

ISSUES THAT MATTER

GUIDE FOR ISSUES THAT MATTER

by

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Guide for **ISSUES THAT MATTER**

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Module

I

WAR AND ITS
AFTERMATH

1

THE UNSURRENDERED PEOPLE

Kenzaburo Oe

About the author

Kenzaburo Oe is a Japanese essayist novelist and short story writer and a major figure in Japanese contemporary literature. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1994. His writings portray the social, political and philosophical issues including war and nuclear weapons. Oe credits his son, Hikari who was born with brain damage, for influencing his literary career. Oe tried to give his son a “voice” through his writings. He is the most celebrated, among the living Japanese writers.

Introduction

The Unsundered People is an excerpt from Oe’s ‘Hiroshima Notes’ published in 1965. ‘Hiroshima Notes’ is a powerful statement on the Hiroshima Bombing on 6th Aug 1945 and its terrible aftereffects. Oe’s account of the lives of the many victims of Hiroshima and the valiant efforts of those who cared for them, both immediately after the atomic blast and in the following years reveals the horrific consequences of the nuclear war. It reveals the ‘human face’ in the midst of nuclear destruction.

SUMMARY

Though we cannot normally divide the world into two sets namely good and evil, the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima made such a distinction. Here the atomic bomb became the symbol of absolute evil and the efforts of the Hiroshima victims and the efforts of the Hiroshima victims and the people who helped them to recover became the symbol of absolute good. But the attackers tried in vain to give the incident a positive value with an excuse that the attack was to end the world was quickly thereby saving millions of lives.

The Hiroshima incident showcased the victory of the human goodwill over the paradoxical humanism goodwill was visible in the

victim's will to live inspite of the pain and destruction that have showered over them and in the efforts of the Hiroshima doctors who worked with little support of medical support systems and supplies. This human goodwill was essential to counter the fake humanism of the attackers or the trust in human strength. This humanism of the American intellectuals believed in the capability of the Hiroshima people to recover from such a destruction. This belief was synonymous to God's trust in the ability of Noah to rebuild human society after the great flood that was to be inflicted upon the man by the God. The Atomic Bomb planners found this Hiroshima attack a suitable way to end the war because they knew that, after all Hiroshima would recover itself from the hell that would be made by the Bomb. But if the bomb attack was planned on a city like Leopoldville (modern day Kinshasa) in Congo, a city with a massive population of poor people, they would not have exhibited such a will power as the Hiroshima people has shown.

These courageous efforts and will power shown by the inhabitants of Hiroshima helped to lessen the guiltiness of the atomic bomb planners. They in fact reduced the burden of conscience of the A-bomb droppers. If they had not shown any courage as will power to recover, it would have amounted to the burden of guiltiness of the Americans. In short, the efforts of the people of Hiroshima counter balanced the evil of atomic bomb.

സംഗ്രഹം

1945 ഓഗസ്റ്റ് 05-ന് ഹിരോഷിമയിൽ അമേരിക്ക നടത്തിയ അണു ബോംബ് സ്ഫോടനമാണ് The Unsundered People (കീഴടങ്ങാത്ത ജനങ്ങൾ) ന്റെ ഇതിവൃത്തം. കെൻസാബുറോ ഓയെ അണുബോംബിനെ തിന്മയുടെ പ്രതീകമായും ഹിരോഷിമ ജനങ്ങളുടെ നിശ്ചയദാർഢ്യത്തിനെ നന്മയുടെ പ്രതീകമായും അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. തങ്ങളുടെ എല്ലാം നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടിട്ടും ഹിരോഷിമയിലെ ജനങ്ങൾ ബോംബാക്രമണം നടത്തിയവരെ പഴിച്ച് വിധിക്ക് വഴങ്ങാൻ നിൽക്കാതെ, പതിയെ ഈ കഷ്ടതയിൽനിന്നും കരകയറി പുതിയൊരു ജീവിതം പടുത്തുയർത്തുവാനാണ് ശ്രമിച്ചത്. ആ ധൈര്യവും നിശ്ചയദാർഢ്യവും സത്യത്തിൽ അമേരിക്കയുടെ പാപഭാരം കുറയ്ക്കുവാനാണ് സഹായിച്ചത്. രണ്ടാം ലോകമഹായുദ്ധം പെട്ടെന്ന് അവസാനിപ്പിക്കുവാനും അതിലൂടെ ലക്ഷക്കണക്കിന് ജീവൻ സംര

ക്ഷിക്കുവാനും കഴിയുന്ന ഒരു ഉപാധിയെന്നാണ് അമേരിക്കൻ ഹിരോഷിമ ആക്രമണത്തെ ന്യായീകരിച്ചത്. അതൊരു കപട മാനുഷികത്വമായാണ് ഓയെ ഇവിടെ ചിത്രീകരിക്കുന്നത്. ഹിരോഷിമയ്ക്ക് അത്തരമൊരു പ്രഹരത്തിൽനിന്നും കരകയറാൻ കഴിയും എന്ന വിശ്വാസമാണ് അമേരിക്കയെ അതിന് പ്രേരിപ്പിച്ചത്. ഇത് ഒരുപക്ഷേ, ആഫ്രിക്കൻ രാജ്യമായ കോംഗോയിലെ ലിയോപോൾഡ് വില്ലെ പോലൊരു ദരിദ്ര നഗരത്തിലായിരുന്നുവെങ്കിൽ ആ നഗരത്തിനും ജനങ്ങൾക്കും പിന്നീടൊരു തിരിച്ചുവരവ് അസാധ്യമായേനെ. അനുബോംബ് എന്ന തിന്മയെ സന്തുലനം ചെയ്യുന്ന തരത്തിലുള്ള ക്ഷമയും നിശ്ചയദാർഢ്യവും ഐക്യവുമാണ് ഹിരോഷിമാക്കാർ പ്രകടമാക്കിയത്. അങ്ങനെ അവർ അനുബോംബിന്, തിന്മയ്ക്ക് കീഴടങ്ങാത്ത ജനങ്ങളായി.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences:

a) Which metaphors does Oe use to represent the atom bomb? as a worst 'deluge' of the 20th century like the Biblical deluge. He also uses the metaphor of cancer to refer atomic bomb.

b) Did the attempt to accord positive value to A- bombing bring place?

No. The attackers tried in vain to give the bombing a positive value that it was an attempt to end the war quickly thereby saving millions of lives. But that did not bring any peace to the minds of the airmen who were deputed to drop atom bomb over Hiroshima

c) What lessens the A-bomb droppers burden of conscience?

The Hiroshima people showcased utmost courage and willpower to recover amidst the total destruction inflicted upon them by the 4 bomb. This was the core of human goodwill that countered the paradoxical humanism of the Americans. This human goodwill lessened the bomb droppers' burden of Conscience.

d) What was the calculation, according to Oe, that led to the decision of dropping an A- bomb?

The calculation that led to the decision to drop the A- bomb at Hiroshima was based on the wolf's confidence in the Scape goats ability to set things straight. That means, the decision was taken at the confidence of Americans on the ability of Hiroshima people to recover after the attack.

e) What gruesome nightmare does Oe have about humanism?

He described the humanism of Americans as paradoxical. Their humanism trusted too much in the enemy's own human strength to cope with the hell that would be made after the A- bomb attack.

f) What reduced the emotional burden of the American doctors?

The A-bomb victims patiently waited for their turns in the waiting room of the Atomic Bomb casualty Commission on the top of Hijiyama hill. They never complained about their fate and this will power exhibited by the inhabitants reduced the emotional burden of American doctors worked there.

g) Why did God trust Noah?

'Noah had the needed will and ability to rebuild human society, hence God trusted him and made the plan for man with a great deluge. This too was referred by Oe, as a metaphor to the balancing out act.

h) Why does Oe say that what happened in Hiroshima after the A bombing was not horrible?

The people who survived in Hiroshima made no particular effort to blame the bomb- droppers. Soon after the blast, there emerged a strong power of human goodwill that helped the victims to recover and rebuild. The Scenario would have been horrible if it were in a desely populated poor city like Leopoldville.

i) What metaphors does Oe use to illustrate the input of A-bombing of Hieroshima?

Oe uses the metaphor of Biblical 'Great Deluge' which was created by the God and the rebuilding of human society by Noah

was used to refer the efforts of the people of Hiroshima. He also uses the metaphor of cancer to illustrate the horrible aftermath of the A- bomb.

j)How is the 'flood' of the present age different from the biblical Great flood of Noah?

Noah could rebuild the society soon after the flood ended, but the present age 'flood', instead of has become frozen. That means the Hiroshima attack is only an episode in the brutal consequences of nuclear weapon development. Many countries still nurture it and some even threatens to use them. Hence the flood is still frozen there and we cannot predict when it will melt and flow away.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

a) In what ways did human goodwill act?

Oe presents in this lesson, an example of dualism of good and evil. Here the good part is the human good will that aroused soon after the A-bomb blast which was as absolute evil of the world war. The injured victims, despite being in a horrible fate, with their loved ones gone and their livelihoods destructed, slowly began to recover and restore. The doctors worked steadfastly with minimum support of medical equipments and supplies. The victims waited patiently for their turns without complaining. Their goodwill counterbalanced the demonic destructions caused by the bomb. Their human goodwill greatly reduced the emotions burden of American intellectuals Oe gives an example to show the kind of will power the people showed; a girl with leukemia goes on suffering all her life not willing to commit suicide. These kind of will to survive helped to lessen the A- bomb droppers'bruden of conscience.

b) What was so paradoxical about the humanism of American intellectuals?

The paradoxical humanism which Oe feared was a humanism based on trusting in human strength. Exactly this humanism would have flashed across the minds of the American intellectuals when planning about the A-bomb attack. The scientists exactly knew the

kind of hell that would be resulted due to the dropping of A-bomb. They also trusted in the capability of Hiroshima people to recover from the bomb. They knew that there were people in Hiroshima who would make this hell as humane as possible. Oe aptly refers a metaphor to expose the pseudo-humanism of the Americans. It was like the attacking wolf's confidence in the goat's capability to set things straight after the damage is done. A biblical scenario is also used by Oe as a metaphor in this regard; God made the rain fall for forty days and nights fully trusting in Noah's ability to restore humanity after the great floods. The American intellectuals exactly knew that the great efforts of the victims to recover and survive would counterbalance the enormous evil of the nuclear bomb.

c) What would have made the toughest mind's postpone the dropping of an atomic bomb?

The American intellectuals were convinced about the capability of Hiroshima to recover from a disaster. But if the Bomb was to be dropped on Leopoldville in Congo, instead of Hiroshima, it would have been the most dreadful thing that even the toughest minds might not bear the shaking scenes. Millions of people would have died immediately and another large number would die in the coming days due to injury, and epidemics. The city would have become a wasteland filled with dead bodies. Leopoldville is a densely populated city in Congo, an African nation with a large population of poor people. The people there were lacking even the basic amenities such as food, shelter, healthcare etc. Hence, the atomic bomb would have destroyed the city of Leopoldville beyond recovery and restoration. Even the mere thought of such a scenario would have forced the A-bomb planners to postpone the dropping without setting a future date.

d) Describe the Scenario of the supposed dropping of A-bomb on Leopoldville?

If the A-bomb was dropped on Leopoldville in Congo instead of Hiroshima, a very large number of people would have died instantly as the city is more densely populated than Hiroshima. The death toll would have risen daily for many months since the city was not

equipped to handle such a scenario. They were lacking food and healthcare supplies. Epidemics would have spread like a forest fire killing a large share of the remaining population. The city would have become a wasteland where people died without sufficient aid. There would have been here and there unattended. Such a shocking scenario would have turned even the toughest mind insane. The city would have been rendered as a huge death chamber

e) How does Oe compare the biblical deluge of Noah to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima?

Soon after the A-bomb blasted at Hiroshima, human goodwill began to rise to the level of expectation of the bomb droppers. This goodwill on the part of the victims and the trust of human strength on the part of the bomb makers were counterbalancing each other. Oe clarifies this concept with the help of a biblical metaphor. God made the rainfall for forty days and nights fully trusted that Noah would rebuild the human civilization after the flood end. If Noah was a lazy man, God's plan would have been a failure. In the same manner, if the Hiroshima people were incapable of recovery like the people in a poor country like Cogo, the bomb planners would have to postpone the date of dropping the bomb without setting a future date. The people of Hiroshima went to work at once to restore human society in the aftermath of this great atomic flood'. Oe goes on to refer the tragic incident as the great flood of the present age.'

f) What is the cancer of the 20th century according to Oe?

Oe uses a couple of metaphors to describe the evil spirit of A-bomb of which the metaphor of cancer clearly depicts in the minds of the reader, the volume and nature of destructive power the nuclear weapons by various nations is like a cancer which spreads from one nation to the other. It does not have any known cure. It is a primitive demon which can create a hell on earth. If a country possesses nuclear weapon, its enemy nation will naturally try to acquire the same destructive power as a defense. This process will go on to spread all over the world, exactly like the cancer spreads from one organ to the other.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a) How does Oe substantiate that the souls salvaged by the people of Hiroshima are the souls of all human beings alive today?

Kenzaburo Oe, a major figure in contemporary Japanese literature is an ardent advocate of democracy and world peace. Most of his writings were against nuclear weapons and war. 'The unsundered people' an excerpt from 'The Hiroshima Notes' also has the nuclear bomb as the central theme. As Oe describes, nuclear weapon is the most modern curse.

The Hiroshima attack was termed by the Americans as an effort with a positive value so as to end the world was quickly thereby saving many thousands of lives in other parts of the world. They trusted in the capability of the people of Hiroshima to recover fast after the blast. Their efforts and goodwill were helpful to reduce the emotional burden of the attackers. In fact, they were chosen as the scape great to salvage many other parts of the world from destruction.

The atomic destruction of Hiroshima, according to Oe, was the worst deluge of the 20th century. The worst deluge of the 20th century. The people of Hiroshima displayed utmost stoicism and they proactively involved into the process of recovery and restoration at once. With their loved ones gone, livelihood destroyed. They were concerned to salvage their own lives, but in the process they also salvaged the soul of the people who had brought the atomic bomb.

Oe draws a parallel between the people of Hiroshima with the biblical character Noah who after the great floods, rebuild the human society. The people of Hiroshima proclaimed to the world the strength of human good will and harmony which could withstand even the most destructive evils like the nuclear bomb. Hence, Oe aptly concludes that the souls salvaged by the people of Hiroshima are the souls of all human beings alive today.

b) Justify the title of the essay 'The unsundered people'.

The Kenzaburo Oe's 'The Hiroshima Notes' targets nuclear bomb in strong language. The passage conspicuous from the title itself, elaborates the kind of will power and selfless devotion the people

of Hiroshima exposed after the atomic attack. Their efforts were so heroic that they could counterbalance the evil of the A-bomb.

Very soon after the attack the people of Hiroshima started rebuilding their lives. The doctors worked steadfastly with the help of minimum supplies and aid. The people amidst the losses and distructions were not willing to surrender to the fate; instead they sought for hope to restart their normal life.

The atomic bomb was so destructive that it created a hell. Even then, the people of Hiroshima could turn the hell as humane as possible. They showcased stoicism even while they were critically injured. They never tried to make an impression that how dradful thing had done on them. This goodwill helped to reduce the burden of conscience of bomb droppers.

The human goodwil showcased by the people of Hiroshima could counter balance the paradoxical humanism of the A-bomb planners. The inhumane damage caused by the demonic bomb would be mitigated by the humane efforts of the victims. In this way, they were Solvaging not only their. Souls but the Souls of those who brought the bomb. Hence, there is no other title as apt as 'the Unsundered People' to point out the people of Hiroshima.

c) How does Oe represent the dualism of good and evil through the essay 'The Unsundered People'?

Oe narrates the notion of balancing between the good ad the evil through the essay 'the Unsundered People'. This idea of dualism seems unfashionable till you read the essay in which Oe deputs the resistance of the good will of the people of Heroshima against the evil spirits of the deadly nuclear bomb.

When an absolute evil, viz. the atomic bomb intruded into the lives of the people of Hiroshima, there sproutede an absolute good inorder to counter the lethol venom it had injected into their lives. There emerged the human goodwill which helped the injured victims to hope for a normal life and restoration of their demolished city. The Hiroshima doctors tried their best with little help of medical support systems and supplies to provide emergency care to the critically injured victims. This act of goodwill was essential to counter the ultimate strength of accumulated science, reckon Oe.

The Scientists who developed the atomic bomb knew the impact of the blast and that there would be nothing but a hell as humane as possible. The Americans tried in vain to give a positive value to the dreadful thing they have done; that they chose to use. A bomb in Hiroshima in order to end the war quickly. This was the most paradoxical humanism was effectively overpowered by the human goodwill and harmony displayed by the people of Hiroshima.

The A- bomb was made on the basis of a calculation that the damage caused by the greatest 'evil' of the century would be mitigated by the efforts of the people which represent the absolute 'good'. It was a counterbalancing act reflecting on the strength of humanism. One elucidated the whole points keeping the idea of dualism in mind.

2

THE OLD PRISON

Judith Wright

About the author

Judith Wright (1915-2000) is an Australian poet, environmentalist and campaigner for Aboriginal land rights. She is the author of several collection of poems including 'The moving Image', 'Woman to Man', 'The Gateway', 'The Two Fires', 'Birds' etc. Her work is noted for a keen focus on the catalyst for poetic creation. She demonstrates an intellectual awareness of European and American literary tradition and portrays the landscapes and life styles of Australia.

Introduction

'The old Prison', referred to, is the ruin of Trial. Bay in Kempsey, New South Wales. The Bay became a place of shelter for coastal shipping and prison labour was brought into enlarge the area with a breakwater. The work completed in 1879. The prison was closed in 1903 but re-opened during world War I. Over 500 German prisoners of war were held there but the building once again closed after world War I. Many years later, due to ravages of war and Vandals the ruin is but a shell of its former self but the atmosphere within the remaining walls is tangible. On a visit to the site, the poet gets affected by the sight, which inspired her to write the poem "The Old Prison".

SUMMARY

Judith Wright uses strong imagery to comment on the themes and issues present in society, from the devastation of war to the impracticality of alternating the past. This in turn conveys to us the mistakes that we have made and how these faults of humanity have led to severe impacts over time.

'The Old Prison' is written in a melancholic (Sad feeling) background. It reflects the pain and Sadness of the prisoners who once lived there. This feeling is personified using many things.

Stanza:1- The unroofed (without roof) prison cells act as a flute for the cold wind which comes from the southern part of the Sea. The wind when passing through the ruined walls of the prisons makes a sound.

Imagery/ figures of speech

Flute for the winds mouth:- Wind making a sound.

breath of ice:- cold

blue caves:- deep sea- reflects Sad mood.

Stanza:2 The wind is personified as a angry bee which hunts for black honey.

Imagery/ figures of speech.

The wind like an angry bee:- The wind makes a sound like a bee(smile)

hunts for black honey:- represents the greed of man.

hollow sea- like the 'blue caves' closed in Stanza I, e-vokes a sad feeling

Stanza : 3 The prison is ravaged by the Sea waves (ravages of time) to ruin. It is an empty shell; those who lived there long gone. The ruined banebase (skeleton) of the prison has a bitter (sad) story to tell about the life of the prisoners there and their sorrowful stories.

imagery/ figure of speech

Waves of shadow:- gloomy waves

empty shell: the prison like an empty shell devoid of life.

bitter song of air: the sound made by the wind, when passing through the empty cells tells sad stories of the prisoners.

Stanza 4 & 5 When the poet asked who built and laboured there, the wind and sea replied that the prisoners cold nest (the gloomy prison) was broken and blown away by the ravages of time. They did not have anyone to love and care.

They lived and care. They lived a solitary life inside a solitary life inside their cell. They cried like the wind which makes a sound when passing through the stone corridor of the ruined prison.

imagery/figures of speech

cold nest- The gloomy prison

The prisoners were like the sea birds but they did not enjoy the warmth of any relationships.

Wind cries through the flute of stone:-

Wind makes a sound. When passing through the ruined stone corridors which enhanced the gloomy background.

സംഗ്രഹം

The Old Prison-ലൂടെ Judith Wright വളരെ വിഷാദാത്മകമായ ഒരു ചിത്രമാണ് ആസ്വാദകരിലേക്ക് എത്തിക്കുന്നത് ഒന്നാം ലോകമഹായുദ്ധത്തിൽ ഉപയോഗിച്ചിരുന്ന ഒരു ജയിൽ, റൈറ്റ് സന്ദർശിക്കുന്നു. ആ വിജനമായ തകർന്ന ജയിലിന്റെ അവസ്ഥ കവിയെ വിഷാദത്തിലാക്കുകയും അത് കവിതയ്ക്ക് വിഷയമായിത്തീരുകയും ചെയ്തു. കവിതയിൽ അവർ വളരെ നിഗൂഢവും ഇരുണ്ടതുമായ പ്രതീകങ്ങളും വാങ്മയ ചിത്രങ്ങളും ഉപയോഗിച്ച് ആസ്വാദകരിൽ ഒരു മരവിപ്പ് സൃഷ്ടിക്കും. ഉൾക്കടലിൽ നിന്ന് വീശുന്ന തണുത്ത കാറ്റ് തകർന്ന ജയിൽ ഭിത്തികളിൽ തട്ടി ശബ്ദം ഉണ്ടാക്കുന്നു. ഇതിനെ കവി- കാറ്റിന്റെ ഓടക്കുഴൽ- തടവുകാരുടെ കഷ്ടതകളുടെ കഥ പറയുന്നു. അന്ന് അവർ തങ്ങളുടെ ഇരുണ്ട ജയിൽ അറകളിൽ ഇരുന്നു കരഞ്ഞപ്പോഴും കൂടെ കരയാൻ ഈ കാറ്റ് ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ആ ജയിൽ ഇപ്പോൾ ഒരു തകർന്ന കിളിക്കൂടിനെ ഓർമ്മിപ്പിക്കുന്നു.

കവിതയുടെ വിഷാദാത്മകതയിലൂടെ അന്ന് തടവുകാർ അനുഭവിച്ച കഷ്ടതകൾ വായനക്കാരിലേക്ക് എത്തിക്കുവാൻ ജൂഡിത്ത് റൈറ്റിന് സാധിച്ചു.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**1. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two:**

a) What does the flute represent?

The ruined prison walls act as a flute for the wind; that is the wind makes a sound when passing through the stone walls of the prison.

b) When does the wind come from?

The wind comes from the blue caves of the south. Blue caves reflect the image of deep or outer sea.

c) What does the wind do?

The wind blows from the outer sea and makes a sound like a bee when passing through the corridors of the ruined prison.

d) Why is the wave compared to a bone?

A Skeleton has many stories to tell. Likewise the sea tells the sad stories of the prisoners who lived and laboured there.

e) Why is the old prison called a 'cold nest'?

The prisoners were unsafe and uncomfortable in the gaol like the seabird. They were also devoid of warmth of any relationships or love.

f) How did the prisoners fare in the old prison?

The prisoners lived a solitary life in their cells with nobody to love or care them.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

a) How does the unroofed cell become a flute?

The cold wind originating from the southern sea blows into the bay. When it passes through the ruins of the old person it generates a sound like a bee. The poet uses an image of the wind playing a flute with its mouth. The unroofed cell walls become the flute for the wind's mouth. The wind is originated from the 'blue caves' of south. The term 'blue' reflects the Sadness of the situation. The wind by playing its 'flute' sings a bitter song by playing its 'flute' sings a bitter song telling the stories of the prisoners.

b) Why is the wind called 'an angry bee'?

The second stanza reflects the severity of the prison life through presenting dark and fierce day'. Judith Wright here uses a simile where she draws a parallel between the wind which makes a sound when blowing over the ruins and an angry bee which hums for the 'black honey'. 'Black honey' tells us the story of a ship wreck in 1816 when a ship called the 'trial' wrecked near the due to a mutiny among the convicts for a bounty on board the ship this metaphor points to

the greed of man. Here the words like 'angry', 'blank', 'dark', 'fierce' etc. Set the background of a painful prison life with melancholy.

c) Why is the song of the waves 'bitter' ?

The waves sing a song like a bone telling the story of its past. The song is bitter as it tells the story of the painful prison life. The agony of their life is vividly represented here. The prison is described as a 'cold nest' which is broken and blown away by the savages of time. The prisoners who once toiled there all long gone. They once lived there in their own cells in solitary confinement. They did not have anyone to love and they were not loved either. They cried in their cells like the wind which cried along with them.

d) Describe the existence of the prisoners in the old prison?

The prison inmates lived in a 'cold nest' where they were left with themselves to look after. They were living in their respective cells solitarily. They never enjoyed the warmth of love or any relationships. They cried within their prisons as the wind outside cried along with them. The mood of the poem reflects the melancholy hardships and severity of the life of prisoners who once lived there which in turn reflects the inner conflicts of the poet herself. The prison life was lamented by the waves in its bitter song which was like a bone telling its past life. Many gloomy imageries are used by the poet to recreate in the minds of the reader the stark picture of the prison life.

e) Why does the wind cry through the flute? What has this been compared to?

The image of the wind playing the flute is used twice in this poem. This image is used to evoke in the minds of the readers the solitary wail of the prisoners thereby leading them into the stark picture of prison life. The wind cries through the flute of unroofed cells telling the bitter stories of the inmates. They were living there in the cells with the company of nobody to love them and to make a relationship. Their cry was resonated with the winds cry. Nature was the only friend for the prisoners.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a. Enumerate the gloomy imagery in the poem and the important figures of speech?

Judith Wright is a celebrated Australian poet, environmentalist and social activist. Her poems were influenced by the nocture. Most of her poems were adorned with imagery and figures of speech relating to the surrounding nature and environment. 'The Old Prison' is no exception.

The image of arctic cold wind is enhanced by the image of the wind coming from the 'blue caves' with a 'breath of ice' which paints a gloomy atmosphere to the poem. It is further intensified with the metaphor of the prison being 'a flute for the wind's mouth'- meaning that the wind rattled through the buildings making sad and frightening sounds.

The wind is then personified with a simile to an angry bee stinging painfully. Through this, the poet presents the human sufferings and the vivid imagery allows the reader to relate the feelings of the prisoners to the strange atmosphere of the ruined prison. The metaphor of 'black honey' represents the greedy of man and the image of 'hollow sea' enhances the gloom like the 'blue caves'.

The day being 'dark and fierce' gives an image of the sufferings of the prison life. The 'waves of shadow' wash away the dirt from the shells which portray the image of the desolate prison devoid of life. The waves were likened to a skeleton which tells many sad stories of the prisoners. This image is sustained through the metaphor 'bitter song of our'.

The prisoners were like sea birds living in 'cold nests'. The coldness of their nest in turn draws a parallel to the solitary and sad life of the prisoners. They were deprived of human warmth and love. They waited miserably in their cells alone as the wind cried through 'the flute of stone'. It implies that the miserable ghosts of the prisoners are still present at the gaol, and the sound of the wind through the cells will never allow it to be a happy place. Wright's repetition of the flute motif ensures this. Wright's selection of gloomy images and metaphors were so effective that they impart a mystic image to the poem.

b) Elaborate the Old prison as a metaphor for human suffering.

Judith Wright Australian poet whose verse throughly modern in idiom is noted for skillful technique. She is the second Australian to receive Queen's Gold medal for poetry. Wright uses landscapes and life styles of Australia, mysticism and political observations in her poetry. Wright has been widely praised for her treatment of such themes as humanity's teous perception of time and readily. The Old prison is a fine example of her treatment of such themes.'

'The Old prison evokes a sense of horrible life of the prisoners. who once sustained in the new ruined prison. Through the dark and mystic images presented in the poem, the poet invariably points to the sufferings of the human kind from the conflicts of life. The usual concept of prison being unpleasant is made more specific through the sustained image of a harsh environment and most specifically through the personification of the wind blowing "from the blue caved of the south like an angry bee'.

What makes the environment more gloomy is the reference to lack of normal human activity. This poignancy is enhanced through the use of terms like "bone -base' cold nest' etc, The prisoners were like the sea birds who build their nest on sea-facing cliffs. The prisoner's nest is broken and blown away.

They suffered horribly is their life in the prison so much that they waited oitiully all alone in their ow cells. They were deprived of human warmth of relationship and love. Judith Wright sketches a dark and desolate prison with brokes ... of roots. This prison is a metaphor of roots. This prison is a metaphor reflectig sufferings endured by the reflecting sufferings endused by the inmates and the sufferings of the humanity at large.

