

Where the mind is without fear

- Rabindranath Tagore

Central Idea :

Written in the pre-independence era, the poem is a link between 'What India is' and 'What the poet wishes it to be'. Through the prayer – poem, Tagore indirectly hints at the challenges faced by India under the British rule. He wants his motherland to be a 'heaven of freedom'. He wants Indians to enjoy freedom, not just from the shackles of a foreign rule, but religious, moral, social and intellectual too. He invokes God to guide his country and let it awake from the deep slumber of all that hampers its progress to all that is progressive and positive.

Summary :

Written during the British reign, the poet wants his countrymen to live fearlessly and get back their self – esteem by standing up for themselves. He wants India to be a country where knowledge is free flowing and not just the sole prerogative of a few fortunate ones. He envisions a united India that is not divided on the basis of caste, creed, religion, etc. He wishes to see his beloved countrymen to be free from all prejudices and superstitious beliefs. The poet wants his countrymen to be sincere and truthful. He visualises India as an epitome of perfection which is the fruit of continuous efforts and hard work of his fellow brethren. He wants his countrymen to think logically and have a clear perception. He does not want reason to get lost in outdated customs and blind superstitions. He appeals to God to lead his country into that 'heaven' where individuals experience freedom in the truest sense, where progressive thoughts translate into actions. He prays to the Almighty to let his country wake up to such an ideal abode of freedom.

MASTER KEY QUESTION SET - 1.1

Warming Up!

- (1) Pair up with your partner and match the terms with their given meanings.

Column A	Column B
(1) Humanism	(a) Concern about and action aimed at protecting the environment.
(2) Patriotism	(b) Holding liberal views.
(3) Internationalism	(c) Quality of being patriotic : vigorous support for one's country.
(4) Liberalism	(d) State or process of being international.
(5) Environmentalism	(e) A rationalistic outlook towards humans rather than a divine or supernatural one.

Ans. (1 - e), (2 - c), (3 - d), (4 - b), (5 - a)

- (2) Poems in English are of different types

• Sonnet • Epic • Limerick • Lyric • Ballad
• Humorous • Elegy • Idyll • Free Verse

Ans. Taking the help of a dictionary/internet guess and write the type of poem against its description.

- (i) A long story - poem, often mythical - Epic
- (ii) A short story poem with a message - Ballad
- (iii) A poem of 14 lines - Sonnet
- (iv) A song - like poem - Lyric
- (v) A poem with no uniformity of rhyme, rhythm etc. - Free Verse
- (vi) A poem set in picturesque, rustic background - Idyll
- (vii) A sad poem, lamenting the death of a loved one - Elegy
- (viii) A 5 line short funny poem with rhyme scheme aabba - Limerick
- (ix) A poem written just to create humor - Humorous

Reading Skills, Vocabulary and Poetic Devices

Q.1. Read the extract given below and answer the following question.

Extract - I (Textbook Page No. 3)

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 depth 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.

Glossary

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| (1) | tireless striving
(collocation) | - continuous efforts and hard work |
| (2) | stretches its arm
(phr) | - aims at achieving a goal |
| (3) | clear (adj) | - transparent |
| (4) | stream (n) | - a small narrow river |
| (5) | reason (n) | - the power of the mind to think logically |
| (6) | dreary (adj) | - depressingly dull and bleak or repetitive |
| (7) | dead habit
(collocation) | - old traditional rituals and customs |
| (8) | thee (pronoun) | - (old English) – you |
| (9) | ever widening (adj) | - forever broadening one's outlook |
| (10) | heaven of freedom
(phrase) | - condition of total freedom of good thoughts, good words and good action |
| (11) | awake (v) | - wake from sleep |
| (12) | fragments (n) | - small parts broken off or separated from something |
| (13) | narrow domestic walls (phr.) | - division on the basis of religion, caste, class and skin colour in societies and between countries. |

A.1. Factual Questions:

(1) Complete the sentence with words/phrases from the poem.

- (i) Mind should be
- (ii) Words should come out from
- (iii) World is broken up into
- (iv) Thought and action should be

Ans. (i) without fear (ii) the depth of truth (iii) fragments (iv) ever-widening.

A.2. Interpretative / Complex / Inference Questions

(1) To whom does the poet pray?

Ans. The poet prays to God.

* (2) What does the poet pray to the Almighty for?

Ans. The poet prays to the Almighty to let his country wake up into a 'heaven' where everyone enjoys freedom of mind and spirit. He also asks God to lead us forward into ever-widening thought and action.

