

Message for the Students

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On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Babasaheb Ambedkar, the Gujarat government secured a quiet place with the latest convenience for University, and erected a building with all the modern amenities named 'Jyotirmay' Parisar. The Board of Management of the University has greatly contributed to the making of the University and will continue to this by all the means.

Education is the perceived capital investment. Education can contribute more to improving the quality of the people. Here I remember the educational philosophy laid down by Shri. Swami Vivekananda:

"We want the education by which, the character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expand and by which one can stand on one's own feet".

In order to provide students with qualitative, skill and life oriented education at their threshold, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University is dedicated to this very manifestation of education. The university is incessantly working to provide higher education to the wider mass across the state of Gujarat and prepare them to face day to day challenges and lead their lives with all the capacity for the upliftment of the society in general and the nation in particular.

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WHERE THE MIND IS WITHOUT FEAR
- RABINDRANATH TAGORE

: STRUCTURE :

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- 1.4 Key Words**
- 1.5 Summary of the Poem**
- 1.6 Analysis and Explanation of the Poem**
- 1.7 Tone of the Poem**
- 1.8 Themes of the Poem**
- 1.9 Questions (answer in brief)**
- 1.10 Multiple Choice Questions**
- 1.11 Let Us Sum Up**
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Answers

1.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall

- be getting an introductory information about the present Poem and Poet
- be having a firsthand experience of the text of the poem
- be getting an overview of the analysis and explanation of the poem
- be learning about the tone and theme of the poem

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore was a great poet, novelist, dramatist, educationist and a multi-faceted artist. He reshaped Bengali literature and music extending its influence on Indian art and music. He was born on May 7, 1861. His collection of poems *Gitanjali* is profoundly fresh, beautiful and spiritual. He was the first non-European to win the prestigious Nobel Prize for literature in 1913.

He was a great humanist, Universalist and internationalist who always believed in the ancient maxim of India “VasudhaivKutumbakam” (The entire world is one family). He was against narrow-minded nationalism and therefore he differed from Mahatma Gandhi on several issues like, Swadeshi movement, spinning of charkha, boycott of foreign goods, etc. Tagore and Gandhiji respected and loved each other deeply despite their difference of opinions. He too denounced the British Rule in India and advocated independence from the British Raj. He founded a famous institution of education ‘VishwaBharati’ that sought to bridge India and the world.

Tagore's major literary works include *Gitanjali*, *Gora*, *GhareBaire* (The Home and the world), etc. He had composed 'Jana GanaMana' which was chosen as the national anthem of India. 'Amar Sonar Bangla' the national anthem of Bangladesh was also composed by Tagore. Tagore died at the age of 80 on August 7, 1941.

1.2 ABOUT THE POEM

The poem *Where the Mind is Without Fear* is taken from the English *Gitanjali* 'Song Offerings'. It is a collection of his 103 poems translated by Tagore himself from Bengali into English. It was published first in November 1912 by the Indian Society of London. It contained translations of 53 poems from Bengali *Gitanjali* and 50 poems from other Bengali collections of his poems *Gitimaya*, *Naivedya* and *Kheya*. The *Gitanjali* became quite popular in the West and was widely translated.

The poem *Where the Mind Is without Fear* is a prayer to the universal father, God Almighty. The poem displays Tagore's vision of true freedom and new enlightened India. The original poem titled "Prarthana" (Prayer) was included in an anthology called *Naivedya*. The poem was translated into English by the poet himself in 1911. It was included in the *Gitanjali* as poem 35 which was published in 1912. Tagore recited its English version at the Indian National Congress Session in Calcutta, 1917.

Rabindranath Tagore envisages an ideal nation in the poem. An ideal nation should be free in true sense, liberal in outlook, united in strength but free from narrow-mindedness. It should be an ideal combination of sensitivity and rational outlook. The people of an ideal nation should be hard working and dynamic. They should always strive for peace, progress and prosperity.

The prayer transcends both time and space, achieving the quality of a universal prayer.

1.3 TEXT OF THE POEM

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high.
Where knowledge is free.
Where the world has not been broken up into
fragments By narrow domestic walls.
Where words come out from the depth of truth.
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening
thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

- Rabindranath Tagore

1.4 KEY WORDS

Fragments	: Pieces, divisions
Domestic	: Household, pertaining to home or family
Striving	: Trying hard

Tireless	: Without getting tired, indefatigably
Head held high	: with self-respect and dignity
Stream	: Flow, river, brook
Dreary	: Dull
Reason	: Logic, intellect, rationality
Desert	: Dry, sandy area of land
Awake	: to wake up, stretch, extend, to get up from slumber/ sleep
Dead habit	: Conditioning, superstitious temperament, ritualistic mind
Ever -widening	: Always expanding, getting larger and larger

1.5 SUMMARY OF THE POEM

The poet prays to God Almighty that the people of his country should be fearless and their heads should be held high with self-respect and human dignity. They should be free from fear, repression and coercion. The poet dreams of a nation where knowledge is free and education is available to all. Education must not be confined to rich and the elite people only but to all. Children should learn from nature and the world around them. They should be curious enough to learn new things all the time. Tagore's concept of education was quite liberal and therefore he believed that education should not be confined only to four walls of classrooms.

Tagore says that people should be united not only with the people of his country but with the entire world. He thinks that there should not be divisions among people on the basis of caste, creed, religion, colour, and race. Tagore believed that the whole world should be like one extended family. He was against narrow-minded nationalism. Tagore says that people of his country should be truthful. Their words should come out from the depth of their hearts.

Tagore further says that the people of his country should continuously endeavor to stretch their arms towards perfection. All should work hard to achieve their goals. These goals should not be materialistic alone but the realization of the self. Tagore believes that sensitivity is very important in life but one must not be superstitious and irrational. Clear stream of reason must not be lost into the desert of false beliefs, superstitions, prejudices and evil customs. Reason and intellect should always rule over dead traditions and beliefs.

The poet says that the people of his country should be progressive liberal and broad minded. He says that the minds of people should be led towards "ever widening thought and action" by the Lord Almighty. Broadminded people's actions are always generous and humane. They rise above narrow-mindedness and superstitious beliefs. In the final line of the poem, the poet addresses God as father and prays to awaken his country into the heaven of freedom.

Tagore was a mystic poet with profound faith in the Unknown power that operates in the entire Universe. For him, God is not just an incarnation but the Inner self within all of us. He invokes the Inner self to awaken ourselves into the Utopian world of peace, freedom and love.

1.6 ANALYSIS AND EXPLANATION OF THE POEM

Where the Mind is Without Fear was written during the British rule before India achieved independence. Tagore died in 1941, a few years before Independence in 1947. He wrote this poem when India was under the colonial rule and the people of India had become mentally enslaved. They felt that they would never be free. They had lost their self-confidence and dignity. Their spirit had been completely drained and depressed. They lived in poverty and ignorance. They were denied proper education and equal rights. Majority of them were illiterate, irrational and superstitious. The British Government employed the strategy of “Divide and Rule” in India and divided the country into fragments based on caste, creed, religion and economic status. Under the British Rule, the erstwhile Indian princely states fought among themselves and acted like the stooge of the British rulers.

Rabindranath Tagore was profoundly aware of the problems India was facing during the British Rule. He dreamt of free India. For Tagore, mere political freedom was not an end but a means to true inner freedom of the people of India. In this poem, Tagore envisions the “heaven of freedom” for India where the people of the country would live in fearlessness, harmony, love the world of knowledge and persistent efforts for perfection.

Where the Mind is Without Fear is a prayer to God almighty to awaken India into the heaven of freedom. The poem has been composed in simple diction, beautiful vivid images and other poetic devices. The verse form of the poem is free verse with no metrical patterns or rhymes. Though it has no meters and rhymes, it has natural musical flow. It can be called a prose poem too. The poem contains eleven lines with no ending rhymes. However the poem contains only one sentence that ends with the last line.

The poem implies freedom from the shackles that kept the people of India chained and enslaved during the British rule. The people of India were full of fear and their heads were bent in servility. They were ignorant and access to knowledge was limited. Therefore the poet wanted to reverse the prevalent condition of the people under the colonial domination.

Tagore wanted the minds of people to be fearless and free from oppression, narrow-mindedness and despair. He wanted their heads held high with self-confidence and dignity. In the first line the poet prays to God that the countrymen should be free from fear, oppression and slavishness. Their heads should be held high in dignity. They should have a deep sense of self-respect and equality. Bent head symbolizes slavishness and servility, raised head denotes honour and self-respect.

In the second line, the poet says that knowledge should be accessible to all without any restrictions and class distinctions. There the poet refers to education which is a means of providing knowledge to the people. The poet is a strong supporter of free knowledge and therefore he believes that education should not be restricted to the rich and the upper class people only. It should be open and available to all. The doors of the temples of learning should be open for all. Children should learn not only within the confine of classrooms but also from nature and the world around them. Tagore, like Wordsworth, believed that one could learn more from nature than from books. As an educationist, Tagore believed in Gurukul pattern of education of Ancient India

where students learnt directly from nature in a natural way instead of rote learning and bookish instruction. It was Tagore's concept of education which he put into practice in his educational institutions Shantiniketan and Vishvabharati University.

In the next two lines, the poet says that the people of his nation should live unitedly and harmoniously. For Tagore, unity and harmony is not important for the nation only but the entire human world. Therefore he says that the world should not be broken up into divisions based on caste, creed, religion, race etc. The greatest problem of human world is lack of unity, harmony and equality. People of the world are divided on the basis of nationality, religion and race. Every nation thinks that they are the best and others are inferior to them. People are usually intolerant towards others, their religions, beliefs and cultures. If we look at the history of humankind, we realize that most of the wars were fought because of intolerance, hatred towards others and rejection of the other people's religions, race, and colour of their skin. Prejudices and false assumptions about other people create enmity and conflict among people.

Tagore says that these are narrow domestic walls that divide people. India is a country with immense diversity of castes, religions, creeds and cultures. However there is a common thread of secular outlook (SarvaDharmSambhav) that binds all together. Even in Hinduism there are many gods, goddesses and practices of worship. The very idea of multiplicity of beliefs is the acceptance of other's beliefs cultures, religions etc. Unfortunately British Rule in India divided the nation by creating disharmony and conflicts among them. Therefore Tagore wants India to be undivided and united.

In the fifth line, Tagore wishes that the people of his nation are truthful and their words should come out from the depth of their hearts. There should be harmony among one's thought, speech and action. For Tagore, truth is not a remote ideal but it must be essentially human. Tagore says, "What we call truth lies in the rational harmony between the subjective and objective aspects of reality."

Tagore and Albert Einstein met in 1930 and discussed what Truth is. Tagore believed that the Divine is not isolated from the world and it proves that the Truth of the Universe is human Truth. It is interesting to note that for Tagore, Truth is not an inaccessible ideal but the part of human consciousness. One can practice it if one follows the voice from within. This inner voice connects all human world and the entire Universe.

In the sixth line, Tagore wants everyone to strive to achieve their goals and reach perfection. He says that people should continue to work ceaselessly for achieving perfection in all directions whether it is material or spiritual. However, true perfection is always spiritual because it is the flowering of one's inner self. Tagore wants people of his nation to be free from lethargy and laziness.

In the seventh line, Tagore compares 'reason' to a clear stream and 'dead habits' to dreary desert. He says that logical thinking should be clear and unaffected by superstitious beliefs and dull, dry customs and rituals. Tagore always stood for sensitivity but for him rational, intellectual attitude was equally important. If emotions are not monitored by reason, they turn into superstitious beliefs and dull rituals. This passion for freedom underlies his

firm rejection of irrational traditionalism which make people the prisoners of dead past. Tagore stood for modern development and scientific advancement. He differed from Mahatma Gandhi on spinningkhadi, charkha, and boycott of foreign goods. He believed that people should not be dominated by machines but he was in favour of reasonable use of modern technology.

In lines 9 and 10, the poet wants the people of his country to be liberal, broad minded and progressive. He wants minds to be “led forward” into ever widening thought and action by the God Almighty. He wants people of free India to overcome the narrow mindedness and bigotry. He prays to the Divine power to lead the people of India towards the world of liberal outlook and altruistic actions.

In the final line, the poet prays to God to awaken his country into such a heaven of freedom as described in the earlier lines of the poem. He prays to the Universal Father to raise his nation to the heights where freedom could be realized in its culmination. According to Tagore, God is not separate from the world and human heart. Tagore wants to awaken the God within us to free our minds from all shackles and bondages. Finally, the message of the poet is very clear. He wants the people of his country to be free mentally and spiritually. He wants them to be united, fearless, compassionate, self-dignified and truthful. He wants them to be curious to learn and know more with open mindedness. According to Tagore, this is the true freedom which the people of his country should achieve.

Tagore’s attitude toward politics culture, nationalism, internationalism, tradition and modernity is reflected in the poem. His concept of patriotism was quite different. He wanted India to be free from colonial rule but he did not want India to be confined to narrow domestic walls of traditions customs and rituals. He wanted the people of India to be global citizens with liberal outlook and compassion for entire world.

1.7 TONE OF THE POEM

Tone in literary writing refers to the methods by which writers and speakers reveal their attitudes or feelings. As tone is equated with attitude, it is important to realize the techniques and modes of revealing the attitudes. As a literary concept, it is adapted from the phrase ‘tone of voice’ in speech. Tone of voice reflects attitudes toward a particular experience or situation and also toward listeners.

In Tagore’s poem *Where the Mind is Without Fear*, there is a tone of longing or yearning for a free nation where there would be freedom from fear, narrow-mindedness, superstitions and irrational attitude. The first eight lines envision Utopian world of freedom which the poet calls “Heaven of freedom” in which he wants his country awake. He prays to the Universal Father to awaken India where there is peace, harmony, liberalism and equal opportunities for all. The poem was written several decades before independence and it inspired freedom fighters of India guiding them about what kind of freedom India should achieve. Tagore’s concept of freedom is quite radical and the message of the poem is highly relevant even today.

1.8 THEMES OF THE POEM

Themes can be defined as a main idea or an underlining meaning of any literary work which can be stated directly or indirectly. A major theme is an idea

that a writer repeats theme in his literary work making it the most significant idea. A minor theme is an idea that appears in the literary work briefly. Theme and subject are two different categories as subject is a topic of the literary work and theme is an opinion expressed on the subject.

The following are the important themes of the poem “Where the Mind is Without Fear”.

- (1) **Division of Bengal:** In 1905, the Indian State of Bengal was divided into two states West Bengal and East Bengal according to the divisive policy of the British Government known as ‘Divide and Rule’. It was divided on the basis of religion. In West Bengal the majority of population was Hindu while in East Bengal, the majority of people were Muslims. East Bengal came to be known as East Pakistan after partition. In 1971, it became Bangladesh. Tagore wrote this poem in around 1910, five years after *Banga-bhanga* (division of Bengal). He was profoundly saddened by the division of Bengal and therefore he referred to it in the poem, where he speaks of the nation broken into fragments. Tagore wants the nation undivided, unfragmented and united. He protests against the division based on religion, caste, race or creed. This is one of the major themes of the poem.
- (2) **East and West:** Tagore loved India and her culture profoundly but he was not a narrow-minded nationalist. He believed that both East and West have their own merits which should be incorporated into each other. There are several practices of the West that the East should adopt and the West should also learn certain good things from the East. In his novels *Gora* and *GhareBaire*, Tagore advocates the synthesis of the two cultures. Tagore was influenced by English poets and poetry. He was a great admirer of the Romantic poets. He also used similar themes employed by the Romantic poets in his own poems. He experimented with Bengali lyrics influenced by the Western poetry and their forms. Tagore was highly sensitive poet but he rejected sentimentalism and irrational attitude. He firmly believed the people of India should cultivate intellectual and rational attitude to free themselves from superstitions and blind faith. He was deeply influenced by the Age of Enlightenment that took place in England in 18th century. He believed that the people of India should adopt rational outlook and become open minded and liberal. He believed that India could achieve independence from the colonial rule through rational and intellectual attitude only. To encounter the British rule, India needed to adopt and employ intellectual stance. According to Tagore the ideal combination of the Eastern and the Western values would certainly improve the quality of life and make India a true heaven of freedom.
- (3) **Confluence of Cultures:** Rabindranath Tagore came from a Hindu family of landed gentry. He was against the clash of civilizations and stood for confluence of three cultures: Hindu, Islam and British. Tagore was brought up in a family where the knowledge of Sanskrit, Bengali, English and Persian was essential part of the family tradition. This outlook was non-sectarian and liberal. The greatest example of how Tagore was respected by independent Bangladesh was

the choice of its national anthem ‘Amar Sonar Bangla’ from Tagore’s songs.

