

Chapter 2

A Pair of Mustachios

Solutions of Questions on Page No 17:

Question 1:

What do you understand of the natures of Ramanand and Azam Khan from the episode described?

Answer:

Seth Ramanand was a man whose every move was a calculated one. He was not one from a rich background, though he built up his business on the maxim that the customer is always right. Whereas, Khan Azam Khan was an impractical man. He took pride in his lineage and lived onto it though due to his false ego he became a pauper in the end.

Question 2:

Identify instances in the story that show the business acumen of Ramanand.

Answer:

Ramanand was a shrewd man who had a great business acumen. He was nothing if he was not amenable, having built up his business on the maxim that the customer is always right. When Azam came to him, Ramanand did agree to let his moustache give Azam money against his wife's trinkets. However, Azam noticed after trading that the other end of Ramanand's moustache was still up. It was wise of Ramanand to turn down his moustache to keep his customer happy, however, he saved his pride as well by letting the other moustache up which made Azam, who lived in his false ego, to trade more gold to make him turn down Ramanand's moustache. The whole game did save the honour of Azam to which he lived, but it actually made him a pauper to have traded his everything to satisfy his pride, while Ramanand gained taking advantage

of Azam's foolishness.

Question 3:

Both Ramanand and Azam Khan seem to have very fixed views. How does Ramanand score over Azam Khan towards the end of the story?

Answer:

Ramanand was a money minded man who would agree to his customer. Was not this how he had built all his money? However, Azam was a man who lived by his worn out pride, tracing his lineage that his father was a Sultan. He was proud in vain. He was determined that only a man who is successor of a warrior or is associated with a royal house can have a Tiger moustache. And a money lender is supposed to have a goat moustache. Ramanand did agree to Azam every time and turned the tip of his moustache down to keep his customer happy while raising the other end to tempt him to return with another possession to bargain. Stubborn they both were in their trading and pride. It helped Ramanand to gain possessions while Azam became a pauper bargaining all that he possessed to feed his false pride.

Question 1:

The episode has been narrated in a light vein. What social mores does the author seem to ridicule?

Answer:

The author has mocked the society and its people who live in false pride of their community or lineage. How a fool who knows not of the practical matters and just to feed their image they go ahead auctioning their actual possessions. And such people are fooled by the smarter ones like Ramanand who bend but do not break. They alter their values according to the need of the situation but do not compromise entirely on their pride. They are the cunning ones who take advantage of fools who are stuffed with their worn out social status and forsake the present to protect the past. The author has ridiculed such people who weave their

fall with their insensibilities.

Question 2:

What do you think are the reasons for the references made to the English people and the British monarchy?

Answer:

Indian society, unfortunately, is the one that takes pride in the language and culture of their rulers and not in their own rich and vibrant history. The nabobs and *babus* that were in British Raj are still looked up and are respected. Though the truth is that these are the people that ensured English Queen's authority on our land. The reference in the story of Mulk Raj Anand makes it clear. He cites an example of how the nabobs and generals in English army are to wear the prestigious lion moustache, which is worn by resplendent *rajas* and *maharajas* of our land. This makes clear how we Indians take pride in being slaves of Britishers.

Question 3:

What do you think is the message that the author seems to convey through the story?

Answer:

The author has tried to make a point that how people living by age old impractical values weave their own fall and create unnecessary disturbance in the society. One should evolve as the time advances and the society grows. Sticking to false pride is not what will bring prosperity to one. One must be cautious and keep a wide eye to see if one is taking advantage of their virtues.

Question 1:

Comment on the way in which the theme of the story has been introduced.

Answer:

One may find the introduction too abstract and may wonder what the story holds. In the beginning, it seems that it might be an essay on how Indians take pride on their style of moustaches. It is only later the reader realises the significance of the introduction. The author wisely served the reader with the detail description of the object around which the whole story will revolve. How men rise and fall by altering and sticking to their status symbols, such as moustachios.

Question 2:

How does the insertion of dialogue in the story contribute to its interest?

Answer:

It is rather incorrect to say that there is any insertion of dialogue in the story. The story is in the dialogue form in itself. However,, in the beginning, it is a little descriptive and the author alone goes on narrating the significance of the moustachios and the pride of different class associated with their particular style of moustaches. However, it serves as an introduction to the actual story giving a picture to the reader of what values will be cause of various turns in events in the story.

Question 1:

Nouveau riche and bourgeoisie are French words. Collect from newspapers, magazines and other sources some more French words or expressions that are commonly used in English.

Answer:

T?e-t?e, entrepreneur, envelope, enclave are some French words in English.

Question 2:

Locate expressions in the text which reflect the Indian idiom, for example, the pride of the generations of his ancestors.

Answer:

Here are a few Indian idioms reflected in the text.

Seed of a donkey

To become a mere worm

Oily lentil-eaters

Question 3:

We 'draw up a deed'. Complete the following phrases with appropriate words

- a. one's word
- b. one's will
- c. ends meet
- d. a loan
- e. a deaf ear to

Answer:

- a. To give one's word
- b. Carry out one's will
- c. To make ends meet
- d. To owe a loan

e. Give a deaf ear to