Chapter 5

Evaluation and the analysis of the Intermediate English textbooks prescribed at Madrasas

5.1 Introduction

Madrasa students need to use English for a variety of purposes according to the results obtained from the data discussed in the chapter 6, including understanding English newspapers, magazines, and English textbooks, watching news and various programs in English on TV and listening to programs on radio. In addition, most of the students want to learn English as they wish to get admission to the universities or colleges of their choice for further qualification in order to secure a good job for a better life.

Madrasa setting is based on Islamic teachings and its tradition and culture. That is why Madrasa curriculum mainly emphasizes religious studies, including Arabic grammar, Arabic literature, Islamic history, history of the Prophet and his companions, and commentary on the Holy Quran and Hadith (sayings of the Prophet), which reflect Islamic culture. Thus, the present chapter deals with an evaluation and analysis of English syllabi and material used at Madrasas for two purposes:

1. To evaluate if the syllabus and material meet Madrasa students’ needs of communication.

2. To ascertain if the content of the English textbooks is in accordance with the socio cultural context of Madrasa learners.

In order to ascertain if the syllabus and material meet Madrasa students’ needs of communication, it is necessary to evaluate the syllabus and the material used at Madrasas. The observation made at six Madrasas of Uttar Pradesh, including Jamiatul Falah, Jamia tul Ashrafia, Madrasa tul Islah (Azamgarh), Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Maahad (Lucknow), and Ahsanul Banat for girls, Moradabad reveals that there is no syllabus for teaching English. The only thing which the teachers and learners use is the English textbooks which have been prescribed by Uttar Pradesh (UP) Board, Lucknow.

UP Board comprises three examining boards: Basic Education Board, Madhyamic Shiksha Parishad (Secondary Education Board), and Senior Secondary Board. The following table shows textbooks of all the three boards respectively.
Table 5.1
English Textbooks prescribed by the UP Board from 1st class to 12th (Intermediate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three Sections of UP Board</th>
<th>Prescribed English Textbooks</th>
<th>Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Education Board</td>
<td>Rainbow from 1st class to 8th class</td>
<td>Mahesh Pustakalya, Panchavati, Mathura, Edition, 2011-2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: textbooks at primary, secondary, and senior secondary level prescribed by Uttar Pradesh Board, including Intermediate English Prose, Poetry, Short Stores, Drama prescribed by Uttar Pradesh Board

5.2 Evaluation of the presentation with exercises of all the Intermediate English textbooks

Since the present study was carried out at the level of Intermediate (Senior Secondary) Madrasa learners, therefore, an evaluation of the presentation, including the exercises of all the four Intermediate English textbooks is made in order to ascertain whether the exercises given at the end of each chapter of the text are grammar-oriented, text-oriented, situational/functional based or communicative approach based. The presentation of all the four textbooks is discussed below:

5.2.1 The presentation of the Intermediate English Prose

As it has been mentioned that all the Madrasas under study do not have any syllabus for the English language program, the textbooks are the only thing for the teachers and the learners to deal with. The content in the syllabus determines the

nature of the syllabus that is, whether the syllabus is grammar-oriented, text-oriented and situational/notional/functional based or communicative approach based. However, the syllabus printed at the beginning of the Intermediate English prose gives little information about the type.

The content of the syllabus given in the beginning of the book seems to be reading comprehension based examination:

a. Explain with reference to context (one passage)
b. One passage, for testing comprehension-factual as well as interpretive and evaluative type
c. Two short answer type questions (answer not to exceed 30 words)
d. One long answer type question from text (answer not to exceed 150 words)
e. Vocabulary (based on text)

The present syllabus set for the assessing students’ performance in their exams clearly indicates that the Intermediate English prose textbook is mainly prescribed to enable students for reading comprehension. The presentation of each lesson will further decide the nature of the textbook.

The presentation of the lessons

Each lesson is divided under the following heads:

A. About the author

This section gives the learners a brief account of the life and the works of the author.

B. About the lesson followed by the text

This consists of a short summary of the lesson, which will prepare the learners mentally in order to understand the text.

C. Glossary

List of difficult words of the lesson with their meanings in both English and Hindi.

D. Understanding the text

This contains exercises on the comprehension of the concerned lesson, which aims at evaluating the learners as to what extent they have understood the text. This section is also divided into two sections.

a. Understanding the Text

This is again divided into four sub-sections.
i. Passages for Explanation
   Passages are selected from the lesson and students are asked to explain them with reference to the context. The focus is on assessing the learners’ comprehension ability.

ii. Comprehensive Questions on the Passage
    Some passages are given and students are asked to read the passages and answer the questions, which aims to evaluate learners’ reading and writing ability.

iii. Short Answer Type Questions: A series of the questions based on the overall understanding of the lesson is given. The students are required to answer the questions within 30 words each, which test their subject knowledge.

iv. Long Answer type questions
    The purpose of this section is to enable students to understand the text and write answers in detail. The word limit of these questions is 150. The divisions of the section ‘Understanding the text’ point out that the main emphasis is only on reading and writing skills.

E. Language study
   This section mainly focuses on vocabulary in order to develop the vocabulary of the learners. The section consists of the following vocabulary-based exercises. The instruction given for each exercise determines its purpose.

a) Use the following words and phrases in your own sentences so as to bring out their meanings clearly.

b) Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the proper words or phrases from the list given below.

c) Give the synonyms of the following.

d) Give the antonyms of the following.

e) Use each of the following pairs of words in sentences of your own to make their meanings clear

f) Find one word from the text for each of the following expressions.
   The goal of this section is to improve students’ vocabulary.

To conclude, the analysis of the presentation of the Intermediate English prose, the exercises in the textbook are mainly based on reading and vocabulary with little focus on writing.
5.2.2. The presentation of the Intermediate English Short Stories\(^2\)

- The content of the syllabus given in the beginning of the book:
  a. One long answer type question (answer not to exceed 150 words)
  b. One short answer type question (30 words)

The content of the syllabus given in the beginning of the textbook of the Intermediate English short stories indicates that the textbook emphasizes reading and writing skills.

Presentation of the textbook

- About the Author
- About the lesson followed by the text
- Glossary
- Short Answer Type Questions
- Long Answer Type Questions
- Objective Type Questions which include the following questions:
  i. Complete the following statements with the most suitable choices
  ii. Point out the ‘true’ and ‘false’ in the following

The exercises given in this book pays attention to the understanding of the concerned chapter.

5.2.3. The presentation of the Intermediate The Merchant of Venice\(^3\)

The content to be given below indicates that this book also focuses on reading comprehension.

Content of the ‘The Merchant of Venice’ for class 12\(^{th}\) (Intermediate)

- Life and career of William Shakespeare
- General Introduction to the play
- Brief summary of the play
- Detailed summary of the play
- Major characters in the play
- Text

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g. Important quotation of the play
h. Long answer type questions
i. Important Questions
j. Short answer type questions

5.2.4. The presentation of each chapter of the Intermediate English Poetry

- About the poet
- About the poem
- Appreciation
- Glossary
- Exercises which include two questions:
  - Explain the following stanzas: Three stanzas are to be explained.
  - Answer the following questions: Seven questions based on comprehension of the poem are given.

After analyzing the presentation, including exercises of all the four textbooks, it may be concluded that the main emphasis is on improving reading ability of the learners with a little focus on writing and with no focus on listening and speaking skills and pronunciation. There is no authentic material used in the exercises which could be challenging and interesting for the students.

5.3 Analysis of the UP Board Intermediate English textbooks in terms of the socio-cultural content and context

This has been a matter of discussion among Ulama (Muslim religious scholars) whether the present textbooks used at Madrasas are suited well according to the Islamic perspective. The English textbooks prescribed in Madrasa curriculum is generally based on English culture and do not meet the expectation and background of Madrasa learners. The textbooks for Madrasa learners, therefore, should be in accordance with their culture and level, enabling them to learn English effectively in order to use it in a variety of context.

To know whether the English textbooks are in accordance with the socio cultural context of Madrasa learners, all the four textbooks, English, including Intermediate Prose, Short Stories, The Merchant of Venice, and The English poetry are analyzed in terms of their socio-cultural content and context.

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The following table shows the name of the chapters given in the Intermediate English prose, which covers a variety of themes including science, education, history, adventure, travelling, and moral values which aim at encouraging learners to increase interest in reading. The chapters also aim to enable the learners to become good citizens equipped with moral values.

5.3.1 Chapter wise analysis of the Intermediate English Prose in terms of socio-cultural content and context

Table 5.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name of the chapter</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>My Struggle For an Education</td>
<td>Brooker T. Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Forgetting</td>
<td>Robert Lynd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A Girl with a Basket</td>
<td>William C. Douglas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Ant and the Grasshopper</td>
<td>W. S. Maugham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Kite Maker</td>
<td>Ruskin Bond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Fellow-traveler</td>
<td>A.G. Gardiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The Secret of Health, Success and Power</td>
<td>Jawhar Lal Nehru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>David Livingstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The Horse</td>
<td>Rabindranath Tagore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I am John’ Heart</td>
<td>J.D. Ratcliff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Women’s Education</td>
<td>S. Radhakrishna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Heritage of India</td>
<td>A. L. Bashan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Intermediate English Prose, prescribed by Uttar Pradesh Board of High school and Intermediate

Lesson No. 1

My struggle for an education

By Booker T. Washington (1856-1915)

Summary of the chapter

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), ‘My struggle for an education’ emphasizes the idea of education, which can upgrade and uplift the poor and backward communities. In this chapter, the author writes about his struggle, determination, and success in getting an education. He started his journey of education from being a coal mine worker in Malden to the college of Hampton.

The journey from working as a poor boy in a coal mine to getting admission to the institute of Hampton, one of the best colleges of that time was not easy; it entailed

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struggle, hard work, determination, patience, and never-give-up attitude. The writer had no money to reach Hampton, which was about five hundred miles away from his home, Malden but he started his journey, carrying a bag with some food, little money, and some clothes by walking and begging rides. He reached the city of Richmond, Virginia, which was about eighty-two miles away from Hampton after spending many days on his journey. When he reached there, he was completely tired and hungry and had no food and money left. He spent night sleeping under a sidewalk.

