

A PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER

W.B. YEATS

I Fill in the blanks:

1. The baby daughter of the poet is sleeping in a Cradle.
2. The poet prays for his daughter.
3. Helen of Troy is the most beautiful woman of ancient Greece.
4. The poet wants his daughter to be kind and Courteous.
5. The beautiful woman makes fool of men.
6. The woman who has charm can make men wise and happy.
7. Freedom from fanatical devotion is essential for the soul to regain its radical innocence.
8. Yeats wants her daughter to marry a husband who respects tradition and convention.
9. Yeats particularly wants her daughter to keep herself aloof from Ratred devotion.
10. According to Yeats, excessive beauty is a fatal gift.

(fatal, hatred, charm, fanatical devotion, courteous, tradition and convention, Helen, beautiful, cradle, daughter)

II Choose the best answer:

1. The baby daughter of the poet is sleeping in a cradle at the Ballyke tower
(a) Pisa tower (b) Ballylee tower (c) Twin tower (d) Eiffel tower
2. Yeats prays for his daughter
(a) mother (b) wife (c) daughter (d) sister
3. Jupiter is the Goddess of beauty and love.
(a) Venus (b) Zeus (c) Jupiter (d) Moon
4. Venus the Goddess of beauty selected the lame Vulcan as her husband.
(a) lame (b) deaf (c) dumb (d) blind

5. The poet wants his daughter to spread happiness all around like the song of the linnets.

(a) cuckoo (b) nightingale (c) skylark (d) linnets

III State whether the following statements are true or false:

1. The poet wants her daughter to have little beauty. True
2. Maud Gonne married W.B. Yeats. False
3. The poet wants her daughter to be spiritually strong. True
4. The poet wants her daughter to marry a richest person. False
5. According to Yeats beauty is a blessing. False

IV Write the synonyms for the following words:

1. Gloom - Sorrow
2. Frenzied - Wild existence
3. Barter - exchange
4. Radical - Basic
5. Scowl - Bad tempered look.

V Answer the following questions in one or two sentences:

1. What is the anxiety of the Yeats?

The anxiety of the poet, Yeats is that his daughter should grow with moderate beauty and lead a happy life.

2. How does the poet describe the storm?

The storm is very furious and dangerous.

3. What is the symbolism of the storm?

The symbolism of the storm is the destruction of civilisation and culture.

4. When was the poem 'A Prayer for my daughter' written?

The poem 'A prayer for my daughter' was written by W.B. Yeats a few weeks after the birth of his daughter.

5. What is the wish of the poet as a father?

The wish of the poet as a father is that his daughter should be endowed with moderate beauty.

6. According to the poet what are the qualities that a girl must possess?

A woman must be courteous and well mannered kind and gracious, Courtesy good manner and graciousness are the qualities that a woman should possess.

7. Who rejected the devoted love of Yeats?

Maud Gonne rejected the devoted love of Yeats.

8. Who was Maud Gonne?

Maud Gonne was the most beautiful woman of Yeats's time.

9. What is the complaint of the poet against Helen?

The complaint of the poet Yeats against Helen of Troy that she becomes bored with her husband, so she ran away with Paris of Troy.

10. Write a note on Aphrodite.

Aphrodite is the Greek Goddess of Love. She married Hephaestus the Vulcan, she was an unfaithful wife as was Helen.

11. What is the opinion of Yeats about intellectual hatred?

Yeats opined that intellectual hatred is the worst thing which drives out innocence and makes women the roughest.

12. Why does the poet favour the life filled with tradition and convention?

The poet Yeats is in favour of Tradition and Convention. One who follows them will lead a happy life, according to the poet, Yeats.

ESSAY

1. Write a critical appreciation of the poem 'A Prayer for my daughter'.

W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) was one of the greatest English poets born in Dublin, Ireland. His father was a well known painter who encouraged his son's interest in writing poetry. He studied art in London but returned to Ireland where he was associated with the Irish revolutionary movement. He founded the Abbey theatre for which he wrote plays and lyrics. In 1923 he was awarded Nobel Prize in Literature. Yeats continued to write till his late days. 'A Prayer for my daughter' is in many ways a personal poem written in 1919, a few weeks after Yeats' daughter Anne was born. The poet speaks as a father anxious for the well being of his daughter. He seems to say that graciousness in social behaviour belongs very largely to woman. A society which allows arrogant, opinionated women to rule it, is a society that has lost its propriety.

