

M.A English Semester II

Prose: Unit 5

On Running after one's Hat- G.K. Chesterton

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G.K. Chesterton

G.K. Chesterton was the best writers of the twentieth century. He was a critic, novelist and a poet but he was an essayist also. He began his career as a journalist and to write weekly articles for newspapers and magazines. He became a reputed figure in the Daily News. He used to sit in Fleet Street café and write his articles and essays with the help of his imaginative and intellectual power. Chesterton possessed some literary implements in which mainly he used to use wit and paradoxical arrows to win and with these weapons, he smartly dealt his duty. His quizzical humor, stylish use of wit, delightful mental creativity like a gymnastic which were in paradoxical and epigrammatical way and his whole-heartedly defensive manner for old, cheerful romantics are the things which regard his writing style and spill different from any other contemporaries of his time.

G.K. Chesterton easily can handled with literary and social criticism, history, politics, economics, philosophy and theology. There are so many essays and columns which are cherished in the form of books and the collections, titles are like: All Things considered, All is Grist. He spent a month of 1927 in Poland and then two years later, he visited Rome and resulted in “The Resurrection of Rome” (1930). His more successful books of that period were ‘The Thing’ (1929), a Catholic Essay and two volumes of general essays, ‘Come to think of it’ (1930) and ‘All is Grist’ (1931). He disclosed the antithesis, identities, distinctions and absurdness. He argued with the help of examples and Anecdotes. He wrote on the qualitative facts, knowing the habits of people to be a reporter, he did not forget what his eyes had seen at the first time. He shows his ideas in natural way without any kind of artificial polish.

His essays have also possessed the touch of humor. In the essay, “A Piece of Chalk” when the lady offered him with nose paper, supposing that he would not like his notes on old brown paper wrappers having the nation of economical aspect. In his thought, the pocket-knife is also a kind

of tool used by human being for their purposes. He says, A knife is a baby of a sword. There is a fine example of his humoristic style when he says that to write on those things which he has possessed in his pocket is not an easy task because it would be too long to write and writing of those things would be turn into an epic and it would be the great epic for the future.

It would be a matter of great fun for the readers whenever he will be introduced by him about that things which he kept in his pocket. In fact, this thought of writer is humorous and interesting and all of these various shades and thoughts are reflected in his style.

On Running after One's Hat

It is a skillful effort. The essay shows psychological situation and status of human being. Everything has its own faces but it depends on us how we take them because everyone has his own view point and attitude driven by the different circumstances. In this essay, the writer tries to express his view through examples. The small things as running, driving to open any jammed drawer, to wait for a train are common but irritating events amongst people. However, it can be made simpler and enjoyable to keep ourselves cheerful and delighted. To chase a ball or to chase a hat is not a different sport we regard to chase a ball as a good sport, while we thing to chase a hat is funniest game. The plot of the story is tightly woven and the arrangements of the events according to the movement of story is really remarkable. Our reaction towards the things made them positive and negative.

However, London was girdled by the water, yet writer was trying to enjoy that moment to keep himself calm and by this method he wants to say that peace of mind made our decision more effective rather than aggressive mind. The writer has not raised any single character in this essay. He has shown the full picture of the society.

His language is very simple and leaves an impression on our mind and compel to think about the problems of the society. He raises a question and answers himself. He says that our thoughts made the events adventurous and inconvenient but it depends on us how we take it. The theme of this essay deals with the social problem; connecting personal life of people. As the story begin we come to know that London is struggling with the problem of flood but writer visualizes the whole scene in a poetical method and then throw light on the small problem with this example.

After every para, he presents a new incident and connects it with main story after a short while by using simple and familiar examples of every common man.

He has used figures of speeches too, to clarify his statements as:

“Redlight and green light on the signal are like a new sun and a new moon.”

“As if a great king had thrown down his staff as a signal and started a shrieking tournament of trains.”

His humoristic style to dictate the event is appraisable;

“Their meditations may be full of Rich and fruitful things. Many of the most purple hours of my life have been passed at Clapham Junction.”

He not only leaves to think the people what he wants to say; but he also clarifies his concept in these words;

“As I have said, everything depends upon the emotional point of view.”

He gives a psychological and moral support to deal with our problems. Every examples glimpses a solution to face bravely our problems without losing our temper. The title of the essay is also appropriate and justify the story line. As we run after our problems and think that it is Right to do so. We chase for that thing in our life which is quite necessary. But our psychological satisfaction in it and we again and again follow this sequence as a runner runs, as a bowler runs without thinking another idea in our mind.