

## **1. Start of Kali Yuga**

### **Summary**

This is the story of how Kali Yuga began. According to the mythological story there had been Yudhistira's Ashwamedha yagyna. It was the greatest ceremony in human memory. In the middle of the ceremony, two farmers came to Hastina-puri with a dispute asking for the settlement. The dispute was quite charitable. The dispute was that the buyer of the land found a pot of gold which he wanted to give back to the seller but the seller refused to take. It created confusion to Yudhistir. So he took advice from Krishna. He suggested farmers to leave the pot of gold with the king and return after three months. Krishna also said Yudhistir that after three months Kali Yuga starts (dawn) which makes the farmers greedy. To him, only a quarter of the values will survive, every situation will be changed. Man will live for pleasure, children will abandon responsibility, women will be like men, men like women. Likewise, human will involve in sexual act like animals, power will be respected, justice abandoned, sacrifice forgotten and love ridiculed. Moreover, the wise will like law of jungle and victim will be victimizer.

Three months later the Yagyna completed. On that day, they saw a mongoose. Its half of the body was like gold. It entered the hall, jumped into the fire pit and rubbed its normal side and left the place with angry look. It is because his normal body skin did not turn gold even in that grand ritual. It showed that this grand yagyna was not ritually grand at all. It was more about royal power. Since then dharma has been lost. It was harnessed by the God Krishna and Goddess Draupadi before the war but only a quarter would be holding it after the war. If it is left, Pralaya would come and the world would come to the end.

### **Theme**

The writer expresses dissatisfaction due to the erosion and gradual loss of the value of dharma. The present worldly activities are less ritualistic and less charitable (with kindness and love) due to the growth of greed.

## **2. College Teachers**

### **Summary**

There are three categories of college teachers. They are positive teachers, neutral teachers and negative teachers.

The positive teachers are small in number. They are the most agreeable teachers. The teachers of this category are interested in the subject matter and the students. They try to learn all of the students' names, they allow for questions and discussions in class. They also do not mind if students disagree with them. They are available for conferences and they encourage students to meet in the office if there is need for help. With such teachers students feel comfortable.

The neutral teachers are not very agreeable. Comparatively, they are not seen interested in the subject or the students. They do not know all the students' names but may learn few. Their classes are boring than the positive teachers because they allow less time for discussion and questions. They are also available for the conferences but they do not encourage the students to meet in the office for their helping

By name the negative teachers are the least agreeable. They are dreadful to the students. The neither know the students' names not help them outside the classroom. They are almost hostile in and outside the classroom. They give lectures; but there is no chance for questions, discussions and conferences for the students. They are not available in the office for students' help. Such teachers are doubly boring than the neutral teachers. They are mechanical and inflexible teachers in fact.

### **Theme**

The writer's opinion is that the amount of learning depends on the methods and behaviors of the teachers. So, he suggests the administrators to **get the neutral and negative teachers to improve** their teaching methods and attitudes. Otherwise, they should **dismiss the negative teachers**. The third suggestion is that the administrators should **hire promising teachers to be positive to their students**.

### **3. The Mirror of Matsuyama**

This is a story of a Japanese man named Matsuyama and his mirror. In his return from Kyoto meeting of the business, he brought some presents to his daughter and wife because he had promised to bring as surprise gifts. Of the various presents, the mirror was the principal gift for his wife. His wife had never seen a mirror, so it gave her of the impression that another woman looks out upon her. But his husband explained about the mystery and asked her to take care of the mirror. Later, the woman becomes ill and died. Before her death she called her daughter and give the mirror to her. She also told her daughter that she will miss her mother and feel lonely. So, she suggested her to look into the mirror to see the mother's face and remove the loneliness. After her death the man married another woman. As her mother suggested, the girl looked into the mirror with care and saw her mother beautiful and young.

One day her step-mother saw her bending in a corner over an object. She was an ignorant woman. So, she disliked the girl. She also guessed that the girl was making plan of killing her by the witchcraft (magic art). The woman also complained the man (husband) about the girl's activity. He became angry and asked his daughter about the reality. The little girl told the story of getting the mirror and the reality. She further told her father that she was looking into the mirror to her mother's face when her heart ached. The man understood and loved her with more respect. The step-mother also understood the matter, felt ashamed and asked for her excuse. The child also forgave them and departed for ever from the home.

#### 4. The open window

This is a story by Saki (H.H. Munro). In this story a very young lady of 15 (named **Vera**) plays an amusing trick on a chance visitor to her aunt's house. According to the story, Mr. Nuttel had to migrate to the rural place for rest to solve problem of the nerve because doctors had told him to have complete rest. His sister suggested him to go to the place from where she had come. She also promised to give him a letter of introduction to all the nice people there. According to the same suggestion, Mr Nuttel went there taking the letters of introduction. First of all he had to meet Mrs. Sappleton there in a new place. So, he went towards the new place. When he reached there with the letter, he meets a self-possessed young girl of 15. She was the niece of Mrs. Sappleton. She tricks him and tells a story of Mrs. Sappleton herself when he waits.