3 WAR Luigi Pirandello

About the author

Luigi Pirandello was an Italian dramatist, novelist, poet and short story writer. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1934. His works had a focus on psychology and the psychological themes used by Pirandello found their most complete expression in his short stories. Pirandello wrote seven novels, more than three hundred short stories, a number of critical essays and six volumes of poetry. In his short stories Pirandello drew a pessimistic portrait of lives stifled by social conventions and imbued with a tragic fatalism. Pirandello added elements of irony and paradox, which were to become standard ingredients of his fiction.

SUMMARY

The story narrates a small episode that happened in a night train which was waiting until dawn, at a small station of Fabriano, on its way to Rome. The story takes place during World War I (1914-1918). The second class carriage was occupied by five elderly passengers and a middle-aged couple joins them and there they start a discussion about the ongoing war. The wife was in deep mourning and she covered her face with a veil to hide her emotion. The husband explains to the fellow passengers that they were in distress as their only son joined the army and went to the war front. He expected sympathy from others while explaining about how much they cared and loved their son. But most of the passengers might be facing the same fate that they didn't care then much. But soon one of them started to argue with the husband about who among them was in more distress and deserves more sympathy. He told the husband that the couple were more lucky as they would lose only one son while in his case, his two sons and three nephews were at the war front. While the argument got escalated a fat traveller interrupted them and declared that their perceptions were wrong. He further explained that their sons never belonged to them but they belonged

to their sons and the love for parents were only one part of the life of their children. If not theirs somebody else's sons had to defend the country. The fat man plainly asked the fellow passengers whether they would defend the country in the war in place of their sons and nobody could answer it. He concluded his argument, with trembling lip and watery eyes, that their sons, if they die fighting in war, they would die young and happy without facing the ugly side of life, as his son died. Everybody were agreeing with him and the wife among the newly joined couple found his words must consoling and realised that she did not rise up to the height of those parents who resign themselves to crying send their sons to death with pride and satisfaction. Pirandello concludes the story abruptly in a poignant note where the fat man broke into uncontrollable tears realising that his son is no more.

സംഗ്രഹം

ലൂയി പിരാൻഡെല്ലോയുടെ 'യുദ്ധം'(war) എന്ന ചെറുകഥ ഒന്നാം ലോകമഹായുദ്ധകാലഘട്ടത്തിലെ ഇറ്റലിയിൽ നടക്കുന്ന കഥയാണ്. റോമിലേക്കുള്ള ഒരു ട്രെയിനിന്റെ രണ്ടാംക്ലാസ് കമ്പാർട്ട്മെന്റിലെ ഒരു കൂട്ടം യാത്രക്കാരുടെ സംഭാഷണത്തിനെ ആസ്പദമാക്കിയാണ് കഥ. അഞ്ച് പേരുണ്ടായിരുന്ന ആ കമ്പാർട്ട്മെന്റിലേക്ക് ഒരു ഭാര്യയും ഭർത്താവും കടന്നുവരുന്നു. അവർ വളരെ ദുഃഖത്തിലായിരുന്നു. തങ്ങളുടെ എല്ലാമായിരുന്ന ഒരേയൊരു മകൻ യുദ്ധത്തിൽ പങ്കെടുക്കാൻ അതിർത്തിയിലേക്ക് പോയെന്ന് അയാൾ ദുഃഖത്തോടെ മറ്റു യാത്രക്കാരെ അറിയിക്കുന്നു. എന്നാൽ അവരെല്ലാം സമാനമായ അവസ്ഥകൾ അനുഭവിക്കുന്നവരായിരുന്നു. അവരുടെ ഒരു മകൻ മാത്രമല്ലേ അതിർത്തിയിലേക്ക് പോയുള്ളൂ തന്റെ രണ്ട് മക്കളും മൂന്ന് അനന്തരവന്മാരും അതിർത്തിയിലാണ് അതിനാൽ അവർക്ക് തന്നെഅപേക്ഷിച്ച് നഷ്ടം കുറവാണെന്നും അതിലൊരു യാത്രക്കാരൻ പറയുന്നു. തങ്ങളിലാർക്കാണ് നഷ്ടം കൂടുതലെന്ന് അവിടൊരു തർക്കം ഉടലെടുക്കുമ്പോൾ കൂട്ടത്തിലുണ്ടായിരുന്ന ഒരുവൻ ഇടപെട്ട് അവരുടെ വാദങ്ങളെല്ലാം തെറ്റാണെന്ന് പറയുന്നു. നാം നമ്മുടെ മക്കൾക്ക് സ്വന്തമാണെന്നും എന്നാൽ മക്കൾ ഒരിക്കലും നമുക്ക് സ്വന്തമല്ല എന്നയാൾ സമർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു. അച്ഛനമ്മമാരോടുള്ള സ്നേഹം മക്കളുടെ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ഒരു ഭാഗം മാത്രമാണ്. അവർക്ക് അതിനപ്പുറം ജീവിതത്തിൽ ഒരുപാട് താത്പര്യങ്ങളുണ്ട്. നിങ്ങൾക്ക് അത്ര വിഷമമു

ണ്ടെങ്കിൽ മക്കൾക്ക് പകരം നിങ്ങൾ യുദ്ധം ചെയ്യാൻ പോകുമോ എന്ന അയാളുടെ ചോദ്യത്തിന് ആർക്കും മറുപടിയില്ല. നമ്മുടെ മക്കൾ യുദ്ധത്തിൽ മരിച്ചാൽ പോലും നാം ദുഃഖിക്കാൻ പാടില്ല മറിച്ച് സന്തോഷിക്കണം. കാരണം, ഈ ചെറുപ്രായത്തിൽ അവർ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ കഷ്ടതകൾ അറിയാതെ രാജ്യത്തിന്റെ നന്മയ്ക്ക് വേണ്ടി മരിക്കുകയാണ്. അയാൾ തുടർന്നു, തന്റെ മകൻ മരിക്കും മുൻപ് പറഞ്ഞ വാക്കുകൾ അയാൾ ഓർമ്മിക്കുകയാണ്. എല്ലാവരും അയാളോട് യോജിച്ചു. തങ്ങളുടെയെല്ലാം ദുഃഖത്തെ അയാളുടെ വാക്കുകൾ ശമിപ്പിച്ചതായി അവർക്ക് തോന്നി. എന്നാൽ കഥയുടെ അവസാനം അയാൾ തന്റെ മകനെയോർത്ത് പൊട്ടിക്കരയുന്നു.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two:

a) What is the setting of the story War?

The story is set in a night train to Rome in Italy during World War I. It portrays the plight of the people affected by the War.

b) Why does the husband feel that the other passengers should pity his wife?

The couple's only son went to war front. Hence, the husband expected sympathy from other passengers when he described their plight to them.

c) What does the passenger say about paternal love and duty?

A father gives all his love to his children without discrimination. It is not like a bread that can be broken into pieces and share among the children.

d) What was the last message sent by the red-faced man's son?

He sent his father his last message saying that he was dying satisfied at having ended his life in the best way he could have wished.

e) Why according to the old traveller, are sons born?

The sons are born because they must be born, reckons the old traveller

f) What is the 'country' compared to?

The fat traveller compared the country to a bread which is a necessity of life.

g) How do young ones die according to the stoic traveller?

If one dies young and happy without facing the ugly side of life it is the best way they could die.

h) How long had the woman been afflicted by sorrow?

The woman had been in deep sorrow for the past three months.

g) Why does the woman's question cause the old man to lose his temperament?

'Her silly and incongruous question made him realize that his son was really dead and gone forever. This realisation let loose his temperament.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

a) Describe the couple who were hosted in to the second class carriage.

A Middle aged couple entered into the second- class carriage of a train which was already occupied with five passengers. The woman was bulky and was in mourning. Her husband was a tiny man with pale face and bright and small eyes. He was shy and uneasy. They were accomodated into the carriage. The woman was hiding her face with the collar of her coat. The husband started to explain to his fellow Gavellers that his wife was to be pitied for the war was taking away from her, only son. But they didn't received much sympathy from others as the husband expected.

b) What advice did the husband receive about parental love?

When the husband among the newly joined couple had started explaining about their son being taken away to the war front another passenger commented that his case war more worse than the couple's as his two sons and three nephews were at war-front. The husband retorted that they had only one son and their loss could be greater.

To this the other passenger explained about parental love that it was not like a bread that could be broken into pieces and shared equally among their children. A father gives all his love to each of his children without discrimination, whether it be one or ten. And he added that he was suffering double as his two sons were at the front.

c) Comment on the physical appearance of the old traveller.

The old traveller was a fat man with red face and blood shot eyes. His bulging eyes seemed to gush out the energy due to the inner violence. His body was weak and he was breathing heavily. He tried to cover his mouth with his hand whenever he spoke so as to hide the two missing front teeth. He was a light fawn coat. When he spoke about his son his lips were trembling and his eyes were watery and motionless. He tried to be calm and controlled even though he seemed to be in great distress and troubled mind within. Finally he lost his temper when the women asked whether his son is really dead.

d) Explain the different opinions shared by the passengers regarding the war.

The story depicts the distress of the people affected by war. The husband among the couple explained about their misery that their only son whom they loved and cared the most was leaving to the front. Another passenger revealed that his son had already sent to the front and wounded twice. A third passenger has his two sons and three nephews at the front. One of them opined with a sigh that our sons did not belong to us but to the country. Another old passenger who was listening to these conversations had a different perspective. He told that the call of the country must be answered because the country is a necessity of life and there is nothing miserable in dying defending it as their sons would die young and happy.

e) Why was the women stunned by the remarks of the old man?

The woman was in deep distress as her only son was taken to the front to fight for the country in the world war. She was seeking

for the last three months any words that would console her in her deep sorrow. But she could not find anything consoling from the words of her husband and her friends. But suddenly, the remarks of the old man that the parents must be proud and satisfied when their children die defending the country, stunned her and she found it consoling her sorrow. She realised that it was not the others who could not understand others but herself who could not rise up to the same height of those fathers and mothers willing to resign themselves, without crying, to the death of their sons.

f) What were the feelings of old man towards sending young people to war?

The old man opined that it was natural to expect the young to be voluntarily joining the war efforts as their love for the country would be stronger at their young age. The country is a natural necessity like the bread and it must be defended. The young men of twenty did not want tears and they prefer to die young and happy in the war as it would save them from facing the bitterness of life. He also refers to the example of his son who died in the war with satisfaction.

g) Describe the way in which patriotism is addressed in the story.

The story was written by setting World War 1 as its background. The passengers of the night train were all affected by the war. Naturally, their conversation led to the war and patriotism. The bravery of the young people who died defending the country which was explained by the fat old man evokes a patriotic feeling to the other passengers. They were, till then, more selfish than their sons, were taken away by the war as they thought that their sons would take care of them in their old age. From the words of the old man they found solace for their distress. The old man describes to them how bravely his son fought for the King and the Country and died happy and satisfied. He tells them that country was a natural necessity that must be defended. All of them agreed with the fat man and congratulated that brave father who could so calmly speak of his child's death.

h) How do you react to the old man's grief at the end of the story?

'The old man was already resigned to the reality of the death of his son. He was proud that his son dies fighting for the country and he died young and happy. But when he overhears the other passengers speaking about war and their sons at war front, the thought of the death of his son makes him uneasy. His lips were trembling and he was panting when he spoke of the death of his son. He was struggling to contain the inner violence. But he could not stand any more when the woman asks whether his son really dead. This made him lose his temper and he broke into uncontrollable sobs. The grief of the old man was natural to any father who lost his son early. The stoicism and content he showed were only superfluous which were overpowered at the end by the emotional struggle within.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a) How does Pirandello portray human nature through the story?

Luigi Pirandello, the famous Italian novelist, poet, dramatist and short story writer, is noted for the use of psychological themes and devices in his works. His novels and short stories are narrated in realistic style and deal with pessimistic portrayal of life and tragic fatalism.

Pirandello's *War* portrays the human nature with its internal and external conflicts which was at stake during the World War. Pirandello's understanding of human psychology is conspicuous by the presence of psychological devices he used in this story. Pirandello places the reader directly into the story's world by describing the departure of the passengers from Rome but he consciously omits the mention of their destinations. The characters are not necessarily on a physical journey, but instead on a tumultuous and emotional one.

The story is set in an old, worn-out, stuffy and smoky second class carriage; this, in turn, reflects the distress of those passengers who were severely affected by the war. Pirandello does not give names to any of the characters, thus, giving a generalized impression of the problems of war. It is also very common in human nature to strive for public attention and sympathy of others. Here, the pas-

sengers argue with one another so as to establish that they are in more distress than others and to be pitied the most.

The war had afflicted them that their sons were sent to the front to take part in it. Here, Pirandello renders the notion of parenthood and the love of the fathers to their sons. Soon all the passengers were stunned to hear that one among them who showed more stoicism lost his son in the battle. His story made them realize that they were wrong in their perceptions and that they couldn't rise themselves to the height of those parents who resigned themselves to the death of their sons with pride.

b) Briefly explain the conflicts and themes raised through War.
Parenthood

Pirandello's War let the readers analyze their notion of parenthood through the exchanges made by the middle-aged passengers. At one instance, a father argues that a son would be loved and cared the most if he is the only son of their parents. But another passenger counters this idea by saying that a father gives all his love to each one of his children in full, be it one or ten, and not partially; and parental love is not like bread that can be divided and split among their children in equal shares.

Patriotism

While the passengers have differing opinions over whose grief is greater, they all have strong patriotic feeling in them. No one even suggests that their sons shouldn't have to fight in the war. The old man explains their sorrow by saying that a parent's love for their children is simply greater than their love for the country. On the other hand, a young person loves their country more than they love their parents. He asserts that young people naturally put love of country above all else, and are happy to die in battle. The old man also speaks of his son as a hero who died for King and Country. Everyone listens raptly and congratulates him.

Intellectualizing emotions

The old man avoids dealing with his grief by intellectualizing over the death of his son. He claims that young people wouldn't want their parents to cry over them "because if they die, they die inflamed and happy". More over, he says that dying young prevents their

children from seeing "the ugly sides of life". He suggests that everybody should stop crying and instead laugh and thank God that their sons die satisfied and happy. The old man's speech is carefully constructed, centered on duty, sacrifice and love of King and Country. But all his rhetoric is just a wall put up to block his pain. This wall is broken by a plain question about his son's death and all his anguish is gushed out.

c) Death is meaningful if one dies for one's country. Evaluate the statement based on the story.

Pirandello's *War* has some elements of patriotism in it. Pirandello suggests that patriotism is simply a rationalization, a way of making the devastations of war acceptable. 'War' is set in a train carriage in Italy during World War I. While their nation is at war with the Central Powers, the passengers are at war with their own feelings.

When the passengers are in deep distress, the old man intellectualizes their emotion saying that a parent's love for their country is second vis-à-vis their love for their children. On the other hand, a young person loves their country more than they love their parents. He asserts that young people naturally put love for their country above all else, and are happy to die in battle. He further adds that dying young prevents them from facing the bitterness of life. He puts forth the example set by his son: he died in battle satisfied and happy that he ended his life in the best way he could have wished.

The old man also elucidates the notion of Country. He points out that the Country is a natural necessity like bread and it must be defended. It is the duty of young generation to defend their country. His son died as a hero defending the King and Country, thereby giving a meaning to his death.

In *War*, Pirandello examines war's toll on individuals. Soldiers must confront their mortality and the ideal of a heroic death. In the climax, the woman challenges the intellectual approach to the loss of their sons and it gives the story a surprising and powerful ending.

Module

II

THE CONSEQUENCES
OF DISSENSION

PERSUASIONS ON THE POWER OF THE WORD: ON CENSORSHIP & PERIL

About the author

Salman Rushdie (1947-present) is an Indian-born British writer who is known for his allegorical novels. He was born in India and was graduated in History from the University of Cambridge. In the 1970s, he worked in London as an advertising copywriter. His first novel was *Grimus* (1975). His next novel, *Midnight's Children* (1981), was a fable about modern India, charting its history from its birth onwards. A film adaptation of this novel, for which he drafted the screenplay, was released in 2012.

His novel *Shame* (1983), based on contemporary politics in Pakistan, was also popular, but Rushdie's fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses*, encountered a different reception. The latter drew criticism from Muslim community leaders for blemishing the Prophet and the community. They denounced the novel as blasphemous. Even the spiritual leader of revolutionary Iran publicly condemned the book and issued a fatwa against Rushdie; a bounty was offered to anyone who would execute him. Rushdie went into hiding and became an exile. Despite the death threats, he continued to write, producing *Imaginary Homelands* (1991), a collection of essays and criticism; the children's novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990); the short-story collection *East, West* (1994); and the novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995). In 1998, the Iranian government announced that it would no longer seek to enforce its fatwa against Rushdie. He recounted his experience in his semi-autobiographical novel *Joseph Anton* (2012). Following his return to public life, Rushdie published the novels *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999) and *Fury* (2001). His other novels include *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), *The Enchantress of Florence* (2008) and *The Golden House* (2017).

Rushdie received the Booker Prize in 1981 for *Midnight's Children*. The novel subsequently won the Booker of Bookers (1993)

and the Best of the Booker (2008). These special prizes were voted on by the public in honour of the prize's 25th and 40th anniversaries, respectively. Rushdie was knighted in 2007. His works examine historical and philosophical issues by means of surreal characters, implicit humour and melodramatic prose style. His treatment of sensitive religious and political subjects has made him a controversial figure.

About the author

Toni Morrison (1931- present) is a Nobel Prize and Pulitzer Prize winning novelist, editor and professor. Her novels are known for their epic themes, exquisite language and richly detailed African-American culture. Her best known novels are *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon*, *Beloved*, *Jazz*, *Love* and *A Mercy*. She has won many honours and awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2012.

Morrison grew up in America. She belonged to a family that possessed an intense love of and appreciation for black culture. After completing her higher studies, she became a teacher at Texas Southern University and later, at Howard. In 1965, she became a fiction editor. She also taught writing at the University of New York and finally became a faculty at Princeton University.

Morrison's first book, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), is a novel about a victimized adolescent black girl who is obsessed by white standards of beauty and longs to have blue eyes. Her second novel, *Sula* (1973), examines the dynamics of friendship and the expectations for unity within the community. *Song of Solomon* (1977) is narrated by a man who is in search of his identity. *Tar Baby* (1981), set on a Caribbean island, explores conflicts of race, class, and sex. Her *Beloved* (1987) won a Pulitzer Prize for fiction and is based on the true story of a runaway slave. *Jazz* (1992) is a story of violence and passion set in New York City's Harlem during the 1920s. Her other novels are *Paradise* (1998), *Love* (2003), *A Mercy* (2008), *Home* (2012) and *God Help the Child* (2015). Her collection of essays are *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*

(1992), *What Moves at the Margin: Selected Nonfiction* (2008; edited by Carolyn C. Denard). She has also written several children's books, including *Who's Got Game?: The Ant or the Grasshopper?* and *Who's Got Game?: The Lion or the Mouse?*, both written with her son and published in 2003. She also wrote the libretto for Margaret Garner (2005), an opera about the same story that inspired *Beloved*.

The central theme of Morrison's novels is the black American experience. She portrays an unjust American society where her characters struggle to find themselves and their cultural identity. Her use of fantasy and her rich interweaving of myths along with true stories gave her fiction great strength and texture. In 2010, Morrison was made an officer of the French Legion of Honour and in 2012, she was awarded the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom.

SUMMARY

This chapter includes two essays that speak about the treatment meted out to dissenters. There are certain nations that are ruled by despots. Such countries are strict regarding public opinions. They do not allow people to ventilate their grievances. They harshly suppress people, especially writers because writers voice the oppressed.

In his essay, "On Censorship", Salman Rushdie speaks about censorship. He says that censorship is anti-creation. He considers it as "the absence of presence". Writers want to talk about everything they like as well as dislike. Censorship means restricting this freedom of writers. Paul Jennings has proposed the world as divided into two categories: "Thing" and "No-Thing". Rushdie says that censorship is "No-Thing" as it lets 'nothing' out. He quotes Jennings' remodelling of Cordelia's dialogue "No-Thing will come of No-Thing..."

Rushdie tells that we do not understand the value of freedom because we have it. We take it for granted. To make this clear, he brings forth the example of air. We need air for sustaining our life. It is freely available in abundance and we take it for granted. Once it is

limited, we find it difficult to breath. Then, we begin to protest. This is similar to the case of liberty. We think that we will be free tomorrow because we are free today. Creativity too needs this freedom and assumption of freedom that tomorrow too creativity will be possible. If the writer dreads for what is in store tomorrow, he cannot write sincerely. His writing, then, will be determined by his fear.

Censorship, thus, intrudes creativity. It makes art "censored" and this demeans the work of art. Censorship labels the creative art as pornographic, blasphemous or immoral. Here, Rushdie cites the example of novels like *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D H Lawrence and films like *Last Tango in Paris*.

സംഗ്രഹം

എഴുത്തുകാർ സൃഷ്ടിക്കുകയാണ്. സെൻസർഷിപ്പ് സൃഷ്ടിക്ക് എതിരാണ്, സൃഷ്ടിയെ ഹനിക്കുന്നതാണ്, നെഗറ്റീവ് ഊർജമാണ്. ടോം സ്റ്റോപ്പർഡ് മരണത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് പറയുന്നത് സാന്നിധ്യത്തിന്റെ അസാന്നിധ്യമെന്നാണ്. ഇതു തന്നെയാണ് സെൻസർഷിപ്പ് എന്ന് റുഷ്ദി പറയുന്നു. എഴുത്തുകാർ പലതിനെക്കുറിച്ച് എഴുതുന്നു. അവർക്ക് ഇഷ്ടമുള്ളത്, ഇഷ്ടമില്ലാത്തത്, കഥകൾ, ആശയങ്ങൾ എന്നിവയെല്ലാം അവരുടെ എഴുത്തിനു പാത്രമാകുന്നു. അവരുടെ കാര്യങ്ങൾ അവർ എഴുതുന്നു.

ബ്രിട്ടീഷ് ഹാസ്യസാഹിത്യകാരനായ പോൾ ജെനിംഗ്സ് പറയുന്നു: ലോകത്തിനെ രണ്ടായി തിരിക്കാം. കാര്യമുള്ളതും കാര്യമില്ലാത്തതും. സെൻസർഷിപ്പ് കാര്യമില്ലാത്ത കാര്യമാണെന്ന് റുഷ്ദി വാദിക്കുന്നു. ഇതിനെക്കുറിച്ച് വ്യക്തമാക്കാൻ അദ്ദേഹം വായുവിന്റെ കാര്യം പറയുന്നു. വായു എല്ലായിടത്തും ഉണ്ട്. അത് ഒരു ചെലവു മില്ലാതെ ലഭ്യമാണ്. അതുകൊണ്ട് നമ്മൾ അതിന് ഒരു വിലയും കൊടുക്കാറില്ല. ഇതുപോലെയാണ് സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം. അത് ഉള്ളപ്പോൾ നമ്മൾക്ക് അതിന്റെ വിലയറിയില്ല.

വായുവിന്റെ അളവിൽ നിയന്ത്രണം വരുമ്പോഴേ അതിന്റെ വില നമ്മൾ അറിയുകയുള്ളൂ. സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം നിയന്ത്രണത്തിനു വിധേയമാകുമ്പോഴേ അതിന്റെ വില നമ്മൾ അറിയും. നമ്മൾ നാളെയും സ്വതന്ത്രരാകും എന്ന വിശ്വാസം നമുക്കുണ്ട്. സ്വതന്ത്രരാണ് എന്ന ഈ ഒരു വിശ്വാസം എഴുത്തുകാർക്കുമുണ്ട്. അതുമാത്രമല്ല, അത്

അനിവാര്യവുമാണ്. സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യവും സ്വതന്ത്രതാ ബോധവും എഴുത്തുകാർക്കു വേണം. ഭയമില്ലാതെ എഴുതാൻ കഴിയുമ്പോഴേ എഴുത്തുകാരനു സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യമുണ്ടാകൂ. സ്വതന്ത്രതാ ബോധമില്ലെങ്കിൽ, നാം സ്വതന്ത്രതരാവില്ല.

കലയിലേക്ക് സെൻസർഷിപ്പ് കടന്നുവരുമ്പോൾ അത് സെൻസേഡ് ആകുന്നു. അതിനാൽ ഇത്തരം കലകൾ അശ്ശീലം, ദൈവനിന്ദ എന്നിങ്ങനെ അറിയപ്പെടുന്നു. അതൊരു ദുഃശക്തനും പോലെ ഈ കൃതികളുടെ മേൽ കിടക്കുന്നു. ഇതിന് ഉദാഹരണമായി 'ലേഡി ചാറ്റ്‌ർലീസ് ലവർ' പോലെയുള്ള നോവലുകളും 'ലാസ്റ്റ് ടാക്കോ ഇൻ പാരീസ്' പോലെയുള്ള സിനിമകളും റൂഷ്ദി നൽകുന്നു.

സ്രോതസ്സാധിപത്യ ഭരണങ്ങൾ വിധ്വസിക്കളല്ല. അതിനാൽ അവർ എഴുത്തുകാർക്ക് സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം കൊടുക്കാറില്ല. സ്വന്തം അഭിപ്രായങ്ങൾ എഴുത്തുകാർ തുറന്നെഴുതിയതിൽ ഇവർ ഭയപ്പെടുന്നു. അതിനാൽ പ്രത്യക്ഷമായും പരോക്ഷമായും അവർ എഴുത്തിനെ നിയന്ത്രിക്കുന്നു. നിരീക്ഷണം, സെൻസർഷിപ്പ്, അറസ്റ്റ്, കൊലപാതകം തുടങ്ങിയ മാർഗ്ഗങ്ങൾ അവർ അവലംബിക്കുന്നു. അടിച്ചമർത്തലുകൾ പലപ്പോഴും ഒരു ജനതയെ നിർബന്ധിത മോഹാലസ്യത്തിലേക്ക് തള്ളിയിടുന്നു. ഇതിനെ ഭഞ്ജിക്കുന്നവരാണ് എഴുത്തുകാർ. പ്രസ്തുത എഴുത്തുകാർ-കവികൾ, നാടകകൃത്തുക്കൾ, ബ്ലോഗറുകൾ, മാധ്യമ പ്രവർത്തകർ സമാധാനം എന്നു വിളിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന ഈ ബോധക്ഷയത്തിൽ നിന്നും ജനതയെ ഉണർത്തുന്നു, യുദ്ധങ്ങൾക്ക് തടസ്സമാകുന്നു.

കലയുടെ അഭാവത്തിലുള്ള ജീവിതം നിരർത്ഥകമാണ്. എഴുത്തിന്റെ കാര്യവും ഇതുതന്നെ. അതിനാൽ, എഴുത്തുകാരും എഴുത്തും സംരക്ഷിക്കപ്പെടേണ്ടത് അത്യവശ്യമാണ്. കാരണം, അവരുടെ അഭാവം നമ്മുടെ നിലനിൽപ്പിനു തന്നെ അപകടകരമാണ്.

പല രാഷ്ട്രങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നും എഴുത്തുകാർ പലായനം ചെയ്യേണ്ടിവരുന്നു. കാരണം ഈ രാഷ്ട്രങ്ങൾ എഴുത്തുകാരെ ഭയപ്പെടുന്നു. എഴുത്ത് സത്യം വിളിച്ചോരുന്നു. അഴിമതിക്കാരനും യുദ്ധക്കൊതിയനും അഴിമതി നിറഞ്ഞ നീതിന്യായ വ്യവസ്ഥയ്ക്കും രാഷ്ട്രീയ മുതലെടുപ്പുകാർക്കും എഴുത്തിനെ ഭയമാണ്. എഴുത്തുകാരുടെ ശബ്ദം, തടഞ്ഞില്ലെങ്കിൽ വ്യവസ്ഥിതിയെ തകർക്കാൻ തക്ക ശക്തിയുള്ളതാണ്.

അവ്യവസ്ഥയെ രണ്ടു രീതിയിൽ മനുഷ്യൻ നേരിടുന്നു: പേരിടൽ, അക്രമം. അവ്യവസ്ഥ (കലാപം) എന്താണെന്ന് നിർവചിക്കാൻ സാധ്യമല്ലാതാകുമ്പോൾ പേരിടൽ നടക്കുന്നു. അതിനെ കൃത്യമായി വിശകലനം ചെയ്ത് നിർവചനം നൽകപ്പെടുന്നു. എന്നാൽ, അവ്യവസ്ഥ എതിർപ്പ് പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കുമ്പോൾ, അക്രമം നടത്തി അതിനെ അടിച്ചമർത്തുന്നു. ഭീഷണി, അറസ്റ്റ് തടങ്കൽപ്പാളയത്തിലുള്ള പീഡനം, കൊലപാതകം ഇവയെല്ലാം ഈ അക്രമണത്തിന്റെ വകഭേദങ്ങൾ ആണ്. ഇതല്ലാതെ നിശബ്ദത കൊണ്ടും അവ്യവസ്ഥയെ നേരിടുന്നു.

