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"SWAMI AND FRIENDS" BY R. K. NARAYAN

Character Sketch of Rajam

Rajam is one of the central characters in Narayan's Swami and Friends. The central action in most of the stories revolve around Swami, Mani and Rajam trio. The son of the Police Superintendent, Rajam is the most charismatic among his friends. In "Rajam and Mani" Narayan offers a detailed portrayal of his character. On the first day at school, he came in a car. He was the only boy in the class who wore socks and shoes, a fur cap and tie, and a wonderful coat and knickers. Besides his social superiority, he was a good student as well. There were vague rumors that he had come from some English boys school somewhere in Madras.

Rajam had an endearing personality. He was smarter than Mani. He believed in self-respect unlike Swaminathan: "If Mani jabbed, Rajam jabbed; if Mani clouted, he clouted; if Mani kicked, he kicked." It was his nonchalance that made him a new menace to the yet unchallenged strength of Mani. If Mani was the overlord of the class, Rajam seemed to be nothing less.

Rajam was very sincere in his studies. He was a regular seventy percenter, second only to Sankar. There were sure indications that Rajam was the new power in the class. He liked assisting or helping his friends. Mani possesses a propensity for domination amongst every one of his age but Rajam didn't feel that within him. In fact, Rajam tried to put forward a hand for friendship with Mani. He wanted to settle the enmity with Mani and this signify the nobility Rajam had got with him.

It should be noted that Rajam represented European culture in the stories. He spoke very good English, "Exactly like a European" and it means that few in the school could make out what he said. Besides his great academic excellence, Rajam drew confidence from his father's prominent position. Rajam sometimes bullied his friends and acquaintances, but more often he united them and urged them toward new goals, most notably the formation of a cricket team.

Swami and Rajam were not on good terms earlier but after their friendship, Rajam tried his best possible way to assist Swami in all the fields. Swami took him as a kind of motivation as he was the son of police superintendent and he thrived to acquire that kind of lifestyle. Though Swami loved and admired Rajam comes into conflict with him, first because Swami supported political action that opposed Rajam's father, and later because he didn't live up to his promise on Rajam's cricket team. Rajam was so angry at Swami for missing the cricket match that he stopped speaking to him, and it is unclear at the end whether the two friends have reconciled.

Undeniably, Rajam is one of the most interesting characters of Swami and Friends. He is attractive, powerful and at the same time humble. He represented the European culture that is posited in sharp contrast with Mani and Swaminathan's humble descent.

Use of Irony and Humour in R.K. Narayan's novel "Swami and Friends".

Professor Krishna Sen in her much-acclaimed critical text on Narayan's *The Guide* has observed that the vocations of Narayan as a cartoonist and a columnist help him immensely to mould his comic vision. *Swami and Friends*, Narayan's first novel, is remarkable for his understanding of child psychology and for his depiction of the buoyant world of school boys in a realistic and convincing manner. According to S.C Harrex, Narayan "finds the child a natural medium for humour both because the child has an innate sense of fun and capacity for joy, and because the child is often unconsciously funny, particularly when it is being most serious or when it adopts grossly exaggerated attitudes."

Narayan tries to understand the world of children—their likes and dislikes, whims and fancies and portrays them from a child's perspective. He makes use of exaggeration as a device to raise the humorous effects. R. K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* brings out a story of a ten year old boy, Swaminathan, who is prone to all typicality of a child's behaviour. He, at his youthful age, is not yet fully equipped to understand the practicalities of a world that surrounds him. He only seeks fun which he gathers by participating in mischief with his friends. The humour can be described as straightforward and the combination of innocence mixed with the desire to be taken more seriously.

In many ways: the main character Swami thinks and acts like a small adult, trapped in a child's body. Swami's fears and anxieties in contrast to the so-called real stress of adulthood create a universal Laughter. He is fascinated by toys, daydreams in class, disdains schoolwork, and hence is so relatable to all readers of the novel because it creates nostalgia of having been engaged in similar activities. This relativity with the protagonist and the other characters of the story is what makes this piece of Narayan's work so lovable.

At a first glance, Swami is viewed as a young playful boy who has enormous amounts of fun with his friends Somu, Mani, Sankar and Samuel, 'the four that he liked and admired the most in his class'. His everyday is a new ravishing episode of a comic that entertains any follower of his. Swami's life takes a dramatic turn when Rajam, the Superintendent's son, comes into picture. Swami thinks of Rajam being a sophisticated and supreme fellow and tries hard to earn his friendship by constantly impressing him at every chance he receives. He perceives Rajam to be of high standards and fails to behold his flaws of neither being affectionate, loyal or faithful. He distances himself with his other friends who also begin calling him 'Rajam's Tail' and quarrels with them without realising how weak their friendship has grown.

Swami also takes his parents and granny for granted. On getting to know Rajam will be at his place, Swami requests his father's room to receive him, asks his mother to prepare nice food, orders the cook to wear a clean lungi and also tells his granny, ".....when he is with me you must not call me or come to my room...fact is, you are—well, you are old.....". Swami places Rajam on the top of his priority list. After he impulsively joins a rebellion against the British, he breaks window panes and is transferred to another school and misses the cricket drills because of excessive homework in the new school which displeases Rajam who forced Swami into participating in the team. At this point of time, in a moment of desperation, he runs away both from school and home. When he returns home, learns that he had indeed missed the cricket match, and discovers that Rajam stubbornly refuses to see him after this. Friendship at that age is nothing more than peer pressure and this is a fact that Swami cannot fathom. School is a place where life is tough. Constant pressure from all directions finally tells on Swami and he bends. The irony lies in the fact that he brings two worlds together merely to gain the attention of a new friend, for whom he becomes inconsiderate of his old friends and family, and that one friend doesn't even forgive him. Also, the bigger irony is that a child's life is not as easy as one assumes it to be.

Character Sketch of Swaminathan

Swami is the ten-year-old protagonist of Narayan's Swami and Friends. Swami is a schoolboy living in 1930, in the fictional town of Malgudi in the South of India under British colonial rule. At the start of the novel, Swami is a typical child who seems outwardly innocent, with only trivial concerns such as homework, impressing his classmates, and avoiding disappointing his father. Swami's mother Lakshmi is homemaker and his father, W. T. Srinivasan, a lawyer. He is seen irritating his family members in the novel. Also, he himself sometimes gets irritated by the way his family scolds him. Swami tries every time and again to win sympathy for his grandmother. He dislikes staying at home and likes spending his time idly.

Swami is considered average among his friends, neither especially clever nor stupid, brave nor cowardly. He is generally good-natured and gets along well with his peers and family, although he can be arrogant or deceitful at times, and is easily swept up in the plans and enthusiasms of others. As the novel progresses, Swami becomes more aware of his own identity and political consciousness and begins to define himself more in terms-of his friendships and national identity than his family relationships. Swami is also a naturally good cricket bowler and prides himself on being nicknamed "Tate" after a famous cricket player.

He has got Rajam and Mani as his best friends. Swami was not an extraordinary character. Like all the other boys of his age, he likes spending time with his companions. Swaminathan likes to spend his time doing nothing. He does not want to study. He was scolded frequently by his father for not studying for his exams. According to Swami, the holidays after his exams are

not given for studying. He keeps telling this to his grandmother. For Swami, a holiday means playing and roaming with his friends all the time.

Swami has also got some bad habits as well. He is a liar and does not hesitate telling lies to his father. Swami was an irresponsible kid. His father on attempting to teach him Arithmetic found that his books were filled with dust and cobwebs. This directly shows how careless and imprudent he is! On being told by his father to put the spider from his book self he keeps it in his pocket. This shows his love towards pet animals. His father sometimes shows his rudeness towards him due to his troublesome behavior. And in response to that Swami leans the table and disperses all the books on the floor. He does that to show his anger against his father as he is incapable of telling back anything to his father. While shaking off the dust from his books, the way he banged the books shows his exasperation. He might get angry sometimes due to acts like scolding but he is genuinely an innocent guy.

Above all, Swami attracts the readers' attention with his innocent fun loving nature. Despite its faults Swami wins over hearts and reminds many of their own childhood.

Discuss the significance of the title of the novel *Swami and Friends* [Rana Sir 9734735383]

Swami and Friends is an Indian book written in English published in 1935. The work was the first novel ever published by the famous Indian author R. K. Narayan. Narayan's friend, Graham Greene, recommended his manuscript to a publisher, and it was finally published by Hamish Hamilton in 1935. The original title of *Swami and Friends* was *Swami the Tate*, but it was changed during the publishing process to *Swami and Friends* likely so that it could have more literary identification with Rudyard Kipling's *Stalky & Co* (1899) and thus appear more marketable as part of a sub-genre of English schoolboy fiction. The novel is the first of a trilogy of novels. The second is entitled *The Bachelor of Arts* and the third *The English Teacher*. The trilogy, which counts among his earlier fiction, focuses largely on problematic social practices, such as the institution of schooling and culture of punishment.

The central theme of the novel is the growing up of young Swami. He is a spontaneous, impulsive, mischievous and yet a very innocent child. His character is childish in the fullest sense of the world. Through Swami's eyes the reader gets to peek into the pre-independence days in South India. The life portrayed in the novel is accurate in its description of the colonial days – the uprisings, the rebellions, the contempt and the reverence the natives had for their subjugator, together with varied elements that have become one, such as cricket and education.

Unlike many colonial and post-colonial writers, Narayan does not directly attack or criticize the colonial system, although elements of gentle criticism and irony directed towards the colonial system are scattered throughout *Swami and Friends* and all his other novels. He has rather

directed his creativity at depicting the life of the people at the time. It is almost as if he is charmed by these unsophisticated and simple, yet eccentric people and their lives. It is unclear if he refrained from an all out attack on the British colonial system out of choice or reverence. But it seems at this point in his career, (and during this particular point of India's history), when he is starting out as an author, he would write to the English speaking audience in India and for the vast audience abroad. Hence it would be folly to attack the very system that would sustain him as a novelist, his career of choice. Asked about why he was unbothered about the prevailing political crisis and other happenings during the time, Narayan replied in an interview thus "When art is used as a vehicle for political propaganda, the mood of comedy, the sensitivity to atmosphere, the probing of psychological factors, the crisis of the individual soul and its resolution and above all the detached observation which constitutes the stuff of fiction is forced into the background." Beyond this, he also had tremendous regard for the English language and literature as an aesthetic pastime, and was not blind to its value in that regard.

The absence of criticism on the colonial system may be also due to the fact that Narayan simply believed the colonizer and the colonized could live together in harmony, benefiting each other. Most Englishmen and the natives certainly seem to do so in his novels, such as Mr Retty (Swami and Friends) and Matheison (Waiting for the Mahatma). The rice mill owner Mr Retty was "the most Indianized of the 'Europeans'....and was the mystery man of the place: nobody could say who he was or where he had come from: he swore at his boy and his customers in perfect Tamil and always moved about in shirt, shorts and sandaled feet." Mr Matheison feels strongly for Indians and considers himself Indian. "You see, it is just possible I am as much attached to this country as you are." Only Mr Brown seems to be the 'black sheep' in this regard. His Western mind is only capable of "classifying, labeling and departmentalizing..." And the gentle criticism and irony directed towards him was in the same way directed towards his fellow countrymen. In his mind, British or Indian, they were all human beings with prejudices, follies, errors, kindness and goodness, each in varying degrees.

The main theme of the novel is "Friendship" and how kids react differently to different situations. Swami is a little boy who has a good heart but is a little bit of a coward. Think it's the same for all the kids of that age. Swami loves his friends and is ready to do anything for them but his cowardliness and bad temper do the trick every time. Anyway, I think the most important thing in that story is simpleness. Swami is a normal boy who can be found in every country and every time. He doesn't have anything special but I think the author should give him a chance. Though he is a good cricket player he hasn't got a chance to show it to others and it seems the only special skill he has. So from my point of view the title of the novel is appropriate and just.

“THE ORPHAN GIRL” BY H.L.V. DEROZIO

Introduction:-

“The Orphan Girl” is an 1827 poem from the treasure of Indian Writing in English. The poet of this piece, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio shows his sympathy toward an orphan girl’s lot. The girl’s orphaned pangs get featured in this heart-touching poem. Through his words, Derozio provides a pictorial representation of a child’s hapless face, her loneliness, and her struggle in the face of odds. This poem was first published in Derozio’s poetry collection Poems (1827).

Historical Context:-

“The Orphan Girl” was written in March 1827. It was published in Derozio’s first poetry collection, Poems (1827). This poem closely resembles the theme of romantic works. The romantic poets (such as William Wordsworth) and essayists (for instance, Charles Lamb) were sympathetic towards the poor section of society. They showed their concern for the people in distress. Similarly, in this poem, Derozio reflects on the plight of an orphan girl. He is optimistic concerning the better future of the child. Besides, Derozio was an Anglo-Indian poet who was considered one of the precursors of the Bengal Renaissance.

Form, Rhyme Scheme, & Meter:-

“The Orphan Girl” consists of three stanzas. The first section acts as an introductory part. In the following stanzas, Derozio tells readers the sad story of the orphan girl.

This poem is written in a regular rhyme scheme. The first stanza does not have a rhyme scheme as such. The first two lines rhyme imperfectly. While the following stanzas contain a set rhyming pattern. The first four lines of the second stanza contain the ABAB rhyme scheme. While the following lines are written in the rhyming couplet form. So, the overall rhyme scheme of the first stanza is ABABCCDDEEFF. The second stanza contains the same AABB rhyming pattern.

Stanza-by-Stanza Explanation & Critical Analysis

Stanza One

*She was yet young and fair—but oh she seemed
Marked for much woe in this unpitying world!
Poor friendless wanderer!—*

Derozio's poem "The Orphan Child" begins with a three-line stanza. It introduces the main character of the poem. In this stanza, the poet gives a hint to the girl's impending tragedy. Besides, the title also serves a similar purpose. It tells readers that the poem is going to talk about the predicament of the girl after losing her parents.

