

Teacher : Kashama SharmaTENDER HEART HIGH SCHOOL, SEC. 33 B, CHD
CLASS : X

SUBJECT : ENGLISH LITERATURE

POEM : THE POWER OF MUSIC

BY: SUKUMAR RAY

Form and Structure :

'The Power of Music' is an English translation of the Bengali poem 'Ganer Gunto', which was a part of Sukumar Ray's 'Abol Tabol' (in English, Rhymes without Reason), an anthology of Non-sense Rhymes. It is famous for its incisive wit and vivid imagination, presented through an absurd and eccentric character, Bhisma Lochan Sharma, whose harsh and loud singing disturbs everybody around him - human beings, birds, animals, plants and even non-living things like buildings. The poet uses hyperbolic situations to bring to life the scene following Bhisma Lochan Sharma's singing to create humour and comic effect.

- ∴ The poem is single stanza poem divided into 20 lines.
- ∴ It is written in the form of first person narrative.
- ∴ The rhyme scheme followed is aabbcc.
- ∴ To provide a comic effect to the poem, quite funny rhyming words have been used like

Sharma - Burma

hell - bent - well - meant

sickly - quickly

roadside - broadside

fellow - bellow

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Explanation in Detail:

Lines 1 to 8 :

The poet describes how every summer, he, along with other people around him, have to endure the loud and discordant singing of Bhisma Lochan Sharma. He says that Bhisma sings so loudly and harshly that his voice echoes on the hills and in the plains all the way from Delhi to Burma (Myanmar). He keeps on singing as if he has staked his life on it and is hell-bent on it, whatever may happen.

The people get confused by his continuous cacophony but they know he does not have bad intentions. Sometimes people on hearing his harsh singing, run in panic and get trampled, whereas some others become pale and sick.

Some old people plead with him that they have grown old and cannot bear his singing anymore, so he should stop singing immediately.

Even the animals have to suffer due to Bhisma's continuous, irritable singing.

The bullock-carts are overturned and horses refuse to move and stand along the road. But unfazed by everything going on around him, Bhisma Lochan continues with his harsh sing-

- ing. The whole situation seems to be exaggerated to get the effect of slapstick comedy.

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Slapstick comedy:

It is a type of physical comedy that involves exaggerated movements, gestures, and reactions often with a humorous intention.

For example: Charlie Chaplin
Mr. Bean

Lines 9-16:

The poet continues to describe the effect of Bhisma Lochan's singing on animals, plants, and even the birds in the sky. He says that the animals are pitiful, i.e., the horses cry out in pain, stare and raise their feet in the air and look quite upset, the moment they hear Bhisma Lochan's singing. Even the fishes, troubled by Bhisma Lochan's singing dive deep down from the surface of the lake in search of silence. And the trees collapse with the sound that can be heard a mile away. His harsh, loud sound reaches the sky and on hearing that the birds lose control over their wings and turn upside down.

Again the human beings request the eccentric Bhisma Lochan to stop singing for if he does not do so, they feel they would die. But Bhisma's voice continues to soar higher and higher despite continuous pleading by the people. Even the sky weeps and the mighty

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buildings collapse due to the loud, unpleasant singing of Bhisma Lochan.

Lines 17 - 20 :

The poet says that now a change happens | comes forth as a wise goat appears on the scene. Bending its head it attacks the singer with its horns and loud noise (bellowing) equals the singer's harsh singing. That puts to an end Bhisma Lochan's musical spree and gives the world the 'golden gift of silence.'

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