



Notes

10**WHERE THE MIND IS WITHOUT
FEAR**

*T*his poem was written when the British ruled our country. We were slaves to a foreign power. Rabindranath Tagore, the great Indian nationalist and visionary wanted India to awaken to a bright dawn of freedom – freedom from slavery and our own mental chains.

Read the poem aloud once. Then read it silently. It would be a good idea to memorize the poem.

Where the mind is without fear
and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken
up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the
depths of truth;
Where tireless striving
stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason
has not lost its way into the
dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward
by thee into ever widening
thought and action-
into that heaven of freedom,
my father,
let my country awake.

- Rabindranath Tagore



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DISCUSSION

Let us now read the following lines of the poem once again and answer the questions that follow.

Where the mind is without fear
and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken
up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the
depths of truth;
Where tireless striving
stretches its arms towards perfection;

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.1**

1. What is meant by “mind is without fear and head is held high”. Tick the correct answer.
 - (i) to be fearless and self respecting
 - (ii) to be proud of one’s high position .
 - (iii) to stand straight and be carefree.
2. What does the poet mean by “where knowledge is free”?
3. The ‘domestic walls’ are usually associated with safety, comfort and love. Are these the feelings evoked by the phrase ‘narrow domestic walls’? If not, choose the correct answer from the ones given below:
 - (i) small houses which make us feel cramped.
 - (ii) ideas which are petty and narrow-minded.
 - (iii) a house divided into rooms by walls.
4. Why has the word ‘tireless’ been used to describe ‘striving’?
5. What are we striving for?

DISCUSSION

Now let us read further.

Where the clear stream of reason
has not lost its way into the

dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward
by thee into ever widening
thought and action-
into that heaven of freedom,
my father,
let my country awake.

In the first two lines the poet has identified ‘reason with clear stream’.

And “dead habit” with “dreary desert”.

Such an identification is called a metaphor. Like the ‘simile’, a metaphor is also a comparison of two or more things. But in a simile the comparison is made by using link words ‘like’ or ‘as’ whereas in a metaphor, words – ‘like’ and ‘as’ are not used.

Example :

Life is not a bed of roses (metaphor).

Life is not as comfortable as a bed of roses (simile).



INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.2

- (a) Why is reason compared with ‘clear stream’?
(b) Where has reason lost its way?
- Look at the line ‘dreary desert sand of dead habit.’ The sound ‘d’ is repeated four times. Why? The repetition of sound gives the line a musical quality. This poetic device is called alliteration. We will now, go back to the first part of the poem.

Can you pick out two lines where letter and sound are repeated?



OVERALL QUESTIONS

- How does the poet describe ‘heaven of freedom’?
- Who does the poet address as ‘thee’ and my father?



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3. Pick out metaphors and similes from the lines given below:
- ‘But swift as dreams myself I found within the pilot’s boat’.
- ‘The wind was a torrent of darkness/ the road was a ribbon of moonlight’
- ‘The ship went down like lead.’
- ‘I pass like night from land to land.’

**CHECK YOUR ANSWERS****Intext Questions 10.1**

1. (i) to be fearless and self respecting
2. Where knowledge is available to all without any discrimination
3. (ii) ideas which are petty and narrow-minded.
4. because it is a continuous process
5. (ii) personification

Intext Questions 10.2

1. (a) Clarity of thought is compared with clear stream.
(b) in the dreary desert of dead habit.
2. (i) the head is held high
(ii) tireless striving stretches its arms.

OVERALL QUESTIONS

1. Where head is held high, knowledge is free. Where people are open-minded and rational.
2. God.
3. Metaphor
 - (i) wind was a torrent of darkness
 - (ii) road was a ribbon of moonlight

Simile

Swift as dreams.

Ship went down like lead.

I pass like night.