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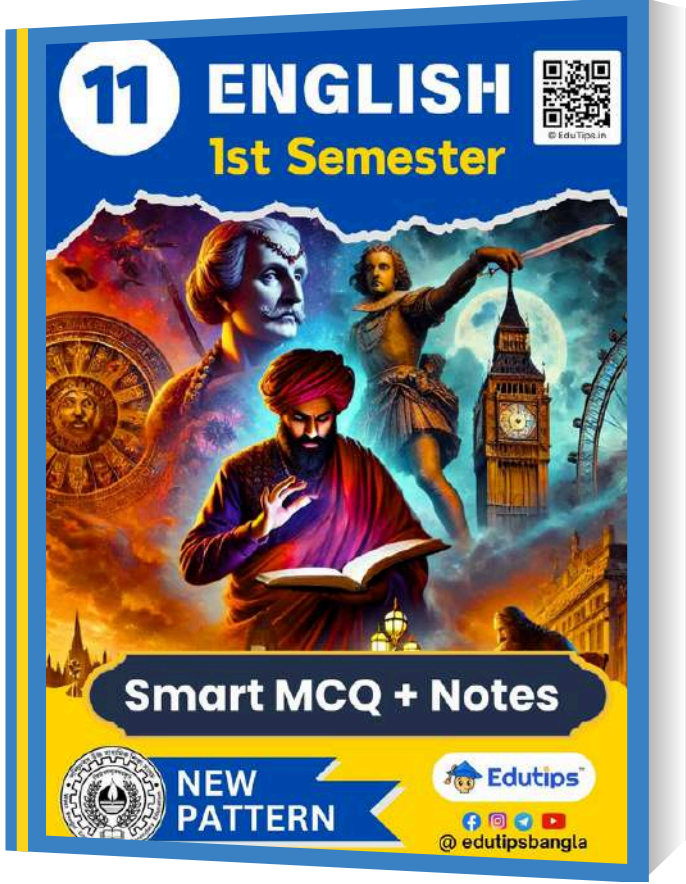


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An Astrologer's Day



R.K. NARAYAN

About the Author :

R.K. Narayan (1906-2001) was one of India's most celebrated English-language writers, known for his simple yet profound storytelling. His works often depict life in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi, capturing the essence of Indian society with humour and realism. His debut novel, *Swami and Friends* (1935), introduced readers to Malgudi and showcased his talent for blending everyday experiences with deep philosophical insights.



His major works include *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The English Teacher* (1945), and *The Guide* (1958), which won the Sahitya Akademi Award and was later adapted into a successful film. Narayan's writing, influenced by Western literary traditions yet deeply rooted in Indian ethos, often explores themes of destiny, tradition, and human relationships.

His prose is marked by simplicity and irony, making his narratives both engaging and thought-provoking. Narayan was instrumental in popularizing Indian literature in English, earning international recognition, including a Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan. His ability to portray the complexities of Indian life through ordinary characters makes him a timeless storyteller.

About the Text :

R.K. Narayan's short story *An Astrologer's Day* is a compelling tale of irony, fate, and deception. Set in a bustling Indian marketplace, the story revolves around an astrologer who earns his living by making astute observations rather than relying on genuine astrological knowledge. His survival depends on his ability to read people's expressions and tell them what they want to hear.

The story masterfully employs irony-while the astrologer deceives others, he himself is bound by fate. Narayan blends suspense with realism, showing how





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human cunning and destiny often intertwine. Through this narrative, he critiques blind faith in astrology while portraying the unpredictability of life. The story's sharp twist ending and its exploration of morality and survival make it one of Narayan's finest short stories.

Text :

Punctually at midday he opened his bag and spread out his professional equipment, which consisted of a dozen cowrie¹ shells, a square piece of cloth with obscure² mystic³ charts on it, and a bundle of palmyra⁴ writing. His forehead was resplendent⁵ with sacred ash and vermilion⁶, and his eyes sparkled with a sharp abnormal gleam which was really an outcome of a continual searching look for customers, but which his simple clients took to be a prophetic light and felt comforted. The power of his eyes was considerably enhanced by their position, placed as they were between the painted forehead and the dark whiskers which streamed down his cheeks: even a halfwit's eyes would sparkle in such a setting. To crown the effect he wound a saffron⁷ coloured turban around his head. This colour scheme never failed. People were attracted to him as bees are attracted to cosmos or dahlia stalks. He sat under the boughs of a spreading tamarind tree which flanked a path running through the Town Hall Park. It was a remarkable place in many ways: a surging crowd was always moving up and down this narrow road morning till night. A variety of trades and occupations was represented all along its way: medicine sellers, sellers of stolen hardware and junk, magicians, and, above all, an auctioneer of cheap cloth, who create enough din all day to attract the whole town. Next to him in vociferousness⁸ came a vendor of fried groundnut⁹, who gave his ware a fancy name each day, calling it 'Bombay Ice-cream' one day, and on the next 'Delhi Almond' and on the third

¹A cowrie : a small snail commonly found in warm, shallow water of the Pacific and Indian oceans.

²Obscure : difficult to understand.

³Mystic : having hidden or secret meaning.

⁴Palmyra : It refers to paper made from the leaves of the palmyra trees.

⁵Resplendent : full of splendor.

⁶Vermillion : a red pigment.

⁷Saffron : It is an orange-yellow colour.

⁸Vociferousness : noisy outcry.

⁹Groundnut : peanut.





'Raja's Delicacy', and so on and so forth, and people flocked to him. A considerable portion of this crowd dallied before the astrologer too. The astrologer transacted his business by the light of a flare which crackled and smoked up above the groundnut heap nearby. Half the enchantment of the place was due to the fact that it did not have the benefit of municipal lighting. The place was lit up by shop lights. One or two had hissing gaslights, some had naked flares stuck on poles, some were lit up by old cycle lamps, and one or two, like the astrologer's managed without lights of their own. It was a bewildering criss-cross of light rays and moving shadows. This suited the astrologer very well, for the simple reason that he had not the least intended to be an astrologer when he began life; and he knew no more of what was going to happen to himself next minute. He was as much a stranger to the stars as were his innocent customers. Yet he said things which pleased and astonished everyone; that was more a matter of study, practice, and shrewd guesswork. All the same, it was as much an honest man's labour as any other, and he deserved the wages he carried home at the end of a day.

He had left his village without previous thought or plan. If he had continued there he would have carried on the work of his forefathers-namely tilling the land, living, marrying, and ripening in his cornfield and ancestral home. But that was not to be. He had to leave home without telling anyone and he could not rest till he left it behind a couple of hundred miles. To a villager it is a great deal, as if an ocean flowed between.

He had a working analysis of mankind's troubles; marriage, money, and the tangles of human ties. Long practice had sharpened his perception. Within five minutes he understood what was wrong. He charged three pice¹⁰ per question, never opened his mouth till the other had spoken for at least ten minutes, which provided him enough stuff for a dozen answers and advises. When he told the person before him, gazing at his palm, 'In many ways you are not getting the fullest results for your efforts', nine out of ten were disposed to agree with him. Or he questioned: 'Is there any woman in your family, maybe even a distant relative, who is not well disposed towards you?' Or he gave an analysis of character: 'Most of your troubles are due to your nature. How can you be otherwise with Saturn where he is? You have an impetuous¹¹ nature and rough

¹⁰Pice : a coin of India of very small value.

¹¹Impetuous : rushing headlong into things.





exterior'. This endeared him to their hearts immediately, for even the mildest of us loves to think that he has a forbidding exterior.

The nuts vendor blew out his flare and rose to go home. This was a signal for the astrologer to bundle up too, since it left him in darkness except for a little shaft of green light which strayed in from somewhere and touched the ground before him. He picked up his cowrie shells and paraphernalia¹² and was putting them back into his bag when the green shaft of light was blotted out; he looked up and saw a man before him. He sensed a possible client and said: "You look so careworn. It will do you good to sit down for a while and chat with me'. The other grumbled some reply vaguely. The astrologer pressed his invitation; whereupon the other thrust his palm under his nose saying: "You call yourself an astrologer?' The astrologer felt challenged and said, tilting the other's palm towards the green shaft of light: "Yours is a nature.... "Oh, stop that, the other said, 'tell me something worth while.

Our friend felt piqued¹³. 'I charge only three pice per question, and what you get ought to be good enough for your money.' At this the other withdrew his arm, took out an anna,¹⁴ and flung it out to him, saying: 'I have some questions to ask. If I prove you are bluffing, you must return that anna to me with interest.'

'If you find my answers satisfactory, will you give me five rupees?'¹⁵

'No' 'Or will you give me eight annas?'

'All right, provided you give me twice as much if you are wrong,' said the stranger. This pact was accepted after a little further argument. The astrologer sent up a prayer to heaven as the other lit a cheroot¹⁶. The astrologer caught a glimpse of his face by the matchlight. There was a pause as cars hooted on the road, jutka¹⁷ drivers swore at their horses, and the babble of the crowd agitated the semi-darkness of the park. The other sat down, sucking his cheroot, puffing out, sat there ruthlessly. The astrologer felt very uncomfortable. 'Here, take your anna

¹²Paraphernalia : things used in a particular activity; equipment.

¹³Piqued : aroused in anger and resentment; offended.

¹⁴Anna : a former coin of India equal to four pice.

¹⁵Rupees : a coin of India equal to sixteen annas.

¹⁶Cheroot : a cigar cut square at both ends.

¹⁷Jutka : a two -wheeled, horse drawn vehicle.





back. I am not used to such challenges. It is late for me today.' He made preparations to bundle up. The other held his wrist and said: "You can't get out of it now. You dragged me in while I was passing.' The astrologer shivered in his grip; and his voice shook and became faint. 'Leave me today. I will speak to you tomorrow. The other thrust his palm in his face and said: 'Challenge is challenge. Go on. The astrologer proceeded with his throat drying up: 'There is a woman...'

