

Water – The elixir of life by Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman

1. State the different functions of water that makes it the most important liquid on earth.

Answer – Nearly 65% of a human being's body is constituted of water. None of our bodily functions can take place without water. The same is true for most other living beings on earth. Agriculture and industry are unthinkable without water. Water bodies like the river, ocean, lakes, ponds etc. Provide us food, transportation, hydro-power, and irrigation benefits. The earth's weather system veers around water. The fertile soil in river banks is due to the sedimentation of mud particles carried by flood water. Earth's flora and fauna can't exist without water. So, water is the most important liquid on earth.

2. What are the ancient civilizations that developed along the bank of rivers? Write on any two.

Answer – The Egyptian civilization grew up along the Nile river, and the Ganges civilization flourished along the Ganges.

Almost the whole of Egypt has been formed by the fertile soil particles carried by the flood waters of the River Nile. Layers and layers of the sediment were deposited over centuries by Nile's flood waters. In the process, a dry and barren desert got transformed into land fit for agriculture, and so, for human habitation. After the first settlements reaped the benefit of the fertile soil, more settlers came and began to live there. Today, the River Nile provides, drinking water, irrigation, fish, transportation, and water for industrial needs.

The Ganges Civilization (1500 BC to 500 BC) is the second large civilization of India. Hundreds of years ago, when the Indus civilization fell into ruins life in the north of India was organized around small towns. A second phase of urbanization, known as the Ganges civilization, started around 1500 BC. Around this time in history, Aryans came here from Iran and elsewhere to live and flourish.

The Aryans were cattle herders. The fertile land in the bank of the Ganges provided them water, vast fields for the cattle to graze, and they began to exploit their new land with gusto. A new era of intellectual and agricultural advancement started in this land of plenty. The Vedic age started as a result and Sanskrit was born.

So, the Ganges Civilization has its roots in the river Ganges.

3. Write a note on the ill effects of industrial waste on industrial waste on water.

Answer – When industrial waste in untreated form is dumped on ground as landfills or discharged to river bodies like rivers and sea, the harmful pollutant in the waste seeps into the soil to contaminate the ground water, or directly poisons the water in the water bodies causing cataclysmic damage to the fishes and other aquatic animals which virtually become extinct. Polluted ground water poses an incipient danger to etc. human life causing diseases like cancer. There are instances galore to show that industrial waste has rendered whole rivers unfit for human use in any form, even agriculture. Our polluted Ganga is a glaring example of human onslaught on Nature. The culprits are the rows of industries in the river's banks that discharge their effluent to the river.

4. Do you think reckless expansion of cities affects the health of a civilization? Write the steps you would take as an urban planner in your locality.

Answer – Unbridled expansion of cities does pose great danger to a civilization. Unplanned urbanization is indeed a very ominous signal that the city is hurtling towards a cataclysmic end. Congested markets, avenues and living districts in cities cause pollution, spread of disease, and social friction. Growth of amenities can't keep pace with the spiralling demand, as a result of which healthcare, schooling, garbage clearance, and policing fall short of needs. As a result the cities become ghettos and repel all sorts of good people like writers, artists, activists and social leaders. A decaying city is the harbinger of mass death and destruction through social strife. In the process the civilization built around them dies.

As a urban planner and a responsible citizen, I will launch a public awareness campaign to make people obey the rules of the civic body pertaining to new constructions, garbage disposal, parking facilities, and drinking water supply. I will also prevail upon the city planners and administrators to provide adequate healthcare, schooling and commuting facilities.

5. What steps can be taken to preserve the water bodies of the country in order to save humanity from the ravages of floods, droughts and earthquakes?

Answer – The following steps can go a long way to preserve the water bodies.

