



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (2023-24)

Class: IX

NO MEN ARE FOREIGN

Subject: ENGLISH

**Summary of the Poem**

‘No Men Are Foreign’ reinstates the fact that, despite the man-made differences of caste, religion, nationality and language, all men are the same. The poet tries to proclaim the idea of universal brotherhood. The poem’s title itself reflects the central idea of the poem that ‘No Men are Foreign’. The title reverberates in the first and the last line stressing on the poet’s idea of “all men are the same.” Kirkup made a comparison to the similarities in the human body between the people who live at different places to state that all are equal. Except for the man-made division in the name of borders and fences, or languages, or ethnicity, all of us live the same life. When we are alive, we walk on the same Earth. Similarly, when we die, we are buried on the same earth. People from different countries enjoy good food during peace and starve during the war and in winter, which is also common to all. Further, the poet draws similarities between the hands that do hard work and the eyes that see the same way when we are awake and close when we are asleep. As he concludes, the poet wants the readers to remember the fact that whenever we hate someone, we cheat and hate ourselves. Similarly, if we pick up the war against each other, we pollute the Earth and render it impure.

**Literary Devices**

**Rhyme Scheme** - The entire poem is written in free verse. There is no rhyme scheme in the poem.

**Alliteration:** The repetition of a consonant sound in two or more closely placed words is called alliteration. The instances of alliteration in the poem are -

Stanza 1 - Body, breathes ‘b’ sound is repeated

Stanza 2 – war’s, winter ‘w’ sound is repeated

**Metaphor**

Stanza 1 - Uniform refers to the military of different countries

Stanza 2 – wars time is compared to the winter season

**Repetition** It is used in the entire poem.

‘Remember’ word is repeated 5 times in this poem.

‘Remember, no men are strange, no countries foreign’ is repeated in stanza 1 and stanza 5

**Enjambment** - running lines of poetry from one line to the next without using any kind of punctuation to indicate a stop. Instances of enjambment in the poem are as follows-

Stanza 1 – line 1, 2 and 3

Stanza 2 – line 3

Stanza 3 – line 1, 2, and 3

Stanza 4 – line 1 and 2

Stanza 5 – Line 2

**Answer the following Questions in brief.**

**1. Explain: ‘Beneath all uniforms, a single body breathes’.**

Ans-The line means that though the outward appearance of people varies because of the difference in their attire, there is an inherent similarity between all human beings. All people live and breathe in a similar fashion. Militaries in the world may don different uniforms but they comprise of human beings who essentially are the same anywhere in the world.

**2. Who is referred to as ‘our brothers’?**

Ans-The people who live in countries other than ours have been referred to as our brothers because basically, we all have similar emotions, hopes, joys and sorrows.

**3. Explain the expression: ‘Their hands are ours’.**

Ans- ‘Their hands are ours’ means that they too work hard like us with their hands to earn their livelihood. It also means that human beings have basically the same physiognomy.

**4. Explain: ‘A labour not different from our own’.**

Ans- This expression means that the hard work done by the people who live in other countries is not different in any way from the one that we do. All of us have to toil and work hard in a similar way for survival.

**5. What do you understand by ‘common life’?**

Ans-‘Common life’ means life anywhere in the world that has similar patterns and features – birth and death, joys and sorrows, youth and old age, and so on and so forth. This commonness of ‘common life’ is experienced by all the people of the world regardless of the country in which they live.

**6. Explain: ‘hells of fire and dust’ and ‘the innocence of air’.**

Ans- ‘Hells of fire and dust’ stands for the devastation created and caused by the arms and ammunition used in wars. ‘Innocence of air’ means the freshness and purity of air that nature has blessed us with. It also indicates the innocence of the human mind. The dust and smoke thus caused pollute the very air we breathe.

**7. What does the poet want to convey by telling us that “It is the human earth that we defile”?**

Ans- The poet wants to convey that wars cause massive destruction of life and property. They ruin the clean and green environment of the earth and breed hatred and enmity. Hence, no one benefits from war because the damage caused to earth is to be borne equally, for we all share the same earth.

**8. 'They have eyes like ours'. What similarity does the poet find in the eyes of people all over the world?**

Ans: -The poet finds that eyes of men all over the world have similar sights and scenes to see, and experience the phenomena of waking up and sleeping in a similar way. Hence, the so-called strange and foreign people to have eyes just like us. Even though the colour and shape of their eyes are different from ours, they bring us identical experiences and perform a similar function.

**9. Why does the poet call harvest 'peaceful' and war as 'winter'?**

Ans: -Harvests are called 'peaceful' because they bring abundance and prosperity and they thrive in peaceful times only. War, on the other hand, is like the severe and harsh 'winter' that ruins the crops and starves people. It is only the peaceful times that bring harmony and contentment. War destroys everything and forces people to face hunger, poverty, disease and death.

