



INDIAN SCHOOL NIZWA - WORKSHEET

ENGLISH THE GHAT OF THE ONLY WORLD

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: XI Sec: ____

SHORT QUESTIONS

1 **Both Shahid and Amitav Ghosh were friends since eternity and to eternity they will be. What makes you think so?**

Ans. Shahid Ali and Amitav Ghosh were not chance acquaintances so their late friendship was part of destiny. It all began in 1998, when Amitav Ghosh quoted a line from The Country Without a Post Office in an article that touched briefly on Kashmir. At the time all the writer knew about Shahid was that he was from Srinagar and had studied in Delhi. Himself having hailed from Delhi University, Amitav's time and Shahid's briefly overlapped. The two had friends in common however, and one of them put Amitav in touch with Shahid. In 1998 and 1999 they had several conversations on the phone and even met a couple of times but they were no more than acquaintances until Shahid moved to Brooklyn the next year.

2 **Do you think that Shahid's cancer played an important role in the making of two friends?**

Ans. Yes, because of Shahid's condition even the most unimportant exchanges had a special charge and urgency. The inescapable pain of talking about food and half-forgotten figures from the past with a man who knew himself to be dying, was multiplied, in this instance, by the knowledge that this man was also a poet who had achieved greatness.

3 **Shahid had a sorcerer's ability to transmute/change the mundane/ordinary into the magical. What incident does the author quote to explain this?**

Ans. Once Amitav Ghosh happened to accompany Iqbal, Shahid's brother, and Hena, his sister, on a trip to fetch him home from hospital. By that time Shahid had already been through several unsuccessful operations. Now he was back in hospital to undergo a surgical procedure that was intended to relieve the pressure on his brain. His head was shaved and the shape of the tumour was visible upon his bare scalp, its edges outlined by metal sutures/stitches. When it was time to leave the ward a blue-uniformed hospital escort arrived with a wheelchair. Shahid waved him away, declaring that he was strong enough to walk out of the hospital on his own.

4 **The title – what is this ghat of the only world?**

Ans. On visiting the Valley of Kashmir, Jahangir, one of the Mughal emperors, is said to have exclaimed: "If there is paradise anywhere on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here." We see the repetition of the same utterance in one of his poems. He placed the glorious physiographical beauty of Kashmir beyond all – Kashmir, the paradise on Earth. Shahid, you may learn, had a deep Kashmiri impact upon him for two reasons – one, part of his education was done in Kashmir, two, he had a wound that he suffered at the Kashmir issues, division, migration and wars. On reaching mellow fruitfulness, Ali dreamt he was at the ghat of the only world – the world of the gone. He was to bid adieu to the world of living. Having gone past pangs of life he was cradling "in supreme consolation", that is, "I love to think that I'll meet my mother in the afterlife, if there is an afterlife."