

Approved as a text for class five by the National Curriculum and  
Textbook Board since 2006

# **Hindu Religious Studies**

## **Class Five**

Written by  
Sunit Kumar Bhadra  
Niranjana Adhikari  
Moloy Kumar Saha

Edited by  
Dr. Narayan Chandra Bishwas

**National Curriculum and Textbook Board, Dhaka**

Published by  
**National Curriculum and Textbook Board**  
69-70, Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000.

---

[All rights reserved by the publisher]  
First Print (Bangla version) : September 2005  
First Print (English Version) : February 2007  
2nd Print (English version) : March 2008  
Reprint (English Version) : April 2009

**Computer Graphics**  
Laser Scan Limited  
15/2 Topkhana Road, BMA Bhaban.

**Cover & Illustrations:**  
G.M.A Razzaque

**Picture Coloured by**  
Ahmed Ullah

**Printing Supervision**  
Shah Taslima Sultana

**Design**  
National Curriculum and Textbook Board

Website version developed by Mars Solutions Limited 

---

## Preface

For improving the existing quality of Primary Education in Bangladesh, National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) in collaboration with PEDP-2 initiated an extensive program for development of curriculum and teaching learning materials in 2002. In the light of this program the curriculum, textbooks and other teaching learning materials of Primary levels have been prepared, revised and evaluated.

The textbook entitled, '**Hindu Religious Studies**' has been prepared on the basis of attainable competencies for the students of Class Five. The subject matter of the textbook is derived from the basic issues of the religion familiar to the children through their family practices. This will facilitate our young learners to know how they can make best use of this religious knowledge & values in their day-to-day life.

The contents of the book are analyzed and explained in such a manner with practical examples, illustrations and system of planned activities, that students are inspired to study the subject with a keen interest.

This book is originally published in Bangla. From 2007 NCTB is publishing the English version of the textbook. English is the language of choice in today's globalized world. To facilitate the verbal and written communication skills of our future citizens and suitably prepare them for international competition, we decided to translate the original Bangla textbooks into English. It's pleasant to note that the number of English medium schools in Bangladesh is increasing very fast. In this context NCTB decided to publish all the textbooks of Primary level in English. This was a big endeavour for us. Despite our all efforts the first edition may not be totally error free. However, in the future editions we shall try to remove all errors and discrepancies.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to those who have made their valuable contributions in writing, editing, evaluating and translating this book. I sincerely hope that the book will be useful to those for whom it has been prepared.

**Prof. Md. Mostafa Kamaludin**

Chairman

National Curriculum and Textbook Board

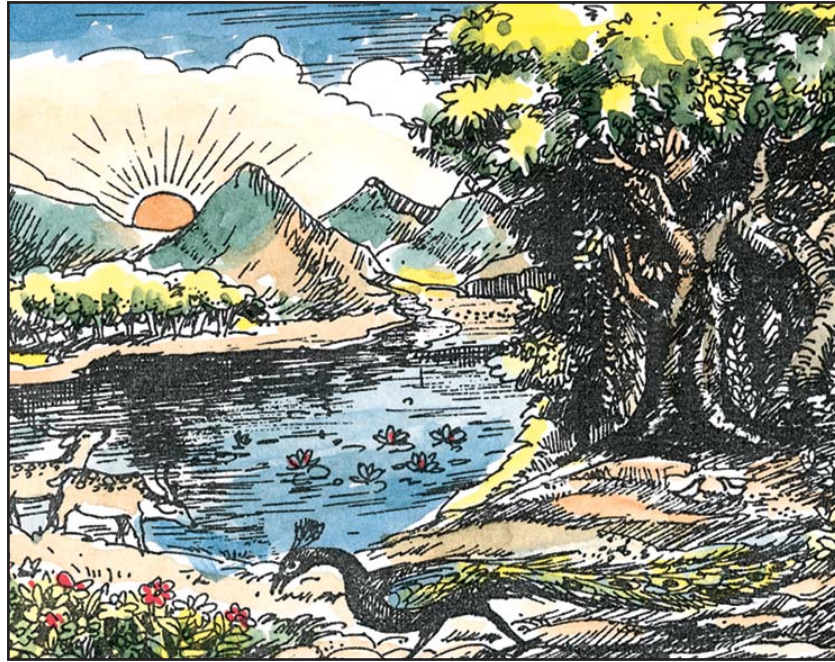
Dhaka

## Contents

<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>Chapter One</b> The Creator And His Creation	1
<b>Chapter Two</b> Mantra, Sloka And Prayer Poems	15
<b>Chapter Three</b> Religious Books, The Ramayana And The Mahabharata	55
<b>Chapter Four</b> Holiness And Cleanliness	81
<b>Chapter Five</b> A Devotion To Ishwara And Elders	95
<b>Chapter Six</b> Avotar (Incarnation)	115
<b>Chapter Seven</b> Moral Stories	132

## Chapter One

# The Creator And His Creation



Natural Scenery

This is our earth. This earth is full of varieties. There is the blue sky above our head. It is endless. It has the sun, the moon, the planets and the satellites. Numerous stars are also there. The light of these stars is seen in the darkness of night. However, stars are not visible at day-light as sun-light hides them all. The beauty of this earth is revealed by day. Then we can see the mountains, rivers, fields and flowers. Various kinds of beasts, birds and insects are also seen. Besides, there are human beings on this earth. Human beings are best of all creations. Men have conscience and intellect. They can conquer everything by dint of their intellect. They can travel everywhere - the land, the sea and the sky. That is why men are the best of all created beings.

These sky, air, creatures and natural beauty were not created all on a sudden. There is one who has created these things. He is the Creator. This noble Creator is called Ishwara by us. Ishwara is one and second to none. No one is greater than He is. He can do every thing. Every thing is under His control. No one has created Him. He is the creation of His own. So He is called self-born. What Ishwara does, is His 'Leela'. 'Leela' is His amusement or delight or pleasure. This 'Leela' is expressed in all his creations. The entire universe is His 'Leela'. Ishwara is eternal and infinite. His 'Leela' is diverse. Endless is His glory. The objective behind all his creations is to enjoy pleasure. He has created the universe out of His pleasure.

The relation between Ishwara and his creation is very intimate. It is like the relation between children and their parents. Ishwara is the origin of all creations. He also exists in all His creatures. Ishwara has created us. He is nourishing us, too. So we have to please Him by our worship. We have to devote ourselves to Him. We have to feel His existence in our hearts. We have to keep our faith firmly in Him. In order to worship Ishwara, we have to love all his creations. Loving His creations means loving Ishwara.

### Exercise

**1) Answer the following questions:**

- a. Describe our earth.
- b. What is the 'Leela' of Ishwara?
- c. How can we please Ishwara?
- d. Describe what is Ishwara in brief.

**2) Give brief answer to the following questions:**

- a. Why has Ishwara created this universe?
- b. Why are the men best of all creations?

- c. Why is Ishwara self-born?
- d. What is the objective of revealing 'Leela' of Ishwara?
- e. Where does Ishwara exist?
- f. How can we love Ishwara?

**3) Fill in the blanks:**

- a. Ishwara is one and \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Ishwara is eternal and \_\_\_\_\_
- c. The relation between Ishwara and his creatures is very \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ is the origin of all creations.
- e. Ishwara has created us and he is \_\_\_\_\_ us, too.
- f. Loving His \_\_\_\_\_ means loving Ishwara.

**4) Match the words from the right side with the words in the left:**

<p>We have the blue sky            Man is the            We call the Creator            Ishwara is            Ishwara is eternal and            To worship Ishwara we have</p>	<p>best of all creations.            Ishwara.            to love His creations.            infinite.            Almighty.            over our head.</p>
--	---

**5) Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

**a. The best of all creation is**

- 1. trees.
- 2. beasts and birds.
- 3. man.
- 4. the sun and the moon.

**b. The objective of Ishwara's 'Leela' is**

- 1. to expose wealth.
- 2. to enjoy pleasure.
- 3. to suffer pain.
- 4. to show power.

- c. **How is the relation between Ishwara and His creations?**
1. very pleasant.
  2. wonderful.
  3. intimate.
  4. hostile.
- d. **Who is the master of creation, preservation and destruction?**
1. the gods and goddesses.
  2. Ishwara.
  3. the king.
  4. the parent.
- e. **Where does the man travel?**
1. the forests.
  2. the sky.
  3. towns and villages.
  4. everywhere.



## Ishwara Exists In All Created Beings

We know that Ishwara is Almighty. He has created everything of this earth. The sky, the wind, the trees, the leaves, the flowers, the fruits, the mountains, the seas, the rivers, the deserts, men and the animals. Ishwara is the Creator of all these things. More to it, He exists in all His created beings. Amazingly enough, Ishwara creates the creatures as well as exists in them. But how does He exist there? He exists as soul and spirit.



