

THE LOST CHILD

THE CHILD GOES TO THE FAIR

It was the spring fair. All the people were going to it. Some walked. Some rode on horses, some in bullock carts. The little child ran with his parents. He was overjoyed. When he remained behind, his father asked him to come. He remained behind to see the toys in the shops. The little boy wanted the toy. But his parents couldn't buy it. So they asked him to look at other things.

OTHER THINGS ATTRACT THE CHILD

It was the season of mustard flowering. The fields looked gold with it. The dragon-flies were fluttering over the mustard flowers. The child tried to catch one of them. But he was called by his mother. He ran gaily towards his parents. He heard the dove cooing. He had picked up the petals in the grove then. He also ran round the banyan tree. But again he was called by his parents

THE CHILD WITH PARENTS REACHES THE FAIR

Soon the child reached the fair. He heard a sweetmeat seller calling 'gulab-jamun, rasogulla, burfi, jalebi'. The sweet shop was greatly decorated with different sweets. Seeing the sweets, the child's mouth watered. He said, 'I want that burfi'. 'Burfi' was his favourite sweet. But his saying so was unheeded.

VARIOUS SCENES OF THE FAIR

The child went ahead with his parents. He heard a flower-seller saying 'A garland of gulmohur'. The child went to the flower basket. He wanted a garland. But he knew his parents would refuse to buy him that. So he moved on. Then he saw a balloon seller. He had balloons of various colours. The child knew his parents would not buy him a balloon. So he walked on farther.

THE CHILD IS LOST

The child then saw a snake-charmer. He was playing a flute to a snake. He went near the snake-charmer. But he knew that his [parents had asked him not to

hear such music. So he went ahead. Then he saw a merry-go-round. Men, women, children etc, were enjoying a ride on it. The child called, "I want to go on the roundabout, please, Father, Mother". But there was no reply. The child had been lost.

THE CHILD IN A VERY BAD STATE.

A full deep cry rose within the child's deep throat. He cried, "Mother, Father". Tears rolled down his eyes. He cried and cried and ran to and fro. But he couldn't see his parents. People laughed and talked. Then he ran to a shrine. There was a big crowd there. The child went a bit ahead between the people's feet. But he was pushed back. A man heard his cry. He lifted him up in his arms.

THE MAN TRIES TO LOCATE THE CHILD'S PARENTS

The man asked the child how he got there. He also asked him the names of his parents. But the child only said, "I want my father". The man took the child to the merry-go-round. He asked him if he wanted to ride on the horse. But the child said only that he wanted his mother. Then the man asked him if he would take a balloon. But the child sobbed and sobbed. He wanted his father and mother only.

THE CHILD IS TAKEN TO THE FLOWER-SELLER AND SWEETMEAT SHOP

The man then took the child to the flower-seller. He asked him if he would like to put a flower garland round his neck. The child turned his nose. He only said, "I want my mother. I want my father". Then the man asked him which sweet he would like. The child turned his face. He only said, "I want my mother. I want my father."

NCERT QUESTIONS

Question 1.

What are the things the child sees on his way to the fair? Why does he lag behind?

Answer:

On his way to the fair the child sees toys, balloons of different colours, garland of gulmohur, a swing and a snake-charmer playing a flute. He gets attracted towards all these things. So, he lags behind.

Question 2.

In the fair he wants many things. What are they? Why does he move on without waiting for an answer?

Answer:

The child wants many things in the fair. He wants to have toys, different sweets, garland, balloons of different colours and has a keen desire to enjoy the roundabout. He moves on without waiting for an answer because whenever he stops to see things, his parents gave him a cautionary call, "come, child, come!"

Question 3.

When does he realise that he has lost his way? How have his anxiety and insecurity been described?

Answer:

The child sees a roundabout in the fair and gets attracted to it. He wants to have a ride on it. He asks his parents for permission to enjoy it. Having no response on the part of his parents he realises that he has lost his way. He starts crying bitterly at once and runs here and there in search of them.

Question 4.

Why does the lost child lose interest in the things that he had wanted earlier?

