**FIRE AND ICE**

**Poetic Devices:**

**Rhyme scheme:** abaa bcbcb

1. **Alliteration**-

Some say, favour fire.

1. **Anaphora-** When a word is repeated at the start of two or more consecutive lines, it is the device of Anaphora.

Lines 1 and 2 begin with ‘Some say’.

1. **Metaphor**- A word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable.

Ice is metaphor for hatred.

Fire for violent desires.

1. **Enjambment**- The continuation of a sentence without a pause beyond the end of a line.

Lines 7 and 8.

1. **Antithesis-** Refers to the juxtaposition of opposing or contrasting ideas.

Fire is antithesis of ice.

**Summary:**

Robert Frost begins the poem with the age old question of how the world will end. Frost uses fire and ice to contrast the potential ways in which the earth may cease to exist – through cosmic explosions or an ice age. Fire and ice are also metaphors for human emotions like uncontrolled desire and deep seated hatred. Both cause harm and damage to human lives irreparably. By reflecting on the power of natural elements, the poem makes readers reflect on the human capability of harm itself.

Fire stands for greed, conflict, fury, violence which can burn everything down with irrationality. Uncontrolled desire makes a person become obsessed and illogical and drives one to do terrible deeds. Ice on the other hand stands for hatred, envy, insensitivity and indifference that cripple relations over time.

Though the poet seems to favour fire over ice initially, the second stanza clarifies that both are differently but equally capable of absolute destruction. Fire might act first owing to its impulsiveness and ice would strike the second time as cold hatred fractures relations from within like slow-acting poison. Both cause physical, mental and moral destruction.

The poem is a call for balance between passion and reason and what can be done to prevent the disintegration of human relations and the world since extremes can ruin lives, societies and nations.

**Questions & Answers**

1. What do ‘fire’ and ‘ice’ stand for ?

In the poem, ‘fire’ is associated with greed, cruelty and lust, whereas ‘ice’ is associated with rigidity, hatred, coldness and indifference.

1. “I think I know enough of hate”. What does the speaker know about hate ?

The poet says that he knows enough of hate and his intuitive power reminds him that it is no less dangerous than the fire of lust.

**Practice Questions**

1. “ But if it had to perish twice”. Why does the poet use ‘if’ in the line?

The poet does not believe that the world will end twice.Thus he expresses his suspicion by using the term ‘if’.

1. How can fire destroy the world?