

Summary Of “Of Adversity” Essay

This essay discusses the advantages and disadvantages of adversity and prosperity. Through the use of references and quotations, Francis Bacon captures our attention and maintains our interest. The present essay is the result of Bacon's experiences as Lord Chancellor at the height of prosperity and his subsequent deprivation and fall. Bacon opens the essay with a quote from Seneca “the good things, which belong to prosperity, are to be wished; but the good things, which belong to adversity, are to be admired.” This means that prosperity is manageable while adversity is difficult. Prosperity is manageable for Bacon, but adversity is far too difficult. While prosperity is wonderful, adversity should not be criticised, reviled, or despised. While prosperity enables man to enjoy material rewards and worldly pleasures, adversity nurtures and improves a man's moral and spiritual characteristics. Thus, anyone who can persevere in the face of adversity is to be admired.

Bacon demonstrates his point through religion that is faith. “Certainly if miracles be the command over nature, they appear most in adversity. It is yet

a higher speech of his, than the other (much too high for a heathen). It is true greatness, to have in one the frailty of a man, and the security of a God.” Everyone is aware that miracles occur, but those who have firm faith in God do not question it, whereas non-believers do, because they do not believe that miracles have control over nature, but that adversity causes miracles to occur, that is, when something goes wrong, God corrects it through a miracle. As a result, adversity is beneficial in that it results in miracles.

Bacon cites another Seneca statement, “It is true greatness, to have in one the frailty of a man, and the security of a God.” It means that genuine greatness in a human being is to possess all of the human flaws but the fortitude (power, sureness) of God. Adversity's primary blessing is that it draws out all of a man's potential and talent, guts and fortitude. When a person is blessed with prosperity, he will utilise his resources prudently since he is experiencing good fortune; on the other hand, fortitude refers to patience, which adversity teaches us.

Bacon compares Hercules, who sailed a powerful vessel to liberate Prometheus from his shackles to the

Christian, who “that sailed in the frail bark of the flesh, through the waves of the world.” In other words, Hercules sailed in relative prosperity, which facilitated his voyage; the Christian, on the other hand, confronts the world in a weak body. According to Bacon, prosperity leads to comfort and thus to vices in a Christian environment, but adversity, by requiring moral fortitude, leads to the development of virtue. Bacon observes that even the Bible emphasises Job’s afflictions and overlooks Solomon’s felicities: “the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job, than the felicities of Solomon.”

Bacon concludes with two illustrations. a tapestry’s one-of-a-kind “We see in needleworks and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work, upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work, upon a lightsome ground: judge therefore of the pleasure of the heart, by the pleasure of the eye,” and the other of a flower. The tapestry is composed of lighter hues in the background and darker hues in the foreground; it represents human life, which is characterised by hardships. The dark

colours in the front, on the other hand, represent satisfaction in life due to their scarcity. The flower illustrates that to make one’s life worthwhile, one must endure hardships, as the fragrance of a flower is only felt when it is crushed, leading him to conclude that “virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are . . . crushed,” by which he means that virtues become stronger when they are “crushed” by adversity.

Similarly, as incense is burned, its aroma intensifies. Similarly, when a man’s virtue or inner power is crushed by adversity or when he burns in the fire of affliction, it manifests itself more effectively. The flower’s example teaches us that if we truly want to make our lives worthwhile, we must overcome obstacles, since the smell of a flower is only detectable after it is crushed. In short, Bacon champions adversity and demonstrates that it is a positive attribute. Adversity, he believes, is a greater blessing than prosperity; it has the potential to teach us something about ourselves and our lives. A man learns the value of hard effort and honesty under harsh circumstances and demonstrates his inner strength of perseverance. He desires for

individuals to have a good attitude toward adversity.

Analysis of the Essay Of Adversity

Francis Bacon had a distinctive writing style that set him apart from contemporaneous writers. His style was not to offer the case to the readers as-is. Whenever he produced an essay, he insisted on his readers see both sides of the storey. He discussed the benefits and drawbacks. He argued as well as justified his positions and left it up to the readers to decide. His writing style has piqued readers' interest in his essays. This essay incorporates quotations from the sacred canon and poets.

Bacon begins the essay by quoting Seneca: "The good things that belong to prosperity are to be wished, but the good things that belong to adversity are to be admired."

Because prosperity is directly related to happiness, joy, and relief, it appears to have all the positive attributes. However, because adversity is the polar opposite of prosperity, it must be appreciated if it has a beneficial effect on our personality. Thus, this remark provides insight into Bacon's mind, indicating that he wants readers to view adversity positively.

Bacon illustrates his thesis with the word "faith" Everyone is aware that miracles occur, but those who have firm faith in God do not question it, whereas non-believers do because they do not believe that miracles have control over nature. However, it is adversity that causes miracles to occur; that is, when something goes wrong, God corrects it through a miracle. As a result, adversity is partially beneficial because it results in miracles. A miracle convinces us that there is someone who rules both human beings and the planet; as a result, we express our gratitude to Him for his compassion and surrender to him.

Calamities are an inevitable part of life, and there is no way to avoid them. However, imagination is something that transports us away from the harsh facts of life to cultivate the quality of endurance. Adversity strengthens and activates one's imagination.

Poets utilise poetry as a vehicle for expressing their imaginations and motivating others. Bacon refers to Hercules and Prometheus and utilises the metaphor of the "sea" to illustrate how adversity teaches us how to sail over life's difficulties.

Temperance is synonymous with moderation, and prosperity teaches us to be temperate. When a person is blessed with prosperity, he will spend his resources prudently, knowing that he is in a prosperous period. On the other hand, fortitude entails patience, which adversity teaches us. It provides the strength necessary to overcome life's difficulties. Both are beneficial, but adversity is a more heroic virtue because it aids in the smooth running of life.

Bacon refers to religion: "And the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon."

He continues by narrating that even the Bible emphasises Job's trials and glosses over Solomon's felicities. It demonstrates unequivocally that if a holy person such as Job experienced adversity, who are regular human people (a mixture of sin and virtue) to weep and lament over the difficulties they confront in life?

Bacon concludes by illustrating adversity with two examples: one of a tapestry (needlework and embroideries) and the other of a flower. The tapestry features lighter

colours in the background and darker hues in the foreground; it represents human life, which is characterised by hardships. On the other hand, the darker colours in the front represent satisfaction in life due to their scarcity. The flower illustrates that to make one's life worthwhile, one must endure adversities, as a flower's smell is only detectable when crushed.

The tapestry and flower are both inspirational. A tapestry is a common form of art in which the proportion of dark and light colours represents the proportion of adversity and prosperity in life. The other type of flower, when crushed, emits fragrance, which pushes people to endure depression and life's difficulties since they make a person worthy.

As a result, Bacon champions adversity and establishes it as a good virtue. Bacon's essay "Of Adversity" demonstrates that even negative events may be viewed and interpreted positively and that even adversity has a beneficial effect on human life.