

Chapter 10.

Kathmandu

Before You Read

Q1. Do you like travelling? The writer, Vikram Seth, enjoys it very much. In his book, Heaven Lake, he describes a long journey from China to India, via Tibet and Nepal.

Answer. Yes, I like travelling as it gives an insight into the unknown world.

Q2. Have you heard of places like Ajmer Sharif, Madurai, Sanchi, Varanasi, Sarnath, or Halebid? Can you name some other places like these?

Answer. Yes, have heard of the holy places like Ajmer Sharif, Madurai. Sanchi, Varanasi, Sarnath, or Halebid. Some Other such places are Amarnath, Vaishno Devi, Handwar, Ujjain and Shirdi.

Q3. What do the surroundings of a holy place in your city look like? Think about it as you read Vikram Seth's description of Kathmandu.

Answer. In my city. usually, the surroundings of the holy places are cluttered, noisy and overcrowded. Shops selling flowers for offering, idols of different Gods, prasad etc. line the nearby streets. These places are visited by hundreds of devotees daily.

Thinking About The Text

Q1. Answer these questions in one or two words or in short phrases.

- 1. Name the two temples the author visited in Kathmandu.**
- 2. The writer says, "All this I wash down with Coca Cola." What does 'all this' refer to?**
- 3. What does Vikram Seth compare to the quills of a porcupine?**
- 4. Name five kinds of flutes.**

Answer. 1. The two temples the author visited in Kathmandu were the Pashupatinath temple and the Boudhanath stupa.

2. 'All this' refers to a bar of marzipan, a corn-on-the-cob roasted in a charcoal stove (rubbed with salt, chilly powder and lemon), a couple of love story comics, and a Reader's Digest.

3. Vikram Seth compares the fifty or sixty bansuris protruding in all directions from the bamboo-made pole to the quills of a porcupine.

4. The five kinds of flutes are the reed new, the Japanese shakuhachi, the deep bansuri of Hindustani classical music, the clear or breathy flutes of South America, and the high-pitched Chinese flutes.

QII. Answer each question in a short paragraph.

1. What difference does the author note between the flute seller and the other hawkers?

2. What is the belief at Pashupatinath about the end of Kaliyug?

3. The author has drawn powerful images and pictures. Pick out three examples each of

(i) the atmosphere of 'febrile confusion' outside the temple of Pashupatinath (for example: some people trying to get the priest's attention are elbowed aside...)

(ii) the things he sees

(iii) the sounds he hears

Answer. 1. The author notes that the flute seller selected a flute from time to time and played it for a few minutes. The sound rose clearly above the noise of the traffic and the hawkers' cries. While the flute seller played slowly, meditatively, and without excessive display, the hawkers shouted out their wares.

2. At Pashupatinath, there is a small shrine that protrudes from the stone platform on the riverbank. The belief is that when it emerges fully, the goddess inside will escape, and the evil period of Kaliyuga will end on earth.

3. (i) The author has drawn powerful images and pictures of the atmosphere of 'febrile confusion' outside the temple of Pashupatinath. Many worshippers trying to get the priest's attention were elbowed aside by others pushing their way to the front. On the main gate, a party of saffron-clad Westerners struggled for permission to enter as only Hindus were allowed to enter the temple. A fight broke out between two monkeys. One was chasing the other, who jumped onto a Shivalinga, then ran screaming around the temples and down to the river, the holy Bagmati.

(ii) He saw that the Boudhanath Stupa had an immense white dome, which was ringed by a road. Small shops were there on the outer edge where felt bags, Tibetan prints and silver jewellery could be bought. There were no crowds there. On the busiest streets of Kathmandu, he saw fruitsellers, flute sellers, hawkers of postcards, shops selling Western cosmetics, film rolls, chocolate, copper utensils and Nepalese antiques.

(iii) The sounds he heard were film songs that were blaring out from the radios, car horns, bicycle bells, vendors shouting out their wares. He also listened to flute music, calling it the most universal and most particular of sounds.

QIII. Answer the following questions in not more than 100–150 words each.

1. Compare and contrast the atmosphere in and around the Boudhanath shrine with the Pashupatinath temple.

2. How does the author describe Kathmandu's busiest streets?

3. "To hear any flute is to be drawn into the commonality of all mankind." Why does the author say this?

