

Poetry is the language of imagination and the passions. It relates to whatever gives immediate pleasure or pain to human mind. It comes home to the bosoms and business of men: for nothing but what comes home to them in the most general and intelligible shape can be a subject of poetry. Poetry is the universal language of the heart, which the heart holds with nature and he who has contempt for poetry cannot have much respect for himself or for anything else. Wherever there is a sense of beauty, or power, or harmony, as in the motion of the waves of the sea, in the growth of a flower, there is poetry in its birth. If history is a grave study, poetry may be said to be graver, its materials lie deeper, and are spread wider. History treats, for the most part, cumbersome and unwieldy masses of things, the empty cases in which the affairs of the world are packed, under the heads of intrigue or war, in different states, and from century to century but there is no thought or feeling that can have entered into the mind of man which he would be eager to communicate to others, or they would listen to with delight, that is not a fit subject for poetry. It is not a branch of authorship: it is "the stuff of which our life is made". The rest is mere oblivion, a dead letter, for all that is worth remembering in life is the poetry of it. Fear is poetry, hope is poetry, love is poetry, hatred is poetry. Poetry is that fine particle within us that expands, refines, raises our whole being; without which man's life is poor as beasts. In fact, man is a poetical animal. The child is a poet when he first plays hide and seek, or repeats the story of Jack the Giant Killer, the shepherd-boy is a poet when he first crowns his mistress with a garland of flowers; the miser is a poet when he stops to look at the rainbow; the miser is a poet when he hugs his gold; the courtier when he builds his hope

upon a smile; the vain, the ambitious, the proud, the choleric man, the hero and the coward, the beggar and the king, all live in a world of their own making; and the poet does no more than describe what all others think and act. (Hazlitt)

## Questions

- (a) In what sense is poetry the language of the imagination and the passion? (4)
- (b) How is poetry the universal language of the heart? (4)
- (c) What is the difference between history and poetry? (4)
- (d) Explain the phrase: "Man is a poetical animal". (4)
- (e) What are some of the actions which Hazlitt calls poetry and its doer as poet? (4)

a) In what sense is poetry the language of the imagination and the passion?

Ans Poetry is the language of imagination and passion in the sense that it portrays sudden happiness or sadness to the peace of mind. Moreover, it forms an intellectual virtue of a man.

b) How is poetry the universal language of the heart?

Ans Poetry is the universal language of the heart because it connects it with nature. In fact, it attracts a man's heart naturally as it is present in every object of metaphysical world. Hence, poetry is the universal language.

c) What is the difference between history and poetry?

Ans The main difference between history and poetry is that history does not inculcate deeply into a man's mind, whereas poetry is deeply inducted into a person's heart and soul. Moreover, history is full of foolish incidents of the past, such as war. On the other hand, poetry puts essence in ones

virtues i.e. anticipation.

4) Explain the phrase "Man is a poetical animal."

The phrase "Man is a poetical animal" means that a man is naturally attracted towards beauty of nature and inculcates that beauty in his peace of mind. Hence, a man is a poetical animal.

5) What are some of the actions which Hazlitt calls poetry and its doer as poet?

Hazlitt talks about one's misery, anticipation, smile, prodd, heroic and coward actions, looking at rainbow, a child playing are all poetry norms and doer of these is as a poet.