

AEC/CVAC

COMPULSORY ENGLISH

Sem 3 CCF

BCom | BBA | BSc.



NEX Edu Classes



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Chapter 1: The Boss Came to Dinner (Bhisham Sahani)

The Preparations

Mr. Shamnath had invited his boss to dinner. Neither he nor his wife could pause even to wipe the perspiration from their faces. The wife, in a dressing gown, her tangled hair tied in a knot, her make-up all smudged, and he, pencil and paper in hand and smoking cigarette after cigarette, ran from room to room, ticking off items in a long list. By five, they had succeeded in putting some kind of order into the arrangements. Chairs, tables, side tables, napkins, flowers, they were all there in the verandah, neatly arranged. Now they turned their attention to the bric-a-brac in the room, either shifting them behind the almirahs or shoving them under the bedsteads.

The Problem of Mother

Suddenly a problem reared up before Shamnath. What about mother?. Till now neither he nor his wife had thought of it. Shamnath turned on his heels and asked his wife in English: 'And what about mother?'. The wife, interrupting her work, did some hard thinking. 'We'll send her to the neighbours. She can stay there for the night. We'll bring her back tomorrow'. Shamnath screwed up his eyes and looked at her thoughtfully. 'No, that won't do. I want to give a wide berth to that next-door hag. If mother stays the night with her, she will again start coming to our house. We will tell mother to finish her meal early and retire to her room. The guests won't start coming before eight'.

The proposition sounded right. But suddenly the wife said, 'But if she falls asleep and starts snoring! Then? Her room is next to where dinner will be served'. Shamnath suggested asking her to keep awake and sitting, or locking her door from the outside. His wife pointed out that she might fall asleep anyway and that dinner could last until eleven. Shamnath threw up his hands in irritation, blaming his wife for previously interfering when his mother wanted to visit her brother, simply to keep up appearances before her friends. His wife washed her hands of the affair, telling him to do as he pleased.

Instructing Mother

Shamnath went to mother's room, which opened onto the verandah. Mother was sitting nervously on a low wooden chowki, telling her beads. She was anxious that everything should go well for the big boss from her son's office. Shamnath told her to finish her meal early, but she replied she wouldn't eat since flesh was being cooked. He instructed her to retire early and wait in the verandah until the guests moved there, at which point she should slip into the drawing room through the bathroom. He also warned her not to sleep early because her snores carry far, to which she shamefully admitted having difficulty breathing since her last illness.

Still anxious, Shamnath made his mother rehearse sitting in a chair by the door. When she dangled her feet or put them up, he reprimanded her, reminding her it wasn't a cot. He strictly forbade her from walking barefoot or wearing her wooden sandals. Being a stickler for discipline who controlled the smallest details of the house, he ordered her to wear a white kameez and salwar. When she emerged dressed, he asked her to put on bangles. Mother reminded him she had sold all her jewellery for his education. Shamnath defensively replied that



he would pay her back double, though she insisted she meant no harm and would never ask a son to pay back. Before leaving to get ready, Shamnath instructed her to reply properly if the Sahib spoke to her, though she was scared and protested that she was illiterate.

The Dinner Party and the Encounter

Mr. Shamnath's dinner reached the crescendo of success. The Sahib liked the Indian dishes and was regaling the audience with anecdotes, while his wife, wearing a black gown and a loud perfume, was the cynosure of the female guests. At ten-thirty, they came out of the drawing room and moved into the verandah.

Shamnath stopped short; his smile vanished. Mother was sitting exactly where he had left her, but her feet were on the seat and she was snoring heavily, her head swaying from side to side. Shamnath seethed with anger but could do nothing in front of the boss. The other wives tittered, and the boss said, 'Poor dear'. Mother woke up flustered and thoroughly confused. The boss smiled and said, 'Namaste'. Mother tried to fold her hands, but with her beads in one hand, the effort was clumsy. When the boss extended his right hand, she confusedly placed her left hand into it, making Shamnath furious.

The Turning Point

The boss saved the situation by cheerfully saying he liked village folk and guessing she must know folksongs. Shamnath pressured his hesitant mother to sing, suggesting the pomegranate song. Left with no way out, she sang an old wedding song in a feeble, cracked voice. The verandah resounded with applause; mother had introduced a new note into the party, turning Shamnath's anger into joy.

The conversation then veered to Punjab's village industry products. Shamnath mentioned that women make *phulkari* (embroidered cloth) and brought out an old, threadbare piece to show. Wanting to please the boss further, Shamnath promised that his mother would make a new one for the Sahib. Although mother quietly mentioned her eyesight was strained, Shamnath interrupted and firmly committed her to the task. The Sahib thanked her, and they proceeded to dinner.

The Aftermath

Mother quietly slipped into her room, her eyes flooding with tears of long-pent-up feelings. After the guests departed at midnight, Shamnath knocked on her door and hugged her wildly, saying she had done wonders and pleased the Sahib. Crying, she asked him to finally send her to Hardwar. Shamnath's face darkened with anger; he accused her of wanting to discredit him before others. He argued that if she left, she couldn't make the *phulkari* he promised the boss. Mother again pleaded that her eyesight was feeble.

Shamnath explained that if the boss was pleased, he might get a raise or a promotion to a higher post. Hearing that her son might get a "lift in the office," mother's wrinkled face was suffused with joy. For the sake of his promotion, she silently prayed for him and agreed, saying, 'In that case I'll make one for him, I'll... I'll somehow manage it, son'.



1. Important Points for "The Boss Came to Dinner"

- a. Mr. Shamnath had invited his boss to dinner.
- b. By five (5 pm), they (Shamnath & his wife) had succeeded in putting some kind of order into the arrangements.
- c. Suddenly a problem reared up before Shamnath. What about mother?
- d. The Shamnath's wife, interrupting her work, did some hard thinking. 'We'll send her (mother) to the neighbours. I want to give a wide berth to that next-door hag. If mother stays the night with her, she (neighbour) will again start coming to our house.'
- e. The guests won't start coming before eight (8 pm).
- f. 'But if she (mother) falls asleep and starts snoring! Then?'
- g. 'She (Mother) was going to visit her brother and you (Shamnath's wife) stuck your nose in. Wanted to keep up appearances before your friends.'
- h. Mother's room opened onto the verandah.
- i. Mother was sitting on a low wooden chowki. She was telling her beads.
- j. Mother don't eat when flesh is cooked in the house.
- k. There would be about ten guests, mostly his Indian colleagues and their wives.
- l. Shamnath said to Mother to wear white kameez and salwar.
- m. 'Mother have no bangles, son. She had to sell all jewellery for Shamnath's education.'
- n. Shamnath's boss was an American.
- o. Shamnath's boss wife was, in a black gown, a rope of pearls round her neck, wearing a loud perfume, was the cynosure of the female guests.
- p. Mother snored heavily.
- q. In confusion, Mother placed her left hand in the Sahib's right hand. Someone giggled. Shamnath was furious.
- r. 'Well, Boss said he like village folk.'
- s. 'Mother, the Sahib (boss) wants you to sing. An old song. Any old song.'
- t. Shamnath suggested mother to sing the pomegranate song, for instance.
- u. In a feeble cracked voice Mother started singing an old wedding song.
- v. Mother had introduced a new note into the party.
- w. In villages of Punjab women make phulkari at home.
- x. Phulkari was a sort of embroidered piece of cloth.



- y. Mother said, 'My sight is not the same as it used to be. Old eyes feel the strain.' 'Son, my eyesight has become feeble.
- z. It was now midnight. The guests had departed one by one.
- aa. Mother said to son, send me to Hardwar. Please send me to Hardwar.'
- bb. Mother does not want to make phulkari however she agreed for the son's promotion.
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2. Glossary

- **Bric-a-brac:** bits of furniture, ornaments, etc. of no great value
- **turned on his heels:** turned sharply round
- **bedstead:** the framework of a bed
- **screwed up his eyes:** contracted the muscles of his eyes
- **give a wide berth to:** avoid
- **hag:** vicious old women
- **threw up his hands in irritation:** expressed annoyance
- **stuck your nose in:** interfered
- **keep up appearances:** maintain an outward show of prosperity
- **wash my hands of:** no longer responsible for
- **held his peace:** kept quiet
- **bandying words:** exchanging words sharply
- **dangling:** hanging or swinging loosely
- **regaling:** royal
- **anecdotes:** small interesting tales
- **sparse:** small in number
- **shrivelled:** dryer and smaller
- **foolproof:** incapable of failure
- **stickler:** person who insists upon the importance of something
- **oddities:** strange acts
- **make a song:** make a fuss
- **crescendo of success:** climax or the highest point of success
- **décor:** all that makes up the appearance of a room



- **cynosure**: centre of attraction and admiration.
- **jolt**: shake
- **tittered**: laughed in a silly manner
- **expansive**: grand, heroic
- **asperity**: harshness
- **shoving**: pushing

3. Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

1. Whom does Mr. Shamnath address as the next-door hag?

- (a) The mother
- (b) The neighbour
- (c) The boss

2. According to Mr. Shamnath the guests won't start arriving before

- (a) before seven
- (b) before nine
- (c) before eight

3. Who said these lines: "But if she falls asleep and starts snoring\! Then?"

- (a) Mr. Shamnath
- (b) Mrs. Shamnath
- (c) the neighbors

4. The mother was going to visit her brother but Mrs. Shamnath stuck her nose in between because

- (a) She wanted to keep up appearance before her relatives
- (b) She wanted the mother to stay with them
- (c) She wanted to keep up appearance in front of her friends