- (4) **True Freedom:** Tagore dreamt of free India with rational attitude and broadmindedness. His attitude towards politics, culture, nationalism, internationalism, tradition and modernity is clearly expressed in the poem *Where the Mind is Without Fear*. He was a nationalist with a difference. He rejected unreasoned traditionalism which made people the prisoners of past. For him, humanity was above all beliefs and faiths. He abhorred untouchability but disapproved Gandhiji’s statement that the Bihar earthquake in 1924 was a divine chastisement for the sin of untouchability.
- (5) **Knowledge:** Tagore firmly believed that knowledge should be accessible to all. All people should be educated and knowledgeable. Education leads to true freedom, intellectual life and nation building. Tagore’s views on education are liberal and aim at creating global citizens. He believed that learning should not be confined to four walls of classrooms but rooted in nature and immediate surroundings. For Tagore, true education should aim at self-realization, intellectual development, and physical development, love for humanity, freedom and spiritual development. He advocated nature centered education rejecting bookish rote learning.
- (6) **Structure, Diction and Style :** The poem *Where the Mind is Without Fear* is written in free verse. It has no rhyme scheme or particular metrical pattern. It contains eleven lines. The whole poem is only a single complex sentence with one main clause at the end and several sub-ordinate clauses beginning with ‘where’. The style of the poem seems to have the influence of the Bauls of Bengal and their soulful rendition. The Bauls of Bengal were known for their mendicant’s life and their views on spiritual salvation.

The diction of the poem is simple lucid and rhythmical. Tagore has used several figures of speech that enhance the beauty of the poem. The poet uses the poetic device of metaphor in line 7-8 where he compares ‘reason’ with a stream of water and ‘habit’ with desert. The poet addresses God as ‘Father’ and prays to him to awaken India into the heaven of freedom. Here the poet uses the poetic device called ‘Apostrophe’. There are also several examples of alliteration in the poem such as “the head is held high”, “tireless striving stretches” and “the dreary desert sand of dead habit” etc. Anaphora runs throughout the poem as there is a repetition of ‘where’ at the beginning of seven lines in the poem “Tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection” is a fine example of personification.

Check Your Progress 1

1.9 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN BRIEF.

- (i) What kind of freedom does Tagore envisage?

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(ii) What does Tagore mean by “narrow domestic walls”?

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(iii) When can people hold their heads high according to Tagore?

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(iv) Where does the clear stream of reason lose its way?

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(v) What does dead habit imply?

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(vi) What does the poet pray to God for?

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(vii) What does Tagore mean by “Where knowledge is free”?

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Check Your Progress: 2

1.10 CHOOSE THE CORRECT OPTION FROM GIVEN BELOW.

1. *Where the Mind is Without Fear* is taken from
(a) Gitanjali (b) Tagore’s collection of poetry
(c) GhareBaire (d) Gora
2. Tagore received the Nobel Prize in _____
(a) 1913 (b) 1941
(c) 1907 (d) 1947
3. *Amar sonar Bangla* was composed by _____
(a) Bankimchandra (b) Sharatchandra
(c) R.C. Dutt (d) Rabindranath Tagore
4. *Where the Mind is Without Fear* is
(a) A Prayer to God (b) A eulogy to God
(c) A Complaint to God (d) A Sermon
5. *Where the Mind is Without Fear* was included as poem _____ in Gitanjali.
(a) 12 (b) 15
(c) 35 (d) 100
6. The original title of the poem in Bengali was
(a) Naivedya (b) Prasad
(c) Prarthna (d) Mukti
7. The poem was translated from Bengali into English by
(a) The poet himself (b) Isherwood
(c) W. B. Yeats (d) KshitimohanSen
8. The British Rule divided India by using the strategy of
(a) “bribe and win” (b) “educate to enslave”
(c) “divide and rule” (d) “destroy the native culture”
9. The poem *Where the Mind is Without Fear* contains
(a) 10 lines (b) 11 lines
(c) 14 lines (d) 5 Couplets
10. Tagore founded educational institution called
(a) PremNiketan (b) Shanti Niketan

- (c) Gram Vidyalaya (d) MuktiVidyalaya
11. Tagore believed in _____ education
 (a) Knowledge centered (b) Nature-centered
 (c) Village-centered (d) Skill centered
12. Tagore compares reason to
 (a) a clear stream (b) a river
 (c) the ocean (d) the lake
13. Bengal was divided into East Bengal and West Bengal in
 (a) 1905 (b) 1910
 (c) 1943 (d) 1947
14. Tagore advocated the synthesis of
 (a) spirit and matter (b) man and machine
 (c) art and science (d) East and West
15. *Amar Sonar Bangla* written by Tagore is the national anthem of
 (a) Bangladesh (b) Nepal
 (c) Bhutan (d) Brahma Desh

1.11 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we studied the famous poem of Rabindranath Tagore which is highly relevant today. It tells us what a true freedom is. It reflects Tagore's liberal views on education, culture, freedom and rational outlook. It is interesting to note that he has presented the vision of free India but the poem contains an important message for all free democratic and secular nations.

1.12 BOOKS SUGGESTED

Das Gupta T. *Social Thought of Rabindranath Tagore: A Historical Analysis*. AbhinavPrakashan, 1993.

Das Kumar, Sisir, editor. *The English writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, SahityaAkademi, 1994.

Guha, Ramachandra. *Makers of Modern India*. Cambridge, 2011.

Sen, Amartya. *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on History, Culture and Identity*, Picador, 2006.

Tagore, Rabindranath. "Song Offerings", Translated by Joe Wirter, Writers Workshop, 1998.

W. B. Yeats. *Gitanjali*. Dover Publications, 2000.

Answers

Check Your Progress: 2

1.(a) 2.(a) 3.(d) 4.(a) 5.(a) 6.(c) 7.(c) 8.(a) 9.(c) 10.(b) 11.(b)
 12.(a) 13.(a) 14.(d) 15.(a)



STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

- ROBERT FROST

STRUCTURE:

- 2.0 Objectives**
 - 2.1 Introduction**
 - 2.1.1 About the Poet**
 - 2.2.2 About the Poem**
 - 2.2 Text of the Poem**
 - 2.3 Key Words**
 - 2.4 Summary of the Poem**
 - 2.5 Analysis and Explanation of the Poem**
 - 2.6 Tone of the Poem**
 - 2.7 Theme of the Poem**
 - 2.8 Structure/Diction/Style of the Poem**
 - 2.9 Questions (answer in brief)**
 - 2.10 Multiple Choice Questions**
 - 2.11 Let Us Sum Up**
 - 2.12 Books Suggested**
- Answers**

2.1 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall

- be getting preliminary information about the Poem and Poet
- be getting an overview of the analysis and explanation of the poem
- be learning about the tone and theme of the poem

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 About the Poet

Robert Frost (1874-1963) was a great American poet known for his realistic portrayal of rural life and immense love for nature. He depicted the rural life of New England in the early twentieth century. His famous poems include:

1. *Home Burial*
2. *The Witch of Coos*
3. *A Servant to Servant*
4. *Directive*
5. *Neither out Too Far nor in Too Deep*
6. *Provide, Provide*
7. *Acquainted with The Night*
8. *After Apple Picking*

9. *Mending Wall*
10. *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*
11. *Birches*
12. *Death of a Hired Man*
13. *The Road Not Taken*
14. *Fire and Ice*

Frost's best poems explore fundamental questions of existence depicting stark loneliness of an individual in the indifferent universe. Frost stood at the cross-roads of 19th century American poetry and modernism. He developed modern idiom, sense of directness and economy that reflect the imagism of Ezra Pound. Frost's theory of poetry links him to both 19th and 20th centuries. He wrote about poetry that, "It begins as a lump in the throat a sense of wrong, a homesickness, a loneliness." Like T.S. Eliot he believed that the man who suffers and the artist who creates are totally separate".

Robert Frost made use of New England dialect which is often discussed as provincialism or regionalism. His regionalism is not political but realistic. Frost had received more than forty honorary degrees and in 1924, he received his first of four Pulitzer Prizes. In 1960, Congress awarded Frost the first congressional Gold Medal. A year later, at the age of 86 Frost was honored to write and recite a poem for President John Kennedy's inauguration ceremony.

The following are the notable qualities of Robert Frost's poetry:-

- (i) Tenderness, sadness and humour
- (ii) Sad acceptance of things as they are
- (iii) Love for nature and rural life.
- (iv) Classical understatement and restraint
- (v) Clarity and simplicity
- (vi) Democratic spirit
- (vii) Realistic depiction of life and nature
- (viii) Pastoral element
- (ix) Picturesque quality
- (x) Lyrical quality

Robert Frost's style is lucid, simple and rhythmical. He often employs dialogues in his poems. He uses colloquial diction of New England. There is vivid imagery in his poetry that creates visual pictures in the minds of the readers. His poetry is often symbolic and metaphorical.

2.1.2 About the Poem

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening is one of the most popular poems by Robert Frost. It was published in 1923 and soon it became a poem that people recited, quoted and kept in memory. On the surface, the poem is simple, at metaphorical level. It tells of a man's temptation to answer the call of beauty and his ultimate decision to respond to the call of duty.

"The woods are lovely, dark and deep
But I have promises to keep

And miles to go before I sleep

And miles to go before I sleep”

This concluding stanza of the poem has a deeper meaning. It has an interesting allegory of life and death, of duty and irresistible temptation and pleasures of life. The poem begins with a traveller passing through woods on a beautiful snowy evening. Woods are dark, deep and lonely. The traveller is tempted by the solitude of dark woods and snow-laden land. The enchanted traveller stops his little horse to watch woods fill up with snow. The little horse thinks it strange as there is no farmhouse nearby. It was the darkest evening of the year. On one side, there was a frozen lake and on the other dark, lonely but lovely woods.

The horse shakes his bell to ask if there was any mistake. The traveler wakes up from his dreamy state of mind. He remembers that it is necessary for him to go home and keep his promise. He has still to travel many miles before he reaches home and sleep. In the final stanza, there are three words that signify deep, philosophical meaning ‘Promise’ indicate one’s duties in life; be it physical or spiritual. ‘Miles’ refer to a journey of life, the period of time to live in years or decades. ‘Sleep’ signifies eternal slumber, the death, the end of the journey of life. Life’s journey includes pleasures, hardship, duties and distances.

In life, we make promises to ourselves and to others. These promises have to be fulfilled before we cover the long distance of the journey of life and yield to our final commitment: eternal slumber i.e death. In our life and the world around us, we face many temptations and distractions. These temptations can be material and physical pleasures, worldly success, fame and wealth. If these things become our center of focus, we miss the true goal of our life. The true goal of human life is self-actualization, the realization of one’s potential. We should strive to reach our true goal before we meet our final destination of our life-Death.

The poem can be interpreted in several ways but the central idea of the poem is commitment to duty. Louisa May Alcott has summed up this philosophy in a very poetic manner she wrote:

“I slept, and I dreamed that life was beauty;

I woke, and found that life was duty.”

2.2 TEXT OF THE POEM

Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village, though:

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods fill up with snow

My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farmhouse near

Between the woods and frozen lake

The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake

To ask if there is some mistake.

The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.
The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep.
And miles to go before I sleep.

– Robert Frost

2.3 KEY WORDS

Woods: forest

Queer : strange

Harness : a set of strap by which a horse or other animal is fastened to a cart plough etc.

Sweep : long swift curving movement

Downy : covered with soft hair or feathers

Easy wind: slow breeze of wind

Flake : a small flat, very thin piece of something
(Downy flake' refers to soft layer of snow)

2.4 SUMMARY OF THE POEM

The speaker in the poem is passing through woods on a cold snowy evening. He is riding on his little horse. It is a lovely dark wood that enchants the speaker by its beauty and silence. The speaker says that he probably knows the owner of the woods. He lives in a nearby village. As he is not there in the woods, he will not see the speaker trespassing. The little horse of the speaker shakes his harness bell to ask if there is any mistake. The horse does not understand why the speaker has stopped here. He thinks that there is no reason to stop in the woods. Even a farmhouse is nowhere nearby.

The place was between dark woods and frozen lake and it was the darkest evening of the year (probably in the month of December). Little horse shakes his harness bells to awaken the speaker from his dreamy state of mind. He seems to have lost in the beauty and silence of the beautiful woods. Deep silence mesmerizes the speaker. There are only sounds of cold, slow breeze and falling snow like white feathers. The speaker is suddenly awakened by the sound of the harness bells of the horse. He does not like to leave this beautiful place as it is so quiet and beautiful. However, he is reminded of his promises that he had to fulfill. He realizes that he should move ahead and reach home in time. He has to perform certain duties before he could rest his head on the pillow.

The poem ends with a message that life and the world may be full of temptations. They may compel us to stop and hinder our journey but we must remember that before we 'sleep' we have to fulfill our duties and keep our promises. We have our duties towards our family, society and the world. We also have duties towards ourselves and to God. Before we die, we should try to fulfill them all. Therefore we should avoid temptations of worldly pleasures and focus our attention on performing our duties. We should focus more on DUTY than BEAUTY.

2.5 ANALYSIS AND EXPLANATION OF THE POEM

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening is a well-known poem by Robert Frost. It was written in 1922 and published in 1923 in his collection of poems "New Hampshire". He had written this poem when he lived in the village Franconia in New Hampshire.

The poem consists of four stanzas of quatrains (four lines) each. In each stanza, the first, second and fourth lines rhyme but the third does not. However, the third line is a connection link to the other stanzas. It determines the rhymes of the other line of the stanza. For example, in the first stanza the first, the second and the fourth line rhyme with words 'know', 'though' and 'snow'. The third line ends with 'here' which does not rhyme with other lines. The rhyme scheme of the poem is aaba, bbcd, ccdc, dddd. There are no punctuations to create pauses and therefore all lines have a nice smooth flow. Let us now discuss the poem in detail.

Lines 1-4

The speaker (may be the poet himself) is passing through the woods on a dark, chilly winter evening on his little horse. He stops amidst the beautiful woods. He says that he probably knows the owner of the woods. He lives in a village nearby. He is not present in the woods therefore he will not be able to see the speaker's trespassing in the woods. He is so enchanted by the beauty of the woods and the entire surrounding that he stops there with his horse and watches the natural beauty of snow covered woods. It is snowing filling up woods with white layers of snow.

Here the dark woods symbolize the mystery of life. Like dark woods, life is in-penetrable and mysterious. Snow is a cold destructive force called Death. The mystery is always lurking and so the speaker has an irresistible urge to stop there and watch the mysterious beauty and solitude of the woods.

Lines 5-8

In the second stanza, the speaker says that his little horse thinks it strange that they have stopped at the wrong place. There is no farmhouse nearby or any other reason to stop there. The speaker has stopped his horse between the woods and the frozen lake. The weather is very cold and the lake is frozen. It is also the darkest evening of the year, probably 22nd December when the winter solstice occurs in the northern hemisphere. The speaker says that his horse is little. It suggests that it is an ordinary horse or probably a pony. He loves his little horse who is quite loyal and obedient. The speaker is not a wealthy man and therefore he does not have an expensive horse. Though he is an ordinary man with limited financial resources, he is a great lover of nature. He is a highly sensitive person who is mesmerized by the beauty and mystery of nature.

The speaker's strange behavior creates a surprise to his little horse. The 'little horse' stands for common sense and pragmatism. He thinks that his master has probably made a mistake by stopping at the wrong place and wrong time.

Lines 9-12

The little horse shakes its harness bells to ask the speaker if there is some mistake or any problem. The horse thinks that there is no reason to stop at such a dark and chilly place. He wants to draw the attention of the speaker

and correct his mistake, There are only two kinds of sounds slow cold wind and falling of white feather like snow. For the horse, these sounds were strange and scaring but for the speaker, it was mysterious and enchantingly beautiful. He was spell bound by the solitude of the woods and frozen lake.

Lines-13-16

The last stanza is an epitome of Frost's philosophy of life. These four lines are popular among readers. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India liked these lines so much that he kept them under the glass top of his table in the Prime Minister's office.

The speaker in the last stanza says that the woods are lovely dark and deep. They fascinate the speaker with its beauty and mystery. 'lovely', 'dark' and 'deep' are suggestive of 'beauty', 'mystery' and 'profundity'. Very often beauty is inexplicable, incomprehensible and impenetrable. It enchants the speaker and he stops there lost in the beauty and mystery of the woods.

