

## CHAPTER – 8

### THE SERMON AT BENARES

#### **2 MARK QUESTIONS**

**1. What prompts Siddhartha to leave his home and embark on a spiritual journey?**

**Answer:**

Dissatisfaction with the teachings and rituals of traditional Brahminism prompts Siddhartha to leave his home and seek enlightenment.

**2. Why does Siddhartha go to the holy city of Benares?**

**Answer:**

Siddhartha goes to Benares to listen to the sermon of Gautama Buddha in his quest for spiritual enlightenment.

**3. How does Siddhartha initially react to Gautama Buddha's sermon?**

**Answer:**

Initially, Siddhartha is impressed by the wisdom and profound truths in Gautama Buddha's sermon.

**4. Why does Siddhartha decide not to become a follower of Gautama Buddha?**

**Answer:**

Siddhartha decides not to become a follower because he believes that true understanding cannot be attained through external teachings alone; it requires personal experience and direct realization.

**5. What theme is explored in "The Sermon at Benares" regarding individuality?**

**Answer:**

The theme of individuality is explored, emphasizing the unique path each person must take in their quest for enlightenment.

**6. What realization does Siddhartha have about the limitations of external teachings?**

**Answer:**

Siddhartha realizes that although the Buddha's teachings are insightful, they are not sufficient for his personal enlightenment, and he must rely on personal experience.

**7. How does Hesse convey the importance of personal experience in the chapter?**

**Answer:**

Hesse conveys the importance of personal experience by having Siddhartha reject the idea of relying solely on external teachings and emphasizing the need for direct realization.

**8. What does Siddhartha resolve to do at the end of the chapter?**

**Answer:**

Siddhartha resolves to follow his own path and gain wisdom through personal experience and direct realization, rather than becoming a follower of the Buddha.

**9. What is the central idea behind Siddhartha's rejection of external teachings?**

**Answer:**

The central idea is that true understanding and enlightenment cannot be gained solely through external teachings; it requires personal exploration and insight.

**10. How does Hesse's writing style contribute to the philosophical tone of the chapter?**

**Answer:**

Hesse's reflective and philosophical writing style invites readers to contemplate the nature of spiritual seeking and the diverse paths individuals may take to find meaning, contributing to the chapter's overall philosophical tone.

## **4 MARK QUESTIONS**

**1. When her son dies, Kisa Gotami goes from house to house. What does she ask for? Does she get it? Why not?**

**Answer:**

Kisa Gotami was overcome with grief and agony when her only son died. She carried her son's dead body in her arms and went from one house to another, asking for medicine that could cure her child, but nobody could help. Since her son was dead, it wasn't possible for anyone to give her any medicine and bring the dead person back to life.

**2. 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?**

**Answer:**

Gautama Buddha asked Kisa Gotami to bring a handful of mustard seeds from a house where no one had lost a child, husband, parent or friend. She went from door to door, but couldn't find a single house where death had not knocked on their door and taken away their beloved one. She did not find any such house as death is inevitable, and all mortals who come to this world are bound to die someday.

**3. Explore the reasons behind Siddhartha's dissatisfaction with traditional Brahminism and his decision to leave home.**

**Answer:**

Siddhartha is dissatisfied with traditional Brahminism due to its rituals and teachings that fail to provide answers to his existential questions. Seeking a deeper understanding of life, he decides to leave home and follow his own spiritual path.

**4. Analyze the impact of Gautama Buddha's sermon on Siddhartha and explain why he chooses not to become a follower.**

**Answer:**

Gautama Buddha's sermon initially impresses Siddhartha with its wisdom. However, Siddhartha realizes that while the teachings are insightful, they are not sufficient for his personal enlightenment. He decides not to become a follower, as he believes true understanding requires personal experience and direct realization.

**5. Discuss the theme of individuality as portrayed in "The Sermon at Benares" and its significance in Siddhartha's spiritual journey.**

**Answer:**

The theme of individuality is central to the chapter, emphasizing the unique path each person must take in their quest for enlightenment. Siddhartha rejects conformity and chooses to follow his own inner

voice, highlighting the significance of individuality in the pursuit of spiritual truth.

**6. Explain how Hesse conveys the limitations of external teachings and the importance of personal experience in the chapter.**

**Answer:**

Hesse conveys the limitations of external teachings through Siddhartha's realization that true understanding cannot be transmitted through words alone. Personal experience and direct realization are deemed essential by Siddhartha, emphasizing their importance in the quest for profound truths.

**9. Elaborate on Hesse's writing style in "The Sermon at Benares" and its role in creating a reflective and philosophical atmosphere.**

**Answer:**

Hesse's writing style is reflective and philosophical, inviting readers to contemplate the nature of spiritual seeking. Through introspective prose and deep exploration of Siddhartha's thoughts, Hesse creates an atmosphere that encourages philosophical reflection, contributing to the overall tone of the chapter.

