

I AM LIKE GRASS

Pash

PASH (1950 -88), was a major Punjabi poet. His important works include *Lok Katha*, *Udadiyan Bajjan Magar* and *Sade Samayan Vich*. The present poem "I Am Like Grass", translated from Punjabi by Suresh Sethi, breathes optimism.

A. Work in small groups and discuss the questions given below:

1. Have you seen grass?
2. How does it look?
3. How do you feel when you walk on it?
4. Can a man be compared to grass? Read the poem and see why the poet thinks himself similar to grass.

I AM LIKE GRASS

I am like grass
you can chop me mow me down
but I shall sprout again
grow
and bounce back

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you can obliterate my signposts
you can bomb the Universities
reduce the hostels to rubble
you may scorch the slums
but you cannot erase my identity
because I am like grass
I will sprout again
and my mantle shall cover everything

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B.1. Answer the following questions very briefly:

1. Why does the poet say that he is like grass?
2. Why does the poet say that he will sprout again even after being mowed down?
3. What makes the poet say that people can't erase his identity?
4. What will his mantle cover?

you may bomb Banga
 you may destroy Sangrur
 and reduce the whole district of Ludhiana
 to ashes

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but it will be only a matter of time
 two years ten years
 before my green mantle covers everything again

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I shall become a vast green jungle
 the green jungle of Barnala
 where tourists will visit me
 visit my green jungle
 because I am like grass
 you can chop me
 you can mow down
 but I will sprout again
 and cover everything

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B.2. Answer the following questions very briefly:

1. What do Banga and Sangrur refer to?
2. "And reduce the whole district of Ludhiana to ashes." What does this line suggest?
3. What time will it take for the poet to come back to his normal state?
4. Why will the tourists visit the green jungle of Barnala?

GLOSSARY AND NOTES

- chop** (v): cut or fell by the blow of an axe
chopper (n): short axe with a large blade
mow (v): cut (grass, hay, etc.) with a scythe or machine
sprout (v): put forth, begin to grow
bounce back (v): recover well after a setback
obliterate (v): blot out, destroy, leave no clear traces of
signpost (n): post on a road etc. indicating direction

rubble (n): rough fragments of stone, brick etc., esp. from a demolished building

scorch (v): burn or discolour the surface with dry heat

slum (n): house unfit for human habitation

mantle (n): loose sleeveless cloak, covering

vast (adj): immense, huge

C. 1. LONG ANSWER QUESTION

1. Why has the poet compared himself to grass? What are the features of grass?
2. Grass is soft, smooth and not rough. It is easily cut. But the poet here has used it as a symbol. What does grass symbolise here?
3. The poem suggests the resolute nature of the poet. Do you agree with it? Give your own opinion.
4. What is the background of this poem? In what circumstances do you think this poem has been written?
5. Summarise the poem in about 100 words.

C.2. GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the following in groups or pairs:

1. Nature is our best teacher.
2. We can always get inspiration from Nature.

C.3. COMPOSITION

1. Write a letter of condolence to your friend living in Punjab who has lost his parents in an attack by the terrorists. Encourage him in your letter and ask him to face the situation boldly.
2. Write a paragraph in about 100 words on the following topics:
 - (i) National Integration
 - (ii) Love for the country is the need of the hour.

D. 1. Word Study

1. Correct the spelling of the following words:

signepost

mantel

univercity

mater

ruble

sprot

2. Match words under **A** with their meanings under **B**.

A	B
mow	loose sleeveless cloak, covering
slums	put forth, begin to grow
vast	recover well after a setback
mantle	immense, huge
bounce back	cut or fell by blow of an axe
sprout	home unfit for human habitation

3. Study the following words:

air	anger	grass	hunger	ice
fog	chill	cloud	dirt	juice

By adding the suffix 'y' we can make them adjectives, e.g;

air + y = airy

Now make the rest words 'adjectives' by adding 'y'. Sometimes a change in spelling is necessary.

E. GRAMMAR/ Figure of Speech

Simile and Metaphor

Simile

Read the following sentence:

I am like grass.

Here a comparison has been made between two objects (man and grass) of different kinds which have at least one point in common. This is called **simile**.

The **simile** is usually introduced by such words as **like** and **as**.

She **is like** a star.

He is **as brave as** a lion.

Ex.1. Make ten sentences using 'like' and 'as'

Metaphor

A metaphor is an imaginative way of describing something by referring to something else which has the qualities that we want to express. e.g. if we want to say that someone is very shy and timid, we might say that he is a mouse.

When we say 'He fought like a lion' we use a simile but when we say, 'He was a lion in the fight.' We use a metaphor.

Ex. 2. Make ten sentences using metaphors.

F. ACTIVITY

1. With the help of your science teacher do a project work on grass. You may focus your attention on the varieties of grass, how it grows, where it grows etc.

G. TRANSLATE

Translate the following sentences into English:

1. टेबुल पर पाँच किताबें हैं।
2. गाड़ी प्लेटफार्म पर खड़ी है।
3. शिक्षक वर्ग में पढ़ा रहे हैं।
4. कुछ छात्र पेड़ के नीचे पढ़ते हैं।
5. छोटा बच्चा टेबुल के नीचे खेल रहा है।
6. वह चार घंटे से पढ़ रहा है।
7. सीता सुबह छः बजे से काम कर रही है।
8. दीवार पर घड़ी है।

