

Chapter 5. The Professor [Poem]

Passage 1

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Remember me? I am Professor Sheth.
Once I taught you geography. Now
I am retired, though my health is good. My wife died some years back.
By God's grace, all my children
Are well settled in life.

Who are the two people involved in this conversation?

Answer:

The conversation is going on between a retired Geography professor and his ex student.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Remember me? I am Professor Sheth.
Once I taught you geography. Now
I am retired, though my health is good. My wife died some years back.
By God's grace, all my children
Are well settled in life.

What does the student say when the professor introduces himself?

Answer:

The former student is not seen talking in this stanza or throughout the poem. We understand that the poem is a monologue where the professor is the only person who talks.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Remember me? I am Professor Sheth.
Once I taught you geography. Now
I am retired, though my health is good. My wife died some years back.
By God's grace, all my children
Are well settled in life.

What does the professor say about himself and his family in the above extract?

Answer:

The professor says that he has retired and is in good health although his wife passed away a few years ago. He also mentions that all his children have settled in life.

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Remember me? I am Professor Sheth.
Once I taught you geography. Now
I am retired, though my health is good. My wife died some years back.
By God's grace, all my children
Are well settled in life.

Why does the professor ask the student 'Remember me'?

Answer:

The professor seems to have met one of his students and is not sure if the student recognises him. Therefore, he uses the phrase 'remember me' and further adds his name and reminding the student that he used to teach Geography and thus initiating the conversation.

Passage 2

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

By God's grace, all my children
Are well settled in life.
One is Sales Manager,
One is Bank Manager,
Both have cars.
Other also doing well, though not so well.
Every family must have black sheep.

What information does Professor Sheth share about his children in the given extract?

Answer:

Professor Sheth talks about his three sons in this extract. One of his sons is a Sales Manager while another is a Bank Manager. The third son, according to him, is the black sheep of the family since he is not doing well in comparison to his brothers. The manager brothers, he adds, have their own cars too.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

By God's grace, all my children
Are well settled in life.
One is Sales Manager,
One is Bank Manager,
Both have cars.
Other also doing well, though not so well.
Every family must have black sheep.

What is the professor's notion of being well settled?

Answer:

The professor thinks that being on a managerial position and having a car indicates that you are well settled in life. This is evident as he calls one of his sons, who is not a manager, the black sheep of the family. We are not told what the profession of this son is except for the fact that he is not doing as good as the other two sons.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

By God's grace, all my children
Are well settled in life.
One is Sales Manager,
One is Bank Manager,
Both have cars.
Other also doing well, though not so well.
Every family must have black sheep.

What does the term 'black sheep' mean? How has it been used in this poem?

Answer:

The term 'black sheep' refers to an odd member of a group who is generally regarded as a misfit, disgrace or cause of shame. The professor uses the term to talk about his third son who according to him has not been as successful as the other two sons.

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

By God's grace, all my children
Are well settled in life.
One is Sales Manager,
One is Bank Manager,
Both have cars.
Other also doing well, though not so well.
Every family must have black sheep.

Does the professor clearly mention that the two managers and the third child are his sons? How do we know that he is talking about his sons and not daughters in this stanza?

Answer:

The professor mentions his daughters in the next stanza. In the given stanza, he is talking about his three 'well settled' children. They are at managerial positions at their workplace and have cars. In the time that the poem was written, it was extremely uncommon for women to reach high positions at work place like the (manager's position mentioned here) own cars. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the professor is talking about his sons in the given stanza.

Passage 3

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Sarala and Tarala are married,
Their husbands are very nice boys.
You won't believe but I have eleven grandchildren.
How many issues you have? Three?
That is good. These are days of family planning.

Who are Sarala and Tarala? What do they do?

Answer:

Sarala and Tarala are the two daughters of the professor. The professor doesn't elaborate on what his daughters do except for the fact that they are married.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Sarala and Tarala are married,
Their husbands are very nice boys.
You won't believe but I have eleven grandchildren.
How many issues you have? Three?
That is good. These are days of family planning.

What does the professor say about his sons-in-law?

Answer:

The professor doesn't give details about his sons-in-law like he gives about his sons. He only says that his daughters are married to 'nice boys'.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Sarala and Tarala are married,
Their husbands are very nice boys.
You won't believe but I have eleven grandchildren.
How many issues you have? Three?
That is good. These are days of family planning.

Does the professor resort to discrimination among his children?

Answer:

The professor proudly boasts that his two sons are managers and have cars. However, we are not told anything about his daughters. The only thing he says about them is that they are married to good boys. His notion of happiness is strongly influenced by gender biases. Like a typical Indian, he believes that a man needs a good job and wealth to be happy while a woman only needs a good man as her husband and his wealth to be happy.

