NCERT Solutions for Class 12

English Kaliedoscope

Chapter - Kubla Khan

Understanding the poem

1. Does the poem have a real geographical location? How does the poet mix up the real and the imaginary to give a sense of the surreal?

Ans: In the poem, Coleridge mentions how Kubla wanted to build a dome untroubled by any of the natural forces. He wanted to create a private world deprived of change. The poet wanted to build a dome in the air with the forces of nature, which would reveal poetics and truth. He wanted to build something that would easily fit into the natural movements of the world. One example of how a poet connects reality with imagination is the Alf River. In this way, the poet adopts certain figures from the real world and binds them with imaginary concepts.

2. Pick out

a. Contrasting images that are juxtaposed throughout the poem.

Ans: Contrasting images in the poem are as follows:

i. The noisy, active, and sinister little river, Alph is shown a calm, quiet, and peaceful garden of the poem.

ii. The ocean is also shown as gloomy and mysterious rather than a sunny, warm forest.

iii. The dome feels warm, whereas the caves are cold, freezing, and icy.

iv. The “wailing woman” is compared with her lover described as a “demon.”

b. Images that strike the eye and images strike the ear, both positive and negative.

Ans: The images that strike the eyes are

i. The imagery of the name “Kubla Khan” invalidates the mysterious, trance-like effect Coleridge is searching for.

ii. The visual descriptions- “gardens bright and sinuous rills,” “incense-bearing tree,” “sunny spots of greenery,” and “forests ancient as the hills” provide an effect of some dreamy recollection.

iii. The poem comes with alliteration in the introductory lines, with each line closing with the words- “Kubla Khan,” “pleasure-dome decree,” “river, ran,” “measureless to man,” and “sunless sea.”

iv. The juxtaposition of the images “waning” and “wailing woman” coveys the effect of a wailing sound.

v. The halting assonance in “As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing” provides the effect of breathing.

c. The words used to describe the movement of water.

Ans: The poet uses several words used to describe the movement of water. He attempts to visualize the river rushing down the hillside “momentarily” like a “fountain”: “A mighty fountain momentarily was forced.”, “meander with a mazy motion.” The poem represents the river as it rushes down a deep canyon and cuts into a wooded hillside with the lines “Through wood and dale the sacred river ran, / then reached the caverns measureless to man/ And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean.”

3. What is the discordant note heard at the end of the third stanza? Can we relate this to the grandeur and turmoil that are a part of an emperor’s life?

Ans: The poet calls Xanadu in a strange sense. He describes the essence as the floating hair and sparkling eyes. These markings present something scary. His vision is overwhelming that the spokesman consumes the milk from paradise together with honey. Critics claim that this picture takes Opium on one side, while others have not accepted these and try to explain it as a final vision of Kubla Khan. At the end of the third Stanza, an inexplicable and peculiar and peculiar atmosphere of mysticism is created.

4. Which are the lines that refer to magical elements?

Ans: The lines that depict the magical elements are:

a. “And all should cry, Beware! / Beware! / His flashing eyes, his floating hair! represents an atmosphere of supernatural mystery.

b. “Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree” creates a magical world.

c. “But oh! That deep romantic chasm which/ slanted” represents the world in some spell cast by some unknown power.

d. “It was a miracle of rare device, / A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice.” represents the dome.

5. What is poetic ecstasy likened to?

Ans: Poetic ecstasy can be defined as the style of turning into alive the passion through voicing the intricate feelings and experiences. The rejuvenating euphoria and the ecstatic energy that remains in the mind and body are together as a strange force that shakes us from within. The magic surrounding the artist through such fragmentary moments takes him into a poetic ecstasy.

6. The poem is a fragment. What do you think has made it a lasting literary piece?

Ans: The poem is considered a universal piece of poetry. The calm, serene surroundings contrast with the dark, gloomy, violent river shown in the poem. There is a combination of Christian, Hinduism, and Islamic traits in the poem. An instance of Jesus’ cross sign is given in the poem. Kubla Khan is from an Islamic background. Also, the romantics shown in the poem are of the Hindu view of Pantheism.