

NCERT QUESTIONS WITH SOLUTIONS

Oral Comprehension Check

1. Where did the ceremonies take place? Can you name any public buildings in India that are made of sandstone?

Ans. The ceremonies took place in the lovely sandstone amphitheatre formed by the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

In India the Parliament, the President House, the Red Fort, the Jama Masjid etc. are made of sandstone.

2. Can you say how 10th May is an 'autumn day' in South Africa?

Ans. Geographically, South Africa is in southern hemisphere so seasons come first over there. Politically, the day symbolises the shedding of the leaves of slavery which remained continued for 300 years in the form of the white rule.

3. At the beginning of his speech, Mandela mentions "An extraordinary human disaster". What does he mean by this? What is the "glorious..... human achievement" he speaks of at the end?

Ans. By 'an extraordinary human disaster', he means the oppression of the black by the white that lasted too long.

The liberation of the black from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discriminations is the glorious human achievement.

4. What does Mandela thank the international leaders for?

Ans. Mandela thanks the international leaders for having come to take possession with the people of South Africa of what is, after all, a common victory for justice, for peace, and for human dignity.

5. What ideals does he set out for the future of South Africa?

Ans. South Africa will never again experience the oppression of one by another. The people will be liberated from the poverty, deprivation, suffering and discrimination. These ideals he set out for the future of South Africa.

6. What did the military generals do? How did their attitude change, and why?

Ans. The military generals saluted Mr. Mandela and pledged their loyalty to democracy and the new elected government. Previously, they had arrested Mr. Mandela but now saluted him. It was because Mr. Mandela had become the president.

7. Why were two national anthems sung?

Ans. Two national anthems were sung because these showed two visions – of the white and of the black. The white wanted to show respect to their national anthem and the black to their one.

8. How does Mandela describe the system of government in his country (i) in the first decade, and (ii) in the final decade of the twentieth century?

Ans. In the first decade of the 20th century, whites patched up their differences and erected a system of racial domination against blacks of their own land. It was the harshest and the most inhumane system.

In the final decade, the system recognised the rights and freedom of all peoples, regardless of the colour of their skin.

9. What does courage mean to Mandela?

Ans. To Mandela, courage does not mean the absence of fear but the triumph over it. The brave man is he who does not feel afraid but he who conquers that fear.

10. Which does he think is natural, to love or to hate?

Ans. He thinks that love comes more naturally to human heart than hate.

11. What 'twin obligations' does Mandela mention?

Ans. The 'twin obligations' Mandela mentions are; the obligations to his family, to his parents, to his wife and children; and the obligations to his people, to his community, to his country.

12. What did being free mean to Mandela as a boy, and as a student? How does he contrast these "transitory freedoms" with "the basic and honourable freedom"?

Ans. To Mandela, being free as a boy means to run in the fields near the mother's hut, to swim in the clear stream that ran through the village, to roast mealies under the stars and to ride the broad backs of slow moving bulls.

As a student he felt freedom is to be able to stay out at night, to read what he pleases and to go where he chose.

'Transitory freedom's are for his ownself and the 'basic and honourable freedoms' are for his people.

13. Does Mandela think the oppressor is free? Why / Why not?

Ans. No, Mandela doesn't think the oppressor is free because a man who takes away another man's freedom is a prisoner of hatred, prejudice and narrow mindedness. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity.

Thinking About The Text

14. Why did such a large number of international leader attend the inauguration? What did it signify the triumph of?

Ans. A large number of international leaders attended the inauguration to confer glory and hope to the newborn liberty of South Africa. It signified the triumph of justice, peace, and human dignity.

15. What does Mandela mean when he says he is 'simply the sum of all those African patriots' who had gone before him?

Ans. By this Mandela means that in the struggle against the policy of apartheid he learnt the meaning of courage from these patriots. They stood up to attacks and torture without breaking and so did he. They showed a strength and resilience that defied the imagination and so did he.

16. Would you agree that the 'depths of oppression' create 'heights' of character'? How does Mandela illustrate this? Can you add your own examples to this argument?

Ans. Yes, I would agree that the 'depths of oppression' create 'heights' of character'. Mandela illustrates that the decades of oppression and brutality produced the Oliver Tambos, the Walter Sisulus, the Chief Luthulis, the Yusuf Dadoos, the Bram Fishers, the Robert Sobukwes.

In India, we had Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and so on.

17. How did Mandela's understanding of freedom change with age and experience?

Ans. In boyhood, Mandela's understanding of freedom was upto physical and dietary freedoms; as a student, upto transitory freedoms; and in young age, he yearned for the basic and honourable freedoms.

18. How did Mandela's 'hunger for freedom' change his life?

Ans. Mandela was transformed from a frightened young man into a bold one, from a law abiding attorney into a criminal, from a family loving husband into a man without a home, and from a life loving man into a monk.