

Imparting Human Values through Literature

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ABSTRACT

In the words of Dalai Lama, "In order to lead a meaningful life, you need to cherish others, pay attention and respect to human values and try to cultivate inner peace." Really a meaningful life needs to pay attention, respect to human values. Values are ideas that guide us in action. In this, they are similar to plans, goals, fears, intentions, policies etc. and the like. All these are ideas which guide us in action. Values only concern with the manner of action rather than the consequences. They set standards that serve to decide priorities and preferences through the right course of action. The ultimate end of the value is happiness.

1. Introduction

In the words of Mohith Agadi, "People with no human values are worse than zombies. The core of compassionate artificial intelligence is a connection. - connection to feel the pain and suffering of humanity." These human values give the effects of bonding, comforting and reassuring. As far as human values in literature are concerned, literature has the following aims:

- Literature for art's sake.
- Literature that has a didactic, moral or utilitarian function.

Literature having these aims has eternal value; moreover, literature that depicts human values, lasts forever. These human values are expressed through characters, incidents, situations, speech, narrations, songs, myths, legends, lyrics, epics, fables, joys, laughter, sympathy, empathy, love and hate and so on, in literature. These values are same and universal and cannot be confounded within the walls of time and place. It can be great Indian epic Ramayana or Mahabharata or Greek epic Iliad or Odyssey.

Powerful literature takes us to a different landscape of imagination for a time being far from the madding crowd. In this present time, which is full of uncertainties, literature alone has the power that engages us, connects us and enable us to dive into the sea of emotions. Whilst Art depicts our emotions visually, literature and language enables us to interpret the world internally. Through words, we explore and engage with the human conditions learn and discover more about ourselves than could be possible through other means.

2. Literature in ICT World

In the world of modern era we think that science and technology has connected the mankind but it is not very true. Had it been, W.H.O. has not estimated that 350 million people

are affected by depression globally. In the present time people want to engage themselves in social media like T.V., computer, internet and computer games, but they have shortage of time for reading and in this way they are lacking reflective power that comes from reading great characters and great events. Salman Rushdie said, "Literature is where I go to explore the highest and lowest places in human society and in the human spirit, where I hope to find not absolute truth but the true of the tale, of the imagination and of the heart."

While writing any piece of literature the author creates his own world and the readers like to travel leisurely in it Reading literature helps us to contemplate how the accumulation of human experience, reinforces a sense for sharing of all the felicity, misery, anger, betrayal, chivalry etc. and we feel that we are not alone in this world. Whenever we go through a very happy or sad moment, we feel that someone also had, experienced this in the part and it makes us happy and rejuvenate.

Due to the changing technological scenario in the ICT world of today, we have a flood of information. In this flood we sometimes feel sinking into it. Matthew Arnold describes this confusion in his poem **Dover Beach**

**for the world which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams
so various, so beautiful, so new
Hath really nether joy, nor love, nor light
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain
And we are here on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight
Where ignorant armies clash by night,**

Literature has its own impact upon human lives and it is valuable in different ways.

3. Value of Literature in different aspects

Literature has	If we read
1. Psychological value –	gives deep insight to know the behavioral aspect of mankind.
2. Religious Value –	presents a foundation of religious insight and belief and tries to explain about the mysteries of life as well as setting rules for one's personal faith.
3. Aesthetic value –	enables us to contemplate the beauty of nature and mankind.
4. Cultural value –	can know human civilisations and their beliefs and traditions.
5. Moral value –	characters and events gives a lesson what to do and what not to do
6. Ethical value –	helps us to ask questions related to the standards of a good life.
7. Political value –	can change the way of life.
8. Revolutionary value –	it can work as a weapon to eradicate exploitation and to foster development without shedding a drop of blood.
9. Recreational value –	enable us to move in the imaginative or realistic world, different to our own.

4. Postering Human Values through Literature

Literature is the means to connect the reader with the reality of life and thus fostering human values. Purpose of lit is Art for art's sake or svantahsukhay (self satisfaction). In Upanishads, the purpose of study is

ऋतं च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च
सत्यं च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च

तपश्चरस्वाध्यायप्रवचने च
दमश्चरस्वाध्यायप्रवचने च

The disciplines are rightness and also the learning and teaching, truth and also the learning and teaching of the vedas; austerity and also the teaching learning of the vedas; self control and also the teaching learning of the vedas.

These duties enumerated in the mantra are tabulated below.

SL. No.	DUTIES	MEANING
1.	ritam	The practice of what is right and proper as indicated in the scriptures.
2.	satyam	Living up to the ideals taught in the scriptures.
3.	tapas	Spirit of self-sacrifice and self-denial.
4.	dama	Control of the Senses.
5.	sama	Tranquility of the mind.
6.	agni	Maintenance of a kitchen for feeding the needy fellow beings.
7.	agnihotram	Practice of Fire-worship
8.	atithiaya	Treating the guests with due respect.
9.	manusham	Live like normal human being.
10.	praja, prajana	Have children for continuing the family line.
11.	prajatih	Have grandchildren i.e. arrange marriages of children.

