

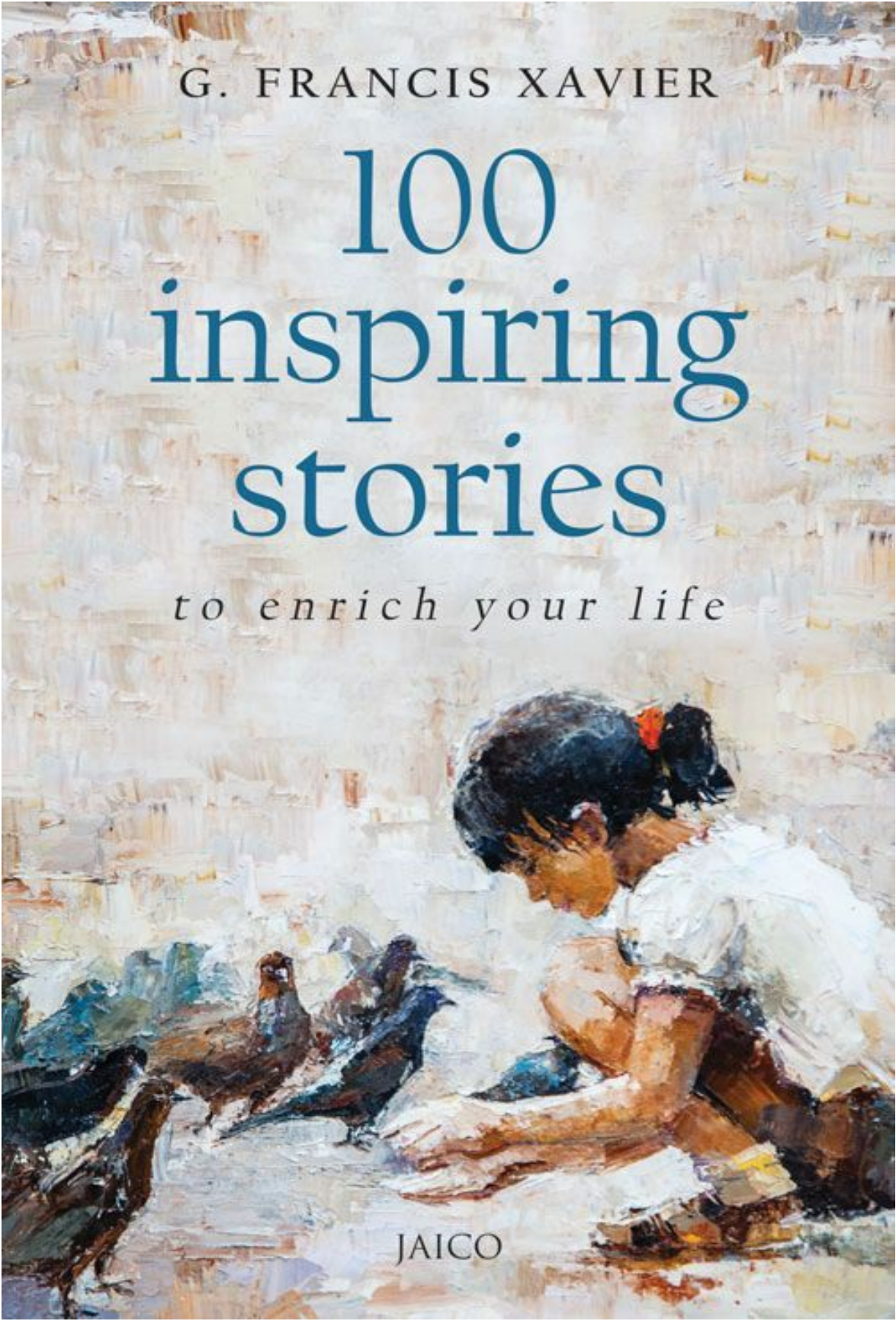
G. FRANCIS XAVIER

100 inspiring stories

to enrich your life



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Dedicated to
Mr. NGUYEN VU NGUYEN – General Director
and
Mr. NHÂN LƯƠNG
Deputy Director
Asia Pacific Talent Youth Training Joint Stock Company
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
With
Love and Gratitude

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I EXPRESS MY LOVE AND GRATITUDE

To my Family Members: my wife Mrs. A. Antoniammal, my children and their spouses: Dr. Denis B. Xavier and Godfreeda, Prakash Xavier and Rupa Das, Anne Sheela Peter and Peter Vijay Kumar and my grandchildren: Nikita, Alan, Preetika and Rosanna.

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Foreword

All of us love stories. The fortunate among us grew up reading, listening, and enjoying many stories — the memories of which are fondly cherished for months, years and decades. These stories have enhanced our learning, enabled us to experience and enjoy the beautiful world around us, as well as teach us many of the principles and truths that guide us in our wonderful journey called life. Stories have a magical charm about them that appeal to the young and also those who are young at heart.

Stories provide important insights that help us take on life's challenges in a proactive, constructive manner. In course of time, we are faced with endless challenges and this is where stories come to the rescue! They can be read in minutes, can change our state of mind instantaneously, and can add to the quality of our lives in a heartbeat.

I met Dr. G. Francis Xavier in Singapore and was at once impressed with his energy, passion and enthusiasm. We discussed our mutual passion for learning, sharing and contribution to personal growth, self-development and personal awareness programme in India and Singapore. One of the unique methodologies of training that Dr. Francis Xavier adopts is “Story Meditation”. He has used hundreds of stories to accelerate learning and accentuate the key message in the stories. A few years back, the participants of his programmes urged him to publish his stories. And I am pleased to have added my support to this wonderful initiative.

I am confident that this collection of marvelous stories will provide

insights to develop and explore one's identity. These stories will inspire, entertain, educate and bring a smile to the reader's face! As stories appeal to all, we can use these wonderful stories as tools of learning, teaching, sharing and connecting with friends, family, colleagues, associates and most of all, our inner self.

Happy story-reading, story-sharing and storytelling!

Dave Rogers,
Singapore

Preface

I am a voracious reader and particularly love reading books on self-improvement. This I do with great passion to improve my own personality. A pursuit that is going strong for over five decades!

I have collected thousands of inspiring stories that are used in my training programs called “TRAINERS’ TRAINING” and “TAP YOUR GENIUS”. The first one is intended to create trainers in the field of Memory, Soft Skills, Study Techniques, Personality and Career Development and the latter is a technique-oriented multidimensional Personality Development Programme designed to ignite the spark of genius in the participants. Each story I tell, has a theme with an intended philosophy, principle and objective for self-improvement. The conclusion to the stories is not revealed to the readers and they are urged to think of answers. I call this process “Story Meditation”.

My participants enjoy these stories. It was at their insistence, that I wrote *the world's best inspiring stories*, which was well received by thousands around the country.

The stories in *100 Inspiring Stories to Enrich Your Life* have been drawn from various sources that have inspired me the most. My contribution is the language and the explanation of the implication of each story.

To get the most from this book: Go through the story. Reflect for a moment on the two questions at the end. Think of the possible answer. Then refer to the answer given. If you follow this procedure, your

creativity will improve and you will learn some invaluable life lessons.

Parents, present this book to your children. They would not just love these stories; their personality too will improve to a considerable extent without any sermon.

Dr. G. Francis Xavier Ph.D.

1

Conquer Your Anger

A man who had a storm-tossed life, cultivated an angry temperament. Anger gave him power over people. One day, he met a stranger and vented his anger on him. But surprisingly, the stranger's eyes seemed to see past the anger and into the man himself. He told the angry man in a calm voice.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the stranger tell him?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The stranger told him, "There is no need to be afraid. Just let the world know and see the true you, hidden behind this angry mask of yours." The hostile man began to think about that and turned much more peaceful than ever before.
2. What was so special about the stranger that changed this hostile man? The stranger saw the real person behind the mask and told him to let all his fears go away with anger. Children get angry and beat adults. No one is afraid of the child's anger. The simple reason is that the child is helpless and we are

superior to the child physically. A person with superior spiritual power is not afraid of anything, because his expectations are few and he will never be disappointed with anything.

2

Love People and Help Them

In an American city, lived a great surgeon, who was also a professor in a medical school. He was a true physician in that he not only had superlative skills but also loved people and went about doing good. He became deeply interested in the little crippled newsboy at the corner, where he regularly bought his newspaper from. The boy was a bright little fellow, and one day the surgeon told him, “Johnny, would you like to have me cure that leg of yours so that you could run and play like other boys?” The boy replied that he did not have enough money to pay for the operation. The doctor agreed to do it out of love and not for money. “Oh, Doctor, that would make me so happy,” replied the boy.

At the operation theatre, before he was administered anesthesia, the boy wanted to pray. He was granted permission. Then he prayed aloud, “God, grant the surgeon a long life so that he may save the lives of many other people.” The prayer touched the heart of the surgeon and later he commented...

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the comment of the surgeon?*
2. *What is the implication of the story?*

ANSWERS

1. “In my life I have operated on many people occupying very high positions and received fabulous amounts for such operations. But I did not get the enormous satisfaction that I did when I operated on this young boy.”
2. A simple act of love and service without any expectation is far superior to any amount of money.

Be Careful While Telling the Truth

There is an old tale of Satan walking around in the street of life, sulking in the shadows with his hunting dogs, the little imps of human weakness. A man Ragu, came walking down the street and Satan spotted him. He told the imp to go and get him. Quickly, the imp crossed the street silently and lightly hopped on to the man's shoulder. In his ear, he whispered, "You are discouraged!" The man replied, "No, I am not."

Louder and more decidedly, the little imp repeated, "Yes, you are discouraged." Ragu crooked his head and murmured, "Well, I suppose I am." The little imp darted back to Satan and said proudly, "I've got him. He's discouraged."

Another man, Ramu passed and this time Satan spotted him and gave ditto instructions to the little imp. The proud demon of discouragement repeated his tactics. The first time he said to Ramu that he was discouraged, Ramu flatly refused to accept it. The second time too, the demon aggressively told him that he was discouraged. This time Ramu denied it even more emphatically. When the demon approached him for the third time, he said something to the demon. The demon got discouraged and came to Satan and informed him that he was discouraged himself.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did Ramu say to the demon that discouraged him?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. Ramu replied rather harshly, “Lies, you are a liar, I am not discouraged! Now go away and leave me alone, you liar!”
2. Truth burns. Telling a crippled person that he is blind will not bother him. Tell him that he is crippled and he will get wild. Call a dishonest person dishonest and he will get mad. Call a liar a liar and he will flatly refute it and pounce upon you. This is applicable to all the bad qualities of a human being and not for the good qualities. Tell a hardworking person that he is hard working and he would feel elated. Therefore, when bad qualities are to be pointed out, remember the dictum that ‘Truth burns’. Be tactful in your approach.

4

How Long Does It Take To Attain Enlightenment?

One day, a man approached the Master and asked him, “Tell me Master, how long does it take to attain enlightenment?” Said the Master, “Ten years.” The young man was shocked. “So long?” he asked incredulously. Said the Master, “No, that was a mistake. It will take you twenty years.” The young man asked, “Why did you double the figure? I am prepared to work very hard for attaining enlightenment. In that case how long does it take?”

The Master answered...

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the Master's answer?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. Said the Master, “Come to think of it, in your case it will probably take fifty years.”
2. The heightened form of wisdom is enlightenment. If anyone

thinks of attaining wisdom or enlightenment, he will never get enlightened. It is not a goal to be attained. No one can fix a goal to become an enlightened soul. It may be possible to get enlightened if one is totally oblivious to getting enlightenment at all. It is not a station to arrive at, but a manner of travelling. If you travel too fast, you may miss the scenery.