According to her information, three years ago a great tragedy happened to the Sappleton family. Indicating a large French window that opened to a lawn, she said that three years ago, Mrs. Sappleton's husband and her two young brothers went off for their day's shooting. Unfortunately, they never came back. In crossing an open area they were surrounded by a treacherous piece of bog. Their bodies were never recovered. So, the Poor aunt always thinks that they will come back some day and walk in at that window. That is why the window is kept open every evening. She also said that the poor aunt's husband was with waterproof coat over his arm and Ronnie (her younger brother) would sing song.

At the same time Mrs. Sappleton comes down and says that her husband and brothers will be home directly from shooting. She also says that her husband and two brothers are coming from shooting. Suddenly, Mrs. Sappleton brightens. Nuttel looks at Vera and sees a shocked look on her face. She was looking as if she has seen the ghosts. This makes Nuttel worried. He only saw dead hunters coming to the house. He becomes frightened and leaves that house in rush without saying good bye to the newly introduced people. Mrs Sappeton does not understand Nuttel's such a strange behavior. However, Vera explains he is afraid of dogs. In fact, Vera tricked Mr. Nuttel. '**Romancer at short notice was her specialty**'.

#### 5. The Library

This is a story by Romesh Guneseekera in which the principal character is **Donald**. Physically Donald is very short and dumpy. He puts coat, gloves and a cap. By his ancestry, he belongs to **Ceylon** (now Sri Lanka). So, by his ancestral relation, he is Ceylonese. From Ceylon he came to Luton and then to London with his parents. Now he has no family in London. He does not have his parents too because they died in the early years. Before his death, his father used to talk about the presence of his uncle in London as their relative from Celyon. At present, Donald has no connection with his relatives in the new country. This makes Donald feel frustration, alienation and anxiety. He has strong feeling of his home country due to his loneliness in the foreign land.

When he moves from Luton to London, he was on the trial of a poet. He reads a book 'The Village in the Jungle'. It was written by Leonard Woolf written after the experience of Ceylon. He also starts his job at

Welfare Organization with few false starts. He did not have experience of such work. In his work, he was proved to be wizard. His boss was a drunkard. He used to drink vodka with mug. Then it was announced that he would not be promoted for 10 years. With this bad experience at work, he leaves his job and decides fully to devote his life for seeking about his ancestry.

In one Saturday morning he goes to the Library situated in the Hill. After reading several books he returns home but he does not find any vehicles. Luckily, he finds a buggy (a car) of Janice Conaway. The woman was native, tall, strong and married. She had a small child. She helps him by providing lift. While travelling, he sees birds such as woodpeckers and pigeon. He also enjoyed the forest, woods and peaceful environment. At the same time he feels that he is anonymous poet, nobody knows him. He remembers what his mother had said after his father's death. She felt quite alone and needed a shared past. Janice also asked about his ancestry. From their talking, it could be known that Donald's grandfather was a famous poet who wrote many poems before 1950s. His name was G.F. Parker. Donald also remembers that his uncle was also a great poet.

The theme of this poem is that **'Loss of ancestry is a very deep anxiety.'**

## **6. Decayed Teeth**

This is a story by Khalil Gibran, a Syrian writer. The story is about writer's painful experience after he had decayed tooth in his mouth. The decayed tooth troubles him much. So, he goes to the dentist and requests him to extract it. But the dentist does not agree to extract rather he wants to fill with pure gold and does so. The writer pays money and returns back to home. However, after few days, he feels the same trouble (tooth aches severely). Then, he goes to another dentist and asks him to extract the damned tooth without asking question. This time, the doctor extracts his decayed (rotten) tooth.

On this background experience of decayed tooth, the writer discusses the Syrian society which is full of with such teeth. He argues that in many societies, when people trouble with decayed tooth, they prefer to fill with gold on it. Society makes no effort to extract the decayed teeth to get rid of the pain. So, the society is not healthy. The writer further says that in Syria (in the mouth of Syria), there are many rotten, black and dirty teeth. Such teeth create sickness in the stomach. It means disease still remains. Then, people still feel pain; trouble, sickness and many people die of it. According to the writer, there are many decayed teeth everywhere, in school, court, society and home. If we visit rich people, we find falsehood, hypocrisy and conceit, if we visit poor people; they have fear, ignorance and cowardice. Reformers hold conferences and deliver public speeches if they are asked to cure decayed tooth.

