

Grade X Lesson 10

The Sermon at Benares

Main Points of the Story

- ❖ Gautama Buddha was born as a prince. He was named Siddhartha Gautama.
- ❖ He was married at the age of sixteen and enjoyed the royal luxuries for ten years.
- ❖ He had a son. Up to the age of twenty-five, he was shielded from the sufferings of the world.
- ❖ The sight of a sick man, then an aged man, and a funeral procession shocked him.
- ❖ Finally, he saw a monk begging for alms.
- ❖ He gave up royal pleasures and set out to seek enlightenment.
- ❖ He wandered for seven years and finally sat down under a big tree in meditation.
- ❖ Enlightenment came to him after seven days.
- ❖ He named the big tree Bodhi Tree or Tree of Wisdom.
- ❖ He was known as the Buddha or the Awakened of the Enlightened one.
- ❖ The Buddha preached his first sermon at the holy city of Benares on the River Ganges.
- ❖ Kisa Gotami's only son had died.
- ❖ She had lost her senses and carried the dead boy to all neighbours.
- ❖ She asked them for medicines to cure him.
- ❖ She prayed the Buddha asked Kisa Gotami to bring a medicine that night to cure her son.
- ❖ The Buddha asked Kisa Gotami to bring a handful of mustard seeds.
- ❖ She went from house and had no problem in getting a handful of mustard seeds.
- ❖ However, she did have a problem in finding a house where no one had died.
- ❖ She considered that fate of men and realised that she was selfish in grief.
- ❖ Death is common to all.
- ❖ Surrendering all selfishness leads to immortality.
- ❖ All earthen pot end in being broken.
- ❖ The world is afflicted with death and decay.
- ❖ He who has overcome all sorrows, will become blessed and enlightened one.

Multiple Choice Questions

I. Read the extract given and below and attempt ANY ONE, by answering the questions that follow:

Poor Kisa Gotami now went from house, and the people her and said, "Here is mustard-seed; take it!" But when she asked, "Did a son or daughter, a father or mother, die in your family?" they answered her, "Alas! The livings are few, but the dead are many. Do not remind us our deepest grief," And there was no house but some beloved one had died in it.

1. The community's response to Kisa in the above extract was somewhat different from before.

Why do you think that was the case?

- a. They had learnt from Buddha's sermons.
- b. They were able to help Kisa in some way this time.**
- c. They understood parental grief.
- d. They liked Kisa and enjoyed talking to her.

2. Which of the options represent the correct understanding of the "poor" in the phrase "Poor Kisa Gotami"?

- a. in need of money
- b. weak
- c. unfortunate**
- d. inferior

3. "Do not remind us of our deepest grief." The tone of the speaker(s) is

- a. disillusioned.
- b. sceptical.
- c. ironic.
- d. solemn.**

4. Pick the option that explains- '... the living are few, but the dead many.'

- a. It shows the high death rate and low birth rate in the city of Benares.
- b. It highlights the holy status of Benares where many Hindus go to die.
- c. It throws light on the numerous loved ones the villagers had lost over time.**
- d. It reflects that many children who had died in the village for various reasons.

5. Imagine you are a photo journalist visiting the city at the time Kisa Gitam went from house to house. you documented her experience given in the above extract in a photo series.

Your publisher wants to publish the photo series in three parts wherein Part 1 shows Kisa's visits to the houses; Part 2 depicts her conversations with people, and Part 3 captures Kisa's reflections at the end of the day sitting by the wayside.

The publisher would also like you to choose titles for the series and its three parts.

Look at the titles given below. And choose the options that provide the most appropriate set of titles.

1. Series Title - From Darkness to Light.

Part I - Living in Loss; Part II - a Mother's Journey; Part III - Mustard Seed

2. Series Title - Mustard Seed.

Part I - A mother's Journey; Part II - From Darkness to Light;

Part III - Living in Loss

3. Series Title - A Mother's Journey.

Part I - Mustard Sees; Part II - Living in Loss; Part III - From Darkness to Light

4. Series Title - Living in Loss.

Part I - From Darkness to Light; Part II - Mustard Seed; Part III - A Mother's Journey

a. 1 and 2

b. 2 and 3

c. 3 and 4

d. 1 and 4

II. Read the Extracts given below and attempt ANY ONE, by answering the questions that follow.

Not from weeping or from grieving will anyone obtains peace of mind; on the contrary, his pain will be the greater and his body will suffer... He who seeks peace should draw out the arrow of lamentation, and complaint, and grief. He who has drawn out the arrow and become composed will obtain peace of mind."

1. If the Buddha were a counsellor, which of the following options would you find in a brochure of his service?

To live in heart we leave behind Is not to Die Thomas Campbell	In another Time in a Happier place We will meet Again Unknown	Death, after all, Is the common exception from birth. Neither heroes nor cowards can escape it. Ellis Peters	The 5 Stages of Grief 1. Denial 2. Anger 3. Bargaining 4. Depression 5. Acceptance
(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)

a. Image (i)

b. Image (ii)

c. Image (iii)

d. Image (iv)

2. Which of the following statements cannot be attributed to the Buddha based on the given extract?

- i. Pain and grief are unavoidable and necessary.
- ii. The inevitability of death makes grieving futile.
- iii. Universality of grief and pain makes us sad.
- iv. Understanding that life is finite leads to wisdom.

a. i and ii

b. i and iii

c. iii and iv

d. i and iv

3. According to the Buddha, peace of mind is attainable by those who

Lamentation : grief :: _____ : _____

a. laughter : joke

b. discomfort : fear

c. **celebration : joy**

d. resignation : loss

4. According to the Buddha, peace of mind is attainable by those who

a. renounce worldly life like the Buddha

b. take out the arrow and become strong

c. grieve, suffer and then move on

d. **recognize terms of life and let go of complaint**

5. The given extract is paraphrased below. Choose the option that includes the most appropriate solutions for the blanks.

