

## **B.Com- Ist Year**

### **Topic-1**

#### **Ch-1 (The Judgement Seat of Vikramaditya)**

The story “**The Judgement Seat of Vikramaditya**” is written by **Sister Nivedita** who was a disciple of Swami Vivekananda. She has written many books on Indian life and legends with understanding and sympathy. The story “The Judgement Seat of Vikramaditya” is taken from the book ‘**Cradle Tales of Hinduism**’.

Vikramaditya was the king of Ujjain which was a very famous city in the history of India. It was famous as a seat of learning. Kalidas, the famous poet, lived here. In the hearts of Indian people, one name that is given great respect is Vikramaditya. His name is permanently linked with the beginning of an era. His name can never be forgotten in India. He was famous for his justice.

Vikramaditya was like King Arthur or like Alfred the Great. He was considered to be the greatest judge in Indian history. Vikramaditya was never deceived. Nor did he ever punish the wrong man. The guilty trembled when they came before him for they knew that his eyes would look straight into their guilt. And those who came to him with difficult problems were always satisfied by the way he solved them. And so, in India after him whenever any judge pronounced his judgement, it was said of him, “Ah! He must have sat on the judgment seat of Vikramaditya”. After his death, his palace and his fort were changed into ruins. The place where his palace stood turned into grassland where shepherds grazed their cattle. The rich, learned and wise men who lived in the king’s court remembered this.

The story happened a long time ago. The palace of Vikramaditya was totally ruined .It was covered with sand, dust and grass. The shepherds used to graze their cows early in the morning and returned in the evening. When it was time to return, a shepherd-boy would call out from the edge of the pasture and all the cattle along with their cow herds would gather round him and together they would turn homewards. The shepherd boys led their life like this in the village. When the cows were grazing in the fields, the shepherd boys used to play with each other. All over the village could be heard the sound of boys playing. Men seated round some trees. Women gossiped in their houses.

One day they found a playground. The ground under the trees was rough and uneven. Here and there, the ends of a great stone peeped out. Many of the stones were beautifully decorated. In the middle, there was a green mound, which looked very much like a judge’s seat.

At last one of the boys thought so and sat on it. He cried, "I'll be the judge and you can bring all your cases before me, and we will have trials." Then he straightened his face and became very grave to act the part of judge. Others saw the fun at once and whispered among them. They picked up some quarrel and appeared before him. They requested him to make a decision upon the matter. Each group stated their case, one saying that a certain field was theirs, another saying that it was not and so on. They all wanted him to settle the dispute. All of a sudden, a strange thing made itself felt. The boy, who appeared so common before he sat down on the mound, looked so different now. He had become so serious that his behavior was so strange that all present got frightened. They thought that it was fun. They put up a fresh case before him. He gave his judgment. This continued for many hours. He listened to complaints and gave appropriate decisions. And then he jumped down from his place. He appeared like a common cow-herd. From then onwards, all the complicated disputes were put before him. And always the same thing happened. The spirit of knowledge and justice would come to him and he would show them the truth. But when he came down from his seat, he would be no different from the other boys.

This news spread in the countryside. Grown-up men and women from all the villages would bring their disputes in the court of the cowherd boy and always they received a judgement that both sides understood and so went away satisfied. Ujjain was no longer the capital of state. The king had shifted to another place. Now the king, who lived far away from Ujjain, heard this story. He said, "That boy must have definitely sat on the judgment-seat of Vikramaditya." The king's guess was correct, as the ruins about the meadows were once Vikramaditya's palace. He thought that if merely sitting on the mound brought wisdom and strength to the shepherd boy, then it should be dug deep and the judgement seat to be found. He would sit on it and heard all the cases. He said that the spirit of Vikramaditya would fall on him and he would be a just king.

