

Chapter 5: Tansen

WARMING UP! [PAGE 105]

Warming Up! | Q 1. (a) | Page 105

Indian Classical music consists of many Ragas. Find out from an expert or the internet, the names of at least 10 Ragas, and the time when they are sung to produce a greater effect.

No.	Name of Raga	Effective when
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

SOLUTION

No.	Name of Raga	Effective when
1.	Raga Abhogi	early night
2.	Raga Adana	(late night)
3.	Raga Ahir Bhairav	(daybreak)
4.	Raga Alhaiya Bilaval	(late morning)
5.	Raga Bageshri	midnight
6.	Raga Bahar	midnight; any time (Spring season)
7.	Raga Bhairavi	morning; (any time)
8.	Raga Bhimpalasi	early afternoon
9.	Raga Bhupal Todi	morning
10.	Raga Bihag	late night

Warming Up! | Q 1. (b) | Page 105

Archaic words are those that are no longer used in a language, but sometimes their usage adds a historical or old-times flavour to a piece of writing.

Examples:

- behold – look
- afeared – frightened
- forsooth – indeed
- hither – this place

Now find out some archaic words from your mother tongue or another language that you are proficient in and write down at least ten of them, and against each, their modern equivalent and meaning in English.

Archaic Language			
	Archaic Word	Modern Equivalent	Meaning in English
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

SOLUTION

Archaic Language			
	Archaic Word	Modern Equivalent	Meaning in English
1.	shrive	forgive	(of a priest) absolve (a person making a confession)
2.	slay	murder	kill in a violent
3.	smite	knock, bash	defeat or conquer
4.	sooth	factuality, authenticity	truth
5.	steed	pony	a horse

6.	wondrous	amazing, awesome	wonderful
7.	yonder	beyond	over there
8.	pate	head, crown	a person's head
9.	nigh	next door, proximate	near
10.	knave	villain, rogue	a dishonest man

Warming Up! | Q 1. (c) | Page 105

There are many legends about the 'nine gems' in Akbar's Court. These are popular tales and they may not have a historical basis. Can you name some of the nine gems and the stories associated with them?

SOLUTION

Akbar was an ardent admirer of art and learning. His court was full of many scholars and talented artists. The Nine most learned men in his court were known as Navratnas.

1. Abul Fazal
2. Faizi Miyan
3. Tansen
4. Raja Birbal
5. Raja Todar Mal
6. Raja Man Singh
7. Abdul Rahim.Khan-I-Khana
8. Fakir Aziao-Din
9. Mirza Aziz Koka

Abul Fazal:	Abul Fazal was the chronicler of Akbar's reign in three volumes over seven years, the third volume is known as the Ain-i-Akbari.
Faizi:	Faizi was Abul Fazal's brother, the poet laureate of Akbar. The name of the father of Abul Fazal and Faizi was Mubarak Nagori, a scholar in the philosophy and literature of Greece as well as in Islamic theology.
Miyan Tansen:	Miyan Tansen was born as Tanna Mishra, in 1520. He was a disciple of Swami Haridas and later became a disciple of Hazrat Muhammad Ghaus (Gwalior). He was a court musician with the prince of Mewar and later was recruited by Akbar as his court musician.

Raja Birbal:	Raja Birbal, a poor Hindu Brahmin Maheshdas was appointed to the court of Akbar for his intelligence and became the court jester. The name Raja Birbal was given by the Emperor. Birbal's duties in Akbar's court were mostly military and administrative. He was also a poet and his collections under the pen name "Brahma" are preserved in Bharatpur Museum. Raja Birbal died in battle, in an attempt to subdue unrest amongst Afghani tribes in Northwest India.
Raja Todar Mal:	Raja Todar Mal, a Hindu Khatri was Akbar's finance minister, who from 1560 onwards overhauled the revenue system in the kingdom.
Raja Man Singh:	Raja Man Singh, the prince of Amber was a trusted general in Akbar's army and was the grandson of Akbar's father-in-law Bharmal. Raja Man Singh was the foremost (7000 Mansabdari) and ablest among Akbar's military commanders and assisted Akbar in many fronts including holding off advancing Hakim (Akbar's half-brother) in Lahore. He was also the Mughal viceroy of Afghanistan, led campaigns in Bihar, Orissa, Deccan, and was also the viceroy of Bengal.
Abdul Rahim Khan-I-Khana:	Abdul Rahim Khan-I-Khana, son of Akbar's trusted general and tutor. Best known for his Hindi couplets.
Fakir Aziao-Din:	Fakir Aziao-Din was a Sufi mystic and an advisor.
Mirza Aziz Koka:	Mirza Aziz Koka aka. Khan-i-Azam or Kotaltash was one of the leading nobles and also the foster brother of Akbar. He also served as a Subedar of Gujarat.

ENGLISH WORKSHOP [PAGE 108]

English Workshop | Q 1 | Page 108

Pick out Archaic words from the poem and give their modern equivalents.

	Archaic Words	Modern Equivalents
(a)		
(b)		
(c)		
(d)		
(e)		

SOLUTION

	Archaic Words	Modern Equivalents
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(a)	maiden	Unmarried girl/spinster
(b)	thy	your
(c)	thine	yours
(d)	twere	It were
(e)	lo	used to draw attention to an interesting or amazing event.
(f)	thee	you (object)

English Workshop | Q 2. (a) | Page 108

Who said the following, to whom, and when?

“Mighty thy Teacher must be and divine.”