Answer:

The lost child loses interest in the things he had wanted earlier because he got lost in the fair. He is panic-stricken for being lost. Now he first wants his parents. He is afraid and feels unsafe.

Question 5.

What do you think happens in the end? Does the child find his parents?

Answer:

Yes I feel that the child finds his parents at last. The kind-hearted person must have tried his best to find his parents. On the other hand the parents of the child must have left no stone unturned to find their child.

Talk about it

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Question 1.

How to ensure not to get lost ?

Answer:

It is very common that children get lost in fairs and crowds. Hardly a day passes when no child gets lost. It is the duty of both the parents and the children to ensure not to get lost. The parents need to be vigilant and more careful at crowded places. Before entering a crowded place the parents should fix a point where the child should wait in case of getting lost. They should make the child memorise home address and telephone numbers. They should put or pin up a note on the pocket of the child with full details. They should attend to the need of the child and never leave him behind, in case he happens to stand at some shop.

On the other hand the child should hold the hands of his parents at a crowded place. He should keep an eye on his parents so as not to lose sight of them. In case of any emergency the help of police, help centres and media can be taken.

SOME VERY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS FROM EXAMINATION POINT OF VIEW

Question 1.

What are the things the child sees on his way to the fair?

Answer:

He sees people gaily dressed, some on horses, some in bamboo or bullock carts. He also sees toys, dragon 'flies, insects, worms, flowers, and doves on his way to the fair.

Question 2.

Why does the child lag behind?

Answer:

He lags behind because he is attracted by several of the things he sees on the way like toys, sweetmeats, dragonflies, flower garlands, the snake charmer and the roundabout.

Question 3.

What are the things that he wants at the fair?

Answer:

At first he wanted a burfi, then a garland of gulmohur flowers, next some colourful balloons, after that he was attracted by the snake charmer and finally he wanted a ride on the roundabout.

Question 4.

Why does the child move on without waiting for his parents' answer whenever he asked for things that attracted him?

Answer:

He moves on without waiting for an answer because he knew they would not pay attention to his demands or give him what he asked for.

Question 5.

When does the child realize that he had lost his way?

Answer:

At the roundabout, when he turned to request his parents to allow him to sit on the ride, he did not get any reply. When he looked around for them he realized he had strayed away from his parents and lost his way.

Question 6.

How has the lost child's anxiety and insecurity been described?

Answer:

His anxiety and insecurity have been described through his reaction to his realisation that he was lost. Tears rolled down his cheeks, his throat became dry, his face flushed and convulsed with fear and he ran in all directions in panic without knowing where to go.

Question 7.

Why does the lost child lose interest in the things that he had wanted earlier?

Answer:

He lost all interest in the things that he had wanted earlier because he felt fearful and insecure at being separated from his parents and all he wanted was to be reunited with them.

Question 8.

What do you think happens in the end? Does the child find his parents?

Answer:

This question can be answered in either way. In my opinion the child is reunited with his parents who are also searching for him and find him crying in a stranger's lap.

OR

No, the child is not reunited with his parents but is taken by the man who finds him and is brought up by him.

Question 9.

Why was the fair being held in the village?

Answer:

It was being held to celebrate the spring season.

Question 10.

What tells us that the little boy was excited about going to the fair?

Answer:

The fact that the little boy has been described as "brimming over with life and laughter" tells us that he was happy and excited to be going to the fair.

Question 11.

Compare the reactions of the father and mother at the child's request for a toy.

Answer:

The father glared at him angrily 'in his familiar tyrant's way' while the mother looked at him tenderly and diverted his attention from the toys.

Question 12.

What made the mother caution the child?

Answer:

The fact that the child had wandered off into the mustard field trying to catch a butterfly made the mother call out to him to come back on to the footpath.

Question 13.

What was the boy engrossed in when his parents sat in the shade of a grove, near a well?

Answer:

The boy was engrossed in watching little insects and worms that were teeming out along the footpath.

Question 14.

What diverted the child's attention from the shower of flower petals in the grove?

Answer:

The cooing of doves diverted the child's attention from the raining flower petals.