Serving the creatures

There is Ishwara in all created beings. It means that He is the origin or source of life. Finally, both the creation and the universe become one within Him. It is said in the Holy Book Upanishada that Ishwara exists in all animate and inanimate objects. According to Upanishada, 'Sarbang Khalbidang Brahma' - everything is Brahma

or Ishwara. Poet Rabindranath has expressed it in his wonderful words:

You are infinite within the limit  
 You play on your tune,  
 Your manifestation is within me  
 Hence it is so melodious.

Ishwara is playing with His 'Leela' residing in the limit of His creatures and the universe. Since Ishwara resides in every created being, serving the creatures means serving Ishwara. And Ishwara is also pleased when His creatures are served. So to love all is to love Ishwara. Swami Vivekananda says, 'He who has mercy on creatures, serves Ishwara.'

This is why we should serve all creatures. We should also serve all human beings. We should take care of our pet animals. We should plant trees and nourish them as well. Thus we shall serve Ishwara who exists in all created beings. Here is a story about serving all creatures.

### **Serving the Creatures by King Rontidev**

In the ancient times, there was a pious king. His name was Rontidev. Once while observing 'Ajachak Brata', he started worshipping Bhagaban Shrikrishna.

Ajachak Brata means not to beg anything from any body. It also means that one has to live on what others give him. King Rontidev had to spend forty-eight days starving. He did not want food from anybody. Nobody gave him food, too, at his own will. On the forty-ninth day someone gave him some rice and 'payes'. He was about to take the food offered to him.

At that time a lean and thin man came to the king. The man was only skin and bone. He said,

-I did not get anything to eat for several days. Please give me something to eat. He had a dog, too. It was also reduced to a skeleton like him. The man also said,

-Not only me, my dog is also starving with me.

The king gave all his rice and payes to the man and his dog.

Suddenly something very strange happened.

The hungry man and his dog vanished in a moment. King Rontidev saw Bhagaban Srikrishna standing before him. King Rontidev fell upon the ground to make obeisance to Srikrishna.

Bhagaban Shrikrishna said, 'The example you have set for serving all creatures will remain immortal forever. You will have my mercy in this world and my company in the world hereafter.'

## Exercise

### 1. Answer the following questions:

- a) 'Ishwara exists in all creatures' - explain the sentence.
- b) 'Serving the creatures means serving Ishwara.' --- explain the comment in brief.
- c) Rewrite the story 'Serving the creatures by Rontidev' in your own words.

### 2. Give brief answers to the following questions:

- a) Who is the Creator of this world?
- b) What is the meaning of 'Ishwara exists in all created beings'?
- c) In which form Ishwara exists in His creatures?
- d) Who is served by serving creatures?
- e) What is 'Ajachak Brata'?

**3. Fill in the blanks:**

- We know that \_\_\_\_\_ is Almighty.
- \_\_\_\_\_ khalbidang Brahma.
- Ishwara \_\_\_\_\_ in all creatures.
- You are \_\_\_\_\_ within limit.
- While observing Ajachaka Brata, king Rontidev had to spend \_\_\_\_\_ days starving.

**4. Match the words from the right side with the words in the left:**

The creator of everything is	origin of life.
Ishwara is the	to love Ishwara.
To serve the creatures is	of our pet animals.
To love all is	Ishwara.
We should take care	to serve Ishwara.
The man had	a dog with him.

**5. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

- Ishwara exists in all creations as
  - soul
  - human being
  - God
  - nature.
- We should plant trees and
  - cut them.
  - pull them.
  - take care of them.
  - spoil them.
- Who observed 'Ajachak Brata'?
  - King Dasharatha.
  - Ramchandra.
  - King Rontidev.
  - Lakshmana.
- Who was standing before king Rontidev?
  - Bhagaban Vishnu.
  - Bhagaban Srikrishna.
  - Bhagabati Durga.
  - Mahadeva.

## Upasana and Prayer

Ishwara is Almighty. He is the controller of everything. He is gracious and merciful. He does good to us. So we should always remember Ishwara. We should praise Him too. There shall remain no distress if we take His shelter. It will make our life beautiful and happy. One can take his shelter through regular upasana. Upasana is a kind of worship. So we should worship Him regularly.

The word 'upa' means close and 'asan' means to sit. So the literal meaning of 'upasana' is to sit close to Ishwara. All our activities to get Ishwara are also called upasana. Upasana also means to call Ishwara whole-heartedly. Praying to Ishwara is also upasana. Meditation, puja, praises, prayer - all these are various forms of upasana. Upasana is an integral part of religion. It is necessary for us to keep our body and mind pure and healthy.

Ishwara has many forms. Upasana is of two kinds in the main: Idol worship and formless worship.

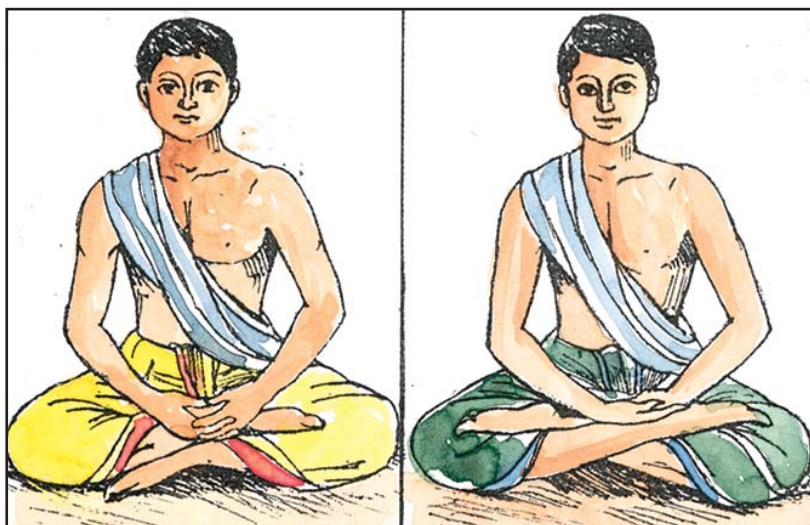
**Idol Worship:** Idol means a thing that has a shape or a form. Idolatry or idol worship means worshipping Ishwara in some form or shape. Many gods and goddesses are mentioned in the Holy Books of the Hindu religion. They are Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Kali, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesh and others. These gods and goddesses are the physical expressions of Ishwara. Gods and goddesses are incarnations of Ishwara. So we worship Ishwara by worshipping the gods and goddesses. A worshipper reaches Ishwara in physical form through idolatry.

**Formless Worship:** Formless is something that has no physical form or shape. It also refers to something, which cannot be given a shape or a form. Ishwara can be worshipped as an entity with no form or shape.

The shapeless and formless existence of Ishwara is called 'Brahmabhab'. The Brahma lies there as a spirit only. In a formless worship a devotee feels Ishwara in the depth of his or her heart. There the worshipper prays for his or her welfare.

Either idolatry or formless - both are ways of worshipping Ishwara. It is said in the Holy book, 'Formless Brahma Himself takes a physical form, when it is necessary'. It means the one who is shapeless is bodied also. Bhagaban Shrikrishna says in Gita, 'As somebody worships me, so I shower my mercy on him or her.' It makes no difference whether we worship Ishwara as an idol or a shapeless entity.

Upasana is an everyday work. We worship Ishwara three times a day: morning, noon and evening. We need purity of our body and mind for worshipping Ishwara. We have to wash and purify ourselves. We can worship at temples. It can also be done at our home. One has to sit before a god for one's worship. Usually the worshipper sits straight facing north or east. There are many prescribed 'asans' or sittings for worshipping Ishwara. However, 'Padmaasan' and 'Sukhasan' are considered suitable for all kinds of worships.



Padmaasan

Sukhasan

Praise Ishwara during worship. Think of His greatness and nobility. Worship leads us to the path of honesty and religion. One should pray for the well-being of oneself and others during the worship. Worship can be done individually. It can also be done collectively with others. For collective worship everybody assembles in a temple on a particular day of the week. Then they all pray together and utter different mantras silently. Here is a mantra with its simple meaning in English:

'Narayanah Parang Brahmatatang Narayanah Parah  
Narayanah Para Jyotiratma, Narayanah Parah'  
(Taityirio Aranyaka, 10/11/4)

Simple meaning:

Narayan is the best Brahma theory, Narayan is the absolute Brahma, Narayan is like absolute knowledge, Naryan is the absolute soul.

## Prayer

Prayer means to want something. It also means to beg something to Ishwara. Ishwara is the Creator. He is the sovereign Lord of this world. We depend on His mercy for everything. He is Merciful. So we pray to Him from the core of our heart.