5. The mother's room opened onto the

- (a) Garden
- (b) Verandah
- (c) Bathroom

6. Who among the following does not eat when flesh is cooked in the house?



(a) Mrs. Shamnath

(b) The servant

(c) The mother

7. Mr. Shamnath would be receiving as his guests.

(a) The boss and his family

(b) The boss and his American colleagues

(c) The boss and his Indian colleagues

8. Who among the following was a stickler for discipline in the house and was meticulous about the smallest detail?

(a) Mrs. Shamnath

(b) Mr. Shamnath

(c) The mother

9. Mr. Shamnath told her mother to wear

(a) White saree

(b) White kameez and salwar

(c) Pink saree

10. Who among the following liked Indian dishes?

(a) The Memsahib

(b) The Sahib

(c) The Indian colleagues

11. What did the boss' wife wear?

(a) A black gown and a gold necklace

(b) A white gown and a diamond necklace

(c) A black gown and a white pearl necklace

12. Why did Shamnath not want to send the mother to their neighbours?

(a) because they weren't nice people

(b) because then the neighbours would keep coming to their house

(c) because the neighbors weren't home

13. Who got up awkwardly and stood before the guests with downcast eyes?

(a) The mother



- (b) Mr. Shamnath
(c) Mrs. Shamnath
14. Mr. Shamnath was furious when
- (a) his mother had no bangles
(b) his mother placed her left hand in the sahib's right hand
(c) his mother wore black kameez and salwar
15. Who liked village folk?
- (a) The boss
(b) The boss' wife
(c) Mrs. Shamnath
16. The mother, in a feeble cracked voice started singing.
- (a) Pomegranate song
(b) An old wedding song
(c) An old folk song
17. Who had introduced a new note to the party?
- (a) The mother
(b) Mrs. Shamnath
(c) The boss' wife
18. According to Mr. Shamnath, in Punjabi homes women made
- (a) Phulkari
(b) Dolls
(c) Pickle
19. The mother sang in a
- (a) Sweet voice
(b) Deep voice
(c) Feeble cracked voice
20. What was the mother holding in her right hand?
- (a) A book
(b) A phone



(c) Beads

21. What is a phulkari?

(a) Sort of embroidered piece of cloth

(b) A type of Indian dish

(c) A type of decorative piece

22. Shamnath's boss was a/an

(a) German

(b) British

(c) American

23. The boss asks to sing an old folk song.

(a) Mrs. Shamnath

(b) The mother

(c) Mr. Shamnath

24. "Suddenly a problem reared up before Shamnath." What problem is referred to here?

(a) The mother

(b) The food

(c) The arrangements

25. Why did the mother not want to make a phulkari for the boss?

(a) She didn't like the boss

(b) She didn't know how to

(c) Her eyesight was feeble

26. Where does the mother want to be sent?

(a) Her brother's house

(b) The neighbors

(c) Hardwar

27. By what time had Mr. and Mrs. Shamnath arranged everything?

(a) By 5

(b) By 6

(c) By 8



28. Why did the mother sell her jewelry?

- (a) For daily cash expenses
- (b) For her son's marriage
- (c) For her son's education

29. What kind of a person the mother was?

- (a) Highly educated
- (b) Old fashioned
- (c) Greedy

30. Why didn't Mr. and Mrs. Shamnath want mother to appear before the guests?

- (a) Because she was ugly
- (b) Because she was an old fashioned lady
- (c) Because she was ill

31. Why does the mother agree to make a phulkari in the end?

- (a) Mr. Shamnath forced her
- (b) Because she wanted to
- (c) Because her son stood a chance for a raise/promotion

32. Why didn't Shamnath want to send his mother to Hardwar?

- (a) Because she'd be lonely there
- (b) Because people will say that he couldn't even give shelter to his mother
- (c) Because they didn't have enough money

33. What song does Shamnath suggest his mother to sing?

- (a) An old folk song
- (b) Pomegranate song
- (c) He didn't suggest any song

34. The mother refuses to eat dinner because

- (a) She wasn't hungry
- (b) She was fasting
- (c) She didn't eat when flesh was cooked in the house

35. The Boss asks Shamnath's to sing.



- (a) wife
- (b) son
- (c) daughter
- (d) mother

36. 'Suddenly a problem reared up' before Shamnath'. The problem is related to

- (a) food
- (b) mother
- (c) wife
- (d) servant

37. Who is the author of "The boss came to Dinner."

- (a) Rabindranath Tagore
- (b) Jayanta mahapatra
- (c) Bhisham Sahani
- (d) Purushottam Lal

38. There would be about guests, mostly his Indian colleagues and their wives.

- (a) 10
- (b) 15
- (c) 5
- (d) 2

39. Mother have how may bangles, in the story 'The boss came to dinner'

- (a) 0
- (b) 1
- (c) 2
- (d) 3

40. The guests had departed one by one at

- (a) 10 pm
- (b) 11 pm
- (c) Midnight
- (d) Evening



41. Mr. Shamnath had invited his boss to

- (a) Lunch
- (b) Breakfast
- (c) Dinner

42. Bric-a-brac means in the story 'The boss came to dinner'

- (a) bits of furniture, ornaments, etc. of no great value
- (b) the framework of a bed
- (c) outward show of prosperity
- (d) small interesting tales



Chapter 2: "The Man with the Scar"

By William Somerset Maugham

PART I: CHAPTER CONTENT

It was on account of the scar that I first noticed him, for it ran, **broad and red**, in a great crescent from his temple to his chin. It must have been due to a **formidable wound** and I wondered whether this had been caused by a sabre or by a fragment of shell. It was unexpected on that round, **fat and good-humoured face**. He had small and undistinguished features, and his expression was artless. His face went oddly with his corpulent body. He was a powerful man of more than common height. I never saw him in anything but **a very shabby grey suit, a khaki shirt and a battered sombrero**. He was far from clean. He used to come into the **Palace Hotel at Guatemala City every day at cocktail time and strolling leisurely round the bar offered lottery tickets for sale**. If this was the way he made his living it must have been a poor one, for I never saw anyone buy, but now and then **I saw him offered a drink. He never refused it**. He threaded his way among the tables with a sort of rolling walk as though he were **accustomed to traverse long distances on foot**, paused at each table, with a little smile mentioned the numbers he had for sale and then, when no notice was taken of him, with the same smile passed on. I think he was for the most part a trifle the worse for liquor.

I was standing at the bar one evening, my foot on the rail, with an acquaintance – they make a very good **dry martini** at the Palace Hotel in Guatemala City - when the man with the scar came up. I shook my head as for the twentieth time since my arrival he held out for inspection his lottery tickets. **But my companion nodded affably**.

"Qué tal, general? How is life?"

"**Not so bad. Business is none too good, but it might be worse.**"

"What will you have, general?"

"**A brandy.**"

He tossed it down and put the glass back on the bar. He nodded to my acquaintance. "Gracias. Hasta Luego."

Then he turned away and offered tickets to the men who were standing next to us.

"Who is your friend?" I asked. "**That's a terrific scar on his face.**"

"It doesn't add to his beauty, does it? **He's an exile from Nicaragua. He's a ruffian of course and a bandit, but not a bad fellow.** I give him a few pesos now and then. **He was a revolutionary general and if his ammunition hadn't given out he'd have upset the government and be minister of war now instead of selling lottery tickets in Guatemala. They captured him, along with his staff, such as it was, and tried him by court-martial.** Such things are rather summary in those countries, you know, and he was sentenced to be shot



at dawn. I guess he knew what was coming to him when he was caught. He spent the night in jail and he and the others, **there were five of them altogether, passed the time playing poker. They used matches for chips.** He told me he'd never had such a run of bad luck in his life. When day broke and the soldiers came into the cell to fetch them for execution he had lost more matches than a reasonable man could use in a life time.

They were led into the patio of the jail and placed against a wall, the five of them side by side, with the firing party facing them. There was a pause and our friend asked the officer in charge of them what the devil they were keeping him waiting for. The officer said that **the general commanding the government troops wished to attend the execution and they awaited his arrival.**

"Then I have time to smoke another cigarette," said our friend. "He was always unpunctual."

But he had barely lit it when the general – it was **San Ignacio**, by the way: I don't know whether you ever met him – followed by his **A.D.C.** came into the patio. The usual formalities were performed and San Ignacio asked the condemned men whether there was anything they wished before the execution took place. Four of the five shook their heads, but our friend spoke.

"Yes, I should like to say goodbye to my wife."

"Bueno," said the general, "I have no objection to that. Where is she?"

"She is waiting at the prison door."

"Then it will not cause a delay of more than five minutes."

"Hardly that, Señor General."

"Have him placed on one side."

Two soldiers advanced and between them the condemned rebel walked to the spot indicated. The officer in command of the firing squad on a nod from the general gave an order, there was a ragged report, and the four men fell. They fell strangely, not together, but one after the other, with movements that were almost grotesque, as though they were puppets in a toy theatre. The officer went up to them and **into one who was still alive emptied two chambers of his revolver.** Our friend finished his cigarette and threw away the stub.