In these lines, the poet refers to the age and looks of the little girl. One could not anticipate what was waiting for her in the future by merely looking at her innocent face. According to the poet, she seemed to be destined for many woes in this world. He refers to the people living in this world as "unpitying". They don't have any sympathy for an orphan kid like her.

The third line refers to the girl as a "poor friendless wanderer". In this line, Derozio uses an exclamation in order to show his sympathy for the child's fate.

Stanza Two Lines 1-4

*Her hair was black as a raven's wing,
Her cheek the tulip's hue did wear,
Her voice was soft as when night winds sing,
Her brow as a moonbeam fair;*

The main story begins in this stanza. In the first few lines, Derozio describes the child's looks. According to him, her black hair was similar to the wings of a raven. Her cheek is reddish just like the tulip flower. Here, the "tulip" acts as a symbol of innocence. It hints at the innocence of the girl.

Her voice has the softness of night winds and her brow is as fair as the moonlight. In this way, the poet seeks elements from nature in order to describe the childish beauty of the orphan girl.

All the lines from this section begin with the word “Her”. It is an example of anaphora. This device is used for connecting the ideas of the speaker.

Lines 5-8

*Her sire had joined the wake of war;—
The battle-shock, the shout, and scar
He knew, and gained a glorious grave—
Such is the guerdon of the brave!—*

In these lines, Derozio describes how her father died. The term “sire” is an archaic term for “father”. According to the poet, her father went to war. Though he was aware of the outcome of the war, he still went there. The terms “battle-shock” and “scar” refer to the impact of war. While the word “shout” resonates with the noise of war.

The child’s father died on the battlefield and gained a “glorious” grave. Here, “glorious” is used in its ironic sense. Derozio does not want to glorify the outcome of the war. He rather criticizes it by using this lofty term and ties it with the idea of death. In the following, he further satirizes the reward a soldier gets in return for his contribution to the nation. According to him, they just get the “guerdon of the grave”. “Guerdon” means a reward or recompense. The poet uses the theme of the futility of war in these lines.

Lines 9-12

*Her anguished mother’s suffering heart
Could not endure a widow’s part;
She sunk beneath her soul’s distress,
And left her infant parentless.—*

Her father’s untimely death at war made her mother extremely sorrowful. She could not bear the pain of losing her husband. Besides, it was very difficult for her

to play a “widow’s part”. Gradually, she sank beneath her soul’s distress. Here, Derozio metaphorically compares “distress” to a sea. Finally, she died of her heartache. In this way, the child lost both her parents. She could even imagine that things would change so fast. All of sudden her little world shattered into pieces and she was at a loss.

Stanza Three Lines 1-4

*She hath no friend on this cold, bleak earth,
To give her shelter, a home and a hearth;
Through life’s dreary desert alone she must wend,
For alas! the wretched have never a friend!*

The third stanza of “The Orphan Girl” deals with what happened with the child after the tragedy. In the first four lines of this stanza, the poet talks about how lonely the girl was. She had no friend to comfort her during her hard times. Besides, the world around her appeared as cold and bleak as a winter landscape. The term “cold” is a reference to the lack of compassion and passivity of others toward the poor girl. “Bleak” hints at the idea of hopelessness.

There was no one to shelter the child. Derozio uses the term “home” and “hearth” as a symbol. The first term symbolizes love and the second one is a symbol of warmth and comfort. By using these symbols, the poet tries to say that there is nobody to love or care for the girl.

Her life turned into a “dreary desert”. She had to wend alone. In the fourth line, the poet uses a rhetorical exclamation to repeat the idea of the first line. Here, the poetic persona says that as the girl never had a friend, she had to walk alone, in the lonely desert of her life. The “desert” is a symbol of hopelessness as well as loneliness.

Lines 5-8

*And should she stray from virtue’s way,
The world will scorn, and its scorn can slay.
Ah! shame hath enough to wring the breast
With a weight of sorrow and guilt oppress’d;*

In these lines, Derozio specifically comments on the attitude of society toward an unfortunate girl like her. According to the poet, people were just waiting to point out her mistakes. They did not care about her condition or how lonely she was. What mattered to them the most was the mistakes of the girl. If she went astray from “virtue’s way”, they would come with their scathing words to demean and blow off the girl’s dim-lit confidence.

They would scorn and their scornful words could “slay” her soul. Here, the poet compares their criticism to a sword metaphorically. The former hurts one’s mind while the other hurts one externally. But, the effect is more or less similar. The criticism of society makes it difficult to even breathe. From this perspective, the sword is better than the harsh words of hypocrites. The scars they cause are invisible, yet they pain one’s soul deep.

According to the poet, they did not have shame to wring the breast of the orphan girl with “a weight of sorrow and guilt”. It means their harsh words increased the burden on her heart and intensified her suffering.

Lines 9-12

*But oh! 'tis coldly cruel to wound
The bosom whose blood must gush unbound.
No tear is so bright as the tear that flows
For erring woman's unpitied woes;*

In these lines, Derozio says that it is “coldly cruel” to wound the girl mentally. Here, the term “cold” refers to the passivity of society towards the girl’s suffering. Their cruelty wounded the girl. They did not care about the age of the girl. The girl, who should play and run in an unbound manner, was burdened with oppression.

According to the poet, the sorrow of the girl is unmatched. Her grief originates from “unpitied woes”. Through this line, the poet tries to say that society did not forgive her for her errors. They kept on criticizing the girl and remained unsympathetic to her woes.

Lines 13-14

*And blest be for ever his honored name
Who shelters an orphan from sorrow and shame!*

The last two lines reflect the poet's sympathy for the girl. He refers to an honored man who, he thinks, may shelter the orphan from her "sorrow and shame". His blessing is showered on that generous person who does so. Here, sheltering the girl from "sorrow" and "shame" means comforting the girl with love and protecting her from the hypocritical society. In this way, Derozio remains hopeful regarding the future of the child. Besides, the concluding section of this poem resembles that of his poem "Freedom to the Slave". It also ends on a similar note.

"THE ORPHAN GIRL": HENRY DEROZIO [SHORT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS]

1. What is the central theme of the poem "The Orphan Girl"?

Ans. Derozio's "The Orphan Girl" is about a young girl whose father died in a war and mother died in the sorrow of her husband. She was left an orphan and the poet is concerned about her future in the cruel world.

2. "She was yet young.... in this un pitying world". Explain.

Ans. Derozio says it about an orphan girl whose father died in a war and mother died in the sorrow of her husband. At that time she was very young and beautiful. The poet regrettably says that the orphan girl was predestined to face much sorrow in this world where there is no genuine pity and sympathy.

3. "Poor friendless wanderer!" Explain.

Ans. Derozio says it about an orphan girl whose father died in a war and mother died in the sorrow of her husband. She is 'poor' because she has no parents. She has no genuine friend on this earth to sympathise with. She is a 'wanderer' because she has no fixed home or shelter.

4. "Her hair was black as a raven's wing".

Ans. Derozio says it about an orphan girl whose father died in a war and mother died in the sorrow of her husband. The hair of the orphan girl was as black as the wings of a raven or crow.

5. "Her cheek the tulip's hue did wear".

Ans. Derozio here gives an appreciation of the beauty of a young orphan girl whose father died in a war and mother died in the sorrow of her husband. The cheeks of the orphan girl were as bright as the tulip flower.

6. "Her voice was..... night winds sing".

Ans. Derozio here gives an appreciation of the beauty of a young orphan girl whose father died in a war and mother died in the sorrow of her husband. The voice of the orphan girl was as soft as the wind or air in the night which is quite calm and gentle.

7. "Her brow was as a moonbeam fair".

Ans. Derozio here gives an appreciation of the beauty of a young orphan girl whose father died in a war and mother died in the sorrow of her husband. The brow or forehead of the orphan girl was as bright as the rays of the moon.

8. "Her sire had joined....He knew...".

Ans. Derozio says it about an orphan girl whose father had participated in a war. The poor orphan girl's father was a professional soldier who earned his bread by fighting. So before his participation in the battle he knew the shock, the loud shout, the pain and the wound associated with the battle.

9. "He knew, and gained a glorious grave".

Ans. Derozio says it about an orphan girl's father who had participated in a war. The poor orphan girl's father was a professional soldier who earned his bread by fighting. So before his participation in the battle he knew the shock, the loud shout, the pain and the wound associated with the battle. The phrase 'glorious grave' is ironically used by Derozio. The only reward and glory which a soldier gains after death in battle is just a grave.

10. "Such is the guerdon of the brave-"

Ans. The word 'guerdon' means 'reward'. Derozio ironically says that only a grave is the reward of a brave soldier after death in the battle. Here he depicts the cruelty of the world and the statesmen.

11. "Her anguished mother's suffering.....a widow's part".

Ans. Derozio says it about an orphan girl whose father had died in a war. After the death of her father the heart of her mother was agonized. Her heart was suffering from terrible pain. She could not endure the fact that she would have to play the role of a widow. She was absorbed in the distress of her soul and she died in the sorrow of her husband. Thus she left her girl parentless.

12. "She sunk beneath her.... infant parentless".

Ans. Derozio says it about an orphan girl's mother. The girl's father had died in a war. After the death of her father the heart of her mother was agonized. Her heart was suffering from terrible pain. She was absorbed in the distress of her soul and she died in the sorrow of her husband. Thus she left her girl parentless.

13. "She hath no friend.....and a hearth".

Ans. Derozio says it about an orphan girl whose father died in a war and mother died in the sorrow of her husband. After the death of her parents the orphan girl has no friends in this cold and bleak world where there is no human warmth and hope. There is no one in this world to give her shelter, a home and a little warmth.

14. "Through life's dreary desert....must wend".

Ans. The word 'desert' is used by Derozio to mean the world. The phrase 'life's dreary desert' refers to the dull and depressing world. Derozio regrettably says that after the death of her parents the orphan girl will have to live alone in this dull and depressing world.

15. "For alas!.....never a friend!".

Ans. Derozio regrettably says that the miserable people of the world are always friendless. So after the death of her parents the orphan girl will have to live alone in this dull and depressing world.

16. "And should she stray.....scorn can slay".

Ans. Derozio says it about an orphan girl whose father died in a war and mother died in the sorrow of her husband. He adds that if the orphan girl deviates from the path of virtue, the people of the world will hate her and this hatred of the worldly people may be ultimately the cause of her death.

17. "Ah! shame hath enough.....and guilt oppress'd".

Ans. Derozio says it about an orphan girl whose father died in a war and mother died in the sorrow of her husband. He laments the fact that if the worldly people scorn the orphan girl, she will suffer from shame. Shame will be enough to squeeze blood from her breasts with the weight of sorrow and guilt. She will be oppressed continuously by the worldly people.

18. "But oh!.....must gush unbound". Ans. Derozio says it about an orphan girl whose father died in a war and mother died in the sorrow of her husband. He says that it is very cruel on the part of the worldly people to wound the bosom of the orphan girl whose blood is coming out of the breasts in an uncontrolled way because of sorrows and shame.

19. "No tear is so bright.....unpited woes".

Ans. Derozio says it about an orphan girl whose father died in a war and mother died in the sorrow of her husband. He says that no tear can be as painful as the tears that flow from the eyes of a sorrowful and oppressed woman in the world where there is no pity.

20. "And blest be for ever.....sorrow and shame"

Ans. According to Derozio, the most blessed and honourable person is one who would shelter an orphan and save him or her from sorrow and shame. Thus "The Orphan Girl" ends in hope about the future of the orphan girl.

LONG MODEL NOTES

THE ORPHAN GIRL by H.L.V. Derozio (Critical appreciation).

The poem "The Orphan Girl" by Henry Louis Vivian Derozio is about a young girl whose father died in a war and the mother in the sorrow of her husband. She is left orphaned and the poet is concerned about her future in this cruel, hypocritical world. The poem consists of two main stanzas having twelve lines each. Except for the first four lines, every two lines rhyme with each other.

The poem begins with the description of the orphan girl. According to the poet, the 'orphan girl's hair was black as a raven's wing'. Her cheeks were as bright as the tulip flower. Her voice was as soft as the gentle breeze or the air at night which is quiet, calm and has a soothing sensation. Her forehead was as bright as the rays of the moon. The underlying suggestion of the poet is that the girl was very beautiful, cute, attractive and looked very pleasant and innocent. The beginning is thus quite pleasing but after the fourth line, the poet returns to the dark reality.

The sire (father) of that girl went to war, fought bravely but ultimately lost his life. The poet sighs that this is the reward of a brave person in this world. The poet here depicts the cruelty of war and how it rewards (in an ironic sense) the good and the bold people. The death of her father was unbearable to her mother. Rather than living as a widow she also died of a heart attack and the young girl was left without parents. The first part begins with an appreciation of a young girl's beauty and ends with a tragedy.

The second part describes the poet's uncertainty regarding her future in the harsh and cruel world. She has no friend on this cold (without human warmth, passion, emotion and compassion) and bleak (without hope) earth. There is no one to give her shelter, a home and a hearth (warmth of fellow feeling). She will now have to live in this dull and depressing world (desert here refers to the heartless world) alone. The poet repeats the phrase that she has no friend (well wisher) and she would now stay away from being good and

kind as the cruel world will scorn, mock and abuse her and this cruel nature of the world will untimely kill her.

The poet laments the fact that the shame which she will suffer will be enough to squeeze blood from her breasts (heart) with the weight of sorrows and guilt and she will be oppressed by the world. The poet then says that it's cruelties would wound her bosom (here symbolises the orphan girl) whose blood is coming out of the breasts in an uncontrolled manner because of sorrows and shame. No tear can be as painful as the tears that flow from the eyes of a sorrowful and oppressed woman in the world.