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Sarala and Tarala are married,
Their husbands are very nice boys.
You won't believe but I have eleven grandchildren.
How many issues you have? Three?
That is good. These are days of family planning.

How many grandchildren does the professor have? Why does he mention family planning?

Answer:

The professor has eleven grandchildren. After stating this he asks his student how many issues (children) he has. The student has three children to which the professor replies that family planning is a trend catching up with the present generation. Although the professor is not against family planning, he doesn't seem to be totally happy with the idea of limiting the number of children in a family.

Passage 4

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

I am not against. We have to change with times.
Whole world is changing. In India also
We are keeping up. Our progress is progressing.
Old values are going, new values are coming.
Everything is happening with leaps and bounds.

Who is the speaker in the given lines? What is it that the speaker is not against?

Answer:

Professor Sheth is the speaker in the given lines. He says that he is not against the practice of family planning.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

I am not against. We have to change with times.
Whole world is changing. In India also
We are keeping up. Our progress is progressing.
Old values are going, new values are coming.
Everything is happening with leaps and bounds.

What does the professor say with regard to change in India?

Answer:

According to the professor, India too is keeping up to the changing time and the changes in the world. He adds that 'old values are going' and new values are being welcomed by the people.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

I am not against. We have to change with times.
Whole world is changing. In India also
We are keeping up. Our progress is progressing.
Old values are going, new values are coming.
Everything is happening with leaps and bounds.

What is the irony in the first line of this extract?

Answer:

Professor speaks about not being against family planning in the first line of this extract however he himself has eleven grand children and he seems to be too happy

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

I am not against. We have to change with times.
Whole world is changing. In India also
We are keeping up. Our progress is progressing.
Old values are going, new values are coming.
Everything is happening with leaps and bounds.

Why does poet use the expression 'Everything is happening in leaps and bounds'? What does it indicate?

Answer:

The poet has used the present continuous tense to mock Indian English where users directly translate their thought processes from the native language into English. The professor uses the mentioned expression to explain how values and traditions are drastically changing in India.

Passage 5

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

I am going out rarely, now and then
Only, this is price of old age
But my health is O.K. Usual aches and pains.
No diabetes, no blood pressure, no heart attack.
This is because of sound habits in youth.

Why does the professor say that he rarely goes out? Does it upset him?

Answer:

The professor says that he rarely goes out nowadays because now he has grown old. There is no indication in the extract that the professor is upset about it, on the contrary he speaks about it as a matter of fact. It appears as if he has accepted the limitations as a part and parcel of a long life.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

I am going out rarely, now and then
Only, this is price of old age
But my health is O.K. Usual aches and pains.
No diabetes, no blood pressure, no heart attack.
This is because of sound habits in youth.

What kind of ailments is the professor suffering from owing to old age?

Answer:

The professor says that there is no problem with his health and that he doesn't have diabetes, blood pressure or heart trouble. However, he says that there are usual aches and pains which come with old age.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

I am going out rarely, now and then
Only, this is price of old age
But my health is O.K. Usual aches and pains.
No diabetes, no blood pressure, no heart attack.
This is because of sound habits in youth.

What does the statement 'This is the price of old age' refer to?

Answer:

The professor mentions that he rarely ventures out nowadays because he is growing old. When a person grows old, his mobility is restricted and his body is slowed down due to the usual aches and pains. Even a little bit of exertion causes stress for the body.

Passage 6

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

You were so thin, like stick,
Now you are man of weight and consequence.
That is good joke.
If you are coming again this side by chance,
Visit please my humble residence also.
I am living just on opposite house's backside.

What questions does the professor ask his student in this poem?

Answer:

The professor begins by asking the student if he remembers him, then he asks the student how many children he has and finally the professor inquires after his health.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

You were so thin, like stick,
Now you are man of weight and consequence.
That is good joke.
If you are coming again this side by chance,
Visit please my humble residence also.
I am living just on opposite house's backside.

What does the professor propose in the extract?

Answer:

The lines above are the concluding lines of the poem where the professor invites his former student to visit his home. He accompanies the invitation with the location of his house.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

You were so thin, like stick,
Now you are man of weight and consequence.
That is good joke.
If you are coming again this side by chance,
Visit please my humble residence also.
I am living just on opposite house's backside.

Explain the last line of the poem. Comment on the poet's use of language in the poem.

Answer:

The last line of the poem is rather funny and appears to be a direct translation of an expression in an Indian language into English. The poet has used Indianism to satirise urbanity and academic achievement as seen through the Indian mind set. He uses the present continuous tense to refer to all actions, a common mistake among Indians who learn English as a second language to their native language.