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QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN SAUL BELLOW'S NOVEL SIZE THE DAY (1956)

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Abstract:-

Dr. Adler. In that society people talk to each other, do business, pass the time of the day but no compassion, no understanding and love. All his decision have ended in a sort of fiasco : “He had decided that it would be a bad mistake to go to Hollywood and then he went, he had made up his mind not to marry his wife, but ran off and got married.” (STD, 23).

Keywords: communication , society , sympathy , Psychologist.

INTRODUCTION:

Tommy had no education and no communication with his father. To keep up his spirit, he smokes a cigar and wears a hat – the prop of confidence and success. He does not want to cut himself off from other man. Just as Joseph, the protagonist of “Dangling Man”, longs for a “colony of the spirit and believes that” goodness is achieved not in vacuum, but in the company of other man, attended by love.(1) In the same way Tommy longs for merger into community, wants love and sympathy from his father. But his father Dr. Adler wishes not to be disturbed by any kind of demands from his son. After observing his father attitude Tommy says, “ It isn't all a question of money there are other things a father can give to a son one word from you, just a word, would go a long way” (STD 109-10). But his father refuses to get involved in his son's desperate loneliness. He pour his misery into the deaf ears of his father but in vain. So, he turns towards Dr. Tamkin the pseudo. Psychologist shrewd and wizard like secret potent. (STC, 64). Tamkin advices Tommy to invest his \$ 700 Dollars in the stock market to make more money but he loses that money like a common fool because of Dr. Tamkin. Only at the end of the novel Tommy feels that he has been merely used.

“I was the man beneath, Tamkin was on my back and I though I was on him. (STD, 77) Malcolm Brodbery rightly calls Tommy, “ a suffering jockey divided between the practical material world and a larger world of being”. (2)

On the marital front, he fails. Marriage for him no longer a sacred conventional bond. It too has become commercialized. There is no place for love and affection. After taking divorce, his wife pesters him with financial aid. She knows fully that her husband has lost all money, she does not spare him. She refuses to take a job but also make Tommy fee guilty be reminding him that it is he who is responsible for their broken family. When he wants to tell his father, what his wife is doing to him, he actually starts to choke himself.

Marriage is no longer a sacred conventional bond. It too has become commercialized like other sacred relationship. All these people feel that his suffering and failure are genuine. Throughout the novel no character deals with him sympathetically. He is a complete victim of “the world's business” and it has drive him to the wall. “There is money every where” – it has reached down into people's hearts until they are cynical and it has corroded human relations to the point where financial success and failure can determine the attitude, a father takes to his son, a wife to his husband or a friend to a friend. Tommy is also helpless to remove himself from this money world where exploitation dominates people.

Bellow says Tommy is a visionary sort of animal, who has to believe that he can know why he exists. He feels that

business of existence should be different from the world's business. Tommy feels deeply alienated from New York because it is violent, heavy, hot, ugly and utterly over bearing . Tonny Tanner is right to say that, “for Tommy there is no way out For him there is no flight, nor any easy solutions”. (3)

Tommy circumstances love made him so cynical that he latest the very idea of freedom. He says, “Don't talk me about being free. A rich man may be free because nobody cares what he does. But a fellow in my position has to sweat it out until he drops dead.” (STD, 67). Once he saw Dr. Tamkin, he chases him but he disappears in the crowd and Tommy finds himself in a funeral parlor the looks down on a dead body of a grey haired stranger. In the face of that dead man he confronts both himself and humanity. The sinks beneath the water flow. The sees his own fate in the coffin. The dead man reminds him of his own inevitable death and he cries for his past failures and sufferings Tonny Tanner remarks, “He weeps for the other, for death which was meaning, for life which strugglers with lifelessness, for morality which unites the living and the dead into one community”. (4) After death man becomes free from his artificial roles. In Bellow's novels, the conformation of one's own death is always the beginning of a new life. He learns that the business of life and the world's business are very different. It was really a rebirth of Tommy Wilhelm. One his rebirth Allen Guttmann remarks, “The final scene is one in which he draws metaphorically, but it is also a symbolic rebirth out of water.” (5)

At the end of the novel Wilhelm has come out of the burdens of his life, putting aside his state of alienation and feels identified with common humanity. So, Bellow makes his point clear that to be an individual, to have separate identity is a great thing. One must seek his new identity in the company of other fellow being. This message though very simple but enhance our knowledge about the way a good man should live.

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- 6.Saul Bellow, *Seize the Day* (1956, Harmonds Worth: Penguin, 1987), 23. All subsequent references to this novel have been included in the text in Parenthetical form.



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