



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

Class: XII	Department: ENGLISH	Date of submission: 23.08.2020
WORKSHEET NO: 1	Topic: KEEPING QUIET-PABLO NERUDA	Note: To be written in notebook

THEME: Necessity of quiet introspection and creating mutual understanding among humans. Emphasis on meditation.

Main Points

1. The poet requests readers to keep quiet till he counts up to twelve
2. He requests us not to use any language and move our arms so much for a while as it will become a hurdle in keeping quiet.
3. When there is no rush; no movement and noise of engines, the threat of sudden strangeness will tie all of us together into an exotic moment .
4. This will bring relief to the fishermen in the cold sea and the salt gatherers also will be able to look after their injured bleeding hands.
5. A good sense will also prevail on the war-mongers as they will understand the futility of the same .
6. When environment is in jeopardy; human-existence is threatened on the earth, the survivor of the war will face fatal consequences.
7. Such war-mongers are also exhorted to put on clean clothes and walk about with their brothers .

8. The poet urges us not to mistake inactivity advocated by him for death.
9. He clarifies that single-minded indulgence in the rat-race of self-centred goals leading to materialism is unwarranted.
10. Keeping quiet and discharging our duties peacefully will evolve better understanding in us.
11. The achievement of mental peace will lead us to introspection and mutual understanding. The absence of these two traits amounts to various conflicts in the world.
12. With the development of mutual understanding comes empathy and then our life becomes a pleasant experience.
13. The poet says like the earth the potentials may not be exhibited all the time.
14. Finally, he declares his departure while persuading us to keep quiet.

Extract Based Questions (4 Marks)

Question.1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

**“If we were not so single-minded
about keeping our lives moving,
and for once could do nothing,
perhaps a huge silence
might interrupt this sadness
of never understanding ourselves
and of threatening ourselves with death(Compartment 2014 Modified)**

- (a) Whom does ‘we’ refer to in the above lines?**
- (b) Why does the poet want us to ‘do nothing’ for once?**
- (c) What is the ‘sadness’ that the poet refers to in the poem?**
- (d) How can a huge silence do good to us?**

Answers.

- (a) ‘We’ refers to the human beings, who are always thinking about their own progress and advancement.
- (b) The poet wants us to ‘do nothing’ for once so that our mind can be at peace and we are able to introspect and analyse our own actions.
- (c) The poet refers to the ‘sadness’ which arises due to the fact that people fail to understand themselves. They have no time to introspect about their actions and their consequences.

(d) A huge silence can do good to us because we are able to achieve peace in this silence. It helps us in analysing ourselves and our actions, interrupting the sadness of threatening ourselves with death.

Question.2. Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

**Perhaps the Earth can teach us
as when everything seems dead
and later proves to be alive
Now I'll count up to twelve
and you keep quiet and I will go.**

(a) What does the Earth teach us?

(b) What does the poet mean to achieve by counting up to twelve?

(c) What is the significance of 'keeping quiet'? (All India 2013; Modified)

(d) What is always alive, even when everything seems to be dead?

or

(a) What does the Earth teach us?

(b) Why does the poet count up to twelve?

(c) What will keeping quiet help us achieve? (Delhi 2008 Modified)

(d) How does the Earth teach us that there is activity even in apparent stillness?

Answer.

(a) The Earth teaches us how new life springs from dead remains, and how there is life under apparent stillness.

(b) The poet wants to achieve peace by counting up to twelve. He wants us to introspect in a moment of silence.

(c) Keeping quiet doesn't mean just not speaking. It means that we should avoid all activities which hurt nature and, in turn, hurt us.

(d) The Earth is always alive, even when everything else seems to be dead. There is always some activity going on in nature beneath its apparent stillness.

or

Answer.

(a) The Earth teaches us how new life springs from dead remains. It gives us lessons about sustaining and resurrecting life.

(b) The poet is initiating an exercise in meditation. When he counts up to twelve, the meditator puts away all digressions and experiences bliss. He wants all meditators to experience that bliss.

