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FRANCIS BACON'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND MORALITY

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ABSTRACT

Francis Bacon, the great scholar, jurist and essayist of his time. He is an ambitious person and of whom ambition becomes. He lives in a world of action and formulated a philosophy for a man of action. Bacon has evolved a whole body of morality and ethics for advancement and personal promotion in life. Bacon is a man of great practical wisdom and experience and in his personal life, he practiced much more than what he practiced to his readers. He is very shrewd observer of society and he had a keen insight into the nature and affairs of men. The topics of his essays include the lofty titles of truth, love, friendship, death and down to earth titles of gardens, masques, triumphs, simulation and dissimulation etc. Bacon's morality and idealism are tempered with craft and utilitarianism. To Bacon "Knowledge" was synonymous with "Power" which promoted human "Happiness". He was a utilitarian but not a sensualist. He is a scholar – reserved and distant, aloof and unapproachable. He is cold and exclusive and his style suits his temperament.

Key words: utilitarian, philosophy, dissimulation, super califragilisticexpialidocious and morality

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Francis Bacon is a supercalifragilisticexpialidocious essayist of the age of the English Renaissance. He is widely regarded as one of the best Philosophical essayist. His essays reflect the materialistic, utilitarian And pragmatic elements. In his essays, Bacon has said a lot without using many words. Bacon borrowed The general conception of the essay from the French writer Montaigne, but filled it with the material drawn From his own mind. Bacon does not preach absolute principles of morality rather he subordinates moral Principles to worldly advancement. His essays are counsels on various subjects of life. His essay 'Of Truth' Is popularly known for its practical wisdom, wit, and brevity. Bacon impresses upon us that Truth like the un is eternal. He compares a lie to a diamond which keeps changing colours. Thus, Bacon suggests very Effectively that truth is constant while lie assumes different forms. Bacon asserts that a mixture of falsehood With truth makes things more agreeable than they really are.

Bacon proclaims that truth is God's greatest gift to man. It is 'Heaven upon earth'. Bacon says that man is instinctively allied to lie. Bacon warns us against crookedness. He calls it the movement of a serpent. Here, Bacon makes it quite clear that crookedness brings disgrace for us. So, this essay has been widely

appreciated for its beautiful thoughts and stylistic achievements. Some of Bacon's sentences read like proverbs. In 'of studies', Bacon has very effectively observed:

"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested"

Bacon suggests that reading, conversation and writing are indispensable for the harmonious development of man's personality. Bacon says:

"Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man"

This essay is a very good instance of Bacon's early style. This essay is rich in both matter and manner. Bacon asserts:

"Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them and wise men use them"

In his essay "of friendship", Bacon highlights the advantages of friendship. The essay opens with a quotation from Aristotle's 'politics'. It is suggested that a friendless person is as lonely in a crowded city as in a desert. According to Bacon, friendship enhances our joys and reduces our sorrows. Bacon asserts that a friendless person is a cannibal who eats his own heart. The second fruit of friendship, according to Bacon, is that it dispels the gloom of confusion and fills the mind with light of clarity. The wise counsel of a close friend helps us to rise above prejudices and judge objectively. Thirdly, friendship prolongs life. If a man has a true friend, he can die with peace. Bacon observes that a sincere friend completes and perfects our actions.

The essay 'of simulation and Dissimulation' shows Bacon as a man of the world. This essay offers guidance to men in their day to day life. Bacon suggests that we should not be altogether open hearted. He asserts that complete self revelation is as undesirable as complete physical nakedness. The way Bacon approves of simulation and Dissimulation shows that Bacon is prepared to tolerate profitable hypocrisy, cheating and falsehood. Bacon judges the correctness of an action by its effects.

Bacon judges everything from the utilitarian point of view. In his essay 'of marriage and single life', Bacon deals with the advantages and disadvantages of the two states. In this essay, Bacon shows his argumentative skill. At first, Bacon argues against marriage. The essay begins with a striking sentence through which Bacon argues against marriage:

"He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune"

It implies that a man with wife and children can't rebel against fortune. Bacon says that a man with wife and children is a captive in fortune's hands. He suggests that a married man can't take risks. He impresses upon us that marriage comes in the way of great and noble achievements. Bacon points out that single men often do great deeds, for they think more of society. Bacon says that unmarried men are best friends, best masters and best servants.

Bacon does not negate the advantages of marriage. He says: "Wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age and old men's nurses". Bacon says that unmarried men have a greater personal interest in making the society better because their children will get benefits in the future. Bacon's presentation of the two states is worldly and non sentimental.

Although Bacon's views on philosophical and metaphysical themes can be found in many essays but there are two essays where his views on such themes have been specifically expressed. These essays are 'Of Religion' and 'Of Atheism'. The essays of Bacon belonging to moral themes are: 'Of Truth'; 'Of Simulation and Dissimulation'; 'Of Suitors'; 'Of Revenge'; 'Of Cunning'; and 'Of Goodness'.

Conclusion

Bacon's significance in the history of English language and literature is giant and unique. He is an accomplished artist of great versatility and genius. He employs his extraordinary range of knowledge, his wide and varied experience, his intelligence, wisdom and keen analytical intellect and insight to great advantage. Bacon dazzles and persuades and convinces. He has few rivals and perhaps no superiors in the realm of English language and literature. His morality is the morality of convenience not of principle or righteousness. Bacon is not a speculative philosopher alone. He lived in a world of action and formulated a philosophy for a man of action. In his essays Bacon does not appear as a scientist or a philosopher but as a man of action or in the words of Bacon himself a "a citizen of the world"

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