

MISTER INSAF (1985). By Pawan Chaudhary. Vidhi Seva, E-31, Mansrovar Garden, New Delhi-110 015. Pp. 92. Price Rs. 25.

THROUGH THE corridors of time man has been crying for justice, pursuing it relentlessly, and excepting for a blessed minuscule minority, justice has eluded the majority almost like a mirage. Almost everyone without exception—poets, novelists, dramatists, the common run of people, the plaintiffs, the defendants, the lawyers, the judges, belonging to different climes and times have been, through the centuries lamenting over a labyrinthine system out of which few have been able to find the way out. In other words, one cries oneself hoarse for judicial reforms, but the cardinal question is how and where to start it. In several instances, we have floundered and faltered mainly because our thoughts, words and deeds have not worked in a coordinated manner. In a nutshell, man has failed whenever he has been insincere to himself and where one has been not true to oneself, how on earth can he ever be true to the society and his fellowmen at large.

It is this tormenting and nagging anguish that smites the conscience of a minority of the scrupulous like the author of *Mister Insaf* (a novel in Hindi); where they furrow the lonely path of rectitude, they are jeered at by the majority for whom 'anything goes' in the stampede for so-called 'success' or 'bright career'. Every page of *Mister Insaf* carries the tell-tale marks of the wounds and gashes inflicted on an unsullied soul by a society and system which unabashedly throw overboard all the norms that make man different from all other animals. The fiction takes on realistic overtones when it carries all through the rise of the author himself from obscurity to the limelight of the courtroom.

The ambitious youth looks forward to the dawn when he would stalk to the portals of courts with all the surging pride of a lawyer; fourteen years before he enters the citadels of justice and fourteen years after, the hero of the fiction discovers himself and the world about him. And what a world my countrymen! The pressure of the world is too much on everyone and few can fulfil the duties of the station where he is placed without fear or favour. Those who dare and act to ram their way through the path of truth and righteousness, have to brave insuperable odds, facing unknown whirlpools at every stage of life. And the world and future belongs to those who dare and act, for civilisation has come about only because of the brave who did not toe the line of the silent majority.

The lawyer in the story is a world apart from the commonality of lawyers and he fights for justice in the very citadels of justice itself. He refuses to be a mere professional who accepts a small or big fee for the services he is supposed to render. Here is an ideal lawyer who would not venture to give any wrong advice or induce his client to take some illegal

step. Principles matter to him much more than 'a roaring practice'. He feels that those lawyers who cannot safeguard their own rights cannot secure the rights of others for whom they are supposed to wage legal battles.

The hero of the story fails often, but discomfiture in any episode of life does not demoralise him just as the success after each failure does not make him lose his head. He takes everything in his stride, challenging his co-professionals and others to get into his bandwagon and face the world from the vantage ground of truth.

A diamond is forever and it is rare; 'Truth is tough. It will not break, like a bubble, at a touch; you may kick it about all day like a football, and it will be round and full at evening', so said Oliver Wendell Holmes.

*Mister Insaf* needs its versions in English and other languages so that its universal message can reach the widest readership possible.

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