5

Pray Twice a Day

Napoleon Bonaparte was the ruler of France. He believed deeply in God and religion. Following is an incident to prove this:

Once, the schedule of a newly built school for girls was shown to him. Among the various regulations, he read the following — “The young ladies shall attend the prayers twice a week.” Napoleon then took a pen and made a correction and submitted the schedule back to the school authorities. The principal on reading the corrected version was very impressed with Napoleon and followed his correction.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the correction made by Napoleon?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. Napoleon took a pen and struck the words ‘twice a week’ and changed them to ‘twice a day’.
2. Napoleon had firm faith in the efficacy of prayer. He insisted that the girls should pray in the morning and also in the evening.

“In the morning the prayer is the Key that opens to us the treasure of God’s mercies and blessings; in the evening, it is the key that shuts us up under His protection and safeguard.”

— HW Beecher

6

When Can Your Action Be Always Right?

The disciples of the Master would frequently be absorbed in the questions of right and wrong, and sometimes they arrived at an evident answer. But sometimes, the answer would be very elusive. The Master, even if he was present, would never take part in such discussions. Once, however, he was confronted with this question, “Is it right to kill someone who seeks to kill me or is it wrong?” The Master replied, “How should I know?” The shocked disciple answered, “Then how would we tell the right from the wrong?” The Master said something that explained everything to his disciples.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the Master say?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The Master said, “While alive, be dead to yourself. Be totally dead. Then act as you will and your action will always be right.”

2. The sentence, 'While alive, be dead to yourself' refers to detachment. Paradoxically, the more detached we are while performing any activity, the greater the possibility to achieve expertise. When there is no attachment to anything, the intention to manipulate or to commit any mistake is far-fetched. Detachment brings peace of mind. A person will never commit any sin while his mind is calm and quiet, serene and tranquil.

Shun Rituals, Practise Love

There was once a very austere man who let no food or drink pass his lips while the sun was in the heavens. In what seemed to be a sign of heavenly approval for his austerities, a bright star shone on top of a nearby hill, visible to everyone in broad daylight, although no one knew what brought the star there. One day, the man decided to climb the mountain, but a little village girl insisted on going along with him. The day was warm and soon the two of them were very thirsty. He urged the child to drink but she said that she would drink if he would too. The poor man was in a quandary. He hated to break the fast, but he couldn't see the child suffer. Finally, he ate and drank for the sake of the child. For a long time he dared not look up at the sky, for he feared that the star would have gone. But finally, he did look up at the sky.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did he see?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The man saw not one star as he used to, but two stars shining brightly above the hill.

2. Austerities and rituals were designed to tame the rebellious mind. The end result of all religions is to love one another.

Set Right the Man; the World Will Be Perfect

There was a strict disciplinarian father. He had a brilliant daughter who was noted for being mischievous. One day, he was trying to concentrate on some work but his daughter would not leave him alone. To get her busy, he took a world map from the newspaper, cut it into different sizes and asked her to put it back again. The girl finished the task very soon. She called her father and told him that she had finished her task. The father was surprised at her dexterity and asked her how she was able to manage it. The girl replied...

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the girls reply?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The girl replied, "Behind the world map was the picture of a man. When the man was set right, the world fell into place."
2. People make the world. Set the man right and the world will be set right. All the major problems of the world are created by

man himself.

9

How Do You Measure Spiritual Growth?

One day, a disciple asked his Master, “Is there a way to measure my spiritual growth?”

The Master said, “There are several ways to do that.”

“Give us one,” requested the disciple.

The Master spoke.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the Master say to his disciple?*
2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. Find out how many times you become emotionally upset in the course of a single day. Maintain a record of it. When the number goes down, you are on your way to spiritual growth.
2. Spiritual strength can be gauged on the basis of equanimity of

the mind. When a person is spiritually strong, he does not struggle, for he understands that he is being led through the work that the supreme within him must do. He does not suffer pain or defeat, for he sees that in the end, there is victory and joy for his true self.

Be Courageous

February 1975 witnessed a horrible and a tragic accident, the crashing of an underground train against a stone wall at Moorgate Station, London, killing 41 people. This accident had injured a 19-year-old policewoman named Margaret. She found herself sitting on the floor with one of her legs under her body and a man on top of her. Neither could move without hurting the other. In the darkness and the stench of all the other dead bodies surrounding them, she decided to help the man get up.

“You are being very brave,” the man said. “I have to be,” she answered. “I am a police-woman.” The firemen who reached the spot a little late, tried to pull them out but Margaret’s left leg was trapped under the huge steel girder. By the time they reached the hospital, Margaret had lost a lot of blood and the doctors suggested that it was best they amputate her leg, and so, her left foot was amputated. Everyone who knew her was horrified and pitied her fate.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did she do further?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. She marvelled everyone around with her ability to laugh and tell jokes despite the terrible tragedy. Within two days, she was sitting up in the hospital chatting cheerfully with the visitors. Her courage received a lot of appreciation the world over. More than all the gifts and cards, she won everyone's hearts as well!
2. Fear lies in the mind. True courage comes from looking fear in the eye, bravely. Margaret inspired many people around the world, and became a true trendsetter. She could have sat down and cursed her destiny, but she didn't do so. Her story is a lesson for all those who think their life is miserable and helpless.

Cleanse Your Mind Constantly

After completing his post-graduation, a young man started hunting for a lucrative job. He approached the MLA in his area to recommend his case to the Minister. The MLA agreed and promised to take the boy to the house of the Minister. On the way, the MLA sensed a foul smell from the boy and it was found that his socks were stinking very badly. The MLA advised the boy to go home and come back the next day after changing his socks. The boy agreed and returned the next day. The MLA again encountered a stinking smell from the boy. This time, he got angry and shouted at him saying, “Did I not ask you to change your socks?”

The boy replied, “I bought a new pair of socks and I have worn them. Here is the bill for the new socks. I knew that you may not believe me. Therefore...”

QUESTIONS

1. *What did he further say to the MLA?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. He said, “I brought the old socks with me to show them to you.”

2. We may compare the stinking pair of socks to our unhappy mind. If the mind is unhappy, even if you are in heaven, only unhappy feelings will prevail. Unless the mind is cleansed through prayer and meditation, it is difficult to change the pattern of our thoughts and feelings.

Love Genuinely and Deeply

A boy and a girl were deeply in love with each other. They celebrated all occasions with great enthusiasm and soon, it was time for Christmas. Both were too poor to offer anything as Christmas gifts to one another. However, they decided to do something about it.

The only precious possession the girl had was her long, golden hair. The boy's only possession was a watch with a worn-out strap. The girl sold her golden hair and bought a strap for his watch and the boy sold his watch and got two combs for her lovely hair.

When Christmas came, they exchanged their gifts and laughed at the irony of life.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the irony of life?*
2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. There was no watch for the strap and no hair for the comb.
2. They came forward to sell off their most precious possessions

for the sake of love. The self-sacrificing love which they exhibited was absolutely priceless. People normally offer worldly gifts to each other. But there is no gift greater than true love.

Never Ever Discriminate

There was a time when racial discrimination was at its worst and black people the world over, were looked down upon. There were terrible death threats given to black people and they constantly lived in fear. Amid this, there was a church which had a black man for a priest. He would regularly conduct masses for one and all and was loved and respected by many. Once, the church was attacked by a few miscreants who had set out to burn it down because it was run by a black priest. As the mob approached to hurt the priest, he calmly stepped back and said...

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the black priest say to the miscreants?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. "If you do not like me because I am ignorant, I can be sent to school and be educated. If you do not like me because I am dirty, I can be taught to wash and be clean. If you do not like me because of my unsocial habits, I can be taught how to live in society. But if you do not like me because of the colour of my skin, I can only refer you to God who made me."

2. “The colour of the skin is something we are born with and cannot be changed at will. Therefore, it cannot be an excuse for people to discriminate.”

How Do You Measure Your Growth?

Sameer, who was in college, considered himself fully grown-up. Enjoying college life to the hilt, he smoked, drank and flirted around with girls. He believed these were his greatest conquests of adulthood. Every night, he would return home late and lie shamelessly to his father when questioned. One night, when Sameer returned home late yet again, his father gently put his arm around his shoulders and asked him, “Son, when do you consider a person to be grown-up?”

Sameer could not answer that smoking and drinking made one grown-up. Observing his silence, his father told him...

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the father say to his son?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. “A person could be considered grown-up the day he realizes the futility of telling lies to anyone about anything.”

2. Telling lies is a sign of an immature mind. Moreover, it is cowardice. Truth demands courage, and courage implies being grown-up.

Derive Bliss By Reducing Your Wants

There lived a woodcutter in a village. He was not able to make both ends meet by cutting trees in the nearby forest and selling the wood in the town. One day, he saw a monk meditating at the edge of the forest where he used to cut trees. He decided to approach the monk to get his advice to earn more money. When the monk opened his eyes from meditation, the woodcutter asked him ways to earn more. The monk advised him to go a little deeper into the forest so that he would be able to earn one month's food by working only for one day. As suggested, the woodcutter went into the forest and found sandalwood trees. By cutting them, he was able to earn much more than what he would normally earn. He approached the monk and thanked him for his valuable advice. The monk told him that if he could go still deeper into the forest, he would be able to earn much more than what he earned now. The woodcutter went deeper into the forest and found a silver mine. He brought the treasure and again met the monk and thanked him. Once again, the monk advised him to go still deeper where he could get real treasure and there would be no need for him to work anymore. The woodcutter followed the monk's advice and found a gold mine. He was immensely happy. Once again, he met the monk and expressed his profound gratitude to him for guiding him to such fabulous treasures.

The woodcutter also wondered why the monk himself didn't go into

the deep forest and get the treasures as he knew about them.

He asked the monk, “Why did you not venture into the forest yourself when you knew that such treasures existed in the deep forest?” To which the monk replied...

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the monk, S reply ?*
2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. The monk replied, “The treasures that you got will satisfy you only for a specific period. If you want to be eternally happy you have to sit and make an inward journey, as I have been doing.”
2. Enduring happiness can be derived not by greedily running after material wealth, but by reducing our wants further and further. This heightened form of bliss is called the ‘Samadhi’ stage in Yoga. Swami Shivananda describes ‘Samadhi’ as a desireless stage. Bliss comes when there is no desire.

Where Does True Wealth Reside?

A miser in France did not even marry for fear that he might have to share his money with his family. He had a secret cellar in his house to store all his treasure. He would go up there regularly every night, admire all his treasures, and come out. He would save every single penny to add to his treasure. Once, he wasn't seen around for many days and soon the days turned into months and word of his mysterious disappearance spread all over the town. Since there was no one to claim his property and house, it was finally legally taken over by the Government and then sold off to someone. After a long time, the new owner found the cellar while building an extension in the house and to his surprise, found...

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the new owner find in there?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. He found the miser's rotting corpse amid the glittering gold and jewels. In his mouth was a candle piece. This would mean that he might have tried to appease his hunger by even trying to eat the candle.

2. Merely collecting and accumulating large amounts of money does not make one wealthy. Greed only leads to misery. True wealth lies in what you are and not in what you have.

What Is The True Nature Of God?

The Master of the monastery was often amused by the preconceived notions that people had about God. He never ceased to attack the notions about God that people entertained and believed to be real. People often claimed that it was God who got them out of trouble and that it was He who made their life and destiny. The Master would always say, “If your God comes to your rescue and gets you out of trouble, then it’s time you started searching for the true God.”

QUESTION

1. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWER

1. You are responsible for your own actions, destiny and life. No one else can influence it any further. Take responsibility for your own life and do not expect anyone to help you in this process. Requesting God to help in all your ventures is a ridiculous idea.

The Exalted Love Of a Mother

The American explorer William Kirdy was returning from an expedition. When he reached Hudson Bay, he met a Red Indian woman lying on the ground exhausted, covered in blood and wounds. The explorer had her wounds bandaged and took care of her and then asked her about herself.

The woman was hundreds of miles away from her tribe. Her tribe was at war with another one and she had had to emigrate. She later became exhausted and had to remain behind with her son.

“How about the wounds?” asked the explorer. “No doubt, you were wounded in the war?”

“Oh, no,” she smiled faintly. These wounds are self-inflicted.” She looked at a fishhook beside her. “Just before you came, I took this flesh from my arm to fix it in the fishhook.”

The explorer was incredulous, but the woman continued her story.

QUESTION

1. *What did she further say ?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. “I have been hungry for the past three days. My breast is completely dried-up and the baby is about to die. What could I do? I tore some flesh from my body and put it on the fishhook to try to catch some fish so that I could nurse my child again.”
2. All mothers are like the one in our story. They go to any extent for the sake of their children. The sacrifices that mothers make, can never be compensated even if we serve them our entire life.

Forgive From Your Heart

A group of college dropouts were looking for a way to make easy money. They began by petty thieving and with time, graduated to bigger loot. Once, they burgled a monastery. They managed to loot everything. As they were leaving, the head of the monastery stood in their path. The miscreants thought that they were caught and that the old man would hand them over to the police. The old man was carrying a bag and told them...

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the old man tell the burglars?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. “Why did you leave this bag in the cell? You may take this bag too if it helps you.” The robbers could see his sincerity. They felt sorry for what they had done and became disciples in the monastery.
2. Forgiveness wins over everyone. The quality of forgiveness should be cultivated meticulously. Forgiveness is the virtue of saints and seers.

Take Responsibility For Whatever You Do

An archer, highly dedicated to the sport, became world-famous. But fame went to his head. One morning, an important official of a nearby town approached him with his son and requested the archer to be his tutor. Quite puffed up, the archer began to show off his skill to the little boy. When an arrow struck bull's eye, the archer praised himself aloud. The second one also hit bull's eye and again, he cheered aloud. But when the next arrow missed the target completely, the archer angrily blamed a gust of wind.

THE MESSAGE

Taking credit for what turns out right and blaming someone else when things go wrong is a habit of many people. This attitude needs to change and one should take responsibility for one's own actions.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the archer say at that time?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The archer angrily blamed a gust of wind for missing the target.
2. Taking credit for what turns out right and blaming someone else when things go wrong is a habit in many people. This attitude needs to change and one should take responsibility for one's own actions.

Render Sincere Service At Your Own Cost

Once, there was a sincere devotee who knelt to be initiated into discipleship by the guru. The guru whispered the sacred mantra into his ear, warning him not to reveal it to anyone.

“What will happen if I do?” asked the devotee.

Said the guru, “Anyone you reveal the mantra to will be liberated from the bondage of ignorance and suffering, but you yourself will be excluded from the discipleship and will suffer damnation.”

No sooner had he heard those words from the guru, the devotee rushed to the marketplace, collected a large crowd around him and repeated the sacred mantra for all to hear. The disciples later reported this to the guru and demanded that the man be expelled from the monastery for his disobedience.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the guru’s reaction?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The guru smiled and said, “I have already expelled him from the monastery. There is no need for him to stay here any longer. I have nothing further to teach him. His action has shown him to be a guru in his own right.”
2. Our ultimate objective in life is to help others. If anyone has the tendency to do some sincere service without expecting anything in return, he is a master in his own way.

The Best Choice In Life

A man had three grown-up children. One day, he called all of them and decided to put them to a test so as to understand them better. He asked them to choose any one thing they desired the most in life.

The first son said, “Money”. The daughter replied, “Beauty”. The third son said, “Wisdom.”

The father at once replied that all the three things they desired the most in their lives were nothing but zeroes and had no value at all. He added that there is one most coveted thing in the world which is highly uncommon but carries maximum value in real life.

QUESTIONS

1. *What is that one thing most desirable in life?*
2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. The man said, “Virtue is the most desirable thing in life, which cannot be compared to anything else.”
2. Five things constitute virtue — Courtesy, Magnanimity,

Sincerity, Earnestness and Kindness. With courtesy, you avoid insult; with magnanimity, you win all; with sincerity, men will come to trust you; and with earnestness and kindness you can achieve success.

What Have You Done Today?

The great American steel magnate, Charles M. Schwab, began his career by working under Andrew Carnegie. He owed all that he learnt in his life to him. He said that it was because of him that he could be so successful. Schwab and his men were exceptionally good at their work. One day, he happily went up to Carnegie and said, “We broke all the records yesterday.” On hearing this, Carnegie asked a question that left Schwab absolutely speechless.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did Carnegie say to Schwab?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. He asked, “That’s about yesterday, but what have you done today?”
2. Success is not a destination but an ongoing process. To compete with our own performance is real success in life.

Keep Up Your Marriage Vows

A man loved a girl passionately and married her. They were blessed with a son. Though they got married out of love, in due course, they began to quarrel with each other over petty things. Their young son one day asked his mother, “What do people say when they get married?” The mother lovingly replied that the couple getting married promise to love each other and be kind to each other for the rest of their life ahead. The little boy considered this briefly and asked his mother...

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the boy ask her?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The boy innocently remarked, “Then you are not always married, is it?”
2. People often forget the vows taken at the time of marriage. Such vows are meant to be kept throughout life. Unfortunately, they are done as mere rituals.

Time Is More Precious To The Elderly

There was once a crowd in the doctor's waiting room because none of the appointments were on time. An elderly gentleman rose and approached the receptionist, "Madam, my appointment was for 10 am, but it is 11 am already. Could you kindly give me another appointment? I can't afford to wait for so long," he said.

One man in the crowd leaned over to the other and said, "This man seems to be in his seventies. What urgency has he got at this age?"

The man overheard the whispered remark, turned to the lady, bowed and said...

QUESTIONS

1. *What did he say to the receptionist?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. "I am not in my seventies. I am now eighty-seven. That is why the urgency."

2. Time is more precious to the elderly. As they grow old, they come closer and closer to the end of their lives. Because of this, there is an urgency in them to do what they intend to accomplish.

Choose Happiness

A man used to be perpetually depressed. Nothing could cheer him. Once, a friend told him about an invigorating herb, which grew on top of a place called Mount Bliss. Not sure of its location, he studied a map and went on his way looking for it. While climbing, he met a mountaineer who discouraged him from climbing any further. The depressed man argued, why should he not climb a mountain for a very powerful herb which guarantees freshness, health and strength? To this, the mountaineer replied...

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the mountaineer's reply?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. "Mount Bliss is not here. You may search for it in your heart," the mountaineer said.
2. People who search for happiness outside of themselves are bound to be disappointed. Happiness is a state of mind which can be realized through cultivating a serene mind, by leading a virtuous life. A life filled with sin and animosity cannot bring

enduring happiness. You can deliberately choose to lead a life of happiness. It is within your control.

Forgive Others For Their Mistakes

A mother and son were washing dishes while the father and daughter were watching TV. Suddenly, there was a crash of breaking dishes, then complete silence.

The girl looked at her father and said, “It was Mum.”

“How do you know?” the father asked. The girl replied...

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the girl's reply?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. “Mum did not say anything,” said the girl.
2. Some people are adept at finding fault with others but never realize that they too commit mistakes at times. To err is human. Since we all are prone to err, learn to forgive the mistakes of others.

Develop Strength From Weakness

Captain Scott of England died in a blinding blizzard while on his way to the South Pole. When his body was finally recovered, an unfinished letter was found in his pocket, addressed to James Barrie, an eminent English writer. The final word in that letter spelled COURAGE. Barrie kept the letter in a casket with great care, as a memento of the brave soldier. After a few years, the writer met with a tragic accident and lost his greatest strength, the use of his right hand without which all of his work and creativity came to a halt. After days and months of depression, one day he sat looking at the casket. Magically, he regained all his lost hope and determination and something inspired him to not give up.

QUESTIONS

1. *How did he manage to regain his lost hope?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The letter which spelled 'Courage' gave him the inspiration and made him start writing again.
2. Even a word like 'courage' can spark off a person's life. Positive words provide the necessary impetus for a person to

develop strength from weakness.

Bear Humiliation For The Poor

There was once a very popular saint, Clement Hofbaeum, who was famous for his largeheartedness and kindness to the poor. He worked hard for the underprivileged and did everything that he could to make their life a bit happier. He would often go out on long, tedious tours collecting donations for the poor. Once, he was out on a similar tour, begging for the neglected, poor people. A man, after being asked for alms, spat on his face. The saint politely said...

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the saint say to the man who spat on his face?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The saint's reply was, "That was for me. Now, do you have anything for the poor?"
2. The world survives because of such saintly souls. They spend their lives in the service of others.

Develop The Virtue Of Humility

One evening, Catherine II of Russia rang for her servant. He did not come and she rang again, but there was no sign of him. She quietly left her room and went to the servant's quarters and saw that the servant was busy with a game of cards. He was racking his brain trying to play a difficult hand. Taking the cards from his hand, the queen asked him to run for the errand she had called him for and then she did something which left everyone absolutely spellbound.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the queen do?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The queen played the game successfully for him.
2. The queen displayed heightened form of humility. The first test of a really great man is his humility. If you wish to be great, begin by being little. If you like to construct a vast and lofty fabric, think first about the foundation of humility. The higher your structure is to be, the deeper must be its foundation.

Remain Serene Against Meaningless Attacks

A man went strolling down the street with a dog at his side. Suddenly, three people came out of their homes and blocked his path. The first yelled that the dog had chased his cat to a tree. The second screamed that the dog disturbed him the whole night with his constant barking. The third commented that the dog wasn't fed properly. The man calmly replied to their attack and left the three people absolutely stunned.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the man say?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The man quietly replied, "Do you have a need to be so unkind? This dog has sensed my friendliness and that's how he has followed me. He's not my dog."
2. The attacks of foolish people are meaningless to the truly innocent and enlightened persons.

The Wonder Of A Child

St. Francis Xavier was perpetually at work and was a workaholic. This, however, started affecting his health. One evening, he was exhausted from teaching and preaching hundreds of people. He wanted to take rest and told one of his companions that he must sleep or else, he would surely die. He told his companion not to wake him up, regardless of whoever came to meet him. A little while later, he came back and corrected his sentence which left his companion surprised.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did he say to his companion?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. He told his companion to wake him up from his sleep only if a child came to see him.
2. This story reveals the fact that his love for children was great. Children may be small but we can learn a lot from them. The following poem is an eye-opener in this respect.

“Would ye learn the road to Laughter Town O ye who have lost the

way?

Would ye have a young heart though your hair be gray?

Go learn from a little child each day.

Go serve his wants and play his play and catch the lilt of his laughter
gay.

And following his dancing feet as they stray

For he knows the road to Laughter Town

O ye who have lost the way!”

— Katherine D Blake

Source: White Mortar Board [Yearbook]

Enjoy The New World Of Experience

A renowned botanist, given to much experimenting, created a new kind of fruit through skilful crossbreeding. To see how people would like it, he offered it to three of his neighbours. The first said that it did not at all look like an apple. The second remarked that oranges were good enough for him and the third commented that it was not like peaches.

QUESTIONS

1. *How did the botanist take their responses?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. From then on, the botanist resolved to offer his new fruit only to those who could think beyond their past.
2. The botanist believed that to taste a totally different kind of life, it's important to detach yourself from the familiar and the habitual. Then only can you really enjoy the world of new experience.

How To Make Love Enduring?

Once there was a newly married couple, very much in love with one another. They wanted their love to only increase and never to reduce. So, they approached the Master and asked, “What shall we do to make our love endure?” The Master replied...