The king ordered many labourers to start the digging. The boy who had been the self-made judge was sorrowful; he felt that something very dear to him was being taken away. At last, something was found. They found a slab of black marble, supported on the hands and wings of twenty five stone-angles. Surely it was the judgement-seat of Vikramaditya. With great rejoicing, it was brought to the city and placed in the hall of justice. The king ordered his people to observe three day's prayer fasting and announced that on the fourth day he would ascend the throne publicly. At last the great morning came and crowds assembled to see the king would take his seat. Walking through the long hall, the judges and priests of the kingdom came, followed the king, then as they reached near the seat of judgment, they parted into two rows, the king walked up in the middle, bowed his head and went straight to marble slab. When the king was about to sit on the

throne, one of the angels began to speak, “Stop”, it said, “Do you think that you are worthy to sit on the judgement-seat of Vikramaditya? Have you never desired to rule over kingdoms that were not your own?” For a while he did not speak. He knew his life was unjust. After a long silence, he spoke “No”, he said, “I am not worthy”. The angel said, “Go then and fast and pray for three days, so that you may purify yourself and be worthy to sit on the throne.” With these words it spread its wings and flew away. The king prepared himself – with prayer and with fasting -- to come again and sat on the judgment-seat of Vikramaditya. But this time again, the same thing happened. Another stone-angle asked him if he had ever desired to possess the riches of others. The king admitted that he had done so and, therefore, he was not worthy to sit on the judgment-seat.

In this way, whenever the king tried to occupy the throne, he was questioned by an angel and he had to withdraw. This went on until the last angel was left supporting the marble-slab. The king went near the throne with great confidence, for he felt sure of being allowed to take his place that day. But as he came near the seat, the last angel spoke, “Are you, then, perfectly pure in heart, O king? Is your heart as pure as that of a little child? The king thought for a moment and said that he was not pure. On hearing the response of the king, the angel flew away into the air carrying the slab on his head. Hence, the king in the story was found lacking in several respects. This was how the judgment-seat of Vikramaditya disappeared from the earth forever.

## Topic-2

### The Selfish Giant

“**The Selfish Giant**” is a story written by **Oscar Wilde**. He has written many stories. This story is meant to be read by the children. This story teaches us a moral lesson. The message of the story is co-existence and spreading love. It advises us not to be selfish. Children are the finest flowers in the garden of God. God is also with us when we give up our selfish nature and we become kind to others. It is a story of a young boy who is a messenger of God and a selfish giant.

“The Selfish Giant” is the story of a giant, his garden and the children. There lived a grand giant who lived in a big house. He had a beautiful garden, but he never let anyone to enter into his garden. Whenever he was away, children used to come there to play. One day, the giant decided to visit his friend and left for the

neighbouring kingdom. The giant came back from his friend's place after seven years. Seeing the children playing in his garden, he angrily chased them away. Their happy voices infuriated the giant. He became angry to see the children playing, he shunned the children out of his garden and built a tall fence around it and put up a notice-board.

### **“TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED”**

Now, the children could not come to the garden and played there. Poor children had nowhere to play. They tried to play on the road but it was too dusty and filled with hard rocks. The children began to remember how happy they were, when they played in the garden. The trees and flowers were so sad that they lost their beauty and were covered with snow and frost. No birds came to sing there. As the seasons passed, the time for spring came, the giant waited eagerly to see his garden bloomed with beautiful flowers. However, he waited and waited but spring never came to his garden. The only residents in his garden were Frost and the Snow that covered the trees and grass. They invited the North Wind over who came wrapped in fur and roared all day about the garden. They thought it was a delightful place and invited the Hail who came dressed in grey.

Many days passed by and the giant worried about his garden until one day he woke up in the morning hearing the laughter of the children and he saw the spring had touched his garden. Spring arrived in the garden to express its happiness on seeing the children again. The giant was very happy and he ran outside to play with the children who had entered the garden through a small hole in the fence. He realized that he had been selfish and was very sorry for what he had done. He let the children play in the garden every day. As he started playing with them he noticed a small boy stuck on the top of the tree. He was favourite among the children who had kissed him. The giant lovingly brought him down and when he asked his name, he ran away. The Giant broke down the wall and opened the garden for kids. Every afternoon, children would come to play with him after school. From then, the giant waited for his little friend to come but he never came.

