



Rabindranath World School
W-10/3120, DLF Phase III, Gurgaon (HR).

THE LOST CHILD

MULK RAJ ANAND

- ❖ The story captures the reactions of a child both before and after he is separated from his parents in a fair. He desires everything that he sets his eyes on and gets enchanted by all tempting goods on display on the way to the spring fair and in the fair. Even though his father is a disciplinarian and does not fulfil the sweet child's demands, the child realises the value of relationships once he gets separated from his parents.
- ❖ The jubilant child sees gaily dressed people walking or riding on horses and some were riding in carts. He also sees toys, dragon flies, insects, worms, flowers and doves on the way.
- ❖ The cooing of the doves diverted the child's attention from the raining flower petals.
- ❖ The child, who is full of joy and energy, lags behind because he is attracted by several things that he sees on the way like toys, sweetmeats, dragonflies, gulmohur flower garlands, snake charmer and the roundabout.
- ❖ While his parents sat in the shade of the grove, he was engrossed in watching the little insects and worms that came out of their hiding places to enjoy the sunshine.
- ❖ In the fair, he is easily distracted by the various stalls and other attractions present in the fair. Initially, he craved for burfi, next he wanted a garland of gulmohur flowers, yearned for some colourful balloons thereafter he got enchanted by the playing of the flute by the snake charmer and lastly longed for a ride on the roundabout.
- ❖ The obedient child moves on because he knows that his strict father would never give in to his demands and would have an excuse to deny his desires.
- ❖ He knew his parents would say that he was too old to play with the balloons hence he did not ask his parents to buy them for him.
- ❖ He was aware that his parents would refuse to buy him a garland and say that they were cheap.
- ❖ He moved away from the snake charmer as he had been forbidden by his parents to listen to the music played by the snake charmer which they called coarse. It was here that he moved farther towards the roundabout and got separated from his parents.
- ❖ In spite of his father's refusal to buy him anything in the fair, he does not throw any tantrum and seems to be a disciplined and obedient child.
- ❖ At the roundabout the child could no longer control himself and requested his parents to allow him a ride. When he receives no reply, he turns to look at his parents and realises that he had been separated from his parents and strayed far from them.
- ❖ Once the child realises that he has been lost, hot and fierce tears rolled down his eyes, his throat turned dry and his face was convulsed with fear. Panic-stricken, he ran in all directions without knowing how to be reunited with his parents. His bright yellow turban comes off and his clothes get dirty. Soon he exhausts himself and starts sobbing. His exuberance (excitement) to visit the fair is replaced by hopelessness and fear.

- ❖ The dejected child then sees people moving towards a temple (shrine) and he too joins the rush hoping to find his parents there. The people were jostling each other to enter the temple. In this rush to enter the temple, the child lost his balance and fell down. Luckily, a man heard his cry and he was saved being trampled by the crowd.
- ❖ The child loses interest in all the things he had wanted earlier as he felt fearful and insecure at being separated from his parents and just desired to be reunited with them. The child feels lost in the fair without the security and reassuring comfort of his parents' presence.
- ❖ Even though the Good Samaritan is a kind man, the child is uncomfortable and anxious in the company of strangers. Within minutes, his life changes from being secure in the umbrella of his parents' care to being insecure and that makes him cry inconsolably.
- ❖ The nature-loving child is captivated by the wonderous attractions of the fair. Being young, he doesn't realise the danger of being separated from his parents. The curious child is enchanted by the many fanciful items and wanders off after one attraction and the other despite his mother's repeated instructions to remain close to them.
- ❖ The Good Samaritan tries hard to stop the child from weeping by offering him all the goodies at the spring fair and appears to be genuinely concerned to restore the child to his parents.

NCERT QUESTIONS

A1) The little child sees gaily dressed people going to the spring fair on foot, riding on horses or travelling on bullock carts. He also sees dragon flies, toys, insects, worms, flowers and doves on his way to the fair. He lags behind because he is attracted by all the things that he sees on his way to the fair.

A2) In the fair, initially he wanted a burfi, then a garland of gulmohar flowers, after that some colourful balloons, later on he was attracted by the snake charmer and finally he wanted a ride on the roundabout.

He moves on without waiting for an answer from his parents because he knew that they would not pay attention to his demands or give him what he had asked for. The obedient child doesn't argue with his strict father.

A3) At the round about, when he turned to request his parents to allow him to sit on the ride, he did not get any reply. That's when he realized that he had strayed away from his parents and got separated from them. His anxiety and insecurity can be seen from the fact that tears rolled down his cheeks, his throat became dry, his face was flushed and convulsed with fear. He ran in all directions, without knowing how to reunite with his parents.

A4) The child lost interest in the things that he had wanted earlier because he felt fearful and insecure after being separated from his parents. All he wanted was to be reunited with them and feel the love and tenderness of his mother and his father's soothing voice.

A5) To be done by the student as per his desire.

New Words to be memorized

Hither and thither

Throngs

Coarse

Brimming

Lingering

Wild capers

Sweetmeat seller

Shrine

Good Samaritan

Disconsolate charge

