

Class X - English

First Flight

The Sermon at Benares

CBSE NOTES

The Sermon at Benares - Practice Worksheet

Strengthen your foundation with key concepts and basic applications.



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Solve the following questions. Write your answers in the space provided.

1. Describe the life of Gautama Buddha before he became the Buddha. How did his early life influence his teachings?

Hint: Focus on Siddhartha Gautama's transition from a prince to the Buddha and the pivotal moments that led to his enlightenment.

2. What was Kisa Gotami's quest after her son's death, and what did she learn from it?

Hint: Highlight Kisa Gotami's journey from despair to understanding the universal truth of death.



Solve the following questions. Write your answers in the space provided.

3. Explain the Buddha's sermon at Benares and its significance.

Hint: Focus on the key messages of the sermon and their relevance to Buddhist teachings.

4. How does the story of Kisa Gotami illustrate the theme of selfishness in grief?

Hint: Discuss Kisa Gotami's transformation from selfish grief to universal understanding.



Solve the following questions. Write your answers in the space provided.

5. What are the common feelings associated with grief, as described in the text? How do they compare to modern understandings of grief?

Hint: Compare the Buddha's teachings on grief with contemporary psychological perspectives.

6. Discuss the relevance of the Buddha's teachings on grief in today's world.

Hint: Highlight the timeless nature of the Buddha's teachings and their applicability to modern life.



Solve the following questions. Write your answers in the space provided.

7. How does the Buddha use metaphors to explain the nature of life and death in his sermon?

Hint: Focus on the metaphors used by the Buddha and their symbolic meanings.

8. What role does acceptance play in overcoming grief, according to the Buddha?

Hint: Discuss the importance of acceptance in the Buddha's philosophy of grief.



Solve the following questions. Write your answers in the space provided.

9. Compare the Buddha's approach to grief with the modern 'stages of grief' theory.

Hint: Compare the structured stages of modern grief theory with the Buddha's direct path to acceptance.

10. How does Kisa Gotami's story exemplify the Buddha's teaching on the universality of suffering?

Hint: Focus on how Kisa Gotami's experience mirrors the Buddha's teachings on universal suffering.



Check your answers with the solutions below.

1. Describe the life of Gautama Buddha before he became the Buddha. How did his early life influence his teachings?

Solution: Gautama Buddha, born as Siddhartha Gautama, was a prince who lived a sheltered life of luxury. At the age of twelve, he was sent for schooling in Hindu sacred scriptures and later married a princess. His life changed when he encountered the sufferings of the world—a sick man, an aged man, a funeral procession, and a monk begging for alms. These sights moved him deeply, leading him to renounce his princely life and seek enlightenment. After seven years of wandering, he attained enlightenment under a peepal tree, which he renamed the Bodhi Tree. His early life of luxury and subsequent exposure to human suffering shaped his teachings on the impermanence of life and the path to enlightenment through overcoming desires and suffering.

2. What was Kisa Gotami's quest after her son's death, and what did she learn from it?

Solution: After her son's death, Kisa Gotami was consumed by grief and sought medicine to bring him back to life. She went from house to house until she met the Buddha, who asked her to procure mustard seeds from a house where no death had occurred. Her futile search made her realize that death is a universal truth affecting every household. This realization led her to understand the Buddha's teaching that life is impermanent and filled with suffering. She learned that grief and lamentation cannot bring back the dead and that peace of mind comes from accepting the nature of life and death.

3. Explain the Buddha's sermon at Benares and its significance.

Solution: The Buddha's sermon at Benares reflects his wisdom on the nature of human suffering. He taught that life is troubled, brief, and combined with pain, and that death is inevitable for all living beings. Using metaphors like ripe fruits and earthen vessels, he illustrated the fragility of life. The sermon emphasized that grief and lamentation do not bring peace but increase suffering. Instead, one should overcome sorrow by accepting the terms of the world and surrendering selfishness. This sermon is significant as it lays the foundation for Buddhist teachings on the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, guiding individuals toward enlightenment and liberation from suffering.



Check your answers with the solutions below.

