



By Kumudini Lakhia

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Understanding the Text

1. How did the author feel about her mother's passion to make her a dancer?

Answer: The author did not feel comfortable about her mother's passion to make her a dancer. The author tells us that her mother discovered in her the innate ability to dance. This motivated the author's mother to make her a dancer. The author tells us that it was the film industry that ignited interest in her mother to make her a dancer. The author says that she never wanted to be a dancer. She describes how troublesome it was for her to travel to her dance teacher's house. The author felt as though she was compelled to learn dance. She felt as if dancing was thrust upon her.

When the author was sent to study in Queen Mary's college in Lahore, she at first thought that she would not have to learn dance. But she considers it to be unfortunate that her mother sent a dance teacher, Radhelal Misra along with her. In a word, the author did not experience anything good about her mother's passion to make her a dancer.

2. What were the lessons of life learnt in her younger days that Kumudini carried into her adult life?

Answer: During her younger days Kumudini learnt many lessons that she carried into her adult life. She relates one incident when she used to stay in Delhi in a sprawling house allotted to her engineer father. Liaquat Ali (later Prime Minister of Pakistan) used to be their neighbour. When one day she and her brother were caught by his gardener picking guavas from his tree, Liaquat Ali did not punish them but gave an open invitation to pick the fruits whenever they wished. The author says that it was one of her first lessons in the games that politicians play.

In Queen Mary's college in Lahore, she could learn the value of discipline. She believes that discipline in one's daily routine does bring discipline in thinking. When her mother died she could learn the pangs of hunger. This shows up in her work. She could understand the nature of conflict which she dealt with in a play called Duvidha.

Kumudini could learn to differentiate between sensitivity and sentimentality. In her adult days she created a piece called Panch Paras, the five senses, to explore this realm. Kumudini relates how she learnt a lesson from Ram Gopal that before one begins to experiment, one needs to perfect the technique with one experiment. Kumudini could learn about her own personality touring with Ram Gopal.

3. How did Kumudini react to her mother's death?

Answer: The news of the death of Kumudini's mother was not directly given to her by the Principal of the school where she was studying at that time. She was told that she had to go home as her mother was sick. When Kumudini reached home she saw her mother dead. She felt helpless in this world. She was only 14 years old at that time. Her hands hung loose from her body. She also felt

hungry but could not express it to anybody. She was afraid of appearing greedy.

4. What were the concepts that Kumudini Lakhia represent through Duvidha, Atah Kim and panch Paras?

Answer: In Duvidha or conflict, Kumudini examined the plight of a middle class woman who is chained to the traditions of Indian life. In Atah Kin, Kumudini uses the concept of the desire for power. Panch Paras is all about the exploration of spiritual life.

5. How does Kumudini Lakhia describe her guru Ramgopal's influence on her?

Answer: Kumudini Lakhia describes intensely about her guru Ram Gopal's influence on her. She recounts that Ram Gopal was a strict disciplinarian and had a fetish for perfection of line. Kumudini has been influenced by this. She has tried to impart this lesson to her students as well. Kumudini narrates how touring with Ram Gopal enabled her to delve deep into her own personality.

Talking about the Text

1. Exceptionally talented people are born so; talent cannot be cultivated.

Answer: Exceptionally talented people are born so, talent cannot be cultivated. Some genetic scientists opine that talent is determined by the genetic factor. It is inherited genetically. It cannot be cultivated. Had it been so, it would have been possible to produce exceptionally talented people by grooming individuals. But in reality that is not the case.

Another View

There are other group of scientists who believe that talent is not exclusively determined by the genes or heredity. Environment plays a vital role in shaping talent. They call it meme and not gene.

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2. "Discipline and a questioning spirit can coexist in an individual."

Answer: Discipline and a questioning spirit can go together. There is no inherent conflict between the two. If somebody is disciplined then one will have questioning spirit in a disciplined manner. Every discipline is with an objective. Discipline is not for discipline's sake. So, if one seeks to understand the fundamentals of a discipline there is no harm.

Another View

Discipline and questioning spirit cannot coexist. One cannot stick to any discipline if one does not take for granted the basic assumptions of a discipline. For example, one cannot follow and apply the principles of an art form if one keeps on questioning. Both cannot go together. Some sort of surrendering of the questioning spirit is required to be disciplined.

3. "Before you begin experimenting you need to perfect the technique with which you experiment."

Answer: There is a tendency among people that they start experimenting without perfecting the technique with which one experiments. Great exponents of arts, however, often recommend that improvisation should follow perfection of the technique with which one begins with. Otherwise, the experiment becomes an end in itself without bearing any fruit.

4. Kumudini Lakhia's life is an inspiring illustration of the emancipation of women.

Answer: Kumudini Lakhia's life shows the emancipation of women. She started learning dance under the inspiration of her mother. She later on joined an Agriculture course. In the Agriculture college she could experience the behaviour of boys and the American teachers. After the completion of the course, she chose to join Ram Gopal

company as a performer. Having led a successful dance career, she settled in a married life. All these show that she was free to chose her ways despite being a woman and the way she could establish her identity in her career is inspiring illustration of the emancipation of women.

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