

18. The Chernobyl Nuclear Disaster



- Reactor – a large structure used for controlled production of nuclear energy.
- The No. 4 reactor at the Chernobyl Power Station of Ukraine, Russia exploded on April 26, 1986. It caused a big loss of life and property. 31 people died as an immediate result of the explosion and had a long term effect on the lives of hundreds of others.

- More than 100,000 people were evacuated from the surrounding area in Ukraine and Belarus. 485 villages and settlements became uninhabitable. 70 were demolished, dug up, carried away and buried.
- Various eyewitnesses recall the terrible catastrophe. Lyudmilla Ignatenko, the wife of one of the firemen narrates her story. They were newlyweds. They lived next to the fire station where he worked. That night she looked out of the window, he saw her and told her to close the window and to go back to sleep. He went to put out the fire.

- The next morning she was informed that her husband was in hospital. When she saw him he was all swollen and his eyes could barely be seen. Many of the doctors and nurses would get sick themselves and die.
- In the hospital there was a strong restriction for the visitors. Her husband died after 14 days. They dressed him up in formal wear, with his service cap. They buried him bare foot.

- Another eyewitness, Sergei Vasilyevich Sobolev also shares his exciting and risky experience of constructing the shield over the Chernobyl Power Station. The unit was given 7,000 rubbles.

- Arkady Filin shares that they were between 25 and 40 working to clear the site. They cut trees and buried everything. They dug up the diseased top layer of soil, loaded it into trucks and took it to waste burial sites.
- They worked like mad men and changed the entire earth and made it barren. They became heroes. It was crazy.