The poem opens with the poet's new born child sleeping in a cradle at the Ballylee tower. A storm is raging with great fury outside his residence. The poet is in a gloomy mood and is anxious about how to protect his child from the tide of hard times ahead. The looming ruin of the current civilization distracts his minds. The poet prays that his daughter may be gifted with moderate beauty which does not make a stranger's eye troubled. A woman with glamorous beauty feels that there is no need for kindness or friendship. Helen of Troy was the most beautiful woman of her age. All the princess of Greece chose to become suitors for her hand. But after she married, she became bored with her husband. Seeking excitement she ran away with Paris of Troy and her elopement wrecked her happiness. The goddess Venus presided over beauty and love could have chosen herself a husband who would have made her happy. But her choice fell upon the lame Vulcan and she found life with him miserable. Yeats wants his daughter to have courtesy and aristocratic traits in keeping with the name of her house and that she may have fixed home and happy thoughts.

The poet looks within himself and finds that there is hatred inside. Freedom from the hatred is essential for the soul to regain its radical innocence. He wishes that his daughter should not harbor hatred. He realizes that intellectual hatred is of the nastiest kind. He is worried about the recollection of Maud Gonne, the most beautiful woman of his times. Yeats too admired her and loved her. Unfortunately beauty made her proud. Instead of being kind, cheerful and loving she chose to become a fanatical nationalist. She becomes a good hater and hatred drove away

all her happiness. The poet wishes that his daughter should not cultivate a fanatic intellect. He thinks that her daughter can remain innocent if she is free from hatred and intellectual fanaticism. The poet wishes that his daughter must marry a husband who respects tradition and convention. Only then she will be able to keep her married life free from vanities and vexations. She can also then ensure happiness for herself and her husband. The poet prays that his daughter may grow up like a green laurel tree and her thoughts may be linnets on its boughs. Like the song of the linnets she can spread happiness all around.

The prayer in the poem is typically Yeatsian. The poet foresaw the collapse of civilization in the near future. He wanted his daughter should have sufficient strength of soul to remain in the social and moral chaos that might envelop the world. Yeats does not want his daughter to be a social butterfly or a political fanatic. He hopes she would prefer a congenial social life, domestic happiness and self realization. The prayer brings out the poet's distrust of beauty, fanaticism and the conventional piety of Christianity. At the same time it reveals his faith in good manners, friendship, married love and self realization through joy.

PARAGRAPH

1. How does Yeats want his daughter to grow up?

The poem opens with the poet's new born child sleeping in a cradle at the Ballylee tower. A storm is raging with great fury outside his residence. The poet is in a gloomy mood and is anxious about how to protect his child from the tide of hard times ahead. The looming ruin of the current civilization distracts his minds. The poet prays that his daughter may be gifted with moderate beauty which does not make a stranger's eye troubled. She wishes that his daughter should possess abundant kindness and she should be free of hatred. She must keep herself aloof from fanatical devotion for it will breed anger and make it impossible to attain happiness. The poet prays that his daughter may grow up like a green laurel tree and her thoughts may be linnets on its boughs. Like the song of the linnets she can spread happiness all around. The poet wants his daughter to develop spiritually. She must learn cheerfully to accept God's will as her own. She must marry a husband who respects tradition and convention. Only then she can ensure happiness for herself and her husband.

2. Discuss the personal experience lies behind Yeats' 'A Prayer for my daughter'.

Yeats afraid that his daughter may find herself in a world where civilization is about to collapse in confusion. He is worried about the recollection of Maud Gonne, the most beautiful woman of his times. Yeats too admired her and loved her. Unfortunately beauty made her proud. Instead of being kind, cheerful and loving she chose to become a fanatical nationalist. She becomes a good hater and hatred drove away all her happiness. A woman with glamorous beauty feels that there is no need for kindness or friendship. Helen of Troy was the most beautiful woman of her age. All the princess of Greece chose to become suitors for her hand. But after she married, she became bored with her husband. Seeking excitement she ran away with Paris of Troy and her elopement wrecked her happiness. The goddess Venus presided over beauty and love could have chosen herself a husband who would have made her happy. But her choice fell upon the lame Vulcan and she found life with him miserable. The poet says that beautiful women are apt to be opinionated and to undo the horn of plenty with which they are born. He supposes that beauty is a fatal gift bringing with it a dangerous foolishness. The poet's own experience makes him pray that his daughter may be saved from the beauty and foolish fanaticism of Maud Gonne.

JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

T.S. ELIOT

I Fill in the blanks:

1. The Magi were the three wise men that visited the infant christ in the stable.
 2. The Magi goes for a journey to Bethlehem
 3. The frequent images during the journey foretell events in christian life
 4. Herod is the king of Jews.
 5. Herod wanted no rival king to Jews
 6. The first phase of journey is difficult for the Magi.
 7. The second phase of journey is edifying.
 8. The camel men were cursing and grumbling.
 9. The Magi hear voices teasing them out of their mission calling it all folly
 10. The reference to new birth in the poem is to the birth of Christianity
- (first phase, cursing, folly, Christianity, second phase, Jews, Herod, Bethlehem, infant Christ, Christ's life)

II Choose the best answer:

1. The Magi are the three wise men of the East.
(a) West (b) North (c) South (d) East
2. The Magi take up this journey with the guidance of the star.
(a) star (b) Moon (c) Sun (d) angel
- (3) The Magi were known for their wisdom and knowledge of Astrology
(a) Theology (b) Geology (c) Astrology (d) Numerology
- (4) Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus Christ for thirty silver coins.
(a) twenty (b) thirty (c) forty (d) fifty
5. The Magi came to a tavern in the night.
(a) morning (b) evening (c) afternoon (d) night

III State whether the following statements are true or false:

1. The town people were unfriendly to the three Magi. *True*
2. The Magi saw four trees on the low sky. *false*
3. The camels were sore footed. *True*
4. The three wise men reported the discovery of infant Jesus to King Herod. *false*
5. The Magi said that he would be glad of another death. *True*

IV Write the synonyms for the following words:

1. Refractory - *Not Manageable*
2. Hostile - *not friendly*
3. Alien - *foreign, unknown,*
4. Agony - *great pain*
5. Folly - *foolishness.*

V Answer the following in one or two sentences:

1. Who were the three Magi?

The magi are the three messengers of God who brought gifts to the child Jesus when he was born in Jerusalem.

2. Write down the names of the three Magi.

The Magi are three messengers of God who brought gift to the child Jesus when he was born in Jerusalem.

3. Explain the season during the journey of the Magi.

The season during the journey of the Magi was the worst one. Animals like camel fell down dead and the animals develop sores on their legs.

4. What are the problems faced by the Magi during their journey?

The problems faced by the Magi are that the Magi suffered due to very chilly weather. They have no shelter to stay and pass the night.

5. What do the voices sing and say in their ears?

The voices sing and said in the ears of the Magi unbearable voices tearing them out of their mission calling it all folly.

6. What is explained by 'a water mill beating the darkness'?

The second phase of the journey of the magi is edifying. At the dawn they came to a temperate valley smelling vegetation with a running stream and water mill beating the darkness indicating the ^{the last} activity of the human habitation.

7. What is the significance of the three trees on the lower sky?

The Magi saw trees on the low sky and on old white horse galloped away on the meadow. The three trees on the low look forward in a remote way to the Crucifixion.

8. What is the biblical reference related to 'an old white horse'?

9. The Silver Coins held as stakes by the gamblers at the recall to us the thirty pieces of silver for which Jesus was betrayed.

9. What is the significance of the silver coins?

8. The white horse galloped on the meadow recalls the Jesus arrived on a white horse as same in revelation by John.

10. Why did the wise men look forward for another death?

For the Magi what they come from and what they go to are completely antithetical. According to Eliot, every attempt is wholly a new start and a different failure.

ESSAY

1. Explain the transit experience of the three Magi.

T.S. Eliot born in U.S.A. came to London during the First World War and became a British citizen. He is considered one of the most literary figures of the twentieth century. He struck a new note in poetry and criticism. In 1948 he was awarded Nobel Prize for Literature.