(i) The act of _____ is not only pointless but (ii) rather _____, causing pain suffering. It only serves to (iii) _____ peace of mind. (iv) _____ without complaint is crucial to well-being and peace.

a. grief, harmful, destroy, accepting

b. **grieving, counterproductive, take away, acceptance**

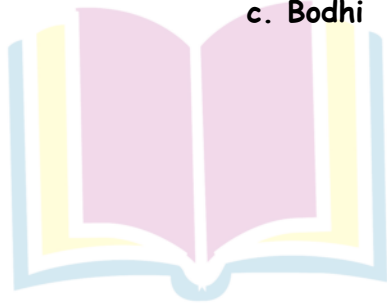
c. weeping, productive, take away, lamentation

d. grieving, harmful, destroy, lamenting.

III. Read the Extracts given below and attempt ANY ONE, by answering the questions that follow.

At about the age of twenty five, the Prince, thereof shielded from the sufferings of the world, while hunting out glanced upon a sick man, then an aged man, then a funeral procession, and finally a monk begging for alms. These sights so moved him that he at once became a beggar and went out into the world to seek enlightenment concerning the sorrows he had witnessed.

1. What was the age of Gautam Buddha when he shielded himself from the sufferings of the world?
 - a. twenty two
 - b. twenty four
 - c. twenty eight
 - d. **twenty five**
2. The Prince was _____ by the effect of sights.
 - a. **moved**
 - b. carried away
 - c. not moved
 - d. not disturbed
3. The Prince left the palace in search of _____.
 - a. freedom
 - b. treasure
 - c. knowledge
 - d. **enlightenment**
4. Find a word from the passage that means the same as 'looked at'.
 - a. shielded
 - b. **glanced**
 - c. procession
 - d. enlightenment
5. Gautam Buddha got enlightenment under _____ tree.
 - a. Banyan
 - b. Mango
 - c. **Bodhi**



Next Generation School

Extract Based Questions

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

1. At twelve, he was sent away for schooling in the Hindu Sacred Scriptures and four years later he returned home to marry a princess. They had a son and lived for ten years as befitted royalty.

- Who does 'he' stand for?
- What did 'he' study for four years?
- What does the phrase, 'as befitted royalty' means?
- What happened after ten years?

Ans. a. Here 'He' stands for Gautam Buddha.

b. 'He' studied in 'The Hindu Sacred Scriptures' for four years.

c. 'As befitted royalty' means 'to live like a royal person'.

d. After ten years the Buddha went out to attain enlightenment.

2. He who seeks peace should draw out the arrow of lamentation, and complaint and grief. He who had drawn out the arrow and has become composed will obtain peace of mind; he who has overcome all sorrow will become free from sorrow and be blessed.

- Who is the speaker?
- How can one get peace?
- What should one do to be blessed?
- What does 'lamentation' mean?

Ans. a. Gautama Buddha is the speaker in the given extract.

b. One can get peace of drawing out the arrow of lamentation, complaint and grief.

c. One should overcome all sorrow and be from all kinds of sufferings will be blessed.

d. Here 'lamentation' means pangs of separation and disappointment.

3. At about the age of twenty-five, the Prince, heretofore shielded from the sufferings of the world, while out hunting chanced upon a sick man, then an aged man, then a funeral procession, and finally a monk begging for alms.

- Name the Prince.
- What are the sights of sufferings that the Prince saw?
- Give the meaning of the world, 'shielded'.

Ans. a. The name of the prince is Siddhartha Gautama, in the northern India.

b. The Prince saw the sights of sufferings of a sick man, an aged man, a funeral procession and finally a monk begging for alms.

c. 'Shielded' means 'protected'.

4. Mark! While relatives are looking on and lamenting deeply, one mortals are carried off, like an ox that is led to the slaughter. So the world is afflicted with death and decay, therefore the wise do not grieve, knowing the terms of the world.

- a. What is the fate of mortals?
- b. Why do the wise not grieve?
- c. Write the meaning of the word, 'lamenting'.

Ans. a. The fact of the mortals is that mortals are carried off like an ox that is led to the slaughter house.

b. The wise do not grieve because they know the terms of the world that nobody can escape death.

c. 'Lamenting' means 'bemoaning'.

5. 'Not from weeping or from grieving will anyone obtain peace of mind; on the contrary, his pain will be the greater and his body will suffer. He will make himself sick and pale, yet the dead are not saved by his lamentation. He who seeks peace should draw out the arrow of lamentation, and complaint, and grief.'

- a. What is the harmful effect of weeping and grieving?
- b. How can one get peace of mind?
- c. What is the meaning of the word, 'lamentation'?

Ans. a. weeping and grieving has harmful effect on man. The more he weeps and grieves due to his beloved's death the more he will get sick and pale.

b. One can get peace of mind by drawing out the arrow of lamentation, complaint and grief from one's heart.

c. 'Lamentation' means 'sadness'.