Answer. 1. The atmosphere at Pashupatinath temple was one of noise, chaos and confusion. Worshippers were trying to get the priest's attention; others were pushing their way to the front; saffron-clad Westerners were trying to enter the temple; monkeys were fighting and adding to the general noise; a corpse was being cremated on the banks of the river Bagmati; washerwomen were at their work, while their children were bathing. In contrast, the Boudhanath stupa was "a haven of quietness in the busy streets around". There was a sense of stillness and serenity about the Buddhist shrine.

2. Along Kathmandu's narrowest and busiest streets, there were small shrines and flower-adorned deities. Apart from these, there were fruit sellers, flute sellers, hawkers of postcards, shops selling Western cosmetics, film rolls, chocolate, copper utensils and Nepalese antiques. The author heard film songs that were blaring out from the radios, sounds of car horns and bicycle bells, vendors shouting out their wares. He also saw a flute seller with many bansuris. He contrasts the serene music produced by the flute seller with the cries of the hawkers.

3. The author considers flute music to be "the most universal and most particular" of all music. There is no culture that does not have its flute. Each kind of flute has a specific fingering and compass, and "weaves its own associations". Still, for the author, to hear any flute is "to be drawn into the commonality of all mankind". In spite of their differences, every flute produces music with the help of the human breath. Similarly, in spite of the differences in caste, culture, religion, region, all human beings are the same, with the same living breath running through all of them.

Thinking About Language

Q1. Read the following sentences carefully to understand the meaning of the italicised phrases. Then match the phrasal verbs in Column A with their meanings in Column B.

1. A communal war broke out when the princess was abducted by the neighbouring prince.

2. The cockpit broke off from the plane during the plane crash.

3. The car broke down on the way and we were left stranded in the jungle.

4. The dacoit broke away from the police as they took him to court.
5. The brothers broke up after the death of the father.
6. The thief broke into our house when we were away.

A	B
(i) break out	(a) to come apart due to force
(ii) break off	(b) end a relationship
(iii) break down	(c) break and enter illegally; unlawful trespassing
(iv) break away (from someone)	(d) of start suddenly, (usually a fight, a war or a disease)
(v) break up	(e) to escape from someone's grip
(vi) break into	(f) stop working

Answer.

	A		B
(i)	break out	(d)	of start suddenly, (usually a fight, a war or a disease)
(ii)	break off	(a)	to come apart due to force
(iii)	break down	(f)	stop working
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(v)	break up	(b)	end a relationship
(vi)	break into	(c)	break and enter illegally; unlawful trespassing

QII. 1. Use the suffixes -ion or -tion to form nouns from the following verbs. Make the necessary changes in the spellings of the words.

Example: proclaim – proclamation

Cremate _____
 act _____
 Exhaust _____
 invent _____
 tempt _____
 immigrate _____
 direct _____
 meditate _____
 imagine _____
 dislocate _____
 associate _____
 dedicate _____

2. Now fill in the blanks with suitable words from the ones that you have formed.

- (i) Mass literacy was possible only after the _____ of the printing machine.
 (ii) Ramesh is unable to tackle the situation as he lacks _____.
 (iii) I could not resist the to _____ open the letter.
 (iv) Hard work and _____ are the main keys to success.
 (v) The children were almost fainting with _____ after being made to stand in the sun.

Answer. 1.

cremate : <u>cremation</u>	act : <u>action</u>	exhaust : <u>exhaustion</u>
invent : <u>invention</u>	tempt : <u>temptation</u>	immigrate : <u>immigration</u>
direct : <u>direction</u>	meditate : <u>meditation</u>	imagine : <u>imagination</u>
dislocate : <u>dislocation</u>	associate : <u>association</u>	dedicate : <u>dedication</u>

2. (i) invention (ii) direction (iii) temptation (iv) dedication (v) exhaustion

QIII. Punctuation Use capital letters, full stops, question marks, commas and inverted commas wherever necessary in the following paragraph. an arrogant lion was wandering through the jungle one day he asked the tiger who is stronger than you you O lion replied the tiger who is more fierce than a leopard asked the lion you sir replied the leopard he marched up to an elephant and asked the same question the elephant picked him up in his trunk swung him in the air and threw him down look said the lion there is no need to get mad just because you don't know the answer

Answer. An arrogant lion was wandering through the jungle. One day, he asked the

tiger, "Who is stronger than you?" "You, O lion!" replied the tiger. "Who is more fierce than a leopard?" asked the lion. "You sir," replied the leopard. He marched up to an elephant and asked the same question. The Elephant picked him up in his trunk, swung him in the air, and threw him down. "Look," said the lion, "there is no need to get mad just because you don't know the answer."