(c) Keeping quiet will help us introspect, reflect and experience silence and peace. This will in turn help us find solutions to our problems.

(d) Though the Earth appears still, there are so many changes that keep occurring beneath its surface. A seed that seems dead germinates under the Earth and new life springs from it.

Question.3. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

**For once on the face of the Earth
let's not speak in any language,
let's stop for one second,
and not move our arms so much.**

- (a) Why does the poet want us to keep quiet?**
- (b) What does he want us to do for one second?**
- (c) What does he mean by "not move our arms"? (Delhi 2012; Modified)**
- (d) How can this moment of stillness help us?**

Answer.

- (a) The poet wants us to keep quiet in the hope that the moment of tranquility might help us in finding the answers to our problems. We can introspect.
- (b) The poet wants us to be silent and motionless for a few seconds.
- (c) The poet means that we should be in a state of total stillness with no physical activity at all.
- (d) This moment of stillness can provide us physical and mental rest, during which our mind will be at peace. We can analyse our actions and their consequences and avoid rash or thoughtless behaviour.

Question.4. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

**It would be an exotic moment
without rush, without engines,
we would all be together
in a sudden strangeness.**

- (a) What will happen if there is no rush or running of engines?**
- (b) Why would it be called an exotic moment?**
- (c) How would we feel at that moment? (Foreign 2011; Modified)**
- (d) Name the poem and the poet.**

Answer.

- (a) It will be an ecstatic moment of tranquility without rush or running of engines.
- (b) It would be called an exotic moment because it will be an instance of universal peace and brotherhood. In that moment, all of us would initiate introspection through meditation and the whole world will be enveloped in quietness.
- (c) We would feel very strange at that moment, because at that time everyone will have a feeling of oneness with their fellow human beings. It will be a new feeling altogether.
- (d) The poem is 'Keeping Quiet', and the poet is Pablo Neruda.

Question.5. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

**Now we will count to twelve,
and we will all keep still.
For once on the face of the Earth,
let's not speak in any language,
let's stop for one second,
and not move our arms so much.**

- (a) How long does the poet want to stay still?**

(b) What does he hope to achieve by keeping quiet?

(c) What does the poet mean by “not move our arms so much”? (All India 2009; Modified)

(d) Why does the poet suggest us not to speak in any language?

Answer.

(a) The poet exhorts each one of us to count to twelve and then be quiet, silent and motionless for a brief moment.

(b) He hopes to achieve and realize the value of quiet introspection. In this silence, we shall feel that all are together and will experience a strange feeling of togetherness.

(c) By this, he means that we should not make any physical movement, as physical activity will stop or interrupt our introspection.

(d) The poet wants us to simply be silent for a moment and utilize that time to understand ourselves as well as others. Besides, language differences often lead to conflict, which the poet, perhaps, wants to avoid.

Question.6. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

Fishermen in the cold sea

would not harm whales

and the man gathering salt

would look at his hurt hands.

(a) What does the poet expect of the fishermen and why?

(b) While gathering salt, what will the man do?

(c) What do the hurt hands imply? (All India 2008; Modified)

(d) How would man and nature benefit in this moment of silence?

Answer.

(a) In the exotic moment of silence and introspection, fishermen will become conscious of the fact that they are causing harm to the whales. The poet expects this because he feels that at this opportune moment all evil will come to an end.

(b) The man gathering salt will stop for a while at that quiet moment and look at his hurt hands.

(c) ‘Hurt hands’ means that human beings are oblivious of the pain they are causing to themselves in the pursuit of amassing more and more comforts. They have no time for themselves.

(d) In this moment of silence, man will not harm nature, and both human beings and nature will get some time to attend to and recover from their wounds.

Q1. What will counting up to twelve and keeping still help us achieve?