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‘The Journey of the Magi’, belongs to a group of poems known as the ‘Ariel poems’. They were written as contribution to an annual volume of poems published at Christmas time; belong to the period from 1927-1929. This poem is based on an incident described in the Gospel of St. Matthew, section (ii). The Magi were the three wise men who visited the infant Jesus in the stable. Journey to Bethlahem is spoken of in the first two verses by one of the Magi. The third gives the new dispensation. The frequent images during the journey foretell events in Christ’s life. The journey is significant as a subtle motif by understatement. The journey of the Magi is in fact a transit experience, poetically recounted in a movement from old dispensation to a new.

The three wise men or the Magi of the East were led to the new born Jesus by a new star, which guided them to the stable where Jesus was born and then disappeared. The Magi were the priestly class among the Babylonians and the ancient Persians. Kings though they be, drawing a clue about the birth of a great King in Palestine, they take up this journey star guided. In the first phase of journey it is awfully difficult for them. They started their journey in the worst time of the year, in the very dead of winter. The camels got sores on the foot lied down in the melting snow and they were unmanageable. The camel men were cursing and grumbling. They didn’t get any shelters and the night-fires burnt out. The city people were hostile to them and the villages were dirty and they charged high prices. It is a great trial and hard time for them. Almost uncrowned, subdued, given to an enforced ascetic disdain of all comforts, they proceed not without regretting many things fine such as summer palaces, silken girls and sherbet. Above all they hear voices teasing them out of their mission calling it all folly.

The second phase of the journey is edifying. At the dawn they came to a temperate valley smelling vegetation, with a running stream and water mill beating the darkness indicating the bustling activity of human habitation. They saw three trees on the low sky and an old white horse galloped away on the meadow. Then they came to a tavern where three people were dicing for pieces

of silver. They got no information and they proceed. They went to Jerusalem and asked King Herod who was an evil man and did want the baby to the King of Jews. He pretended them to help but his real intention was to kill the baby. The star which they had seen guided to the place where the child lay and then disappeared. The three wise men overjoyed when they saw the infant Jesus and they offered him gifts. It was then revealed to them that they should not report their discovery to King Herod. They went home another way.

The journey is for a birth and a death – the birth of Christ, the King and the death of all that they have been for until now. Kingdoms are nothing now for they find no ease there. The old dispensation must surrender itself to the new. For the Magi what they come from, and what they go to completely antithetical. Suffering from an unquiet mind in spite of his new faith the wise men looked forward to death, which might take him to a heaven of positive joy. According to Eliot, “Every attempt is wholly a new start and a different failure”.

PARAGRAPH

1. Bring out the Biblical references in the poem ‘The Journey of the Magi’.

In the second phase of the journey, at the dawn the magi came to a temperate valley smelling vegetation, with a running stream and water mill beating the darkness indicating the bustling activity of human habitation. They saw three trees on the low sky and an old white horse galloped away on the meadow. Then they came to a tavern where three people were dicing for pieces of silver. The three trees on the low sky look forward in a remote way to the crucifixion. The pieces of silver held as stakes by the gamblers at the inn recall to us the thirty pieces of silver for which Jesus was betrayed. When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they parted his garments casting lots upon them what everyman should take. The white horse galloped away on the meadow recalled the Jesus’ arrival on a white horse as said in revelation by John.

THE UNKNOWN CITIZEN

W.H. AUDEN.

I Fill in the blanks:

1. The soldier is known by his Number

2. The marble monument is erected by the State
3. The ideal citizen was found to be moderate in his views.
4. The citizen didn't hold his own views.
5. The unknown citizen is supposed to be a ideal citizen.

II Choose the best answer:

1. The poem 'The unknown citizen' is a Satire
(a) sonnet (b) elegy (c) satire (d) ballad.
2. The unknown citizen worked in Budge Motors Inc
(a) Fudge Motors Inc (b) Hedge Motors Inc (c) Budge Motors Inc (d) Sledge Motors Inc
3. The Unknown citizen has five children.
(a) four (b) five (c) six (d) seven
4. According to Auden the unknown citizen was an Opportunist
(a) opportunist (b) altruist (c) benefactor (d) patron.
5. The unknown citizen learnt only what he was taught by The teacher.
(a) the teachers (b) the parents (c) the books (d) the society.

