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Comprehension story 10

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow, using your own words wherever possible.

Proceeding to the other qualities named, I say that every prince must desire to be considered merciful and not cruel. He must, however, take care not to misuse this mercifulness. Cesare Borgia was considered cruel, but his cruelty had brought order to the Romagna, united it, and reduced it to peace and fealty. If this is considered well, it will be seen that he was really much more merciful than the Florentine people, who, to avoid the name of cruelty, allowed Pistoia to be destroyed. A prince, therefore, must not mind incurring the charge of cruelty for the purpose of keeping his subject united and faithful; for, with very few examples, he will be more merciful than those who, from excess of tenderness allow disorder to arise, from whence spring bloodshed and rapine; for these as a rule injure the whole community, while the execution carried out by the prince injures only individuals. And of all princes, it is impossible for a new prince to escape the reputation of cruelty, new states being always full of dangers.

Nevertheless, he must be cautious in believing and acting, and must not be afraid of his own shadow, and must proceed in a temperate manner with prudence and humanity, so that too much confidence does not render him incautious, and too much difference does not render him intolerant.

From this arises the question whether it is better to be loved more than feared, or feared more than loved. The reply is, that one ought to be both feared and loved, but as it is difficult for the two to go together; it is much safer to be feared than loved, if one of the two has to be wanting.

For it may be said of men in general that they are ungrateful, voluble
dissemblers anxious to avoid danger, and covetous of gain; as long as you
benefit them they are entirely yours; they offer you their blood, their goods, 25
their life and their children, as I have said before, when the necessity is
remote; but when it approaches, they revolt. And the prince who has relied
solely on their words without making other preparations, is ruined; for
friendship which is gained by purchase and not through grandeur and nobility 30
of the spirit is bought but not secured, and at a pinch is not to be expended in
your service. And men have less scruple in offending one who makes himself
feared; for love is held by a chain of obligation which, men being shellfish, is
broken whenever it serves their purpose; but fear is maintained by a dread of
punishment which never fails.

Still, a prince should make himself feared in such a way that if he does not 35
gain love, he at any rate avoids hatred; for fear and absence of hatred may
well go together, and will be always attained by one who abstains from
interfering with property of his citizens and subjects or with their women. And
when he is obliged to take the life of anyone, let him do so when there is 40
proper justification and manifest reason for it; but above all he must abstain
from taking the property of others, for men forget more easily the death of
their father than the loss of their patrimony. Then also pretexts for seizing
property are never wanting, and one who begins to live by rapine will always
find some reason for taking the goods of others, whereas causes for taking life 45
are rarer and more fleeting.

But when the prince is with his army and has a large number of soldiers under
his control, then it is extremely necessary that he should not mind being
thought cruel; for without this reputation he could not keep any army united
or disposed to any duty. Among the noteworthy actions of Hannibal is
numbered this that although he had an enormous army, composed of men of 50
all nations and fighting in foreign countries, there never arose any dissension
either among them or against the prince, ether in good fortune or in bad. This
could not be due to anything but inhuman cruelty, which together with his
infinite other virtues, made him always venerated and terrible in the sight of
his soldiers, and without it his other virtues would not have sufficed to 55

produce that effect. Thoughtless writer admire on one hand his action, and on the other blame the principal cause of them.

And that it is true that his other virtues would not have sufficed may be seen from the case of Scipio, whose armies rebelled against him in Spain, which arose from nothing but excessive kindness, which allowed more license to the soldiers than was consonant with military discipline. 60

Questions

- (a) Suggest a suitable title for the passage (02 marks)
- (b) What does the author mean by:
- (i) “... Friendship is gained by purchase and not through Grandeur and nobility of spirit is bought but not secured ...” (line 28-30) (04 marks)
 - (ii) “... men forget more easily the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony” (line 08) (04marks)
- (c) In not more than 100 words, summarize what, according to the author, is required of the prince to rule effectively. (10marks)
- (d) Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases as used in the passage, using you own words wherever possible
- (i) charge of cruelty (line 08) (02 marks)
 - (ii) execution (line 12) (02 marks)
 - (iii) temperate manner (line 16) (02 marks)
 - (iv) wanting (line 22) (02 marks)
 - (v) covetous of gain (line 24) (02 marks)
 - (vi) remote (line 26) (02 marks)
 - (vii) pretexts (line 42) (02 marks)
 - (viii) dissension (line 51) (02 marks)
 - (ix) Venerated (line 64) (02 marks)
 - (x) consonant (line 61) (02 marks)
- (20 marks)

Spellings, Punctuation and Grammatical Expression (SPGE) (10 marks)

Suggested answers

(a) Suggest a suitable title for the passage (02 marks)

- Attributes of a good leader
- Attributes of good leadership
- Requirement of the prince to rule effectively

(b) What does the author mean by:

(i) “... Friendship is gained by purchase and not through Grandeur and nobility of spirit is bought but not secured ...” (line 28-30)
(04 marks)

Friendship not earned by dignity should not be trusted because it can only be sustained/maintained by constant rewards

(ii) “... men forget more easily the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony” (line 08) (04marks)

People may not remember the death of their father but do not forget the loss of inherited property

(c) In not more than 100 words, summarize what, according to the author, is required of the prince to rule effectively. (10marks)

REQUIREMENT OF THE PRINCE TO RULE EFFECTIVELY

In order for the prince to rule effectively he must exercise authority and strict controls for the safety of his subjects and their property. He should preferably use fear to love in order to earn respect from his army but must desist at any cost from interfering with or taking the property of his subjects and citizens or their wives to avoid revenge. He should give severe punishments in case of disobedience but clear justifications are necessary in the case of capital punishment.

(d) Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases as used in the passage, using your own words wherever possible

(i) charge of cruelty (line 08) (02 marks)
duty/obligation for unkindness/meanness/brutality

(ii) execution (line 12) (02 marks)
assassinations/killing

(iii) temperate manner (line 16) (02 marks)
moderate fashions/way

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|--------|--|------------|
| (iv) | wanting (line 22)
inadequate/insufficient/scarce | (02 marks) |
| (v) | covetous of gain (line 24)
excessive desire for wealth/possession | (02 marks) |
| (vi) | remote (line 26)
out of the way | (02 marks) |
| (vii) | pretexts (line 42)
excuses | (02 marks) |
| (viii) | dissension (line 51)
opposition/rebellion | (02 marks) |
| (ix) | Venerated (line 54)
Respected/honored/values | (02 marks) |
| (x) | consonant (line 61)
in agreement /conforming to/in accord | (02 marks) |
| | | (20 marks) |

Spellings, Punctuation and Grammatical Expression (SPGE) (10 marks)

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Thanks

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