Prayer is part of worship. We can pray to Ishwara even when we do not worship. We pray to Him before we start any good work. We also pray to Him when we are in some danger. So we can pray to Him under any situation. But He cannot be worshipped anywhere. As in worship, so in prayer the purity of body and mind is needed. Sunrise, midday and sunset - these are three special times for prayer. Generally, hands should be folded while praying to Ishwara.

Modesty is also needed at the time of prayer. Modesty is a kind of feeling of mind. He is the master, I am His slave; He is the giver, I am the receiver - these are some expressions of modesty.

Prayer can also be done individually and collectively like worship. There are many mantras for prayer in our Holy Books. A mantra with simple meaning is given below:

Keshava Sheshharan Narayana Janardana  
Govinda Paramananda Mung Sanuddhar madhava  
(Gopalpoorbataponio Upanishada : Shrikrishnastuti, Sloka 14)

Simple meaning:

O Keshava, O Dukkaharan, O Narayana, O Janardana,  
O Govvinda, O Paramananda Madhava - save me.

We should begin our work with the name of Ishwara. We should praise Him everytime we worship and pray. This is an integral part of religion. Ishwara is pleased if we praise Him. It also makes us happy. Great is the importance of worship and prayer. Both worship and prayer keep our body and mind fit and pure. They make our mind cheerful. Constant worship and prayer lead human beings to the path of honesty and religion. Thus we become honest and pious. We can develop ourselves step by step. We can feel Ishwara within our heart. We shall worship Ishwara and pray to Him at temples or at our homes.

### Exercise

**1) Answer the following questions:**

- a) What is 'Upasana'? Discuss.
- b) What is idolatry? Discuss.
- c) What do you know about formless worship? Discuss.
- d) Write a mantra of worship with its simple meaning.



**2. Give brief answers to the following questions:**

- a) What is the meaning of the word 'Upasana'?
- b) How many kinds of Upasana are there and what are they?
- c) What is formless worship?
- d) Name two kinds of asan or sittings for prayer.
- e) What is prayer?
- f) How to pray?
- g) What is the necessity of Upasana and prayer?

**3. Fill in the blanks:**

- a) Ishwara is \_\_\_\_\_
- b) It is our \_\_\_\_\_ to worship regularly.
- c) Ishwara is the \_\_\_\_\_ Master of the world.
- d) Prayer means to \_\_\_\_\_ something from Ishwara.
- e) \_\_\_\_\_ is part of worship.
- f) During worship \_\_\_\_\_ of body and mind is necessary.
- g) One has to have \_\_\_\_\_ of mind at the time of worship.

**4. Match the words from the right side with the words in the left:**

Upasana means	two kinds.
Upasana leads man to honesty	Brahmabhab.
Upasana is mainly of	while praying.
To worship Ishwara in	to sit close to Ishwara.
different shapes is	
The shapeless spirit of Ishwara	and religiousness.
is called	
Hands should be folded	idolatry.

**5. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:****a) Upasana means sitting**

- |                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. beside Ishwara. | 2. close to Ishwara. |
| 3. under Ishwara.  | 4. far from Ishwara  |

**b) How many kinds of Upasana are there?**

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. four. | 2. two.   |
| 3. six.  | 4. eight. |

**c) Upasana is**

- |                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. a weekly work.  | 2. an everyday work.    |
| 3. a monthly work. | 4. a fort-nightly work. |

**d) We can pray**

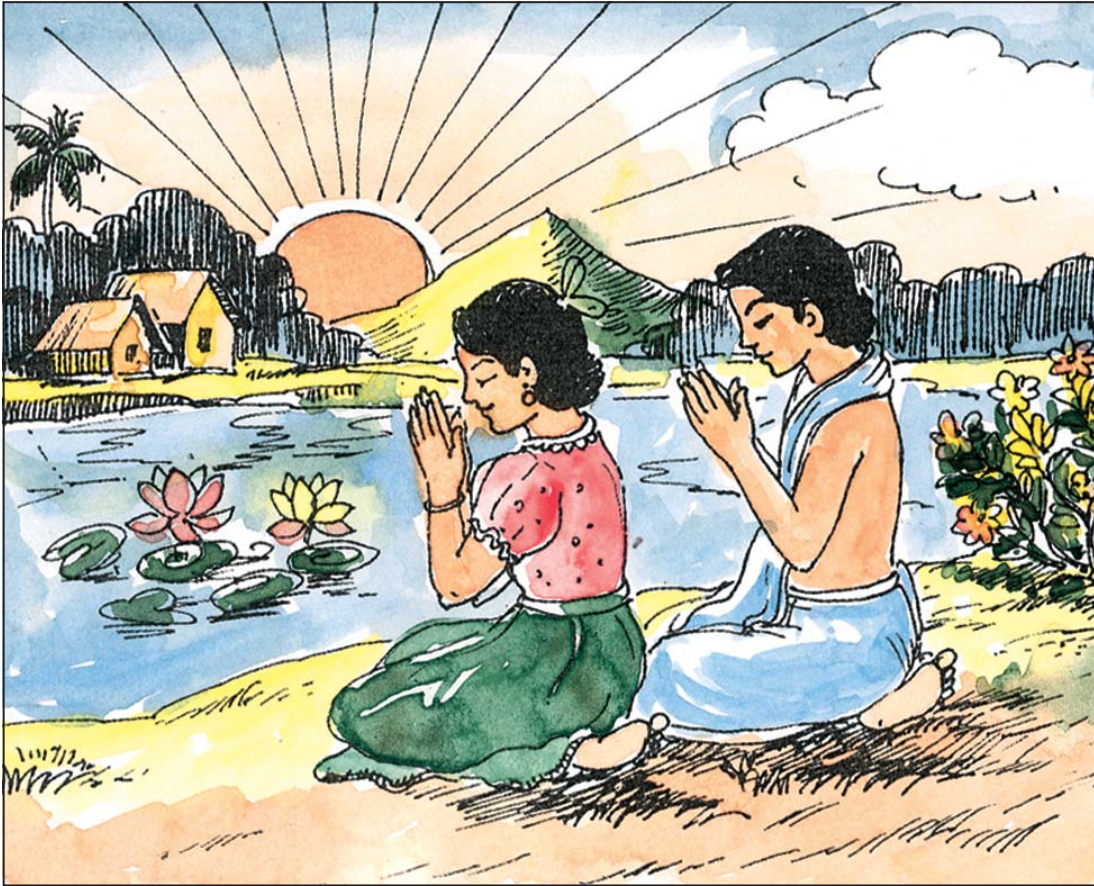
- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. at temple. | 2. in classroom. |
| 3. at home.   | 4. anywhere.     |

**e) What is gained by Upasana?**

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. purity of body and mind. | 2. wealth and resources. |
| 3. fame and honour.         | 4. knowledge.            |

## Chapter Two

# Mantra, Sloka And Prayer Poems



Children are Praying

We know that the book of religion is a Holy Book. Remarkable Holy Books of Hinduism are the Vedas, the Upanishada, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Gita, the Puranas etc. There are mantras and slokas in these Holy Books. Ishwara, gods and goddesses are glorified in these mantras and slokas. Eulogy means describing the beauty, quality and sublimity of Ishwara, gods and goddesses. It also means admiring and remembering them. We not only praise our gods and

goddesses, but also pray to them. We pray for the well-being of our body and mind. We pray for the benefit and peace of all.

There are many mantras and slokas related to praises and prayers in our Holy Books. These were written in Sanskrit in the ancient times. Bangla was not in vogue at that time. We read and recite mantras and slokas in Sanskrit. However, we translate them into Bangla to know the meaning. Besides, there are many prayer poems in Bangla.

Eulogy of gods and goddesses is a part of Hindu religion. Ishwara and gods and goddesses are satisfied if we praise them. Then they bless us. Praising makes our mind holy. It widens our outlook. It also awakens the feeling for Ishwara in our mind.

We shall learn how to recite the mantras correctly. We shall learn their simple meaning in Bangla. We shall also learn some prayer poems in Bangla.

### **The Vedas**

Sabita Pashchatat Sabita Purastat  
 Sabitottarattat Sabitadharattat.  
 Sabita Noh Subatu Sarbatating  
 Sabita No Rastang Dirghamayuh.  
 (Rigveda 10/36/14)

### **Simple Meaning:**

Whether on the west, on the east, on the north or on the south, may the Suryadeva or Sungod give us fulfilment and long life.

## Upanishada

Neelah Patango Harito Lohitakkha  
 Storhidgarva rhitabah Samudrah.  
 Anadimattang Bibhutben bartase  
 Jata Jatani Bhubanani Biswa.  
 (Shwetaswatar, 4/4)

### Simple Meaning:

You are the blue insect, or bee, you are the parrot of green colour and red eyes. You are the cloud with lightning, you are all seasons - all seas. You have no beginning, you exist everywhere; the whole world has been created from you.