1. Strict rules to be enforced to prevent individuals and factories from dumping their wastes on the lakes, rivers and the sea.
2. Yearly de-silting of ponds and lakes to preserve their water holding capacities.
3. Large-scale plantation of trees in catchment areas of rivers to prevent soil erosion.
4. Digging of new wells, ponds etc. to increase water storage capacity for human use.
5. Stoppage of irregular sand mining from river beds.
6. Stoppage of building of extra-large dams that could trigger earthquakes.

An Educated Person by Harold Nicolson

Question & Answer

1. What means and methods do you think one has to adopt in order to be educated truly?

Answer- There can be quite a few ways to determine if a person is truly educated. But, none of these can be said to be free of flaw. Counting the number of years spent in school, or seeing the area of specialization of a person can be quite misleading. Sp, according to the author, a person can be said to be truly educated if they study the particular branch of knowledge that interests them, and then proceed to study other

subjects that have some remote, but inseparable link with their core of interest. A gardener can be said to be educated if they acquire knowledge of Botany, aesthetics, floral decoration etc. Such comprehensive and wholistic knowledge of a subject makes the man 'an educated person', no matter how trivial his area of interest might be.

2. How does Nicolson explain the idea of liberal education, general knowledge and the notion of literary men?

Answer- Liberal education has undefined contours, no rigid walls, and no restrictions on free thinking. It allows the mind to foray into domains that could be of interest to the learner, even if it does not appear in the syllabus.

General knowledge is also a term that is frequently misunderstood. It is certainly not knowing something about everything, or acquiring specialized skills on a narrow range of subjects. A person can be described as having general knowledge, if they have done in depth of matters that relate to their core area of interest.

Going by similar logic, a literary man will be acknowledged as such if they study literature of varied genres, learn a second or even a third language, and read works of authors who have written books on their main areas of interest.

3. What according to you is the difference between quantity and quality? Give suitable examples.

Answer- A writer can write a large number of books, but can't grip the mind of the readers because of the bland and sterile nature of the books. Such books are generally termed as 'pulp fiction'. On the other hand, there are authors whose works have fascinated readers for centuries, triggered revolutions, and brought about reforms in the society. One example is Victor Hugo's Les Miserables. This book shook the conscience of the society through its depiction of suffering, exploitation and cruelty in French society.

4. Do you think that the traditional education system was more effective than the present one? Elaborate your reasons.

Answer- The traditional education system taught artisanship, simple mathematics, and basic literature. It helped the students to make a living by adopting to certain crafts. On the contrary, the modern education system is much more elaborate, imparts a lot of knowledge, but does not equip the student to earn his livelihood. So, the modern system is much less need-based.

5. What contribution does 'Humanities' as a discipline serve the society?

Answer – Humanities provide the elixir of life to the human beings. It enables humans to engage in hobbies, write books, perform arts, and, thus, express the hidden creativity in them. Without 'humanities', life would be sterile, mechanical, and insufferably monotonous.

No Learning without Feeling (Claire Needell Hollander)

Questions and Answers

1. What according to Hollander should determine an English teacher's choice of suitable reading for adolescents?

Answer – Adolescents generally like to read literature that packs high-octane emotion-gripping power. Stories and poems that knock them hard, be it with sorrow or joy, have a special appeal for them. Hollander is convinced that reading literature becomes a true learning exercise when the story sways the learners' minds to extreme turmoil. Texts interspersed with poignant or euphoric highs or lows are ideal for learning literature because they guide the learners to learn new skills and new techniques of building a plot, or describing a scene. In a nutshell, the sentimental the story is, the more is its value as a text for Literature. Hollander is convinced about it.

2. How does Hollander argue the value of a literary education for the young?

Answer – Literary education is the most important pathway to higher learning, according to Hollander. It conditions the mind to understand and appreciate subjects like Philosophy, Psychology, Political Science etc. These subjects are replete with elevated levels of emotional thoughts. So, conditioning young mind to absorb the abstract thoughts involved in these subjects is best done by exposing the young students to emotional scenes and plots in literature books.