'Stop,' said the other. 'I don't want all that. Shall I succeed in my present search or not? Answer this and go. Otherwise I will not let you go till you disgorge¹⁸ all your coins.' The astrologer muttered a few incantations¹⁹ and replied: 'All right. I will speak. But will you give me a rupee if what I say is convincing? Otherwise I will not open my mouth, and you may do what you like.' After a good deal of haggling the other agreed. The astrologer said: "You were left for dead. Am I right?"

"Ah, tell me more."

"A knife has passed through you once' said the astrologer. 'Good fellow!' He bared his chest to show the scar. What else?"

'And then you were pushed into a well nearby in the field. You were left for dead.

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"I should have been dead if some passer-by had not chanced to peep into the well,' exclaimed the other, overwhelmed by enthusiasm. "When shall I get at him?' he asked clenching his fist.

'In the next world,' answered the astrologer. "He died four months ago in a far-off town. You will never see any more of him'. The other groaned on hearing it. The astrologer proceeded:

'Guru Nayak.

'You know my name!' the other said, taken aback.²⁰

"As I know all other things. Guru Nayak, listen carefully to what I have to say. Your village is two days' journey due north of this town. Take the next train and be gone. I see once again great danger to your life if you go from home. He took

¹⁸Disgorge : give up or handover.

¹⁹Incantation : words spoken in casting a spell.

²⁰Taken aback : startled or suddenly surprised.





out a pinch of sacred ash and held it to him. 'Rub it on your forehead and go home. Never travel Southward again, and you will live to be a hundred.'

'Why should I leave home again?' the other said reflectively.²¹

'I was only going away now and then to look for him and to choke out his life if I met him. He shook his head regretfully. 'He has escaped my hands. I hope at least he died as he deserved.' 'Yes,' said the astrologer. 'He was crushed under a lorry²². The other looked gratified to hear it.

The place was deserted by the time the astrologer picked up his articles and put them into his bag. The green shaft was also gone, leaving the place in darkness and silence. The stranger had gone off into the night, after giving the astrologer a handful of coins.

It was nearly midnight when the astrologer reached home. His wife was waiting for him at the door and demanded an explanation.

He flung the coins at her and said: 'Count them. One man gave all that.' 'Twelve and a half annas,' she said, counting. She was overjoyed. 'I can buy some jaggery²³ and coconut tomorrow. The child has been asking for sweets for so many days now. I will prepare some nice stuff for her.'

"The swine has cheated me! He promised me a rupee,' said the astrologer. She looked up at him. 'You look worried. What is wrong?'

'Nothing.'

After dinner, sitting on the pyol,²⁴ he told her: 'Do you know a great load is gone from me today? I thought I had the blood of a man on my hands all these years. That was the reason why I ran away from home, settled down here, and married you. He is alive.

She gasped. "You tried to kill!"

'Yes in our village, when I was a silly youngster, we drank, gambled, and quarrelled badly one day-why think of it now? Time to sleep,' he said yawning, and stretched himself on the pyol.

²¹ Reflectively : in a way that shows.

²² Lorry : (here) long, flat, horse-drawn wagon.

²³ Jaggery : unrefined sugar made from palm tree sap.

²⁴ Pyol : a low bench.





Quick Recall

Choose the correct answer from the alternatives given:

- 1) The astrologer advised Guru Nayak not to travel..... again
 - a) eastward
 - b) southward
 - c) westward
 - d) northward
- 2) Rearrange the sentences:
 - (i) The astrologer saw his face by the match light.
 - (ii) He made preparations to bundle up.
 - (iii) He asked the client to take back his anna.
 - (iv) The stranger held his wrist and he shivered in his grip.
 - a) i-iii-ii-iv
 - b) ii-iii-i-iv
 - c) iii-i-ii-iv
 - d) iv-iii-ii-i
- 3) The place of the Astrologer's business was lit up by
 - a) gaslight
 - b) lantern
 - c) moonlight
 - d) halogen light
- 4) If the Astrologer had not attempted to murder Guru Nayak,
 - (i) he would have continued to live in his village.
 - (ii) he would have become an astrologer.
 - (iii) he would have become a farmer.
 - (iv) he would have joined the army.

Select the correct option :

- a) i and ii are true but iii and iv are false
- b) i and iii are false, ii and iv are true
- c) i and iv are true but ii and iii are false
- d) i and iii are true, but ii and iv are false





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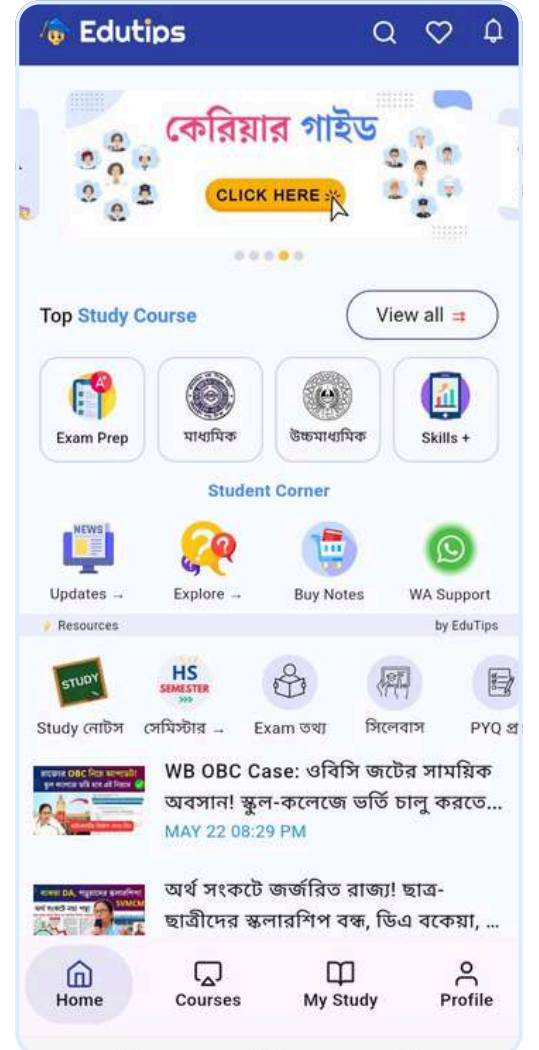


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5. Select the correct option to match the following:

A	B
i. Guru Nayak	a. had dark whiskers
ii. Astrologer	b. tamarind tree
iii. Bombay	c. name of the client
iv. Sat under	d. fried groundnut

- a) i-a, ii-b, iii-c, iv-d
b) i-c, ii-a, iii-d, iv-b
c) i-b, ii-c, iii-a, iv-d
d) i-d, ii-b, iii-c, iv-a

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The Swami and Mother-Worship



SISTER NIVEDITA

About the Author :

Sister Nivedita (1867-1911) : Margaret Elizabeth Noble was born in the town of Dungannon in County Tyrone, Ireland. She was an Irish teacher, social activist, school founder and disciple of Swami Vivekananda. She spent her childhood and early youth in Ireland. She met Swami Vivekananda in 1895 in London and travelled to Calcutta, India in 1898. Swami Vivekananda gave her the name Nivedita when he initiated her into the vow of Brahmacharya on 25 March 1898. In November 1898, she opened a girls' school in the Bagbazar area of North Calcutta. She wanted to educate girls who were deprived of even basic education. Nivedita had close association with the newly established Ramkrishna Mission.



About the Text :

The author portrays Swami Vivekananda's profound and passionate devotion to the Divine Mother, highlighting his belief in Her as the ultimate source of power and his inclusive view of Hindu spirituality. The text explores Swami Vivekananda's deep and unwavering faith in the Divine Mother, presented as the ultimate reality and source of all power. The text offers insights into his spiritual fervour and the way he spoke about the Divine Mother, using familial and personal language. Nivedita's portrayal of Vivekananda's worship showcases the inclusive and expansive nature of Hindu spirituality, which transcends cultural and geographical boundaries.





Text :

The story of the glimpses¹ which I caught of this part of the Swami's life would be singularly incomplete, if it contained no mention of his worship of the Mother. Spiritually speaking, I have always felt that there were two elements in his consciousness. Undoubtedly he was born a *Brahmajnani*, as Ramakrishna Paramahansa so frequently insisted. When he was only eight years old, sitting at his play, he had developed the power of entering *Samadhi*. The religious ideas towards which he naturally gravitated², were highly abstract³ and philosophical, the very reverse of those which are commonly referred to as 'idolatrous'.⁴ In his youth, and presumably when he had already been some time under the influence of Sri Ramakrishna, he became a formal member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. In England and America he was never known to preach⁵ anything that depended on a special form. The realisation of Brahman was his only imperative⁶, the Advaita philosophy his only system of doctrine⁷, the Vedas and Upanishads his sole scriptural authority.

And yet, side by side with this, it is also true that in India the word "Mother" was forever on his lips. He spoke of Her, as we of one deeply familiar in the household life. He was constantly preoccupied with Her. Like other children, he was not always good. Sometimes he would be naughty and rebellious. But always to Her. Never did he attribute to any other, the good or evil that befell. On a certain solemn occasion, he entrusted to a disciple a prayer to Her that in his own life had acted as a veritable charm. "And mind!" he added suddenly, turning with what was almost fierceness upon the receiver, "make Her listen to you, when you say it! None of that cringing to Mother! Remember!" Every now and then he

¹Glimpses : Brief look.

²Gravitated : To be attracted/ move towards something.

³Abstract : Existing in thought or as an idea but not having a physical or concrete existence.

⁴Idolatrous : Relating to or practising idolatry; idol worshipping.

⁵Preach : Earnestly advocate/ deliver a sermon to an assembled group of people.

