CHAPTER – VI

CONCLUSION

R.K. Narayan, we can say is undoubtedly a great novelist; he also deserves to be put into the category of epics writers through his prose epics The Ramayana and The Mahabharata. Although they cannot be put into the category of The Iliad, The Aeneid, The Divine Comedy, Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained etc. But they look like prose epics and create the epic effect. They express the soul of the generation and his prose epics are put in category of other sublime epics. We know that he was much interested in Hindu mythology and Indian philosophy. He accepted the fact that a work is epic when it is the complete expression of the moment of collective life. The readers of his epic notice the voice of a lot of people both human and superman, speaking through this voice. His epics describe the soul of his generation they may be put in the category of the epics of life. Lots of version of these epic are available to us. He handled his themes with the freedom and imagination of great artist. We feel that he is in full acquaintance with the life of Ayodhya and Hastinapur. His prose works create the heroic impression.
Now we have to consider how his interest in *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* helped him in writing successful writing. In his epics, he created the world of wonder. He kept himself within the limits of probability while writing novel. His epics and novels do not have the magnetic power of a classical epic.

Narayan’s novels as well as his epics life in it’s totally. He is much admired for his art of narration. He is much admired for his sample and unpretentious manner. English language had no problem for him. Simplicity and clarity we find in his life. His purpose was admirably served on account of its flexibility.

In his novels, we find a clear beginning, middle and an end. In every novel one finds the background of South Indian community. Due emphasis has been laid on cultural tradition though modern values have not been ignored. As a matter of fact, he described the timeless quality of Malgudi in his novels and always followed a classical pattern while narrating his story.

He presented life-like characters. Narayan painted those people whom he knew very well. Narayan painted these people whom he knew very well. All of them are human in their likes and dislikes. Narayan’s
focus is on all characters. He succeeded in infusing life into the inhabitants of his fictional world.

Like William Shakespeare, Narayan deals with the themes of love and marriage in most of his novels. There is a passionate love between Chandran and Malathi, Sriram and Bharati, Raman and Daisy, etc. He did not like to discuss sex openly in his novels, though he described the sexual feelings of Ramani and Raju, Sriram, Sampath, Raman, etc., but pornographic scenes have been mostly avoided. As he was a pure artist, he did not want to make any political propaganda through his novels. _Swami and Friends_ and _The Bachelor of Arts_ do not confirm genius. But _The Dark Room_ and _The English Teacher_ are remarkable studies in social behavior and answer the question – how to live? Through Savitri (_The Dark Room_) Narayan described the woman who could not detached herself from her husband, her children and her home. Like a typical Indian woman, she returned to her home towards the end of the novel and found pleasure in her old paradise.

Narayan’s novel _Waiting for the Mahabharata_ described his ethical idealism. Here Narayan concentrates on Bharati’s personality, the true follower of Gandhi. She is prepared to curb her passion for Sriram on account of her fundamental purpose of life. She does not dream of
golden ornaments, fine dresses and sophisticated living like common woman. The values of *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* have been indirectly highlighted in *Waiting for the Mahatma*.

Through *The Guide* Narayan emphasized Krishna’s theory of Karma. Raju led a life of mean deception and ended up in vain self-deception. When he was arrested for his forged methods. Rosie simply remarked – this is his karma.

In *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, Narayan condemned Vasu as this fellow was the destroyer of serenity of the social atmosphere of Malgudi. This rascal has no moral code and his devoid of social properties of life. His lust for money was responsible for his death.

In the novel *The Vendor of Sweets*, Narayan analyzed the questions, which came to the mind of Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra and were ultimately resolved by Krishna.

In the novel *The Painter of Signs*, Narayan highlights the character of Daisy who devoted her whole life for the cause of population control in the country. She sacrificed even her lover for Raman due to her mission in life.
In the novel *A Tiger for Malgudi*, Narayan concentrate on various philosophical questions. Here the friendship between tiger and Sanyasi inspired the tiger to control his five sense and succeeded in his aim.

In the novel *The World on Nagraj*, Narayan expressed his ideas on several issues such as generation gap, division of property between the two brothers, growing materialism and the gap between the East and the West.

It is accepted fact that likes Valmiki and Ved Vyasa. Narayan soared high with his imagination and could enrich with the themes of universal values and wisdom. He emphasized through his epics the need for men to do good deeds and also admit the theory of Karma.

Valmiki and Ved Vyasa were not only poets but priest as well. As a result, both of them are worshiped as prophets by the people. Like Milton, they accepted God's almightiness. Because of their dedication to their purpose they accepted the responsibility of poets of immoral fame. Like Milton, he sought the help of God to get success in his mission and his mission and he really succeeded. It is true that he is popular for his Malgudi novels. But his prose epics are equally important and can be called epics of faith in righteousness, truth, tolerance, non-violence and
the victory of good over evil. In the same war, Narayan asserts through *The Mahabharata* that God is always for compassion towards all the worshippers.