In the morning, he got work on a cargo ship where he worked for some days and earned money to reach Hampton. He said good-bye to the captain and went to the institute of Hampton and presented before the principal who was not impressed with his appearance. In order to examine the boy, the principal assigned him a work of cleaning and dusting the recitation room. The boy proved excellent in his work, impressing the principal who allowed him to stay there and get education free. Later on, this boy became a famous educationist of the United States of America.

Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The content of the story is highly inspiring for the young minds. The story teaches that hard work, determination, and dedications are primary conditions for achieving anything, which can make any difficult task and mission easy and attainable, eliminating all kinds of barriers and obstructions, whether they are related to the financial crisis, or discrimination on the basis of religion and race. It was because of hard work and determination that the author managed to get education in Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute after facing many problems.

Lesson No. 2

Forgetting

By Robert Lynd (1879-1949)

Summary of the chapter

Robert Lynd (1879-1949) is a humorist who chooses ordinary things to write about jovially. In the present chapter, ‘Forgetting’ he talks about the efficiency of the human memory, which is generally based on the priority of the matters and issues. A modern man commonly forgets common things which he does not feel very important, for example, taking medicine, posting letters, collecting articles, sticks, and umbrellas in the train, bus or taxi. The memory of the youngsters (sportsman and anglers) seems to be worse than that of the old people. For example, young players
forget to collect cricket bats, hockey sticks, lost balls, fishing rods, and some other sporting items in their playground or in the buses or train. This happens because, during their journey from the field to their home, they are totally lost either in seeking the causes of their lost games or making strategies for winning the games. However, the modern man does not forget shutting the door and the names of the actors, celebrities, murders, players, popular television show anchors and hosts.

Moreover, the author says that good memories are generally associated with intelligence. It is supposed that intellectuals never forget anything. While, reality shows different results, that is the intellectuals like Socrates, Coleridge, and Einstein, who had excellent memories, but they used to forget ordinary things like collecting sticks in the train or posting their letters.

The author concludes his chapter by telling a story of a man who puts his baby in a perambulator and forgets. Meanwhile, his wife comes there for shopping and she finds her baby, collects it, and takes it home. At night, when the husband gets home, he asks her wife about the dinner and totally forgets that he has left his baby in the perambulator. The wife is shocked.

**Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context**

The chapter has no moral values, rather, it is a humorous lesson.

**Lesson No. 3**

**A girl with a basket**

**By William C. Douglas**

**Context**

The author, William C. Douglas, the former judge of the Supreme Court of America depicts a realistic picture of India after Independence. It was the time when Partition between India and Pakistan was declared. Millions of people had to migrate from Pakistan to India and vice-versa of the fear of religious fanaticism.

**Summary of the chapter**

'A girl with a basket' is a story written by William C. Douglas when he visited India after Independence. In the story, he takes a local train from Delhi to Bariely on his way to Ranikhet. Whenever the train stops at every halt, he gets off the train and interacts with the local people. At one small station, when he gets down the train, he is surrounded by the refugee children, selling hand-made beautiful baskets and fans. He buys some baskets and fans. At some distance, a nine year beautiful girl, carrying
baskets and fans in her hands and waiting for her turn comes to the author when every other child has left him and politely requests him to buy her items as well. But as the writer's hands are full with the items, he does not want to buy any items anymore and puts some coins in her basket as charity. The innocent and charming girl with the pitiable condition gets tears in her eyes and considers the writer's action against her self-respect. She humbly refuses to accept his charity and returns it to him, which impresses him very much and finally he buys some items from her. She smiles and disappears. The girl's gentle behavior and being concerned about her self-respect made a deep impact on the mind of the author. He writes that the Indians are hardworking, gentle and have self-respect.

Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The lesson focuses on the menace and the aftermath of Partition which left millions of people homeless and without food. Hundreds of thousands of them died because of starvation during this phase. The lesson highlights how refugees struggled for their livelihood. Even their children, who were supposed to go to school, also supported their families and were involved in earning a living. The present lesson has a good lesson that people try to maintain peace, harmony and mutual understanding among them.

Lesson No. 4

The Ant and the Grasshopper

By William Somerset Maugham (1871-1965)

Summary of the chapter

William Somerset Maugham (1871-1965) starts his essay with a famous fable "The Ant and the Grasshopper" by Aesop which emphasizes a universal fact that the industry is rewarded and giddiness is punished. In his story, Aesop tells a story of a hard-working ant that enjoys its stored food in the rainy season and, on the other hand, the lazy and giddy grasshopper with no food regrets his inaction.

The author, Maugham tries to deviate from this universal law, "Hard work is rewarded and giddiness is punished" by bringing a twist in his story, "The ant and the Grasshopper", wherein the ant is presented as George and the grasshopper as Tom, two brothers of Ramsay family. Of them, George, the elder brother is a respectable and sensible lawyer and a responsible person of his family who has a wife and four daughters. He works hard and saves money for his later life.
On the other hand, Tom Ramsay spends money extravagantly and does not work. He borrows money from his friends and brother, George, who worries about him. When George stops giving him money, Tom starts blackmailling him. George has to give him money to save the prestige of his family.

For almost twenty years, Tom spends his life luxuriously without marriage. He goes to clubs and bars; drinks and dances there and philanders with beautiful women. When he turns 46, he meets an old wealthy woman whom he marries. The old woman dies after some time and leaves her huge property on the basis of which he can spend his whole life lavishly. On the other hand, George was thinking that his brother would be found dead in the gutter one day because of his life style and giddiness, but he proves to be wrong.

Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The story reflects that honesty and hard work do not always pay, which seems to be the opposite of the universal fact “Hard work is rewarded and idleness and giddiness are punished”. But, here, Maugham tries to present an exceptional case, which can happen in our life.

Exceptions in comparison to the universal fact should not be highlighted. Students should be better advised to become responsible, hardworking, respectable to the societal norms, and dedicated to their work. They must avoid being extravagant and giddy because such persons are condemned in the society. They have no position in the society because of their evil deeds. On the other hand, responsible people have good positions and are respected everywhere.

Fatalism in Islam

Belief in qadr (fate and the decree) is an important pillar of Islamic faith, which a Muslim (believer) must believe in. The pillars of faith are: “Believing in Almighty God, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day, and to believe in al-qadar (the divine decree) both good and bad”.

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5Is man’s fate pre-destined or does he have freedom of the will,” Islam Question and Answer, Last modified September 21, 2015, http://islamqa.info/en/20806
Qadr (fate or the divine decree) means, “Allaah has decreed all things from eternity and knows that they will happen at times that are known to Him, and in specific ways, and that He has written that and willed it, and they happen according to what He has decreed”.

In the chapter, Tom Ramsay had a good destiny because it was predestined, which had to happen to him, thus, he had a vast sum of wealth when his wife, the old woman died. The Almighty God is the Sustainer, who sustains Tom by making him rich.

Lesson No. 5
The Kite Maker
By Ruskin Bond (1934)

Summary of the chapter

The author, Ruskin Bond makes a comparison between the past and the present time. The writer notes a drastic change in the moral values of the present society. Things have changed now. People look hurried and stressed in their life. They have no concern for one another.

He presents a story of an old kite maker, Mahmood, who recalls simple and easy life of old days. He remembers the pleasure, freedom, charm, and glories of the days gone by. People had respect one another and even a low profile person had social prestige. In his old days, everybody took care of his neighbor. He remembers whenever he fell ill, his neighbors came to visit him and offered help. People had enough time to meet each other. They used to sit under the banyan tree to discuss their matters. But now nobody sits under the tree except who wants to take a shade from the burning sun. Nobody helps one another, rather tries to cheat them.

In the present chapter, the author worries about this change which has been expressed in the way he ends the story. The death of Mahmood signifies the end of the social and moral values in society.

Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The story teaches a lesson that students should respect and help one another. Being materialist is not good for a good and healthy and prosperous life. Live simple and think high.

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6Ibid.
Mahmood, a Muslim character is depicted as a kite maker in the chapter, “The Kite Maker, which is written by a non-Muslim writer, Ruskin Bond. Bond goes on presenting Mahmood as a respectable and famous kite maker who loved by everyone and everywhere, regardless of what faith he believed in. He was also rewarded by **Nawabs** (noble men) for whom he used to make beautiful kites.

**Lesson No. 6**

**A Fellow- Traveller**

By A.G. Gardiner (1865-1946)

**Summary of the chapter**

“A Fellow-traveler” authored by A. G. Gardiner is an essay which reflects on the journey of the life, including human beings and animals existing in this world. The essay emphasizes that every living thing is mortal and no one should feel superior because of his power and position.

In the story, the author takes a train departing from London in the evening. After some stations the train crosses, all the passengers got off the train except the author. He feels a sense of freedom where he could do anything what he likes to do. Meanwhile, a mosquito enters the coach and sat on his nose. The author tried hard to get rid of this irritating fellow-traveler but he failed. After some time, the author realized that they both are mortal things and will die one day. Both appeared from the dark into the light and again will disappear into the darkness after completing their life. Thus, he should not feel himself superior to this insect that also has the same right to live freely.

**Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context**

This chapter teaches the lesson of humanity; every creature in this universe has an equal right to live, even if it is a small, feeble insect like a mosquito. One should not have any sense of superiority over others. People should have concern and affection for everyone and treat one another as living beings. They should be respectable and generous to accommodate others.

**Lesson No. 7**

**The Secret of Health, Success and Power**

By James Allen (1864-1912)
Summary of the chapter

'The secret of Health, Success and Power' has been taken from the well known work of James Allen (1864-1912), 'From Poverty to Power'. The author in this chapter, talks about the secret of health, success, and power which every human being desires to gain and gets stressed and agitated if he fails to achieve the same.

James Allen considers strong faith and purity as the key to health, success and power. Purity is to be free from all the evil desires and negative traits. To Allen, faith means belief in the existence and grace of God, determination and confidence in our work, and faith in our power. To acquire power it is necessary to have steady and firm faith. The essence of faith is consistency and continuity.

Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The lesson is fit for the Madrasa students, which is premised on some eternal truths and moral precepts. The lesson teaches students about achieving three important things: health, success, and power, which can be attained when they believe in the existence and greatness of God. They should have determination and take care of their health by holding open their minds pure, detached from every single evil desire and deed.