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the Master’s reply?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The Master replied, “Love other things together.”
2. Family feud arises when what is liked by husband is detested by the wife and what the wife enjoys is hated by the husband. If they are able to start liking and even loving what the other likes, there is no scope for any quarrels and misunderstandings among them. The couple should learn to love other things (which they don’t like instinctively or naturally), together. It is ideal if the likes and dislikes of a couple are the same.

Be Happy And Cheerful

There is a story of an Irishman who was known all over for his humour and wit but he died suddenly and went up for divine judgment. He was feeling extremely uneasy. He didn't think he had done much good on earth! There was a queue ahead of him, so he settled to listen and look. After consulting His big book, God said to the first man in the queue, "I see here that I was hungry and you gave me food to eat, good man! Go to heaven." The second man He sent to heaven as well, as he had given Him water when He had been thirsty. The third man was also sent to heaven as this man had gone to visit Him when He had been sick. And so it went on... The Irishman now sat examining his conscience and felt he had a great deal to fear. He had never given anyone food or water or visited any sick person. But when his turn came...

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the judgment given to him?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The Irishman was also sent to heaven, because God said that whenever He was depressed and felt discouraged, this man's timely jokes and funny stories had made Him laugh and be

happy.

2. Jokes make people laugh. Laughter brings happiness and good health. In this way, people who advocate and practice wit and humour serve humanity.

Duty First And Study Next

A famous French preacher named Bossuet was appointed as the Bishop by the King. He was a very learned person and would devote most of his time to studies. Due to his avid interest to study more, many people who wanted to consult him had to go home without meeting him.

One day, the King wanted to know the opinion of the people and asked them how they liked the newly-appointed Bishop. The King expected a very positive response from them, as the Bishop was very learned and intelligent. But the reply of the people made him ponder the issue.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the reply of the people?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The people replied, “We like him pretty well. But to tell you the truth, we would have preferred a Bishop who had finished his education, for whenever we called on him, we were told that he was at his studies.”

2. It is good to study to acquire knowledge, but not at the cost of others' inconvenience. The Bishop had the laudable quality of studying, but as a Bishop he should have devoted equally sufficient time for consultation to his people.

Be Shrewd And Intelligent

There was a young lady who had gotten into a trap of legal hassles and as a result, had to regularly visit the court. One day, she was called onto the witness stand and was asked her age by the prosecutor. “I don’t know,” she replied. The prosecutor said, “Now look here, Miss. This is the court of law and you have sworn to tell the truth.” “Yes, but you told me earlier that I must only tell what I know to be the truth and not hearsay,” retorted the young lady. “I did indeed!” thundered the prosecutor. “Well,” replied the young lady, “I cannot tell you my age because my mother told me the year I was born and that’s hearsay evidence, isn’t it?”

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the reaction of the judge?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. “The witness is excused from answering the questions,” ruled the judge suppressing a giggle.
2. Some people by nature are inclined to conceal their age. Nevertheless, the strategy adopted by the woman in this story

is quite appreciable.

Examine And Correct Your Faulty Life

People came from far and near to hear the sermons of a priest who was noted for his ability to make people change their lives. In one of his sermons, he said to the people, “What would you do if your automobile broke down? Examine it and correct it. What would you do if your television set became faulty? Examine it and correct it. What would people do when their lives become faulty?” The priest himself gave the answer.

QUESTIONS

1. *What are the answers given by the priest?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. (a) When your automobile breaks down, you will examine and repair it.
(b) When your television set does not work, you will bring the mechanic and set it right.
(c) When your life becomes faulty, you will never examine and take corrective measures to improve your life.

2. The implication of the story is that people are quite practical with their cars and televisions. Unfortunately, they are not practical when their lives get damaged in one way or the other. Telling them to examine and correct their lives may sound simple. Instead of examining their lives, people search for some mysterious formulas to solve all their problems. There is more health in eating one apple than in reading an entire book about apples.

Enjoy Yourself

Once, Alexander the Great was approached by a philosopher and asked, “If you conquer Rome, what will you do next, Sir?”

Alexander replied, “Sicily is next door and will be easy to take.”

“And what after Sicily is taken?”

“Then, I will move over to Africa and sack Carthage.”

“And after Carthage?” asked the philosopher.

“It will be the turn of Greece.”

“And what, may I ask you, will the fruit of all these conquests be?”

“Then,” Alexander said, “I will sit down and enjoy myself.”

To which the philosopher asked a question.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the philosopher’s question?*
2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. "Can you not enjoy yourself now?" asked the philosopher.
2. The poor think they will be happy if they become rich. The rich think they will be happy when they get rid of their ulcers. One should take time to smell the roses. Happiness is in the present moment. One should learn to enjoy the present.

Derive Happiness By Limiting Your Desires

In New Jersey, a bank teller helped an elderly woman with his financial advice, which made her gain a few millions. Out of gratitude, the woman offered him a gift of \$300,000, which he politely refused.

QUESTIONS

1. *What made him refuse such a fabulous gift?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. He said that he was paid for his services by the bank. He also said that he did not like that much money.
2. It is rare to find such persons in the modern world. Limitation of desires is the beginning of true happiness. It frees us from superficial worldly bliss and we begin to enjoy whatever we have. Contentment blossoms in the hearts of those who limit their wants and desires.

Who Is A Genius?

A writer once arrived at a monastery to write a biography of the Master. “People say you are a genius. Are you?” the writer asked him during an interview. “You might say so,” said the Master none too modestly.

“And what makes a person a genius?” asked the writer.

“The ability to recognize,” answered the Master.

“Recognize what?” asked the writer once again.

“The ability to recognize a butterfly in the caterpillar, an eagle in an egg, the saint in a selfish human being and... a child in you.”

QUESTION

1. *What did the writer understand from what the Master explained?*

ANSWERS

1. The Master meant to say that a genius is someone who can spot the underutilized or hidden potential that needs to be tapped in a person. The extraordinary in an ordinary can only

be seen by a genius.

Turn Your Enemy Into A Friend

The upper house of Congress was a battleground of heated arguments for Senators Benjamin and Seward. Once, as usual, Senator Benjamin was engaged in a personal attack on Seward. It lasted for a considerable time. Then, Benjamin resumed his seat, angry and bitter, to await a counter-attack. But what he heard just left him amazed and a little while later, Seward was seen joking with his colleagues, puffing contently on the cigar given by Benjamin.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did Seward say as a counter-attack?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. Senator Seward sauntered up to his opponent and in his most disarming manner said, "Benjamin, give me a cigar. When your speech has been printed, send me two copies."
2. Forgiveness can even turn the bitterest enemies into friends.

Be Dedicated

A very shrewd and successful businessman was on his deathbed. The end was very near. As expected, his family had gathered around him. The dying man asked if his elder son was present there. Somebody said yes. Then he went on to inquire about his next son and again got a positive response. Later, he called out to find out whether all other children were there. For which too, he got a positive answer. All the family members were present at his bedside. Suddenly, he became very angry and almost shouted.

QUESTIONS

1. *What do you think the businessman shouted for?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The businessman yelled at everyone present there, “If all of you are up here, who the hell is taking care of the shop down below?”
2. The man was really a businessman till his death. Such total dedication to his business alone made him a successful businessman and he could amass fabulous wealth.

Treat Everyone As A Messiah

There was once a very renowned guru who sat meditating in his Himalayan cave. People from far and near would come visiting him with different problems. Once, he opened his eyes to discover an unexpected visitor sitting before him, the chairman of a well-known company.

“What is it that you seek?” asked the surprised guru.

The chairman recounted a tale of woe. At one time, his factory was making huge profits and the employees were very cooperative. Unfortunately, of late, labour problems emerged and the financial position of the factory deteriorated, incurring heavy losses.

Now this is what the chairman wanted to know — “Is it because of some mistake of ours that the factory has been reduced to this state?”

“Yes,” said the guru, “a mistake of ignorance.”

“And what mistake might that be?”

“One of the employees in your factory is an *avatar* of God in disguise, and you are ignorant of this.” Having said that, the guru closed his eyes and returned to his meditation.

The chairman’s heart beat fast at the thought that God Himself had

returned to earth and was right there in his factory. How was it that he had failed to recognize Him? And who could it be? It could be anybody. It might be the manager, assistant manager or one of the staff. All of them had many defects. But then, the guru had said He was in disguise. Could those defects be one of His disguises? Come to think of it, everyone in the factory had defects. And one of them had to be the Messiah!

Back in the factory, he assembled all his employees and told them the discussion that he had had with the guru and informed them that one of them should be God. They looked at each other in disbelief. God? Here? Incredible! But He was supposed to be here in disguise. So may be... What if it were so?

One thing was certain. If God was there in disguise, it was unlikely that they would recognize Him. So they took to treating each other with respect and consideration. "You never know," they said to themselves when they dealt with one another, "maybe He is the one."

After this, there was no bickering among the employees. The atmosphere in the factory had completely changed. Everyone started working with sincerity and dedication, loving and respecting each other. Production improved and profits increased.

QUESTION

1. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWER

1. Human relationships play a vital role in our lives. An essential aspect of relationships is to treat others with respect. When respect is bestowed on a person, the relationship gets strengthened. Better relationships bring joy and happiness and in the process, productivity increases.

Don't Hug Your Sufferings

A teacher of esotericism made it a point to teach by just writing on the blackboard. One day, he entered the classroom and wrote six sentences on the blackboard:

Stop loving your suffering.

Stop enjoying your persecution.

Stop adoring your anxiety.

Stop cherishing your resentment.

Stop glorifying your failure.

If you want spiritual rebirth, give up your love for such foolishness.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the teacher really mean?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The teacher simply meant that one may think that people want to end their suffering and persecution, but the fact is that they fight like tigers to keep them.
2. People enjoy their suffering, because suffering provides an excuse for egotism. The sufferer is able to remain the centre of both, his own attention and the attention of others.

A Lesson For Every Wife

Nathaniel Hawthorne had a great job at the customs. He had however, one great passion in life and that was to write. One day, he lost his job at the customs and went back home disheartened and depressed. But a surprise awaited him at home. His wife told him, “I always knew that you were a man of genius, and someday you would write an immortal masterpiece. Now, you can write your book. Out of the money you gave me, I have saved a sufficient amount to support our family.” With his wife’s support and encouragement, he went on to write.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did he write?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. He wrote a masterpiece like his wife had predicted — ‘The Scarlet Letter’.
2. In times of lows and depressions, encouragement from a wife can do wonders for the husband. Hawthorne was fortunate to have had such a wife.

Serve People In Dire Need

Once upon a time, in the land of Japan, there was Tetsugen, a student of Zen, who once resolved on a mighty undertaking — the printing of 7,000 copies of sutras which, till then were available only in Chinese. He travelled the length and breadth of Japan to collect funds for this project. Some wealthy people offered him hundred pieces of gold, while a few gave him small amounts, but he expressed equal gratitude to each donor regardless of the sum given. After ten long years of travel, he finally collected the funds necessary for the task. Just then, the river Uji overflowed and thousands were left without food and shelter. Tetsugen spent all his project money to help these people. Then, he began the work of raising funds again. Again, it was several years before he got the money he needed. Then an epidemic spread all over the country. So Tetsugen once again gave away all his project money to help the suffering ones. Once again, he set out on his travel and twenty years later, his dream finally came true.

The printing block that produced this first edition of the sutras is on display at the Obaku Monastery in Kyoto. The Japanese tell their children that Tetsugen got out three editions of the sutras in all.

QUESTIONS

1. *What are the first two editions ?*

2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. The first two editions are the monetary help he offered to people rendered distraught by the flood and the epidemic. They are considered invisible editions of the book, which are far superior to the third one.
2. Serving people in dire need is superior to bringing out books of scriptures.