## Shrimatbhagavatgita

Anekbahudar-baktanetrang  
 Pashyami Tbang Sarbato Thantarupam.  
 Nantang Na Madhyang Na Punastabading  
 Pashyami Bishweshwara Ishwaraupa.  
 (11/16)

### Simple Meaning:

Numerous are your hands, bellies, faces and eyes. I have seen your eternal manifestation everywhere. But O the Lord of the universe, O the manifestation of the universe, I cannot see your beginning, ending and middle anywhere.

Tbamadideva Purushah Purana -  
 Stbamasya Bishwasya Parang Nidhanam.  
 Bettasi Bedyancha Parancha Dham  
 Tbayata tang Bishwamanantarup.  
 (Gita 11/38)

### Simple Meaning:

O the eternal manifestation, you are the eternal God, you are the eternal being without beginning or end. You are the only shelter of the universe. You are the one who knows and again you are the one who is to be known. You are the absolute abode -- you exist as you encompass the whole world.

### Shrishi Chandi

Sharanagatadeenarta-paritranaporayane.

Sarbasyartihare Devi Narayani Namosthuto Te.

(11/12)

### Simple Meaning:

O goddess, protector of the unprotected, saviour of the poor and the sick, destroyer of sorrows of all, O Narayani, we bow to you.

### Shivamahimnahstotram

Asitagirisamang Syat Kajjalang Sindhupatre.

Suratarubarshakha Lekhani Patramurbi.

Likhti jadi Griheetba Sarada Sarbakalang

Tadapi taba Gunanameesh Parang Na Jati

(Pushpadanta Shivamahimnahstotram, Sloka Number 32)

### Simple Meaning:

O Lord (Shiva), if the ink is like the black mountain, if the sea is ink-pot, if the pen is made by the branch of Kalpataru the best tree of heaven, if the earth is the page for writing and the goddess Saraswati herself writes for time eternal, yet the greatness of your virtues shall not come to an end.

## Bangla Prayer Poems in English Translation

(1)

Salute to Sharbani Eeshani Indrani  
Ishwarai Ishwara-jaya.  
Aparna fearless Annapurna Joya  
Maheshwari Mahamaya.

... ..

O mother Parvati, I am very poor  
Now I am in a great danger.  
Always restless is the water on lotus-leaf  
Afraid and scared bashful and hesitant  
Lest I should not embarrass you in my danger  
O Abhoya, the fearless, please be merciful  
On me, so that I may cross this world-ocean.  
(Krittivasi Ramayana)

(2)

If I don't know  
how to beg your mercy,  
please accept me  
at your feet.  
What I build up  
I forget at ease,  
I make worship of happiness  
with fruits and flowers.

Don't keep that dust  
in the playhouse with hatred,  
please wake it up  
hurling the shell of fire.

(Abridged from Geetanjali by Rabindranath Tagore)

## Exercise

### 1. Answer the following questions:

- a. Write the mantra of the Vedas from your text book with simple meaning.
- b. Recite a mantra from the Upanishada.
- c. Recite a sloka of the Shrimadbhagabatgita from your text book.
- d. Write a sloka from the Shrishri Chondi with simple meaning.
- e. Recite a Bangla prayer poem from your text book.

### 2. Give answers in short:

- a. Write the names of four holy books of Hindu religion.
- b. What is praising?
- c. Who are mentioned in mantra and sloka and why?
- d. What is the benefit of reciting mantra and sloka?

### 3. Fill in the blanks:

- a. Sobita No Rastang \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ Purusho Purana  
Stamasya Bishwasya Parang Nidhanam.
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ Paritranparayane.
- d. Namaste Sharbani \_\_\_\_\_  
Ishwarai Ishwara-jaya.



## Gods, Goddesses and Puja

We know that Ishwara is one and second to none. He has unlimited power. His virtues are endless. He is the father of this world. He has no form or shape. He can assume any shape at any time, although He has no form. He comes down with some special virtues or powers. Then He becomes corporeal. The deities are physical expressions of Ishwara. It means, they are physical expressions of the special virtues or powers of Ishwara. The strength of Ishwara is easily reflected in gods and goddesses. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Durga, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Ganesh are different forms of the same Ishwara. Gods and goddesses own powers of special kind. For example, Brahma creates things. The creative power of Ishwara is in Brahma. Ishwara's power of nourishment is in Vishnu. The destructive power of Ishwara is in Shiva. Similarly, Durga is the goddess of strength. Goddess Lakshmi is the owner of riches, while goddess Saraswati stands for knowledge. Agnideva is the god of burning. Ishwara embodies the combined forces of all gods and goddesses. The Vedas is our first Holy Book. Then the Holy Book called 'Puranas' was written. These Holy Books contains the expressions and powers of gods and goddesses. Gods and goddesses are pleased if they are offered puja. Ishwara is pleased if gods and goddesses are pleased.

Puja means adoration or prayer or worship. It also means special adoration of some physical form of Ishwara with flowers, water and other ingredients. In fact, we worship the same Ishwara, if we worship different gods and goddesses. According to Gita, those who worship gods and goddesses, worship Ishwara in the real sense.

Gods and goddesses have miraculous powers and glory. They can do a thing very easily, what men cannot. For example, Saraswati is the goddess of knowledge. Men acquire knowledge by the grace of

Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth. Wealth and riches are gained by the grace of Lakshmi. Goddess Durga protects humankind from mishaps and dangers. So another name of goddess Durga is Bipattarii or protector from danger. She removes the distress of human beings. So Durgotinishini or destroyer of distress is another name of Durga.

The images of gods and goddesses are placed in temples or houses. Some deities are worshipped every day and some are on particular days. For example, the puja of god Vishnu and goddess Lakshmi is performed every day. They are called Griho-devata or house-gods. On the other hand, Durga Puja, Saraswati Puja, Brahma Puja etc are performed on particular 'tithi' or lunar days and moments. Some gods and goddesses are described below.

### **Durga**

Durga is the goddess of power. She is the cumulative expression of all the powers of the universe. She is the mother-symbol of Ishwara. She has many names. Mahamaya, Bhagabati, Chandi, Mahalakshmi, Mahakali are some of them. Durga killed a demon called Durgom. She destroys durgoti or distress. So she is given the name Durga.

The complexion of goddess Durga is as bright yellow. It is the colour of Atoshi flowers. Her face is as beautiful as a full-moon. She is trinoyona or three-eyed. Her one eye is in the middle of her forehead. There is a curved moon on one side of her head. Lion is her carriage. Durga has ten hands. So she is also called Doshabhuj or ten-handed. She holds ten weapons in her ten hands.

We find goddess Durga in battle dress. She fights with the weapons in her ten hands. She punishes the evil and nourishes the good.



Durga, the goddess

Durga killed Mahishasur. So she is called Mahishmardini. She killed two demons called Shumbha and Nishumbha. The stories of Durga are written in our Holy Book Shrishrichandi. Chandi is to be read during Chandi Puja.

There is a definite tithi or lunar day for Durga Puja. It is performed in autumn. So it is also called Sharadiya Puja or autumnal worship. Durga Puja performed in spring is called Basanti or springtime worship. However, the autumnal worship is more known as Durga Puja.

Durga does good to us. So she is called Sarbamangala or all-benefactress. Durga gives us what we want to her. We are freed from any danger if we remember her name. We should say 'Durga Durga' before a journey.

### **Salutation mantra for goddess Durga:**

Sarbamangalmangalye Shive Sarbarthosadhiuke.  
Sharanye Tryambake Gauri Narayani Namosthute.

Simple Meaning :

O the giver of all benefits, the bountiful, the giver of all meanings, the symbol of shelter, the three-eyed, the fair complexioned, Narayani, We bow to you.

### **Lakshmi**

Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth. She sits on a lotus. She has two hands. She has a lotus in her right hand and a bunch of grains in the left. A basket of riches is on her left lap. Her complexion is golden. Her carriage is an owl.

Lakshmi Puja is held at the full-moon night in the month of Aswin. This Puja is also called Kojagori Lakshmi Puja. We gain wealth if Lakshmi is satisfied. In many houses Lakshmi is adored as the house-goddess. There Lakshmi Puja is performed on every Thursday. Panchali is read during Lakshmi Puja. Ringing a bell is forbidden while worshipping Lakshmi.

