Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**The Three Questions:**

1. According to the King, when would he never fail at anything?

Ans. According to the King, if he always knew the right time to begin everything, who were the right people to listen to and whom to avoid, and above all, if he always knew what was the important thing to do then he would never fail at anything he might undertake.

1. What did the King proclaim throughout his Kingdom?

Ans. The King proclaimed throughout his Kingdom that he would give a great reward to anyone who would teach him what was the right time for every action, and who were the most necessary people and how he might know what was the most important thing to do.

1. Who came to answer the questions of the King?

Ans. Learned men came to answer the questions of the King, but they all answered the questions differently.

1. Give the different answers and the counter answers to the first question.

Ans. Some said, in order to know the right time for every action, one must draw a table of days, months and years in advance and must live strictly live according to it. Others declared that it was impossible to decide beforehand the right time for every action; but that should not let oneself absorb in idle pastimes, one should always attend to all that was going on and then do what was most needful. Again, the others said that no matter how attentive the King was, it was impossible for a man to decide correctly the right time for every action, but that he should have a council of wise men, who would help him to fix the proper time for everything.

1. What did some people say against the idea of a council for the King?

Ans. Some people said that there were some things which could not wait to be laid before a council, but about which one had to decide whether to undertake them or not.

1. What was the reason behind suggesting the idea of a magician?

Ans. Some people said that only a magician can know beforehand what was going to happen. Therefore, in order to know the right time for every action, one must consult magicians.

1. According to different people, who were the most needed people for the King?

Ans. According to different people, the most needed people for the King were his councillors, some said the priests, the others said doctors while some said the warriors were the most necessary.

1. What were the most important occupations mentioned by the people?

Ans. Some people said that the most important thing in the world was science, while others said that it was the skill in warfare, and others said that it was religious worship.

1. What did the King decide after hearing the different answers? Why?

Ans. The King did not agree with any of the answers and gave reward to none. But, he still decided to consult a hermit, who was widely renowned for his wisdom.

1. Where did the hermit live? As a result of it, how did the King go there?

Ans. The hermit lived in a wood which he never quitted, and he received nothing but common folk. Hence, the King went to meet him in simple clothes.

1. What did the King do just before reaching the hermit’s cell?

Ans. Before reaching the hermit’s cell, the King dismounted from his horse and leaving his bodyguard behind, he went alone.

1. What was the hermit doing when the king approached? What did he do on seeing the king?

Ans. When the king approached, the hermit was digging the ground in front of his hut. Seeing the king, he greeted him but then went on digging again.

1. How was the hermit’s condition while digging?

Ans. The hermit was frail and weak, and whenever he stuck his spade into the ground and turned a little earth, he breathed heavily.

1. How did the hermit react when the king asked him the answer to his three questions?

Ans. The hermit listened to the king but did not answer. He just spat on his hand and recommended digging.

1. When did the king ask about his questions again? What did the hermit answer?

Ans. On seeing the hermit tired, the king offered him help. After he had dug two beds, the King stopped and repeated his questions. The hermit yet gave no answer but rose and stretched his hand for the spade and asked the King to rest for a while and to let him work a bit.

1. Describe the condition of the bearded man.

Ans. The bearded man came running out of the wood. He held his hands pressed against his stomach, and blood was flowing from under them. When he reached the King, he fell fainting on the ground moaning feebly. There was a large wound in his stomach.

1. How did the King try to better the man’s condition?

Ans. The King washed the wound the best he could, and bandaged it with his handkerchief and with a towel the hermit had. But the blood would not stop flowing and the king again and again removed the bandage soaked with warm blood, and washed and rebandaged the wound. When at last the blood ceased flowing, the man revived and asked for something to drink. The King brought fresh water and gave it to him.

1. Where did the King and the hermit take the wounded man?

Ans. The King with the hermit’s help, carried the man into the hut and laid him on the bed.

1. What happened to the King in the hut?

Ans. The King was so tired with his walk and the work he done, that he crouched down on the threshold and fell asleep, so soundly that he slept all through the short summer night.

1. Why did the bearded man ask for forgiveness?

Ans. The man told the King that the King did not know him but the man knew him. He told the King that he was an enemy of his who swore to revenge on him because the King had executed his brother and seized his property. He told the King that he was aware that King had gone alone to meet the hermit and he resolved to kill him on his way back but the King hadn’t returned so he came to the ambush to find him. He then came across the King’s bodyguard who recognised him and wounded him. The man escaped but he said that he would have bled to death if the King wouldn’t have dressed his wound. The man had wished to kill the King but the king had saved his life. Hence, the man asks for the King’s forgiveness.

1. How did the King act on the man’s request for forgiveness?

Ans. The King was very glad to have made peace with his enemy and to have gained him as a friend. The King not only forgave him but also assured the man that he would send his servants and his own physician to attend him and would also restore his property.

1. Why did the King approach the hermit again before leaving? What was the hermit doing?

Ans. Before going away, the King approached the hermit as he wished to beg for an answer to his questions once again. At that time, the hermit was outside, on his knees, sowing seeds in the beds that had been dug the day before.

1. What answer did the hermit give when the King asked for his answers the last time?

Ans. When the King asked the hermit for the answers to his questions, the hermit said that his questions had already been answered.

1. In what way were the King’s questions answered?

Ans. The hermit told the King that if the King had not pitied his weakness the previous day and would have left without helping him, then the man would have attacked the King and then would have repented not staying with the hermit. Here, the most important time was when the King was digging the beds and the most important man was the hermit, and doing good to him was the King’s most important business. Later, when the man came to them, the most important time was when the King was attending him, because had he not done so, he would’ve died without making peace with the King. Here the most important person was the man, and what King did for him was the most important business.

The Hermit says, that the only time that is important is- “Now!” because, it is the only time when one has power. The most necessary man is the one with whom he is as no one knows whether he will ever have dealings with anyone else, and the most important affair is to do him good because for that purpose alone was man sent into this life.