There was a little stir at the gateway. A woman came into the patio, with quick steps, and then, her hand on her heart, stopped suddenly. She gave a cry and with outstretched arms ran forward.

"Caramba," said the general.

She was in black, with a veil over her hair, and her face was dead white. She was hardly more than a girl, a slim creature, with little regular features and enormous eyes. But they were distraught with anguish. Her loveliness was such that as she ran, her mouth slightly open and the agony of her face beautiful, a gasp of surprise was wrung from those indifferent soldiers who looked at her.



The rebel advanced a step or two to meet her. She flung herself into his arms and with a hoarse cry of passion: alma de mi corazón, soul of my heart, he pressed his lips to hers. **And at the same moment he drew a knife from his ragged shirt** – I haven't a notion how he had managed to retain possession of it – and stabbed her in the neck. The blood spurted from the cut vein and dyed his shirt. Then he flung his arms round her and once more pressed his lips to hers.

It happened so quickly that many didn't know what had occurred, but from the others burst a cry of horror; they sprang forward and seized him. They loosened his grasp and the girl would have fallen if the A.D.C. hadn't caught her. She was unconscious. They laid her on the ground and with dismay on their faces stood round watching her. The rebel knew where he was striking and it was impossible to staunch the blood. In a moment the A.D.C. who had been kneeling by her side rose.

"She's dead," he whispered.

The rebel crossed himself.

"Why did you do it?" asked the general.

"I loved her."

A sort of sigh passed through those men crowded together and they looked with strange faces at the murderer. The general stared at him for a while in silence.

"It was a noble gesture," he said at last. "I cannot execute this man. Take my car and have him led to the frontier. Señor, I offer you the homage which is due from one brave man to another."

A murmur of approbation broke from those who listened. The A.D.C. tapped the rebel on the shoulder, and between the two soldiers without a word he marched to the waiting car.

My friend stopped and for a time I was silent. I must explain that he was a Guatemaltecan and spoke to me in Spanish. I have translated what he told me as well as I could, but I have made no attempts to tone down his rather high-flown language. To tell the truth I think it suits the story.

"But how did he get the scar?" I asked at length.

"Oh, that was due to a bottle that burst when he was opening it. A bottle of ginger ale."

"I never liked it," said I.



Summary of "The Man with the Scar"

- **The Encounter:** The narrator is at the Palace Hotel in Guatemala City and notices a man with a prominent, broad, red scar extending from his temple to his chin. Despite his terrifying scar, the man has a surprisingly fat, good-humored face and wears a shabby grey suit with a battered sombrero.
- **His Current Life:** The man frequents the hotel's bar every day at cocktail time, leisurely trying to sell lottery tickets. Though people rarely buy tickets, they frequently buy him drinks, which leaves him often slightly intoxicated.
- **The General's Backstory:** An acquaintance reveals that the scarred man is actually an exiled revolutionary general from Nicaragua. He was captured alongside his staff, tried by court-martial, and sentenced to be shot at dawn. The night before the execution, the five condemned men passed the time playing poker using matches as chips.
- **The Execution Day:** On the morning of the execution, they were delayed because the commanding officer, General San Ignacio, was running late. When asked for a final wish, the scarred man asked to say goodbye to his wife.
- **The Shocking Twist:** When his beautiful young wife rushed to embrace him, he pulled a hidden knife and stabbed her in the neck, killing her. When asked why he did it, he simply replied, "I loved her".
- **The Pardon:** Viewing this act as a "noble gesture," General San Ignacio was deeply moved and refused to execute him, instead sending him to the frontier out of respect for his bravery.
- **The Irony:** After hearing this dramatic and bloody tale, the narrator assumes the scar was a battle wound. However, his acquaintance humorously reveals that the terrible scar simply came from a bursting ginger ale bottle.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Who is the writer of the story, 'The man with the scar'?
(a) Bhisham Sahani (b) William Somerset Maugham (c) Rabindranath Tagore (d) Jayanta mahapatra
2. Where does the story 'The man with the scar' take place?
(a) Mexico City (b) Guatemala City (c) San Salvador (d) Havana
3. What is the man with the scar's occupation in the story 'The man with the scar'?
(a) A hotel manager (b) A lottery ticket seller (c) A bartender (d) A soldier
4. Why did the man with the scar come into the Palace hotel everyday?
(a) To drink wine (b) To meet his friends (c) To sell lottery tickets (d) To eat food
5. How did the man get his scar?
(a) Due to a bottle that burst when it was opening (b) Due to a formidable wound (c) It has been caused by a sabre (d) It has been caused by a fragment of a shell
6. What distinctive feature does the man in the scar have?
(a) A missing hand (b) A prominent scar (c) Unusual clothing (d) A unique hairstyle



7. How is the man with the scar's physical appearance described?
(a) Lean and tall (b) Round, fat, and good-humored (c) Tall and muscular (d) Skinny and disheveled
8. What type of attire does the man consistently wear in the story 'The man with the scar'? (a) A formal suit (b) A shabby grey suit, khaki shirt, and a sombrero (c) Casual beachwear (d) Military uniform
9. How does the man interact with customers at the Palace Hotel?
(a) He aggressively sells tickets (b) He engages them with a smile and mentions his numbers (c) He simply sits quietly at the bar (d) He refuses to serve anyone
10. What can be inferred about the man's lifestyle based on the story 'The man with the scar'?
(a) He is wealthy and successful (b) He struggles financially and often appears to be under the influence of alcohol (c) He is well-respected in the community (d) He is a tourist visiting Guatemala
11. What is the overall tone of the narrator's description of the man?
(a) Admiring (b) Critical (c) Indifferent (d) Nostalgic
12. What does the man's rolling walk suggest about him?
(a) He is clumsy (b) He is accustomed to walking long distances (c) He is injured (d) He is in a hurry
13. What is the significance of the man never being seen in anything but shabby clothing? (a) It indicates his wealth (b) It reflects his carefree attitude (c) It suggests his poor financial situation (d) It shows his love for fashion
14. How does the narrator perceive the man's interactions with others in the hotel?
(a) As charming and engaging (b) As sad and lonely (c) As rude and dismissive (d) As professional and efficient
15. What does the phrase "trifle the worse for liquor" imply about the man?
(a) He is sober and in control (b) He is occasionally drunk (c) He is a heavy drinker (d) He never drinks alcohol
16. What time of day does the man frequent the Palace Hotel?
(a) Morning (b) Afternoon (c) Cocktail time (d) Late at night
17. In which establishment does the majority of the story take place?
(a) A local bar (b) A restaurant (c) The Palace Hotel (d) A marketplace
18. Where is the narrator standing when he encounters the man with the scar?
(a) At a café (b) In the hotel lobby (c) At the bar (d) Outside the hotel
19. How does the narrator react to the man with the scar's offer of lottery tickets?
(a) He enthusiastically buys a ticket (b) He shakes his head in refusal (c) He accepts a ticket out of curiosity (d) He argues with him
20. How does the narrator's companion respond to the man with the scar?
(a) He ignores him (b) He nods affably (c) He refuses to buy a ticket (d) He criticizes him



21. What language does the narrator use to greet the general?
(a) English (b) French (c) Spanish (d) Italian
22. How does the general describe his business?
(a) Thriving (b) Not so bad, but could be worse (c) Very successful (d) Poor and struggling
23. What does the general order at the bar? (a) A cocktail (b) A beer (c) A brandy (d) A whiskey
24. What observation does the narrator make about the general? (a) He seems very wealthy (b) He has a terrific scar on his face (c) He is very jovial (d) He looks unwell
25. What is the narrator's opinion about the general's scar?
(a) It enhances his appearance (b) It doesn't add to his beauty (c) It makes him look wise (d) It is unnoticeable
26. From which country is the general originally?
(a) Guatemala (b) Nicaragua (c) Mexico (d) El Salvador
27. How does the narrator describe the general's character? (a) Completely trustworthy (b) A ruffian and a bandit, but not a bad fellow (c) A noble leader (d) A cruel tyrant
28. What would the general have achieved if his ammunition had not run out?
(a) He would have escaped to another country (b) He would have become the minister of war (c) He would have retired peacefully (d) He would have won a major battle
29. What happened to the general after he was captured?
(a) He was exiled (b) He became a hero (c) He was tried by court-martial and sentenced to death (d) He escaped from prison
30. What did the general and the others do while in jail?
(a) Planned their escape (b) Played poker with matches as chips (c) Discussed their future (d) Wrote letters to their families
31. What does the phrase "summary in those countries" suggest about justice in Nicaragua? (a) It is fair and thorough (b) It is quick and often harsh (c) It is slow and deliberate (d) It is unpredictable
32. How many men are lined up against the wall for execution?
(a) Three (b) Four (c) Five (d) Six
33. What reason does the officer give for the delay in the execution?
(a) They are preparing the firing squad (b) The general commanding the troops wishes to attend the execution and they awaited his arrival. (c) There is a shortage of ammunition (d) They are waiting for witnesses
34. Who is the general mentioned in the excerpt?
(a) General Martinez (b) General San Ignacio (c) General Lopez (d) General Rivera
35. What does the condemned man request before the execution?
(a) A final meal (b) To speak to a lawyer (c) To say goodbye to his wife (d) A drink