The most blessed and honourable, according to the poet, is the one who would shelter an orphan from sorrow and shame. Thus the poem ends in hope and uncertainty about the future of the orphan girl. The poem gives an insight into the condition of woman and the suppression which she faced during the time of the poet. A girl whose parents would die had to live a shameful life and was physically, mentally and sexually tortured by the people. Derozio was a social reformer. He visualised an independent and a better India. Thus here in this poem he is attacking and criticising the hypocritical attitude of the patriarchal society. Here in this poem he has depicted a picturesque sight of the unbearable and downtrodden condition of woman folk of his time. As an ideal social reformer he has ironically exhibited the evil and cunning attitude of the society and at the same time has made an earnest appeal at the end of the poem to save and protect the orphan girl (uplift the woman folk in general).

FREEDOM TO THE SLAVE BY HENRY LOUIS VIVIAN DEROZIO

Introduction:-

“Freedom to the Slave” appears in Henry Louis Vivian Derozio’s first poetry collection Poems(1827). This poem is about the exquisite joy of a slave who is freed to be a man. The basic essence of this poem concerns the inherent happiness to be free in contrast to the pangs of subjugation, oppression, and most importantly slavery. Derozio, being a vibrant voice of the Bengal

Renaissance, hints at the slavery of Indians to the British East India Company by referring to an individual who was enslaved. Through writing this piece, he tried to make Indians desirous of the cherished freedom which not only emancipates a person mentally but also helps to expand the potential of one's soul.

Historical Background

The poem "Freedom to the Slave" was written in February 1827. It was published in the same year in Poems (1827). The volume of poetry was printed at the Baptist Mission Press. At the time of writing this poem, Derozio, who was only 17, taught English literature and history at the Hindu College. His personality and attitude made him dear to his students. He encouraged frequent debates in order to expand his students' knowledge.

Derozio was the first "national" poet of modern India. His patriotic poetry is an important landmark in the history of Indian Writing in English. "Freedom to the Slave" is one such poem where Derozio's love for his country is reflected. It also taps on the themes of Romanticism such as free-thinking, abolition of slavery, and humanity.

Summary:-

This poem begins with an allusion to Thomas Campbell's poem "The Pleasures of Hope". Then the text directly jumps into the story of a slave who was enslaved. Right now, he is freed from the shackles of slavery. First and foremost, he realizes the hidden potential and noblest feelings buried inside his soul. It makes him kneel no more to anyone. Once again, he feels himself a human being, not a creature destined to serve, suffer, and follow.

Then Derozio delves deeper into the joy of the emancipated character. He looks around and realizes that he is now as free as the air, bird, and river. The flame of freedom has enlightened his soul's altar. In the next lines, he expresses his gratitude to all those who are fighting in order to make the slaves free. He wishes the almighty to bless those generous hands which break the chain of slavery in any form.

Form

“Freedom to the Slave” is 28 lines long. Derozio groups the lines into a single stanza. Every four lines of the text form a unit (similar to a quatrain) and present a specific idea. There is only a difference in lines 9-16. Here, the poet packs the eight lines together. Besides, he writes this piece from the third-person point of view and describes the happiness of the slave after getting freedom.

Rhyme Scheme

The rhyme scheme of the poem is regular and it follows the ABCB rhyming pattern. It is also known as the ballad rhyme scheme. For example, the second and fourth lines rhyme together while the first and third lines end with distinct sounds.

Meter

Regarding the meter, it is composed of iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter alternatively. The poem begins with an iambic tetrameter line. It is followed by a line in iambic trimeter. This pattern is repeated throughout the text. Let’s have a look at the scansion of the first eight lines in order to have an idea of the metrical scheme of the overall poem.

Themes

The poem “Freedom to the Slave” taps on the themes of freedom, slavery, and patriotism. As the title says, this piece is all about the idea of freedom. But, Derozio explores this theme from the perspective of a slave who is freed from the chains of subjugation. In order to appreciate the theme, one has to look deeper into the mind of the slave. His exploration of the things that he was not able to cherish before reflects the inherent desire of a man to be free like the nature around him.

By writing this poem, Derozio uses the character as a metaphor of all the Indians, enslaved by the colonial rulers. Their life was no different than the life of a slave. But, the slave in the poem can lead his life freely. Indians could not. Hence, the poet is sympathetic towards the sufferings of his countrymen and tries to infuse the spirit of freedom in their hearts.

LINE-BY-LINE ANALYSIS & CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE POEM “FREEDOM TO THE SLAVE”

Epigraph

“And as the slave departs, the man returns.”.... Campbell

The epigraph of “Freedom to the Slave” alludes to Thomas Campbell’s poem “The Pleasures of Hope”. Derozio quotes this line in order to give a hint to readers regarding the main idea of the poem. In this line, Campbell uses an epigram. He says that as a slave is freed from the chain of subjugation, he becomes a man again. Here, the terms “slave” and “man” are used to refer to the concepts of “slavery” and “humanity”. So, this line also contains the use of synecdoche.

The meaning of this line is that slavery kills the basic essence of humanity from a man’s heart. The slavers treat a slave as a creature inferior to them. Thus, when a slave is emancipated, he can enjoy the pleasures of being a man.

Lines 1-4

*How felt he when he first was told
A slave he ceased to be;
How proudly beat his heart, when first
He knew that he was free !—*

The poem directly begins with the essence of the epigraph. Besides, the title “Freedom to the Slave” also hints at a slave who is given freedom. Derozio anticipates in the first two lines regarding his state of mind. When he was first told he ceased to be a slave, it gave him pleasure, inexpressible with words. By hearing that he was free, his heart leaped up in joy. He became proud to know that he could live as a human being. Here, the poet focuses on the term “heart” in order to refer to the emotions of the person. Besides, he uses a

rhetorical exclamation in the fourth line to portray his happiness after seeing the slave freed to be a man again.

Lines 5-8

*The noblest feelings of the soul
To glow at once began;
He knelt no more; his thoughts were raised;
He felt himself a man.*

In the following line, Derozio refers to the “noblest feelings of the soul”. The noblest feelings in a man’s heart include happiness, pride, compassion, and benevolence. It does not end here. Rather such feelings include all the qualities that make a person, a human being. Previously, the slave was treated as an inferior creature who was destined to serve his superior. As he ceased to be a slave, he could explore those feelings once again.

He had to kneel to nobody. This feeling of self-confidence and self-esteem elevated his thoughts. He could think freely. In this way, he felt himself a man. Here, the poet uses an epigram. He conveys that when a man is free in his mental space, he can explore the true meaning of being a human. The thoughts of selfhood are what make him complete as a man.

Lines 9-16

*He looked above—the breath of heaven
Around him freshly blew;
He smiled exultingly to see
The wild birds as they flew,
He looked upon the running stream
That ‘neath him rolled away;
Then thought on winds, and birds, and floods,
And cried, ‘I’m free as they!’*

In the following lines, Derozio describes how the freed slave draws inspiration from his surroundings. After being completely free internally and externally, he could appreciate the nature around him. He could breathe the freshness of

air once again. Here, the poet uses a metaphor in “breath of heaven”. The “heaven”, a reference to the sky, is invested with the idea of breathing. Its “breath” is a reference to the air humans breathe.

He looked around at the wild birds. Their flight filled his heart with happiness. It is important to note the term “wild” here. By this term, Derozio connects the untamed spirit of the person to that of the wild birds.

He looked upon the “running stream” that rolled away beneath his feet. So, the person was standing near a river and appreciating the beauty of nature. The “running stream” contains the use of personification. Here, the stream is invested with the idea of running away.

The scene filled him with pleasure. It made him wonder about his own freedom. Thus he said, “I’m free as they!”. The exclamation reflects his mental happiness. In this line, Derozio uses the repetition of “and” in order to emphasize the terms mentioned here. Besides, these terms “winds”, “birds”, and “floods” are symbols of freedom.

Lines 17-20

*Oh Freedom! there is something dear
E’en in thy very name,
That lights the altar of the soul
With everlasting flame.*

In this section, Derozio shifts from his subject (the slave) and describes how he sees “Freedom”. Firstly, he personifies the abstract idea by invoking it as a human being. According to him, there is magic in the very word itself. Indeed, if we pronounce the term by closing our eyes, we can feel the essence tied to it. It transcends the soul, elevates the mind, and frees the spirit.

Not only that, it lights the “altar of the soul”. In this phrase, the poet compares the human soul to an altar. It is like a temple where the lord resides. Freedom is the priest who lights the temple with its “everlasting flame”. In this way, freedom enlightens the spirit and the darkness fades from there.

Besides, its flame has an eternal quality. As long as the man lives, the light of freedom stays with him.

Lines 21-24

*Success attend the patriot sword,
That is unsheathed for thee!
And glory to the breast that bleeds,
Bleeds nobly to be free!*

In these four lines, Derozio taps on the theme of patriotism. After reading these lines, it becomes clear why the poet is talking about the freed slave in this poem. He does so in order to bring home the idea of India's slavery to the British empire.

Here, Derozio's poetic persona directly addresses the spirit of Freedom. He blesses the patriotic spirits who unsheathed their swords to free their country from the shackles of colonial rulers. The "unsheathed" sword is a symbol of protest as well as war. By using this symbol, Derozio voices against the subjugation of his dear countrymen.

He glorifies the brave hearts who bleed to emancipate themselves as well as their nation. His spirit salutes those who devoted their lives for the noble cause. Readers can find the repetition of the word "bleeds" that creates a resonance of the idea in their minds. It is meant for the sake of emphasis.

Lines 25-28

*Blest be the generous hand that breaks
The chain a tyrant gave,
And, feeling for degraded man,
Gives freedom to the slave.*

In the last section of "Freedom to the Slave", the poet blessed the generous humans who felt pain when they saw their fellow humans were tied by the chain of slavery. By "generous hand", the poet refers to the generous people. They broke the chain which a tyrant gave to the slaves. The "chain", a symbol

of subjugation or dependence, was meant for holding them back. By freeing them from these symbolic fetters, the abolitionists helped them to realize their true potential.

The last two lines show the poet's sympathy for the degraded state of the slaves. He blesses the hearts of those who had fellow feelings for the slaves. The feeling of compassion is what gives them freedom.

MODEL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What is meant by the expression "Freedom to the Slave"?

This expression is a reference to the meaning of freedom to a slave. Through this piece, Derozio describes how a freed slave appreciates his present state and implicitly contrasts it with his life before freedom.

Q. What does the expression "as the slave departs, the man returns" mean in the poem "Freedom to the Slave"?

This line is an allusion to Thomas Campbell's "The Pleasures of Hope". It means that when a slave is freed, it gives him enough space to realize his worth. Besides, it helps him to feel the joy of being a man again.

Q. Who speaks the words "I'm free as they!" in the poem "Freedom to the Slave"?

These words are spoken by the freed slave. By uttering this exclamation, he refers to the winds, birds, and rivers that are free like him.

Q. How did the slave feel when he was first told that he was free?

When the slave was first told that he was freed, he became proud of the freedom he was longing for. It allowed him to explore the noblest feelings buried in his soul.

Q. When was "Freedom to the Slave" written?

The poem "Freedom to the Slave" was written in February 1827. It was published in the same year in Derozio's poetry collection, Poems (1827).

LONG MODEL NOTES

Central theme of Derozio's poem, "Freedom to the Slave" / Critical Appreciation of the poem.

Derozio's poem, "Freedom to the Slave" is an event of the liberation of those slaves who were under the bondage of a powerful nation and fought hard day by day for their freedom. The main problem here is freedom and it is for those who are not free. The poem is actually for freedom.

Here, Derozio seems to have been greatly influenced by 19th-century English Romantic poets, whose devotion and admiration for independence was unequivocal and the high ideals of freedom, equality and brotherhood of the French Revolution (1789).

Like those poets and lovers of freedom, Derozio strongly expresses that without freedom a human being has no entity of his own. This is specially emphasized in the feeling and the speech of the slave as presented by the poet. So, Derozio's slave, when told that a slave he ceased to be (he felt proud and high) thinks himself a true man. He looked around him to behold the blowing wind, the flowing wind and the flying birds and cheerfully cried:

"I am free as they".

Derozio implies here, through his slave, who just turned free, that slavery is not just a physical state of enslavement of a person, but it is the total subjugation of thoughts, beliefs and feelings. Indeed, freedom brings about a mental change, the emergence of the mind to enjoy the idea that anyone is free, no longer a slave. Indeed, Derozio openly proclaimed what freedom meant to a slave. Just when man is liberated from servitude he can, then, at that point, partake in the excellence and opportunity around him. After all neither by birth nor by nature, none is enslaved, rather everyone is allowed to be free and joyous. It is only the mischief of human cunningness and tyranny

that make slaves of others to make most for themselves by the exploration of others, weak and humble.

In this context, it should be remembered that Derozio's poem "Freedom to Slave" was written at a time when India was a victim of slavery and exploitation under British rule. In this connection, in his apostrophe to freedom the poet gives vent to his eulogy of the patriots, ready to give their blood to release their fatherland from the shackles of oppressive slavery. His concluding lines in this respect are filled with his glorification of those who stand and fight for freedom.

*"Blest be the generous hand that breaks
The chain a tyrant gave,
And, feeling for degraded man,
Gives freedom to the slave".*

Thus, the poet in this poem details his feelings on knowing that he was no more a slave. He felt proud and joyous on learning of his attainment of freedom from the slavery that had been imposed. He felt himself to be a true man on getting released from slavery. He smiled exactly to realize himself as free as the air blowing fresh, the stream flowing at ease and the birds flying at their will.

FREEDOM TO THE SLAVE BY DEROZIO: VERY SHORT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What does Derozio refer to as 'slave' in the poem "Freedom to the Slave"?

Answer: Literally a slave is a human being who is forced by his master to work under him. However, the mention of the 'patriot' and the tyrant brings to mind the fact that India may be looked upon as 'slave'. Actually, the poem was composed in 1827 when India was under the British regime.

2. What is the epigraph of the poem "Freedom to the Slave"?

Answer: The epigraph of the poem “Freedom to the Slave” is a quotation from Campbell’s “The Pleasures of Hope”. It is “As the slave departs, the man returns”. It implies that the true spirit of life cannot be enjoyed by one in bondage. This idea is related to the theme of Derozio’s poem which poetizes the feelings of a liberated slave.

