

Poem - 2.

## On Children

### I. Comprehension - 1.

1. And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, "Speak to us of children." And he said: Here 'he' refers to  
a) her child, b) The prophet  
c) The poet.  
= b) The prophet.

2. 'Your children are not your children' means.

a. They do not belong to their parents only.

b. The children should have their own space.

c. Parents should not be possessive of their children.

b). The children should have their own space.

3. 'They come through you, but are not from you' means.

a) Though parents give birth to their children they do not own them.

4. According to the prophet, what may be given to the children?

- Love and affection.

5. 'Their souls dwell in the house of - tomorrow' means.

c) Children have a different vision of life.

6. 'The bows' and 'living arrows' refer to parents and children

7. 'For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable?' Discuss the contrast between the underlined words.

In the last four lines of the poem, Gibran uses the metaphor of archer-bow and arrows to explain the role of parents in bringing up children. In this metaphor, God is the archer, the parents represents the bow, and the children are the living arrows.

Here 'Arrows that flies' means the child that seeks to grow and live in the world. The child which is ready for future to face the society. The child who is on the way to achieve its goal.

'The bow that is stable' it means the parents that is determined, thoughtful and satisfied with what have gained.

## ii) Comprehension - ii

1. Why does the prophet categorically state, "Your children are not your children"?  
According to Kahlil Gibran, love occupies the most important place in God's creation.

In the line 'Your children are not your children' Gibran tells parents to be aware that a child is not a thing to be possessed by us because we have not created 'life'.

A child is eternal life itself and is a gift from the abundance of existence. As parents we may have brought them to the earth, as sons and daughters. Since children are not lifeless things we cannot possess them. They have their own individuality, likes and dislikes. The child may pursue their own profession. They live their life according to their will and wish. The poet explains that the children are by humans, they act as directed by almighty God. God has put the children in this world with a particular purpose in his mind. No parents can take it for granted above their nature or attitude. That is why the prophet categorically states that 'your children are not your children'.

Q. What does the metaphor. bow and arrow signify with regard to parent-children relationship?

In this metaphor God is the archer, parents are the bows and the arrows are the children.

Just as we use the bows to shoot the arrow at a target. God uses man

as bows. to bring children into this world. Here woman bore children nurse and nurture them and the archer (god) will direct an arrow to reach their goal. More the bows we bend, far & swift the arrows fly.

This means that parents exist only to look after their children till they are fit enough to fly on their own, not to keep them possessively themselves. From this metaphor, it becomes clear that parents serve only as an instrument to help the arrow fly to its destination and parents cannot own them.

3. According to the prophet, what attitude should parents have towards their children?  
Khablil Gibran tells the parents that they are not the owners of their children. He argues that children have come to this earth as life's longing for itself and are born as sons and daughters and they are not created by parents. Hence parents cannot possess them.

The prophet advises the parents not to be over possessive towards their children. They should be left free to face the society. So that they become more confident and brave in life. The parents should have feelings and love towards their children but not their thoughts. While being responsible for their safety, welfare and growth in all respect it is the responsibility of the

of the parents to protect the child from all kind of harm and provide education of all kinds like moral, emotional, social etc and get them ready to face society. As children outlet their parents, it is wise for parents to let their children to create their own destiny. God almighty always be there to guide them into a bright future and achieve success in the world.

### iii Comprehension iii

1. In this poem, 'parents could' stand as a metaphor for.
- the older generation
  - leaders
  - religious heads
  - teachers.

a) In the poem 'On children' by Kahlil Gibran, 'parents' could stand as a metaphor for the older generation. As advised by the prophet, the older generation must understand that the children of this generation are born as life's longing for itself. They have their own souls. Therefore, the older generation must only strive to protect their bodies until they become adults so that they grow up as mature individuals and fulfil god's mission for which they have come to this earth. The younger generation dwell in the house

of tomorrow to which the older generation cannot enter and even they try to put their thoughts on children, where as the children go always against to their thoughts. However their duty is to make the younger generation realize that they have been sent to the earth by God to fulfill his mission.

- Q. The poem 'On children' does not focus merely on the lives of children but also talks about the responsibility of parents. Explain.

The poem 'On children' does not focus merely on the lives of children but also talks about the responsibility of parents in treating them. The parents should not think about children that they belong only to them. They are the sons and daughters of life longing for itself that they are born to them, but they should also realise that impassion of their own thought doesnot work as they have their own different thoughts, dreams and passion. How Parents can only control and shelter their bodies but not their souls, parents should also realise one thing, that we have to strive to be like them but not to make them like us. Parents should be with them abruptly. They should act as bows, the prophet want the bows to be stable to shoot the arrow in the right direction. The life of the children should be set on the right path, It is our responsibility to be flexible enough to allow our children to live their own lives.