## 7. The Necklace

Mathilde Loisel is an attractive and pretty, but very unhappy woman. She believes that life has played her false. She wanted to be appreciated and loved by some rich gentleman from a good family, but she had to settle for a junior clerk in the Ministry of Public Instruction. So, she is in constant frustration. She hates her plain apartment, its absence of pictures on the walls, and its poor furniture. She is so humiliated by her lower-middle-class existence that she even refuses to see one of her old friends whom she has known from her days at the convent school. Madame Forestier is wealthy, and Mathilde finds visits to her too painful to bear; so, she spends her days hanging around her drab flat, sometimes crying the entire time, overcome with worry, regret, desperation, and distress.

Her husband, on the other hand, seems better adjusted. He does not notice that the tablecloth has been in use for three days. One day, he comes home from his office with an invitation to a party that is being given by his superior, the minister of public instruction. Instead of greeting the news with delight, Mathilde throws the invitation down on the table, saying that it is no good to her, because she has nothing suitable to wear for such an occasion. Her husband tries to convince her that it was very difficult for a junior clerk to get asked to such an event. She refuses and tells him to give the invitation to a colleague whose wife is better turned out than she.

Mr. Loisel tries another tack. He asks her how much it would cost to get a proper dress. She decides on the sum of four hundred francs. He, then, agrees to give her that amount. An appropriate dress is ordered and is ready before the date of the dance. Mathilde, however, is still depressed. Now she complains that she does not have any jewelry to wear with it. Her husband suggests flowers. She is unimpressed. He then suggests that she go to her rich friend Madame Forestier and borrow some jewelry. His wife thinks it a good idea and the next day goes and explains the situation to her. Madame Forestier is more than willing to comply and goes to a wardrobe to get a large jewelry casket. She tells Mathilde to take what she likes. Such an embarrassment of riches makes it difficult for Mathilde to make up her mind. She asks to see something else. Suddenly, she discovers a black satin case that contains a magnificent necklace, “a river of diamonds.” With tremulous voice she asks if she may borrow this item. “But yes, certainly,” says her friend. Mathilde throws her arms around her friend’s neck, and then joyously hurries home with her treasure.

At the minister’s party, she appears to be the prettiest woman in the room. All men’s eyes are on her. Even the minister notices her. She dances throughout the night, leaving her exhausted husband dozing in a small drawing room with three other husbands whose wives are also enjoying themselves. When the party breaks up at four o’clock, Mathilde wants to get away as fast as possible because she does not want the other women, who all wear furs, to notice her plain cloth coat. She runs out to the street hoping to find a cab, but the search takes her down to the Seine where, at last, she and her husband find an old dilapidated brougham stationed along the embankment. The ride back to their dismal apartment is sad for Mathilde with her fresh memories of her triumph.

Once home, as she is taking off her wraps, she discovers that the necklace is no longer around her neck. They search her clothes: nothing. Her husband goes out and retraces their path home. He returns several hours later having found nothing. The next day, he goes to the police and files a report. He then advertises in the lost-and-found in the papers, but still, nothing. After five days, however, when nothing shows up, they decide that the necklace is truly gone and they must have it replaced. They take the necklace case from jeweler to jeweler to find a strand of diamonds that matches the one lost. They finally see one in a shop at the Palais-Royal. The price, with a four-thousand-franc discount, is thirty-six thousand francs.

The Loiseles pay for it with an eighteen-thousand-franc inheritance that the husband has received from his father, and by borrowing the rest in small amounts, thereby mortgaging their lives for the next decade. The replacement necklace is returned to Madame Forestier, who remarks rather coldly that it should have been returned sooner because she might have needed it. She does not bother to open the case.

The Loiseles are left with their debts. They get rid of their maid. They move to a poorer apartment. The wife now has to do all the menial work herself: wash the sheets, carry garbage down to the street, carry up the water, do her own shopping, bargaining with everybody to save a few sous. The husband moonlights, working in the evenings for a bookkeeper and often at nights, doing copying at twenty-five centimes a page. This goes on year after year until the debt is paid. The time of penury has transformed Mathilde into a poor, prematurely old hag, with a loud voice, red hands, and neglected hair, but in her misery she often remembers the minister's ball, where she had her great success. What, she asks herself, would have been her fortune had she not lost the necklace?

One Sunday, as she strolls along the Champs-Élysées, she sees Madame Forestier taking a child for a walk. Jeanne Forestier is still young-looking and attractive. Now Mathilde Loisel decides to tell her old friend everything that happened. She stops to speak to her but is not recognized until she introduces herself. She explains that life has been pretty grim. She tells her about the lost necklace; how she had it replaced and for the past ten years has been slaving to pay for it. She is relieved that the long ordeal is over, and naïvely proud that her friend never knew that a different necklace had been returned to her. Madame Forestier is deeply touched. Taking both of her friend's hands she says, "Oh! My poor Mathilde! But mine was a fake. It was worth no more than five hundred francs!"