⁶Imperative : Of vital importance; crucial.

⁷Doctrine : A belief or set of beliefs held and taught by a Church, political party, or other





would break out with some new fragment of description. The right hand raised in blessing, the left holding the sword, - "Her curse is blessing!" would be the sudden exclamation that ended a long reverie. Or becoming half-lyric in the intensity of his feeling, "Deep in the heart of hearts of Her own, flashes the blood-red knife of Kali. Worshippers of the Mother are they from their birth, in Her incarnation of the sword!" From him was gathered, in such moments as these, almost every line and syllable of a certain short psalm, called the 'Voice of the Mother,' which I wrote and published about this time. "I worship the Terrible!" he was continually saying, - and once, "It is a mistake to hold that with all men pleasure is the motive. Quite as many are born to seek after pain. Let us worship the Terror for Its own sake."

He had a whole-hearted contempt⁸ for what he regarded as squeamishness⁹ or mawkishness¹⁰. He wasted few words on me, when I came to him with my difficulties about animal sacrifice in the temple. He made no reference, as he might have done, to the fact that most of us, loudly as we may attack this, have no hesitation in offering animal sacrifice to ourselves. He offered no argument, as he easily might have done, regarding the degradation of the butcher and the slaughter-house, under the modern system. "Why not a little blood, to complete the picture?" was his only direct reply to my objections. And it was with considerable difficulty that I elicited from him, and from another disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, sitting near, the actual facts of the more austere side of Kali-worship, that side which has transcended the sacrifice of others. He told me however that he had never tolerated the blood-offering commonly made to the "demons who attend on Kali." This was simple devil-worship, and he had no place for it. His own effort being constantly to banish fear and weakness from his own

⁸Contempt : The feeling that a person or a thing is worthless or beneath consideration.

⁹Squeamishness : Easily made to feel disgusted/ having fastidious moral views.

¹⁰Mawkishness : The quality of showing emotion or love in an awkward or silly way.





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consciousness and to learn to recognise THE MOTHER as instinctively in evil, terror, sorrow, and annihilation¹¹, as in that which makes for sweetness and joy, it followed that the one thing he could not away with was any sort of watering-down of the great conception. "Fools!" he exclaimed once, -as he dwelt in quiet talk on "the worship of the Terrible", on "becoming one with the Terrible" - "Fools! they put a garland of flowers round Thy neck, and then start back in terror, and call Thee 'the Merciful!'" And as he spoke, the underlying egoism of worship that is devoted to the kind God, to Providence¹², the consoling Divinity, without a heart for God in the earthquake, or God in the volcano, overwhelmed the listener. One saw that such worship was at bottom, as the Hindu calls it, merely 'shop-keeping,' and one realised the infinitely greater boldness and truth of the teaching that God manifests through evil as well as through good. One saw that the true attitude for the mind and will that are not to be baffled by the personal self, was in fact the determination, in the stern words of the Swami Vivekananda, 'to seek death not life, to hurl oneself upon the sword's point, to become one with the Terrible for evermore!'

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It would have been altogether inconsistent with the Swami's idea of freedom, to have sought to impose¹³ his own conceptions on a disciple. But everything in my past life as an educationist had contributed to impress on me now the necessity of taking on the Indian consciousness, and the personal perplexity¹⁴ associated with the memory of the pilgrimage to Amarnath was a witness not to be forgotten to the strong place which Indian systems of worship held in that consciousness. I set myself therefore to enter into Kali worship, as one would set oneself to learn a new language, or take birth deliberately, perhaps, in a new race. To this fact I owe it that I was able to understand as much as I did of our Master's life and thought. Step by step, glimpse after glimpse, I began to comprehend a little.

¹¹ *Annihilation : Complete destruction or obliteration.*

¹² *Providence : The protective care of God or of nature as a spiritual power.*

¹³ *Impose : To force an unwelcome decision on someone.*

¹⁴ *Perplexity : Inability to deal with or understand something*





And in matters religious, he was, without knowing it, a born educator. He never checked a struggling thought. Being with him one day when an image of Kali was brought in, and noticing some passing expression, I suddenly said "Perhaps, Swamiji, Kali is the Vision of Siva! Is She?" He looked at me for a moment. "Well! Well! Express it in your own way," he said gently, "Express it in your own way!"

Another day he was going with me to visit the old Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, in the seclusion¹⁵ of his home in Jorasanko, and before we started, he questioned me about a death-scene at which I had been present the night before. I told him eagerly of the sudden realisation that had come to me, that religions were only languages, and we must speak to a man in his own language. His whole face lighted up at the thought. "Yes!" he exclaimed, 'And Ramakrishna Paramahansa was the only man who taught that! He was the only man who ever had the courage to say that we must speak to all men in their own language!' Yet there came a day when he found it necessary to lay down with unmistakeable clearness his own position in the matter of Mother-worship. I was about to lecture at the Kalighat, and he came to instruct me that if any foreign friends should wish to be present, they were to remove their shoes, and sit on the floor, like the rest of the audience. In that Presence no exceptions were to be made. I was myself to be responsible for this.*

After saying all this, however, he lingered¹⁶ before going, and then, making a shy reference to Colonel Hay's poem of the 'Guardian Angels', he said, "That is precisely my position about Brahman and the gods! I believe in Brahman and the gods, and not in anything else!" He was evidently afraid that my intellectual difficulty would lie where his own must have done, in the incompatibility of the

¹⁵Seclusion : The state of being private and away from other people.

*In no temple anywhere, ought there to be any exception. No one has any respect for a man who cannot stand for the dignity and sacredness of his own place of worship.- Nivedita.

¹⁶Lingered : Stay in a place longer than necessary because of a reluctance to leave.





exaltation¹⁷ of one definite scheme of worship with the highest Vedantic theory of Brahman. He did not understand that to us who stood about him, he was himself the reconciliation¹⁸ of these opposites, and the witness to the truth of each. Following up this train of thought, therefore, he dropped into a mood of half-soliloquy, and sat for a while talking disjointedly, answering questions, trying to make himself clear, yet always half-absorbed in something within, as if held by some spell he could not break.

"How I used to hate Kali!" he said, "And all Her ways! That was the ground of my six years' fight,-that I would not accept Her. But I had to accept Her at last! Ramakrishna Paramahansa dedicated me to Her, and now I believe that She guides me in every little thing I do, and does with me what She will! Yet I fought so long! I loved him, you see, and that was what held me. I saw his marvellous purity I felt his wonderful love His greatness had not dawned on me then. All that came afterwards, when I had given in. At that time I thought him a brain-sick baby, always seeing visions and the rest. I hated it. And then I too had to accept Her!"

"No, the thing that made me do it is a secret that will die with me. I had great misfortunes at that time It was an opportunity She made a slave of me. Those were the very words- 'a slave of you.' And Ramakrishna Paramahansa made me over to Her...Strange! He lived only two years after doing that, and most of the time he was suffering. Not more than six months did he keep his own health and brightness.

"Guru Nanak was like that, you know, looking for the one disciple to whom he would give his power. And he passed over all his own family, -his children were as nothing to him,-till he came upon the boy to whom he gave it, and then he could die.

¹⁷Exaltation : A feeling or state of extreme happiness.

¹⁸Reconciliation : The restoration of friendly relations.





"The future, you say, will call Ramakrishna Paramahansa an Incarnation of Kali? Yes, I think there's no doubt that She worked up the body of Ramakrishna for Her own ends.

"You see, I cannot but believe that there is somewhere a great Power That thinks of Herself as feminine, and called Kali, and Mother..... And I believe in Brahman too.....But is it not always like that? Is it not the multitude of cells in the body that make up the personality, the many brain-centres, not the one, that produce consciousness?.....Unity in complexity! Just so! And why should it be different with Brahman? It is Brahman. It is the One. And yet - and yet - it is the gods too!"

Similarly, he had returned from a pilgrimage in Kashmir saying "These gods are not merely symbols! They are the forms that the bhaktas have seen!" And it is told of Sri Ramakrishna that he would sometimes speak, coming out of *samadhi*, of the past experience of that soul that dwelt within him, - "He who came as Rama, as Krishna, as Jesus dwells here"-and then would add playfully, turning to his chief disciple, "But not in your Vedantic sense, Noren!"

Thus we are admitted to a glimpse of the struggle that goes on in great souls, for the correlation and mutual adjustment of the different realisations of different times. On the one side the Mother, on the other side Brahman. We are reminded of the Swami's own words, heard long ago, "The impersonal God, seen through the mists of sense, is personal." In truth it might well be that the two ideas could not be reconciled. Both conceptions could not be equally true at the same time. It is clear enough that in the end, as a subjective realisation, either the Mother must become Brahman, or Brahman the Mother. One of the two must melt into the other, the question of which, in any particular case, depending on the destiny and the past of the worshipping soul.

For my own part, the conversation I have related marked an epoch. Ever since it took place, I have thought I saw in my Master's attitude a certain element of one who carried for another a trust confided to him. 87 He would always, when asked to explain the image of Kali, speak of it as the book of experience, in which





the soul turns page after page, only to find that there is nothing in it, after all. And this, to my own mind, is the final explanation. Kali the Mother is to be the worship of the Indian future. In Her name will her sons find it possible to sound many experiences to their depths. And yet, in the end, their hearts will return to the ancient wisdom, and each man will know, when his hour comes, that all his life was but as a dream.

Who does not remember the Veda-like words of the Gita? - "Not, verily, by avoiding action, can a man rise to this inaction!" May we not, similarly, know for a certainty that not without going through this experience can we reach the realisation at the end? Through the Mother to Brahman, through new life and knowledge, and many changes, through the struggles, the victories, and the defeats of the immediate future, to that safe haven of the soul where all is One, and all is peace? As I look more and more closely into the life of that great Teacher whom I have followed, I see each day with growing-clearness, how he himself was turning the pages of the book of experience, and that it was only when he had come to the last word that he could lie back like a weary child, in the arms of his Mother, to be wrapped away at last into the Supreme Revelation, knowing that 'all this was but a dream!'

