



## THE DEPICTION OF VIRTUE AND WICKEDNESS IN ROALD DAHL'S CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

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Virtue should not be unique, it should be indispensable. It may not be innate, but can be brought in, when one gets maturity and experience. This appropriate quality reaches how one should live their life with righteousness. If one should retain virtue, he/she should have a certain complex mindset. Either virtue or wickedness can be found as the reflection of people's actions and their perceptions. "Be not overcome by evil but repay evil with good" (Bible). Finding a person with good conscience and high moral values are not effortless in modern days. Learning the array of virtues spotted by philosophers, analysing the relationship among virtue and applying it to enhance one's well-being are some of the objectives to integrate virtue in daily life of an individual. It is undeniable that everyone has come across many people with righteousness in reality and in history.

Most of the morals in Greek, explain that, to lead a happy and contented life one should possess the quality of virtue. Also, the Greek philosophers claim that, 'being virtuous makes the human life, a perfect one'. Knowledge and belief are the necessary things for virtue whereas Plato and Aristotle argued, along with belief and knowledge, desires, feelings and emotions are also significant.

Virtue and wickedness always come along though they are incompatible in their meaning. It is evident that ill-minded are more in number than the virtuous. One can have many examples in literature and there are various writers who handled these qualities as their theme to help the readers to understand the nature of a good human. It is to be noted that, the concept of evil or wickedness became interesting topics in writing. In literature, Evil is often compared with supernatural power or creatures especially in fictional and religious context. But Evil is associated with the quality of people who are wicked and vicious.

Roald Dahl (1916-1990) is a British novelist, poet, screen writer and fighter pilot. He served in the Royal Air Force during World War II and became a writer only in 1940. His novel "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" is based on his own experience about the chocolate companies. When he is young, there are two rival chocolate companies called 'Cadbury' and 'Rowntree'. The former used to send chocolates to the school children, seeking for true opinion, about their making. The two leading companies often try to steal the secrets of making, of their opponents, by sending their spies. All these experiences made him to write this novel. So, this novel is said to be the best example for depicting the characteristics of virtue and wickedness. From his novel one can learn that; these qualities are infused even in the minds of children. The five children - Augustus Gloop, Veruca Salt, Miss Violet Beauregard, Mike Teavee and Charlie Bucket are engrossed by these qualities. The first four children belong to high strata in society, but the main character, little Charlie is down-and-out that, sometimes his family cannot afford even for their meal. Charlie varies from them not only by his economic condition but also by his quality and nature of his character. Unlike Charlie, rest of the children are malicious and wicked. The reason behind the differences in quality among the children is based on their living condition and the way, the children are raised. "Few men have the virtue to withstand the highest bidder" (Web Washington). Poverty, Wealth, Greed and Inadequate parenting, all together bring out the aspect of virtue and wickedness in the characters. Firstly, this presented paper accord with Poverty and Wealth and how it affected the characters to obtain their quality.

The little Charlie Bucket lived in a small wooden house, in the great town along with the six-grown-ups. They feel excruciate in that little house, which is not large enough even for five, but they are seven in number. There are only two rooms and one bed. The bed is shared by four grandparents of Charlie, two on one side, remaining two on the other side. Rest of the three, sleep upon the mattresses on the floor. "The bed was given to the four grandparents



because they were so old and tired. They were so tired; they never got out of it” (CCF 05). This proves that, Charlie’s family strikes with extreme poverty.

Life of Bucket’s family is challenging that they cannot spare even for an extra meal. Mr. Bucket is the only bread-winner of the family. He can afford only for “bread and margarine for breakfast, boiled potatoes and cabbage for lunch and cabbage soup for supper” (CCF 05). This is not enough for a growing boy. “His father and mother often went without their own share of lunch or supper so that they could give it to him” (CCF 06). All his life, Charlie longs only for one thing – Chocolate. He has the habit of staring at the great slabs of chocolate through the windows of the shops, on his way to school. Charlie gets the chance to taste the bar of chocolate, only once in a year, on his birthday. He makes it last for more than a month. The family strikes with two approaches of poverty- Absolute and Relative in other words, limitations in their basic needs and in income. The latter is due to the sudden arrestment of the factory where Mr. Bucket works. Though Charlie is raised in unconditional poverty, he doesn’t lack his quality and character. He is very respectful to all the elders out there and he doesn’t feel bad or did not made any complaints, though he has all the reasons. “Who sow virtue reaps honour” (Web Washington). He is very kind, brave, generous and selfless.