6. At about the age of twenty-five, the Prince, heretofore shielded from the sufferings of the world, while out hunting changed upon a sick man, then an aged man, then a funeral processed, and finally a monk begging for alms. These sights so moved him that he at once went out into the world to seek enlightenment concerning the sorrows he had witnesses. He wandered for seven years and finally sat down under a peepal tree, where he vowed to stay until enlightenment came. Enlightened after seven days, he renamed the tree the Bodhi Tree (Tree of Wisdom) and began to teach and to share his new understandings.

- a. Who is the Prince?
- b. Mention any two sights moved the Prince?
- c. What did he do after he became enlightened?
- d. Which word in the passage means the same as 'a state of high spiritual knowledge'?

Ans. a. Siddhartha Gautama is the Prince.

b. The two sights that moved the Prince were the sights of a sick man and an aged man.

c. After he became enlightened, he began to teach and share his new understandings.

d. 'Enlightenment' means 'a state of high spiritual knowledge'.

7. So the world is afflicted with death and decay, therefore the wise do not grieve, knowing the terms of the world.

'Not from weeping or from grieving all anyone obtain peace of mind; on the contrary, his pain will be the greater and his boys will suffer. He will make himself sick and pale, yet the dead are not saved by his lamentation, and complaint, and grief.'

- a. Why did Buddha give this sermon to Kisa Gotami?
- b. What fact of life did Buddha convey to Gotami in this sermon?
- c. How can one obtain peace?
- d. Which word in the passage means the same as 'affected by suffering or pain'?

- Ans.**
- a. The Buddha gave this sermon to Kisa Gotami as she was grieving due to the death of her only son. She had lost her peace of mind.
 - b. In the sermon, the Buddha conveyed to Kisa Gotami that the world is afflicted with death and decay. Death is common to all and the dead cannot be saved by lamentation, grief and sorrow makes one sick and pale.
 - c. One can obtain peace not by grieving and weeping but by knowing the terms of the world, that is death and decay is common to all.
 - d. 'Afflicted' means 'affected by suffering or pain'.

8. Kisa Gotami became weary and hopeless, and sat down at the wayside watching the lights of the city, as they flickered up and were extinguished again. At last the darkness of the night reigned everywhere. And she considered the fate of men that their lives flicker up and are extinguished again.

- a. Why did Kisa Gotami lose all hope?
- b. Why did she sit down at the wayside?
- c. What did she realize about the fate of men?
- d. Which word/phrase in the passage means the same as 'put out'?

- Ans.**
- a. Kisa Gotami lost all hope because she realized that she could not get back her dead son's life as death is inevitable to all.
 - b. She sat down at the wayside because she was tired and hopeless. There, she was watching the lights of the city.
 - c. She realized about the fate of men that the lives of human beings flicker up and extinguish again.
 - d. 'Extinguish'

9. The Buddha answered, 'I want a handful of mustard-seed.' And when the girl in her joy promised to procure it, the Buddha added, 'The mustard-seed must be taken from a house where no one has lost a child, husband, parent or friend.'

- a. Whom did the Buddha answer?
- b. What was his answer?
- c. What condition was put the Buddha on the mustard-seed?
- d. Which word in the passage means the same as 'obtain/get'?

Ans. a. The Buddha answered to Kisa Gotami when she asked him for a medicine that would cure her son.
b. He answered that wanted a handful of mustard-seed, to be procured from the neighbouring houses.
c. The condition put by the Buddha was that the seed must be taken from a house where no one had died.
d. The word is 'procure'.

10. Kisa Gotami had on only son, and he died. In her grief she carried the dead child to all her neighbours, asking them for medicine, and the people said, 'She had lost her senses. The boy is dead.'

At length, Kisa Gotami met a man who replied to her request, 'I cannot give thee medicine for thy child, but I know a physician who can.'

And the girl said, 'pray tell me, sir; who is it?' And the man replied, 'Go to Sakyamuni, the Buddha.'

- a. What was Kisa Gotami's grief?
- b. What did she do in her grief?
- c. How did the people react?
- d. Which physician is referred to by the man?
- e. Which phrase in the passage means the same as 'at last'?

Ans. a. Kisa Gotami was grieving at the death of her only son.
b. In her grief, she carried her dead son to her neighbours and asked them for medicine to cure him.
c. The people said that she had lost her senses in grief. The boy was dead.
d. The man refers to Sakyamuni, the Buddha.
e. 'At length' mean 'at last'.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Describe the early life of Gautama Buddha.

Ans. Gautama Buddha began life as a prince. He was named Siddhartha Gautama. He was sent away for schooling in the Hindu sacred scriptures at twelve. When he returned home, he was married to a princess. He lived in royal luxury, shielded from the sufferings up to the age of twenty-five.

2. What were the sights that moved and shocked Gautama?

Ans. Prince Gautama had been deliberately shielded from all the sufferings of the world. One day he chanced upon a sick man, then an aged man, and then a funeral procession. Finally, he saw a monk begging for alms. These sights moved him. He went out into the world to seek solution of all these sufferings. He wanted to seek enlightenment.

3. How did Siddhartha Gautama get enlightenment? Why did he name the fig tree as the Bodhi tree?

Ans. Gautama wanted a final solution for the sufferings and pains that afflicted the people of the world. He wandered for seven years for seeking enlightenment. Finally, he sat down under a fig tree. He vowed to stay there until enlightenment came. Enlightened after seven days, he renamed the fig tree. It was named as the Bodhi Tree or Tree of Wisdom. He gave did the Buddha say in this regard? his first sermon at the city of Benares on the River Ganges.