3. How does Hollander describe the fate of reading which is divorced from our personal lives and concerns?

Answer – Literature serves as a double edged sword that can either familiarize one with life as it is, or, make one delve into the world of fantasies and form the notion of untroubled incessant pleasure. Hollander understands well that every human is ought to face the adversities of life one day or the other. He is aware of the fact that life is not all sunshine and roses. He wants the budding minds to be armoured with diverse experiences and to not be paralyzed in the face anomalies waiting ahead. Literature divorced from our lives and concerns is good for nothing and Hollander, in a way, attempts to depict the intellectual paralysis it ends up inflicting on us.

4. What is the difference between teaching language through literature and teaching language as an abstract medium of communication?

Answer – Language is the thread that binds the human intellect with perception and allows one to weave his unique view of the world. That uniqueness in turn forms his identity. Language and abstractness are oxymorons. Language as merely an abstract medium of communication is stripped of its essence and only serves as a robotic transaction of lifeless words, various sets of rules that are to be memorized and utilized to obtain the products of desire. It is result oriented but devoid of anything truly meaningful. When literature serves as the medium, it attaches its depths of emotions, uniqueness of outlooks, blends of experiences and most importantly, exposure to the realities of life along with language learning. The distinction here is apparent. One rewards you truth and liberty whereas the other restricts you from that.

5. Why does Hollander want the English curriculum in school to follow the college English Curriculum?

Answer – The English curriculum in school is limited by design, partly by the desire to stay clear of any political intervention and partly by the dormant dread of exposing teens to radicality and the extremities of human emotions. Meanwhile, the college curriculum is free from any such restrictive attitude and prescribes the learners literature that is realist. Such literature can potentially serve as their entry point into several other fields of study and unexplored spheres of life. Hollander finds the contrast between the two curriculums absurd as one precedes the other and realism is the ultimate eventuality. Thus, he aspires to bridge the gap between them to enable the orientation to literature a fruitful endeavour for the teachers as well as the students.

6. Why does Hollander see de-emphasising literature in the school curriculum as a problem?

Answer – Hollander takes issue with literature taking a backseat as he internalizes how it serves as a roadblock for the students in literary exploration. By playing safe and nitpicking extremely basic and insignificant titles, the students are essentially made to form the preconception that literature is inherently boring and insignificant. Not giving literature its due importance robs the students of the exhilarating experiences of being in the shoes of the exemplary authors whose produces remain evergreen. Hollander, as a proponent of freedom, wants the formative minds to be exposed to authentic literature and have the liberty to explore life as they will with command over their emotional response to all adversities.

7.What are the uses of having emotion or feeling as an entry point into teaching literature?

Answer – Literature is one of the building blocks that form the cohesive whole of art. Art is inherently alive and emotion is the driving force of that liveliness. Art that is bland and devoid of any moving element ultimately fails to resonate with humans. By having emotion as an entry point, it can be ensured that the readers are genuinely initiated into the process of sucking out all the marrow of life using literature as a pathway. Literature that succeeds in evoking emotional responses will not be alien to the readers. That familiarity will allow them to effortlessly connect with the teachers and together, they can explore the depths of human experiences literature has to offer.

The Man Who Knew Too Much by Alexander Baron

1. What made Private Quelch stand out from amongst his peers in the army?

Ans: Private Quelch was blessed with a superhuman memory, and great attention to details. His memory was astounding, and his humility was so praiseworthy. He was dutiful, and never took any work assigned to him to be demeaning.

2. How does his nick name show that he does not fit into the army ethos?

Ans : His profound learning won him the nick name 'The Professor'. Professors are found in universities and colleges. The rough and tumble of the battle ground is so far away from the tranquil and civil atmosphere of a university. So, Quelch didn't quite fit the military roles.