അതിനാൽ എഴുത്തുകാർ സംരക്ഷിക്കപ്പെടണം. മറ്റ് എഴുത്തുകാരും ഇതിനു ശ്രമിക്കണം. ഇതിലൂടെ നാം സംരക്ഷിക്കുന്നത് നമ്മെ തന്നെയാണ്. എഴുതപ്പെടാതെപോയ നോവലുകളും പാടാതെ പോയ പാട്ടുകളും മൂടിവയ്ക്കപ്പെട്ട സത്യങ്ങളും തട്ടിൽ കയറാത്ത നാടകങ്ങളും നിലച്ചുപോയ സിനിമകളും ഒന്നു തെളിയിക്കുന്നു-ചിന്തകളെ ദുഃസ്വപ്നമായി കണ്ട് ഭയക്കുന്നവർ ഉണ്ട്. ഒരു ജനതയ്ക്ക് ഏൽക്കുന്ന മുറിവുകൾ അതിന്റെ ആഴത്തിലും പരപ്പിലും പകർത്തുവാൻ ഒരു എഴുത്തുകാരനേ കഴിയൂ. അതിനാൽ, അവനും അവന്റെ എഴുത്തും നമുക്ക് അത്യാവശ്യമാണ്, ഒഴിച്ചുകൂടാനാവാത്തതാണ്.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences:

a. What is censorship according to Rushdie?

According to Salman Rushdie, censorship is the thing that stops one from doing what one wants to do. He says that censorship is anti-creation, negative energy and uncreation.

b. How does Rushdie connect Paul Jennings and Shakespeare?

In King Lear, Cordelia speaks that nothing will come of nothing. Paul Jennings revises this quote, saying "No-Thing will come of No-Thing". He suggests that 'no-thing' refers to censorship.

c. What happens when the faucets are turned off?

When the faucets are turned off, the availability of air thins mak-

ing it heavy to breathe. Many people will begin to protest, some will condemn the reduction in air supply, while others will argue for the right to freely available air.

d. Who are unable to breathe freely in Rushdie's part of the world?

In Rushdie's part of the world, some people are unable to breathe freely. They are black youngsters wearing hoodies in Miami and women in red States trying to make free choices about their own bodies.

e. How is 'censored art' labelled?

Censorship intrudes art and makes it 'censored art'. It is labelled as immoral, blasphemous, pornographic or controversial.

f. To what does Rushdie compare the labelling of censored works?

In Samuel Coleridge's poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", the sailors hang a dead albatross around the neck of the protagonist for the 'sin' he has committed. For Rushdie, labelling is just like this, hanging a dead bird around one's neck.

g. How is it perilous for an authoritarian regime to give a free hand to the writers to publish?

It is dangerous for an authoritative regime to give writers free range because they can publish their judgements or follow their creative instincts. They can, hence, disturb the social oppression imposed by the regime.

h. What are the methods adopted by authoritarian regimes to control writers?

Authoritarian regimes control writers because they fear them. They do this by surveillance, censorship, arrest and even slaughter.

i. What is the role of the writers according to Toni Morrison?

According to Toni Morrison, the role of the writers is to disturb

the social oppression by authoritarian regimes that functions like a coma. They stop the blood flow of war caused and enjoyed by profiteers.

j. What is of equal peril to the ordinary folk, to 'us'?

The life and work of writers facing peril must be protected. Their absence is an equal peril to us.

k. Name the two human responses to the perception of chaos?

Naming and violence

l. What is the most rational response when chaos resists?

Chaos can resist by either reforming itself or rebelling against the imposed order. When this happens, violence is the most rational response.

m. What is the third response to chaos?

The third response to chaos is stillness. This stillness can be passivity or paralytic fear.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

a. What do writers want to talk about?

. In his essay, Salman Rushdie talks about censorship. He says that writers want to talk about creation and censorship is anti-creation. According to him, writers want to talk about what they do. They want to talk about how much they get paid. They want to gossip about other writers and how much they get paid. They want to complain about critics and publishers. They want to talk about what they love, the writers they love, and sentences and stories. They want to talk about their own ideas and their own stories

b. Why don't we make a fuss about the air we breathe?

The air is all around us. It is freely available for our use or misuse. It is plentiful, enough for us and for the coming generations

as well. Since it is available in abundance and is free of cost, it is unnecessary to demand it to be freely provided in sufficient quantity. Thus, we take it for granted just like any other natural resource. It is not a subject of discussion and we ignore its importance or presence though we need it to live. That's why we do not make a fuss about it.

c. Why is the assumption of freedom essential for the creative artist?

We are free now and so, assume that we will be free tomorrow. Similarly, the creative art too needs freedom and an assumption of freedom. This assumption is important for any creative artist. If he worries about his tomorrow's freedom, then he will not be free even today. If he is afraid of what he is to write or has written, then his choices are ruled by fear rather than his creative talent. If he is not confident about his freedom, then he is not at all free. Thus, he needs to have freedom as well as to assume that he is free.

d. How is the fear of unmonitored writing justified for autocratic regimes?

Authoritative regimes always monitor writing. This is done because they fear what can be written. There are unsettling writers who write about the oppression under such regimes. They can disturb this oppression that functions as a sort of coma. If not persecuted, they will go on troubling the predators who prey upon common man. They can openly raise their voice through their writings and can be threatening if not controlled. Thus, such regimes are cautious to control and at times, swipe away such threats. They regulate what should be written and impose censorship on creative writing.

e. Describe how 'naming' is accomplished?

There are two human responses to the understanding of chaos. One such response is naming. When voices are raised against authoritative regimes, they are considered as chaos by them. When

this chaos is the unknown, what they do is naming. This is accomplished without any difficulty. The chaos is named and classified. Its cause, extend, solution and the lot are charted and devised subsequently.

f. What is the nightmare that Rushdie envisages?

Salman Rushdie speaks about censorship and its impact on writing. According to his perception, when censorship intrudes on art, art becomes censored, deprived of its creative texture or naturalness. They demean the works. Such works are considered filthy if they voice against the despotic rule. If this continues, Rushdie foresees, people will have to succumb to the shackles created by the rule. We assume we will be free tomorrow as we are free today. But, there is no guarantee to this. Thus, he supports writers to write their 'things'.

g. Why is a writer's work necessary to mankind?

Writers tend to write against the agendas that work against the human beings. Such writings make them as well as the authoritarian regimes in great peril. Still they write because they aim to make a change or in the society. Regimes, often, cruelly suppress such tendencies. Thus, there are a lot of whispered or unwritten voices yearning to come into the light. The trouble and trauma of despotic rule cannot be properly articulated by people and this is done by the writers. They give shape to the grievances of the common man. That's why a writer's work is necessary to mankind.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a. Describe how Rushdie puts forward an effective proposition against censorship using comparisons and literary references?

Salman Rushdie, in his essay, proposes what censorship is and how it has permeated even in the literary scenario. He quotes Tom Stoppard here. While describing about death, Stoppard has said

"the absence of presence". Rushdie merges it in his essay by forwarding that censorship is the absence of voice. According to him, censorship is anti-creation. It shackles creativity and kills the voice of the common man.

Paul Jennings has proposed that the world is divided into two categories: "Thing" and "No-Thing". Rushdie compares censorship as "No-Thing". He, here, uses Jennings' reworked quote from King Lear, "No-Thing will come out of No-Thing". He brings in the example of air to make this clear. Air is all around us. It is present abundantly and is free of cost. Thus, we do not bother about it. We breathe it and move on without caring to discuss about it. Rushdie introduces a scenario where air is supplied to us by some invisible force through giant pipes. He asks us to imagine that these pipes are regulated. We move on until the air begins to thin. Once we find it difficult to breathe, we protest.

Freedom is like air. We do not recognise its value until it is limited. Writers are very often restricted and what they feel is suffocation as if they cannot breathe. Creativity is a product of freedom. Writings come up because the writers are free. Once they are restricted, they cannot write from their heart. Their writings, hence, will be products of their fears and anxieties, rather than truth and reason.

b. Why is freedom essential for writers according to Salman Rushdie and Toni Morrison?

Writers write about everything and anything. They write what they like and dislike. They write for themselves as well as others. There are places where people are subjugated by the authority. In such places, writers are the ones who write for the victims. Thus, the authority finds itself in danger and imposes restriction upon writers. One main form of restriction is censorship.

Writers need freedom to write. Rushdie says that writers not only need this freedom, but also the assurance of tomorrow's freedom. If the writer is worried about tomorrow, he cannot be faithful

to his writings. If he is afraid of his subject of writing, he will not be able to be sincere to his pen. He will be forgetting the fact that "pen is mightier than the sword". If he is afraid of his choices, his creativity will be dominated by fear and not talent.

Writers have to be confident about their freedom and what they write. Toni Morrison says that we should stand together to protect the freedom of writers because they write for us. They survive censorship, threatening, and even, executions through their creativity. They disturb the forceful 'peace' imposed by the authority. They try hard to avert wars and usher in peace. Totalitarian governments are fearful of these writers that they try to suppress them because truth is trouble. The history of persecuted writers is a long one, according to Morrison. Censorship and annihilation of what is written has been repeating and she asks us to protect the freedom of writers. She reminds us that writers are our gifts to ourselves. Moreover, they are necessary as they pen down our thoughts, trauma and feelings.

c. How does Toni Morrison categorise the perils of free speech and the human response to chaos in her essay?

In her essay, "Peril", Toni Morrison writes about the importance of writing and writers. She points out that authoritarian regimes are threatened only by the voice of writers. This is because writers can disturb the ambiance of power created by the despots. In many countries, people have no voice and are often suppressed by the authority. Writers act as the mouthpieces here. They speak for the people. Hence, the authority tries to curb free speech.

It is essential for us to protect the writers for they speak for us. They enable us to create a sort of chaos for us. Morrison speaks about two responses from the part of the authority to handle the chaos. They are naming and violence. When the chaos is peaceful, the authority merely names the chaos. It maps the chaos, charts its course and names it after analyzing it well. Once the chaos turns violent, violence is the most rational response of the authority. It goes to any extent to suppress the chaos and subjugate the sub-

jects. Chaos can turn violent by rebelling or resisting and this is reiterated in the same manner.

The chaos, the voice of the people, when violent, is brutally oppressed. Censorship and threats are the mild forms of response to this. Incarceration, arrests and death are what follows. There can also be another sort of response from the part of the authority, that is stillness. Whatever be the chaos or the response to it, writers are the ones who create a meaning out of chaos. They come forward with whispered poems, muffled voices, and outlawed languages. Morrison, thus, stresses on the perils of both the authority and the writers.

THE BURNING OF THE BOOKS

Bertolt Brecht

About the author

Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) is a German poet, playwright, and theatrical reformer who founded the epic theatre and developed drama as a social and ideological forum for leftist causes. He was a doctor by profession. His first play *Baal* was staged in 1923, but he rose to fame with *Trommeln in der Nacht* (1922; *Drums in the Night*).

Brecht had developed a violently antibourgeois attitude that reflected his generation's deep disappointment in the civilization that had come crashing down at the end of World War I. Among his friends were members of the Dadaist group, who aimed at destroying what they condemned as the false standards of bourgeois art. Karl Korsch, the eminent Marxist theoretician, was the one who introduced him into ardent communist ideology.

In Berlin, he worked briefly for the directors Max Reinhardt and Erwin Piscator. Collaborating with the composer Kurt Weill, he wrote the satirical ballad opera *Die Dreigroschenoper* (1928; *The Threepenny Opera*) and the opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (1930; *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*). It was during this time that he developed his theory of "epic theatre". He also became a fervent Marxist. In 1933, he went into exile in Denmark, and then in the United States, where he joined the Hollywood. In Germany, his books were burned and his citizenship was withdrawn. He became sort of an exile. The plays of Brecht's exile years became famous in the author's own and other productions: notable among them are *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* (1941; *Mother Courage and Her Children*), *Leben des Galilei* (1943; *The Life of Galileo*), *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (first produced in English, 1948; *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*, 1949). Brecht left the United States in 1947. He spent a year in Zürich, working mainly on *Antigone-Modell* 1948 (adapted from Hölderlin's translation of

Sophocles; produced 1948) and on his most important theoretical work, *Kleines Organon für das Theater* (1949; *A Little Organum for the Theatre*).

Brechts' own company, the Berliner Ensemble, was formed by him and finally, he returned to Berlin. He was a superior poet with a command of many styles and moods. As a playwright he was an intensive worker and director. He forced the German theatre, against its nature, to underplay

Brecht argued that the theatre should not seek to make its audience believe in the presence of the characters on the stage. It should not make it identify with them. It is to make the audience realize that what it sees on the stage is merely an account of past events that it should watch with critical detachment. Hence, the "epic theatre" is based on detachment or alienation effect, achieved through a number of devices that remind the spectator that he is being presented with a demonstration. He is reminded that the theatre is only a theatre and not the world itself.

SUMMARY

The poem is set in a country ruled by a despotic government called as the Regime. It has decided to burn the banned books. These books are referred to as "unlawful" by the Regime because they speak against it. Cartloads of such books are brought to be burned. The oxen that pull these carts are dull reminding us of the dull situation of the people.

A banished writer is furious to know that his books are not there to be burned. He has been writing against the Regime which has made him an exile. His books are banned in his country, but they are not there in the list of books to be burned. He writes passionate and anger filled letters to the Regime to know why his books are excluded. He says that he has always written truth and excluding his books point that he is a liar. He asks the Regime to burn him reminding us of the ancient practise of burning at stake.

സംഗ്രഹം

ആത്മകഥാപരമായ ഒരു കവിതയാണ് ഇത്. നാസീഭരണത്തിനു കീഴിൽ ജീവിച്ച കവിയാണ് ബെർടോൾഡ് ബ്രഷ്ക്. നാസീഭരണ കൂടത്തിനെതിരെ ഉള്ളവയായിരുന്നു അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ കവിതകളും നാടകങ്ങളും. നിരോധിക്കപ്പെട്ട പുസ്തകങ്ങൾ കത്തിക്കുന്ന ഒരു ഭരണകൂടത്തെയാണ് ഈ കവിതയിൽ നാം കാണുന്നത്. നിരുത്സാഹം നിറഞ്ഞ കാളകൾ വലിക്കുന്ന നിരവധി വണ്ടികളിൽ ഈ പുസ്തകങ്ങൾ കൊണ്ടുവന്ന് തീയിലേക്ക് തള്ളപ്പെടുന്നു.

നാടുകടത്തപ്പെട്ട നിരോധിത പുസ്തകങ്ങളുടെ കർത്താവായ എഴുത്തുകാരൻ, തന്റെ പുസ്തകങ്ങൾ ഈ കൂട്ടത്തിലില്ലെന്ന് തിരിച്ചറിയുന്നു. അതിനാൽ, അയാൾ ദേഷ്യത്തിലാകുന്നു. അനിയന്ത്രിതമായ കോപത്താൽ ഭരണകൂടത്തിന് അയാൾ ഇതിനെ ചോദ്യം ചെയ്ത് കത്തെഴുതുന്നു. താൻ സത്യം മാത്രമേ എഴുതിയിട്ടുള്ളൂ വെന്നും തന്നെയും അഗ്നിക്ക് ഇരയാക്കുവാൻ അയാൾ ആവശ്യപ്പെടുന്നു.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two:

a. What did the Regime order?

The Regime ordered the unlawful books to be burned.

b. What kinds of books are being publicly burned?

Unlawful books are being publicly burned. Unlawful, here, refers to threatening the authoritarian rule.

c. Where is the writer who writes 'fierce letters to the morons in power' located?

The writer is banished from the country. He is in exile.

d. Why does the exiled poet want to protest when he finds out that his books had not been burned?

When the exiled poet finds that his books had not be burned, he

decides to protest. His books were not selected means they were not considered as threatening, which it was really meant to be, the authoritarian rule.

e. What is the tone of the poem? How is it made evident through the verse?

The poem is tragicomic in tone. It portrays the oppression under the Regime and at the same time, comically shows the discontent of a writer for not banning his books.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

a. Why is the poet offended / angry that his books aren't on the list?

The poet has been writing against the Regime that has been oppressing the people for a long time. The Regime has realized the danger in such writings and have banned them. The poet's works also have been banned. Finally, the Regime burns the banned books with the exception of the poet's books. This makes him offended. He feels angry for not having been considered as a threat by the Regime.

b. Describe the irony in the line 'haven't I always reported the truth? ... Burn me'.

The poet has always written against the Regime. He has reported the truth about the subjugated life of his fellow men. As a result, his books are banned and he has been banished. But, once the Regime burns the banned books, his works are not included. He feels as if he has not been writing the truth. He wants the Regime to burn his books. This is ironically said as "Burn me!"

c. What is meant by 'unlawful books'?

Unlawful books are those books that report things sincerely. They become 'unlawful' under authoritarian regimes that do not want sincere reports on the oppressive measures that they undertake. They

are the voice of the marginalized who suffer under the dominant ones. They threaten the totalitarian ideologies and try to centralize the muffled voices.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a. How does Brecht express his solidarity with the victims of the Nazi persecution through the poem?

a. Bertolt Brecht was born and brought up in Germany. He had served its military for a brief time before committing himself to writing and theatre. He was initiated into Communism and was an anti-bourgeois throughout his life. He wrote against the dominant ideology. His works were banned in Germany. He was forced to leave his motherland and seek asylum in various countries, including USA. His books were publicly burned, an indication that he was a threat to the Dominant Nazi regime. He opposed the 'cultural cleansing' of the Nazis and wrote against it, which threatened his own very existence.

In his poem, "The Burning of Books", Brecht portrays an incident where 'unlawful books' are burned by the Regime. He shows how the dull oxen haul cartloads of such books to the pyre. This dullness represents the inhumanness of the Nazis. They are compared as oxen because they are strong like these animals, but devoid of humanity. They wield power and use the same to oppress the others. This reflects a true incident where Brecht's books were burned. Such books are considered as 'unlawful' because they propagate against the Regime, here the Nazis. Brecht stresses "banished" and "excommunicated" to picture the plight of the writers and evidently, that of the people.

When the poet, mentioned in the poem, realises that his books are not yet burned, he is furious. He has been writing the truth, but his books are not burned. This questions his sincerity to his writings and country. He has been writing against the Regime and he is shocked to know that he is not considered as a threat. He writes an angry note to the Regime asking it to "Burn me!" This brings into our

memory a time when those who spoke truth were burned at the stake. The poet finds burning the books equal to burning men who voice against the regime. Here, thought and man becomes one; ideology and existence become the same. When these are threatened and muffled, it is similar to burning at the stakes.

b. Comment on the wielding of censorship as a weapon of control by authoritarian governments, based on this poem by Brecht.

Censorship means the suppression or banning of any parts of books, films etc. that are considered as immoral, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security. It is employed in many places on varying degrees base on the issue at hand. Objectionable or sensitive matters are often censored. This censorship questions the freedom of expression and thought that every human being has. Strict censorship existed in many countries and still exists in severe as well as mild forms.

Censorship is a weapon used by despotic rulers to suppress the creativity. This is done because they fear creativity. In "The Burning of the Books", Brecht portrays a similar instance. He himself was a victim of censorship. He wrote against the regime of the Nazis and about the atrocities done by them. This made him to flee his country and live a life of exile. We see in this poem an occasion where books are banned and called as 'unlawful' for speaking truth. This is a mild form of censorship. Burning the books is a sort of warning that writers should not promote banned books nor create any more works that are deemed to become 'unlawful'.

At the end of the poem, we see the poet infuriated on realising that his books have not been burned. He satirically questions the authority why they have not burned them. He asks them to do so. He challenges them to burn him. Here the "me" in "Burn me!" stands for his books and most prominently, the ideology which he believes in. His pen is said to be on fire, lighting up the truth and burning away the Regime. He questions the very right to write and brings in irony to show his opposition and protest.

6

THE CENSORS

Luisa Valenzuela

About the author

Luisa Valenzuela (1938- present) is an Argentine fiction writer and journalist. She is among her nation's most significant writers, best known for magic realism, a style often associated with Latin-American writers such as Gabriel García Marquez and Julio Cortazar. Valenzuela is also one of the most widely translated female South American writers.

Valenzuela's father was a doctor and mother was a writer. Given her parents' place in, she was able to meet writers such as Jorge Luis Borges, Ernesto Sabato etc in her youth. She hoped to become a painter or a mathematician, but writing became her career.

Valenzuela's first journalistic work appeared in various magazines including *Esto Es* and *El Hogar* while she was still in her teens. Her first short story, "Ese Canto," was published in 1956. She also worked for a time at a library, the Biblioteca Nacional, where Borges was the library's director. She shifted to France after marriage. It was while living in France that she wrote her first novel *Hay que sonreír* (1966; published in English as *Clara*. Divorcing her husband after five years of marriage, Valenzuela moved to Paris and began working as a writer for Radio Television Française. She, later, worked as an editor at *La Nación*, the Buenos Aires newspaper. She also published her collections of short stories. *El gato eficaz* (1972; *Cat-o-Nine-Deaths*) became her second novel. She began her freelance journalism career and started lecturing about writing in 1970.

Returning to Buenos Aires in 1974, Valenzuela discovered that the political situation in Argentina following the death of Juan Peron had degenerated into a paramilitary dictatorship with violence and repression. Between 1976 and 1983 some 20,000 Argentine citizens "disappeared." In 1979, she was offered a writer-in-residence position and decided to move to the United States to escape the

political repression. "I decided to leave in order not to fall into self-censorship," she, later, told about her exile. "Exile may be devastating, but perspective and separation sharpen the aim." She was appointed as a visiting professor in the New York University in 1985 and was a guest speaker at writing conferences in locations throughout the world, including the Americas, Israel, and Australia.

Valenzuela became a fellow at the New York Institute for the Humanities in 1982 and belonged to the Freedom to Write committee of PEN's American Centre. Her concerns with human rights issues prompted her to join Amnesty International. Her works continue to revolve around themes of politics and women's issues. She also focuses on the violence and suffering experienced in many Latin American countries under authoritarian regimes. Moreover, she approaches language not only as the means of conveying a theme, but also as the object of the story.

With democracy restored to Argentina in April of 1989 Valenzuela returned to Buenos Aires. Returning on occasion to New York City, she continued to be a prolific writer. Among her best known works in translation are *Other Weapons*, *The Lizard's Tail*, *Black Novel* and *Bedside Manners*. Among the published collections to appear in translation are *Strange Things Happen Here: Twenty-Six Short Stories* and a *Novel* (1979), which includes the novel *Como en la guerra* (*He Who Searches*) as well as stories from *Aquí pasan cosas raras*.

SUMMARY

The story is about Juan who lives in a country ruled by a totalitarian government. He gets the new address of his lover, Mariana. She resides in Paris and he writes a letter to her. He knows that letters are always intercepted. He fears that his words will be misunderstood. If such a thing happens, the authority will do anything and everything to threaten the existence of both the sender and the receiver. He is afraid of what may befall Mariana when the letter is

read by the censors. So, he decides to join the Directorate of Censorship to intercept his own letter.

Juan joins Section K in the directorate. He is employed to check out for explosives in letters. He witnesses his colleague getting maimed in an explosion when a letter bomb blasts. This incidence is considered by the authority as pure negligence from the part of the employee. Another colleague of Juan speaks how important it is to get more payment for doing such a dangerous job. Juan denounces him to the authority. He gets promoted for his commitment. He gets more involved in the job that he does. He works as a true adherer of the despotism.

Finally, he reaches Section B where only few letters reach. Most of the letters are thrown into the Condemned Basket before reaching Section B. It is the letters from this Basket that are taken as proofs for treason against those who have written them. Such people are executed without any trial. Juan is more fervent in doing his duty that he does not even find time to have food or sleep. He denies his mother's requests to go out and enjoy fresh air. He gets completely tied up to his office.

Juan utilises his complete attention in reading and analysing the letters. He is so concentrated in his work that he does not even recognize his own letter. He finds fault with it and throws it into the Condemned Basket. Since he is the one who wrote the letter, he is executed by the authority the very next day

സംഗ്രഹം

ഒരു സ്വേച്ഛാധിപത്യ രാഷ്ട്രത്തിൽ ജീവിക്കുന്ന ആളാണ് ജുവാൻ. അവൻ തന്റെ പ്രണയിനിയായ മരിയനയ്ക്ക് ഒരു കത്തെഴുതുന്നു. അവളുടെ പുതിയ വിലാസം ലഭിക്കുമ്പോൾ അവൻ വളരെ സന്തുഷ്ടനാകുന്നു. അതിനാലാണ്, മറ്റൊന്നും ആലോചിക്കാതെ അവൻ അവൾക്കായി പാർസിലേക്ക് കത്തയയ്ക്കുന്നത്. കത്തുകളെല്ലാം ഭരണകൂടം പരിശോധിക്കും എന്ന തിരിച്ചറിവിൽ അവൻ ഭയപ്പെടുന്നു.

കുശലാനുബോധങ്ങൾ പോലും ഭരണകൂടം സംശയത്തോടുകൂടിയാണ് നോക്കുന്നത്. കത്തുകളിലെ ചിഹ്നങ്ങൾ പോലും അവർ സംശയിക്കുന്നു. അവരുടെ രഹസ്യഭരണാർ എല്ലാം രാജ്യങ്ങളിലും ഉണ്ട്. അവർ തന്റെ മരിയാനയെ ഉപദ്രവിക്കും എന്ന് അവൻ ഭയപ്പെടുന്നു. അതിനാൽ ആ കത്ത് തിരിച്ചെടുക്കാൻ അവൻ തീരുമാനിക്കുന്നു. സെൻസർഷിപ്പ് ഡയറക്ടറേറ്റിലേക്ക് അവൻ സെൻസറായി അപേക്ഷിക്കുന്നു.

തന്റെ കത്ത് തിരിച്ചെടുക്കുവാനായി ജോലിക്ക് അപേക്ഷിക്കുമ്പോൾ തന്നെ അവർ ജോലിക്ക് എടുക്കുമെന്ന് അവൻ പ്രതീക്ഷയുണ്ട്. കാരണം, കത്തുകൾ വിശകലനം ചെയ്യാൻ അവർക്ക് ധാരാളം സെൻസർമാരെ വേണമായിരുന്നു. സെൻസറായി ജോലിക്ക് വരുന്നവരുടെ ഉദ്ദേശം കത്തുകൾ കൈക്കലാക്കുക എന്നതാണെന്ന് അധികാരികൾക്ക് അറിയാമായിരുന്നു. എങ്കിലും അത് അസാധ്യമാണെന്ന് അവർക്ക് അറിയാമായിരുന്നു. അങ്ങനെ ജൂവാനും സെൻസറായി ജോലിക്കു ചേരുന്നു. സെക്ഷൻ കെ-യിലാണ് അവൻ പ്രവേശിക്കുന്നത്.

സ്ഫോടക വസ്തുക്കൾ ഒളിപ്പിച്ചുവച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു എന്നു സംശയിക്കുന്ന കത്തുകളാണ് സെക്ഷൻ കെ-യിൽ കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്തിരുന്നത്. വളരെ അപകടകരമായ ഒരു ജോലിയാണത്. ജൂവാൻ ജോലിക്കു കയറിയതിന്റെ മൂന്നാം ദിനം സ്ഫോടനത്തിൽ അവന്റെ സഹപ്രവർത്തകൻ അംഗഭംഗം വന്നു. ഇത്രയും അപകടകരമായ ജോലി ചെയ്യുന്ന തങ്ങൾക്ക് വേതന വർദ്ധനവ് വേണം എന്ന് ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ട് സമരം നടത്താൻ തീരുമാനിച്ച മറ്റൊരു സഹപ്രവർത്തകനെ അവൻ ഒറ്റുകൊടുക്കുന്നു. അങ്ങനെ അവൻ സെക്ഷൻ ജെ-യിലേക്ക് സ്ഥാനക്കയറ്റം ലഭിക്കുന്നു. അവിടെ മാർകമായ പൊടികൾ നിറച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു എന്ന് സംശയിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന കത്തുകളാണ് കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്തിരുന്നത്.

