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Subject

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Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin presented the idea of developing a public library in 1731. The initial step taken by Franklin was to drew "Articles of Agreement". There has been no public library before that so he worked on the agenda of providing free books to the people with the aim of enhancing knowledge of the people. The mission focused on offering a wide range of ideas related to different aspects of life including economics, society, politics and nature. He considered the library as a significant source for improving knowledge of people regarding the world.

The public library was established to assure that it was accessible to all members of the society. Franklin donated many of his books to the library including Merchant Mappe of Commerce. Franklin mentioned, “printing-house is always called a chapel by the workmen, the origin of which appears to have been that printing was first carried on in England in an ancient chapel converted into a printing-house, and the title has been preserved by tradition” (Elliot 47). Many other renowned people like proprietor William Penn also contributed by donating his work to the library. The library had positive impacts on society because it allowed them to access books freely related to any subject. This was an effective step for encouraging people to gain knowledge and acquire education. A large and impressive collection of the books was created including the work of famous people. The library promoted the concept of studying and collecting knowledge. It paved ways of learning for people of society. This was an important step for familiarizing society about science and other fields.

Franklin's quest of moral perfection claims that thirteen virtue leads to moral perfection. The first virtue recognized by Franklin includes ‘temperance' that means eating adequate but not to the point of elevation. The second virtue that leads to moral perfection includes order. He states, "I found myself incorrigible with respect to Order, and now I am grown old, and my memory bad, I feel very sensibly the want of it” (Elliot 90). Order means that the things are at its place in an orderly manner. A society lacking order cannot be virtuous because people are more inclined to do wrong. the third virtue required for moral perfection is a resolution that means the ability to solving the problem. One has a responsibility of solving a problem without the fear of falling. This suggests resolving a conflicting situation that involves a moral issue. Frugality is the next virtue that is needed for achieving moral perfection. This suggests doing good to others by minimizing the possibilities of harming. One must not waste things by excessive or wrong use. Another virtue identified by Franklin is an industry that means choosing employment and keeping oneself engaged with work. Sincerity is the seventh virtue that stresses on staying just and honest with the people. This also means that one must avoid harming or hurting others. Moderation is the next virtue indicating that people must be able to avoid extremes. They must forebear resenting injuries or limiting them from going good to others. The emphasis is on the recognition of one's duty towards society.

It was challenging for Franklin to prove the role of virtues in reaching moral perfection. The tenth virtue according to Franklin is challenging that leads to moral perfection includes cleanliness. This indicates taking care of hygiene and becoming intolerant to uncleanliness. Tranquillity is another virtue that suggests calmness because it decreases the likelihood of entrapping in accidental situations. Chastity is another challenging virtue that focuses on using venery only for the health of offspring. Although it is possible to attain moral perfection it is a complex task that involves challenges. Franklin "found the difficulty of obtaining good and breaking bad habits in other points of vice and virtue, have given up the struggle and concluded that a speckled axe was best” (Elliot 89). It is crucial for an individual to identify good and bad habits because it allows them to differentiate between two extremes. Their familiarity with the possible outcomes convinces them to choose anyone.

Franklin believed that God never intervenes in human lives and the creation of humans. He was a religious man although he didn't perform religious practices such as prayer. His ideology was that the world is created on reasoning and God. Most of his ideas and philosophy are based on self-description and logic. He mentioned, “it may be well my posterity should be informed that to this little artifice, with the blessing of God, their ancestor ow'd the constant felicity of his life” (Elliot 90). He attempted to find the reasoning behind everything but believed in the creation of this universe. However, his moral concerns present him as a religious man such as he believed on the immortality of the soul. The emphasis on moral duty and virtues depicts that he cared about religion. His philosophy was aimed at educating people about their moral responsibility and choosing well. He familiarized society with reasoning for choosing between two extremes. Moral perfection also reveals that Franklin had Faith in God. His belief in virtues exhibits his religious side. The discussion of Franklin on virtue reveals his connection with religion.

Work Cited

Elliot, Charles. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN. The Harvard Classics, 1995.