

Prose - Chapter 2

Lost Spring

Exercise : Solutions of Questions on Page Number : 13

Question:

Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meaning from the context.

Answer :

- *looking for* -try to locate or discover
- *slog their daylight hours* -struggle persistently during the daytime
- *roof over his head* -a place to live
- *perpetual state of poverty* -endless impoverishment
- *dark hutments* -encampment of huts devoid of any light
- *imposed the baggage on the child* - force the profession on the child

Think as you read : Solutions of Questions on Page Number : 17

Question:

What is Saheb looking for in the garbage dumps? Where is he and where has he come from?



Answer :

Saheb is looking for coins, rupee notes and any other useful objects in the garbage dumps. Saheb and his family have migrated to Seemapuri, a slum area on the outskirts of Delhi, looking for a source of living after they were uprooted from their native village in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Question:

What explanations does the author offer for the children not wearing footwear?

Answer :

The author comes across many shoeless rag-picker children in her neighbourhood. According to her, one explanation of this habit of remaining barefoot is that it is a tradition among the poor children of this country. However, the author quickly mentions that calling it a tradition could be just a means of justification of the utter destitution.

Question:

Is Saheb happy working at the tea-stall? Explain.

Answer :

Saheb is not really happy working at the tea-stall because working for a master meant sacrificing his freedom



and his "carefree look". Even though the job at the tea-stall pays him 800 rupees and all his meals, he seems less contented than before. The weight of his master's steel canister seems heavier than his rag-picking plastic bag.

Question:

How, in your opinion, can Mukesh realise his dream?

Answer :

Mukesh was different from the others of his community. By daring to dream, he has already taken the first step towards a big change. He wants to become a motor mechanic and drive a car. He can realise this dream with determination and hard work. There might be many obstacles on his way but a strong willpower will help him move towards the way to success. The fact that he is willing to walk a long distance in order to learn the vocation, underlines his firm resolve. The only thing left for him to do is to make that first journey to that garage and request the owner to take him in and guide and direct him on his journey as a mechanic.

(A model answer has been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer based on their own experience and understanding.)



Question:

What makes the city of Firozabad famous?

Answer :

Firozabad is famous for its glass bangles. The place is the centre of India's glass- blowing industry.

Question:

What could be some of the reasons for the migration of people from villages to cities?

Answer :

There are many factors that cause migration of people from villages to cities. Some villagers voluntarily move to the cities in search for jobs and better civic and health facilities, etc. Others are forced to migrate when natural disasters like flood, storm, drought, famine, etc. destroy their houses and properties. History has records of large scale migrations caused by wars. Also, many villagers who are better off than others manage to send their children to study in the cities. In the lesson 'Lost Spring', Saheb and his family migrates to Seemapuri from Dhaka after their houses were destroyed in the storms.

(A model answer has been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer based on their own experience and understanding.)



Question:

Would you agree that promises made to poor children are rarely kept? Why do you think this happens in the incidents narrated in the text?

Answer :

Yes, the promises made to poor children are seldom kept. Often, they are not taken seriously or have been made on the pretext of retaining a child's fancy for something. This keeps the child hoping for a better possibility till he/she realises the truth. It is difficult for people to shatter the children's dreams; while it is also painful to see these children thrive of false hopes given to them. Once, while interacting with Saheb, the narrator ends up encouraging him to study and jokingly talks about opening a school herself. At that time she fails to realise that unknowingly she has sown a seed of hope in Saheb's heart. She becomes conscious of her mistake when, after a few days, Saheb approaches her, enquiring about her school. Her hollow promise leaves her embarrassed.

(A model answer has been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer based on their own experience and understanding.)



Question:

Mention the hazards of working in the glass bangles industry.

Answer :

The impoverished workers in the glass bangles industry toil in potentially hazardous working conditions while welding. The furnaces they work in have extremely high temperature and lack proper ventilation. Persistently working in low light conditions, without any protective eye gear, leaves them blind. Even burns and cuts are quite common. The workers are quite prone to ailments such as lung cancer.

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Question:

What forces conspire to keep the workers in the bangle industry of Firozabad in poverty?

Answer :

The unfavourable social and legal systems, the deceptive middlemen, and their own sad destinies keep the workers in the bangle industry of Firozabad in perpetual poverty.

Question:

Why should child labour be eliminated and how?

