

No Men Are Foreign - James Kirkup

Answers to NCERT Questions

Answer the following Questions

1.(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 same?

Ans: (i) The poet is referring to the clothes we wear.

It could also be interpreted as the kind of person you are, the caste, creed, culture, religion, nature, demeanour, character, the facade (deceptive external appearance), the prejudices, and the pretenses under which we breathe. The poet says that we are all the same, whatever we cover ourselves with.

(ii) The poet says that we are all the same, we live in the same world, our habits are the same, we work, we eat, we sleep and wake up in the same manner. The strength in every human being lies in his ability to love and spread love. And we all settle down in the same earth when we die.

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

Ans: No men are strange, no countries are foreign, single body beneath all uniforms, land is same everywhere, land is same where we shall lie.

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

Ans: They too are aware of sun..., they too are fed by peaceful harvests, their hands are like ours, in their lines we read, a labour not different from our own.

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

Ans: It is the people who are not interested in a life of universal brotherhood who are the perpetrators of war. Their selfish and acquisitive motives, urges them to incite other humans to join them to battle it out and conquer the earth that belongs to everyone. This could be triggered by intolerance towards each other in the name of religion, caste, creed, territory, etc. It is these perpetrators who destroy life. We should not adhere to their demands for war and bloodshed because what is mine is theirs too. We are all brothers and sisters, and there is no boundary between us. There is no country or no foreigner.

Additional Questions

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow: (4 Marks each)

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

beneath all uniforms, a single body breathes

Like ours:

- (a) What do we have to remember?
- (b) What does he mean by uniforms?
- (c) What does he say about the uniforms?
- (d) What does he say about the human being?

Ans:

- (a) We have to remember that we are all human beings and not strangers or foreigners.
- (b) The poet is referring to the different kinds of clothes we wear, the style, the colours and pattern.
- (c) He says that beneath every uniform it is a human being.
- (d) He says that all human beings are similar and they all breathe in the same manner as we do.

2. Remember that they have eyes like ours that wake

or sleep, and strength that can be won

By love.

- (a) What do we have to remember?
- (b) What is common in their and our eyes?
- (c) What can be won?
- (d) How can we become strong?

Ans:

- (a) We have to remember that they too have eyes that wake and sleep.
- (b) They too sleep and wake up by closing and opening their eyes as we all do.
- (c) Strength can be won.

(d) The one thing that universally strengthens all human beings is love. Everyone needs love to grow strong, emotionally and physically.

3. Remember, we who take up arms against each other

It is the human earth we defile.

- (a) What is the poet referring to here?
- (b) What happens if we are instigated?
- (c) What is the poet telling us to ponder upon?
- (d) What does he warn us about?

Ans:

- (a) The poet is referring to the situations when we are instigated against each other.
- (b) We are likely to take up arms against each other.
- (c) The poet is telling us to ponder upon the situation that would arise, if we take up arms against each other.
- (d) He warns us that we will be responsible for defiling the earth if we take up arms against each other.

Short Answer Questions (30–40 words: 2 Marks each)

1. Do we all belong to the same world? Do you agree with the poet?

Ans: Yes, we all do belong to the same world. I agree with the poet. But belonging and believing are two different sides of the same coin. How many of us accept the universality of existence? Do we treat and behave with every one in the same manner? We fail to accept our immediate surroundings as common, then how is it possible to go beyond.

2. How do human beings conflict?

Ans: The poet says that human beings spread negative ideas, creating ill-will and intolerance towards each other. When this volcano of hatred erupts, there is war, bloodshed, death, and discontent. It is therefore, necessary that we do not fall prey to false prejudices and unnecessary attempts made to defile the earth.

3. Why does the poet say that life is the same everywhere?

Ans: The poet says that life is the same everywhere because men have the same wants. To satisfy these wants, he generally follows the same practices, works the same way, eats the similar kind of food, and cultivates food in the same way. Most

importantly, the poet says that it is 'love' that gives every human being the strength to live.

