

# UNIT 8

## THE SERMON AT BENARAS

### LET'S BEGIN

1. In the lesson 'The Sermon at Benaras' you were asked to find out the meaning of 'sermon'. The meanings are given below but these are in different contexts:

- a talk on a religious or moral subject
- a long or monotonous piece of admonition or caution or a warning, a lecture.

- (a) Discuss with your classmates the context to which the present text belongs.
- (b) What could be the examples for the different context according to you?
- (c) When your parents or elders say something, you say, "Oh, not again!" When do you say so and why?

2. Read the poem given below in the context of 'The Sermon at Benaras'. It was actually delivered as a part of a sermon in 1910 by the author, Canon Henry Scott Holland (1847 – 1918), a priest at St. Paul's Cathedral, London. After reading the poem, discuss in groups of four and list the similarities and differences between 'The Sermon at Benaras' and 'Death Is Nothing At All'. For example the theme, the situation, the philosophy of the two speakers etc.

### Death Is Nothing At All

Death is nothing at all.  
It does not count.  
I have only slipped away into the next room.  
Nothing has happened.



1076CH10

**LOOK UP  
AND  
UNDERSTAND**

familiar  
fondly  
negligible  
parting  
solemnity

Everything remains exactly as it was.

I am I, and you are you,

and the old life that we lived so fondly together is untouched,  
unchanged.

Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.

Call me by the old familiar name.

Speak of me in the easy way which you always used.

Put no difference into your tone.

Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.

Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes that we enjoyed  
together.

Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.

Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.

Let it be spoken without an effort, without the ghost of a shadow  
upon it.

Life means all that it ever meant.

It is the same as it ever was.

There is absolute and unbroken continuity.

What is this death but a negligible accident?

Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?

I am but waiting for you, for an interval,  
somewhere very near,  
just round the corner.

All is well.

Nothing is hurt; nothing is lost.

One brief moment and all will be as it was before.

How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!

*Canon Henry Scott Holland*

**READING COMPREHENSION**
**TEXT I**

Read the passage given below and answer the questions that  
follow.

In the future, if we want a happier humanity, a happy world,  
we must tackle the root of the problem. Of course the economy  
and political power are also causes. But the ultimate cause lies  
within the human mind. Every human action, verbal or physical,

even minor actions, have some motivation. Proper motivation or proper development is an important factor. Thus, if intelligence is accompanied with human affection and compassion, what I call human feeling, then it is very useful.

If society's moral values and standards of behaviour become negative, each of us will suffer. Therefore, the intentions of an individual are very much related to the interests of society. There is a definite correlation.

The educational system and family life are two very important areas. In the educational field, one has to take care not only of the brain, but also of one's spiritual development. I say "spiritual development" not in a religious sense but simply in the sense of having a good and compassionate heart. If one has a compassionate heart, it automatically brings inner strength and allows for less fear and less doubt. Subsequently, one becomes happier and more open-minded, thus making more friends in society.

(Source: *The Transformed Mind* by His Holiness the Dalai Lama)

**LOOK UP  
AND  
UNDERSTAND**

humanity  
motivation  
correlation  
spiritual  
compassionate

**Q.1. According to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, what should we do if we want a happier humanity?**

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**Q.2. Where does the ultimate cause of the problem lie?**

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**Q.3. "What I call human feeling, then 'it' is very useful." What is 'it' referred to here?**

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**Q.4. Why does the Dalai Lama say that proper motivation is important?**

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**Words**

**Sentences**



LOOK UP  
AND  
UNDERSTAND

flock  
grieve  
parishioners  
spake

Q.5. Why is there a requirement of correlation between the intention of an individual and the interest of society?

Q.6. What does His Holiness the Dalai Lama mean by “spiritual development”?

Q.7. A compassionate heart brings—

- (a) \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) \_\_\_\_\_

TEXT II

Read the poem given below and answer the questions that follow.

Father Gilligan was overworked and extremely tired as he kept attending to the sick and dying among his parishioners. He was offering them spiritual comfort day and night. One night he fell asleep on a chair. God sent his angel down to help his most beloved servant of the people.

The Ballad of Father Gilligan

The old priest Peter Gilligan  
Was weary night and day,  
For half his flock were in their beds,  
Or under green sods lay.

Once while he nodded on a chair,  
At the moth-hour of eve,  
Another poor man sent for him,  
And he began to grieve.

"I have no rest, nor joy, nor peace,  
For people die and die;"  
And after cried he, "God forgive!  
My body spake, not I!"

And then, half-lying on the chair,  
He knelt, prayed, fell asleep;  
And the moth-hour went from the fields,  
And stars began to peep.

They slowly into millions grew,  
And leaves shook in the wind;  
And God covered the world with shade,  
And whispered to mankind.

Upon the time of sparrow chirp  
When the moths came once more,  
The old priest Peter Gilligan  
Stood upright on the floor.