3. What is the meaning of the epigraph of the poem “Freedom to the Slave?”

Answer: The epigraph of the poem “Freedom to the Slave” which is a quotation from Campbell conveys the idea that the true spirit of life cannot be enjoyed by one in bondage. This idea is related to the theme of Derozio’s poem which poetizes the feelings of a slave when he is liberated.

4. How does Derozio present freedom in the poem “Freedom to the Slave”?

Answer: In the first stanza of the poem “Freedom to the Slave” freedom is depicted as a physical existence — liberation from bondage. It is looked upon in terms of its effect on the slave. In the second stanza, freedom is depicted as something which inspires a patriot and a generous man to perform selfless acts.

Freedom To The Slave Very Short Questions And Answers From Stanza 1

1. What effect did freedom have upon the heart of the slave?

Answer: Freedom had a deep effect on the heart of the slave. To be precise, as he was alive, his heart was beating but freedom added a sense of pride to this biological heartbeat. Actually, he felt proud to get back his original existence — the existence of a liberated human being.

2. How did freedom affect the soul of the slave?

Answer: Freedom affected the soul of the slave to a great extent. In the time of bondage, the soul of the slave could not conceive of noble thoughts but with the attainment of freedom, the slave could once again conceive of noble thoughts. After all, conceiving noble thoughts were useless in the period of bondage.

3. How did the slave become a man again?

Answer: In the time of bondage the slave did not have any liberty. In fact, he had to kneel before his master. Moreover, he did not have mental freedom. To be precise, he could not conceive of noble thoughts because there was no need for these. Naturally, having got back both, the slave became a man again.

4. How did the freedom of the slave cause difference to the breath of heaven?

Answer: The breath of heaven being part of Nature blew unaltered during the bondage of the slave as well as in the phase of his post-liberation. However, after the attainment of freedom, the slave felt as if the breath of heaven was giving him a sensation of freshness. Such a perception is however devoid of any logic.

5 Why did the slave smile exultingly?

Answer: The slave smiled exultingly because he was happy at his recently achieved freedom. When the slave smiled in this manner, he saw wild birds flying. It perhaps suggests that he found a similarity between his state of freedom and that of the wild birds and this finding prompted such a kind of smile.

6. What did the slave look at the running stream?

Answer: A stream which is constituted of water runs smoothly and above all freely. Similarly, the slave who has got freedom from the master moves freely. The slave found an objective correlative in this running stream. Therefore partly out of joy and partly out of wonder the slave looked at the running stream.

7. "I'm as free as they" With whom does the slave compare himself and why?

Answer: The slave compares himself to winds, birds and floods.

Winds flow unobstructed because it has enough power. Birds have the liberty to move freely because they have wings. Floods have powerful currents of water to glide unobstructed. Similarly, the slave has gained freedom and so he has freedom of mobility. So the slave says so.

Freedom To The Slave Very Short Questions And Answers From Stanza 2

1. What according to Derozio is the “everlasting flame”?

Answer: According to Derozio the “everlasting flame” is the noble ideals which are eternal in nature. These noble ideals can be conceived by only a free man. One finds such noble ideals in the slave after he is liberated from bondage by the master. Moreover, these ideals are suggestive of the broadness of mind.

2. How does the slave attain freedom?

Answer: A generous man feels for the physical and psychological degeneration of the slave. Therefore this person fights against the tyrant who has captivated the slave. The generous person takes the risk of life in the process and ultimately defeats the tyrant. Thus through the sincere efforts of the generous person the slave attains freedom.

3. Why does Derozio say “Bleeds nobody to be free!”?

Answer: The person who attains freedom and the person responsible for the said freedom are different persons. In Derozio’s poem slave attains freedom but the person responsible for it is the generous man. This generous man bleeds by fighting with the tyrant who has made the slave captive. Thus the said fighting is basically a selfless work.

4. What, according to Derozio, are the qualities of a patriot?

Answer: According to Derozio a patriot must have certain qualities. First, he will have to feel for the degradation of a person or place. Secondly, he will have to fight against this degradation and thus be above self-interest. Above all, he will have to think of his glory at the cost of life.

NISSIM EZEKIEL'S POEM ENTERPRISE

Critical appreciation of Ezekiel's Enterprise./ Central theme of the poem Enterprise

Nissim Ezekiel is one of the most eminent Indian writers in English of the 20th century. He was a playwright, editor, critic and poet. Ezekiel's poetry has different themes and styles. "**Enterprise**" is an allegorical poem. It deals with a tedious journey undertaken by some pilgrims. The journey is reminiscent of the journey undertaken by the Magi in Eliot's modernist reconstruction of Christ's Nativity in "**The Journey of the Magi**." The journey in the poem is metaphorical. It parallels the journey of human life.

The poem begins with a group of people journeying to a holy place. At the beginning, the pilgrims are full of enthusiasm and vigour. Therefore, they started their journey with a lot of excitement, sure enough, that they could easily overcome all the difficulties. Inconveniences seemed insignificant to them; *'it started as a pilgrimage/Exalting minds and making all/The burdens light....'*. During the second stage of their pilgrimage, they confronted the adverse natural difficulties, symbolized by the blazing Sun. But nothing could detain them from reaching their destination or take away their enthusiasm. Their passion to reach their destination was as burning as the blazing Sun above their heads. The heat of the sun is symbolic of Mother Nature being hostile towards human ambitions. Carried away by the unrestrained excitement, the pilgrims kept a record of the events that they witnessed- goods being bought and sold by the peasants and the ways of serpents and goats. The travellers passed through three cities where a sage had taught. But they were unconcerned about what he taught or what his message was.

The third stanza speaks about the differences that cropped up among the members. As they reached a desert, differences arose among the question of how to cross the challenging landscape. One of the members, an excellent prose writer, left the enterprise. He was considered the most intelligent among the lot. Therefore, a shadow of discord fell onto their enterprise and continued to grow as one of the members parted from the group. The poet describes the hindrances that follow the enterprise. In the next stage of their journey, the travellers were attacked twice and while saving themselves they lose their ways and forget the noble ambitions which had motivated them to come so far. However, there was still an assurance from the leader of the group. He assured them that the sea or the destination was at hand. But it turned out to be a mirage.

The final stanza of the poem records the arrival of the pilgrims at their destination. Nevertheless, instead of bringing a sense of fulfillment and achievement, the journey had only brought them frustration. They now started to doubt the importance of their journey. They began to find it futile and meaningless. They found nothing heroic in their achievements. They had a belief that their journey would be unparalleled and that its success would give them a place in history. They later realized that such a journey was already undertaken by others before them and would be repeated in the near future. This gave them a sense of disillusionment and they felt the journey was futile. In the end, they felt that staying back home would have been better than venturing out on such a dangerous journey with disastrous consequences.

The group of men all set out for the journey, enthusiastic and full of vigour set out for the spiritual quest. They face hardships, difficulties yet they do not lose their aspirations. But during the second stage of their journey, disharmony and differences in opinions among the members arises and soon & conflict breaks out which results in disunity. The final stanza raises a question about the significance of the journey. The journey here is a metaphor of life. The poem is a stark depiction of the condition of men on this earth who are subjected to such failures, hardships and disillusionment during their course of journey of life.

Enterprise is a symbolic poem. Symbolism refers to the use of symbols to represent ideas or facts. The Pilgrimage in the poem symbolizes life. The 'crowd of pilgrims' symbolizes a group of men, who undertake to achieve a common goal which begins with excitement and hope but ends with disillusionment and frustration. The 'Sun' is the symbol of hostility of nature towards human aspirations and ambitions. A "desert patch" is symbolic of the challenges and hardships which the group faces. Finally, 'home' symbolizes remaining rooted to the soil or remaining true to oneself.

[Enterprise: Nissim Ezekiel \[Short Questions and Answers\]](#)

1. Central theme: The theme of the poem "Enterprise" revolves around a metaphorical journey to a pilgrimage started by some enthusiastic people. The enterprise, though started in high spirit, faced some difficulties in the middle. Finally when they reached the destination, they doubted the importance of that troublesome journey. Most of the critics agree that the poem is an allegory for the journey of life. Our life also begins with high expectations. But we often deviate from the aim or face tough challenges in the middle. Finally we reach the last stage without much achievement.

2. "It started.....burdens light". Ans. The poet-speaker (Nissim Ezekiel) and a group of men set out on a pilgrimage. It had a noble aim and lofty goal. The members of the group were excited. The thought of the holy journey elevated their minds and made all the burdens light. In fact, when people are enthusiastic, the burdens seem to be lighter.

3. "The second stage.... match our rage".

Ans. The poet-speaker (Nissim Ezekiel) and a group of men set out on a pilgrimage. The first stage of the journey was its commencement. But at the second stage they faced the torture of nature. The heat of the sun was as intense as was their enthusiasm. But it was not enough to test their passion and enthusiasm.

4. "We stood it.....I thought".

Ans. The poet-speaker (Nissim Ezekiel) and a group of men set out on a pilgrimage. The first stage of the journey was its commencement. But at the second stage they faced the torture of nature. However, the travellers bravely faced the difficulties of the journey.

5. "Observed and put down.....had taught".

Ans. The poet-speaker(Nissim Ezekiel) and a group of men set out on a pilgrimage. During their journey they wrote down plentiful notes and recorded their observations. They observed and wrote down what the peasants were selling and buying. Similarly, They observed and recorded the behaviour and movements of animals like serpents and goats whom they saw on the way. They even observed the three cities where they saw a hermit to teach his lessons. Here the irony is that the travellers were wasting their time taking notes on ordinary aspects of life. They were concerned with rather unimportant things.

6. "But when the differences.....and grows".

Ans. The poet-speaker (Nissim Ezekiel) and a group of men set out on a pilgrimage. The journey started in a good spirit. But then differences arose among the travellers. Some members did not agree with the others to cross a sandy tract which they came across. As a result, the best prose writer and intellectual person among them parted from the group. After one friend left the group, a shadow of conflict befell on the enterprise and continued to grow. They now lacked the zeal with which they started.

The irony here is that a holy journey for a noble cause lost its integrity. People became egoistic and concentrated on trivial matters. Their main concern was now the way, not the ultimate aim.

7. "Another phase.....smelt the sea".

Ans. The poet-speaker (Nissim Ezekiel) and a group of men set out on a pilgrimage. At one stage of the journey some local or external forces attacked them twice on the way. As a result, they lost their way. A section of the group then claimed their freedom of action. They expressed their wish to leave the group. The poet tried to pray for the success of their mission. The group leader tried to assure others that they were near the sea and so the destination was at hand.

The irony here is that when human beings find themselves in trouble, they forget the larger issue and run away to save their narrow interests. The author metaphorically suggests that disagreements and clashes of opinion hinder intellectual progress and the discovery of new knowledge.

Enterprise: Nissim Ezekiel [Short Questions and Answers]

8. "We noticed.....little hope".

Ans. The poet-speaker(Nissim Ezekiel) and a group of men set out on a pilgrimage. At one stage some travellers left the others as they were attacked twice and lost their way. Those travellers, who continued the journey, now found themselves to be a small crowd. As they progressed, they could see nothing. They now looked like a group of aimless and hopeless wanderers.

9. "Ignoring what the.....merely bent".

Ans. The poet-speaker(Nissim Ezekiel) and a group of men set out on a pilgrimage. At one stage some travellers left the others as they were attacked twice and lost their way. Those travellers, who continued the journey, now paid no attention even to the roar of thunder which certainly had some significance. They were too tired to understand what the thunder meant. 'Ignoring the thunder' may also mean that they ignored what their inner self suggested. The travellers were physically exhausted and deprived of common needs like soap. Some members were not able to walk any more and the others just bent down with pain.

10. "When, finally....we were there".

Ans. The poet-speaker (Nissim Ezekiel) and a group of men set out on a pilgrimage. After facing a lot of difficulties they ultimately reached the destination. But they wondered why they had been there. They did not find the journey meaningful at all. The journey only brought trouble and disappointment to each one of them.

11. "The trip had.....to earn our grace".

Ans. The poet-speaker (Nissim Ezekiel) and a group of men set out on a pilgrimage. After facing a lot of difficulties they ultimately reached the destination. But the hardship of the journey made everyone's face dark and pale. They felt that their deed was neither heroic nor unusual in any way. They came to the conclusion that home is the only place where they could enjoy peace of mind. Doing good to mankind is a better way than going on a pilgrimage to gather God's grace.

Justify the Title of the Poem "Enterprise".

“**Enterprise**” written by Nissim Ezekiel was published in his 1960 collection **The Unfinished Man**. The poem follows a group of people on a “pilgrimage” whose long trek begins with a strong sense of purpose but ends in devastation and disillusionment. The pilgrims, who come across as idealistic yet somewhat naive and ill-prepared, get so beaten down by their journey that, once they reach their destination, they don’t even remember why they’re there. The poem has been read as an allegory for a number of things (including the journey of life itself, India’s emergence from the grip of colonial rule, and the flaws of organized religion). Above all, it speaks to the way that idealism can falter in the face of reality, the divisive nature of pride, and the value of focusing on the journey rather than the destination. It is one of those wonderful poems published in Ezekiel’s collection of poems named “**The Unfinished Man**”. It revolves around a metaphorical journey to a pilgrimage started by some enthusiastic people, including the poet.

“**Enterprise**” 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.

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. 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.

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. 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.

At last, the pilgrims reached the place of pilgrimage. They did not know why they went there. They had lost face on the trip. They discovered that their deeds were ordinary and commonplace. 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.