Lesson No. 8

The Variety and Unity of India

By Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964)

Summary of the chapter

The essay is an extract from the celebrated book, “The Discovery of India”, which is the epitome of the Nehru’s literary excellence. The essay focuses on the unique quality of India i.e. its ‘unity in diversity’. This essay conveys a message to the world that India is a wonderful planet where the people of various cultures, traditions, colors, races, religions, and languages live together in peace and harmony.

The soil of India is fertile enough to absorb the external cultures and beliefs happily. The foreign traditions influenced it, but this did not destroy the heritage of unity.

Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The essay focuses on the significance of unity. It tells us that in spite of cultural, racial and sectarian variations, we should live together happily. No matter what religion and faith we abide by, what practise we follow, what place we live in,
what food we eat, what work we do, we all should not forget we are the creatures of one and only one God Almighty and we should maintain the discipline, peace, love, and affection among us.

Lesson No. 9
A Dialogue on Civilization
By C.E.M. Joad (1891-1953)

Summary of the chapter
Civilization does not reside in wealth, but in the mind, the fountainhead of all the sublime ideas, inventions and creativity. It motivates people towards creative works, such as beautiful art, paintings, pictures, and literary works. Education, having good attitudes, behavior and manners are the fruits of the civilization.

Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context
The lesson teaches us that if we want to be civilized, we should acquire good traits and make our heart, free from all kinds of evil desires and prepare and develop our minds for beautiful things and creative works. This is a good lesson, which should be taught to Madrasa students.

Lesson No 10
On an African River
By David Livingstone (1891-1953)

Summary of the chapter
The author, David Livingstone in his essay, "On an African River" shares his personal experience of sailing with his family and his fellow explorer Oswell to a hill station in South Africa. He discovered a river named Chobe, which is the natural habitat of dangerous wild creatures like hippos and crocodiles. The crocodiles are so dangerous that a single crocodile can swallow a big cow. The writer also encounters some tribes who believe in superstitions and get scared of the person, even if he/she gets a bite or splashes by a reptile. The people drive such victims of their tribe, leaving them to die.

Analysis of the chapter in terms of socio-cultural content and context
This chapter encourages the readers to develop their interest in discovering hidden facts, and teaches us to prepare our hearts for facing hurdles, dangers, and challenges. The lesson also discusses some superstitions among some tribes, which
are absolutely wrong. We should not believe in superstitions since these may destroy one’s life.

Lesson No. 11

The Horse

By Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

Summary of the chapter

‘The Horse’ is a fine story written by Rabindranath Tagore, which tells a story of the creation of the horse. When God created everything, including earth, sky, humans, animals, and other things, He thought of creating one more animal named horse and called His assistant and asks if any material is left to create horse. Finally, God creates the horse and sends him in the open fields to roam and eat, which has been captured by man who puts certain checks upon it and started using it to carry his burden upon its back.

One day, when God wakes up from His meditation, he hears the horse neighing weakly and is imprisoned in a man’s house. He immediately summons the man and asks him to set the horse free at once. The man obeys God, but he plays a trick. He ties the front legs of the horse, that starts hopping like a frog. The creator then starts regretting upon His creation and asks the man to keep the horse in his house and accept the burden of the horse. This will show the greatness of his heart.

Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The message of the story is good that students should develop sympathy towards all the creatures living on this earth and not to torture them since they have feelings and emotions like them. This also tells us that like human beings, animals too deserve the best treatment and their rights. Their feelings should be appreciated and cared about. People should take a lesson from this unique creature, the horse which never fights and never makes anything its prey. It is regarded as a useful animal for human beings. Like the horse, we must be active to race with the wind and be courageous and ambitious to reach the point where the sky touches the earth.

Representational Problems: Anthropomorphism

The chapter, “The Horse” by Rabindranath Tagore has representential problems. The chapter is based on the concept of anthropomorphism, according to which the Almighty God is represented in the form a man, and thus, acts accordingly. This is against Islamic principles. In the story God seems to be helpless and
dependent on things like some substance for new creation. Moreover, He regrets and is shameful for His creation of the horse, which creates doubts about His power and being Almighty. Thus, the present story may better be avoided for Madrasa students.

Lesson No. 12
I am John's Heart
By J. D. Ratcliff

Summary of the chapter
In this essay, J. D. Ratcliff talks about the human' heart and how this heart can function for a long time healthily. In the lesson, John' heart speaks about himself and gives suggestion to make the heart healthy. The heart suggests that John should take proper rest and keep from basedesires. John should not smoke and drink, and go for exercise daily and not let be fat himself. If John does so, his heart will be healthy and work very well till he dies.

Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context
The lesson is full of useful and valuable advice for the sound heart and mind. The lesson teaches that, to regain a healthy heart, we should avoid smoking and fatty food and take regular exercise and a short nap. We must not do anything that may hurt anyone, leave all the negative traits and always think of beautiful ideas. This is very useful lesson for the Madrasa students.

Lesson No. 13
Women's Education
By S. Radhakrishna (1888-1975)

Summary of the chapter
'Women’s Education' has been taken from the S. Radhakrishna’s book, 'True Knowledge'. The chapter focuses on the women’s education in order to uplift them in the society. The author regards education as a key to the development of a society. He suggests that the curricula should be equipped with professional development as well as moral education. Moral education would help minds to be imbued with virtues, moral values and responsibilities towards the society. The writer says that the real education is beyond materialistic education. Education should not be seen as a source of making money, rather, be a fountain to make hearts and souls pure and fresh.

In addition, the chapter pays attention to the significance of women’s education and the inclusion of moral education in the curriculum. This chapter also
appeals women to be disciplined, well cultured, and to retain their natural quality of compassion, self-control and restraint. It urges us to study the Indian classics, marked with moral values and inspiring stories.

**Analysis of the chapter in terms of socio-cultural content and context**

The chapter is good for Madrasa learners as well, however; Madrasa learners should be taught the Islamic teachings and literature rather than the Indian classics according to their context.

**Importance of education in Islam**

Islam emphasizes acquiring knowledge, which benefits man in this world and the hereafter. The very first revelation of the holy Quran pays attention to acquiring knowledge. The Prophet underscored the significance of gaining knowledge:

It is narrated by IbnMaja in al-Sunan that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, “Acquisition of knowledge is binding on all Muslims (both men and women without any discrimination); Acquire knowledge even if you may have to go to China for it.\(^7\)

The real education depends on moral upbringing, having a civilized and good relationship with others. It is narrated in Sahih Bukhari that the Prophet (pbuh) said that the best parents are those who provide the best of education, which includes the best of manners and the strong will to please the Almighty God.\(^8\)

In short, the education is emphasized in Islam both for men and women, equipping them with the moral values and good traits.

**Lesson No. 14**

**The Heritage of India**

By A.L. Basham

**Summary of the chapter**

The author focuses on the heritage of India, and identifies and analyzes two aspects of its ancient culture and traditions. First, he discusses the role of our reformers in eliminating some dreadful aspects of the Indian society such as barbarous hecatombs of the Vedic age, burning of widows on the pyres of their husbands.


However, such evil is still found in the society, but efforts are going on in order to eliminate the evils of the society such as caste discrimination, untouchability, and girl marriage in childhood.

The second aspect which is regarded as the base of Hindu civilization is the Indian classics, which the writer emphasizes to study. He also tells that India has been assimilating Western culture, but Western influences do not affect its cultural traditions.

The lesson is full of useful and valuable advice for making our hearts and minds sound and pure.

**Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context**

The lesson teaches that we should study our classics that are a guide for us and come forward in order to eliminate caste discrimination, regionalism, and sectarian differences and promote the unity, peace, and harmony. The lesson is good for Madrasa learners. However, the advice of studying the Indian classics by the writer may better be avoided for the Madrasa learners because of their different background. In place of Indian classics, Madrasa students can study the Islamic moral based stories.

**5.3.2 Chapter wise analysis of the Intermediate English Short Stories in terms of socio cultural content and context**

Table 5.3. Chapters of the Intermediate English Short Stories

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Source: *Intermediate English Short Stories*, prescribed by Uttar Pradesh Senior Secondary Board
Lesson No. 1
Pen Pal
By G. Srinivas Rao (1928-)

Summary of the chapter

G Srinivas Rao was born in 1928, who wrote many articles and stories, including Pen Pal. In the present short story, the writer makes a pen pal, a lady from America. Many envelopes containing letters, books, magazines, and beautiful Christmas gifts are exchanged among them. She becomes very close to him and he finally falls in love with her. He imagined that his pen pal was a wealthy young and the beautiful American lady. The writer wanted to know her age, but was much shy to ask her age. However, he asked for her photograph, but the lady replied that she does not have any photograph. In another response, she also denied gently, saying that she is not beautiful.

The series of exchange of letters becomes irregular but not extinct. Meanwhile, the author got married and got children. One day she got a letter from a friend of the lady, informing him that his pen pal friend was 78 years old and has died, while crossing a road because of her low vision. In her letter, she revealed the reason of hiding her age to him, that she did not want to disillusion him.

Analysis of the chapter in terms of socio-cultural content and context

This story is beautiful and heart touching. However, friendship or love between a girl and a boy before marriage is strictly prohibited and is discordant with the teachings of Islam. Therefore, the present lesson cannot be a part of the Madrasa English syllabus. Ulama (Muslim religious scholars) dislike such content in the Madrasa curriculum.

Lesson No. 2
After Twenty Years
By O’ Henry (1862-1910)

Summary of the chapter

This is the story of two very close friends, Jimmy Wells and Bob, who differ in nature from each other. Both want to do something special in their lives. Bob intends to go to West in order to make a fortune and achieve his goal. He does not care about the means for earning money; he only wishes to attain it. On the other hand, his friend Jimmy has a wish to serve his country. One night, they move apart
from each other in order to make their fortunes and agree to meet after 20 years at the same place and the same time.

The appointed time has come and they are destined to meet each other. By then John is a policeman, whereas Bob is a wanted man in Chicago. When John recognizes Bob as a wanted criminal of Chicago, he immediately arrests him. Thus, Bob gets jailed for what he did in his life and meets his fate.

**Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context**

This story is a good piece of literature for the Madrasa learners. This is an enlightening story, with a distinct moral. It is suited well in terms of both its plot and story for the young, supple minds. The story teaches the students that every evil action leads punishment. Honesty, hard work, and lawful sources of making money are the ways of living a successful and happy life.

