

Poem
19

A Man of Words and Not of Deeds

Charles Perrault (Translated by Robert Samber)

Words and Expressions

deeds	–	actions; acts	اعمال
weeds	–	wild plants; unwanted plants	خودرو گھاس پھوس
roar	–	thunder	گر جنا
crack	–	break; collapse	ٹوٹنا
smart	–	hurt; ache	دکھنا

Multiple Choice Questions

Choose the correct synonym.

- A man of words and not of **deeds** is like a garden full of weeds.
A) actions B) success
C) disgrace D) honour
- A man of words and not of deeds is like a garden full of **weeds**. (Board 2007)
A) grass B) vegetation
C) thorns D) wild plants
- And when the sky begins to **roar**, it's like a lion at the door.
A) pour B) thunder
C) glow D) crack
- And when the door begins to **crack**, it's like a stick across your back.
A) open B) bang
C) rattle D) break
- And when your back begins to **smart**, it's like a penknife in your heart.
A) bend B) hurt
C) soothe D) thin
- It's like a **penknife** in your heart.
A) spear B) pang
C) demon D) pocketknife
- You're dead and dead and dead **indeed**.
A) probably B) really
C) somehow D) almost

Answers

1. A 2. D 3. B 4. D 5. B 6. D 7. B

Questions and Answers

Q.1 How does the life of an idle man pass through different phases?

Ans. The poem throws light on the life of an impractical man. Sometimes, he enjoys the pleasures of life and sometimes, he is faced with difficulties. A talkative man loses heart as soon as he has to face the problems but the man of action faces the odds of life hopefully and manfully.

Q.2 What happens when life is spent with the help of words and not of deeds?

OR

What is the moral/theme of the poem "A Man of Words and Not of Deeds"?

OR

What is the difference between the life of words and that of action?

(Board 2008)

Ans. The poem teaches us the importance of action in life. Idlers and empty talkers are like weeds and snow in a garden. Words have importance only if they are followed by actions. Action leads to success and glory while mere words lead to failure and disgrace.

Q.3 What is the condition of the garden when the weeds start growing?

OR

"A man of words and not of deeds / Is like a garden full of weeds." Comment.

OR

Why does the poet compare an idler to a garden full of weeds?

Ans. A garden full of weeds is a symbol of ugliness and barrenness. It becomes a picture of utter neglect and carelessness and thus it becomes deserted and useless. Similarly, a man of words becomes a useless person.

Q.4 What is meant by 'A Man of Words and not of Deeds'?

Ans. It means a man who only talks but does nothing. He cannot give practical shape to his words. He forgets that real worth lies in action, not in words. Great braggarts are little doers.

Q.5 What is the significance of "the roaring sky" in "A Man of Words and not of Deeds"?

Ans. Here "the roaring sky" implies the criticism of the people an idle man has to face when his idleness is exposed.

Q.6 What is your understanding of the image of "a lion at the door"?

Ans. The image of "a lion at the door" suggests that an idle man is very close to destruction. He cannot escape the outcome of an idle and worthless existence.

Q.7 Who is the author of the poem "A Man of Words and not of Deeds"?

Ans. The poem has been written by Charles Perrault.

Explanation with Reference to the Context

Stanza 1:

A man of words and not of deeds,
Is like a garden full of weeds.
And when the weeds begin to grow,
It's like a garden full of snow.

Reference:

These lines have been taken from the poem "A Man of Words and Not of Deeds" written by Charles Perrault and translated by Robert Samber.

Context:

The poem teaches us the importance of action in life. Idlers and empty talkers are like weeds and snow in a garden. Words have importance only if they are followed by actions. Action leads to success and glory while mere words lead to failure and disgrace.

Explanation:

In these lines, the poet talks about a person who speaks a lot but does nothing useful. Such a man is like unwanted plants which not only obstruct the growth of fruitful plants but also mar the beauty of the garden. These weeds convert the garden into a jungle. Such a garden is no better than barrenness. Snow is also a symbol of inactivity and death. Like weeds, snow also destroys the beauty of the garden. In short, the man of words and not of action is just like a garden full of weeds and snow.

Stanza 2:

And when the snow begins to fall,
It's like a bird upon the wall.
And when the bird away does fly,
It's like an eagle in the sky.

Reference:

These lines have been taken from the poem "A Man of Words and Not of Deeds" written by Charles Perrault and translated by Robert Samber.

Context:

The poem teaches us the importance of action in life. Idlers and empty talkers are like weeds and snow in a garden. Words have importance only if they are followed by actions. Action leads to success and glory while mere words lead to failure and disgrace.

Explanation:

A man of words finds himself in the best of colours when he has his followers beside him. He gets a chance to speak his heart out. His flight is metaphorical to his being talkative. The more he indulges in idle talk, the higher he soars. It means he is at the top of the world while narrating his useless tales. He takes high pride as there are people around him who give ears to whatever he says.

Stanza 3:

And when the sky begins to roar,
It's like a lion at the door.
And when the door begins to crack,
It's like a stick across your back.

Reference:

These lines have been taken from the poem "A Man of Words and Not of Deeds" written by Charles Perrault and translated by Robert Samber.

Context:

The poem teaches us the importance of action in life. Idlers and empty talkers are like weeds and snow in a garden. Words have importance only if they are followed by actions. Action leads to success and glory while mere words lead to failure and disgrace.

Explanation:

These lines reflect people's reaction. Ultimately the people around a talkative man show their grudge exposing the uselessness of the man of words. They start censuring his unwanted utterances. He can't stand such a criticism and the very fear of his exposure before the people pains him. It is a kind of punishment he receives for his fake, boastful, high claims. The use of similes, "like lion at the door" and "like a stick across the back" is very effective. The image of the cracking door suggests lack of protection against suffering. His image is tarnished, which is more painful than even being whipped.

Stanza 4:

And when your back begins to smart,
It's like a penknife in your heart.
And when your heart begins to bleed,
You're dead and dead and dead indeed.

Reference:

These lines have been taken from the poem "A Man of Words and Not of Deeds" written by Charles Perrault and translated by Robert Samber.

Context:

The poem teaches us the importance of action in life. Idlers and empty talkers are like weeds and snow in a garden. Words have importance only if they are followed by actions. Action leads to success and glory while mere words lead to failure and disgrace.

Explanation:

When the idle man is fully exposed, he suffers from a severe pain. It is the drop-scene to the drama of his life. He is humiliated, left alone, and is lost into the world of oblivion, with no following and no recognition. This is virtually his death and he becomes a living corpse. The tragic end of such a man of words suggests that the way to success and glory passes through hard work and practicality and not through words.