

Khetarpal's Voice of Poetry Defends Indian Culture and Its Glory

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Abstract

Milton's characters, most of them, lie out of nature and were to be formed purely by his own inventions. It shows greater genius in Dr Dalip Khetarpal to have drawn his characters upon prevalent culture and own observations. Readers enjoy exploration and description while literary critics describe it as a monumental fact of Indian history of English Poetry. This paper explores Dalip's talent of establishing relevance, value and importance of his drawn characters on perfect reasoning rather than arguments.

Keywords

Indian culture, mysticism, Indian ethos, Indian English literature.

Milton's characters, most of them, lie out of nature and were to be formed purely by his own inventions. It shows greater genius in Dr Dalip Khetarpal to have drawn his characters upon prevalent culture and own observations. Readers enjoy exploration and description while literary critics describe it as a monumental fact of Indian history of English Poetry.

Dalip's chief talent is that he establishes relevance, value and importance of his drawn characters on perfect reasoning rather than arguments, supports it with on the spot recording and becomes an eyewitness so that any arguments and doubts could be quashed forever. His distinguishing excellence lies in the sublimity of his thoughts and sensibility. Several other poets in the contemporary world rival him in the field of poetry, but in the greatness of his creativity, he becomes triumphant over all the peer poets.

Dalip, by the choice of the chiselled and nobler words (which the readers cherish), has carried language to greater heights than any of the Indian English poets has ever done before him and made sublimity of his own style equal to that of his sentiments.

In each poem of Dr Dalip, the protagonist is, by far, not an imaginary character, but is the outcome of his own observation. It is bitterly ironical that at a holy place where millions of people visit, national issues and exploitative politics revolve; discussions like the toppling of governments, a stronghold of politicians, forte and pulse

of constituencies in general elections, etc, take place. It must be remembered that relevance, truth, Promethean thoughts, sublimity, propensity, virginity, protection of daughters, sisters, wives, mothers and weaker sections of the society are definitely, in peril and have become a matter of great concern, especially, where the matters are related to gods and goddesses. But shamefully, the destroyer of all that is good is discovered in the form of a priest and holy men---a very serious matter indeed! Just pay heed to a dastardly killing of a nine year Muslim girl who was repeatedly brutally raped and killed by the priest and his associates at Kathua (Jammu and Kashmir) temple; the dead body was thrown away after disfiguring the face, just for concealing the heinous crime, condemnation, identity of the girl and avoid arrest. When we discuss and describe a paradox, paradigm, people, poet, poetry, politics, police then why not a condemnable pundit who is seated at a holy place of worship. This adventurous and demanding issue differentiates between mortality and immortality. Thus, Dalip Khetarpal and his poem, *Spirituality And Sensuality...Oddest Admixture* attains eternity. His character in this particular poem is fully packed with actions which he ascribes to sin and the portrait of the pundit he draws with words neither titillates nor dramatizes the scene in filmy style, but incurs the rancour of the world. The poet bemoans that the sacred place where the mind that occupies spiritual thoughts should be captured by Satan and devouts and devotees should suffer from Miltonic blindness.

Dr Dalip compares a pundit to Satan, bereft of the nobility and glory, but the most embarrassing part is that silence might be the sign of the strong waves to rise or it is another side of a coin of crime to put under the carpet. To keep it a secret is to support the Nirbhaya happening. Is it correct to say that the temple goers are accustomed to this prevailing culture that Dalip witnesses the scene under illustration and discussion? It is his lively conscience and purified soul that motivates him to write such kind of a poem that becomes an element of a revolution that burns all evils like the burning of all evil inherent in Ravana. Dalip's sentiments, ideas and crusades are so excellently and effectively knitted that the vulgarity of pundit and vulnerability of our women have become the bane of our society.

His four books namely *Fathoming Infinity*, *Refractions*, *Sculptured Psyche* and *Weird Musings* are the Chaar Minar of Indian English poetry. Poets and People must buy and read the poems therein as they display Indian culture which is the soul and glory of our nation. We are quite convinced and influenced that **'soul never perishes'**.

