

Lal Singh Dil

Lal Singh Dil has expired; but not before giving voice to the unvoiced. Harbhajan Singh had said, “his poetry doesn’t delight; it puts us into shame”. Amarjit Chandan wrote, “ He is poet of life. After recognising the state of destitute and support less people, in his poetry, his reader becomes tense. One feels suffocated, eyes get drenched –don’t know the reason: helplessness or sentiments.”

In fact Dil breathed his poetry. There is no conscious effort of creativity in his writing; his reality is touching enough not to require costumes or cosmetics. He was an actor without skills; but his performance agitates all the readers of his poetry or his autobiography *Dastaan*. He was one of few poets whose naked truth itself has emerged as poetics of their poetry, the writing of undercurrents, which is potent enough to silence contemporary sloganeers. Dil is yet to get his due, as a top rank poet of lowly placed people.

Dil’s total poetry is available in *Nag Lok*; compilation of three collections: *Satluj Dee Hawa* (1971), *Bahut Saare Suraj* (1982) and *Satthar* (1997). In *Thakewaan* (Tiredness), one of his most poignant poems, he narrates his vulnerability that has emerged from long but unsuccessful struggle for his physical and emotional survival:

*I don't feel like doing
Or not doing anything
My thoughts move like
A seized insect
If someone declares that
A train crushed my beloved;
Perhaps even then...
If I come to know
That my brother has gone mad
I shall wriggle a bit*

*If somebody discloses
That cops have unclothed my mother
The incident shall just pass away
Like the wheel of a train*

But he is only fatigued, not defeated. The same poem declares: “*But my heart beats like tremendous deluge*”. He had to face serious torture at the hands of Punjab police, for his commitment to ideology during Naxalite movement. His endless agony of being a scheduled caste amongst so-called high castes never allowed him to feel like a free man. He has always been in shackles of this bias. He could never escape two monsters: the state oppression and social dejection. If our police system really wishes to make its cadre a bit more humanistic, let it prescribe his autobiography as a textbook in their training courses.

The personal agony of not being married to anyone through out his life, coupled with his infinite poverty added to his tortures; and he concludes his *Thakewaan* as follows:

*The dogs bark:
'My house my house',
The feuds:
'My village, my empire'
The leaders:
'My country, my country'
People say:
'My fate, my destiny'
What should I utter?
I don't feel like doing
Or not doing anything
My brother, comrade, girl, mother, country
Nobody belongs to me.
But my heart beats like that tremendous deluge.*

Yet he asserts that this weariness is only physical. Mentally he is sound enough to declare that he wishes to pick up the mountain just like a shovel removes a chip of soil. He wishes to sweep the palaces and mansions away from the road.

A very small writing *Tul* has a big content. A few lines depict the reality of society in no uncertain manner. Ironically these lines can also be seen as his autobiographical key:

*It seems that
While shaping Gulli
We have reduced it to a straw.
Now we can't even hit it.*

Following lines are enough to sum up his ideological stance and social alienation:

*I'm in search of
A non-revolutionary poem
So that I can befriend someone
I wish to remove
The nails of my belief
So that I can befriend someone
But I fail to find
A non-revolutionary subject
So that I can befriend someone*