4. How does the story of Kisa Gotami illustrate the theme of selfishness in grief?

Solution: Kisa Gotami's initial reaction to her son's death was marked by selfishness, as she sought to undo his death without accepting its inevitability. Her relentless quest for a cure reflected her inability to see beyond her personal loss. However, her encounter with the Buddha and her subsequent realization that death spares no one helped her understand the selfish nature of her grief. She acknowledged that her sorrow was self-centered, ignoring the universal experience of loss. This realization aligned with the Buddha's teaching that surrendering selfishness leads to peace of mind and a path to immortality.

5. What are the common feelings associated with grief, as described in the text? How do they compare to modern understandings of grief?

Solution: The text describes grief as a natural emotion accompanied by feelings of sadness, anger, guilt, anxiety, loneliness, fatigue, and disbelief. These feelings are universal and timeless, resonating with modern psychological understandings of grief. Contemporary texts also highlight similar emotions, emphasizing that grief is personal and varies among individuals. However, modern approaches often include structured support systems and counseling, whereas the Buddha's teaching focuses on internal acceptance and overcoming sorrow through wisdom. Both perspectives agree that grief is a profound emotional response to loss, but they differ in their methods of coping and healing.

6. Discuss the relevance of the Buddha's teachings on grief in today's world.

Solution: The Buddha's teachings on grief remain relevant today as they address the universal human experience of loss and suffering. His emphasis on acceptance, overcoming selfishness, and finding inner peace offers timeless wisdom for coping with grief. In modern times, where mental health awareness is growing, the Buddha's approach complements therapeutic practices by encouraging mindfulness and emotional resilience. While contemporary methods may include professional help and support groups, the core message of understanding and accepting the impermanence of life aligns with the Buddha's teachings. Thus, his sermon at Benares continues to provide valuable insights for dealing with grief in today's fast-paced and often stressful world.



Check your answers with the solutions below.

7. How does the Buddha use metaphors to explain the nature of life and death in his sermon?

Solution: The Buddha employs vivid metaphors to illustrate the impermanence and fragility of life. He compares mortals to ripe fruits, which are always in danger of falling, and to earthen vessels made by a potter, which inevitably break. These metaphors emphasize that death is an inescapable part of life, affecting everyone regardless of age or wisdom. By using such imagery, the Buddha makes abstract concepts tangible, helping his audience grasp the transient nature of existence. His teachings encourage individuals to reflect on these metaphors and internalize the truth of life's impermanence, leading to a deeper understanding and acceptance of death.

8. What role does acceptance play in overcoming grief, according to the Buddha?

Solution: Acceptance is central to the Buddha's teachings on overcoming grief. He asserts that weeping and lamentation only increase pain and do not save the dead. Instead, peace of mind comes from drawing out the 'arrow of lamentation' and becoming composed. By accepting the inevitability of death and the terms of the world, individuals can free themselves from sorrow. The Buddha's message is that true healing begins with acknowledging the reality of loss and surrendering selfish desires to hold onto the departed. This acceptance fosters emotional resilience and paves the way for inner peace and spiritual growth.

9. Compare the Buddha's approach to grief with the modern 'stages of grief' theory.

Solution: The Buddha's approach to grief focuses on acceptance and overcoming sorrow through wisdom, emphasizing the impermanence of life and the futility of lamentation. In contrast, the modern 'stages of grief' theory, popularized by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, outlines a progression through denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. While both approaches acknowledge the pain of loss, the Buddha's teaching is more prescriptive, advocating for immediate acceptance and emotional detachment. The modern theory, however, recognizes grief as a nonlinear process with varying emotional responses. Despite these differences, both perspectives aim to guide individuals toward healing and peace, highlighting the universal challenge of coping with loss.



Check your answers with the solutions below.

10. How does Kisa Gotami's story exemplify the Buddha's teaching on the universality of suffering?

Solution: Kisa Gotami's story exemplifies the Buddha's teaching on the universality of suffering by demonstrating that death and loss are common to all. Her futile search for a house untouched by death reveals the inescapable nature of human suffering. This realization aligns with the Buddha's assertion that all mortals are subject to death and decay. Through her journey, Kisa Gotami understands that her personal grief is part of a larger, shared human experience. This insight helps her overcome her sorrow and embrace the Buddha's wisdom, illustrating the transformative power of recognizing the universal truth of suffering.



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