

Comprehension

Quick Recap

- A. 1. This line means easy accessibility of knowledge for all citizens of the nation; it can also refer to the unrestricted flow of knowledge that is not suppressed by fear or bias of any kind.
2. In the poet's ideal country, people would be free to learn and express their opinions without fear of any kind. They will not be guided by bias and prejudice. It will be a country where everyone will be judged according to their merit. The people there will approach everything with an open mind and not hesitate to accept new ideas. These things will make the poet's ideal country a heaven of freedom.
3. The figure of speech used here is personification, metaphor.
4. The poet wishes for his country to be roused out of its slumber of ignorance, dependence and intolerance. The country was in a sorry state with a foreign power ruling over it, and the people felt helpless and hapless, and divided.
5. The poem is addressed to the Almighty in the form of a prayer.

B. Answer the questions with reference to context

1. a. These walls are the divisive walls of Caste, Race and Religion.
b. These walls create divisions among the people of the country, causing disharmony.
c. India would have been a harmonious and united country.
2. a. The mind of the citizens of the nation is being referred to here.
b. The Almighty is being addressed as 'thee'.

The poet wishes that God's guiding presence should always be there with the citizens of this nation, that they are directed towards progressive thought and action under His influence.

- c. This phrase refers to progressive thoughts and deeds that keep up with the need of the time.

Ponder

C. Think and answer

1. In the first line, 'fear' refers to the obstacles to free thought. People can be afraid to think freely, live freely and dream of a better way of life. The poet wants a nation where the mind is fearless.
2. Yes, these ideas are still relevant. The country today is plagued by casteism, communalism, gender bias, poverty and lack of education. Therefore, the prayer of the poet still holds good today.
3. 'Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high': the quality being highlighted is that of fearlessness, courage and self-respect. 'Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection': a relentless quest for perfection is an important quality for nation building. Or it means the untiring and ceaseless efforts that are made to achieve perfection.
- 'Where the mind is led forward by thee. Into everwidening thought and action': refers to the plea of the poet to God to broaden the minds of his countrymen and to make them act for the betterment and progress of all and not for themselves only.