

# Enterprise - Nissim Ezekiel Critical Appreciation

Enterprise – Nissim Ezekiel

## **Introduction:**

Enterprise by Nissim Ezekiel is a satiric poem with a moral. It deals with pilgrimages which serve no useful purpose. The poet suggests that religious pilgrimages are a waste and snobbish. In 'Enterprise' which contains the two central metaphors of his poetry – pilgrimage and home – Ezekiel reveals his attitude of commitment. Besides, according to him, to please God one need not go on pilgrimages as He is within.

## **A Pilgrimage: Without Getting the Call:**

The poem is in the form of a narrative. The narrator, the poet explains how he and some others started on a pilgrimage. The aim of the pilgrimage was to ennoble the minds and to make the burdens light. The pilgrimage had no hitch, to start with. While, at the second stage, they did not know whether they got a call at all. Obviously, they had started casually, and impulsively. It was very hot and they were unable to beat the heat. Thus they were physically unfit for the pilgrimage.

## **Mission Misunderstood by the Pilgrims:**

The pilgrims visited various places of interest on the way and took down notes on the very humdrum aspects of life and on curiosities. Thus, ironically, the pilgrimage had started with a distraction. Obviously, the pilgrims had misunderstood their mission. Soon, differences arose among the members of the team over silly matters. The best intellectual among them left the team egotistically. This made the team gloomy.

## **Division Among the Pilgrims:**

After the best intellectual left the team, the division in the team grew day by day. Obviously a religious man must be humble. Egotism cannot exalt the mind. On another day, the group was attacked twice and they lost their way. One section of the pilgrims lost faith in the leadership and tried to form a separate group. The leader was helpless and he said that he was 'smelling a sea of problems'. The narrator could only pray.

## **A Scattered Group Without Hope:**

The group of pilgrims had now become listless. They could see nothing. They were a scattered crowd with no hope. They had also exhausted all their essential provisions like soap. Some had lost their hope and others were merely bent by the problems.

## **Charity Begins at Home:**

Atlast, the pilgrims reached the place of pilgrimage. They did not know why they went there. They had lost face in the trip. They discovered that their deeds were ordinary and common placed. The narrator discovered that we can get God's grace at home. Serving one's own family by practising virtues at home is the way to please God. After all, charity begins at home.

## **Conclusion:**

The poem is full of irony. People who wanted to exalt their minds became mean. The pilgrims wanted the pilgrimage to lighten their burden. But the pilgrimage itself became a burden. Ironically the leader was helpless. The anti-climax was reached when the pilgrims did not know why they arrived 'there'. Obviously, without faith and unity of purpose, God can never be reached.