There are many stories about the greatness of Lakshmi. Let us listen to such a story. Once there was a Brahmin widow. She had a son. They were very poor. They begged alms, but could not earn their livelihood even by begging. The Brahmin widow fell in distress along with her son. Finding no other way she took shelter with her son in her brother's house. Her brother was not also a rich man. So the widow and her son lived in extreme hardship. The son worked all the day in the field tending cattle. His aunt could not tolerate him at all. She did not even give him enough to eat. The widow used to shed tears in silence at the misfortune of her son. Moreover, she gave in secret some of her food to the son working in the field.



Goddess Lakshmi

The son of Brahmin was very pious. He uttered the name of goddess Lakshmi in silence despite all his distress. He prayed, 'Mother, please remove our distress. I shall worship you all my life.'

One night the Brahmin widow gave her son a piece of sweetmeats to eat secretly. The aunt overlooked it. Then she complained to her husband about the Brahmin widow and her son. On that very day, he drove away his sister and nephew from his house.

It was a dark night. They lost their way as they walked towards an unknown destination. After some time they reached a forest. The mother and her son were at a loss. They lay down under a tree there.

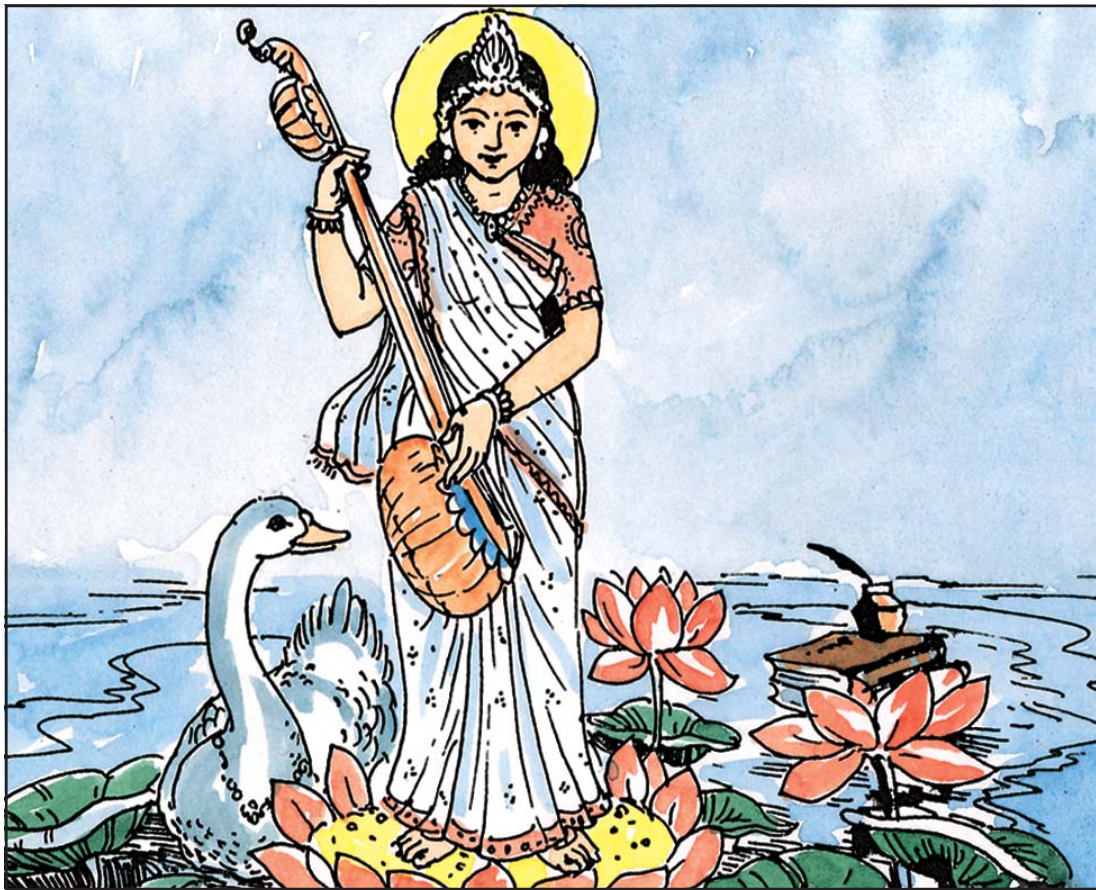
On the next morning they woke up gazing at a very beautiful old lady. She was standing before them. She had a small packet in her hand. The old lady said, 'My child, you seem to be starving. I am Lakshmi, I am giving you some paddy. Sell half of this paddy in the shop near the forest and buy something to eat. Scatter the rest of the paddy on a piece of fallow land. It will bring you good fortune. There is a hut made of leaves on the other side of this field. Take shelter there.' Saying so, Lakshmi in the guise of an old woman, went away.

The Brahmin lady and her son sold half of the paddy as mother Lakshmi advised them. They bought food with that money and ate the same. Then they bowed to mother Lakshmi with folded hands. The son of Brahmin scattered the remaining paddy around the field. At night the mother and her son slept in the hut. The next morning the Brahmin son saw a beautiful scenery. The uncultivated land was full of golden paddy. The joy of the mother and her son was boundless. They sold the paddy and got much money. They worshipped goddess Lakshmi with utmost devotion.

On the next day, the landlord heard that all his uncultivated land was full of golden crops. He visited the hut of the Brahmin widow. He gave her all the uncultivated land as a gift. He also made a big house for the lady and her son. Along with that he asked all his people to worship goddess Lakshmi.

### Saraswati

Saraswati is the power of knowledge of Ishwara. She is the goddess of learning. Her complexion is fair. Her dress is white. She sits on a white lotus. She holds a book in her one hand and a veena in the other. She is also called 'Veenapani' for the lute she holds. A white swan is her carriage.



Goddess Saraswati

Saraswati puja is performed on the fifth day of Shukla Paksha or the light half of the month of Magh. Shukla Paksha is the fortnight during which the moon is increasingly visible till it attains fullness. This tithi or the holy hour is also called Shripanchami. Saraswati Puja is meant specially for the learners. It is observed with pomp and grandeur in our educational institutions including schools, colleges and universities. Saraswati Puja is also performed along with autumnal Durga Puja.

You should perform Saraswati Puja for acquiring knowledge and learning. Recite the 'Pronam Mantra' of Saraswati before you start your study. Mother Saraswati shall shower mercy and you will gain much knowledge.

### **Kartik (Kartikeya)**

Kartikeya is the chief commander of gods. He is known as Kartik. His complexion is as bright as molten gold. His appearance is extremely beautiful. He wears various ornaments around his body. He has two hands. He holds a bow with arrows in his hand. He killed the demons in the war between demons and gods. A peacock is his carriage.





Kartik

Kartik Puja is performed on the last day of the month of Kartik. It is also observed during Durga Puja. The devotees usually pray for children to Kartik while worshipping him.

## Ganesh

The complexion of Ganesh is red. His head is like that of an elephant. He has a tooth and a trunk. Big is his belly. He wears an upobeet or a sacred thread on his neck. He has four hands. His carriage is a mouse.



Ganesh

Ganesh is the god of siddhi or success. Success is attained by worshipping Ganesh. So he is called 'Siddhidata' or the giver of success. Ganesh Puja has to be performed at the beginning of worshipping all gods.

The businessmen usually perform Ganesh Puja at the time of opening a Halkhata. (fresh account-book).

Remembering the name of Ganesh before any activity brings prosperity to men. 'Shukla Chaturthi' or the fourth day of Bhadra is called 'Ganesh Chaturthi'. Ganesh Puja may also be performed on the fourth day of Magh. Besides, it is also observed during Durga Puja. Ganesh Puja is a big festival in South India. The worshippers of Ganesh are called Ganapatya.

## Brahma

Brahma is the god of creation. Ishwara creates everything in the guise of Brahma. He has created the universe and all other things. Brahma has four faces. His complexion is red and fair. He has four hands. His two right hands hold a spoon to pour butter and a string of beads. His two left hands hold a bowl and a pot of butter. Brahma's carriage is a swan. He sits on a red lotus.