**10. The land our brothers walk upon. Is earth like this, in which we all shall lie! What does the poet mean to say through the above lines? Explain.**

Ans. The poet means to say in these lines that it is the same land on which we walk and after our death, we would be buried in the same earth. Through these lines, the poet tells us that we do all our activities on the same land. We get food from this land. We make our houses on this land and we get many other things from the same land, then why do we say to some people to be 'others'. No one is other. We live in the same house or universe as a family. Then why do we create discrimination against some people? Why do we fight with our brothers? It is all because of our greed to get more wealth and power. In the pursuit to fulfil this desire, we fight with others and hurt them.

**11. How does air remind us of our sharing the earth? How is air innocent?**

Ans. Although human beings have divided land, the air we breathe remains undivided. Air doesn't belong to any country or territory, but moves freely across countries and is breathed by all men and women. Air is essentially clean so is it innocent. Human beings wage wars and raise dust and emit smoke, thereby polluting the air.

**12. What does the poet emphasize by beginning and ending the poem with the same line?**

Ans. By beginning and ending the poem with the same line, the poet emphasizes his message of the oneness of spirit of brotherhood. Although the message in both the lines is same, the opening line uses the adjective 'strange' with regard to men and 'foreign' in regard of countries, while in the end, the adjective 'foreign' is used to describe men and 'strange' is used to describe countries. This means that the two adjectives are one. Countries exist only because men create nations, nature does not divide humanity, it is man who does so. However, all human beings are the same.

**Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.**

**STANZA 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.”*

**Questions:**

- (a) What should we remember?
- (b) What uniforms is the poet talking about?
- (c) Where do our brothers walk?
- (d) Where shall we all lie at the end of our life?
- (e) What lesson can we learn from these lines?

**Answers:**

- (a) We should remember that no men are strange and no country is foreign.
- (b) The different uniforms or attire worn by different kind of people. Militaries in the world may don different uniforms but they comprise of human beings who essentially are the same anywhere in the world.
- (c) They walk on this earth.
- (d) The poet says that at the end of our respective lives, we all shall lie buried in the same earth. He means to draw our attention to the common fate that awaits us regardless of our nationality.
- (e) These lines teach us the lesson of peace, universal brotherhood and harmony. We learn that since all people in the world are like our brothers and sisters, there are no enemies or strangers to be afraid of.

**STANZA 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.”*

**Questions:**

- (a) Who does ‘they’ refer to in the first line in this stanza?
- (b) What are they fed by?
- (c) What are they starved by?
- (d) Which poetic device has been used in “war’s long winter starv’d”? Why has war’s winter been called long?

**Answers:**

- (a) 'They' refers to the people of countries other than ours, whom we consider being strange.
- (b) They are fed by peaceful harvests.
- (c) They are starved by long wars or winters.
- (d) The poetic device used in "war's long winter starv'd" is a 'metaphor'. Here the starvation caused by the harsh winter season has been compared indirectly to the destructive period of wartime. The winter of war has been called 'long' because unlike the natural phenomenon of the winter season, it is self-inflicted trouble that not only robs the warmth of peace but also seems unending.

**STANZA 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."*

**Questions:**

- (a) What do the eyes do?
- (b) How can strength be won?
- (c) What is common in every land?
- (d) What can all recognise and understand?

**Answers:**

- (a) The eyes wake and sleep.
- (b) Strength can be won with love.
- (c) Life is common in every land.
- (d) All can recognise and understand that life is common in every land.

**STANZA 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.'*

**Questions:**

- (a) Who do you think tells us to hate our brothers?
- (b) Why do we sometimes hate our brothers?
- (c) How shall we dispossess ourselves?
- (d) What advice does the poet give us in these lines?

**Answers:**

- (a) The opportunist and power-hungry leaders and politicians, who are at the helm of affairs during wartime, tell us to hate our brothers.

- (b) We sometimes hate our brothers because we allow vested and unscrupulous politicians and religious leaders to instigate us. We are taken in by their lies about our differences and begin to consider our brothers as strange and foreign.
- (c) We shall dispossess ourselves by hating our brothers in other parts of the world when we are told by the politically motivated people to do so. These brothers are not foreign or strange just because they belong to different countries, races and cultures.
- (d) The poet advises us to ignore the directions of those who incite us to hate and exploit others because by doing so we harm ourselves.

**Choose the correct options to answer the following questions.**

Q1. What does the title of the poem convey?

- a) all the people belong to the same earth
- b) people belong to one country
- c) all people should live in one country
- d) none

Q2. “To hate our brothers...” Who are “brothers” here?

- a) Fellow citizens
- b) Poet’s acquaintances
- c) Natives of Ireland
- d) People from other countries

Q3. In the poem ‘No Men Are Foreign’, when anyone tells us to hate others, then we \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves

- a) Deprive
- b) Uplift
- c) Cheat
- d) Both a and c

Q4. As mentioned in the poem, when is the harvest peaceful?

- a) Period of harsh winter
- b) Period of long winter
- c) Period of cultivation and peace
- d) Period of war

Q5. “...a single body breathes”- What does this mean?

- a) Living beings breathe
- b) We all breathe in the same way
- c) God created men
- d) One life one wish

**ANSWERS-MCQs**

Q1-A, Q2-D, Q3-D, Q4-C, Q5-B