ജോലിയോട് വളരെയധികം കുറു പുലർത്തുന്ന ജൂവാൻ താമസിയാതെ സെക്ഷൻ ഇ-യിൽ എത്തുന്നു. അവിടെയാണ് കത്തുകൾ വായിക്കപ്പെടുന്നത്. തന്റെ കത്ത് തനിക്കു കിട്ടുമെന്ന പ്രതീക്ഷയിൽ അവൻ ആത്മാർഥമായി ജോലി ചെയ്യുന്നു. വൈകാതെ അവൻ തന്റെ ലക്ഷ്യം പോലും മറന്നു പോകുന്നു.

അങ്ങനെ അവൻ ഉയർന്ന തസ്തികയിൽ എത്തുന്നു. സെക്ഷൻ ബി-യിലേക്ക് അവൻ സ്ഥാനക്കയറ്റം ലഭിക്കുന്നു. വളരെ കുറച്ചു കത്തുകൾ മാത്രമേ എല്ലാ കടമ്പകളും കടന്ന് അവിടെ എത്തിയിരു

ന്നുള്ളൂ. ഊണും ഉറക്കവും മറന്ന് അവൻ തന്റെ ജോലിയിൽ വ്യാപൃതനാകുന്നു. അവനെ നേർവഴിക്കു നടത്താൻ അവന്റെ അമ്മയും ശ്രമിക്കുന്നു.

അവസാനം അവൻ എഴുതിയ കത്ത് അവൻ ലഭിക്കുന്നു. അതിൽ രാജ്യദ്രോഹപരമായ കാര്യങ്ങൾ അവൻ കണ്ടെത്തുന്നു. ജോലി യോട് അമിതമായുള്ള കൂറിനാൽ അന്ധനായ അവൻ ആ കത്ത് അധികാരികൾക്ക് കൈമാറുന്നു. പിറ്റേന്ന് തന്നെ അവർ അവനെ വധിക്കുന്നു.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two:

a. What was the stroke of luck that happened to Juan?

Juan happened to get the new address of his lover, Mariana. This was the stroke of luck that happened to him.

b. What plan did Juan conceive to outsmart the censor mechanism?

In order to outsmart the censor mechanism, Juan decided to sabotage the mechanism. He decided to join as a censor to intercept his own letter.

c. Why was Juan hired immediately?

Juan was hired immediately as a censor because more censors are needed every day. The Directorate of Censorship did not waste time background checking the recruits.

d. What happened on the third day?

On the third day of Juan at work, a fellow worker's hand blew off when he took a letter that had a bomb concealed in it. It disfigured his face too.

e. What work did Juan do in Section E?

In section E, Juan was given intercepted letters to read and analyse. There he had the hope of getting the letter that he had sent to Mariana.

f. How did Juan's mother try to set things right for him?

Juan's mother knew that he was not himself for some time and tried to guide him back to the right path. She tried to divert his attention to Lola's girls, but without any avail.

g. How did the authorities reward him for his devotion to duty?

Juan was dedicated to duty and thus, he got promotions. He was so attentive that he condemned his own letter and it made the authorities to execute him.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

a. What does Juan fear would happen to the letter he sent to Mariana?

a. Juan had sent a letter to Mariana who is in Paris. He knows that the authority intercept the letters and now, fears that the same fate awaits his letter. Even punctuations and phrases are doubted as part of conspiracy against the authority. He fears that his letter might be considered similarly. Such letters make the sender as well as the receiver in danger. He is depressed that something might happen to Mariana. He dreads the power of the authority because they have agents who can travel across countries and kidnap and torture their enemies.

b. How was Juan able to join the Censorship Bureau?

b. Juan did not want to join the service because of conviction like a few others. He wanted to get hold of the letter that he had sent to Mariana. So, he decided to sabotage the censoring mechanism. This was done by infiltrating the Directorate of Censorship. He applied for the post of censor. He was hired immediately because more censors were needed every day to intercept the letters. The Directorate knew why many people like Juan joined the service. But, it was confident that nobody will be able to get hold of their own letters from a multitude of letters.

c. How did Juan get his promotions?

Initially, Juan joined the Section K in the Directorate of Censorship. He denounced a fellow worker, who was planning to organise a strike for raising their wages, to the authority. At this time, Juan was employed in a section that handled letters that were suspected to carry bombs. For his commitment to his duty and authority, and for denouncing his fellow colleague, he was promoted to Section J. His merits made him have more promotions and he reached Section E. His transfers to higher positions were possible solely because of his commitment to duty and authority. He worked sincerely that he, finally, reached Section B.

d. Describe Juan's passion for work, which made him forget his noble mission.

As Juan got promotions back to back, he grew more and more committed to his work. His promotions to higher sections required more keen attention from him. He became very much evolved in his work. He even disregarded his mother. He never had time for anything, but to read and analyse the intercepted letters. He took all his energy and concentration to analyse the letters. He became so dedicated that he forgot why he joined the service in the first place. He considered his job as one with patriotic fervour. He barely ate and cared for himself, but was really satisfied with his job.

e. What was Juan expected to do in Section B?

Juan got promoted to Section B in the Directorate of Censorship. The letters that reached this section was less as compared to other sections. Very few letters cleared the previous sections and thus, they required much analysis. Juan had to read these letters again and again to ensure that they did not have any hidden meanings or messages. He had to put some of them under magnifying glass, and others under electronic microscopes to check out for possible microdots. He had to put in a lot of concentration to his work. He had no time to eat or have a proper sleep.

f. What is ironical about Juan's execution by the authorities towards the end?

Juan had joined the service only to intercept the letter that he had written to Mariana. He feared that the letter might be intercepted and it might put her in danger. He joined as a last grade employee. Once he began to dedicate himself in the job, he forgot why he joined the service. He reached the higher sections via promotions and became more absorbed and dedicated in his work. He, finally, intercepted the letter that he had written. He felt hidden messages in it. His pure dedication made him to surrender the very same letter to the authority. Since he had written the letter, he was executed the next day.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a. Describe the work done in the various sections of the Censorship Bureau by the censors.

The Directorate of Censorship has been established mainly to intercept letters. Letters are scrutinized to find if they are a threat to the authority. It consists of various sections like Section A, Section B, Section C etc. They recruit more people as censors as they need them to read and analyse the texts. Letters that are a threat are thrown into the Condemned Basket. The sender and receiver are finally prosecuted. The directorate has Secret Commandos who are well trained to infiltrate into various nations and mercilessly and silently remove the 'threats'.

As mentioned earlier, the directorate is divided into various sections. The lower one is Section K. Letters that are suspected to be bombs are handled here. Very carefully are the letters handled so as to find the explosive before it explodes and is taken care of. Juan witnesses a colleague of his getting seriously injured when a letter explodes. He loses a hand and gets his face disfigured. The people here are meagrely paid for such a dangerous job. Section J involves checking letters for poisonous powders. Strict care is taken to handle

such letters. Careful scrutiny is done to check for powders that are meant to kill.

Section E consists of analysing the letters by reading them. Words and phrases can hide messages. Hidden transcripts can be there in any letter. Even punctuations can be codes that can threaten the authority. Thus, in this Section, letters are read carefully with rapt attention. Not so many letters go past this Section. In Section B, thus, only a few letters reach. These letters are finely checked under magnifying glasses. They are checked for microdots under electronic microscopes. Refined and technologically high methods are employed to scrutinise the letter for one last time.

b. Bring out the satire in the story "The Censors" by drawing examples from the situations in the story.

The very title "The Censors" hint that it is about the trials and tribulations caused by censorship. The protagonist knows well about the censorship that is imposed in his country. He knows too well that even letters are intercepted. They go through a long process of thorough checking before they reach the receiver. Most of the letters are destroyed condemning them as a threat to national security. The sender as well as the receiver is, then, 'taken care' by the authority. Still he writes a letter and that too to Paris. This shows that he has not reasoned much on his current situation.

The only way that Juan finds to intercept the letter is to join the directorate. It is hilarious to know that the directorate recruits censors without much background checkups for such important jobs. It knows why most of them apply for the post, but do not give it much importance. It is confident of its won power. Juan uses every trick up in his sleeve to get to the higher sections. It is funny to see him working with such a concentration to intercept threatening letters. But, the irony is that he has completely forgotten why he has joined the service. Simple sentences are regarded as threats and the writers are punished severely.

Juan's zealous nature and he becoming a workaholic are portrayed with a tinge of humour. He does not eat or sleep well due to his over dedication. His mother tries to guide him into 'the right path'

by introducing him to girls. But, she fails. Valenzuela mocks at parents who consider getting their children married as a method to make them 'right'. Finally, we see him getting hold of the letter that he had written. He finds that what he has written has implicit meanings. He has become so critical in his approach that he cannot even recognize his own words of love. He throws the letter to the Condemned Basket which makes the authority to execute him for being the sender.

c. How did Juan change over the course of the story? Write a character analysis of Juan.

Luisa Valenzuela ironically portrays the fate of Juan who lives under a despotic rule. He knows about the strict censorship and still, sends a letter to his lover, Mariana, who is settled in Paris. The story is about his attempts to get the letter back. He joins the Directorate of Censorship and is always keen to have his letter. The story points out the changes that comes over him once he joins his service.

Juan joins the service only to get hold of his letter. He is not afraid of what might befall him. He is much more concerned about Mariana. He knows about the wide reach of the authority. They can cross national boundaries and terminate any sort of threat. He wants to save Mariana. His letter has been a product of his love, but he is fearful that the authority may misunderstand any of the phrases or punctuation and prosecute Mariana. He joins the service in Section K. From a mere clerical post, he does whatever he can to rise to higher sections. This is clear when he denounces a fellow colleague.

Juan slowly forgets why he joined the service. He gets immersed in his duty. He becomes more and more dedicated and as a result, has nothing else to do, but scrutinize the letters that come to his desk. He is exhausted by his stressful work, but never gives it up due to his excessive dedication. He has no time to spare even for his mother. His duty becomes a true patriotic one ironically. He is so zealous to his service that he hands his own letter to the authority once he gets it. He cannot identify his own passionate words and this ends up in his execution.

Module

III

OF CULTURE, IDENTITY
AND TRADITION

THE POISONED BREAD

Bandhu Madhav

Bandhu Madhav was a Dalit short story writer from Mahar community in Maharashtra. He wrote extensively in the 1940s-50s, and was instrumental in founding the 'Little India Movement.'

SUMMARY

During harvest time, Mhadeva accompanied his grandfather Yetalya Aja to Bapu Patil's farm. They were looking for a job of winnowing and treading out the corn at the threshing floor. Yetalya also intended beg for a share of corn or a few vegetables to eat too. Upon seeing them Bapu Patil started a long tirade in which he insulted the Mahar community. Yetalya displayed no reaction to Patil's rudeness but remained subservient, much to the dismay of Mhadeva. He interrupted the tirade and talked about the dignity of a human being irrespective of his religion. Yetalya defended his grandson by saying that he was young and being city-bred he gained education.

Yetalya and Mhadeva toiled in the hot sun and Yetalya went to Gyanba Patil's threshing floor to get a tripod and a few measures of corn. Bapu Patil came back with Tuka Magdoo and started to verbally abuse Yetalya. When Yetalya returned, Bapu Patil declared that they would not be given any wages. Yetalya begs for food, but was not given anything. Dejected, he gathered the stale, foul smelling pieces of bread from the animal pen. Mhadeva questions the animal-like existence of the Mahar community. Yetalya replies that he wanted to protest against the injustice but that he was helpless.

In the conversation that followed, Mhadeva opened Yetalya eyes discussing the need to obtain freedom by abandoning their slavish existence. When an empowered Yetalya had thrown away the stale bread he collected, his wife came and collected them. She then mixed it with meat and cooked them for dinner, which everyone ate. Next morning Yetalya was found to be sick with dysentery. Mhadeva thought about the stale bread they had to eat, and was once again

reminded of the pathetic, animal-like existence his community led. The doctor confirmed that the dysentery was caused by the toxins in the stale bread. When none of the medicines proved effective, and seeing his grandfather suffer, Mhadeva was devastated. Yetalya realized that it was the lack of education that prevented a Mahar from being independent. He said on his deathbed that the bread would take away the humaneness in humans. Even after twelve years, during every harvest season Mhadeva is reminded of his grandfather's last words.

സംഗ്രഹം

കൊയ്ത്തു കാലത്ത് ബാപ്പുപാട്ടീലിന്റെ പാടത്തേക്ക് മുത്തച്ഛനായ യെതാലയെ അനുഗമിക്കാറുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. മഹാദേവ മെതിക്കളത്തിൽ എന്തെങ്കിലും പണി കിട്ടുമോ എന്നറിയാനാണ് അവർ പോകുന്നത്. ചോളമോ പച്ചക്കറിയോ ഭിക്ഷയായി ചോദിക്കുക എന്നൊരു ഉദ്ദേശ്യം കൂടിയുണ്ട് യെതാലയ്ക്ക് അവരെ കണ്ടയുടനെ ബാപ്പു പാട്ടിൽ ശകാരമാരംഭിക്കുകയും മഹാറുക്കളെ അടച്ചാക്ഷേപിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. യെതാല ഇതെല്ലാം കേട്ട് മിണ്ടാതെ വിധേയനായി നിന്നത് മഹാദേവയെ വിഷമിപ്പിച്ചു. അവൻ മതത്തിനതീതമായ മാനുഷിക അന്തസിനെപ്പറ്റി ബാപ്പുവിനോട് സൂചിപ്പിച്ചു. ഇതൊരധിക്ഷേപമായിക്കണ്ട ബാപ്പുവിനോട് യെതാല മാപ്പപേക്ഷിക്കുകയും നഗരജീവിതവും വിദ്യാഭ്യാസവും തന്റെ ചെറുപ്പക്കാരനായ കൊച്ചുമകനെ സ്വാധീനിച്ചതാവാം എന്നു വിശദീകരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു.

അവർ പൊരിവെയിലത്ത് അധാനിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ ഗാന്ധി പാട്ടീലിന്റെ മെതിക്കളത്തിലേക്ക് യെതാലയ്ക്ക് പോകേണ്ടിവരുന്നു. ഈ സമയം അവിടേക്കു വരുന്ന ബാപ്പുവും തുക്കാ മഗ്ദും യെതാലയെ അധിക്ഷേപിച്ചു സംസാരിക്കുന്നു. മുക്കാലിയും ചോളവുമായി തിരിച്ചെത്തിയ യെതാലയോട് കൂലി തരില്ല എന്നു ബാപ്പു പ്രഖ്യാപിക്കുന്നു. ഭക്ഷണത്തിനായി കെഞ്ചിയ അദ്ദേഹം ഒന്നും ലഭിക്കാതെ വരുമ്പോൾ തൊഴുത്തിൽക്കിടന്ന പഴകിയ നാറിയ റൊട്ടി പെറുക്കിയെടുക്കുന്നു. മഹാറുക്കളുടെ - മൃഗതുല്യമായ ഈ ജീവിതത്തെ മഹാദേവ ചോദ്യം ചെയ്യുന്നു. ചെറുത്തു നിൽക്കണമെന്ന് ആഗ്രഹമുണ്ടെങ്കിലും നിസ്സഹായനാണ് താനെന്ന് യെതാല വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്നു.

തുടർന്നുള്ള സംസാരത്തിൽ, മാനസികമായ അടിമജീവിതം അവ സാന്നിദ്ധ്യം മാത്രമേ തങ്ങൾക്കു സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം സാധ്യമാകൂ എന്ന് മഹാ

ദേവ മുത്തച്ഛനെ പറഞ്ഞു മനസിലാക്കുന്നു. പഴകിയ റൊട്ടി ഉപേക്ഷിച്ച് വീട്ടിലേക്ക് പോകുന്ന ശാക്തീമരിക്കപ്പെട്ട യെതാലയെയാണ് പിന്നീട് കാണുന്നത്. എന്നാൽ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ഭാര്യ ആ പഴകിയ റൊട്ടി എടുത്തുകൊണ്ടു പോകുകയും, ഇറച്ചിയോടൊപ്പം അത്താഴത്തിന്റെ കൂടെ എല്ലാവർക്കും നൽകുകയും ചെയ്തു. അടുത്ത ദിവസം രാവിലെ വയറിലൂടെയും ഛർദ്ദിയും (dysentery) ബാധിച്ച യെതാലയെയാണ് കാണാനാവുന്നത്. വിഷമയമായ റൊട്ടിയിൽ നിന്നാണ് അസുഖം ബാധിച്ചതെന്ന് ഡോക്ടർമാർക്ക് ബോധ്യപ്പെടുന്നു. മരുന്നുകളൊന്നും ഫലിക്കാതെ വന്ന് മരണാസന്നനായിക്കിടക്കുന്ന മുത്തച്ഛനെ കണ്ട് മഹാദേവ തകർന്നു പോകുന്നു. അറിവില്ലായ്മയും വിദ്യാഭ്യാസമില്ലായ്മയുമാണ് മഹാറുക്കളെ പിന്നോട്ടിടക്കുന്നതും സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യമില്ലാത്തവരാക്കുന്നതും എന്ന് യെതാലയ്ക്കു ബോധ്യമാകുന്നു. മരണക്കിടക്കയിൽ, മനുഷ്യന്റെ മനുഷ്യത്വം ഇല്ലാതാക്കുന്ന റൊട്ടിയാണിത് എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞ് യെതാലയ്ക്കു മരിക്കുന്നു.

പുത്രന്റെ വർഷത്തിനു ശേഷവും കൊയ്ത്തുകാലത്ത് മുത്തച്ഛന്റെ വാക്കുകൾ നിരന്തരം ഓർക്കുകയാണ് മഹാദേവ.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two:

a. Why did Yetalya and Mhadeva go to Bapu Patil's house?

They were looking for a job of winnowing and treading out the corn at the threshing floor. Yetalya also intended beg for a share of cucumber, marrow or a few peanuts as wages.

b. Why did the Chandrabhaga river dry up, according to Patil?

According to Patil, they have angered the rain-god causing the drying up of Chandrabhaga river. The Mahars and Mangs had profaned religion and by abandoning caste they have defiled Lord Vithoba of Pandharpur.

c. What was the wage that Mhadeva and his grandfather received at the end of the day?

Yetalya begged to Patil for food, but was not given anything. He

noticed the neglected food in the animal pen. He gathered the stale, rancid pieces of bread lying on the ground in front of the oxen. Flies were swarming over the moldering crumbs, which had turned green and foul.

d. Why did grandfather go to Gyanba Patil's threshing floor?

Yetalya went to Gyanba Patil's threshing floor to fetch a tripod and a few measures of corn.

e. What was it prevented a Mahar from being independent, according to grandfather?

According to him, it was the lack of education that prevented a Mahar from being independent.

f. Why was grandfather writhing in pain the next morning?

He was writhing in pain because he was vomiting and purging. He contracted dysentery after he ate four-day-old stale bread.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

a. What was grandfather's attitude when Bapu Patil humiliated him?

Upon seeing Yetalya and Mhadeva, Bapu Patil started a long tirade in which he insulted the Mahar community. He asked with what evil intention they had come at such an early hour, and that they had ruined his day by bringing ill-luck to him. Yetalya displayed no reaction to Patil's rudeness but gently remarked that he was Patil's slaves and that they came looking for a job and it was his privilege to beg for his share of corn as wages. His humility angered Patil, and sarcastically commented that they were Harijans, and had claimed equality; so Patil was no longer their bread-giver. Yetalya straightened himself with certain pride and said that he was not one among those who claimed equality. He respected the fact that God had created religion and castes, and did not intend on questioning them.

b. How did Mhadeva react to Bapu Patil's sarcastic comments?

Upon seeing them Bapu Patil started a long tirade in which he

insulted the Mahar community. Yetalya displayed no reaction to Patil's rudeness but remained subservient, much to the dismay of Mhadeva. According to Patil, they have angered the rain-god causing the drying up of Chandrabhaga river. The Mahars and Mangs had profaned religion and by abandoning caste they have defiled Lord Vithoba of Pandharpur. Mhadeva interrupted Patil and said they did not pollute religion. Religion should treat human beings simply as human beings, and not based on caste differences. He asked who created the Mahars and Mangs and what God could they claim as their own. Also, he had addressed him simply as "Patil," whereas the rest of their clan called him Anna or "Elder Brother", which further angered Patil.

c. Why did Patil deny their wage or share of corn at the end of the day?

Mhadeva was city-bred and had gained education. Yetalya displayed no reaction to Patil's rudeness but remained subservient, much to the dismay of Mhadeva. So Mhadeva interrupted Patil's angry tirade. He found no point in suffering the humiliation silently. He argued that the belief that lower caste was created from the foot of Brahma gave upper caste the right to treat them like footwear. But they were also human beings with flesh and blood, and there was no difference between a Mahar and a Patil. Patil declared that if Yetalya's grandson was so well-off Yetalya had no need to beg for food from Patil. He reminded them that a little learning does not give the boy the right to teach him.

d. How does Mhadeva react to getting the stale, rancid crumbs of bread?

Yetalya begged to Patil for food, but was not given anything. He noticed the neglected food in the animal pen. He gathered the stale, rancid pieces of bread lying on the ground in front of the oxen. Flies were swarming over the moldering crumbs, which had turned green and foul. Mhadeva mocked his grandfather saying that they are no better than cats or dogs because all they had received as payment were some rotten pieces of bread. In his opinion, the hereditary land right had trapped Mahars. They had to feed themselves on the

charity of others and could never dream of doing business independently. He opened his grandfather's eyes when he said that all that comes from begging is more begging.

e. Comment on the reaction of Grandma when grandfather throws the crumbs.

Yetalya had thrown away the stale bread he collected, to dogs. His wife saw this and came rushing out of the house. She shouted at him asking if he had gone mad. She collected the pieces before the dogs could get them and cleaned the mud off them. She mixed them with dulli and cooked them for supper. At night everyone greedily ate them, and after the heavy meal they fell asleep. Next morning Yetalya was found to be sick with dysentery.

f. What realization did the grandfather have on his deathbed?

Seeing every one cry, Yetalya asked them not to cry since he was old. He realized that it was the lack of education that prevented a Mahar from being independent. One should take away the accursed poison bread from the mouths of Mahar people; the bread would take away the humaneness in humans. In the end, he dies with the realization that his true Dalit identity is not one of slavishness, but of reclaiming his rights as a human being. The words inflamed Mhadeva yearning to retaliate against the injustice towards Dalit people. Even after twelve years, during every harvest season Mhadeva is reminded of his grandfather's last words.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a. Narrate the experience that Yetalya and his grandson Mhadeva had at the Patil's house and the consequent change of attitude that Yetalya had.

or

b. "The Poisoned Bread" highlights the Dalit predicament and the emergence of an empowered Dalit consciousness. Discuss.

During harvest time, Mhadeva accompanied his grandfather Yetalya Aja to Bapu Patil's farm. They were looking for a job of winnowing and treading out the corn at the threshing floor. Upon seeing Yetalya and Mhadeva, Bapu Patil started a long tirade in

which he insulted the Mahar community. He asked with what evil intention they had come at such an early hour, and that they had ruined his day by bringing ill-luck to him. Yetalya displayed no reaction to Patil's rudeness but gently remarked that he was Patil's slaves and that they came looking for a job and it was his privilege to beg for his share of corn as wages. His humility angered Patil, and sarcastically commented that they were Harijans, and had claimed equality; so Patil was no longer their bread-giver. Yetalya straightened himself with certain pride and said that he was not one among those who claimed equality. He respected the fact that God had created religion and castes, and did not intend on questioning them.

According to Patil, they have angered the rain-god causing the drying up of Chandrabhaga River. The Mahars and Mangs had profaned religion and by abandoning caste they have defiled Lord Vithoba of Pandharpur. Mhadeva interrupted Patil and said they did not pollute religion. Religion should treat human beings simply as human beings, and not based on caste differences. He asked who created the Mahars and Mangs and what God could they claim as their own. Also, he had addressed him simply as "Patil," whereas the rest of their clan called him Anna or "Elder Brother", which further angered Patil.

Yetalya defended his grandson by saying that he was young and being city-bred he gained education. Patil declared that if Yetalya's grandson was so well-off Yetalya had no need to beg for food from Patil. He reminded them that a little learning does not give the boy the right to teach him.

They toiled in the hot sun and Yetalya went to Gyanba Patil's threshing floor to get a tripod and a few measures of corn. Babu Patil came back with Tuka Magdoo and started to verbally abuse Yetalya. When Yetalya returned, Babu Patil declared that they would not be given any wages.

Yetalya begs for food, but was not given anything. Dejected, he gathered the stale, foul smelling pieces of bread from the animal pen. Mhadeva questioned the animal-like existence of the Mahar community to which Yetalya replies that he wanted to protest against the injustice but that he was helpless. In Mhadeva's opinion, the hereditary land right had trapped Mahars. They had to feed

themselves on the charity of others and could never dream of doing business independently. He opened his grandfather's eyes when he said that all that comes from begging is more begging.

Yetalya had thrown away the stale bread he collected, to dogs. His wife saw this and came rushing out of the house. She shouted at him asking if he had gone mad. She collected the pieces before the dogs could get them and cleaned the mud off them. She mixed them with dulli and cooked them for supper. At night everyone greedily ate them, and after the heavy meal they fell asleep. Next morning, Yetalya was writhing in pain because he was vomiting and purging. Mhadeva thought about the stale bread they had to eat, and was once again reminded of the pathetic, animal-like existence his community led. The doctor confirmed that the dysentery was caused by the toxins in the stale bread.

When none of the medicines proved effective, and seeing his grandfather suffer, Mhadeva was devastated. Yetalya realized that it was the lack of education that prevented a Mahar from being independent. One should take away the accursed poison bread from the mouths of Mahar people, the bread that would take away the humaneness in humans. The words inflamed Mhadeva yearning to retaliate against the injustice towards Dalit people. Even after twelve years, during every harvest season Mhadeva is reminded of his grandfather's last words.

The experience that Yetalya and his grandson Mhadeva had at the Patil's house opened and Yetalya's eyes. After consuming the poisoned bread, he became aware of the animal-like existence the Mahar community was leading. In the end, he dies with the realization that his true Dalit identity is not one of slavishness, but of reclaiming his rights as a human being. He left the legacy of invoking a Dalit movement to his grandson. Thus, "The Poisoned Bread" highlights the Dalit predicament and the emergence of an empowered Dalit consciousness.

8

A TRIP WESTWARD

Zitkala-Sa

Introduction

Zitkala-Sa was a Native American writer, editor, musician, teacher and political activist. Her birth name was Gertrude Simmons and she was born on the Yankton Indian Reservation. When she was a child she was recruited by Quaker missionaries for a boarding school for Indians. Most of her stories are based on her struggle to retain her cultural identity against a dominant Anglo-American culture.

SUMMARY

The current passage is taken from the chapter *An Indian Teacher among Indians* published in *American Indian Stories* (1921). In the story, Zitkala-Sa narrates the experience of her trip to her home in Yankton Indian Reservation. She describes the sights she sees during her long journey through the reservation. When she steps down at the station, she feels nostalgic as the wind blows her hat off, returning her to the olden days when she roamed bareheaded over the hills.

She hires a vehicle and travels to her home along with an Indian driver. On the roadside she noticed various plants, the roots of which were used as food among her people. She is restless until she reaches in front of her mother's canvas-covered wigwam, and worried about meeting her mother after a long time. Her mother never went to school. Unlike Zitkala-Sa, her mother made compromises and did not give up her own customs in order to follow the white man's ways.

Soon she notices the dilapidated condition of her home - the logs of the wigwam were not in place, sunflower seeds sprouted on the roof - and asks her mother why the house remained uncemented. The mother replies now that she is old she does not work with beads anymore. Her brother Dawee has lost his job as a government clerk and there is no money to buy food. The US President decided to give Dawee's job to a white person, rendering his education useless. Seeing the injustice done to her family, all her nostalgic feelings disappear and she is inflamed with feelings.

The narrative is about the plight of Yankton Dakotas; it is but a reminder of the ways in which indigenous populations are marginalized and exploited across the world and history.

സംഗ്രഹം

American Indian Stories എന്ന പുസ്തകത്തിൽ നിന്നെടുത്തതാണ് ഈ ഖണ്ഡിക-യാങ്ടൺ ഡക്കോട്ട റിസർവേഷനിലേക്ക് Zitkala Sa നടത്തിയ യാത്രയുടെ അനുഭവ വിവരണമാണിത്. സംവരണ സ്ഥലത്തുകൂടി ഉള്ള നീണ്ട യാത്രയിലെ കാഴ്ചകൾ ഇവിടെ പങ്കുവെക്കുന്നു. ഹാറ്റ് ധരിക്കാതെ ആ കുന്നുപുറങ്ങളിൽ കാറ്റുപോലെ കറങ്ങി നടന്ന കുട്ടിക്കാലത്തേക്കുള്ള ഒരു ഗൃഹാതുര യാത്രയായി അതു മാറുന്നു. സ്റ്റേഷനിലിറങ്ങുമ്പോൾ വീശിയടിച്ച കാറ്റ് ഓർമകളിലേക്ക് അവളെ കൊണ്ടു പോകുന്നു.