In contrast with Charlie, the other four child characters are known for their wickedness. Some children become evil without the proper guidance of their parents. But psychiatrists accept that, in some cases, ‘children are naturally bad, and it is not the fault of their parents’. This is evident in the case of these four children. All the four are born in rich family and they can afford for anything they wish. Anything that one gets, without any efforts, never last long.

Each one of them is craving for a specified thing like Augustus Gloop, a nine-year old boy craves for eatables, Violet, the gum chewer craves for gum and Mike Teavee for television. Though they are naturally bad, their parents have possibilities to drag them out of their evil nature. But they failed, and this explained the theme of inadequate parenting in Dahl’s Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Children obtain their quality from parents, by the actions they do and not by the words they speak. Parents are the first teacher and influencer for every child. They acquire their attitude, goals from their parents, so by this they leave an ever-lasting impression in the minds of the children. This is the reason why good parenting is necessary in raising the children. “Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall” (Web Shakespeare). The best illustration for bad parenting is depicted in this novel - Parents of the four children other than Charlie.

Greed is one of the major themes discussed in Dahl’s Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Anything that is excessive than one’s need is what called as greed. “There is sufficiency in the world, for man’s need but not for man’s Greed” (Web Gandhi). This strong desire may differ from person to person according to their perceptions. It may be on food, money, power, possession etc. Greed manifests itself as gluttony, lust, avarice, cupidity and so, based on the object of interest. In general, people think that greed is just a strong desire for money. But in literature, it is often mentioned the selfish nature of the characters. “As far as I am concerned, I prefer silent vice to ostentatious virtue” (Web Einstein). Some says that greed is innate in every human being and all are greedy to some extent.

In Christianity, people consider greed as one of the seven deadly sins which lead them to external damnation. In Buddhism, ‘greed is one of the three poisons that create bad karma’. For people with excessive desire enough is never enough. There is some major difference between greedy and envy. Envy arouse in people when they are not content with their current status. Whereas greedy arouse in people when they are not enough of what they already have. This difference clearly shows that the four children in Dahl’s Charlie and the Chocolate Factory are not envious but greedy.

Augustus Gloop, the first person to get the golden ticket, is extremely greed for food in other word, a glutton. His love for food made his appearance as a “monstrous ball of dough with two greedy eyes” (CCF 26). The second person to get the golden ticket is Veruca Salt, born in a rich family. Her greed is on the golden ticket to enter the factory. Her father Mr. Salt brings more than ‘hundreds of thousand’ Wonka bars and made the hundred working



women in his peanut factory, to unwrap the bars, to find the golden ticket. Next in the list is Miss Violet Beauregard. She is proud to say that “I am a gum chewer, normally” (CCF 37). She adores gums and to break the record of her friend, she chewed a gum for nearly three months. And she wished that, Wonka offer her with enough gum for the rest of her life, at the end of the day in factory. Finally, it is Mike Teavee, a nine-year-old boy, has the extreme desire for television. His eyes are always glued to the television set, even when the reporters visit his house to meet the lucky child. “It is an ill bird that fouls its own nest” (Web Virtue). One can see the obsession of the children on something they love.

Augustus Gloop, the glutton falls into the river of chocolate, when he tried to fill his enormous stomach with it, and then the great pipe sucks him into its giant hole. Then the gum chewer becomes a huge blueberry balloon, when she tries to chew the experimental piece of gum. Next, in the nut room, the squirrels pushed Veruca Salt into the rubbish chute, thinking that she is a bad nut, when she tries to get a squirrel for herself. At last it is Mike Teavee who wants to be the first person to send through the television is leaped out into the “full glare of the mighty lens” (CCF 153). All the four are ended up without getting what they are wished for. One who does evil thinks to others, end up with the same.

The one exceptional, little Charlie Bucket who is brave and kind to others gets the chance to handgrip Wonka’s World-famous Chocolate Factory, when he grows up. Wonka bestowed his factory to little Charlie. “Ability may get you to top but its character that will keep you there” (Web Lincoln). Charlie is the epitome of all that is virtuous. He is meek and never expect more than what is given to him though he is undernourished. He is the only person who wanders all the segment of the factory as he wished for. This happened only because of his virtuous nature. Thus, virtue won the wickedness.

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