Fathoming Infinity (2015) is a maiden collection of poems wherein the readers come across 46 poems among which *Pyromaniacs' Diwali*, *A Dialogue With Pitiabale God*, *Who Will Kill the Monster?*, and *Dark Shades of Man and Woman* are notably readable, awaken, enlighten and provide laughter 'stuff'. At some places unpleasant remarks, thoughts and ideas are embedded in the poems but have meaningful connotations. These particular poems grip the attention at

once and force one to ponder over them. I tried to find the meaning of the firecracker of Diwali while going through Dalip's poem 'Pyromaniacs' Diwali':

*Myriad fireworks,/Ceaseless lamps of ceaseless
colours,/Lightening every/ Nook and corner,/Town,
city and village/Feast our sight,/But what*

*Explicitly impresses us/Implicitly depresses us also,/For
crackers/Of*

Different intensity show/The repressed violence/That lies hid/In the Psyche/Of thrill and sensation seekers/Of pyromaniacs/Whose inner agony/Seek vent/Through maddening, deafening/And raping explosions/Whose Masochism/Lapses into pyromania/Never to recover,/But only to blunder/Into crackers and fireworks,/Into incineration,/With lunatic mirth.

Another book, *Refractions* (2016) contains just 21 poems, one after another possesses gems, rubies and ambers so the readers and lovers of poetry find beautiful light, spark and warmth at every page. *Catastrophic Flaws... Spirituality and Sensuality ---Oddest admixture, Be not social chameleons...and Love conquers all...* We can understand from the facts that when a lover becomes true then it happens what Dalip describes in the following lines of his poem, *Love conquers all...:*

*A true lover with a sober and tamed ego Can melt a
stony beloved*

Into molten wax Love conquers all...

The Greek poetess, essayist, novelist, short story writer and journalist, Kaperdeli Eftichia, has minutely, patiently and extensively studied poems of Dalip that she shares in her **Preface** of *Sculptured Psyche* (2017). The collection of poems is absolutely an excellent penetrative study of various realms...narcissistic, social, religious, educational, philosophical, psychological, poetic self-knowledge, destiny or destiny of "sister souls." There are two things, 'soul and conscience', must be preserved and protected as these matter much, humanity's position as a civilized being is dominated in relation to the purely pure human nature of "as the soul and conscience' and its integration "into the system" into the social group that is recruited to serve the identity of culture which ends with the "corruption" of the soul. Nothing can save one from becoming Netanyahu, Donald Trump, Yezid, Maviya and other such figures witnessed in the land of Rama and Ravana, combined. It is, however, essential to mention that this book consists of 20 poems such as 'A Parody of God's Expertise', 'How fanciful God resides in human psyche', 'Soul-mate', 'A priest disconnects God's call' and 'Indian sub-consciousness, a reflection of Western Consciousness' and rest 15 others attract and startle as if they give a new found land with some innovative ideas and thoughts.

A collection of poems, titled *Refractions* reveals the fullest powers of his genius. His unflinching insight into the lives and activities of the people, his ability to dramatize the most commonplace situations, his sweet and gentle humour made him not only one of the greatest of poets but

also one of the beloved stars and one of the most admired darlings of the horizon of poetry.

His poetry is held in high esteem by writers and critics. Here, at this juncture, I would like to quote from the **Preface** of Dr Maria Miraglia, an Italian poetess and authoress, "the presentation and flow of the poems in the anthology, *Fathoming Infinity* leaves no impression of a mere "attempt" but capable enough to take a reader to an eloquent flow that gently carries one to the meaning beyond words.

Dr Dalip Khetarpal is a renowned name in the field of Indian English poetry. Besides, he is a reviewer, critic, editor, columnist, former educationist and administrator. At the very outset, I would like to highlight the most admiring quality of Khetarpal which is his belief in discussions which are always better than arguments, since he feels an argument is to find out who is right, and a discussion is to find out what is right. Discussion in his poetry is always superb with the intention that the readers and scholars become a participant in the discussion and extract sense and true meaning out of it to contribute to the social life for its betterment.

He writes in English but is equally popular in other Indian languages too. The basic reason of it is that he is not only a poet and critic of English language but also a fearless crusader who fights for truth, non-violence, human rights, poverty, illiteracy, orthodoxy, fundamentalism, extremism, terrorism, oppression, hypocrisy, exploitation, evils at the

centre of learning, deep-rooted corruption in bureaucracy, and holy places of worship. Such traits of humanity and delicacy in him are traditionally inherited from forefathers which were quite apparent from his schooldays. He possesses penetrating sight and insight into the ambience of the political, social and literary groups. He is an offbeat writer and remains steadfast on his stance. Sometimes a handful of people do not agree with him, but they still like him because of his nobility, profundity, outspoken and honest behavior. He is totally against literary lobbyism and evil practices in society. The voice of his poetry is revolutionary simply because it plays a vital role in bringing changes in society. He protects the genuine texture of poetic endeavour. It is, however, felt to a greater extent that his voice is welcomed by one's nobility, civility and sensibility.