**Lesson No 3**

**The Gold Watch**

By Ponjikkara Raphy

**Summary of the chapter**

Ponjikkara Raphy born in Keral, India in 1924 pays attention to a basic issue of livelihood in the society. It is very difficult for a poor person to run his house in spite of his hard work for earning money. He has already taken a lot of loans and is unable to pay it back. When he fails to seek the ways of making money to support his family and to pay back his loans, he unwillingly intends to choose the illegal means in order to meet his needs. He attempts to steal a golden watch kept on a table in the office of the engineer, a short and fat Englishman. Though he trembles and scares, but he picks the watch from the table and puts in the pocket of his trousers. When he doubts that someone has seen his stealing, he puts the watch back on the table and got away because of the fear of being held and insulted before all the workers of the factory and because of the fear of being sacked from the factory.

**Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context**

A good story for the Madrasa learners, which teaches them that even if there are critical conditions or a financial crisis, one needs to have patience and should not in illegal acts, causing problems and leading to get punished and life long remorse.

For achieving any goal one needs to work hard. God tests by putting us into trouble. We are sometimes put into trying times in order to see how we act in that
situation. If we have faith and belief in our potential, wrong means cannot tempt us. Our foundations should be strong enough to discern between right and wrong. We should believe in God and look forward to the best.

Lesson No. 4

Drought

By Sarat Chand Chattopadhyay (1876-1938)

Summary of the chapter

The story depicts a picture of oppression in Indian society, wherein poor people were oppressed by the rich and are not helped by them when they have a tough time in their life. They were subject to such treatment which was meted out to slaves by their masters.

In the story, Gafur is a poor Muslim cultivator, living in a hut in a Hindu concentrated village with his teenage daughter, Ameena and with his bull, Mahesh. Gafur does not own any land and cultivates others' lands as sharecroppers. Three years' continuous drought causes scarcity of water and food in the village. Gafur passes through the hardest and critical time of his life, with no food neither for him and his daughter nor for Mahesh. He has already taken loans many times. One day because of starvation, Mahesh enters the garden of his landlord and destroys the saplings. Gafur is called at landlord's home and beaten up badly.

Days pass by and Gafur's poverty continues. Since Gafur and his daughter are Muslims, they are not allowed to touch the well and take the water from it directly. Ameena, his daughter has to collect water from some Hindu women. When his landlord and others denied offering anything, money or food to him, he decides to sell Mahesh off. When the landlord and other people of the village knew his intention of selling, they warn him not to do so to avoid hurting the sentiments of Hindus, who worship bulls and cows as their gods and goddess.

One day, when Gafur returns home, and asks water from Ameena, he sees Ameena is lying on the ground and the pot of the water has been broken and Mahesh is drinking the left over water. On seeing this, Gafur gets furious, pics his stick and starts striking Mahesh's head to death. Gafur gets scared of the bull's death and has to leave the village at night.
Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

This is a good story, which teaches students that all human beings and other creatures are the creation of God. We should treat and help one another in critical times, because we do not know when we may turn needy. There should not be any kind of discrimination on the basis of position, caste, color, and religion. We should not punish people without finding out the reason behind their actions.

Lesson No 5
An Astrologer’s Day
By R. K. Narayan (1907-2001)

Summary of the chapter

This is a story of an astrologer, living in a city, who was the son of a farmer in a village. Long ago, while drunk, he had a fight with his friend, Guru Nayak and stabbed him, and pushed him into a well, presuming he was dead. To avoid being detected, he decided to leave the village and came to the city and disguised himself by taking a profession of the astrologer.

Guru Nayak intended to take revenge and set to look for his friend. One day, when the astrologer was about to return his home, his friend, Guru Nayak reached him to know about something worthwhile. The astrologer used the usual tricks about marriage and money, but the man wanted to know something specific about his question, which he had in his mind. In the dim light of match stick, the astrologer recognized this man as his old friend whom he had murdered. But the astrologer’s friend could not recognize him, that he was the same person who had stabbed him, trying to kill him.

The astrologer made use of the opportunity and wanted to get rid of this man forever, and explained to him about his past incident of an attempt to murder him. He informed him that the man who stabbed and threw him in a well had passed away months before in a road accident, a lorry crushed him to death. He warned him that his life is not safe now and advised him to go back home immediately and never to travel in this direction. The man got satisfied, and felt relieved that his enemy had already died. He followed the advice of the astrologer and went back home for not returning again there. The astrologer felt relieved that his friend was alive and that he did not need to repent anymore for the murder in the state of drunkenness.
Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The story is full of moral values, teaching young minds that wine is the root cause of many misfortunes in one’s life. No one can live happily after committing sins and crimes, even if they committed these while drunk. His conscience never lets him remain in peace. The evil of his wickedness haunts him forever. He feels guilt-ridden and remorseful. He flees out of the fear of being identified and caught. This is what the writer tries to convey in this story.

Therefore, we should shun all the activities that lead to crimes and wrong doings. We should always be good in our deeds so that we are proud of what we do, rather than do a wrong and repent all our lives.

This didactic story warns the students eloquently against the hazardous effects of drinking. It articulates well the concepts and the concomitant feelings of sin and guilt.

Lesson No. 6

The Selfish Giant

By Oscar Wilde (1856-1900)

Summary of the chapter

Children are a beautiful gift of God. They have innocent hearts and their sweet voice, pranks, and smiles make the surroundings delightful and pleasant. People who are kind towards children are blessed by the Almighty and are cursed if they behave harshly with children.

In the present story written by Oscar Wilde (1856-1900), there is a selfish giant, who disliked children to enter his garden filled with trees laden with fruits, plants with swaying flowers, and beautiful singing birds. One day, when he found children playing in his garden, he got angry and shooed them out. He built a long and high wall around his garden, putting a notice board, “The Trespassers will be prosecuted”. The children got extremely disheartened. After some days, he noticed his garden’s charm faded away and trees and blooming plants and flowers got dried up. He became worried about his garden.

One morning, he heard voices of children playing in his garden who sneaked the garden through a hole in the wall. The giant noticed that his garden started bringing the charm back because of the presence of the sweet children, who were playing and singing. He also started playing with them. He helped a little crying child
who was unable to climb the tree because of his height. The child later on disappeared and was never seen again.

The days passed by and the giant grew old who could not play with the children and sat just in his armchair, looking happily at children playing in his garden. One day, he saw the little child he helped him in placing on a branch of a tree. He was standing under the same tree, which had turned white and beautiful. The child was wounded in his arms and feet. The giant got shocked and angry and asked the child to tell the name of the person who had injured him as he wanted to avenge him. The child smiled and told him not to get furious. They are the wounds of love and then gave him good news that since he turned his heart soft and kind to children, he will be granted paradise after his death. Next day, when he died, his body was covered with white blossoms.

**Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context**

The story has a moral lesson, teaching the students to be kind and soft hearted, and to treat children gently and show mercy upon them. Children are the most innocent form of the human beings. They do not intend to harm anyone. Their means of enjoyment are as simple as they are. They should be loved since God showers His blessings upon these little souls. In addition, the story also tells how one can undo his mistake and instructs us in remorse and repentance.

**Note:** The story depicts Jesus Christ as a little child, who tested the giant’s actions. When the giant turned to be kind and loving towards children, he blessed him and his garden turned beautiful and blooming. In Islam, Jesus is not God, and he cannot come in such forms except on one occasion when God will send him before the doom to help people and spread the message of Islam. The clash of two different ideologies might lead to getting the Madrasa students affected. Therefore, this piece of literature should be avoided for Madrasa students.

**Lesson No. 7**

**The Lost Child**

By Mulkraj Anand (1905-2004)

**Summary of the chapter**

The story shows the extent of the love of the child for his parents, though his father’s treatment towards him was not good. In the story, a child with his parents goes to the fair (a sort of gathering or a small market) outside the village and is
fascinated by different toys and wants to get them. Whenever, the child asks his father to buy any particular toy, the father refused because he is poor. On being asked about buying the toys again and over again, the father gets irritated and scolds the child and treats him badly. In the fair, when the child loses his parents, he starts crying and sobbing. To console the child, the passers bye offer him toys and sweets, but this time, the child wants nothing, no toys, no sweet, and anything else except his parents. Finally, after some time, when he finds his parents back, he becomes very happy and hugs his father. He does not care what his father did to him and how he treated him earlier.

Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The story is full of moral lessons, which teaches the students to be kind and soft hearted towards the children and never to misbehave with them. The story also advises everyone to understand the psychology of the children and treat them affectionately.

Love for children in Islam

In Islam, children are as a gift and grace of God. This is fard (obligatory) for parents to nurture and educate their children with great care, love, and affection. Children are supposed to be treated equally and fairly, and any undue preference among them on the basis of gender or other criteria is strictly disallowed. It is narrated in Sahih Bukhari, report no. 2447; Sahih Muslim, report no. 1623, that the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said, “Fear Allah and treat your children equally”.  

The Prophet was the most kind hearted and loving for children. He used to love his children and grandchildren and others’ children as well. He used to play with children and give them gifts on his camel. Imam Muslim has mentioned a hadith narrated by Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that: “I never saw anyone who was more compassionate towards children than Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him). His son Ibrahim was in the care of a wet nurse in the hills around Madinah. He would go there, and we would go with him, and he would enter the house, pick up his son and kiss him, then come back”.  

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The Prophet was also compassionate and loving for others' children equally. It is narrated by Usamah Ibn Zaid (may Allah be pleased with him) in Sahi Bukhari, which shows this humane aspect of the Prophet's personality: Allah's Messenger used to put me on (one of) his thighs and put Al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali on his other thigh, and then embrace us and say, “O Allah! Please be merciful to them, as I am merciful to them”.

In conclusion, in Islam children are to be given great importance with abundant love, compassionate, affections, care, and good education.

**Lesson No. 8**

**A Special Experience**

By Prem Chand (1880-1936)

**Summary of the chapter**

Freedom is everybody's natural right. The story shows how much people had to suffer for the sake of freedom during the colonial rule. The prisons were filled with freedom fighters. They were abused and tortured in many ways. Thousands of wives of freedom fighters became widows and they faced all sorts of plight. However, these miseries and agonies dampened neither the spirit of fighters nor of their wives. They bravely participated in and fought the freedom movement.

