

CISCE VIRTUAL LEARNING SERIES

LESSON: ICSE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH (ENGLISH PAPER 2)

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE (ACT 4 SCENE 1)

October 13th, 2020

Response to Questions posed by students during the live Lesson:

S.No.	Questions	Answers
1.	Why has the Duke sent for Bellario?	<p>The Duke</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• expected to face difficulty in this case – Shylock was adamant in wanting his bond and the Duke wanted to save Antonio, who was a friend and fellow Venetian.• Bellario was an experienced lawyer – the Duke hopes that Bellario’s expertise would save Antonio.
2.	What is an ‘epitaph’? Why does Antonio want Bassanio to write his epitaph?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An epitaph is the inscription on a tombstone• In response to Bassanio’s passionate outburst “The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones and all/ Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.” Antonio says that he (like an over ripe fruit. diseased ram) is ready for death. Bassanio should not throw away his life, instead he should remain alive and write a

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		befitting epitaph for him.
3.	Who was Daniel? Can you please explain the reference to him?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniel was a biblical character mentioned in the Old Testament who was noted for his judgement when he was still a young man. • the name Daniel is of Hebrew origin and it means 'God is my judge'
4.	Why does the Duke address Portia/ Balthazar as 'learned doctor' when she appears in court?	Portia was introduced by Bellario in his letter to the Duke as a 'learned/ young doctor (of Law) from Rome".
5.	Why is Shylock not happy when the Duke pardons his life?	When the Duke pardons Shylock his life, he has already lost everything ... his home, possessions had been confiscated and shared between Antonio and the State. He was left with no means of earning a livelihood (He was a moneylender) So these words are spoken in bitterness.
6.	Is it okay to say that we feel sorry for Shylock, if we're asked to comment on the treatment meted out to him at the end of the trial?	Yes of course ... after all Shylock has been shamed and humiliated by the others. He loses everything, his home, possessions, his faith, and his dignity.
7.	Why does Portia refuse to have dinner with the Duke?	She explains to the Duke that she has to return to Padua the same night. Actually, she and Nerissa need to hurry home to Belmont to be there when their husbands returned!
8.	Why does Portia ask for Bassanio's ring?	It was a sort of test of his love for her. She was annoyed when Bassanio declares

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		<p>earlier in the scene, that he was prepared to sacrifice his life and beloved wife to save Antonio.</p>
9.	Why does Bassanio give away his ring?	<p>Bassanio gives away his ring in response to Antonio's words, "Let him have the ring:/ Let his deserving's and my love withal/ be valued 'against your wife's commandment."</p>
10.	Does Mercy triumph over justice in The Merchant of Venice?	<p>Mercy doesn't really triumph over justice, does it?</p> <p>Every single one of the main characters in the play has an opportunity to show mercy but doesn't.</p> <p>Shylock is asked repeatedly by the Duke, Antonio, Portia and Bassanio yet he stubbornly demand his bond.</p> <p>Although Portia seems to believe very much in the qualities of mercy, she herself has none to spare for Shylock.</p> <p>Antonio – could have shown Shylock mercy but in a particularly cruel punishment, he insists Shylock abandon his Jewish faith and become a Christian and leave his wealth to Lorenzo when he dies.</p> <p>Though throughout the play most of the characters constantly talk about the virtues of mercy, it seems that none of them are merciful enough to forgive Shylock.</p>

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		<p>Overall, the only mercy Shylock receives is being able to escape with his life.</p> <p>You may give your own opinion too, with suitable references from the play.</p>