

A JOURNEY TO PARASNATH

Reference to Context Questions:

(a) Why is Parasnath Hill considered one of the holiest places for Jains?

Parasnath Hill is considered one of the holiest places for Jains because it is believed that many Tirthankaras attained salvation there. It is also home to important Jain temples and holds spiritual significance for followers of Jainism.

(b) How does the geographic location of Parasnath Hill contribute to its significance?

Being the highest mountain in Jharkhand and located in the Giridih district, Parasnath Hill stands out geographically. Its natural beauty, biodiversity, and serene environment add to its spiritual significance and make it a place of pilgrimage and reflection.

Context 2:

(a) This passage highlights the ecological importance of Parasnath Hill by describing its green forests, varied trees, and rare plants, showing it as a rich natural habitat.

(b) Aastha's mother plays a key role by pointing out different bird types and plants, making the journey educational and helping Aastha appreciate nature more deeply.

Context 3:

(a) Staying at the Dharamshala gave Aastha an opportunity to listen to stories about Jainism, helping her learn about the religion's principles and deepen her cultural understanding.

(b) The principles of Ahimsa and Aparigraha in Jainism emphasize non-violence and non-attachment, encouraging a peaceful and simple way of life. They are important teachings that Aastha learned during her journey.

Context 4:

(a) The passage highlights Jharkhand's cultural diversity by describing the tribal communities like Santhal, Munda, and Oraon who live in harmony with nature.

(b) Aastha gains an understanding of how tribal people live closely with nature, showing her the deep connection between local traditions and the environment.

Context 5:

(a) The journey helped Aastha reflect on her beliefs and appreciate the natural beauty of her state. It made her more thoughtful and aware of India's cultural variety.

(b) Aastha gained a deeper understanding of the different ways people live, believe, and connect with nature in Indian society, enriching her knowledge of her country.

Context 6:

(a) Sharing her experience helped Aastha reinforce her own learning while educating her classmates about cultural respect, religion, and environmental preservation.

(b) The teacher used Aastha's story to teach broader lessons about respecting diverse religions, understanding societal customs, and preserving natural and historical heritage.

Answer the Following Questions:

1. Parasnath Hill is significant to Jains because it is associated with the Tirthankaras and Jain principles like Ahimsa and Aparigraha. It is also important to the Santhal people and other tribes who consider it spiritually valuable and live in harmony with the environment around it. This shows India's cultural diversity through the coexistence of different traditions.

2. Aastha faced physical challenges during the trek, such as climbing difficult paths and adjusting to the environment. She overcame these with her mother's support, curiosity to learn, and determination.

3. Aastha's journey helped her understand the teachings of Jainism, appreciate tribal cultures, and value nature. It also contributed to her personal growth by broadening her perspective and increasing her respect for cultural diversity.

4. Preserving natural and historical sites like Parasnath Hill is important to protect cultural heritage and biodiversity. Such places teach us about history, religion, and the environment, and inspire us to live responsibly and respectfully.

5. Before the journey, Aastha might have expected a simple trek. During the journey, she faced challenges, learned about diverse cultures, and grew personally. Afterward, she gained a deeper understanding of her state and society, making her experience far richer than expected.

6. Ahimsa means non-violence, and Aparigraha means non-attachment.

In daily life, Ahimsa can be applied by being kind to others, avoiding harm to animals, and using peaceful means to resolve conflicts. Aparigraha can be followed by avoiding greed, living simply, and not becoming overly attached to material possessions.

7. Parasnath Hill is portrayed in the story as a place of stunning natural beauty. It is covered with lush green forests and a variety of trees, making it a peaceful and refreshing environment.

Aastha and her mother notice different kinds of birds and many rare plants, which shows that the hill is rich in biodiversity. The presence of mist-shrouded peaks, valleys echoing with prayers, and beautiful sunrises over the hills create a magical and serene atmosphere.

This natural beauty greatly enhances the experience of visitors and pilgrims. For pilgrims, the calm and scenic surroundings add to the spiritual journey, helping them feel closer to nature and the divine. For visitors like Aastha, the hill becomes not just a religious site but also a place for learning, reflection, and connection with nature. The natural setting allows people to feel peace, inspiration, and a deep sense of respect for both the environment and the spiritual significance of the place.