III State whether the following statements are true or false:

1. The unknown citizen went to hospital twice in his life. False
2. The unknown citizen was considered as a saint. True
3. The unknown citizen bought all the things on installment plans. True
4. The unknown citizen left with power of independent thinking. False
5. Auden sees something foolish in society and makes fun of it. True

IV Write the synonyms for the following words:

1. Absurd - foolish
2. Frigidaire - Fridge
3. Assimilate - argest
4. Factory - industry
5. Opportunist - a person who explores his opportunities.

V Answer the following questions in one or two sentences:

1. What were the virtues of the modern man?

The virtues of the modern man are that there is very co-operative with the co-workers and also with the government. He had no opinion of his own.

2. Was the Unknown citizen a saint? Why?

No, the Unknown citizen is not a saint. But he did everything for the sake of the nation and for the sake of society.

3. What does the sub title of the poem 'The unknown citizen' signify?

The subtitle 'Unknown Citizen' signifies that it is not a celebrity but a decent citizen of the modern society.

4. Why did the modern man give birth to five children?

The government fixed five children for a family. So he obeyed the rules of his citizens.

5. Who is a Eugenist?

A Eugenist who studies how best to improve the human race through the birth of hearty citizens.

6. What was the report of the Social psychology department about the modern man?

The report of the social psychology department about the unknown citizen is that he is totally a blameless person and he had no opinion of his own any matters.

7. Was the Press content with the modern man?

The press was convinced that he bought a newspaper everyday and was not reacted by the advisement of the newspaper.

8. How did the modern man purchase all his modern necessities?

The Modern man purchases all his necessities by installment payment.

9. Was the modern man opportunist? Why?

Yes, the modern man opportunist in the sense that he awarded all the chances and moves with the people so smoothly.

10. Was the modern man happy and free?

The modern man is happy to some extent. He is not free. He does everything as the society expect from him.

ESSAY

1. The poem 'The Unknown Citizen' is a satire about the lack of individuality of moderns. - Elucidate. -

W.H. Auden was born in New York in 1907. He studied in Oxford and was influenced by the poems of T.S. Eliot and psychology became one of his favourite subjects. Auden's first collection of poems was published in 1928. The poem 'The Unknown Citizen' was first published in The Listener in 1939. Later it was included in the collected shorter poems in 1950. In this title, Auden makes a parody of the dedication which is traditionally seen on the memorials of the soldiers killed in wars in Europe. Such memorials are usually dedicated to the 'The Unknown Soldier.' 'The Unknown Citizen' is an average citizen in the modern industrialized society. This poem is a parody of an unknown soldier, who is known by his number, and not by his name. Auden intends to satirize the system of modern society.

Auden gives the account of the unknown citizen as given by the bureau of statistics. In the modern age of statistics, man is reduced to a mere number. He has lost individuality. The passive voice in the first line indicates the insignificance of the citizen as an individual. The various departments of the Government found him to be agreeable man. There was no official complaint against him at any stage. As he upheld the values of the society he was considered a saint. Here the word 'saint' used ironically as he did everything for the sake of the nation and the society. The Unknown Citizen worked in Fudge Motors Company and his employers were happy with his work and conduct. Though he was a member of Trade Union he did not partake in any protest and he paid his dues regularly. He was friendly with both the employers and workers. His social behaviour was satisfied as he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.

The Press was convinced that he bought a paper every day. Here again it is a satiric observation about the press as if the sole purpose of the Press was to increase the number of readership. His reactions to advertisements were normal.

He fell a prey to advertisements and bought costly things generally required for modern living on credit and pay in easy installments later. His life was fully insured and his health card shows that he enjoyed sound health. The unknown citizen had no opinion of his own. He changed his opinions according to the dictates of the time. He believed in whatever he was asked to believe.

When there was peace he was for peace, when there was war, he enlisted himself as a soldier. Auden suggests that he was an opportunist. He was married and he was meticulous even about the number of children he produced. He added five children to the population which was considered as the right number according to the experts on human reproduction. He neither found fault with the educational system and the teacher's report said that he never interfered with the education of his children.

