

## Study Material for Degree III (Hons.), English, Paper-VII

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### POEM: POETRY

#### POET: HENRY LIOUS VIVIAN DEROZIO

Henry Vivian Derozio the writer of the poem '*Poetry*' is regarded as the first Indian poet in English. He was born in 1809 in Calcutta. His father was of Indo-Portuguese descent and his mother was an Anglo-Indian. He became clerk in a firm at the age of 14. Later at the age of 18 he joined as a teacher at Hindu College. He was also the founder of Young Bengal Movement. He lived for a very short time but had an extraordinary career as a journalist, teacher, poet and leading intellectual of his day. Derozio was a true patriot. His love for India its glory can be gathered from his poems like **The Harp of India**, and **To India –My Native Land**. He sings of India's glorious past as well as its plight during the British Rule.

Derozio wrote sonnets and narrative poems on various themes like love, nature, death and freedom. He wrote a remarkable poem 'The Fakir of Jhungheera'. This is considered to be one of his best creative works. It involves the issue of social reform. The narrative describes the life of a young Brahmin widow, Nuleeni who was rescued by a robber chief from sati (a ritual of burning the wife alive on the funeral pyre of her husband). The other important poems written by Derozio are '**Songs of the Hindustanee Minstrel**', '**Going into Darkness**', '**A Walk by the Moonlight**'. The poet is greatly influenced by the romantic tradition of British poets like Shelley, Byron and Keats. There is an influence of Indian mythology and Greek mythology in his poems.

The poem, **Poetry** by Derozio is a sonnet that describes the creative power of poetry. Through poetry the poet's imaginative capacity creates a world that is fanciful and colourful. The magical power of poetry which the poet calls '*sweet madness*' enthuse a young mind with immense energy and vigour. The '*delicious phrenzy*' helps the poet create a world of joy and delight. The flight of imagination helps the poet to move widely and unhindered through the creation of the world.

*With that delicious phrenzy which it loves,  
Its raving reels to vary rapture pleased, -  
And then through all creation wildly roves*

The poet further describes the attribute of poetry that enables the poet to explore the wonder of the sky, as well as, unveil the secret of the deep sea. It can reach the highest point of 'Himaloy' mountain and at the same time delves into the deep sea. The experience is extremely wonderful and fascinating. The mind is spell bound and ecstatic.

**Now is the deep recess of the sea,  
And now to highest Himaloy it mounts;**

The power of poetic creation helps us enjoy the splendid fragrance of Arabian perfume. The poet's power to think and imagine carries us to far off land like Greece, renowned for its classical treasure and to Italy, famous for its rich cultural heritage as well ruins that are remnants of past.

*Now by the fragrant shores of Araby  
Or classic Greece, or sweet Italia's founts,  
Or through her wilderness of ruins;*

Poetry is a work of art that celebrates the beauty of a lady as well as sings of the bravery of a hero. In other words, if poetry can describe the passion of love then it can also create fiery verses as mentioned below. The inspiration for love created by the verses is unparalleled. Even the birds like nightingale and dove fail to surpass the superb melody of love that poetry produces.

*Gazing on beauty's lip or valour's brow;  
or rivalling in the Nightingale and dove  
in pouring forth its melody of love;  
Or giving to the gale, in strain of fire,*

Hence, it can give expression to varied moods, like love, happiness, beauty, purity, sorrow and power. Above all, the most important aspect of poetry lies in its immortality. Immortality refers to the tradition of poetry writing. Hence, poetry is the '*immortal harpings – like a seraph's lyre*'.

The poem **Poetry** has beautifully emphasised the magical qualities possessed by poetry. This sonnet also reveals the about poetry's capacity to describe the landscape along with emotions and passions that form the mindscape.

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