He has the ability to demolish the high stature of the so-called litterateurs, editors of their own magazines and poets in a single word or line because he is aware of his own punctilious, prowess and propulsive powers and forces active in his psyche. He is full of fervor in making and embellishing the literary horizon worthy and fascinating, at the same time patronizes the budding poets and novice writers. On the Indian land, the voices of great contemporary poets, like Anil K Sharma, Prof R. K. Singh, Prof R. K. Bhushan, Asad Rezzwi, Wafa Naqvi and Dalip Khetarpal, echo the soulful words of great poets and writers like, Mirza Ghalib, Munshi Premchand and prominent contemporary poet, Asad Rezzwi who is

popularly known for his melodious voice for singing Ghazal (Ode), Nazm (poem), Naat (a Naat is a poetry that especially praises Prophet Muhammad pbuh. The practice is popular in Asia), Manqabat (a Sufi devotional poem, in praise of Ali ibn Abi Talib as, the son-in-law of Muhammad pbuh and the members of his family) audience enjoy the Kalam (poetry) and voice. Besides, he a short story writer, dozens of All India Radio and TV Channel programs are to his credit. Here, it is most important to refer his theory and practice of poetry which plays a pivotal role in shaping feelings and thoughts of the contemporary poets, "The world will agree with my view that poetry is the most beautiful art ever created. It is something that has the power of changing lives. At present, we don't have poets like Wordsworth, Forster, Allama Iqbal, Saba Naqvi, but Dalip Khetarpal has the feel of the demand of the time. What a poet feels and what is felt by the audience, is felt by Khetarpal. At least poetry makes the readers think. Poetry is a medium of conveying a message. The meaning and message that verse contains easily reach the soul and also affect the mind. But the listener and the audience must have the capability of understanding it. The verse through the force of its grasping power touches the heart.

Dr. Dalip Khetarpal has his eyes on the changing society and whenever anything that is dazzling or dull, that is worth mentioning, never loses any chance in making the readers informed and aware as he thinks that it is his responsibility and duty to enlighten them. He is vigilant

and truly called a sensitive, sensible, and a CCTV of the era. He does so with the judicious and humane intention so that the people should not become the victim of a priest, politicians and other culprits in the society.

He has been engaged in writing for the last four decades and during this period he has served humanity through his noble medium of poetry. He does not wish for any award or reward by serving poetry, literature and humanity, but his first and foremost motto is to serve his creatures of God through his poetry that is why people irrespective of languages, castes and religions have respect in their hearts that is the precious and ever-lasting earnings of his life and that becomes a source of satisfaction, appreciation and admiration.

In a book release function at Ghalib Academy, New Delhi on Dec 09, 2018, Khetarpal had captured the attention of a large gatherings and guests including former Governor, academicians, professors, advocates of the Supreme Court, senior journalists, social activists, theologians, poets, scholars, writers, authors and distinguished personalities through his speech. The poet observes that nowadays all aspects of life are vitiated by mobile; most people are engaged in WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram etc. and they do not realize the harms that could cause by their negligence of seeing and observing the more important happenings of the nearby locations and surroundings. They only talk about remote, irrelevant

and inconsequential issues. But to overlook crimes and injustice happening before a person is also a criminal act.

A Londoner poet, writer and author, Alan Jacobs writes about Khetarpal in **Preface** of the book, *Refractions*, that is needed to be referred to here, Dr Dalip Khetarpal may be termed a brilliant poetic innovator and at the same time a poetic genius. Alan Jacobs adds more praise in this way, *'I cannot think of any other contemporary poet who has ever dared to tackle major issues and issues such as common debauchery in temples, including philosophic questions, with such courage, challenging poetic skill, and has succeeded so well.'*

Poet laureate Dr Yayati Madan G. Gandhi in his **Foreword** of *Refractions* says that Khetarpal unearths some disturbing truths of life. With rare grit and guts, he gauges the real nature of man on the basis of his own personal philosophy. It is also pertinent to mention here that Dr Gandhi is one of the current nominees for Nobel prize for 2019.

A former academician, civil servant and member of Himachal Public Service Commission HP, Shimla writes in the **Introduction** of the most read and analyzed book, *Refractions*, *'Poems of Dr Dalip Khetarpal are unique in perception. He explores areas of human life hitherto unattended and makes a lasting imprint striking verses of Refractions prone and irritate intellects, temple going pious men and women, coerce man to think, analyze and arrive at a*

logical conclusion about objective, identity and existence of life and spread evils from educational centre to places of worship.'