After a very long time, when the giant was old, he wake up in the morning and saw his little friend in the blooming garden. He quickly ran out. The child had imprints of two nails on his hands and two on his little feet. The Giant asked him the name of the person who wounded him. The child told him that those were the wounds of Love. Instantly, the Giant was struck with awe and he knelt before the child. The little child told him that once he allowed him to play in his garden, now it was time for the Giant to come into his garden, which is paradise. He told him

that he was the Christ and had come to take him to Heaven with him. The giant died peacefully and his soul rested in Heaven.

In the afternoon, when the children came to play in the Giant's garden, they found the Giant lying lifeless on the ground with white blossoms all over him.

### **Topic-3**

#### **Engine Trouble**

**“Engine Trouble”** is a humorous essay written by **R.K. Narayan**. This story has been taken from one of the famous works **“An Astrologer’s Day”**. The title **“Engine Trouble”** seems as if there is an engine that needs to be repaired but in reality, it depicts problems that were carried by a man from that road engine. The story presents the idea that an event that should bring happiness and contentment brings a lot of pain and suffering. In this story, R.K. Narayan had shown the suffering of a common man who once got a chance to win the lottery.

The story started with a fair in the village where games, swings, many different sorts of things and lottery tickets were available. A showman came and brought with him his Gaiety land. The Gymkhana grounds were used for the festivities and the whole town poured in to see the show. The narrator went to that fair with his wife and then the lottery game began. There were many prizes in the lottery but one prize was so big and covered with a black cloth. All were buying tickets to get that big prize out of greed. So, the narrator also bought that ticket. Finally, the narrator won that ticket and came to know that it was a big road engine. He was astonished to see that engine as he did not know how to ride that and exactly what to do with that engine. He dreamed of selling that engine at a very high rate. All congratulated him.

The narrator asked the host of the show how he would take that gift home. The host replied **“I can’t help you with this and it’s your responsibility to take it home but you are allowed to keep it here till the fair is going on”**. Then, the narrator realized that he was trapped seriously. The lottery prize proved to be an unlucky prize. Next day, when he went near the road, he saw a notice from the Municipal Corporation that he would have to pay 100 Rs as rent every month because he was using a government place. He got tensed as 100 Rs was a huge amount. He asked his wife to give her jewellery to sell and pay the tax. Later, he thought of selling that roller at cheaper rates and got rid of it. He tried to convince as many people but failed as nobody was interested in buying that.

Three months later, even then he was not able to sell it. Then, he got an idea of selling the engine to Municipal Corporation itself. He reached the head of the Municipal Corporation and had a fight with him. The head gave him another notice

to remove that engine within 24 hours. He felt upset. Then, a friend allowed him to park that engine in his fields for two months. The narrator could not find a man who could handle that engine. He and his wife went to the temple and talked to the priest. The priest suggested they could use the temple's elephant in removing that engine from government property. Another priest advised him that this could not be done by an elephant alone and he would need some labourers as well. The narrator agreed to arrange fifty coolies for this purpose. All labourers and elephants were there to pull the road engine. A large crowd was there to see the strange sight. The engine was not rolling rather it was moving in a straight direction. A driver was also there to move the engine but all in vain. The engine got smashed into a wall and broke it. The owner slapped the narrator and filed a police complaint. The police put the narrator in jail.

Then, the owner of the wall asked the narrator to build that wall in order to get free from the jail. The narrator agreed to build a wall within a month. He was released from jail. The narrator returned home and paid some amount to the elephant owner, labourers and driver by selling his wife's jewellery. Then his wife got angry and left his place with the children. She asked him that she would return home when this engine would be sold.

Later on, a Swami came to the town that performed various impossible feats and insisted on having a road engine run over his chest. He swallowed pieces of glass, drank acids, and buried himself underground. At the end of the performance, he delivered a speech. He remarked that he was serving humanity and carrying his master's message to the people. He asked the Municipal Chairman to bring a road engine which he would drive over his chest. The narrator offered the Swami his engine. The spectators moved to the compound wall. The Swami placed one pillow near his head and another at his feet. He made a chalk mark on his chest, and instructed his assistant to drive the engine over his chest. The engine was about to move when a police-inspector appeared on the spot. The inspector brought orders from the magistrate of the town that the Swami could not drive the engine over his chest. The Swami became very angry and decided to leave the place at once. The narrator requested the Swami's assistant to drive the road engine to the field. But the assistant refused to oblige him. The narrator was puzzled. He did not see any way out from his difficulties.