Ans: Counting up to twelve takes a very short time. Keeping still for this brief interval of time gives us a momentary pause to **introspect** and review the course of action. It is generally observed that most of the ills and troubles of the world are caused by our rush or hurry. Violence is caused by anger. Keeping quiet and still will give us necessary respite and ensure **peace**.

Q2. Do you think the poet advocates total inactivity and death?

Ans: No, he doesn't advocate either total inactivity or death. He makes it quite clear that 'stillness' should not be confused with 'total inactivity' or equated to it. Total inactivity brings death. But Neruda has 'no truck with death'. His stillness means halting of harmful and hostile human activities.

Q3. What is the 'sadness' that the poet refers to in the poem? [All India 2014]

Ans: Man's sadness is formed out of his own actions and thoughts. It is quite ironical that man who understands so much fails to understand himself and his actions. Rash actions prove harmful and disastrous. Man is the creator of all disasters. He is always threatening himself with death because of his thoughts and actions. This is the tragedy of his life.

Q4. Why does Pablo Neruda urge us to keep still?

Ans: Stillness is essential for calm reflection and quiet introspection. We hear the voice of conscience in moments of silence. The poet is convinced that most of human ills and miseries are caused by man's hurry and rush to do things. The poet wishes that we may withdraw ourselves from our undesirable actions and keep still for a moment.

Q5. Why shouldn't we "speak in any language" and "not move our arms so much"?

Ans: People of the world speak in different languages. They indulge in unnecessary debates and disputes. Most of these arguments lead to destructive wars. The poet urges people to stop speaking in any language. They must speak through their hearts. So far men have moved their arms only to harm others. Therefore, the poet wants that they should not move their arms so much. Let a feeling of mutual understanding, be created among human beings.

Q6. Pablo Neruda says: "we would all be together in a sudden strangeness."

When can we experience such a moment? Why will that be an exotic moment?

Ans: Non-stop activity, unnecessary rush and noise have made our lives unpleasant and full of misery, pain and troubles. We must stop rushing, hurrying, worrying and running. Even the noise of engines and machines must stop for once. Then all of us will enjoy the sudden strangeness of that moment. It will be a unique moment. In that exotic or fascinating moment we shall feel totally relaxed, physically as well as mentally.

Q7. What does the poet ask the fisherman and the man collecting salt to do? What does he exactly want to convey by this?

Ans: Pablo Neruda is against any kind of violence. He addresses the fishermen and asks them not to harm whales living in the cold seas of the polar regions. He is also against any kind of self-torturing. The man who is gathering salt has hurt his hands. He asks this man to look after himself and take care of his injured hands.

Q8. What are the different kinds of wars mentioned ?

Ans: The poet is against wars of all kinds. He wants a total stoppage of war. Green wars against the environment, wars with poisonous gases and wars with fire must be terminated (stopped) at once.

Q9. What alternative does Pablo Neruda suggest instead of indulging in wars?

Ans: Instead of indulging in wars, the people must come out in their best dresses with their brothers. They should go out for a walk under the shady trees and enjoy themselves doing nothing. This would bring the feeling of togetherness among them.

Q10. How does the poet distinguish 'stillness' from 'total inactivity'? Why does Neruda say- I want no truck with death?

Ans: Pablo Neruda is in favour of stillness or silence. We remain still and quiet for sometime. On the other hand, total inactivity is a permanent suspension of work. It is just like death. 'Stillness' should not be confused with 'total inactivity'. Life goes on as usual. There can't be anything like total inactivity. The poet refuses to associate with death or deal with it.

Q11. Why does the poet feel that we should not be so single-minded'?

Ans: People are generally single-minded. They want to focus on only one thing. They want to keep their lives going. They are ever busy in their pursuit. The poet wishes that they would not be so absorbed with always being on the move. They must have some respite or rest. They too need peace or silence.

Q12. Why do men become sad? How can this sadness be overcome?

Ans: Men fail to understand themselves. They are always threatening themselves with death. When they realize their failure to understand themselves they become sad or helpless. Fear of death also makes them sad. Only a huge silence can interrupt this sadness. Such silence will do them good.