This particular book is dedicated to all those whose interest in aesthetics is not only abiding but also alive and awake. Obviously, the poet also eyes those who are in slumber and not enlightened and are away from the field of poetry, howsoever numberless they are.

An American author, poet and literary reviewer, Jen Walls describes the mind and art of Khetarpal in the **Introduction** of the book *Weird Musings* with a unique style in startling words, delights and increases the awareness of the readers, 'The poet, pulls us into his ponderings and gallantly sweeps an important overview of the dark side of social media's myopic soul-less world, replete with its empty praises-fully digitized and forever prized by narcissists' climbing within on deceptive chimes, filling all the callous cyborg cafes. He lashes out at the impure a falsity and leaps wildly too at lasciviousness of phoney cronyism that ferociously whetting the world's warped appetite for darkness, deceit and denial.'

Poems like 'why do Stars Affect Only The Hindus', 'Hypocrisy Awakens self-contradictory drives', 'What And Where's character', 'Big pseudo gods Among little blockheads' and 'Futile Queries and shrieks of few anguished souls' from 'Weird Musings' (2018) should be read thoroughly for a proper assessment of the anthology.

A Scottish poet and critic, Neil Leadbeater has expressed his views in **Foreword II**, *Weird Musings* about Khetarpal's poetry which are worth mentioning here for the lovers of poetry, 'Khetarpal is a poet, not a prophet. He gives us a view of the world as he sees it and it is a very personal and healthy view. His tone may be didactic but he does not preach at his readers because his writing shows compassion and an understanding of our fallen nature.

The poem, *POETS AND POETRY* of Dalip Khetarpal exhibits his mind and art, thoughts and feelings, love and compassion, sense and sensibility, spirit and energy, brevity and boldness, skill and stamina, perestroika and ferociousness and soul and conscience. Poetry blossoms in his mind takes shape in his heart and thereafter the readers find on the page of the book. His feelings, thoughts and impassioned voice come out forcefully and are forceful enough to change the direction of the wave and shape the thought of the society. Multi-faceted, multi-layered, multi-dimensional and multi-coloured qualities of his poems are read, liked and appreciated by the people of the society.

Poetry is a passion and emotion to Khetarpal. It is an art of a genius and its creation is 'exquisite'. He classifies poets - the one who is the master in poetry, the second is a one without any or with less potential and the third is a plagiarist. For the first category, he has the following lines:

Poetry, infused with passion and emotion

Flows from a poet's powerful imagination,

Creating an art, exquisite.

He is harsh, but correct in his approach towards the minor poets:

A minor poet, especially,

*Wallows in the fake glory of a fool's paradise.
Extricating himself from this rut is not only painful,
But suicidal also, for a self-glorified poet*

Sees and knows not What he really is!

Plagiarists suffer from guilt-complex when they are praised. But ironically, Khetarpal has a pitiable feeling about the senior artists also who wallow in illusion. The following lines speak volumes:

*Pitiable and aesthetically tragic That even a great
creative artist*

*Has sometimes to live even in fool's paradise But,
should we survive by wallowing in illusion?*

Is this the way this ignorant prejudicial world goes on?

The flight of his thought and the range of his feeling are infinite; this may be the cause why people with limited knowledge and parochial attitude fail to grasp his thoughts and feelings and so, fail to appreciate him also.

He seems to be truly acquainted with his own genius and also appears to know what Nature had bestowed upon him more bountifully than upon others. The potential of displaying the vast, illuminating the darkness, dispelling the awful, the gloomy and the dreadful are all brought together to infuse a powerful spirit into subjects chosen

and to draw the attention of this world, igniting its spirit and finally also getting perhaps, his own appetite for some recognition satiated is something rare. To paint things with minute attention, inexhaustible fervor and lively memory rather than fancy is also the sign of a great aesthete. Dalip's delight is to sport in the wider regions of possibility. He sends his faculties upon discovery into worlds where only facts can travel but feels also delighted to visualize, like the sensuality in the eyes of a pundit. It is a monumental discovery that may purify the mind of the heartless holy priests (pundits) seated in temples (*Mandirs*) when counseled. With great endeavour and like a knight he traces the traits of hellish deeds of the priest who is supposed to be an inhabitant of heaven.