In the story, a man when he gets jailed for the allegation of supporting the freedom fighters in an agitation against the Britishers, his wife stands strong and appreciates his husband's action. The man was the only person in his family, who earned money and ran his home, but when he got sentenced, his wife starts facing financial problems. When his wife wants to do any business at her home, she cannot do it because the business demands the support of his husband. Then she plans work, but she drops this idea as well in order to preserve her dignity.

When she fails to do any work, she asks for help from her father and her father-in-law, but both refused her to offer any help because of the fear of losing their pension. Meanwhile, her husband’s friend, Babu Gyanchand and his wife came to help her and took her to their home with bag and baggage. But after some days,
Gyanchand got a notice from the principal of his school to get her out of their home, else he will be sacked. Gayanchand’s wife repeatedly asks him to resign, instead of getting her out of their home. He resigns and sacrifices his job because he wants to support her.

Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The story shows how people supported freedom fighters and how they had to pay for it. People sacrificed themselves in order to gain Independence from the ruling British government. The story tells the students about the significance of the patriotism and love for the country, and gives a lesson to be kind and help people in need.

5.3.3 Chapter wise analysis of the socio-cultural content and context of the

Intermediate English Poetry

Table 5.3

List of chapters in the Intermediate English Poetry

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Book-II

| 1      | The Light of Asia (Book the Third)                      | Sir Edwin Arnold       |

Source: Intermediate English Poetry prescribed by Senior Secondary Uttar Pradesh Board
Poem No. 1

Mercy

By William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice

Context

These verses have been taken from his play “Merchant of Venice” written by William Shakespeare (1564-1616). The poem is an eloquent appeal by Portia, the wife of Bassanio to Shylock in the court of Duke, wherein Portia tries to importune Shylock to show his mercy to Antonio who had borrowed money from Shylock and failed to pay it back.

Summary of the poem

In order to convince Shylock, Portia admires the act of mercy. Portia starts saying that mercy is an honorable and gentle quality of the human being, which cannot be forced, rather it must spring naturally from the heart of an individual. Leniency resembles the delicate rain drops from the paradise, which feed the earth. Mercy is a double blessing, which blesses both the giver and the receiver (the one who shows mercy to an individual and the one who benefits from it). It is the most powerful and strongest act in the world. The act of mercy is far better and incomparable to the throne of a king. The king's scepter as a symbol of majesty shows
materialistic power, but the act of mercy is higher than any power and prestige in the world. Mercy, an attribute of God is enthroned in the hearts of kings. Royal force appears to be like God's energy when the king blends benevolence with equity.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The verses are useful for Madrasa students, teaching them a lesson of being merciful to others.

Poem No. 2

Character of a Happy Life

By Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639)

How happy is he born or taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his highest skill;

Whose passions not his masters are,
Whose soul is still prepar'd for death,
Untied unto the world with care
Of princes' grace or vulgar breath;

Who envies none whom chance doth raise,
Nor vice; who never understood
How deepest wounds are given by praise,
No rules of state, but rules of good;

Who hath his life from rumours freed,
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruins make accusers great;

Who God doth late and early pray,
More of his grace than goods to send;
And entertains the harmless day
With a well-chosen book or friend;

This man is free from servile bands,
Of hope to rise or fear to fall;
Lord of himself, though not of lands;
And having nothing, yet hath all.

Summary of the poem

In his poem "The character of a happy life", Sir Henry Wotton presents the characteristics of a happy life. A person who has freedom of will and thought leads an upbeat life. He does what he wishes to do independently and never depends upon others. His only weapon is his straightforwardness, clear and kind heartedness, and truth, and he does not need any fame. Such an upright man is not afraid of death and criticism. This upright man is free from being envious of anyone's progress. He cares about his conscience and is a God-fearing person. He hates flattery because it gives the deepest wounds. This man spends his time with his books and friends and in praying to God. He is not afraid of ups and downs in his life. He might be poor but generous in his heart and has full control over his mind. Ultimately, he is a master of everything he does.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

This poem is useful for the students, which teaches them that every person should be honest, God fearing, generous, hard working, and free from every evil desire.

Poem No. 3

The True Beauty

By Thomas Carew (1598–1639)

He that loves a rosy cheek
Or a coral lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
Fuel to maintain his fires;
As old Time makes these decay,
So his flames must waste away.
But a smooth and steadfast mind,
Gentle thoughts, and calm desires,
Hearts with equal love combined,
Kindle never-dying fires:
Where these are not, I despise
Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes.

Summary of the poem

The poet, Thomas Carew (1598-1639) in his poem "The True Beauty" describes two kinds of beauty; spiritual (inner) and physical (outer). Of them, he praises the beauty of mind and soul, which is satisfying and everlasting. A soul, with a pure heart, gentle thoughts, and strong and steady mind is always to be praised. On the other hand, external beauty like "rosy cheek" "coral lip" and "star like eyes" is not long lasting, and disappears with the passing time.

Analysis of the chapter in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The poem is composed on a moral ground, teaching students the distinction between true and deceptive beauty. A soul with a pure mind and a clean and generous heart is the real beauty.

Poem No. 4
On His Blindness
By John Milton (1608-1674)

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts: who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

Summary of the poem

John Milton in his poem, “On his Blindness”, complains to God about his blindness, which creates him a hurdle, handicapping him from achieving his goals in life. God bestowed on Milton the precious gift of poetic talent, which seems to be destroyed because of his lost vision. He thinks why God took away his vision, though he wants to serve God and entertain people through his poetry, a rare gift he has been bestowed with. Being rendered blind, how he would continue to serve God, is his question and a complaint to God. But, soon he realizes his mistake and repents. He realizes that God does not need any service for him. He is omnipotent, supreme power and king of kings, who has infinite servants to do anything He wants. He feels that he should not make any complaint to God about any misfortunes and miseries; whatever he has been given with is right and enough.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

This poem contains a message and a good lesson for everyone not to lodge any complaints to God, even if he/she has any sufferings. He/she must show his/her patience and should be obedient to the Lord.

Patience and perseverance in Islam

One of the key concepts in Islam is that man is tested, time and again, by putting him on trials and tribulations. He may face difficulties, challenges, and obstacles. In such conditions, man is supposed to endure with patience and perseverance. In short, man should have patience and believe in God for every single challenge he faces.

Poem No. 5

From ‘An Elegy Written a Country Churchyard'

By Thomas Gray (1716-1771)

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way, And leaves the world to darkness and to me.
Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
   Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
   The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

   The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

   Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
   Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
   Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
   The short and simple annals of the poor.

   The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
   And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
   Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.
   The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

About the author and the context of the poem

Thomas Gray was born in 1716 in London and died in 1771 and completed his studies at Eton and Cambridge. Gray wrote this "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" around 1746. This poem was composed on the death of his close friend, Richard West.

Summary of the poem

The author sets his meditation in the evening, far from the city in a classic English churchyard with graveyards, yew trees, and mounds. He sets a scene at the beginning of the stanza. The cattle and the farmers are going back home and darkness is advancing. Then he moves on saying that it is already night and things are still and calm now, except the sounds of the beetle and the bells of the sleepy cattle.

The poet believes that death makes no difference between a common man and a rich man. He tries to find out if there were natural poets or politicians among the
underprivileged people buried there, whose talents were never recognized. With this contemplation, he wants to praise such dead people through his words who were simple and honest. He tells that wealthy men should not laugh at poor men because death will never leave out anyone. Everyone and everything has to die and decay.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The elegy gives a moral that people should not feel proud of their birth, status and assets and mock others. Since nobody will remain on this planet as death will engulf everything and everyone.

Poem No. 6

The Scholar

Robert Southey (1774–1843)

My days among the Dead are past;
   Around me I behold,
Where’er these casual eyes are cast,
     The mighty minds of old:
My never-failing friends are they,  5
With whom I converse day by day.
With them I take delight in weal
   And seek relief in woe;
And while I understand and feel
     How much to them I owe,  10
My cheeks have often been bedew’d
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.
My thoughts are with the Dead; with them
   I live in long-past years,
Their virtues love, their faults condemn, 15
Partake their hopes and fears,
And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind.
My hopes are with the Dead; anon
   My place with them will be,  20
And I with them shall travel on
Through all Futurity;
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

Summary of the poem

The poet, Robert Southey (1774–1843) appears here as a scholar who spends his time reading great pieces of writing in order to seek guidance from them and feel relief. While reading the books of the great writers, Southey loves and appreciates their virtues and hates their vices. The poet learns and is inspired by the accomplishments of the great writers and owes everything to them. Their works are appreciated and entertained everywhere. In the same way, at the end of the poem, he hopes after when he dies, his scholar-like studies and literary achievements will be remembered too, and his name will be enlisted along with the great writers. Thus he will also be immortalized.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The poem teaches students to take lessons from the great people who did great and contributed in this world in the form of knowledge. The poet advises students to work hard and do wonders.

Poem No. 7

The Education of Nature

W. Wordsworth (1770-1850)

THREE years she grew in sun and shower;
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown:
This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.
Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse; and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power

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To kindle or restrain.
She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.
The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Ev'n in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.
The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place,
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.
"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give,
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."
Thus Nature spake—the work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.
Summary

‘Education of Nature’ by William Wordsworth (1770-1850) composed in the Hartz Forest during the poet’s journey in Germany is one of the best poems, which asserts that the nature is man’s best educator, guide, and friend. The poet imagines a girl and sees the nature as her mother, that takes her into her custody and rears and nourishes her. The poet says that the nature plans to educate her in different ways: the motion of stars, the refreshing air, the music of flowing water, the songs of birds, and the clouds will add charm and beauty to her physique. The girl will derive calm and silence from the lakes, rivers, seas, flowers, and mountains, making her a perfect, innocent, kind hearted, and beautiful lady. But when she dies, all the plans of nurturing the girl are vanished, and her body is lost in the nature.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The poem is very well focused on the education of nature, which teaches students that nature makes a man perfect physically, mentally and spiritually. A man must learn from the nature and should enjoy his life.

Poem No. 8

A Lament

By Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

O world! O life! O time!
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—Oh, never more!

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more—Oh, never more!