Question 15.

How did the boy react on nearing the village where the fair was being held? Why?

Answer:

He felt both attracted and repelled at the sight of the large number of people who had converged at the village to enjoy the fair.

Question 16.

Why did the child not ask his parents to buy him the burfi?

Answer:

The child knew that his parents would not listen to his request and would call him greedy for wanting

Question 17.

Why did the child move away from the flower seller without asking his parents for a garland?

Answer:

He was aware that his parents would refuse to buy him a garland and say that they were cheap.

Question 18.

Why did the child not ask his parents to buy him balloons even though he was fascinated by them?

Answer:

He knew his parents would say that he was too old to play with the balloons so he did not ask his parents to buy them for him.

Question 19.

What made the child move on from the snake charmer?

Answer:

The child had been forbidden by his parents from listening to the music being played by the-snake charmer, which they had termed as coarse, so he moved away from the snake-charmer.

Question 20.

Where did the child finally decide to ask his parents to let him enjoy the delights at the fair? Why?

Answer:

At the roundabout the sight of the machine in full swing with men and women shrieking, crying and laughing out aloud in excitement, encouraged the child to ask his parents to be permitted to ride the roundabout.

Question 21.

Where and how did the child meet his saviour?

Answer:

The child met his saviour near the entrance of a temple where he was almost at the point of being trampled under the feet of the jostling crowd.

Question 22.

How did the man try to quieten the crying lost child?

Answer:

He first took him to the roundabout, then to the snake-charmer, next the balloon seller, after that to the flower-seller and finally to the sweetmeat seller, hoping to quieten the crying lost child.

Question 23.

How was the boy's reaction to the attractions of the fair different after getting separated from his parents?

Answer:

He lost all interest in the attractions of the fair and kept crying for his parents.

Question 24.

Do you think the title of the story is appropriate?

Answer:

Yes, the title appropriately captures the essence of the story. It highlights the plight of a little child who is lost in a fair and it captures the emotions that the child goes through on being separated from his parents. It shows how the child who a moment ago is excited at the sights and sounds of the fair suddenly loses interest in all these sights once he realises that he is lost.

Question 25.

Describe in detail all the attractions that the child is drawn to till he gets lost in the fair.

Answer:

Right till the time he loses his parents, the child is attracted to it. several things that he sees on his way. At first it is the toys being sold at the wayside shops.

Then he is attracted to the dragonflies in the mustard field. Next he is drawn to the worms and insects on the footpath and the shower of flower petals and the cooing of the pigeons. On reaching the fair he is first tempted by the goodies being sold by the sweetmeat seller and then by the colourful balloons of the balloon-seller. Next he is drawn by the sound of the snake charmer and finally he is mesmerized by the roundabout with children and adults enjoying the rides.

Question 26.

Do you consider the child's behaviour as depicted in the story normal? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer:

Yes, the child's behaviour was normal. The story very clearly depicts the behaviour of a young child who is attracted by everything he sees around him. The child is not only attracted to toys and sweets but also fascinated by the natural wonders of the world like dragonflies, pigeons, flowers and snakes.

This is a reflection of the universal phenomenon of a child's attraction and fascination with the natural world. As mentioned in the story the child is both 'repelled and fascinated' by the colourful world around him which is normal for any young child. The crowds and noise repel a child while the colourful world and the sights of the fair fascinate him.

Question 27.

The story describes certain attractions which may not be so attractive to a modern child. Can you pick up some of them from the story – 'The Lost Child'.

Answer:

A modern city child has very little interaction with nature on a daily basis, unlike the lost child. They have very little possibility of being allowed to run wild in a yellow mustard field or being interested in doing so. Technology has taken away a lot of their time and hence he or she does not have the time to run after dragonflies or butterflies or simply rejoice under the rain of flower petals from a gulmohur tree.

With their exposure to amusement parks and water parks with mechanised rides and an artificially created ambience, they would probably not even feel comfortable in natural surroundings. However if the child is allowed free rein to interact with nature he/she would probably find the natural affinity that a human being has for nature and behave in the same manner as the lost child in the story.