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. Ezekiel's choice of title for this poem is the surest way of making readers feel the pinch of irony. In the gap between the beginning and the end of the poem lies irony: the beginning harping on the purpose, quite sanctimonious and dignified; the end reflecting the utter purposelessness of the journey. The seriousness and the sense of purity and sincerity with which the journey began are lost in the end, as the poet's intention is to expose the spiritual vacancy of the city-dwellers. These so-called pilgrims in "Enterprise" do not understand the spiritual significance of the journey. At the end of an enterprise, one is rewarded with a rare sense of delight, one feels elevated; but here in this poem the enterprise ends in purposelessness, and all the participants wear a "darkened face." Irony reaches climax when the meaninglessness of the enterprise is revealed: "When finally we reached the place/ we hardly knew why we were there".

The entire poem is about the activities that took place in the journey and the journey is reflective of the journey of life. So, the word, 'Enterprise', being a more comprehensive term than 'journey' or 'pilgrimage' is an appropriate title for the poem. Hence, the title is justified. Thus it can be said that the journey at once becomes a metaphor for life. In the rat race of competition, principles and ethics are quite often side-stepped. We live life to achieve some prescribed goal. However, as we carry on, we tend to become so obsessed with the target, that the means do not matter at all: the End is only the end. Besides, the poet echoes that in the race to be successful, people have lost the inner meaning of life, and live life only on the topographical or superficial level, The theme that is echoed in Farhan Akhtar's movie "**Rock On**". People have forsaken the simple joys of life; they tend to ignore life's basic experiences/teachings. The spiritual enigma of life is not a matter of concern for them. 'Home' or self-discovery resides within each individual. It is primarily subjective, and not objective.

Irony and Satire in Nissim Ezekiel's Poem- Enterprise.

In an earlier time the writers had great crave for using satire and considered it as the greatest literary tool but as they came under the influence of western culture, they felt the need of doing something extra that would be helpful to make them extraordinary by making the distance between the writer and his craft. In this reference irony becomes a significant device and confers upon us the finite qualification and discrimination that distinguish a mature experience of the writer.

Irony works with great force and acquires a new meaning in post-modern literature. In fact, irony is the critical device by which a writer or a poet excels all his contemporaries. Ironic mode adds to the dignity and magnitude of the writer or poet's creative writing technique in handling with the social themes because it helps his experiences an utterly modern shape. Consequently irony becomes one of the most outstanding features of writing. Modern poetry places it first rather than other literary features. Shiv K. Kumar, K.N.Daruwalla,, Nissim Ezekiel, R. Parthasarthy etc. can be counted as the greatest ironists in modern poetry. In this paper we analyze Ezekiel's poetry in order to know his ironic mode.

Ezekiel's poetry is ironical and reveals different kinds of ironies such as subtle irony, verbal irony, irony of situation, irony of characters and irony of life. In fact, his irony is direct and woven into the very texture of his poetry. Shiv K.Kumar rightly writes, "his (Ezekiel's) irony comes through more incisively in his poems written in Indian English,

which is a mix of Indian vernacular and half-baked English.” A close study of Ezekiel’s poetry reveals two kinds of irony: “one closely allied to satire where the poet stands at a distance from the object looked at, the other, closely allied to compassion, where the poet examines the experience as if from within.” The first kind of irony can be seen in his early and the second type of irony is clearly visible in the later period. Both type of irony are intermingled in Ezekiel’s middle period. In fact, the ironical method can be visible everywhere in his poetry. Ezekiel makes subtle use of irony and his insight into life finds its true expression through it. He develops irony and ironical contrasts frequently from the superstition and folk beliefs that exist in the society and gives them an utterly modern shape.

As a storyteller Ezekiel creates poems out of ordinary incidents, situations and events that one encounters in day to day life. He picks out a situation, analyzes it and describes it in such a way that it immediately assumes a kind of social significance because he views the ordinariness of most of the events with a sense of detachment. Ezekiel’s ‘Enterprise’ is a beautiful narration of the spiritual journey of our great saints and sages whose mission of life for the people of the country was like a pilgrimage for the enlightening of knowledge. During this pilgrimage a situation is examined with an ironic detachment with a hope that solution would emerge in due course. That’s why, the pilgrimage started the journey with a happy note but the difference among the members of the group going on pilgrimage surfaced as they faced difficulties on the way. The difference means here the difference of ideas, rites and rituals between the Hindu and the Muslim before the partition. The difference arose first over the question as to “how to cross a desert patch.”

“Desert patch” suggests the ignorance, darkness and religious differences of the contemporary time. Further they say, **“We lost a friend whose stylish prose /Was quite the best of all our patch.”** The group was in grief but managed to survive and proceed further till the next phase after being twice attacked by China, once our bosom friend in 1962 and Pakistan in 1965. After the partition, India had to face two attacks which created big bombs in the path of the pilgrims but later on it enjoyed the freedom. Thus the poem shows an ironic detachment. As the poet writes: **Another phase was reached when we were twice attacked and lost our way. A section claimed its liberty. To leave the group. I tried to pray Our leader would smelt the sea.**

Ezekiel’s choice of title for this poem is the surest way of making readers feel the pinch of irony. In the gap between the beginning and the end of the poem lies irony: the beginning harping on the purpose, quite sanctimonious and dignified; the end reflecting

the utter purposelessness of the journey. The seriousness and the sense of purity and sincerity with which the journey began are lost in the end, as the poet's intention is to expose the spiritual vacancy of the city-dwellers. These so-called pilgrims in "**Enterprise**" do not understand the spiritual significance of the thunder. At the end of an enterprise, one is rewarded with a rare sense of delight, one feels elevated; but here in this poem the enterprise ends in purposelessness, and all the participants wear a "darkened face." Irony reaches climax when the meaninglessness of the enterprise is revealed: "When finally we reached the place/we hardly knew why we were there"

The second type of irony is found in 'Night of the Scorpion', which absorbs irony into its very structure. Ezekiel puts a situation, not merely a state of mind but the speaker in the poem, most probably the poet himself is the detached observer of the whole scene, perhaps smiling to him when the woman's pain ends after a lapse of twenty hours, moves among other characters..The poet records those exact situations of the night when his mother was stung by a scorpion and after biting his mother with a "flesh of diabolic tail" the scorpion vanished somewhere in the darkroom. Then the peasants came like swarms of flies and "buzzed" the name of God a hundred times to paralyze the evil one and they "clicked" their tongues. The poet remarks: with every movement that the scorpion made his poison moved in Mother's blood, they said. May he still, they said. May the sins of your previous birth be burned away tonight, they said. May your suffering decrease the misfortunes of your next birth, they said. The phrase "they said" is repeated four times and it has an effect of incantation of a ritual. This urban and complicated ritual of the chanting is juxtaposed against the primitive quality of its content and it results in the ironic detachment of the poet. Indian belief explains that the previous birth as well as the next birth after one's death is determined by one's karma. The protagonist's father has a different perception of life and so he disregards the farmers' superstitions and puts a match to a little paraffin.

Ezekiel writes: My father, sceptic, rationalist, trying every curse and blessing, power, mixture, herb and hybrid. He even poured a little paraffin upon the bitten toe and put a match to it. The protagonist watches the flame "feeding on "his mother and the holy man performs his rites to tame the poison with an incantation. After twenty hours, it lost its sting. The irony of the whole incident is that while the neighbors and the father have been making earnest efforts to assuage the woman's pain, actually the pain subsides naturally after the long twenty hours of suffering. The poem ends with an overtone of irony. The concluding ironical lines cancel out all earlier responses to scorpion bite. The mother remains in bearable pain till twenty hours as these twenty hours are over. She was not

much oppressed by her own suffering but the idea of her children's suffering in the event of scorpion bite tormented her more. This irony shows itself in the way in which the poet has described the efforts being made by all those who have gathered at the spot to relieve the woman's pain. R. Parthasarthy comments on the poem: 'Night of the Scorpion' evokes superstitious practices we haven't yet outgrown. It enacts an impressive ritual in which the mother's reaction, towards the end, to her own sufferings ironically cancels out earlier responses, both primitive and sophisticated. The relationship between the domestic tragedy and the surrounding community is unobtrusively established. The poem also demonstrates the effective use of parallelism.

It is noteworthy that Nissim Ezekiel has written many poems ridiculing the absurdities and follies of the Indian people and his chief weapon of attack is irony. Undoubtedly irony has become his most conspicuous quality. He does not attack the superstition of the people directly but exposes the absurdity of superstitious beliefs by the use of irony. Almost every poem by Ezekiel is characterized by irony to a greater or lesser extent. He makes use of the weapon of irony in expressing ideas and depicting situations, characters and life and this weapon is like a great satirist can use with a devastating effect in order to reform society. In other respects, Ezekiel shows originality even in the use of irony and in his mode of attack on the malpractices and the evils from which Indian society has been suffering for years and years, and which are actually growing in magnitude instead of being brought under control. Thus Ezekiel is a great master of the weapon of irony and always attempts to use it as a device in his poems and creates truly great poetry. He uses the form of irony and gives a new meaning to his poetry.

Like Kumar he believes that irony can be successfully employed to make one see life in clarity. Kumar writes, "Irony, therefore, is a multifaceted weapon, a kind of poetic strategy which can be put to very effective use." Commenting upon the use of irony by Ezekiel a critic states, "the stand-point of Ezekiel is that of a highly educated, cultured and polished man not belonging to any extreme of society, and that such a stand-point is conducive to the development of an ironic attitude."

Role Played by Ezekiel in the Transition to Indianism.

Indian English literature (IEL), also referred to as Indian Writing in English (IWE), is the body of work by writers in India who write in the English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. Its early history began with the works of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio and Michael Madhusudan Dutt

followed by Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo. R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao contributed to the growth and popularity of Indian English fiction in the 1930s. It is also associated, in some cases, with the works of members of the Indian diaspora who subsequently compose works in English. It is frequently referred to as Indo-Anglian literature. (Indo-Anglian is a specific term in the sole context of writing that should not be confused with Anglo-Indian). Although some Indo-Anglian works may be classified under the genre of postcolonial literature, the repertoire of Indian English literature encompasses a wide variety of themes and ideologies, from the late eighteenth-century to the present day, and thereby eludes easy categorization.

Nissim Ezekiel was an Indian Jewish poet, actor, playwright, editor and art critic. He was a foundational figure in postcolonial India's literary history. specifically for Indian Poetry in English. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983 for his collection, "Latter-Day Psalms", by the Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters. Ezekiel has been applauded for his subtle, restrained and well crafted diction, dealing with common and mundane (simple) themes in a manner that manifests both cognitive profundity, as well as an unsentimental, realistic sensibility, that has been influential on the course of succeeding Indian English poetry. Ezekiel enriched and established.

Indian English language poetry through his modernist innovations and techniques, which enlarged Indian English literature, moving it beyond purely spiritual and orientalist themes, to include a wider range of concerns and interests, including familial events, individual angst and skeptical societal introspection.

Ezekiel is a foreigner whose ancestors had migrated to India. As a poet he has observed and experienced much more of Indian life. Thus the acceptance of Indian reality is an important characteristic of his poetry. His poetry portrays the social aspect of India with a humanistic strain. But the fact of the matter is that Ezekiel rebelled against the Indian way of life. He has ridiculed the Indian modes of behaviour and the Indian way of speaking the English language. Thus his poems show more of anti- Indianness than Indianness. In short, the poet's relationship with India is a love-hate relationship.

The austerity of Ezekiel's poetic art, the condensation of his style, the economical precision of his language, the impressiveness of imagery, the sharpness of his wit and irony, the contemporary of his subject matter – all these things immediately render him a modern poet. Modernism as a literary movement which reached its height in Europe between 1900 and 1920s, with the writings of Nissim Ezekiel, began spreading in India.

One of Nissim Ezekiel's poems: "**Night of the Scorpion**" bears the evidence of Ezekiel's modernity. Both thematically and structurally, these poems are modern poems. Before bringing out the elements of modernity, we need to know what we mean by modernity and what the characteristics of modernity are. Literary Scholar Peter Childs sums up: "**There were paradoxical if not opposed trends towards revolutionary and reactionary positions, fear of the new and delight at the disappearance of the old, nihilism, and fanatical enthusiasm, creativity and despair.**" These oppositions are inherent in Modernity. As T.S Eliot remarks complexity and variety are the characteristics of modernity, these are sufficiently displayed in the poems of Nissim Ezekiel.

Complexity is found in the poem, "**Night of the Scorpion**", the title of the poem is in some ways deceptive. It leads us to believe we are in for a frightening and a dramatic tale with a scorpion taking centre stage. In fact, the poem is not about the scorpion at all, but about the reaction of different people to its sting. Again in the same poem, the first stanza is in the line "**After twenty hours it lost its sting.**" This line could be read into two different ways: the most common interpretation is that after 20 hours, despite "every curse and blessing" it literally stops hurting. Another interpretation is that the mother dies; after twenty hours of agony it lost its sting as she could not feel anything. However, these lines are deceptive and cause friction in mind and thus this exposes Ezekiel's complexity, that is to say it is the exposure of modernity.

Free verse is one of the most common features of modernity. Modern poets follow a free verse style to decorate their poems. In the poems of Nissim Ezekiel, we see the use of free verse. The poems Night of the Scorpion and The Patriot are written in free verse. This type of poetry has little or no rhyme scheme, regular pattern of rhymes, or line lengths. As the lines from Night of the Scorpion are:

"I remember the night my mother was stung by a scorpion.

Ten hours of steady rain had driven him to crawl beneath a sack of rice."

As the tendency of the modern poets is to isolate themselves from the rest of the society, we see in Nissim Ezekiel's poetry that he wants to isolate himself or wants to live apart from others. In Night of the Scorpion when his mother was stung by a scorpion and the people around their house were gathering he perhaps wanted their departure by saying,

**“More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours, more insects, and the endless rain./
My mother twisted through and through, groaning on a mat.”**

Ezekiel’s poetry is a criticism of life. He is most famous for his wry commentaries on contemporary India often writing in an exaggerated Indian English, for example the overuse of the present continuous tense. As a critic of his age he shows the superstitions of his age in his poetry. In *Night of the Scorpion*, we see, when his mother was stung by a Scorpion, the neighbours poured into her hut to offer advice and help. They said that by the endless pain, the sins of her previous birth would be “burned away” and her next birth’s suffering would be decreased. These are the common superstitions and beliefs of common people. And we see, the neighbours tried to cure her and her husband tried “**every curse and blessings,**” but despite these things time proves to be the best healer: “**after twenty hours it lost its sting**”.

