**Philip Larkin**

This study material has been prepared for B.A. English Literature Paper-III Modern Literature (A) (Poetry) students of Vth semester for the session 2021-22 of Lucknow University

* Was born in the year 1922, at London.
* Took education at St. John’s College, Oxford.
* A quiet and unassuming man used to write sad and bleak poems.
* Worked at wellington, Belfast and Hull as librarian.
* We have unromantic portrayal in his poems, of poetic persona.
* He was described as “saddest heart in the post war supermarket.”
* We have in his poetry boredom of living in world which is devoid of sensitivity; artificial nature of social behavior; the hollowness of human wishes; dilemma of making a choice, illness, slow decline and finally the death.

**Major Influences:**

* Kingsley Amis, a novelist who portrayed anti-hero themes in his novels.
* Y.B. Yeats, Larkin even published his own collection of poems “Yeatsian” the “North Ship” in 1945.
* He turned towards Thomas Hardy and changed his loyalties to him, Hardy a regional novelist about Wessex.

**Work:**

1. **North Ship** (1945)
2. **The Less Deceived** (1945)
3. **The Whitsun Weddings** (1964)
4. **High Windows** (1974)

Once asked why the writes on sad and bleak themes. His reply was: “Actually I like to think of myself as quite funny and I hope this comes through in my writings. But it’s unhappiness that provokes a poem.”

**Church Going** is a reflection symbolizing the change in society’s views towards churches. It is poem about learning rather than being undeceived. The speaker is struggling towards knowledge rather than working his way out of illusion. The poet finally realizes that the Churches will never be out of use as “a hunger himself to be more serious.” The poet is satisfied by the Church and what it truly represents. According to poet the Church is the source of power of some sort of other.

The first draft of the poem was dated 24th. April, 1954 he has written 21 pages and abandoned it. Then came the final version in July 1954 and was published in Less Deceived. Larking was fascinated by and fond of English ecclesiastical architecture and seriousness of mode he fell in love with such places. It is in contrast to his cynicism about Christianity. Church going his notable for his “cycle-clips” associated with popular imagination with Larkin in his lifetime.

Larkin explore the experience of visiting a Church. He asks himself why he often visits Churches whilst out cycling. He find himself “at a loss” about what he is looking for both literally and intellectually. He thinks how the buildings are falling out of use, and what they might become in future. The final stanza of Church going adopts a more conclusive tone about this “serious house on serious earth” to which people will always be visiting. In spite of that he makes his poetry interesting, optimistic, positive and thought provoking though the subjects he takes are sad and bleak.

Work Consulted and Cited:

* **'Eternal Rhythms'**, 2012, Oxford University Press, India.
* **'The Infinite Riches'**, 1999, Oxford University Press, India.
* **'A compendious History of English Literature'**, 2001, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.
* Iyenger, KRS, **'Indian Writing in English'**, 2017, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi.