

Sermon at Benares

Summary of the Chapter

Sermon is a religious talk delivered by a prophet or Saint. Here we have the journey of Goutam Buddha from prince hood to his saintly life. He left the palace at the age of 25, after seeing the sufferings of the world, to seek enlightenment. He wandered for seven years, here and there, and under a peepal tree at Bodhgaya he got it. His first sermon was delivered at Benaras as it was considered to be the holiest place because of the river Ganga.

He thinks that he who seeks peace should draw out the arrow of lamentation, complaint and grief. He who has drawn out the arrow has become composed, and will obtain peace of mind; he who has overcome all such circumstances will be free from sorrow and be blessed.

Kisa Gautami: She was grieving over the death of her son. She moved from door to door and at last came to Buddha. She made him a humble request to make her son alive. Buddha said he would do but he asked a handful of mustard seeds. He further commanded it must be taken from a house where no one had lost a child, husband, parent or friend.

She went from house to house but was unable to find one where nobody had died. She was tired and hopeless and sat down at the wayside watching the light of the city as they flickered up. And she realised that these lives flicker up for some time and are extinguished again.

This way she was taught that the lives of mortals in this world are troubled and brief and there is no means by which one can avoid deaths. As all earthen vessels made by the potter are being broken, so is the life of mortals. Death is inevitable.

Quick Revision Notes

- This lesson tells us about the life of Gautama Buddha, who was born in a royal family as Siddhartha.
- Once he saw a funeral processing, and monk begging for the alms.

- These sights moved them a lot and he decided to become a monk and started moving in search of enlightenment.
- He started meditation under a peepal tree and after seven days he got enlightenment and he became known as the Buddha (the Awakened or the Enlightened).
- He preached his first sermon at Benares.
- Once a woman came to him requesting to bring her dead son to life.
- Gautama Buddha asked the lady to bring handful of mustard seeds from the house where there had been no death.
- The lady moved from one house to another but she could not find a single house where no one has lost a child, husband, parents or friend.
- Then she came to know that death common to all and is the ultimate truth.