

2.5 Father Returning Home

ICE BREAKERS

➢ **Discuss with your partner the difficulties that you face while commuting to and from the college by public transport.**

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

➢ **The similar problems are faced by the other commuters on the way to their work place. Imagine their plight and suggest three solutions.**

Solutions →

- giving them your place to sit
-
-
-

➢ **Complete the following table.**

A	B
The way our elders take care of us	The way you can take care of elders in your family.
1. Love and protect us 2. ..... 3.	1. Help them in daily chores. 2. ..... 3. .....

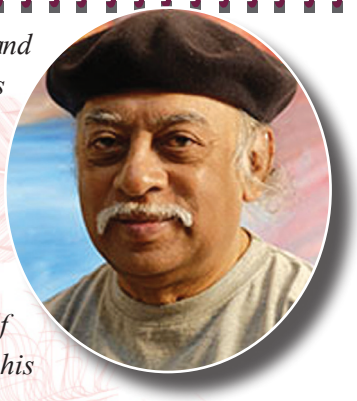
➢ **Write your duties towards the following–**

Family

Parents	Siblings	Grandparents
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

School / College

Teachers	Classmates
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....



Dilip Chitre (1938 to 2009) *was a celebrated bilingual poet and translator with a remarkable work in Marathi and English. His versatile creativity extends to painting, film-making and his notable contribution as a magazine columnist. He received the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award, both for poetry as well as for his well-known translation work 'Says Tuka', popular abhangas (spiritual poems) by Sant Tukaram. He had started translation of literary work of saints in Marathi at the age of 16. Exile, alienation self -disintegration and death are observed to be the major themes of his works.*

This poem is taken from 'Travelling in a Cage'. It draws a portrait of a suburban commuter. It depicts his dull, monotonous, exhausting and equally pitiable daily routine. It describes a forced alienation at home, which is reflected through the stale food and lack of sharing. His children refuse to share their joys and sorrows with the hardworking father who as a result is forced to retire into solitude. This very painful loneliness is a symbol of man's isolation from the materialistic man-made world.

Father Returning Home

My father travels on the late evening train

Standing among silent **commuters** in the yellow light

Suburbs slide past his unseeing eyes

His shirt and pants are soggy and his black raincoat

Stained with mud and his bag stuffed with books

Is falling apart. His eyes dimmed by age

Fade homeward through the humid monsoon night.

Now I can see him getting off the train

Like a word dropped from a long sentence.

He hurries across the length of the **grey platform**,

Crosses the railway line, enters the lane,

His chappals are sticky with mud, but he hurries onward.

Home again, I see him drinking weak tea,

Eating a stale *chapati*, reading a book.

commuters : those who travel regularly from one place to another typically to work

grey platform : It is grey due to cement. Here, 'grey' suggests old age, dullness, sordidness of a father's life.



He goes into the toilet **to contemplate**

Man's **estrangement** from a man-made world.

Coming out he trembles at the sink,

The cold water running over his brown hands,

A few droplets cling to the greying hair on his wrists.

His **sullen** children have often refused to share

Jokes and secrets with him.

He will now go to sleep

Listening to the static on the radio, dreaming

Of his ancestors and grandchildren, thinking

Of nomads entering a subcontinent through a narrow pass.

-Dilip Chitre

contemplate : think deeply
estrangement : alienation

sullen : bad tempered

Refusal of the children to share jokes and secrets indicates :

(1) They are angry

(2) Generation gap

(3) Lack of concern

BRAINSTORMING

(A1) (i) Discuss with your friend the difficulties faced by the father in the poem.

(a) .....

(b) .....

(c) .....

(d) .....

(ii) Discuss the character sketch of the father with the help of the given points.

(His pathetic condition, the treatment he receives at home, his solitude, the way he tries to overcome it)

(a) .....

(b) .....

(c) .....

(d) .....

(A2) (i) Given below are the ideas conveyed through the poem. Match the pairs and draw out the hidden meaning from those expressions.

Expressions	Meaning
(a) Children avoid expressing themselves.	(1) Father is so eager to meet family members that he doesn't even bother about his safety.
(b) Father was deprived of refreshing hot beverages or nourishing diet.	(2) Hostility of children
(c) The father hurries the home crossing railway line	(3) Indulge into his past and future.
(d) The father was destined to listen only to the cracking sounds on media.	(4) Uncomfortable journey
(e) His sordid present is devoid of any hope.	(5) His basic daily requirements were also not catered to.
(f) The father's endless commuting distance him from his children	(6) Father is not less than any tribal wanderer, a modern nomad.
(g) Suburban area, visible through the train, is past unnoticed.	(7) Has least value in the society where his presence or absence might hardly make any difference.

(h) He is just as a small word, dropping from a sentence.	(8) Because there is hardly anything enchanting / interesting in the monotonous routine journey to look out of the window
(i) He doesn't get a place in a crowded train.	(9) The father couldn't even fulfil the least expectation of entertaining himself.

(ii) Find the lines to prove the following facts from the poem.

(a) Father is deprived of good food.

(b) Children did not have a healthy relation with the father.

(iii) The poet deals with the theme of man's estrangement from a man-made world. Analyze it with the help of the poem.

(iv) The father contemplates about his past and peeps into his future. Give reasons.

(A3) Complete the following using suitable describing words as appeared in the poem with the help of the words given in the brackets :

(weak, dim, muddy, soggy, stale)

(a) Father's attire

(b) Father's tea

(c) Father's footware

(d) Father's food

(e) Father's eyesight

(A4) (i) 'Fade homeward through the humid monsoon night'.

In the above line the weather is humid, not the night. The epithet or adjective is transferred from the weather to the night. This figure of speech is Transferred Epithet.

Find out such other expressions from the poem.

(ii) Identify and write the lines from the poem which express the following figures of speech.

Figures of speech	Lines
1. Simile	1. .....
2. Alliteration	2. .....
3. Onomatopoeia	3. .....

(iii) I see him drinking weak tea, eating a stale *chapati*.

Here 'stale *chapati*' stands for stale food/non-nourishing food or diet, where the part symbolizes the whole, i.e. food. Guess the name of the figure of speech.

(A5) (i) Write a counterview on the following topic.

"Every day is a mother's/ father's day."

(a) If you love them, you don't need to wait for such days.

(b) Celebrating days is just a formality.

(c) Celebrations of the days condition your expression of emotions.

(d) It is a kind of a pretext to neglect your everyday responsibilities.

(ii) Conduct a group discussion on the role of children towards their 'Parents and Senior Citizens'.

(iii) Write an appreciation of the poem 'Father Returning Home'.

(iv) Compose a short poem in about 4-6 lines on your father.

(v) Write a character sketch of your family member.

(A6) (i) Dilip Chitre has translated Sant Tukaram's *'Abhang'* (devotional poem) for which he received Sahitya Akademi Award. Browse the internet to collect more information about it.

(ii) List various occupations related to services which can be rendered to senior citizens.

(a) To counsel patients of Alzheimers' disease.

(b) .....

(c) .....

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