One day the narrator was sleeping and he felt an earthquake when he tumbled down from his bed. Other villagers also came out of the houses out of fear. The narrator went out and saw that the engine was not there. He was shocked and tried to find it. He found that the engine was trapped in a sewer line outside the house of that wall owner whose wall was earlier broken by this engine. But this time, the owner requested him not to remove that road engine from that sewer line. Because the wall owner was also getting notices from the municipal corporation

and now his problems were solved as the sewer was covered by the road engine. He also asked him not to pay for the broken wall. The narrator told him that he had spent a lot of money on it. His wife was also in anger so he could not leave that engine here. Then the owner said that he would pay all of the expenses.

Eventually, he got rid of the road engine and got all of his money back. The narrator heaved a sigh of relief. His troubles ended. The narrator could live his life again without the concerns that were brought upon him by his winning of the road engine. Life could be returned to normal for the narrator.

#### **Topic-4**

#### **The conjuror's Revenge**

“**The Conjuror's Revenge**” is written by **Stephen Leacock**. He is known to be a humorous writer. This story gives us the idea that we should not make fun of the skill and knowledge of another person. The story tells us how a conjuror teaches a lesson to a person who tries to spoil his magic show.

The conjuror was a magician. The conjuror performed several tricks for the audience and amused them. He had a certain amount of skills with which he showed his tricks and earned his living. The conjuror in the lesson was showing his tricks to a group of people. Each time he performed a trick the Quick Man, who was crazy and fast in grasping, quick-witted but cunning, in the audience would say that the trick was done with the help of items hidden up the conjuror's sleeve. The conjuror produced a bowl of goldfish from a piece of empty cloth. Most of the people praised him for his skill. But, there was a Quick Man who told the people around that the conjuror had the bowl of goldfish up his sleeve. The people agreed with the Quick man. The next trick that was shown by the conjuror was Hindustani Rings. He joined the separate rings. People were surprised. But the quick man again said that he had hidden another lot of rings near his sleeve. The people nodded and whispered the same. After this, the conjuror decided to show a very amusing trick by taking out a number of eggs from a hat. He wanted some gentleman in the audience to lend him his hat. He was able to get from the audience. He took many eggs out of the hat. This trick surprised the people. They said that he was wonderful. But, the quick man again said that the conjuror had a hen up his sleeve. It went on like that. For all the other tricks that the conjuror performed which included cards, bread, and a rocking chair –the Quick Man said that these must have had it up his sleeve. The reputation and the skill of conjuror touched below zero. These constant comments by the Quick Man upset the conjuror but he did not show it and went on with his tricks. The Quick Man's comments made the audience feel that the tricks were nothing special and were as

a result of the conjuror having things hidden up his sleeve. This upset the conjuror. In spite of his discomfort, he went on performing one trick after the other till he could take it no more. He decided to take revenge.

The conjuror told the people that he was going to end the show. But he requested the quick man to lend him his gold watch. Appearing to perform a trick using items borrowed from Quick Man – he took the Quick Man’s watch and pounds it into pieces. He paid no heed when Quick Man told the audience that the watch had slipped into the conjuror’s sleeve. The conjuror then took the Quick Man’s handkerchief and punched holes in it. The Quick Man thought that this was also a trick which he did not understand. The conjuror then took the Quick Man’s silk hat and crushed it by dancing. He then proceeded to burn the Quick Man’s collar and smashed his spectacles. The quick man looked puzzled. The Conjuror told the audience that with the gentleman’s permission, he had broken his watch, burnt his collar, smashed his glasses and danced on his hat. He would like to entertain the audience if the gentleman permitted him to paint green stripes on his overcoat or to tie his suspenders in a knot. He was unable to give any reason for what the conjuror had done. Later, the Quick Man and the entire audience towards the end realized that what the conjuror did with the Quick Man’s things were actually destroyed and were not tricks. Thus, the conjuror’s revenge was completed after he destroyed the belongings of the Quick Man. The conjuror had succeeded in fooling the Quick Man with his permission. At no point of time did the Quick Man realized that the Conjuror was taking his revenge. So, the moral of the story is that, If we unnecessarily irritate or cause any harm to another person, we will have to face the consequences.