4. What did Kisa Gotami do when her only son died? What did her neighbours think about her?

Ans. Kisa Gautami's only son had died. She was overwhelmed with grief. She carried the dead child to all her neighbours. She asked them for medicine to cure her son. The neighbours thought she had lost her senses. A dead child could never be cured.

5. How did Kisa Gotami go to the Buddha? What did Buddha ask Gotami to do?

Ans. A man advised Kisa Gotami to go to Sakyamuni, the Buddha. He was the physician who could cure her dead son. She went to the Buddha. He asked Kisa Gotami to bring a handful of mustard seeds from a house. The house must be such where no one had lost a child, husband, parent or friend.

6. Did Kisa Gotami get a handful of mustard seeds as directed by the Buddha?

Ans. Poor Kisa Gotami went from house to house. The people pitied her and were ready to give a handful of mustard seeds to her. But, she couldn't find a house where no one had lost a child, husband, parent or friend.

7. Why did Kisa Gotami say, 'How selfish am I in my grief. What did she realise about the fate of mankind? ,

Ans. Kisa Gotami became weary and hopeless At last, the darkness of the night reigned everywhere. She realised that she had been very selfish in her grief. Death spares none. One who is born is destined to die sooner or later. No grieving or lamenting would bring a dead man to life.

8. What did Buddha say about the mortals of the world?

Ans. The Buddha said to Kisa Gotami that the life of mortals is troubled and brief in this world. Those who have been born can't avoid dying. As ripe fruits are in danger of falling, so mortals are always in danger of death. All earthen vessels end in being broken.

9. Can grieving and lamentation avoid death and decay in this world? What did the Buddha say in this regard?

Ans. This world is afflicted with death and decay. Therefore, the wise don't grieve. No one will ever get peace of mind by weeping or grieving. Weeping or grieving only makes a person sick and pale. Only the person who has overcome all sorrow will be free from sorrow. He will then be blessed.

10. What did the Buddha want Kisa Gotami to understand?

Ans. The Buddha wanted Kisa Gotami to understand that all men and women are mortals. And all mortals are destined to die. No lamentation and grieving can bring a dead person back to life. Therefore, she should stop lamenting and grieving on the death of her son. Overcoming the sorrows makes a person free from sorrows,

11. How did Kisa Gotami realise that life and death is a normal process?

Ans. Kisa found no house where some beloved had not died. She understood that death is common to all. So she was being selfish in her grief. She thought only of her grief. Life and death is a normal process. Death is certain. No one can escape it.

12. Describe the main message that the lesson 'The sermon at Benares' gives to the readers.

Ans. The Buddha wants us to understand that this world is full of sufferings, death and decay. Death spares none. Death is the ultimate truth of life. Everything that is born today will die sooner or later. No lamentation or grieving will bring the dead to life again.

13. How did Kisa Gotami realise that life and death is a normal process?

Ans. Kisa Gotami realized that life and death is a normal process. She found no house where some beloved had not died. She came to know that living are few, but dead are many.

14. Why was Kisa Gotami sad? What did she do in her hour of grief?

Ans. Kisa Gotami was sad because her only son died. So in her grief, she was at her wit's end. She carried the dead child to all her neighbours. She asked them for medicine. The people remarked Kisa had lost her senses.

15. What did the Buddha want Kisa Gotami to understand?

Ans. The Buddha wanted Kisa Gotami to understand that man cannot her peace of mind by grieving. A man who has overcome sorrow will be free from sorrow and will be blessed.

16. Why did the Buddha choose Benares to preach his first sermon?

Ans. The Buddha chose Benares to preach his first sermon because he regarded it the most holy place on the bank of the Ganges. The devotees take a holy dip in it. His sermon reflects wisdom about one kind of suffering beyond one's realization.

17. Why did Kisa Gotami go from house to house?

Ans. Kisa Gotami went from house to house because she wanted medicine to cure her dead son. At last, someone told about who could cure her dead son. Buddha told her to find a house where the death had not touched.

18. Why did the Buddha ask Kisa Gotami to bring a handful of mustard seeds?

Ans. The Buddha asked Kisa Gotami to bring a handful of mustard seeds from a house where no one had died ever, because he wanted her to realize the ultimate truth of life. Now she came to know that no one can escape death as death is common to all.

19. How did the Buddha teach Kisa Gotami the truth of life?

Ans. The Buddha asked Kisa Gotami to bring a handful of mustard seeds from a house where no one had died. She could not find such a house. She now realised the ultimate truth of life that no one escape death. So, she should not grieve on the death of her son. Thus, the Buddha taught Kisa Gotami the truth of life.

20. What did the Buddha do after he had attained enlightenment? Why?

Ans. After the Buddha had attained enlightenment, he began to teach and share his new understandings of truth of life-Death is a universal truth. The basics of his first sermon were to show the path of immortality to mankind by surrendering 'all selfishness and grief'.

21. Do you agree that Kisa Gotami was being selfish in her grief? Give a reasoned answer.

Ans. Yes, Kisa Gotami was selfish in her grief in her grief. She went from house to house to get a handful of mustard seed to revive her son. The answer from every house was a big "No!" The Buddha told her to find a house where death had not entered. She searched and searched.

