



মহাশিক্ষা বিভাগ (সি)  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (S)

Government of Manipur

## LESSON - 7

### THE QUEST OF A MAN

#### NOTES:

#### AN INTRODUCTION TO “THE QUEST OF MAN”.

‘The Quest of Man’, the fifty-sixth in the series of letters in “Glimpses of World History” and the first that Jawaharlal Nehru wrote from the district jail of Dehra Dun, takes us back to the origin of human civilization that had been preceded by the Earth’s story for many thousands of years. The distinctive feature of human civilization is that it owes its existence to the human mind. It is the eternal curiosity of the human mind to find out and learn more and more about the world that started man on this quest.

#### SUMMARY:

The subject matter of this letter is philosophical but it has been rendered in a simple and elegant style. The writer attempts to recreate the history of the world from pre-historic times to modern days. Nehru says that he started with the narration about discovery of fire and agriculture and extended his writings to cover facts of history about empires and different civilizations. He wonders whether midway he had lost sight of the biggest human challenge that sought to unravel the history of the universe. He has written about civilizations that have come and gone, but somewhere along the line he had missed to delve upon the human quest to understand the world that man journeys through. Nehru feels close to his daughter Indira when he writes, as if they are sitting together and talking. Nehru says that it is his mind which is man’s greatest asset that helps him in his quest.

Nehru says that religion imposes its own ways based on spiritual beliefs and faith and science gives answers through experiment and reason. There cannot be any single answer to what man is seeking, as his quest has taken two distinct directions – one to understand himself and the other to understand nature. Religion looks to the inner nature of man while science to the outer nature. Both are important. But Nehru prefers the scientific approach because it is rational and open minded, not dogmatic like religion. However, man is misusing science, instead of harnessing its power. He is almost to the point of destroying the very civilization that he has built up.

**WORD MEANINGS:**

- Vivid : *intense, producing strong clear pictures in the mind.*
- Interminably : *long, endless.*
- Civilization : *human society with its own social organization and culture.*
- Eddies : *moving like smoke.*
- Skimmed : *passed over surface rapidly and lightly with slight contact.*
- Slouching : *standing or moving or sitting in a drooping fashion.*
- Tracts : *region or area of indefinite extent.*
- Dogmatic : *authoritative, rigid, arrogant.*
- Dogmatize : *make positive unsupported statements*
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