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ENG 1121-D428

Poem Analysis

Advice From a Father

“A creative man is motivated by the desire to achieve, not by the desire to beat others.” As stated By Rudyard Kipling. The poem “If” is a list of advice from the father, which seems to be a very wise man, to his son to teach him how to face life, which is full of fortune and misfortune. There are messages about honesty and self-confidence. If we could try to do even half the things mentioned in the poem, we would be far better people. There are so many lessons to be learned from the poem like being true to one’s self, overcoming obstacles that get in your path, and never giving up.

The first stanza of the poem, is about to being true to one’s self. The poet advises his son to be brave enough, have confidence in himself, and listen to others criticism, even if it is untrue. In the line from the poem, “If you can keep your head when all about you. Are losing theirs and blaming it on you.” Is saying that there are always going to be people who think differently than, or misjudge, you for one reason or another. Also this stanza is saying that we need to rise above this, to do what we know is right and not let others provoke you into actions you know are wrong. Also the poet asks the readers to make themselves strong enough so that they can take responsibility for their actions and choices bravely and not believe in blame games. Another thing the poem is trying to say is that we have to control our emotions and forgive to those who try to harm us.

The second stanza is about overcoming obstacles that get in your path, whether due to others, or of your own making. The poet says that life imposes different circumstances of success and failure that contradict one's demands and hopes. His advice is always to try again to follow your dreams, but to be realistic in the approach. I believe this section is teaching perseverance to keep going, even when things get rough. He says to his readers that they must not let defeat affect them and advises them to treat every defeat they might face as a chance which life gave them to learn yet another lesson. In the end of the stanza the line, “or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  And stop and build them up with worn out tools.” Is a reminder by the poet. He tells his reader that the journey towards success is never an easy ride, as on their way they will meet people who would want to bring them down by using their struggles against him or her.

Never give up is one important approach in this world, and I believe this advice is the most important lesson in the third stanza. It is truly hard to get back up after life has beaten you into the ground. It can be done however, if we always believe in ourselves and know that we did it once so we can do it again. The poet give us an example of this in the lines, “If you can make one heap of all your winnings; And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss, And lose, and start again at your beginnings, And never breathe a word about your loss.” This is a very important lesson. I think Kipling knew how hard life can be sometimes, and also I think this section of the poem is full of hope for all the humanity.

Finally in the last section I believe there are two important lessons that we should notice. First, that we are all equal. Don’t put yourself above anyone else, but know that you are just as good as everyone else. There are things to be admired in almost everyone if you look hard enough. I think the second lesson I take from this stanza is to never waste time and make every minute of every day count. In other words the time is golden, as is stated in the line, “If you can fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds worth of distance run, yours is the Earth and everything that's in it.” These statements highlight that we have to take advantage of every second we have in our lives and also the control of our time and spend well each second.

In conclusion this is a very moving poem because it has many things to learn from it. Reading the poem allows us to understand what the poet is trying to say, which is incredible. If every person can take the message and see the positive things, which Rudyard Kipling describes in this poem, I think we will be a better community and better people. Also this poem has many symbolic parts that are a kind of map to life. In this way the poem gives us a message, but we have to learn to read the signs that life gives us.