The horse's intrusion into his meditative state makes him aware of his duties and responsibilities. He realizes that he has to fulfill promises after travelling many miles. Therefore, he cannot stay there. He must move on and reach his home in time. He can rest only after keeping his promises and fulfilling his duties. Here 'sleep' refers to death. Before we die, we have to fulfill our duties. We have to play various roles in our life such as the role of a son or daughter, husband or wife, father, mother and so on. We have to maintain family relationships and social relations. We have duties towards family, society, nation and the world. We should fulfill them sincerely before we meet the final destination of our life i.e 'Death'.

In our life, we make 'Promises' to ourselves, to society and the nation. People also make 'promises' to us. Fulfilling mutual promises is equally important in life. It is the duty of an ideal individual towards himself and to the world.

We know that the journey of life is never smooth. There are distractions, temptations and innumerable obstacles on the path of life. We are often distracted by such temptations and forget our duties and commitments. Worldly pleasures and beauty of nature are alluring. We indulge in them and we want to continue to enjoy them forever. Failure in performing our duties is the failure of our life.

The speaker realizes this and decides to move on hurriedly. He thinks that keeping promises must be his priority. He must reach home, complete his tasks and then go to bed. This is the surface idea of the poem. The inner meaning is profoundly philosophical. It reminds us of the great message of the 'Bhagavad Gita' about duty, the importance of Karma (action). Life is beautiful and full of enchanting pleasures but the ultimate aim of life is to do one's duties and not to indulge in material pleasures of life.

The famous poem by Louisa May Alcott beautifully sums up the message of this poem.

"I slept and I dreamed that life was beauty.

I woke and found that life was duty."

Robert Frost uses symbols and imagery very beautifully in his poems. The imagery of the poem *Stopping by woods on a Snowy Evening* is vivid and picturesque. His language and diction are simple and colloquial. He creates

rhythm and music using short and simple words. In this poem, he has employed only monosyllabic and disyllabic words often repeating them as in the last stanza of the poem.

“And miles to go before I sleep
And miles to go before I sleep”

For Frost sound was equally important as the meaning of the words. He emphasized on dramatic element and metaphor in poetry.

2.6 TONE OF THE POEM

Frost's *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* conjures a tone of quiet reflection and remembrance of a winter evening. The narrator passes through the forest with his little horse on a chilly winter evening. He stops amidst the forest which is laden with fine feathery snow. It was the darkest evening of the year. The narrator is mesmerized by the beauty and mystery of the lovely dark surrounding. On one side, there is deep forest and on the other, there is a white frozen lake. The deep solitude affects the meditative mood of the narrator. There are only two sounds slow breeze of cold wind and downy flakes of falling snow. The narrator reflects upon the mysterious beauty and solitude of the lovely, dark and deep woods.

The little horse reminds the narrator posing the question why he stopped in the forest. There was no farm house nearby. He shook this harness bells disrupting the reflective mood of the narrator. The narrator wakes up to the job at hand and realizes that he has certain promises to keep, some duties to perform before he would go to sleep. Here the word 'sleep' indicates 'Death' which always makes us aware of uncertainty of life, and duties to be performed within that short span of life.

The tone of the poem is not sad or painful but the meditative realization of duties, to be performed and promises to keep.

2.7 THEMES OF THE POEM

At the literal level, the poem tells us about the speaker's passing through the dark and deep woods on a cold wintry evening. He stops amidst the dark and mysterious surrounding. The little horse finds the narrator's stopping by the woods quite queer and shakes his harness bells to alert the narrator. The narrator realizes that he should move on and reach home in time to complete his tasks and fulfill the obligations on hand before going to bed. However, the poem has deeper symbolic meaning. There are serious themes like death, duty, choices, obligations, isolation and beauty etc. in the poem. Let us discuss the major themes of the poem briefly.

- (1) **Beauty:** The beauty of nature is enchanting. It attracts human beings making them negligent towards their duties. Beauty creates repudiation of action and obligation. The darkness of woods is mesmerizing and mysterious but it is treacherous. It cuts itself off from action. The peace and solitude of the woods move one forget one's duties and obligation. The poet says that such beauty and solitude must be left behind to fulfill one's promises. According to Indian philosophy, beauty of the world creates illusion, maya that entraps human beings creating amnesia about their duties.
- (2) **Loneliness and Isolation:** The speaker finds himself lonely in the

dark and deep woods. He is far away from hustle and bustle of human world. Even the owner of the woods is not there. So his trespasses into his woods and enjoys the loneliness and isolation. He likes to stay there enjoying the solitude of the woods and the frozen lake. There are no sounds except slow cold breeze of wind and falling of snow.

- (3) **Choices:** The speaker in the poem stops in the woods. He enjoys the beauty and solitude of dark woods. He has choice to stay or go home. At first, he feels that he should stay there and relish the beauty and peace of the forest and frozen lake. However, his little horse reminds him of his mistake. Now the speaker is torn between two choices to stay in the woods or go home. It was difficult to take the decision but finally, the speaker decides to go home and keep his promises. He feels that it is necessary for him to fulfill his obligations before sleep. In human life, we often face such choices but to make the right choice is not an easy task. It is the test of life that symbolizes our attitude towards beauty, duty, life and death etc.
- (4) **Man and Nature:** Human beings are part of nature. They feel enticed towards the beauty of nature because man is also the creation of nature. Civilized men have tried to separate themselves from nature but when they are amidst nature, they become captivated by its beautiful beauty and peace. Nature is not always soothing and beautiful. It is scary and fierce too. The speaker in the poem likes, to stay in dark woods laden with snow but it is not safe to be there for long. The horse is a practical animal and he reminds the speaker to move on. The narrator also realizes that it is more important to reach home and perform his duties before going to bed. It is also safer to be at home in its cozy environment and warmth of the family.
- (5) **Duty and Obligations:** All human being have duties and responsibilities towards family, society and the world at large. We are not islands separated from one another. We are all connected with one another. We have duties towards the earth we live in. If we do not care for environment, time would soon come when the earth would be depleted of all its resources. It would ultimately destroy all lives. Therefore duties are important for the survival of mankind. We have to play roles as sons, daughters, husbands, wives, brothers and soon. We have obligations and responsibilities towards our country, our state and our city or town. In India, we believe that we have duties towards the Creator (God) who has created us as human beings, the highest species on earth. 'The Bhagavad Gita' says that we should perform our duties. First we should not think of the results but of action only. Lord Krishna says that Karma (actions) alone must be the priority of all human beings.
- (6) **Death:** Death has always been an enigma. Is it the end of life or transition to another life? We, in India believe that death is not the end of life. It is like changing clothes. The Gita says that life is eternal. Soul does not die, it is the body that dies. The soul exists forever, it has no beginning or end only body is born and it is the body that dies and is reborn.

Death is often compared with sleep in literature, philosophy and psychology. Sleep and death are brothers according to old Greek proverb. In sleep, we experience temporary death. We experience peace and rest in sleep. It relieves us from stress and pain of our hectic schedule. Death, like sleep also liberates us from pain and stressful journey of life. Robert Frost uses the theme of Death by calling it 'sleep'.

“And miles to go before I sleep
And miles to go before I sleep”

2.8 STRUCTURE/DICTION/STYLE OF THE POEM

The poem '*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*' has four stanzas of four lines each. All quatrains have metrical pattern of iambic tetrameter. Each line has four iambic feet which are made up of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.

U / U / U / U /
U / U / U / U /

The woods | are love | ly dark | and deep

Syllable:

Note : (U) indicates unstressed syllable and (/) indicates stressed syllable.

Unstressed syllable is a low beat and the stressed one is high beat. In Iambic Tetrameter, there are four feet with rising rhythm.

The rhyme scheme of the poem is aaba, bbcd, ccde, dddd

Whose woods these are I think I know	A
His house is in the village though;	A
He will not see me stopping here	B
To watch his woods fill up with snow	A

(‘Know’, ‘though’ and ‘snow’ rhyme while the third line does not rhyme)

Robert Frost’s diction is simple and often colloquial. The poem contains simple images from rural life like horse, woods, darkness, freezing cold, snow, promises, distance and sleep etc. These simple images are symbolic, for example, ‘dark wood’ symbolize mystery of life, promises stand for obligations and ‘sleep’ stands for death. The poet has used several poetic devices like alliteration, metaphors and personification. The horse ‘thinks’ and ‘asks’ the speaker like a human being and therefore the ‘horse’ is an example of personification. The examples of alliteration are; whose woods/his house/ watch his woods fill up with/ he gives his harness/dark and deep.

The repetition of final line reiterates and reaffirms the idea of promises and obligations the narrator has to fulfill.

Check Your Progress: 1

2.9 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN BRIEF.

1. Where does the speaker stop? Why?

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2. Does the speaker know about the owner of the woods? Where does the owner of the woods live?

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3. Why does the horse think the speaker's stopping by the woods queer?

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4. Describe the place where the speaker stops in the woods.

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5. Why does the horse give his harness bells a shake?

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6. In silence of woods, what are the two sounds the speaker hears?

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7. Why does the speaker decide to move on?

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8. Explain the message of the poem in brief.

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Check Your Progres: 2

2.10 CHOOSE THE CORRECT OPTION FROM GIVEN BELOW.

1. *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* is poem by
(a) Robert Frost (b) John Keats
(c) William Wordsworth (d) Emily Dickinson
2. *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* was published in
(a) 1921 (b) 1923
(c) 1947 (d) 1950
3. *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* has
(a) five stanzas (b) four stanzas
(c) three stanzas (d) two stanzas
4. Quatrain contains _____lines
(a) five (b) four
(c) three (d) two
5. The horse is puzzled why the speaker
(a) is unhappy (b) is shocked
(c) stopped by the woods (d) stopped by the lake
6. The horse gives his harness bells a shake
(a) to awaken him (b) to caution him
(c) to ask him if there was any mistake
(d) to ask him to move on
7. It was the _____ evening of the year.
(a) hottest (b) coldest
(c) darkest (d) the most fearful

8. The speaker was enticed by
 - (a) the beauty of woods
 - (b) the dark evening
 - (c) deep forest
 - (d) frozen lake
9. The speaker finally decides
 - (a) to stay in the forest
 - (b) to rest amidst woods
 - (c) to move on
 - (d) to go to a farm house
10. To keep promises means
 - (a) to obey orders
 - (b) to follow rules
 - (c) to live honestly
 - (d) to fulfill one's obligations
11. 'Sleep' symbolizes
 - (a) death
 - (b) suicide
 - (c) life
 - (d) uncertainty
12. The speaker finally realizes that
 - (a) life is mysterious
 - (b) life is full of beauty.
 - (c) life is full of temptations
 - (d) life is not just beauty but it is duty.

2.11 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have learnt that poetry is the most compact and meaningful form of literature. Great poetry is always profoundly philosophical, reflective and meditative. Poetry deals with the issues of life aesthetically. As we have stated earlier, a single stanza of a poem can epitomize the philosophy of life that a volume of prose work can do. It holds mirror up to nature and the world vividly.

2.12 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. Works by Robert Frost at Project Gutenberg
2. Robert Frost, Poetry Foundation
3. Robert Frost (1995) Poirier, Richard, Richardson, Mark eds. Collected poems.
4. Deirdre, J. Fagan (1 January 2009) critical companion to Robert Frost: A Literary Reference to its life and work.
5. www.britannica.com
6. Wikipedia.org
7. <https://www.aresearchguide.com/>
8. www.enotes.com
9. <http://study.com>

Answers

1. (a), 2. (b), 3. (a), 4. (b), 5. (c), 6. (c), 7. (c), 8. (a), 9. (c), 10. (a), 11. (a), 12. (d)

: STRUCTURE :

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 About the Author
- 4.2 About the Story
- 4.3 Text of the Story
- 4.4 Key Words
- 4.5 The Summary of the Story
- 4.6 Critical Analysis of the Story
- 4.7 Tone of the Story
- 4.8 Theme of the Story
- 4.9 Diction and Style of the Story
- 4.10 The title of the Story
- 4.11 Questions (answer in brief)
- 4.12 Multiple Choice Questions
- 4.13 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.14 Books Suggested

Answers

3.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall study

- The famous short story *The Last Leaf* by O. Henry.
- The characters' analysis of the story.
- An introductory information about the present Poem and Poet
- The text of the story
- The critical analysis and tone of the story
- The diction and style of the story
- The plot, setting and characters of the story

3.1 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

O. Henry (1862-1910) was born under the name William Sydney Porter in North Carolina in 1862. His father was a physician. He lost his mother when he was only three years old. After his mother's death he and his father went to live with his paternal grandmother. As a student, he was an avid reader and read classics. He was also a skilled guitar and mandolin player. He began to work in a drugstore of his uncle in 1879. Then in 1881, he became a licensed pharmacist.

O. Henry moved to Texas in 1882 hoping to get rid of persistent cough that he had developed. He began to live in a sheep ranch, learned shepherding, cooking and baby-sitting. He tried different jobs from pharmacy to drafting, journalism and banking. In 1891, he joined the First National Bank in Austin

as a book-keeper and teller. In 1894, he was charged with embezzlement of funds and he lost his job.

After losing his bank job, he devoted full time to the weekly *The Rolling Stone* that published his sketches and short stories. He relocated to Houston with his family in 1895 and began working as a columnist, reporter and cartoonist at *The Houston Post* drawing monthly remuneration of 25 dollars. In 1896, he was arrested for embezzlement at the First National Bank. He took an impetuous step and escaped on July 6, 1986 a day before his trial to Honduras.

Sydney Porter stayed in a hotel in Peru and wrote *Cabbages and Kings* which was published in 1904. It is one of his notable works that included his short stories that displayed facets of life in a crippled town of Central America. He had coined a word 'banana republic' to depict unstable Country of Latin America. In 1897, he heard the news of his wife dying of tuberculosis, so he returned to Austin to be with his wife and family. His father-in-law posted a bail so that he could remain with his wife until her death in 1897. Then he was sentenced to five years imprisonment. At the prison hospital, he worked as a pharmacist and he did not have to live in a cell in the jail.

During this period, he wrote stories which made him quite popular. In 1902, he was released from the jail and went to New York City where he began writing short stories under the pen name O. Henry. He wrote one short story every week for a newspaper in addition to other stories for magazines. His popular collections of short stories include: *The Four Million* (1966) *Heart of the West* (1907) *The Trimmed Lamp* (1907) *The Gentle Grafter* (1908) *The Voice of the City* (1908) *Options* (1909) *Whirligigs* (1910) and *Strictly Business* (1910).

O. Henry's representative collection of short stories was *The Four Million* which stood for New York City and its people. Many stories of this collection depict the everyday lives of the Manhattan inhabitants. O. Henry was skilled in plotting short stories writing in humorous, witty style with surprise endings. Even after his death, O. Henry's stories continued to be collected under the following titles.

1. *Sixes and Sevens* (1911)
2. *Rolling Stones* (1912)
3. *Waifs and Strays* (1917)
4. *O. Henryana* (1920)
5. *Letter to Lithopolis* (1922)
6. *Postscripts* (1923)
7. *O. Henry Encore* (1939)

O. Henry's stories are witty and often lightly humorous. They have twisted endings, life-like characters and realistic setting. His famous story *The Gift of the Magi* is about a young married couple who want to buy Christmas gifts for each other. The wife sells her long beautiful hair to buy a nice chain for her husband's watch. The husband sells the watch to buy lively combs for his wife. *A Retrieved Reformation* is about a safecracker Jimmy Valentine who saves the life of a girl by using his safe cracking expertise. *The Cop and the Anthem* is about New York City hobo who attempts to save himself from

terrible cold by getting arrested and sent to jail. He hears the Church anthem that makes him decide to get out of criminal life. But the police officer arrested him for his suspicious wandering near the Church gate. The court sends him to jail for three months the very next morning.

O. Henry's writing has vivacity, variety and interest. He employs simple, day-to-day speech patterns and rhythm of common folks. His diction is pungent and glittering with an eccentric symbolism. His vocabulary contains a lot of slang words and phrases. His was the most original talent. There is a fine blending of technical excellence, sparkling, wit, abundant humour and fertile imagination.

Towards the end of his life, things began to fallout. His last years were darkened by alcoholism, ill-health and financial problems. In 1907, he married Sara Lindsay Coleman but the marriage was not a happy one and they separated after one year. O. Henry died of cirrhosis of liver on June 5, 1910 in New York. The funeral was held in New York city but he was buried in North Carolina, the state of his birth.

