**QUESTION BANK: P1 WHERE THE MIND IS WITHOUT FEAR**

**1. Why has the poet used ‘Where’ at the start of the many sentences in the poem? What does it refer to? (3)**

**Ans:** The word ‘Where’ refers to a condition. By repeating the word, the poet tries to paint an idealistic picture of India that he wants to see. He is trying to increase the intensity before making a mention of ‘heaven of freedom’.

**2. What is meant by ‘head is held high’? Was it important to do it at that stage? (3)**

**Ans:** Head held high means to be self-respecting, brave and to be confident about oneself. It was important at that stage to have high self-esteem because Indians were subjugated by the British colonisers. The confidence of most of the Indians was at rock bottom.

**3. What does ‘knowledge is free’ mean? (3)**

**Ans:** By the words ‘Where the knowledge is free’, the poet wants to say that in his country everyone should have the freedom to acquire knowledge without any restrictions. The restrictions imposed on the spread of knowledge include the prejudices based on wealth, caste and religion. Knowledge was a monopoly only of the higher castes and the elite.

**4. What does ‘narrow domestic walls’ refer to? How have they broken up India? (4)**

**Ans:** ‘Narrow domestic walls’ refers to the barriers which we have created because of the narrow beliefs or narrow-mindedness in the behaviour or thoughts. Narrow-mindedness pertaining to the caste, class or gender discrimination, the superstitions, orthodox beliefs and practices have broken India into small fragments. Also the criteria of religion, region, language and political boundaries plays a major role. These divisions are the ‘narrow domestic walls’ according to the poet.

**5. Do you think that we still live in a country which is broken up in fragments by narrow domestic walls?** **(3)**

**Ans:** Yes, we still live in a country that is broken up in fragments. Though India is one country but there are many reasons like caste, creed, gender bias, discrimination, class, superstitious thinking, etc. that divide the country by such narrow domestic walls.

**6. How can narrow domestic walls harm the nation? (3)**

**Ans:** The narrow domestic walls can harm the nation by creating divisions among people and destroying the unity and integrity of the nation. If these walls exist then our focus would be on sorting out these differences rather than on our progress. These walls should be destroyed or dismantled as keeping these walls will divide the nation and weaken it.

**7. Why does the poet feel that the words should ‘come out from the depth of truth’? (3)**

**Ans:** The poet feels that the words should ‘come from the depth of truth’ as we should be honest in our dealings. For progress, it is essential that we should speak the truth otherwise we shall be hypocrites and will be trying to cheat one another. In such a scenario, we will reach a dead end.

**8. How can the countrymen strive for and achieve perfection? (3)**

**Ans:** The poet says that countrymen will achieve perfection through rigorous and persistent efforts and interminable struggle. He knows that perfection is not easy to gain. However, with tireless striving can hope to come near our destination of perfection.

**9. The clear stream of water is compared to what? And why? (4)**

**Ans:** The clear stream of water is compared to logical thinking or reasoning. The flow of thoughts is compared to the flow of water. The clarity of thoughts is compared to the clarity of water. Finally the productivity of positive thought is compared to the productivity that can be achieved by water.

**10. What is meant by ‘dreary desert sand of dead habit’? (3)**

**Ans:** ‘Dreary desert sand of dead habit’ refers to ritualistic behaviour and blind belief. They are illogical and are like desert, unproductive. There can be no progress if one does not follow reason and logic and continue to move in the rut of old customs.

**11. Who is ‘thee’ in the poem? Why do you think the poet wants ‘thee’ to lead the world? (3)**

**Ans:** ‘Thee’ refers to God. He wants God, the Father or the Almighty to lead the people so that people don’t get stuck in their old traditions and thoughts. If they do, the poet says, Indians will not be able to progress and because of this the country will also not progress.

**12. What does the poet mean by ‘ever widening’ thought and action? (2)**

**Ans:** Ever widening thought and action means broadmindedness and learning new things. He requests God to inspire us for bigger thought and bigger action.

**13. When according to Tagore would there be a heaven of freedom? (4)**

**Ans:** Our country would surely become a heaven of freedom, when people would live with dignity, self-respect and with the head held high. The first step of reaching heaven would be achieved, when they respect and imbibe the qualities of honesty, hard-work and truthfulness. The poets envisages our India to be a country without fear, where knowledge is available to everyone and people would be proud of the heritage. There would be no political or geographical segments that would pose as barriers. It would be an ideal country where people would be free from age-old dead customs but attain moral, spiritual and intellectual freedom.

**14. Define ‘heaven of freedom’. (3)**

**Ans:** The phrase ‘heaven of freedom’ means an ideal state and a place where people would live a life of dignity. They would be free from prejudices, always progressive and forward-looking, united and blissful. These are the blessings and finally the poet turns to God to shower such blessings on the fellow Indians.

**15. What does the poet mean by ‘let my country awake’? (3)**

**Ans:** The poet found that people are slaves of dead habits and they lived in fear. The poet wants the people to rise from their slumber of ignorance, and try to be free from all kinds of bondages and chains.

**16. Why does Rabindranath Tagore feel that Indians should not feel any kind of fear? (3)**

**Ans:** Rabindranath Tagore, the poet, feels that the Indians have been exploited and robbed of their self-pride. So he dreams of a free nation where people would not fear oppression and exploitation from British, rich people or any other oppressor.

**17. What happens when the mind is without fear? (3)**

**Ans:** When the mind is without fear, people will fight for justice and truth. When people are fearless they will speak what they think to be right and just. So there will be true equality in the society.

**18. Does the poet have a religious outlook? How does the poet show in the poem? (3)**

**Ans:** Yes, the poet has a religious outlook. The whole poem refers to the Father in the heaven, God. He also uses ‘thee’ to address the God. This shows that he is a religious man and a firm believer in God.

**19. Describe any two traits that the poet wants to inculcate in his countrymen? (3)**

**Ans:** The poet wants his countrymen to be fearless and free from prejudices. They should rise above considerations of caste, colour, creed, etc. which have kept India divided and in chains of slavery.

**20. Is the dream of the poet realized? If yes, how? If not, why not? (4)**

**Ans:** Yes, the dream of the poet is realized to some extent but not completely. People are getting rid of old and outdated beliefs, knowledge has spread, social prejudices have broken down though in some parts they still prevail. Women have come out and taken more active part in public life. We are still haunted by the narrow domestic walls that we have created within the country. This regularly results in confrontations leading to breaking of the social fabric of India.

**21. Give two examples of alliteration in the poem. (2)**

**Ans: ‘**Where the world has not been broken up’, ‘where words come out from the depth of truth’, ‘into the dreary desert’, ‘where tireless striving stretches’

**22. Give two examples of metaphor in the poem. (2)**

**Ans:** ‘Clear stream of reason’- Logical thinking is implicitly compared to a clear stream.

‘Dreary desert of dead habit’- Indirect comparison between ritualism and dreary desert.

**23. Give an example of personification in the poem. (2)**

**Ans:** ‘A tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection’- The human quality of stretching the arm is given to striving.