## **8. The Spanish Church**

This is a narrative essay written by Catherine Watson, a female writer. It is about hiking (trip) made to visit a famous Church named Portmarin (in short 'portal'). Her friends go on walking but she stops there and sits on a wall made of grey stone. She stopped there not because of footsore but she felt happy. She wanted to sit on the wall and enjoy Spanish sun and prolong the feeling. It was one of the best moments of the trip.

While she was sitting on the wall a couple of Italian bikers drove past her with a maximum speed. Later she met them again at the bottom of the hill. They were repairing the ruptured tire. The writer thought of walking on foot instead of going on bike quickly.

That night, the writer stayed with her friends in a modern posada. They were on the way to the great shrine of Saint James in Santiago. But, none of them were religious ones. Portmarino was near the end of Camino. It was a moved town, a reconstruction. Its original damaged village lies beneath the waters of a dammed up river. The remains of the wall seem to have broken the water surface. The writer had already known about the place. So, she was not surprised with the condition of the place. The village had been drowned but the government made a small walled church. It is a boxy looking church with few windows. It was at the centre of the plaza and it was the authenticity of the history.

In the morning, her friends came and she led them for the shiny green doors of the church. She was alone to be at the church. But, a boy in a red jacket came in when she did. His presence in the church made her feel a little bit self-conscious. As if by agreement, they walked in opposite directions, he headed to the right and the writer headed left. However, the writer was impressed by his youth. He was about 22. He had a plain, pleasant face, slightly freckled (dotted) with a wide mouth and sandy hair. After few minutes, the writer sat down near the front and closed her eyes, then prayed not being a true devotee of the god but because others and millions have done for thousand years. She was not praying for anything but sitting with her heart relax.

When the writer stood to leave, she saw that boy in the red jacket sitting down farther to the from on his side of the aisle. She stopped there to watch him but he did not notice her. He was staring upward at the window above the altar. Perhaps it was transforming him or her as well. She felt tenderness to the boy –the man, the child, all the ages he would be as if she had known him all his life being a mother, sister, lover, friend and all. The boy stood up, his eyes met her eyes, his face broke into a wonderful whole hearted smile. It was pure as the light. Then he walked back, the writer watched him along the passage. When the writer came out , he was already gone and his red jacket was disappearing on the far side of the cobblestone and she never saw him again.

## **9. Nelson Mandela**

Nelson Mandela was a South African political hero. He was called Madiba as an affectionate nickname. In Africa he is seen as the warm and wise father. He is also considered as a global statesman. He was born in the royal house of the Thembu tribe. He attended British modeled school but later he was taught to be a Black English man. As a black South African, his freedoms were very limited. By his study, he became a lawyer and joined African National Congress (ANC). He was charged with organizing armed wing of ANC, then he worked underground but he was arrested in 1962 and put in prison for life. In 1990 he walked out of prison after 27 years due to a massive mass rally for peace for his release and freedom in Africa. Then the democratic election held.

This election led him to be South African president in 1994. Then, he led the country to peaceful transition from white minority rule to multiracial democracy. He worked as a president for five years.

The reporter of magazine Reader's Digest took his interview in Cape Town. Some main points of the interview are as follows:

- If you say we want peace, we want stability, we can do a lot of things towards the progress of the society
- If you have a terminal disease, you do not have to sit down and mope. Enjoy the life and challenge the illness (he learnt this lesson from the story of reader's digest)
- Religion is important not to be hostile to a greater part of the society. Many people believe and it is not good to go against it. It is the belief of people in superior being. The belief that there is superior being who supervises our affairs is good for humanity.
- AIDS is the greatest public health crisis of all time. One of the things we have to deal with is that of stigma. Help get rid of the ignorance which leads to this stigma.(Diana went to hospital with AID sufferers, sat down on their beds, shook hands with them. She did very well.)
- Do not isolate people who are suffering from terminal disease because that alone kills people far more than the disease itself. When somebody discovers that they are no longer regarded as human being, he or she loses the will to fight.
- Beyond AIDS, Poverty and lack of education (Combined) is another single problem facing the world right now. Without education children can never, really meet the challenges they will face.
- Children can bring you down to mother earth instead of floating high. They can be very frank; they correct some mistakes that you have made in the past. They can remind you of the mistakes you made.
- He suggests UN not to take unilateral action (Such as the action of US and UK governments). UN like institutions should make sure of what they are formed.
- Armed wings are required when the government is not prepared to have any discussion to the opposition.
- Mandela believes on multilateralism-(multiple countries working together in certain issues) participation of many, not of a single participation in action (not only US.