The 'O. Henry Award' is given every year for remarkable short stories in his memory. The federal court house where he was convicted is named as O. Henry Hall. A film was made in 1952 featuring his five stories called *O. Henry's Full House*. The episode based on *The Cop and the Anthem* earned high critical acclaim. It was started by Charles Laughton and Marilyn Monroe. The other stories included in the films were, *The Clarion Call*, *The Last Leaf*, *The Ransom of Redchief* and *The Gift of the Magi*.

In 1962, The Soviet Postal Service issued a stamp commemorating O. Henry's 100th birthday. In 2012, the US Postal service issued a stamp commemorating the 150th anniversary of O. Henry's birth.

3.2 ABOUT THE STORY

The Last Leaf by O. Henry is one of the most acclaimed and widely read short stories. The story begins with sketchy background of the old Greenwich Village where artists have their studios in crisscrossing streets. A traveller would lose his way in these mazy streets. The description of the streets reflects queer, psychological morbidity of the place.

Then the story focuses on the main theme of artist duo Sue and Johnsy. They had met at a hotel and found themselves sharing certain common tastes. Both were aspiring painters who had come to try their luck in New York. They decided to share the apartment living together. Then comes winter with extreme cold, rain and wind Johnsy becomes the victim of pneumonia. The doctor examines her and tells Sue that Johnsy won't have much chance of survival if she does not have a strong will to live, Johnsy had already lost hope to live. She awaited her death watching the falling leaves of an ivy vine on a brick wall nearby. She watched and counts the leaves thinking that she would die with the fall of the last leaf.

Sue scolds her for her stupid belief but Johnsy's mind is gripped by the falling of the last leaf and her death. Sue tells this to Behrman, an old painter who had nurtured the dream of painting a masterpiece. He was a frustrated artist who survived by painting ads and posters. To save young Johnsy, the old Behrman painted the last leaf on the wall after all the leaves had fallen. It was a rainy night and he climbed the ladder with a lantern in his hand and painted his masterpiece.

The painted leaf inspired Johnsy to live and she began to recover soon. Sue told Johnsy that old Behrman had died of pneumonia as he had painted the moveless last leaf on the brick wall on a rainy and windy cold night. She said that it was his real masterpiece.

Behrman sacrificed his own life to save Johnsy, proving that art triumphs over death. The ironical twist to the plot makes the story very interesting. It comes unexpectedly resulting into tragic-comic note.

The Last Leaf is a perfect short story with brevity compactness and neatness. All the elements of the story-plot, characters, dialogue, setting and description are organically connected with one another. There is an ironical twist at the end of the story which is both surprising and convincing. The story epitomizes the Christian parable of Resurrection and sacrifice. The story *The Last Leaf* displays O. Henry's writing skills compact plot, terse dialogues that suit the speakers and twisted ending. Behrman's chivalric action forms the main theme of the short story. Sue and Johnsy's close bonding represents true and sincere friendship. O. Henry has employed sound imagery and sight imagery very effectively. Howling wind and beating rain express sound imagery while Johnsy's watching of the falling leaves from the ivy vine through the window displays sight imagery. *The Last Leaf* is a story of passion, hope and sacrifice with a message that real art is human love and sacrifice.

3.3 TEXT OF THE STORY

In a little district west of Washington Square the streets have run crazy and broken themselves into small strips called "places." These "places" make strange angles and curves. One Street crosses itself a time or two. An artist once discovered a valuable possibility in this street. Suppose a collector with a bill for paints, paper and canvas should, in traversing this route, suddenly meet himself coming back, without a cent having been paid on account!

So, to quaint old Greenwich Village the art people soon came prowling, hunting for north windows and eighteenth-century gables and Dutch attics and low rents. Then they imported some pewter mugs and a chafing dish or two from Sixth Avenue, and became a "colony."

At the top of a squatty, three-story brick Sue and Johnsy had their studio. "Johnsy" was familiar for Joanna. One was from Maine; the other from California. They had met at the table d'hôte of an Eighth Street "Delmonico's," and found their tastes in art, chicory salad and bishop sleeves so congenial that the joint studio resulted.

That was in May. In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy fingers. Over on the east side this ravager strode boldly, smiting his victims by scores, but his feet trod slowly through the maze of the narrow and moss-grown "places."

Mr. Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric old gentleman. A mite of a little woman with blood thinned by California zephyrs was hardly fair game for the red-fisted, short-breathed old duffer. But Johnsy he smote; and she lay, scarcely moving, on her painted iron bedstead, looking through the small Dutch window-panes at the blank side of the next brick house.

One morning the busy doctor invited Sue into the hallway with a shaggy, grey eyebrow.

"She has one chance in - let us say, ten," he said, as he shook down the

mercury in his clinical thermometer. “ And that chance is for her to want to live. This way people have of lining-u on the side of the undertaker makes the entire pharmacopoeia look silly. Your little lady has made up her mind that she’s not going to get well. Has she anything on her mind?”

“She - she wanted to paint the Bay of Naples someday.” said Sue.

“Paint? - bosh! Has she anything on her mind worth thinking twice - a man for instance?”

“A man?” said Sue, with a jew’s-harp twang in her voice. “Is a man worth - but, no, doctor; there is nothing of the kind.”

“Well, it is the weakness, then,” said the doctor. “I will do all that science, so far as it may filter through my efforts, can accomplish. But whenever my patient begins to count the carriages in her funeral procession I subtract 50 per cent from the curative power of medicines. If you will get her to ask one question about the new winter styles in cloak sleeves I will promise you a one-in-five chance for her, instead of one in ten.”

After the doctor had gone Sue went into the workroom and cried a Japanese napkin to a pulp. Then she swaggered into Johnsy’s room with her drawing board, whistling ragtime.

Johnsy lay, scarcely making a ripple under the bedclothes, with her face toward the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking she was asleep.

She arranged her board and began a pen-and-ink drawing to illustrate a magazine story. Young artists must pave their way to Art by drawing pictures for magazine stories that young authors write to pave their way to Literature.

As Sue was sketching a pair of elegant horseshow riding trousers and a monocle of the figure of the hero, an Idaho cowboy, she heard a low sound, several times repeated. She went quickly to the bedside.

Johnsy’s eyes were open wide. She was looking out the window and counting - counting backward.

“Twelve,” she said, and little later “eleven”; and then “ten,” and “nine”; and then “eight” and “seven”, almost together.

Sue look solicitously out of the window. What was there to count? There was only a bare, dreary yard to be seen, and the blank side of the brick house twenty feet away. An old, old ivy vine, gnarled and decayed at the roots, climbed half way up the brick wall. The cold breath of autumn had stricken its leaves from the vine until its skeleton branches clung, almost bare, to the crumbling bricks.

“What is it, dear?” asked Sue.

“Six,” said Johnsy, in almost a whisper. “They’re falling faster now. Three days ago there were almost a hundred. It made my head ache to count them. But now it’s easy. There goes another one. There are only five left now.”

“Five what, dear? Tell your Sudie.”

“Leaves. On the ivy vine. When the last one falls I must go, too. I’ve known that for three days. Didn’t the doctor tell you?”

“Oh, I never heard of such nonsense,” complained Sue, with magnificent scorn. “What have old ivy leaves to do with your getting well? And you used to love that vine so, you naughty girl. Don’t be a goosey. Why, the doctor

told me this morning that your chances for getting well real soon were - let's see exactly what he said - he said the chances were ten to one! Why, that's almost as good a chance as we have in New York when we ride on the street cars or walk past a new building. Try to take some broth now, and let Sudie go back to her drawing, so she can sell the editor man with it, and buy port wine for her sick child, and pork chops for her greedy self."

"You needn't get any more wine," said Johnsy, keeping her eyes fixed out the window. "There goes another. No, I don't want any broth. That leaves just four. I want to see the last one fall before it gets dark. Then I'll go, too."

"Johnsy, dear," said Sue, bending over her, "will you promise me to keep your eyes closed, and not look out the window until I am done working? I must hand those drawings in by to-morrow. I need the light, or I would draw the shade down."

"Couldn't you draw in the other room?" asked Johnsy, coldly.

"I'd rather be here by you," said Sue. "Beside, I don't want you to keep looking at those silly ivy leaves."

"Tell me as soon as you have finished," said Johnsy, closing her eyes, and lying white and still as fallen statue, "because I want to see the last one fall. I'm tired of waiting. I'm tired of thinking. I want to turn loose my hold on everything, and go sailing down, down, just like one of those poor, tired leaves."

"Try to sleep," said Sue. "I must call Behrman up to be my model for the old hermit miner. I'll not be gone a minute. Don't try to move 'til I come back."

Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor beneath them. He was past sixty and had a Michael Angelo's Moses beard curling down from the head of a satyr along with the body of an imp. Behrman was a failure in art. Forty years he had wielded the brush without getting near enough to touch the hem of his Mistress's robe. He had been always about to paint a masterpiece, but had never yet begun it. For several years he had painted nothing except now and then a daub in the line of commerce or advertising. He earned a little by serving as a model to those young artists in the colony who could not pay the price of a professional. He drank gin to excess, and still talked of his coming masterpiece. For the rest he was a fierce little old man, who scoffed terribly at softness in any one, and who regarded himself as especial mastiff-in-waiting to protect the two young artists in the studio above.

Sue found Behrman smelling strongly of juniper berries in his dimly lighted den below. In one corner was a blank canvas on an easel that had been waiting there for twenty-five years to receive the first line of the masterpiece. She told him of Johnsy's fancy, and how she feared she would, indeed, light and fragile as a leaf herself, float away, when her slight hold upon the world grew weaker.

Old Behrman, with his red eyes plainly streaming, shouted his contempt and derision for such idiotic imaginings.

"Vass!" he cried. "Is dere people in de world mit der foolishness to die because leafs dey drop off from a confounded vine? I haf not heard of such a thing. No, I will not bose as a model for your fool hermit-dunderhead. Vy do you allow dot silly pusiness to come in der brain of her? Ach, dot poor leetle Miss Yohnsy."

"She is very ill and weak," said Sue, "and the fever has left her mind morbid

and full of strange fancies. Very well, Mr. Behrman, if you do not care to pose for me, you needn't. But I think you are a horrid old - old flibbertigibbet."

"You are just like a woman!" yelled Behrman. "Who said I will not pose? Go on. I come with you. For half an hour I have been trying to say that I am ready to pose. Gott! this is not any place in which one so good as Miss Yohnsy shall lie sick. Someday I will paint a masterpiece, and we shall all go away. Gott! yes."

Johnsy was sleeping when they went upstairs. Sue pulled the shade down to the window-sill, and motioned Behrman into the other room. In there they peered out the window fearfully at the ivy vine. Then they looked at each other for a moment without speaking. A persistent, cold rain was falling, mingled with snow. Behrman, in his old blue shirt, took his seat as the hermit miner on an upturned kettle for a rock.

When Sue awoke from an hour's sleep the next morning she found Johnsy with dull, wide-open eyes staring at the drawn green shade.

"Pull it up; I want to see," she ordered, in a whisper.

Wearily Sue obeyed.

But, lo! after the beating rain and fierce gusts of wind that had endured through the livelong night, there yet stood out against the brick wall one ivy leaf. It was the last one on the vine. Still dark green near its stem, with its serrated edges tinted with the yellow of dissolution and decay, it hung bravely from the branch some twenty feet above the ground.

"It is the last one," said Johnsy. "I thought it would surely fall during the night. I heard the wind. It will fall to-day, and I shall die at the same time."

"Dear, dear!" said Sue, leaning her worn face down to the pillow, "think of me, if you won't think of yourself. What would I do?"

But Johnsy did not answer. The loneliest thing in all the world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious, far journey. The fancy seemed to possess her more strongly as one by one the ties that bound her to friendship and to earth were loosed.

The day wore away, and even through the twilight they could see the lone ivy leaf clinging to its stem against the wall. And then, with the coming of the night the north wind was again loosed, while the rain still beat against the windows and pattered down from the low Dutch eaves.

When it was light enough Johnsy, the merciless, commanded that the shade be raised.

The ivy leaf was still there.

Johnsy lay for a long time looking at it. And then she called to Sue, who was stirring her chicken broth over the gas stove.

"I've been a bad girl, Sudie," said Johnsy. "Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how wicked I was. It is a sin to want to die. You may bring me a little broth now, and some milk with a little port in it, and - no; bring me a hand-mirror first, and then pack some pillows about me, and I will sit up and watch you cook."

And hour later she said:

"Sudie, someday I hope to paint the Bay of Naples."

The doctor came in the afternoon, and Sue had an excuse to go into the hallway as he left.

“Even chances,” said the doctor, taking Sue’s thin shaking hand in his. “With good nursing you’ll win. And now I must see another case I have downstairs. Behrman, his name is—some kind of artist, I believe. Pneumonia, too. He is old, weak man, and the attack is acute. There is no hope for him; but he goes to the hospital today to be made more comfortable.”

The next day the doctor said to Sue: “She’s out of danger. You’ve won. Nutrition and care now— that’s all.”

And that afternoon Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay, contentedly knitting a very blue and very useless woolen shoulder scarf, and put one arm around her, pillows and all.

“I have something to tell you, white mouse,” she said. “Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia today in the hospital. He was ill only two days. The janitor found him on the morning of the first day in his room downstairs helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were wet through and icy cold. They couldn’t imagine where he had been on such a dreadful night. And then they found a lantern, still lighted, and a ladder that had been dragged from its place, and some scattered brushes, and a pallette with a green and yellow colors mixed on it, and—look out the window, dear, at the last ivy leaf on the wall. Didn’t you wonder why it never fluttered or moved when the wind blew? Ah, darling, it’s Behrman’s masterpiece—he painted it there the night the last leaf fell.”

- O.Henry

3.4 KEY WORDS

Quaint	: odd strange and attractive.
Greenwich Village	: District of Lower Manhattan borough in New York City, the home of painters and writers
Tabled ‘note	: Meal at fixed price.
Gables	: triangular part of the house below the roof.
Chicory salad	: Dish of uncooked herbs quite popular in America.
Bishop Sleeves	: Full Sleeves in lady’s dresses.
Mite	: Very small in size
Zephyr	: Gentle wind
Undertaker	: A person who arranges funerals and burials.
Pharmacopeia	: Book of medicinal prescriptions and directions for use
Ivy Vine	: Every green plant with dark shiny leaves.
Goosey	: Foolish person
Satyr	: Greek god of woods, represented as partly man and partly goat.
Juniper Berries	: Berries that give its characteristic flavor to gin.
Serrated	: Having a toothed edge like a saw.
Janitor	: A person hired to take care of a building.
Palette	: A painter’s dish for mixing colours.
Crazy	: mad, passionate

Traverse	: Travel across, go across
Prowl	: move about restlessly, slink, sneak
Congenial	: like-minded, kindred, compatible
Ravager	: Destroyer, destructive
Smite	: Strike with a firm blow
Chivalric	: Characteristic of the time of chivalry and knight hood.
Shaggy	: long, thick and unkempt
Pulp	: soft, wet, shapeless mass of material, mash
Illustrate	: to serve as an example, show demonstrate, adorn
Solicitously	: Carefully, attentively with concern
Bare	: open, uncovered
Dreary	: dull, drab, uninteresting, wearisome
Gnarled	: Rough, twisted and knotty
Imp	: a small, mischievous devil or sprite
Fierce	: ferocious, vicious, and untamed
Confounded	: confused, perplexed, befuddled
Flibbertigibbet	: frivolous, excessively talkative, chatterer
Peer	: look minutely with concentration.
Persistent	: continuous, tenacious, untiring, and unrelenting
Endure	: suffer, undergo, and remain in existence
Dissolution	: Ending an assembly or partnership
Decay	: decompose, rot, perish, and deteriorate.
Acute	: severe, drastic, dreadful, grave, serious.
Nutrition	: nourishment, sustenance, food.
Contented by	: satisfied and happy, gratified.
Dreadful	: terrible, frightful, appalling, horrible.
Drag	: haul, pull, tug.
Scatter	: throw in various random directions, toss, fling.
Flutter	: flap, fly unsteadily, quiver, hover.

3.5 SUMMARY OF THE STORY

The Last Leaf takes place in Greenwich Village, a place where artists live in New York City. The story centers around two young women artists-Sue and Johnsy who share a studio at the top of an old apartment building. When winter comes Johnsy becomes seriously ill with pneumonia. The doctor who examines her says that Johnsy will not survive if she does not have a will to live. He says that Johnsy has already left hope for life and she awaits death. The doctor asks Sue if Johnsy has any unfulfilled ambition or a passion for a man. She says that Johnsy wanted to paint the Bay of Naples but the doctor says that it is not a great cause that would inspire her to live.