Quick Recall

A. Choose the correct alternative from the following options:

1. According to the author at what age did Swamiji learn to enter into Samadhi?
 - a) He was only eight years old when he developed the power of entering Samadhi.
 - b) He was twelve years old when he developed the power of entering Samadhi.
 - c) He did not have the power of entering Samadhi.
 - d) He could enter Samadhi since he was an infant.





2. Assertion (A) In truth the 'impersonal God' and the 'personal God' could not be reconciled.

Reason (R) Both conceptions cannot be true at the same time.

- Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
- Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- A is true but R is false
- A is false but R is true.

3. Arrange the following ideas in the sequence in which they appear in the passage:

- Swamiji was born as a *Brahmajnani*, as Ramkrishna Paramhansa so frequently insisted
- "Mother" was forever on his lips. He spoke of Her, as we of one deeply familiar in the household life.
- When he was only eight years old, sitting at his play, he had developed the power of entering *Samadhi*.
- On a certain solemn occasion, he entrusted to a disciple a prayer to Her that in his own life had acted as a veritable charm.

Options:

- A-C-B-D
- A-D-B-C
- A-B-C-D
- D-C-B-A

4. What is the Swami's attitude towards Mother worship, according to Sister Nivedita?

- He advocates for the worship of all deities equally
- He emphasises the importance of Mother worship in spiritual life
- He considers it a primitive form of religious expression
- He discourages devotees from practicing Mother worship

5. How does Mother worship play the role in Hinduism, as mentioned in the text?

- It is an outdated tradition that the modern Hindus no longer follow.
- It's a superstitious practice rooted in ancient mythology
- It's a means of seeking material blessings and prosperity
- It serves a bridge between the individual Soul and the individual Spirit



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Amarnath



SISTER NIVEDITA

About the Author :

Sister Nivedita (1867-1911), born Margaret Elizabeth Noble in Ireland, was a teacher, writer, social reformer, and disciple of Swami Vivekananda. She dedicated her life to India after meeting Vivekananda in London in 1895. Initiated into the vow of Brahmacharya in 1898 and given the name "Nivedita," meaning "Dedicated to God," she worked tirelessly for women's education and Indian nationalism. Her work included founding a girls' school in Kolkata and aiding during the plague epidemic of 1899. Nivedita also contributed to revolutionary movements and inspired Indian intellectuals through her writings. As a prolific writer, Sister Nivedita authored several influential works reflecting her deep connection with India and its spiritual heritage. Her book *The Master as I Saw Him* (1910) is a biographical account of Swami Vivekananda, capturing her experiences and insights into his teachings and personality. The book stands apart for its nuanced portrayal of the guru-disciple relationship, highlighting both reverence and the challenges inherent in such bonds. In her writings, Sister Nivedita combined profound spiritual reflections with practical observations about Indian society. Her literary contributions include articles for journals like *Prabuddha Bharat* and books such as *Kali the Mother* (1900), which influenced contemporary thinkers like Abanindranath Tagore. Through her works, she bridged Western thought with Indian spirituality, leaving an enduring legacy as both a writer and a reformer.



About the Text :

The essay *Amarnath* in Sister Nivedita's book *The Master as I Saw Him* recounts her pilgrimage with Swami Vivekananda to the sacred Amarnath Cave in Kashmir. The narrative vividly explores the physical and spiritual challenges of the journey, portraying the pilgrimage as a profound metaphor for spiritual





awakening. Swami Vivekananda's experience at the shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva is central to the essay. Observing all rites of the pilgrimage with deep reverence, he later shared that he felt blessed with "Amar"-the divine gift of choosing death at will, a privilege associated with spiritual liberation. The essay emphasizes themes of divine communion, the transformative power of pilgrimage, and unity among diverse pilgrims. It captures the awe-inspiring connection between nature and spirituality, reflecting on how the Himalayan landscape amplifies the sacredness of the experience. Nivedita's admiration for her master's spiritual depth shines through her descriptions of his profound connection with Lord Shiva during the journey. Through this account, Sister Nivedita not only documents Vivekananda's spiritual insights but also highlights how such pilgrimages serve as catalysts for personal and collective transformation. The essay stands as a testament to the unifying force of devotion and faith, transcending physical hardships to achieve a deeper communion with the divine.

Text :

It was in the course of an open-air meal in the Mogul Gardens at Achhabal¹, that the Swami suddenly announced that he would go to Amarnath with the pilgrims, and take his daughter² with him. Within our little party, there was too much feeling of delighted congratulation, for any obstacle to be put in the way of the fortunate member. And aided³ thus, as well as by the State officer, in charge of the journey, preparations went forward for this unique experience.

Kashmir seemed, in those weeks, to be full of pilgrims. We left Achhabal, and returned to our boats at Islamabad, for final arrangements, and everywhere we saw the march of gathering hosts⁴. It was all very quiet and orderly and picturesque. Two or three thousand people would encamp⁵ in a field, and leave it before dawn, with no trace of their occupation, save⁶ the ashes of their cooking-fires. They carried a bazaar with them, and at each halting place, the pitching of

¹Achhabal : a town in Jammu and Kashmir, known for its Mughal garden, often visited as part of the Amarnath Yatra.

²Daughter : a figurative or metaphorical expression.

³Aided : Helped.

⁴Hosts : Guests.

⁵Encamp : to set up or inhabit a temporary camp or shelter.

⁶Save : Except.





tents, and opening of shops, took place with incredible rapidity. Organisation appeared to be instinctive⁷. A broad street would run through the middle of one part of the camp, and here one could buy dried fruits, milk, dahls, and rice. The tent of the Tehsildar, -with that of the Swami on one side, and my own on the other, -was generally placed near some advantageous spot for the lighting of the evening fire, and thus his neighbourhood tended to form a social centre.

There were hundreds of monks, of all the orders, with their Gherua tents, some no larger than a good-sized umbrella, and amongst these, the Swami's influence appeared to be magnetic. The more learned of them swarmed about him at every halting place, filling his tent, and remaining absorbed in conversation, throughout the hours of daylight. The talk on their side, he told us afterwards, had been all of Siva, and they had remonstrated⁸ with him seriously, when he had insisted, occasionally, on drawing their attention to the world about them. Even foreigners, they urged, were men. Why make such distinctions between *Swadesh* and *bidesh*? Nor could many of them understand the warmth of his love and sympathy for Mohammedanism. The same other-world-likeness that made *Swadesh* and *bidesh* indistinguishable, also prevented these simple souls from formally conceiving of a unity, in which Hindu and Mohammedan were but rival elements. The soil of the Punjab, they argued, was drenched⁹ with the blood of those who had died for the faith. Here, at least, let him practise a narrow orthodoxy! In answer to this, as became one who was, in fact 'an anachronism of the future'¹⁰, the Swami made those practical concessions¹¹ of the moment that were expressive of his love for the brethren¹², and drove his principles home¹³ to their minds with the greater force and vehemence¹⁴. But, as he told the tale of his

⁷*Instinctive : arise naturally.*

⁸*Remonstrated : Protested.*

⁹*Drenched : Soaked.*

¹⁰*Future : refers to Swami Vivekananda's spiritual presence or insights being ahead of his time.*

¹¹*Concessions : Compromises or adjustments made temporarily to suit the current situation.*

¹²*Brethren : Indicates actions that demonstrate care, affection, or solidarity for fellow believers or companions.*

¹³*Home : Making others understand his core beliefs or values.*

¹⁴*Vehemence : Intense passion or forcefulness in expressing ideas or emotions.*





warm discussions, the foreign mind¹⁵ could not help, with some amusement, noting the paradox that the Tehsildar¹⁶ himself, and many officers and servants of the pilgrimage, had been Mussulmans¹⁷, and that no one had dreamt of objecting to their entering the Cave with the Hindu worshippers, on the ultimate arrival at the shrine¹⁸. The Tehsildar came afterwards, indeed, with a group of friends, begging¹⁹ formal acceptance by the Swami as disciples; and in this, no one seemed to find anything incongruous²⁰ or surprising.

Leaving Islamabad, we caught up somewhere with the pilgrimage²¹, and camped with it, for that night, at Pawan, a place famous for its holy springs. I can remember yet the brilliance of the lights reflected in the clear black waters of the tank that evening, and throngs of pilgrims proceeding in little groups from shrine to shrine. At Pahlgam-the village of the shepherds -the camp halted for a day, to keep ekadasi²². It was a beautiful little ravine²³ floored, for the most part with sandy islands in the pebble-worn bed of a mountain stream. The slopes about it were dark with pine-trees, and over the mountain at its head was seen, at sunset, the moon, not yet full. It was the scenery of Switzerland or Norway, at their gentlest and loveliest. Here we saw the last of human dwellings, a bridge, a farm house, with its ploughed fields, and a few saeter-huts²⁴. And here, on a grassy knoll²⁵, when the final march began, we left the rest of our party encamped.