3. How is his character trait suggested by his physical appearance?

Ans: Quelch appeared thoughtful always. Unlike army personnel, he had a stooping frame, and looked like a scholar with an unassuming exterior. His horn-rimmed glasses added to his appearance of an exceptionally scholarly person.

4. We are told that the quiet Private Quelch worked hard to display his knowledge to get a promotion; but his enthusiasm and his unconquerable spirit seems to tell a different story. What is it?

Ans: Quelch was, no doubt, a very assertive person who impulsively corrected a mistake when on duty or attending a class. His doggedness to correct errors was misunderstood by his seniors to be a sign of defiance. No doubt, he loved to be promoted, but this passion didn't drive him in his work. Instead, a quest for perfection and deep intellectual honesty were the hallmarks of his character. But his unwillingness to compromise on facts didn't quite endear him to his bosses. Thus, he became a victim of his own quest for perfection.

5. What does private Quelch attribute his awesome knowledge to? What was his pet expression or statement?

Ans: He was a voracious reader and picked up facts from the books he read. He was careful about the selection of books. With remarkable dexterity, he gleaned facts and knowledge from the books he read.

6. What is the turning point in this story?

Ans : The turning point of the story comes when the corporal asks Pvt. Quelch to take over the training class. He had expected Quelch to falter and make a fool of himself, but the latter did the job with aplomb.

7. How is the corporal's hardness suggested? How is this a function of army life?

Ans: When a senior gets miffed with the conduct of his soldiers, he asks them to 'fall in', and then announces his punishment.

8. How did the corporal get his revenge?

Ans: Private Quelch was assigned kitchen duty considered to be unglamorous and somewhat humiliating in army. The corporal deputed Quelch to kitchen duty.

The Bicycle by Dash Benhur

1. What was the theme of Sudhir Babu's poems for the last two years?

Ans: Sudhir Babu had a bicycle that had nearly outlived its designed life, but his long association with it had led to the cycle carving a place for itself in his heart. So, he wrote many poems centered around this cycle

2. Why was Tana annoyed with his grandfather's poetry?

Ans: For the young boisterous Tana, his grandfather's infatuation with a cycle that had almost become a ramshackle piece was somewhat annoying. He was irked because the unattractive, old cycle got so much adoration from his grandfather.

3. How was Tana's bicycle different from that of Sudhir Babu's bicycle?

Ans: Tana's cycle was new and shining. It was red in colour and had shock absorbers fitted to it. It had a new-age look.

4. What was Sudhir Babu's profession?

Ans: Sudhir babu taught English in a nearby college.

5. Why was Tana annoyed with his grandfather's poetry?

Ans: Tana, the restless youngster could never understand the emotional bonding between the old decrepit cycle and his grandfather who owned it. He didn't quite approve of the way his grandfather lavished praise on the cycle that deserved to be scrapped. This annoyed him.

6. What kind of a bicycle did Sudhir Babu have? By what name did he address his bicycle?

Ans: Sudhir Babu's cycle was an old vintage type that had been bought decades ago. Years of use and disuse had robbed it of all its charm. However, it had a dynamo fitted to its back wheel that emitted a strong beam of light when the cycle ran. In this regard, it stood apart from other cycles. Suresh Bab had named it Veersen".

7. What other incidents does Sudhir Babu recall where Veersen had emerged as the real hero?

Ans: On one occasion, Sudhir Babu had gone on a picnic with his friends. On the way back, it got dark, and the cycle-borne picnickers found it hard to find the road. Sudhir Babu's cycle came to the front and dazzled like a petromax throwing a bright beam of light on the road. It carried the day.

8. How did Sudhir Babu breathe a new lease of life into his old bicycle?

Ans: Sudhir Babu gave the ageing cycle to a repairer for seven days with instructions to give it a complete make-over. The repairer did a thorough job, and gave Veersen a nice smart look.

9. Why was Veersen consigned to a lonely position on the front verandah? Why did Sudhir Babu's family bar him from riding the bicycle?