In every line of Dalip's poetry breathes sanctity of thought and purity of manners, especially, when he focuses on the damned and evil spirit of the pundit. Definitely, a pundit's mind and behaviour invites condemnation and rouses hatred. Dalip douses the sensual flame of the pundit forever by satirizing him bluntly in clear-cut words.

To develop the art and skill of poetry it is very essential to note the suggestions of Prof Namwar Singh (Professor of Jawaharlal Nehru University) who was not only a litterateur, critic but also an intellectual of Hindi language. He was an encyclopedia of Indian culture and civilization. Besides, he had deep insight into history of language and literature of Urdu and other Indian languages and

literature. Especially, he was fond of Urdu poetry. He used to elucidate in seminars and symposia the features and importance of Urdu poetry through the verses of Meer, Dard, Ghalib, Wali, Seraj, Jigar, Firaq, Iqbal and Faiz Ahmed Faiz and addressed the participants saying that if you do not study the referred poets you would not be able to understand the Indian cultural heritage. Further, he emphatically said 'the writers of Urdu language and literature read Kabir and Raheem as you read Khusro and Shaikh Saadi'. He counted various benefits of how Indian litterateurs and poets can protect the old and glorified culture. Poets and litterateurs of Indian languages and literature should flourish and promote Indian language and comparative literature to enrich it. Without having the knowledge of unity in diversity of Indian languages and literatures, Indian poets cannot identify the true colour of India and they would utterly fail to impress the readers. Getting a place in the history of poetry and literature will be absolutely a ridiculous dream.

Dalip Khetrapal has taken Indian English poetry and criticism to new heights. He has thrown stones of knowledge through his words that impact even the shores. These books demolish the evils generated by man and incorporated the same into the religion which had been savouring the virginity of the temple going girls and other married women who have also been the victims of their seemingly holy characters. He is a great reader of human psyche. To reiterate, in a temple, he caught a pundit on the wrong foot, unbarred him and highlights his lustful gaze

with rosary in his hand surrounded by the devotees of the deities. Ironically, indulging in debauchery at the holy temple and shattering the sacred image of that sacred place of worship, is the most shameful and baneful act.

Dalip Khetrapal sings poems in his own voice. His voice bears facts and sense. His voice displays the power of a clean conscience and purifies souls, without taking dips in the Holy Ganges. Dalip dogmatically affirms that sacred places must remain holy as it is a place of deities; it should never become a place of adultery and debauchery. If claps, kisses, hugs, embraces, invitations, cleavages, titillating, hips, painted dolls, wealth, power, majority, religion and lobbyism play pivotal roles in getting places in the field of poetry and literature, Kabir, Premchand, Ghalib and Maya Angelo would not have become popular. Struggle, efforts, passion, merits, qualities and truth, observation, feelings of the reality of life and humanity are the true assets of Dalip Khetrapal. He breaks all conventional barriers and secures genuine recognition from the readers, but castigates those who are causing harm to poetry and poets.

Involvement in lying, cunningness and manipulative behaviour through poetry is somewhat scornful and causes colossal losses to poetry. Palpable disinterestedness and apparent distance of the lovers, readers, well wishers and patrons of poetry and poets are to be considered at all levels and at any cost. Let un-poetic voice and behavior be defused and dumped which is of

course in the interest of poetry and poets. Many poets do not show their feelings for humanity but rather have developed a great ability to stimulate, sometimes lapsing into histrionics. They can be charming and charismatic, but are not free from guilt. They learn the art of inducing and exploiting others' endeavour, labour, emotion and passion. The so-called kings and queens of poetry are the reminders of the period of Matthew Arnold. Dryden's politicians, Geoffrey Chaucer's Pardoner's Tale and William Langland's Pier's Plowman are of the same features.

Dalip Khetarpal takes the readers to the world of science, technology and reason where an object appears exactly as it is, without any coated material of myth or illusion or hallucination. He believes that the words the poets write are less important than what they make people think. He does not know if his poems will shape a generation, but he knows that he has made a difference in a few lives, a kind of ripple that surely yields result sooner or later, a call for purification. He thinks that it is important, indeed. It is the calibre of Allama Iqbal that his lines and verses of poetry have changed the lives of a multi-million people in India and abroad and the themes and contents of his poetry will be affecting and changing the future too. Khetarpal very candidly says that I wish to change one, one means that is affecting Indian culture which is the soul of our nation. If a pundit of a temple is changed it would be palpable in the society, a source of relief and contentment. Khetarpal's poetry lives all around us, shares, heals, invigorates, speaks up, reveals, heralds changes and is a beacon. Let it

illumine the mind, heart, path and society for all times to come.

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