ഒരു American Indian ഡ്രൈവറുമായി വാടകവണ്ടിയിൽ സ്വന്തം വീട്ടിലേക്ക് പോകുകയാണ് കഥാകൃത്ത്. അവളുടെ കുടുംബത്തിലെ ഡക്കോട്ടകൾ ആഹാരമായി ഉപയോഗിച്ചിരുന്ന ചെടികളുടെ വേരുകൾ അവൾ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കുന്നു. തന്റെ അമ്മയുടെ കുടാരത്തിലെത്തുന്നതുവരെ അവൾ അസ്വസ്ഥയാണ്. ഒരുപാട് കാലത്തിന് ശേഷമാണ് അവൾ അമ്മയെക്കാണുന്നത് അതിന്റേതായ ആശങ്ക അവൾക്കുണ്ട്. അമ്മ സ്കൂളിൽ പോയിട്ടില്ല. അമ്മ, Zitkala -Sa യെ പ്ലാലെയല്ല. വെള്ളക്കാർനെപ്പോലെയാകാൻ വീട്ടുവീഴ്ചകൾ നടത്തുകയോ പാരമ്പര്യം ഉപേക്ഷിക്കുകയോ ചെയ്തിട്ടില്ല.

കുടാരത്തിന്റെ പഴകിപ്പൊളിഞ്ഞ അവസ്ഥയും അതിനു മേലെ മുളച്ചു വരുന്ന സൂര്യകാന്തി വിത്തുകളും ശ്രദ്ധിച്ച കഥാകൃത്ത്, വീട് സിമെന്റിട്ടുറപ്പിക്കാത്തത് എന്തുകൊണ്ടാണെന്നും അമ്മയോടന്വേഷിക്കുന്നു. പ്രായാധിക്യം കൊണ്ട് തന്റെ പരമ്പരാഗത തൊഴിലായ ആഭരണനിർമ്മാണം നടക്കുന്നില്ലെന്നും അവളുടെ സഹോദരനായ Dawee യ്ക്ക് ജോലി നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടെന്നും തുറന്നുപറയുന്നു. ആഹാരത്തിനു പോലും പണമില്ലാത്ത അവസ്ഥയിലാണവർ. സഹോദരന്റെ ജോലി വെള്ളക്കാർക്കു നൽകപ്പെട്ടെന്നും അവന്റെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം ഇനി ഉപയോഗശൂന്യമാണെന്നുമുള്ള വാക്കുകൾ അവളെ ചൊടിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. ഗൃഹാതുരത്വം അനീതിക്കെതിരെയുള്ള കോപത്തിന് വഴിമാറുന്നു.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two:

a. Where is the author going?

The author goes to her home in Yankton Indian Reservation to meet her mother.

b. Why was the author thrilled?

The author was meeting her mother after a long time and she wondered what her mother would say when she saw her little daughter all grown up. Planning to surprise her mother, she did not write a letter to her mother announcing the details of her arrival. She felt that the familiar surroundings of the place she grew up in greeted her old friends.

c. How did the author live in the olden days?

When she was a child, the author led a carefree life in her Reservation. She used to roam bareheaded over the hills she lived close to Nature.

d. What caused the driver to jump suddenly in his drowsiness?

While she was travelling to her mother's place, she notices the first cone-shaped wigwam. She exclaims loudly causing the driver to suddenly jump out of his drowsiness.

e. Where did the author's mother live?

The author's mother lived in a little canvas-covered wigwam in Yankton Indian Reservation. The place was in a dilapidated condition much to the dismay of the author.

f. What does the author mean when she says her mother made only compromises?

Unlike Zitkala-Sa, her mother made compromises and did not give up her own customs in order to follow the white man's ways. She stayed close to her own people and culture.

g. Why does mother live in an uncemented house?

When the author asks her mother why the house remained uncemented, the mother replies now that she is old she does not work with beads anymore. Her brother Dawee has lost his job as a government clerk to a white man. In short, there is no money to buy even a morsel of food.

h. What happened to the author's brother Dawee?

The author's brother Dawee was a government clerk in their Reservation. The US President - the Great Father - decided to give Dawee's job to a white man.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

a. Describe the terrain of the homeward trail of the author.

It was a hot day when the author started her journey towards her home. As the scenery receded from her, she noticed the gradual expansion of the horizon. As she moved out into the plains out of the forest, the clusters of tall buildings reduced in numbers. There were only small log cabins that were situated comfortably in the heart of Nature. The shadows of clouds, the long yellow grasses thrilled the author like meeting old friends. When she stepped down at the station, the wind seems to blow away her hat off, returning her to the olden days when she roamed bareheaded over the hills. She hired a vehicle and travels to her home along with an Indian driver. On the roadside she noticed various plants whose roots were used as food among her people. She noticed the first cone-shaped wigwam and exclaimed loudly causing the driver to suddenly jump out of his drowsy nodding. As she travelled through the homeward trail, the familiar scenes filled her with nostalgic feelings.

b. Describe the landscape of the reservation where the author's mother's house is located.

The author was meeting her mother after a long time and she wondered what her mother would say seeing her little daughter all grown up. Planning to surprise her mother, she did not write a letter to her mother announcing the details of her arrival. She felt that the familiar surroundings of the place she grew up in greeted her old friends. As the author continued towards her homeward trail, she

notices the familiar rugged cliffs and round-topped hills. She crossed a ravine which was thicketed with small shrubs and bushes. There was a large yellow field of sunflowers which served like a garden to her mother's cottage.

c. Describe the author's mother's cottage.

The author's mother lived in a little canvas-covered wigwam in Yankton Indian Reservation. There was a large yellow field of sunflowers which served like a garden to her mother's cottage. The place had two windows, directly opposite to each other. The pink-flowered curtains were the only decoration in the place. The place was in a dilapidated condition much to the dismay of the author. The house was not cemented, the logs of the wigwam were not in place, and sunflower seeds carried by the wind sprouted on the roof. The rains had soaked the earth and roof and there was the smell of damp clay. The author felt that this peculiar smell was the natural breath of such a dwelling.

d. Why was the author inflamed upon listening to her mother's story?

Upon her visit, Zitkala-Sa, noticed the pathetic conditions of her home - the logs of the wigwam were not in place, and sunflower seeds had sprouted on the roof. She asked her mother why the house remained uncemented. The mother replied that since was old, she did not work with beads anymore. Also, the author's brother Dawee who was a government clerk in their Reservation, lost his job. The US President - the Great Father - decided to give Dawee's job to a whiteman. Dawee could not make use of the education the Eastern school had given him. In short, there is no money to buy even a morsel of food, so mother cannot repair the dilapidated house. Seeing the injustice done to her family, all her nostalgic feelings disappear and she is inflamed with feelings. Till her visit, the author remained unaware of her family's condition.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a. Narrate the experience of Zitkala-Sa on her trip to her home in her reservation.

The author goes to her home in Yankton Indian Reservation to meet her mother. The author was meeting her mother after a long time and she wondered what her mother would say seeing her little daughter all grown up. Planning to surprise her mother, she did not write a letter to her mother announcing the details of her arrival. She felt that the familiar surroundings of the place she grew up in greeted her old friends.

It was a hot day when the author started her journey towards her home. As the scenery receded from her, she noticed the gradual expansion of the horizon. As she moved out into the plains out of the forest, the clusters of tall buildings reduced in numbers. There were only small log cabins that were situated comfortably in the heart of Nature. The shadows of clouds, the long yellow grasses thrilled the author like meeting old friends. When she stepped down at the station, the wind seems to blow away her hat off, returning her to the olden days when she roamed bareheaded over the hills. She hired a vehicle and travels to her home along with an Indian driver. On the roadside she noticed various plants whose roots were used as food among her people. She noticed the first cone-shaped wigwam and exclaimed loudly causing the driver to suddenly jump out of his drowsy nodding. As she travelled through the homeward trail, the familiar scenes filled her with nostalgic feelings.

As the author continued towards her homeward trail, she notices the familiar rugged cliffs and round-topped hills. She crossed a ravine which was thicketed with small shrubs and bushes. There was a large yellow field of sunflowers which served like a garden to her mother's cottage. The author's mother lived in a little canvas-covered wigwam in Yankton Indian Reservation. There was a large yellow field of sunflowers which served like a garden to her mother's cottage. The place had two windows, directly opposite to each other. The pink-flowered curtains were the only decoration in the place. The place was in a dilapidated condition much to the dismay of the author. The house was not cemented, the logs of the wigwam were not in place, and sunflower seeds carried by the wind sprouted on the roof. The rains had soaked the earth and roof and there was the smell of damp clay. The author felt that this peculiar smell was the natural breath of such a dwelling.

Upon her visit, Zitkala-Sa, noticed the pathetic conditions of her home - the logs of the wigwam were not in place, and sunflower seeds had sprouted on the roof. She asked her mother why the house remained uncemented. The mother replied that since was old, she did not work with beads anymore. Also, the author's brother Dawee who was a government clerk in their Reservation, lost his job. The US President - the Great Father - decided to give Dawee's job to a whiteman. Dawee could not make use of the education the Eastern school had given him. In short, there is no money to buy even a morsel of food, so mother cannot repair the dilapidated house. Seeing the injustice done to her family, all her nostalgic feelings disappear and she is inflamed with feelings.

b. Elicit the basic theme of the passage "A Trip Westward" in the light of the treatment meted out to the Native Americans by the White Settlers.

The author goes to her home in Yankton Indian Reservation to meet her mother. The author was meeting her mother after a long time and she wondered what her mother would say seeing her little daughter all grown up. Planning to surprise her mother, she did not write a letter to her mother announcing the details of her arrival. She felt that the familiar surroundings of the place she grew up in greeted her old friends.

When she stepped down at the station, the wind seems to blow away her hat off, returning her to the olden days when she roamed bareheaded over the hills. She hired a vehicle and travels to her home along with an Indian driver. On the roadside she noticed various plants whose roots were used as food among her people. When she was a child, she used to live closer to Nature.

The author's mother lived in a little canvas-covered wigwam. Upon her visit, Zitkala-Sa, noticed the pathetic conditions of her home - the logs of the wigwam were not in place, and sunflower seeds had sprouted on the roof. She asked her mother why the house remained uncemented. The mother replied that since was old, she did not work with beads anymore. Fashioning beads was a sacred task for the Native Americans and only women were allowed to create beads.

Also, the author's brother Dawee who was a government clerk in their Reservation, lost his job. The US President - the Great Father - decided to give Dawee's job to a white man. Dawee could not make use of the education the Eastern school had given him. In short, there is no money to buy even a morsel of food, so they cannot repair the dilapidated house.

The mother informs that white settlers are occupying the land allowed to the Yankton Dakota Reservation under the Dawes Act of 1877. Reservation was a tract of land set apart by the US Government for the use of Native American people. Even that piece of land was being taken away from the Native Americans.

The author was inflamed with feelings when she sees the injustice done to her people. Till her visit, the author remained unaware of her family's condition. When she was a child she was recruited by Quaker missionaries for a boarding school for Indians. Years later, the trip to her home awakened her and she realized that she distanced herself from her home and culture. She became aware of the ill-treatment meted out to the Native Americans by the White Settlers.

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THE POT MAKER

Temsula Ao

Temsula Ao is a renowned poet and short story writer from Nagaland. She was a professor at the prestigious North Eastern Hill University in Shillong. She is recognized as one of the major literary voices of Northeast India and was awarded the Padmashri in 2007.

SUMMARY

"The Potmaker" is included in Temsula's short story collection *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone* (2006). The story is set in a Naga community. Sentila wishes to become a pot maker, following the footsteps of her mother and grandmother. The other potters discourage her saying that it is backbreaking work, often frustrating when it yields no results. Her mother Arenla tried to make her learn weaving since it is a highly valued skill in any girl, but Sentila is adamant wishing to learn pottery. Secretly, she makes daily visits to the potter's place. When the mother comes to know about her visits, she decides not to say anything but wait to see how serious Sentila was. When her visits become a topic of village gossip the village council summons Sentila's father Mesoba. He lies that Sentila goes to listen to the lullabies of an old woman, and that he had ordered a dao for her. The council tells him to remind his wife that it was her obligation to teach her daughter the skills that were handed down from generation to generation. The skills belonged to the community and not to an individual. If Arenla hesitates to do it, she will be declared as the enemy of the village.

Half-heartedly, Arenla shows her daughter how to make pots and takes pleasure in seeing her daughter fail miserably. But Sentila does not give up. She meets Onula, an old woman who supervises the girls' dormitories. Onula decides to help her and patiently shows Sentila how to mould the clay to make the desired shape. Sentila makes an imperfect pot, and Onula suggests that she should learn the rest from her mother.

Next time when they are together, Sentila observes how her mother makes pots. Arenla asks Sentila to make pots, stepping away from the shed complaining of illness. Sentila undergoes an epiphany as she makes pots and arranges them in a row. When Sentila returns home, she finds her mother lying on the floor. Realising that she had passed away, Sentila runs to the village watchmen. Throughout the night she sits next to her mother's dead body, muttering to herself. When the body was taken away, she ran after it asking for forgiveness. Onula suspects that something had happened between the mother and the daughter and she visits the shed. She finds two rows of pots, and cannot find any difference between them. She assumes that Arenla alone could not make them in such a short span of time, nor could Sentila who was too young to achieve it by herself. Both set of pots were perfect. She realises that Sentila had met her true calling and a new pot maker was born.

സംഗ്രഹം

നാഗൻമാരുടെ ഇടയിൽ നടന്ന കഥയാണ് തെംസുല അദ്ദേഹം ഈ കഥ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. നായികയായ സെന്റിലയ്ക്ക് തന്റെ അമ്മയെയും മുത്തശ്ശിയെയും പോലെ പരമ്പരാഗതമായി കലമുണ്ടാക്കുന്ന തൊഴിലിൽ ഏർപ്പെടാൻ ആണ് താൽപര്യം. നടുവൊടിക്കുന്ന, മടുപ്പിക്കുന്ന, ഫലമില്ലാത്ത തൊഴിലാണിത് എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞ് അവളെ പിന്തിരിപ്പിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുകയാണ് മറ്റു കുശവന്മാർ. അവളുടെ അമ്മയായ അരൻല അവളെ കച്ചവടസാധ്യത കൂടുതലുള്ള നെയ്ത്തുവിദ്യ അഭ്യസിപ്പിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നു. എന്നാൽ സെന്റിലയ്ക്ക് വീണ്ടും കലം മനയൽ ആണ് താൽപര്യം. അവിടെ ഒരു കുശവക്കുടിയിലേക്ക് ദിവസവും ഹൃസ്വസന്ദർശനം നടത്തുന്ന സെന്റിലയെ കാണുന്ന അമ്മ, അവളെ ശകാരിക്കുന്നില്ലെങ്കിലും അവളുടെ ഉദ്ദേശ്യമറിയാൻ കാത്തിരിക്കുന്നു. അവളുടെ സന്ദർശനങ്ങൾ ഗ്രാമത്തിലെ സംസാരവിഷയമാകുമ്പോൾ ഗ്രാമസഭ അവളുടെ അച്ഛനായ മെസൊബയെ വിളിച്ചുവരുത്തുന്നു. താരാട്ടു പാട്ടുകൾ കേട്ടു പഠിക്കാൻ പോയതാണെന്നും കള്ളം പറഞ്ഞു സെന്റിലയെയും അരൻലയെയും പിന്തിരുത്തുന്ന മെസൊബയെ തലമുറകളായി കൈമാറിവന്ന കൈമിടുകുകൾ അടുത്ത തലമുറയ്ക്ക് പകർന്നു നൽകേണ്ട ബാധ്യത അരൻലയ്ക്കുണ്ടെന്നു

ഓർമ്മപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. അത്തരം കഴിവുകൾ വ്യക്തിയുടെത് എന്നതിനെക്കാൾ സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ പൊതുസ്വത്താണ് എന്ന് പരാമർശിക്കുന്ന അവർ, ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ അരെൻല മടിച്ചുനിന്നാൽ അവളെ ഗ്രാമത്തിന്റെ ശത്രുവായി പ്രഖ്യാപിക്കേണ്ടി വരുമെന്നും ഓർമ്മിപ്പിക്കുന്നു.

മനസില്ലാമനസോടെ അമെൻല സെന്റിലയെ കലം മെനയാൻ പഠിപ്പിക്കുകയും അവളുടെ പരിശ്രമങ്ങളുടെ പരാജയങ്ങളിൽ സന്തോഷിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. എന്നാൽ സെന്റില തന്റെ ശ്രമങ്ങൾ ഉപേക്ഷിക്കുന്നില്ല. പെൺകുട്ടികളുടെ വാസസ്ഥലം നോക്കുന്ന ഒന്നുല എന്ന സ്ത്രീയുമായി ചങ്ങാത്തെ കൂടുന്ന അവൾ കൂടുതൽ പരിശ്രമിക്കുന്നു. ഒന്നുല അവളെ പ്രാഥമികപാഠങ്ങൾ ക്ഷമയോടെ പഠിപ്പിച്ച ശേഷം പ്രാവീണ്യം നേടേണ്ടത് അമ്മയിൽ നിന്നാണെന്ന് ഉപദേശിക്കുന്നു.

അടുത്ത തവണ ഒരുമിച്ചായിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ അമ്മ കലം മെനയുന്നത് അവൾ സൂക്ഷ്മമായി നിരീക്ഷിക്കുന്നു. ശാരീരിക ആസ്വാസ്ഥ്യം ആണെന്ന് പറഞ്ഞ് അമ്മ സെന്റിലയോട് കലം മെനയാൻ ആവശ്യപ്പെടുകയും അവിടെ നിന്ന് പോകുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. വെളിപാട് കിട്ടിയതുപോലെ അവൾ കലം മെനഞ്ഞ് നിരയായി അടുക്കി വെക്കുന്നു. അമ്മയുടെ

നിരയിൽ ഉള്ളയത്രയും കലങ്ങൾ അതേ പോലെ മെനഞ്ഞ് സെന്റില അഭിമാനത്തോടെ വീട്ടിലെത്തുമ്പോൾ മരിച്ചു കിടക്കുന്ന അമ്മയെയാണ് കാണുന്നത്. ഗ്രാമവാസികളോടൊപ്പം മരണാനന്തര ചടങ്ങുകളിൽ പങ്കെടുക്കുന്ന സെന്റില അമ്മയുടെ ശരീരത്തിനടുത്ത് നിന്നും മാറാതെ പിറുപുറുത്തു കൊണ്ടേയിരുന്നു.

സംസ്കാരത്തിനായി ശരീരമെടുത്തപ്പോൾ പിന്നാലെ ഓടി ക്ഷമ ചോദിക്കുകയാണ് സെന്റില. ഇതു കാണുന്ന ഒന്നുല അമ്മയ്ക്കും മകൾക്കുമിടയിൽ എന്തോ സംഭവിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട് എന്ന് ഊഹിക്കുകയും അവരുടെ പണിസ്ഥലം സന്ദർശിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. അവിടെ രണ്ടു നിര കലങ്ങൾ കാണുന്ന അന്നുലയ്ക്ക് ആ കലങ്ങൾ തമ്മിൽ വ്യത്യാസമൊന്നും കണ്ടെത്താനാവുന്നില്ല. ആ കുറഞ്ഞ സമയത്തിനുള്ളിൽ അരെൻലയാവില്ല അത്രയും

കലങ്ങൾ മെനഞ്ഞതെന്ന് ഊഹിക്കുന്ന ഒന്നുല, അമ്മയോളം പ്രഗത്ഭയായി മാറിയിരിക്കുന്നു സെന്റില എന്നു മനസിലാക്കുന്നു. ഗ്രാമത്തിന് ഒരു പുതിയ കുശവനെ കൂടി ലഭിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two:

a. Why was Arenla reluctant to teach Sentila the craft of pot making?

Arenla believes that Sentila should learn weaving since it is a highly valued skill in any girl. Pottery is backbreaking work, and often frustrating when it yields no results. She thought that Sentila was not serious about her dream of becoming a potter.

b. Why does Arenla feel that weaving is a better craft to learn than pot making?

Arenla believes that Sentila should learn weaving since it is a highly valued skill in any girl.

c. Why did Mesoba return home with a heavy heart after meeting the elders?

His wife's arguments had practical sense in it but he could not ignore the opinions of the village council which always put the collective good above individual interests. The council did not respect Arenla's decision and wanted her to teach whatever she knew to her daughter, because the skills belonged to the community and not to an individual. If Arenla hesitates to do it, she will be declared as the enemy of the village.

d. Who is Onula? What was her attitude towards Sentila's wish to become a pot maker?

Onula was an old woman who supervised the girls' dormitories. She knew about the disagreement between Arenla and Sentila. She realised that Sentila was serious about pursuing her dream as a potter and decided to help the girl fulfill her dream.

e. Why was Sentila surprised when her mother left her in the shed to make pots?

The first time Arenla showed her Sentila how to make pots, she took pleasure in seeing her daughter fail miserably. This time Sentila

was surprised that her mother left her alone, without staying back gloat over yet another failure.

f. What was Sentila's reaction when her mother's body was carried out for burial?

When the body was taken away, she ran after it asking for forgiveness. She never intended any of this to happen, and that simply "came" to her.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

a. Describe Sentila's visit to the old potmakers' shed.

Sentila wishes to become a pot maker, following the footsteps of her mother and grandmother. Her mother Arenla tried to make her learn weaving since it is a highly valued skill in any girl, and refuses to teach her. Secretly, she visited women who were expert potters and requested them to teach her. They thought that the girl would outgrow her childish fascination for the craft. Seeing that Sentila was adamant in pottery, the potters discouraged her saying that it was backbreaking work. It is often frustrating when the sudden rain destroyed the batches left to dry. Some batches may be ruined completely because of the uneven firing in the makeshift kiln. Those that turned out to be bad could not be sold, they were either used at home for various purposes or given away. Sentila would take her baby brother to the potter's place and an old lady would sing lullabies to him. She enjoyed her visits as she watched the women engaged in their works.

b. What was the response of the elders of the village council to Mesoba's explanation?

When her visits became a topic of village gossip, the village council summoned Mesoba, Sentila's father. He lied that Sentila went to listen to the lullabies of an old women, and that he had ordered a dao for her, assuring that she will start to make pots soon. Convinced by what he said, the council decides to let him go. They told him to remind his wife that it was her obligation to teach her daughter the skills that were handed down from generation to generation. The skills belonged to the community and not to an individual. In morungs

-dormitories for men-expert men taught younger men the necessary skills for survival. Similarly, it was the duty of a mother to teach her daughter the skills meant for women. If Arenla hesitates to do it, she will be declared as the enemy of the village.

c. How did Onula help Sentila with pot making on the night of the music band's visit?

On the night of the music band's visit, Sentila was trying to make pots without waking Onula. But the woman was watching her with sympathy and revealed her intention of helping her. She gave advices to make a perfect pot - how to keep the thighs muscles taut, to cover the thighs with a sacking, to make sure her hand is not wet too much as she dipped it in water, the right way to hold the spatula rhythmically. Sentila makes an imperfect pot, and Onula suggests that she should learn the rest from her mother. Sentila was a quick learner and she could learn the rest from her mother. That way she can follow the rulings of the council too.

d. What did Sentila experience while making pots after Arenla left her in the shed?

Arenla asks Sentila to make pots, stepping away from the shed complaining of illness. Sentila took a lump of clay and placed in on her sack-covered thigh. She dipped her hand into the water and carefully inserted it into the clay. Then using the spatula she began to shape the clay. She began to be in a dream-like state as the clay began to transform into the shape of a pot. She was surprised by her skills and began to undergo an epiphany. She made pot after pots with the same speed and skill she had noticed in her mother's hand. She arranges them in a row, and notices that she had made just one short of her mother's talent.

e. What was Onula's impression about the two batches of moist pots in the shed?

Onula suspected that something had happened between the mother and the daughter and she visited the shed. She found two rows of newly made pots. She analysed them to find whether it was the work of one person or whether a second hand was involved in the process. She could not tell apart one batch from another. She

assumed that Arenla could not make them alone in such a short span of time, nor could Sentila who was too young to achieve it by herself. She felt that she has seen something very peculiar in the two batches of moist pots, placed side by side in perfect symmetry inside the shed. She realised that Sentila had met her true calling and a new pot maker was born.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a. Describe how Sentila becomes a pot maker, against the expectations of her mother.

OR

b. Critically analyse and respond to "The Pot Maker" as a story about tribal value systems that place collective good over individual interest.

The story is set in a Naga community. Sentila wishes to become a pot maker, following the footsteps of her mother and grandmother. Her mother Arenla tried to make her learn weaving since it is a highly valued skill in any girl, but Sentila is adamant wishing to learn pottery. Secretly, she makes daily visit to the potter's place. They thought that the girl would outgrow her childish fascination for the craft. Seeing that Sentila was adamant in pottery, the potters discouraged her saying that it was backbreaking work. It is often frustrating when the sudden rain destroyed the batches left to dry. Some batches may be ruined completely because of the uneven firing in the makeshift kiln. Those that turned out to be bad could not be sold, they were either used at home for various purposes or given away. When the mother comes to know about her visits, she decides not to say anything but wait to see how serious Sentila was.

When her visits became a topic of village gossip, the village council summoned Mesoba, Sentila's father. He lied that Sentila went to listen to the lullabies of an old women, and that he had ordered a dao for her, assuring that she will start to make pots soon. Convinced by what he said, the council decides to let him go. They told him to remind his wife that it was her obligation to teach her daughter the skills that were handed down from generation to generation. The skills belonged to the community and not to an individual. In morungs -dormitories for men-expert men taught younger men the necessary skills for survival. Similarly, it was the duty of a mother to teach her

daughter the skills meant for women. If Arenla hesitates to do it, she will be declared as the enemy of the village.

Mesoba returned home with a heavy heart after meeting the elders. His wife's arguments had practical sense in it but he could not ignore the opinions of the village council which always put the collective good above individual interests. Half-heartedly, Arenla showed her daughter how to make pots and took pleasure in seeing her daughter fail miserably.

But Sentila does not give up. She met Onula, an old woman who supervised the girls' dormitories. Onula decides to help her and patiently showed Sentila how to mould the clay to make the desired shape. Sentila makes an imperfect pot, and Onula suggests that she should learn the rest from her mother. Next time when they were together, Sentila observed how her mother makes pots. Arenla asks Sentila to make pots, stepping away from the shed complaining of illness. Sentila undergoes an epiphany as she made pots and arranged them in a row.

Onula suspected that something had happened between the mother and the daughter and she visited the shed. She found two rows of newly made pots. She analysed them to find whether it was the work of one person or whether a second hand was involved in the process. She could not tell apart one batch from another. She assumed that Arenla could not make them alone in such a short span of time, nor could Sentila who was too young to achieve it by herself. She felt that she has seen something very peculiar in the two batches of moist pots, placed side by side in perfect symmetry inside the shed. She realised that Sentila had met her true calling and a new pot maker was born.

The story focuses on value systems that hold the interests of the community over the individual. It highlights the formative influence of tribal tradition and customs on an individual and her aspirations. Sentila's community expects her to become a pot maker like her mother and grandmother. However her mother does not want her to be one. The village council intervenes in their lives to remind that they belong to a community which always put the collective good above individual interests. Towards the end, Sentila becomes a pot maker against her mother's expectations. In the eyes of the community she is upholding tradition, but she loses her mother in the process.

Module

IV

ENVIRONMENT
MATTERS

10

DOES IT MATTER?

Richard Leakey

Richard Leakey is a Kenyan anthropologist, politician and conservationist. He was the director of National Museum of Kenya. The essay "Does it Matter?" is an excerpt from Leakey's book on environmental issues titled *The Sixth Extinction*.

SUMMARY

The essay begins with a reference to the wager between Julian Simon and Paul Ehrlich and the opposing views on the need to preserve biodiversity. The question whether we need to be alarmed or not is brought to focus. Leakey elaborates on the three important areas of the value of biodiversity - economic, ecosystem services and aesthetic pleasure. He agrees with Les Kaufman that the loss of any species takes something away from the human soul.

He further stresses the need to sustain ecological diversity stating that our ignorance of the true nature of the input-output relations or interactions between species, may lead to an erroneous assessment of their value in an ecosystem, causing irrevocable breakdowns upon their loss.