The closing lines are again ironical. This reveals the complete passivity of the individual in the mechanical and industrial set up of the modern society. Auden depicts the unknown citizen as a man who has been completely assimilated into the social mechanism. He is left with no power of independent thinking. The question of happiness or freedom for such a man is irrelevant. He has no complaint against the system and is never heard grumbling. He is taken to be a modern citizen, because he has no individuality, no independent thinking, which might have made him different from others; otherwise he would be supposed to have something wrong with him. As there is no wrong heard about him, he is supposed to be a perfect citizen.

PARAGRAPH

1. What is the significance of the title of the poem 'The Unknown citizen'?

In this title, Auden makes a parody of the dedication which is traditionally seen on the memorials of the soldiers killed in wars in Europe. Such memorials are usually dedicated to the 'The Unknown Soldier.' 'The Unknown Citizen' is an average citizen in the modern industrialized society. This poem is a parody of an unknown soldier, who is known by his number, and not by his name. Auden intends to satirize the system of modern society. In the modern age of statistics, man is reduced to a mere number. He has lost individuality. The passive voice in the first line indicates the insignificance of the citizen as an individual. The various departments of the Government found him to be an agreeable man. There was no official complaint against him at any stage.

2. Comment on the statement that the unknown citizen was a saint?

In the modern age of statistics, man is reduced to a mere number. He has lost individuality. The passive voice in the first line indicates the insignificance of the citizen as an individual. The various departments of the Government found him to be agreeable man. There was no official complaint against him at any stage. As he upheld the values of the society he was considered a saint. Here the word 'saint' used ironically as he did everything for the sake of the nation and the society. The unknown citizen had no opinion of his own. He changed his opinions according to the dictates of the time. He believed in whatever he was asked to believe. When there was peace he was for peace, when there was war, he enlisted himself as a soldier. He added five children to the population which was considered as the right number according to the experts on human reproduction.

3. Explain the social behaviour of the unknown citizen.

The unknown citizen was friendly with both the employers and workers. His social behaviour was satisfied as he was popular with his mates and liked a drink. The Press was convinced that he bought a paper every day. His reactions to advertisements were normal. He fell a prey to advertisements and bought costly things generally required for modern living on credit and pay in easy installments later. His life was fully insured and his health card shows that he enjoyed sound health. The unknown citizen had no opinion of his own. He changed his opinions according to the dictates of the time. He believed in whatever he was asked to believe.

4. Was the modern man free and happy?

The question whether the modern man was free and happy is ironical. The poem reveals the complete passivity of the individual in the mechanical and industrial set up of the modern society. Auden depicts the unknown citizen as a man who has been completely assimilated into the social mechanism. He is left with no power of independent thinking. The question of happiness or freedom for such a man is irrelevant. He has no complaint against the system and is never heard grumbling. He is taken to be modern citizen, because he has no individuality, no independent thinking, which might have made him different from others; otherwise he would be supposed to have something wrong with him. As there is no wrong heard about him, he is supposed to be a perfect citizen.

NIGHT OF THE SCORPION

NISSIM EZEKIEL

I. Fill in the blanks:

1. The peasants came like Swarms of flies
 2. Nissim Ezekiel was the narrator of the poem.
 3. The poet's father was a rationalist.
 4. The mother was bitten by a Scorpion.
 5. The peasants searched for the scorpion with Candles and lanterns.
- (candles, Nissim Ezekiel, swarms of flies, rationalist, scorpion)

II. Choose the best answer:

1. The mother thanks god because the scorpion spared her children
a) stung her b) spared her children c) went away d) did not poison her
2. The poet's father pouring powder on the mother's toe.
a) paraffin b) herbs c) powder d) Injection
3. The scorpion crawling beneath a sack of rice
a) a mat b) sack of rice c) pillow d) dress
4. The sting of the scorpion is painful
a) flies b) pleasure c) painful d) sad
5. The poet was died in Jan 2004.
a) Jan 2005 b) Feb 2006 c) Feb 2004 d) Jan 2004

III. State whether the following statements are true or false:

1. The scorpion tail is diabolic. True

2. The peasants are educated people. *False*
3. The mother thanks God because the scorpion spared her children *True*
4. After thirty minutes the poison lost its sting. *False*
5. The poison may purify the mother's sin. *True*

IV. Write the synonyms for the following words:

1. Diabolic - *Poisonous*
2. Groan - *Crying with pain*
3. Sceptic - *afflicted by festering sores.*
4. Incantation - *enchantment.*
5. Spared - *reflected*

V. Answer the following in one or two sentences:

1. Why did the scorpion come inside the house?

The scorpion came inside the house to seek protection and shelter from the rain.