¹⁵*Foreign Mind : Refers to an outsider's perspective, in this case Sister Nivedita's view as a European observing Indian traditions.*

¹⁶*Tehsildar : A Tehsildar is a local administrative officer in India, responsible for revenue collection and maintaining law and order in a Tehsil (a sub-division of a district).*

¹⁷*Mussulmans : An older term for Muslims, referring to followers of Islam.*

¹⁸*Shrine : The final point of reaching the sacred site after completing the pilgrimage journey.*

¹⁹*Begging : Asking for.*

²⁰*Incongruous : Inappropriate, or unexpected in a particular situation.*

²¹*Pilgrimage : A journey undertaken to a sacred place for religious purposes.*

²²*Ekadasi : A holy day in the Hindu lunar calendar, observed with fasting and prayers.*

²³*Ravine : A narrow valley with steep sides, often carved by a stream or river.*

²⁴*Saeter-huts : Small huts or cottages typically found in Scandinavian landscapes, used by shepherds or farmers in mountain areas.*

²⁵*Knoll : A small hill covered in grass.*





Through scenes of indescribable beauty, three thousand of us ascended the valleys that opened before us as we went. The first day we camped in a pine-wood; the next, we had passed the snow-line²⁶, and pitched our tents beside a frozen river. That night, the great camp-fire was made of juniper²⁷, and the next evening, at still greater heights, the servants had to wander many miles, in search of this scanty fuel. At last the regular pathway came to an end, and we had to scramble up and down, along goat-paths, on the face of steep declivities²⁸, till we reached the boulder-strewn gorge, in which the Cave of Amarnath was situated. As we ascended this, we had before us the snow-peaks covered with a white veil, newly-fallen; and in the Cave itself, in a niche never reached by sunlight, shone the great ice-lingam²⁹, that must have seemed, to the awestruck peasants who first came upon it, like the waiting Presence of God. The Swami had observed every rite of the pilgrimage, as he came along. He had told his beads, kept fasts, and bathed in the ice-cold waters of five streams in succession, crossing the river-gravels on our second day. And now, as he entered the Cave, it seemed to him, as if he saw Siva made visible before him. Amidst the buzzing, swarming noise of the pilgrim-crowd, and the overhead fluttering of the pigeons, he knelt and prostrated two or three times, unnoticed; and then, afraid lest emotion might overcome him, he rose and silently withdrew. He said afterwards that in these brief moments he had received from Siva the gift of Amar³⁰, -not to die, until he himself had willed it. In this way, possibly, was defeated or fulfilled that presentiment³¹ which had haunted him from childhood, that he would meet with death, in a Siva temple amongst the mountains.

²⁶ *Snow-line* : refers to the altitude beyond which snow remains on the ground year-round.

²⁷ *Juniper* : Juniper is a type of evergreen tree, often found in colder mountainous regions.

²⁸ *Declivities* : very steep slopes or inclines, making the trek arduous.

²⁹ *Ice-lingam* : refers to a naturally occurring, cylindrical ice formation in the Amarnath Cave worshiped as a divine manifestation of Shiva.

³⁰ *Amar* : "Amar" means "immortal" in Sanskrit. Swami Vivekananda felt he received Shiva's blessing to choose his time of death, symbolizing profound spiritual realization.

³¹ *Presentiment* : A sense of foreboding or anticipation.





Outside the Cave, there was no Brahminic exploitation³² of the helpless people. Amarnath is remarkable for its simplicity and closeness to nature. But the pilgrimage culminates -on the great day of Rakhibandhan, and our wrists were tied with the red and yellow threads of that sacrament. Afterwards, we rested and had a meal, on some high boulders beside the stream, before returning to our tents. The Swami was full of the place. He felt that he had never been to anything so beautiful. He sat long silent. Then he said dreamily, "I can well imagine how this Cave was first discovered. A party of shepherds, one summer day, must have lost their flocks, and wandered in here in search of them. Then, when they came home to the valleys, they told how they had suddenly come upon Mahadev!" Of my Master himself, in any case, a like story was true. The purity and whiteness of the ice-pillar had startled and enwrap him. The cavern had revealed itself to him as the secret of Kailas³³. And for the rest of his life, he cherished the memory of how he had entered a mountain-cave, and come face to face there with the Lord Himself.

Quick Recall

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Choose the correct answer from the alternatives given :

1. At what location did the pilgrims camp beside a frozen river?
 - a) Below the snow-line
 - b) At a tropical forest
 - c) Above the snow-line
 - d) In a desert region
2. What was used as fuel for the campfire at higher altitudes?
 - a) Dry wood
 - b) Coal
 - c) Juniper
 - d) Kerosene

³²Exploitation : take advantage of devotees for money or gifts.

³³Kailas : sacred mountain in Tibetan mythology and Hinduism, considered the abode of Lord Shiva.





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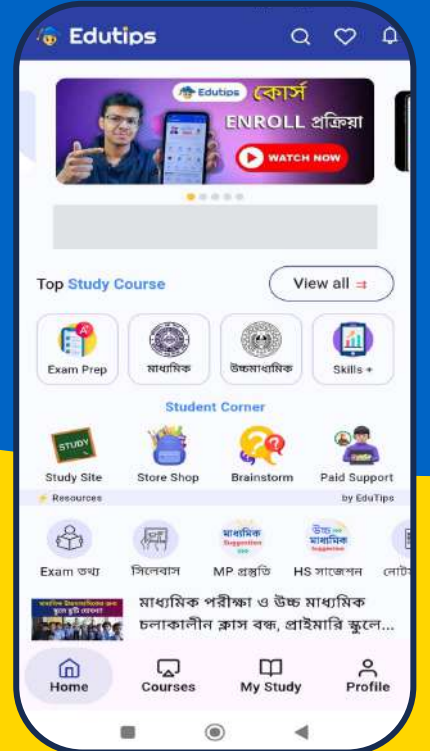
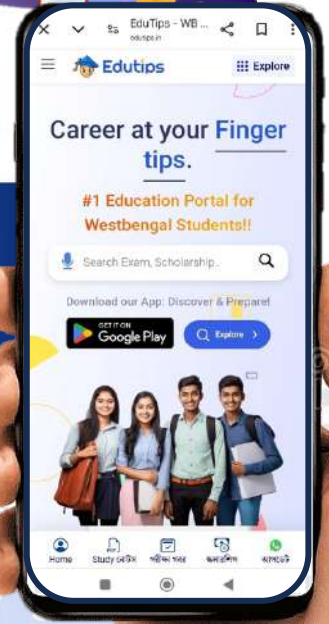
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A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

3. Assertion: Swami Vivekananda participated fully in the Amarnath pilgrimage rituals.

Reason: He wanted to experience a profound spiritual awakening.

- Both assertion and reason are correct and related.
- Both assertion and reason are correct but unrelated.
- Assertion is correct, but reason is incorrect.
- Assertion is incorrect, but reason is correct.

4. Assertion: The ice-lingam is a naturally occurring phenomenon within the Amarnath Cave.

Reason: It symbolizes the divine presence of Shiva.

- Both assertion and reason are correct and related.
- Both assertion and reason are correct but unrelated.
- Assertion is correct, but reason is incorrect.
- Assertion is incorrect, but reason is correct.

5. Match the following:

Column A	Column B
1. Swami Vivekananda's spiritual practice during the pilgrimage	a) Symbolizes the divine presence of Lord Shiva
2. Significance of the ice-lingam	b) Assisted by a State officer in charge
3. Preparations for the pilgrimage	c) Marks the end of the Amarnath pilgrimage
4. Rakhibandhan's role in the pilgrimage	d) Participating in rituals and fasting

Options for matching:

- 1-d, 2-a, 3-b, 4-c
- 1-d, 2-b, 3-c, 4-a
- 1-d, 2-b, 3-a, 4-c
- 1-a, 2-b, 3-c, 4-d





The Model Millionaire



OSCAR WILDE

About the Author :

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) was an Irish playwright, poet, and novelist, renowned for his wit, flamboyant personality, and sharp social criticism. A leading figure of the Aesthetic Movement, he championed "art for art's sake." His major works include *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), a novel exploring hedonism and moral decay, and the satirical plays *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) and *An Ideal Husband* (1895), which mock Victorian society's hypocrisy. Wilde's epigrams remain widely quoted for their brilliance. He lived in exile in France, where he died in 1900. Wilde's legacy endures in his literary genius, social critique, and advocacy for individuality and aesthetic beauty.



About the Text :

Oscar Wilde's *The Model Millionaire* is a short story that humorously yet poignantly critiques social values and the perception of wealth. The story follows Hughie Erskine, a handsome but financially struggling young man in love with Laura Merton. Her father insists that Hughie must have £10,000 to marry her. One day, Hughie visits his friend Alan Trevor, a painter, and sees an old beggar posing as a model for a painting. Feeling pity, Hughie secretly gives the beggar a sovereign.

Later, he learns that the beggar was actually Baron Hausberg, a wealthy man. Impressed by Hughie's generosity, the Baron gifts him £10,000 as a wedding present. The story highlights Wilde's characteristic wit and irony, emphasizing the theme that true wealth lies in kindness rather than material riches. It also satirizes social conventions, portraying a world where appearances can be deceptive. Wilde's playful yet moralistic storytelling makes *The Model Millionaire* a timeless tale on generosity and unexpected fortune.





Text :

Unless one is wealthy there is no use in being a charming fellow. Romance is the privilege of the rich, not the profession of the unemployed. The poor should be practical and prosaic¹. It is better to have a permanent income than to be fascinating. These are the great truths of modern life which Hughie Erskine never realised. Poor Hughie! Intellectually, we must admit, he was not of much importance. He never said a brilliant or even an ill-natured thing in his life. But then he was wonderfully good-looking, with his crisp brown hair, his clear-cut profile, and his grey eyes. He was as popular with men as he was with women, and he had every accomplishment² except that of making money. His father had bequeathed³ him his cavalry sword, and a History of the Peninsular War in fifteen volumes. Hughie hung the first over his looking-glass, put the second on a shelf between Ruff's Guide⁴ and Bailey's Magazine⁵, and lived on two hundred a year that an old aunt allowed him. He had tried everything. He had gone on the Stock Exchange for six months; but what was a butterfly to do among bulls and bears⁶? He had been a tea-merchant for a little longer, but had soon tired of pekoe⁷ and souchong⁸. Then he had tried selling dry sherry⁹. That did not answer; the sherry was a little too dry. Ultimately he became nothing, a delightful, ineffectual¹⁰ young man with a perfect profile and no profession.