36. How many prisoners were subjected to court-martial along with the scar-faced man?
(a) Three (b) Four (c) Five (d) Six
37. Where did the narrator of 'A Man with the Scar' meet the man?
(a) Mexico City (b) At the Bar of Palace Hotel of Guatemala City (c) San Salvador (d) Havana
38. To which hotel did the scar-faced man go everyday at cocktail time?
(a) Palace Hotel (b) Grand Hotel (c) Victoria Hotel (d) Dolphin Hotel
39. How did the scar-faced man pass the night before his execution in the Jail?
(a) Planned their escape (b) Played poker with matches as chips (c) Discussed their future
(d) Wrote letters to their families
40. What was the last wish of the scar-faced man?
(a) A final meal (b) To speak to a lawyer (c) To say goodbye to his wife (d) A drink
41. From which state was the scar-faced man on exile?
(a) Guatemala (b) Nicaragua (c) Mexico (d) El Salvador
42. How did the man with a scar earn a living?
(a) A hotel manager (b) A lottery ticket seller (c) A bartender (d) A soldier
43. What was the physical build of the man with the scar?
(a) Small and thin (b) A powerful man of more than common height with a corpulent body
(c) Lean and muscular (d) Short and stout
44. Which drink specifically caused the bottle to burst and create the man's scar?
(a) Beer (b) Wine (c) Ginger ale (d) Whiskey
45. Who caught the rebel's wife to prevent her from falling to the ground after she was stabbed?
(a) The general (b) The narrator (c) Two soldiers (d) The A.D.C.
46. What Spanish phrase did the rebel exclaim when his wife flung herself into his arms?
(a) Hasta Luego (b) Gracias (c) Alma de mi corazón (d) Qué tal
47. How many chambers of his revolver did the officer empty into the man from the firing squad who was still alive?
(a) One (b) Two (c) Three (d) Four
48. What was the nationality of the friend who told the narrator the execution story?
(a) Mexican (b) Guatemaltecan (c) Nicaraguan (d) Spanish
49. What color was the rebel's wife wearing when she arrived at the patio?
(a) White (b) Red (c) Blue (d) Black
50. Where did the rebel hide the knife he used to stab his wife?
(a) In his boot (b) Under his sombrero (c) In his ragged shirt (d) In his trousers



Chapter 3: Purushottam Lal: Life

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Purushottam Lal (1929-2010), more famously known as **P Lal**, was a teacher of English. He was also a noted English poet, essayist, translator and publisher. He is best known as the **English translator of the Mahabharata**. This poem, with a brilliant economy of words, describes the various facets of human life – **love, faith, hope, spirit and truth**. The last stanza is fascinating, as it says how different men perceive truth differently, thus causing differences among men.

PART II: THE POEM

Life

Is a flower of five petals.

Love's the first

Where a lusting bee settles,
quenching thirst.

Faith is the second.

A drooping treasure
when reckoned
in fastidious measure.

Hope's a third.

Brooding breast
Where a blood-spattered bird
takes rest.

The fourth I cannot see.

Only a limp hand
stretches endlessly
for the touch of land.

The fifth—look

Wrapped
in that terrible Book,
terrible man, terribly trapped

PART III: GLOSSARY/NOTES

Table



Word/Phrase	Meaning
Lusting	It signifies someone who has a strong desire (lust means 'strong desire')
Drooping	Sad or depressed
Fastidious	Very careful about minute details
Blood-spattered	Covered with drops of blood
Limp	Lacking strength and energy
Wrapped in that terrible Book, terrible man, terribly trapped	These lines describe how different men belonging to different religions go by their different books, causing divisions among men – this is a terrible trap for mankind

PART IV: DETAILED EXPLANATION OF THE POEM

Stanza 1: The Central Metaphor

The poem begins with a powerful metaphor comparing **life to a flower of five petals**. This immediately establishes that life has five essential components or dimensions that the poet will explore in the subsequent stanzas.

Stanza 2: First Petal – LOVE

Love's the first Where a lusting bee settles, quenching thirst.

- **Love is the first petal** of life's flower
- The poet uses the imagery of a "**lusting bee**" to represent people with strong desire for love
- The bee "**settles**" on this petal, suggesting that love is where desire finds its resting place
- "**Quenching thirst**" symbolizes the satisfaction of one's deep emotional and physical needs through love
- The **lusting bee** represents people who are extremely desirous (have strong desire) of love

Stanza 3: Second Petal – FAITH



Faith is the second. A drooping treasure when reckoned in fastidious measure.

- **Faith is the second petal** of life's flower
- Faith is described as a "**drooping treasure**" – something valuable but sad or depressed in appearance
- The phrase "**when reckoned in fastidious measure**" suggests that when faith is examined too carefully or critically (with excessive attention to minute details), it loses its vitality and appears drooping
- Faith is precious but fragile when subjected to overly critical scrutiny

Stanza 4: Third Petal – HOPE

Hope's a third. Brooding breast Where a blood-spattered bird takes rest.

- **Hope is the third petal** of life's flower
- Hope is described as a "**brooding breast**" – a nurturing but anxious source of comfort
- The "**blood-spattered bird**" is a powerful image representing something that has suffered violence or hardship
- This wounded bird "**takes rest**" in hope, suggesting that hope provides sanctuary for those who have been damaged by life's struggles
- Even after trauma and violence (represented by the blood), hope offers a place of recovery and rest

Stanza 5: Fourth Petal – SPIRIT

The fourth I cannot see. Only a limp hand stretches endlessly for the touch of land.

- **The fourth petal represents Spirit**, but the poet explicitly states "**I cannot see**" it
- This suggests the intangible, elusive nature of the spiritual dimension of life
- The image of a "**limp hand**" (lacking strength and energy) that "**stretches endlessly for the touch of land**" evokes:
 - A drowning person reaching for safety
 - The human soul's eternal yearning for connection with the divine or with something greater
 - The spiritual quest that continues without apparent success (endlessly)
- The spirit is the most difficult aspect of life to perceive or grasp



Stanza 6: Fifth Petal – TRUTH

The fifth—look Wrapped in that terrible Book, terrible man, terribly trapped

- **The fifth petal represents Truth**
- The poet draws attention with "**look**" to something alarming
- "**Wrapped in that terrible Book**" – people are bound by their religious texts and doctrines
- "**Terrible man, terribly trapped**" – human beings become trapped by their rigid adherence to their holy books
- This stanza carries the poem's central message: **different men belonging to different religions go by their different books, causing divisions among men** – this is a terrible trap for mankind
- Truth, which should unite people, becomes a source of conflict when it is confined to specific religious texts
- The repetition of "terrible" emphasizes the tragedy of this situation

PART V: IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

About the Poet

1. **Purushottam Lal (1929-2010)**, also known as **P Lal**
2. He was a **teacher of English**, poet, essayist, translator and publisher
3. He is **best known as the English translator of the Mahabharata**

About the Poem

4. The poem describes the **various facets of human life – love, faith, hope, spirit and truth**
5. Life is compared to a **flower of five petals**
6. The poem uses **brilliant economy of words**
7. The **last stanza is fascinating** as it says how different men perceive truth differently, thus causing differences among men

The Five Petals

8. **First petal: LOVE** – described through the image of a lusting bee settling and quenching thirst
9. **Second petal: FAITH** – described as a drooping treasure when reckoned in fastidious measure



10. **Third petal: HOPE** – described as a brooding breast where a blood-spattered bird takes rest
11. **Fourth petal: SPIRIT** – the poet cannot see it; only a limp hand stretches endlessly for the touch of land
12. **Fifth petal: TRUTH** – people wrapped in their terrible Books, terrible man, terribly trapped

Key Images and Symbols

13. **Lusting bee** – represents people who are extremely desirous (strong desire) of love
14. **Drooping treasure** – represents faith that becomes sad when examined too critically
15. **Blood-spattered bird** – represents hope as a refuge for the wounded and traumatized
16. **Limp hand** – represents the weak, endless striving of the human spirit
17. **Terrible Book** – represents religious texts that trap people and cause divisions

Themes

18. The **five essential dimensions of human life**: Love, Faith, Hope, Spirit, and Truth
19. The **elusive nature of spiritual experience** (the fourth petal that cannot be seen)
20. The **divisive nature of organized religion** and rigid adherence to religious texts
21. The **tragedy of truth** becoming a source of conflict rather than unity

PART VI: SUMMARY

"Life" by Purushottam Lal is a profound philosophical poem that explores the five essential dimensions of human existence through the extended metaphor of a five-petaled flower. Each petal represents a crucial aspect of life: Love (the fulfillment of desire), Faith (the fragile treasure), Hope (the sanctuary for the wounded), Spirit (the elusive, yearning force), and Truth (the ultimate trap when confined to rigid doctrines).

The poem moves from the tangible and accessible (love, faith, hope) to the increasingly abstract and problematic (spirit, truth). The final stanza delivers a powerful social critique, suggesting that humanity's greatest tragedy lies in how religious dogma divides rather than unites people. The poem's brilliance lies in its compression—using minimal words to convey maximum meaning—and its unflinching examination of how humanity's search for truth can become its own imprisonment.

