**In Arabic by Agha Shahid Ali**

**Short Answer**

**Q. Why is Arabic “a language of loss”**

**Ans:-** Arabic is a language of loss because of its complexities and twisted calligraphy. This appears very difficult for the narrator to appreciate its glory. The poet indicates towards the language of Arabic with certain glories but we do not practise these glories into the literary forms. Arabic language is part and parcel of first Asian culture then the Islamic culture. Unfortunately, there is a distant gap between the language and its hereditary speakers. This compels the poet to switch towards the globally prevalent English language in the field of literary expressions. This binds the poet to exercise the Genre of Ghazal in English language.

**Q.In the 5th couplet, why is memory “on longer confused?**

**Ans:-** In the fifth couplet, while referring to Shamas, the poet asserts developed consciousness. He has recovered the full – fledged facet of his homeland projected through the language of Arabic. Arabic has made the history rich especially history of Middle East literature. The non – native speakers of Arabic language used it without any bias. The poet tries to assert that in the present scenario, with the contribution of their own post colonial literature they gave the real picture of the oriental civilization. So, presenting this argument, the poet claims that memory is no longer confused.

**Q.Comment on the use of refrain ‘In Arabic”.**

**Ans:-** Refrain is a characteristic feature of Ghazal writing that originated in Arabic language. In every couplet Ghazal the last word or syllable of the second line is rhymed. In the same manner the words, ‘In Arabic’ are repeated in order to enforce the determination and identity of Arabic language. The word ‘Arabic’ in the refrain of the poem “in Arabic” presents not only the linguistic glory but also the metaphorical representation of his identity in general and Islamic identity in particular.

**Q. What does the poet mean by braiding of the Qasidas in Arabic in the 6th couplet?**

**Ans:-** While referring to the Spanish playwright and poet Garcia lorca, the poet highlights the literary power of Qasidas written by him Arabic language. In the sixth couplet, referring to the braiding of the Qasidas, the poet zooms on the distinguished composition and grand ideas expressed in the Qasidas. The uniqueness of Qasidas makes them the whole and apparently indivisible. This shows the appeal of the Qasidas across the other literary genres of the world languages.

**Long Answer**

**Q. Explain how Agha Shahid Ali invests a new vigour into the classical form?**

**Ans:-** Shahid Ali wrote many Ghazala in English manifesting his rare linguistic dexterity by mingling an essentially eastern poetic style with the English language. His Ghazals are market with a stylistic finesse, epigrammatic compression, elliptical thinking, literary and cultural allusiveness, word-paly and wit.

Ali is better known in the United States than he is in India or Pakistan. His writing is thickly influenced by the Persian – Urdu tradition so his style could be called “Ghazalesque”. He enriched the domain of contemporary English poetry by drawing on his multi-cultural locations. He blended the rhythms and forms of the Indo-Islamic tradition with a distinctly American approach to storytelling. Most of his poems are not abstract considerations of love and longing, but rather concrete accounts of important personal and political events. He was also intensely interested in geography, and often blended the landscapes of America with those of Kashmir.

**Q. How does “In Arabic’ manifest the poet’s multiple cultural locations? Illustrate from the text.**

**Ans:-** ‘In Arabic’ is divided into twelve couplets each ending with the refrain ‘In Arabic’. The couplets are taken from separate contexts but are united by themes of loss, longing, cultural identity and the need for affirmation. In ‘In Arabic’, Ali skilfully manages to convey his cross cultural affiliations, his nostalgia and the desire to affirm Islamic, Arabic and Persian heritage. The poet of ‘In Arabic’ is at pains to affirm individual as well as cultural memory through a range of allusions. The sacrifice of prophet Ishmael by his father prophet Abraham affirms its Islamic lineage. The reference to the Holy Koran prophesying a fire of men and stones could be read as his reading of contemporary violence of history through an Islamic framework. There is a veiled reference to Kashmir. Kashmir is mentioned in the sixth couplet in which he admires the handiwork on the miniature – a coming together of kashmiri paisley and Arabic. There is further reference to destruction and erasure in the allusions to the Palestinian poet Shammas who wrote poetry in Arabic – an act of territorialization in the face of what Ali calls ‘each confusion’.