To make matters worse, he was in love. The girl he loved was Laura Merton, the daughter of a retired Colonel who had lost his temper and his digestion in India, and had never found either of them again. Laura adored him, and he was ready to kiss her shoe-strings. They were the handsomest couple in London, and had not a penny-piece between them. The Colonel was very fond of Hughie, but would not hear of any engagement.

¹Prosaic : dull, ordinary or lacking imagination.

²Accomplishment : something successfully achieved.

³Bequeathed : to give property etc. at death.

⁴Ruff's Guide : an annual publication devoted to horse racing.

⁵Bailey's Magazine : A law journal.

⁶Bulls and bears : operations on stock exchange.

⁷Pekoe : high grade black tea.

⁸Souchong : a kind of black tea made from tender leaves.

⁹Dry sherry : a type of Spanish fortified wine made from white grapes which stimulates appetite.

¹⁰Ineffectual : unsuccessful.





'Come to me, my boy, when you have got ten thousand pounds of your own, and we will see about it,' he used to say; and Hughie looked very glum¹¹ on those days, and had to go to Laura for consolation.

One morning, as he was on his way to Holland Park, where the Mertons lived, he dropped in to see a great friend of his, Alan Trevor. Trevor was a painter. Indeed, few people escape that nowadays. But he was also an artist, and artists are rather rare. Personally he was a strange rough fellow, with a freckled¹² face and a red ragged beard. However, when he took up the brush he was a real master, and his pictures were eagerly sought after. He had been very much attracted by Hughie at first, it must be acknowledged, entirely on account of his personal charm. 'The only people a painter should know,' he used to say, 'are people who are bete¹³ and beautiful, people who are an artistic pleasure to look at and an intellectual repose to talk to. Men who are dandies¹⁴ and women who are darlings rule the world, at least they should do so.' However, after he got to know Hughie better, he liked him quite as much for his bright buoyant¹⁵ spirits and his generous reckless nature, and had given him the permanent entree¹⁶ to his studio.

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When Hughie came in he found Trevor putting the finishing touches to a wonderful life-size picture of a beggar-man. The beggar himself was standing on a raised platform in a corner of the studio. He was a wizened¹⁷ old man, with a face like wrinkled parchment, and a most piteous expression. Over his shoulders was flung a coarse brown cloak, all tears and tatters; his thick boots were patched and cobbled, and with one hand he leant on a rough stick, while with the other he held out his battered¹⁸ hat for alms.

¹¹Glum : sad and gloomy.

¹²Freckled : small light brown spots due to sun exposure.

¹³Bete : it is a French word means stupid or silly(here).

¹⁴Dandies : fashionable.

¹⁵Buoyant : cheerful, lively, optimistic.

¹⁶Entree : a French word which means right or privilege of admission.

¹⁷Wizened : having dried up appearance; shrivelled.

¹⁸Battered : worn out.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

'What an amazing model!' whispered Hughie, as he shook hands with his friend.

'An amazing model?' shouted Trevor at the top of his voice; 'I should think so! Such beggars as he are not to be met with every day. A trouvaille, mort cher; a living Velasquez! My stars! what an etching Rembrandt would have made of him!'

'Poor old chap!' said Hughie, 'how miserable he looks! But I suppose, to you painters, his face is his fortune?'

'Certainly,' replied Trevor, 'you don't want a beggar to look happy, do you?'

'How much does a model get for sitting?' asked Hughie, as he found himself a comfortable seat on a divan.

'A shilling¹⁹ an hour.'

'And how much do you get for your picture, Alan?'

'Oh, for this I get two thousand!'

'Pounds?'

'Guineas²⁰. Painters, poets, and physicians always get guineas.'

'Well, I think the model should have a percentage,' cried Hughie, laughing; 'they work quite as hard as you do.'

'Nonsense, nonsense! Why, look at the trouble of laying on the paint alone, and standing all day long at one's easel²¹! It's all very well, Hughie, for you to talk, but I assure you that there are moments when Art almost attains to the dignity of manual labour. But you mustn't chatter; I'm very busy. Smoke a cigarette, and keep quiet.'

After some time the servant came in, and told Trevor that the frame-maker wanted to speak to him.

'Don't run away, Hughie,' he said, as he went out, 'I will be back in a moment.'

The old beggar-man took advantage of Trevor's absence to rest for a moment on a wooden bench that was behind him. He looked so forlorn²² and wretched²³ that Hughie could not help pitying him, and felt in his pockets to see what money he had. All he could find was a sovereign²⁴ and some coppers²⁵. 'Poor old fellow,'

¹⁹Shilling: a British currency.

²⁰Guineas: British currency worth 21 shillings.

²¹Easel: wooden frame to support a picture or a blackboard.

²²Forlorn: sad and hopeless.

²³Wretched: miserable.

²⁴Sovereign: a British gold coin.

²⁵Coppers: a small low value coin made of copper alloy.





he thought to himself, 'he wants it more than I do, but it means no hansoms for a fortnight;' and he walked across the studio and slipped the sovereign into the beggar's hand.

The old man started, and a faint smile flitted across his withered lips. 'Thank you, sir,' he said, 'thank you.'

Then Trevor arrived, and Hughie took his leave, blushing a little at what he had done. He spent the day with Laura, got a charming scolding for his extravagance, and had to walk home.

That night he strolled into the Palette Club about eleven o'clock, and found Trevor sitting by himself in the smoking-room drinking hock²⁶ and seltzer²⁷.

'Well, Alan, did you get the picture finished all right?' he said, as he lit his cigarette.

'Finished and framed, my boy!' answered Trevor; 'and, by-the-bye, you have made a conquest. That old model you saw is quite devoted to you. I had to tell him all about you - who you are, where you live, what your income is, what prospects you have--'

'My dear Alan,' cried Hughie, 'I shall probably find him waiting for me when I go home. But of course you are only joking. Poor old wretch! I wish I could do something for him. I think it is dreadful that any one should be so miserable. I have got heaps of old clothes at home - do you think he would care for any of them? Why, his rags were falling to bits.'

'But he looks splendid in them,' said Trevor. 'I wouldn't paint him in a frock-coat for anything. What you call rags I call romance. What seems poverty to you is picturesqueness²⁸ to me. However, I'll tell him of your offer.'

'Alan,' said Hughie seriously, 'you painters are a heartless lot.'

'An artist's heart is his head,' replied Trevor; 'and besides, our business is to realise the world as we see it, not to reform it as we know it. a chacun son metier. And now tell me how Laura is. The old model was quite interested in her.'

'You don't mean to say you talked to him about her?' said Hughie.

²⁶Hock : a German white wine.

²⁷Seltzer : the brand name of German sodawater.

²⁸Picturesqueness : vividness; quaintness.





'Certainly I did. He knows all about the relentless colonel, the lovely Laura, and the £10,000.'

'You told that old beggar all my private affairs?' cried Hughie, looking very red and angry.

'My dear boy,' said Trevor, smiling, 'that old beggar, as you call him, is one of the richest men in Europe. He could buy all London to-morrow without overdrawing his account. He has a house in every capital, dines off gold plate, and can prevent Russia going to war when he chooses.'

'What on earth do you mean?' exclaimed Hughie.

'What I say,' said Trevor. 'The old man you saw to-day in the studio was Baron Hausberg. He is a great friend of mine, buys all my pictures and that sort of thing, and gave me a commission a month ago to paint him as a beggar. Que voulez-vous? La fantaisie d'un millionnaire! And I must say he made a magnificent figure in his rags, or perhaps I should say in my rags; they are an old suit I got in Spain.'

'Baron Hausberg!' cried Hughie. 'Good heavens! I gave him a sovereign!' and he sank into an armchair the picture of dismay.

'Gave him a sovereign!' shouted Trevor, and he burst into a roar of laughter. 'My dear boy, you'll never see it again. Son affaire c'est l'argent des autres.'

'I think you might have told me, Alan,' said Hughie sulkily, 'and not have let me make such a fool of myself.'

'Well, to begin with, Hughie,' said Trevor, 'it never entered my mind that you went about distributing alms in that reckless way. I can understand your kissing a pretty model, but your giving a sovereign to an ugly one - by Jove, no! Besides, the fact is that I really was not at home to-day to any one; and when you came in I didn't know whether Hausberg would like his name mentioned. You know he wasn't in full dress.'

'What a duffer he must think me!' said Hughie.

'Not at all. He was in the highest spirits after you left; kept chuckling to himself and rubbing his old wrinkled hands together. I couldn't make out why he was so interested to know all about you; but I see it all now. He'll invest your sovereign for you, Hughie, pay you the interest every six months, and have a capital to tell after dinner.'





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

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'Not at all. He was in the highest spirits after you left; kept chuckling to himself and rubbing his old wrinkled hands together. I couldn't make out why he was so interested to know all about you; but I see it all now. He'll invest your sovereign for you, Hughie, pay you the interest every six months, and have a capital story to tell after dinner.'





'I am an unlucky devil,' growled Hughie. 'The best thing I can do is to go to bed; and, my dear Alan, you mustn't tell any one. I shouldn't dare show my face in the Row.'

'Nonsense! It reflects the highest credit on your philanthropic ²⁹spirit, Hughie. And don't run away. Have another cigarette, and you can talk about Laura as much as you like.'

However, Hughie wouldn't stop, but walked home, feeling very unhappy, and leaving Alan Trevor in fits of laughter.

The next morning, as he was at breakfast, the servant brought him up a card on which was written, '*Monsieur*³⁰ Gustave Naudin, *de la part de*³¹ M. le Baron Hausberg.'

'I suppose he has come for an apology,' said Hughie to himself; and he told the servant to show the visitor up.

