

POETRY TEACHES LEARNERS LESSONS OF LIFE: AN EVALUATION OF POEMS IN ENGLISH YUVAKBHARATI (FROM 2020 ONWARDS) STANDARD XII IN MAHARASHTRA

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The new syllabus is introduced to the students of SYJC (Second Year Junior College) in Maharashtra. Maharashtra state Bureau of Textbook production and Curriculum Research, Pune constituted the Committee for designing the syllabus and writing a course book. `English Language committee` and English Language Study Group` have published English Yuvakbharati standard XII. The syllabus is designed following the aims of teaching English at (+2) level. The selection of the material is done on the basis of objectives of teaching English at junior college level. Prose and poetry sections are created on the basis of aims and objectives. The first problem that arises in our mind is what to teach. The answer may be objective one. We have aims of teaching English on college level. Prose units and poems are selected on the basis of the objectives of teaching poetry. The poems given in this text are useful for learners to equip developing literary taste and inculcating values and life skills in the minds of learners. One of the objectives of teaching poetry at (+2) level is to teach the learners lessons of life. It is interesting to know whether this can be done through teaching these poems to student's learning in XII grade.

We know poetry is the oldest genre. Epics is the oldest form of poetry. It means primitive men expressed their thought through this channel called poetry. Epic is one of the types of poetry. The other forms of poetry were developed later on. Poetry is not meant for reading. It is meant for singing. Learners often forget which prose lessons they have learnt earlier. However this does not happen in case of poems because we remember them well. At every stage of teaching we select the poems carefully. Poetry teaches learners lessons of life. This statement is mentioned in the introductory part of the text book. The question arises whether the selected poems are based on the objectives. Can they really help learners to know lessons of life? It is true that poetry teaches us moral or ethical values. The Ramayana is the

best example. The language of Valmiki, greatest poet gives us moral values. These are like lessons of life. The poems in this text-book are meant to teach learners beauty of language and literature. Wordsworth rightly says that every poet is a teacher.

There are in all eight poems in this text. They are selected and graded carefully. The state board follows the objective of teaching poetry at (+2) level. These poems are: Walt Whitman's 'Song of the Open Road,' Sarojini Naidu's 'Indian Weavers', Robert Southey's 'The Inchcape Rock', Edward Guest's, 'Have You Earned Your Tomorrow', Dilip Chitre's 'Father Returning Home,' William H. Davies' 'Money', George Gordon Byron's 'She Walks In Beauty' and Mamang Dai's 'Small Towns and Rivers'. Researcher studies them carefully to examine whether these poems teach life's lessons to students. The analysis is given below. The researcher tries to investigate whether the poems selected for teaching are based on the objective 'That Poetry teaches lessons of life to learners.

1. Walt Whitman's poem 'Song of the Open Road' is taken from his collection of poems titled 'Leaves of Grass. It is selected from the section titled 'song of the Open Road' The road is a symbol of journey It indicates man's journey of life. Roads connect places, peoples and countries. The poet earnestly tells us to give up indolence. He suggests us to start walking towards our desired destination. We should visit various people and places in the world. We need to walk to them. We should live here on this earth happily. The open road is a symbol of innumerable possibilities and opportunities. We can choose any one opportunity. We should work hard and then our life will be fruited. The speaker knows where he wants to go. He starts his journey with a hope that he will definitely reach to the destination. The speaker is not a fatalist. He has a positive attitude and is energetic. He starts journey without making any complain. He chalks out his itinerary quickly. He breaks the shell and comes out to see the boundless world. Other men are dubious. Their living is like a stagnated water in a pond. They quarrel with one another unceasingly. Walt Whitman thinks earth is the best place for travelling. He knows his limitations too. He can't fly like birds or can't afford to book a seat in areophane. The best thing that he can do is that he can walk towards other habitable planets. There may be the colony of aliens. The last lines tell us the condition of those who have stucked to their houses. They try to part with their responsibilities but they cannot do so. They spend their time caring

