

Lesson- 12

The Noble Nature

IT is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make Man better be
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere;
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night-
It was the plant and flower of Light
In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures life may perfect be.

- Ben Jonson

About the Poem:

Ben Jonson (1573-1637) was a versatile and dominating literary personality known as a play-wright, poet, actor and critic of the 17th Century. He is identified for his brilliant classical and realistic comedy. His memorable comedies are 'Volpone', 'The Alchemist' and 'The Silent Woman'.

'The Noble Nature' is a short lyric, composed by Ben Jonson, imparting great meaning and a message to humanity that we live in deeds not in years. The poet contrasts a meaningless and unimpressive long life with a short life full of heroic and virtuous deeds by drawing two symbols from Nature - an oak and a lily. Jonson widely disseminates that the worth of human life is measured not in years but on the basis of achievements and noble acts that leave imprints on the vast eternity of time.

GLOSSARY:

bulk (n) -large in quantity

bald (adj) - (here) without leaves

sere (adj.) - sear, withered

proportion(n) - ratio

measure (n) - span, period

ACTIVITY 1: COMPREHENSION:

A Answer the following questions in about 20-30 words each:

1. What symbols does Ben Jonson draw from Nature?

2. Mention the qualities of an oak.
3. How does a lily of a day impress us?
4. How can human life be perfect, according to the poet?

B Answer the following questions in about 60-80 words each:

1. How does the poet juxtapose two objects of Nature with human life?
2. Discuss the theme of the poem.

ACTIVITY 2: VOCABULARY:

Aquaint yourself with the following literary terms:

(1) Lyric (2) Ode (3) Ballad (4) Epic

ACTIVITY 3 : SPEECH ACTIVITY:

1. Draft a short speech to be read out on 'The Importance of Time' for your fellow students in the class.
2. Your team has won the National Soft Ball Trophy. As the captain present a report of the event in the school assembly.

ACTIVITY 4: COMPOSITION

1. In the morning assembly your principal spoke on the life of our patriots. Prepare an article for your school magazine on 'Our Patriots Our Role Models'.
 2. As secretary of 'Eco Club' of your school write a report on Van Mahotsava programme.
 3. As president of the Dramatic Society of your school write a notice informing the students about staging of a play on the life of Maharana Pratap.
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