

## Literature For Peace And Human Utility

Man is a social animal. He cannot live alone; association with others makes for self - realisation. He has an instinctive sense of identity with his fellow men.. He has a sense of completeness and importance when he feels that he is a part of universal human life. Egoism or self-centered existence leads to his unhappiness. The brotherhood of men is the supreme goal of humanity. Nature meant all men to be equal and integral with others. It is Nature's holy plan that men should live in close unity and solidarity and in unison with Nature. But Nature's holy plan has been defeated by men. The poet laments what man has made of man. Wordsworth mourns man's inhumanity to man and deploras man's separation from Nature. Modern industrial civilization has sundered man's relationship with Nature and has caused a division among men. Artificial barriers have been set up to dissolve the cohesion of the Family of Men. Casteism, parochialism, linguism, nationalism, provincialism are man's creations which are responsible for the schism among humanity. The generous impulses, genial feelings and innate good will have been eroded and men are now engaged in cut -throat competition for power, help and influence. Malice and Prejudice prevail over the world and man has virtually been turned into an enemy of man. In this milieu of separatism, malice and animosity, literature has a big role to play. Literature is not divorced from the life and has close relation with the society in which it is made. Moreover, the poets, novelists and dramatists are called upon to fulfill a social function. A writer who is cooped up in the ivory tower of his private emotions and experiences does not discharge his social obligation. A great writer imbues his readers with a sense of identity with his fellow men. He does not do it directly and didactically \_ but he treats his subjects – matter in such a way as to inspire his fellow men with a sense of unity and purpose. A novelist or dramatist delineates the relationship of men and women in a sympathetic and perceptive manner so that the readers feel a kinship with the struggling and suffering humanity. George Eliot defines the social function of art: **“Art is a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow men beyond the bounds of personal lot”**. The writer seeks to impress the readers with the sympathies of the readers. The only effect that a great writer seeks to produce is that those who read them should be better able to imagine and feel the pains and joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling erring human creatures. Shakespeare is the most impersonal of all writers. But his plays show man's moral struggle in the world. He presents the spectacle of struggling erring humanity in such a way as to evoke pity and admiration for them. The readers feel a sense of identity with the character and are imbued with a sense of unity with their fellowmen. A great writer is inspired by a higher morality by virtue of his broad vision derived from his freedom from orthodox restraints and sectarian motives. It is the human solidarity that is at the heart of the moral concern of great writers. Tolstoy observes:

**“Art is a great matter. Art is an organ of human life transmitting man's reasonable perception into feeling..... In our age, the common religious perception of man is the consciousness of the brotherhood of man – We know that the well –being of man lies in union with his fellowmen.”** It is by sympathetic delineation of characters through their inevitable confrontations and contrasts, by exploring the areas of their minds and by exposing the secrets and mysteries of their mental responses that the writer translates the idea of solidarity with sense of solidarity with the others and thereby knowing their condition. This is the essential purpose of characterization with Shakespeare, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Conrad, etc. In ‘King Lear’ Shakespeare depicts the gradual awakening of self. Lear at the beginning is wrapped up with a sense of fellowship with others. Wordsworth rightly observes: “Art should bind together by feeling and passion the vast empire of human society”. Apart from the social and moral function of art, the poets and other writers have always prepared the lesson of human unity. It is ever recalling to our erring minds the basic fact, “one touch of Nature make the whole world kin”. The poets are making us alive to the great truth that we are all the same ‘suffering and enjoying human beings’. Shakespeare shows all human beings akin in spirit. For him king is but a man , the Jew has eyes and feelings just like a Christian and the proud man, dressed in brief little authority is like a an angry ape. He has pulled down so-called great men from their higher pedestal and placed them in the same position with the common men. Shelly has the ecstatic vision of the equality of man:

***Equal, unclassed, tribeless and nation less,  
Exempt from awe, worship, degree the king  
Over himself, just gentle, wise, but man.***

Tennyson has the poetic dream of the Parliament of Men where all men's good shall be each man's rule, and “the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in the universal law of love”. Rabindranath in all his writings has enjoined on his universal brotherhood of man. By Sahitya he means “Sahitabodha,” man's sense of togetherness with all his fellowmen. Thus literature has always made us alive to the importance of human unity, It is consummation devoutly to be wished, although it is a far-off cry. Men cannot live in peace and plenty unless this human unity is achieved. The threats of war, the menace of inequality and the horror of sectarianism have made life insecure and unhappy. The cause of unity and fraternity of mankind can be fostered and promoted only by the deep study of world literature. No politicians and thinkers can bring about this unity and equality among humanity who are sundered by artificial barriers and man-made distinctions.

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