## **10. A Smile**

- **Anonymous**

This poem highlights the importance of smile produced by human being. To the poet, a simple smile can do many magical and unexpected things in our lives. It is simple thing to do but it can do a lot of things. So, it is funny. For example, while we make a smile, our face simply wrinkles and the wrinkle



disappears soon. An interesting fact of the smile is that one smile makes two smiles. When we smile at others, we are rewarded with the smile. It means a response of a smile is another smile. So, a smile makes another smile. Another magical function of the smile is that it can bring two people together and establishes new relationship. It also bridges the gap between the old and the young. To a stranger, it may help to establish relationship for the future. Lovers establish the relationship by means of the same smile. It also helps to reduce the distance between two people. It can help to reduce the hatred among people. A smile of a child to an old grandmother is more expensive than buying an expensive gift.

A smile is also a communicable disease because it transfers to another person. By this communication we are blessed with many smiles in lives. So, let's count how many smiles that we have earned in our lives.

## **11. Ode to Tomatoes**

**Pablo Neruda**

This is a poem of celebration/dedication of a simple and humble object 'tomatoes'. It is about learning to embrace or celebrate or respect to simple things which are seen insignificant in surface. Looking at ordinary tomatoes in surface, people may underestimate them. But the beauty of the tomatoes lies within them. Its beauty needs to be respected by human beings. The poem suggests that we need to try to find the beauty within ordinary objects or ordinary beings.

In the summer time streets are filled with tomatoes. They are sold by the street vendors. Then, he talks to the winter time and the canned tomatoes which come off the shelf. They are ready to be served. In various dishes they come to us in the kitchen. The tomatoes have their own radiance or light like a gentle majesty. So, the poet thinks that it is not good to kill (cut) them. After it is cut it is married to the opinion in various local dishes. They are the star of the local dishes.

## **12. Do Not Say**

In this poem the poet by **Mohamad Bin Haji Salleb (a Malay poet)** addresses to the snobbish (opposite of **humble**) and so called educated people and politicians who pass the kampong sitting in a car and pretend to know the simple poor people and their life. The poet compares between poor people but humble and the rich. He also shows his deep respect to the **poor**. According to the poet, Malay people are not lazy. They sing their own song, read rhythmic language, wear their own hand -woven clothes and practice their own culture. They develop everything they need for their life. They are rich in their hearts and feelings; they are closer to the nature and humanity.

The Malay people sing the whole night singing and dancing together. They sing long rhythmic poem about the action of great men and women or about national history (called Epic Sharis). The poet is

attacking to the political philosophers in that the political philosophy has nothing to do for the advancement and civilization because their society was already an entity.

### **13. The Ballad of a Dead Friend**

**This** is a poem by Edwin Arlington Robinson about the reality of the death and time. To the poet, friends are important but death/time takes them away from us. He says that the death does not listen to our prayers. It simply mocks/laughs at our **prayers**. We pray, shed our tears and express grieves to our friends but the time does not listen (heed) to us. So, they blind us to accept the fact that death is natural phenomenon. Man always desires for things that are away from the reach.

The poet further says that we all are mortal. When we are born we cherish wishes and **dreams** ignoring age and death. We think that we will live to fulfill our wishes and desires but death rubs us before we achieve the goal. It is only love that goes beyond time and death. Love is never subject to death. It is only in the form of memory that remains to remind us of the friends who have gone by the force of the death. It is perhaps god who permits death to turn us into dust. It is the reality. It is inevitable/unavoidable.

### **14. The Buddha's Wife**

This poem by Ruth Silcock expresses a deep faith towards women. It is mainly a satirical to the men folks and sympathetic to the women. In a sense the poem is sad as well. Through this poem, the poet criticizes male dominated, patriarchal society that dominates and exploits women.

The poet gives example of religious people such as Buddha, Gandhi, Krishna and St Paul. They all were men saints and reputed personalities, but they neglected and did not consider to the life of women. Buddha and Gandhi mistreated their wives. Buddha fled for his own enlightenment. He left his wife and son in trouble. Gandhi also gave up his family for political reason. He was bandy with crooked legs and skinny body having little sexual desire due to his physical condition. A group of milkmaids wait for the glimpse of their adorable Lord Krishna but he does not hear their prayers. Likewise, St Paul tries to rule the passion of the young and playful Christian nuns. They are found disrespectful to their wives and family responsibilities.

In the last stanza, the poet says that man considers himself the supreme authority. He thinks he has all the rights (to express voice, write, to touch the beauty) to mistreat and dominate women.

