REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

Sawhny takes poetry to common man with élan

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Sept. 20 : Writing poetry is the most difficult job in the world, according to late Keshava Dev, the legendary Malayalam writer. "To be a poet, one has to learn what life is. To know what is life, you should learn to live," he once told aspiring poets. If the number of modern day poets are any indication, we have to infer that not many of us have learnt to live. But there are exceptions.

For Lahore-born Ashok Sawhny, poetry is a part of life. He thinks, speaks, dreams and even lives on poetry. His strong foundation in Urdu and English has helped him mould words with élan.

Mr. Sawhny has penned more than a dozen collections of beautiful poems. He

slice of life

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jots down each and every instance he comes across in daily life as poems. *To have Loved,* his latest collection of poems, is a kaleidoscopic view of life in all its beauty, love and sorrow.

Simplicity and elegance are the two prominent factors which stand out in his poems. He has come out with thoughts which will linger like the ones jotted down by Eliot, Frost and Coleridge. "Write your

hurts on the slates of stand; For winds of forgiveness to blow them away. Then see the power of the unseen hand; And what the magic of that has to say," writes Sawhny in *Slates of Sand.*

Mr. Sawhny has under stood life in its true sense. He as experienced pangs of separation and isolation since he had to leave his hometown following the 1947 division of India. He came up in life the hard way. "When life seems to you unfair, That's when you most need a silent prayer. When things seem to go awry, That's when you most need to shed the I," he writes in *When.* With this book, Mr. Sawhny succeeds in bringing poetry to the common man, proof that good poetry cannot be confined to the drawing rooms of the elite.