Johnsy watches leaves falling from the ivy vine that clings to the brick-wall nearby. She begins to count leaves thinking that she would die with the fall of

the last leaf. It was a stormy and rainy night. Leaves keep falling and Johnsy is waiting for her death. Sue is deeply worried and she tells their old neighbour Mr. Behrman who was an unsuccessful artist about Johnsy's illness and her obsession about imminent death. Behrman always hoped to paint a masterpiece which he never did. However, Behrman stays out on a rainy, chilly night to paint a realistic-looking leaf on the wall. Seeing the unmoved leaf, Johnsy gathers courage and hope and begins to recover. Behrman catches pneumonia from exposure to the rain and cold and dies a few days later. She tells Johnsy about the cause of Behrman's death and remarks that Behrman's masterpiece was the last leaf that saved her life.

3.6 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE STORY

The Last Leaf is one of the most appealing short stories by O. Henry. Its setting is Greenwich Village which is a heaven of aspiring artists and bohemian people. O. Henry depicts the place as the vibrant colony of artists who live in poverty and starvation. Many of them are starving artists who suffer from shortage of food and expose to sickness, cold and hunger. Greenwich Village had been a home for lesbians and gay people in New York a fact which becomes significant in the story as two female characters are romantically involved like true lovers.

The story centers around two young women artists Sue and Johnsy. They meet in a restaurant and discover that they had some common interests in art and food. They decide to work together and share an apartment at the top of a run-down old building. The basis of the friendship of Sue and Johnsy was a shared interest in art and creativity. They soon became emotionally attached. O. Henry describes the dreadful visit of Mr. Pneumonia to the neighbourhood and Johnsy becomes the victim of the fatal disease. O. Henry describes pneumonia as a strange male visitor to depict man as an antagonistic presence in the lives of Sue and Johnsy.

A doctor visits and tells Sue that Johnsy had a one in ten chance of living. He adds that only her passion to live will help her to survive. If she loses hope to live, no medicines will help her in recovery. The doctor asks her if Johnsy is depressed over a man. She tells him that there is no man in the Johnsy's life. The doctor's diagnosis reveals the fact that there is always a strong link between hope and health. She firmly rejects the doctor's suspicion about Johnsy's involvement with any man. She knew that Johnsy was focused only on travelling and developing her talent as an artist. She was quite sure that Johnsy was not interested in man, marriage and children.

Sue sits beside Johnsy's bed and works on an illustration for a magazine. She notices that Johnsy looked out of the window and counted falling leaves from an ivy vine on the brick wall nearby. When she asks her what she was counting, she replies that she would die when the last leaf would fall to the ground. Sue tells her that it was a silly thought as the doctor had already told her that there was a good chance of her recovery. Sue promises Johnsy to buy more food and wine after she sells her illustration for the magazine. However, Johnsy remains unaffected and she says that she wants to turn loose "her hold on everything and go sailing down, down just like one of those poor, tired, leaves".

Sue's work for the magazine shows her poor economic condition. She struggled as an artist and earned a meager income from her work. However,

her promise to buy more food and wine shows her care and love for Johnsy. She looks after all household work in addition to drawing and painting. She tells a lie about the doctor's remark about her health and recovery to motivate her to live. However, Johnsy's desire to die like the falling of the last leaf shows her fading hope to live.

She then goes downstairs to visit her neighbor, Mr. Behrman who was an old, unsuccessful artist. He had tried to paint a masterpiece all his life but in vain. He was a frustrated artist who had turned alcoholic smelling of gin all the time. He was very protective of Sue and Johnsy and cared a lot for them. When Sue told him about Johnsy's crazy obsession about the falling of the last leaf connecting it to her death; he was a bit angry and called her foolish. Sue asked him to pose as model for her drawing; he agreed and came to Sue's studio. While Johnsy was asleep, Behrman kept looking solemnly at the ivy vine.

Behrman was a failure as an artist but he was a man with a milk of human kindness. His angry words about Johnsy displayed his profound concern for her. Under his gruff exterior, there throbbed a sensitive heart. His solemn look at the ivy vine made him worried about the fading life of a nice young Johnsy. He probably decided then to paint the last leaf on the wall that night.

It was a stormy, windy and rainy night. But the next morning, she saw that the last leaf clung tenaciously to the vine. Johnsy was sure that the last leaf would have fallen that night but she found it clinging to the vine bravely. Naturally she was surprised but she still believed that it would certainly fall that day. She was also convinced that pneumonia would take her away from Sue and the world.

Another night was also windy and rainy but the last leaf remained unmoved. Johnsy sat up and asked for soup and a mirror. She said that the last leaf showed her that it was a sin to want to die. She told Sue that she would soon paint the Bay of Naples. The doctor visits again and tells Johnsy that she would soon be all right. Her request for food and a mirror suggests her reclamation of desire to live. The mirror symbolizes her rebonding with herself. Her desire to paint the Bay of Naples demonstrates that her hope had returned with her health. This underscores the story's central idea that life and hope are inseparably intertwined.

The doctor tells Sue and Johnsy that he has to visit another patient Mr. Behrman. He has caught pneumonia and needs to be hospitalized. The next day, Sue tells Johnsy that Behrman has died. The janitor found him sick in his room with wet clothes as if he has been out on a stormy night. In his room, Behrman had a ladder, and painting materials which revealed that he had been out all night to paint the last leaf on the brick wall. The leaf that saved Johnsy's life was not real but it was the masterpiece painted by Behrman.

The story ends with surprising ending that the 'last leaf' was in fact a painting by Behrman who sacrificed his own life to save Johnsy. He knew that the survival of the leaf alone would rekindle Johnsy's hope to live. He always wanted to paint a masterpiece which he could never do but his selfless act of sacrifice made the painting of the last leaf his true masterpiece.

3.7 TONE OF THE STORY

The general tone of the story *The Last Leaf* is bit sarcastic and serious. Though the themes of the story are sickness, poverty and death, the author treats them in less serious manner. He makes fun of the residents of Greenwich Village which serves as the setting of the story. The story begins with sarcastic tone describing cross streets in Greenwich Village where poor artists struggle to survive. O. Henry makes fun of his characters and their shallowness and frivolous temperament. The story is an ideal example of the third person omniscient point of view in which the author shows the attitude thoughts and emotions of the characters clearly and realistically. The story depicts the mood of hopelessness as Johnsy abandons her hope to live waiting for imminent death with the falling of leaves from the ivy vine.

3.8 THEMES OF THE STORY

There are several themes in the story *The Last Leaf*. Let us discuss them in detail:

- (i) **Hope and Health :** Johnsy becomes victim of pneumonia during cold winter. She connects her life with the falling of ivy leaves on the brickwall nearby. It rained heavily and cold wind blew all the time. Leaves kept falling from the vine. Johnsy's obsession that she would soon die when the last leaf would fall down was quite obstinate. The leaf symbolizes life and death. The old artist Behrman paints the last leaf on the brick wall on a rainy night. It gives her hope to live but Behrman dies of pneumonia which he catches because of staying outside on a chilly, rainy night. The doctor tells Sue that the real problem with Johnsy was that she had lost the desire to live. He says that if she had some unfulfilled desires for future, her chances for life would be better. However Johnsy has already abandoned her desire to live and she wants to go sailing down like those poor tired ivy leaves.

When Johnsy sees that the last leaf has remained moveless and clung tenaciously, she is motivated to live. She realizes that it is a sin to want to die. Johnsy begins to recover soon sitting on bed, eating food and hoping to paint the Bay of Naples. Behrman used his art to transfer his hope to Johnsy proving that the last leaf painted by him was his real masterpiece.

O. Henry suggests that physical health is always connected with hope for the future. For restoring physical health, hope is the most powerful cure. Thus hope and health are inextricably inseparable.

- (ii) **Death:** The title of the story *The Last Leaf* conveys the theme of death. The word 'last' signifies close to end or close to death. The life of a tree is connected with the growth and health of branches and leaves. In the story, ivy leaves keep falling due to autumn. Autumn is the season of death of leaves. Johnsy becomes the victim of pneumonia which symbolizes death. Johnsy regains her hope to live and restores her health but Behrman who painted the last leaf to save Johnsy died of pneumonia.
- (iii) **Optimism and Pessimism:** Life is made of dualities such as life and death, hope and despair, day and night, spring and autumn, hot and cold etc. Here there is a theme of pessimism and optimism. Pessimism

deals with gloomy aspects of life; optimism deals with positive aspects of life. Johnsy had plunged into deep abyss of pessimism, waiting for death. She counted the falling leaves. She thought that she would die when the last leaf falls down. However, when she saw that the last leaf clung to the wall moveless, she was inspired to live. Restoration of her hope makes her fill with desire to live and soon she begins to recover. O. Henry conveys the message that one should never lose hope and optimistic approach to life as it is a sin to want to die.

- (iv) **Self-sacrifice:** One of the important themes in the story *The Last Leaf* is self-sacrifice. Behrman risked his life to save Johnsy from death. He painted the last leaf on the brick wall on a rainy and stormy night. He caught pneumonia due to cold and rain and died in a few days. This alludes to Christian doctrine of self-sacrifice that epitomizes the noblest human deed. Behrman always wanted to paint a masterpiece which he could never do. However, the last leaf that he painted on the brick wall proved to be his masterpiece. O. Henry suggests that kindness and passion are far greater than art.
- (v) **Gender and Sexuality:** O. Henry depicts Sue and Johnsy as young female artists who struggle to make way in male dominated world of art. Their behaviour can be termed as feminist in the sense that they challenge accepted notions of women's roles in the society. It is generally believed that women are destined to marry, produce children and devote their energy to domestic duties. Sue and Johnsy thought out of the box and wanted to live independent life in the pursuit of art. They were aspiring artists who struggled a lot leading financially precarious life. They met in a restaurant and discovered that they shared common interests in art and food. They decided to live together in the same apartment confronting the disapproval of the prevalent society.

In the story, we come across several examples where men belittle Sue and Johnsy. For example when the doctor diagnoses Johnsy's pneumonia, he asserts that art is "not anything worth thinking about". The doctor asks Sue if Johnsy was upset over a man. Sue contradicts the doctor's view by saying that for Johnsy no man was so important as her love for art. This shows that both Sue and Johnsy were career-oriented and professional. During the 20th century women struggled to rise above their female sexuality and protested against gender bias and social norms fixed by male dominated society.

- (vi) **The Prevalent Condition of the Artists:** *The Last Leaf* by O. Henry is set in Greenwich Village, a bohemian neighbourhood in New York city. It was famous as a gathering place and residential colony of the painters and writers. The place had criss-cross streets with strange curves and angles. The artists who lived here led financially precarious life earning a very little income. The building in the area was old and dilapidated with low house rent. The place was overcrowded and with lack of proper sanitation. It was exposed to cold weather and outbreak of diseases like pneumonia.

Sue, Johnsy and Behrman tried to make a living by painting but could hardly make both ends meet. Poverty, alcoholism and diseases prevailed in the area making people weak and sick. Behrman always dreamt of painting a masterpiece but he never succeeded in doing so all his life. He made a small income as a model for the artists. Sue also earned a little by painting illustrations for magazines. Johnsy nurtured a dream of painting the Bay of Naples but her poor health and poverty made her trip to Italy almost impossible.

The Last Leaf suggests that even starving artists have stronger social bonding with their neighbours. For them, painting is not only a personal achievement and source of income. O. Henry suggests that a great art is always imbued with humanistic attitude, compassion and love. The friendship between Sue and Johnsy displays sincerity, love and loyalty. Behrman was careless about his health but he was profoundly concerned about Johnsy's deteriorating health. He painted the last leaf to save Johnsy's life which finally resulted into his true masterpiece.

3.9 DICTION AND STYLE OF THE STORY

O. Henry's style of writing is sarcastic and funny. He used diction with colloquialism and slangs. He used literary devices like metaphors, personification and similes. The story also contains symbolism and imagery. There is a lot of colour imagery in the story. O. Henry's stories have surprising ending with ironical twist. His dialogues have speech patterns and rhythms of the language of the common folks with vivacity, variety and vibrancy. His narration in the story is in third person omniscient narrator mode. His description is picturesque and colourful. His style is also humorous just like his plot and characters. In his plots, co-incidences play a very important role creating humorous situations. There is a beautiful combination of wit humour and irony in his writing style.

3.10 TITLE OF THE STORY

The title of the story *The Last Leaf* is quite appropriate as it is the last leaf painted by Behrman saves the life of a young artist Johnsy. Johnsy suffered from pneumonia losing hope to live. She thought that she would die when the last leaf from the ivy vine falls down. It was a stormy rainy weather and the leaves kept falling rapidly. The old painter who lived downstairs painted the last leaf on the wall when he saw that the last leaf (the real one) fell down. He caught pneumonia due to rain and chilly wind. Soon he died but the last leaf that remained unmoved filled Johnsy with a new hope to live. Behrman had a dream of painting a masterpiece which he could never do all his life but the last leaf that saved Johnsy's life proved to be his real masterpiece. The last leaf suggests both desire for death and hope for life.

Check Your Progress: 1

3.11 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN BRIEF.

- (i) Describe the visit of Mr. Pneumonia to Greenwich Village.

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(ii) What is the significance of ivy leaves in *The Last Leaf* ?

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(iii) Describe the friendship between Sue and Johnsy.

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(iv) What is the twist in the ending of the story *The Last Leaf* ?

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(v) How did Behrman catch pneumonia?

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(vi) Why is the last leaf painted by Behrman his true masterpiece?

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(vii) What does the title *The Last Leaf* suggest?

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(viii) How did Johnsy's hope for life revive?

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Check your Progress 2

3.12 CHOOSE THE CORRECT OPTION FROM GIVEN BELOW.

1. *The Last Leaf* is a _____
(a) poem (b) novel
(c) epic (d) short story
2. *The Last Leaf* is penned by _____
(a) O. Henry (b) Somerset Maugham
(c) Guy de Maupassant (d) Ruskin Bond
3. Greenwich village was inhabited by _____
(a) farmers (b) labourers
(c) teachers (d) artists
4. Sue was from _____
(a) Philadelphia (b) Florida
(c) California (d) Maine
5. Johnsy was from _____
(a) Maine (b) New York
(c) California (d) Canada
6. Sue and Johnsy shared common interests in _____
(a) poetry (b) clothes and fashion
(c) food and art (d) sports
7. "Mr. Pneumonia" is the example of _____
(a) simple (b) metaphor
(c) personification (d) climax

8. The doctor said that there was one chance in _____ for Johnsy's recovery from pneumonia.
 - (a) 100
 - (b) 10
 - (c) 20
 - (d) 50
9. Johnsy wanted to paint _____.
 - (a) The Tajmahal
 - (b) The Leaning Tower of Pisa
 - (c) The Bay of Naples
 - (d) The Dal Lake of Kashmir
10. Behrman was a _____ artist.
 - (a) successful
 - (b) rich
 - (c) matured
 - (d) frustrated
11. Behrman had a dream of painting _____.
 - (a) a masterpiece
 - (b) a portrait of Sue
 - (c) a portrait of Johnsy
 - (d) a natural scene of Italy
12. Behrman died of _____.
 - (a) pneumonia
 - (b) cholera
 - (c) typhoid
 - (d) cancer
13. The last leaf painted by Behrman inspired Johnsy.
 - (a) to die
 - (b) to live
 - (c) to work
 - (d) to paint
14. The last leaf painted by Behrman proved to be his.
 - (a) real masterpiece
 - (b) passion for life
 - (c) monumental work
 - (d) piece of art
15. O. Henry was famous for _____ in his stories.
 - (a) figurative language
 - (b) simple diction
 - (c) twisted ending
 - (d) rustic characters

3.13 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have studied one of the most famous stories by O. Henry. The story depicts the important features of an ideal short-story such as single compact plot, small number of characters, realistic dialogues, twisted ending and universal themes. You should have realized how a novel differs from a short-story. A novel has detailed narrator, a large number of characters, multiple setting, dialogues and detailed description of characters and setting. A novel is like a movie while a short story is like a snapshot. O. Henry's short stories have twisted ending that makes his short stories very appealing and effective.

3.14 BOOKS SUGGESTED

Smith, C. Alphonso "The Strange Case of Sydney Porter And O. Henry". *The World's Work: A History of Our Time*, 1916.

