Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**Assignment: The Elephant and the Tragopan**

Answer the following :

1. Who talked for hours? What did they talk about?

Ans: The elephant and the tragopan talked for hours. They were speaking about how man was trying to destroy the habitat of animals and rendering them homeless.

1. What did the elephant do? What was the purpose of his action?

Ans: The elephant arose and with a modest trumpet call he drew the attention of all the other beasts in the forest called Bingle. He wanted to bring to their notice how man was conniving to take away their habitat and hoped that they would all reach to an agreement and pose a united fight against man.

1. Why did the elephant feel he could speak about man? Enlist the qualities of man mentioned by the elephant.

Ans: The elephant felt he could speak about man as he his clan had served and therefore studied man. According to the elephant, man has a lot of contrasting qualities. He is mild and vicious. He is practical but at the same time capricious. Sometimes he is very puzzling as he is good and bad.

1. The poet has used contrasting words to describe man. Explain each pair of contrasting qualities mentioned.

Ans: Man is mild and vicious. When it comes to his family or his loved ones, he is very mild in his behaviour but when he deals with his opponents or enemies, he can be very vicious. When it is about his interests and profit, he is very practical but from others he expects an emotional decision. Thus he is very difficult to understand. When he wants something of his interest, he behaves in a good manner but when he is angry he can be very bad. The poet thus is trying to convey that man displays contrasting emotions at the same time.

1. How does man misuse animals?

Ans: From times immemorial, man has always misused animals to fulfil his desires. He kills many animals for food and also uses the hides of some of the animals. Robbing the elephants of their ivory for making trivial things like combs is also a cruel act done by man. He shoots just for fun and uses animals like bears and monkeys to entertain his clan. Man also tames many animals like the elephant , the horse , cows to do his work and carry his load,

1. Inspite of making immense use of animals, how does man treat them?

Ans: Inspite of making immense use of animals, man never expresses his gratitude to them. He takes away their land and never allows them to stay secure in any place. He does worship them and sings of them and weaves stories around them and celebrates the glory of their deeds yet he has never truly cared for them.

1. What does the poet mean by ‘fertile fuss?

Ans: “Fertile fuss” refers to the false affection shown by man towards animals. Man worships them and sings of them at festivals. He makes stories revolving around animals and celebrates and glorifies the deeds of animals. The poet calls this fertile because outwardly it appears as though man holds animals in high regard but he calls it all a fuss it is useless when man does not care for them at all.

1. Explain : He sees the planet as his fief

Ans: In this line the poet is conveying the fact that man( he) thinks that the entire planet ( fief) is his rightfully owned property. He has encroached upon the habitat of mammals and birds without caring about their survival.

1. What are the sacrifices that animals are expected to do for man?

Ans: The animals are expected to sacrifice everything right from their own thirst and hunger to their habitat. Man builds dams to access more water , sacrifices animals for his hunger and clothing and takes away their land to build fancy abodes for himself.

1. What does the word ‘scheme’ refer to?

Ans: In the context of this poem , man is planning to take away the land upon which the animals dwell and build dams to make reservoirs thus pushing even marine life further away from their dwelling. Thus man is trying to tame the valleys and the streams which rightfully belong to the beasts. This cunning plan of man is referred to as a ‘scheme’ in the poem.

1. What does the elephant tell the trout?

Ans: The elephant tells the trout that its dream of having the endless space in the stream will be shattered as man is planning to build a dam inorder to make reservoirs for his selfish need. In the process the soot and filth will push the trout further and they too finally end in death.

1. Explain : What tolls for us is your own bell

Ans: In this line the elephant is warning the trout saying that the way man has encroached upon the land of the beasts , he is also doing the same with streams and rivers. Thus the inhabitants of the jungle and the streams will eventually perish. ‘Bell’ refers to the death bell that is rung at the time of a funeral. So the elephant tells the trout that their funeral will also take place just like that of the beasts.

1. What does the elephant tell the leopard?

Ans: The elephant tells the leopard that currently they are happy as they can easily get their prey- the deer and after slaughtering it can go to the streams to quench their thirst. But the elephant warns the leopard that soon it will also be homeless like the other creatures as man will take away their habitat.

1. What plea does the elephant make to all the denizens of Bingle at the end?

Ans: At the end the elephant requests all the denizens- in fur ( mammals) and feather(birds) – of Bingle to unite and resist man and fight his cruel intentions and to either live or die together.