Modern poets are generally conscious about the problems prevailing in the society and they try to bring out the problems. And so, in his poems, he tries to show the problems of the society, of the country and of the world. It seems that he is much more concerned not only about the problems of his own country but also of the whole world. Also, he prefers contemporary Indian English to write his poetry which exposes his modernity. In his writing we find the following features of Indian English.

Indian people use progressive form to express their normal expression but according to some grammarians some words can not be used in the progressive form. But he has used these words expressing the progressive form:

“I am standing for peace and non violence” (The Patriot)

“I am simply not understanding...” (The Patriot)

No other writer in English either native or foreign has used double verbs in poetry. He writes:

“Why world is fighting fighting” (The Patriot)

In the concluding part we can say that Nissim’s poems are true modern poems considering both content and form. And Nissim Ezekiel is a true modern set expressing in his poetry the very idea of modernity.

“Night of the Scorpion” by Nissim Ezekiel

INTRODUCTION/SUMMARY

Nissim Ezekiel (1924 - 2004) was born in India to an Indian Jewish family. He studied in Bombay and London. He wrote eight collections of poetry and won the Akademi Award for a volume called 'Latter Day Psalms'. He was also a renowned playwright, art critic, lecturer and editor. He is credited with beginning the modernism: Modernism was a movement or style in 20th century art, architecture and literature characterised by a deliberate departure from tradition and the invention of new forms. Movement in India and was one of India's best known poets.

"Night of the Scorpion," is a poem written by the Indian Jewish poet, Nissim Ezekiel. It was published in 1965 in his anthology "The Exact Name". There are two main themes of the poem- Superstition and Motherhood. The poem is written in a flashback mode by the poet.

The poem Night of the Scorpion starts in a house at night where it is raining and a scorpion, in order to take some shelter, comes to the house. This poem is about how the scorpion stung the poet's mother and the mother's love for her children.

*"I remember the night my mother
was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours
of steady rain had driven him
to crawl beneath a sack of rice."*

The poem opens in a way that suggests reflection—the speaker remembers (and, is so, older now) the night his mother was stung by a scorpion, which bit the mother because of its predatory impulse, while hiding beneath a bag of rice to escape from the rain. The speaker specifically remembers this night due to this event namely, the mother getting bitten. The way in which the mother is bitten is also shown in "flash / of diabolic tail"; the speaker manages to suggest that the scorpion is demonic with its "diabolic" tail, and emphasises its speed with the word flash. The scorpion then flees the scene and, thus, risks the rain again.

A picture of a religious village is created by what the neighbours do to paralyze the scorpion: "buzzed the name of God". Their reason for this is that they believe that as the

scorpion moves, his poison moves in the blood of the mother. It is also implied that they live in a caring, closely-knit village by the fact that the neighbours feel welcome at all. The speaker is displeased by their arrival, comparing them to flies (unwanted and irritating) as they veritably buzzed around the mother. They tried to provide reasons and many relied on superstition to guess what the problem was. The villagers tried to find the scorpion but they could not. By saying, "With candles and with lanterns / throwing giant scorpion shadows / on the mud-baked walls," the speaker is implying there is still evil haunting the house, even after the scorpion had left the house. This could also be implying that the shadows of the various household utensils and other items are converted by the brain of the searchers into the shadow of a scorpion - as that is what they are looking for.

Many things were tried to help relieve the mother's pain but none worked. The speaker watches helplessly. The speaker's father who was a sceptic and rationalist, tried to save his wife by using powder, mixture, herbs, hybrid and even by pouring a little paraffin upon the bitten toe and put a match to it. This reflects in one of the village peasant's saying, "May the sins of your previous birth/ be burned away tonight," which the father tries to do, not for burning her sins but to burn away the poison residing inside the mother, which reflects her sins being atoned for.

The speaker watches the vain holy man performing his deceptive incantations but he cannot do anything to stop it. The peasants, finally accepting the fate of the mother, try to put a positive spin on the situation by saying that even if the mother died, her next life (an Indian belief) would be less painful, as she is atoning for her future sins by enduring this pain. After twenty hours, the poison loses its sting. A sign of her prevailing love and affection for her children is shown when she thanks God that she was stung and not her children.

Read the poem once. It is about the night when the poet's mother is bitten by a scorpion.

*I remember the night my mother
Was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours Of steady rain had driven him To crawl beneath a
sack of rice.
Parting with his poison – flash*

*Of diabolic tail in the dark room –
He risked the rain again.
The peasants came like swarms of flies And buzzed the Name of God a hundred Time
to paralyse the Evil one.
With candles and with lanterns
Throwing giant scorpion shadows
On the mud-baked walls
They searched for him; he was not found.
They clicked their tongues.
With every movement that the scorpion made
his poison moved in Mother's blood they said.
May your suffering decrease
the misfortunes of your next birth, they said.
May the sum of evil
balanced in this unreal world
against the sum of good
become diminished by your pain.
May the poison purify your flesh
Of desire, and your spirit of ambition,
They said, and they sat around
On the floor with my mother in the center,
The peace of understanding on each face.
More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours
more insects, and the endless rain.
My mother twisted through and through
groaning on a mat
My father, sceptic, rationalist,
trying every curse and blessing,
powder, mixture, herb and hybrid.
He even poured a little paraffin
upon the bitten toe and put a match to it.
I watched the flame feeding on my mother
I watched the holy man perform his rites to tame the poison with an incantation.
After twenty hours it lost its sting.
My mother only said
Thank god the scorpion picked on me and spared my children.*

Critical appreciation of 'Night of the Scorpion' by Nissim Ezekiel./ Central theme of the poem.

Ezekiel's "Night of the Scorpion" is a strong yet simple statement on the power of self-effacing love. It captures a well detached black and white snapshot of Indian village life with superstitious simplicity. The poet dramatizes a battle of ideas fought at night in a lamplight between good and evil, between darkness and light, between rationalism and blind faith. The selfless love of a mother wins all the other contradictions.

The poem opens with the poet's reminiscence of a childhood experience. He begins by explaining that the scorpion had come in because of heavy rain and had hidden under a sack of rice. Ezekiel uses alliteration to describe the moment of the sting: 'Parting with his poison'. He alludes to evil in the phrase 'diabolic tail', comparing the scorpion to the devil. The scorpion departed and, on hearing the news of the deadly sting, villagers came to the house. Ezekiel uses the simile 'like swarms of flies' to describe their number and behaviour. He states that they buzzed the name of God repeatedly, the onomatopoeia enabling us to hear the constant noise they made. The scorpion is again seen as the devil in line ten: 'the Evil One'.

We can imagine the fear of the child observing the scene, as the peasants' lanterns created 'giant scorpion shadows' on the walls of his home. Onomatopoeia is used again as the poet says that these people 'clicked their tongues' whilst searching for the scorpion. They believed that whenever the scorpion moved, its poison 'moved in Mother's blood'. Line eighteen is the first in a fourteen-line section which recounts the words of wisdom voiced by the peasants in the hope that the woman would survive. Five of the lines begin with 'May...' and are clear examples of the religious beliefs held by these villagers. They refer to past and future lives, absolution of sins, the lessening of evil and the hope that the poison will 'purify' the woman's flesh and spirit. Ezekiel describes how they surrounded his mother; he saw 'the peace of understanding' in their facial expressions.

The father, being a sceptic and a rationalist tried hard to remove the poison but his efforts failed. This leads to the performance of the religious ceremony to remove the poison. It was only after twenty hours, the pain stopped. His mother was thankful to God that the scorpion bit her and spared her children. Ezekiel describes in detail that his father actually set alight to the toe that had been bitten. It must have had a profound effect on the poet as a child, he describes how 'I watched the flame feeding on my mother',

personifying the fire. Ezekiel then watched and listened to a 'holy man' carrying out certain rites to 'tame' the poison. The poison lost its sting the following night.

The poem concludes with a short three-line stanza in which Ezekiel recalls his mother's reaction to her frightening and painful experience. She spoke of it only briefly, thanking God and saying how glad she was that the scorpion had chosen to sting her rather than her children. One of the interesting points about the poem is that Ezekiel narrates it from the point of view of a child who was purely an observer, not involved as the adults were in taking any action. This allows him to relate the actions and words of the peasants and his father whilst being detached from them. It is an insight into the behaviour of a small community in India where everyone becomes involved in one family or one mother's suffering, and all gather to witness the event and contribute a prayer. His comparison of the peasants to flies suggests that he would rather they had left the family in peace. The structure of the poem is free, with lines of varying lengths and no rhyme scheme. The second stanza that ends the poem attracts attention for its brevity and emphasises the words of the mother and their effect on the son.

“NIGHT OF THE SCORPION” by NISSIM EZEKIEL

SHORT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1, "I remember that night" - Who is 'I'? Explain.

'I' here refers to the poet speaker Nissim Ezekiel. Here he is referring to an incident which took place during his childhood period. 'The night' referred to here by the poet Nissim Ezekiel is that night when her mother was bitten by a scorpion and she had to suffer tremendously. This incident took place during the childhood period of the poet. The weather during that particular night was extremely rough and hostile.

Q2. "Parting with his poison--flash of diabolic tail in the dark room" -

'His' here refers to the scorpion who bit the mother of the poet speaker on a dark rainy night. The scorpion ejected his poison upon the toe of the lady. The word 'diabolic' means devilish or demonish. The poet here has made use of the rhetorical figure transferred epithet. He here suggests that the scorpion was devilish who injected the poison his tail upon the toe of his mother and she had to suffer greatly. Thus the negative adjective 'diabolic' is used to suggest the negative impact of the scorpion upon his mother. The

word 'flash' means very quickly. The ejection of the poison upon the toe of the lady was very quick and immediate.

Q3. "He risked the rain again"-

"He' here refers to the scorpion. The night when the unfortunate incident took place was disturbed by continuous and incessant rain. The scorpion entered the house of the poet and took shelter under a sack of rice in order to protect itself from the hostile atmosphere. However as the mother entered the dark room she was bitten by the scorpion. After ejecting the poison upon the toe of the lady the scorpion went outside and risked its life because of the rough weather.

Q4. "The peasants came like the swarm of flies" / "Throwing giant scorpion shadows"

The poet speaker Nissim Ezekiel mentions that the information of his mother getting bitten by a scorpion reached the ears of the neighbours (peasants) within a flash and they started gathering in the house of the lady. Their arrival is compared by the poet along with the swarm of flies because of several reasons. Firstly, flies always gather in large numbers, and in the same manner huge numbers of peasants reach the house of the lady. Secondly, the flies never remain silent, rather they constantly buzz, similarly the neighbours were constantly repeating the name of God and it created a similar buzzing sound. Thirdly and most importantly the poet claims that the gathering of so many people was disturbing and irritating for his suffering mother. As the presence of the flies is not entertained by anyone, in the same manner this gathering was not liked by the mother or the poet who was a child then. What the poet wants to suggest is that the presence of so many people around her was more painful and agonising to her than the pain imparted by the poison of the scorpion.

Q5. "They buzzed the name of God a hundred times/To paralyze the evil one/ They searched for him/ What was the superstitious belief of the neighbours.-

The news of the scorpion's attack upon the poet's mother reached the neighbours within a flash. They gathered around her in huge number and continuously buzzed the name of God. They searched for the 'evil one' (scorpion) and prayed to God to paralyse the scorpion. They did all this because of their superstitious thoughts. The villagers traditionally believed that if the scorpion remains free and constantly moved from one place to another than the poison of the scorpion would gradually get circulated in the

entire body of the lady. Because of this conventional belief they were desperately searching for the scorpion.

Q6. What were the signs discussed by the neighbours? How did the neighbours try to console the suffering lady?

The villagers (neighbours and peasants) symbolise the superstitious, traditional and fearful people of the uneducated Indian village. They desperately attempted to console the suffering lady by exhibiting the positive aspects of the scorpion's attack and her suffering. Some of the neighbours claimed that this suffering is a blessing in the disguise of a curse and it would give her relief from the sins of her previous life. While some other peasants suggested that this pain would make her next life easy and fortunate. Again few other villagers asserted that this attack of the scorpion would balance the good deeds and sins committed by the lady in her present life. The poison of the scorpion would give the lady relief from all the negative thoughts of greed and ambition.

Q7. "unreal world" - Explain.

The phrase 'unreal world' refers to a popular religious belief. According to that belief, the soul is the property of heaven and it is given to human beings as a gift. After the death of the body, the soul returns to heaven. Thus, heaven is the original and the real habitation of soul and earth is only a temporary and unreal existence of the soul.

KAMALA DAS'S "MY GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE"

Analyze Kamala Das's "My Grandmother's House" as a confessional poem. / As an autobiographical poem/ Critical appreciation.

"My Grandmother's House" is a reminiscent poem, written in the form of a dramatic monologue. The speaker here is Kamala Das herself and she seems to be talking to her husband who, however, says nothing in the poem. The poem is deeply autobiographical in which the poetess's longing for her parental house in Malabar is movingly expressed. She remembers passionately her family home where she spent some years of her early life in the affectionate care of her grandmother.

The tone of nostalgia and rootlessness of the poetess is evident right from the beginning. She now lives in a big city after her marriage, a remote place from her grandmother's

house. She is reminded of her grandmother's house where she spent her memorable childhood. Ironically, it is the only place where she received love from her grandmother. Kamala Das vividly recalls her grandmother and the day she died. When she died, a death-like silence reigned in the house. Nobody lived there, nobody talked and the house became silent and wild. The house being deserted, snakes could be seen among the books in the library of the house. The authoress was then too young to read. After the grandmother's death her blood was almost frozen with fear and seemed cold like the moon. Her blood also became cold like the moon because there was none to love her the way she wanted.