An old gentleman with gold spectacles and grey hair came into the room, and said, in a slight French accent, 'Have I the honour of addressing Monsieur Erskine?'

Hughie bowed.

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'I have come from Baron Hausberg,' he continued. 'The Baron--'

'I beg, sir, that you will offer him my sincerest apologies,' stammered Hughie.

'The Baron,' said the old gentleman, with a smile, 'has commissioned me to bring you this letter;' and he extended a sealed envelope.

On the outside was written, 'A wedding present to Hugh Erskine and Laura Merton, from an old beggar,' and inside was a cheque for £10,000.

When they were married Alan Trevor was the best-man, and the Baron made a speech at the wedding-breakfast.

'Millionaire models,' remarked Alan, 'are rare enough; but, by Jove³², model millionaires are rarer still!'

²⁹Philanthropic: charitable and generous.

³⁰Monsieur: French for Mister(Mr).

³¹De la part de: (French) on behalf of.

³²By Jove: by God.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

Quick Recall

Choose the correct answer from the alternative given:

- What does the Baron do after learning about Hughie's kindness?
 - Laughs at him
 - Ignores him
 - Sends him a cheque for £10,000
 - Asks him for more money
- Alan Trevor laughed at Hughie because the beggar was actually a _____.
 - Prince
 - Real beggar
 - Millionaire
 - Spy
- Assertion (A): Hughie Erskine was shocked to learn the true identity of the beggar model.
Reason (R): The beggar was actually Baron Hausberg, one of the richest men in Europe.
 - Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A
 - Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A
 - A is true, but R is false
 - A is false, but R is true
- Which of the following statements is false?
 - Hughie Erskine was wealthy and successful from the beginning.
 - Alan Trevor was a painter and Hughie's friend.
 - The model in the studio turned out to be a millionaire.
 - Hughie gave the model a sovereign out of sympathy.
- Match the characters with their descriptions:

A	B
A. Hughie Erskine	1. A successful artist and Hughie's friend.
B. Alan Trevor	2. Rich Baron disguised as a beggar.
C. Baron Hausberg	3. A kind but financially struggling young man.
D. Colonel Merton	4. Laura's father who demanded a fortune for marriage.

Options:

- A-3, B-1, C-2, D-4
- A-1, B-3, C-4, D-2
- A-2, B-4, C-1, D-3
- A-4, B-2, C-3, D-1





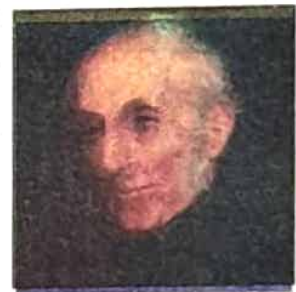
Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

About the Poet :

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was a pioneering figure of English Romantic poetry, renowned for his deep reverence for nature and emphasis on emotion and simplicity in verse. Born in the Lake District, his surroundings profoundly influenced his poetry, shaping his belief that nature is a source of spiritual and moral guidance.



Alongside Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Wordsworth co-authored *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), a collection that marked the beginning of the Romantic movement. His preface to the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* outlined his revolutionary poetic principles—using everyday language, focusing on common people, and portraying profound emotions. His magnum opus, *The Prelude*, is a semi-autobiographical epic that traces the growth of his poetic consciousness.

Wordsworth's poetry, including *Tintern Abbey*, *Ode: Intimations of Immortality*, and *The Solitary Reaper*, reflects his philosophy that nature and childhood are sources of wisdom. His later years saw a more conservative shift, and he was appointed Poet Laureate in 1843.

His influence on English poetry is immense, as he transformed poetic diction and inspired future generations. His belief in the healing and enlightening power of nature remains a defining aspect of Romanticism and continues to resonate today.

About the Text :

"Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802" is a sonnet by William Wordsworth that captures a rare moment of tranquility in London at dawn. In the summer of 1802, Wordsworth and Dorothy were en route to Calais, France.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

As they passed through London in the early morning, Dorothy recorded in her journal how the city appeared strikingly calm and serene, bathed in the golden light of dawn. It was this vision of a quiet, unspoiled London-before the daily rush of people and industry began-that inspired Wordsworth's sonnet. Unlike his usual nature-themed poetry, this poem presents an urban landscape through the Romantic lens, emphasizing beauty, harmony, and emotional depth.

The poem describes the city as it appears in the early morning, before the bustle of daily life begins. Wordsworth marvels at the serene grandeur of London, bathed in the soft golden light of sunrise. The opening line, "Earth has not anything to show more fair," expresses his awe, while the imagery of the Thames flowing freely and the buildings glowing in the sunlight gives the city a natural, almost pastoral quality. The phrase "silent, bare" highlights the moment's peacefulness, contrasting with the usual noise and chaos of urban life. It remains one of his most celebrated reflections on urban beauty.

Earth has not any thing to show more fair¹ :
 Dull² would he be of soul who could pass by
 A sight³ so touching in its majesty⁴ :
 This City now doth⁵, like a garment, wear
 The beauty of the morning; silent, bare⁶,
 Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples⁷ lie⁸
 Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
 All bright and glittering in the smokeless⁹ air.
 Never did sun more beautifully steep¹⁰

¹Fair: Beautiful, attractive.

²Dull: Lacking sensitivity or awareness.

³Sight: View, scene, or something visible.

⁴Majesty: Grandeur, greatness, or impressive beauty.

⁵Doth: An archaic form of "does," used in old English

⁶Bare: Uncovered, exposed, empty.

⁷Temple: Often used metaphorically, meaning a sacred or revered place.

⁸Lie: To be situated or placed.

⁹Smokeless: Clear, free from pollution or smoke.

¹⁰Steep: To be immersed in or surrounded by something.





In his first splendour¹¹, valley, rock, or hill;
 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm¹² so deep!¹³
 The river glideth¹⁴ at his own sweet will:
 Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
 And all that mighty heart¹⁵ is lying still!

Quick Recall

Choose the correct answer from the alternatives given:

- 1) The "mighty heart" refers to the city of
 - a) Dover
 - b) Paris
 - c) London
 - d) Moscow
- 2) Assertion (A): In the morning everything seen from the Westminster Bridge looks bright and glittering.
 Reason (R): The air is smokeless
 - a) Both A and R are correct
 - b) A is correct but R is incorrect
 - c) R contradicts A
 - d) A is incorrect but R is correct
- 3) The beauty of the city of London is
 - a) Silent and bare
 - b) Silent and fiery
 - c) Silent and foggy
 - d) Silent and dazzling

¹¹ Splendour : Great beauty, magnificence, or impressive grandeur. It refers to something that is visually stunning, luxurious, or awe-inspiring.

¹² Calm : Peaceful, quiet, or still.

¹³ Deep : Profound, intense, or vast.

¹⁴ Glideth : (Old English form of glides) Moves smoothly.

¹⁵ Heart : Here, it symbolizes emotions or soul.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

- 4) (i) The poem describes the City of London.
 (ii) The river refers to is Danube.
 (iii) The poem describes early morning.
 (iv) The poet is angry on God.

Select the correct option :

- a) i and iii are false, ii and iv are true.
 b) i and iii are true, ii and iv are false.
 c) iii is false, but i, ii and iv are true.
 d) i is true, but ii, iii and iv are false.
5. Select the correct option to match the columns:

A	B
i. Calm	a. Unaesthetic
ii. Mighty	b. Tranquil
iii. Dull	c. Sparkling
iv. Glittering	d. Powerful

- a) i-a, ii-b, iii-c, iv-d
 b) i-b, ii-c, iii-d, iv-a
 c) i-b, ii-d, iii-a, iv-c
 d) i-c, ii-d, iii-a, iv-b





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 c) i-b, ii-d, iii-a, iv-c
 d) i-c, ii-d, iii-a, iv-b





The Bangle Sellers



SAROJINI NAIDU

About the Poet :

The Nightingale of India, Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949), was a poet, political activist, and freedom fighter. She was a child prodigy who studied in England after being born in Hyderabad. Her poems, such as **The Golden Threshold** and **The Bird of Time**, are full of Indian themes and vivid imagery. She participated in the Quit India and Civil Disobedience Movements, which were crucial to India's independence because she was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi. She was the first Indian woman to lead the Indian National Congress in 1925. She became the first female Governor of Uttar Pradesh following independence. She was a strong supporter of Nationalism and women's rights who died in 1949, leaving behind a significant literary and political legacy.



About the Poem :

Sarojini Naidu's poem "**Bangle Sellers**" was initially included in her poetry collection **The Bird of Time** (1912). The poem was probably composed in the early 1900s, when Naidu was actively involved in the fight for freedom and Indian nationalism was at its height.

The poem honours the customary profession of bangle vendors, representing Indian culture, womanhood, and the various phases of a woman's life. It talks about the bangles worn by older women, brides, and young maidens; each colour stands for a different emotion or experience. The poem captures India's vibrant traditions and the value of hard work through vivid imagery and poetic language.

Naidu's nationalist views are also supported by the poem, which subtly challenges British colonial economic domination by praising India's native craftsmanship. It is still a noteworthy piece of work.





Bangle sellers¹ are we who bear
Our shining loads² to the temple fair³...
Who will buy these delicate, bright
Rainbow-tinted circles of light⁴?
Lustrous tokens of radiant lives⁵,
For happy daughters and happy wives.

Some are meet for a maiden's wrist,
Silver and blue as the mountain mist⁶,
Some are flushed like the buds that dream⁷
On the tranquil brow of a woodland stream,
Some are aglow with the bloom that cleaves
To the limpid glory of new born leaves

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¹Bangle sellers: Merchants who offer bangles, which are traditional jewellery worn by Indian women and represent beauty, customs, and life stages.

²Shining loads: Draws attention to the sellers' vibrant, multicoloured bangles highlighting both their beauty and cultural significance.