At last, she became tired and hopeless. Then she watched, sitting at the wayside that the city lights flickered up and extinguished again. It made her realize that she had become selfish in her grief as death is common to all.

22. After her son's death, why does Kisa Gotami go from house to house?

Ans. After her son's death, Kisa Gotami went from house to house because she was grief-stricken. She carried her dead child to all her neighbours, asking them for medicine to cure her dead son. But she was disappointed as nobody could help her.

23. What did Siddhartha Gautama see when he went out for hunting? What impression did it make on his mind?

Ans. When Siddhartha Gautama went out for hunting, he saw a sick man, then an aged man, then a funeral procession, and finally a monk begging for alms. These sights moved him so much that he at once went out into the world to seek enlightenment about the sorrows that he had witnessed.

24. What did Buddha say about death and suffering?

Ans. Buddha said about death and decay that the life of mortals in this world is troubled and brief, combined with pain. Everyone on this earth has to die one day. Nobody can escape death. As all earthen vessels made by the potter end in being broken, so is the life of mortals. Human beings are led to death as an ox is led to the slaughter. Therefore, the world is afflicted with death and decay

25. Why was Gautama known as Buddha?

Ans. 'Buddha' means 'The Awakened' or 'The Enlightened'. After seven years of wandering Gautama attained wisdom. When he started sharing his new understandings with the suffering people, he was called 'Buddha'

26. Where did Gautama Buddha preach his first Sermon? What was it all about?

Ans. Gautama Buddha preached his first sermon at Benares, the holiest city. It was about the ways to overcome our sorrows. It reflects Buddha's wisdom about one inscrutable kind of suffering.

27. Why was Kisa sad? What advice was given to her?

Ans. Kisa Gotami had lost her only son. He was dead. She loved him very much and wanted him to be alive. But she could not find any medicine so she was sad. She was advised to go to Buddha.

28. What did Kisa request her neighbours to give for her son? Did she get it?

Ans. Kisa Gotami asked her neighbour to give her a medicine that could bring life back to her son. No, she could not get any.

29. How did Kisa Gotami realise that the life and death is a normal process?

Ans. Buddha asked Gotami to bring mustard seeds from a house which had never lost any member of the family. She was unable to get such a house as man is normal and is bound to die.

30. When and where was Gautama Buddha born? Why did he decide to leave the palace?

Ans. Gautama Buddha was born in 563 B.C in Northern India. Buddha was away from all the sorrows of life. Once he saw a sick man, a beggar, an aged man and a funeral procession. He realised that the world was full of sorrow. He wanted to attain knowledge. So he decided to leave the palace to get enlightened.

31. How did 'Bodhi Tree' get its name?

Ans. After seven years of wandering Gautama sat under a peepla tree. He attained knowledge under that tree and got enlightened. He renamed the tree as 'Bodhi tree' which means the tree of wisdom. 'Bodhi' means knowledge.

32. What kind of suffering is reflected in the Sermon?

Ans. Grief over the death of a loved one is the main theme of this sermon. People fail to understand that death is common to all. All mortals have to die. There is no use of lamentation. One does not get peace of mind unless one overcomes the sorrows.

33. What were the greatest sorrows that pained Buddha?

Ans. Poverty, illness and death were the greatest sorrows that pained Buddha. He saw a poor man begging, an old man and a funeral procession that changed his course of life. These sights moved him so much that he went out into the world to seek enlightenment and truth.

34. Why did people think that Kisa had become mad?

Ans. Kisa Gotami's only son died. She was not ready to accept the fact that once a mortal dies, he/she cannot be brought back to life. She went to her neighbours with her dead son to get some medicine to bring him back to life. People thought that Kisa had gone mad.

35. Why did Kisa go to Gautama Buddha?

Ans. One of the neighbours advised Kisa Gotami to go to Buddha who could have given her some life- saving medicine for her son.

36. According to Gautama Buddha, how can a person get a peace of mind?

Ans. A person can get peace of mind only if he draws out the arrows of lamentation complaint and grief. Those who overcome all sorrows become free from disillusion, get peace of mind and be blessed.

Long Answer Type Questions

1. Describe the journey of Siddhartha Gautama becoming the Buddha.

Ans. Gautama Buddha began his life as a royal prince. He was named Siddhartha Gautama. At twelve, Gautama was sent away for schooling in the Hindu sacred scriptures. At the age of sixteen, he returned home to marry a princess. The prince was deliberately shielded from all sufferings of the world. But this attempt failed when the prince while out hunting chanced upon a sick man. Then, he saw an aged man. He also chanced to see a funeral procession. Finally, he saw a monk begging for alms. These sights of suffering, sickness and decay shocked and moved the prince. He wanted to seek the final solution of all these sorrows and sufferings. He wandered for seven years in search of enlightenment. Finally, he sat down under a fig tree. He meditated there until he was enlightened after seven days. He renamed the tree the Bodhi Tree or the Tree of Wisdom. He became known as the Buddha or the Awakened or the enlightened one. The Buddha gave his first sermon at Benares on the River Ganges

2. Why did Kisa Gotami go to every neighbour? Why did she say, 'How selfish I am in my grief?'

Ans. Kisa Gotami's only son had died. Naturally, she was filled with grief. She carried the dead child to all her neighbours. She asked them for medicine. The people thought that she had lost her senses in grief. She was demanding medicine for her dead son.