Fossil records show that there have been several unpredictable and irreversible crises of life on the planet and every species, including *Homo Sapiens*, is vulnerable. While evolution is a powerfully creative process that has restored diversity after each prior mass extinction, it does not mean that human beings should not be concerned about preservation.

On the contrary, humankind, with no superior claims for self-preservation, has an ethical responsibility to protect Earth's biota. Unlike the five previous extinction events whose causes are not determined, the sixth extinction in progress is a direct result of human activity, making it critical that urgent efforts are made to halt the destruction of our planet's natural ecosystems.

സംഗ്രഹം

ജൈവ വൈവിധ്യം സംരക്ഷിക്കേണ്ട ആവശ്യമുണ്ടോ, അതെപ്പറ്റി ആശങ്കപ്പെടേണ്ട കാര്യമുണ്ടോ എന്നതിനെ പറ്റി ജൂലിയൻ സൈമൺ, പോൾ എൽറിഫ് എന്നിവർ തമ്മിലുള്ള തർക്കത്തെപ്പറ്റി സംസാരിച്ചുകൊണ്ടാണ് ലേഖനം ആരംഭിക്കുന്നത്. ലേഖകനായ റിച്ചാർഡ് ലീകി (alarm) ആശങ്ക ആവശ്യമാണെന്ന അഭിപ്രായക്കാരനാണ്. ജൈവവൈവിധ്യത്തിനു സാമ്പത്തികവും, ആവാസവ്യവസ്ഥിതി സംരക്ഷണപരവും, സൗന്ദര്യ ശാസ്ത്രപരവും ആയ മൂല്യമുണ്ടെന്ന് ലേഖകൻ വിശദീകരിക്കുന്നു.

വിവിധയിനം ജീവജാലങ്ങൾ തമ്മിലുള്ള വ്യവഹാരം, ബന്ധം എന്നിവയെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള അജ്ഞത, അവയുടെ മൂല്യത്തെ പൂർണ്ണമായി മനസ്സിലാക്കുന്നതിൽ നിന്നു നമ്മെ തടയുന്നു; അല്ലെങ്കിൽ തെറ്റായ മൂല്യധാരണകൾ ജനിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. ഈ മൂല്യധാരണകളിൽ നിന്നുകൊണ്ട് പാരിസ്ഥിതികവൈവിധ്യം സംരക്ഷിക്കാതെയിരുന്നാൽ തിരിച്ചെടുക്കാൻ വാങ്ങാത്ത തരത്തിലുള്ള മാറ്റങ്ങളും തകർച്ചയും അതുളവാക്കും എന്ന് ലേഖകൻ ഓർമ്മിപ്പിക്കുന്നു.

ഫോസിൽ രേഖകൾ പരിശോധിച്ചാൽ, മനുഷ്യന്മാർക്കുണ്ടെല്ലാ ജീവജാലങ്ങൾക്കും ആഘാതമായിത്തീരാൻ സാധ്യതയുള്ള പ്രവചനാതീതവും ഗതിനിർണ്ണയിക്കാനാവാത്തതുമായ പ്രതിസന്ധികളുടെ ചരിത്രം കാണാനാവും. മുൻപ് നടന്ന ഓരോ കൂട്ട-വംശനാശങ്ങൾക്കും ശേഷം പരിണാമത്തിന്റെ സർഗ്ഗശക്തി വൈവിധ്യം പുനഃസ്ഥാപിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടെങ്കിലും, അതിന്റെ അർത്ഥം മനുഷ്യൻ പരിസ്ഥിതിസംരക്ഷണത്തിന് ഊന്നൽ നൽകേണ്ടതില്ല എന്നല്ല.

മരിച്ച്, സ്വയം സംരക്ഷണത്തെപ്പറ്റിപ്പോലും ന്യായമായ അവകാശവാദങ്ങളുണ്ടാകാനാവാത്ത മനുഷ്യൻ, ഭൂമിയുടെ ജൈവവസ്തുവത്ത് മുഴുവനായും സംരക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള ധാർമിക ബാധ്യതയുണ്ട്, മുൻപു നടന്ന കാരണമറിയാത്ത കൂട്ടവംശനാശങ്ങളിൽ നിന്ന് വ്യത്യസ്തമായി, ഇപ്പോൾ നടന്നു കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ആറാം വംശനാശം മനുഷ്യന്റെ നേരിട്ടുള്ള ഇടപെടലുകൾ കാരണമാണ്. അതിനാൽ തന്നെ, ഭൂമിയുടെ ആവാസവ്യവസ്ഥയുടെ നാശം തടയുന്നതിന് അടിയന്തരമായ പരിശ്രമങ്ങൾ ആരംഭിക്കേണ്ടത് തികച്ചും അനിവാര്യമാണ്.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences:

a. Which three important areas of the value of biodiversity has Leakey identified?

The three important areas of value of biodiversity identified by Leakey are economic, ecosystem services and aesthetic. Firstly, if value can be identified the loss of diversity represents the loss of that value. Secondly, if an interacting network of plants and animals is important in sustaining the chemistry of the atmosphere and the soil, the loss of the species reduces the effectiveness of these services. Thirdly, if a rich diversity of species helps the human psyche in important ways, then the loss of species reduces us in some ineffable way.

b. What is Julian Simon's contention regarding the future of material resources of Earth?

Julian Simon contends that our continued appropriation of nature is compatible with sustaining an equable natural world. This conclusion is derived from the assumption that like the present, future technologies could provide human beings with the present and potential material resources indefinitely.

c. What might have precipitated mass extinctions in the past?

The five major extinctions in the past have occurred due to diverse causes. These include a severe ice age, a messy prolonged climate change, a savage episode of global warming emerging from volcanic eruptions and a giant asteroid impact.

d. What is the first and most immediate message given by fossil records?

The most immediate message of fossil records is that major catastrophic collapses of biodiversity can and do occur. These crises in life's flow can be rapid, irreversible and unpredictable. Thus, when human action results in the extirpation of a species, humans become responsible for the simultaneous loss of a continuous chain of genetic links that reaches back billion years.

- e. What is the second major message of fossil records?

The second major message of fossil records is that evolution is a wonderfully and powerfully creative process, one that rapidly fills the void left after each mass extinction. Often, the burgeoning of new species after extinction involves a transformation of the dominant form of life. In the age of mammals, primates have become not extensively endowed mentally.

- f. What is the holistic understanding of Earth's biota?

Homo sapiens like every species are a product of many chance events, leading back to the amazing explosion of life form half a billion years ago and beyond the origin of life itself. When one gains this holistic understanding of Earth's biota, one sees oneself as a part of the whole with a duty to protect and not harm the rest of the nature.

- g. How is the sixth extinction different from the Big Five before it?

Unlike the five previous extinction events whose causes are not determined, the sixth extinction is the direct result of human activity. It is also unusual particularly due to the fact that a large number of plant species are being wiped out, which is unprecedented compared with past crises.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

- a. How does Leakey establish that the loss of diversity of species represents the loss of associated values?

Leakey propounds that if animals and plants are a potential source of new materials, medicine and food, then the loss of species reduces that potential. If an interacting network of plants and animals is important in sustaining the chemistry of the atmosphere and soil, the loss of the species reduces the efficacy of the services. And if diversity of species succors the human psyche in important ways, then the loss of the species reduces man in some ineffable way. He says, that humans evolved within a world of nature, and an appreciation of, and need for, nature are real and ineradicable components of the human psyche. Humans are risking erosion of their soul if they allowed the erosion of the world of nature around them.

b. What is Julian Simon's view on the loss of species and how is it contrasted with the view of Les Kaufman?

Julian Simon argues that with recent scientific and technical advances-especially seed banks and genetic engineering-the importance of maintaining species in their natural habitat has diminished. He says that humans need not be enormously better off with persistence of any imagined species and that this casts doubt on the true economic value of species that might be lost elsewhere. He believes that we will be able to sustain an ever growing population for the next seven billion years in spite of the destruction of nature. Les Kaufman on the other hand believes that the human soul is integrated with nature and says in his book *The Last Extinction*, 'A piece of the American soul died along with the passenger pigeon, plains buffalo, and the "American chestnut".'

c. How does our understanding of the input-output relations of natural economy on Earth form our concepts regarding preservation of biodiversity?

The input-output relations are the interactions among species at all scales of life called ecosystem services. They represent the tangible elements of stability and health that emerge from the entire biota operating as a complex dynamic system. Our knowledge of the extent of its holistic and selective importance, and influence is limited. But human beings cannot afford to destroy their surroundings due to a possible non-utility of certain species. The costs of doing so are high because *Homo sapiens* are not only the agents of extinction, but also one of its victims. It is therefore, imperative that human beings partake in the preservation of biodiversity if not for nature at least for his own sake.

d. What are the responses of the alarmists and anti-alarmists to fossil records available?

Fossil records show that major catastrophic collapses of biodiversity has occurred in the past. According to alarmists this gives a clear warning that species and their communities are not infinitely resilient to external insult and that human beings bear the burden of erasing an entire chain of genetic links lasting from pre-

historic times when they wipe out a species. Anti-alarmists on the other hand, argue that according to fossil records species' lives are limited to one and ten million years, and any attempts to save them is a waste of resources as they are bound to disappear anyway.

e. Why should human beings be concerned about the preservation of diversity in the face of the sixth extinction event in progress?

Human beings should be concerned about the preservation of bio-diversity because they are inhabitants of the earth merely by chance, a chance of events leading to an explosion of life forms, half a billion years ago. Since man shares the Earth with all the species on it, he has a moral duty to protect it. When he sees himself as a part of the interactive whole of Earth's biota, it becomes binding on him to respect other species and not exploit them as a privileged species. The fact that *Homo sapiens* will disappear from the face of the Earth eventually does by no means give it the license to do as the will pleases.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a. Does the preservation of biodiversity really matter? Substantiate your viewpoint on the basis of the arguments raised by various alarmists and anti-alarmists.

The fast disappearing biodiversity in recent years has made its preservation a source of hot debate among academics mainly due to the economic costs involved in the preservation process. Richard Leakey argues that the value of biodiversity can be identified in three important areas: economic, ecosystem services and aesthetic. If animals and plants are a potential source of new materials, medicine and food, then the loss of species reduce that potential. If an interacting network of plants and animals is important in sustaining the chemistry of the atmosphere and soil, the loss of the species reduces the efficacy of the services. And if diversity of species succors the human psyche in important ways, then the loss of the species reduces man in some ineffable way.

The anti-alarmists among academics like Julian Simon and others argue that with recent scientific and technical advances-especially

seed banks and genetic engineering—the importance of maintaining species in their natural habitat has diminished. He says that humans need not be enormously better off with persistence of any imagined species and that this casts doubt on the true economic value of species that might be lost elsewhere. He believes that we will be able to sustain an ever growing population for the next seven billion years in spite of the destruction of nature. Anti-alarmists like Simon, argue that according to fossil records species' lives are limited to one and ten million years, and any attempts to save them is a waste of resources as they are bound to disappear anyway.

However, looking at fossil records is a matter of perspective. Alarmists argue that fossil records give a clear warning that species and their communities are not infinitely resilient to external insult and that human beings bear the burden of erasing an entire chain of genetic links lasting from pre-historic times when they wipe out a species. Thus, instead of being a self-centered abusive species, Leakey points out that the *Homo sapiens* needs to understand the Earth's biota operating as an interactive whole producing health and stability, and work towards protecting it.

b. How does Leakey establish the fact that *Homo sapiens* have a key responsibility to preserve biodiversity?

Richard Leakey argues that the value of biodiversity can be identified in three important areas: economic, ecosystem services and aesthetic. If animals and plants are a potential source of new materials, medicine and food, then the loss of species reduce that potential. If an interacting network of plants and animals is important in sustaining the chemistry of the atmosphere and soil, the loss of the species reduces the efficacy of the services. And if diversity of species succors the human psyche in important ways, then the loss of the species reduces man in some ineffable way.

Anti-alarmists like Julian Simon, argue that according to fossil records species' lives are limited to one and ten million years, and any attempts to save them is a waste of resources as they are bound to disappear anyway.

Leakey refutes this argument and says that human beings bear the burden of erasing an entire chain of genetic links lasting from

pre-historic times when they wipe out a species, since fossil records indicate that species and their communities are not infinitely resilient to external insult.

Human beings are inhabitants of the earth merely by chance, a chance of events leading to an explosion of life forms, half a billion years ago. Thus, instead of being a self-centered abusive species with the attitude of ownership, Leakey points out that the *Homo sapiens* needs to understand the Earth's biota operating as an interactive whole producing health and stability. Since man shares the Earth with all the species on it, he has a moral duty to protect it and not the right to exploit it.

Homo sapiens are not only the agents of extinction, but also one of its victims. It is therefore, imperative that human beings partake in the preservation of biodiversity if not for nature at least for their own sake.

(Combine 3.a. and 3.b. if necessary)

11

ON KILLING A TREE

Gieve Patel

Gieve Patel is a poet, painter, playwright and a doctor. He lives in Mumbai and practices medicine there. Along with his practice he has managed to write plays and poems of contemporary significance and organize exhibitions of his paintings in India and abroad.

SUMMARY

"On Killing a Tree" presents a clinical and systematic description of the procedure for killing a tree. Sardonic in tone, the poem criticizes the ruthless, methodical ways in which humans uproot trees which have taken years to come into being. Unmindful of these ecological processes, humans cut them down.

When a fully matured tree is hacked or chopped, it has a natural mechanism to heal. Its bark will heal and new green twigs and branches will sprout from the bottom. The tree will go back to its former size again if unchecked. A tree can be truly killed only when it's uprooted. This can be done by roping it and pulling it till it snaps or by pulling it out entirely. The tree will then become brown and wither and harden, and ultimately die. The earth is the anchor of stability and security to the tree. When the connection to the earth that is, the tree roots are taken away, the tree will begin to wither and then die.

The task of killing a tree is completed in the poem; but it clearly suggests that it can never be an accomplishment anywhere anytime.

സംഗ്രഹം

ഒരു മരത്തെ എങ്ങനെയാണ് കൊല്ലേണ്ടതെന്ന ചിട്ടയായ പ്രായോഗിക നടപടിക്രമങ്ങളാണ് ഈ കവിത അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. ആക്ഷേപരൂപത്തിൽ, ഈ കവിത വിമർശിക്കുന്നത് വർഷങ്ങളുടെ വളർച്ചയുടെ രൂപമായ മരത്തെ ചിട്ടയോടെ പിഴുതെറിയുന്ന മനുഷ്യന്റെ നിസംഗതയെയാണ്.

മുഴുവളർച്ചയെത്തിയ ഒരു മരത്തെ മുറിപ്പെടുത്തിയാൽ അതിനു മുറിവുണക്കുന്നതിന് ഒരു സ്വാഭാവികമായ പ്രക്രിയയുണ്ട്. അതിന്റെ തോലുണക്കുകയും ചെറുയിലകൾ മുളയ്ക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. കാലക്രമേണ മരം അതിന്റെ പൂർവസ്ഥിതി പ്രാപിക്കാനിടയുണ്ട്, നാമൊന്നും ചെയ്യാതിരുന്നാൽ വേരോടെ പിഴുതെടുക്കുകയാണ് മരത്തെ കൊല്ലുന്നതിന് ഉത്തമമായ രീതി. ഒടിഞ്ഞു വീഴുന്നതു വരെ വടം കെട്ടി വലിക്കുകയോ കടപുഴക്കുകയോ ചെയ്യാം. അപ്പോൾ മരത്തിന്റെ നിറം തവിട്ടുനിറമായി മാറുകയും, ഘനപ്പെടുകയും ഉണങ്ങുകയും മരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യും. ഭൂമിയാണ് മരത്തിന്റെ ഉറപ്പിന്റെയും സുരക്ഷിതത്വത്തിന്റെയും നങ്കൂരം. അതു നഷ്ടപ്പെടുമ്പോൾ, വേരുകൾ ഇല്ലാതാവുമ്പോൾ മരം ഉണങ്ങി മരിക്കുന്നു.

ഒരു മരത്തെ എങ്ങനെ വിജയകരമായി ഇല്ലാതാക്കാം എന്ന് കവിത കാട്ടിത്തരുന്നു. അതേസമയം ഒരിടത്തും ഒരിക്കലും അതൊരു നേട്ടമാവില്ലെന്നും കവിത ഒർമ്മിപ്പിക്കുന്നു.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences:

a. Is the poet really trying to teach us to kill a tree?

On the surface the poem appears to be about how to kill a tree, but in reality it is an outcry against human attempts to overcome nature and a reminder that nature rebounds even in the face of mass extinction. The poet uses a sardonic tone to criticize the ruthless ways in which humans uproot trees.

b. How has the tree grown to its present status?

The tree has grown slowly in a process spanned across years. As a seedling it consumed the nutrients within the earth and sprouted out. The tree reached its present state with abundant green foliage after absorbing years of sunlight, air and water through the processes of photosynthesis and respiration.

c. How will the tree overcome the hacking and chopping?

When a fully matured tree is hacked or chopped, it has a natural

mechanism to heal. Its bark will heal and new green twigs and branches will sprout from the bottom. The tree will go back to its former size again if left unchecked.

d. What does the poet mean by 'No' at the beginning of the third stanza?

The poet says that it is not enough to hack or chop a tree to kill it. It has to be uprooted as the roots of the tree are deep within the earth if it has to be killed.

e. What does the poet mean by 'anchoring earth' and 'earth-cave'?

By 'anchoring earth' the poet means that Earth is a solid anchor or stable support for the tree. The 'earth-cave' is a hollow in the earth used by primitive humans for shelter and storage. Here, the poet uses the term to show that to the tree's roots, the earth is a cave of security.

f. Why does the poet call the roots 'the strength of the tree'?

The poet calls roots 'the strength of the tree' as they are rooted in the soil which is the source of nutrition for the tree. It is also the part which helps the tree to regenerate if the tree is chopped off from above.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

a. Why does the poet say that it takes 'much time' to kill a tree?

The tree's relationship with the soil has been a deeply rooted and long one. As a seedling it consumed the nutrients within the earth and sprouted out. The tree reached its present state with abundant green foliage after absorbing years of sunlight, air and water through the processes of photosynthesis and respiration. Merely chopping it off from above is not sufficient to kill it as it has the ability to regenerate from below. The poet says that if a tree has to be killed it has to be uprooted as the strength of the tree lies in its roots which lie deep in the soil.

b. What needs to be done to kill a tree permanently?

To kill a tree one needs to attack its strength, that is, its roots need to be pulled out from the earth which offers it support and stability. The earth acts as an anchor of stability and source of resources to the tree. Since roots are the nodes that connect the earth and the tree, disconnecting the roots from the soil is vital to kill it permanently. This can be done by roping it and pulling it till it snaps or by pulling it out entirely. The tree will then become brown and wither and harden, and ultimately die.

c. How does the poet show the regenerative power of nature?

The poet shows the regenerative power of nature by describing the way a chopped of tree revives itself. He says that even if the trunk of a tree is chopped off, the bark has the potential to heal. New twigs and branches will soon sprout from the bottom to restore the tree to its former glory. A tree can be truly killed only if it's uprooted; signifying that regenerative power of nature resists and revives until the connection from the earth is destroyed completely. It's a reminder that nature rebounds even in the face of mass extinction.

d. What is the symbolic significance of roots?

The tree's roots signify its intimate connection with nature. This connection hidden deep within the earth sustains it on a day-to-day basis and in the event of a crisis. The earth provides the tree with the much needed resources through the roots and also helps it to regenerate if it's chopped off from above. This symbolizes the infinite potential of nature to nurture and heal all living things despite what humans do to destroy them. When human beings forget their roots with nature, however, and engage ultimate exploitation everything will wither like the uprooted tree.

e. What relationship between the earth and trees is presented in the poem?

The relationship between the earth and the trees is a one of the nurturer and the nurtured. The Earth acts like a mother to the trees and aids them to grow from a seedling to a tree. The soil is the

source of nutrients and water for the trees. Besides this, the literally deep rooted connection of the trees with earth enables them to regenerate back when chopped off by selfish human beings. The earth acts as an anchor of stability and cave of safety for the trees. The connection between the earth and trees severed only if they are uprooted; signifying that regenerative power of nature resists and revives until the connection from the earth is destroyed completely.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a. Critically evaluate the poem 'On Killing a Tree' considering the tree represents every living being with a deep connection with nature.

OR

b. How does the poem reinforce the regenerative power of nature, in the context of the dangers to biodiversity due to human actions?

In the poem 'On Killing a Tree', the poet adopts a sardonic tone to criticize the ruthless, methodical ways in which humans uproot trees which have taken years to grow. Using complex organic processes, a tree uses the resources in the air and soil to process food to grow. The tree has grown slowly in a process spanned across years. As a seedling it consumed the nutrients within the earth and sprouted out. The tree reached its present state with abundant green foliage after absorbing years of sunlight, air and water through the processes of photosynthesis and respiration. Unmindful of these ecological processes, humans cut them down.

When a fully matured tree is hacked or chopped, it has a natural mechanism to heal. Its bark will heal and new green twigs and branches will sprout from the bottom. The tree will go back to its former size again if unchecked. A tree can be truly killed only when it's uprooted. The regenerative power of nature resists and revives, until its connection with the earth is destroyed entirely. The earth is the anchor of stability and security to the tree. When the connection to the earth that is, the tree roots are taken away, the tree will begin to wither and then die.

On the surface, the poem appears to be about how to kill a tree, but in reality it is an outcry against human attempts to overcome

nature and a reminder that nature rebounds even in the case of mass extinction. The job of killing a tree is not over as long as its deepest roots - its intimate relationship with nature - are not pulled out.

The poem is a jab at human beings who ruthlessly exploit nature, unmindful of the fact that their own roots are deeply intermingled with Planet Earth. They fail to understand that if they continue destroying the various elements of nature it will finally lead to their own demise. The fact that nature has a miraculous ability to regenerate does not give humans the right to continue abusing nature as at some point it is bound to give way and collapse.

12

HAGAR: A STORY OF WOMAN AND WATER

Sara Joseph

Sarah Joseph is a leading feminist writer in Malayalam, social activist and the founder of 'Manushi' an organization for women thinkers. Her novels like Aalaahayude Penmakkal, Othappu, Aathi etc. gave her popularity and critical acclaim. She has been honoured by several awards for literary as well as social work.

SUMMARY

The chapter retells the biblical story of Hagar and Ishmael and their miraculous survival in the hostile desert where Abraham had abandoned them. Hagar did not understand the abandonment and questions Abraham's logic. He replied that it was the will of God. The will to keep her son, Ishmael alive gave her the courage to struggle against the hopelessness. She saved the few drops of water and dates left for her son despite being parched and hungry until the last, and protected him from the desert heat and cold using her body as a shield.

Hagar heard the voice of a mysterious bird in the wilderness. It was near a bush, flailing its wings and its downy feathers lay all around. It thrashed about on the ground heedless of blood that speckled its wings and found a hidden spring in the earth. Hagar screamed, scooped her son, rushed to the spring and immersed her son in water. She poured a palm full of water in his mouth and dipped him in water again and again.

She settled on the banks of the small lake that lay between the barren hills and thorny bushes. The mysterious bird had led her to the source of life. Hearing of the water source, nomads and desert tribes came in search. She made a covenant with them. Hagar was to act as the caretaker of the water, so that not a drop of it is wasted, for the sake of her child and future generations. She insisted that the covenant was for the sake of life and not ownership. She told them that the first drop of water from it had the value of the life of her

firstborn. They agreed to gather food for her in return for the water.

The nomads eventually settled near the lake, cultivated vegetables and harvested them. The harvests hatched festivals. In due course, a new community and civilization came into being.

സംഗ്രഹം

സാറാ ജോസഫിന്റെ ആതി എന്ന നോവലിന്റെ ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് പരിഭാഷയുടെ രണ്ടാം അധ്യായമാണ് പാഠഭാഗം. ബൈബിളിലെ ഹാഗാറിന്റെയും ഇശ്മയേലിന്റെയും കഥയുടെ പുനരവതരണമാണിത്. അബ്രഹാമിനാൽ കൊടിയ മരുഭൂമിയിൽ ഉപേക്ഷിക്കപ്പെട്ട അവരുടെ അത്ഭുതകരമായ അതിജീവനത്തിന്റെ കഥ. തങ്ങളുപേക്ഷിക്കപ്പെടുന്നതിന്റെ യുക്തി ഹാഗാറിനു മനസിലാക്കാനാവുന്നില്ല; അവൾ അബ്രഹാമിനോട് സംശയങ്ങളുന്നയിച്ചെങ്കിലും ദൈവഹിതം എന്ന അവി്യക്തമായ മറുപടിയാണ് ലഭിക്കുന്നത്. തന്റെ മകനായ ഇശ്മായേലിനെ ഏതു വിധേനയും സംരക്ഷിക്കാനുള്ള ഇച്ഛാശക്തി, നിരാശയ്ക്കെതിരെ പൊരുതുവാൻ അവളെ പ്രാപ്തയാക്കുന്നു. വിശപ്പു ദാഹവും കൊണ്ട് വലഞ്ഞെങ്കിലും കയ്യിലവേശേഷിച്ച ജലവും ഈന്തപ്പഴവും അവൾ അവനായി കരുതിവെക്കുന്നു. മരുഭൂമിയുടെ കൊല്ലുന്ന ചൂടിനെയും തണുപ്പിനെയും പ്രതിരോധിക്കാൻ അവന് വേണ്ടി അവൾ തന്റെ ശരീരം പരിചയായുപയോഗിക്കുന്നു.

ആ വന്യതയിൽ മരണം മുന്നിൽക്കാണുമ്പോൾ ഹാഗാർ ഒരു പക്ഷിയുടെ സ്വരം കേൾക്കുന്നു. ഒരു കുറ്റിച്ചെടിക്ക്ടുത്ത് ചിറകിട്ടിക്കുന്ന പക്ഷിയെയാണ് അന്വേഷിച്ചുചെന്ന ഹാഗാറിന് കാണാനാവുന്നത്. ചുറ്റും തൂവലുകൾ പൊഴിഞ്ഞു കിടന്നിരുന്നു. ചിറകിൽ കിനിയുന്ന രക്തം വകവെക്കാതെ ആ പക്ഷി മണൽ വകഞ്ഞുകൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. അവിടെയാണ് ഹാഗാറിന് ആ നീരുറവ ദൃശ്യമായത്. ആനന്ദത്താൽ അലറിവിളിച്ച ഹാഗാർ മകനെ കോരിയെടുത്ത് ആ ഉറവയ്ക്കരികിലോടിയിരുത്തി അവനെ വെള്ളത്തിൽ മുക്കുന്നു. കൈക്കുമിളിയിൽ വെള്ളം കോരി അവന്റെ വായിലിറ്റിച്ച ഹാഗാർ അവനെ വീണ്ടും വീണ്ടും വെള്ളത്തിൽ മുക്കുന്നു.

മൊട്ടക്കുന്നുകൾക്കും മുൾക്കാടുകൾക്കും നടുവിലുള്ള ആ തടാകത്തിന്റെ കരയിൽ അവർ തമ്പടിക്കുന്നു. ആ പേരറിയാത്ത പക്ഷിയാണ് അവരെ അവിടേക്ക് നയിച്ചത് ആ ജീവന്റെ ഉറവിലേക്ക് നയിച്ചത്. ആ ജലസ്രോതസിനെപ്പറ്റി കേട്ടമരുഭൂഗോത്രക്കാരും നാടോ

ടികളും അവിടെയെത്തുമ്പോൾ ഹാഗാർ അവരോട് ഒരു ഉടമ്പടി ആവശ്യപ്പെടുന്നു. അവളുടെ സന്തതിക്കും അനന്തര തലമുറകൾക്കും വേണ്ടി ഒരു തുള്ളി വെള്ളം പോലും പാഴാക്കപ്പെടാതിരിക്കാൻ ആ ഉറവിന്റെ കാര്യവിചാരകയായി ഹാഗാറിനെ അംഗീകരിക്കണം. ആ ഉടമ്പടി ഉടമസ്ഥാവകാശത്തിന്റെ സൂചനയല്ല; മറിച്ച് ജീവന്റെ സൂചനയാണ്. മറ്റുള്ളവർ അതിനെ ഒരു ജലസ്രോതസായി കാണുമ്പോൾ ഹാഗാർ അതിനെ കാണുന്നത് ജീവന്റെ സ്രോതസായാണ്. ആ ഉറവിലെ ആദ്യ തുള്ളി ജലത്തിന് അവളുടെ കടിഞ്ഞൂൻകുഞ്ഞിന്റെ ജീവന്റെ വിലയുണ്ടെന്ന് ഹാഗാർ പറയുമ്പോൾ, മറ്റുള്ളവർക്ക് ഉൾക്കൊള്ളാനാവില്ല. ജലത്തിനു പകരം അവർക്കു ഭക്ഷണമെത്തിക്കാമെന്ന് നാടോടികളും ഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗക്കാരും വാഗ്ദാനം ചെയ്യുന്നു.