Ans: On one unfortunate occasion, Sudhir Babu while riding his old, trusty Veersen met with an accident. He hit a roadside pole head on. The resulting injury made Sudhir Babu spend a few days in hospital. From then on, His family members forbade him from riding Veersen again. The cycle was left to stand alone in the verandah and fell into disuse. Its charm faded off rather fast.

10. How did the bicycle come to the rescue of Sudhir Babu and his friends when they found themselves stranded in a forest?

Ans: It had got dark and the small group of picnickers found it very hard to negotiate their path in the terrain. Sudhir Babu's Veersen had a dynamo and a headlight. It was made to lead the other cyclists with its bright beam of light.

The Fight Between Leopards By James Edward Corbett

1. How does the text open? Why was the woman wailing?

Answer – The text opens with the narrator, on a visit to a village discovering that a child had been snatched by a leopard who had mutilated its body mercilessly. The mother, a widow, was in utter distress at the loss of her child.

2. What blame the woman had put on the villagers?

Answer – Gripped by despair and grief, the woman felt her child could have been saved if the villager would have chased the leopard and forced it to leave the child behind. The villagers didn't do this. She bemoaned that had her husband been alive, he would have run after the leopard and forced it to abandon its prey (the child).

3. What was the prime goal of the narrator? Did he succeed in fulfilling his goal?

Answer – The leopard had remained elusive to the villagers even after killing so many preys. Even it had escaped the prying village dog. With no way to intercept the mystery leopard, the villagers lived under a cloud of ominous funk. The narrator wanted to unravel the mystery and kill the leopard, if possible. He did not succeed at the end as an intruder leopard spoiled the plot.

4. Where and how did the leopard keep its kill?

Answer – A certain distance away from the village, there was a thick hedge of rambler roses. The trees were four feet high. The leopard felt the spot safe enough to deposit the mutilated corpse of the boy. He opened his vice-like claws and released the dead body.

5. How did the narrator plan to catch hold of the leopard?

Answer – On coming back to the courtyard after assessing the terrain, the narrator asked the headman to give him a crowbar, a robust wooden peg, a hammer and a dog chain. He fixed the flagstone in the

courtyard's center, and tied one end of the chain to it. He had the dead body of the boy brought to the yard and tied the other end of chain to it. The mother and daughter of the victim were asked to move away from the spot.

He had some straw spread on the verandah. He sternly told the villagers to maintain absolute silence as the night fell.

He asked the villagers to return to their homes, and seated himself on the verandah at a spot from which he could get a clear view of the chain bait (corpse). The narrator was pretty certain that the leopard would return to reclaim its prey. If possible, the leopard could kill another person.

"The leopard loved human flesh and would surely come back to retrieve the dead boy's body," assumed the narrator. In a nutshell, the whole operation was a trap laid by the narrator.

6. What did the narrator feel and what did he think while he was sleeping? What was it actually?

Answer – The narrator felt a furry touch first around his knee and later towards his shoulder. He assumed it to be the leopard getting ready to bite his throat. However, it was a cat that had become wet in the rain.

7. What did the narrator finally witness? How was it?

Answer – The narrator finally got to see a vicious fight between two leopards, each trying to take away the corpse. The second leopard apparently was a trespasser to the first leopard's area. It was younger and stronger than the first.

8. How many rounds were there in the fight of the leopards? Whom do you think won the fight at last?

Answer – There were three rounds in all that the narrator got to see. But, the war of attrition continued as the two rivals left the place to settle their scores further afield.

9. Why was the narrator disheartened?

Answer – The narrator had hoped to hunt the predator leopard and win accolades from the people and the authorities, but the duel between the trespasser leopard with the killer leopard changed the plot. It upended the narrator's plans.

10. What happened after the long silence that took place in between the fight of the leopards?

Answer – The two rivals apparently paused to regain the stamina to re-start their fight. They resumed their fight after the long pause