



# The Sermon at Benares – Revision Notes

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## Summary of the Lesson

- Text type: Extract from the life of Lord Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama).
- Siddhartha Gautama was born a prince in North India.
- At 12 → sent for schooling in sacred Hindu scriptures.
- At 16 → married a princess, lived luxuriously.
- At 25 → came across sickness, old age, and death → was deeply disturbed.
- Left palace, renounced worldly life → wandered in search of enlightenment.
- After 7 years of meditation, attained enlightenment under a Peepal tree (Bodhi Tree) at Bodh Gaya → became the Buddha (“The Awakened One”).
- First sermon delivered at Benares (Varanasi) → taught about life’s truth.

## Story of Kisa Gotami:

- Her only son died → she was grief-stricken, carried the dead child asking for medicine.
- People thought she had lost her senses.
- Buddha advised her to bring mustard seeds from a house where no one had died.
- She went door-to-door but found no house untouched by death.
- Realized death is universal and inevitable.
- Accepted truth and overcame grief.



## Themes

- Suffering and death are universal.
- Detachment leads to peace.
- Life is temporary; everything changes.
- Wisdom comes through experience.

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## Characters

- Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha) → seeker of truth, compassionate teacher.
- Kisa Gotami → grieving mother, symbolizes human attachment and eventual acceptance of truth.

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## Message of the Lesson

- Human life is full of suffering and death.
- One must accept the reality of death and detach from excessive attachment.
- Inner peace comes from acceptance, not denial.






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## Literary Devices

- Parable/Allegory → Story of Kisa Gotami conveys a universal truth.
- Symbolism → Mustard seed = acceptance of reality; Death = inevitability of change.
- Didactic Tone → Meant to teach life lessons.

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## Short Questions & Answers

1. Who was Gautama Buddha?  
 A prince who renounced worldly life, attained enlightenment, and became a spiritual teacher.
  2. Where did Buddha attain enlightenment?  
 Under the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya.
  3. Where did Buddha deliver his first sermon?  
 At Benares (Varanasi).
  4. Who was Kisa Gotami?  
 A young mother whose only son died.
  5. Why did Buddha ask her to bring mustard seeds from a house where no one had died?  
 To make her realize that death is common to all and unavoidable.
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## Long Q&A

**Q1. What lesson did Kisa Gotami learn from the Buddha?**

**Answer:** Kisa Gotami was heartbroken after her son's death. She sought medicine to bring him back. Buddha asked her to collect mustard seeds from a house untouched by death. She found that every family had faced death. She realized that death is universal and inevitable. Thus, she learned the lesson of acceptance and detachment from worldly attachments.

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**Q2. Explain the central idea of *The Sermon at Benares*.**

**Answer:** The chapter teaches that human life is full of suffering, and death is inevitable. Excessive attachment leads to pain. By detachment and acceptance of life's reality, one can achieve peace of mind. This teaching is the foundation of Buddhism.

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**Q3. How does the story of Kisa Gotami illustrate Buddha's message?**

**Answer:** Kisa Gotami represents every grieving human being who resists accepting loss. Buddha's simple task of finding mustard seeds from a house untouched by death revealed to her that death spares no one. This practical realization helped her accept truth. Thus, her story illustrates Buddha's teaching of universality of death and impermanence of life.

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## Value-Based Q&A

**1. What values can we learn from Buddha's teachings?**

 Detachment, acceptance, wisdom, peace, compassion.

**2. Why is acceptance of death important?**

 Because denial increases suffering, while acceptance leads to peace.

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 **With this, you now have the complete notes for *The Sermon at Benares*:**

- Summary
- Themes, Characters, Message
- Literary Devices
- Short & Long Q&A
- Value-based questions

