

# Literature as an Immortal Source of Moral Values

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## Abstract

We have moral values to protect our life. The great values are truth, freedom, honesty. When they are functioning in the right way, our life is protected. These moral values help us to distinguish between what's wrong and what's right, good and bad. These moral values make us the complete human being. Moral values reflect everyone's character and spirituality. Moral values highlight us the lines we should never cross. It is how the fire purifies the gold from impurities in it; moral values do make the phenomenon in the followers. Modern way of life has started violating and ridiculing the moral values lessened the importance of moral values. Literature plays a vital role in bringing the moral values to the mankind right from the beginning. Literature resembles as lighthouse which paves the way for the travelers as how the literature gives moral life to people. This article showcases the role of a literature in projecting its essence of goodness with moral values to mankind though many changes happens both in the society.

**Keywords:** Moral values, Religion, Life, Modernism, Postmodernism, Literature.

Moral values are the standards by which we define right and wrong. They can come from self, family, community, religion, and distinguish us with the difference between proper and improper actions and behavior. "Morality is not just any old topic in psychology but close to our conception of the meaning of life. Moral goodness is what gives each of us the sense that we are worthy human being" (Pinker, P 34).

Humans are animals with a unique kind of distinctive features what shows that we are a kind of animal. We are different from animals with the largest brains and many qualities, culture, religion, and ethical traditions, scientific knowledge, language, commonsense, art and literature, technology, and in general all of the creations of the human mind. Ethical behavior or moral behavior, morality or virtual ethics are projected by writers in all literature. What makes the humans to lose morality in their life? The desires and inappropriate thoughts make them to lose morality in their life. People have many moral values and ideas they accept those values by which their conduct is judged as either right or wrong. These norms would vary from individual to individual or culture to culture. But we have some universal moral values which are widespread such as not to kill, to honor one's parents etc... It raises questions whether the moral sense is a part of human life or nature, or it is a biological mark or ethical values are products of

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religious and cultural traditions, what makes the humans to be moral? Either following a religion or merely believing ht common sense. Spiritually humans are the creation of god and they are crated in the image of god.

“Divine command” (god’s commanding is what makes a particular kind of action moral). The first command that was given to mankind was “not to eat the fruit” but unfortunately it was violated by the first inhabitants of the world. So they were punished. But god didn’t stop giving commandments to his people. So some commandments and restrictions make humans to shape their path to moral life. These commandments determine what we ought to do or not to do. Thomas Aquinas, the 13<sup>th</sup> century Christian theologian says that some moral values or laws come from divine authority. But here comes a question, whether moral values are taught by the religion or it is naturally embedded in humans.

We have many philosophers of classical Greece and Rome like Aristotle throughout the centuries, said that humans hold moral values by nature. They come out with saying that humans are Homo sapiens and also Homo moralis. Charles Darwin brought the theory of evolution and this theory brought about the need to reconsider the foundations of morality. Do animals attribute moral or ethical behavior? This evolution highlights distinctive question about the origins and tents of moral behavior. Is the moral sense determined by biological evolution? If so when did moral behavior come about in human minds? Did modern people have a moral sense? Is it boosted by natural selection, or does it come as a byproduct of following something (such as religion, culture) or differently, is the moral sense is the outcome of Cultural Revolution? Darwin asserts that the difference between humans and animals are the moral sense or conscience. Some scientists affirm that morality is a biological attribute of human because they make moral judgment that is to judge some actions as good and others as evils but some philosophers argue that the morality comes from culture and religious beliefs. For many centuries religion has been deciding what is right and what is wrong. Religion has preached many practical general rules.

Morality in the modern world - Modern people tend to want to maximize their freedom to fulfill their self interests, value security and desire greatest happiness. We all want other people to leave us to live in our self interests. But morality can best be described as the putting-aside of our own short-term interests to achieve our greater, long-term interests. It is simply sacrificing our immediate personal objectives for long terms.

“without this sacred regard to general rules, there is no man whose conduct could be depended upon, it is which constitutes the most essential difference between a man of principles and honor and a worthless fellow”

-Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759)

Aristotle studied questions like “what is moral responsibility” the poet Dante Alighieri named the seven deadly sins: vanity, jealousy, anger, laziness, greed, gluttony, and lust which are also spoken in Christopher Marlow in *Dr. Faustus*.

Psychology plays a vital role in the lives of humans. Id, ego, super ego are ideas produced by Sigmund Freud. Id is the set of uncoordinated instinctual trends; the ego is the organized realistic part; the superego plays the critical and moralizing role it deals with what is right and what is wrong. Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung has projected humans conscious and unconscious levels. He noted the humans have a persona which is distinct from our inner self. The Latin term refer either to a person’s personality the mask of an actor. It is the mask that humans wear in the society to hide their inner conscious. Shadow is the darker side of the human’s life which they don’t want to bring it to the light. The modern way of living associated with these concepts. Many people live with the mask and also with the shadow (darker side) in this world. The concept of post modernism ridicules the traditional values and also moral values as the people want to maximize their freedom to fulfill their self interests. The importance of moral values has been lessened by the people. It is like; people are travelling in a large ship without a route map to reach their destination. Here literature plays the greatest role like the lighthouse which guides the ships that lost their path. Though literature has its origin before the birth of humankind, it has known its job and never failed to give moral values to the people who struggle to live a beautiful life. Writers, authors, poets, are the building blocks of any literature. Many centuries, prophets, saints, writes, poets, have born, lived, died but their golden words are carved in the papers still communicate with us giving ethics to humans. Many traditions lost its root and cultures are collapsed and religions are ridiculed but literature didn’t change its essence in giving moral values. Men may come men may go literature never dies. We have to remember that,

“We are taken from the dust and surely return to the dust, but our life should be moral and the best lesson to everyone”.

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