Only after meeting the Buddha, she followed his instructions. She couldn't get a handful of mustard seeds not even from one family. There was no family where no one had lost a child, husband, parent or friend. Only then she realised what the Buddha wanted her to understand. She realised that she was very selfish in her grief. She was grieving for her dead child. She forgot that death spares none. She realised that no lamentation or grieving can bring a dead person back to life again.

3. What did the Buddha ask Kisa Gotami to do? Why couldn't Kisa Gotami succeed in getting a handful of mustard seeds from any family?

Aus. Kisa Gotami couldn't get any consolation and cure from her neighbours. They realised that grief had made her almost mad. One of them directed her to the Buddha. He thought only the Sakyamuni the Buddha was the most appropriate physician to cure her son. The Buddha wanted

the grieving woman to learn a lesson. So, he asked her to bring a handful of mustard seeds from a family. The mustard-seed must be taken from a house where no one had lost a child, a husband or a friend. Poor Gotami went from house to house begging for a handful of mustard seeds. The people pitied her. They were ready to give a handful of mustard seeds to her. In short, there was no house where some beloved one had not died in it. So, Kisa Gotami didn't succeed in her mission. She only realised that she had been selfish in grief.

4. What does the Buddha say about the life of mortals in this world? How can one obtain the peace of the mind?

Ans. The Buddha preached his first sermon at Benares. He preached that all men, women and children are mortals. And all mortals are destined to die. Actually death and decay is the fate of all mortals in this world. Death spares none. The life of mortals in this world is troubled and brief. It is combined with pain. Those who have been born, can't avoid dying actually, there is no means of avoiding death and decay. The ripe fruits fall, so do the aged people of the world. One by one the mortals are carried off, like an ox that is led to the slaughter house. Therefore the wise do not grieve. No amount of lamenting or grieving can bring a dead man back to life. Weeping and grieving will never give anyone the peace of mind. On the other hand, they only compound miseries. He who has overcome all sorrows will become free sorrows. He will become the blessed one.

5. Why did Gotami go to the Buddha? What lesson did teach her?

Ans. Kisa Gotami lost only son and grieved. She is desperate in saving his life. She went to the Buddha. Gautama Buddha relieves her from her pain by his guidance and kindness. All human beings are victims of such desires and they suffer but the timely guidance and kindness may help them. Timely help and sympathy is a great help for those who are in grief. Gautama Buddha helped Kisa Gotami by his words love and guidance in overcoming her grief. It is a big relief for the grieving person if support and care are extended to them in time.

6. What lesson on death and suffering did the Buddha teach Gotami in the chapter, 'The Sermon at Benares'?

Ans. The Buddha taught a lesson on death and suffering to Gotami. He said that the life of mortals in this world is troubled and brief and combined with pain. For there are not any means by which those that have been born can avoid death. After reaching old age there was death; of such a nature are living beings.

Mortals when born are always in fear of death. Just like all earthen vessels made by the potter end up being broken so is the life of mortals. Both young and adult, who are fools and those who are wise, all fall into the power of death; all are subject to death.

Of those who are overcome by death, depart from life, and nobody can save them. The world is afflicted with death and decay; therefore the wise do not grieve, knowing the terms of the world. The Buddha also taught her that neither from weeping nor from grieving will anyone

obtain peace of mind; the pain will be greater and the body will suffer. The person who grieves will make him sick and pale, yet the death will not be saved by the lamentation of the person. Finally, the Buddha tells that one who seeks peace should take out the arrow of lamentation, complaint and grief. One who has overcome so all will become free from sorrow and be blessed.

7. Through 'The Sermon at Benares', the Buddha preached that death is inevitable and we need to overcome the suffering and pain that follows.

Based on your reading of the lesson, write how should cope with the death of a loved one.

Ans. Death, sorrows and pain are reality of our life. No one can deny it. But, it is human nature to be grieved on the personal losses, although everyone knows that one who takes birth has to die one day. No one on this earth is immortal. Gautama Buddha did not know anything about pains, sorrow and death of man before he saw a sick man, then an aged man, then a funeral procession and a monk begging for alms. He decided to save the man from these sufferings.

So, Buddha made the people realize that death is a reality and is inevitable. So, men must not grieve on death, even one should cope with the death of a loved one.

8. The Buddha said, 'The world is afflicted with death and decay, therefore the wise do not grieve, knowing the terms of the world.' Do you think the statement is appropriate even for today's life? Write your views in the context of the above statement.

Ans. The world is afflicted with death and decay; therefore the wise do not grieve, knowing the terms of the world. This statement of the Buddha is appropriate and relevant even for today's life.

In the context of the above statement, death and decay is inevitable on this earth. Men are led to death as an ox is led to the slaughter. We cannot console ourselves by weeping and grieving, rather it will make us sick and pale. So the wise never weep on death and never grieve on sorrows as they know that these are the realities and truth of our lives.

I think that the Buddha's statement teaches the humans today that can escape from death. So, we should not grieve on death.

9. Life is full of trials and tribulations. Kisa Gotami also passes through a period of grief in her life. How does she behave in those circumstances? What lesson does a reader learn from the story of her life? Give any two points how you would like to act in the midst of adverse circumstances.

