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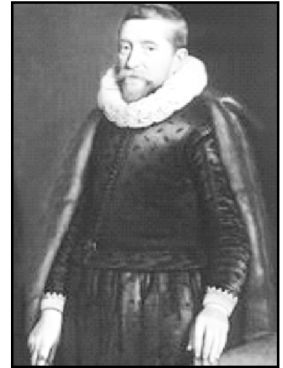
CHAPTER

Character of A Happy Life

Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639)

➡ About the Poet

Sir Henry Wotton, a famous scholar and critic of the seventeenth century, was born in 1568. He was educated at Winchester and entered the Middle Temple to qualify for practising at the bar. He was not only a poet but also a diplomat. So he was made agent and secretary to the Earl of Essex. He was ambassador at the Court of Venice. He was also employed on various other diplomatic missions from 1604 to 1624. John Donne and Jayaac Walton, famous writers of the time, were his notable friends. His famous writings are '*Character of a Happy Life*', '*On His Mistress*', '*The Queen of Bohemia*' and '*You Meaner Beauties of the Night*'.



➡ About the Poem

According to Sir Henry Wotton, the Life of a truly happy man is marked by true freedom of thought, righteousness, honesty, truth, simplicity, faith, carefreeness and self contentment. He is always free from jealousy, ill-will and worldly anxieties. He prays to God daily. He envies none. He passes his time in the company of a good book or a good friend. He is the Lord of himself and master of all, he surveys. He may be poor but morally he is always great.



*How happy is he born or taught,
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth, his utmost skill!*

*Whose passions not his masters are,
Whose soul is still prepared for death;
Untied unto the world with care,
Of princely love or vulgar breath;*

*Who hath his life from rumours freed,
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great;
Who envies none whom chance doth raise,
Nor vice; who never understood;
How deepest wounds are given with praise,
Nor rules of state, but rules of good;*

*Who God doth late and early pray,
More of his grace than gifts to lend;
Who entertains the harmless day,
With a well-chosen book or friend;*

*This man is free from servile bands,
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall;
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, he hath all.*

—Sir Henry Wotton

➡ Appreciation of the Poem

'Character of a Happy Life' is a didactic poem intended to teach us something. It is composed by Sir Henry Wotton who inspires us into righteousness, honesty, simplicity, faith and carefreeness. The poem shows us the path of true happiness. There is smooth flow from beginning to the end. It is divided in six stanzas having the rhyme scheme ab, ab, cd, cd, ef, ef, gh, gh. The poem is completely easy to memorise. We find fine example of oxymoron in the line—"And having nothing, he hath all."

||Glossary||

Serveth	: serves (सेवा करता है)
will	: desire (इच्छा)
armour	: defensive covering, usually metal for the body (protection) (सुरक्षा कवच)
simple truth	: pure truth (पूर्ण सत्य)
utmost skill	: great quality (महान योग्यता)
whose armour is his	: honesty is the only weapon with which the honest thought protects himself (ईमानदारी वह अकेला हथियार है जिससे ईमानदार विचार अपनी रक्षा करता है)
passions	: strong feelings or desires (मनोवेग)

whose passions not his	:	The person who is not led away by his strong emotions or desires (व्यक्ति जो अपनी सुदृढ़ भावनाओं और इच्छाओं से परे नहीं है)
whose soul is still	:	The person who is not afraid of death, prepared for death (मृत्यु के भय से रहित व्यक्ति)
untied unto—vulgar	:	a truly happy man does not aspire for the breath love of a prince nor does he care for the criticism of mean or low persons
rumours	:	gossip or baseless news (अफवाह, आधारहीन समाचार)
conscience	:	inner voice (आत्मा की आवाज)
retreat	:	shelter, refuge (शरण स्थली)
state	:	condition in which somebody is (in appearance, mind, health etc.) (एक व्यक्ति की स्थिति—अस्तित्व, मस्तिष्क, स्वास्थ्य आदि के सन्दर्भ में)
flatterers	:	people who praise too much (अत्यधिक प्रशंसा करना)
ruin	:	destruction (विनाश, बर्बादी)
oppressors	:	cruel persons who try to keep down others (दूसरों को नीचा दिखाने वाला क्रूर व्यक्ति)
envies	:	feels ill-will or grudge at other's better fortunes (ईर्ष्यालु)
vice	:	evil conduct, immortality (पाप कर्म)
who envies—nor vice	:	a happy man does not have a feeling of heart burning at the lot of those persons who have risen to eminence by sheer chance and not by their merit or work. Nor does he envy those who have achieved distinction in life by adopting unfair means
How deepest wounds — with praise	:	The world is full of deceitful people who stab you in the back although in your face, they might praise you sky high. But the happy man is not of that kind. He never praises anybody nor does he want to be praised either. He calls a spade to spade
nor rules—of good	:	The happy man does not care for the rules framed by the Government if they are not in the interest of the people. He observes only those rules that are based on goodness and righteousness and promote the well-being of mankind.
late and early	:	at every time (हर समय)
grace	:	mercy, divine influence (दया, दैवी प्रभाव)
to lend	:	to grant, to bestow (अनुदान या ऋण लेना)
gifts	:	blessings (आशीर्वाद)
entertains	:	welcomes (मनोरंजन, स्वागत)

well chosen	:	useful (उपयोगी)
servile bands	:	conditions which make man act like a slave (वह परिस्थिति जिसमें व्यक्ति गुलामों की तरह कार्य करता है)
of hope to rise or	:	in the hope of progress (विकास की आशा में)
fear to fall	:	fear of failure (असफलता का भय)
lords of himself — not of lands	:	The happy man may not possess an estate but is essentially the lord of himself because he has self-control and is ever satisfied with his lot
And having — hath all	:	Although the happy man may have no material possessions yet he has all the worldly riches for he achieves real happiness

||Exercise||

➡ Answer the following questions :

1. Name the figure of speech used in the lines given below:
Lord of himself, though not of lands.
And having nothing, he hath all.
2. Explain the meanings of, 'Whose armour is his honest thought'.
3. Give the central idea of the poem 'Character Of A Happy Life'.

➡ Explain the following lines with reference to the context :

1. How happy utmost skill!
2. Nor ruin of good.
3. This man hath all.
4. Who hath his life oppressors great.
5. Whose passions vulgar breath.

