**VOICE OF RAIN**

**Read the extracts and answer the following:**

1. And who art thou? said I to the soft-falling shower,

Which, strange to tell, gave me an answer, as here translated:

I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain.

(i) What does the phrase strange to tell mean?**.**

**‘Strange to tell’ sounds a note or exclamation of surprise. The poet had not expected to get an answer inhuman voice from the rain.**

(ii) Why does the rain call herself the ‘Poem of the Earth’?

**The rain has its birthplace in the river bodies and season the earth. It is the lovely and musical child of the earth.**

**2. And forever, by day and night, I give back life to my own origin,**

**And make pure and beautify it;**

**(For the song, issuing from its birthplace, after fulfilment, wandering**

**Reck’d or unreck’d, duly with love returns).**

(i)  How is the cyclic movement of rain brought out in the poem?

 The poem gives us a clear picture of how the clouds are formed and how they dissolve into the water again. They have a short life-span

(ii) What is the significance of the word ‘song’ here?

 The word ‘song’ refers to the musical sound which can be heard when the rain falls on different surfaces on the earth

(iii) How does the rain benefit the earth?

. The rain is a great benefactor of the earth. It cleanses, purifies and waters the dry earth. It gives a new life and beauty to the scorched fields and all the living beings.

**Give answers for the following questions:**

**1. Why does the poet call this poem a ‘translation’?**

**Ans**. The voice of the rain is naturally mysterious and is different from our own. So, the poet who alone understands it translates the reply of the rain into English.

**2. What question does the poet ask for the rain? What reply does he get?**

**Ans.**   The poet asks the rain who she is. The rain in its mysterious voice introduces herself as Poem of the Earth.

**3. What are the functions of the cloud or rain?**

**Ans**.   The rain bathes everything on the earth, washes away dust layers, cures dry conditions. and gives a new life to seeds. In this way, it cleans, purifies and beautifies all things on the earth.

**4. What is the central idea of Walt Whitman’s poem?**

**Ans**. The poet wants to convey the birth, growth, change and finally the blessings of rain. It is water that turns into clouds, wanders in the sky, takes on strange shapes, but finally in the form of water returns to the earth. It purifies, bathes and adds beauty to all things on the earth. Rain does its duty unmindful of any recognition. Human beings should learn a lesson from this and make efforts to preserve the Earth.

**1. Rain does its duty unmindful of any recognition. A great lesson is hidden here. What is that?**

**Ans.** Rain is the song of the Earth which is its birthplace and so its mother. It does not forget its mother and relentlessly works to make her mother all green, happy and worth living. It washes away the layers of dust and helps the seeds to sprout again. It gives life to dry earth and drying plants. In a way, it makes all earthly things clean, pure, fertile and beautiful. It fulfils the purpose of its birth by doing different duties and finally returns to its mother and rests in her lap. These services rendered by the rain are taken for granted and the rain does not mind it. All this contains a hidden message for mankind.

Man must do whatever he can to enhance the beauty and splendour of this earth which is his mother. But in reality, he leaves no stone unturned to destroy his mother. He is ever-ready to exploit her and leave her destitute. He forgets that by doing so he is destroying himself and leaving nothing for his progeny. Unlike the rain, he tries his best to milk the mother earth to the maximum and leave her all day. He should not do that. He should rather do everything to keep his mother earth life-giving for all times to come. He should respect natural resources and give them some space for renewal. If he does that, it will be the greatest service he will be doing not only to his mother earth but also towards all living beings.