ESSAY – 7

BRIDGES

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

Page No 196:

Question 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.

Question 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 saw 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 need to perfect the technique with one experiment.

Kumudini could learn about her own personality touring with Ram Gopal.

Question 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.

Question 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.

Question 5: How does Kumudini Lakhia describe her guru Ram Gopal'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

Question 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 perspective:

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.

Question 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 perspective

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.

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

ANSWER:

There is a tendency among people that they 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.

Question 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 choose 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.

APPRECIATION

Question 1: The significance of reading an autobiography lies in drawing lessons from another life. What is the significance of Kumudini's account for us as readers?

ANSWER:

We as readers can understand many core issues of life by going through the account of Kumudini. Her training in dance in her initial years teach us the lesson that learning any art form requires dedication and hard work. It needs rigour to acquire the skills. Her account of going to the dance teacher's house show her sheer dedication to the art.

We can know about the value of discipline when Kumudini talks of her teachers in Queen Mary's college, Lahore. According to Kumudini, discipline in one's daily routine does bring discipline in thinking. This is really inspiring for the readers.

Kumudini's account of her days with guru Ram Gopal is inspiring. We can learn the lesson that one needs to perfect the technique with which one begins to experiment.

Her account teaches us that one should learn to adjust with a group of different personalities as in a family and a performance on the stage.

Question 2: "I can see clear bridges between my life experiences and my work in dance." How does Kumudini Lakhia weave episodes from the two realms in her account?

ANSWER:

Kumudini Lakhia in her account shows that her life experiences form the basis of her work in dance. Though she was focussed on dance, yet she tells us that she lived her life. She has taken cues from her life experiences to present these in her dance.

She recounts how in Duvidha or conflict she has examined the plight of a middle class woman who is chained to the traditions of Indian life. In Atah Kim, we can see how Kumudini bases the theme on the desire for power which she experienced after her schooling was over.

Her work Panch Paras is on the spiritual realm of life. Kumudini tells us about her experience on spiritualism, the arguments she used to have with her grandmother regarding the existence of God etc. She has used this bit of experience as theme in Panch Paras.

Question 1: Distinguish between the following pairs of words

Incredulous - Incredible

Suspicious - Susceptible

Sensitivity - Sentimentality

Successive - Successful

ANSWER:

Incredulous: not disposed or willing to believe, unbelieving

Incredible: beyond belief or understanding

Suspicious: openly distrustful and unwilling to confide

Susceptible: yielding readily to or capable of

Sensitivity: the ability to respond to physical stimuli or register small physical amounts or differences.

Sentimentality: falsely emotional in a maudlin way.

Successive: having or giving the right of succeeding to an inheritance, following in order or in uninterrupted course

Successful: having succeeded or being marked by a favourable outcome

Question 2: Interpret these phrases in the context of the essay

Mist of protection
At a crossroads
It came with strings attached

ANSWER:

Mist of protection: The phrase has been used by the author to signify that her childhood was very protective. Her parents always cared for her and kept watch over her. They tried to influence her in all her activities. She found this protection as something like a mist which covers our vision.

At a crossroads: At a cross road refers to a situation when someone is not able to decide as to which path to choose. In the text the phrase is used by the author to describe her situation after completing the agriculture course when she was left with few job prospects.

It came with strings attached:

Question 3: 'Kummi', ' ghumar' and 'dandia' are some dance forms mentioned in the text. Make an inventory of folk dance forms in the different regions of the country.

ANSWER:

Arunachal Pradesh: Bardo Cham

Assam: Bihu dance, Jhumur

Chhattisgarh: Raut ancho, Panthi

Gujarat: Garba, Padhar, Raas,

Himachal Pradesh: Kinnauri Natti

Karnataka: Yakshagana

Kashmir: Dumhal

Lakshadweep: Lava

Madhya Pradesh: Tertali, Charkula, Jawara, Grida dance

Maharastra: Pavri Naach

Manipur: Thang ta, Dol cholam

Mizoram: Cheraw Dance

Nagaland: Chang lo or sua lua

Orissa: Goti Pua

Pondicherry: Garadi

Punjab: Bhangra, Giddha, Jhumar, Ludi

Rajasthan: Ghoomor, Kalbelia, Bhavai

Sikkim: Singhi Chamm

Tamil Nadu: Kummi, Kolattam

Tripura: Hojagiri

West Bengal: Gambhira, Domni