



2

SYMPATHY

—Charles Mackay (1814–1889)

About the Poet : Scottish poet Charles Mackay was born in 1814 in Perth (Australia). He passed his early life in France and in 1834 he settled in London. He became famous due to his song 'Cheer, Cheer', 'The Poor Man's Riches', 'The Giant'. In the beginning he started working as a journalist and worked for the 'Morning Chronicle' for 10 years. He studied at the Caledonian Asylum, London and at Brussels. His poems are well known for their simplicity and lyrical qualities. He died in 1889.

About the Poem : The poet was in deep distress. A rich man gave him some money but expressed little sympathy. So it was of little value for him. Once again he was in grief. A poor man served him with sympathy. But the poet had nothing with him to pay for it. So sympathy was more valuable for him.

- [1] I lay in sorrow, deep distressed;
My grief a proud man heard;
His looks were cold, he gave me gold,
But not a kindly word.
- [2] My sorrow passed—I paid him back
The gold he gave to me;
Then stood erect and spoke my thanks
And blessed his charity.
- [3] I lay in want, and grief, and pain;
A poor man passed my way;
He bound my head, he gave me bread,
He watched me night and day.
- [4] How shall I pay him back again
For all he did to me?
Oh, gold is great, but greater far
Is heavenly sympathy.



Glossary

sorrow	: grief दुःख
distressed	: unhappy दुःखी
proud	: arrogant अहंकारी
gold	: money धन
erect	: straight सीधा
want	: need कमी
charity	: kindness दयारूपी दान
sympathy	: compassion सहानुभूति
in want	: in need आवश्यकता में, अभाव में
blessed	: gave blessing आशीर्वाद दिया
bound	: soothed, pressed दबाया
heavenly	: divine Godly दिव्य

EXERCISE

Comprehension

In the examination paper, there are asked only two questions from each stanza. Given below are some more questions for extra practice.

Read the following stanzas and answer the questions put thereupon :

(1) *I lay in sorrow kindly word.* (Stanza 1)

1. What did the proud man hear ?
2. How did the proud man help the poet ?
3. What was the condition of the poet ? Who heard him ?
4. How did the proud man help him ? What was lacking in his help ?

(2) *My sorrow passed his charity.* (Stanza 2)

1. 'My sorrow passed—' Who said and what does he mean by these words ?
2. When did the poet pay back his money ?
3. Who stood erect and when ?
4. What three things did the poet do ?

(3) *I lay in want night and day.* (Stanza 3)

1. Write the title of the poem from which the above stanza has been taken. Write the poet's name.
2. Was the poet again ill ? How do you know ?
3. Was the poet again in need of something ? How do you know ?
4. How did the poor man help the poet ?
5. Sort out the words from the stanza which rhyme together.



(4) *How shall I sympathy. (Stanza 4)*

1. Why cannot the poet pay back for the man's gratitude ?
2. How is poor man's help greater than gold ?
3. Why is sympathy described as heavenly ?
4. 'How shall I pay him back again? 'Why does the poet think so?

APPRECIATION OF THE POEM

Answer the following questions :

1. What did the poet do to the rich man ? Mention three things that he did.
2. The poor man's help is greater than gold, why ?
3. Two men helped the poet. Why does he think he cannot pay back the poor man ?
4. What difference do you see between the 'proud man' and the 'poor man' ?
5. Why is sympathy described as 'heavenly' ? Which of the following would you describe as heavenly :
pride, selfishness, kindness, goodness, indifference towards the poor and the sick, loving care of the old.
6. Give the central idea of the poem.
7. Write any four lines of the poem.

Project Work :

1. Write the definition of pronoun and adjective.
 - (i) He works hard.
 - (ii) I do not tell a lie.
 - (iii) Did you sing a song?
 - (iv) Who helps them?