

# THE PROFESSOR

*The Professor* by Nissim Ezekiel is particularly remarkable for its depiction of Indianness in a satirical tone.

The poem is written in very simple language and in prose-poem **style**. No particular metre or rhyme scheme has been followed in writing the poem *The Professor*.

The poem *The Professor* can be classified as a **dramatic monologue**. In its abrupt beginning, one-way conversation and the presence of a silent listener, *The Professor* qualifies the basic requirements of a monologue.

## *The Professor: Line by line Explanation*

Line 1 to 4:

The poem begins with the professor's question: "Remember me?" Then he himself gives the identity that he is Professor Sheth. It is clear from his speech that he is talking to one of his past students whom he taught geography. He goes on to tell his student that he is now retired but his health is still good at this age. He also mentions that his wife is no more.

Line 5 to 9:

The professor is thankful to God that all his children are well-established in their life. One of his sons is a Bank Manager, and another one is a Sales Manager. Both his sons own cars.

Line 10 to 11:

He now talks about his third son who is not doing so well as the other two. He regards him as the 'black sheep' of the family. "Black sheep" here means that the son is probably immoral, unprofessional and somewhat reckless. Even then, the professor protects his son by saying that every family generally has such a member.

Line 12 to 13:

Now it is his daughters' turn. Professor Sheth says that his two daughters Sarala and Tarala are married to good husbands. They are 'very nice boys' according to him.

Line 14 to 17:

The professor also proudly declares the unbelievable fact that he has eleven grandchildren. And for the first time, he now gives his student a chance to speak. He asks his student how many issues he has. It seems that the professor is mocking at his student on hearing that he has only three children. He also assures his student that this is not so bad. Nowadays people are more conscious about family planning. And he is not against family planning. He accepts the change that time brings.

Line 18 to 21:

The professor now speaks of the changes that the whole world is facing. He feels that the Indians are also keeping up with the change. We are progressing with time. Old conceptions are going and new ideas are coming. Everything is changing at a fast pace.

Line 22 to 25:

Now the professor says that he rarely goes out, as he is a retire person. This is also due to the old age that he can no longer walk or travel much. But he is proud that he is keeping good health with only occasional aches and pain. He has no diabetes, no blood pressure, and no heart attack.

Line 26 to 28:

The professor continues to speak of his health. He is still keeping his good health because of his good habits in youth. He then asks the student about his health and he is happy to hear that he is keeping it up well.

Line 29 to 30:

Mr. Sheth then talks about his age. He is sixty-nine years old now, and hope to live for a hundred years.

Line 31 to 33:

The professor now reminds the student that he was so thin, comparing him to a stick. But now he (the student) has gained some weight and power. The professor perhaps indicates the social position of the student, as well as his physical growth. And he also mentions that it is a good joke, in case the student doesn't get it properly.

Line 34 to 36:

In these lines the professor requests his student to visit his residence if he comes this way again in future. He also tries to point out the location of his house, that is, the back side of the house on the opposite side of the road.