

Good life



**ASSIGN
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8 September Good Life in the Epic of Gilgamesh The ancient Epic of Gilgamesh demonstrates good life in many ways. As commonly understood and as commonly sought after, good life means having all the finest things in life. These refer to which is physically satisfying, such as food, clothing, shelter, sex, wealth and power. This is clearly demonstrated in Siduri's - the maker of wine - words to Gilgamesh:

When the gods created man they allotted to him death, but life they retained in their own keeping. As for you, Gilgamesh, fill your belly with good things; day and night, night and day, dance and be merry, feast and rejoice. Let your clothes be fresh, bathe yourself in water, cherish the little child that holds your hand, and make your wife happy in your embrace; for this too is the lot of man. (Lawall & Mack 32-33)

Siduri, herself, being a woman and being the maker of wine, represents sensual pleasure. Is it not; the woman is man's object of sexual pleasure and desire? And is it not; wine tastes too good to man's appetite? Furthermore, Siduri's words also imply that if immortality is to gods, having the best in life is to man. So, in life, man should seek the best and the most in life. Just like what most of us believe today: Life is short; so, live it to the fullest.

A deeper meaning of good life is also demonstrated in the epic, when Gilgamesh sought for eternal life after Enkidu's death:

For Enkidu; I loved him dearly; together we endured all kinds of hardships; on his account I have come, for the common lot of man has taken him... Since he went, my life is nothing; that is why I have travelled here in search of Utnapishtim my father; for men say he has entered the assembly of the gods, and has found everlasting life: I have a desire to question him, concerning the living and the dead.' (31)

Understanding these words of Gilgamesh, good life means having the wisdom to fully understand life. However, this can only be achieved if man learns to love, just like what happened to Gilgamesh and Enkidu - Enkidu sought for life because he felt sorry to leave Gilgamesh forever, while Gilgamesh lost the pleasures of life with the death of Enkidu.

As we understand what is truly good in life, we come to learn that good life is hard to achieve, because it is more of a responsibility than pleasure: " Reed-house, reed-house! Wall, O wall, hearken reed-house, wall reflect; O man of Shurruk, son of Ubara-Tutu; tear down your house and build a boat, abandon possessions and look for life, despise worldly goods and save your soul alive" (35). Furthermore, leading a good life is filled with trials and challenges: "... was it for this that I toiled with my hands, is it for this I have wrung out my heart's blood? For myself I have gained nothing; not I, but the beast of the earth has joy of it now... I found a sign and now I have lost it" (39). Nevertheless, it is in living a good life that makes man immortal, because great things outlive man's life.

In nether-earth the darkness will show him a light: of mankind, all that are known, none will leave a monument for generations to come to compare with his. The heroes, the wise men, like the new moon have their waxing and waning. Men will say, ' Who has ever ruled with might and with power like him'? As in the dark month, the month of shadows, so without him there is no light. (40)

The deeper meaning of good life has been presented in the Epic of Gilgamesh in a developmental fashion, which could mean two things: (1) good life is sought; it is not given in silver platter; (2) good life transforms man and completes man for what man should be.

Work Cited

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