
HARINDRNATH CHATTOPADHYAYA AND SIDDHARTHA...**MESSENGER OF LOVE AND PEACE**

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INTRODUCTION

Harindrath Chattopadhyaya is known as a poet, a playwright, a musician a philosopher a painter and an actor. He has a versatile personality that is why he was always appreciated & praised by his contemporary literary world. His plays like the Window, The Sentry's Lantern, Siddhartha - Man of Peace have been read as social plays which make us think over various social follies.

Chattopadhyaya gives his message of love and Peace through his powerful historical play Siddhartha-Man of Peace to the twentieth century world which is formed by war, hatred, selfishness and stress. Chattopadhyaya judiciously chose the life of Siddhartha for a message to the modern world so that it may rise above narrow loyalties of caste, colour, language, religion, and other differences. He believed that no man could live in peace in this temporary physical world. The Buddha is worshipped for his practical way of life.

Lord Buddha's life his principles, his teachings are really relevant of time when humanity is formed with foolishness of man and his distractive inventions. He propagated the idea hostility cannot end hostility.

Chattopadhyaya wrote Siddhartha-Man of Peace after destructive second world war which resulted in another cold war between the two super powers. The playwright was inspired by the lofty ideas and philosophy of J.L. Nehru who devoted his life of peace and happiness for entire humanity i.e. why he dedicated his play Siddhartha-Man of Peace to Nehru.

In the play he presents the incidents from the life of Prince Siddhartha. It starts with royal house of Suddodhana, Buddha's father and the King of Kapilvastu and his queen Mayadevi who is blessed with a son on Purnima. After watching the shining face of his son the King became certain that his son would be a generous and kind King. So he established cordial relations with other states. Act II deals with the expectations of the glory of Siddhartha and his achievements as a King. Saint like Buddha becomes a rival for the boastful Dev Dutta and his servants in court. He is taught the true dharma of a Kshatriya. He is told that the dharma of a Kshatriya is to kill big animals or fight in the war. But Siddhartha rejects this idea of violence by saying:

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No, No! Dev Dutta! he is not a warrior who intrigues against others; he is not a warrior whose blood craves for the blood of others.....The true warrior is tender and compassionate; he is brimful of love and understanding; true marks of heroism.

Therefore, understand Dev Dutta; that killing is not the sign of warriorhood; but on the other hand, saving.

These principles of Siddhartha also disturb the King. He tries his best to involve the young prince into secular affairs. But Siddhartha's Cold resignation to life gives a deep shock to King. Dev Dutta tells the King:

'He sits, the very image of God,
Which to a clan of warriors like our own
Proves veritable insult. We are men,
We live, we love, we dreams of war, we build,
Ambitious Fortunes, not waste our lives away
In False ascetic dreaming.'

Suddodhana expected his son to extend the boundaries of his kingdom & increase wealth & happiness. But Siddhartha's future plans steals the sleep from his father's eyes.

Act III portrays the tension & disturbance in the royal family. Act IV starts with a verbal conflict between the King & the Prince. In spite of his various attempts to draw the interest of his son in this physical world he has to face failure. At last he makes the last attempt by getting his son married to a beautiful maiden Yashodara, the King of Dandapani. But after sometime Yashodara comes to know that she may lose her prince. She reveals her heart to prince:

Your heart is clouded Prince. That cloud shall pass. No stone shall be left unturned to gladden your life.....Your life shall find complete fulfilment.

Siddhartha tries to convince her that one who serves humanity is greater than others and serving is also true dharma of a Kshatriya.

The particular incident of the injured bird reveals the Prince's love for all living creatures. In fact IV the playwright lays stress on the opposite qualities of Siddhartha and Dev Dutta. Siddhartha is benevolent whereas Dev Dutta is cruel & wicked. The Prince's heart flows with the milk of human kindness. Life is holy for him.

The Prince who grows up in riches & royalty does not know the meaning of sorrow & miseries. He has not seen the grief & suffering of man. Channa, his charioteer makes him acquainted with the harsh realities of life. The Prince gradually learns that this material world which is a house of misery is infested with pride, lust, selfishness and ignorance. So he

deeply feels that peace in life must be the main objective of man. He abandons the sensual pleasure and material life. The king tries to change the mind of his son:

'What suffering that makes you decide to leave us and go away. Are you thinking of going to a forest?. And do you think you can find peace there? If the forest could yield peace, then tigers and panthers would have found it long ago. You are mad, raving mad.....that's what I think you are'.

The King also tries to convince him by saying that God has created life and its disparities and not man. but the Prince who has already recommended his escape from physical & temporary world tells his future plans to his father:

To begin with, it is for us to see to it that the world, on the surface, is made a fit place to live in, free of distinctions, affording equal opportunity to all men alike, exploding the myth of birth, driving away that last least form of tyranny_____. I want the world to be freed of all suffering.....

This particular plan has lofty aims which need great responsibility. Lastly the king tries to arouse his sense of duty towards his pregnant wife and coming child:

You have hardly been married a brief stretch of time to the beautiful Yashodara. I suppose you realize that she is with child. Is this the time for you to be thinking in the way you are doing?

Act V marks the climax of the play. The decides to renounce the world and to seek peace and truth.

Channa his charioteer and his horse Kanthak also accompany him in his mission. In the next Act the prince is shown wandering from place to place in search of truth and peace. In act VII on a full moon day Sits under a Bo-tree. Mara, the God of love and his son viz, Desire Discontent, Thirst, Caprice and gaiety try to assail him but he remains unaffected.

Monk Gautam becomes famous and a host of herefics try trap and defame him. He is charged with the murder of a Sundari. But the king brings the real culprit to book and he is proved innocent publicly. His return in celebrated in chorns:

“He has come back with his banner of peace unfurled. Not prince of an earthly kingdom but lord of the world”.

In Act VIII, Siddhartha meets his wife, son Rahul and parents. This time they readily embrace the gospel of peace who is trying to see the suffered humanity disciples are sent to distant lands to spread his message of peace :

And peace shall only come when it has attained enlightenment after conquering wrong desires, great, hatred and lust; and then no man shall exploit another and equality shall reign in the world. Equality and understanding and Peace. Peace! Peace! Peace!

To conclude, Chattopadhyaya is very much successful in conveying the message of Siddhartha of love universal peace and brotherhood. The writer finds out remedy for the torn humanity in the ideals of the Buddha. The ideas & principles of Buddha are the only remedy for the welfare of humanity which is lost in waste struggle for material possessions the writer states in the epilogue:

Go ye into a world of broken men, exploited men, wounded men.....and preach my message. Say to the world: Peace! His message which today is needed more than ever, when wars are being fought and enmities rampant every where.....

Peace, Peace. Everybody looks back across two thousand five hundred years and recalls the Golden lord”.

The play invokes the teaching of lord Buddha who illuminated the world with his principles of universal peace, love and brotherhood.

REFERENCES

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8. Ibid 225
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