Multiple Choice Questions: "Life" by P. Lal

1. Who is the poet of the poem, 'Life'?
- (a) Bhisham Sahani
- (b) Rabindranath Tagore



(c) Jayanta mahapatra

(d) Purushottam Lal Answer: (d)

2. What does the first petal stand for in the poem life?

(a) Love

(b) Faith

(c) Hope

(d) Truth Answer: (a)

3. What does the second petal stand for in the poem?

(a) Love

(b) Faith

(c) Hope

(d) Truth Answer: (b)

4. What does the third petal stand for in the poem?

(a) Love

(b) Faith

(c) Hope

(d) Truth Answer: (c)

5. What does the fourth petal stand for in the poem?

(a) Love

(b) Faith

(c) Spirit

(d) Truth Answer: (c)

6. What does the fifth petal stand for in the poem?

(a) Love

(b) Faith

(c) Spirit

(d) Truth Answer: (d)

7. What according to the poet is a 'drooping treasure' in the poem 'Life'?

(a) Love



(b) Faith

(c) Hope

(d) Truth Answer: (b)

8. What is life compared to in the poem 'Life'?

(a) Flower of five petals.

(b) Flower of four petals.

(c) Flower of six petals.

(d) Flower of three petals. Answer: (a)

9. What does the phrase 'blood-spattered bird' signify in the poem 'Life'?

(a) Love

(b) Faith

(c) Hope

(d) Truth Answer: (c)

10. Which petal can the poet not see in 'Life'?

(a) First (love)

(b) Second (Faith)

(c) Third (Hope)

(d) Fourth (Spirit) Answer: (d)

11. Which animal does the poet describe love (1st petal) in 'Life'?

(a) Lusting bee

(b) Blood-spattered bird

(c) Butterfly

(d) Ant Answer: (a)

12. Which animal does the poet describe hope (3rd petal) in 'Life'?

(a) Lusting bee

(b) Blood-spattered bird

(c) Butterfly

(d) Ant Answer: (b)

13. "Lusting bee" describes which petal of life?



(a) First (love)

(b) Second (Faith)

(c) Third (Hope)

(d) Fourth (Spirit) Answer: (a)

14. "Blood-spattered bird" describes which petal of life?

(a) First (love)

(b) Second (Faith)

(c) Third (Hope)

(d) Fourth (Spirit) Answer: (c)

15. According to the poet P. Lal there are ____ petals of life.

(a) 2

(b) 3

(c) 4

(d) 5 Answer: (d)

16. What does 'lusting bee' signify in the poem 'Life'?

(a) People who are extremely desirous (strong desire) of love

(b) People who are extremely desirous (strong desire) of Faith

(c) People who are extremely desirous (strong desire) of Hope

(d) People who have weak desire of love Answer: (a)

17. ____ is referred to as a 'brooding breast' in the poem 'Life'.

(a) Love

(b) Faith

(c) Hope

(d) Truth Answer: (c)

18. What does 'quenching thirst' signify in the poem 'Life'?

(a) Satisfy their thirst for love

(b) Satisfy their thirst for faith

(c) Satisfy their thirst for Hope

(d) Satisfy their thirst for truth Answer: (a)



19. What is the state of the 'terrible man' referred to?

- (a) People who appear to be 'wrapped' or bound by the holy book
 - (b) People who appear to be free
 - (c) People who appear to be independent
 - (d) People who appear to be hopeful
- Answer: (a)

20. Fill in the blank: Only a ____ hand stretches endlessly for the touch of land.

- (a) Limp
 - (b) Strong
 - (c) Weak
 - (d) Holy
- Answer: (a)

21. The ____ look wrapped in that terrible Book, terrible man, terribly trapped.

- (a) First
 - (b) Second
 - (c) Fourth
 - (d) Fifth
- Answer: (d)

22. Purushottam Lal, famously known as P Lal, lived during which years?

- (a) 1920-2005
- (b) 1929-2010
- (c) 1935-2015
- (d) 1940-2018

Answer: (b)

23. What was Purushottam Lal's primary profession?

- (a) Doctor
- (b) Teacher of English
- (c) Scientist
- (d) Politician

Answer: (b)

24. P Lal is best known as the English translator of which major work?

- (a) The Ramayana



- (b) The Bhagavad Gita
- (c) The Mahabharata
- (d) The Upanishads

Answer: (c)

25. According to the text's introduction, how does the poem describe the various facets of human life?

- (a) With elaborate metaphors
- (b) With a brilliant economy of words
- (c) Through long, detailed stanzas
- (d) Without using any imagery

Answer: (b)

26. Why does the last stanza say differences are caused among men?

- (a) Because men belong to different classes
- (b) Because different men perceive truth differently
- (c) Because of the lack of faith
- (d) Because hope is lost

Answer: (b)

27. In the glossary, what does the word "lusting" signify?

- (a) Lacking energy
- (b) Someone who has a strong desire
- (c) Being extremely careful
- (d) Feeling sad or depressed

Answer: (b)

28. How is the word "drooping" defined in the chapter's notes?

- (a) Very careful about minute details
- (b) Lacking strength
- (c) Sad or depressed
- (d) Bound by a book

Answer: (c)

29. What does the word "fastidious" mean according to the glossary?



- (a) Sad or depressed
- (b) Covered with drops of blood
- (c) Very careful about minute details
- (d) Lacking strength and energy

Answer: (c)

30. What is the meaning of "blood-spattered"?

- (a) Extremely desirous
- (b) Covered with drops of blood
- (c) Wrapped in a terrible book
- (d) Very careful about details

Answer: (b)

31. How does the glossary define the word "limp"?

- (a) Lacking strength and energy
- (b) Sad or depressed
- (c) Quenching thirst
- (d) Stretching endlessly

Answer: (a)

32. According to the poem, what does the limp hand stretch endlessly for?

- (a) A brooding breast
- (b) A drooping treasure
- (c) The touch of land
- (d) A lusting bee

Answer: (c)

33. What does the "terrible Book" ultimately do to mankind, according to the glossary?

- (a) It quenches their thirst
- (b) It provides a drooping treasure
- (c) It causes divisions and is a terrible trap
- (d) It gives them hope and rest

Answer: (c)



34. In the poem, "Faith" is reckoned in what kind of measure?

- (a) Fastidious measure
- (b) Drooping measure
- (c) Terrible measure
- (d) Endless measure

Answer: (a)

35. Where does the blood-spattered bird take its rest?

- (a) On a limp hand
- (b) In a fastidious measure
- (c) On a brooding breast
- (d) In a terrible Book

Answer: (c)

36. Besides being a teacher and a translator, P Lal is also noted as being a(n):

- (a) Essayist and publisher
- (b) Doctor and lawyer
- (c) Politician and actor
- (d) Singer and dancer

Answer: (a)

37. How many facets of human life does the poem primarily describe in the introduction?

- (a) Three
- (b) Four
- (c) Five
- (d) Six

Answer: (c)

38. The phrase "wrapped in that terrible Book" refers to which petal?

- (a) The second
 - (b) The third
 - (c) The fourth
 - (d) The fifth
- Answer: (d)



39. Who is "terribly trapped" in the final stanza?

- (a) A blood-spattered bird
- (b) A lusting bee
- (c) Terrible man
- (d) The poet

Answer: (c)

40. The glossary suggests that divisions among men are caused by different men going by different what?

- (a) Religions and books
- (b) Treasures
- (c) Lands
- (d) Passions

Answer: (a)



Chapter 4: Jayanta Mahapatra: Dawn at Puri (Poetry)

PART I: INTRODUCTION

'Dawn at Puri' by Jayanta Mahapatra is a poem of **Modern Indian Writing in English**. Along with **A.K. Ramanujan**, Mahapatra is remembered as **one of the pioneers of modernist writing in India**. In the poem, the poet presents the picture of the **Puri sea beach at dawn** and its resemblance to the people living there.

Puri is a famous tourist spot in India, located in **Odisha**. It is also famous for its **Jagannath Temple**. **Jagannath** is an avatar of **Lord Vishnu** and the state observes a huge religious gathering for Lord Jagannath during the season of **Monsoon**.

PART II: THE POEM

Dawn at Puri

Endless crow noises
A skull in the holy sands
tilts its empty country towards hunger.

White-clad widowed Women past
the centers of their lives
are waiting to enter the Great Temple

Their austere eyes
stare like those caught in a net
hanging by the dawn's shining strands of faith.

The fail early light catches
ruined, leprous shells leaning against one another, a mass
of crouched faces without names,

and suddenly breaks out of my hide
into the smoky blaze of a sullen solitary pyre that fills
my aging mother:

her last wish to be cremated here twisting
uncertainly like light
on the shifting sands

PART III: DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

Stanza 1



"Endless crow noises A skull in the holy sands tilts its empty country towards hunger."

In the first two stanzas of 'Dawn at Puri', Jayanta Mahapatra presents **two images** to the readers. The former tells the readers about the **ambience of Puri sea beach at dawn**. The latter reminds us of the **pilgrims gathering around the Jagannath Temple before sunrise**. Apart from the broad images depicted in the poem, there are some minor images which are of no less importance. One such image is of the **human skull**. The poet mentions this in the poem to make the readers aware of the **problem of hunger and poverty prevalent in rural India**.