<http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/LasLea.shtml#7>

[http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/634.](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/634)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Leaf

<https://www.enotes.com>

<https://www.litcharts.com/>

Answers

Check Your Progress: 2

1.(d) 2.(d) 3.(c) 4.(a) 5.(c) 6.(c) 7.(b) 8.(c) 9.(a) 10.(a) 11.(a)
12.(b) 13.(a) 14.(c)

: STRUCTURE :

- 4.0 Objectives**
- 4.1 About the Author (Essayist)**
- 4.2 About the Essay**
- 4.3 The text of the Essay**
- 4.4 Key Words**
- 4.5 The Summary of the Essay**
- 4.6 Critical Analysis of the Essay**
- 4.7 Tone of the Essay**
- 4.8 Themes of the Essay**
- 4.9 Bacon’s Style and Diction**
- 4.10 Questions (answer in brief)**
- 4.11 Multiple Choice Questions**
- 4.12 Bacon’s Famous Quotes**
- 4.13 Let Us Sum Up**
- 4.14 Books Suggested**

Answers

4.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall

- learn one of the important forms of literature i.e Essay
- in this unit you will study the famous essay ‘Of Studies’ by Francis Bacon.
- themes, tone and critical analysis of the essay

4.1 ABOUT THE AUTHOR (ESSAYIST)

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was a great lawyer, thinker statesman, historian and essayist. He claimed that “all knowledge was his province”. He introduced a new system of thinking based on empiricism. His ultimate goal was to spread practical knowledge for the benefit of mankind. Bacon was knighted in 1603 and rose to the high positions like solicitor General, Attorney General and Lord Chancellor. Later he was forced to leave his post on the charge of bribery. After retirement he devoted himself to literary and philosophical work until he died in 1626.

Bacon’s major works include:

1. *The New Atlantis* (A narrative fiction) (1627)
2. *The Advancement of Learning* (A philosophical work) (1605)
3. *The Idea of Progress* (A philosophical work)
4. *Essays* (First edition) 1597

5. *Norum Ogranum* (1620)

6. *Essays* (Third edition) 1625

Bacon was influenced by Plato, Aristotle, Cicero Machiavelli and Montaigne. He influenced Philosophers of later period such as Thomas Hobbes, Isaac Newton, John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Boyle etc. Bacon is regarded as the father of empiricism who argued that true knowledge should be based on inductive reasoning and careful observation of natural events. Bacon's philosophical works can be divided into three main branches scientific works religious and literary works and judicial works.

Bacon's 'Essays' are written on variety of topics like truth, death, adversity, marriage, love, envy, atheism, superstitions, friendship and so on. His style is terse and epigrammatic. Bacon was a great phrasemaker who coined many phrases and aphorisms. He is frequently quoted by orators, writers and thinkers. In 1999 edition of "The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations" there are around 91 quotations from Bacon's Essays'.

Bacon's essays are like 'dispersed meditations'. He was a great scholar and he quoted famous proverbs in Latin, French, Italian and Spanish. He often quoted directly from The Bible. Bacon's style of writing is masculine and plain. He was not a poet but his style also carries poetic touches. He had a rare gift of seeing analogies in ordinary things of life. His style is characterized by brevity, wisdom and picturesqueness.

4.2 ABOUT THE ESSAY

The Elizabethan Age was the most creative period in English literature. Just at that time, Renaissance took place in England. It was the period of revival of learning in England. Bacon said "Time is the greatest innovator." Bacon was a great thinker, scientist, innovator, statesman and essayist. This essays deal with various philosophical topics like love, friendship, marriage, wisdom, death and so on. These essays are "dispersed meditations" in true sense. They are crafted in terse aphoristic style.

This essay *Of Studies* is one of his most popular and widely read essays. Bacon's language is simple brief and clear. In this essay, he says that there are three main benefits of study delight, cultivation of better communication and a powerful means to solve problems of life. Bacon uses the words delight, ornament and ability for these three benefits of studies. However studies have disadvantage also. Too much study leads to laziness. Sometimes those who study too much become pedantic and show off their pedantry here and there. In true and genuine studies, affectation should always be avoided. The bookish knowledge has no meaning unless it is supported by practical experience of life. Practical experience helps us in applying the knowledge we have achieved from studies to real life situations.

Bacon says that studies are not for mere arguments or contradicting others. One should also keep open mind but not believe blindly whatever one reads or studies. One must cultivate critical attitude to evaluate the views of the thinkers and writers.

According to Bacon, there are different types of books that need to be read in different ways. Some books are to be read in parts skipping through the pages. Some books need to be read completely without missing any part of it. Some books should be studied very carefully and the

reader should ponder over its content with deep concentration. Such books have form and content that can be useful in our practical life.

Then Bacon tells readers about the remedies studies can provide for the diseases of mind. Every subject has its importance and use. For example, history enhances wisdom. It makes readers wise and understanding. Poetry makes the readers more creative and imaginative. Mathematics helps in acquiring subtlety. Natural philosophy makes people grave and serious. Logic and rhetoric teach them how to argue and debate.

These studies make people more civilized and sophisticated. As physical exercises cure the defects of the body, studies can cure the defects of mind. For example, bowling is good for kidneys, shooting for lungs and walking for digestion. In the same way mathematics is a strong cure for wandering, inconsistent minds. The study of laws is an effective remedy for developing good memory and curing bad memory. This essay by Bacon discusses the uses and benefits of the studies and knowledge of different subjects in human life.

4.3

TEXT OF THE ESSAY

STUDIES serve the delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert men can execute and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels and the plots and marshaling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning. By study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they are bounded in by experience. Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them: for they teach not their own use; but that is wisdom without them and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are like common distilled waters flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave, logic and rhetoric able to contend. Absent studies in mores. Nay there is no stound or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies: like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again. If his wit

be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the schoolmen; for they are *cyminisectors*. If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt. - **Francis Bacon**

4.4 KEY WORDS

Delight	: pleasure, joy, happiness
Discourse	: written or spoken communication debate, discussion
Execute	: to implement, to put into practice
Counsel	: advice , guidance, instruction
Marshall	: to bring to gather, to organize people or things to achieve some aim
Sloth	: Laziness
Affectation	: pretension, show, pretense, snobbery
Crafty	: Cunning, tricky, wily, sly
Contemn	: to treat with contempt, despise, disdain
contradict	: deny, refute, dispute, counter
Confute	: prove a person or an assertion wrong
Swallow	: gulp down, devour, eat up
Diligence	: persistent work, effort, industriousness
Deputy	: inordinate, assistant, proxy, adjutant
Extract	: to squeeze out pluck out draw out
Distilled	: purified, refined, processed
Flashy	: showy, flamboyant, expensive, brightly-coloured.
Conference	: meeting , formal meeting for discussion
Confer	: to grant a title degree or right
Wit	: intelligence, cleverness, humour, good sense
Grave	: serious, solemn sober
Rhetoric	: oratory , art of effective speaking
Contend	: struggle to surmount difficulty
Stond	: hindrance, halt, post, stand
Impediment	: obstruction, obstacle, barrier
Abeunt studia	:
in Mores	: (Latin) Studies determine character
Wrought	: Shaped by hammering, fashioned in a certain way
Demonstration	: proof, confirmation, display, presentation
Apt	: suitable, appropriate
Distinguish	: differentiate, separate
Cymini sectoros	: hairsplitters/ dividers of cumin seeds, skilled in analysis
To call up	: to call someone to do something, to invite
Defect	: shortcoming

4.5 SUMMARY OF THE ESSAY

The Essay *Of Studies* by Bacon is regarded as his masterpiece which possesses rich vocabulary, fresh ideas and highly useful and relevant themes. It appeals to people of all times. Bacon highlights the importance of Studies in the beginning of the essay. Studies have three main benefits: delight, better communication and a remedy for solving problems of life. Studies without practical application is meaningless. True learned people execute plans quite efficiently. Bacon further says that reading makes a full man; conference a ready man and writing makes an exact man.

Bacon states that too much study leads to laziness. Pedantry and affectation are the blemishes of superfluous studies. Studies are not for arguments and contradicting others. One should be open minded in order to learn but one must not accept everything blindly. Critical attitude is necessary in genuine study. Bacon further says that some books are shallow: some are packed with meaning. Therefore some books can be read in parts and some need to be read carefully and with deep concentration. Bacon says that studies help in removing certain defects in a person and make one wise and understanding. Studies also make a person civilized and refined in behavior and attitude.

4.6 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ESSAY

Of Studies is one of the most popular essays of Francis Bacon. It is formal essay with a serious tone. It is an intellectual discourse that appeals seriously to the intellectual readers. It is also didactic in nature. It is full of wisdom and knowledge. It aims at teaching the readers the value of knowledge in pragmatic manner.

Francis Bacon uses the methods of comparison and contrast showing similarities and differences in the topics discussed in the essay. He also uses the method of illustration giving example for explaining his arguments and statements. For example, he compares and contrasts different types of books and how they should be read. He says "Some books are to be tasted, other to be swallowed and a few to be chewed and digested".

Bacon's essays are reflective in nature. They are short pieces with profound philosophical ideas written in aphoristic style. Like a lawyer, he tries to convince the readers and prove his points.

Of Studies deals with the themes of studies. He says that three important purposes of studies are providing pleasure, more effective communication and enhancing our capabilities. Bacon also briefly states that excessive studies lead to laziness, vanity and hypocrisy. True education and knowledge should be backed by practical experience. He says that knowledge without practical experience and application is harmful and worthless. Experience makes us wise and judicious. We learn to choose the essence and eliminate the unnecessary things.

Bacon says that cunning and crafty people abhor studies. Simple and ordinary people admire studies while wise people use them wisely to solve the problems of life. They observe and analyze ideas and filter them coming to conclusions quite impersonally.

About reading, Bacon says that one should read not to refute others' ideas or contradict them. It should not be used for pointless discussion or debate.

True study should be analytical and rational devoid of biased attitude. Bacon says that there are different types of books that require different modes of reading. Some books can be given cursory reading only. Some others can be read quickly and in parts. Important books need to be read slowly, minutely and with deep contemplation. Some books can be read by others who provide synoptic view of the books.

Bacon further says that reading makes a full man; conference a ready man; writing an exact man. Reading adds perfection to the personality of an individual. Conference gives a person the skill of arguing and debating. Writing makes a person exact by removing his weaknesses and ignorance. It also helps in enhancing one's memory.

Bacon discusses the uses and importance of studying history, poetry, mathematics, philosophy and logic. History makes a person wise. Poetry makes one more creative and imaginative. Mathematics provides one logical sense and philosophy makes a person serious and moralistic in attitude. Studies are useful in removing certain defects of mind as physical exercises remove physical defects.

Bacon has used some archaic words, some figures of speech and Latin phrases in this essay. This style is straightforward, direct and assertive.

4.7 TONE OF THE ESSAY

Bacon's essays are reflective and philosophical in nature. His essays always appeal to the intellect. *Of Studies* is an essay with a serious, reflective tone. It discusses the uses and benefits of studies. It also discusses its disadvantages. The essay very aptly explains how different types of books should be read and how different fields of study help the readers by curing certain types of mental problems of the readers. The essay is didactic and expository in tone.

4.8 THEMES OF THE ESSAY

Of Studies is the first essay of the first collection of ten essays by Francis Bacon published in 1597. In the edition of 1612, it was revised adding new sentences and changing some words. The theme of the essay is "Studies" Bacon was a thinker and pragmatic philosopher. He believed that one must put one's theoretical knowledge into practice. Knowledge without practical experience is meaningless. He says "Studies serve for delight and aesthetic pleasure. They also help in decoration of speech and effective communication. Studies also help in developing and sharpening one's ability".

Bacon advocated scientific enquiry in studies. He says that studies "perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants that need proyning (pruning) by study".

Bacon also discusses the disadvantages of superfluous and pedantic studies. He says that too much study makes a man lazy. Superfluous study makes a person snobbish and pedantic. Crafty men condemn studies; simple admire them while the wise make use of it wisely. True wisdom can be achieved through keen observation and critical analysis. Bacon makes a very systematic classification of different types of books. He says that some books are shallow and they can be read in parts skipping some parts of them. There are some books that need to be chewed and digested. Bacon says that different fields of study help in different ways" history makes men wise; poets witty;

mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend”.

Studies also remove certain defect of human mind as physical exercises remove physical ailments or defects. *Of Studies* deals with the theme of benefits of study uses of study, disadvantages of study, knowledge, wisdom and how different kinds books should be read. The essay is full of profound wisdom, experience and observation.

4.9 BACON’S STYLE AND DICTION

Bacon’s style is full of vitality and clarity of thought and language. Bacon’s essays are often didactic and expository. He used the method of comparison and contrast in his essays. He borrowed references and quotes from great Greek and Latin thinkers, philosophers and writers. He also quoted from the Bible quite frequently. In *Of Studies*, he used figures of speech like similes and litotes. Litotes is an understatement in which positive statement is expressed by negating its opposite for example; “To spend too much time in studies is sloth”.

Bacon used archaic words like “maketh” (makes) “doth” (does) nay (no), stond (hindrance) etc. In this essay Bacon has used Latin phrases(i) (cumiectaries (skilled in qualities) and a Abuent studia in Mores in mores (studies determine character)

Bacon made use of parallelism by using parallel sentences, structures, phrases, clauses and words. He often used colon, semi colon and comma to juxtapose parallel or opposite sentences, phrases clauses etc. His technique is straightforward and assertive. There is a fine combination of thought and brevity and picturesqueness. His style is aphoristic and his words, phrases and quote are often quoted. His quotes are like gems of wisdom.

Check Your Progress: 1

4.10 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN BRIEF.

1. What are the uses of studies according to Bacon?

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2. How do the expert men use studies?

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3. What are the disadvantages of too much studies?

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4. What does Bacon compare natural abilities with natural plants?

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5. What is the importance of practical experience in studies?

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6. Why do crooked and crafty men contemn (condemn) studies?

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7. What is the right way of reading or studying?

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8. How should one read different types of books?

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9. “Some books are to be chewed and digested” Elucidate the statement.

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10. Explain: “Reading make the full man; conference a ready man, and writing an exactman”.

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11. How does the study of history poetry, mathematics philosophy and logic and rhetoric help individuals?

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12. How does the story of certain subjects cure mental problems in an individual?

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13. What are the characteristics of Bacon’s style of writing?

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Check Your Progress: 2

4.11 CHOOSE THE CORRECT OPTION FROM GIVEN BELOW.

1. Francis Bacon belonged to _____ period.
(a) Renaissance (b) Reformation
(c) Augustan (d) Romantic
2. Francis Bacon is mainly known for his _____.
(a) plays (b) novels
(c) essays (d) scientific works
3. Bacon rose to the position of _____.
(a) Prime Minister (b) Education Minister
(c) Treasurer (d) Lord Chancellor
4. Bacon introduced new system of thinking based on _____.
(a) logic (b) spirituality
(c) empiricism (d) emotion
5. 'The Advancement of learning is a _____ work by Bacon
(a) empirical (b) philosophical
(c) scientific (d) literary
6. Bacon believed that knowledge should be based on _____.
(a) inductive reasoning (b) deductive reasoning
(c) philosophy (d) morality
7. Francis Bacon's style is called _____.
(a) romantic (b) logical
(c) epigrammatic (d) lucid
8. Bacon's essays are called _____.
(a) jottings (b) contemplative
(c) dispersed meditations (d) philosophical reflections
9. According to Bacon studies have three benefits viz.
(a) happiness, love and compassion
(b) truth, love and mercy
(c) delight, ornament and ability
(d) entertainment, wisdom and understanding
10. Too much study leads to _____.
(a) stupidity (b) hypocrisy
(c) wavering of mind (d) laziness
11. Bacon says that in true studies _____ must be avoided.
(a) laziness (b) seriousness
(c) affectation (d) sensitivity

12. True knowledge, according to Bacon should be supported by _____
 (a) practical experience (b) hard work
 (c) sincerity (d) emotional attitude
13. Good books require _____
 (a) deep concentration (b) speedy reading
 (c) repeated reading (d) reading of reference books
14. Bacon says that history makes men _____
 (a) noble (b) good
 (c) emotional (d) wise
15. Bacon says that study of mathematics cures _____
 (a) wandering mind (b) silly mind
 (c) sick mind (d) sad mind
16. According to Bacon, scholastic philosophy is good for _____
 (a) sad mind (b) nervous mind
 (c) muddled mind (d) inconsistent mind

4.12 BACON'S FAMOUS QUOTES

- ❖ Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready and writing an exact man.
- ❖ A bachelor's life is a fine breakfast, a flat lunch and a miserable dinner.
- ❖ Knowledge is power
- ❖ In order for the light to shine so brightly, the darkness must be present.
- ❖ Truth is the daughter of time not of authority.
- ❖ Some books should be tasted, some devoured but only a few should be chewed and digested thoroughly.
- ❖ Read not to contradict and confute, not to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider.
- ❖ Imagination was given to man to compensate him for what he is not; a sense of humour to console him for what he is.
- ❖ It is sad fate for man to die too well known to everybody else, and still unknown to himself.
- ❖ Money is a great servant but a bad master.
- ❖ Wonder is the seed of knowledge.
- ❖ The job of the artist is always to deepen the mystery.
- ❖ There are two ways of spreading light to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.
- ❖ Silence is the sleep that nourishes wisdom.
- ❖ Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other.
- ❖ Nuptial love maketh mankind, friendly love perfecteth it; but wanton love corrupteth and embaseth it.

