

IN THE KINGDOM OF FOOLS

HOT Question:

Analyze how A.K. Ramanujan's "In the Kingdom of Fools" critiques the dangers of unquestioned obedience to authority, using examples from the text.

Answer:

"In the Kingdom of Fools," A.K. Ramanujan presents a satirical narrative that underscores the absurdity and dangers of blindly following authority. The kingdom is ruled by a foolish king and his equally foolish ministers who reverse the natural order of things, decreeing that night be day and vice versa. The citizens, in fear of punishment, obediently comply with these irrational rules. This unquestioning obedience leads to a series of ridiculous events, including a bizarre trial where the innocent are condemned and the guilty are spared based on arbitrary decisions. The climax reveals the folly of such blind adherence when the wise guru and his disciple outsmart the foolish authorities, exposing the irrationality of their rules. The story serves as a cautionary tale about the perils of not questioning authority, emphasizing that wisdom and critical thinking should prevail over blind obedience. Through humor and irony, Ramanujan critiques the blind acceptance of illogical edicts and the resulting chaos it can bring.

SHORT QUESTIONS

Question 1: How was the kingdom of fools different from other places?

Answer: Everything was strange and abnormal in the city of fools. People used to sleep in the day and work in the night; the price of everything was same-a single duddu. It was all very strange. Such things were available nowhere. So the kingdom of fools was different from other places.

Question 2: How according to the king had justice come a full circle?

Answer: According to the king, the first accused was a merchant. He blamed the bricklayer who blamed the dancing girl. She blamed the goldsmith who in turn blamed the merchant. Thus, justice had come to a full circle.

Question 3: Why did the guru want to leave the kingdom quickly? Why did the disciple decide to stay on?

Answer: The guru realised that the place was dangerous. Anything could happen to him as it was the kingdom of fools. So, he decided to leave it. But the disciple decided to stay on as he wanted to enjoy cheap and good food.

Question 4: Who was finally blamed for the crime and why?

Answer: The rich man was finally blamed. It was because his father was the real murderer of the thief, but he had died. However, his son had inherited his property and his sins. Therefore, he was to die for his father's crime.

Question 5: Why did the servants of the king catch the disciple?

Answer: The rich merchant was very thin. He was not fit for the stake. The king decided to find a person fat enough to fit the stake. The disciple had grown fat with all the food he had been eating. Thus, the king's servants caught him.

Question 6: Why were the people of the kingdom confused when they saw the dead bodies of the king and his minister?

Answer: The people of the kingdom were confused as to how their king and the minister were dead instead of the guru and the disciple. The people were not able to see through the plan which was executed by the guru against their King and the minister.

Question 7: When did the disciple remember the words of his Guru?

Answer: The disciple did not pay any heed to the advice of his Guru, when the Guru asked him to leave the kingdom of fools. When the king decided that the disciple was the suitable person for execution, he remembered the words of the Guru.

Question 8: Why did the King decide to postpone the execution of the Guru and his disciple?

Answer: The Guru had convinced the King that people dying on the stake would rule the kingdom in their next birth. The foolish king fell for the Guru's words and wished to hatch a plan to die himself. Hence, he postponed their execution.

Question 9: On what conditions did the Guru and his disciple agree to rule the kingdom?

Answer: The Guru laid the condition that he would be free to change all the old and foolish laws. Hence, night was considered as night and day as day. People would work during the day and not the night. Also, the prices of different materials would be different according to their values.