"Mavrone, Mavrone! The man has died,  
While I slept on the chair,"  
He roused his horse out of its sleep  
And rode with little care.

He rode now as he never rode,  
By rocky lane and fen;  
The sick man's wife opened the door:  
"Father! You come again!"

"And is the poor man dead?" he cried.  
"He died an hour ago."  
The old priest Peter Gilligan  
In grief swayed to and fro.

"When you were gone he turned and died,  
As merry as a bird."  
The old priest Peter Gilligan  
He knelt him at that word.

"He who hath made the night of stars  
For souls who tire and bleed,  
Sent one of His great angles down  
To help me in my need.

**LOOK UP  
AND  
UNDERSTAND**

peep  
pity  
roused  
swayed

Words

Sentences



He who wrapped in purple robes,  
With planets in His care,  
Had pity on the least of things  
Asleep upon a chair."

W.B. Yeats

**Q.1. Why did Father Gilligan cry "my body spake, not I"?**

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**Q.2. "The moth-hour of eve", "the moth hour went" and "the moths came once more" establish a link. They suggest—**

- (a) the movement of moths.
- (b) the passage of time.
- (c) the actions of Father Gilligan.

**Q.3. Why did the poet say that the priest "rode with little care"? Does it mean that the old priest, Peter Gilligan, had no care for the safety of the horse and people on the way? What did he not care about?**

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**Q.4. How did the priest feel when he heard that the sick man was dead? (Choose the correct option.)**

- (a) He was frustrated and amazed.
- (b) He was ashamed and annoyed.
- (c) He was full of grief and self-condemnation.

**Q.5. Why did Father Gilligan kneel down when he heard the sick man's wife say "When you were gone..."?**

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**Q.6. How did God help when "the least of things" was in need?**

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## VOCABULARY

1. Antonyms for the words in the text 'The Sermon at Benaras' are given below. Find the words and fill in the blanks.

- (a) unfit \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) joy \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) contentment \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) found \_\_\_\_\_
- (e) cheered \_\_\_\_\_
- (f) lively \_\_\_\_\_
- (g) calm \_\_\_\_\_

### FUN FACTS

**SILENT LETTER: W**

Wrap

Wrist

Wreck

2. Use a dictionary to find out four words each having the meaning nearest to the ones given below.

Example:

wander — stroll dawdle drift roam

- (a) vow — \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) preach — \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) preserve — \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) awaken — \_\_\_\_\_
- (e) enlighten — \_\_\_\_\_
- (f) reign — \_\_\_\_\_

## GRAMMAR

### Reported Speech

We use direct speech when we repeat someone's words and indirect speech when we use our own words to report what someone else has said. We use an appropriate reporting verb, make pronominal (relating to pronouns) changes and change certain words denoting 'nearness' in the direct form to words suggesting 'remoteness' (in time and place) in the indirect form.

Words

Sentences







1. Read the passage ("Kisa Gotami had an only son, ... a child, husband, parent or friend.") from the text, 'The Sermon at Benaras' (page 134). Rewrite the paragraphs changing the direct speech into reported speech in the space given below.

[illegible]



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2. Read the story given below. Change the direct speech into reported speech and rewrite the story in the space provided. Use the reporting verbs given above wherever necessary. You can use any other reporting verb you find suitable.

It is said, "It is not how much we have, but how much we enjoy that makes happiness."

Being happy does not require everything to be good but an eye to see good in everything. One day a crow saw a swan. "This swan is so white," he thought, "and I am so black. This swan must be the happiest bird in the world."

The swan replied, "I was feeling that I was the happiest bird around. But I think the parrot is the happiest bird as it has two colours." The crow then approached the parrot. The parrot said, "I have only two colours, but the peacock has multiple colours."

The crow then visited a peacock in the zoo. "Dear peacock," the crow said, "you are so beautiful. Every day, thousands of people come to see you. You are the happiest bird on the planet."

The peacock said, "I always thought that I was the most beautiful and happy bird on the planet. But I am entrapped in this zoo. I have realised that the crow is the only bird not kept in a cage, and could happily roam everywhere."