### **15. Life is Fine**

This poem is composed by an American poet **Langston Hughes**. It is a monologue (self-talk and self-realization/enlightenment of life). It is also about the appreciation of life. In this poem the poet brings out the **significance of life which is reinforced by the obstacles in the living journey**. The poem is about a man (perhaps the poet himself) who is having hard time with his life. He had a lot of difficulties

in his life. So, he decides to commit suicide as a permanent solution for everything. He walks to the river, sits on the bank tries to think but he can't.. So, he jumps into the river and sinks. His attempts to commit suicide fail. He finds the water Cold (very cold) and High (intense cold like death).He comes up once and cries. He tries again but fails to die. He again attempts to kill himself jumping from the 16<sup>th</sup> floor of a building. He thinks about the baby and tries to jump but he cannot jump. He shouts loudly and cries loudly. From the attempts it is understood that one attempts to commit suicide due to the loss of love. It is love that makes people alive. The speaker is still alive. He realizes the purity of life and says, 'Life is Fine! Fine as wine! Life is Fine!'The poet's illusion about committing suicide removes by this understanding.

### **16. Punishment in Kindergarten**

This is a simple poem by Kamala Das, a poet from Kerala, India. The poem is about her bitter experience of while she was a student at Kindergarten. It is the recall of the experience of her childhood. In the poem, she remembers an incident of going for picnic with her friends and class teacher. All the children except the poet were playing and making merry but she was alone kept away from her friends. Her teacher, a blue-frocked woman, scolded her saying why she did not join the others. She also blamed her of being peculiar. Other friends were licking sugarcane. Listening to the scold, they laughed at the poet. The poet felt very much grieved by the words used by the teacher. She thought that they should have consoled her rather than laughing and insulting. The teachers' words caused a great pain to the poet. By this insult, the poet filled with sorrow and she hid her face in a hedge and wept. It was a great punishment to the writer.

Now she has grown into an adult. She has learnt to live as an 'adult peace' and happiness. Now, she does not have to weep hiding her face in the hedge. By this she learned that life is a mixture of joy and sorrow.

### **17. Night of the Scorpion**

This is a narrative poem by Nissim Ezekiel, an Indian poet. The poet narrates about how the poet's mother was saved after she was stung by a scorpion.

It was night time. The rain had been pouring continuously for ten hours. It forced the scorpions to come in hiding. In order to take shelter, the scorpion had come to the writer's house. It hid under the sack of rice. When the writer's mother walked past the rice sack, she was stung the deadly scorpion.

A good number of people from the neighborhood came to help the mother. They were peasants, priest, quack doctors and others. The villagers were very superstitious and ignorant as well. They believed

that if the scorpion moves, its poison in the victim will also move and spread all over. The mother's pain and suffering was also linked with the previous birth. To them her suffering is caused by the sins of her earlier births.

The poet's father attempted to make scientific treatments. He applied powder, herbs and hybrids without interfering the peasants' activities. He poured little paraffin upon the bitten toe and put a match to it. The scientific treatment also became ineffective like holy chant. Even when he did this a holy man was also performing his rites to remove the effect of poison with a chant.

After twenty hours it lost its sting and the poet's mother could speak. But the last words she spoke was even so touchy with full of love to her children. She said that God was thankful because the scorpion picked on her (not her children) and saved her children. God done right to chose mother for punishment rather than the children. She is found more anxious to her children rather than her own life. This shows mother's love to her children in the India.

## 18. The Passer-by

The passer-by is a short one act play by one of the greatest Chinese writers, Lu Shun (a great master of Chinese literature. His writing inspired people for revolution). In this play, there are only three characters- an old man, a girl (lass), and a passer-by. It is late afternoon. The place is desolate (isolated and remote village), near a hut. The passer-by arrives and they have a short dialogue. He is like a hermit or *jogi*, thirsty and may be hungry, old and with wounded foot bleeding. He does not know where he came from nor does he know where he goes. There is no finality of journey, only continuation.

The gist of the dram is-everywhere there is tyranny in the society. This drama portrays the fate of the poor, during pre-revolution China. It is the picture of a decaying, corrupt society (a dark history of pre-revolution in China) in Lu Shun's time.

According to the story of the drama, when a young girl and an old man are about to go inside their hut, the young girl sees a beggar coming out of the bush from the east. The passer-by (between thirty and forty) arrives and asks some water to drink because he thirsty. The old man asks few questions to the passer- by. One of the questions is his name but the passer-by replies that 'he does not know his name'. People call him by the name they like. The old man also asks his destination, i.e. where he is heading to. The passer-by even does not know where he is going to. But he remembers that he came from the east. He tells that he has walked a long way and he is tired from his travelling. Thereafter, the girl gives him water. He feels better and now he can continue the journey.

