

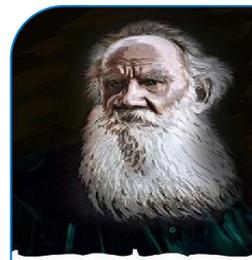


## COMPREHENDING MEANING OF LIFE IN THE WORKS OF LEO TOLSTOY

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### ABSTRACT :

The main theme of almost all the Tolstoy's work was the spiritual life of man. According to the teachings of Tolstoy, the question of the meaning of life does not arise because a person lacks meaning in his life, rather due to his acknowledgement of the inconsistency he feels against the ideal meaning in his personal life. It is the sudden acknowledgment of this, which makes the question possible for the person. Religion, invariably has a direction relation with the meaning of life. This process of acknowledgement is not transitory rather it is inherent in every individual. Tolstoy concepts of life, death, man, love and God acquire meaning only when it is in connection with the concept of the meaning of life.



LEO TOLSTOY

“ Love is life. All, everything that I understand, I understand only because I love. Everything is, everything exists, only because I love.”

Everything is united by it alone. Love is God, and to die means that I, a particle of love, shall return to the general and eternal source.”

**KEYWORDS :** student teachers, technological knowledge, technological pedagogical content knowledge, technology integration.

### INTRODUCTION:

It was through his characters, he made the readers understand the significance of social, cultural, historical and moral being. His heroes are portrayed in a distinctive and self-worth process although they are mainly presented as the being affected by the external factors like family, society, culture and history. In *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina* and *Resurrection* historical events, familial conditions, and social contradictions respectively had huge impact on the destiny of the characters, the author wanted to look for ways to save person. It is during these fatal experiences that one finds searching one's own soul and finds relief in the tussle with external factors and circumstances. In both the great and short works of Tolstoy we do find the life beginning of heroes, their search and pondering over the profound question of life and death, about the motive of man in this world and the acute awareness of his own "I".

In *War and Peace*, the noble, intelligent and beautiful Andrei Nikolayevich Bolkonsky sought the welfare of society and not his own fame and glory, after several catastrophic disappointments and spiritual upsurges: "It is not enough for me to know what I have in me - everyone must know it: Pierre, and that young girl who wanted to fly away into the sky, everyone must know me, so that my life may not be lived for myself alone while others live so apart from it, but so that it may be reflected in them all, and they and I may live in harmony!" The readers witness his height in metropolitan salons and also his simplicity and support in the dust of Schoengraben when the tank is evacuated by Captain Tushin. In the Borodino field, he unites with officers and soldiers in feeling sad of loss and at the same time felt anger on the enemy who had attacked his homeland. It was the unity with the people in times of trouble for the country that filled the life Andrei Volkonsky's meaning of life.

The quest for the meaning of life is invariably the key in "The Death of Ivan Ilych" and "The Cossacks" as well wherein both the heroes Ivan Ilych and Olenin respectively go in a quest of truth and goodness. It was in the death bed that Ivan Ilych realizes the true meaning of life while bearing the agonizing mental and physical pain. It allowed Ivan Ilych to retrospect his whole life with entirely different perspective which allowed him to take fresh outlook onto his life and those of others only to be revealed as inner falsity. He was astonished by the fact that cold indifference towards him by his family members, acquaintances and everyone else was merely the reflection of his attitude towards others, all his life. Olenin whereas in his splendour and fullness desired to achieve the truth and find the meaning of life. He left eagerly left everything behind and headed towards Caucasus where he gained altogether a different perspective by analysing the falsity of his earlier life and saw the meaning and motive of life in the simplicity and innocence of nature and natural.

The heroes of Tolstoy took different roads to achieve the meaning of their lives, for some protagonist it was in the death, for others in nature, for some in marriage and for others in entirely different way. Tolstoy in his work "The Way of Life" asserted on the answers of his questions like "Who am I?" "Why am I?" "What is the meaning of life?" "How one must live life?" Tolstoy wrote: "For good life you need the light of reason. And in order for the mind to be light, you need a good life. One helps the other. Therefore, if the mind does not help a good life, it is not a real mind. And if life does not help the mind, then this is not a good life."

Invariably, it would be wasting one's life if one fails to find the motive of his life. What is the use of living a life when one cannot find any significance in one's own living as a liability for the betterment and upbringing of others. In his youth itself Tolstoy asserted on the purpose and meaning of life. He wrote in his diary on April 17, 1847: "I would be the unluckiest of people if I had not found a goal for my life- a common and useful goal." (Tolstoy 31) Later on he wrote the answer to it, "Everyone tries to make himself as much good as possible, and the greatest good in the world is to be in love and harmony with all people."

Conscience manifests itself in the moral self-consciousness of individual. It is conscience which burdens man's heart and pricks him for every wrong done. If one fails to listen to the voice of his/her conscience even the most favoured culture and civilization will carry no meaning. Tolstoy said that start with yourself, there is nothing in life which is stronger than a man when he wants to be free and strong. To be yourself, to believe and think in your own way- is it so difficult, is it impossible?... Fighting with yourself is joy in life. Every little victory, is a step forward... Drop one, two, three, but go up. And fall again, but still get up.

Tolstoy while asserting on the motive of life suggested the true meaning of life, written in his book *Path of Life*, a principle which all must follow: "In order for a person to live his life well, he needs to know what he should do and what he should not do. In order to know this, he needs to understand what he is and the world in which he lives. The wisest and kindest people of all nations have taught about this at all times."

In any society, there is always a public opinion about moral and ethical values but it is not the society which thinks and feels rather it is every individual that think and feels. It lies in the understanding of man's finite life and its usage for others, in terms of betterment and elevation in which the true meaning of life lies. If a being does not understand that human life is not eternal, and that his life is constantly approaching death, is immortal. It can be understood with this simple reason that a person who does not know that he has been robbed, is not robbed. Therefore, it is entirely in the understanding of a being about the meaning of life.

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