And they instruct. सत्यं वदं धर्मं चर | स्वाध्याय माप्रमदः speak the truth, abide by your dharma, never be idle in your studies. Again –

यान्यवद्यानिकर्माणि, यानिसेवितव्यानिनोऽत्राणि ।

O disciples! only do those actions which are in accordance with the shastras and Society. Do not perform actions that oppose this. Great epic Ramayana and Mahabharata also set standards of life through Satya and Dharma. Medieval Hindu poets Kabir and Rahim also taught human values through their writings.

जोतोकोकाँटाबुबैताहिबोबतूफल
तोहिफूलकोफूलहैबाकोहैतिरसुल

Good Literature is based on dharma and dharma means achieving highest human values and thus differentiating man from animals. The same goes with Quran for Muslims, Bible for Christians, Torah for the Jew.

Al Ma'arri (793-1058) a blind Arab philosopher and poet rejected all the religions for love.

**A church, a temple or a Kaba stone
Koran or Bible or a martyr's bone**

**All these and more my heart can tolerate
Since my religion now is love alone.**

SafdarHasmi a play wright and director best known for his work with street theatre in India gave the message of love and unity.

मंदिरमस्जिदगुरुद्वारा ने बाँटदियाभगवानको
जमीनबाँटीसागरबाँटेमतबाँटोँइंसानको

In the words of **Mark Twain** "I have no race prejudices and I think no color prejudices or caste prejudices nor creed prejudices. Indeed I know it. I can stand any society. All that I care to know is that a man is a human being that is enough for me, he can't be any worse."

The root of this intolerance, violence and riots lies somewhere in the greed of man. As in the words of **Dalai Lama**. "Man surprised me most about humanity. Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health and then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present, the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die and then dies having never really lived."

In the western Hemisphere, **Plato** in his Republic banished poetry and poets from the society because they are twice removed from reality. By doing so, he gave the stress on human values rather than false emotions. He wanted to ennoble man and society. **Aristotle's** idea of catharsis offers liberations from the frustration that can lead to the act of violence in the daily life of the people. Through catharsis the feeling of pity and fear are aroused and the person has to think over a hundred times before doing any act of violence. **Alexander Pope** rightly said "The proper study of mankind in Man."

Iliad invites us to reflect on the nature of war itself and the use of force as it shapes our understanding of virtues such as honor and responsibility and vices such as excessive pride, vengeance and cruelty. Romantic poets too, have tried to set up standards of life through visualizing nature in all its forms. Greed and materialistic approach of life is shown by **Wordsworth** in these lines.

**One world is too much with us
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers
Little we see in nature that is ours.**

In ode to skylark **Shelley** shows this dissatisfaction of human being

**we look before and after
and pine for what is not.**

The value of self satisfaction is much needed in today's world. The eternal truth as expressed by **Gray** is

**The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power
And all that beauty, all that wealth ever gave
Awaits alike the inevitable hour
The paths of glory but lead to the grave.**

Man has to value truth, love and faith for one another that is why **Keats** says :

**Beauty is truth, truth beauty
That is all; ye know on earth
And all ye need to know.**

In **Dover Beach**, **Matthew Arnold** deplores the loss of 'sea of faith' in the world and asks his beloved.

Ah! love, let us be true to one another.

By stating that poetry is criticism of life, Arnold meant that poetry could move into the void created by people's loss of religious faith. He believes that poetry provide "the superior character of truth and seriousness" and it could offer people the type of spiritual sustenance that they once received from religion. Eliot also considered the classics and English literature to be of vital importance in moral education.

5. Literature as a harmoniser

In this troubled time literature can act like harmonizer and tranquiliser to bind the people with human values. History has shown that the advancement of science and technology has its own role in building and destruction of great civilisation and its impact on global peace. Scientific advances improve our lives, they also complicate how we live and react to the new technologies more and more, human values come into conflict with scientific advancement as we deal with different issues.

According to a new report co-edited by a University of Nottingham academic: Emerging Computer technologies will change our lives for the better by 2020. But we need to retain control to ensure that these developments do not impact negatively on basic human values.

In such conditions, literature is the only source of harmony and unity amongst people. No doubt Literature provides joy and entertainment but its main endeavor is to bind the people and the world at large with its chord of sympathy, love, co-operation, brotherhood, mutual trust and respect. About the binding of people and world Rabindranath Tagore, in his essay the Poet's Religion says : What is the truth of this world? It is not in the masses of substance, not in the number of things, but in their relatedness, which neither can be counted, nor measured, nor abstracted. It is not in the materials which are many, but in the expression which is one.

6. Conclusion

The present world which is full of greed, violence, corruption, trouble, jealousy, conflict, war, literature is the right solution and remedy for all these maladies. Values like love and compassion honesty and duty, truth and beauty, sympathy and empathy console us. These value delight us, teach us, instruct us, strengthens and emboldens us to face the situations of the present world. I would like to conclude the topic by the lines delivered in the address of William Faulkner, on Dec 10, 1950 in Stockholm, Sweden while accepting the Nobel Prize in Literature. Telling about the duties of a good writer, He says

"He must learn them again. He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid; and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed – love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice..... He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past."

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