Aeneas, A Devoted Hero Essay, Research Paper

Aeneas, the Devoted Hero

In Virgil?s Aenied, he illustrates the hero and central character, Aeneas, as a man who presents piety and duty. This human emotion piety, pietas in Latin, is duty towards family, country, and gods. Aeneas always fulfills his duty to his family, his fated city, and his gods. This piousness is what keeps him going through the grueling journeys and challenges, even when things are not going perfectly. Pietas is the characteristic that makes Aeneas stronger through each trial as he makes personal sacrifices and never wavers from his duties to his family, his country, and most of all to the gods.

The complete devotion to Aeneas? family is a commendable trait of piety. Aeneas? love for his kin is exemplified in his fleeing of falling Troy. He was recalling his story to Dido about how when he realizes that there was no use fighting any longer, and that he must leave Troy; he hurries off to find his family. Once he reaches his family, he has his father, Anchises, on his shoulder, Iulus, his son?s little hand in his own, and Creusa, his wife close behind as they head off for the ships. When he reaches his destination at the funeral mound, he realizes that his wife was missing. Aeneas ?turn[s] back alone into the city? nothing for it but to run the risks again ? comb of all Troy, and put [his] life in danger as before?(975-979 II). His devotion to his wife was worth risking his life in order to bring her to safety. As he frantically searches ?in endless quest from door to door?(1001 II) for Creusa, her ghost appeared to him and told to him that she cannot go with him because she was longer living, but to go back to the family and that a special mission is ahead of him. Personal loss is a tragedy that Aeneas must face as he ventures on to reach is fate. His pious personality is the characteristic that saves his family and leads him on his journey to the future founding of Rome.

Every battle that Aeneas fights, is a battle fought for his country. In book II, during his recollection of the end of Troy, he tells Dido that even though he was told to flee, he did stay back for a short while and fought. The reason for this action could be that he could not stand to see the destruction of his home. After his escape of Troy, Aeneas endures journey after journey of unsuccessfulness. His pieta here is what kept him going through the grueling time. As he was telling his heartfelt story to the queen, Dido, she was falling helplessly in love with Aeneas. During the stay at Carthage, the love between Dido and Aeneas bloomed. The stop at the city turns into a yearlong settlement. Jove, ruler of the gods, began to get angry because Aeneas is not fulfilling his destiny. He sends out his messenger to scold Aeneas and remind him that he has duties to accomplish. Aeneas must now choose between his fate or his love for Dido. As he fought down his emotion for Dido, Aeneas makes the decision to carry out the gods? instruction. After making the personal sacrifice of losing Dido to the future of Rome, Aeneas exemplified that he is worthy of the term piety. After he leaves Carthage, he eventually arrives at Cumae where at battle against the Italians breaks out. During the fighting, Aeneas kills many enemies, but one incident glorifies his piety to his country. As he was fighting young Lausus, the ?drove his tough sword through the young man?s body,?(1142 X) the death on his pale face made Aeneas ?grown in profound pity? and rung his heart?(1151-1152). After he kills Lausus, Aeneas faces Mezentius, the young dead soldier?s father, and was driven to slay him too. Aeneas kills the father and son duo with pity in his heart as he fights for his country. He does his duty, to fight for his destiny with devoutness to his gods.

Aeneas? duty to the gods exemplifies his piousness. Through his journeys and challenges, he prays to his gods and asks for blessing. He has total devotion to the gods maybe because of his half divine. With Venus as his mother, she always watches over him, intervenes with trouble to help out her son. In book III, Aeneas prays at a shrine of Apollo for ?a home and walls?(117-118 III) for his weary men. As Aeneas stay in the home and walls of Carthage, Mercury sent by Jupiter, reminds him that he must remember his fate, and that he should leave immediately. Knowing that he will hurt Dido and leave his happiness, he is being dutifully follow the words of Mercury, who represents the Jove. While following the gods? command in Cumae, Aeneas ?spoke out his vows?(236 XII) to the ?almighty Father, and his lady-thou, Saturnia, more kindly to us goddess, now, I pray; and thou, too, famous Mars,?(239-243 XII) and ?call[s] on springs and streams, and all the powers both of high heaven and the deep blue sea.?(244-245 XII) Even during the suspense of his battle with the Italians, he glorifies the gods and prays for peace to come. Aeneas displays piety to the gods at times of battle and war. His duty and devotion to the gods leads him to the victory over the Italians and to the land.

Aeneas? victory at the end venerates his piousness. His ability to keep going through endless heartaches and disappointments strengthens him as a hero and as a leader. This admirable trait is shown through the love he has for his family, the devotion of reaching his fate of finding the new city, and the duty to his gods as he ventures through his mission. His pietas was confirmed when he put aside his heart to comply with the wills of the gods. Virgil idealizes Aeneas as a model of great leadership, firm on his beliefs, but also a compassionate person. He is a symbol of the great Roman virtues of pietas.