4.13 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have studied one of the most thoughtful essays by Francis Bacon. Bacon's views on studies are quite relevant today also. Bacon believes that true knowledge must be supported by practical experience. Mere knowledge without practical experience is shallow and useless. Mahatma Gandhi always emphasized on practical knowledge and skills. He said that in true education, three should be developed. Three "H's" mean head hands and heart. Head stands for intellectual development hands for skill development, and manual labour and heart for emotional enhancement.

Bacon's views on studies are not only thoughtful but pragmatic. To understand Bacon's pragmatism you are recommended to read his essays on love, death, adversity, religion, atheism and so on. You are also advised to read and learn his famous quotes.

4.14 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. "Understanding the Essay" Edited by: Patricia Foster; Jeff Porter
2. <https://www.thoughtco.com/of-studies-by-francis-bacon-1688771>
3. <https://www.enotes.com>

Answers

Check Your Progress: 2

1. (A), 2. (D), 3. (D), 4. (C), 5. (C), 6. (A), 7. (C), 8. (D), 9. (C), 10. (D),
11. (C), 12. (A), 13. (C), 14. (D), 15. (A), 16. ()

: STRUCTURE :

- 5.0 Objectives
 - 5.1 About the Author (Speaker)
 - 5.2 J. Krishnamurti's Philosophy
 - 5.3 About the Speech/Talk by J. Krishnamurti
 - 5.4 Text of the Essay
 - 5.5 Key Words
 - 5.6 Critical Analysis and Explanation of the Talk
 - 5.7 Tone of the Talk (Speech)
 - 5.8 Theme of the Talk
 - 5.9 Language and Style
 - 5.10 Questions (answer in brief)
 - 5.11 Multiple Choice Questions
 - 5.12 Some Famous Quotes of J. Krishnamurti
 - 5.13 Let Us Sum Up
 - 5.14 Books Suggested
- Answers

5.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall learn

- *The Purpose of life* essay by Jiddu Krishnamurti
- Tone, theme and language of the essay

5.1 ABOUT THE AUTHOR (SPEAKER)

J. Krishnamurti was born in 1895 in a town called Madanapalle in Madras Presidency. His father was a Telugu Brahmin named Jiddu Narayaniah. He was the eight child of Narayaniah and Sanjeevamma. Krishnamurti's parents followed traditional rituals and retained their orthodox roots. Krishnamurti father was an officer in the Revenue Department and he had to remain away from home most of the time. Krishnamurti's mother was a simple, religious woman with generous heart and love for the family. Krishnamurti's eldest sister and mother created a warm and loving atmosphere in the family.

Nityananda was Krishnamurti's younger brother whom he loved profoundly. When Krishnamurti was ten years old, his mother died and his beloved sister also passed away when he was hardly ten years old. Young Krishnamurti felt lonely and unhappy as no one was there in the family to look after him.

Annie Besant, the President of the Theosophical society adopted Krishnamurti and his brother Nitya in their youth. Dr. Besant and other theosophists proclaimed that Krishnamurti was the world teacher whose coming the Theosophists had predicted. Annie Besant and Lead-beater, trained J. Krishnamurti preparing him as the world teacher. They introduced

Krishnamurti to occult

powers. Krishnamurti was made the Head of the organization called the Order of the Star in the East.

In 1925, Nitya died which made him deeply shattered and shocked. This sad event proved to be the turning point in the life of J. Krishnamurti. He revolted against the teachings of Theosophical society. He renounced the role he was expected to play and dissolved the Order of the Star in 1929. He proclaimed openly that truth was a pathless land and one has to search for the truth individually.

J. Krishnamurti died on 7th February, 1986. All his life he travelled throughout the world talking to large audiences not like a Guru but as a fellow traveller. Krishnamurti was regarded as one of the greatest thinkers of our time. He belonged to no school of philosophy or thought. He encouraged questioning to find out the truth. He dealt with problems of modern society analyzing them critically. He wanted people to free themselves from fear, anger, sorrow and the bondage of conditioning. His teaching transcended belief systems, nationalism sectarianism and institutional religions. He explained the working of human mind with great precision and analysis. He told people repeatedly that we are all human beings and not Hindus, Muslims, Christians and so on. His teachings are highly relevant to the modern times.

Krishnamurti left a large body of literature in the form of public talks, writings, discussions with teachers and students. He established several schools in India, England and America which taught the students to question themselves and search for truth.

Major works of J. Krishnamurti are as follows:-

1. *At the Feet of the Master*
2. *Awakening*
3. *The Song of Life*
4. *The First and Last Freedom*
5. *Early Talks*
6. *Freedom from the Known*
7. *Meditations*
8. *Commentaries on Living* (First, Second, Third series)
9. *Krishnamurti Journal* (1982)
10. *Poems and Parables* (1981)
11. *Last Talks* (1992)
12. *Tradition and Revolution* (1990)

5.2 J. KRISHNAMURTI'S PHILOSOPHY

(The core ideas of J. Krishnamurti's teachings)

To understand J. Krishnamurti, it is necessary to understand his core ideas. First of all, he believed that truth is a pathless land and there is no fixed path to truth. He was opposed to Gurudom, organizations, institutions, and followers. He also always questioned authority of scripture and so called shastras. He believed that religion was "a frozen thought of man".

According to J. Krishnamurti, people do not know how to listen and see. Usually when people listen, their minds either blindly accept or reject what

is said. The same is true of seeing. When people seeing something, they compare it with past experience or seeing. Thought is past and it always hinders present experience of seeing. J. Krishnamurti said that one must be totally attentive where is no hindrance of past or ego. He called it choiceless awareness.

J. Krishnamurti said that the unconscious mind is a storehouse of desires, hopes, fears, worries, prejudices and so on. We give name to each experience and it is stored in our memory. When we experience or feel something, the past memory hinders it marring the present experience. Thinker is not different from thought and "I" is an illusion that always deprives us of pure perception and happiness.

J. Krishnamurti said that suffering is the greatest problem of mankind. He believed that suffering arises out of fear and insecurity. Fear exists in relationships and not in isolation. It is usually about past or future. If one is free from past or future, there would be no fear. Fear is born out of conflicts of mind. Desire is also the cause of fear. To be free from desire, one must understand the process of ego.

J. Krishnamurti's idea on death is unique. To die means to be free from all attachments, fears and sufferings. In fact, we die every day, every moment. Love and death are synonymous. In true love, one is free from all attachments and fears. Love can exist only when there is total freedom. If individual is free and happy, the world too would be free and happy.

J. Krishnamurti was against traditions of dead past. He said that traditions are sterile and stagnant without freshness. He was also opposed to narrow minded chauvinism, nationalism, war and violence of all kinds. At the core of his thinking there is the problem of conditioning. We are conditioned by our cultural social, political and religious milieu. Until, we are free from conditioning, we cannot be free and happy. The purpose of life is to de-condition ourselves and live in 'Present' - Here and Now.

5.3 ABOUT THE SPEECH/TALK BY J. KRISHNAMURTI

J. Krishnamurti was a great spiritual teacher of our times. He was a revolutionary thinker who rejected dead traditions, customs and beliefs. He said that truth is not a ready-made road. It is a pathless land and one has to carve one's path. He opposed the tradition of Gurudom and accepted the famous dictum of Lord Buddha "Be your own light".

The Purpose of Life is a part of J. Krishnamurti's Talks *Life in Freedom* in Benares, Ojai and Ommen in 1928. J. Krishnamurti describes an eagle descending from the mountain tops. It came down into the valley without fluttering of the wings. It disappeared into shadows of the dark mountains. At the end of the day, it returned to its abode in the mountains.

J. Krishnamurti compares the man who has seen the vision of Truth with an eagle. One who has seen the vision of Truth may wander among the transient things of the world but his life is guided by his goal. Like the eagle, he returns to his abode of eternal peace and joy.

J. Krishnamurti says that the establishment of eternal goals is necessary if one wants to disentangle himself from the complications of life. It should not be the goal shown or suggested by someone else but it should be born of his

own experiences and understanding. Once such a goal is set, it will remove all confusions and make clear the purpose of life.

As the ship is lost in the sea without a compass, the man without the goal would be lost in the world of confusion. The man with knowledge of his goal can guide himself by the compass of his understanding.

If the individual does not know his purpose, he would be in a state of uncertainty and chaos. If the person has not solved his problem, the problem of the world will not be solved. If the person is unhappy and discontented, the world around him would be full of sorrow, discontent and ignorance. This means that the individual and the world are inseparable. Therefore J. Krishnamurti used to say "You are the World".

To give understanding to others, the person should have understanding for himself first. J. Krishnamurti says that all people are in search of happiness through religion, scriptures, rituals, yoga, meditation etc. All people are seeking something all the time. The seeking is goaded by desires, passions and longings. When a person sets the goal, he is free from desires, fears and sorrows.

Such a condition exists throughout the world. Man is unconsciously trying to free himself from pettiness, and narrowness. The end of this search is freedom and eternal happiness. Man wanders from life to life, temples to temples, from one creed to another. He accepts, rejects and accepts again. The process of accumulation and rejection entangles him like a butterfly against the windowpane.

Life is molded by one's desires of his heart. If the desire is for a noble life, the life of the person becomes beautiful. Like earthen vessels beautiful or ugly life is fashioned according to the purpose which one has established for himself. If the goal for happiness and freedom is established, life becomes simple. Time is a binder of life but the moment one is free, he is beyond time. Then one can guide himself without any outside authority. The person would be free from fear and his only ultimate goal would be absolute truth.

5.4 TEXT OF THE ESSAY

For the well-being of the mind and heart, understanding is as essential as a warm fire on a cold night.

People imagine that they can attain by some miraculous process, that they can find Truth by the mere outward form of worship, that they can discover their goal by the continual repetition of prayers and chants, or by the performance of yoga, puja and other rites. You can only discover that which you desire, that for which your heart longs, and for which your mind craves, by yourself, through the purification of the heart and mind.

If you would understand Truth you must remove from your heart those stones and weeds which strangle its full growth.

Where there is narrowness of mind and limitation of heart, Truth cannot enter. If you would climb to that height where there are eternal snows, you must leave behind you the accumulation of your possessions, you must be hardened and well trained; and your heart must be filled with the desire of attainment. For those who have no fixed purpose there is renunciation and self-sacrifice; there is sorrow, grief and pain, endless struggle and violent dissatisfaction.

But for those who have the fixed purpose to attain the Truth which is the unfoldment of life -though they may dwell in the valley of the shadows- there is no sacrifice, there is no struggle.

Because you have no fixed purpose all the shadows of the valley entice you, wrap you in their soft fogs, so that you lose the ecstasy of life. But if you have established your goal, which is the goal of the world -the attainment of the Kingdom of Happiness through freedom from all experience- then you can control the future, then you are the creator of that which you desire. If you can pass through the valley of the shadows with eyes eternally fixed upon the mountain-top, then you can have all experiences without creating barriers between yourself and the goal. This is the understanding of life which will bring order out of chaos and it is for that purpose that the Beloved has come. As the true artist, who by his imagination creates beauty out of the chaos around him, out of the confusion which exists in the world, so the Beloved, Truth, creates order in the mind and heart of those who understand. When you understand, you will have solved the problem of your daily life. If there is no struggle within to free yourself from the cage of sorrow and pain, from the limitations which cause confusion, then, however much I may knock at the door of your heart, there will be no response. But the moment you yourself are dissatisfied, the moment you yourself desire to escape and to attain liberation, then you yourself seek the source of Truth.

Those who seek for an understanding of life must fix their inward perception on eternal Truth which is the unfolding of life.

To those who live and have their being in the valley, the mountains are mysterious, hard, cruel, and eternally aloof. The mountains never change; they are ever constant, never yielding. So it is with Truth. To those who live in the valley of shadows, of transient things, Truth seems terrible, hard and cruel.

Everywhere, among all people, there is a search for something hidden, for some realization, which will give wisdom, greater knowledge, greater vision, greater understanding; this the people call Truth.

They think that Truth lies hidden in some distant place, away from life, away from joy, away from sorrow. But Truth is life, and with an understanding of life there is born an understanding of Truth. When you are fulfilling life with understanding you are the master of Truth.

Though there is at the present time a revolt against tradition and the established order of things, against morality in the narrow sense, yet the majority of people still judge and try to understand life from the prejudiced point of view of a limited and settled mind. A Hindu will only recognize Truth when it is presented to him through the medium of Hinduism, and so it is with the Christian and the Buddhist. But Truth is never contained in a particular form or medium. Truth can only be understood with an unbiased mind, capable of detachment and pure judgment.

As every human being is divine, so every individual in the world should be his own master, his own absolute ruler and guide. But if he would guide himself intelligently, he must be able to judge all things with an open mind and not reject what he does not understand because he is prejudiced.

Truth is the power within each one of you which urges you on to attainment. It is the consummation of all intelligence. It is Absolute. There is no god

except the man who has purified himself and so has attained to Truth.

When you bind life to beliefs and traditions, to codes of morality, you kill life. In order to keep alive, vital, ever changing, ever growing, as the tree that is ever putting out new leaves, you must give to life the opportunities, the nourishment which will strengthen it and make it grow. When life desires to find its freedom the only way by which it can attain is through experience.

There can be no understanding of life, which is Truth, when there is not the thrill, the agony, the suffering, the continual upheaval, discouragement and encouragement of life.

In the olden days, especially in India, those who desired to find Truth imagined that they could discover the way by withdrawing from the aching world, from the transient things, from the shadow of the real, by the destruction of the physical. But now you have to face life as it is, for you can only conquer life when you have a complete and not a partial understanding of it.

Once there was a man who kept all the windows of his house well closed except one, hoping that through that window alone the sunlight would come, but it never came. That is what those people are doing who are bound by tradition, by narrow sectarian beliefs, and who think that Truth is contained in any of those beliefs. You cannot bind life, which is the Truth, by anything, for life must be free and untrammelled. If you do not understand that the purpose of life is freedom, then you are only gilding the bars of your cage by the invention of theories, of creeds, of philosophies and religions.

The basis of all these innumerable beliefs is fear. You are afraid for your salvation, you are afraid to test your own knowledge, and hence you rely on the assertions, on the authority of another.

In order to be happy need we have religions? In order to love need we build temples? In order to fulfill the self need we worship a personal god?

You must give to the suffering world, not beliefs, creeds, dogmas, but new understanding which comes from intelligent cooperation with Nature, through observation of all the events of daily life.

Those who would understand Truth, who would give of their heart and their mind to that Truth, must first have grown in experience. Then experience will guide them, for experience gives intelligence, and intelligence is the accumulation of all experience. The web of life is spun out of common things and the common things are experience.

Learn from every event, from every activity in daily life, and assimilate the experience every moment of the day.

You go to temples or to churches or to other places of worship and there you imagine that you are purified. But does that purification stand the test of daily life?

Your theories, your superficial knowledge of life, do not help you at moments of crisis. When death comes and takes away your friend, your beliefs and theories do not help you to overcome your loneliness and the sense of separation. You will only overcome it if the poison of separation has been destroyed, and you can only destroy that sense of separation by

observing others in sorrow, in pain and in pleasure like yourself, and finding that in suffering as well as in pleasure there is unity.

No one can develop that power which dwells within you but yourself, for that power grows by experience. But experience alone, undirected by the goal you would attain, produces chaos, the chaos which prevails in the world at present. Without the understanding of the purpose of life there is bound to be chaos.

The first demand upon those who would seek the understanding of true happiness, is that they should have the burning longing to be free from all things, to gain that freedom which comes when you are beyond the need for further experience because you have passed through all experience.

If you would understand what I mean by the freedom of life, you must establish for yourself the goal which is liberation even from life itself.

For the understanding of life you must have revolt, dissatisfaction and great discontentment. Many people in the world imagine that they have found Truth by adopting some theory or other, and hence that they have solved the whole problem of life.