Through his prose epics R.K. Narayan asserts the importance of eternal providence and shows the reasonableness of God’s action at every stage. Hanuman, the great follower of Rama, asserts boldly that his strength lies in obeying his lord. At no stage one can find him opposing Rama. Similarly, Arjuna does not argue much with Krishna merely because the great truths were revealed to him by this incarnation of God. Like Adam and Eve, Rama and Sita, Yudhistira, Arjuna and Draupadi posses the comforting thought that they are protected by god.

The message of Narayan’s prose epics is still true today. Here Narayan asserts not only private righteousness but public righteousness as well.

In *The Ramayana*, Narayan narrated the events of the life of Rama and Sita and at the same time asserted the importance of infinite goodness and immense goodness. One notices here the theme of Salvation and also how God converts every evil into good. Being a man of calm and quite temperament, Narayan was man of noble temperament and tried his level best to get God’s grace with his epics, M.V. Rama Sharma asserts:
The ennobling sentiments expressed by Adam remind us of the great truths revealed to Arjuna in The Gita. The last hundred lines of Paradise Lost closely resemble the Bhaktiyoga of The Gita where Man’s ultimate goal is to surrender to god. Implicit faith in God, unquestioned acceptance of God’s will. Express the tenets of, oral conduct and ethical wisdom to be observed not followed by all men aspiring for divine similitude.¹

In his prose epics Narayan dealt with the people who were always prepared to obey God. Why not to summit to God? Regarding the prophetic vision of Valmiki, M.V. Sharma remarks –

Brahma blesses him (Valmiki) in his Endeavour to write the sacred story of Rama. The epics are mostly centered round the concept of marriage as sacred, inviolable bond between husband and wife Rama is an exemplary of an ideally married man. Valmiki introduced this social custom with Rama and Sita as the historic personage representing the Indian ideal of monogamous marriage, one of the great institutions of the world. Valmiki can also be taken as a poet of prophetic vision who visualizes Ramarajya, the benign welfare state as a model for all ages emulate its example.²

Following the pattern of Valmiki, Narayan gives the social criticism of the life of that time and at the same time refers to political matters also. Like Valmiki, Tulsi and Kamban, Narayan also regards Rama the symbol of Sharma. M.V. Rama Sharma asserts –
Rama and Sita never serve from the path of happy. Marital bonds. Their love for each other is sublime. They are the archetypes of conjugal bliss. Another distinct idea that comes to us as we read The Ramayana is the total identification of Rama with kingship. Even though he willingly accepts the life of exile, his mind is given to a just and judicious administration. When he ascends the throne after fourteen years of forest life the country experiences the golden age of prosperity, equity and justice.\(^3\)

Narayan’s prose epics answer the question – how to live? Both these epics sanction a way of life and a pattern for noble conduct. The purpose of Narayan while his epics were a common welfare of the community and that is why his Rama is truly ethical, moral and righteous in his conduct.

In Narayan’s The Ramayana, Rama behaves very much as a human being though the reader is always aware that Rama is divine. He proves himself to be more than human on several occasions. Narayan shows how the people were afraid to Ravana’s tyranny. Only Vishnu could help them. Ravana too had been blessed by Brahma and as a result became naughty and wicked. Vishnu came forward and took birth in the human form to protect mankind from the evil forces. This is how Narayan asserted the importance of divine grace through The Ramayana. Vishnu incarnates as Rama and protects mankind from the demons. According to
Hindu mythology, the incarnation of God is always for the well-being of the world or rather for the establishment of righteousness.

Rama extends his grace to all those who surrender to him. For example, Bharata surrenders to him in Chitrakuta. This younger brother frankly tells him that it is not possible for him to rule the kingdom all alone. Rama though appreciates Bharatha’s loyalty to him yet repeats his promise to king Bharata. In spite of every request, Rama is not prepared to return back to Ayodhya. Here one notices Bharatha’s nobility of character as he feels that Rama is the right person to administer justice.

Rama’s magnanimity has got to be admired as even Vibhishana regards him the follower of dharma. M.V. Rama Sharma remarks:

Dharma in all its varied aspects is closely observed and preserved by Rama. In accepting Vibhishana he follows apad-dharma, whereas Vibhishana fulfils his objective in offering prapatti to Rama. Even the crow that commits the gravest offence against Sita gets Rama’s pardon when it falls at his feet........

The Ramayana in its stress on devotion or surrender to God is nearer to Paradise Lost. Both epics emphasize the need for man to submit to God. In both epics, this ethical wisdom is viewed as an essential requisite for man’s ennoblement.
Like Ved Vyasa, Narayan also asserted the importance of Dharma, Artha, Karma and Moksha through The Mahabharata. Some critics regard The Mahabharata only a historical account of the political, social and religious conditions of ancient India. But its didactic value can be ignored at any cost and it can be called a treatise of life. In other versions of The Mahabharata, the poets have described how Bhishma answered all the question of Yudhistira even on death-bed. Mathew Arnold said that ‘poetry is the criticism of life’. Similarly, these prose epics of Narayan are criticism of life and can be safely admired for their truth and beauty. Regarding the conflict between good and evil in The Mahabharata, M.V. Rama Sharma aptly remarks:

Vyasa in a way describes his own grandson categorizing them as good an evil. The Kauravas brothers invariably exult in doing evil. The Kaurava brothers invariably exult in doing evil and they try to get rid of their cousins Pandavas through all types of wicked strategic. The Pandavas are treated as incarnation of God on a lower plane. The Kauravas are considered to be incarnations of Asuras on Anti-gods. Duryodhana is kali himself, the arch-friend and his associate Sakuni is Dvapara, the arch-gambler......