³Temple fair: A customary event held close to temples where craftspeople, such as bangle vendors, exhibit and market their wares, frequently on holy or joyous occasions.

⁴Rainbow-tinted circles of light: A metaphor that highlights the delicate beauty and vibrant colours of bangles.

⁵Lustrous tokens of radiant lives: Suggests that bangles are auspicious, prosperous, and joyful in a woman's life.

⁶Silver and blue as the mountain mist: Describes bangles for young maidens, which stand for innocence, peace, and purity.

⁷Flushed like the buds that dream: Likens bangles to budding flowers, representing youthful beauty and aspirations.





Some are like fields of sunlit corn⁸,
Meet for a bride on her bridal morn,
Some, like the flame of her marriage fire⁹,
Or, rich with the hue of her heart's desire,
Tinkling, luminous, tender, and clear,
Like her bridal laughter and bridal tear¹⁰.

Some are purple and gold flecked grey¹¹
For she who has journeyed through life midway¹²,
Whose hands have cherished, whose love has blest,
And cradled fair sons on her faithful breast¹³,
And serves her household in fruitful pride,
And worships the gods at her husband's side¹⁴.

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⁸Sunlit corn : Golden-hued bangles that are appropriate for a bride on her wedding day and symbolize fertility and prosperity.

⁹Flame of her marriage fire : A reference to red bangles that stand for love, passion, and the sanctity of matrimony.

¹⁰Bridal laughter and bridal tear : A metaphor for the bride's emotional journey and mixture of happiness.

¹¹Purple and gold flecked grey : Describes bangles for senior women that stand for dignity, experience, and wisdom.

¹²Journeyed through life midway : Describes a woman who has experienced marriage, motherhood, and taking care of the home.

¹³Cradled fair sons on her faithful breast : Emphasizes the nurturing role that mothers play in raising their children.

¹⁴Worships the gods at her husband's side : Participating in religious rites alongside her husband, it reflects the traditional role of a devout wife in Indian society.





Quick Recall

Choose the correct answer from the alternatives given :

1. What do the bangles symbolize in the poem?
 - a) Wealth and prosperity
 - b) Different stages of a woman's life
 - c) The economic struggles of bangle sellers
 - d) The beauty of traditional jewellery
2. Assertion (A): The poet suggests that all women must wear bangles to conform to tradition.

Reason (R): The poem celebrates bangles as symbols of femininity, but it does not impose them as a societal obligation.

- a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
- b) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- c) A is true, but R is false.
- d) A is false, but R is true.

3. Case Study

"Some are flushed like the buds that dream
On the tranquil brow of a woodland stream..."

Based on the case study, which of the following statements signify the imagery of "buds that dream on the tranquil brow of a woodland stream"

- a) The restless energy of youth
 - b) The innocence and aspirations of a young girl
 - c) The carefree life of a married woman
 - d) The sorrow of old age
4. Arrange the following events in the order they occur in the poem.
 1. Bangles suitable for young maidens are described.
 2. The bangle sellers bring their bangles to the temple fair.





THE BANGLE SELLERS

3. Bangles for brides, symbolizing joy and love, are mentioned.
4. Bangles for mature women, representing wisdom and experience, are described.

Options:

- a) 2 - 1 - 3 - 4
 - b) 1 - 3 - 2 - 4
 - c) 2 - 3 - 1 - 4
 - d) 3 - 2 - 1 - 4
5. Match the types of bangles (Column A) with their symbolic meaning (Column B).

Column A (Types of Bangles)	Column B (Symbolism)
1. Silver and blue bangles	A. Represent a bride's passion and desires
2. Sunlit corn-coloured bangles	B. Symbolize youthful dreams and aspirations
3. Flame-coloured bangles	C. Signify a woman's maturity and devotion
4. Purple and gold-flecked grey bangles	D. Represent purity and serenity of maidenhood

Options:

- a) 1-D, 2-B, 3-A, 4-C
- b) 1-B, 2-D, 3-C, 4-A
- c) 1-D, 2-A, 3-B, 4-C
- d) 1-C, 2-D, 3-A, 4-B





The Second Coming



WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

About the Poet :

William Butler Yeats (1865 - 1939) was an Irish poet, dramatist and writer. He was one of the foremost figures of 20th century literature. He was a driving force behind the Irish Literary Revival. In 1923 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature and later served two terms as a Senator of the Irish Free State. He studied poetry from an early age, when he became fascinated by Irish legends and the occult. While in London, he became part of the Irish literary revival. His early poetry was influenced by John Keats, William Wordsworth, William Blake and many more. He had become the chief playwright for the Irish Literary Theatre in 1897, and early on promoted younger poets such as Ezra Pound.



About the Poem :

'The Second Coming' was first printed in *The Dial* in November 1920 and included in his 1921 collection of verses *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*. The poem uses Christian imagery regarding the Apocalypse and Second Coming to describe allegorically the atmosphere of post-war Europe. It is considered a canonical work of modernist poetry and has been reprinted in several collections, including the Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry.

The poem was written in the aftermath of the First World War and the beginning of the Irish War of Independence in January 1919, which followed the Easter Rising in April 1916. Yeats saw human history as a series of epochs, what he called 'gyres'. He saw the age of classical antiquity as beginning with the Trojan War and then that thousand-year cycle was overtaken by the Christian era, which is coming to a close. Harold Bloom in 1986 cited the poem as "one of the most universally admired poems of our century."





The Second Coming¹

Turning and turning in the widening gyre²
 The falcon³ cannot hear the falconer⁴;
 Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
 Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
 The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
 The ceremony of innocence is drowned⁵;
 The best lack all conviction, while the worst
 Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
 Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
 The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
 When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*⁶

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¹Coming: The poem as a whole is a depiction of a world spiraling into chaos and anarchy, with the falcon's disconnection from the falconer being a key symbol of the decline.

²Gyre: Cyclical nature of history. The widening gyre is a metaphor for the spiraling chaos and instability the Yeats sees as overtaking society.

³Falcon: The falcon is a bird. In this context it represents the common people or those who traditionally followed the orders of their superiors.

⁴Falconer: The falconer symbolizes the old aristocracy, society's natural rulers, or the authority that once held control.

⁵Drowned: The line reflects the loss of innocence and order in the face of chaos and violence, particularly after World War I. It might be seen as a symbol of the pre-world war with its traditions, values and sense of order.

⁶Mundi: Refers to the collective unconscious or 'world spirit', as a source of inspiration and images that reveals a vision of a 'rough beast' slouching towards Bethlehem, symbolizing an apocalyptic event rather than a divine return.





Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep⁷
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle⁸,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

Quick Recall

Choose the correct answer from the alternatives given:

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1. In the poem, the falcon symbolizes _____. (01)
 - a) Authority and control.
 - b) Freedom and independence.
 - c) Fear and uncertainty
 - d) Loyalty and obedience.

⁷Sleep : A long period of dormancy or peace.

⁸Cradle : The cradle of the infant Christ.





2. What does the poet mean by "loosed upon the world"? (01)
- Chaos and anarchy
 - Peace and tranquility
 - Justice and order
 - Love and Harmony.

3. Assertion (A): The world is spiraling into chaos and anarchy.

Reason (R): There is an increasing disconnect between the common people and the old order of society.

- Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
- Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- A is true, but R is false.
- Both A and R are false.

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4. Case:

The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert

Question: Why does the image of *Spiritus Mundi* trouble the poet's sight?

- It represents the Antichrist and heralds an apocalyptic end.
- The poet does not understand the image.
- It is strange to the poet.
- The poet is not fond of the creature.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

5. Arrange the events in the order they appear in the poem:
- A rough beast slouches towards Bethlehem to be born.
 - Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
 - The Second Coming is at hand.
 - Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold.

Options:

- D-B-C-A
- A-B-C-D
- C-B-A-D
- C-D-B-A

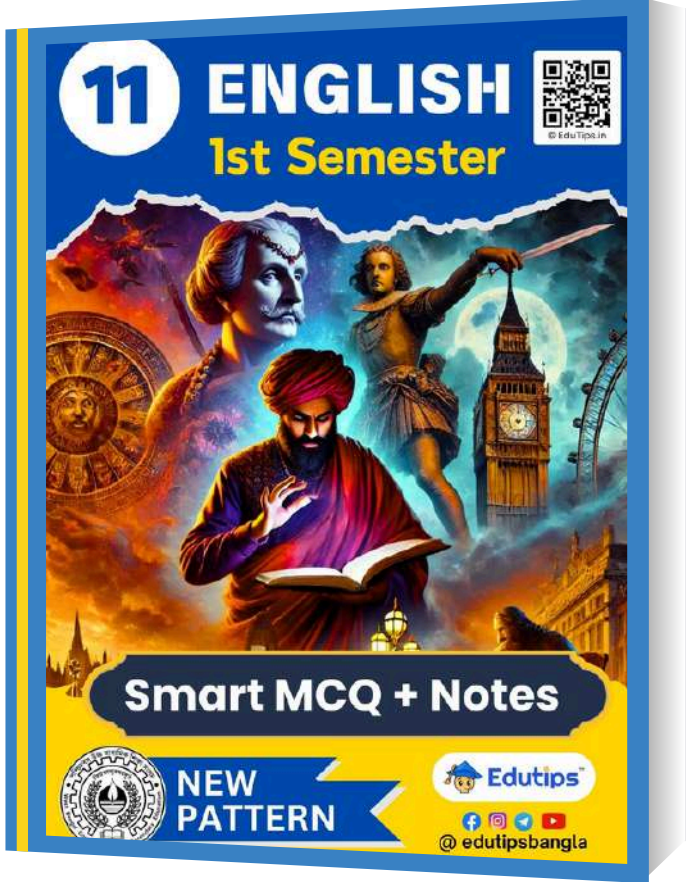
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