Summary of the poem

Shelley in this sorrowful poem, “A Lament”, expresses grief about the loss of something which can never be regained again. It is unknown what he is lamenting on
the death of someone or a loss of youth or self confidence and optimism. The expression 'No more- Oh, never more' shows the extent of desperation.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The content of the poem is filled with sorrows and grieving for what the poet lost in life and seems to be completely desperate now. This poem may not be taught to Madrasa students as it has no moral values except desperation and hopelessness, which might affect the young minds, leading them to get disappointed from what they have lost.

Poem No. 9
La Belle Dame Sans Merci
By John Keats (1795-1821)

Ballad

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
    Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
    And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms!
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
    And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew,
    And on thy cheeks a fading rose
    Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,
    Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look’d at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan. 20

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery’s song. 25

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
“I love thee true.”

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sigh’d full sore, 30
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream’d—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream’d 35
On the cold hill’s side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—“La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!” 40
I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill’s side.

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither’d from the
lake,
And no birds sing

Summary of the poem

John Keats (1795-1821) in the ballad, “La Belle Dame Sans Mercy”, brings the attention of the people about the femme fatal, who traditionally woos young hearts with her beauty and then deceives them, leaving them shattered.

In this ballad, the Keats tells a story of a weary knight whom the poet found in a distant place in a dying state. On being asked, the knight tells his story of a beautiful fairy lady, who tempted him and spent pleasant moments with him. The knight offered her a garland and a bracelet of beautiful flowers. In return, the fairy accompanied him to her cave and gave him sweet roots and honey. Before the knight could understand her clever tricks and enchanting behavior, she managed to lull him by singing a sweet song, pushing him in a deep sleep. During his nightmare, he dreamt many knights who were warning him to be careful and not be enthralled and deceived by this treacherous lady. But it was too late. When the knight woke up, he found himself lonely by a hillside waiting to die.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The content of the poem is filled with the story of love, deception, and destruction, leaving a message for the students to be careful from such enticement and temptations. However, the content of the poem seems not to be appropriate for Madrasa students.
Poem No. 10
To the Pupils

Henry Luis Vivian Derozio (1807-1831)

Expanding like the petals of young flowers
I watch the gentle opening of your minds
And the sweet loosening of the spell that binds
Your intellectual energies and powers
That stretch (like young birds in soft summer hours)
Their wings to try their strength. O how the winds
Of circumstance and freshening April showers
Of early knowledge and unnumbered kinds
Of new perceptions shed their influence;
And how you worship truth's omnipotence!
What joyance rains upon me when I see
Fame in the mirror of futurity,
Weaving the chaplets you have yet to gain,
And then I feel I have not lived in vain.

Summary of the poem

The poet, Henry Luis Vivian Derozio's in his poem, "To the Pupils of the Hindu College" tries to compare his pupils with blossoming, growing, and expanding flowers, where their pupils' minds are like delicate petals, waiting for knowledge. The poet emphasizes the significance of the role relationship between a teacher and his students. The poet assumes young minds are like closed buds. A teacher opens the shackles of ignorance and fills with abundant guidance and knowledge. He says that young brains advance gently like young birds flapping their wings in order to fly high in the sky. The poet believes that when the pupils attain success, the teacher feels on the top of the world with his students' achievements.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

This poem is highly inspiring, for both teachers and students, emphasizing the importance of the relation between them, which they must consider during and after their school or college time. A bond of healthy relation between a teacher and his/her pupils leads to a fruitful career of the students.
Poem No. 11
From “The Passing of Arthur”
By Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

And slowly answer’d Arthur from the barge:
“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
   And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
   Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have liv’d my life, and that which I have done
   May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
   Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
   Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
   Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
   For what are men better than sheep or goats
   That nourish a blind life within the brain,
   If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
   Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
   For so the whole round earth is every way
   Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
   But now farewell.

Summary of the poem

The above lines are an extract from the narrative poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892), depicting a conversation between King Arthur and his dearest knight Bedivere at the time when the king is set to sail to the Avalion island, after being wounded in the battle for recovery. He advises his loyal knight not be sad about the termination of the Round Table and the lasting of the golden age of present kingdom. The king consoles his kings, saying that change is a law of the nature, which will bring prosperity in the country. He asks the knight to pray for his soul if he dies and does not return from his voyage, because prayers do wonders. People not praying to God are like sheep and goats. Prayer is a good way to connect with God.
Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The above mentioned lines teach students that failure and success is in the hand of God. Change is a law of God and necessary for betterment. In every circumstance, we should believe in God.

Poem No. 12

O Captain! My Captain!

By Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red!
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
    But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
    Fallen cold and dead.

The Author

Walt Whitman was born on May 31, 1819 and died in 1892. He is the author of *Leaves of Grass* and is considered like Emily Dickinson as one of the architects of a uniquely American poetic voice.

Summary of the poem

The poem, “O Captain! My Captain” by Walt Whitman is an elegy written to mourn the shocking death of the former American president Abraham Lincoln, who had been assassinated in 1964.

The poet considers American leader and president, Abraham Lincoln as the captain of a ship (the United States of America), who geared up his ship (country) safely into the harbor, reaching the destination successfully and triumphantly, regardless whatever the barriers, sufferings, and tribulation of the civil war came in his way. The captain succeeded in order to accomplish his noble endeavor of rooting out the slavery system and had to sacrifice his life. In the end, the poet has mixed feelings of happiness and sorrow. He is happy what the American leader did for his country and grieves over his dead and cold body.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The poem is a great lesson for the students, that a man should work hard to achieve his targets, regardless what obstacles s/he has to face. S/he has to keep working for goals. In addition, this poem also teaches that everyone should serve for the noble causes of the community and country.

Poem No. 13

“Dover Beach”

By Matthew Arnold (1822-1888)

The sea is calm tonight.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-bleached land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

The context of the poem

"Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) is set in the Dover region of southeastern England in 1851.

Summary of the poem

The poet is worried about the recent changes in the perspective of the people’s life, where everyone seems to be materialistic, forgetting the real spirit of being a true human being and losing the belief in religion and God. The poet advises her beloved to be careful about this world of fraud and be loyal to her love. He presents this world as a mirage, where every glittering thing is actually a deception. The world, which looks beautiful and fresh is full of such sorrows and pain, which cannot be recovered. However, the poet advises to be faithful to God, make a strong connection among people in order to sustain in this world.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The content of this poem gives a strong message to its reader to be careful in this world of deception, to be loyal and help one another, by believing in God. This is a beautiful poem which should be taught to the Madrasa students.

Poem No. 14

Our Casuarina Tree

By Toru Dutt (1856-1877)

LIKE a huge Python, winding round and round
The rugged trunk, indented deep with scars,
Up to its very summit near the stars,
A creeper climbs, in whose embraces bound
No other tree could live. But gallantly
The giant wears the scarf, and flowers are hung
In crimson clusters all the boughs among,
Whereon all day are gathered bird and bee;
And oft at nights the garden overflows
With one sweet song that seems to have no close,
Sung darkling from our tree, while men repose.

When first my casement is wide open thrown
   At dawn, my eyes delighted on it rest;
Sometimes, and most in winter,—on its crest
   A gray baboon sits statue-like alone
Watching the sunrise; while on lower boughs
   His puny offspring leap about and play;
And far and near kokilas hail the day;
And to their pastures wend our sleepy cows;
And in the shadow, on the broad tank cast
   By that hoary tree, so beautiful and vast,
The water-lilies spring, like snow enmassed.

But not because of its magnificence
Dear is the Casuarina to my soul:
Beneath it we have played; though years may roll,
   O sweet companions, loved with love intense,
For your sakes, shall the tree be ever dear.
   Blent with your images, it shall arise
In memory, till the hot tears blind mine eyes!
What is that dirge-like murmur that I hear
Like the sea breaking on a shingle-beach?
   It is the tree’s lament, an eerie speech,
That haply to the unknown land may reach.

Unknown, yet well-known to the eye of faith!
Ah, I have heard that wail far, far away
In distant lands, by many a sheltered bay,
When slumbered in his cave the water-wraith
And the waves gently kissed the classic shore
   Of France or Italy, beneath the moon,
When earth lay tranced in a dreamless swoon:
And every time the music rose,—before
Mine inner vision rose a form sublime,
Thy form, O Tree, as in my happy prime
I saw thee, in my own loved native clime.

Therefore I fain would consecrate a lay
Unto thy honor, Tree, beloved of those
Who now in blessed sleep for aye repose,—
Dearer than life to me, alas, were they!
Mayst thou be numbered when my days are done
With deathless trees—like those in Borrowdale,
Under whose awful branches lingered pale
“Fear, trembling Hope, and Death, the skeleton,
And Time the shadow;” and though weak the verse
That would thy beauty fain, oh, fain rehearse,
May Love defend thee from Oblivion’s curse.

About the Author

Toru Dutt (1856-1877) is a well known Indian poetess. ‘Our Casuarina tree’ has got the appreciation throughout the world.

Summary of the poem

In this poem the writer, Toru Dutt shows her love and personal attachment towards nature. She attempts to recapitulate and immortalize her childhood memories related to the Casurana tree grown in the courtyard of her home, under the shade of which she spent the most important phase, childhood of her life. The tree is gallant, which seems to be touching the stars, and is too strong that it can support python-like creepers. The tree is loved by birds, baboons, and bees, which she loves very much. She also expresses her feelings of grief, that is, the loss of her dear ones with whom she played, swung, and enjoyed under this tree.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

This is a good poem and should be prescribed for Madrasa learners. The poem will teach them how human beings should show their love and care for nature.
Poem No. 15
Where The Mind Is Without Fear
By Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)
Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into ever-widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

Summary of the poem
Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), a spiritual writer in his poem, ‘Where the Mind is without Fear’, expresses his love and affection towards the nation. He prays to God to make a liberal nation like a heaven with beautiful, pure, and generous hearts, and free from evil desires, jealousy, fear, narrow-mindedness, oppression, bias, caste and gender division, slavery, political and financial greed. He hopes for a nation, where knowledge and education should not be limited to the upper class, rather it should be free for everyone without any discrimination.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context
This poem is highly focused on the spiritual freedom of a nation, which encourages students to change their minds. The lesson can be used for Madrasa students.

