

Page No. 138

Understanding The Poem**1. How does the nightingale's song plunge the poet into a state of ecstasy?****Answer:**

John Keats composed this poem while sitting in his garden under a plum tree in Hampstead. The Nightingale song inspired the poet, which helped him complete the poem in a day. The poet starts the poem in a sad mood and explains how his "heart aches" as if he is drugged or poisoned. He felt like he drank water from the Lethe and was drowsy. It is then revealed that the song of the Nightingale is the main reason for the happiness of the poet. Finally, the Nightingale is addressed by the poet that his happiness lies in the happiness of the bird.

2. What are the unpleasant aspects of the human condition that the poet wants to escape from?**Answer:**

When the poet is celebrating joy in the Nightingale song, he is pushed into deeper thought. John Keats consoles the people for the unpleasantness and sorrows that one undergoes in life. The poet wants to break free from these, fly to the Nightingale and drown in the euphoria of its singing. The poet notices the truth which lies in human life and learns that the entire world can provide only momentary happiness to humans while the rest is fake and contains pain. The materialistic profits include pain rooted within, and the poet wants to run away from all of them. He notices the different obstacles one has to go through in their life. He talks about the bird, which has never gone through weariness or fever; who never groans like the men where "palsy shakes a few", those "sad" folks with few "grey hairs". He laments the world where everything is temporary. The poet wants to come out from the various aspects of the world and wishes to embrace the world where happiness lies, where joy awaits him.

3. What quality of 'beauty' and 'love' does the poem highlight?**Answer:**

Romantics share a respect for the beauty of nature and find comfort in the embrace. The poet extolls the truth in this poem, which is about death and immortality. In order to fight against this inevitability, he celebrates nature's beauty, wherein he notices the beauty in the song of the Nightingale. We all must die in the end. The poet enjoys the song of the bird and feels euphoric. The poet realises that beauty is something that lies within and not what we see. The poet dwells in the beauty of nature which helps him to delay the ultimate, which is death! Anyhow, he must die. This beauty in the song of the bird, nature would always remain, though the poet would become aged and die. It is important to note that true happiness and beauty lie in spiritual awakening and not in this profit-minded world. In this world of momentary profits, nothing is permanent, neither love nor beauty.

4. How does the poet bring out the immortality of the bird?**Answer:**

While the poet is lamenting the various aspects of human life, he admires the song of the Nightingale and feels ecstatic about it. He praises its beauty and calls it immortal for its song, which will not fade away like people who wither with age and die. He wants to fly to the bird and wishes to die and live with the bird. However, the poet realises that what he wishes for is not possible. The song of the Nightingale bewitches the poet, and he sings in praise of it whose humming has been heard by the clowns, emperors and "Ruth" and will be immortal and heard by posterity. He adores and adds to the beauty of the Nightingale's song with his explanation. Attracted by the beauty of this bird's song, the poet delays death and lives through the immortality of the Nightingale, though not for long.

5. How is the poet tossed back from ecstasy into despair?

Answer:

While the poet praises the song of the bird, the Nightingale further flies far from him. The poet moans, “Forlorn!” as the sound is detached, the spell breaks, and the poet awakes to reality. He notices that through dreaming, he has gone far away from reality. He is again pushed to the physical world, and he mourns that his imagination will not occur in reality. The poet grieves at this loss and wonders whether he was dreaming or he imagined it all. He grieves for he lacks beauty and his art.

6. How does the poem bring out the elusive nature of happiness in human existence?**Answer:**

This poem is an attempt to distinguish the real and imaginary, happiness and true happiness, pleasure and pain, reality and dream, the ideal and the actual. In this poem, the permanent and temporary have been differentiated. True pleasure, as the poet defines it, does not lie in the physical world, which is full of pain, loss and misery. We chase happiness and beauty like the poet who chases the song of the bird, and at a certain point, the spell is bound to break like the bursting of the bubble and the human is pushed into reality to understand the inevitable and the ultimate, the death! Happiness is evanescent and elusive, which cannot be possessed forever as it is fickle. When the poet felt that he found true happiness in the song of the Nightingale, which is above time and age, he awakens to reality. He notices that it is just a dream, so happiness is also like a dream which is not permanent. All that we humans can do is delay the inevitability of death by enjoying the beauty that gives us happiness.