Key Points:

- The poem begins with **"Endless crow noises"** – creating an atmosphere of dawn
- **"A skull in the holy sands"** – a stark image of death and poverty on the sacred beach
- The skull **"tilts its empty country towards hunger"** – symbolizes the widespread hunger and emptiness in the nation
- The sands are described as **"holy"** – indicating the religious significance of Puri
- The **skull** indicates a **hungry and poor country**

Stanza 2

"White-clad widowed Women past the centers of their lives are waiting to enter the Great Temple"

In the second stanza of the poem, Mahapatra presents the **imagery of the widow women waiting to enter the "Great Temple" of Lord Jagannath**. At this stage of their lives, **only faith and devotion to the almighty can only keep their spirit of living alive**.

Key Points:

- **"White-clad widowed Women"** – widows dressed in white saris, traditional mourning attire
- They are **"past the centers of their lives"** – they have crossed their prime time/youth
- They **"are waiting to enter the Great Temple"** – the Jagannath Temple
- The widows have **austere eyes** – stern, severe, and simple eyes reflecting their harsh lives
- The Great Temple refers to the **Jagannath Temple**

Stanza 3

"Their austere eyes stare like those caught in a net hanging by the dawn's shining strands of faith."

This section of 'Dawn at Puri' contains another set of images like the previous section. In this section, Jayanta Mahapatra brings the image of the **fishes caught by a net** into the light. It is one



of the familiar images of the people who have already visited Puri. The poet **compares the eyes of those fishes showing the last hope of life and liberty, to the eyes of the widows**. Their condition is similar to those fishes; **both caught by the net of life and struggling**.

Key Points:

- **"Their austere eyes"** – the widows' eyes are severe, strict, and grave
- They **"stare like those caught in a net"** – compared to fish caught in a net, trapped and helpless
- **"Hanging by the dawn's shining strands of faith"** – their only support is their religious faith at dawn
- The widows' eyes stare like **fish caught in a net** – symbolizing their trapped condition in life

Stanza 4

"The fail early light catches ruined, leprous shells leaning against one another, a mass of crouched faces without names,"

In the next section, the poet uses the image of the **"shells"** to compare the **lonely and hopeless state of the widows**. Like the shells leaning against each other on the shore, the widows also gather at the temple and sit there in the manner of the shells. According to the poet they have **"crouched faces without names"**. There is no need to differentiate them by their names. Their condition makes them an **entity of loneliness and hopelessness**. In this way, the poet tries to depict their short but simple annals of life.

Key Points:

- **"The fail early light"** – the weak, pale early morning sunlight
- It catches **"ruined, leprous shells leaning against one another"** – empty, diseased shells supporting each other
- The shells represent **"a mass of crouched faces without names"** – the widows huddled together, losing their individual identities
- The **ruined shells are leaning against one another** – symbolizing the widows' mutual support in their desolation
- The widows are compared to **lying shells** – empty, abandoned, and lifeless

Stanza 5 & 6

"and suddenly breaks out of my hide into the smoky blaze of a sullen solitary pyre that fills my aging mother:

her last wish to be cremated here twisting uncertainly like light on the shifting sands"



Jayanta Mahapatra in the last section of 'Dawn at Puri' depicts the **last stage of life** by producing the image of the **"sullen solitary pyre"**. The smell of pyre makes the poet's mother aware of her mortality. Her attitude towards death is significant in the poem. Instead of fearing her approaching death, **she welcomes it**. She wishes to die in her native land with which her bond is deep and unbroken.

Key Points:

- The poet's vision suddenly shifts to **"the smoky blaze of a sullen solitary pyre"** – a cremation fire
- It **"fills my aging mother"** – reminds the poet of his elderly mother
- **"Her last wish to be cremated here"** – she wants her final rites performed at Puri
- This wish is **"twisting uncertainly like light on the shifting sands"** – fragile, changing, and uncertain like light on moving sand
- The pyre makes the poet remember his **mother**
- The poet's mother's last wish was **to be cremated on Puri beach**

PART IV: SUMMARY OF DAWN AT PURI

In 'Dawn at Puri' Mahapatra uses the **imagery of the sea beach to portray its proximity to life**. 'Dawn at Puri' by Jayanta Mahapatra presents a **picturesque description of the seashore and the pilgrims** visiting each day to visit the famous temple of Jagannath. At the beach, there are **numerous crows gathering here and there**. In this noisy ambiance the poet observes **a skull resembling poor and hungry millions of our country**. Thereafter the poet shifts his vision and looks at the temple where **"white-clad widowed Women" are waiting to enter the "Great Temple"**. The poet sees a **deep religious yearning in their eyes**.

In the next section of 'Dawn at Puri', Mahapatra shifts again to the seashore and now he rather sees **empty shells lying there instead of crows**. It is actually an instance of symbolism which will be discussed later in the analysis section. In the landscape suddenly a **heap of smoke** seeks the attention of the poet. It is actually coming out of a **cremation pyre**. The poem ends with the wish of the **poet's aging mother**. She wants to be cremated at her native place like the mentioned pyre on the seashore.

Multiple Choice Questions: "Dawn at Puri"

1. The sea beach mentioned in this poem is
 - (a) Digha Beach
 - (b) Goa Sea beach
 - (c) Puri Sea beach
 - (d) Western Beach



Answer: (c)

2. Puri is famous for

- (a) Jagannath Temple
- (b) Shiva Temple
- (c) Nataraj Temple
- (d) Mountain.

Answer: (a)

3. The poem starts at

- (a) Morning
- (b) Daybreak/dawn
- (c) Evening
- (d) Afternoon

Answer: (b)

4. The poet could hear the noise of

- (a) Prayers
- (b) Crow
- (c) Wind
- (d) Wave

Answer: (b)

5. The sands of Puri is described as

- (a) Holy
- (b) Pure
- (c) Cold
- (d) Warm

Answer: (a)

6. The skull in the sand indicates the

- (a) Rich country
- (b) Hungry and poor country
- (c) Religious country



(d) Happy country

Answer: (b)

7. The poet notices the white-clad

(a) Girls

(b) Women

(c) Brahmins

(d) Widows

Answer: (d)

8. The widow women wore-

(a) Grey sari

(b) White sari

(c) Red sari

(d) Yellow sari

Answer: (b)

9. The widows have crossed/ passed their lives'

(a) Childhood

(b) Adolescent

(c) Centres/prime time

(d) Old age

Answer: (c)

10. "Women/past the centres of their lives"- Here 'centres' means

(a) Childhood

(b) Adolescent

(c) Prime time

(d) Old age

Answer: (c)

11. The widows are waiting to enter

(a) Jagannath Temple

(b) Shiva Temple



(c) Nataraj Temple

(d) Home

Answer: (a)

12. Here the Great temple refers to

(a) Jagannath Temple

(b) Shiva Temple

(c) Nataraj Temple

(d) Kailash temple

Answer: (a)

13. The eyes of the widows were

(a) Greedy

(b) Dull

(c) Austere

(d) Closed

Answer: (c)

14. The widows' eyes stare like

(a) Fish caught in net

(b) Fish in the water

(c) Sun

(d) Skull on the sand

Answer: (a)

15. The early light of sun is described as

(a) Hot

(b) Fail

(c) Cold

(d) Powerful

Answer: (b)

16. The fail early sunlight falls on

(a) Ruined, leprous shells



- (b) Fish
- (c) Net
- (d) Widows

Answer: (a)

17. The ruined shells are lying

- (a) In rows
- (b) In scattered way
- (c) Leaning against one another
- (d) Under sand

Answer: (c)

18. Who are compared to the lying shell?

- (a) Fish
- (b) Nets
- (c) Solitary pyre
- (d) Widows

Answer: (d)

19. "A mass of crouched faces"-the excerpt is said about

- (a) Lying shells
 - (b) Dead persons
 - (c) Widows
 - (d) Fishes in net
- Answer: (a) (Note: Based on the poetic analysis provided, the widows sit "in the manner of the shells" and it is the widows that the poet says "have crouched faces without names".)

20. The poet could see in inner-eyes

- (a) The Temple
- (b) The blazing pyre of his mother
- (c) The widows
- (d) The fish in net

Answer: (b)

21. The pyre makes the poet remember of



- (a) Widow women
- (b) Poet's mother
- (c) skull
- (d) Relative

Answer: (b)

22. Poet's mother's last wish was

- (a) To visit Puri sea beach
- (b) To visit Jagannath temple
- (c) To be cremated on Puri beach
- (d) To make a country tour

Answer: (c)

23. What makes poet's thought twisting uncertainly like?

- (a) His own wish
- (b) Scene of widow
- (c) Scene of pyre
- (d) Mother's last wish

Answer: (d)

24. Who is the Poet of the poem 'Dawn at Puri'?

- (a) Bhisham Sahani
- (b) Rabindranath Tagore
- (c) Jayanta mahapatra
- (d) Purushottam Lal

Answer: (c)

25. Which bird's endless noise has been mentioned in the poem 'Dawn at Puri'?

- (a) Pigeon
- (b) Parrot
- (c) Crow
- (d) Hen

Answer: (c)



26. Who were waiting to enter the Great Jagannath Temple of Puri at dawn?

- (a) A group of widow woman
- (b) A group of men
- (c) A group of children
- (d) A group of pilgrims

Answer: (a)

27. A ____ in the holy sands tilts its empty country towards hunger.

- (a) Skull
- (b) Body
- (c) Hand

Answer: (a)



Chapter 5: Rabindranath Tagore: Gitanjali XVIII (Poetry) (Song 18)

PART I: ABOUT THE POET

Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941)

Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941) is **best known as a poet**, and in **1913** was the **first non-European writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature**.

