



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

Class: VIII	Department: ENGLISH	Date of submission: October -2020
Worksheet No:	Topic: A nation's Strength	Note: Study notes

About the poet :

Ralph Waldo Emerson was an American essayist, lecturer and poet. He is seen as a champion of individualism and a critic of the pressures of society on an individual. He spread his views through dozens of published essays and more than 1,500 public lectures across the United States.

Central Idea:

This beautiful poem has been written by "R.W. Emerson." In this short poem, he reveals the secret of a nation's success. The success of a nation lies with its man power that is its people and not with gold and jewels.

Summary:

The poem "A Nation's Strength" presents the elements which can make a nation strong. Initially, the poet wonders whether it is gold, kingdoms, wars or pride that can lift a nation and make it invincible. The conclusion is that only men can make a nation strong as they are the ones who, through their work, symbolize a nation. Such strong men are described as always awake and ready, always sacrificing themselves for honor, always ambitious and brave. They work for the prosperity of the nation. They fight for truth and for the sake of honor of their nation. They believe that whatever they do, their actions are the representatives of the character, honor, and respect of their nation. They do not do anything that can dampen the image and reputation of their nation. We, have a rich history of the nations who were small but they had great people in them and those people brought their nations to the heights of progress and prosperity.

In the last stanza, the poet describes the characteristics of brave people. He says that these people do not sleep. They work while others sleep because they don't have time to waste. They are the people who face all the challenges and problems of life manfully. They are not cowards like others who step back from the challenges. They build the pillars of a nation very strong. They lay the foundations of their nation very deep. And then they lift the nation to the heights of skies.

Imagery:

Imagery and metaphors are usually employed to enhance the meaning of a text and have the purpose of embellishing it. In “A Nation’s Strength” by Ralph Waldo Emerson, several other figures of speech are also employed:

- Antithesis
- Rhetorical questions
- Personification
- Alliteration

Metaphors:

The first metaphor employed in the poem appears in the first stanza, particularly in the first line of the poem. The word “pillars” (l. 1) creates the metaphor of a building; the poet associates a nation with a building which needs to have a strong foundation in order not to collapse:

Rhythm and rhyme:

The poem “A Nation’s Strength” by Ralph Waldo Emerson is a six-stanza poem, each stanza having four lines. The poem follows the rhyme scheme *abab*, which is also called alternate rhyme. In the following example, the first line rhymes with the third while the second line rhymes with the fourth:

The mode of expression:

The poem takes the form of an appeal towards the poet’s fellow citizens, even if the direct address is never used. What is more, the first four stanzas of the poem enumerate the wrong deeds of past nations which have failed to rise.

Literary sources:

<https://www.indiatimes.com/culture/who-we-are/14-facts-that-will-make-you-feel-proud-to-be-an-indian-233095.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CS6HQV3G4JU>