Q13. How might a huge silence interrupt the sadness of men?

Ans: Men never understand themselves. Nor are they ever sure of their actions. They face another tragedy. Due to their own actions, they threaten themselves with death. This realization makes them helpless and sad. Only a huge (long) silence might interrupt this sadness and do them some good.

Q14. Under the apparent stillness there is life. Justify this statement giving an example from the poem 'Keeping Quiet'.

Ans: Neruda does not equate stillness with total inactivity. He believes that under this apparent stillness there is life. We can learn it from the earth. When everything seems dead, the earth still remains alive. The earth is never dead. Life on the earth goes on as usual under the apparent stillness.

Q15. Justify the title 'Keeping Quiet'.

Ans: The title of the poem is quite appropriate and logical. It suggests the necessity of quiet introspection. The people of the world are overactive and always on the move. Their activities have caused untold trouble and suffering. Keeping quiet will do them a lot of good. It will save them from many harmful and violent activities. Moreover, it will help in reflecting over the fate of man and help in creating a feeling of mutual understanding among human beings.

Q16. Which is the exotic moment that the poet refers to in 'Keeping Quiet':[Delhi 201]

Ans: The poet talks about the exotic moment when everyone keeps quiet. There will be no rush for a second. The machines must stop for a moment. That moment will be fascinating for all of us. All of us shall enjoy the sudden strangeness of the moment together.

Q 17. Which is the exotic moment that the poet refers to in 'Keeping Quiet'? (Delhi 2014)

Answer. The poet refers to the moment of stillness and quietness as an exotic moment. It would be an exotic moment, as such the tranquillity will initiate peace and brotherhood. There would be no movement, no talk, no activity and consequently, no violence.

Q 18. What is the sadness that the poet refers to in the poem 'Keeping Quiet'? (All India 2014)

or

What is the sadness that the poet refers to in the poem? (All India 2011)

Answer. The poet refers to the sadness which surrounds man due to not having any time for himself, the pain of not understanding what he or his fellow human beings want. He has no time for introspection; as a result, he is unable to analyse his own actions and understand its consequences.

Q 19. Which images in the poem 'Keeping Quiet' show that the poet condemns violence?

(Compartment 2014)

Answer. The images of fishermen not harming the whales in the sea and wars leaving behind no survivors to celebrate the victory show that the poet condemns violence. The poet wants the warmongers to change their blood-stained clothes to clean ones. The poet's

refusal to have any association or dealing with death also shows that he is not in favour of any form of violence.

Q 20. What symbol from nature does the poet use to prove that keeping quiet is not total inactivity? (Foreign 2014)

Answer. The poet uses nature as a symbol to explain his idea that there can be life under apparent stillness. According to him, keeping quiet is not total inactivity. A seed may appear to be dead and inactive, but one day, the same seed may turn into a fruitful tree.

Q 21. How, according to Neruda, can keeping quiet change our attitude to life? (Compartment 2014)

Answer. Keeping quiet and suspending all our activities for a brief moment will give us time to introspect and analyse our own actions. We will develop a new understanding of our surroundings and thus change our attitude to life. We will check our destructive ways and try to be more positive and constructive.

Q 22. What are the different kinds of wars mentioned in the poem? What is Neruda's attitude towards these wars? (Delhi 2013)

Answer. The poet has written about wars against humanity and nature. Green wars, wars with poisonous gases and wars with fire are the different kinds of wars mentioned in the poem. Wars do good to no one. Pablo Neruda feels that such wars may bring victory, but there are no survivors. It means that there is heavy loss on both sides.

Q 23. How can suspension of activities help? (All India 2012)

Answer. The poet believes that suspension of activities will allow man to introspect, which can help them in analysing their own actions, and in solving many of their problems based on caste, religion or nationality. It will help them develop a new understanding of their surroundings, and thus make them mend their destructive ways.