Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

Assignment: Last Lesson of Afternoon

1. Explain: ‘My pack of unruly hounds’. To whom does he call so? Why?

Hounds are wild dogs who are untrained and are very indiscipline. He calls his group of students as a pack. He says so because his students are uninspired to learn and he cannot haul and urge them. He further says that the students are forced to stay inside the class till the bell rings and they wish to ‘unleash’ themselves like the pack.

2. What is the ‘brunt’ which the poet is talking about?

The poet is talking about the books that the students are going to offer to him and which are lying on the desks of the students. According to him, the books have several insults of blotted pages and scrawl of slovenly work.

3. What is contemplating about, in the third stanza?

In the third stanza, he is contemplating if he should use the last fuel of his life i.e. his utmost energy of his soul to kindle the flame of knowledge that will consume (extinguish) the students’ dross of indifference.

4. Why does the poet refer to the ‘abyss’ in the fourth stanza?

Abyss is a bottomless pit. Here, in the poem, the poet refers to it as something that is wasted. He decides not to waste his soul or strength in teaching the students because his teaching and the students’ learning both will be pointless. The poet knows that the students are not interested and hence he says all the knowledge will go down the abyss.

5. Explain: ‘It is all my aunt’. Why does the poet say so?

It refers to an expression of indifference and disbelief (or meaning ‘It’s all the same to me!’). He says so as it is not going to matter to him if his students can or cannot write a description of a dog. He also questions if there is any point of it all to them both.

6. What does the poet say at the end of the poem?

The poet says that he does not and will not care just like the students. He also says that they both can keep their strengths for themselves and not waste energy in trying to achieve anything. Finally, he decides to sit and wait for the bell.

7. Which of the following best describes the feeling of the poem? Anger, sorrow, jubilation, frustration, despair. Give reasons and justify.

There is no sorrow here and the poet has nothing to be jubilant about. The poet is surely angry and has so much to give the learners but they want none of it. The poet also seems to be frustrated because of the students’ mockery and indifference towards knowledge and will to develop and grow.