ENG-CC Shillong

**Q 1/ Describe the natural beauty of Shillong as presented by Nissim Ezekiel.**

Ans: The poet describes the natural mystical beauty of Shillong in all its glory. The rivers, woods, trees and birds all look like a part of a scenic picture frozen in time. During his walks in the dawn, the trees and the surrounding nature is almost personified as the Pine trees seemingly hold themselves in a nervous silence, realizing that he is a self-absorbed man; deaf and blind to nature. He describes the dissolving clouds and the cool calm air that soothes the unknown aches imprinted on him through his urban lifestyle. The Cedar Trees are mentioned; an important symbol of strength and eternity which is what Shillong is – a powerful bond of nature and humanity. Furthermore, the poet speaks of the gradual spiritual awakening that he undergoes, helping him feel and perceive things like the beauty and serenity of nature.

**Q 2/ Why does the poet not find any use of the “quietness” of Shillong?**

Ans: The poet feels that the calm and quiet serenity of Shillong is of no practical use. Life is slow in Shillong and the river is far beyond the hill; imaginary and unreal.

**Q 3/ What lesson does the poet learn from the landscape in Shillong?**

Ans: The landscape for the poet is like a first lesson in a new language of Nature in his life where he has finally begun to open his open and leave behind his claustrophobic world view. Liberated and unburdened, in the woods of Shilling he learns a new lesson of hope, beauty and inspiration; thus, understanding human truths.

**Q 4/ “I see**

**the things I cannot see” – Explain.**

Ans: The above lines are taken from the poem Shillong by Nissim Ezekiel. The poet beautifully explains the scenario that he had arrived in Shillong as a man who was blind to the impact and rejuvenating effect of Nature. But as time passed, he began to see the things which actually cannot be seen through his bare eyes.

By this, he tries to mean the spiritual beauty of the landscape which can only be felt but never seen. With time he is perceive the beauty of the silence, watch the flowers waving and him and the yellow bug sitting on the leaf. His mind is now receptive to nature.

**Q 5/ “I learn the landscape**

**like a first lesson**

**in a new language”. – Explain.**

Ans: The above lines are taken from the poem Shillong by Nissim Ezekiel. At first, he was a stranger in an unfamiliar land but with time he had begun to get attuned to Shillong. With his spiritual awakening and realization of nature; the lines indicate that he finally feels as if he has learnt a new lesson in itself – a lesson on nature, by nature and in the language of nature.

He has surrendered himself to the magical spells of nature leaving the monotonous pedantic world out of his thoughts. He feels liberated and enlightened amidst the woods of Shillong where he learns a new lesson of hope, beauty and inspiration; thus, understanding human truths.

**Q 6/ Discuss how the poem Shillong reflects a conflicts and contrast between the urbanized life and calm natural world.**

Ans: In this poem “Shillong” the poet has described a serene picture of Shillong. The poet expresses his experience of Shillong’s enchanting natural landscape from the point of one who has come from city life and has lost all connections with nature being engaged in the self-centered interests and works.

At first the poet describes the calm nature of Shillong, which affects him as he us unable to adjust to it. Though it is calm and peaceful the poet does not find anything to do with this kind of environment. He is unable to understand the quietness and peacefulness of Shillong as it is beyond his comprehension. He is deaf to the serenity of nature and blind to nature’s lessons such that he feels even as if the Pine trees are grumbling about his dense mind and thick sensibilities. He describes feeling as if the pine trees noticed that he had lost the meaning of the nature’s beauty. The trees apparently felt that he was too much concerned with his own thoughts that even the songs of birds could not heal his heart.

This entire conflict had its origins in the contrast between an urban lifestyle and the natural world. Belonging to a fast and noisy, hectic lifestyle; the poet has a narrow viewpoint of the world, measuring the existence of things as per their monetary value such that he even wonders about the use of the natural world of Shillong.