4. How is innocence outraged? How does it affect our life and surroundings?

Ans: Innocence and purity of everything around us is outraged by hatred and jealousy. It makes us take up arms against each other, resulting in the destruction of peaceful co-existence. The poet says that the air that is everyone's is defiled by hate-mongers.

5. How are the eyes of everyone similar, according to the poet?

Ans: The eyes of every human being is the same, according to the poet. He justifies this by saying that everyone uses their eyes to sleep and wake up. We may add that we see the same world and beauties of nature that is spread before us by the almighty. We have the same dreams and shut our eyes to the same things that we all know is not good for us.

6. Explain the use of the terms 'harvest' and 'war' in the poem.

Ans: The poet has symbolised 'harvest' as the harbinger (indicator) of peace, harmony and growth and the giver of life. Contrarily, 'war' is the instrument of destruction, and spreads hatred and misery everywhere. War ushers in death.

Long Answer Questions (100–150 words: 8 Marks each)

1. Write an article on the relevance of the poem in today's world. You are Preeti/Preetam.

Ans:

In a Foreign World

By Preeti

The essence of human existence has been portrayed magnificently by the poet in the poem, 'No Men are Foreign'. Isn't it true that we are all living in the same world, whether in the north, south, east or west? Do we all not eat the same food, cooked in the same manner? Can we live anywhere in the world without food, water, air, and love? This is the highlight of James Kirkup's poem. The relevance the poem has in today's world is immense. Man is forgetting the fact that we are all brothers and sisters and created by the same God. What is the use of spreading terror and hatred? We need to stop killing and maiming our own species. Let us understand the message of the poet, and appreciate the need to accept the foreigners and countries around the world as our own. Break all boundaries that separate you from me and them.

2. Is it possible to change the volatile (highly explosive) situation that is prevailing in the world today? How? Explain.

Ans: The world around us is rife with hatred, blood-shed, war and death. We were given a beautiful mass of land to live and co-exist with everyone in peace and harmony. What happened? When, where and how? Why has man become intolerant of each other? It is not very difficult to find an answer or a solution to these questions. But if it has to be effective, we need to work together.

Man, in the course of time, had developed qualities that were detrimental to harmonious living. Selfishness, greed, power and ego, took the better of him. He therefore, began spreading hatred among his brethren to secure and expand his geographical boundaries. Is this going to be of any use? Definitely not! What happens as a result of strife and hatred is chaos and destruction.

Why not change? It is a simple shift over from being inhuman to becoming human. Live happily, accept everyone the way he or she is, give, and spread joy and happiness. For the world is ours, to live not as foreigners, but as one big family.

Self- Assessment Test

Extract Based Questions

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

1. They, too, aware of sun and air and water,

Are fed by peaceful harvests, by war's long winter starv'd.

- (a) Who is 'they' in the above lines?
- (b) What are they aware of?
- (c) What does the poet mean by peaceful harvest?
- (d) Explain "war's long winter starv'd."

2. Their hands are ours, and in their lines we read

A labour not different from our own.

- (a) "Their hands are ours. What does this mean?"
- (b) What are the 'lines' here?
- (c) What is the poet trying to say in these lines?
- (d) Which word in the above lines is the synonym of "work"?

Short Answer Questions

- 1. Why does the poet begin and end his poem with the same lines?

2. Is it true that 'labour' is the same everywhere?
 3. Justify the title of the poem.
 4. Is it important to have an opinion of one's own? Is it right to be influenced by the thoughts and ideas of others?
 5. How is our life common? Explain in reference to the poem, 'No Men are Foreign'.
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Long Answer Questions

1. Write a letter to the Prime Minister of the country, requesting him to ponder upon the thoughts shared by the poet James Kirkup.
2. Write a paragraph on "Coexistence in the Planet.
3. Make a diary entry of an incident that happened to you, wherein you were exposed to a very commendable humanitarian act of a little child on the street.