their families. Sometimes they determine to leave their houses to go on a tour. They cannot go to far off places. They return back half way. They can't avoid their duties and responsibilities. After crossing a distance they realize that they are having a load of responsibilities on their back. They are carrying this load everywhere they go. He calls it a sweet burden. Familial responsibilities can't be separated from men. They are inevitable. They are like our shadows. It is difficult to cast off shadow. He assures himself that he will fulfill his responsibilities on returning to his home. It indicates a characteristic feature of the speaker's personality. It is that he is not an escapist. The poet has a deeply seated gypsy. So he leaves his house to see the wonders of nature. He wishes to know about uncharted lands. He tells us to spare some time from the routine life. He tells us to visit far off places to breathe fresh air. We should visit new lands and meet new people. This is an enriching experience. We should avoid procrastination.

2. Sarojini Naidu's 'Indian Weavers' is a lyric. It is a metaphysical poem. In ancient times India was famous for silk trade. Silk clothes were exported to various countries of the world. The speaker of the poem meets a group of weavers for three times. They were busy weaving clothes in the morning, noon, and night. The three times of day can be compared with man's life. It indicates man's childhood, adulthood, and old age. We require clothes. It is one of the fundamental needs of man. They are made by artisans. Weavers weave them and provide them to us. We want different sets of clothes at different stages. Sunny morning indicates early childhood stage in man's life. Noon indicates the prime time of youth and dark night indicates deterioration and fall. Weavers are artisans. They weave silk garments for children, adults, and old persons. They weave clothes for funeral ceremonies too. The speaker talks with them in the morning. He observes they are weaving clothes for children. They look happy. Children like new dresses, children's smiles make them happy. In the evening the poet visits them again. Weavers look gloomy. On being asked why they are unhappy, he told him that they were weaving a shroud. The duty may be pleasurable or painful. We have to perform it anyway. Weavers are doing their duty. For them work is worship. They give us the lesson of life. It is that we must perform our duty without deviating from our path. It may be either pleasurable or sorrowful.

3. The poem *Inchcape Rock* is a ballad. It is written by Robert Southey. The poet tells us the story of Abbot of Aberbrothok. He implants a warning bell on the hazardous area of the sea. It is the rift which is made of sandstone. It is located below the sea water and is useful for sailors. They hear the ringing of the bell and become alert while driving boats or ships. They become cautious and thus can dive ships safely. A bad tempered pirate cuts the string of the bell. It was tied with a purpose to alert sailors. Evil doers always torture others. Sir Ralph, cuts the string of the bell from the buoy. It was installed there by Abbot of Aberbrothok. Whenever ships happen to pass through this area the sailors hear the warning bell. They become alert. Thus many incidents of ship wreck were avoided. They are greatly indebted to Abbot of Aberbrothok. He represents good doers while the pirate stands for evil doers. They often forget the truth that they cannot avoid punishment for their evil actions. After some years a pirate ship arrives in this area. Haze spreads in the sky. The night is dark. Visibility is almost lost. Sir Ralph, the pirate is unable to drive his ship. He is worried how to avoid icebergs. He feels that there should be an alarm bell. He cannot locate the reef beneath the sea water. His vessel strikes against the massive cliff. The ship sinks in the sea. At this moment Sir Ralph hears the ringing of bell. Devil rings his knell. This is influence of karma or deeds. It is rightly said that if you are digging a ditch for others you may fall in it. As you sow so shall you reap.
4. The poem *'Have You Earned Your Tomorrow'* is written by American poet Edgar Guest. This is an inspirational poem. The speaker tells readers that we should strive for the wellbeing of others. We should help one another. We need to evaluate our actions. It is good for our future life. This is a didactic poem. The poet tells us that we should deal with others warmly. We should talk with them in a sweet tone. We should kindle a flame of hope in others' hearts. There is a maxim. You receive what you give. Give respect to others and you will be respected. The speaker requests us to treat our friends warmly. Harassing one's close friends is a sign of selfishness. We should be grateful to others. We should help those who are in distress. Our actions should bring happiness in others' lives. We should treat wretched men amicably. We should make them self-reliant. We adore generous men. We abhor cruel men. God blesses those

who are virtuous. He lengthen their life span. The poet tells us that we should always help to others. He also tells us how to live life peacefully.

