

PASSAGE TO INDIA

- Walt Whitman

About the poet

- Walt Whitman: (1819-1892)
- An influential American Poet, Essayist and Journalist.

About the Poem

- 'Passage to India' is a poem by Walt Whitman
- First published in 1871
As part of his collection "Leaves of Grass".
- It is written by Whitman to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal and the completion of the transcontinental railroad in the United States, which connected the East and the West to make travel to India more easier (accessible).

⑤ Summary

The poem opens by highlighting the marvels of human achievements such as Suez Canal and the Transcontinental Railroad which symbolize the bridging of East and West.

Whitman finds these works as milestones in the progress of humanity and a testament (प्रमाण) to the indomitable (अटूट, excellent) spirit of exploration.

As the poem unfolds, Whitman shifts from the physical achievements to a more profound spiritual journey while envisioning a world where barriers between the nations and cultures dissolve, leading to unity among the people. He invokes (कॉल) historical and religious figures such as the explorers and prophets to emphasize the timeless quest for knowledge and truth.

Whitman suggests that the ultimate destination is not merely India but a symbolic journey towards spiritual awakening. Through 'The Passage to India', Whitman articulates his vision of a harmonious world, unified by both physical progress and the spiritual fulfillment.

inghtment and the universal quest for meaning and connection.

TEXT OF THE POEM, "PASSAGE TO INDIA"

Singing my days,
Singing the great achievements of the present,
Singing the strong light works of engineers,
Our modern wonders, (the antique ponderous Seven outvied,)
In the Old World the east the Suez Canal,
The New by its mighty railroad spann'd,
The seas inlaid with eloquent gentle wires;
Yet first to sound, and ever sound, the cry with thee O soul,
The Past! the Past! the Past!

The Past- the dark unfathom'd retrospect!
The teeming gulf-the sleepers and the shadows!
The past-the infinite greatness of the past!
For what is the present after all but a growth out of the past?
(As a projectile, form'd, impell'd, passing a certain line, still keeps on,
So the present, utterly form'd, impell'd by the past.)

Passage O soul to India!
Eclaircise the myths Asiatic, the primitive fables.
Not you alone proud truths of the world!
Nor you alone ye facts of modern science,
But myths and fables of eld, Asia's, Africa's fables,
The far-darting beams of the spirit, the unloos'd dreams!
The deep diving bibles and legends,
The daring plots of the poets, the elder religions;
O you temples fairer than lilies pour'd over by the rising sun!
O you fables spurning the known, eluding the hold of the known,
mounting to heaven!

You lofty and dazzling towers, pinnacled, red as roses, burnish'd with gold!
 Towers of fables immortal fashion'd from mortal dreams!
 You too I welcome and fully the same as the rest!
 You too with joy I sing.

Passage to India!

Lo, soul, seest thou not God's purpose from the first?
 The earth to be spann'd, connected by network,
 The races, neighbors, to marry and be given in marriage,
 The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near,
 The lands to be welded together.

A worship new I sing,
 You captains, voyagers, explorers, yours,
 You engineers, you architects, machinists, yours,
 You, not for trade or transportation only,
 But in God's name, and for thy sake O soul.

Passage to India!

Lo soul for thee of tableaux twain,
 I see in one the Suez canal initiated, open'd,
 I see the procession of steamships, the Empress Eugenie's leading the van,
 I mark, from on deck the strange landscape, the pure sky, the level sand in
 the distance,

I pass swiftly the picturesque groups, the workmen gather'd,
 The gigantic dredging machines.

In one again, different, (yet thine, all thine, O soul, the same,)
 I see over my own continent the Pacific Railroad, surmounting every barrier,
 I see continual trains of cars winding along the Platte, carrying freight and
 passengers,

I hear the locomotives rushing and roaring, and the shrill steam-whistle,
 I hear the echoes reverberate through the grandest scenery in the world,
 I cross the Laramie plains, I note the rocks in grotesque shapes, the buttes,
 I see the plentiful larkspur and wild onions, the barren, colorless, sage-
 deserts,

I see in glimpses afar or towering immediately above me the great
 mountains, I see the Wind River and the Wahsatch mountains,
 I see the Monument mountain and the Eagle's Nest, I pass the Promontory,
 I ascend the Nevadas,

I scan the noble Elk mountain and wind around its base,
 I see the Humboldt range, I thread the valley and cross the river,
 I see the clear waters of Lake Tahoe, I see forests of majestic pines,
 Or crossing the great desert, the alkaline plains, I behold enchanting
 mirages of waters and meadows,

Marking through these and after all, in duplicate slender lines,
 Bridging the three or four thousand miles of land travel