(3) How should the people be according to the poet?

Ans. According to the poet, the people should be truthful, sincere, fearless and have a high self esteem. They should abandon all superstitions and instead, think logically expressing their opinions freely and work hard towards perfection.

* (4) What does the poet wish for?

Ans. The poet wishes God to lead his country to a 'Heaven of freedom' where his countrymen enjoy social, political, religious and intellectual freedom.

(5) What are the different qualities that the poet prays for his countrymen?

Ans. The poet prays that his countrymen are fearless and have a high self esteem. He wants them to be rational, truthful, hardworking and progressive.

* (6) What are 'reason' and 'dead habit' compared to?

Ans. 'Reason' and 'dead habit' are compared to a clear stream and dreary desert respectively.

* (7) Is the poem a prayer for India alone?

Ans. No, the poem isn't a prayer for India alone. It is a universal plea that holds good at all times and for all nations of the world.

* (8) What should the words we speak reflect?

Ans. The words we speak should reflect our truthfulness.

*** (9) How is the world broken into fragments?**

Ans. The world is broken into fragments by narrow domestic walls like differences in caste, creed, gender, colour, religion and language.

(10) What does the poet mean by 'dead habit'?

Ans. By 'dead habit' the poet means the old traditional rituals and customs that hamper all progress. They often have to do with superstitions that are commonly believed.

*** (11) What qualities does the poet want to inculcate in his countrymen?**

Ans. The poet wants to inculcate truthfulness, fearlessness, self-confidence, industriousness, rationality and logical thinking in his countrymen.

(12) Where does the poet want God to lead his countrymen?

Ans. The poet wants God to lead his countrymen forward into an ever-widening thought and action and into a heaven of freedom where fear does not exist.

*** (13) What effect does the repetition of the word 'where' at the beginning of each line achieve?**

Ans. The repetition of the word 'where' at the beginning of each line achieves an artistic effect known as Anaphora. It emphasizes and lends clarity to the kind of place that Tagore wishes his country to become, thereby intensifying the theme of the poem.

(14) What do you understand by the phrase 'narrow domestic walls'?

Ans. The phrase 'narrow domestic walls' indicates differences in caste, creed, gender, religion and colour that divide us and make us rigid and do not allow us to accept progressive ideas.

*** (15) Explain what the 'tireless striving' should be for.**

Ans. 'Tireless striving' refers to the relentless and tireless hard work that the poet expects this countrymen to put in, to achieve perfection.

*** (16) What should people keep on widening? How can it be done?**

Ans. People should keep on widening their thoughts. This can be done by abandoning all forms of superstitious beliefs and orthodox patterns that come in the way of logical reasoning.

*** (17) From what darkness of night should our nation awaken?**

Ans. Our nation should awaken from the darkness

of captivity and slavery of a foreign rule, of superstitious beliefs and discrimination of caste, creed and religion; into a heaven of freedom where everyone enjoys social, physical, mental, intellectual freedom.

*** (18) What attributes of Rabindranath Tagore does the poem (prayer) reflect?**

Ans. The poem reflects a patriotic Rabindranath Tagore. He comes across as a supporter of human rights and a staunch advocate of liberty in all its forms - political, social, mental and intellectual.

*** (19) 'Where words come out from the depth of truth.' Explain in your own words.**

Ans. Words that come out from the 'depth of truth' means words that are sincere and true. People should be truthful and forthright. Truthfulness should be the dominant quality of people so that they speak words that come right from their hearts.

*** (20) Who is 'Thee' in the poem? What does the poet appeal to 'Thee' to do?**

Ans. God is referred to as 'Thee' in the poem. He wants God to lead his country to a place where religious, social, political and intellectual freedom is experienced in the truest sense, so that people can get back their lost dignity and help the country progress.

(21) Explain 'ever-widening thought and action'.

Ans. The poet wishes his countrymen to have a progressive approach and accept new ideas readily. He wants them to have a broad outlook which translates into noble actions.

(22) When can we keep our head held high? Explain.

Ans. We can hold our head high in dignity when we are free from oppression of all kinds. Knowledge would help us derive strength and shed all the prejudices and superstitions. This newly acquired confidence will give us back our lost dignity so we can hold our heads high.

A.3. Poetic Device Questions

(1) Name and explain the figure of speech.

(i) Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high

Ans. Alliteration, as three words 'head', 'held', 'high' begin with the same letter 'h' and produce the same sound for a better poetic effect.

