

"The Martyr's Corner" by R.K. Narayan

TEXTUAL QUESTION ANSWERS

A. Choose the correct option:

1. **The story is set in –**
→ (a) India
 2. **Rama sold –**
→ (c) snacks
 3. **Rama's shop was located at –**
→ (b) a busy street corner
 4. **Rama lost his corner because of –**
→ (a) a political riot
 5. **The spot where Rama worked came to be known as –**
→ (b) The Martyr's Corner
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B. Answer the following questions briefly:

1. **Who was Rama?**
→ Rama was a poor snack seller in a South Indian town who ran a small mobile stall at a busy street corner.
2. **Why was Rama's corner popular?**
→ It was popular due to his tasty food, quick service, and the convenient location where many people gathered in the evenings.
3. **What happened during the political riot?**
→ A sudden clash broke out between two groups, leading to police action and casualties, after which the place was declared sacred and renamed "The Martyr's Corner".

4. What effect did the riot have on Rama's livelihood?

→ Rama lost his regular place of business and had to relocate to a less busy area, resulting in a drastic fall in his earnings.

5. Why is the story titled "The Martyr's Corner"?

→ The place where Rama used to sell food turned into a political memorial site after the riot, and he was ironically displaced by the so-called "martyrs" of the cause.

C. Answer the following questions in about 40–50 words:

1. Describe Rama's daily routine.

→ Every evening, Rama wheeled his food cart to the busy street corner and sold snacks like dosas, vadas, and coffee. He served quickly and efficiently, attracting many daily customers and earning a modest income.

2. What irony lies in the renaming of the corner?

→ The corner was renamed "The Martyr's Corner" to honor those who died in the riot, but ironically, Rama—the man who had long made a living there—was forgotten and displaced in the process.

3. How did people treat the spot after the incident?

→ After the riot, the spot was revered. People placed garlands and lit candles in memory of the martyrs, and it became a political symbol, no longer a place of business.

4. What does the story reveal about society's attitude toward the common man?

→ The story shows that society often overlooks the struggles of the poor and working class. Rama's livelihood was sacrificed for political symbolism without regard for his suffering.

5. How does Narayan use satire in the story?

→ Narayan uses gentle satire to criticize the political

glorification of violence while ignoring the real victims like Rama. The story highlights how sentimental nationalism can displace practical concerns.

D. Answer the following questions in about 80–100 words:

1. Describe the character of Rama.

→ Rama is a hardworking, honest, and humble street vendor. He provides delicious, hygienic food at affordable prices and earns his living through sheer dedication. Despite his poverty, he maintains dignity in his work. However, after the political riot, his livelihood is destroyed, and he is forced to relocate to a less profitable area. His quiet suffering and forced adjustment reflect the struggles of many poor people in society who are victims of political actions beyond their control.

2. What is the significance of the title “The Martyr’s Corner”?

→ The title reflects the transformation of an ordinary food stall location into a memorial for political martyrs. It is significant because it highlights the irony that while the dead were honored, the living—like Rama—were ignored and displaced. The place, once vibrant with activity and livelihood, became a symbol of tragedy and political spectacle, showing how public memory often glorifies death while forgetting the living victims.



20 ADDITIONAL SHORT & LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

◆ **Short Answer Type (30–50 words):**

1. What kind of food did Rama serve?

→ Rama served South Indian snacks like dosas, vadas, and hot coffee, all freshly made and delicious.

2. Why did Rama's business thrive?

→ His food was tasty, clean, affordable, and served quickly in a high-footfall area, attracting regular customers.

3. What caused the riot at the corner?

→ A political rally or dispute between groups triggered violence and police intervention, resulting in casualties.

4. Why couldn't Rama return to his corner?

→ The place was turned into a memorial for martyrs, making it unsuitable and restricted for business activities.

5. Where did Rama shift his business after the riot?

→ He shifted to a side street with less foot traffic, which severely reduced his earnings.

6. Did Rama protest his displacement?

→ No, Rama did not protest; he silently accepted the situation, showing his helplessness and resignation.

7. What is the tone of the story?

→ The tone is sympathetic, ironic, and reflective, highlighting social injustice subtly.

8. What was the public's reaction to the new Martyr's Corner?

→ People treated it with reverence, offering flowers and tributes, as if it were a sacred site.

9. Did Rama's customers follow him to his new place?

→ No, most of his customers did not visit the new location, leading to a decline in business.

10. How does Rama's story reflect on the lives of the urban poor?

→ It shows how fragile their livelihoods are and how easily they are affected by political or societal events.

◆ **Long Answer Type (100–150 words):**

11. **Discuss how Rama symbolizes the common man.**

→ Rama symbolizes the ordinary working-class person who labors daily to survive. He doesn't engage in politics but is deeply affected by it. His stall represents self-employment, independence, and humble living. When political violence erupts, he is not consulted or compensated but merely displaced. Despite being a long-time contributor to the community through his service, he becomes invisible. His story is a commentary on how political events often ignore their consequences on the common people.

12. **What message does the author convey in “The Martyr’s Corner”?**

→ R.K. Narayan conveys that political conflicts, while often glorified, leave silent victims behind. The transformation of a thriving corner into a sacred martyr site displaces Rama, who symbolizes innocent bystanders affected by political agendas. The author criticizes society’s tendency to romanticize tragedy while overlooking the day-to-day needs of the poor. The story calls for more empathy toward those whose lives are disrupted by such events.

13. **How does Rama cope with the loss of his corner?**

→ Rama silently relocates to a new place, accepting his fate with quiet endurance. He doesn’t rebel or demand justice, showing the submissiveness that often characterizes those without power. His resilience is admirable, but his silence also reflects societal neglect.

14. **Describe the setting and its importance in the story.**

→ The setting is a busy Indian town where street vendors are part of the urban ecosystem. The corner is not just a location but a livelihood hub. After the riot, it becomes a symbol of

martyrdom, showing how urban spaces can drastically change due to political forces.

15. **Why is the story an example of social realism?**

→ The story portrays real-life struggles of poor street vendors, the unpredictable nature of political unrest, and society's indifference to the underprivileged. It highlights the socio-economic issues without dramatization, making it a classic piece of social realism.