Poem No. 16
If
By Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)
If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
   Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
   Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream---and not make dreams your master;
If you can think---and not make thoughts your aim,
   If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
   And treat those two impostors just the same:.
   If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
   Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
   And stoop and build'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
   And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
   And lose, and start again at your beginnings,
   And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
   To serve your turn long after they are gone,
   And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings---nor lose the common touch,
   If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
   If all men count with you, but none too much:
   If you can fill the unforgiving minute
   With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
   Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
   And---which is more---you'll be a Man, my son!
Summary of the poem

This poem by Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) is an attempt to encourage his readers to become confident and optimistic, no matter what the circumstances be. The poet tries to exhort the youth, not to pay attention if others have evil intention about them, but they will have to be patient, honest, loyal, social, and self-reliant. The writer advises them to show their strength against every evil activity, be confident enough to believe in themselves, and face all the hurdles bravely. They must not be deceived by any feeling of triumph or defeat. They must continue their work, thinking that whatever they do, they will get rewarded. Selfless attitude, balanced and calm mind, sacrifice, hard work, time management, perseverance, respecting and helping others, and being social are the key features for the success of man, leading him to happiness and glory.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The poem tells the key features of success that are related to adopting the moral values for personality development. The poem teaches the students to maintain peace, harmony and brotherhood, not to be cheated and hurt by criticism, and to be confident, having pure hearts.

Poem No. 17
Nightingales
By Robert Bridges (1844-1930)

BEAUTIFUL must be the mountains whence ye come,
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams, wherefrom
Ye learn your song:
Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there,
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air
Bloom the year long!
Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams:
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
A thro' of the heart,
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound,
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,
For all our art.
Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then,
As night is withdrawn

From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of May,
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
Welcome the dawn.

Summary of the poem

Nightingale, in poetry has been a symbol of both melancholy and melody. Robert Bridges (1844-1930) perceives the song of the nightingale as melody and portrays her beauty in his poem “Nightingales”. This poem is an imaginative conversation between the writer and the nightingales.

The writer tries to find out the beauty of the environment where they were born and raised and now came here. He imagines that their birth place must be beautiful and astonishing valleys of fruits, blooming flowers, and streams, which must have made their songs so charming and melodious. He tries to explore the location of the forest and starry woods, where they have learnt their songs. The nightingales prove his notion false and say that their dwelling is in the barren mountains, where the rivers are dry. Their songs sound sweet and beautiful, but they are actually filled with pain that lies in the depth of their hearts, with forbidden hopes and pinning vision, which man cannot understand. When the night is over and morning comes they disappear from the meadows, where an abundance of beautiful flowers blossom and sway in the air.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The poem teaches that a man must always be happy, even if he has worries and miseries in his life. He should always express himself as a happy and prosperous man and please others like the nightingales do.

Poem No 18

Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening

By Robert Frost (1874-1963)

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.
My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Summary of the poem

Robert Frost (1874-1963) in his poem, “Stopping by woods on a snowy evening”, explores the fact of life and death. He believes that stopping at some point is death. The writer tells a story of a man and how honestly he performs his duties and responsibilities. The man, with his horse passes through woods covered with snow, which is far enough from his owner’s sight. This beautiful scene tempts him and tries to stop and watch the beautiful scenery around. But his conscience does not allow him to stop and take a rest. He prefers life to death, which means he dismisses the idea of stopping by woods on a snowy evening and keeps continues his journey to his owner’s home.

Analysis of the poem in terms of socio-cultural content and context

The poem teaches the students that they should not forget their duties and work, even if they are enchanted and distracted by the beauty of the world.

Poem No. 19

Palanquin Bearers

By Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949)

Lightly, O lightly we bear her along,
She sways like a flower in the wind of our song;
She skims like a bird on the foam of a stream,
She floats like a laugh from the lips of a dream.

Gaily, O gaily we glide and we sing,
We bear her along like a pearl on a string.

Softly, O softly we bear her along,
She hangs like a star in the dew of our song;
She springs like a beam on the brow of the tide,
She falls like a tear from the eyes of a bride.

Lightly, O lightly we glide and we sing,
We bear her along like a pearl on a string.

Summary of the poem

'The palanquin bearers' written by Sarojini Naido (1879-1949) is one of her finest poems in which she tries to portrays a scene of palanquin bearers, carrying a bride. The bearers look very happy and feel pride in their job, with no burden. They are carrying the palanquin merrily, singing songs as if it is the best job for them which they do not feel tiresome. The writer describes the scene of the palanquin bearers. The palanquin sways like a flower in the wind of their songs, skims like a bird, floats like a laugh, hangs like a star, springs like a beam, and falls like a tear from the eyes of a bride, and seems to be a pearl on a string.

Analysis of the poem in terms of socio-cultural content and context

The poem teaches that a man must be hard working, feel pride in and love his job, regardless of what work he does.

Poem No. 20

The Song of the Free

By Swami Vivekanand (1862-1902)

The wounded snake its hood unfurls,
The flame stirred up doth blaze,
The desert air resounds the calls,
Of heart-struck lion's rage;

The cloud puts forth it deluge strength
When lightning cleaves its breast,
When the soul is stirred to its in most depth
Great ones unfold their best!

Let eyes grow dim and heart grow faint
And friendship fail and love betray.
Let Fate its hundred horrors send
And clotted darkness block the way-

All nature wear one angry frown
To crush you out - still know, my soul,
You are Divine. March on and on
Nor right nor left but to the goal.

Summary of the poem

The above lines have been taken from "The Song of the Free" written by Swami Vivekanand (1862-1902), a philosopher and a saint poet, who tries to teach readers that they should not feel any fear of death, suffering, and misfortune. They should be courageous and face and fight the challenges bravely, believing in God, which is their ultimate goal. No matter if the friends turn into foes and loves betray, but they should not stop loving and being loyal. They should learn from a wounded snake that unfolds its hood and excited flames burn strongly. They should also be as courageous as a heart-struck lion that roars fearlessly and never gives up.

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

The poem teaches that the students should believe in God, be loyal to one another and be courageous and confident.

Chapter-II of the Intermediate English prose

The Light of Asia: Book The Third: Text

Analysis of the poem in terms of its socio-cultural content and context

'The Light of Asia: Book The Third: Text' by Sir Edvin Arnold (1832-1904) is a long poem of five hundred and nineteen verses, which reflect the life and teaching of Gautam Buddha. In the words of the writer himself: "In this poem, I have sought to
depict the life and character and indicate the philosophy of that noble hero and reformer Prince Gautam of India, the founder of Buddhism”.

5.3.4. Analysis of the Socio-Cultural Content and Context of ‘The Merchant of Venice’

The Merchant of Venice

By William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

The book comprises the life and career of William Shakespeare, general introduction, brief summary, detailed summary, major characters, and the text of ‘The Merchant of Venice’ followed by exercises related to the drama.

Life and Career of William Shakespeare

He was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, England in April, 1564. He belonged to a respectable family, son of a merchant named John Shakespeare. His mother was a daughter of the Arden family who had been landowners in Warwickshire for a long time. He continued his education till the age of fourteen in the local grammar school of Howkshed and left the school to assist his family in order to overcome their family troubles.

At the age of eighteen and a half, he married Anne Hathway, who was twenty-six at that time, eight years older than him. They had three daughters- Susanna and a twin named Hamnet and Judith in 1583 and in 1595 respectively.

As an actor and dramatist he earned great esteem and reputation, and had a good business sense. In 1599 he also acquired a share in the profits of the Globe Theatre. He took retirement in 1611 and died at the age of fifty-two in 1616.

At the age of twenty-one, he left his village for London and became a Londoner. He began his work as a humble horse boy and a call boy at the Globe theatre. As a playwright, he first improved the works of other playwrights. Gradually by gaining experience, he started writing pieces of literature. He wrote thirty-seven plays and many poems and became a major dramatist of the day. The first play he wrote was Henry VI and Part II, a history play, first performed in 1590-1591. The Merchant of Venice is one of his famous dramas.

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The characters of the play have multi-character, multi-functional and dimensional features and aspects, which highlight the divergence in the existing sociological norms and notions among the masses.

**Antonio:** He is a wealthy Venetian merchant who occasionally lends money, but never charges interest. Since his primary source of income is from his merchant ships, he is the "Merchant" of the play's title.

**Bassanio:** Bassanio, one of the best friends of Antonio is careless about his money, is a typical Elizabethan lover and nobleman. He borrows money from Antonio for his expenses and to woo Portia in style.

**Salanio:** He is another friend of Antonio who thinks that Antonio's melancholy may be affected because Antonio is in love.

**Salarino:** He is another friend of Antonio who believes that Antonio is sad because of his ships at sea.

**Lorenzo:** He is a friend of Antonio and Bassanio and wins the love of Shylock's daughter, Jessica.

**Gratiano:** He is the light-hearted, talkative friend of Bassanio, who accompanies Bassanio to Belmont, where he falls in love with Portia's confidante, Nerissa.

**Leonardo:** He is Bassanio's servant.

**Portia:** She is one of Shakespeare's most intelligent and the Wittiest heroines, who is renowned for her beauty and wealth.

**Nerissa:** She is Portia's merry and sympathetic lady-in-waiting.

**Balthasar:** The servant whom Portia sends to her cousin, Dr. Bellario.

**Stephano:** One of Portia's servants

**Shylock:** He is an intelligent businessman who thinks that since he is a money lender, charging interest is his right.

**Jessica:** She is the young daughter of Shylock who falls in love with Lorenzo. Disguised as a boy she elopes with Lorenzo.

**Launcelot Gobbo:** He is a "clown" (a jester) and a young servant of Shylock who is about to go off because he thinks that Shylock is the devil. Eventually, he leaves Shylock's service and becomes Bassanio's jester.

**Tubal:** He is a friend of Shylock who tells him that one of Antonio's ships has been wrecked.
Old Gobbo: He is the father of Launcelot who has come to Venice to look for his son.

The Duke of Venice: He presides as judge over the courtroom proceedings in Shylock's claim over Antonio.

The Prince of Morocco: He is one of Portia's suitors who misses the chance to hook up with her when he chooses the gold casket.

The Prince of Arragon: He chooses the silver casket and is another disappointed suitor for Portia's hand in marriage.

Salerio: He is a messenger from Venice.

Dr. Bellario: A lawyer in Padua.

Summary of the drama

'The Merchant of Venice' by William Shakespeare is remembered for its dramatic scenes and noteworthy characters that pronounce this work of Shakespeare as remarkable.