Answer :

Child labour should be eliminated because it takes away from the child his childhood and the prospect of



elementary education. Moreover, since the child labourers are cheap, and consequently engaged in hazardous and dangerous employment, they are often vulnerable to mental and physical illness. In order to curb this problem, it is important to make education easily accessible. Apart from that, the parents must be made aware of the consequences of working in harmful environments. It is also important to make the public aware of the fact that child labour is a criminal offence and is punishable under law. The government must ensure stricter child labour laws and that the offenders are punished.

(A model answer has been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer based on their own experience and understanding.)

Question:

How is Mukesh's attitude to his situation different from that of his family?

Answer :

Mukesh belongs to a family of glass bangle makers in Firozabad. Even though the children of such families usually carry on their family profession, Mukesh wants to be a motor mechanic and drive a car. Unlike his



family members, and others of his community, he has dared to dream. His grandmother's words about the unbreakable lineage represent the attitude they have towards their situation in life. They believe that it is their destiny to toil as bangle makers. But Mukesh dreams of a better and safer career. The resolute boy is willing to walk a long distance from his home to learn to be a mechanic, exemplifying the saying, 'where there is a will, there is a way'

Thinking about language : Solutions of Questions on Page Number : 21

Question:

Although this text speaks of factual events and situations of misery it transforms these situations with an almost poetical prose into a literary experience. How does it do so? Here are some literary devices:

- *Hyperbole* is a way of speaking or writing that makes something sound better or more exciting than it really is. For example: Garbage to them is gold.
- *A Metaphor*, as you may know, compares two things or ideas that are not very similar. A metaphor describes a thing in terms of a single quality or feature of some other thing; we can say that a metaphor



"transfers" a quality of one thing to another. For example:
The road was a ribbon of light.

- *Simile* is a word or phrase that compares one thing with another using the words "like" or "as". For example: As white as snow.

Carefully read the following phrases and sentences taken from the text. Can you identify the literary device in each example?

1. Saheb-e-Alam which means the lord of the universe is directly in contrast to what Saheb is in reality.
2. Drowned in an air of desolation.
3. Seemapuri, a place on the periphery of Delhi yet miles away from it, metaphorically.
4. For the children it is wrapped in wonder; for the elders it is a means of survival.
5. As her hands move mechanically like the tongs of a machine, I wonder if she knows the sanctity of the bangles she helps make.
6. She still has bangles on her wrist, but not light in her eyes.
7. Few airplanes fly over Firozabad.
8. Web of poverty.
9. Scrounging for gold.
10. And survival in Seemapuri means rag-picking.
Through the years, it has acquired the proportions of



a fine art.

11. The steel canister seems heavier than the plastic bag he would carry so lightly over his shoulder

Answer :

1. Irony
2. Metaphor
3. Antithesis
4. Antithesis
5. Simile
6. Pun
7. Pun
8. Metaphor
9. Metaphor
10. Hyperbole
11. Paradox

Things to do : Solutions of Questions on Page Number :
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Question:

The beauty of the glass bangles of Firozabad contrasts with the misery of people who produce them.

This paradox is also found in some other situations, for example, those who work in gold and diamond mines, or carpet weaving factories, and the products of their labour, the lives of construction workers,

and the buildings they build.

- Look around and find examples of such paradoxes.
- Write a paragraph of about 200 to 250 words on any one of them. You can start by making

notes.

Here is an example of how one such paragraph may begin:

You never see the poor in this town. By day they toil, working cranes and earthmovers, squirreling deep into the hot sand to lay the foundations of chrome. By night they are banished to bleak labour camps at the outskirts of the city...

Answer :

You never see the poor in this town. By day they toil, working cranes and earthmovers, squirreling deep into the hot sand to lay the foundations of chrome. By night they are banished to bleak labour camps at the outskirts of the city. Such is the life of the poor construction workers in this city, Delhi. It is the capital of India, with beautifully constructed buildings everywhere around the city. How often do we reflect on the poor labourers who toil so hard working day in and day out constructing these structures?

These labourers who construct these buildings, ironically, often lead a nomadic life living in temporary



settlements in slums or construction areas. They are denied the very fruit of their hard work. It is absurd that bricklayers are forced to live in tents of plastic and rubber sheets. They live in penury; the job is underpaid to such an extent that they fail to manage a proper house of their own. The paradox is even more deplorable when one finds such labourers working in construction sites for schools and hospitals. These people are illiterate and often do not send their children to schools for the lack of resources. Again, these people often work and live in hazardous and unhealthy conditions without any health benefits. Why are such things overlooked by the society and the government? It is high time the government and the rich work together for providing these construction site workers with the basic necessities along with education for their children.