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Words

Sentences



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## EDITING

1. There are some omissions in the paragraph given below. Edit the paragraph, use suitable prepositions and words.

## The Wild Geese

One day, Prince Siddhartha was going to the royal gardens on his way to the river. A flock of wild geese passed overhead. Devadatta, the Prince's cousin, shot an arrow into their midst and one of the geese fell. It was wounded and fell just in front of Siddhartha. His heart was filled with compassion when he saw the poor bird bleeding profusely. He lifted it and he drew the arrow very carefully from its body. He took the bird with him. Devadatta sent a messenger to claim the bird. But Siddhartha



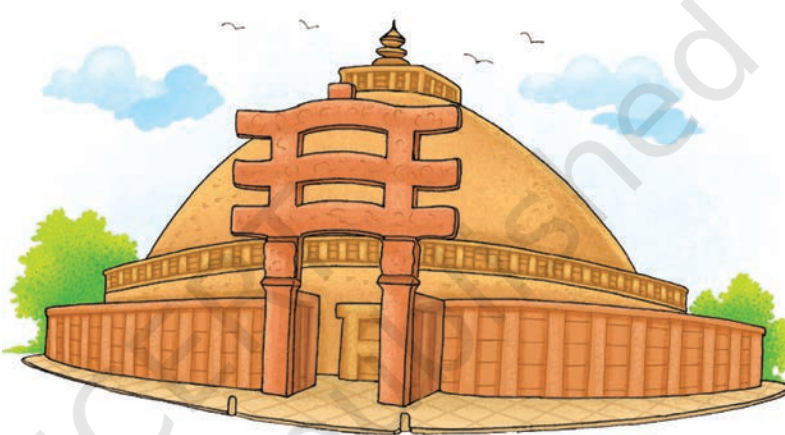
refused to give it. He said that belonged to him because he had saved its life. It did not belong to Devadutta who had tried to kill.

## LISTENING

1. Following is a narrative on Sanchi stupa. Listen to it carefully and answer the questions that follow. You can listen to the recorded narrative or ask your teacher, sibling or friend to read it aloud.

The fascinating and world famous Sanchi stupa is located on a hilltop in Sanchi town, Madhya Pradesh, India. It is one of the most important Buddhist monuments that portrays Buddhist art and sculpture. Starting from the third century BC through the twelfth century AD, it attracts the attention of thousands of visitors round the year including national and foreign tourists, archaeologists, and historians among others.

This stupa is the oldest stone structure in India that was built during the Mauryan period. Originally commissioned in the third century BCE by Emperor Ashoka, this huge hemispherical dome consists of a central chamber. In this chamber, the relics of Lord Buddha are placed. The original construction work of this stupa was supervised by Ashoka. His wife, Devi, was the daughter of a merchant of nearby village, Vidisha. Sanchi was also her birthplace as well as the venue of her and Ashoka's wedding. Later, four ornamental gateways or *toranas* facing four directions and a balustrade surrounding the stupa were added in the first century BCE. The Great stupa at Sanchi is one of the oldest stone structures in India and counted among the best conserved ancient stupas of Central India. It has been enlisted as an UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1989.



Words

Sentences



## FUN FACTS

### TONGUE TWISTER

I saw Susie  
sitting in a shoe  
shine shop.

Where she sits  
she shines, and  
where she shines  
she sits.

The sculptures on the ornamental gateways or *toranas* consist of decorative illustrations of events encompassing the life of Lord Buddha. These events are explained in the Jataka tales. The tree used here symbolises Lord Buddha. The most striking features regarding the stupa is that Lord Buddha has been depicted symbolically by figures like thrones, wheels, and footprints among others.

- (a) Which Buddhist monument is referred to here and what does it portray?

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- (b) Who are the people who visit this Stupa throughout the year?

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- (c) In which period the Stupa was built, and who commissioned it?

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- (d) Where is the central chamber in the Stupa? What is kept inside it?

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- (e) What structures were added to the huge hemisphere in first century BCE?

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- (f) The *toranas* are decorated with: (Tick the right answer)

- (a) stone ornaments ( )  
(b) events of Lord Buddha's life ( )

- (c) Lord Buddha's relics ( )
- (d) symbolic depiction of Lord Buddha as throne, wheel, footprints, etc. ( )

## SPEAKING

It is important to know that everyone has some problem or other, and they grieve in unique ways. Your grief is different than those around you. You have experienced a loss or an intense sorrow, especially caused by someone's death. This can also refer to the loss of physical or cognitive abilities or the loss of something that was routine in your life such as friendship, head boy or head girl, playing for school, etc.

Discuss with your friend and note down—

- what could be the possible reasons for someone's grief or sorrow.
- how can they overcome this.

Share your feelings and suggestions in the class.

## WRITING

1. Write a paragraph on how you can help others who are in grief. You may consider the following points:

- grief is expressed through a variety of behaviours—observe these
- reach out to others in their grief, but some people may not want to accept help; some will not share their grief—understand this
- some others will want to talk about their thoughts and feelings—be a support to them, stand by them
- let the grieving person know you care for them—be patient
- focus on what you can do, like holding their hand, etc.—a solace or a consolation

Words

Sentences





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**PROJECT**

- Work in groups of four.
- Collect Jataka tales (at least six) concerning the previous births of Gautama Buddha in both human and animal form.
- Read these and rewrite the stories in your own words. You can develop a comic strip too.
- Make a collage of the stories.
- Illustrate the stories and display the collage in your class.