Question 28.

Describe the character of the child as depicted in the story.

Answer:

The child is very young, innocent and full of joy and energy. He finds everything around him exciting and fascinating, whether a dragonfly or toy displayed in a toy shop. Like any child he is easily distracted and his desires and interests keep on changing from sweetmeats to balloons to rides. He is not used to large crowds and is 'repelled and fascinated' by them.

His whole world revolves around his parents and he is deeply affected at his separation from them. He is obedient and disciplined and does not throw a tantrum to get his object of desire. He fears his father and approaches his mother whenever he is tempted by any of the objects he sees during his journey to the fair and at the fair itself.

Question 29.

How does the child in the story lose himself? How far is he responsible for his predicament?

Answer:

The child is wholly responsible for his predicament because at every stage we find him wandering off after one attraction or the other in spite of repeated instructions from his mother not to do so. Initially we find him staring down in front of the wayside toy shops. Next he wanders off into the mustard fields, chasing dragonflies. Then he slows down to admire the insects and worms that line the footpath.

After that he gets distracted by the rain of flower petals and the cooing of the doves and has to be pulled back to the main road by his mother. On entering the fair he again slows down in front of the sweetmeat seller, the flower seller, the snake charmer and the roundabout before realising that he is completely on his own.

Long Answer Type Questions (4 marks each)

(About 80-100 words)

Question 1:

What changes do you notice in the behaviour of the child, once he is separated from his parents in the story "The Lost Child"?

Answer:

A child along with his parents had been to a fair. He was very excited and happy with the stalls of toys and sweets. He gets separated from his parents and starts crying. He runs hither and thither in search of his parents, but in vain. Since the place was overcrowded he got real scared. He started crying as he was all alone. A kind hearted man offers him many things but he refuses. The child who wanted everything from the fair was now not interested in any of these things as he only yearned to be with his parents.

Question 2:

Compare the attitude of the child before and after his separation from his parents.

Answer:

Before separation the child was very happy and excited at the fair. He was fascinated with all the things that were displayed at the stalls. He wanted to have all the things like his favourite toys, sweets, flowers, etc. He also wanted to go for a ride. But after separation the boy just wanted to be with his parents. He was not interested in any of those things which he kept longing to have from the stalls. In the absence of his parents these things did not give him any satisfaction.

Question 3:

How did the man who found the little boy in the fair, try to soothe him?

Answer:

The man who found the little boy in the fair tried every possible way to soothe him. He took him to a roundabout swing then offered a horse ride, tried to make him listen to the snake charmer's song and offered him a balloon, as he thought that this would distract his mind, but in vain. He offered him flowers and sweets, but the child kept crying. The child could not be distracted by any of the things at the fair as he longed to be with his parents.

Question 4:

How do you know that the lost child was a nature – lover?

Answer:

The child was attracted to the nature's little aspects because of his innocence. When his mother diverted his attention towards the mustard field he saw the flowers which were in the nascent stage and flowering. The flowers of the field were pale like melting gold. He then saw a group of dragon flies which were bustling about on their purple wings, intercepting the flight of a lone black bee or butterfly in search of sweetness from the flowers. The child wanted to catch those dragon this but they went away fluttering and flapping. He also got attracted to the little insects and worms along the foot that were teeming out from their hiding places to enjoy the Sunshine. A shower of young flowers fell upon the child as he entered the fair. He forgot about his parents and began to gather the raining petals in his hands. Again when he heard the cooing of doves, he ran towards his parents shouting about them.

Question 5:

What all things did the child get attracted to, once he entered the fair? Was he able to get all the things he desired? What happened when he made a bold request to his parent?

Answer:

With a wide mouth, he stared at the sight of burfi. Later he was attracted to a garland of gulmohur and was carried away by the rainbow glory of the

coloured balloons. He wanted them all but, on the other hand, he also knew the answers of his parents, so he convinced himself and did not ask them for anything. Finally, he made a bold request for going on the roundabout. As he turned to get their reply, he could not find them behind him.