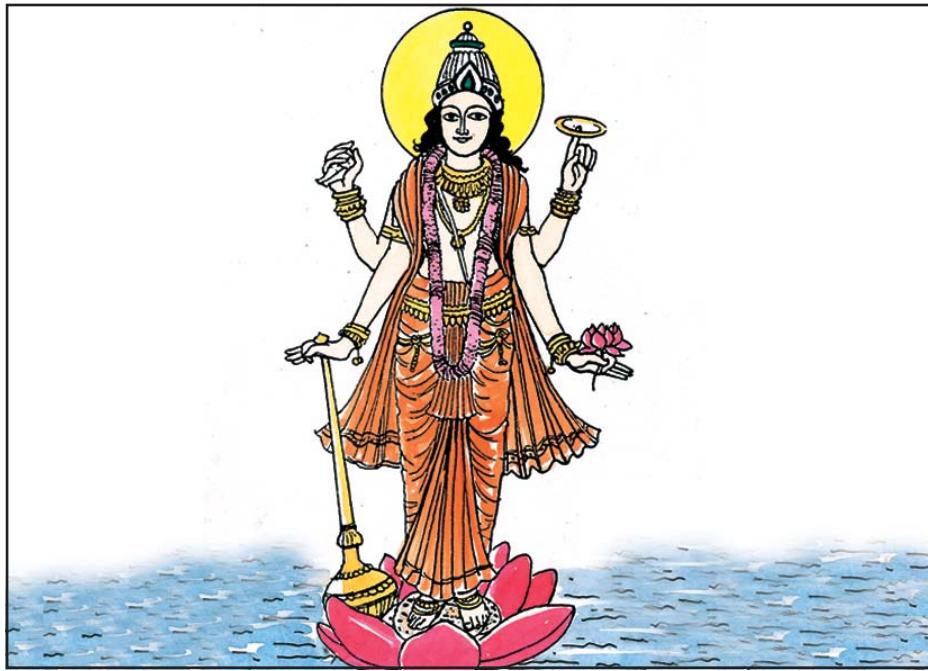
Brahma

Brahma Puja is performed on the specific moments of lunar days. It is performed on the day when Brahma stays on the earth. The date of Brahma Puja can be determined by counting tithi or lunar days. Brahma loves red flowers. We offer red flowers during Brahma's worship.

## Vishnu

The expression of Ishwara that nourishes the creations is called Vishnu. He rears and protects everything of this world. So Vishnu is called Master of Nourishment.

Vishnu has four hands. He holds four different things in his four hands. These are Shankha (conch), Chakra (wheel), Goda (mallet) and Padma (lotus). The Chakra or wheel of Vishnu is called Sudarshan. It means good-looking. His complexion is like the light of the moon. He lives in 'Baikunthadham'. His carriage is a bird called 'Garurh'.



Vishnu

Vishnu Puja is performed during all other worships. There is no fixed date for Vishnu Puja. It can be performed any day. The worshippers of Vishnu are called Vaishnavas.

Narayana is another name of Vishnu. He has done good to this earth in the guise of various avatars or incarnations. Our sins are pardoned if we remember Vishnu. It makes our mind sacred and peaceful.

## Shiva

Shiva is the god of destruction. He brings equality by destruction. Brahma creates everything anew after destroying the same. Shiva destroys the evil for our good. He is called Shiva since he is beneficial to us. Shiva has many other names - Rudra, Pashupati, Mahadeva etc.

Shiva's complexion is snow-white. His hair is matted. A curved moon lies on the upper side of his forehead. He holds a damru (a small drum) and a horn in his hand. Trishul is his main weapon. Shiva wears tiger's skin. His carriage is a bull.



Shiva

The Puja of Shiva can be performed any time. But it is specially performed on the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight of Falgun. This tithi is called Shiva Chaturdashi. The night of Shiva Chaturdashi is known as Shivaratri or Shivanight. The worshippers of Shiva are called Shaiva.

Shiva is satisfied at little. He is fond of the leaves of wood-apples. These are indispensable for Shiva's worship.

## Exercise

### 1. Answer the following questions:

- a. What do you mean by gods and goddesses?
- b. What is Puja?
- c. Describe goddess Durga. When is Durga Puja performed?
- d. Write the Salutation Mantra of Durga with simple meaning.
- e. Describe Saraswati.
- f. Describe the appearance of Vishnu.

### 2. Answer the following questions in short:

- a. Write the names of three gods.
- b. What does goddess Durga stand for?
- c. How many hands does goddess Durga have?
- d. What does goddess Lakshmi stand for?
- e. What does goddess Saraswati stand for?
- f. What does god Brahma stand for?
- g. What do we say when Ishwara assumes some form?
- h. What does Vishnu stand for?
- i. What does Vishnu do?
- j. What is the date of Shiva Chaturdashi?

### 3. Fill in the blanks:

- a. Ishwara has no \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Durga, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Ganesh are different forms of the same \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Brahma \_\_\_\_\_ everything.
- d. Vishnu is the Master of \_\_\_\_\_
- e. The wheel of Vishnu is called \_\_\_\_\_
- f. The worshipers of Vishnu are known as \_\_\_\_\_
- g. \_\_\_\_\_ is our ancient Holy Book.
- h. \_\_\_\_\_ creates in the guise of Brahma.

- i. The form in which Ishwara nourishes his creation is called \_\_\_\_\_
- j. \_\_\_\_\_ is to be read during Durga Puja.
- k. \_\_\_\_\_ is the goddess of riches.
- l. \_\_\_\_\_ is performed before worshipping all gods and goddesses.
- m. \_\_\_\_\_ is the god of success.
- n. The worshippers of Shiva are called \_\_\_\_\_
- o. \_\_\_\_\_ is the carriage of Shiva.

**4. Match the words from right side with the words in the left:**

Ishwara has	the forms of Ishwara.
Gods and goddesses are	miraculous power.
Puja is performed to	bright like otoshi flowers.
Gods and goddesses own glory and	no form.
Dura's complexion is	an owl.
Durga Puja is performed in	chief commander of gods.
The carriage of Lakshmi is	destruction.
The seat of Saraswati is	the name of Shiva is recalled.
God Kartikeyo is the	in autumn.
Shiva is the god of	white lotus.
Sins are pardoned if	nourishes us.
Bishnu	satisfy gods and goddesses.

**5. Give tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

a. What is the physical form of Ishwara?

1. Bhagaban
2. planet.
3. gods and goddesses.
4. stars.

b. Our ancient Holy Book is

1. The Vedas.
2. The Ramayana.
3. The Mahabharata.
4. The Puranas.



c. What does goddess Durga stand for?

1. knowledge.
2. riches.
3. creation.
4. power.

d. What does goddess Lakshmi stand for?

1. creation.
2. power.
3. riches.
4. knowledge.

e. The form in which Ishwara nourishes his creation is

1. Durga.
2. Vishnu.
3. Shiva.
4. Lakshmi.

f. What does goddess Saraswati stand for?

1. knowledge.
2. riches.
3. power.
4. creation.

g. How many weapons does Durga hold in her ten hands?

1. five.
2. seven.
3. ten.
4. twelve.

h. What is the name of the wheel of Vishnu?

1. Sulochan.
2. Subarna.
3. Sudarshan.
4. Subhasan.

i. Worshippers of Vishnu are called

1. Vaishnabas
2. Shakta.
3. Shiba.
4. Ganapatya.

j. Kartikeya is the

1. chief commander of gods.
2. king of gods.
3. ambassador of all gods.
4. enemy of gods.

k. What is the carriage of Saraswati?

1. peacock.
2. white swan.
3. mouse.
4. owl.

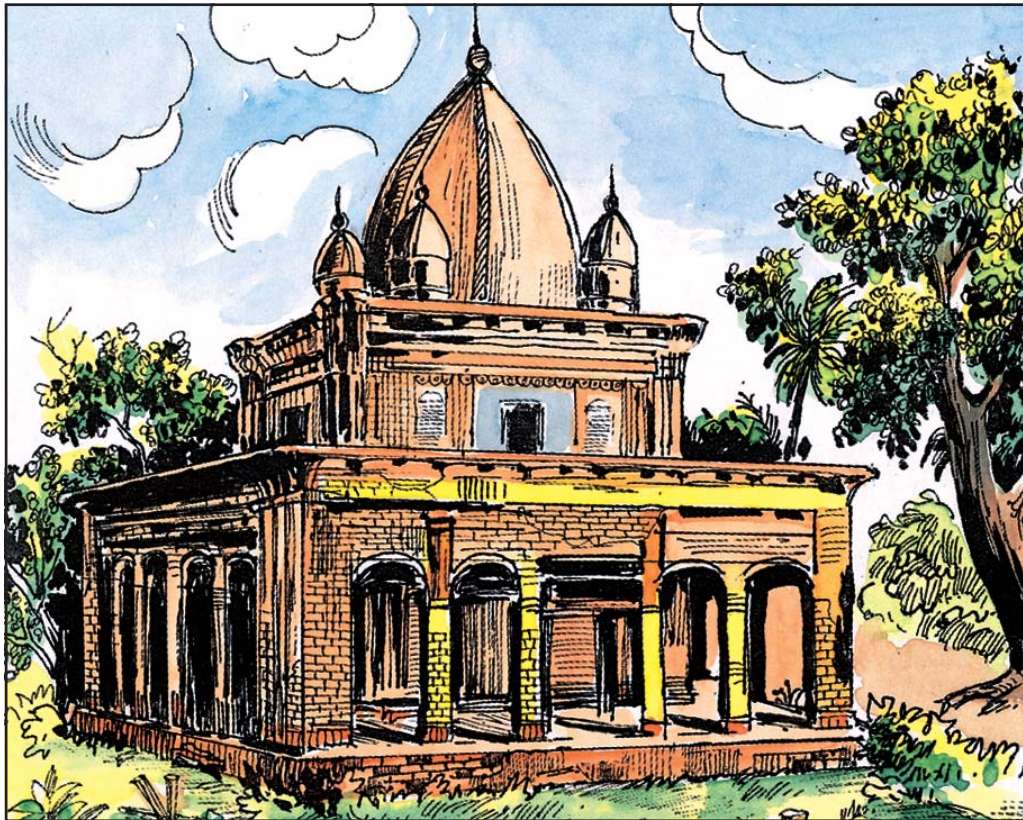
l. What is the name of the worshippers of Shiva?