Ans. It is true life is full of trials and tribulations. In the story, we see that Kisa Gotami also passes through a period of grief after the death of her only son. In her grief, she carried her dead child to all her neighbours to get medicine for cure. Becoming hopeless and disappointed, she came to the Buddha for help. The Buddha asked her to get a handful of mustard seeds from a house where no one had died. She was unable to fulfil what the Buddha

asked her to do. At last, she realized that death is inevitable to mankind. The life of mortals is troubled and brief and combined with grief.

The story of Kisa Gotami's life is indeed a lesson to the wise readers that we cannot get peace of mind through weeping and grieving. To get peace of mind, we must give up lamentation and grief.

Hence, in the midst of adverse circumstances, one should not lose hope and should draw out the 'arrow of tension' from one's mind. Secondly, it should be accepted as a challenge.

10. Gotami comes to Buddha praying to him to revive her dead son. Buddha asks her to bring a handful of mustard seeds from a house where no one has lost a child, husband, parent or friend. Through this simple act, Buddha communicates the most profound, truth of life, not only to Gotami but also to the whole mankind. What is the truth that Buddha communicates? What lesson does Gotami learn? What changes would take place in a common man's life if that truth is understood?

Ans. The Buddha communicates the truth of life that death is common to all. The life of mortals, i.e. human beings, is troubled, brief and combined with pain and untold sufferings. Nobody can escape death. So, those who are born will certainly die one day. Hence, we should not grieve on death.

Kisa Gotami learns the lesson that death is the ultimate truth of life. She could not find any house where no one had ever died. She now realized that death comes to all. No one can escape death. The lights of the city flicker and resemble the fare of men.

If a common man realizes that death is common to all, he will not weep on death and never grieve on sorrows. He can get peace of mind by drawing out the arrow of lamentation from his heart. He who has overcome sorrows will be free from sorrows and be blessed.

11. How did Siddhartha Gautama become Buddha?

Ans. Siddhartha Gautama was the son of the king Suddhodhana of Kapilvastu. He led his early life in luxuries. Once he decided to go out for hunting. On the way the Prince saw a sick man, an old man and a dead man. These sights moved him so much that he became restless and could not sleep. He decided to become a monk. So at once he became a beggar and went out into the world to seek enlightenment concerning sorrows he had witnessed. He wandered for seven years and finally sat under a peepal tree. He got enlightenment after seven days of rigorous and continued meditation under the tree. He renamed the tree as the Bodhi Tree. At that point, Siddhartha Gautama became known as the Buddha.

12. Why do you think Kisa Gotami understood the reality the second time? In what way did the Buddha change her understanding?

Ans. Kisa Gotami understood the reality of life the second time that death comes to all and we must not grieve in such cases.

Kisa Gotami understood the truth of life when she sat down at the wayside watching the lights of the city, as they flickered up and extinguished again. She considered the fate of men that their lives also flicker up and are extinguished again. It was the same thing that Gautam Buddha wanted her to understand.

The Buddha made her understand the reality by asking her for a handful of mustard seeds from a house where no one had ever. But, to her dismay, she could not find such a house. Thus, her understanding was changed.

13. Kisa Gotami again goes from house to house after she speaks with the Buddha. What does she ask for the second time around? Does she get it? Why not?

Ans. Kisa Gotami again went from house to house to house after she spoke with the Buddha. She asked for a handful of mustard seeds for the second time around the village. But, unfortunately she did not get because she had to get it from a house where no one had died ever-no one had lost a child, husband, parent or friend".

So, it was impossible for her to get the mustard seeds from a house where death has not occurred.

Kisa Gotami realized the ultimate truth of life. It is that every living being is to die one day. No one can escape from death. Grief cannot console anyone. We must accept this universal truth.

Hence, Kisa Gotami thought to herself, "how selfish am I in my grief? Death is common to all".

14. "The life of mortals in this world is troubled and brief and combined with pain...." with statement of the Buddha, find out what Kisa Gotami learnt after the death of her child.

Ans. According to Buddha, all men are mortal so those who have been born cannot avoid dying. Life of mortal is always troubled and brief. Sorrow and suffering are inevitable to the mortals. All young and adult fall into the power of death; all are subject to death. So the wise do not grieve, knowing the terms of the world. Kisa Gotami after the death of her child learnt from Lord Buddha that death is common to all; he who has overcome pain will become free from pain, and be blessed.

15. The sight of a sick man, an aged man, a funeral procession and a monk made Siddhartha leave his home and go out in search of enlightenment. What lesson about life do you learn from this episode?

Ans. Siddhartha lived a life full of luxuries till the age of twenty-five. Once when he went outside to hunt, he saw a sick man, an aged man, a funeral procession and finally, a monk begging for alms. The sight moved Siddhartha so much that he left the home and went in search

of enlightenment. The incident revealed a great truth - life is short. Beauty, riches, comforts all are transitory and vanish one day. If we all understand this fact and work towards making our life valuable for others, there would be no fight, grudges and pain. When somebody does something wrong, he/she forgets that one day we are going to be struggle in life and wait for good times to come.

16. What happened when Kisa Gotami went from house to house to get the mustard seeds as instructed by Buddha? Does this teach you something about how to overcome grief and hopelessness? Write your answer.

Ans. Kisa Gotami was suggested by Buddha to go and bring some mustard seeds from a house where there has been no death. Unable to find such a house, she reflected upon her action. Truth dawned upon her. She realised that surrendering ourselves is the only way to get rid of one's pains and sufferings. There is a continuous cycle of life and death, happiness and sorrows. Wise persons do not grieve. One should remain calm and dauntless in all the situations. By doing so, peace of mind can be obtained.