Exclusively For Lawyers

Once, a Springfield farmer got into difficulty with a neighbour about the line between their farms. From a small insignificant argument, it became a major issue. He went up to Lincoln to file a case against his neighbour. Surprisingly, his neighbour too came to Lincoln with the same intention of filing a case against him. Lincoln said to both of them, “If you go on fighting like this, it will entail enmity that will last for generations and that is not good. Therefore, it is better to settle your dispute out of court and work out a compromise.” Both the farmers were adamant and did not like the idea of compromise. Ultimately, Lincoln made them compromise and settled the issue out of court.

QUESTIONS

1. *How did Lincoln manage to settle the dispute?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. When Lincoln found that they were not in a mood to compromise, he told them, “Why don’t you two sit in my office while I attend to a man outside. In the meantime, you can settle your dispute amicably. To secure you from any interruption, I will lock the door as well.” He locked the room

and did not return till afternoon. The two men were left alone in the room. They did not know what to do and started conversing with each other. In the process, they realized that a compromise was the best solution. By the time Lincoln returned, the matter was settled.

2. This shows Lincoln's large-heartedness. Instead of having an eye on money, he had the heart to help his clients. Lawyers in general could emulate his example.

Destruction Is The Task Of Children

Once upon a time, the Buddha was walking past a jungle which was said to be under the rule of an evil bandit called Angulimal. Unfortunately, the Buddha was caught before he could make it through and was threatened with death by the bandit.

“Then be good enough to grant me two wishes before killing me,” said the Buddha. “First, cut off the branch of that tree,” he said, pointing towards a nearby tree. One slash of the sword and it was done! “What next?” asked the bandit.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the second wish of the Buddha?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. “Put it back again,” said the Buddha.
The bandit laughed. “You must be crazy to think that anyone could do that.”
“On the contrary, you are crazy to think you are mighty

because you can wound and destroy.

2. Growth takes place in silence. Destruction is always followed by loud noise. Construction of a building is a process of silence. Destruction of a building is followed by a thunderous sound. Growth takes time, like the growth of a tree. Destruction occurs in no time like that of cutting down a tree.

Make Constant Efforts To Become Proficient

Once, Mark Twain met a budding author. The two struck a friendship and became close friends. One day, the young author told him that he was losing confidence in his ability to write. “Did you ever get that feeling?” he asked.

“Yes,” said Twain. “Once, after I had been writing for nearly fifteen years, it suddenly struck me that I did not possess the slightest talent for writing.”

“What did you do then? Did you give up?”

Twain gave him an answer that made the young author understand all about his struggle and constant efforts.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did Twain tell the young author?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. Twain told him, “How could I give up writing? By then, I was already famous.”
2. Twain had been writing for nearly fifteen years. If one can pursue a profession for fifteen years with a single-minded goal, it is natural for such a person to become an expert in that field. Naturally, he can become popular too. If one pursues a goal aggressively for a long period, there is every possibility of such a person becoming famous.

Help The Helpless

One afternoon, a Far Eastern Christian ascetic was climbing a mountain road in Tibet. With him, travelled a Tibetan monk. The two wayfarers were well aware that a storm was rising and that they must reach a certain monastery before dark, or they would perish in the piercing mountain cold. As they hastened forward in the icy wind, they passed a precipice from which rose a groaning voice. At the bottom, lay a fallen man, badly hurt and unable to move. The Tibetan said, "In my belief, here we see karma. This is the work of fate, the effect of a cause. This man's doom is to die here, while I must press upon on my own errand." But the Christian answered, "In my belief, I must go to my brother's aid." So, the Tibetan hurried on his way, while the ascetic clambered down the slope, packed the man on his back and struggled upward again to the darkening road. His body was dripping with perspiration when at last he nearly fell over an obstacle on the ground and stood overwhelmed with pity and amazement. Huddled at his feet lay his Tibetan companion, frozen to death. But the ascetic had escaped the same doom.

QUESTIONS

1. *How did the ascetic escape the same doom?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The ascetic was able to escape death because his hard exercise in carrying the injured brother on his back had kept his body warm and had in turn saved his life.
2. One should always help the helpless under all circumstances. Consciously or unconsciously, every one of us does render some service or the other. If we cultivate the habit of doing this service deliberately, our desire for service will steadily grow stronger and will result not only in our own happiness, but also that of the world at large.

Develop Godly Qualities

A renowned poet, Torquato Tasso, once had a persistent doubt and wanted to ask the wisest person to solve it for him. So he went to see King Charles IX, and asked him, “Who is the happiest person alive?” The king promptly replied, “God”. Tasso then asked him, “Who is the happiest person alive, after God?” The king replied ...

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the king's reply?*
2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. The king replied that the happiest person alive after God is the one who becomes the most like God.
2. The attributes of God are — love, purity, sincerity, honesty, sympathy, etc. If one were to develop these qualities, one becomes like God. A person can be happy only when he displays positive qualities in himself. All negative feelings like hatred, resentment, animosity, etc. would make a person unhappy and depressed.

A Unique Way To Punish Your Children

A family with one grown-up son aged 21 was living in a farmhouse, cultivating hundred acres of land. They lived 20 kilometres away from the city with no neighbours to interact with the family.

One day, the father asked his son to drive him to the city as he had some business meetings throughout the day. The car was to be given at a particular garage for some minor repairs and servicing. The boy got excited with the opportunity to drive his dad to the city. Since he was going to the city, his mom gave him a list of household items to be purchased. The boy dropped his father at a particular place. At that time, the father asked his son to be at the same place at 4.30 pm so that both could return home together.

The boy left the car at the garage and also finished shopping as quickly as possible. Then, he went straight for a movie which was running successfully for several weeks. As he was totally immersed in watching the movie, he forgot to notice the time. When he came out of the theatre, it was already 5 pm. Then he went to the garage, picked up the car and reached the place where his father was waiting for him. By then it was 5.30 pm. His father asked him why he was late. The boy was a little scared to inform him that he had gone for a movie. So he told his father that he got delayed at the garage, as the car was not ready for

delivery. The boy did not know that his father had already called the garage over the phone and ascertained that the car was ready for delivery by 4 itself. The father got upset that his son had told him a lie. He wanted to punish his son for telling a lie.

QUESTIONS

1. *How did the father punish his son?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The father told his son that there was something wrong with the way he had brought him up. In order to teach him a lesson, he decided to walk back to his farmhouse in the night, with no light on the road. The son felt ashamed. As his father was walking, he did not leave him alone and drove the car behind him slowly. They reached the farmhouse after six hours.
2. Instead of punishing the boy in some way, the father decided to punish himself. This act of nonviolence touched the boy's heart and he resolved never to lie again in his lifetime. It is a unique way of teaching a lesson which can be emulated by other parents.

Confess Your Sins And Be Purified

A Catholic priest was once questioned about the significance of making confessions. The priest told a story to explain its importance. He went on to say, “People who regularly scoff at confession make me think of the story of Jonathan Swift’s servant. After spending the night at an inn, Swift asked for his boots in the morning and saw them brought in covered in dust. “Why didn’t you clean them?” he asked his servant. “I thought there was no point,” said the servant. “After a few miles on the road, they’ll be covered in dust again, no matter what I do.” “Quite right, now go and get the horses ready, we are leaving.” Soon afterwards, the horses came out of the stable and Swift was ready for the journey. “But, we can’t leave without breakfast!” cried the servant. “There’s no point,” replied Swift, “after a few miles on the road you’ll be hungry once again!”

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the priest try to convey through this story?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. People generally think that it is a futile attempt to confess our sins to a priest as we may fall prey to sin again. This story

conveys the message that frequent confession would purify the soul.

2. Confession not only takes away the dust of sin but also gives us a special strength to avoid it, and makes firmer our friendship with *God*.

Live Before Death

There was a public meeting organized in a village. All questions at the public meeting that day were about life beyond the grave.

The Master sitting in one corner of the meeting only laughed when everyone else argued, but he did not give a single answer. To all his disciples who demanded to know the reason for his evasiveness, he said, “Have you observed that it is precisely those who do not know what to do with this life who want another life that will last forever?”

“But is there life after death or is there not?” persisted a disciple.

The master asked a counter-question that stunned everyone around.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the counter-question by the Master?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The Master merely questioned back, “The question here is, is there life before death?”

2. No one has seen life after death. Therefore, there is no point in arguing whether there is life after death or not. What is certain is that we have to live our life before death. Live productively and creatively. Live your life with the intent to serve other human beings in one form or another.

Everyone Is A Potential Genius

Once upon a time, a man found an abandoned eagle's egg and with the fear that it might break, placed it under a brooding hen. The eaglet hatched with the chickens and grew among other chickens. The eaglet-chicken clucked and cocked, scratched the earth for worms, and flapped its wings to fly a few feet in the air like other chicken. Years passed and it spent its whole life being a chicken. One day, it spotted a magnificent bird glide above its head in graceful majesty with scarcely a movement of its golden wings. "That's the king of the birds, the eagle," said the mother hen. "He belongs to the sky, and we belong to the earth."

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the response of the eaglet-chicken?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The eaglet-chicken said, "How I wish that I could fly!" But it never made an attempt to fly in the air, though it was capable of doing it.
2. Everyone has the potential to achieve something great and outstanding. But our beliefs about ourselves fix the limitation

of our achievements. Every individual estimates himself and that basic estimate goes far towards determining what he can become. You can do no more than what you believe you can.

Accept Your Ignorance With Humility

The celebrated Duval, librarian of Francis I, was considered a very learned person. One day, an egoistic person, jealous of the librarian asked him many impertinent questions to which Duval replied, “I don’t know.” Annoyed by this, the man snapped at him and said, “Why Sir, you ought to know! The Emperor pays you for your knowledge.”

To this question Duval answered...

QUESTIONS

1. *What was Duval’s answers?*
2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. Duval answered, “The Emperor pays me for what I know. If he were to pay me for what I don’t know, even the treasures of the entire empire would not be sufficient.”
2. The realization that there is so much to learn would only make a person learn more and more.

Remember Things Through Association

One chronically forgetful instructor at a college was known as an absent-minded professor. One day, one of his students found his car key on the lid of a cake box inside the departmental refrigerator. The student took the keys and dangled them in front of the instructor. On seeing this, the instructor insisted that the keys be put back right where the student had found them.

“But, how will you remember them?” questioned the student.

The instructor replied...

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the instructor's reply?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. “It’s not the keys I’m worried about,” he replied. “It’s my wife’s birthday cake. Unless the car keys are on it, I’ll forget to take it.”

2. Three factors contribute to effective memory. They are — interest, emotions and association. The instructor applied the principle of association. While going home, he had to go by car, for which he would definitely search for the keys. He knew that he had kept them in the refrigerator. While taking the keys, he would easily remember to take the cake for his wife. In this way, we may be able to remember many things by creating our own associations.

Beautify Your Life With Inner Glow

Lincoln was not very goodlooking. But people admired him, not for his looks but for the kind of person he was. Once, a man who had painted Lincoln's portrait was introduced to him. This painter was a big fan of Lincoln's. He brought the portrait to show to him.

All those who were present at the moment, admired the portrait as remarkably beautiful. When Lincoln saw the portrait, he was absolutely speechless, for the portrait was truly beautiful. He went up to the painter, shook his hands and said...

QUESTIONS

1. *What did Lincoln say to the painter?*
2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. Lincoln said to the painter, "I presume, Sir, while painting this portrait, you took your idea of me from my principles and not from my person."

2. Beautify your life with inner glow rather than outer show. True beauty comes from the principles and character of a person, and not from mere appearance.