The poem `Father Returning Home is written by Dilip Chitre. He was a well known bilingual poet. He is known for translating marathi saint poet Tukaram`s poems into english. This poem deals with the retired life of his aged father. He lives with his son in a metropolitan city. He travels by local train everyday. Old age is inevitable phase in our life. The old men cherish values. New generation people may like their values or may practice different values. Aged persons have their problems. Speaker`s father is fond of reading and travelling. His bag is full of books. Sometimes he lingers in nostalgic past. The Youngers should try to know problems of agedpersons. They should be treated with respect. Parents work hard to raise their children. Now the grown up children ought to care of their old parents. We should be grateful to their parents.

William H. Davies poem `Money` deals with a rich man`s quest for happiness. We know the true value of money when we do not have it. when our pouch is full of money everyone wishes to befriend with us. Our friends who leave us when we have no money are fair weather friends. They leave us when we face financial difficulties. A true friend accompanies in sun and shower. He never distances his friend. Money is needed for living a good life. Exces money can create problems. It may become the cause of our sorrows. Rich people sometimes look worried while poor people are always happy. They work with their spouses. They sing songs with them in the day time. The speaker surprises how they live happily though they face financial problems. The poet wishes poor men should become prosper ous men. Rich men should stop earning excess money. If we have money, people become our friends. They seek financial help from us. The speaker has bitter experiences. Now he wishes to live like a poor man. This time so we need to use it discreetly he has a few friends but they are faithful. Money is a double edged weapon.

George Gordon Byron`s poem *She Walks In Beauty`* is a lyric. In this small poem he describes beauty of an anonymous woman. He portrays beauty of a woman. He compares her with clear sunny atmosphere and starry sky. Her eyes are dark and attractive. She is graceful like a sunny day. Her hair are dark. He compares her hair

with shiny black feathers. Tresses linger over her beautiful face. Pure thoughts emanate from her heart. They brighten her face. She gives a winning smile. She is innocent and beautiful. The poet tells us that true beauty is the beauty of soul. Good thoughts, gentle manners and virtues are ingredients of woman's beauty. Beauty is the sum and total of internal and external qualities. The poet describes various aspects of a woman's beauty.

Mamang Dai's poem 'Small Towns and Rivers' deals with a landscape and nature. We often say rivers are our mothers. Human culture and civilization flourished developed banks of rivers. They nourish forests and human beings. The poem deals with beliefs of tribals. They live in the company of nature and they live happily in the company of nature. These days we are slowly destroying nature to increase borders of our cities. Poet depicts life of tribals in the North Eastern states of India. They live in woods worship various natural objects. They believe that spiritual progress is more important than materialistic progress.

Conclusion:-

The poems given in this text are based on certain objectives. There are eight poems in poetry section and they are meant for teaching us certain values. They teach readers the lessons of life. 'Open Road' tells us that we need to develop positive attitude. We should break the shell and learn ways of the world. We are chained in household duties. We cannot overthrow them. 'Indian Weavers' deals with the truth that everyone has to complete the cycle of nature. We should always remember that death is our final destination. 'The Inchcape Rock' is a ballad. It teaches us valuable lesson of life. 'We sow so shall we reap.' 'Have you Earned Your Tomorrow' deals with the importance of money in human life. We should be cordial with all our friends. We should try to light the flame of hope in the hearts of other men. 'Father Returning Home' deals with the monotonous life of a retired old man. 'Money' deals with the quest of rich man. Money is the root cause of all evils. A true friend will never leave our company in adversities too. 'She walks in Beauty' deals with aesthetic aspects of a woman's beauty. 'Small Towns and Rivers' deals with life of tribals in North Eastern states in India. The learners learn many things after reading these poems. They teach us lessons of life.

References :-

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