Class : 11th

Subject : English

Chapter : 12

Chapter Name : Ajamil and the tigers

Q1 The poem has a literal level and a figurative level. Why has the poet chosen ‘tigers’ and ‘sheep’ to convey his message?

Answer. This poem is written in a way to depict satire on modern politics where people are sheep, warriors are sheepdogs, politicians are compared with Ajamil and the tigers are depicted as the countries that try to attack our nation. Sheep depicts the innocence of the people and the cruelty of other nations that are trying to harm our nation.

Page : 142 , Block Name : Understanding the poem

Q2 What facet of political life does the behaviour of Ajamil illustrate?

Answer. In the poem, when the brave dog brought all the tigers as the prisoners of war with him, Ajamil, didn’t punish him instead signed a treaty friendship with them.

This indicates that the lack of confidence of the politicians over the army which is the reason why so many prisoners are treated with great hospitality instead of severe punishment.

They feel that in war the whole nation is lost at once, and they believe it's better to sacrifice some and protect the rest.

Page : 142 , Block Name : Understanding the poem

Q3 Why have the words, ‘pretended’ and ‘seemed’ been used in the lines:

...pretended to believe every single word of what the tiger king said.

And seemed to be taken in by all the lies.

How does the sense of these lines connect with the line ‘Ajamil wasn’t a fool’?

Answer. Ajmail is aware that the treaty he signed is not a permanent one and he was also aware that the tigers are going to attack them one day. Still, he went ahead to sign the treaty for a feeling of temporary peace.

Hence the words ‘pretended’ and ‘seemed’ are used to express Ajamil’s feeling that he didn’t trust those tigers.

Page : 142 , Block Name : Understanding the poem

Q4 Why did Ajamil refuse to meet the sheepdog’s eyes?

Answer. Sheepdog is a brave warrior and is capable of winning the war against all the tigers. And Ajmail was aware that the sheepdog wouldn’t be happy to sign a treaty with those tigers, whom he can win. Hence he refused to meet the sheepdog’s eyes as was not ready to change his decision of making peace with the tigers.

Page : 143 , Block Name : Understanding the poem

Q5 ‘He is free to play a flute all day as well fed tigers and fat sheep drink from the same pond with a full stomach for a common bond.’ What do the phrases ‘play the flute all day’ and ‘a common bond’ refer to?

Answer. The peace established between the two that is tigers and the sheep was a temporary phase. So Ajamil can have some relaxation, at least for some days, which is referred by the phrase ‘play flute all day’.

No matter how strong or weak an animal is all live on the same land and drink the same water and live for a common good, this was referred by the phrase ‘a common bond’.

Page : 143 , Block Name : Understanding the poem

Q6 The poem is a satire against the present political class. How effectively does it convey the anger and anguish of the common man trapped in the system?

Answer. In the scenario of war and peace, the common man is the one who suffers the most. He is the one who is losing his property, health and sometimes lives too. Yet in the process of making good for most of the people, he doesn’t get justice. He is gets stuck in the system and cannot turn back. The only thing that he can do is to keep pain buried in his heart till the time he dies. This poem reflects the anger and pain that a common man faces.

Page : 143 , Block Name : Understanding the poem