

Chapter - 6 A Lecture Upon The Shadow

Understanding The Poem

Question 1.

How do the shadows before noon differ from the shadows afternoon? What do the two kinds of shadow represent?

Answer:

The Poet refers to Noon as 12 PM, a very short time. A minute preceding or succeeding Noon is either morning or evening. In a relationship based on love, there is an opportune time when two people understand each other perfectly. Similarly, the shadows before and after Noon are meant to describe the actors' relationship in love before and after the right time when their relationship has matured and they understand each other perfectly. The shadow before noon is clear whereas afternoon it fades away.

Question 2.

Love is described as light. What makes the poet talk about shadows?

Answer:

According to the Poet, the shadows represent the ups and downs in a relationship based on love. The shadows represent parallel human bonding which is tested over a gradual period of time. The length of the shadow is meant to depict maturity in love. As described in the poem, the shortest length of the shadow is at Noon (12 PM) depicting utmost understanding as compared to a longer shadow during the early part of the day.

Question 3.

Comment on the use of the image of the shadows for the idea that the poet wants to convey.

Answer:

The poet has two clear ideologies in narration. One depicting the bond of love and understanding between two people. This ideology compares the relationship based on the length of the shadow. In the second ideology, the Poet draws a simile to love being intrinsic and extrinsic during the latter and initial stages of the relationship respectively.

Question 4.

The poet seems to be addressing his beloved in the poem. What is the message he wishes to convey to her?

Answer:

The poet in the poem while addressing his beloved wants to convey her about the different stages of love. He is trying to explain his lady love that at the beginning of love everything seems to be good and smooth in a relation. He tries to make her understand that when the love is fresh both the people don't look at their personalities they only think of love but as the relation grows they get to know each other much closer, and have a clearer picture. Over period of time, love grows maturity comes. He tries to explain that there are ups and downs in every relation.

Question 5.

Instead of 'A Lecture Upon Love' the poet calls the poem 'A Lecture Upon the Shadow'. What is the effect that this has on our reading of the poem?

Answer:

Love is a Universal Language it is said, yet it is not definitive for most people. The Poet has tried to explain the essence of love by defining shadows as a metaphor for the relationship between two people in love. As in the case of shadows, their length is dependent on time and Sun's position during the day, the same ideology is applied to the relationship of love in the backdrop of intricate factors and circumstances such as emotional upheaval, misunderstandings etc. between the two people.

Talking About The Text

Question 1.

Notice the spelling of the following words

houres shadowes Sunne

noone clearnesse behinde

The 'e' that was used in Donne's period got dropped from English orthography later. Pick out the other words in the poem that have this peculiar feature.

Answer:

The other words in the poem that have this peculiar feature are:

i. Thine

ii. Worke

iii. Blinde

iv. Thee

Question 2.

Take note also that the apostrophe is not used for indicating the possessive form: loves philosophy.

Answer:

i. Produc'd

ii. Reduc'd

iii. Now'tis

iv. Attain'd

v. High'st

Question 3.

Examples from other poems from this period:

- How neatly doe we give one onely name
- To parents issue and the sunnes bright starre!

Answer:

The student should try on their own.

Try This Out

Question 1.

Notice the adjectives in phrases such as 'infant loves' and 'brave clearnesse'. What is the meaning of these adjectives

(i) in isolation

(ii) as part of these phrases.

Answer:

(i) The meaning of the adjective in isolation is to be away from everyone or to stay alone.

(ii) The meaning of the adjective as part of these phrase means repetition of words at the starting of a line.