

ANIMALS BY Poet Walt Whitman

Read the following extracts carefully and answers the questions that follow.

1. I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contained, I stand and look at them long and long.

- (a) What does the poet want to turn into?
- (b) Which qualities of animals attract the poet?
- (c) Which word is similar to the word "Calm"?
- (d) Explain the successive use of the word 'long' twice and bring out its significance.

Answer:

- (a) The poet wants to turn into an animal.
- (b) The poet is attracted to the calmness and poise of the animals.
- (c) The word is 'Placid'.
- (d) The successive use of the word 'long' makes the line significant; the first 'long', denotes 'period/Time' whereas the other, 'a desire'.

2. They do not sweat and whine about their condition, They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins, They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,

- (a) Why do humans lie awake in the dark?.
- (b) What do humans do about their condition?
- (c) Which word is opposite to "good deeds"?
- (d) Find a word from the passage that is an antonym of 'Thanking'.

Answer:

- (a) Humans lie awake in the dark weeping for their sins.
- (b) They sweat and whine about their condition.
- (c) The word is 'Sins.'
- (d) The word is 'whine'

3. Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning things, Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago, Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.

- (a) What does the poet call a mania here?
- (b) How are the animals not dissatisfied?
- (c) What does 'demented' mean?
- (d) Which word in the passage means 'species'?

Answer:

- (a) The habit of owning things by humans has been called a mania.
- (b) Since animals do not have the desire to own anything, therefore they are never dissatisfied.
- (c) It means mad or unbalanced.
- (d) The word is 'Kind'.

4. Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago,
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.

- (a) Who does 'another' refer to here?
- (b) Who is the poet referring to that lived thousands of years ago?
- (c) What does 'kneel' symbolise here?
- (d) Which word in the passage is an antonym of 'a part'?

Answer:

- (a) 'Another' refers to other animals here.
- (b) The poet is referring to the ancestors of human beings who lived thousands of years ago.
- (c) Kneel is symbolic to praying in the above line.
- (d) The word is 'Whole'.

5. So they show their relations to me and I accept them, They bring me tokens of myself,
they evince them plainly in their possession I wonder where they get those tokens, Did I
pass that way huge times ago and negligently drop them?

- (a) Who does 'they' refer to here?
- (b) Explain the line: "They bring me tokens of myself"
- (c) Which word in the stanza means "show"?
- (d) What similarities does the poet find between the human beings and the animals?

Answer:

- (a) 'They' refers to the animals.
- (b) The poet here means that the animals remind him of true values of the human nature such as kindness and innocence.
- (c) The word is 'Evince'.
- (d) The poet finds that animals, like human beings do not trouble others unless they are compelled; they are equally kind and innocent.

6. I wonder where they get those tokens, Did I pass that way huge times ago and negligently
drop them?

- (a) What does the poet wonder?
- (b) Why does the poet say that he negligently dropped them?
- (c) Which word in the stanza means "carelessness"?
- (d) Find from the passage a word which means 'enormous'?

Answer:

- (a) The poet wonders whether the animals get all their virtues from humans.
- (b) The poet believes that animals got their values from humans while they lost them a long time ago and have forgotten about them.
- (c) The word is 'Negligent'.
- (d) The word is 'Huge'.

Answer the following questions:-

1 .Why does the poet like animals?

ANS-The poet likes animals for their self-contained and quiet nature. The fact that animals are not like human beings and satisfied with their lives appeals to the poet a lot.

2. Explain the satisfaction that animals have and humans don't.

ANS-Animals do not have the desire to possess worldly things. Whereas, the more humans own, the more their desire to own grows, leaving them dissatisfied forever. The absence of this greed in animals keeps them satisfied and its presence keeps humans dissatisfied.

3 .Why do animals not weep for their sins?

ANS-Animals do not weep for their sins because they do not need to do so. They are innocent creatures that commit no sins. It is humans, who weep yet commit sins.

4. What makes the poet sick?

ANS-The fact, that humans commit all kinds of sins and still discuss their duty to God, makes the poet sick. This shows the hypocrisy of humans, who on one hand do wrong and on the other pray to God.

5. Differentiate between humans and animals in terms of desire.

ANS-Animals are very different from humans as they have no desire to own things. They are happy without an unending greed while humans become maniacs in their greed for possessing valuables.

6. What does the poet mean by, "Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth"?

ANS- The poet means that animals do not pray to God or to ancestors and all of them are equal, hence no one is more respectable than the other. The good values of animals and the lack of social conventions make them happy.

7. Why does the poet wish to live with animals?

ANS- The poet wishes if he could be transformed and live with animals. The poet thinks that animals are self contained , peaceful and unambitious , uncomplaining , simple and honest. He finds himself like animals.

8. Why has the forest been empty all these days? Mention three things that cannot happen in a treeless forest?

Ans : The forest has been empty all these days because its trees have been cut down. Three things cannot happen in a treeless forest .Firstly, birds cannot sit there .Secondly, insects can't hide themselves .Thirdly; the sun cannot bury its rays in shadow.

9. Where are the trees in the poem 'The Trees'? How do you know that they have been struggling to break out?

Ans : In the poem, the trees are in the veranda of the poet's house. They are being used for interior decoration. They have been struggling to break out and go to the forest, their natural habitat. Their roots have been working to separate themselves from the cracks of the veranda floor. Their leaves have been making efforts to move towards the glass. Their twigs have been straining to break the roof and move out.