## Topic-5

### The Man who knew too much

“**The man who knew too much**” is the story written by **Alexander Baron**. He has written many novels. He also served during the Second World War. This story is an account of a man who knows a lot. His show off and over- confidence proves to be his weakness rather than his strength.

This story is about a man who had a great knowledge of various things. The narrator called him Private Quelch. He had been recently admitted into the army. He was keen to earn medals and positions. So, he kept on increasing his knowledge. Private Quelch was a trainee. He had a good knowledge in military affairs. He always showed off his knowledge. A nickname was given to him and that was ‘Professor’. Anybody who had a doubt in the subject would lose it after a talk with Quelch. One day in musketry, when the Sergeant was taking a lesson



about rifles, he mentioned a round -off value of two thousand feet per second. Professor interrupted and corrected it at two thousand four hundred and forty feet per second. The sergeant was irritated by this and asked questions at the end of sessions to seek revenge but every time, the professor knew all the answers related to the technical definitions, the parts of the rifle, how to use and its care. He knew all the answers because of his intelligent reading. When the sergeant asked him how he got all this knowledge. Then he said that he used to read enormously. He borrowed training manuals and burnt the midnight oil to learn them. He told his colleagues that he was sure to get a commission soon. So, as a man of positive attitudes and high ambitions, he focused on his career growth. First he wanted to get his stripes and then his commission. Army loved such individuals.

The professor worked hard. He borrowed training manuals and stayed up late at night and read them. He would not allow any other co-trainee to get appreciation. If his co-trainee made a mistake the Quelch corrected him publicly. He behaved in such a way as if he were superior to all. It irritated everyone. He, however, became unpopular with his batch mates because of his habit of lecturing them on any topic related to their training, right from the use of guns to the different ways of cleaning them. On another occasion, the drone of a plane flying overhead was heard. The Professor tried to show his superior knowledge by predicting the name of an aircraft just by its noise. All others felt small before him.

However, a change came in the professor's life. Corporal Turnbull was his turning point. He was a tough and strong man who came back from Dunkirk with all his equipments. He was teaching about grenades. He was the hero of the squad. Once, Corporal Turnbull said that the outside of a grenade was divided up into a large number of fragments. Professor interrupted him also. He said that the grenade was divided into forty four segments. Corporals didn't like this. However, he said nothing and resumed speaking. The professor again interrupted him by saying that he should not have started his lecture by explaining the different characteristics of grenade. All were thunder-struck.

To avoid further insult, Corporal told Professor to come and continued his lecture. A deep silence followed. The professor gave a very easy lecture on the grenade unaware of the rising irritation of the Corporal. All listened to him in a frightened kind of silence. Corporal Turnbull stood and watched. He thanked private Quelch and asked him to sit down. Then, Corporal announced that the officer had asked him to nominate one of them for a special purpose. Everybody thought that the private Quelch was going to be promoted. At the end of session, he said the cookhouse wanted a person for work and that he had selected Private Quelch. Then, he had to pay for his over enthusiasm by being sent to the cookhouse as punishment, much to the amusement. It was a great punishment for him. When the author went with his friend to the canteen and returned, they heard

a familiar voice. It was a professor. He was complaining about the way potatoes were peeled in the cookhouse and was showing his knowledge off. His friends mocked and ridiculed him for his exuberance. He appeared somewhat eccentric. He still didn't learn a lesson. So, the story teaches us the importance of humility and respect. The true intelligence lies not just in learning but in helping others with the knowledge you gain. Pride and arrogance can devalue and destroy the true rewards of knowledge and intelligence.