The passer by wants to know what lays ahead his journey. The old man replied that ahead the road lies only tombs and tries to convince the stranger to return. But the girl says that there are many wild flowers beyond the tombs. The old man cannot say what is beyond the tombs (graves) because he has never gone beyond. Refusing the request of the old man, the passer-by wants to continue his journey because he says that he does not like the place where he has come from. He reveals some other facts about his refusal that the place from where he came has no value for ordinary people like him. There is rule of tyranny and only celebrities and landlords are respected and valued by the society but the poor people are left to suffer. They are either expelled or put to prisons.

The girls sees the passer-by's bleeding foot, so, she offers him a piece of cloth to dress the wound. He rubs with it but he refuses to take it for bandage. He says that taking such alms will increase his burden. The old man, finally, requests to take rest but the passer-by refuses again and insists to continue his journey.

## 19. Stealing and Atonement

This is an extract taken from 'The Story of My Experiment with Truth' by Mahatma Gandhi. This is the narration of Gandhi's childhood experiment with eating meat, smoking, drinking, stealing and atonement.

Gandhi and a relative became fond of smoking. They tried to copy the example from one of Gandhi's uncles. They started from the stumps thrown by his uncle but they could not smoke much smoke from them. So, they began to steal coppers from the servant's pocket money to buy Indian cigarettes. However, they were not able to smoke in front of the elders (since they were not free to do so). So, they decided to commit suicide. For this, they went to Kedarji Mandir carrying *Dhatura* seeds. They had *darshan* and looked for a lonely corner but their courage failed to do so. This thought of committing suicide helped both of them to be away from smoking in life.

Gandhi has also narrated another event of stealing. Once he had stolen a bit of gold from his meat eating brother's armlet (bracelet/wristlet). This brother had run into a debt. By this Gandhi made up his mind to **confess** it to his father but he did not dare to speak not because of the punishment but of the pain that cause him. But, finally he decided to make a cleansing with a clean confess. He decided to write a confession note to his father. He wrote it on a slip of paper and gave it to him himself. In it he not only asked confession but also for punishment for it. He also requested not to punish himself for the offense and he will never steal in future. His father was suffering from fistula and was in a plain wooden bed. Reading it his father cried, and then son. Father's tears (pearl's drops of love) dropped on the note. It was Ahimsa. He closed his eyes for a while and then tore up the note. This cleansed son's heart and washed away his sins. He tells that he learnt the first lesson of Ahimsa from his father's treatment to him. The love of his father pardoned him and his mistakes. He learnt the power of pure love, pure confession and Ahimsa. There is no limit to its power. It is an example of clean confession as well.

## 20. Journal Writing-I

This is a journal by J. Krishnamurti. In it, the author portrays a colorful natural world. He describes every details of natural world which includes the existence of all creatures from birds, trees, and water. According to him, the early morning is a perfect moment (timeless moment) for meditation.

He explains two concepts: 'becoming' and 'nothingness'. Man has always embraced 'becoming', achieving, gaining in life. In becoming there is corruption, achieving, gaining, fear of losing and dying. So, man has corrupted, spoiled and failed to understand the true meaning of life. As a result man's life is waste.

In becoming, there is uncertainty and instability. In nothingness there is absolute stability and so clarity. It never dies. Nothingness is not the reality but it is the truth. It is not constraint of time. In order to arrive at nothingness, our mind must pass through self. It is the area of complete freedom time, thought and becoming. So, Krishnamurti warns us not to be illusive between the two.

Krishnamurti states that man assumes that he is superior to other creatures that live in the same world. He loses his love, his dignity and become insensitive and indifferent to the life of other creatures. Man has lost respect for other small creatures due to their own mistakes. In search of material success, man has constructed his own vision of truth which is a mistaken one.

According to the author, thought is time. Time has also given birth of consciousness with its content. It is the culture of time. Thought is born of experience and knowledge, which are inseparable from time and the past. Time is the psychology enemy of man. Our action is based on based on knowledge, and time. So, man is always a slave to the past. There is pure observation which is inside without any shadow of the past or time. This timeless insight brings a deep transformation in the mind.

Meditation is the emptying of consciousness of its content (e.g. knowledge, time, thought).

## **21. The Alchemist**

*The Alchemist* is a novel by Brazilian author Paulo Coelho which was first published in 1988. *The Alchemist* follows a young Andalusian shepherd in his journey to Egypt, after having a recurring dream of finding treasure there. This lesson is a part of that novel. The principal character of the novel is Santiago.