(ii) Where the world has not been broken up into fragments

Ans. Alliteration, as two words 'where' and 'world'

begin with the same letter 'w' and produce the same sound.

(iii) Where words come out from the depth of truth

Ans. Alliteration, as two words 'where' and 'words' begin with the same letter 'w' and produce the same sound.

(iv) Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection

Ans. Personification, as 'striving' is given the human quality of stretching its arms to reach perfection for a better poetic effect.

Alliteration, as 'striving' and 'stretches' begin with the letter 's' and produce its sound for a better rhyming effect.

(v) Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way

Ans. Metaphor, as 'reason' is indirectly compared to a 'clear stream' for a better poetic effect.

(vi) Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit

Ans. Metaphor, as 'dead habit' i.e. old rituals and customs are indirectly compared to the desert sand.

Alliteration, as 'dreary' and 'desert' begin with the letter 'd' and produce the same sound.

(vii) Where the mind is led forward by thee

Ans. Apostrophe, as a direct address has been made to God by the poet for a better poetic effect.

(viii) Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake

Ans. Apostrophe, as a direct address is made to God by the poet for a better poetic effect.

Synecdoche, as 'country' (whole) stands for the 'countrymen' (part).

***(2) Find out the examples of 'Metaphor' from the poem.**

Ans. Examples of Metaphor from the poem -

(i) Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way.

(ii) Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit.

(3) What is the significance of the title?

Ans. The title 'Where the mind is without fear' is very apt as it underlines the very theme of the poem. The poet, in the poem, invokes God to lead his country towards freedom which is not just physical but that of mind and spirit also. Hence the title is significant as it forms the basis of Tagore's hope and prayer for his country.

(4) What is tone of the poem?

Ans. The tone of the poem is serious and patriotic.

(5) What is the mood of poem?

Ans. The mood of the poem in the first eight lines is sorrowful but the last two lines have an optimistic mood.

***Q.2. Read the poem. Write an Appreciation of the poem in about 12 to 15 sentences with the help of the following points.**

Points

- Title
- Poet
- Rhyme scheme
- Favourite line
- Theme/Central idea
- Figures of speech
- Special features-Type of the poem, language, tone, implied meaning, etc.
- Why I like/dislike the poem

Ans. Title: 'Where the mind is without fear'

Poet: Rabindranath Tagore

Rhyme scheme: The poet has chosen to write in free verse without any rhyme scheme or metre, thus making it one big complex sentence.

Favourite line: 'Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.' This line makes the whole poem a prayer, an appeal made to God.

Theme/Central idea: The poet's desire to see his countrymen free and the qualities he wishes to see in them, as well as hopes for a better future.

Figures of speech: Figures of speech add to the beauty of the poem. Tagore has used Apostrophe, Metaphor, Alliteration, Synecdoche and Personification to express his thoughts.

Special features: The poem is a prayer-poem written in a serious tone that echoes patriotism throughout. The mood transcends from gloomy in the beginning to hopeful in the last two sentences. The use of 'into' in the last two sentences not only ushers in hope, but also lends a sense of clarity, underlining the theme of the poem. The implied meaning that the poet wishes to convey is that only when people experience freedom of mind and spirit can a country progress. Through the beautiful use of imagery such as 'Clear stream of reason' and 'dreary sand of dead habit', the

poet presents his vision for a brighter tomorrow for India while he indirectly acknowledges the reality of the present.

Why I like the poem: The poem's message is timeless, as it does not fail to have a global appeal today as well. Even though the poem has been written for India in the pre-independence era, we can still relate to it today. The gap between the present and the future presented in the poem through simple language enhances the poet's purpose and leaves the reader hopeful. All in all, the poem inspires us to collectively strive towards making India a 'heaven of freedom'.

ENGLISH WORKSHOP

(1) In your notebook write down lines from the poem as a proof for the following.

(i) Tagore wishes for a nation where people are truthful.

Ans. Line - Where words come out from the depth of truth.

(ii) The poet would like everyone to work hard to reach their goal and in the long run to reach perfection.

Ans. Line - Where timeless striving stretches its arms towards perfection.

(iii) The poet wishes that everyone in his country holds his head high in dignity.

Ans. Line - Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high.

(3) Read the poem carefully and complete the table after the discussion in pairs. One is done for you.

Ans.

Concept in the poem	Present situations	Expected/Ideal situation
(1) mind	mind is full of fear	fearless mind
(2) head	head is bowed low due to lack of self respect and low self-esteem	head is held high
(3) knowledge	knowledge is the prerogative of a few chosen ones	knowledge is free for all
(4) words	shallow & superficial words	truthfulness prevails
(5) habit	old harmful traditions and customs are practised	people think logically and use reason
(6) thought and action	narrow outlook	people are progressive and broad-minded

(4) Complete the following sentences using your own interpretation.

