

CLASS – 9TH

Beehive- Chapter – 5th (Poem) A Legend of the Northland

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INTRODUCTION OF THE POEM

"A Legend of the Northland" is a ballad. It narrates the legend of an old lady who angered Saint Peter because of her miserliness. In Northland, where days are too short and nights too long, a story is told to the children and they like it. St. Peter once preached on the earth walking from place to place. One day, he was very hungry and wanted some food. He went to the door of a little woman who was baking cakes. The saint asked her to give him a cake out of her many cakes. The woman made a very little cake but she thought, it was too large to give away. She made another cake, but still found it too large to give away. In the end, she made a wafer-thin cake, but still could not give it. This angered the Saint, who called her too selfish to be a human being. He turned her into a woodpecker, who bores and bores tree-trunks for food.

This story has a lesson for humanity-Don't be miser. Be generous and kind to those who need your help.

SUMMARY

Far, far away, in the Northland, days are short and nights are long. People, there, use sledges which are drawn by reindeer. Children look like bear's cubs in their furs. A story is told to those children, which holds a lesson for the listeners. Once, when Saint Peter walked on the earth preaching, he came to the door of a little woman who was baking cakes on the hearth. As the saint was very hungry and very weak with fasting, he asked the woman for a cake from her store of cakes. The woman being selfish and miser, found her very little cake too large to give away. She baked another cake smaller than the first, but thought it was as large as the first one. In the end, she baked wafer-thin cake, which too she could not give to the saint. She put it away. The saint grew angry at this and turned the woman into a woodpecker, a bird that bores and bores dry wood to find its scanty food.

Poetic Devices Used in the Poem

Assonance- Repetition of vowel sounds.

Stanza 1 "Away, away..."

Simile- A device which compares two different things by using the words 'as' or 'like'.

Stanza 2 The children look like bears' cubs.

Consonance- Repetition of consonant sounds.

Stanza 2 swift, sledges, snows

Allusion- A reference to the statement, person, place etc from history, religion, literature or any other field.

Stanza 4 onwards Saint Peter

Repetition- Repetition of words/phrases in the same line, to emphasise an idea

Stanza 13 boring, and boring, and boring

Imagery- Use of words to represent objects, ideas or actions.

Stanza 15 Black as a coal in the flame

Stanza 16 Boring and boring for food.

Thinking About the Poem:

1. Which country or countries do you think "The Northland" refers to?

Ans. "The Northland" could refer to any extremely cold country in the earth's north polar region, such as, Greenland, the northern regions of Russia, Canada, Norway etc.

2. What did Saint Peter ask the old lady for? What was the lady's reaction?

Ans. Saint Peter was very hungry and weak because of fasting. He asked the lady for single cake from her store of cakes she had been baking. The lady found her cakes too large to give away. So, she started making a smaller cake for him. At last she did not give him anything to eat.

3. How did he punish her?

Ans. When the lady did not offer even a wafer-thin cake to the hungry saint, he got angry and turned the lady into a woodpecker, who has to build a nest and find its insufficient food by boring holes into dry wood.

4. How does the woodpecker get her food?

Ans. The woodpecker has to bore holes repeatedly in dry, hard trunks of trees to find its scanty food.

5. Do you think that the old lady would have been so ungenerous if she had known who Saint Peter really was? What would she have done then?

Ans. If she had known that the saint asking her for a cake was Saint Peter, an apostle of Christ, she would have behaved in a different way. She would have tried to seek his blessings for more

wealth and material things by being falsely generous towards him. Her greed would have made her a better human being, thought temporarily.

6. Is this a true story? Which part of this poem do you feel is the most important?

Ans. No, it is not a true story. It is a legend. The most important part of the story is where the selfish lady is changed to a bird, cursed to live in a nest and seek her food by boring and boring all day in the hard dry wood. Her punishment inspires us to be better human beings.

7. What is a legend? Why is this poem called a legend?

Ans. A legend is an old traditional story which is passed from one generation to another either verbally or orally. This poem narrates the legend of an old lady who angered Saint Peter because of her selfishness and ungenerous behaviour. Hence, this poem is a legend. A legend teaches us a moral lesson.

8. Write the story of 'A Legend of the Northland' in about ten sentences.

Ans. Once Saint Peter stopped at the door of an old lady's cottage as he was feeling hungry and weak after the day's fasting. The lady was baking cakes on the hearth. He asked her for a cake from her store of cakes. The selfish lady tried to bake small cake but each time they seemed too big for her to give away. Finally, she baked one that was as thin as a wafer. Unable to part with it too, she put it on the shelf and did not give any cake to the saint. Saint Peter was very angry with her for her behaviour and said she was too selfish to live as a human and have food and a shelter and a fire. He punished her by changing her into a woodpecker, who was doomed to live in a nest and bore into dry wood all day for food.

II 1. Let's look at the words at the end of the second and fourth lines, viz..., 'snows' and 'clothes', 'true' and 'you', 'below' and 'know'. We find that 'snows' rhymes with 'clothes', 'true' rhymes with 'you' and 'below' rhymes with 'know'. Find more such rhyming words.

. Ans. Some other rhyming words are : 'earth' and 'hearth', 'done' and 'one', 'lay' and 'away', 'flat' and 'that', 'myself' and 'shelf' etc.

2. Go to the local library or talk to older persons in your locality and find legends in your own language. Tell the class these legends.

Ans. In India, a legend is popular. It is based on the argument that the luck, and not the labour, can bring about a change in the fortune of a man. According to a popular story, Lord Shiva and his wife, Parvati, were once going through the sky on a pleasure trip. Looking down on the earth, Parvati saw a man going on a stony path. The man was in rags and was also hungry for the last three days. Taking pity on the man, Parvati entreated her husband, who was famous for his mercifulness, to do something to free the man from troubles of poverty and hunger. Shiva replied that the man was an unlucky fellow and, thus, no one could help him. Parvati was not to be

defeated so easily. She persisted in her pleadings in favour of the man. At last, Shiva had to give in. He threw down a pack of gold coins on the way the man was going to pass through. The man, in the meantime, was thinking about the troubles of blind people and trying to experience their troubles while walking. He was walking with his eyes shut. He passed by the pack of gold coins as his eyes were shut. Lord Shiva said, "Look here, Parvati, that unlucky man has left the pack of gold coins behind. All my efforts to change his luck have failed Can anyone help an unlucky man?" Parvati had no answer.

By- Amar Singh Rajawat