



**“full fathom five thy father lies”-  
William Shakespeare**

## 5. Full Fathom Five Thy Father Lies, (A Poem/Song)

-William Shakespeare

### Summary and Central Idea:

This poem occurs in Shakespeare's play, The Tempest, Act 1, Scene 2. The Spirit of Ariel sings this song to Ferdinand, the Prince of Naples, who mistakenly thinks his father drowned. The Spirit of Ariel says that Ferdinand's father is under the sea about 30 feet below. His bones have changed into coral and eyes into pearls. No parts of his body have disappeared and decayed but they have been changed into something rich and strange. Every hour the sea nymphs ring the funeral bell for his honour.

William Shakespeare tries to prove that death is meaningful. Death changes living creatures into something more strange and valuable. So, it is better to be happy than to be sad in someone's death. This poem is also remarkable for its music. Poet uses the repetition of same consonant sound, which is known as alliteration like Full Fathom Five and repetition of vowel sound which is called assonance like five-lies nymphs-ring etc. Onomatopoeia (creating sound similar to the sound of things or creatures) has made this poem more rhythmic, for example Ding...,dong bell.

### Important Questions:

1. Do you think death is meaningful in the poem?
2. Interpret the poem anyway you like?

### 1. 2076 Set B Q. No 2e

Does death have any meaning in the poem? Explain. [3]

The poem, "Full Fathom Five Thy Father Lies" occurs in William Shakespeare play, The Tempest, Act 1 scene 2 The spirit, Ariel, sings this song to Ferdinand, Prince of Naples, who mistakenly thinks his father is drowned. Shakespeare gives the philosophical meaning of life and death in the poem. Not quite different from the Socrates meaning of death, he means to say that death is a gate way to enter into the new life. In other words, it is not an end of life but an agent to transfer one's soul from one world to another world. He persuades both Ferdinand and the reader that death should be celebrated rather than ignoring it and weeping on it. It is natural which every one has to face. To justify this, Shakespeare gives Ariel a voice who convinces Ferdinand. Ferdinand weeps on the death of his father. Seeing it, Ariel persuades him not to weep on his death by saying that his father has undergone a sea change after he is drowned. Nothing of him has faded away. He has only been transformed from one state of living to another state of living. His bones are coral made, eyes have become pearl. Sea nymphs ring his death bell. Thus, the poet shows death as a meaningful agent of change. It

is simply a process of transformation but not an end. The main idea is that the man who is the part of the nature transfers into another natural object after death. The poem proves this with example. Ferdinand's father has been changed into something more valuable and strong. Even after death he is warmly welcomed in heaven by the sea goddess with the death bell.

## **2. 2076 Set C Q. No. 2**

How is death taken in the poem? Is it a transition from one form to the other form of life? Explain. [3]  
William Shakespeare tries to prove that death is meaningful. Death changes living creatures into more strange and valuable. So, it is better to be happy than to be sad in someone's death. It is a transition from one form to the other form of life. It's like a gateway to enter in heaven. We don't die spiritually. Our soul is seeks an another world and body. We only die physically. For that he gives an example of a man drowned in the sea. Ferdinand's father becomes stronger and vibrant after death. His bones have changed into coral and eyes into pearls. No parts of his body has been disappeared and decayed but they have been changed into something rich and strange Every hour the sea nymphs ring the funeral bell for his honour.

## **3. 2075 Set B Q. No. 2b**

Do you agree that death is not the end of life? Explain with reference to the poem.

Please refer to 2076 Set B Q. No. 2e

## **4. 2072 Set E Q. No. 2a**

What is the relation between life and art? Describe briefly [3]

Life and art are intricately interconnected. This is shown in the famous song "Full Fathom Five Thy Father Lies" by William Shakespeare. The poem is an elegy sang by Ariel on the Ferdinand's fathers would be death to persuade him. Ariel makes a meaning that life is so immortal as soul never dies. We become stronger and richer after the death. We just undergo the sea change but do not disappear. Death simply prepares us for the better life in heaven. But this doesn't happen to the general man. Only artist becomes immortal because the life of an artist is captured by the art in it. For example we are still reading Shakespeare even after hundreds of years of his death. Vinci's life, Gandhi's life, Einstein's and so many other artists' life is immortal and meaningful. They are just away from us physically. They never die because their life is safe in their creations and contribution. So art and life are connected.

**5. 2067 Q. No. 12**

Write the central idea of the poem 'Full Fathom Thy Father Lies'. [3]

Please refer to **2076 Set B Q. No. 2e**

PARBIN KANDEL