## **8 MARK QUESTIONS**

**1. What does Kisa Gotami understand the second time that she failed to understand the first time? Was this what the Buddha wanted her to understand?**

**Answer:**

When Kisa Gotami failed to procure a handful of mustard seeds from a house where death never took away any beloved one, she became weary and helpless and sat down by the roadside. While sitting there, she observed the flickering and extinguishing of lights, and finally, the darkness of the night reigned everywhere. This incident made her realise that death is inevitable and she was being selfish in her grief and agony. She understood that in this valley of desolation, there is always a path that leads man, who has surrendered all his selfishness, to immortality

Yes, this is what Buddha wanted her to understand that every mortal being who is born in this world is bound to die one day.

**2. Why do you think Kisa Gotami understood this only the second time? In what way did the Buddha change her understanding?**

**Answer:**

In the first instance, Kisa Gotami could only see her grief of losing her young son. But, when she went from one house to another the second time to procure a handful of mustard seeds to save her dead son, she understood that everyone was dealing with the loss of a dear one. Not a single house was left untouched by death, where people had not lost their son, husband, parent or friend. At some point in time, everyone has experienced the pain of death and losing their



loved ones. Feeling dejected, she sat down and realised that death is inevitable and the fate of mortal beings is to live and die someday. Through this instance, Gautama Buddha helped her to understand that death is common to all mortal beings and that everyone is bound to die one day or the other.

**3. How do you usually understand the idea of ‘selfishness’? Do you agree with Kisa Gotami that she was being ‘selfish in her grief’?**

**Answer:**

A selfish person is one who is extremely preoccupied with himself or herself. In the story, Kisa Gotami was also being selfish in her grief because she was just thinking about her own pain. So when she lost her child, she wanted to bring him back to life by any means and finally went to Buddha to ask for help. He gave her the ultimate lesson of life that humans are mortal beings, and it is natural for everyone to die. Although we may find it difficult to accept the death of our loved ones, death is inevitable and is bound to happen sooner or later.

**4. Explore Siddhartha's internal conflicts and struggles that lead him to reject traditional Brahminism and set out on a spiritual journey.**

**Answer:**

Siddhartha's internal conflicts arise from a deep dissatisfaction with the rituals and teachings of traditional Brahminism. He questions the meaning of life and the efficacy of existing beliefs, feeling an inner calling for a more profound understanding. This discontentment

prompts him to leave his home, family, and the familiar, as he embarks on a personal quest for spiritual enlightenment. His struggles are rooted in the clash between societal expectations and his individual quest for truth, reflecting the universal theme of the individual's journey toward self-discovery.

**5. Analyze Siddhartha's initial impressions of Gautama Buddha's sermon and the subsequent realization that prompts him to reject becoming a follower.**

**Answer:**

Siddhartha is initially captivated by the wisdom and profundity of Gautama Buddha's sermon. However, as he contemplates the teachings, he recognizes their limitations in providing the complete enlightenment he seeks. Siddhartha realizes that personal experience and direct realization are crucial, leading him to reject the idea of becoming a follower. This pivotal realization signifies his commitment to forging his unique path, unbound by external doctrines, and underscores the theme of individuality in spiritual seeking.

**6. Discuss the role of the holy city of Benares in Siddhartha's spiritual journey and its symbolic significance in the narrative.**

**Answer:**

Benares serves as a crucial setting in Siddhartha's spiritual journey, representing a sacred space where he encounters Gautama Buddha

and his transformative teachings. Symbolically, Benares embodies the intersection of spiritual knowledge and worldly existence.

Siddhartha's presence in Benares signifies a pivotal moment where he confronts established beliefs and seeks a higher truth. The city becomes a metaphor for the crossroads in Siddhartha's life, where he decides to diverge from conventional paths and forge his own way in the pursuit of enlightenment.

**7. Elaborate on the theme of self-discovery in "The Sermon at Benares" and how Siddhartha's rejection of external teachings reflects his journey toward personal enlightenment.**

**Answer:**

The theme of self-discovery is central as Siddhartha rejects external teachings, emphasizing his commitment to personal experience. His decision signifies a profound understanding that true enlightenment cannot be handed down but must be personally realized. By rejecting conformity and choosing the path of individual exploration, Siddhartha underscores the importance of direct experience in the quest for profound truths. This theme resonates throughout the narrative, emphasizing the transformative power of self-discovery in one's spiritual journey.