(i) When the mind is without fear and head unbowed, we enjoy freedom.

(iv) The poet dreams of a nation where knowledge should be free to all.

Ans. Line - Where knowledge is free.

(v) The poem is a 'prayer'.

Ans. Line - Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

(2) Read the columns carefully and match the expressions with their meanings.

Column 'A'	Column 'B'
(1) The head held high	(a) A fearless person
(2) Narrow domestic walls	(b) Sincerity of heart
(3) Knowledge is free	(c) A person with self respect and proud of possessing it
(4) Depth of truth	(d) Narrow mindedness
(5) Mind is without fear	(e) Education is given to all
(6) Stretches its arms	(f) Dried, infertile land of sands
(7) Clear stream of reason	(g) Clear thinking
(8) Dead habits	(h) Aim at perfection
(9) Ever widening thought and action	(i) Broadening the outlook and attitude

Ans. (1 - c), (2 - d), (3 - e), (4 - b), (5 - a), (6 - h), (7-g), (8 - f), (9 - i)

(ii) When knowledge is free, every citizen enjoys the right to and

(iii) We can prevent injustice when we pull down discriminatory walls of caste, class, religion, etc.

- (iv) Constant effort and strife leads to
 (v) Logical thinking and reasoning can put a stop to
 (vi) Tagore appeals to God to make his country a

Ans. (i) mental (ii) read, write (iii) social
 (iv) perfection (v) superstitions (vi) heaven of freedom.

(5) Fill in the blanks.

- (i) Students should keep themselves aloof from
 (ii) When everyone will be well literate.
 (iii) It is a social duty of every student of the modern world to uproot from societies.
 (iv) Students must develop outlook and attitudes.
 (v) In the world of sycophancy, students must

Ans. (i) dogmatism (ii) educated
 (iii) discrimination (iv) scientific (v) season

WRITING SKILLS

- (6) Almost every line of the poem begins with the word 'Where' and it expects the idealistic country and countrymen. Now work in a group of six students and compose your poem regarding 'Ideal School'. Begin your lines with word 'Where'**

Ans. Ideal School

Where nature offer sits classrooms for learning
 Where four walls do not define a child's world,
 Where discipline comes from within
 Where little hearts bask in the sunshine of human emotions,
 Where homework is home play instead,
 Where the thirst for knowledge defeats the greed for marks,
 Where hobbies and passion win the war against stress and pressure,
 Where being is more important than becoming,
 Let every tiny feet walk into that ideal school !

- (7) Imagine you have to deliver a speech on the occasion of 'Independence Day' or 'Republic Day' in the school assembly. Prepare a speech to deliver on the topic 'India of my dreams'.**

Use the following steps:

- Greeting and salutation

- Self Introduction
- Introduction of the topic
- Elaboration of the topic with examples
- Conclusion
- Thanking audience

Ans. Respected Principal, teachers and my dear friends, a very good morning to one and all. I stand before you to express my vision for the India I dream of. French Nobel laureate, Romain Rolland remarked, 'If there is one place on the face of the earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India.' So, what do I dream for my motherland that has manifested the dreams of countless others across the world?

Still, as a child of my beloved motherland, I have a vision and a dream for my country. I wish for India what each child wishes for his mother i.e. happiness, peace, prosperity and fame.

On the technological front, I wish India to be an icon of technological advancement. I wish it to be the richest in technical knowhow. India has suffered in the past due to the personal self-interest of a few but the India of my dreams shall see all her children united together by the bond of love and compassion. I wish all Indians live in an India that is free of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and communal disharmony. My dream India would be a manufacturing hub and the largest exporter of goods. Culturally, I wish India to be rich and prosperous for which we need to preserve our ancient culture and carry it with us wherever we go. I wish India to be a university of love and global peace. The India of my dreams would radiate harmony and brotherhood.

No Indian in my dream India would ever have to starve. The sweet fruits of their labour would assure them of their daily bread. All men and women would enjoy equality as social evils like child labour, female foeticide and others would become a thing of the past. India of my dreams would be guided by the youth who have the humility of a saint, knowledge of the leader and wisdom of a guru.

Thank you!

- (8) Read the short story written by Rabindranath Tagore 'The Kabuliwala' or 'The Home Coming.'**

Ans. Students are expected to do this activity on their own.