1. Vaishnabas.
2. Shaktas.
3. Shaivas.
4. Ganapatya.

## Temples and Pilgrimages

A temple is a house of deities. There are idols of different gods and goddesses in a temple. They are worshipped there. Gods and goddesses are holy. They live in temples. This is why all temples are holy houses.

Temples are named after the names of idols or deities residing there. For example, the temple of Shiva is named after the name of god Shiva. A Kali temple is named after the name of goddess Kali. The temple of Vishnu is named after the name of god Vishnu and so on.



## Temple

We worship gods and goddesses. The leading ones among them are Shiva, Vishnu, Durga, Kali, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Sita, Manasa etc. The Puja and festivals of these gods and goddesses take place in different parts of India and Bangladesh. There are numerous temples of these gods and goddesses. Moreover, there are many temples in some other countries, such as Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, and England etc.

These temples of deities are also known as pilgrimages to the votaries and worshippers. The devotees visit these temples. They witness the gods and goddesses there. They also offer their devotion to them.

Some temples have been set up on the tombs of saints, ascetics, famous personalities, kings and Maharajas. These are called tomb temples. People also visit these temples as pilgrimages.

Men make temples to worship gods and goddesses, it means Ishwara. Devotion to Ishwara is the main reason for setting up these temples. However, temples are also valuable as social organizations.

Temples are holy and virtuous places. These are not only places of religion, but also the places of pilgrimage. Mind becomes holy by visiting temples. Men convey their prayer to gods and goddesses placed in these temples. Thus they attain virtue. When people visit temples, religious feelings arise in their mind. This feeling widens their hearts. No narrowness remains there. So every one should visit temples in a convenient moment to witness and worship the deities.

Description of some famous temples:

### **Dhakeshwari Temple**

There are many temples of gods and goddesses in Dhaka. Dhakeshwari temple is the main and most ancient of them.

It has an idol of goddess Durga, known as goddess Dhakeshwari. She is worshipped thrice a day: morning, noon and evening. There are many Shiva temples near the temple of Dhakeshwari goddess. Besides, a natmandir or a theatre is situated in front of the Dhakeshwari temple. Many renovation works have been done recently.

Dhakeshwari temple is a sacred hub of pilgrims belonging to Hindu religion. Worship, food offering, prayer and other rituals are performed everyday in this temple. People from home and abroad gather here to witness and worship the idols. A New Year's Fair takes place in its courtyard on the first Baishakh, the starting month of the Bangla calendar. Numerous people visit the temple and worship the deities in a befitting manner.

### **Kali Temple of Chinishpur**

Chinishpur is a village, two miles on the north-west of Narshingdi. It is not far away from Dhaka. Saint Ramprasad founded a temple in this village. The temple is an ancient one. There is an idol of Shiva in another temple close to it. The site is very beautiful with a big banyan tree beside the temple. Kali Puja is performed here annually on the last day of the dark fortnight of Jaisthya, the second month of the Bangla calendar. A fair takes place on this occasion. Many people attend the Puja and fair. The goddess is worshipped here daily on a regular basis.

### **Meher Kali Temple**

Meher Kali temple is situated at the village Meher under Chandpur district. Saint Sarbananda Thakur is the founder of this temple. It is an ancient temple. Kali Puja is held here on the last day of each dark fortnight of a lunar month. An annual fair and festival on Paush Sankranti, the last day of Paush, the ninth month of Bangla calendar takes place marking the death

anniversary of Sarbananda Thakur. In other temples close to it, the idols of Shiva and other deities are found. Worship and prayers are held here regularly. Thousands of devotees gather here during the fair and festival.

### **Kantaji Temple**

The Navaratna temple of Kantaji is situated at Kaharol under Dinajpur district. The noble king Pran Nath started its construction. His son King Ramanath finished the work. In 1752 the great king Ramanath dedicated this temple to Rukshminikanta, also known as Kantaji. Rukshminikanta is another name of Shrikrishna.

There is an idol of Kantaji in this temple. Its architectural design is very attractive. There are many illustrations of the stories from Hindu mythology drawn on the walls of this temple. Some examples are the fight between Rama and Ravana, martial procession of goddess Chandi and the battle of Kurukshetra. Many pictures of Krishna's amusement are portrayed in clay on the walls of this temple. These are called terracotta. Worship is done regularly in this temple.

### **Kali Temple of Dakshineswar**

The Kali Temple of Dakshineswar is situated at a place very close to Kolkata. Queen Rasmani founded this temple in 1855 A.D. It is situated at a beautiful site on the bank of the Ganges. There is an attractive idol of Kali in this temple. Kali is known here as Bhabatarini Ma Kali. There are twelve temples of Shiva in this campus. A temple of Radhakanta also stands there. A theatre stands in front of the Kali temple. Thakur ShriRamkrishna used to worship Kali in this temple of Dakshineswar. Worship performed and food offerings are served here everyday. People from home and abroad assemble here to visit the idol of mother Kali. A great number of devotees gather here on the day of Kali Puja.

## Pilgrimages

A place of pilgrimage is a holy place. It is related with the name of a god or a great man. Religious feelings arise in our mind as we visit a place of pilgrimage. It broadens our mind overcoming narrowness. Visiting places of pilgrimage removes our sins. It helps us gain virtues. It brings peace in our mind. Everything in a pilgrimage including its soil and water is sacred.



Pilgrimage

We know that Ishwara is present everywhere. But His expressions are much more reflected in the places of pilgrimage. Men visit these places to come closer to Ishwara. There are hundreds of places of pilgrimage all over the world. These are usually situated on river

-banks or sea-beaches. Places of pilgrimage are also situated on hill-tops in an enchanting natural environment.

Places of pilgrimage are of three kinds:

1. Sthabar or Immobile Pilgrimage, b. Jangam or Mobile Pilgrimage, c. Manas or Spiritual Pilgrimage.

### **a. Sthabar or Immobile Pilgrimage**

Immobile means fixed or motionless. These are located permanently at some places around the world. Four fixed places of pilgrimage are famous in four ages. These are Pushkar in the age of Satya, Naimishaaranya in Treta, Kurukshetra in Dapor and Ganga in Koli. Each place of pilgrimage is related with some spiritual memory.

Sthabar pilgrimages are also known as land pilgrimages since these are situated on earth. The climate is favourable and the natural beauty is very pleasant here. The body and mind of human beings are delighted at the panoramic beauty of nature. So, immobile pilgrimages are very popular.

### **b. Jangam or Mobile Pilgrimage**

Jangam means movable. Saints, ascetics, learned persons, priests and similar persons are called mobile pilgrimages, since they can move from one place to another. They can express their feelings related to religion and other fields. Like visiting the places of pilgrimage, meeting the ascetic and saintly persons brings religious feelings to our mind and we gain much virtue. The good contact with the saints widens human mind. Eventually men can discover what is good for them.

### **c. Manas or Spiritual pilgrimage**

The word 'manas' refers to mind. Men's best sense-organ is mind. If the mind becomes pure and liberal through religious practices, it possesses

the qualities of pilgrimages. It is rightly mentioned in the Holy Books that a person living anywhere after controlling his sense-organs can claim it as his perfect place of pilgrimage similar to Pushkar, Prayag and Kurukshetra.

Pilgrimages are holy places. So visiting a pilgrimage is an act of virtue. All of us should visit pilgrimages according to our ability. We should be aware of the magnanimity of all the places of pilgrimage. It brings us virtues. It makes a man happy.

Men may commit mistakes on their way to life. They may commit sins, too. It degrades their morality. They grow immoral losing their values and principles. They become sinners with the burden of vices. Sinners can never prosper in their life. They cannot bring prosperity for their country, too. They make their journey towards the places of pilgrimage for remission of sins. They believe that visiting pilgrimages saves them from sins. It reduces their burden. So visiting pilgrimages has been prescribed in all religions. Many people visit places of pilgrimage with the sole purpose of gathering virtues.