2. Where did the scorpion hide?

The scorpion hid himself beneath a sack of rice.

3. Why does the poet refer to his tail as diabolic?

The sting of the scorpion's tail caused much pain to the poet's mother. He is therefore calling its tail diabolic or devilish.

4. How did the poison enter the mother's body?

The scorpion had stung the mother on her toe and thus the poison entered the mother's body.

5. What good the Villagers hope that the poison would do?

The villagers hoped that the poison would purify the mother's body of desire and her spirit of ambition.

6. Why did the father pour a little paraffin and put a match to it?

The father put a little paraffin upon the bitten toe and put

a match to it because it was thought that it would burn the poison of the wound.

7. Who is the narrator of this poem?

Nissim Ezekiel was the narrator of this poem.

8. How long did the effect of the poison last?

The effect of the poison lasted for twenty hours.

9. What did the holy man do?

The holy man performed his rites to tame the poison with his incantation.

10. Why the peasants buzzed the name of a God?

The peasants were buzzed the name of a God to paralyse the evil one.

11. Why the peasants 'clicked their tongues'?

The peasants believed that whenever the scorpion moved, its poison also moved in mother's blood.

12. Who was rationalist?

The poet's father was a rationalist.

13. Why the mother was thanked to the God?

The mother was thanked to the God because he spared her children.

14. What was the significant of the title?

The poem is titled the night of the scorpion for the scorpion is the victor of the poem.

ESSAY

1. Write the summary of the poem 'Night of the scorpion'.

Nissim Ezekiel (1924 -2004) was born in Bombay in an Indian Jewish family. He was an actor, playwright, editor and art and critic. His first book of poems, 'A Time of Change' was published in London in 1952 and in 1953 he had published his second book of poems. The Night of Scorpion was one of his finest poems and it had been taken from his collections of poems entitled "The Exact Name" published in 1965. In this poem he expressed his childhood experience. The poem Night of the Scorpion was one of the finished poems of Nissim Ezekiel.

The Night of Scorpion is a brilliant narrative poem. The protagonist or narrator might be the poet himself or an imagined person who speak in the first person. He narrated that his mother was stung by a scorpion in one rainy night. He was remembering the night when his mother was suffered. It had raining continuously for ten hours and during the time scorpion had crawled itself under the sack of rice. The peasants came like swarms of flies and sat around the mother. They murmured the names of god to minimize the movement of the scorpion. Because they felt that the poison moved in his mother's blood with the movements of the scorpion. They began to search for it with candles and lanterns. But they couldn't find the scorpion. They said that her sins of the previous birth would be washed and it reduces the misfortunes of her next birth. The peasants prayed that the poison would purify her desires and ambitions. His mother was pained as they were speaking.

The narrator's father who a rationalist. He was trying some powders, herbs and mixtures on her toe. He even poured a little paraffin upon the bitten toe and put a match to reduce the pain. Next a holy man performed his rites to tame the poison. But only after twenty hours the pain subsided. His mother thanked God that the scorpion picked on her and spared her children. Thus the poem brings out the mother's love and sacrificial thoughts as well as the superstitions and ignorance practised by the villagers.

PARAGRAPH

1. Describe the reaction of the peasants?

The peasants were the neighborhood of the mother. They came to sympathize with the mother. When they heard that the mother was stung by a scorpion they came like a swarms of flies. They buzzed the name of the God hundred of time to paralyze the evil. They felt that the Scorpion moves, it is poison also move and spread all over. The mother's suffering was caused by the sins that she committed in the previous birth and the pain will also made her life happy in the next birth. The good and evil had to be balanced and therefore her pain will reduce the evil. The peasants were uneducated, ignorant and superstitious and they did not know if the Scorpion stung that the pain will reduce after sometime. This is a simple truth but they had a blind belief.