

POEM – 2

KEEPING QUIET

About the poet

Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) is the pen name of Neftali Ricardo Reyes Basoalto who was born in the town of Parral in Chile. Neruda's poems are full of easily understood images which make them no less beautiful. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in the year 1971. In this poem Neruda talks about the necessity of quiet introspection and creating a feeling of mutual understanding among human beings.



GIST OF THE POEM

- In this poem the poet wants to make the readers understand the importance of work and its effect.
- He requests us to keep quiet till he counts up to twelve for perfect introspection.
- He requests us not to use any physical and mental languages for a while as they will become a hurdle in keeping quiet.
- When there is no rush, no movement and no noise of engines, the threat of sudden strangeness will tie all of us together into an exotic moment
- This will bring relief to the fishermen in cold sea and the salt gatherers will also be able to look after their injured bleeding hands.
- A good sense will also prevail on the war-mongers as they will understand the futility of the same
- When the environment is endangered, human-existence is threatened, the survivor of the war will realise the futility of war.
- The poet urges us not to mistake inactivity to death.
- He clarifies that single-minded indulgence in the rat-race of self-centered goals leading to materialism is unwarranted.
- Keeping quiet and discharging our duties peacefully will evolve better understanding in us.
- 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.
- With the development of mutual understanding comes empathy and then our life becomes a pleasant experience.
- The poet says like the earth the potentials may not be exhibited all the time.
- Finally, he declares his departure while persuading us to keep quiet.

THEME OF THE POEM

In the war stricken world, the poet has emphasized the need to introspect and bring in the spirit of brotherhood among the people of the world.

TITLE OF THE POEM

The title is very appropriate as the poem celebrates the necessity of quiet introspection and silence. This moment of silence will act as an antidote to war, violence, hatred, exploitation and turmoil. By keeping quiet, mankind can try to understand himself and stop harming himself and others with death and destruction.

CENTRAL IDEA OF THE POEM

In the poem the poet tries to tell us that we should stop our destructive activities and keep quiet for some time. By keeping quiet he means that we should look into ourselves and see what our behaviour is doing to others. We should analyse ourselves and change accordingly.

MESSAGE OF THE POEM

To promote the international brotherhood, peace and cooperation we need to introspect our activities in regards to the community.

Answer the following questions in 30 to 40 words.

1. What does the poet call an exotic moment and why?

Ans. The poet calls the moment of calm introspection 'an exotic moment'. He calls it so because it will give us a very unusual feeling. We shall feel ourselves as one with all others. We will come out of all our greed, selfishness and cruelty.

5. What does the poet say about those 'who prepare green wars'?

Ans. The poet says that there are people who enjoy making wars. They want to win victories even if there are no survivors after the victory. The poet says that these people will stop making wars if they can take out sometime for quiet introspection. They will then look upon all others not as their enemies but as their brothers.

6. What should not be confused with total inactivity? Why?

Ans. The poet says that we should stop all our activities for a few moments and do quiet introspection. But his, this saying should not be confused with total inactivity. He says that the essence of life is activity while inactivity is death.

7. How, according to the poet, can earth teach us?

Ans. When it is winter, everything on the earth seems to be dead. But later in spring, it is proved that the earth is alive, not dead. It has new colours and beauties added to it. Similarly, after the silence and stillness of quiet introspection, man can start his activities in a better and purposeful manner.

8. Explain: 'sudden strangeness'.

Ans. Just after counting to twelve, all of a sudden we all become 'silent and still'. It is a sudden strangeness.

9. Explain: 'a huge silence'.

Ans. When for once, all of us on earth, are in silence and stillness, it becomes very widespread silence all around.

10. Explain: 'interrupt this sadness'.

Ans. Interference in sadness of life means getting rid of it at that moment to create cheerfulness.

11. What are the two types of sadness named in the poem 'keeping Quiet'?

Ans. One is 'sadness of never understanding ourselves'. The other is threatening ourselves with death.