

1.APPRECIATION OF THE POEM 'IF' BY RUDYARD KIPLING

“If” is a didactic poem written by Rudyard Kipling. It is a well-known poem. It gives sound advice to young people for a successful life. It is considered as the most beloved poem of Kipling. The poem is addressed to Kipling’s son John. The theme of the poem is manhood and leadership. The word “if” is repeated to describe each action that should or should not be done to achieve manhood in his son’s life. Throughout the poem, Kipling combines contradicting ideas. Kipling advises the younger generation to follow the cardinal virtue of patience, mental equilibrium, courage, devotion and detachment for achieving success and honour in worldly life. The central idea of the poem “If” is that success comes from self-control and a true sense of the values.

The poem exhorts the reader to be patient, honest, truthful, dependable and humble. He may have to face criticism, opposition, lies, and hatred. When others blame him, he should not lose his confidence. He must remain confident and believe in himself; yet he must do his best to take allowance of their doubting. In all things he must keep his character, morals and values, yet he must not look too good or wise.

This poem inspires one to dream, but advises not to make dreams one’s master. He should think but should not make thoughts his aim. He should view success and failure equally. He should be optimistic too when he sees the results of his hard work destroyed. He should build them up with confidence.

In the final stanza, the poet instructs him to keep talking with the crowds. At the same time he should maintain his virtue. The poet advises him to walk with the Kings without losing the common touch. All men should be able to count on his help. He should forgive people without any delay. If he can do all these things, the Earth and everything in it will be his own.

The poem is in good rhyme scheme. It has good sound effects and fine imagery. The tone of the poem centres on human qualities. The mood is one of joy and optimism. There are no overly affectionate words, yet the message of the poet comes from the emotional tie to a child's welfare. The speaker wants his child to do well in life. By using the second person point of view, the reader feels that the poet is speaking directly to him. The language used is so simple that readers can easily understand. There are lot of symbols and figures of speech especially personification. Dreams assume human role to control our lives. Success is personified as triumph. Failure is personified as disaster. Will is personified as a person who encourages us to succeed. We can also see the use of 'metaphor' used by the poet to make the poem more beautiful. 'Unforgiving minute' refers to time that waits for no man. 'Worn out tools' represent the feeling of 'total tiredness' and to make use of our old values. Symbols also make the poem more attractive. 'Knaves' represent scoundrels, liars or common people. 'Kings' represent for important people. The poem also makes use of the conditional clause "if" to talk about conditional fulfillment.

Kipling's thoughts on action echo Lord Krishna's description of a man in The Bhagavad Gita. In fact, many of the ideas expressed in the poem directly reflect Lord Krishna's message of Nishkama Karma to Arjuna:

"The message conveyed in the poem is very important. It helps one to lead a successful life. The poet as a father prepares his son to achieve his dreams. It is just like the mother bird who pushes her baby for his first slight. She has prepared him for the first flight by modeling, coaxing and instructing.