Shylock, the Jewish moneylender of Venice is a hard hearted man, notorious for his severity. Antonio, a merchant of noble rank used to lend money to people in distress without any rate of interest, unlike Shylock, but now he does not have sufficient money to lend because his trade ship did not come for which he has been waiting for many days. Two different natures and distinct approaches towards business and people between Antonio and Shylock cause hatred and enmity between the two. Antonio often condemns Shylock’s action of taking interest and not supporting people in distress. Shylock is angered by his mistreatment at the hands of Venice’s Christians, particularly Antonio. Shylock looks for a chance to avenge himself against Antonio.

Noble and kind Antonio is loved by all fellow-citizens. Bassanio, a gentleman of Venice is very close and dear to him. Bassanio had led a too expensive life out of the small share of his father's property and exhausted his fortune in doing so. Antonio helped his friend, whenever he needed money. When Bassanio receives messages from Portia, his childhood love, he also feels that she has the same feelings for him. In order to match his appearance with that of a rich heir for the wealthy Portia, he requests Antonio to borrow three-thousands ducats from Shylock as his guarantor. Shylock agrees on a condition, that is, if Antonio fails to return his money with interest on the appointed time, he will take one pound of flesh from any part of his
body where he will like. Bassanio tried to stop Antonio from such an agreement, but Antonio convinced him, saying that he would repay Shylock before the payment date as his ships would return with the goods. Finally the bond is signed.

When Bassanio gets money, he undertakes a journey for Belmont with his friend, Gratiano in order to participate in the competition of choosing the right casket to get married to Portia, who is a wealthy heiress of Belmont, whose father had died many years ago and had left behind a large estate for her. Bassanio reaches Belmont and takes part in the competition, where he finds the princes of Morocco and Arragona who came to marry Portia.

The competition commences and the princes of Morocco and Arragona fail to choose the right casket out of three in which the portrait of Portia is kept. According to the terms and conditions, these princes now cannot marry any woman in their whole life. Antonio wins this competition and accepts the ring from Portia, promising never to part with it. Meanwhile Gratiano also gets permission from Portia to marry to her fair waiting gentlewoman named Nerissa.

This happy moment is interrupted by a messenger, carrying a message for Bassanio from Antonio that contained fearful tidings. Bassanio reads out the letter, in which Antonio writes about the forfeit of his bond to Shylock, and as a penalty Antonio has to give a pound of flesh from any part of his body. And this case is to be presented in the court of Duke of Venice. Hearing the message, Portia asked Bassanio to leave for his friend’s help and before he could set out, she marries him to give her legal right to her money so that he can help Antonio. On the same day, Gratiano and Nerissa also get married. Both bade their husbands cheerfully.

When Portia was left all alone, she begins to think if she could by any means help Antonio. She states the complete case to a counselor in the law named Bellario, who is a gentleman. The counselor helps Portia with his advice and by arranging a dress of the lawyer. Soon Portia and her maid Nerissa dressed themselves as men. Portia disguised herself as a counselor-Balthasar and Nerissa as her clerk and set out for Venice on the same day of the trial and reach Venice.

Portia enters the court of justice and looks around her. Bassanio and Gratiano could not make out their wives in disguise. She presented the letter to the duke from Bellario stating, that Balthasar (so he called Portia) will plead for Antonio. Shylock ignores many pleas to spare Antonio’s life as he only wants to revenge. The duke of
Venice presides over the trial and announces that he has sent for a legal expert pointing out to Balthasar (Portia). Portia first of all addresses Shylock who has already refused the money offered to him by Bassanio, which was just twice the amount. Portia asks him to show mercy to Antonio, but he remains inflexible and insists on a pound of flesh from the body of Antonio as part of the bond between him and Antonio.

Portia examines the bond and finds it legally bound. She declares that Shylock is entitled to the merchant's flesh. Shylock praises her wisdom, but as he is on the verge of collecting his due, Portia reminds him that he must do so without causing Antonio to bleed, as the contract does not entitle him to any blood. Shylock gets shocked with her wisdom and logic and sees that the counselor is gaining support from the court members, he hastily agrees to take Bassanio's money instead, but Portia insists that Shylock should take his bond, else nothing at all. Portia, through her wisdom proves Shylock as guilty of conspiring against the life of a Venetian citizen, and that means he must turn over half of his property to the state and the other half to Antonio.

The Duke on hearing the matter, agrees on the counselor's logic and thereafter spares Shylock's life, and charges a fine by forfeiting his property. But Antonio forgives his half of Shylock's wealth on two conditions: first, Shylock must convert to Christianity, and second, he must will the entirety of his estate to his disinheritied daughter Jessica and his husband Lorenzo (who was Antonio's friend) upon his death. Shylock agrees on it, and on realizing his loss, makes an excuse and takes leave.

The Duke was impressed by the counselor's wisdom and asked Antonio and Bassanio to thank him and be grateful in the most polite manner. Antonio, who does not see through Portia's disguise, showers the young law clerk with thanks, and as a gift is eventually pressured into giving the counselor (Portia) the ring with which he promised never to part. Gratiano gives Nerissa, who is disguised as Portia's clerk, his ring. The two women disguised in the said form decided to return to Belmont so that they could reach the same day, before their husbands return. Meanwhile, they find Lorenzo and Jessica declaring their love for each other under the moonlight.

The two women reached Belmont before their husbands' return and when Bassanio and Gratiano arrive the next day, their wives accuse them of faithlessly
giving their rings to other women and displayed their anger. Before the deception goes too far, however, Portia reveals that she was, in fact, the legal expert (counselor) who pleaded for Antonio and Nerissa disguised as her clerk, and both she and Nerissa reconcile with their husbands with a smile. On the other hand, Lorenzo and Jessica are pleased to learn about their inheritance from Shylock, and the joyful news arrives that Antonio’s ships have in fact made it back safely. Thus, the tragic beginning of the rich merchant Antonio ends with an unexpected good fortune and the group laughs at the comical adventure of the rings; and the husbands realizing how they could not recognize their wives. The play ends with the swearing of Gratiano in sort of a rhyming speech, that

"...while he lived, he’d fear no other thing
So sore, as keeping safe Nerissa’s ring."

**Analysis of the play in terms of its socio-cultural content and context**

The context of this drama is alien to Madrasa learners. The content of this drama has pros and cons in terms of the context of Madrasa learners.

**Pros**

This drama teaches that one should not exploit the needy and helpless people and support by offering help and lending money without taking an interest. Conspiracy, greed, and other evil desires lead to the destruction of one’s life.

**Cons**

This whole drama is centered on the love stories of three different couples. Such relations are against Islamic teachings. Bassanio’s lifestyle and his request to Antonio for borrowing money from Shylock in order to get Portia is an approach which is not sanctioned in Islam. Thus, this drama be better avoided for Madrasa learners.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, the present chapter focuses on the evaluation of the presentation, including exercises of the chapters in all the four English textbooks prescribed for the students of 12th class (Intermediate) in order to ascertain whether the presentation, including the exercises have communicative approach, and the analysis of the chapters of all the four textbooks in terms of their socio-cultural content and context in order to ascertain if these chapters are in accordance with the context of the Madrasa learners who subscribe to Islamic culture and traits.
The evaluation of the presentation along with the exercises of every chapter of every textbook, including Intermediate English Prose, Short Stories, Poetry and drama ‘The Merchant of Venice’ indicates that the exercises, mainly emphasizes improving reading ability of the learners, with a little focus on writing skill and bilingual vocabulary, without using them in context and with no focus on speaking and reading skills and pronunciation. The approach of the syllabus is text-oriented rather than the communicative based approach. The solution to this problem is that the exercises in the textbooks should be designed according to the communicative approach, which includes all the four language skills, pronunciation, and context-based grammar and vocabulary.

The analysis of the chapters of all the textbooks shows that the content of the texts has socio-cultural values. However, some chapters are unsuitable for Madrasa students and culturally not well suited to the Madrasa students’ context.

The textbooks for Madrasa learners should have an integrated content with the main focus on the inclusion of Islamic culture, which will help them understand the text quickly, resulting in the improvement of their language skills, especially reading skill. Integration of local culture plays a vital role in the target language learning as Hamid Ashraf, Khalil Motallebzadeh, Zeinab Kafi (2013) emphasize the inclusion of local culture in ESL/EFL textbooks.  

However, Indian culture cannot be considered as a local culture for students studying in Madrasas. In Madrasa settings, students’ local culture is Islamic culture. Therefore, the above mentioned textbooks are not very appropriate for Madrasa learners because Madrasa learners’ needs, culture and setting are different from the students of other national colleges and schools.

One of the solutions to culturally inappropriate Madrasa English textbooks is to produce new material for Madrasa learners that should include 50% Islamic culture and 50% global culture. Researchers differ on what culture be reflected in ESL/EFL textbooks: the target culture, the local culture or the global culture. Hemat Purba advocates the inclusion of target culture and says, “a sound grasp of the background

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knowledge of the target culture is necessary for anyone to communicate successfully with the speakers of the language".\textsuperscript{14} No doubt, a reflection of the target culture is important in ESL/EFL texts, but it is not all in all. The background knowledge of local culture and global culture also plays a vital role in language learning. This stance is also supported by researchers namely María Carolina Moirano\textsuperscript{15}, Muhammad Asim Mahmood, Zobina Muhammad and Asghar Zahida Hussain.\textsuperscript{16} In the same way scholars like Soraya Rajabi\textsuperscript{17} and Hamid Ashraf, Khalil Motallebzadeh, Zeinab Kafi (2013) also support the inclusion of local culture with the equal content of target culture in ESL/EFL texts.

The idea of a balance between the target culture and the local culture or a balance between the local culture and the global culture in ESL/EFL texts will work in Madrasa setting effectively. For Madrasa learners, the texts should include 50% Islamic culture and 50% global culture. A balanced approach between the Islamic culture and the global culture will help Madrasa learners predict, interpret and understand English texts comfortably. As a result, their reading proficiency will be improved and they will be able to enjoy English learning. To conclude, one of the important problems in ESL/EFL programs at Madrasas is culturally inappropriate English textbooks. One of the possible solutions to this issue is to produce a new material for Madrasa learners that should be based on 50% Islamic and 50% global culture.


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