

THE SERMON AT BENARES

Q1. What is a sermon? How is it different from a lecture?

Ans. A sermon is a religious talk or a speech made by a renowned, religious personality in order to make people morally and spiritually uplifted and enlightened. It is different from a lecture. Lecture means a general topic related to any subject given in a college or university.

Q2. When her son died, Kisa Gotami goes from house to house. What does she ask for? Does she get it? Why not?

Ans. When her only son died, Kisa Gotami goes from house to house asking if she can get some medicine that can save her son's life who has died. She does not get any medicine because the boy was dead and possibly the dead cannot come to senses with any medicine.

Q3. Kisa Gotami again goes from house to house after she speaks with the Buddha. What she asks for the second time around? Does she get it? Why not?

Ans. After she speaks with the Buddha, Kisa Gotami again goes from house to house the second time. As per the directions of the Buddha, she now asks the people for a handful of mustard seeds provided they have not lost anyone in their families. But she could not get the mustard seeds because there is not a single house where no one has lost child, husband, parent or friend.

Q4. What does Kisa Gotami understand the second time that she failed to understand the first time? Was this what the Buddha wanted her to understand?

Ans. Kisa Gotami understands that death is inevitable. It is common to all. No one can escape it. She realises the fact that the fate of men is like the lights which flicker up and extinguish again. The Buddha also wanted her to understand the same fact.

Q5. Why do you think Kisa Gotami understand the second time that she failed to understand the first time? In what way did Buddha change her understanding?

Ans. Kisa Gotami realizes that death is inevitable when she cannot find any family untouched by it. The Buddha teaches her this by asking her to fetch mustard seeds from a house where no one has died. After searching every house and finding none without loss, she understands that death is common to all.

6. How do you usually understand the idea of selfishness? Do you agree with Lisa Vitamin that she was being selfish in her grief?

Ans. A selfish man is one who acts for his own sake. One whose actions are directed to benefit oneself owns selfishness. It is the pursuit of something regardless of their nature and gratification of emotions regardless of their source. We agree that Kisa Gotami was being selfish in her grief because she desired the medicine that can cure her dead boy which was not possible.