



CLASS X
ADDITIONAL ENGLISH
CHAPTER 5 - A PSALM OF LIFE
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SOLUTIONS

COMPREHENSION

A. Answer the following questions in one phrase or sentence each:

Q1. What is a Psalm?

Ans: - A Psalm is a religious or sacred song or hymn.

Q2. What does the poet say of our life?

Ans: - The poet says that our life is serious and real. Death or grave is not life's goal.

Q3. What is our destined end in life?

Ans: - Our destined end in life is to act wise and create a good future. Enjoyment and sorrow are not end or way of life.

Q4. What do you mean by 'the bivouac of life'?

Ans: - By 'the bivouac of life' it means the temporary shelter in life's journey on earth.

Q5. 'Act, -act is the living present!' Explain the line.

Ans: - It means we must act courageously and actively in the present to achieve our goals. We should bury our past and stop worrying about our future.

Q6. "Dust thou art, to dust returnest". Explain.

Ans: - It means that human body is made of dust and will go back to dust after death. It is applicable only to the body and not the soul.

Q7. Give the last message of the poem.

Ans: - The last message of the poem is we should not spend our priceless present moments sitting idly and doing nothing, rather we have to work hard towards reaching our goals leaving our footprints on the sands of time for other to follow in this endless struggle of life.



APPLICATION

B. Answer the following questions in about 25-30 words each:

Q1. What is the attitude of young man to life?

Ans: - The attitude of young man to life is that life is not an empty dream. It is real and earnest and the grave is not the ultimate goal of life.

Q2. How should we behave in a broad battlefield of life?

Ans: - We should behave like a hero in a broad battlefield. We should not be like dumb cattle driven by others, with no particular aim or direction.

Q3. How can we make our lives sublime?

Ans: - We can make our lives sublime by leaving behind something worthwhile, such as noble deeds. In this manner, others can follow in our footsteps.

Q4. What did Longfellow affirm in the poem "A Psalm of Life"?

Ans: - Longfellow affirmed in the poem that life was not an empty dream as it is real and earnest. He did not think that grave was the ultimate goal of life. We must act actively in the present; bury our past and not trusting the future. We should do something great so that people remember us forever.

Q5. What does the poet wish us to do in the battle of life?

Ans: - In the battle of life, the poet urges us not to worry about the consequences. We must learn to work hard, to labour, to act wisely, and wait for the rewards patiently.

COMPOSITION

C. Answer the following questions in about 100 words each:

a) Give/write the theme of the poem.

Ans: - The main theme of the poem "A psalm of life" is to represent an optimistic view of life. Life is not an empty dream. It is rather real. According to the poet, this life is precious. We should not waste it. Rather we should use this life to do something great, so that people remember us forever. The speaker also advises that one should seize the day and live in the present - neither dwelling on the past, nor worrying too much about future. We should not be discouraged by the thought of death. Rather, we should take life seriously, work hard in the present and wait for the reward patiently.



b) Give the central idea of the poem.

Ans: - The central idea of the poem is that it imparts a high moral lesson. He says that life is reality and should be taken seriously. Life is full of struggle and difficulties and is like a battlefield. We should face it bravely. To achieve our goals in life, we should be patient and hardworking. We must act actively in the living present, forgetting the dead past and trusting no future. Lessons from the lives of great men will make one's life sublime likewise we can leave behind our footprints on the sand of time to be followed by others.

c) How does the poem appeal to you?

Ans: - The poem "A Psalm of life" appeals us by its simplicity, straightforwardness, optimistic, faith in God, hard work and patience. The poem is trying to tell us to live life to the fullest, find a purpose, and leaving behind a lasting legacy for future generations. "A Psalm of Life" is meant to encourage us to spend our lives, however short they might be, in pursuit of meaningful, compassionate acts that will change the lives of others; those living and those to come. This is a very motivating and didactic poem. It is really a sacred song of life.

The rhyme scheme of the four lined stanzas (*abab*) is properly structured and quite appealing. It adds beauty to the poem. The metaphors used when life is spoken of as a battle is truly amazing.

d) Give an estimate of the poem as a hymn.

Ans: - A hymn is a religious song or poem of praise to God. The title of the poem "The Psalm of Life" itself is very much appropriately named. It is a lyrical poem about life or sacred song of life. It is the response of a young man as a psalmist. He responds to the Biblical teachings of life as an empty dream. So, we may take it as a psalm in response to a psalm. The young man does not believe in the fact that life is an empty dream. For him life is real and the grave is not its goal. Life is like a- battlefield, where one should act like a hero in the struggle and strife of life. The line when the poet said to work courageously in the present moment, having faith in god bears ample testimony to this fact. Therefore, this poem is quite appropriate to be called as a hymn poem.



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e) Give reasons for your liking\disliking the poem.

Ans: - Yes, I really like this poem. The reasons for liking this poem are as follow:-

- 1) The message of this poem is very meaningful. We should continue to pursue and achieve goals, learn to work hard and to work for the rewards.
- 2) The tone and style are simple yet beautiful. The Spontaneous flow of the words and phrases, as well as the theme of the poem, is quite appealing. The poet represents life from the optimistic view of life.
- 3) It is a very inspiring and motivating poem. It conveys his message that we should not spend our priceless moments sitting idly instead we should work hard to reach our goals.
- 4) Optimistic, self-belief, faith in God, hard work and patience are the values as such desired in the poem.

EXPLANATION

B. Give the meaning of the extract with comments:

a) “Lives of great men all remind us

We can make our lives sublime

And, departing, leave behind us

Foot prints on the sand of time;”

Ans: - In this stanza, the poet says that the lives of so many great and successful men remind us that we can also achieve those heights if we wish and strive for that. And if we can do that, we would be living forever in the hearts of people. He compares immortality to leaving footprints on the sand of time. We will not be living forever, but we can leave our marks on the infinite flow of time through our good deeds so that later generations can follow our way. This is in fact true to be said as the psalm of life.



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b) Let us, then, be up and doing,

With a heart for any fate;

Still achieving, still pursuing,

Learn to labour and to wait.

Ans: - This is the final stanza of the poem. Here, the poet asks us to be up at once and start working. However, he urges not to mind the consequences, or, to make our mind prepared for any fate. We must carry on, reaching great heights, still not leaving. We must learn to labour, to work hard, to act wisely, and wait for the rewards patiently.

EXTRA QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q1. Who are 'mournful numbers'?

Ans: 'Mournful numbers' are the sorrowful ways in which people complain that life has no meaning.

Q2. How should we treat our past? Why?

Ans: - We should bury our past completely because if we bear our past along with us, we will never be able to progress in the present and future.

Q3. Why should we not trust the future?

Ans: - We should not trust the future though it may seem pleasant because future is never fixed. We never know what we might face in our future.

Q4. Explain the line, "Life is but an empty dream!"

Ans:- Life is but an empty dream means that life is meaningless and empty. But the poet rebukes them and says that life is not an empty dream and it is their soul which is sleeping.

Q5. Do you agree with the poet that the grave is not the goal of life? Why?

Ans:- Yes, I agree with the poet that death is not the ultimate goal of life. We should do things in life which makes our future better and create a happy environment for everyone.