Contentment without understanding is like a pool covered with green scum, which does not reflect the bare eye of heaven. It is very easy to be ignorantly discontented, but to be discontented and to revolt intelligently is a divine gift. Revolt with intelligence, with understanding, is as a great river that is full of power.

Revolt is essential in order to escape from the narrowness of tradition, from the binding influences of belief, of theories. If you would understand the Truth, you must be in revolt so that you may escape from all these -from books, from theories, from gods, from superstitions- from everything which is not of your own.

If you would understand the meaning of my words, then throw aside all your mental conceptions of life and begin again from the very beginning. Then you will see for yourself how life works, how life which is the accumulation of all experience speaks through that voice which we call intuition, which guides you and helps you on the onward path.

I would urge you to be free -free from the very gods whom you worship, from the very beings whom you hold dear, because freedom is necessary for the growth of the soul and without freedom there is decay.

Because you do not wish to be free, you seek comfort, and comfort is like the shadow of a tree, it varies according to the sun from moment to moment, and those who seek comfort must move from one abode to another. Comfort cannot dwell with understanding.

The man who seeks comfort, who searches for the satisfaction of the moment, will never find real and lasting joy, for the momentary comfort is as transitory as the flower that is born of a morning and withers at the ending of the day.

When a pond is not touched with the breath of air, the waters become stagnant, and no animal comes to it to slake its thirst. But when the fresh winds come and breathe on its face, then animals and human beings alike can quench their thirst.

So if there is not in you the fresh wind of desire for freedom from all things,

you will not find the Truth which alone can remove the thirst of the world.

When you are free, as the bird in the skies, your life becomes simple. Life is complicated only when there is limitation. Then you need traditions and beliefs to uphold you.

But when you desire to be free from all things, then you break away from the old order and enter upon that new life which will lead you towards perfection which is liberation and happiness.

When you are able to become a flame of revolt, then the means to reach the Kingdom will be found.

We have to create a miracle of order in this century of chaos and superstition. But first we have to create order in ourselves, a lasting order which is not based on fear or on authority.

I have found and established for myself that which is eternal, and it is my work to create order in your mind, so that you will no longer depend on outward authority, no longer be the slave of superstition or of those trivialities which hold life in bondage, and divide you from your goal.

Because you have no true purpose in life there is chaos within you; there is misery without understanding, strife without purpose, and struggle in ignorance. But when you have established the goal of the Beloved in your heart and mind there is understanding in your life. There may still be struggle but it will be with understanding, and there will be greater love and greater happiness. Establish, therefore, within you that which is eternal, and the present shadows will pass away.

When you have established the Beloved in your heart, the source and the end are united and time no longer exists, for you hold eternity within you.

When you have established the Beloved in your heart, you are ready to face the open seas, where there are great storms, and the strong breezes which quicken life.

Because you have the Beloved in your heart, you must be a lighthouse on a dark shore, to guide those who are still enshrouded in their own darkness.

Of what value is your understanding, of what value are your high and noble thoughts, your pure life, if you do not help those who are in constant pain, who are in darkness, and in confusion? Of what value is the Truth you have seen if you are not able to give of that Truth to those who are hungering and thirsting after the eternal?

Because you have understood, be courageous with that understanding, and give of your life to those who are in darkness.

- J. KRISHNAMURTI

5.5 KEY WORDS

breeze	: gust of wind, gentle wind
awaken	: rouse from sleep
peak	: summit, top
jostle	: push, elbow, bump roughly
strife	: struggle, conflict, discord
transient	: temporary, short-lived, momentary
abode	: residence, a place of living

soar	: fly high in the air
establishment	: initiation, formation, foundation/founding
disentangle	: extricate, disengage, untwine
confusion	: chaos, muddle, puzzle
complication	: difficulty, obstacle, impediment
compass	: an instrument which shows directions
perception	: realization, ability to see. here etc. through senses
discontented	: dissatisfied, one who is not is satisfied
ignorance	: lack of knowledge
eternally	: lack of knowledge
eternally	: perpetually, endlessly
attainment	: Achievement
current	: Stream, flow, prevalent, present
ecstasy	: joyful excitement, euphoria, bliss
unconsciously	: unknowingly, with unawareness
complexities	: complication, convolution, entanglement
mould/ mold	: cast, die, hollow container used to give shape to metal
absolute	: Complete total perfect
overshadow	: Cast shadow over something
seek	: Search, attempt to find

5.6 SUMMARY OF THE TALK (SPEECH)

J. Krishnamurti was a seer with a profound vision of life. He rejected stereotype traditions and taboos. He believed that truth is a pathless land and every individual has to seek truth individually. To follow scriptures and Guru would make the person muddle headed. He would be lost in the world of confusion. The person conditioned by religion, scriptures and Guru would never be able to attain truth which is true freedom and happiness.

The Purpose of Life is a Talk by J. Krishnamurti given in Benares, Ojai and Ommen in 1928. It is the part of the series *Life in Freedom*. J. Krishnamurti says that a man without goal would be chaotic condition. He would never be able to attain freedom and happiness. He would be like a ship without a compass.

J. Krishnamurti describes eagle descending from the mountain top into the valley without a flutter of wings. It disappears in the darkness of deep valley. However it returns to its abode in the evening. During the day, it might have struggled a lot but at the end of the day, it is free from jostle of the world. The some it true of a person with a goal of the person has established a goal of life, he would be out of confusion and sufferings.

J. Krishnamurti says that the goal must be set by the person himself and not by others. It must be born out of his own experience. If the person does not know his purpose, he would be in a state of uncertainly and chaos. In fact, the individual is the world. If he is unhappy, there would be sufferings in the world if he is happy and peaceful so will be the world.

J. Krishnamurti says that all people are in search of happiness. Some worship idols, some meditate and some perform rites and rituals. They repeat mantras. Like a boat in the current of water man is pulled by desires, passion and longings such a person has no goal established goal and so he is in permanent confusion and chaos. Such a condition exists everywhere in the world.

All people want to be free from confusion and sorrows of life. They want to be free from fear and enjoy true freedom but they have no fixed goal and therefore, they never be free from complexities of life. They are like a butterfly that knocks against the windowpane.

J. Krishnamurti says that a man can mold his life through the establishment of his purpose. Life would be beautiful or ugly as it depends upon the purpose one has established for himself. The true goal of is happiness and happiness comes from freedom Time freedom is freedom from fear and past. It is freedom from conditioning if one lives in present with choiceless awareness, one would be eternally happy. J. Krishnamurti believed that one has to be the Light unto oneself. Lord Buddha said “ App Deepo Bhava” (Be your own Light)

J. Krishnamurti's talks are highly appealing and thought provoking. He did not advise or guide people like a Guru but communicated with the people like a friend or companion. He called himself a follow traveller. He encourages people to question all kinds of traditions, customs, established religions, scriptures and authorities. He believed that without total freedom, there would be no happiness and peace in the world.

5.7 CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND EXPLANATION OF THE TALK

J. Krishnamurti was one of the greatest thinkers of modern times. He was a great mystic and seer. He was a revolutionary spiritual thinker who rejected old traditions, taboos and rituals. For him, truth was a pathless land. He never claimed to be a teacher or Guru. He rejected the concept of Gurudom. He said that he had no Guru and he was nobody's Guru.

Krishnamurti said that one has to be free from “the known” which denotes conditioning by the past experiences and impressions. He was always against the idea of image making. When we see someone, we do not see the person but judge him by our past experiences and impressions.

According to J. Krishnamurti, our unconscious mind is the store house of desires, hopes, fears, worries, prejudices, likes and dislikes. Our thinking is propelled by our past experiences and impressions. He always emphasized on pure perception. He said that when one sees a rose, his mind interferes with his seeing. Therefore, he thinks about rose, compares it with other roses he had seen in the past but fails to see it as it is. True seeing must be without interference of mind.

J. Krishnamurti said that the greatest problem of mankind is suffering. Physical sufferings are natural but psychological sufferings are created by people the selves. It is born out of fear, insecurity, ego and conflict within the mind.

People are unhappy because of conditioning which is created by social and cultural environment. We always identify ourselves with our country, culture, religions etc. Freedom from conditioning is possible by the freedom from thinking. When mind is totally still and thoughtless there is freedom for the real To BE. Krishnamurti said that thought is made of past. It breeds the sense of ownership. It creates jealousy and possessiveness. The process of

Knowledge is the result of thought. Thought is past. Past is 'known'. The response of the past always overshadows the present, the unknown. Only the understanding of the self is freedom from knowledge.

The Purpose of Life is a part of the *Talk Life in Freedom* on which J. Krishnamurti tells the audiences about freedom and the goal of life. He says that a person without a goal in life is like a ship without a compass. It is pulled by the current of thoughts, traditions and so called religions. J. Krishnamurti describes an eagle descending in to the valley without fluttering its wings. Soon it disappears into the dark shadows of the valley. At the end of the day, it returns to its abode. It goes through strife and struggle during the day but returns to its home in the evening. The same is true of a man. With the vision of the Truth one who has established an eternal goal in life he may undergo the strife and struggle in the world only to return to the abode of peace and happiness. His life is guided by the goal which is established by himself and not by others.

If a person has no established purpose of life, he is in a state of uncertainty and chaos. If the person has not solved his own problem, the problem of the world would never be solved. In fact, the individual is the world. One cannot separate the individual from the world. The world and the individual are one. If the problem, of an individual is solved by understanding, the problem of the world would be solved.

People try to seek happiness in religions, traditions, rituals, customs, yoga and meditation. Some people chant mantras but they are all carried away by desires. Desires make people insecure and unhappy. That is the reason why true freedom is the freedom from desires, thoughts, fears and insecurity. One keeps wandering from one shrine to another, one Guru to another but he remains unhappy because he has not established the goal of his life.

There are many interpreters of truth. There many conflicting paths and religions. So, people remain entangled in complexities. The purpose of life should be freedom from knowledge, thought and desires. Time is a binder of life and so, once the person is free, he is beyond time. One should guide himself never depending on others or any authority. If the person is free from fear there will no conflicts, no fear, no insecurity. There will be only peace, happiness and absolute Truth.

Regarding education, J. Krishnamurti said that we create stereotype human being through education. We teach them to be insecure, ambitious and fall into retrace. We destroy their curiosity, creativity and spontaneity. The education should be to make students creative curious and free from fear. They should be free to doubt and question. Then only they will be able to live happily and fearlessly.

5.8 TONE OF THE TALK (SPEECH)

J. Krishnamurti was a great thinker, philosopher and mystic. His views are profoundly thought provoking and contemplative. This style was conversational and directed to the hearts and minds of the listeners. He always said that he did not teach people but shared his views with his audience in a friendly manner. He called his talk's dialogues. He often asked his audience

“Do you understand what I said?” He said that he was a fellow-traveller of his guidance on the path of truth. The overall tone of the talk is reflective analytical and contemplative.

5.9 THEME OF THE TALK

The theme of the Talk *The Purpose of Life* is the goal of life which is search for freedom. J.Krishnamurti said that people who have no fixed goals of life are like lost ships without compass. Those who know the purpose of their life are free from conflict, fear and ego. They go through the turmoil’s of the world but in a stoical manner. Like an eagle that returns home in the evening at the end of the day, the person with a purpose of life returns to peace and joy even though he goes through the worldly worries and conflicts.

According to J. Krishnamurti the purpose of life is to be free from fear, conflicts and conditioning. True education should focus on inner freedom rather than material gain and worldly success.

5.10 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

J. Krishnamurti prose is chaste, simple and poetic. Very often it has an element of sensuous appeal. He described beauty and peace in nature juxtaposing it against the turmoil and strife in the human world. His description of nature displays his keen observation without interference of past and conditioning. He often describes elements of nature like earth, wind, trees, mountains, flowers, birds etc. There are images of light and shadows in his writings and talks. It is believed that if one has a pure perception, the colours of nature are perceived in their purest forms.

In J. Krishnamurti’s talks and writings valley and mountains are described frequently. For him, mountains symbolize self-realization and the valley symbolizes the mundane world of gloom and strife. The sea, waves, rivers, trees also recur in J.Krishnamurti’s talks and writings. The merging of the river with the ocean is symbolic of the union of the individual with the universal.

J. Krishnamurti’s images appeal to all out senses of sight, smell, touch, hearing and taste. He does not reject is the perception of senses. He always acknowledges what is. His prose is full of imagery and figures of speech. In his talk *The Purpose of Life*, he describes the flight of the eagle in the beginning. Later he describes the people on the Ganga Ghat performing rituals, Yoga or reciting mantras. This power of description is vivid and appealing. There is no artificiality or deliberate craftsmanship in his style. It is natural and spontaneous.

Check Your Progress: 1

5.11 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN BRIEF.

1. How does J. Krishnamurti describe the flight of the eagle in the valley?

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2. How does J. Krishnamurti compare a man with the vision of Truth to an eagle?

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3. How should one set one's goal of life?

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4. Why is a man without goal like a ship without compass?

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5. How is the individual problem's the problem of the world?

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6. What did J. Krishnamurti see when he was going down the sacred Ganges in a boat?

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7. What is the end of search for all humanbeings?

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8. How can life be shaped beautiful according to J. Krishnamurti?

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9. What happens when a goal of life is established in one's life?

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10. What is true freedom according to J. Krishnamurti?

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Check Your Progress: 2

5.12 CHOOSE THE CORRECT OPTION FROM GIVEN BELOW

1. J. Krishnamurti believed that
 - (a) truth is a pathless land
 - (b) truth is a readymade road
 - (c) truth is the goal of life
 - (d) truth can be achieved through scriptures
2. At the end of the day, an eagle returns to
 - (a) a hill
 - (b) a mountain top
 - (c) its abode
 - (d) its goal
3. A man with an established goal also returns to
 - (a) truth
 - (b) freedom

- (c) peace and happiness (d) confused state
4. J. Krishnamurti says that one should set one's goal of life according to
 - (a) shastras
 - (b) one's religion
 - (c) the guidance of the Guru
 - (d) one's own experience and understanding
 5. According to J. Krishnamurti, a man without established goal of life is like
 - (a) steer less ship (b) lost ship
 - (c) wrecked ship (d) ship without compass
 6. If the individual problem is not solved
 - (a) the problem of the world will not be solved
 - (b) the problem of society will not be solved
 - (c) there would be chaos
 - (d) there would be no peace
 7. One can give understanding to others only if one
 - (a) understands the world
 - (b) is religious
 - (c) is happy and free
 - (d) understands himself first
 8. J. Krishnamurti says that all people in the world are in search of
 - (a) freedom (b) happiness
 - (c) love (d) money
 9. The purpose of life according to J. Krishnamurti is
 - (a) wealth (b) health
 - (c) freedom and happiness (d) God

5.13 SOME FAMOUS QUOTES OF J. KRISHNAMURTI

- * The ability to observe without evaluating is the highest form of intelligence
- * It is truth that liberates, not your effort to be free.
- * Real learning comes about when the competitive spirit has ceased
- * Tradition becomes our security, and when the mind is secure, it is in decay.
- * To understand the immeasurable, the mind must be extraordinarily quiet
- * Happiness is strange; it comes when you are not seeking
- * I maintain that Truth is a pathless land and you cannot approach it by any path whatever by any religion by any sect. The moment you follow someone you cease to follow truth.
- * Thought is cunning so clever that it distorts everything for its own convenience.
- * Acquiring knowledge is a form of imitation.

- * Be a light unto yourself
- * To understand life is to understand ourselves and that is both the beginning and the end of education.
- * The only freedom is the freedom from the known

5.14 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you studied a very thought provoking talk by Jiddu Krishnamurti. J. Krishnamurti was a revolutionary thinker who never claimed to be a Guru. He shunned all the frills of the so called seers, saints and Gurus. He asked his audience to seek their own path of truth as he believed that Truth is not a readymade road. It is to be searched by an individual without following any Guru, saint or scriptures.

J. Krishnamurti's views on education are amazingly original and fresh. He wanted the students to be free from all kinds of conditioning, not learning and competitiveness. You are advised to listen to J. Krishnamurti's videos on YouTube and read the books of his talks and writings.

BOOKS SUGGESTED

- Jiddu Krishnamurti, *Life in Freedom*. Talks in Benares, Ojai and Ommen, 1928.
- Jiddu Krishnamurti *Does Life Have A Purpose?* gathering at Oomen, Holland, 1930
- Rudolf Steiner *The Philosophy of Freedom: The Basis for a Modern World Conception* , 2011

Answers

Check Your Progress: 2

1. (A), 2. (C), 3. (C), 4. (D), 5. (D), 6. (A), 7. (D), 8. (B), 9. (C)