Choose The Right Career

Once, two beggars sat with their backs to an old mango tree. Before them was a rippling stream. The day was delightful and yet, one of them looked disconsolate. “You know, Raju,” mused one, “this business of begging is quite torturous. Think it over, nights on park benches or on the cold pavement; travelling on the goods train and always dodging the police; being kicked from one town to another and wondering where your next meal is coming from; wandering unwanted everywhere, sneered at by your fellow men...”

His voice trailed off as he sighed heavily “Well,” said the second beggar, “If that’s the way you feel, why don’t you go and find yourself some job?”

The first one sat up with a jerk and said sternly...

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the first beggar say to his companion?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. “What! And admit to the world that I am a failure?” the first

beggar said.

2. For the same reason, many who have chosen a wrong career do not like to change it, feeling that others would brand them as failures.

How To Reduce Stress And Tension

A stockbroker who had lost a huge fortune was disconsolate and in a very bad state. He tried his best to be his usual self again, but nothing helped. After a lot of persuasion by others in the family, he came in search of peace to a monastery. But he was too distraught to even meditate. In the monastery, he did not get what he wanted — peace of mind. Therefore, he left the monastery with total dissatisfaction. After he had gone, the Master had only a single sentence by way of wry comment.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the Master's comment?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The Master commented, "Those who sleep on the floor, never fall down from their beds."
2. 'Sleep on the floor' refers to development of the virtue of humility. There is no feeling of hurt where there is humility. Loss of money hurts the ego. The stockbroker lost his money. That might not have been a big loss for him, but in the eyes of

the society, his position was lowered. The greater the ego, the higher would be the fall of the person. Develop humility and there will never be an occasion for stress, tension, worries and loss of sleep.

Intelligent Way To Escape Wrath

War spreads like wildfire and so does hatred and bitterness. Those were the days when things were really sensitive between the French and the British, somewhere around the year 1727. Feelings ran high among the British when Voltaire visited England. One day, a crowd of angry Englishmen surrounded him when he was walking down a street. They caught hold of him and shouted, “Kill him. Hang the Frenchman!” When the mob seemed to get out of control, Voltaire said something to them which not only pacified them but led him safely back to his residence.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did Voltaire say to the angry crowd?*
2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. Voltaire said, “Englishmen! You want to kill me because I am a Frenchman! Am I not punished enough in not being an Englishman?”
2. Quick wit can lead you out of the most difficult and seemingly impossible situations. Voltaire flattered the Englishmen with his implicit statement that being English was superior to being

French.

Never Make Prayer A Ritual

This is the story of two little girls who were recently taught the meaning and power of prayer at school. One day, both were in danger of getting late for school, something they absolutely dreaded. One said, “Let’s stop and pray to God to get us there on time, so that we are not punished.” The other immediately said ‘no’.

QUESTIONS

1. *Why did the other one say ‘no’?*
2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. The other said ‘no’, because she felt that stopping and praying would further delay their reaching school. She thought running and praying at the same time was a better idea.
2. For most, prayer has become a ritual. The objective of prayer is to become more and more virtuous. Pray to God to be more pure, humble and honest. That kind of prayer will be answered. To pray for rain is ridiculous and even more ridiculous is to pray for money or for a transfer from one place to another.

Bring The Kingdom Of God Into Your Heart

During the war between Russia and Germany, the Russian Government ordered that all youth should join the army for compulsory conscription for the war effort.

One youth refused to join the army. He informed the officers that he was totally against any war. The officers brought him before a judge. When questioned, the youth replied that he was a conscientious objector to the war and believed in the philosophy of Tolstoy and the preaching of the New Testament. The judge explained to him about being realistic and that the kingdom of God had not yet come. To which the young man said...

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the young man say to the judge?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The young man replied, "These laws are of the kingdom of God. It hasn't come as yet for you, but it has come to me."

2. The youth's conviction should be appreciated. He strongly believed that God would never recommend war as the means to bring peace on earth. War only leads to destruction and God would never want that.

Develop The Quality Of A Saint

Saint Vincent de Paul's name is associated with his kindly deeds. He would very often travel far and wide doing things for people. Once, he was on one of his visits to the galley slaves at Marseilles, France. There he saw amongst all the prisoners present, one who was gloomier than the rest. "Tell me, my good man, what makes you so sad?" asked the saint. "My wife and children are far away, and I long to see them, but I know that I'll have to wait for a long time to finally be able to do that." On hearing this, Saint Vincent made a sacrifice which resulted in the slave reuniting with his family.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the saint do?*
2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. He disguised himself in the slave's clothes and took his place, while the slave hastened towards his family.
2. The act of St. Vincent de Paul displays the saintly qualities in him.

Cultivate Patriotism

The kingdom of Athens was putting up a strong defence against the Dorian invaders. But the invaders were quite confident because they had received the words, — “Either Athens must perish or her king!” from the Oracle. The Athenians were desperate. They could not bear the thought of their beloved king, Codrus being killed by the enemy. One night, an Athenian peasant entered the Dorian camp and deliberately picked a fight with some of the soldiers. A fight ensued and the Dorian soldiers killed the Athenian peasant. The news spread through the army and there was panic in the general public. Before morning, the Dorians found themselves fleeing, for they remembered the words of the Oracle.

QUESTIONS

1. *Why did the Dorians flee?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The Dorians, to their horror found out that the Athenian peasant who had died, was none other than King Codrus, who had disguised himself as a peasant and offered his life for the safety of his subjects.

2. The king was prepared to die for his country. His sacrifice is quite laudable. From that time on, no Athenian thought himself good enough to wear the crown of King Codrus.

Believe In God

Remaud, a French senator, had rented a hotel room for a month and paid for it in advance. The hotelkeeper asked him if he wanted a cash receipt.

“Oh, don’t bother,” said the senator. “It is enough that God has seen it.”

“Why monsieur, you believe in God?” asked the hotelkeeper. “Of course. And you do too, don’t you?”

“No Sir, I don’t.”

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the senator say to the hotelkeeper?*
2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. The senator said, “On second thought, I feel that I should have a receipt from you.”
2. Fear of God brings discipline in a person. Strong belief in the

presence of God would make a person more sincere, honest and truthful. In the absence of this belief, one may be tempted to do all types of antisocial activities. This is the main reason for all religions to propound the theory of the existence of one God.

No One Is Too Stupid To Learn

There was once a boy who was dismissed and sent back from school because his teachers claimed that he was too stupid to learn anything. He came back and told this to his disheartened mother. She told him to ignore their comments. She came forward to teach him. This boy didn't go to any school or university and was self-taught. Years later, the same boy grew up to create history in the scientific world.

QUESTIONS

1. *Can you guess this boy's name?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The boy's name is Thomas Alva Edison.
2. It is pathetic that some teachers make unholy remarks about students, which may discourage them and lead them to discontinue school itself. Edison's mother came forward and encouraged him. But for the encouragement of his mother, the world would have lost a super genius in the scientific world. This is a lesson to all teachers and parents.

Retain The Romance Of Life

There was once a very young-hearted colonel, Thomas Hart Benton, who was well-known for his jovial and humorous nature. People would often mistake him to be much younger than he really was, and he was often questioned about his age. Each time, he would have the same reply.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the reply of Thomas Hart Benton?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. He would always say, "According to the calendar, my age is seventy-four; when anything is to be done, I am only thirty-five years old."
2. Chronological age starts as soon as we are born. Biological age indicates the condition of our body as regards health and disease. Mental age refers to our capacity to discriminate, create and imagine, and how we use our mental faculties. We can have different ages. In this connection, the words of Norman Vincent Peale are worth quoting:

“The person who is young awakes with a strange feeling which he was not able to explain but which is as if to say, This is the great day; this is the day on which wonderful things can happen. The individual who is old, regardless of age arises with the spirit unresponsive, not expecting any great thing to happen. This day will be no worse. Some people retain the spirit of expectation at three-score and ten. Some lose it early in life. The measure of one’s age is actually how well he retains the romance of life.”

Source: *Stay Alive All Your Life*, by Norman Vincent Peale

Calamities Can Bring Growth And Enlightenment

In the midst of a vast, lonely desert, there was an old dying tree. Its withering branches had been home to a beautiful bird. The tree had been its home for many years. But one day, as luck would have it, a whirlwind uprooted the tree, forcing the poor bird to fly a tiring hundred miles in search of another shelter. The depressed bird, searching for shelter, kept wondering what ill it had done to deserve such a calamity. After several days of continuous flying and almost giving up with tiredness, it finally came to a forest of fruit-laden trees. And thus, it built another home in the new paradise.

QUESTION

1. *What is the moral of this story?*

ANSWER

1. If the withered tree had survived, nothing would have induced the bird to give up its security and fly. Calamities and difficulties are only temporary setbacks. They bring along growth and enlightenment and even better opportunities.

Explore All The Possibilities

A father and son, out for an evening walk, spotted a huge stone blocking their path. At once, the little boy tried to lift the stone, but it was far too heavy for him. His father standing close by asked him, “Have you used all your strength?” The boy promptly replied, “Yes.” The father then commented...

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the father's comment?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. “No, my son, you are not using all your strength. You have not asked me to help you out.”
2. Strength lies in exploring all possibilities to accomplish a task. This includes requesting someone to help you. No one can build an institution without getting the help of others. Only with others’ cooperation, great things can be accomplished.

Worship Through Dance

There was once a dervish (member of a Muslim religious order), who worshipped Allah through his hard and rigorous dance sessions. He would regularly travel many miles and perform his whirling dance in front of each mosque, before moving to another one. That's how he lived. People who watched him would very often give him food, water and also shelter to spend the night. He was once asked why he worshipped God through dance. "Because, to worship God means to kill the Self, and dancing has the passion and the life that kills the Self. When the Self dies, all the problems die with it. Where the Self is not, love is, God is," he said.

QUESTION

1. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWER

1. To worship God, one needs love in the heart and love comes only from selflessness and sacrifice.

Courage Wins The Heart

The Emperor of Russia, Peter the Great was blessed with a son after many years of prayers and waiting. Unfortunately, good luck didn't last long and death took away his little one. The death of the newborn son affected Peter the Great so much that he closed himself up in a room to starve himself to death. He gave it to be understood that whoever dared to disturb him in his retirement would be sentenced to death. The senate assembled to discuss this urgent issue and Dologorouki, one of his ministers, volunteered to save the Czar from certain death. He courageously went up to the Czar's room and knocked on the door. "Whoever you be, fly off or I will open the door and knock out your brains!" threatened the Czar's terrible voice from within. "Open I say," countered Dologorouki in a resolute tone.

After that, he said something to the Czar which made him come out and embrace him. He yielded to the counsel of his faithful courtier and resumed the rule of his country.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did Dologorouki say to the Czar?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. He said, "It is the duty of the senate to come and ask you whom you wish to have named the emperor in your absence, since you have resigned."
2. Dologorouki's courage won the heart of the Emperor. Let me quote here, the words of Dr. Alexis Carrel: "Nature has no pity for those who are lazy or feeble minded. She favours those who are sober, alert, intelligent and enthusiastic; most of all, those who have the courage to take risks and who possess the will to succeed. She smiles on those who are ready to live hard and dangerously. Whoever refuses to take risks pays the penalty of loss of life in one form or another."

Source: *Man, The Unknown* by Dr. Alexis Carrel

Spirituality In Productive Activity

The Master, while being gracious to all his disciples, could not conceal his preference for those who lived in the world — the married, the merchants and the farmers — over those who lived in the monastery. When he was finally confronted about this, he said something which explained everything.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the Master say?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The Master said, “Spirituality practiced in the state of activity is incomparably superior to that practiced in the state of withdrawal.”
2. A person who, for his own liberation or *mukthi* sits in meditation for hours together, is not as productive to society, as the farmer who cultivates and produces grains for the people to consume. This is why the priests and nuns of the Catholic community, embracing spirituality and renunciation, plunge into activity by way of establishing educational institutions,

hospitals and also rendering social service to the poor and downtrodden.

