Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**Question Bank: Where the mind is without fear**

1. **What does the poet mean by ‘knowledge is free’?**

Ans: Here the poet means that knowledge is available to all irrespective of their class, caste or gender. It is not limited to a few.

1. **Why does the poet feel that his countrymen should not be fearful?**

Ans: During the British rule, Indians were robbed of their pride and respect. Tagore dreams of an India where people will have forgotten all their loss and would break free from bondage and live with self-respect. He desires his countrymen to take pride in themselves and hold their heads up high and voice their opinions fearlessly.

1. **Explain ‘narrow domestic walls ‘and how they have fragmented the world.**

Ans: Narrow domestic walls refer to the superstitions, narrow outlook and beliefs of people. This has led individuals to become self-centered and also made their hearts small and intolerant.

People have lost faith in one another, leading to fragmenting the world into small pieces.

1. **What does the poet compare ‘reason’ to? Why? What figure of speech is used here?**

Ans: The poet compares reason to a clear stream. Rational thinking and clarity in thought helps in progress and growth of an individual and a nation collectively. The evil and negative thoughts and the old and superstitious beliefs can only be washed away by such clean and pure ideas. Thus, the poet compares such clear thoughts to a clear stream which washes away all the silt as it flows.

1. **What kind of qualities does the poet want his countrymen to inculcate in their speech and character?**

Ans: The poet wants his countrymen to speak the absolute truth and nothing else. He wants to be devoid of any blemishes on our character and to have purity of heart.

1. **Explain : ‘dead habit’**

Ans: Dead habit means meaningless traditions. These futile traditions shouldn’t let our sense of rationality and logic wither away. We must avoid being ruled by old blind customs and traditions which are baseless.

1. **Whom does ‘thee’ and ‘father’ refer to?**

Ans: Both ‘thee’ and ‘father’ refer to God – the almighty, a divine entity who would be our guide and mentor in our lives.

1. **Where does the poet want the father to lead him and his countrymen? Why?**

Ans: The poet wants the father – God- to lead him and his countrymen to into a free world. He believes that in such a world people will be able to break free from the old traditions and belief. The dead habits which are making the lives of the people dormant would be eradicated and will lead to growth and progress in the lives of all.

1. **What kind of heaven does the poet wish his country to wake up into?**

Ans: The poet wishes his country to wake up into the heaven of freedom. This new light would bring in truth, enlightenment for the countrymen. In this new light the countrymen would see things clearly and also let go of age old beliefs and superstitions which are hindering the growth of these countrymen. The poet dreams of a heaven where countrymen would live with dignity and self-respect. The land will flourish with men and women brimming with values like honesty, hard work and truthfulness. It is then that our country would be a paradise of freedom.

1. **Justify the title.**

Ans: The poem gives a varied description of the poet’s dream of a free and fearless country. Through this poem, the poet prays to the almighty to grant his wish to instill pride, strength, bravery, brotherhood and unity among his countrymen. He dreams of a country where the age-old beliefs are eradicated, there is no fear for the countrymen to voice their new beliefs or opinions. Thus, the title is aptly justified, for a country of men who are without fear and ready to progress and rise.

1. **Do you think that we still live in a country which is broken up in fragments by narrow domestic walls?**

Ans: Yes, we still live in a country that is broken up in fragments. Though India is one country, there are many reasons like caste, creed, gender bias, discrimination, class, superstitious thinking, etc. that divide the country by such narrow domestic walls.

1. **How can narrow domestic walls harm the nation?**

Ans: The narrow domestic walls can harm the nation by creating divisions among people

and destroying the unity and integrity of the nation. If these walls exist then our focus

would be on sorting out these differences rather than on our progress. These walls should be destroyed or dismantled as keeping these walls will divide the nation and weaken it.

1. **Why does the poet feel that the words should ‘come out from the depth of truth’?**

Ans: The poet feels that the words should ‘come from the depth of truth’ as we should be honest in our dealings. For progress, it is essential that we should speak the truth otherwise we shall be hypocrites and will be trying to cheat one another. In such a scenario, we will reach a dead end.

1. **How can the countrymen strive for and achieve perfection?**

Ans: The poet says that countrymen will achieve perfection through rigorous and

persistent efforts and endless struggle. He knows that perfection is not easy to gain. However, with tireless striving, one can hope to come near our destination of perfection.

1. **What does the poet mean by ‘let my country awake’?**

Ans: The poet found that people are slaves of dead habits and they lived in fear. The poet wants to people to rise from their slumber of ignorance, and try to be free from all kinds of bondages and chains.

1. **Why does Rabindranath Tagore feel that Indians should not feel any kind of fear?**

Ans: Rabindranath Tagore, the poet, feels that the Indians have been exploited and robbed of their self-pride. So he dreams of a free nation where people would not fear oppression and exploitation from British, rich people or any other oppressor.

1. **What happens when the mind is without fear?**

Ans: When the mind is without fear, people will fight for justice and truth. When people are fearless they will speak what they think to be right and just. So there is be true equality in the society.