17. What is the truth of life, according to Buddha? How should a wise man behave in times of trouble or mishappenings?

Ans. According to Buddha, all men are mortal. One, who is born, is sure to die. All things in nature die and are reborn -be it animals, plants or objects. Some people start behaving like a madman whenever a problem arises in their life. They lose their sense of reasoning and become depressed. But this is not a solution to come out of your grief. A sensible person understands the realities of life and remains balanced in all the situations. The lesson here whenever we come across a problem, we should try to find out its solution. Instead of blaming our fate or others, we must think deep for the reason of that problem. By being calm, resolute and contented, most of the problems can be solved.

18. How can one attain peace? Does the lesson teach you something? Explain in your own words the theme of the lesson.

Ans. One can attain peace by renunciation, i.e. by giving up all material gains. Too much affinity to material gain brings grief; one cannot have sleep even, pondering over how to attain one's material gains like amassing one's fortune, conquering countries, enriching one's property. One who can overcome one's greed, grief and lust can obtain peace.

This lesson, in fact, teaches us through the sermon of Lord Buddha. The sermon teaches us that we all are mortals. So we will die one day. We should not grieve, nor should we crave for material gains, surrender of our selfishness, lust and grief leads us to the path of immortality. Life is short, men are mortal and everything is transitory. So we should be free from sorrow. Path to enlightenment is to surrender all material gains and draw out the arrows of lamentation, complaints and grief.

19. Kisa Gotami lost her only son and grieved. She is desperate in saving his life. She goes from one place to another. She is criticized for this act of desperation and is called mad. Is it not a normal reaction of a normal human being? Is it justified to criticize Kisa Gotami? What is your opinion?

Ans. Kisa Gotami lost her only son and grieved. She is desperate in saving his life. She goes from one place to another. She is criticized for this act of desperation and is called mad. But I find it a normal reaction of a normal human being. Every mother has such feelings for son. Every possible effort is made to save a life. Kisa Gotami is also a normal mother who wants her son to come to life. Her action is a normal action. A person loses his common sense when one is grieved. All logic or reasoning fails. No doubt one has to accept the universal truth of life and death. But it takes time to understand it. Kisa Gotami's action was a normal act and she should not be called a mad woman. It is a normal action of a normal action of a grieving mother. It is easy to say that in case of any loss one should be quiet, calm and composed but is difficult to put in practice.

20. A timely help and sympathy is a great help for those who are in grief. Gautama Buddha helped Kisa Gotami by his kind words and guidance in overcoming her grief. It is a big relief for the grieving person if support and are extended to them. How are kindness and sympathy important in a peaceful and joyful life?

Ans. Most people in our society are unhappy and grieved because the values of kindness and sympathy are missing day by day from our life. There is no timely guidance and help. People suffer because of their ignorance or their lack of knowledge about the reality of life. They do not accept the things as they are. Overambition and unnecessary craving for the things make them ultimately suffer. They are not satisfied with what they have. They desire for the things they don't deserve for and suffer. People are not kind to one another. There is lack of sympathy for one another. This all leads to sufferings. Kisa Gotami suffers because of her selfish desire and craving for her son. Gautama Buddha relieves her from her pain by his guidance and

kindness. All human beings are victims of such desires and they suffer but the timely guidance and kindness may help them. Timely help and sympathy is a great help for those who are in grief. Gautama Buddha helped Kisa Gotami by his words love and guidance in overcoming her grief. It is a relief for the grieving person if support and care are extended to them in time.

21. Describe the journey of Sidhartha Gautama becoming the Buddha.

Ans. Sidharth Gautam had a long and inspiring journey to become the Buddha. He was royal Prince. As a royal prince he led a luxurious life. He married a royal Princess. He always remained in his palace and was shielded from all sufferings. He never had a sight of sufferings out of his palace. Once he was outside his palace, he encountered four glooming sights. He saw a sick man, an aged man, a funeral procession and a monk begging for alms. His observation led him to a gloomy conclusion. That life was full of sorrow and sufferings. He was disillusioned. He wanted to know the cause of all sufferings. He wanted to know the truth. In search to truth, he left his palace and family. He wandered here and there for 7 years in search of truth. He left all the worldly pleasure to seek enlightenment. Finally, he sat down under a peepal tree, where he vowed to stay until enlightenment came. After seven days he was enlightened. He began to teach and share his new understanding. At that point he became known as the Buddha, the Awakened or the enlightened.



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TEST YOUR SKILLS

Short Answer Type Questions

1. How did the prince get his schooling?
2. What sights shocked and moved the royal prince?
3. How did Gautama achieve enlightenment?
4. Why was Kisa Gautami in deep grief?
5. What did Buddha ask Kisa Gotami to do and why?
6. What did Kisa Gotami realise in the end?
7. What did the Buddha say about the life of mortals in this world?
8. How is everything and everybody in this world destined to die sooner or later?
9. Why did Kisa Gautami carry her dead son to her neighbours?

Long Answer Type Questions

1. How did the shocking sights affect Gautama?
2. How did Kisa Gotami behave in her grief before meeting Buddha?
3. How did Gautama become the Enlightened one? Where did he give his first sermon?
4. How can one free one's-self from all the sorrows? Why was Kisa Gotami selfish in grief?
5. Highlight the main teachings of the Buddha as described in 'The Sermon at Benares'.



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