Every Bit Of Knowledge Is Useful

There was an intelligent young man who studied physiognomy, spending six years of hard work on research. On his way back home, after having completed his studies, he met a man who offered him his place to stay for the night. The scholar's first intuitive feeling on meeting the hospitable man was that he was wicked. But then, he changed his mind when the stranger showered all love and affection on him. Ultimately, this man gave him a bill which was a hundred times more than what it should have been. To pay it off, the scholar had to give up everything he had. But in the end, he joyfully cried and thanked God.

QUESTIONS

1. *Why did he thank God?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The man thanked God because it was proved that his six years of studies had not been a waste of time and he had assessed the man correctly.
2. Knowledge is power. The more we learn, the better would be our capacity to tackle problems that we confront in life.

Pay Undivided Attention To Whatever You Do

There was once a farmer in Spain who had three sons and one daughter. One day, the farmer became very ill and a passing traveler told his family that he could only be saved by the 'water of life'. "Where do you get that?" said Alonzo, the eldest son. "From a well on a mountaintop which is three days hard riding away from here," said the stranger. And so, Alonzo set off. After three days riding, he came to the mountain and met an old man. Alonzo asked him about the 'water of life'. "Well, you will get it from a well up there, but let me give you some advice. As you climb, you will find many of the stones shout, jeer and mock you. Don't look at them or touch them." That sounds easy, thought Alonzo and went on. He began climbing the mountain and immediately the stones began to jeer at him, mock him and call him names. He paid no attention until one stone in particular, called Alonzo, a boaster and a bragger. On hearing this, Alonzo was furious, perhaps because this insult was rather near the truth. Angrily, he turned towards the stone and immediately turned into a stone himself. Two weeks later, the second son Carlo set out to get the 'water of life' and to find his brother. He found the mountain and the old man and received exactly the same warning. Soon, he was climbing up the mountain and ignored the cries of the stones, until suddenly, he felt he heard his brother's voice and he too was turned into stone.

A week later, the third son, Alfredo was on the mountain. Having heard the old man's warning, he was singing and whistling to drown the sounds of the stone's voices. Suddenly, he heard the song of a charming lady and his attention was diverted to the sweet voice and he turned to see the lady. The inevitable happened and he also turned into a stone.

The farmer was by now very weak and in the last desperate effort to save his life, Maria, his daughter set off to find the 'water of life'. When she heard the old man's warning, she decided that her father's life depended on her getting the water, so no matter what the stones shouted, she kept her eyes fixed on the well up ahead. Eventually, she reached it and filled her goatskin full of the precious liquid. As she did, a drop fell on a stone nearby which immediately turned into a man. At once, Maria felt she must help here too, so she went on sprinkling a drop each on all the stones there and soon there was a large gathering of men and women including her three brothers.

Finally, she reached the bottom with just enough water for her father. With the whole crowd cheering and thanking her, Maria and her brothers arrived home and restored their father back to good health.

QUESTION

1. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWER

1. With total devotion and concentration, anything can be achieved.

Set An Example

Once there was a missionary who wanted more and more people to become his followers. To accomplish this, he decided to impress the people of a village by taking them out for a plane ride. The plane glided over their villages, hills, forests and rivers. Occasionally, they would look out of their windows, but on the whole, they were unimpressed. Back on the ground, his flock trooped out of the plane without a word of comment. Anxious to get some response, the missionary exclaimed, “Wasn’t it wonderful? Think of what human beings have achieved! There we were up in the sky, above all the worldly things, looking down at all of it.”

The group listened impassively. Finally the leader spoke.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the leader say?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The leader said, “The insects also do what we just did and are happier than us.”

2. Fake impressions fade out. To draw people to spiritual life, missionaries should lead an exemplary life that will open the eyes of others to follow them.

Avoid Carrying Tales

A girl was known all over town for her much-detested habit of carrying tales. Thanks to her, there were constant misunderstandings and complications between people. Her mother tried hard to stop this habit but in vain. After a lot of thinking, one day, she called her and gave her a pillow and asked her to remove all its feathers. A gust of wind then scattered and blew off the feathers. Now the mother asked her to put the feathers back in the pillow. The girl was not able to do it. She then understood what her mother wanted to teach her.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the lesson learnt by the girl?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The girl learnt that the tales that she spread were like the feathers. Once scattered, it was impossible to collect them back together.
2. The mother's way of teaching a lesson to her daughter is appreciable. Most parents take recourse to scolding their children for whatever mischief they do in life. If parents are a

little more creative, the parent-child relationship can be built on a sound footing.

God Is Watching

A boy and a girl who were in deep love decided to commit a sin together before getting married. They found an empty hut which they thought would be an ideal place for their intended sin. They went into the hut and found an idol of God. Very conveniently, to escape the feeling of guilt, they placed the idol outside and went inside the hut again. But there was something stopping them and they finally decided not to commit the sin.

QUESTIONS

1. *What kept them from committing the sin?*
2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. They realized that by just placing God's idol outside, they could not remove God Himself.
2. God is present everywhere and watching our good as well as bad deeds.

Be Bold And Honest

A newly-appointed policeman was on duty. Once, he stopped a speeding motorcyclist and inquired about his identity. This motorcyclist happened to be a Circle Inspector but the policeman continued to write a ticket for him. The Inspector said, “Look here young man, some day you may be transferred to my police station where you will have to work under me.”

The policeman replied...

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the policeman's reply?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The policeman replied, “Well Sir, when I do get there, you will remember that you have a good and honest man working for you.”
2. Honesty is the best policy for everyone to follow. This will pay rich dividends in the long run.

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Where Does Suffering Come From?

Once, the disciples of a Master were all involved in a heated discussion on the cause of human suffering. Some said it came from selfishness, others said it arose from delusion and yet others, from the inability to distinguish the real from the unreal. The Master was at last consulted on this issue.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the Master's reply?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The Master said, "All suffering comes from a person's inability to sit still and be alone."
2. Very few people develop the habit of sitting still and being alone. Sitting still and trying to be alone refers to the meditative process. If one were to develop the habit of meditating, all suffering would vanish. Lord Buddha prescribes the following five meditations to be free from all suffering:
 - a. The first meditation is the meditation of LOVE, in

which you must sit still and so adjust your heart that you long for the well-being and welfare of all beings, including the happiness of your enemies.

- b. The second meditation is of PITY, in which you sit still and think of all beings in distress, vividly representing in your imagination their sorrows and anxieties so as to arouse a deep compassion for them in your soul.
- c. The third meditation is the meditation of JOY in which you sit still and think of the prosperity of others and rejoice at their rejoicing.
- d. The fourth meditation is the meditation of IMPURITY, in which you sit still and consider the evil consequences of corruption, the effects of sin and diseases. How trivial often are the pleasures of the moment and how fatal their consequences!
- e. The fifth meditation is the meditation on SERENITY, in which you sit still and rise above love and hate, tyranny and oppression, wealth and want, and regard your own fate with impartial calmness and perfect tranquility.

Source: *The James Allen New Thought Collection*

The Courage Of A President

When Woodrow Wilson was the President of the United States, he was facing some difficulties with Old Mexico. In one skirmish before the American marines captured Vera Cruz, some Americans lost their lives. Their bodies were brought to New York and arrangements were made for a grand funeral. Despite all the rumours of plots to assassinate him, the President insisted on taking part in the funeral procession. His friends tried their best to stop him from going to New York. “The country cannot afford to lose its President,” said one of his friends.

On hearing this, the President gave a fitting reply.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the President’s reply?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The President said, “The country can’t afford to have a coward for a President.” And he proceeded to New York and rode in the procession.
2. One of the sterling qualities that politicians develop is courage.

Because of this quality, they can lead a country. To achieve something great and outstanding, many qualities are to be developed. The following poem would motivate one to achieve one's goal —

“It takes a little courage
And a little self-control
And some grim determination
If you want to reach the goal.

It takes a deal of striving,
And a firm and stern-set chin,
No matter what the battle,
If you are really out to win.

There is no easy path to glory,
There's no rosy path to fame;
Life, however we may view it,
Is no simple parlour game.

But its prizes call for fighting,
For endurance and for grit.
For the rugged disposition
And a don't-know-when-to quit.

You must take a blow or give one,
You must risk and you must lose,
And expect that in the struggle
You will suffer many a bruise.

But you must not whine or falter
If a fight you once begin;
Be a man and face the battle
That is the only way to win.

—J. Maurus

Source: *Wisdom Stories* by J. Maurus

Attribute Your Success To God

Once, when for more than a month, the crowds had been packing Glasgow's largest auditorium to hear Billy Graham in his All Scotland Crusade, a newspaper reporter asked the young American evangelist, "How do you account for your success?" "The only explanation I know is God," he said.

"But why did God choose you?" asked the reporter.

Billy Graham's answer had the reporter in splits.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was Billy Graham's answer?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. His answer was, "When I get to heaven, that's the first question I am going to ask God."
2. His answer reveals the truth that he attributed his success to the grace of God. He had totally surrendered to the will of God. One of the principles of Yoga is *Ishwara Pranidhana*, which

means total surrender to God. If a person surrenders everything to God, he develops the virtue of humility. When humility is consciously practiced there is no ego and self-centred nature. This will result in total absence of stress and tension which leads to tremendous efficiency in whatever one undertakes. Very few people realize this simple truth.

Be Good And Serve Society

A Moral Science teacher once instructed her students to go out and be good. One of the students went out after school hours and walked down the streets, distributing gifts to the poor and helping whoever needed help. The next day he told the teacher of his good deed. But the teacher was not impressed by his action.

QUESTIONS

1. *Why was the teacher not impressed?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. She told him: “I asked you to be good and not to do good.”
2. People may do good without necessarily being good. For example, people offer gifts and other material goods to the poor and downtrodden mainly for publicity and not with the genuine intention to help them. Goodness stems from good thoughts and intentions.

Spend Your Time Productively And Creatively

Once, all the animals of the jungle assembled for an animal party. They began to complain that humans were always taking away things from them. The cow said that humans took away her milk, the hen added that her eggs were taken, the pigs said that their flesh was taken and the whale said that her oil was taken, and so on. The snail was however the last one to speak, “I have something they want more than anything else in the world and would definitely take away if they could.”

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the snail talking about?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The snail was talking about the time it has. Humans are badly in need of time, but they don't take it from the snail.
2. Time is the most precious of our possessions. It can neither be borrowed from others, nor can it be lent to anyone. If you want to make full use of your life, you must appreciate the

importance of time and self-discipline. If you are able to utilize your time appropriately you can enjoy both, your work and leisure. Self-discipline means the willpower to do those things which you know should be done, before doing the things you want to do because they are more enjoyable. By attacking tasks rather than procrastinating, you will often find time enough to do both. It is *your* time that you are spending. You should master your time until you are willing to master yourself.

True Courage Is To Live For Others

In the year 1908, Mrs. J Brookes, one of the telephone operators of Folsom, New Mexico was warned by one of the residents of the hills to flee for her life from the flood speeding to engulf the valley. More than forty families have acknowledged their lives saved by this frail woman, who displayed magnificent courage.

QUESTIONS

1. *How did this woman save the lives of the people?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. Mrs. Brookes rejected the opportunity to save herself and employed the hour between the warning received and her own death to call up subscribers by telephone and acquaint them of the danger.
2. True courage is tested in times of trouble by forgetting oneself and doing the best possible for others.