SOLUTION

Akbar said this to Tansen after he heard him sing the Deepak Rag.

English Workshop | Q 2. (b) | Page 108

Who said the following, to whom, and when?

“He dwells within a cave of Himalaya.”

SOLUTION

Tansen replied with the above line when Akbar asked him about his teacher.

English Workshop | Q 2. (c) | Page 108

Who said the following, to whom, and when?

“As you desire, Huzoor.”

SOLUTION

Tansen said to Akbar when Akbar expressed a desire to visit Tansen's teacher in the Himalayas to hear him sing.

English Workshop | Q 2. (d) | Page 108

Who said the following, to whom, and when?

“O Holy Master, bless us with thy song !”

SOLUTION

Tansen and Akbar travelled through the mountains and kneeling before the Ostad said the above lines requesting him to sing a song for them.

English Workshop | Q 2. (e) | Page 108

Who said the following, to whom, and when?

“Ah no, to thee I sing: he sings to God.”

SOLUTION

Tansen said to Akbar when Akbar asked him to sing the same raga for him.

English Workshop | Q 3 | Page 108

Rearrange the following in their proper order as in the poem. Write the serial number against each line:-

- (a) The Ustad sang the Malkous Raga enchantingly.
- (b) Akbar followed Tansen, dressed miserably.
- (c) I request you to sing such a song that will I experience unmatched joy.
- (d) Ustad was nowhere to be seen.
- (e) O Divine Teacher, please gift us the joy of your song.
- (f) One day, the singer sang Deepak Raga in the court.
- (g) Akbar expressed his wish to meet the Teacher.
- (h) He experienced heavenly delight.
- (i) Tansen sings to please the earthly king but Ustad devotes his songs to God.
- (j) She sang Raga Malhar, which had a cooling effect.

SOLUTION

- (f) One day, the singer sang Deepak raga in the court.
- (j) She sang Rag Malhar, which had a cooling effect.
- (g) Akbar expressed his wish to meet the Teacher one.
- (b) Akbar followed Tansen, dressed miserably.
- (e) O Divine Teacher, please gift us the joy of your song.
- (a) The Ustad sang the Malkous Raga enchantingly.
- (h) He experienced a heavenly delight.
- (d) Ustad was nowhere to be seen.
- (c) I request you to sing such a song that I will experience unmatched joy.
- (i) Tansen sings to please the earthly king but Ustad devotes his songs to God.

English Workshop | Q 4. (a) | Page 108

Write the reason in your own words.

Akbar strongly desired to hear Ustad sing.

SOLUTION

Akbar was spellbound by Tansen's Deepak Rag. He could only imagine how great his teacher would be and what heavenly joy one would experience through his songs. So Akbar strongly desired to hear Ustad sing.

English Workshop | Q 4. (b) | Page 108

Write the reason in your own words.

Akbar had to dress like a slave.

SOLUTION

Spellbound by Tansen's Deepak Raga, Akbar could only imagine how great his teacher would be. So he wished to hear his teacher's song. Tansen explained that Ostad lives in a cave in the Himalayas and rejects earthly wealth and dislikes earthly kings. So Akbar did not mind if he had to dress as a slave to experience heavenly joys of the Ostad's sound.

English Workshop | Q 4. (c) | Page 108

Write the reason in your own words.

After the song, Ostad had vanished.

SOLUTION

Before Akbar could return from his heavenly dream and praise Ostad for his singing, Ostad had vanished as he did not wish to be praised by them. He sang only for the Gods and so found earthly applause and awards unworthy.

English Workshop | Q 4. (d) | Page 108

Write the reason in your own words.

Ostad's song was more elating than Tansen's songs.

SOLUTION

Tansen sang to please the king whereas Ostad sang to please God. Tansen sang for the king and so his songs could only provide earthly pleasure. Ostad would devote his songs to God which filled his songs with divine joy, making it more elating than Tansen's songs.

English Workshop | Q 5 | Page 108

What message does the poet wish to convey through this narrative poem, 'Tansen'?

SOLUTION

The message the poet wishes to convey through this narrative poem "Tansen" is he explains our condition of today. In music, in painting, in poetry man's first thought is, "How will it be? What will people say of it?" When inspiration is sacrificed to the material world how can the soul ever dance? In his attachment to the external world, man has lost touch with his own self.

As a man grows, the more he is successful in worldly affairs, the more he loses contact with his inner being. For a truly harmonious existence, one has to connect to his soul and through it to God. It is then that magic will unfold in one's life.

English Workshop | Q 6 | Page 108

Summarise this poem in your own words in 8 to 10 lines, highlighting only the main points.

SOLUTION

The poem tells us about an incident that happened in Emperor Akbar's court. Tansen, the famous singer from Akbar's court once sang Deepak Raga (the song of fire) so intensely that he was himself engulfed in this musical fire. It was only when a maiden was summoned to sing the Malhar raga (the song of rain) did Tansen's health recover. Emperor Akbar was extremely pleased by Tansen's song, praised him and desired to listen to his teacher's song.

So they travelled to the Himalayan cave where Ustad resided, dressed as poor slaves, and pleaded to the Ustad for a song. The Ustad then enchanted them with the Malkaous raga and bestowed bliss to Akbar's soul. But as Akbar returned from his enchanted dream to praise Ustad, he found him gone.

Tansen then explained that he cannot recreate the magic of Ustad because he is used to singing for earthly kings but the Ustad aims to please God and therefore possesses a certain magical prowess that none can attain.