

SCEPTICAL

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY



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Table of Content

- I. Early childhood
- II. Events
- III. Personality
- IV. Conclusion

I.

Have you ever been in one of those situations where you are reading a book, or a novel, or an autobiography and you feel yourself so lost in the story and the tragic events described in it move you and you feel like your eyes can not hold this anymore and a tear roll down your cheek?

Ever experienced this? Me neither!

I don't get the point of explaining so much tragedy in an autobiography. In my opinion, autobiographies are not supposed to contain this much drama. They are supposed to give an overview of writer's life and not of his traumatic experiences.

As far as I have read autobiographies, they all start with the date of birth of writer. Therefore, I am not starting with the same thing. I know none of us is interested in the early life of writer, but still, following the rules and starting with the early life happenings, I would just like to give you an overview of my early childhood. I was born in Lahore and got my education in a private school. I was not a brilliant student. But even after this, I had eleven shields, four certificates and three cups when I left my school after matriculation.

After matriculation, I studied pre-medical in private college. I won an amount of two thousand rupees at the end of my second year at college for being the regular student of the class. I scored good marks in my intermediate examinations and then I got admission in Institute of Applied Psychology, University of the Punjab.

II.

For writing down my own personality, I guess I would be able to do that in a better way if I will explain myself as a third person who is watching me doing all the things I do. Say, the third person's name is Bravo. So let the game begin!

Bravo tells me that I am different. He tells me that I do not try new things. He says that I do not trust people. He tells me that I am hard to convince. He calls me stubborn sometimes.

He says, "You're afraid." And whenever I ask him, "what am I afraid of?" He says, "You're afraid of everything! You're afraid of trying new things, trusting people, giving people chances, of giving people the warnings that they require just before you leave them. You just treat people as you treat the people in games you play in your PlayStation. There is difference between people and the characters you associate to them. May be it is not your fault. But still, the thing is; You are afraid, Ali!"

But wait, just before I respond to Bravo, I would like you to keep these remarks in your mind and continue reading this autobiography with a bit more attention.

Imagine yourself walking on a straight road. The people around you are fine. The weather is great. And the road is turning into a fly-over at some distance. Now, you see a railway track spreading below the fly-over and perpendicular to the road you are walking on. If road was leading you from South to North, then railway track is spread from West to East. As you were doing good and had no need to put focus on this. But suddenly, you find a way, sort of stairs, that would take you down to the railway track. And there comes a thought in your mind that tells you to try this at once. You say, "No." But then another thought asks you, "Why not?" And then you decide to go down the stairs only. Then you take those stairs and reach there down on the railway

track. You might be thinking that I am in a mood of making a train hit you. But no, relax! Take a deep breathe. Now, what you see is an abandoned track that is no longer in use for trains to pass. No trains means no threat to your life.

Taking the stairs changed your direction from North to West. And right now, you are facing the West. There is a tunnel right there in front of you. You cannot see much in the tunnel as there is dark. Now you decide to go into the tunnel and as soon as you started walking into it, you see a warning sign on the entrance of tunnel that tells you to stay out of it. But you ignore this as you want to see what's there inside this that they do not want us to see. Keeping on your journey, you reach nearly in the middle of the tunnel. Now you see a barrier along with a warning sign. This time, this says, "Work in progress. Go back." But guess what? You ignore this one as well.

One or two steps ahead, you see workers in yellow suits trying to fix something there. When they see you going farther in the tunnel, they know you might get harmed by any unexpected event that might occur. Therefore, they also do the same things as the warning signs did.

But, did you stop at warning signs?

Considering yourself mature enough, you tell them that you will not go much ahead, just a step or two. And as soon as you take your third or fourth step, something hits you and hits you real hard. You are about to faint. When you see your arm, you see blood coming out of it. You start feeling that you cannot move your arm anymore. Pain makes you go down on your knees. You put your fists down on the ground and you lower your head a bit down. You stay in that position for a while. That "Stay Out", "Work in progress. Go back" and the voices of those workers run across your mind. Now you start realizing that you should have heard them. You should have brought them to your notice. Just after realizing it, you open your eyes. You turn your head up. Make your fist tighter and decide to leave this all. Your arm hurts you when you try to get up.

But somehow you manage to stand up by summing up the energy inside you. You turn your back to tunnel and start walking towards the entrance point. In other words, you are now heading towards East. You're slightly inclined towards your injured arm and holding it with your other hand. When you walk by those workers, they mock at you that they told you to go back. As it was your fault, you don't respond to them and keep going. Then you pass by the barrier and the warning sign that told you to go back. You do not look at this but you barely smile and think to yourself that you should have stopped. And nearly the same thing happens when you pass by the first warning sign. And then you reach out of the tunnel with an injured arm.

Now you raise your eyes and you see that road. You realize your mistake and you realize that you should not have done this. You start moving towards the stairs and you hear a voice that asks you to stop. You just stop but do not look back. A worker comes running to you with a piece of cloth in his hand. He gives it to you and also tells you that they have nearly fixed the problem and you can visit it now. You smile and say, "Thank You!"

First step of the stairs and you realize people will ask about your injured arm. Then you tie that piece of cloth that the worker gave you, firmly around your arm. So that no one can see what you had suffered. Taking the stairs, you reach the road. You start moving on the same road once again. And whenever someone asks you about your condition, you tell them, "Oh, I'm fine."

You must be thinking what all this imagination has to do with this autobiography. But wait.

What if I tell you that you are now back in your chair, sitting comfortably and reading this? And all the things you just imagined were actually the things I went through? Not in literal sense, but in figurative sense. Interesting it is. Isn't?

III.

Let me relate this event to this autobiography. The road I was walking on depicts a normal and happy life. The track I saw was below my path and obviously it had nothing to do with me. But I found it attractive and decided to adapt this. This path was actually the distraction. Other people did not even bother about trying this. Next, the track was abandoned. It means that the people were not either interested in trying this or might have already tried this. Tunnel actually indicates the “people.” Stairs were the events that led me to those “people.” And guess what does the darkness in the tunnel indicate? It indicates darkness in people’s hearts. It indicates their coldness. The first warning – that told me to stay out of it, was actually the warning from those people. Second warning with a barrier – was actually my own limit. But I decided to go beyond my own limit as well. The third warning was from workers. It means a warning from the people who love me and who are near to me. The harm I got by going against warnings and my own limits was actually the harm from those people from whom those warnings wanted to protect me. When I said it caused damage to arm, it actually meant it harmed my mental stability, my mental satisfaction and my self-esteem. It made me go down on my knees.

But after realizing my mistake, I had to forgive myself for trying the new path. Then I got up and started walking out of the tunnel. That meant I started walking out of their lives. While I was getting myself out of this toxic situation, flashback of those warnings made me smile. That smile broke something inside me. Something that was already broken. Isn’t that strange that I am saying that it broke something that was already broken? No? But it does happen. When you keep giving people chances again and again and all they give you in return is “harm.” And when they came running to me, I did not go back because I already had enough.

And when I covered that bruise with that piece of cloth, that actually meant that I covered that mental harm with a fake smile. A fake smile so that people would not be able to see that scar. And at the end when I started walking back on the road, meant that I started continuing my normal life. Covering the scars and moving on with my life. Now after all this, what if there comes another railway track on the path? Shall I?

IV.

Now having all these situations understood, tell me if I am different. Tell me if I am at wrong by not trying the new things. Tell me if I am wrong if I am afraid of trusting people. Am I afraid? Should I try new things? Should I trust people? Should I give chances? Should I give warnings to people just before leaving them?

SHOULD I?