Key Details:

- **Born:** 7th May 1861 in Calcutta
- **Died:** 7th August 1941
- **Nobel Prize:** 1913 for Literature (first non-European to receive this honor)
- **Most famous work:** Gitanjali

PART II: ABOUT GITANJALI

Gitanjali is a collection of poetry, the **most famous work by Rabindranath Tagore**, published in India in **1910**. Tagore then translated it into **prose poems in English**, as **Gitanjali: Song Offerings**, and it was published in **1912** with an **introduction by William Butler Yeats**.

Important Dates:

- **Bengali Gitanjali published:** 1910
- **English Gitanjali published:** 1912
- **Tagore got Nobel Prize:** 1913

Number of poems in Gitanjali: 157 poems

PART III: ABOUT GITANJALI XVIII (SONG 18)

"**Gitanjali 18**" by Rabindranath Tagore is about a **lovelorn person who is contrasted with the celebratory atmosphere of rain**. The poem's speaker is a **woman who is overcome with longing as the monsoon clouds rise**.

A **lovelorn man/woman is juxtaposed against the celebratory atmosphere of rain**. In Song 18 of Gitanjali, Rabindranath Tagore **alludes to this rich tradition of rain music and poetry**. The speaker, an **archetypal woman lover**, **drowns in longing as the monsoon clouds rise in the sky**.



PART IV: THE POEM

Gitanjali XVIII (Song 18)

Clouds heap upon clouds and it darkens. **Ah, love**, why dost thou let me wait outside at the door all alone?

In the busy moments of the noontide work I am with the crowd, but on this dark lonely day it is **only for thee that I hope**.

If thou showest me not thy face, if thou leavest me wholly aside, I know not how I am to pass these **long, rainy hours**.

I keep **gazing** on the far away **gloom of the sky**, and my heart wanders **wailing with the restless wind**.

PART V: DETAILED SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

Summary of Gitanjali XVIII

Tagore says that **dark clouds have gathered, one on top of another** and the day has darkened. At this he cries out to God as to why He was making his wait at the door thus, alone.

He says that he was with other people during the day when everybody was busy with their work, but night is dark and lonely, he was fervently longing for him and hoping that he would come. And then he says that if God did not show him his face or if He left him alone, then he didn't know how to pass the long, lonely and depressing days of the rainy season. Then the poet expresses how in his longing for God he keeps gazing at the sky which is dark and gloomy and his heart cries as the wind, mingling with the sound of wind.

Stanza-wise Analysis

First Stanza

"Clouds heap upon clouds and it darkens. Ah, love, why dost thou let me wait outside at the door all alone?"

- The poem opens with the imagery of "**clouds heap upon clouds**" – dark clouds gathering ominously
- "**It darkens**" – the atmosphere becomes gloomy, reflecting the speaker's inner state
- The speaker cries out "**Ah, love**" – addressing the beloved/God with an exclamation of disappointment
- The central question: "**why dost thou let me wait outside at the door all alone?**" – expresses feelings of abandonment and neglect



- Waiting "**outside at the door**" represents exclusion and longing

Key Symbolism:

- "**Clouds heap upon clouds**" symbolizes overwhelming emotions and despair
 - "**It darkens**" suggests the speaker is experiencing a sense of foreboding
 - The question reveals the speaker feels abandoned and neglected
-

Second Stanza

"In the busy moments of the noontide work I am with the crowd, but on this dark lonely day it is only for thee that I hope."

- The speaker contrasts two states of existence:
 - "**Busy moments of the noontide work**" – chaotic and active daily life with the crowd
 - "**Dark lonely day**" – the present moment of isolation
- Despite being with the crowd, the speaker feels isolated
- "**It is only for thee that I hope**" – the beloved/God is the sole source of hope
- This indicates they find hope only in their loved one or God

Key Points:

- The speaker's daily life is chaotic and active
 - The phrase "dark lonely day" conveys isolation and sadness
 - The speaker feels isolated despite being surrounded by people
-

Third Stanza

"If thou showest me not thy face, if thou leavest me wholly aside, I know not how I am to pass these long, rainy hours."

- The speaker expresses fear of total abandonment
- "**If thou showest me not thy face**" – the desire to see the beloved/God
- "**Leavest me wholly aside**" – feeling abandoned and neglected
- "**Long, rainy hours**" – symbolize endless waiting and despair
- The rhetorical question: "**How am I to pass these hours?**"

Key Symbolism:



- "Long, rainy hours" symbolize endless waiting and despair
- The phrase "leavest me wholly aside" implies feeling abandoned and neglected
- "If thou showest me not thy face" implies they seek companionship

Fourth Stanza

"I keep gazing on the far away gloom of the sky, and my heart wanders wailing with the restless wind."

- **"I keep gazing"** – implies focused and contemplative state of mind
- **"Far away gloom of the sky"** – suggests distant and melancholic outlook
- **"My heart wanders wailing"** – the heart responds by wandering and wailing
- **"Restless wind"** – symbolizes turmoil and emotional unrest, the speaker's unfulfilled desires

Key Symbolism:

- "Gazing" implies focused and contemplative state of mind
- "Far away gloom of the sky" suggests distant and melancholic outlook
- The mood conveyed is sorrowful longing
- "Restless wind" symbolizes the speaker's unfulfilled desires and turmoil

PART VI: IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

About Rabindranath Tagore

1. Rabindranath Tagore was born in **Calcutta**
2. Rabindranath Tagore was born on **7th May 1861**
3. Rabindranath Tagore died on **7th Aug 1941**
4. Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize for **Gitanjali** in **1913**
5. Rabindranath Tagore got Nobel Prize in **Literature**
6. Rabindranath Tagore was the **first non-European writer** to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature
7. **Gitanjali** is a famous poem written by Rabindranath Tagore
8. There are **157 poems** in Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali

About Gitanjali



9. **Bengali Gitanjali published: 1910**
10. **English Gitanjali published: 1912** (as "Gitanjali: Song Offerings")
11. English Gitanjali had an **introduction by William Butler Yeats**
12. **Tagore got Nobel Prize in 1913** for Gitanjali

About Gitanjali XVIII (Song 18)

13. The poet of Gitanjali XVIII is **Rabindranath Tagore**
14. **"Love" and "thee"** in Gitanjali 18 refers to **God** (the beloved is addressed as God)
15. The primary emotion expressed by the speaker is **loneliness**
16. The speaker compares their feelings of waiting to **the dark clouds in the sky**
17. The predominant imagery used is **clouds and rain**
18. The speaker describes the passage of time as **long and painful**
19. The metaphor used to describe the speaker's situation is **"clouds heaping upon clouds"**
20. The tone of Gitanjali XVIII is **melancholic**
21. The **"restless wind"** symbolizes **the speaker's unfulfilled desires and turmoil and emotional unrest**
22. The season that is the theme is **rain**
23. The speaker's heart responds by **wandering and wailing**
24. The mood conveyed through "I keep gazing on the far away gloom of the sky, and my heart wanders wailing with the restless wind" is **sorrowful longing**
25. The "long, rainy hours" symbolize **endless waiting and despair**
26. The rhetorical question about passing time is: **"How am I to pass these hours?"**
27. The phrase "these long, rainy hours" uses the literary device of **metaphor**
28. The speaker feels **abandoned and neglected** about being "wholly aside"
29. "If thou showest me not thy face" implies **they seek companionship**
30. "The busy moments of the noontide work" suggest the speaker's daily life is **chaotic and active**
31. The phrase "dark lonely day" conveys **isolation and sadness**
32. The speaker **feels isolated despite being surrounded by people**
33. "It is only for thee that I hope" indicates **they find hope only in their loved one or God**
34. "Clouds heap upon clouds" symbolizes **overwhelming emotions and despair**



35. "It darkens" suggests **they are experiencing a sense of foreboding**
36. The question "why dost thou let me wait outside at the door all alone?" reveals **they feel abandoned and neglected**
37. The combination of darkness and waiting conveys **melancholy and longing**
38. The exclamation "Ah, love" primarily expresses **disappointment**
39. Waiting "outside at the door" represents **exclusion and longing**
40. The imagery of "clouds heap upon clouds" enhances **the sense of chaos and heaviness**

PART VII: COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY

"Gitanjali XVIII" (Song 18) by Rabindranath Tagore is a profound lyrical expression of spiritual longing and the pain of separation from the Divine. Set against the backdrop of a dark, rainy day, the poem captures the speaker's intense yearning for union with God, who is addressed as the beloved.

The poem opens with the powerful imagery of clouds piling upon clouds, creating an atmosphere of impending darkness and emotional weight. This external gloom mirrors the speaker's internal state of despair and loneliness. The speaker stands waiting "outside at the door," a poignant metaphor for spiritual exile and the feeling of being excluded from divine presence.