QIV. 1. The heart is a pump that _____ (send) the blood circulating through our body. The pumping action _____ (take place) when the left ventricle of the heart _____ (contract). This _____ (force) the blood out into the arteries, which _____ (expand) to receive the oncoming blood.

2. The African lungfish can live without water for up to four years. During a drought it _____ (dig) a pit and _____ (enclose) itself in a capsule of slime and earth, leaving a tiny opening for air. The capsule _____ (dry) and _____ (harden), but when rain _____ (come), the mud _____ (dissolve) and the lungfish _____ (swim) away.

3. MAHESH : We have to organise a class party for our teacher. _____ (Do) anyone play an instrument?

VIPUL : Rohit _____ (play) the flute.

MAHESH : _____ (Do) he also act?

VIPUL : No, he _____ (compose) music. MAHESH : That's wonderful!

Answer. 1. The heart is a pump that sends the blood circulating through our body. The pumping action takes place when the left ventricle of the heart contracts. This forces the blood out into the arteries, which expands to receive the oncoming blood.

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Speaking

Q1. Discuss in class the shrines you have visited or know about. Speak about one of them

Answer. Do attempt yourself.

Q2. Imagine you are giving an eyewitness account or a running commentary of one of the following:

(i) a game of football, cricket or hockey, or some sports event

(ii) a parade (e.g. Republic Day) or some other national event Speak a few sentences narrating what you see and hear. Use the simple present and the present continuous tenses. For example:

- **He passes the ball but Ben gets in the way ...**
- **These brave soldiers guard our frontiers. They display their skills here ...**

Answer. Do attempt yourself.

Writing

QI. The text you read is a travelogue where the author, Vikram Seth, talks about his visit to two sacred places in Kathmandu.

Imagine that you were with Vikram Seth on his visit to Pashupatinath temple, and you were noting down all that you saw and did there, so that you could write a travelogue later.

Record in point form

what you see when you reach the Pashupatinath temple

what you see happening inside the temple

what you do when inside the temple

what you see outside the temple

what your impressions are about the place.

Answer. Do attempt yourself.

QII. Here is your diary entry when you visited Agra. Read the points and try to write a travelogue describing your visit to Agra and the Taj Mahal. You may add more details. January 2003 — rise before dawn — take the Shatabdi Express at 6.15 a.m. from Delhi — meet a newly-married couple on train — talk about Himachal Pradesh — get off the train — enter the once-grand city, Agra — twisted alleys — traffic dense — rickshaws, cars, people — vendors selling religious artifacts, plastic toys, spices and sweets — go to the Taj Mahal — constructed entirely of white marble — magical quality — colour changes with varying of light and shadow — marble with gemstones inside — reflection of the Taj Mahal in the pond — school-children, tourists — tourist guides following people.

Answer. Do attempt yourself.

Thinking About The Poem

Q1. “A slumber did my spirit seal,” says the poet. That is, a deep sleep ‘closed off’ his soul (or mind). How does the poet react to his loved one’s death? Does he feel bitter grief ? Or does he feel a great peace?

Answer. The poet is shocked and surprised at the death of his loved one It feels painful. Death does not make anyone feel good. It is always associated with misery.

Q2. The passing of time will no longer affect her, says the poet. Which lines of the poem say this?

Answer. The lines “She seemed a thing that could not feel, The touch of earthy years.” of the poem show that the passing of time will no longer affect her.

Q3. How does the poet imagine her to be, after death? Does he think of her as a person living in a very happy state (a ‘heaven’)? Or does he see her now as a part of nature? In which lines of the poem do you find your answer?

Answer. The poet imagines her to be an inseparable part of nature, No. he does not think so because heaven' is not a dead thing. It is shown in the line 'Rolled round in earth's diurnal course/With rocks and stones and trees',