**8. Examine Herman Hesse's writing style in "The Sermon at Benares" and its impact on conveying the philosophical nuances of Siddhartha's spiritual quest.**

**Answer:**

Hesse's writing style in the chapter is characterized by introspective and philosophical prose, creating an immersive atmosphere for readers. Through meticulous exploration of Siddhartha's thoughts and emotions, Hesse captures the intricacies of the protagonist's spiritual journey. The reflective tone, combined with Hesse's eloquent expression, serves to convey the profound philosophical nuances of Siddhartha's quest. The narrative's richness and depth are enhanced by Hesse's ability to articulate the complexities of spiritual seeking, making the chapter a compelling exploration of existential themes.

## **GRAMMAR**

**1. This text is written in an old-fashioned style, for it reports an incident more than two millennia old. Look for the following words and phrases in the text, and try to rephrase them in more current language, based on how you understand them.**

- give *thee* medicine for *thy* child
- *Pray* tell me
- Kisa *repaired* to the Buddha
- there was *no* house *but* someone had died in it
- kinsmen
- *Mark!*

**Answer:**

- Give you medicine for your child
- Please tell me
- Kisa went to the Buddha
- There was not a single house where no one had died
- Relatives
- Listen

**2. You know that we can combine sentences using words like and, or, but, yet and then. But sometimes, no such word seems appropriate. In such a case, we can use a semicolon (;) or a dash (—) to combine two clauses.**

**She has no interest in music; I doubt she will become a singer like her mother.**

**The second clause here gives the speaker's opinion on the first clause. Here is a sentence from the text that uses semicolons to**

**combine clauses. Break up the sentence into three simple sentences. Can you then say which has a better rhythm when you read it, the single sentence using semicolons, or the three simple sentences?**

**For there is not any means by which those who have been born can avoid dying; after reaching old age there is death; of such a nature are living beings.**

**Answer:**

The single sentence using semicolons has a better cadence and rhythm. This implies that the three parts of the sentence are connected to each other in their meanings. The second clause gives detailed information about the first clause. The third clause is, therefore, directly related to both the first and the second clauses. Their meanings are conveyed in a better way when they are joined by semicolons.

## **SUMMARY**

Chapter 8 of the Class 10 English NCERT textbook includes the prose piece titled "The Sermon at Benares." This chapter is an excerpt from Herman Hesse's novel "Siddhartha" and recounts an essential moment in the life of the protagonist, Siddhartha, as he embarks on a spiritual journey.

The narrative is set in ancient India, and Siddhartha, the son of a Brahmin, seeks to find the true meaning of life and existence. Dissatisfied with the teachings and rituals of traditional Brahminism, Siddhartha decides to leave his home and follow his own path in the pursuit of enlightenment.

Siddhartha's journey leads him to Gautama Buddha, who is delivering a sermon in the holy city of Benares. As Siddhartha listens to the sermon, he is initially impressed by the Buddha's wisdom and the profound truths he imparts. However, he realizes that although the Buddha's teachings are insightful, they are not sufficient for him to attain the enlightenment he seeks.

Feeling the need to continue his personal quest, Siddhartha decides not to become a follower of the Buddha. Instead, he resolves to gain wisdom through personal experience and direct realization. Siddhartha acknowledges that true understanding cannot be transmitted through words alone; it must be discovered through one's own journey and insights.

The excerpt explores the theme of individuality and the uniqueness of each person's path to enlightenment. It emphasizes the idea that personal experience and direct realization are crucial in the search for profound truths. Siddhartha rejects the idea of relying solely on external teachings and dogmas, choosing instead to follow his own inner voice.

Hesse's writing in "The Sermon at Benares" is reflective and philosophical, inviting readers to contemplate the nature of spiritual seeking and the diverse paths individuals may take to find meaning in their lives. The chapter encapsulates Siddhartha's quest for self-discovery and the importance of personal experience in the pursuit of enlightenment.



## **POEM- FOR ANNE GREGORY**

- **William Butler Yeats**

**1. What does the young man mean by “great honey-coloured /Ramparts at your ear?” Why does he say that young men are “thrown into despair” by them?**

**Answer:**

The young man in the poem praises the “great honey-coloured hair /Ramparts at Anne’s ear” to refer to her beautiful yellow coloured hair that gracefully falls behind her ear and covers it like a wall. Her hair is so attractive that young men hopelessly fall in love with her. They are “thrown into despair” because they are enchanted by Anne’s beauty as her hair beautifully falls behind her ear. She is so pretty that everyone wants her, which is not possible. Hence, they are all thrown into despair.

**2. What colour is the young woman’s hair? What does she say she can change it to? Why would she want to do so?**

**Answer:**

Anne’s hair is yellow in colour, just like honey. She says that she can dye it black, brown or carrot colour, which means that she can change it to any colour of her choice. She says so to express that outer beauty can be changed anytime, but that’s not real or permanent. She wants young men to look deep into her soul and wants them to love and appreciate her for her inner beauty rather than her external superficial appearance.

