Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

Assignment: Two poems

Q1. Describe the madman.

Ans: 1. The madman is described as wandering who is seeking the touchstone and has matted locks tawny and dust laden and a body that has worn to a shadow. His eyes are tight-pressed like the shut up doors of his heart and his burning eyes are like the lamp of a glow worm seeking its mate.

Q2. What were the waves doing? Explain the figure of speech that is

mentioned.

Ans: The waves were ceaselessly talking of the hidden treasures and mocking the ignorance that the madman did not know the meaning of the hidden treasures. The figure of speech used here is personification as the waves have been given the human quality of talking and mocking.

Q3. What is the figurative meaning of ‘hidden treasures’?

Ans: The figurative (symbolical) meaning of ‘hidden treasures’ is the good things or opportunities in life that a man comes across but does not realise the value.

Q4. What did the village boy ask the madman?

Ans: The village boy asked the madman to tell him from where he had got the golden chain which he had about his waist.

Q5. Why did the madman strike his forehead wildly?

Ans: The madman did not realise that the iron chain had turned into gold because of the habit of picking up pebbles touching the chain and throwing them away without looking to see if a change had come. When the boy pointed out to the chain , he realised that he had thrown away opportunity in the form of the touchstone. Thus he struck his forehead.

Q6. What is the search of the madman compared to?

Ans: The endless search of the madman is compared to two things. Firstly it is compared to the action of the ocean which lifts its arms to the sky for the unattainable, that is to meet the sky (horizon). The search is also compared to the stars in the sky which seem to keep moving aimlessly in circles.

Q7. The madman had no hope remaining yet he continued his search. Why?

Ans: Although the madman had no hope remaining , he continued his search because it had become his life.

Q8. What is the state of the madman at the end of the poem?

Ans: The old man is in a pitiable state at the end as his strength is gone, his body is bent and his heart is in the dust, like a tree that has been uprooted.

Q9. What is the child doing and what is the adult doing?

Ans: The child is sitting in the dust and playing with a broken twig all the morning while the adult is busy with his accounts, adding up figures by the hour.

Q10. What has the adult forgotten? What does he seek out?

Ans: The adult has forgotten the act of being absorbed in sticks and mud pies or the innocent games of childhood which made us happy. He now only seeks out costly playthings and gathers lumps of gold and silver. In other words he his busy in his daily routine of making money.

Q11. What is the ‘frail canoe’ compared to? Why?

Ans: The ‘frail canoe’ is compared to life. It symbolises how everyone has to balance duties and desires in his or her own life.

Q12. What is the message of the poem ‘Playthings?’

Ans: The message of the poem ‘Playthings’ is that people tend to forget the real charm of life in the process of earning money and running after responsibilities.

Q13. What kind of attitude does the madman portray?

Ans: The madman’s attitude portrays that while we are in search of certain things we get so involved in the activity that we do not even realise when that thing comes to us and when we lose it.