

Grade IX

Lesson 6. No Men are Foreign

- James Kirkup

Poetry

Soul of the poem

We have many ways of thinking of other people as different from us. They may belong to different countries or religions, follow a different lifestyle and speak a different language. But the poet reminds us of the many ways in which we are all the same for we are all humans.

We all are human beings. We follow the same living routine we all breathe, eat, walk in the same way. We all are aware of the sun, the air and the water. We need them equally and use for the same purpose. We all love peace and hate war. Others also have eyes like ours that wake or sleep. In every land, there is a common life. Love is paramount everywhere that wins the heart. When we hate others, fight with them, raise arms against them, it is ourselves that we shall dispossess, betray and condemn. We pollute our own earth where none is foreign or strange. We all have a single common entity and that is of being human.

NCERT Questions

Thinking About the Poem

- (i) "Beneath all uniforms..." What uniforms do you think the poet is speaking about?
(ii) How does the poet suggest that all people on earth are the same?
(i) The poet is speaking about different cultures and civilisations of the world. All men are similar in many ways. There are differences in dresses, religions, ways of living but all have one common entity of being humans. Beneath each uniform, is the same human being everywhere.



(ii) The poet suggests that all people on earth are the same. They breathe, eat, walk in the same way. They all are aware of the sun, the air and the water. They all love peace and hate war. They have similar eyes that wake or sleep. The line 'No men are foreign and no countries strange' express this fact.

2. In stanza 1, find five ways in which we all are alike. Pick out the words.

- a. No men are strange or foreign.
- b. No countries strange.
- c. Single body breathes like ours.
- d. Same land our brothers walk upon.
- e. Same earth we lie in

3. How many common features can you find in stanza 2? Pick out the words.

- a. Aware of sun and air and water.
- b. Fed by peaceful harvest.
- c. Starved by war.
- d. Similar labour (labour not different front our own).

4. ".....whenever we are told to hate our brothers....." What do you think this happens? Why? Who 'tells' us? Should we do as we are told at such times?

This happens when some politicians having vested interest or the religious leaders incite the masses to serve their own interest. They provoke the innocent people to indulge in anti-social activities. No, we should not obey them. We should always remember that we all are alike. By developing hatred for others, we harm ourselves only. The poet also says that we all are brothers and sisters. We should do everything at our own discretion.

Solved Question Bank

Reference-to-Context Questions

Q. Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. Remember, no men are strange, no countries foreign

Beneath all uniforms, a single body breathes





Like ours: the land our brothers walk upon
Is earth like this, in which we all shall lie.

a. On this earth, no two people are _____.

Strangers

b. It is a single body like ours that breathes under _____.

Different uniforms

c. One day all of us will rest in the same soil. True/False

True

d. The words _____ and _____ in the above stanza mean same as 'unfamiliar or alien'.

'Strange, foreign'

2. They, too, aware of sun and air and water,
Are fed by peaceful harvests, by war's long winter starv'd.
Their hands are ours, and in their lines we read
A labour not different from our own.

a. People of all countries are dependent on sun, air and water for their _____.

Survival

b. Each and everyone has seen periods of _____ and periods of war.

Peace

c. The division of labour is just superficial. Inside, we all are one in spirit and soul. True/False

True

d. The word _____ in the above stanza means the same as 'tranquil'.

'Peaceful'

3. Remember they have eyes like ours that wake,
Or sleep, and strength that can be won
By love. In every land is common life
That all can recognise and understand.



a. 'They' refers to _____.

Other people

b. We can win all through _____.

Love

c. In every land people sleep during the day and wake up at night.

True/False

False

d. 'In every land' implies _____.

'All the other countries'

4. Let us remember, whenever we are told

To hate our brothers, it is ourselves

That we shall dispossess, betray, condemn

Remember, we who take arms against each other

a. When we hate our countrymen, we are actually hating _____.

Ourselves

b. In reality, there is no hatred for anyone in anybody's heart. We are all forced _____ our brothers.

To hate

c. Terrorism, patriotism and militancy are some of the reasons for picking up arms against each other. True/False

True

d. _____ in the above stanza means the same as 'cheat or deceive'

'Betray'

5. It is the human earth that we defile,

Our hells of fire and dust outrage the innocence

Of air that is everywhere our own,

Remember, no men are foreign, and no countries strange.

a. _____ are responsible for spoiling the earth.

Humans / Human beings

b. Hatredness _____ the air we live in

Pollutes

c. We can all truly prosper in a peaceful environment.

True/False

True

d. _____ in the above stanza means the same as 'a feeling of shock or anger'.

'Outrage'

Short Answer Questions

1. What does the poet ask us to remember in the first stanza of the poem 'No Men Are Foreign'?

In the poem 'No Men Are Foreign', the poet asks us to remember that under all uniforms, a single body breathes like ours. We all walk on the same land. We all live and work in the same way. So, we are not different from each other.

2. How does the poet compare life with others in stanza III of the poem 'No Men Are Foreign'?

The poet does not believe in narrow patriotism. He says human beings are equal. All the men have eyes like ours. These wake up and sleep equally. Love can win all. There is no difference among the nations.

3. "We are told to hate our brother." How does it affect us?

The poet says that hatred pollutes our own air. When we hate others, we dispossess ourselves. We tend to betray and condemn ourselves. If we hate others, we defile our own earth. Hatred brings only destruction.

4. 'Are fed by peaceful harvest.' What does it imply?

The poet conveys that all men are equal. No men are foreign. All the men living across the world love peace. Peace is loved by all equally. It brings prosperity and harmony.



5. **'Remember they have eyes like ours that wake or sleep.' Who are 'they'? What does the poet convey through this line?**

'They' stands for the men across the world. The poet conveys through these lines that no men are foreign. There is no difference at all. People may belong to different countries or religions, follow a different lifestyle, speak a different language but they are all the same.

6. **What message does the poet convey through the poem 'No Men Are Foreign'?**

The poet conveys the message of universal brotherhood through the poem. He says that the people living in other parts of the world are like us in many ways. There are many common things among the nations. All live, work, eat, walk and sleep in the same way. All hate wars and love peace. We should not hate them as they are also humans like us.

7. **How do all human beings live and suffer the same?**

The poet says that all live and suffer the same. The human body is the same everywhere. All are aware of sun, air and water. All prosper when there is peace. All starve when there is war. War destroys everyone equally.

8. **'Our hells of fire and dust outrage the innocence of air'. Explain.**

The poet conveys that hatred pollutes the air we breathe in. If we fight among ourselves, we create hell only. All prosper in a peaceful environment. The war replaces the innocence of the environment with hatredness.

9. **'Patriotism does not mean hating the people of other countries.' Do you agree?**

Explain.

It is true that patriotism does not mean hating others. We should love our country and have equal respect for others. We should always remember that no men are foreigners and no countries are strangers.

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10. "It is ourselves that we shall dispossess, betray, condemn." What does the poet convey?

The poet conveys that when we hate others, we hate ourselves. No men are foreigners, or strangers. We should not hate our brothers as they are like us in many ways. We should not wage a war against any country as we all are one.

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