Santiago loved to travel from one place to another. His parents wanted him to become a priest from a simple farm family. He attended seminars until he was 16 and studied Latin, Spanish, and theology. He wanted to know the world which would be much more important than anything. His purpose in life was travelling. One afternoon, he told his father that he did not want to be a priest and he wanted to travel. Then, his father told him that people who travel are shepherds. So, Snagiago becomes ready to be a shepherd. Taking only three ancient Spanish gold coins given by his father, he bought a flock of sheep.

Santiago took the sheep very far and wide to manage grass for them. He was so bounded to the life of the sheep in the last two years. The sheep were so used to that they had known the schedule. He had believed that the sheep were able to understand what he said. He would share the experiences as well. He would comment on the things and places he had seen in the villages. In a sense, the sheep could communicate with him.

He visited many places, knew about them and told the stories to his sheep. He had books as well. He would prefer to use thicker books for two reasons: they lasted longer (he could spend longer time reading them) and they would make more comfortable pillows.

After two years of walking in the terrain, he knew all the cities of that region. But for the past few days he had spoken to the sheep only one thing: **the girl of a merchant's daughter who lived in the village**. He had only once in that village. The merchant was the proprietor of the dry goods shop. He had gone there by the information of his friend. Santiago wanted to sell some wool. But the merchant was so busy, so, he had wait. The girl was a typical of the region of Andalusia with flowing black hair and eyes of the Moorish conquerors. While waiting for two hours, he talked to the girl, told the stories of the countryside, and told the news from other towns. Her surprised was that even a shepherd studied books. He wished that the day would never end, that her father would stay busy and keep him waiting for three days. He felt something he had never experienced before: the desire to live in one place for ever. But, the merchant speared, and asked the boy to shear four sheep. He paid the wool and asked the shepherd to come back the following year. So, it was only four days before he was going back to the same village.

## 22. Karl Marx

Karl Marx (1818-1883) was a philosopher in the left Hegelian tradition. He is most noted for his contribution to political economy and for his revolutionary political activities. Marx was educated in the classical tradition and enough knowledge of European literature.

Marx has not written any literature but his theories influenced theory and criticism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His greatest comment toward literature is that it is never totally autonomous.

Marx's earliest writings were on criticism on religion. He principally raised the issue of Jewish emancipation. He further said that a genuine human emancipation is not achieved by providing the rights to certain religious groups but only with total refashioning of the total social order. He compares religion with opium and argues that *religion diverts our attention from the pursuits of happiness in the world to the afterlife concerns*. **To him, it is the opium of the people**. So, his religion goes through political and revolutionary philosophy. According to him proletariat or the working /labour class is the only agent which can free society through their class struggle.

Marx's theories about society, economics, and politics are collectively understood as Marxism. Marxism holds the believe that human societies develop through class struggle. In capitalism, this manifests itself in the conflict between the ruling classes (known as the bourgeoisie) that control the means of production and working classes (known as the proletariat) that enable these means by selling their labour for wages. Marx predicted that capitalism produced internal tensions which would lead to its self-destruction and replacement by a new system: socialism.



Capitalism is a mode of production based on private ownership of the means of production. Capitalists produce competitive commodities with the least payment of the wages to the labour. They exploit the labours. The worker should come to understand that their economic interests are prevented by the capitalists. This relation of production gives rise to class struggle to overthrow capitalism by the proletariats. He is in favour of collective ownership of the means of production, which is called communism.

Marx also developed the concept of alienation, fetishism and ideology relating to the political economy.

The **alienation** is the process whereby the worker is made to feel foreign to the product of his/her own labour. Under capitalist forms of production, the product of labour does not belong to the labourer. The product is then alienated from the worker because it belongs to another (the capitalists). Then, the worker is also alienated from the production process.

**Fetishism of commodities:** It is the perception of the social relationship involved in production, not as relationships among people, but as economic relationships among the money and commodities exchanged in market trade. The market exchange of commodities obscures the true economic character of the human relations of productions.

**Ideology:** For Marx, all thoughts and ideas are socially constructed and depend on society's material conditions. The ideas of the ruling class have always been the dominant ideas. For him whoever controls the means of material productions also controls the means of ideological production. So, ideology is the interest of the ruling class.

The result of Mark's theoretical development and its practical activities is 'Manifesto of Communist Party'. It is the world's most influential political manuscripts. It describes the approaches to the class struggle, problems of the capitalism and prediction of potential communism's future forms. The manifesto summarizes Marx and Engel's theories about the nature of society and politics.

For Marx, class antagonism (conflict) exists under capitalism. It creates its own instability and eventuate the working class' development of class consciousness. This leads revolution and finally the establishment of a classless, communist society constituted by a free association of producers. Marx actively fought for its implementation, arguing that the working class should carry out organized revolutionary action to overthrow capitalism and bring about socio-economic emancipation of the proletariat.

