

Chapter 3: Poems by Blake

NCERT · Class 12 · English · Kaleidoscope · Poetry

Questions

Question 1

How are these two matched poems related to each other in content? How is the human being depicted in the Song of Innocence, and how is he/she depicted in the Song of Experience? Do we find both aspects working in an average human being?

Solution

Answer. Both poems are related to each other because they convey the virtues of peace, mercy, love and pity. The speaker in both poems portrays the moral value of humans. Individuals have a moral commitment to civilisation with a bunch of virtues. Human beings are depicted as masters of virtues.

Question 2

How would you explain the lines For Mercy has a human heart, Pity a human face, And Love, the human form divine, And Peace, the human dress?

Solution

Answer. The poet says that virtues like peace, mercy, love and pity are embodied in human beings themselves. Through the above lines, the poet tries to convey how important virtues are in human life, which would make human life meaningful on earth. Mercy is inside the heart; a human face reflects pity, divine love, and peace permeates the human body with dresses that make humans look beautiful and cultured. With all these virtues in humans, it makes the world look colourful, making life on earth more beneficial to humans.

Question 3

How do Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love get distorted in the human brain?

Solution

Answer. Virtues, such as peace, mercy, love and pity, get distorted in the human brain when traits like selfishness, revenge, cruelty, etc., take control over humans. They begin to behave like uncultured people. When a person acts unruly, he loses his dignity and virtues, and his brain gets distorted. So, in the poem, the poet tries to explain that every individual should maintain their qualities and never allow evil attributes to take over them. The poet tries to convey that when there are divisions in society, all the virtues will be distorted in the human brain.

Question 4

Blake's poetry expresses one aspect of his multi-dimensional view of human experience—of mankind once whole and happy, now fallen into discord and tyranny, from which it must be rescued. Explain with reference to these two poems.

Solution

Answer. These two poems illustrate the same meaning, the values which help individuals lead peaceful lives. At first, kindness towards others was the plan of humankind in the early decades. They were happy and showed a better life throughout those periods. But in today's generation, the situation has changed drastically. Selfishness has destroyed love and kindness in humankind, leading to the loss of human virtues and values. Therefore, as mentioned in the poem, the selfish motives and personal gain of the new generation must be protected by teaching virtues such as pity, mercy, peace, and love in young people's hearts, making a way to a better life.

Language Work

Question 1

Certain words in the poem have been capitalised. Can you think of reasons for this?

Solution

Answer. In the poem, some of the words are capitalised to draw readers' attention to know the importance of the words in the context. The words that are capitalised in the poem refer to the virtues one should implement in their life. The effectiveness of capitalising terms is to convey to the readers what different virtues mean and denote.

Question 2

Count the syllables in the lines of 'The Divine Image'. Do you see a pattern? The first line has eight, and the second line has six syllables. Two syllables make a foot in poetry. Here, the first syllable of each foot is unstressed, and the second syllable is stressed.

Solution

Answer. Yes, we can see a pattern in the lines of 'The Divine Image'. The first line has eight, and the second line has six syllables. The first syllable of each foot is unstressed. The second syllable is stressed because in each foot, one of the syllables is more prominent or more substantial than the other syllable(s), and it is called the strong syllable, termed the head syllable. The other syllables in the foot are the weak syllables.