ആ മരുഭൂമിയിലെ മൂലയിൽ നാടോടികൾ സ്ഥിരതാമസമായി കൃഷിചെയ്യാനാരുണ്ടിരുന്നു. പച്ചക്കറികളുടെ വിളവെടുപ്പ് കാലക്രമേണ ഉത്സവങ്ങളായി പരിണമിക്കുന്നു. പുതിയ ഒരു സമൂഹവും സംസ്കാരവും അവിടെ ജനിക്കുന്നു.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences:

a. Why did Hagar's husband take her and their child to the wilderness?

On being asked why they were being abandoned in the desert, Hagar's husband replied that it was the will of God. The Biblical character Hagar was similarly abandoned in the desert when her husband, Abraham's first wife, Sarah was pregnant with her first child. Hagar, Sarah's maid had been offered to Abraham because the latter was barren.

b. What was the thought that led Hagar to struggle against hopelessness?

The will to keep her son, Ishmael alive gave her the courage to struggle against the hopelessness. She saved the few drops of water and dates left for her son despite being parched and hungry until the last, and protected him from the desert heat and cold using her body as a shield. The thought of burying her firstborn was unbearable to her.

c. Whose voice did Hagar hear in the wilderness?

Hagar heard the voice of a mysterious bird in the wilderness. It was near a bush, flailing its wings and its downy feathers lay all around. It thrashed about on the ground heedless of blood that speckled its wings and found a hidden spring in the earth.

d. What did the mysterious bird reveal to Hagar?

The mysterious bird revealed a hidden spring to Hagar. The spring, that gushed forth from the earth, saved Hagar and her son Ishmael from perishing in the desert.

e. What was Hagar's reaction on seeing the water spring in the desert?

Hagar screamed, scooped her son, rushed to the spring and immersed her son in water. She poured a palm full of water in his mouth and dipped him in water again and again. Hagar's breasts filled with milk as she soaked herself in the stream.

f. What was the water covenant between Hagar and the nomads?

The water covenant between Hagar and the nomads was that Hagar will act as the caretaker of the water for the sake of her child and future generations. She stressed on the value of the first drop of water and said that it had the value of the life of her firstborn. The nomads acknowledged her word and agreed to gather food for her in return for the water.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

a. Comment on the indifference of Abraham as he abandons Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness.

Abraham left his wife and child in the wilderness with just a few loaves of bread, a small quantity of dates and goatskin full of water. He was well aware that there was no chance for their survival as a sand storm was raging on their way to the wilderness. When pressed upon for the reason for his action, he said that it was the will of God.

The fact that he did not offer them any further explanation and walked away from them leaving them to survive in a hostile desert shows his indifference.

b. Briefly narrate how Hagar and her child managed to survive till the mysterious bird revealed the water spring.

The will to keep her son, Ishmael alive gave her the courage to struggle against the hostile conditions in the desert. Hagar sank to the ground and nested the baby under her to protect him from the heavy sandstorm. At night, when the temperature dropped she hid her son within the folds of her robe and pressed him to the warmth of her bosom. Hagar saved the few drops of water and dates for her son despite being parched and hungry herself. When she heard the voice in the desert she mustered all her strength and dashed here and there in hope of finding a savior.

c. Describe the anxiety of Hagar in the face of imminent death.

After a few days in the desert when her limited food supplies and water ran out, Hagar faced a severe crisis. Her baby had become weak from hunger, thirst and continuous crying. Hagar began to ponder whether she or her son would die first. The thought of burying her son or him surviving after her death made her shudder. When her son, Ishmael became still one afternoon she cried heartbroken. The anxiety that she was being abandoned by God Himself terrified her. She prayed in desperation and pleaded to all the forces of nature. Her prayers were finally answered only when a mysterious bird revealed a hidden spring to Hagar and her child.

d. What was the water covenant that was born in the desert?

The water covenant between Hagar and the nomads was that Hagar will act as the caretaker of the water for the sake of her child and future generations. She insisted that the covenant was for the sake of life and not ownership. Hagar said the nomads may not know the true value of water as they saw only a source of ample water. She said to her the first drop of water had the value of the life of her firstborn. The nomads sensed her earnestness and

acknowledged her demands. They agreed to gather food for her in return for the water.

e. How was the water spring instrumental in building a new community and civilization in the desert?

The word about the water spring spread out and soon nomads and desert tribes arrived in search of the water source. They soon established a water covenant with Hagar that they would use the water wisely. The nomads settled near the spring. They fed Hagar and the child and used the water well honoring the water covenant. They bathed and drank plenty of water. The availability of water increased the scope of settled cultivation. The nomads eventually cultivated vegetables near the lake and harvested them. The harvests hatched festivals. In due course, a new community and civilization came into being.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a. Describe how Hagar rose to be the protector and caretaker of waters in the desert and of a tribe, in spite of being abandoned in the wilderness by her husband.

OR

b. Hagar is a powerful woman, empowered by her determination and sensitivity to the power and bounty of nature. Discuss.

The biblical story of Hagar is retold in the second chapter Sarah Joseph's novel *Gift in Green*. The retelling focuses on the role of nature in the survival of our species and civilization. The need to value water sources is highlighted by the author.

Hagar was abandoned in the desert by her husband. The will to keep her son Ishmael alive gave her the courage to struggle against the hostile conditions in the desert. During the sandstorm Hagar sank to the ground and nested the baby under her to protect him. At night, when the temperature dropped she hid her son within the folds of her robe and pressed him to the warmth of her breast. Hagar saved the few drops of water and dates for her son despite being parched and hungry herself. When she heard the voice in the

desert she mustered all her strength and dashed here and there in hope of finding a savior.

The hidden spring uncovered by the mysterious bird was a saving grace for Hagar and his son. This made her value the water source as much as life itself. When desert tribes and nomads came in search of it, she made a covenant with them. Hagar was to act as the caretaker of the water, so that not a drop of it is wasted, for the sake of her child and future generations. She insisted that the covenant was for the sake of life and not ownership. Hagar said the nomads may not know the true value of water as they saw only a source of ample water. She told them that the first drop of water had the value of the life of her firstborn. The nomads sensed her earnestness and acknowledged her demands. They agreed to gather food for her in return for the water.

The nomads eventually settled near the lake, cultivated vegetables and harvested them. The harvests hatched festivals. In due course, a new community and civilization came into being. Thus, Hagar became a protector and caretaker of waters in the desert and of a tribe in spite of being abandoned in the wilderness by her husband. What the story underscores is that we take nature and its gift of water for granted and that if one is to have life and prosperity, water must be valued. It is also Hagar's story of endurance and boundless generosity.

Module

V

BEING
A REFUGEE

13

UNDERSTANDING REFUGEEISM:

An Introduction to Tibetan Refugees in India

Mallica Mishra

Mallica Mishra is a development consultant with the National Council of Rural Institutes. She is a sociologist specialising in the area of education. She explores the cultural and social dimensions of the problems of refugees in the essay.

SUMMARY

The essay is divided into three parts. The first deals with the definition of refugees and the common perceptions on refugees. The second section outlines the evolution of the awareness of the problems of refugees and the measures taken internationally to address it. The third section explores the sociological and cultural dimension of being a refugee.

Refugees may be regarded as a group of people who are forcibly torn and uprooted from their native country and planted somewhere else due to circumstances beyond their control. Their experience is marked by trauma, stress, persecution, danger, loss, isolation etc. Refugees are usually seen as a homogenous category because people tend to think that refugees are all the same. But there are differences among them in terms of country of origin, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, language, gender, class, disability, socio-economic and educational background etc. before and after migration. According to Xenos, the problem of refugees in our time is a sense of "uprootedness or homelessness." He also says that this home space is rather political than geographical.

After the First World War, break up of Austro-Hungarian empire and Russian Revolution, the world began to notice the international dimension of refugee problem. But it was only after the Second World War and the formation of UNO that any real movement was made to address the issue. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

in 1948 proclaimed basic human rights for all human beings irrespective of nationality and citizenship. This paved way for an international system of refugee law since the refugees did not have a nation/state protecting their human rights. The 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees defined the term refugee, outlined the rights of the displaced and laid down the general guidelines for the protection of refugees. Still, there is much to be done in this regard as these international agreements are not absolute or undisputed; so the welfare measures for refugees are often dependent on each country's policies.

The moral, spiritual and intellectual life of man is formed by the environment in which he is a natural part of. Refugees are very often violently uprooted in this sense and their life in another country is a struggle to re-root themselves. It affects their culture and identity. Usually people think that the relocation and reconstruction of life of refugees is an easy process. It is as if the refugees neatly pack their roots and plant them later in a new community in an orderly manner. Liisa Malkki says that any such idea is wrong. Studies on ethnic groups, culture and identity are also useful in studying refugeeism. There are two major theoretical approaches on ethnic identity: (1) Primordialist approach and (2) Optional-Situational approach. According to Primordialist approach, ethnic identity is rooted in similarities of physical features and cultural features. In this approach ethnic or refugee identity is understood to be something that does not change and is 'eternal.' But Optional-Situational approach understands ethnic identity as an ongoing process. Refugee identity is understood as constructed in relation to others and through their interactions with each other. Situations, constraints, and positive and negative values attached to identities of people around influence the formation of identities according to this approach. This approach is more useful in studying refugee groups according to the author.

സംഗ്രഹം

ഈ ലേഖനത്തിന് മുന്നൂ ഭാഗങ്ങളാണുള്ളത്. അഭയാർത്ഥി എന്ന പദത്തിന്റെ നിർവചനവും ആ കൂട്ടത്തെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള പൊതു ധാരണകളുമാണ് ഒന്നാം ഭാഗത്തിൽ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. രണ്ടാം ഭാഗത്തിൽ അഭയാർത്ഥികളുടെ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള അവബോധത്തിന്റെ ചരിത്രവും ആ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളുടെ പരിഹാരത്തിനായുള്ള അന്താരാഷ്ട്ര ഇടപെടലുകളും പ്രതിപാദിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. അഭയാർത്ഥി ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ സാംസ്കാരികവും സാമൂഹ്യശാസ്ത്രപരവുമായ മാനങ്ങളാണ് മൂന്നാം ഭാഗം ചർച്ച ചെയ്യുന്നത്.

അവനവന്റെ അധികാരത്തിന്റെ സീമകൾക്കപ്പുറമുള്ള സാഹചര്യങ്ങളാൽ വീടും മാതൃഭൂമിയും ഉപേക്ഷിച്ച് അന്യരാജ്യങ്ങളിൽ അഭയം നേടാൻ നിർബന്ധിതരാകുന്ന ജനങ്ങളെയാണ് അഭയാർത്ഥികളായി കണക്കാക്കുന്നത്. മാനസികാഘാതം, ക്ലേശം, പീഡനം, ഭീതി, അപകടം, നഷ്ടം, ഒറ്റപ്പെടൽ എന്നിവയാണ് അഭയാർത്ഥി അനുഭവങ്ങളുടെ മുഖമുദ്ര. അഭയാർത്ഥികളെല്ലാം ഒരുപോലെയാണെന്നാണ് പലരുടെയും ചിന്ത. എന്നാൽ ജനിച്ച രാജ്യം, വംശം, വർഗം, ഗോത്രം, മതം, ഭാഷ, സംസ്കാരം, ലിംഗം, അവശതകൾ, കുടിയേറ്റത്തിന് മുന്നേയും ശേഷവുമുള്ള സാമൂഹ്യ - സാമ്പത്തിക - വിദ്യാഭ്യാസപരമായ വ്യവസ്ഥകൾ തുടങ്ങി ഒരുപാട് കാര്യങ്ങളിൽ അഭയാർത്ഥികൾക്കിടയിൽ വ്യത്യാസങ്ങളുണ്ട്. Winter Xenos എന്ന എഴുത്തുകാരന്റെ അഭിപ്രായത്തിൽ അഭയാർത്ഥികളുടെ ഏറ്റവും പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ട പ്രശ്നം കടപുഴക്കപ്പെട്ട , വീട്ടിൽ നിന്നുമായി എന്നിങ്ങനെയുള്ള തോന്നലുകളാണ്. വീട് എന്ന ചിന്ത ഭൂമിശാസ്ത്രപരം എന്നതിനെക്കാൾ രാഷ്ട്രീയപരമാണ് എന്നും അദ്ദേഹം അവകാശപ്പെടുന്നു.

ഒന്നാം ലോകമഹായുദ്ധം, റഷ്യൻ വിപ്ലവം, ആസ്ട്രിയൻ ഹംഗേരിയൻ സാമ്രാജ്യത്തിന്റെ തകർച്ച എന്നിവയ്ക്കു ശേഷം അഭയാർത്ഥി പ്രശ്നത്തിന്റെ അന്താരാഷ്ട്രമാനം ജനങ്ങൾക്കു ബോധ്യമായിത്തുടങ്ങി. എന്നാൽ പ്രശ്നപരിഹാരത്തിനുള്ള മാർഗ്ഗങ്ങൾ ആരംഭിക്കുന്നത് രണ്ടാം ലോകമഹായുദ്ധത്തിനു ശേഷം UNO യുടെ സ്ഥാപനത്തോടെയാണ്. ദേശീയതയ്ക്കും പൗരത്വത്തിനും അതീതമായി സാർവലൗകികവും മൗലികവും ആയ മനുഷ്യാവകാശങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടെന്ന പ്രഖ്യാപനം UN നടത്തുന്നത് 1948 ലാണ്. സ്വരാഷ്ട്രങ്ങളുടെ നിയമസംരക്ഷണം ലഭിക്കാത്ത അഭയാർത്ഥികൾക്കുവേണ്ടി അവകാശസംരക്ഷ

ണത്തിനുവേണ്ടി ഒരു അന്താരാഷ്ട്ര നിയമഘടനയുടെ കരുതലും ഉണ്ടാകുവാൻ ഇത് കാരണമായി. 1951 ലെ അഭയാർത്ഥികളുടെ സ്ഥിതി യെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള UN കൺവെൻഷൻ മറ്റൊരു വഴിത്തിരിവായത്. അഭയാർത്ഥിയെ നിർവചിക്കാനും, നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടവരുടെ അവകാശങ്ങൾ ക്രോഡീകരിക്കാനും, അവരുടെ സംരക്ഷണത്തിനുള്ള മാർഗനിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ ഉരുത്തിരിയുവാനും ഈ കൺവെൻഷൻ കാരണമായി. എന്നാൽ ഈ അന്താരാഷ്ട്ര ഉടമ്പടികൾ ഒന്നും തന്നെ സമ്പൂർണ്ണമോ തർക്കമില്ലാത്തതോ അല്ല എന്നതിനാൽ രാജ്യങ്ങൾക്ക് അവരവരുടെ നയങ്ങൾക്കനുസരിച്ച് അതിനെ വ്യാഖ്യാനിക്കാനാവും. അതുകൊണ്ടു തന്നെ അഭയാർത്ഥി സംരക്ഷണത്തിൽ ഇനിയുമേറെ ജോലി ബാക്കി യുണ്ട് (അന്താരാഷ്ട്രതലത്തിൽ)

ഒരു മനുഷ്യൻ സ്വാഭാവികമായി ജീവിക്കുന്ന സാഹചര്യങ്ങളാണ് അവൻ ആത്മീയവും ബൗദ്ധികവും സദാചാരപരവുമായ രൂപം നൽകുന്നത്. മനുഷ്യജീവിതത്തിന് അർത്ഥം നൽകുന്നത് ഇങ്ങനെയുള്ള വേരുകളാണ്. എന്നാൽ ഈയർത്ഥത്തിൽ അഭയാർത്ഥികൾ വേരറ്റു പോയവരാണ്; മറ്റൊരു രാജ്യത്തെ അവരുടെ ജീവിതം വേരു പിടിക്കാനുള്ള ഒരു പോരാട്ടം കൂടിയാണ്. അത് അവരുടെ സംസ്കാരത്തെയും വ്യക്തിത്വത്തെയും ബാധിക്കുന്നു. ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ സ്ഥാനചലനവും പുനർനിർമ്മാണവും ചിട്ടയായി നടക്കുന്ന ഒരു നിസാരകാര്യമാണ് എന്ന രീതിയിലാണ് പലപ്പോഴും നയതന്ത്രജ്ഞരും മറക്കാദമിക

വിദഗ്ദ്ധരും മനസിലാക്കുന്നത്. ലിസ മൽക്കിയുടെ അഭിപ്രായത്തിൽ അതു തെറ്റാണ്. ഗോത്രങ്ങളെയും വർഗ്ഗങ്ങളെയും അവയുടെ സംസ്കാരം വ്യക്തിത്വം എന്നിവയെയും പറ്റിയുള്ള പഠനങ്ങൾ അഭയാർത്ഥികളുടെ വ്യക്തിത്വങ്ങളെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള പഠനത്തിനു സഹായകമാണ്. താത്വികമായ രണ്ടു രീതികളാണ് ഈ മേഖലയിലുള്ളത്. 1. Primordialist രീതി 2. Optional-sitnational രീതി. Primordialist രീതിയിൽ വംശീയ/അഭയാർത്ഥി വ്യക്തിത്വം ശാരീരികവും സാംസ്കാരികവുമായ സമാഗതകളിൽ നിന്നും ഉടലെടുക്കുന്ന മൗലികവും മാറ്റമില്ലാത്തതുമായ ഒന്നാണ്. എന്നാൽ Optional-sitnational രീതി വംശീയ വ്യക്തിത്വത്തെ ഒരു നിരന്തരം നടക്കുന്ന പ്രക്രിയയായാണ് കണക്കാക്കുന്നത്. മറ്റുള്ളവരുമായുള്ള ബന്ധത്തിലും അവരുമായുള്ള ഇടപെടലുകളുടെ ബന്ധത്തിലുമാണ് അഭയാർത്ഥി വ്യക്തിത്വങ്ങൾ രൂപമെടുക്കുന്നത്. സാഹചര്യങ്ങൾ, പരിമിതികൾ, മറ്റു വ്യക്തിത്വങ്ങളിൽ ദർശിക്കുന്ന നന്മ - നിഷേധാത്മകത എന്നിവയ്ക്കെല്ലാം വ്യക്തിത്വരൂപം

പിക്രമണത്തെ സ്വാധീനിക്കാനാവും. ലേഖികയുടെ അഭിപ്രായ പ്രകാരം അഭയാർത്ഥി ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ അനുഭവങ്ങളടുത്തറിയാൻ സഹായിക്കുക രണ്ടാമത്തെ രീതിയിലുള്ള പഠനങ്ങളാവും.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences:

a. How does the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees define a refugee?

It defines refugee as a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

b. What is the difference between refugees and other immigrants and ethnic minorities?

Refugees, immigrants and ethnic minorities share a subordinate position in society, but the plight of refugees is worse. They do not have the sense of belonging to a home country or even the legal security of a home country.

c. What, according to W N Xenos, is the problem of refugees in our time?

According to Xenos, the problem of refugees in our time is a sense of "uprootedness or homelessness". He also says that this home space is rather political than geographical.

d. When and to refer to whom was the term 'refugee' coined?

The term refugee was coined in the late seventeenth century to refer to the French Protestants who fled from the forced conversion policy of France.

e. How did the Universal Declaration of Human Rights address the problems of the refugees?

Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 proclaimed basic human rights for all human beings irrespective of nationality and

citizenship. This paved way for an international system of refugee law since the refugees did not have a nation/state protecting their human rights.

f. What do we mean by 'the social construction of reality'?

People create their own version of reality in relation to others and through their interactions with each other. This process is called social construction of reality.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

a. Who is a refugee? Is 'refugee' a homogenous categorisation?

In 1951, UN Convention on the Status of Refugees defined refugee as a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." In other words, refugees may be regarded as a group of people who are forcibly torn and uprooted from their native country and planted somewhere else due to circumstances beyond their control. Their experience is marked by trauma, stress, persecution, danger, loss, isolation etc. Refugees are usually seen as a homogenous category because people tend to think that refugees are all the same (in stereotypical and monolithic ways). But there are differences among them in terms of country of origin, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, language, gender, class, disability, socio-economic and educational background etc. before and after migration.

b. What were some of the measures taken in the twentieth century to protect the rights of refugees?

After the First World War, break up of Austro-Hungarian empire and Russian Revolution, the world began to notice the international dimension of refugee problem. But it was only after the Second World War and the formation of UNO that any real movement was made to address the issue. Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 proclaimed basic human rights for all human beings irrespective of nationality and citizenship. This paved way for an

international system of refugee law since the refugees did not have a nation/state protecting their human rights. The 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees defined the term refugee, outlined the rights of the displaced and laid down the general guidelines for the protection of refugees. Still, there is much to be done in this regard as these international agreements are not absolute or undisputed; so the welfare measures for refugees are often dependent on each country's policies.

c. How does Simone Weil address refugeeism?

Simone Weil, the French philosopher and political activist, focuses on the idea of rootedness to understand the core problem of refugeeism: the loss of roots and the protection of these roots in exile. For him, to 'be rooted' is an important need of human beings. The process of being rooted happens by "real, active and natural participation" in a community life. This participation helps to preserve cultural memories and to sustain certain hopes about the future. Weil says that such participation is brought about by place, conditions of birth, profession and social surroundings. The moral, spiritual and intellectual life of man is formed by the environment in which he is a natural part of.

Refugees are very often violently uprooted in this sense and their life in another country is a struggle to re-root themselves. It affects their culture and identity.

d. What are the challenges to the re-rooting process, according to Liisa Malkki?

Usually people think that the relocation and reconstruction of life of refugees is an easy process. It is as if the refugees neatly pack their roots and plant them later in a new community in an orderly manner. Liisa Malkki says that any such idea is wrong. According to her, people who think so overlook the "epistemological crisis" in the middle of the immigration of refugees. The re-rooting of refugees usually involves: (1) huge changes in legal and political status, (2) breaking up of families, (3) struggles for economic mobility, and (4) struggles between old cultural values and values of the new society. In short, life as they 'knew it' is changed. Life becomes strange and

new; and it takes unbelievable amount of time and effort to get to know and then participate in life as before.

e. Differentiate between the Primordialist and Optional-Situational approaches to refugee identity?

Studies on ethnic groups, culture and identity are also useful in studying refugeeism. There are two major theoretical approaches on ethnic identity: (1) Primordialist approach and (2) Optional-Situational approach. According to Primordialist approach, ethnic identity is rooted in similarities of physical features and cultural features. A common culture involves shared language, religion, history, sense of common origin and a view of shared life chances. In this approach ethnic or refugee identity is understood to be something that does not change and is 'eternal.'

Optional-Situational approach understands ethnic identity as an ongoing process. Individuals and groups see themselves and define themselves in relation to others. So the refugee identity is understood as constructed in relation to others and through their interactions with each other. Situations, constraints, and positive and negative values attached to identities of people around influence the formation of identities according to this approach. This approach is more useful in studying refugee groups according to the author.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a. Comment on the efforts made by the international community towards understanding and resolving the problems of refugees?

OR

b. Describe the role of culture and identity in understanding refugeeism.

In 1951, UN Convention on the Status of Refugees defined refugee as a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." In other words, refugees may be regarded as a group of people who are forcibly torn and

uprooted from their native country and planted somewhere else due to circumstances beyond their control. Their experience is marked by trauma, stress, persecution, danger, loss, isolation etc. Refugees are usually seen as a homogenous category because people tend to think refugees are all the same (in stereotypical and monolithic ways). But there are differences among them in terms of country of origin, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, language, gender, class, disability, socio-economic and educational background etc. before and after migration.

After the First World War, break up of Austro-Hungarian empire and Russian Revolution, the world began to notice the international dimension of refugee problem. But it was only after the Second World War and the formation of UNO that any real movement was made to address the issue. Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 proclaimed basic human rights for all human beings irrespective of nationality and citizenship. This paved way for an international system of refugee law since the refugees did not have a nation/state protecting their human rights. The 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees defined the term refugee, outlined the rights of the displaced and laid down the general guidelines for the protection of refugees. Still, there is much to be done in this regard as these international agreements are not absolute or undisputed; so the welfare measures for refugees are often dependent on each country's policies.

In addition to these, academic centres are trying to understand and promote social inclusion of refugee populations by creating a knowledge base about the refugee experience. Understanding the key problems faced by refugees includes cultural and social dimensions. Simone Weil, the French philosopher and political activist, focuses on the idea of rootedness to understand the core problem of refugeeism: the loss of roots and the protection of these roots in exile. For him, to 'be rooted' is an important need of human beings. The process of being rooted happens by "real, active and natural participation" in a community life. This participation helps to preserve cultural memories and to sustain certain hopes about the future. Weil says that such participation is brought about by place, conditions of birth, profession and social surroundings. The moral,

spiritual and intellectual life of man is formed by the environment in which he is a natural part of. Refugees are very often violently uprooted in this sense and their life in another country is a struggle to re-root themselves. It affects their culture and identity.

Usually people think that the relocation and reconstruction of life of refugees is an easy process. It is as if the refugees neatly pack their roots and plant them later in a new community in an orderly manner. Liisa Malkki says that any such idea is wrong. According to her, people who think so overlook the "epistemological crisis" in the middle of the immigration of refugees. The re-rooting of refugees usually involves: (1) huge changes in legal and political status, (2) breaking up of families, (3) struggles for economic mobility, and (4) struggles between old cultural values and values of the new society. In short, life as they 'knew it' is changed. Life becomes strange and new; and it takes unbelievable amount of time and effort to get to know and then participate in life as before.

Studies on ethnic groups, culture and identity are also useful in studying refugeeism. There are two major theoretical approaches on ethnic identity: (1) Primordialist approach and (2) Optional-Situational approach. According to Primordialist approach, ethnic identity is rooted in similarities of physical features and cultural features. A common culture involves shared language, religion, history, sense of common origin and a view of shared life chances. In this approach ethnic or refugee identity is understood to be something that does not change and is 'eternal.' Optional-Situational approach understands ethnic identity as an ongoing process. Individuals and groups see themselves and define themselves in relation to others. So, refugee identity is understood as constructed in relation to others and through their interactions with each other. Situations, constraints, and positive and negative values attached to identities of people around influence the formation of identities according to this approach. This approach is more useful in studying refugee groups according to the author.

14

REFUGEE BLUES

W.H. Auden

W. H. Auden is a renowned English poet associated with the 'Oxford Group'; he moved to the USA later in his life. He wrote poems revealing a Marxist and anti-fascist world view. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1948. His innovative use of language in poetry and iconoclastic attitude created a niche for himself in English poetry.

SUMMARY

The speaker of the poem says that his current city has ten million souls. Some live in great mansions while some live in modest conditions. In neither dwelling, there is a place for him and his companion.

He once had a country which he thought was good and just. And it was still there but he cannot go back to it now. His and his companion's passports expired and they do not renew themselves like the yew which blossoms anew in every spring.

When the consul asked for their passports, he replied that they had expired. The consul then shouted that if they had no passports, they were officially dead. But they were still alive. They went in front of a committee to get their passports renewed. But they told them to come back next year. But where shall they go today? The speaker wonders.

The speaker went to a public meeting and there he heard the open protestation against letting them into the country. The speaker imagined thunder rumbling. It was Hitler saying that all Jews must be put to death. The speaker saw a well-dressed poodle, a door opening for a cat, the fish swimming freely, the birds singing happily in the wood; they were all having better lives than he and his companion, a couple of Jews.

The speaker dreams of a huge building with thousands of rooms and yet the Jews had none. The speaker ends the poem by saying that he can see a marching army looking for them.

സംഗ്രഹം

രണ്ടാം ലോകമഹായുദ്ധത്തിന് കാരണമായ വംശഹത്യയുടെ സാഹചര്യങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നുകൊണ്ടുള്ള കവിതയാണിത്. പലായനം ചെയ്യേണ്ടി വന്ന ഒരു യഹൂദൻ മറ്റൊരഭയാർത്ഥിയോട് സംസാരിക്കുന്ന രീതിയിലാണ് കവിത അഭയാർത്ഥി ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ആകുലതകളും ഒറ്റപ്പെടലും വൈരുധ്യങ്ങളും വെളിവാക്കുന്നത്.