Become More Virtuous Than Your Enemies

Once there lived a man called Hari, who was very loving and helpful. He would go out of his way to help people and at times, he even placed his needs second, in order to make people happy. Everyone benefited from his kindness but most of the time, people took him for granted. With time, Hari became depressed about the consciousness that he was being used, but could not help being generous. One day, he heard that the Buddha was passing through his village and decided to approach him with his feelings. He asked the Buddha, “What do you think I must do, to take revenge on people who took me for granted and used me?” To this, the Buddha gave a reply that Hari never forgot throughout his life and followed it well.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the reply of the Buddha?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The Buddha merely said, “Become more virtuous than they are.”

2. We have no control over the behaviour of others. They will continue to behave the way they feel is correct, but we must rise above the feelings of bitterness. Also, we can improve on our own virtuous nature. The more virtuous we become, the easier it is for us to control our negative emotions.

Check On Your Performance Periodically

A boy once walked into a grocery shop and telephoned to a certain company to ask about a job as an office boy. He was told, “The job has been filled a week ago.” “Is the boy you have satisfactory?” he asked. “Very satisfactory!” was the answer. The boy hung up and wore a big smile. The druggist who heard the conversation was puzzled. “If the job is filled, how come you are so happy?” he inquired. The boy’s reply stunned the druggist.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the boy reply?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The boy said, “Oh, I was just checking up. You see, I am the office boy they employed a week ago.”
2. First, the boy’s ingenuity should be appreciated. Moreover, it is better to have a regular check on one’s performance for further improvement.

Get A Positive Response From The World

A little boy playing around on a hilltop, shouted, “Who are you?” and ditto came the reply. Then he said, “You are a mean boy.” Again, ditto was the reply. Bewildered, he went home and narrated the experience to his mother. His mother advised him to speak kindly to the echo. She said, “Say ‘I love you’ to the echo and see the response you get.”

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the boy do?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The next day, the boy went to the hilltop and shouted, “I love you.” The echo responded saying, “I love you.” The boy was happy to hear the echo.
2. The story of the echo is the story of our life. The world merely mirrors our reactions. If we are good, we expect the world to be good. If we are bad, we imagine that everything is bad in this world. Life is like a full circle. Whatever we give to the

world comes right back to us. So if we want good, we must do good and also be good.

Time Heals Everything

Dr. Johnson was a world-famous writer. Boswell was his devoted biographer. Boswell was once very badly insulted by one of his associates. He felt hurt and reported the matter to Dr. Johnson.

Dr. Johnson advised him.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the advice given by Johnson ?*
2. *What is the implication of this story ?*

ANSWERS

1. Johnson advised, “Consider Sir, how insignificant this will appear twelve months from now.”
2. With the passage of time everything is evened out. Time is the best healer. What is considered as unbearable pain will vanish in course of time. Nothing is permanent on this planet.

How Do You Tolerate An Insult?

Once upon a time, there came a visitor to see Buddha in his monastery. He insulted him outrageously. But Buddha seemed quite unruffled by the insults hurled at him by the visitor. Buddha's disciples who watched this happen, came forward to fix up the visitor, but remained quiet at Buddha's signals to keep out of the matter. Finally, when they couldn't tolerate the nonsense any further, they threw the visitor out. They asked Buddha why did he go on tolerating all the insults, and not retaliate in any way.

Buddha was quiet for a moment and then said something that taught all his disciples a lesson for a lifetime.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the Buddha tell his disciples?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. Buddha said, "Imagine what would happen if someone placed an offering before you and you did not pick it up. Or someone sent you a letter that you refused to open. You would obviously be unaffected by its contents. Would you not? Do

this each time you are abused and you will not lose your serenity.”

2. No one can insult you without your permission. You don't have control over others' tongues but you can surely conquer your emotions by not being upset by the unwarranted statements made by others.

Lead A Life Of Awareness

A Moral Science teacher told her students, “Man preaches peace, but he delights in war. See the automobile out there. Suppose you instructed it to never run wild and cause a wreck. Would it obey?”

QUESTIONS

1. *What will the automobile do?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The automobile will not obey because it is mechanical. It can only behave mechanically. Likewise, majority of the people behave mechanically, which is why many things happen in this world that are not conducive to for mankind to evolve. Only a conscious person can behave in a way that does not cause wrecks.”
2. Many lead a life of unawareness. Often, when a person displays negative emotions, he is not aware of his state of mind. The result is that the impact of such negative feelings wreaks havoc in society. The best remedy for all the ills of society is to create awareness in the minds of people.

Never Pray For Selfish Ends

Sidney Walker, the world-famous lightweight champion, was an illiterate shoeshine boy before he rose to fame. He had seen both the worlds and so, was a very humble man. Once, WC Heinz came to visit him in his dressing room after his big annual fight and said, “I understand you pray before every fight. Tell me, what do you pray about?”

QUESTIONS

1. *What did Sidney Walker answer him?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. “That’s right, I pray that nobody gets hurt. Then I pray that it is a good fight and that the most deserving person wins the fight,” said Sidney Walker.
2. One should never pray for selfish needs. Only when you are free from tension and stress can you pray for others. This will also show your large-heartedness. When you are not selfish you will have perennial flow of energy in you.

Be True To Yourself

An old woman had spent her entire life being difficult. One morning, realization hit her that she had to change. She joined a charitable organization and said nice things to others. But to her surprise, she felt a vague resentment towards her activities. She felt forced to be good and this only doubled her guilt, for now she felt guilty over her resentment towards doing good. Though confused, she intelligently reflected, “There is something dreadfully wrong. This isn’t goodness at all; it is self-enslaving and stage acting. True goodness must be something entirely different.” So, she began a search for true goodness, which she finally realized and understood after she met a sage who was famous for helping people out with their problems.

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the sage tell her?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The sage said, “True goodness blooms in the absence of an unconscious self-image of being good. Abolish conditioned thoughts about personal goodness and badness and authentic goodness flourishes.”

2. There is no higher deed than just being genuine in whatever you do. Being true to oneself gives ultimate satisfaction.

Live Now, Happily And Merrily

Once, there was a clock repairer. He would go from house to house fixing up damaged clocks and watches. One day, as he was about to fix the pendulum of yet another damaged clock, to his surprise, he heard the clock speak. "Please Sir, leave me alone. It will be an act of kindness on your part. Think of the number of times I have to tick in a minute, then an hour, then the day, and in years," the clock pleaded. But the clock repairer answered wisely. He said...

QUESTIONS

1. *What did the clock repairer say to the clock?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The clock repairer said, "Don't think of the future. Just do one tick at a time and you will enjoy every tick for the rest of your life." That is exactly what the clock decided to do, and is still ticking away merrily.
2. The present moment will never be unbearable if you live in it fully. What is unbearable is to have your body here at 10 am and your mind at 6 pm. Life is living now, in the present, not

regretting the past and not anticipating the future.

Realize The Genuine Love Of Your Parents

Mary Garden, the noted Opera singer earned a great deal of money with her performances. Her father often demanded huge sums of money from her and she usually thought he was being unreasonable. A few years later, she retired and stopped giving performances. Money, she thought, wasn't a problem and so decided to invest in the stock market so as to double it up. After a few years, she lost all her money in the stock market crash. She was totally shaken up at her misfortune. At this moment of distress, she received a note from a bank stating that her father had deposited all the money he had received from her in the bank. She heaved a great sigh of relief.

QUESTION

1. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWER

1. She had been thinking that her father was unreasonable in taking too much money from her. But he had kept all the money in the bank thinking that she might need it if she had any financial problems in future. This shows genuine paternal

love. Children often do not realize the love of their parents once they become independent or get married.

What Makes A Deathbed Terrible?

David Warwick, a famous actor on the stage accumulated a great fortune through his acting skills. One day, he was showing his new home, garden and all his luxuries to a very close friend. Instead of admiring his success and affluence, the friend remarked something that made David really think about his fabulous wealth.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the remark of his friend?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. His close friend commented, “Ah, David, these are the very things that make a death-bed seem so terrible.”
2. A beggar can die peacefully, but not the wealthy. A beggar has no regrets to leave when he is gone. This is not the case with the wealthy. They get frightened at death, as they have to leave behind so much of wealth that they accumulated with hard work and greed.

Only Fools And Cowards Commit Suicide

Barney Jones was a very successful businessman and lived his life constantly in the limelight, but of late, too much of competition from his rivals was wearing him out, and his nerves were on edge. To add to his troubles, Barney's wife was determined to be classed as the best dressed lady in town and it was proving to be a drain on Barney's purse and a load of strain on his already depressed condition. He could not sleep at night and had lost his grip on life. His health too started deteriorating. After much thinking and worrying, he came to the conclusion that life was not worth living and decided to commit suicide. He approached his doctor for advice. He wanted to die without much pain and also didn't want anyone to know that he had committed suicide. The doctor gave him a prescription.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the prescription given by his doctor?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. The doctor told him to run five miles a day as fast as he could.

He had to do the running every day till he died. As he would be running too fast, he would drop dead one day. No one could even guess that he had committed suicide. The death would also be a painless one. Barney followed the advice of his doctor. The first day, he ran as fast as possible for five miles. As he was dog-tired at the end of this venture, he fell asleep as soon as he went to bed. For the first time, he had a sound and peaceful sleep. The same process continued for a few more days. The more he ran, the better became his health due to sound sleep. He gained more energy and enthusiasm and wanted to live a fruitful life, abandoning his thought of committing suicide.

2. The best antidote for stress and worry is work. When we plunge into action, we forget our worries and also generate more energy. When the energy level goes up, we become more optimistic and productive. Only fools and cowards commit suicide. There is so much to life and it should be lived every moment.

What Is Meditation?

Once upon a time, a Master kept scrapping a brick against the floor where his disciples sat in meditation.

At first, one of the new disciples was content taking this to be the test of his powers of concentration but soon the noise became unbearable and he burst out, “What on earth are you doing? Can’t you see I am in meditation?”

“I’m polishing this brick to make a mirror out of it,” said the Master.

“You’re crazy! How can you make a mirror out of a brick?” The Master replied...

QUESTIONS

1. *What was the reply of the Master?*
2. *What is the implication of the story?*

ANSWERS

1. The Master merely said, “No crazier than you! How can you make a meditator out of the self?”

2. It is an impossible task to make a brick into a mirror. Similarly, when a person gets annoyed over the noise, he cannot hope to have a meditative state. Meditation is not concentration but forgetting one's self. In the absence of the self, there can't be irritation and bickering. "The purpose of meditation, paradoxically, is to learn to be without purpose. Since nearly everything we do in life is done with some goal in mind, most of our actions are only means to an end, pointing us continually toward a future that does not exist. But meditation, when no goal disturbs it, allows us to discover the richness and profundity of the present moment. We begin to realize the miraculous power of our own lives — not as they will be, or as we might imagine they once were at some golden time in the past, but as they actually are. Meditation is one of the few things in life that is not about DOING but about BEING."

— Rick Fields

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How Do You Pray?

Once there was a Muslim mystic named Farid. He was known all over town for his kind-hearted nature and selflessness with which he worked for the people. He was prevailed upon by his neighbours to go to the court in Delhi and obtain a favour from Akbar for the village. After a lot of convincing, he agreed to ask the Emperor for the favour. Farid walked into the court and found Akbar at his prayers, and so he waited. When the Emperor finally emerged, Farid asked, “What sort of a prayer did you make?”

“I prayed that the All Merciful would bestow success, wealth and long life on me,” was the reply.

Farid promptly turned his back to the Emperor and walked away with a remark that left the Emperor feel ashamed.

QUESTIONS

1. *What was Farid’s remark?*
2. *What is the implication of this story?*

ANSWERS

1. Farid remarked, “I came to see an Emperor. What I find here is

a beggar, no different from the rest.”

2. In this context, the prayer of Socrates is worth remembering, “Give me beauty in the inward soul and may the inner and outer be at one. May I consider wisdom to be wealth, and let me have only as much gold as a temperate man and only he can bear and carry. This prayer, I think, is enough for me.”

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