Tagore skillfully contrasts the speaker's current isolation with the memory of being part of the crowd during busy work hours. This contrast emphasizes that true loneliness is not merely physical solitude but the absence of connection with the Divine. Despite the surrounding darkness and the threat of abandonment, the speaker's hope remains fixed solely on the beloved.

The poem's emotional crescendo builds through the speaker's fear of being completely forgotten—"if thou leavest me wholly aside"—and the terrifying prospect of endless, empty hours stretching ahead. The final image of the speaker gazing at the gloomy sky while their heart wanders "wailing with the restless wind" creates a powerful fusion of human emotion with natural elements.

Written in Tagore's characteristic prose-poem style, Gitanjali XVIII exemplifies the poet's ability to transform personal spiritual experience into universal art. The poem speaks to anyone who has experienced the pain of longing and the fear of abandonment, while ultimately affirming the persistence of hope even in the darkest moments.



Multiple Choice Questions: Gitanjali XVIII (Song 18)

1. Rabindranath Tagore was born in?

- (a) Odisha
- (b) Punjab
- (c) Delhi
- (d) Calcutta Answer: (d)

2. Rabindranath Tagore was born on?

- (a) 8th May 1861
- (b) 8th July 1861
- (c) 7th May 1862
- (d) 7th May 1861 Answer: (d)

3. Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize for In 1913?

- (a) Seshar Kavita
- (b) Gora
- (c) Gitanjali
- (d) Gitabitan Answer: (c)

4. Rabindranath Tagore died on?

- (a) 7th Sep 1941
- (b) 8th Aug 1941
- (c) 7th Aug 1941
- (d) 7th Aug 1942 Answer: (c)

5. Rabindranath Tagore got Noble price in the year?

- (a) 1912
- (b) 1914
- (c) 1915



(d) 1913 Answer: (d)

6. What is a famous poem written by Rabindranath Tagore?

(a) Abal Tabal

(b) Mohesh

(c) Gitanjali

(d) Dudher Dam Answer: (c)

7. How many poems are there in Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali?

(a) 140

(b) 150

(c) 156

(d) 157 Answer: (d)

8. Rabindranath Tagore got Nobel Prize in.....

(a) Painting

(b) Literature

(c) Recitation

(d) Economics Answer: (b)

9. Who has been addressed as love in Gitanjali 18?

(a) God

(b) Country

(c) Wife

(d) Nature Answer: (a)

10. Who has been addressed as thee in Gitanjali XVIII?

(a) God

(b) Country



(c) Wife

(d) Nature Answer: (a)

11. What is the primary emotion expressed by the speaker in Gitanjali XVIII?

(a) Joy

(b) Anger

(c) Loneliness

(d) Indifference Answer: (c)

12. What does the speaker compare their feelings of waiting to in Gitanjali XVIII?

(a) Busy moments of the day

(b) The dark clouds in the sky

(c) A joyful gathering

(d) A bright sunny day Answer: (b)

13. Who wrote the poem Gitanjali XVIII?

(a) Rabindranath Tagore Answer: (a)

+2

14. What imagery is predominantly used to convey the speaker's mood in Gitanjali XVIII?

(a) Light and brightness

(b) Clouds and rain

(c) Music and laughter

(d) Flowers and sunshine Answer: (b)

15. How does the speaker describe the passage of time on this dark day in Gitanjali XVIII?

(a) Quick and easy

(b) Long and painful

(c) Fast and exciting

(d) Normal and routine Answer: (b)



16. What metaphor is used to describe the speaker's situation in Gitanjali XVIII?

- (a) A sunny day after a storm
- (b) Clouds heaping upon clouds
- (c) A river flowing swiftly
- (d) A garden in full bloom Answer: (b)

17. Which of the following best describes the tone of Gitanjali XVIII?

- (a) Optimistic
- (b) Melancholic
- (c) Indifferent
- (d) Playful Answer: (b)

18. What does the "restless wind" symbolize in Gitanjali XVIII?

- (a) Change and renewal
- (b) Stability and calm
- (c) The speaker's unfulfilled desires
- (d) Happiness and celebration Answer: (c)

19. What is the effect of the weather on the speaker's mood in Gitanjali XVIII?

- (a) It brightens their spirits
- (b) It reflects their inner joy
- (c) It deepens their feelings of isolation
- (d) It causes them to become energetic Answer: (c)

20. Which season is the theme of Gitanjali XVIII?

- (a) Rain
- (b) Winter
- (c) Summer



(d) Spring

(e) Autumn Answer: (a)

21. How does the speaker's heart respond to the external environment in Gitanjali XVIII?

(a) It remains unaffected

(b) It feels joyous and light

(c) It wanders and wails

(d) It grows heavy with burdens Answer: (c)

22. What does the imagery of the "restless wind" symbolize?

(a) Calmness and stability

(b) Freedom and adventure

(c) Turmoil and emotional unrest

(d) Joy and celebration Answer: (c)

23. What does the word "gazing" imply about the speaker's state of mind?

(a) Distracted and indifferent

(b) Focused and contemplative

(c) Active and energetic

(d) Frightened and anxious Answer: (b)

24. What does the phrase "far away gloom of the sky" suggest about the speaker's outlook?

(a) Hopeful and bright

(b) Distant and melancholic

(c) Immediate and joyful

(d) Clear and serene Answer: (b)

25. What mood is primarily conveyed through the line "I keep gazing on the far away gloom of the sky, and my heart wanders wailing with the restless wind?"

(a) Joyful anticipation



- (b) Sorrowful longing
- (c) Indifference
- (d) Anger and frustration Answer: (b)

26. What do the "long, rainy hours" symbolize in Gitanjali XVIII?

- (a) Time spent in joy
- (b) A period of reflection and happiness
- (c) Endless waiting and despair
- (d) Opportunities for growth Answer: (c)

27. What rhetorical question does the speaker pose about passing time in Gitanjali XVIII?

- (a) How can I enjoy these moments?
- (b) How can I find peace in solitude?
- (c) How am I to pass these hours?
- (d) How can I embrace the rain? Answer: (c)

28. What literary device is used in the phrase "these long, rainy hours" in Gitanjali XVIII?

- (a) Metaphor
- (b) Hyperbole
- (c) Personification
- (d) Alliteration Answer: (a) (Note: They represent the lonely and depressing days of waiting)

29. How does the speaker feel about being "wholly aside" in Gitanjali XVIII?

- (a) Content and at peace
- (b) Indifferent and relaxed
- (c) Abandoned and neglected
- (d) Empowered and free Answer: (c)

30. What does "if thou showest me not thy face" imply about the speaker's desire?



- (a) They seek companionship
- (b) They want solitude
- (c) They wish for a journey
- (d) They prefer distraction Answer: (a)

31. What does "the busy moments of the noontide work" suggest about the speaker's daily life?

- (a) It is filled with leisure
- (b) It is chaotic and active
- (c) It is solitary and quiet
- (d) It is carefree and relaxed Answer: (b)

32. What mood is primarily conveyed by the phrase "dark lonely day"?

- (a) Optimism
- (b) Isolation and sadness
- (c) Excitement and adventure
- (d) Contentment and peace Answer: (b)

33. How does the speaker contrast their experience with the crowd and their feelings on the dark day?

- (a) They feel more connected in the crowd
- (b) They feel isolated despite being surrounded by people
- (c) They are indifferent to both situations
- (d) They prefer solitude over company Answer: (b)

34. What does the phrase "it is only for thee that I hope" indicate about the speaker's emotions?

- (a) They are hopeful for future joy
- (b) They are indifferent to love
- (c) They find hope only in their loved one or God
- (d) They are content with their surroundings Answer: (c)



35. What does "clouds heap upon clouds" symbolize in the passage?

- (a) Joy and celebration
- (b) Overwhelming emotions and despair
- (c) Clear and bright weather
- (d) Opportunities and growth Answer: (b)

36. What does the phrase "it darkens" suggest about the speaker's feelings?

- (a) They are feeling cheerful
- (b) They are experiencing a sense of foreboding
- (c) They are enjoying the moment
- (d) They are indifferent to their surroundings Answer: (b)

37. What does the speaker's question, "why dost thou let me wait outside at the door all alone?" reveal about their emotional state?

- (a) They are content with their solitude
- (b) They feel abandoned and neglected
- (c) They are indifferent to their love
- (d) They are excited for a reunion Answer: (b)

38. What mood is conveyed by the combination of darkness and waiting in Gitanjali XVIII?

- (a) Eagerness and anticipation
- (b) Melancholy and longing
- (c) Excitement and joy
- (d) Indifference and apathy Answer: (b)

39. What emotion is primarily expressed in the exclamation "Ah, love" in Gitanjali XVIII?

- (a) Anger
- (b) Disappointment
- (c) Affection
- (d) Indifference Answer: (c)



40. What is the significance of waiting "outside at the door"?

- (a) It signifies a sense of adventure
- (b) It represents exclusion and longing
- (c) It shows confidence in the relationship
- (d) It indicates a social gathering Answer: (b)

41. How does the imagery of "clouds heap upon clouds" contribute to the overall mood of the passage?

- (e) It creates a feeling of peace
- (f) It enhances the sense of chaos and heaviness
- (g) It signifies a clearing of the skies
- (h) It represents clarity of thought Answer: (f)