ഒരു കോടി ജനങ്ങളുയിവസിക്കുന്ന നഗരത്തിലാണ് തങ്ങളെന്നു പറഞ്ഞാണ് കവിത ആരംഭിക്കുന്നത്. ചിലർ കൊട്ടാരങ്ങളിലും ചിലർ കുടിലുകളിലും താമസിക്കുന്നു. എന്നാൽ അവിടെയെങ്ങും അവർക്കിടമില്ല. തങ്ങളുടേത് നല്ലത് എന്നു കരുതിയ ഒരു രാജ്യമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു അവർക്ക്. ഇപ്പോഴുമുണ്ടാരാജ്യം; എന്നാൽ അവർക്ക് അവിടേക്ക് പോകാനാവില്ല. പള്ളിവളപ്പിലെ യു മരങ്ങളെപ്പോലെ തളിർത്തു പൂവിടില്ലല്ലോ പാസ്‌പോർട്ടുകൾ. കാലാവധി കഴിഞ്ഞ പാസ്‌പോർട്ടുമായി പോകാനിടമില്ലാതെ അലയുകയാണവർ.

കാലാവധി കഴിഞ്ഞ പാസ്‌പോർട്ടുകളുടെ കാര്യം ബോധിപ്പിച്ചപ്പോൾ, അതില്ലെങ്കിൽ നിങ്ങൾ മരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു എന്ന് ആക്രോശിക്കുകയാണ് സ്ഥാനപതി. ജീവനോടെയുണ്ടെങ്കിലും ഔദ്യോഗികമായി മരിച്ച അവസ്ഥ. അതു പുതുക്കാനുള്ള കമ്മറ്റി : പോയിട്ട് അടുത്ത വർഷം വരു എന്നാണുപദേശിക്കുന്നത്. ഇന്ന് എവിടെപ്പോകും എന്നറിയാതെ വിഷമിക്കുകയാണവർ.

അവിടെയൊരു പൊതുയോഗത്തിൽ അവരെ രാജ്യത്തനുവദിക്കുന്നത് അപകടകരമാണെന്നും തൊഴിലും ആഹാരവുമില്ലാതെയാവും എന്നുമുള്ള തരത്തിൽ പ്രതിഷേധ സ്വരങ്ങൾ അവർ കേൾക്കുന്നു. യൂറോപ്പിന്റെ ആകാശത്ത് ഇടിമുഴങ്ങുന്നത് ഭാവനയിൽക്കാണുകയാണ് അവർ. ഇടിമുഴക്കത്തിൽ അവരെ കൊല്ലേണ്ടതുണ്ട് എന്നു ഹിറ്റ്‌ലർ പറയുന്നു. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ മനസിൽ കവിതയിലെ കഥാപാത്രങ്ങളുണ്ട്.

ഉടുത്തൊരുങ്ങിയ നായയെയും പരിചരിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന പൂച്ചയെയും സ്വതന്ത്ര്യവിഹാരം നടത്തുന്ന പക്ഷികളെയും മീനുകളെയും കാണുന്നുണ്ടവർ. ആ പ്രാണികളുടെ ജീവിതത്തെക്കളും അധഃപതിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു ഈ രണ്ട് യഹൂദരുടെ അവസ്ഥ.

ആയിരം മുറികളും ജനാലകളും വാതിലുകളുമുള്ള ഒരു വലിയ കെട്ടിടം സ്വപ്നം കാണുകയാണ് ആഖ്യാതാവ്. എന്നാൽ സ്വപ്നത്തിൽ പോലും അവർക്കു സ്വന്തമായൊരു മുറിയില്ല.

അവരെ തുരത്തിയോടിച്ചു കൊല്ലുന്നതിന് പടയിറങ്ങിയിരിക്കുന്ന ഒരു സൈന്യത്തെ കാണാം എന്ന് നിസഹായതയോടെ പറഞ്ഞ് കവിത അവസാനിക്കുന്നു.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences:

- a. Who is the speaker in the poem and who is he speaking to?

The poem is in the form of a monologue. The speaker in the poem is a German Jewish refugee and he is speaking to a fellow refugee.

- b. What is the historical context of the poem?

Auden wrote the poem in 1933. By then, the antagonism of the Nazi regime in Germany towards the Jews was quite visible and escalating. It was tough for them to get asylum in other countries too. The Holocaust is the historical context of the poem.

- c. What does the poet mean when he says 'look in the atlas and you'll find it there'?

The poet means that the country was still there, but the narrator could no longer call it home. The sense of loss of a home is described in these lines as they "cannot go there anymore."

- d. What does the poet say about his passport?

He says that the passport could not renew itself like the old yew in the churchyard. His old passport is no longer valid and technically he is not alive for the authorities.

- e. What is the irony in the line 'O we were in his mind'?

Irony is the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite. Here, when Hitler has the people 'in his mind' it does not mean that he cared for them; it means that he wanted them dead.

- f. What is the advantage of being a poodle or a cat?

Poodles and cats are groomed and taken care of as pets. They are fed, loved and do not have to suffer like the refugees. The poet suggests that animals are far better off than Jewish refugees.

g. How does being human hinder one's freedom?

Human beings are discriminated against by human beings based on caste, colour, creed, religion, nationality etc. Animals and birds are not discriminated against like that.

h. Why were the soldiers looking for the refugees?

The soldiers were looking for the refugees to hunt them out of hiding and to kill them.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

a. Comment on the statement: "The title 'refugee blues' encapsulates the theme of the poem."

A refugee is a person seeking refuge or shelter in a foreign country out of the fear of political persecution or threat of death by an invading or authoritarian regime. 'Blues' are certain slow songs expressing sadness, depression or a negative mental state caused by an experience or idea. The theme of the poem is the feeling of persecution and insecurity felt by the narrator during the Holocaust. The Jews were persecuted and victimised and had nowhere to turn to for protection. So the poem could be considered a sad song of a refugee and 'Refugee Blues' is a suitable title.

b. What are the key images, ironies and metaphors in the poem?

The poem is replete with images of social and communal life. These images serve as a contrast for the sense of loneliness felt by the refugee. A city with a million souls and its mansions where the refugees do not have a space; a dream about a building of a thousand floors, windows and doors where they cannot live in; public meetings where people speak against them; pet animals, birds and fishes living in comparatively more freedom and luxury; and a great plain with falling snow where soldiers are hunting them down are some of the major images.

Irony is the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite. When Hitler had the people "in his mind" it does not mean that he cared for them; it means that he wanted them dead. There is also irony in animals living in more freedom

and luxury than human beings; and also in considering one dead if he did not have a passport.

A metaphor equates two things for the sake of comparison or symbolism. Renewal of old passports is equated to the blossoming of old yew trees. Similarly, Hitler ordering the death of Jews is equated to the rumble of thunder.

c. How does the poet juxtapose human condition with the behaviours of the bureaucrats and politicians?

In the poem, the loneliness, loss and insecurity of the refugees is greeted by indifference and prejudice by politicians and bureaucrats. The consul declared the narrator dead since he did not have a valid passport. The committee for dealing with the refugees were not concerned with their immediate needs. They asked the narrator to come back after a year while he was not sure about where to go that day. In public meetings, politicians spoke of the refugees as if they were thieves who would steal their jobs and bread.

d. What are the challenges faced by the refugees?

Refugees are marked by a sense of loss and trauma. In another country they see prosperity and peace, but cannot really experience it. The speaker is unable to feel a sense of belonging or shake the feeling of persecution and insecurity. He faces a series of bureaucratic delays, dismissals and prejudice (see Qn: 2.c.). The narrator has not just lost his home; he has lost his freedom and identity. He is unable to renew an expired passport- which means that he is practically dead for all official purposes although he is still alive. People are not ready to welcome refugees; they distrust and discriminate against them. These challenges faced by the narrator are common to refugees across the globe.

e. What do the references to the birds and animals made in the poem suggest?

The narrator saw a poodle wearing a jacket and a door opening to let in a cat. Meanwhile doors were being closed at the narrator's face. The pets are fed, clothed, loved and do not have to suffer like the refugees. The poet suggests that animals are better off than Jewish

refugees. The narrator observes that the fish swimming in the water and the birds singing in the woods were free and had nothing to fear. The contrast in the living conditions of animals and refugees suggests that the refugees lived in unnatural fear and subordination.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a. Comment upon the contemporariness and relevance of the situation described in the poem "Refugee Blues" in the light of recent events across the world.

(add the following paragraph to the answer for 3.b.)

The disruption of democracy and prevalence of anarchy caused by recent events in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, parts of the Arab world, parts of Africa, Burma etc. has caused a surge in the number of refugees. It has brought to light the attitude of various civilized nations towards the less fortunate. U.S. president Donald Trump has come to power with the thinly veiled promise of getting rid of refugees from the United States. Similar indifference or hostility has been visible in the policies of many developed nations across Europe. Travel bans and restrictions imposed in the last five years alone shows the indifference of the world towards the helpless refugees. Even when countries like India open up to Tibetan, Sri Lankan or Burmese Rohingya refugees, it has not been possible to assure their well-being; moreover it takes a great investment of money, effort and time for cultural adaptation and repatriation.

b. Narrate the experiences and the baffling ironies of life faced by the refugees.

A refugee is a person seeking refuge or shelter in a foreign country out of the fear of political persecution or threat of death by an invading or authoritarian regime. 'Blues' are certain slow songs expressing sadness, depression or a negative mental state caused by an experience or idea. The theme of the poem is the feeling of persecution and insecurity felt by the narrator during the Holocaust. The Jews were persecuted and victimised and had nowhere to turn to for protection. Refugees are marked by a sense of loss and trauma. In another country they see prosperity and peace, but cannot really

experience it. The speaker is unable to feel a sense of belonging. The poem is replete with images of social and communal life. These images serve as a contrast for the sense of loneliness felt by the refugee. A city with a million souls and its mansions where the refugees do not have a space; a building of a thousand floors, windows and doors where they cannot live in are just some of these. Even in their dreams, they were dispossessed.

The loneliness, loss and insecurity of the refugees are greeted by indifference and prejudice by politicians and bureaucrats. The consul declared the narrator dead since he did not have a valid passport. He is unable to renew an expired passport- which means that he is practically dead for all official purposes although he is still alive. The narrator has not just lost his home; he has lost his freedom and identity. The committee for dealing with the refugees were not concerned with their immediate needs. They asked the narrator to come back after a year while he was not sure about where to go that day. In public meetings, politicians spoke of the refugees as if they were thieves who would steal their jobs and bread.

It is ironic that human beings are discriminated against by human beings based on caste, colour, creed, religion, nationality etc. Animals and birds are not discriminated against like that. The narrator saw a poodle wearing a jacket and a door opening to let in a cat. Meanwhile doors were being closed at the narrator's face. The pets are fed, clothed, loved and do not have to suffer like the refugees. The poet suggests that animals are better off than Jewish refugees. The narrator observes that the fish swimming in the water and the birds singing in the woods were free and had nothing to fear. The contrast in the living conditions of animals and refugees suggests that the refugees lived in unnatural fear and subordination.

The image of a marching army looking to hunt the refugees out of hiding and to kill them summarises the plight of refugees. They are one against many, helpless and have lost everything.

15

THE CHILD GOES TO THE CAMP

Ghassan Kanafani

Ghassan Kanafani was a Palestinian journalist, novelist and revolutionary. His experiences as a refugee and painter could be seen in his works. An anthology of his translated stories titled Palestine's Children presented before the world the predicament of the people of Palestine. He was assassinated in a car bomb explosion in 1972.

SUMMARY

The speaker lived with his parents, seven brothers, five cousins, an uncle, an aunt and a grandfather. He stresses that it had been a hostile time. There was not really a war, but it was a war-like situation. Survival was tough and everybody had to work hard to make ends meet. The grandfather used to take away money from the other members of the family to buy newspapers to know the latest bad news. He made the kids read to him. Fights were common in the family and the grandfather's obsession on newspapers contributed to it.

The ten year old speaker was the leader of his brothers. Isam was of the same age and considered himself the leader of the cousins. They used to quarrel but the family entrusted them with a task. They would carry a big basket to the market, walk to the market for an hour and a quarter, gather fruits and vegetables and return once the basket was filled. (Hunger makes stealing a normal act for them.) They used to eat the best fruits and vegetables on the way (with no concern about the people at home).

One day the narrator found a five pound bill on his return journey from the vegetable market with Isam. They were carrying a particularly heavy basket that day through the main street. The narrator spotted a policeman in the middle of the street and under his thick heavy shoes lay the five pond note. He dived and got hold of the money knocking the policeman over in the process. He managed to run away with the note before the others caught up with him.

When the narrator reached home after dark the seventeen family members were waiting to claim the narrator's five pounds. His father and uncle had decided to share the money in half, probably after a quarrel. As opposed to his hopes, they had no intention of letting the ten year old narrator keep the money. He was asked first, warned, and then hit physically by his family for the five pounds. The narrator's parents, uncle and grandfather fought for it with the same childish stubbornness of his ten year old cousin Isam.

His grandfather finally took a stand and saved the kid from further harassment. He said that the grown-ups had no right to the money and that the children could spend it any way they wanted on a sunny day outing. Though this was the proposal made in front of the family, the unseen agreement between the narrator and his grandfather was that he would buy the latter newspaper every day the coming week.

The narrator did not spend the money. He kept it in his pocket and guarded it even in sleep. He fended off temptations from the mother and grandfather. The money was in his right pocket for five weeks. "As long as it was in my pocket it seemed to me like a key that I held in the palm of my hand, one that I could use at any time to open the door and walk out." It gave him a sense of security and was waiting for the hostile time to be over to spend it. But that time was not coming. One day he slipped and fell under a truck while trying to collect a bunch of chard and lost consciousness. His five pounds were gone when he woke up at the hospital. He assumed his cousin Isam might have taken it on the way to the hospital. There were no questions about it, only a quiet resignation.

The story is a sharp observation on the dehumanizing effects of war and a critique of the policies that displaced and disenfranchised the Palestinians.

സംഗ്രഹം

യുദ്ധമില്ലെങ്കിലും ശത്രുത നിറഞ്ഞുനിന്ന ഒരു കാലത്തിലാണ് തങ്ങൾ ജീവിക്കുന്നത് എന്നു പറയുകയാണ് ആഖ്യാതാവ്. പത്തുവയസുകാരനായ ആഖ്യാതാവ് തന്റെ മാതാപിതാക്കൾ, എഴു സഹോദരങ്ങൾ, മുത്തച്ഛൻ, അമ്മാവൻ, അമ്മായി, അവരുടെ അഞ്ച് മക്കൾ എന്നിവരോടൊപ്പമാണ് താമസിച്ചിരുന്നത്. പലസ്തീനിൽ യുദ്ധമില്ലെങ്കിലും യുദ്ധമുള്ളതുപോലെയുള്ള അവസ്ഥ. ജീവിച്ചു പോവുക എന്നത് ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടായിരുന്നു; കഠിനാധ്വാനം ചെയ്താലെ അന്നം കണ്ടെ

ത്താനാകൂ. ഏറ്റവും പുതിയ ദുരന്തകഥകൾ അറിയുവാനായി മുത്തച്ഛൻ അംഗങ്ങളുടെ പണമെടുത്ത് പത്രം വാങ്ങുമായിരുന്നു; കുട്ടികളെക്കൊണ്ട് വായിപ്പിക്കും. ശബ്ദങ്ങളും വഴക്കും പതിവു സംഭവമായിരുന്ന ആ കുടുംബത്തിൽ മുത്തച്ഛന്റെ രീതികൾ കൂടുതൽ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളുണ്ടാക്കി.

ആഖ്യാതാവായിരുന്നു തന്റെ സഹോദരങ്ങളുടെ നേതാവ് മറ്റു കുട്ടികളുടെ നേതാവ് പത്ത് വയസ്സുകാരനായ ഇസാം എന്ന പയ്യനും. അവർ നിരന്തരം ശബ്ദം കൂട്ടുമെങ്കിലും, മുതിർന്നവർ അവരെ ഒരു ഭാരിച്ച ഉത്തരവാദിത്തമേൽപ്പിച്ചു. ചന്തയിൽ ഒരു കാലിക്കൂടയുമായി പോകുന്ന അവർ അവിടെ നിന്നു പണമില്ലാതെ സംഭരിക്കാവുന്ന അത്രയും പച്ചക്കറികളും പഴങ്ങളും ശേഖരിച്ചു വീട്ടിലേക്കു നടക്കും. (വിശപ്പ് മോഷണത്തെ ഒരു സാധാരണ സംഭവമാക്കി മാറ്റി). കൂടയിലെ നല്ല പഴവും പച്ചക്കറിയും നടക്കുന്ന വഴിയിൽ അവർ കഴിക്കുമായിരുന്നു. (വീട്ടിലുള്ളവരെപ്പറ്റി ചിന്തിക്കാൻ യുദ്ധവും വിശപ്പും അവരെ പഠിപ്പിച്ചില്ല.)

ഒരു ദിവസം ചന്തയിൽ നിന്നും മടങ്ങുമ്പോൾ അഞ്ച് പൗണ്ടിന്റെ ഒരു നോട്ട് ആഖ്യാതാവിന്റെ ശ്രദ്ധയിൽപ്പെട്ടു. താരതമ്യേന ഭാരക്കൂടുതലായിരുന്നു കൂടയ്ക്കത്. അപ്പോഴാണ് ഒരു പോലീസുകാരന്റെ ഷൂവിനടിയിൽ മണ്ണിൽ ആ നോട്ട് കാണുന്നത്. ചാടിവീണ് പോലീസുകാരനെ തട്ടിവിഴ്ത്തി നോട്ടുമെടുത്തോടുമ്പോൾ ഒരു ജനക്കൂട്ടം തന്നെ പിന്നാലെ ഓടിവരുന്നുണ്ടായിരുന്നു.

അന്നു രാത്രി വീട്ടിലെത്തുമ്പോൾ തന്റെ പതിനേഴു കുടുംബാംഗങ്ങളും ആ പണം സ്വന്തമാക്കാൻ കാത്തിരിക്കുന്നുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. അച്ഛനും അമ്മാവനും പണം പങ്കിട്ടെടുക്കാൻ തീരുമാനിച്ച പോലെയാണ് പെരുമാറിയത്; അവരും ശബ്ദം കൂടിക്കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ടാവാം അതിനെച്ചൊല്ലി. അവന്റെ പ്രതീക്ഷയ്ക്കു വിരുദ്ധമായി ആ പണം ആ പത്തുവയസുകരൻ വിട്ടുകൊടുക്കാനുള്ള സൗമനസ്യം ഒരാളും കാട്ടിയില്ല. ചോദ്യങ്ങൾക്കു ശേഷം ഭീഷണികൾ ലഭിച്ചു. അതിനു ശേഷം അടിയും. പത്തു വയസുകാരൻ ഇസാമിനെപ്പോലെതന്നെ ബാലിശമായി അച്ഛനും അമ്മാവനും മുത്തച്ഛനും പണത്തിനായി ശ്ലാഘിക്കുക.

ഒടുവിൽ മുത്തച്ഛനാണ് അവനെ രക്ഷിച്ചത്. മുതിർന്നവർക്ക് പണത്തിൽ ഒരവകാശവുമില്ലെന്നും, വെയിലുള്ള ഒരു ദിവസം കുട്ടികൾക്കു വേണ്ടി അവനതു ചിലവാക്കട്ടെയെന്നും തലമുതിർന്ന മുത്തച്ഛൻ

പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ചു. മറ്റുള്ളവരുടെ മുന്നിൽ അങ്ങനെ പറഞ്ഞെങ്കിലും അടുത്ത ഒരാഴ്ചത്തേക്ക് പത്രം വാങ്ങിക്കൊടുക്കണം എന്നതായിരുന്നു അവരുടെ ഇടയിലുള്ള രഹസ്യധാരണ. അമ്മയുടെയും മുത്തച്ഛന്റെയും മൊക്കെ പ്രലോഭനങ്ങളിൽ വീഴാതെ അവൻ ആ പണം സൂക്ഷിച്ചു വെച്ചു.

ഊണിലും ഉറക്കത്തിലും തന്റെ വലതു പോക്കറ്റിൽ ആ പണം സൂരക്ഷിതമായിരിക്കുന്നു എന്നവനുറപ്പുവരുത്തി. അഞ്ചാഴ്ച അവനതങ്ങനെ കാത്തു. അതു കീശയിലുള്ള കാലം കൈയിൽ ഒരു താക്കോലുള്ളതു പോലെയാണെന്നവൻ കരുതി; നശിച്ച ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ കതകു തുറന്നു പുറത്തു പോകാൻ സഹായിക്കുന്ന താക്കോൽ. കീശയിലെ പണം അവൻ സൂരക്ഷിതത്വം നൽകി; ശത്രുതയുടെ കാലം തീരുമ്പോൾ ചിലവാക്കാം എന്നോർത്ത് അവനതു കരുതി വെച്ചു. എന്നാലങ്ങനെയൊരു കാലം വന്നില്ല. ഒരു ദിവസം ചന്തയിൽ അവൻ കാൽ വഴുതി ഒരു ട്രക്കിന്റെ അടിയിലേക്ക് വീണു. ഭാഗ്യം കൊണ്ട് മരിച്ചില്ല; എന്നാൽ അബോധാവസ്ഥയിലായി ആശുപത്രിയിൽ ബോധം വരുമ്പോൾ ആദ്യം അന്വേഷിച്ചത് കീശയിലെ അഞ്ച് പൗണ്ട് നോട്ടാണ്. അതവിടെയുണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല. ആശുപത്രിയിലേക്കുള്ള വഴിയിൽ ഇസാം എടുത്തതാവുമത്. അതിനെപ്പറ്റി അവൻ ചോദ്യങ്ങളൊന്നും ചോദിച്ചില്ല; കേവലം വിധിക്കു കീഴടങ്ങി.

(യുദ്ധവും യുദ്ധസമാനമായ അവസ്ഥയും മനുഷ്യത്വമില്ലാതാക്കുന്നു എന്ന നിരീക്ഷണവും, പലസ്തീനിനെ ആ മനുഷ്യത്വരഹിതമായ അവസ്ഥയിലേക്കു തള്ളിവിട്ട നയങ്ങളോടും സാഹചര്യങ്ങളോടുമുള്ള വിമർശനവുമാണ് കഥയിൽ കാണാനാവുന്നത്)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences:

a. How does the grandfather manage to get his newspapers?

When the narrator's grandfather found at least five piastres lying on the table or in the hanging pant pockets, he bought newspapers with it. He would then call one of his grandsons to read him the newspaper.

b. What task did the narrator's father and uncle find for Isam and the narrator?

The narrator's father and uncle made him and his cousin, Isam visit the market everyday to find bits and scraps of vegetables and fruits for the family. They would carry a big basket to the market, walk to the market for an hour and a quarter, and return once the basket was filled.

c. What had the boys agreed to between themselves regarding the food they collected?

The boys agreed that they would eat the best from the collected basket on their way home. It was a secret deal which neither boy ever gave away.

d. How did the narrator's mother try to get five pounds from the child?

The narrator's mother tried to persuade him by arguing that with five pounds they could buy two rotls of meat, or a new shirt for the narrator. She said they could even get books for the upcoming summer when he was sent to school.

e. How did the narrator lose the five pounds?

The narrator slipped and fell under a truck while trying to collect a bunch of chard and lost consciousness. His five pounds were gone when he woke at the hospital. The narrator assumed his cousin Isam might have taken it on the way to the hospital.

2. Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

a. What distinction does the narrator draw from 'war' and 'hostility'?

The narrator says that in a war there is respite involved as the warring parties would surrender, retreat or come to a truce at some point or the other. But in hostility there is constant aggression. This made food, work and money hard to come by. The hostility within their large family for the division of resources was much more than the war raging outside.

- b. Describe the condition of the narrator's family.

The narrator's family consisted of eighteen members belonging to different generations. He had seven brothers, five cousins, a grandfather, an aunt and an uncle besides his parents. They lived under the same roof in a hostile period where food, money and work were hard to come by. The inherent poverty and indefinite scarcity corrupted the values of both the strong and vulnerable. There was a constant battle amongst the family members for food and money. The narrator and his cousin, Isam had to collect the fruit and vegetable leftovers from the market to feed the family every day.

- c. How did the protagonist and Isam manage to get the baskets filled?

The narrator and Isam found food from the front of shops, behind cars and table tops of stores. They reached at market at the end of the day when the shops were closing. At times, Isam would shoot off like an arrow to salvage a little lettuce or apple from the wheels of a moving truck. The narrator would fend off the other kids who were looking for similar scraps while Isam collected them. They had to fight off the kids, shop owners and even the police to finally take a full basket home.

- d. Narrate how the narrator got the five pound bill.

The narrator found the five pound bill on his return journey from the vegetable market with his cousin, Isam. They were carrying a particularly heavy basket that day through the main street. The narrator spotted a policeman in the middle of the street and under his thick heavy shoes lay the five pond note. He dived and got hold of the money knocking the policeman over in the process. He managed to run away with the note before the others caught up with him.

- e. Why were the family members waiting for the narrator?

When the narrator reached home after dark the seventeen family members were waiting to claim the narrator's five pounds. His father and uncle had decided to share the money in half, probably after a quarrel. As opposed to his hopes, they had no intention of letting the

ten year old narrator keep the money. He was asked first warned and then hit physically by his family for the five pounds. The narrator's grandfather finally took a stand and saved the kid from further harassment.

f. What was finally decided regarding the five pounds?

The narrator's grandfather finally got him to agree to his proposal. He said that the grown-ups had no right to the money and that the children could spend it anyway they wanted on a sunny day outing. Though this was the proposal made in front of the family, the unseen agreement between the narrator and his grandfather was that he would buy the latter newspaper every day the coming week.

g. Briefly describe the nature of relationship between Isam and the narrator.

Isam was the narrator's ten-year old cousin. Both of them considered themselves to be the heads of their respective group of brothers. They were given the daily task of collecting the food for the family from the scraps left in the vegetable market. Though they fought amongst themselves, they worked as a team to collect the leftovers from the market and fight off the other kids, shopkeepers and policemen. When the narrator found the five pound, Isam found it difficult to be on the same terms with the narrator. They argued and spoke little during the time.

3. Answer the following questions in about 300 words:

a. Critically analyze 'The Child Goes to Camp' as a story highlighting the constraints and condition of the refugees.

OR

b. Comment on the repeated use of 'a hostile time' to lend irony and humanity to the story. How does it connect the domestic struggles of the narrator and his family to the state of the world outside?

The story "The Child Goes to Camp" is set in a Palestinian refugee camp. The protagonist is a ten-year old living with his huge family of

eighteen members. They lived under the same roof in a hostile period where food, money and work were hard to come by. The narrator and his cousin, Isam had to collect the fruit and vegetable leftovers from the market to feed the family every day.

The protagonist constantly uses the phrase 'a hostile time' to describe his family's situation. The incessant bombing and the improbability of truce, retreat or any kind of ending made the Palestinian situation very different from a war stricken country. The hostility outside reflected a great deal within the basic unit of the Palestinian society, family. There was a constant battle amongst the family members for food and money. Even the narrator's grandfather borrowed any money which was lying around to get a newspaper without considering whether it was kept aside for any other purpose.

When the narrator found a five pound note on the street, the life lessons he learned from his family taught him not to share the note but to hold on to it. When the narrator reached home after dark the seventeen family members were waiting to claim the narrator's five pounds. His father and uncle had decided to share the money in half, probably after a quarrel. As opposed to his hopes, they had no intention of letting the ten year old narrator keep the money. He was asked first, warned, and then hit physically by his family for the five pounds. The narrator's parents, uncle and grandfather fought for it with the same childish stubbornness of his ten year old cousin Isam.

His grandfather finally took a stand and saved the kid from further harassment. He said that the grown-ups had no right to the money and that the children could spend it anyway they wanted on a sunny day outing. Though this was the proposal made in front of the family, the unseen agreement between the narrator and his grandfather was that he would buy the latter newspaper every day the coming week. The narrator slipped and fell under a truck while trying to collect a bunch of chard and lost consciousness. His five pounds were gone when he woke at the hospital. He assumed his cousin Isam might have taken it on the way to the hospital. There were no questions about it, only a quiet resignation.

The inherent poverty and indefinite scarcity corrupted the values of both the strong and vulnerable in the family. So the hostile time suggests the dehumanizing environment created by human conflicts. Its effects are worse than physical injuries of war. The author shows the nature of human conflict set amidst the harsh realities of the refugee camp and the insignificance of morality when faced with hunger. The story is a sharp observation on the dehumanizing effects of war and a critique of the policies that displaced and disenfranchised the Palestinians.