The poetess often passionately longs to visit her dead grandmother's house to which she was emotionally attached since her childhood. She would like to peep through the dust-ridden windows which were shut after the death of the grandmother. She would like to listen and feel the still atmosphere prevailing in the house. The windows are called 'blind' because as the house was deserted, no one can look through the windows. The 'window' image is very suggestive indicating a link between the past and the present. It signifies the desire of the poetess for a nostalgic peep into her past and resurrect her dreams and desires. After the grandmother's death Kamala Das is often lost in a mood of despair. Sometimes she wants to gather a heap of darkness from her grandmother's house. She would take it with her to her city residence. She would lie down there in her bedroom in a contemplative mood like a dog which seems to be lost in contemplation.

Kamala Das addresses her husband as 'darling'. She informs him that he can never believe the intensity of love which she received from her grandmother. He can never realize that she was extremely proud of her grandmother's house where she was deeply loved by her grandmother. It is the separation from her grandmother's house after marriage that has ruined her life forever. Now she has become a beggar for love. She knocks helplessly at the doors of strangers to receive love at least in a small measure. She has almost lost her way in search of genuine and selfless love. In the concluding lines of the poem Kamala Das exposes her loveless and hopeless conjugal relationship. The last portion of the poem shows the agony and humiliation of a married woman who is forced to seek love from others for her emotional satisfaction.

"My Grandmother's House" is thus a symbolic retreat for the poetess to a world of innocence, purity, love and simplicity from a world of corruption, sterility, exploitation and cunningness. Pathos is the keynote of the poem. There are some key phrases and images in the poem to convey to us the sense of disappointment and futility. Among them

mention should be made of "The house withdrew into silence". "my blood turned cold like the moon", "listen to the frozen air", "pick an armful of darkness" etc. Last but not least, the poem is remarkable for its compression and for the condensation of its material. Kamala Das has shown a remarkable capacity to avoid garrulity and copiousness. There is nothing irrelevant in the poem and no digression at all.

"My Grandmother's House": Kamala Das [Short Questions and Answers]

1. What type of poem is "My Grandmother's House"?

Ans. "My Grandmother's House" is a confessional poem of Kamala Das. In this poem the poetess describes her childhood days which were spent in her grandmother's house to which she was deeply attached. The whole poem is marked by a tone of nostalgia and rootlessness.

2. "There is a house..... I received love".

Ans. Kamala Das, the poetess now lives in a big city (Bombay) after her marriage. It is a remote place from her grandmother's house at Malabar, Kerala. She is reminded of her grandmother's house where she spent her memorable childhood. Ironically, it is the only place where she received love from her grandmother.

3. "The house withdrew into silence".

Ans. Kamala Das is reminded of her grandmother's house at Malabar where she spent her childhood days. A death-like silence reigned in the house of the grandmother after her death. Nobody lived there, nobody talked and the house became silent and wild.

4. "Snakes moved/ Among books.....".

Ans. Kamala Das is reminded of her grandmother's house at Malabar where she spent her childhood days. When the house was deserted after the death of the poetess's grandmother, snakes could be seen among books in the library of the house.

5. "I was then too young/To read...".

Ans. Kamala Das is reminded of her grandmother's house at Malabar where she spent her childhood days. When her grandmother died, she was so young that she could not read the books in the library.

6. ".....My blood turned cold like the moon".

Ans. When the grandmother of Kamala Das died, her blood was almost frozen with fear and seemed cold like the moon. Her blood also became cold like the moon because there was none to love her the way she wanted.

7. "How often I think..... frozen air".

Ans. Kamala Das is reminded of her grandmother's house at Malabar where she spent her childhood days. The poetess often longs to visit her dead grandmother's house to which she was emotionally attached since her childhood. She would like to peep through the dust-ridden windows which were shut after the death of the grandmother. She would like to listen and feel the still atmosphere prevailing in the house.

8. What do you mean by the phrase 'blind eyes of windows'?

Ans. By the phrase 'blind eyes of windows' Kamala Das means the closed windows of her grandmother's house through which nothing could be seen. She would like to peep through the dust-ridden windows which were shut after the death of the grandmother. But it was impossible to see anything because the windows were closed.

9. "Or in wild despair like a brooding/Dog....".

Ans. After her grandmother's death Kamala Das is often lost in a mood of despair. Sometimes she wants to gather a heap of darkness from her grandmother's house. She would take it with her to her city residence. She would lie down there in her bedroom in a contemplative mood like a dog which seems to be lost in contemplation.

10. ".....you cannot believe.....and loved".

Ans. Kamala Das addresses her husband as 'darling'. She informs him that he can never believe the intensity of love which she received from her grandmother. He can never realize that she was extremely proud of her grandmother's house where she was deeply

loved by her grandmother. It is the separation from her grandmother's house after marriage that has ruined her life forever.

11. "I who have lost..... in small change?"

Ans. Kamala Das says that after her grandmother's death she has become a beggar for love. She knocks helplessly at strangers' doors to receive love at least in a small measure. She has almost lost her way in search of genuine and selfless love. In the concluding lines of the poem Kamala Das exposes her loveless and hopeless conjugal relationship. The last portion of the poem shows the agony and humiliation of a married woman who is forced to seek love from others for her emotional satisfaction.

TWO LADY RAMS : MULK RAJ ANAND.

A Critical Appraisal of Themes [Can you appreciate Anand's short story 'The Two Lady Rams' critically? Illustrate your answer.]

The short story 'The Two Lady Rams' is in Anand's collection of short stories called "**The Tractor and the Corn Goddess and Other Stories**" (1947). The story is a lighthearted one set in the backdrop of the pre-Independent India. The comic situation in the story arises out of the complications of bigamy which, in the pre-Independence India, was far from uncommon.

Since Mulk Raj Anand has written a large number of stories differing in mood and tone, it is convenient to group his stories from the point of view of thematic pre-occupation. Besides lyrical stories, imaginative stories, and socialist realistic stories, there are some stories of pure fun and farcical exaggeration present in the treasury of Anand's writings. 'The Two Lady Rams' belongs to this last category with a social context. Certainly Anand's range and variety are evident in the story not only in terms of mood, tone and spirit but also in terms of style and technique.

Anand's 'The Two Lady Rams' falls in the group with other stories like 'A Pair of Mustachios', 'The Signature' and 'The Liar' together under the heading 'The Comic Vein'. These stories, relegating the social criticism to the background, are marked for the undercurrent of comedy. The mode of treatment is comic cum satirical here.

Throughout the story 'The Two Lady Rams', it is hoped that a fairly comprehensible reading has been provided, starting with shaping influences to the socio-political and historical forces that had a deep impact on Anand's thinking and ideology, essentially with his underlying concern and

understanding of humanism. This background was meant to lay a foundation to then grasp more effectively the story. It basically deals with the status of Indian women and the Hindu property laws during the British rule in India. An instance in this regard can be referred to from Sukhi Ram's words-

"I will stay here if I like', said the loud Sukhi. 'I am the owner of the whole of this house. You had nothing before I brought a lakh of rupees in my dowry!.....What did this bitch bring with her-nothing but a fair complexion and a snub nose".

When we read the story we are better able to understand the subtler nuances of Indian writing in English along with being able to perceive the deeper politics of what it meant to write in a language which was not the writer's, to an extent for aiming at a wider audience and at another level what can be understood in a post-colonial world as "writing back to the empire" with a level of ease and comfort, while yet managing to maintain the flavour of Indianism in it. The very ending of the story proves this point:

"Since that day Sir Jhinda and the two Lady Rams are a familiar feature of all ceremonial occasions in our capital. And no Empire Day, cricket match or horse race is complete without them. For they are three staunch pillars of the Raj which has conceded to them privileges unknown in the annals of the Angrezi Sarkar of India."

RELEVANCE OF THE TITLE

[Comment on the relevance of the title 'The Two lady Rams'.]

The title of Mulk Raj Anand's story "The Two Lady Rams" is very straight forward and to the point. The plot itself begins, gets into the climax, falls in denouement and concludes happily only because of these two titular 'Lady Rams'. 'The Two Lady Rams' in the story are actually the two wives of Lalla Jhinda Ram-Sukhi Jhinda Ram and Sakuntala Jhinda Ram respectively.

Lalla Jhinda Ram was an ordinary shopkeeper who had married oran two women and had also acquired the status of a knight in lieu of the "services rendered" by him to the British Raj. While the first wife of Lalla Jhinda Ram, Sukhi, brought along with her a big dowry and gave "financial

push to that ordinary shopkeeper", the younger wife, Sakuntala introduced romance in his life. Though the dowry became the launching pad of Jhinda Ram's social as social success, Sakuntala was one to put more beauty and admiration into Lalla Jhinda Ram. Thus, he was almost forced to call both of them "Lady Rams" to placate the raging bitterness and high-blown war between his two wives.

Jhinda Ram tried to get some help from the Governor or A.D.C., but to no avail. Finally, his chauffeur, who had been a witness to all the troubles Jhinda Ram went through, offered to give a solution to placate and resolve the reigning crisis. With a certain amount of tact and double-dealing, the chauffeur approached each wife separately in her respective quarters and managed to convince each of them that she alone was to attend the garden party. Both the wives appeared in their flashing saris and after all the dressing-up ritual, none of them considered having her "prolonged toilet" ruined for the day. So, both of them went with Lalla Jhinda Ram to the party.

The unexpected arrival of 'Two Lady Rams' instead of one did not cause a flutter or lead toward any uncomfortable incident during their reception at the Government House. Instead, they were warmly greeted by the hosts. Thus, from that day onwards, Sir Jhinda Ram and his Two Lady Rams became a must presence in every social occasions.

The comic vein in the story which had arisen out of the complications of bigamy, unknown to British in pre-Independent India, thus, has hit the target in the form of the title and has been accepted and appreciated by all. Thus, The Two Lady Rams survive to get the opportunity of receiving equal respect and right from others.

Status of Hindu Women in Colonial India. [Comment on the status of Indian women in pre-Independent British India with references to the text.]

It would be worth understanding, through the short story "The Two Lady Rams" by Mulk Raj Anand, the role and status of Indian or Hindu women in colonial British India. The story distinctly depicts a patriarchal system and of what can be understood through the title, the two

wives of Sir (Lalla) Jhinda Ram, in the story acquire their identity, through the male head of the family.

The eventual move through the narrative clarifies this quite clearly when we begin to understand the reason behind the raging animosity between the two wives, which is one of rivalry for gaining the title of 'Lady Ram'. Here, the title 'Lady Ram' is acquired by both the wives eventually, once the high-blown war between them is settled through the intervention of Sir Jhinda Ram's driver. The chauffeur thought the situation could be resolved at once and pondered

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"Why, if he could marry two wives in a law, he certainly ought to have a right to call them both Lady Rams". The tact of Sir Jhinda Ram's driver (chauffeur) saves the day for Sir Jhinda Ram.

During the British rule in India, too, where patriarchal set-ups were found in Indian families, the identity of the wives depended solely upon their husband and was derived from him. Hence, both the surname 'Ram' and the prefix 'Lady'-consequent to Jhinda Ram's acquiring of the title of 'Sir', for certain services that he had rendered to the British regime in India-are acquired by both his wives, Sukhi and Sakuntala.

The relationships between the members of Lalla Jhinda Ram's family were far from cordial, to the extent that the domestic quarrels between his elder wife, Sukhi and the younger one, Sakuntala, often took a rather ugly turn. As the male head of the family, he was responsible for the maintenance of both his wives, though there was hardly any peace in the house ever.

The two women had their own separate quarters where they lived and "Lalla Jhinda Ram slept alternate nights in the suites of the two wives." The story, very interestingly, reveals the living conditions of Indian women, during the period of the British colonial rule in India. There was the 'purdah' style in which the characters in the story, too, lived, which immediately brings to mind the 'zenanas' or quarters in which women used to live even during the period of the British regime. This is stated quite emphatically in the narrative describing the living quarters of Lalla Jhinda Ram

"The bungalow, in which Lalla Jhinda Ram and his two spouses lived, had been specially built before his second marriage, in the now famous Purdah style which has become current in Hindustan."

This, by itself, is a telling comment on the status of Indian women during the colonial period in India, where "they are not equal members of the family" and are no more than "mere possessions".

The story, then does manage to be a comment on the bitter times under the British rule, for Indian women. Many of the regressive features of the Indian society still remained the order of the day for Indian women, perhaps, at times, more stifling with the space of the house governed by the male head of the family, while the outer space was governed by the colonial master-in either situation hardly offering them any relief.

Thus, the treatment meted out to women in the story becomes an undertone to a sharp critique of the British Colonial rule in India at one level with more restraints and lesser freedom, and rights granted to them, 'the second sex' of the society - the women.

AS A SHORT STORY

[Comment on the significance of Mulk Raj Anand's 'The Two Lady Rams' as a successful short story]

Mulk Raj Anand considered literature at one level, as a weapon in his hands to attack any social, political or economic institution that could injure human freedom and equal opportunities for all. At the other level, he understood it to be "the purveyor of a new vision of society : an international brotherhood based on humanist and Socialist ideals and constructed through bhakti-yoga". "The Two Lady Rams", which originally appeared in Mulk Raj Anand's "**The Tractor and the Corn Goddess and Other Stories**", like Salman Rushdie's '**The Free Radio**', brings out the effect of colonialism on Indian people. As an Indian short story written in English, it deals with colonial British Indian issues in a satirical and comical vein.

The story revolves round Lalla Jhinda Ram and his two wives Sukhi and Sakuntala. This story comes as a social satire on the pre-Independence days' British rule of India and highlights the tussle between the colonial subject and the colonial master. The government or the colonial master-His Majesty Excellence has decided to honour some of his loyal subjects. Among them, Lalla Jhinda Ram is one who will be conferred upon the title of knighthood. For this, there will be an investiture ceremony at the garden party of A.D.C. or His Majesty Excellence along with Her Majesty Excellence.

