Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**Notes: The Village Blacksmith**

1. **Where was the smithy? Give a physical description of the village blacksmith.**

**Ans:** The smithy was under a spreading chestnut tree. The village blacksmith was a mighty man and had large sinewy hands. His arms were brawny and the muscles are as strong as the iron bands which he worked on. His hair was crisp, black and long and his face was tanned. His brow was full of honest sweat as he did a lot of hard work with honesty.

1. **What are the blacksmith’s hands compared to? Why? Which figure of speech has been used?**

**Ans:** The blacksmith’s hands have been compared to the iron bands that he works upon. This is a simile as a direct comparison is made using the word ‘like’.

1. **Why is the blacksmith able to look the whole world in the face?**

**Ans:** The blacksmith is an honest person who works hard and makes a living. He doesn’t owe anything to anyone and so is able to look the whole world in the face.

1. **Bring out the auditory imagery in the third and fourth stanza.**

**Ans:** In the third and fourth stanza, the poet has used a lot of auditory imagery. These stanzas describe the work done by the blacksmith. He uses the bellow which is a tool that produces air to feed fire. The bellow makes a whooshing sound and as the fire flares up it makes a roaring sound. Secondly when the blacksmith swings the sledge it makes slow measured sounds which are compared to the ringing of the bell by the sexton.

1. **Describe briefly the work of the blacksmith (based on the poem).**

**Ans:** The blacksmith works in a smithy under a spreading chestnut tree. He works continuously from morning till night. He uses the bellow to blow air to increase the intensity of the fire so that he can heat the metal which he wants to shape. He then swings the sledge to beat the metal to give it a different shape.

1. **What do the children coming home from school do? Why?**

**Ans:** The children coming home from school stop at the smithy and peep in to see the blacksmith at work. They are fascinated with the mammoth task he does. They enjoy seeing how the flames forge the metal and hearing the roaring sound of the bellows. The children also enjoy catching the sparks that fly about like chaff from a threshing floor.

1. **What are the burning sparks compared to? Why?**

**Ans:** The burning sparks are compared to the chaff on the threshing floor. The chaff is very light and it flies around everywhere. Similarly, the sparks from the fire are also light and keep flying around.

1. **What does the blacksmith do on Sundays? What does this tell us about him?**

**Ans:** The blacksmith goes to Church on Sundays. This tells us that he is not just involved in his work but also leads a normal life. He spends time with his family and also takes out time for religious activity.

1. **What makes his heart rejoice? Why?**

**Ans:** When the blacksmith goes to church, he hears his daughter’s voice who is singing in the village choir. She sounds like her dead mother’s voice. The daughter’s voice makes him emotional and he remembers his wife. This nostalgic feeling makes his heart rejoice.

1. **Bring out the love and loyalty of the blacksmith towards his wife who is no more.**

**Ans:** The blacksmith’s daughter’s voice is like her mother who is no longer there. On hearing her voice, the blacksmith recalls his wife. It seems to him like she is singing from paradise. He also thinks how she must be lying in her grave. These memories bring tears in his eyes. This shows he is very loyal towards his dead wife and still loves her.

1. **How does the blacksmith go on with his daily routine?**

**Ans:** In spite of the hard work and his personal sorrow of losing his wife, the blacksmith goes on with his daily routine. He experiences a variety of emotions like rejoicing and sorrowing and goes on toiling but continues with his life.

1. **Why is the blacksmith able to earn a good repose at night?**

**Ans:** The blacksmith toils day in and day out. Every morning he takes up some part of his work and tries to finish it by evening. Sometimes some work is started but not completed; sometimes the work is done. His hard work enables him to get a good repose at night.

1. **Why does the poet thank the blacksmith? OR What does the poet learn from the blacksmith? OR What is the message of the poem?**

Ans: The poet thanks the blacksmith because like a true friend the blacksmith has taught him a wonderful lesson in life. The life and work of a common man like the blacksmith provides an example of persistence and accomplishments in spite of trials and tragedies. The blacksmith works hard to give shape to metals after subjecting them to the harsh blows and the roaring fires. Similarly, we must toil each day to shape our future and life with our own hands on the anvil of life.

1. **What details in the poem tell you that the blacksmith is honest?**

Ans: The lines- ‘His brow is wet with honest sweat’, ‘week in, week out, from morning till night’, - show that the blacksmith is honest.

1. **‘The blacksmith’s body has become hard and rugged but his heart is still soft.’ Justify this statement.**

Ans: The blacksmith does a lot of hard work all day and night. This has made his body and arms and hands very strong and hard. But he is still human and heart and emotes like others. When he goes to church on Sundays he is with his boys. When he hears his daughter sing at church, his heart rejoices and he even sheds a tear when he remembers his dead wife. Thus, we can see that his body has hardened but his heart is still soft.