

A Legend of the Northland (Poem)

Extract Based Questions(3 marks)

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Q. 1. He came to the door of a cottage In travelling round the earth Where a little woman was making cakes And baking them on the hearth

- (i)Who does "he" refer to in the first line ?**
- (ii)What request did "he" make to the woman ?**
- (iii)Was the little woman rewarded or punished ? Why ?**

Ans. (i) "He" refers to Saint Peter in the first line.

(ii)"He" requested the woman to give him a cake.

(iii)The little woman was punished since she was highly stingy, miserly, greedy and mean.

Q. 2. He came to the door of a cottage

In travelling round the earth

Where a little woman was making cakes

And baking them on the hearth.

- (i)What was Saint Peter doing ?**
- (ii)What was the little woman making ?**
- (iii)What is a hearth ? (Board Term 1,2012, ELI-022)**

Ans. (i) Saint Peter was travelling.

(ii)The little woman was baking cakes.

(iii)Hearth is a fire-place.

Q.3.Then Saint Peter grew angry

For he was hungry and faint ' ,

And surely such a woman Was enough to provoke a saint

- (i)Why was Saint Peter about to faint ?**
- (ii)How did the woman provoke Saint Peter ?**
- (iii)What is the rhyming scheme of the given stanza ?**

Ans.(i)Saint Peter was about to faint as he had been preaching and fasting.

(ii)The woman provoked Saint Peter by not giving him the cakes that were baked for him.

(iii)abcb.

Q.4.He came to the door of a cottage In travelling round the earth Where a little woman was making cakes And baking them on the hearth.

- (i)What was Saint Peter doing ?**

(ii)What was the little woman making ? _

(iii)What is a hearth ? (Board Term 1,2012, ELI-022)

Ans.(i)Saint Peter was travelling.

(ii)The little woman was baking cakes.

(iii)Hearth is a fire-place.

Q.5.And being faint with fasting For the day was almost done

He asked her, from her store of cakes,

To give him a single one.

(i)Who is "He" in the extract ?

(ii)What did he ask her to*give him ?

(iii)Trace a word from the extract that means "weak". (Board Term 1,2012, ELI-023)

Ans.(i)"He" referred to in the extract is Saint Peter.

(ii)He asked her to give him one cake from her store. '

(iii)Faint

Q.6.And being faint with fasting,

For the day was almost done,

He asked her, from her store of cakes,

To give him a single one.

(i)Who is "He" in the passage ?

(ii)Why was he fainting ?

(iii)What is meant by "the day was almost done" ? (Board Term 1,2012, ELI-024)

Ans.(i)"He" in the passage is Saint Peter.

(ii)He was fainting due to fasting.

(iii)"The day was almost done" means that the day had finished or passed.

Short Answer Type Questions (2 marks each) (About 30-40 words each)

Q.1.Why does the poet say that the hours of the day are few ?

Ans.In the poem, the poet uses a name Northland. In the area of Northland, the nights are longer and the days are shorter. As a result there are very few hours in a day.

Q.2.Who came knocking at the door of the old woman? Why was he there ?

Ans.In the Northland an old lady Lived in a cottage. She was baking cakes when St. Peter came knocking at her door. He had become weak with fasting and travelling. He was looking for food

Q.3. Is this a true story? Which part of the poem do you think is really important ?

Ans. This is a legend. It is not a true story. Even the poet feels that it is not true. The most important part of the poem is the point when we realize that the old woman is very greedy. She could not part with her cakes for a hungry man.

Q.4. Is this poem correct in being known as a legend? Explain.

Ans. A legend is a semi true story which has been passed on from person-to-person through ages. This legend has an important meaning or symbolism for the culture in which it originates. A legend includes an element of truth or is based on historic facts but with mythical qualities. The saint in turn curses the old woman. This poem can also be regarded as a folktale which again is a story told from one generation to another.

Long Answer Type Questions (4 marks each)

(About 80-100 words each)

Q.1. What are the poetic devices in the ballad 'A Legend of the Northland'?

Ans. The major literary devices, also called poetic devices, in "A Legend of the Northland" by Phoebe Gary are assonance which means repetition of vowel sounds, This appears in line 1: "Away, away.... Another striking literary element pertains to the structure of the quatrain stanzas (four lines per stanza) that have no end punctuation. Each line rolls to the other through enjambment. It works very well in most spots, although there are one or two places where the enjambment is clumsy, such as "Where a little woman was making cakes / And baking them on the hearth / .And being faint from fasting... ." There is both an explicit speaker ("tell me a curious story") and an explicit addressee ("yet you might learn"). The rhyme scheme of the poem is alternate unrhymed lines with rhymed ones in an abebdefe, etc. pattern. The major literary technique is sensory imagery that includes vision, taste, and sound as Saint Peter (the technique of Biblical allusion) approaches the cottage and witnesses the baking of the cakes, then turns the woman into a woodpecker that can be heard tapping tapping on a tree.

Q.2. What is a dramatic narrative? Is our poem a form of dramatic narrative? *

Ans. Poems with dramatic narrative are a form of poetry that has a plot and tells a story, Poems in this genre can vary in length from short to long and they can tell a complex story. Many times these poems use the voices of characters and narrator and usually the story is written in metered verse. This poem is a dramatic narrative told from inside a frame in which the speaker introduces the story to the addressee. In the far cold Northland a good Saint was wandering on the road. He nearly fainted as he was so hungry with fasting. The saint came to a cottage and within he saw a little old woman baking cakes. As he was starving, he asked a small cake for himself. The old lady baked the smallest cake for him but refused to even part with it. As a result the saint got angry with the old lady and cursed her. His curse transformed the old woman into a woodpecker. Today, everybody can see her in the forest where she lives in trees etching trees for her food.

This poem has a beginning and an end. The beginning is in a simple narrative tone which ends in a dramatic form.

Value Based Questions

Q.1. Why did the woman bake a little cake? (Board Term 1, 2013, 9KK 73AP)

Ans. The woman in the poem has been shown as a highly stingy, miserly, greedy and mean by nature. Whenever, she took out cake from the hearth, they appeared to be larger than the original size. Hence, she baked a very small cake for Saint Peter.

Q. 2. Greed is a quality which God does not like. Discuss it in the context of the poem.

Ans. Greed is considered to be a sin. This has been clearly brought out in the poem. In a legend of the Northland greed has no end. This is evident in the behaviour of the old lady when she was asked for a cake by St. Peter. She could not even give him a wafer thin slice. This angered St. Peter and he cursed her to be a woodpecker. One should always be able to share with others as God has been so kind to give us so much.