There comes an official announcement for the ceremony to Lalla Jhinda Ram and it allows his wife as the 'Lady Ram' to be attended upon the ceremony. As Sakuntala was the younger and more beautiful one, superiority and wishes to go with her husband as the 'Lady Ram'. Ram wished and decided to take her along with him as the 'Lady Ram' in the party. But, on hearing this, Sukhi fumes with anger and claims the justification of the title 'Lady Ram'. According to Sukhi, she has had got the better dowry from her father's house at the time of marriage and also she is the elder one.

Lalla Jhinda Ram probably married Sakuntala as Sukhi is unable to give birth to his offspring. But, legally, both wives enjoy the company of their husband every alternative day and night. Due to the authoritative order, Jhinda Ram gets into trouble and was almost forced to call both his wives "Lady Rams" to placate the bitterness and high blown war between them.

Thus, the final solution comes from a chauffeur of Lalla Jhinda Ram who suggests the master to take both of them to the party. With a certain amount of tact and double dealing, he (the Chauffeur) approached each wife separately in her respective quarters and managed to convince each of them that she alone was to attend the garden party. Thus, with the aid of his driver or chauffeur, Sir Jhinda "bundled them" into his care and sped off for the party at the Government House.

The unexpected arrival of Two Lady Rams instead of one did not cause a flutter or lead to any untoward incident, during their reception at the Government house by "His Excellency" and "Her Excellency". Thus, the story concludes happily on the note that from that day onwards, Sir Jhinda and his two Lady Rams were "a familiar feature" in every "ceremonial occasions".

Though it is a long short story, Anand's 'The Two Lady Rams' still shows its brevity in style and technique. It is a synthesis of fusion between the ethos, values of India and post-Renaissance Europe, where the idealism of the East is combined with the realism of the West. It conquers the heart of every reader who likes to start it on a lighter note to gradually sink deeper into the serious one.

INDIANNESS IN 'THE TWO LADY RAMS'.

[Does the story 'The Two Lady Rams' have any significance other than merely relating to a domestic conflict? If yes, what is the underlying politics that the writer is targeting through the reference to the domestic conflict? Or, Do you find any significant note of 'Indianness' in the story 'The Two Lady Rams' written in the backdrop of British colonial India? How and why? State the context that matters most.]

The English language has come to the Indian subcontinent as a 'reminiscent' and much prized reward of the British Colonial experience which spans nearly all the 'History of India in Becoming a Unified Nation' after its colonization by the British from the mid-18th century. And it is in the same understanding that one cannot refuse to accept that English as a language has played a pivotal role in igniting the nationalist spirit in the minds of the Indian citizens who were divided on the basis of regional identities. Even then, English was borrowed into Indian contexts, which subdued the existence of English as an alien language and made it all the more 'Indian'. Such colourful "Indianism permeates in the diction, idiom and imagery in dialogue" of Mulk Raj Anand. He has suitably justified the Indian English Short Story 'The Two Lady Rams' (part of the collection The Tractor and the Corn Goddess and Other Stories) typically what defined by Anand as "highly developed form of folk-tale" that included "psychological understanding of the contemporary period."

This short story comes as a social satire on the "Angrezi Sarkar of India" and highlights the tussle between the colonial subject and the colonial master. The story follows the same theme at two levels, where for one, Lalla Jhinda Ram acquires the title of 'Sir' as the colonial subject to the "department that acted on His Majesty's Behalf" and secondly, the wives-Sukhi and Sakuntala-

who are the colonial subjects to the agent of the patriarchal society, that is their husband, Jhinda Ram. Thus, the theme of the story that remains in focus, all throughout the reading of it, is that of the colonial master and the colonial subject. The author is contemptuous of the colonial master and has a defined dislike towards him. However, the authorial stance expresses the author's dislike of the British regime and its state functionaries in India, couched in an inflated language, to heighten the effect of the ridicule that he intentionally targets at them:

"When his Majesty the King Emperor (or whichever Government Department it was that acted on His Majesty's behalf) conferred the title of knighthood on Lalla Jhinda Ram, in recognition of his sundry services to the British Empire, His Majesty's Government did not realise the awful domestic predicament into which they would put him. Of course, there is no way in which His Majesty the King Emperor, sitting seven thousand miles away from India, can ever get to know anything about the private lives of his subjects."

As the story unfolds, one can understand the satire that stands to highlight how poorly the 'colonial master' governed over its subjects of whom he knew and cared the least. The apparent honour of Knighthood, which is cunningly bestowed on Jhinda Ram (take a pun of his 'sundry' services to the Empire) and supposed to raise his social status helps to bring forth this negligence of the British State; and as for the wives, the selfish decision of Lalla Jhinda Ram to take the second wife to his investiture ceremony because, otherwise, she would abstain from entertaining him, shows the lack of regard and respect towards wives who were then treated as mere objects of the household.

The elder wife, Sukhi, fumed with anger when news of this apparent discrimination reached her ears, through the servants in the women's quarters where she lived segregated. The animosity and bitterness between the two wives only worsened and took the shape of a veritable war as "trenches were dug", "barricades raised" and "if there was no gunpowder used, it was only because women in India have not yet learnt all the tricks of Al Capone as the men have through the talkies."

Another theme shadily addressed in the story is the tuft between 'on setting modernity' and 'fading traditions', which is, again, another feature of Colonial British India. Thus, even when Lalla Jhinda Ram enjoys a siesta and his mansion had an "English style golkamara or living room", he was acquitted to marry two wives on the grounds of Hindu Mitakshara law and

demanded for his wives to dress in a traditional sari for the Ceremony. In all, the household of Jhinda Ram was on the margins of 'traditional' and the cusp of 'modern'. And when the Modern (the Knighthood) merged with the Traditional (the two wives of Sir Jhinda), the Colonial Anxiety surfaced much amusingly. In this regard, one can imagine the last gravely serious comment "the three staunch pillars", said with respect to Sir Jhinda and the Lady Rams as drawing its symbolism to the state of the Indian common folk, like Jhinda Ram, which struggled to obtain an identity through the modern, like Sakuntala, but could not afford to lose the traditional (Sukhi) that had formed the whole truth of their survival.

Another fact of the issue of Identity comes through the tussle of Sakuntala and Sukhiboth of whom wish to be the 'Lady Ram' since the women of colonial India were recognized by the name of their husband. Anand comments on the lack of individual identity of women in marriage, and through his female characters, he attempts to inspire revolution in women to fight for their rights.

The story 'The Two Lady Rams', therefore, comes with the hidden message of the agony involved in the service of the British than the 'Homeland' which came with the loss of one's integrity and common sense which Lalla Jhinda Ram idolizes when he seeks the advice of his Chauffeur. Thus, the satirical sling at the colonization of British India is aptly hinted at and smack of a great perception by the writer.

MOCK-HEROIC NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

[Discuss the use of the mock-heroic technique in the short story 'The Two Lady Rams' and comment on its effectiveness. Or, Discuss Anand's 'The Two Lady Rams' as a satirical account of British India with a mock-heroic narrative.]

'The Two Lady Rams' is a part of Anand's collection "**The Tractor and the Corn Goddess and Other Stories**" (1947). The story is a light-hearted one set in the backdrop of pre-independent India. The comical vein in the story arises out of the complications of bigamy which, in the pre-Independent days in India, was far from uncommon.

'The Two Lady Rams' runs as a comical account of the day of a shopkeeper's life who is bestowed the highest honour in British Raj, only to add misery to his life. A misery which does not come from poverty or exploitation, but whose cause is over abundance of undue credibility. Thus, even when the story is not the whole truth yet it is derived from the truth of the lives of the 'Indians'.

In addition, the story places a satire on the 'sleeping Indian spirit' and the so-called 'collaborators' of the British Raj who, out of selfish motives, served the Colonial master. By extension, the story, therefore, comes with a hidden message of the agony involved in the service of the British than the 'Homeland' which came with the loss of one's integrity and common sense which Jhinda Ram idolizes when he seeks the advice of his. Chauffeur.

The title itself sounds a bit hilarious with the word 'Lady' prefixed before the name Ram, and it does not seem like a strange concoction. Thus, it is a hint at the satirical sling of the story. The technique used in the story is that of the mock-heroic, whereby seemingly absurd situations are presented in a heroic and grandiloquent way, thereby imbuing them with hilarity and ridicule.

The mock-heroic style is built into the narrative as a domestic fight between the two wives reaches the level of a war, with the use of war terminology, to heighten the effect of the ludicrous in the narration of the event. An insignificant, trivial event as this being scaled to the level of a war, of some consequence, gains the attention of the readers. Furthermore, with the use of war-related terms to remind us, "that despite being a routine affair, war is a rising of passions on a grand scale", it catches light-hearted and ridiculed attention from the readers.

The use of the war metaphors baffles the readers for a moment, with the expression like "unwritten agreements were violated", "malicious gossip campaign", "partisan servants or relations", "Sukhi outflanked the wall", "she resisted like a tiger and, upturning the table in the living room, barricaded herself there and waxed eloquently about the misdeeds of Sir Jhinda and Lady Ram all day", but then the narrative shifts back to the necessity of settling the discord within the family, with a sense of urgency. The metaphors smack of a tinge of laughter from within a war-like situation, giving rise to a domestic conflict.

Finally, after much toil and hardship, Sir Jhinda Ram's chauffeur, who had been a witness to all the events that had transpired into the shape of an ugly war at his master's house, offered to give a solution to placate and resolve the reigning crisis. With a certain amount of tact and double-

dealing, the driver approached each wife separately in her respective quarters and managed to convince each of them that she, alone, was to attend the garden party.

The younger wife, Sakuntala, "had already been confident about her husband's choice, but Sukhi's vanity was tickled by the special emphasis that chauffeur laid on the Master's ultimate choice of her." By thus impressing on each wife individually that she alone was chosen to go for the garden party with Sir Jhinda Ram, the driver or chauffeur provided his master, Sir Jhinda, some peace to have his meal and to get ready for the occasion, without the trouble of having to deal with either of his wives.

Both the wives appeared in their flashing sarees and after all the dressing-up ritual, none of them considered having her "prolonged toilet" ruined for the day. Thus, with the aid of his driver, Sir Jhinda "bundled them" into his car and sped off for the party at the Government House.

The unexpected arrival of the two 'Lady Rams' instead of one did not cause a flutter or lead to any untoward incident, and the story concludes happily, rather mockingly, on the note that from that day onwards, Sir Jhinda and the two Lady Rams were "a familiar feature of all ceremonial occasions" held in the capital, for it is said, "they are three staunch pillars of the Raj which has conceded to them privileges unknown in the annals of the Angrezi Sarkar of India."

Short Type Questions Marks-2

1. Which collection of stories comprises Anand's 'The Two Lady Rams'?

Mulk Raj Anand's short story 'The Two Lady Rams' comprises a part of his collection "The Tractor and the Corn Goddess and Other Stories", published in 1947.

2. What is the background of the story?

The story is a light-hearted mock-heroic narrative set in the backdrop of the pre Independent colonized India. In fact, the comedy in the story arises out of the complications of bigamy which, in the pre Independence days in British colonial India, was far from uncommon.

3. What is the setting of the story 'The Two Lady Rams'?

'The Two Lady Rams' runs as a comical account of the day of a shopkeeper's life who is soon going to be bestowed upon the highest honour in British Raj, only to add misery to his life. It is set majorly inside the house of Lalla Jhinda Ram, and later shifts to the garden party of the Government House.

4. Who are 'The Two Lady Rams' of the story and who is their lord?

The male protagonist or the Lord, is Lalla Jhinda, for whose complicated bigamy, the story has been named so. He has two wives - the elder one called Sukhi (aged 50 years) and the second named Sakuntala (almost half the former's age) who are the 'two Lady Rams' of the story.

5. Why does the title of the story become a conflict?

The lord of the house, Lalla Jhinda Ram, is going to receive a Knighthood from the British Empire, but the glory and joy of the celebration are clouded by the fact that he has two wives. Each of them insists on attending the investiture ceremony but the invitation has come for only one-for the 'Lady Ram' only. This results in a domestic conflict in the house of Lalla Jhinda Ram smacking off a comical vein.

6. Who confers the title of Knighthood on Lalla Jhinda Ram?

His Majesty, the King Emperor's Government or the Government department acting as the representative of the British Empire, confers the title of Knighthood on Lalla Jhinda Ram on behalf of the King Emperor.

7. What does the bungalow of Jhinda Ram look like?

The bungalow, in which Lalla Jhinda Ram and his two spouses lived, had been specially built before his second marriage, in the famous Purdah style which was a Hindustani trending pattern at the time. Its front, which looked out into Lawrence Road, was like the front of an ordinary English bungalow, with a verandah decorated by palm trees and hanging plants, leading through a narrow hall into a large living room. On either side, there was a suite of bedrooms and boudoirs, bounded by a walled square, which was itself divided by a high wall running right through the middle of the compound.

8. How did Jhinda Ram spend his time at his house?

Lalla Jhinda Ram slept alternate nights in the suites of his two wives and spent the few hours during which he was at home in the day time in the English style gol kamara or, living-room in his bungalow.

9. What Hindu Law did the English still allow in India at that time?

The English allowed the Hindu Mitakshara law to be practiced in India at that time with the Indian Penal Code, side by side, which they had imposed, and who, therefore, allowed a man to marry three or four wives, and made no ruling whether all or any of these wives could assume the title of 'lady' if the husband was conferred with any honourable title from the government.

10. Why did not the A.D.C. want to get involved in Jhinda Ram's matter?

Sir Jhinda was sufficiently perturbed by the domestic conflict going on in his house and thus, went to telephone the A.D.C. to His Excellency, the Governor to ask for an appointment to see him on an urgent matter. As the A.D.C. was busy with the arrangement for the Garden Party next day, he presumed that Jhinda Ram was only after some deal or something as usual. So, he did not want to get involved in the shady negotiations of the trader anymore.

THE END

THANK YOU

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