**3. Objects have qualities which make them desirable to others.**

**Can you think of some objects (a car, a phone, a dress...) and say what qualities make one object more desirable than another?**

**Imagine you were trying to sell an object: what qualities would you emphasise?**

**Answer:**

There are various objects having qualities in our lives that make them desirable to others. Here we bring to you a list of objects that make it desirable to others:

Object	Qualities
Car	Colour, speed, fuel efficiency, brand
Dress	Pattern, colour, material, fit
Phone	Brand, technology, user-friendliness, memory, price
Bag	Design, colour, brand, price, style

While selling an object, a person should emphasise the different features of the product and also help the buyer identify how it is better than other products in the market. Students can also add some points on their own to understand how best an object can be sold to a customer.

**4. What about people? Do we love others because we like their qualities, whether physical or mental? Or is it possible to love someone “for themselves alone”? Are some people ‘more lovable’ than others? Discuss this question in pairs or in groups, considering points like the following.**

**(i) a parent or caregiver’s love for a newborn baby, for a mentally or physically challenged child, for a clever child or a prodigy**

**(ii) the public’s love for a film star, a sportsperson, a politician, or a social worker**

**(iii) your love for a friend, or brother or sister**

**(iv) your love for a pet, and the pet’s love for you.**

**Answer:**

Every person has his/her own choices, likes and dislikes. Students are advised to answer the question based on their interpretation and personal experience. As humans, we all have our personal favourites based on our perceptions and situation in life. It is, therefore, not wrong to like some people more than others.

1. A parent or caregiver’s love for a newborn baby, for a mentally or physically challenged child, for a clever child or a prodigy reflects their attentiveness and concern for them.
2. The public’s love for a film star, a sportsperson, a politician or a social worker reflects our admiration and being awestruck by their personality.
3. Your love for a friend or brother, or sister reflects your love, compassion, empathy and a feeling of togetherness for them.
4. Your love for a pet and the pet’s love for you reflect the unconditional and selfless love towards each other.

**5. You have perhaps concluded that people are not objects to be valued for their qualities or riches rather than for themselves. But elsewhere, Yeats asks the question: How can we separate the dancer from the dance? Is it possible to separate ‘the person himself or herself’ from how the person looks, sounds, walks, and so on? Think of how you or a friend or member of your family has changed over the years. Has your relationship also changed? In what way?**

**Answer:**

Students can write this answer as per their personal experiences. It is recommended that they think about their family and friends and attempt this question based on their interpretation and personal experiences.

Here are some hints that may help you:

1. Approach a friend or a family member and give it a thought, whether you think of them as an individual or their physical appearance takes precedence.
2. Every person’s way of thinking changes with age. A person needs to check it himself if his thought process has remained the same or improved/degraded with time.
3. Every person is unique, and we should accept them as they are rather than criticise them for anything.
4. It is well understood that our love and feelings for our loved ones undergo a change in due course of time.
5. We should not judge people superficially for their looks or appearance, but rather appreciate the person for his/her positive qualities.

## **SUMMARY**

Chapter 8 of the Class 10 English NCERT textbook features the poem "For Anne Gregory" by W.B. Yeats. This poem is a reflection on the transformative power of beauty and its impact on identity. The speaker, addressing Anne Gregory, explores the theme of the fleeting nature of physical beauty and its profound influence on an individual's character.

The poem begins with the speaker's acknowledgment of Anne Gregory's changing appearance over time. The speaker presents a scenario where Anne is advised to change her appearance by various individuals, including gypsies and a wise old man. The advice revolves around altering her physical features to enhance her beauty.

The central idea of the poem revolves around the consequences of heeding such advice. The speaker suggests that changing one's physical appearance can have a profound impact on one's inner self. Anne Gregory, initially a beautiful and admired woman, undergoes a transformation by following the advice to change her nose and her hair.

As Anne Gregory alters her physical features, she becomes a different person both in appearance and character. The speaker notes that her beauty becomes a "troublesome change" as it affects her soul. The poem emphasizes the idea that external changes can lead to an internal shift in character and identity.

The speaker expresses regret for the advice given to Anne, stating that it would have been better to let her natural beauty shine without alteration. The poem concludes with a reflection on the transient nature of physical beauty and a warning against the potential consequences of pursuing it at the expense of one's true self.

W.B. Yeats employs evocative language and metaphorical imagery to convey the poem's themes. "For Anne Gregory" serves as a contemplation on the complexities of beauty, identity, and the relationship between the external and internal aspects of an individual's existence. The poem encourages readers to value authenticity and appreciate the deeper aspects of human identity beyond mere physical appearances.