Kurukshtera war despite all the deviations from conventional practice is acclaimed as a holy war fought for establishing dharma, Vyasa tries to familiarize us “with the cosmic conception of the eternal conflict between Right and Wrong, Dood and evil, justice and injustice” in his epic, The Mahabharata.
......Loss of Kingdom or other adverse circumstances can never deter Rama or Yudhistira from observing dharma. Yudhistira has to undergo serve tests and he is invariably successful in following dharma. Vyasa and Valmiki present two unique characters Yudhistira and Rama to whom dharma is truth and for the sake of dharma they are prepared to accept any trying circumstances of life.  

Like Hanuman and Arjuna, Narayan himself surrender before Rama and Krishna so as to free from the worldly bondage and lead a detached life. In spite of the early death of his dear wife Ranjan, he did not lose his patience, tolerance, wisdom and prudence. He asserted the theory of liberation and detachment from mundane existence in his epics as well as novels. His autobiography My Days confirms the fact that he worked for the sake of work and did not quarrel with the publishers for money. Many serials and films have been prepared on his work and yet he reminded indifferent to the financial aspect of his action. Through his prose epics and novels he rendered yeoman's service to humanity and that was the real service to God. He accepted that 'pain follows pleasure' and 'gain follows losses'. Like R.N. Tagore, Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, Anand Joshi, etc. He had an illuminated heart and his every action was the worship of Brahma.

Thus, R.K. Narayan's The Ramayana and other epics The Mahabharata are sublime though they have been written in prose.
Secondly, Narayan's art of narration is superb and the readers do not lose interest while reading his epics as well as novels. Thirdly, these two epics have aptly been accepted as the best guides for spiritual illumination irrespective of the age of the readers. Fourthly, these epics give aesthetic pleasure to all kinds of people in every generation. Fifthly, they inspire people to lead an ethical life if they want to get the joy of living. Narayan asserts that people can get peace and harmony when they lead a righteous life. Sixthly, Narayan here explained what is real peace and prosperity? I hope that The Ramayana and The Mahabharata will remain torchbearers for future generation as they express universal truths and justify the ways of God to men. Adam and Eve suffered because they dissolved God. Rama and Sita also suffered but like Adam and Eve their obedience to God led them into perfection. The Mahabharata will be read by all and sundry as it highlights the theory of karma. Narayan's epics assert the principle of right conduct, right philosophy and right knowledge. His basic aim in writing epics and novels was to establish peace and justice in society and he succeeded in his aim to a great extent. As a matter of fact, his prose epics can be called pure literature relevant for all ages.
REFERENCES


2. Ibid, p. 144.


4. Ibid, p. 147.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>R.K. Narayan:</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher/Location, Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. R.K. Narayan:  
*Gods, Demons and others,*  

12. R.K. Narayan:  
*Swami and Friends,*  

13. R.K. Narayan:  
*The Financial Expert,*  

14. R.K. Narayan:  
*The Man-Eater of Malgudi,*  

15. R.K. Narayan:  
*A Vendor of Sweets,*  

16. R.K. Narayan:  
*A Writer's Nightmare,*  

17. R.K. Narayan:  
*The Guide,*  

18. R.K. Narayan:  
*The Bachelor of Arts,*  

19. R.K. Narayan:  
*The English Teacher,*  

20. R.K. Narayan:  
*Mr. Sampath,*  

21. R.K. Narayan:  
*A Tiger from Malgudi,*  
SECONDARY WORKS:


11. Tilak, B.G.:  *Gita Rahasya*,
    English Translation by B.S. Supthankar,

12. Guru Datt:  *Sriram Bhagwat Gita Ek Ayodhyayan*,
    Bharati Sahitya Sadan Sales.
    30/90 Connaught Circus, New Delhi.

13. Kamil Bulke:  *Ram Katha*,,
    Prayag University, Allahabad. 1993.


15. C.V. Vaid:  *A History of Sanskrit Literature*,
    Poona. 1930.

16. Upendra:  *Mahabharata: Charit Charcha*,,
    Naman Prakashan, New Delhi, 1998.

17. William Buck:  *Mahabharata*,


19. Dr. Ra, Prakash:  *Valmiki and Tulsi*,
    Sahityaik Mulyankan Pratisthan,
    Meerut.


    A Critical Evaluation, Atlantic
    Publishers and Distributors, B-2, Vishal
    Enclave, New Delhi, 1999.