

Francis Bacon's Essays full of Worldly Wisdom :

A study

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Abstract :-

Francis Bacon was born on January 22, 1561 in London. He came of an aristocratic family, being the son of Sir Nicholas Bacon. There is no doubt that the essays of Bacon are a treasure house of what is called worldly wisdom. Worldly wisdom means the kind of wisdom that is necessary for achieving worldly success. Worldly wisdom does not imply any deep philosophy or any ideal morality. It simply means the art of the technique that a man should employ to achieve success in his life. It therefore implies shrewdness, sagacity, foresight, judgement of character. Bacon's essays are replete with wisdom of this kind. He teaches us the art of how to get in this world, how to become rich and prosperous, how to rise to high positions, how to exercise one's authority and power so as to attain good results. It is true that Bacon is a philosopher and a influence, etc.

Introduction :-

Bacon is clearly seen in his essays both as a philosopher and as a moralist. A philosopher is, broadly speaking, a person who is deeply interested in the pursuit of truth. While a moralist is a right and what is wrong and urges them to treat the right path only. Bacon appears in this dual role in many of the essays that he has written. In the essay *Of Truth*. Bacon says truth is the supreme good for human being. He describes the inquiry of truth as the wooing of it. Making an obvious references to the Bible, Bacon says that the first thing created by God was light and the final thing created by Him was the rational faculty which he bestowed upon man. First God breathed light upon matter or chaos. Then He breathed light into the face of man and afterwards. He has always been breathing light into the face of man and afterwards. He has always been breathing light in to the face of those whom He chooses for his special favour. Bacon quotes Lucretius who said that the greatest pleasure for a man was the realisation of truth. All these, we might say are observation of a philosopher – cum moralist. Bacon's objects in writing this essay is manifestly to instil into the minds of his readers a love of truth. He wars human beings against the punishment which descend upon them on the dooms day for the falsehoods which they indulge in or practise.

Their essay *Of Great Place*, contains a large number of moral precepts but these moral precepts, be noted are synonymous with worldly wisdom. In seeking power Bacon says, a man loses his liberty. Men in high position, he observes rightly, derive much of their happiness only from hearing that other. Like a true moralist he writes:

In place, there is licence to do good and evil,
 whereof the latter is a curse;
 for in evil, the best condition is not to will,
 the second now can. (Lines 31-32)

The whole purpose of a man's effort should according to Bacon, the meritorious works. Noble performance, he points out, raises a man almost to the status of God. Bacon also warns men of authority against the vices which are likely to be sets them. There is plenty of worldly wisdom in the guidelines of conduct which he lays down for men in high positions. No man in a high position will come a cropper if he follows the advice offered by Bacon. He firmly admits that a man may have to adopt objectionable methods in order to attain a position of high authority. This is how he writes in this connection:

All rising to great place is a by a winding stair;
 if there be functions,
 it is good to side a man's self whilst he is in the rising,
 and to balance himself when he is placed. (Lines 108 - 110)

Even when Bacon urges a high official not to speak ill of his predecessor, he does so not in the interest of high morality but because there will be unpleasant consequences for the man who does not follow this advice. In other words, Bacon tries to bring about a compromise between morality and the demands of worldly success.

Another important essay of Bacon having full of wisdom is *Of Friendship*. Bacon does not speak of friendship in terms of an emotional bond intimately linking two persons. He makes a purely worldly approach to the subjects. He gives us the uses of friendship. A friend enables us to give an outlet to our suppressed discontents. The advice given by a friend is most reliable. A friend can speak or act on our behalf in situation in which we ourselves cannot speak or action our behalf in situation in which we ourselves cannot speak or act. Bacon seems to suggest that we need friends only of worldly happiness and worldly good. He does not speak of the emotional or moral aspect of friendship at all.

Bacon makes a utilitarian approach even to studies. In his essay on this subjects he speaks of the pleasure of studying only to forget it. He wants studies to be supplemented by practical experience so that a man make the best use of both to affair worldly wisdom. Wise men, according to him, are those who put their studies to practical use. He also points out that different branches of study have different effects on the human mind. Bacon's says "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man." Bacon forgets that everybody does not have an aptitude for mathematics or for any other particular branches of study.

In the essay, *Of Marriage and Single Life*, Bacon wisdom, again, is not of the profound or philosophical variety; it is worldly wisdom and much of this wisdom is cynical. The very opening sentence of this essay is cynical because Bacon here expresses the view that a married man with children can no undertake great enterprises; Bacon says, “He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune.” And he goes on to say that what is certainly not true that the best works and of greatest merit for the public proceeded from the unmarried or childless men. Further he said that wife is a mistress when the husband is young, that she is a companion when he enters middle age, that she is a nurse when he grows old ? He warns soldiers to be married because then they will fight better. He thinks that by getting married a dishonest judge will become honest.

Conclusion :-

While observing the ideas and views of Bacon’s about Worldly wisdom and moral aspect in human’s life, which he explained deeply and minutely in his essays. He lays down valuable guidelines for human conduct. He urges being to follow the right path in every field of life political, social, domestic etc. This is how an eminent English critic Hugh Walker speaks about Bacon’s contribution to the development of English prose: “Bacon took one of the longest steps ever taken is the evolution of English prose style”. He says Bacon’s essays are a great treasure of wisdom though the wisdom which they embody is “Worldly” wisdom. They are throughly practical in character being concerned for most part with the conduct of life in private and public affairs.

References

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