Sins are also remitted through charity, sacrifice, great festivals and worships. But lot of fund is needed to organize such religious festivals and rituals. The cost of visiting the places of pilgrimages is comparatively lower. There are many places where you may reach on foot or at a minimum cost.

There are many positive effects of pilgrimages. Taking baths or spending nights in a pilgrimage equals the good effects of all sacrifices done by a person so far. Such a person is fortunate enough to enter heaven.

There are many pilgrimages in different countries of the world including Bangladesh and India. For example, Chandranath, Langalbandh, Navadweep, Goya, Kashi, Vrindavan, Hardwar, Mathura, Puri etc. Many pilgrims come together to visit these pilgrimages.



Brief descriptions of some places of pilgrimage in Bangladesh and India are given below.

### **Chandranath**

Chandranath is a famous place of pilgrimage in Bangladesh. It is situated at Sitakunda under Chittagong district. The temple of Chandranath is on top of the hill called Chandranath in Sitakunda. It is also known as Chandranath Dham. Chandranath is another name of Shiva. A big fair takes place on the day of Shivachaturdashi. It is attended by a huge crowd. The natural beauty of its surrounding is very beautiful. The mind is purified on going there. You should visit Chandranath whenever you get a chance.

### **Langalbandh**

Langalbandh is a famous pilgrimage in Bangladesh. It is located at the Bandar Thana of Narayanganj district. It is a very old place of pilgrimage on the bank of the Brahmaputra. It is said that in the ancient times Parshurama could free him from sins after taking a bath in the holy water of this pilgrimage. Parshurama brought the holy water of Brahmakunda to the plain land with the help of his plough. Many devotees still assemble here with the hope of remission of their sins.

Every year the fair of Ashtami Snan of Langalbandh is held on Shukla Ashtomi or the eighth lunar day of the light fortnight of the month of Chaitra. Redemption is attained by taking a holy bath here. Thousands of devotees and virtue-seekers gather here to take holy baths. A number of ancient temples stand here. Everyday people worship and adore their deities in these temples.

### **Haridwar**

Haridwar is a famous pilgrimage. It is situated at Uttar Pradesh or the northern province of India. Its ancient name is Mayapuri. It is

called Gangadwar in the Puranas. It is Haridwar to the Vaishnavas and Hardwar to the Shaivas.

Haridwar stands at the foot of the mountain Shaibalaka. The Ganges has met the plains here. 'Har-Ki-Piari Ghat' is the most beautiful among all the wharfs of the Ganges. The Gangadwar temple is close to it. Worships and prayers are held regularly in this temple. The evening Arati with waving lamps is very attractive here. After every twelve years the famous Kumvafair sits at Hardwar. This is the time when millions of pilgrims assemble here to take baths in the Ganges and to participate in the fair. Taking Ganga-baths along with a kumva or pitcher in Haridwar helps one to enter the sacred world of Vishnu.

There are many temples in Hardwar. Famous among them are the temples of Chandidevi and Mayadevi. Close to Hardwar stands the Shiva temple of Dakshmineshwar. The Dakshmajagga (sacrifice of Dakshma) happened here. Besides, there are many more temples like Rhishir Ashram, Bholagiri Ashram, Gitabhaban etc.

### **Badarikashram**

Badarikashram is a famous place of pilgrimage. It is in the Uttar Pradesh of India. At present it is called Badrinath. Many people opine that some parts of the Vedas and the Upanishada were written here. The idol of Shiva has been placed in Kedarnath and that of Vishnu in Badrinath.

Seven hundred years ago the kings of Garoal placed the idols of Shiva and Vishnu in this temple. The peak of the temple is wrapped with gold. There is a Lakshmi temple in the campus. The hermitage of noble-hearted Vyasadeva is situated here. The Pandavas went to heaven across this valley.

## Exercise

### 1 Answer the questions below:

- a. What is a temple?
- b. Describe a famous temple of Bangladesh.
- c. Describe the temple Meher Kali.
- d. Where is the temple of Kantji? Describe the idol placed here.
- e. Briefly describe the temple of Dakshineswar.
- f. How many kinds of pilgrimages are there? Write about each of them.
- g. Where is Langalbandh? Why do many devotees gather there?
- h. Describe the Chandranath Dham.
- i. Where and when does the fair of Kumva sit? What happens in this fair?

### 2. Answer the following questions in short:

- a. What is placed in a temple?
- b. Where is the temple of Dakshineshwari?
- c. What is the name of idol placed in the temple Dhakeshwari?
- d. What is the other name of Shrikrishna?
- e. What is the positive effect of visiting pilgrimage?
- f. What is the name of mother Kali in the temple of akshineswar?
- g. Where does 'Ashtomi Snan' take place?
- h. Who freed himself from sin by a holy bath in Langalbandh in the ancient time?
- i. What is the recent name of Badrikashram?

### 3. Fill in the blanks:

- a. A temple means a house of \_\_\_\_\_
- b. In a temple there are idols of different \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Temples are \_\_\_\_\_, since gods and goddesses stay there.
- d. Temples are named after the names of \_\_\_\_\_
- e. There is a \_\_\_\_\_ in front of Dhakeshwari temple.
- f. Dhakeshwari temple is a sacred place of pilgrimage for the \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Queen \_\_\_\_\_ founded the temple of Dakshineswar.
- h. There is a beautiful idol of \_\_\_\_\_ in the temple of Dokkhineswar.
- i. Thakur \_\_\_\_\_ was a worshipper of this Kali temple of Dakshineswar.
- j. The soil and water of a pilgrimage is \_\_\_\_\_
- k. Immobile pilgrimages are also called \_\_\_\_\_ pilgrimage.
- l. \_\_\_\_\_ is achieved after taking a holy bath with a Kumva in the Ganges at Haidwar.

### 4. Match the words from the right side with words in the the left:

In a temple there are idols of	in the temple of Dakshineswar.
A temple is a	holy.
There is an idol of Durga	Bodrinath.
In a temple minds become	in Bodrinath
The temples are named after.	the names of gods and goddesses.
The recent name of	holy pace.
Badrikashram	
There is an idol of Vishnu	idols.

**5. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

a. Because of the presence of gods and goddesses temples are

- |            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| 1. holy.   | 2. beautiful. |
| 3. famous. | 4. unholy.    |

b. In Dhakeshwari temple there is an idol of

- |               |           |
|---------------|-----------|
| 1. Saraswati. | 2. Durga. |
| 3. Vishnu.    | 4. Kali.  |

c. Kantaji temple is in

- |             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1. Dhaka.   | 2. Naryanganj. |
| 3. Rangpur. | 4. Dinajpur.   |

d. The founder of the temple Meher Kali is saint

- |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Ramananda.         | 2. Haripada.            |
| 3. Srabananda Thakur. | 4. Rabindranath Tagore. |

e. The best sense-organ of man is

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. body. | 2. hands. |
| 3. food. | 4. mind.  |

f. Who founded the Kali temple of Dakshineswar?

- |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Queen Rasmani.     | 2. Queen Hemantakumari. |
| 3. Sarbananda Thakur. | 4. Haripada Thakur.     |

g. Langalbandh stands on the bank of

- |            |                 |
|------------|-----------------|
| 1. Meghna. | 2. Jamuna.      |
| 3. Padma.  | 4. Brahmaputra. |

h. In the ancient time the name of Haridwar was

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Mayapuri. | 2. Indrapuri. |
| 3. Rajpuri.  | 4. Jampur.    |

i. Which idol is placed at Bodrinath?

- |           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| 1. Shiva. | 2. Vishnu. |
| 3. Durga. | 4. Kali.   |

## Rebirth and Harvest of Deeds

### Rebirth

Rebirth means to be born again. Death after birth and birth after death again - this is a distinctive theory of Hindu religion. There is a soul in every creature or living being. Men remain alive because of this soul existing in their body. Human body is inanimate and the soul is animate. As long as the soul exists in our inanimate body, it remains alive. The body becomes an inanimate object, if the soul leaves it. The soul has no birth and no death. It is said in Gita,

Na Jayate mriate ba kadachin nayang  
 bhutba Bhabita ba na bhuyah.  
 Ajo nityah shashwato thayang  
 purano na hanyate hanyamane sharire.  
 (Shrimadbhagabatgita, 2/20)

-- The soul is never born, it never dies. It does not grow or increase again and again. The soul is birth-forsaken, eternal, constant and ancient. It does not perish, although the body perishes.

The soul only takes shelter from one body to another. This is called rebirth. Like the Gita, the soul and the rebirth are also mentioned in the Upanishada.

According to Hindu religious belief, man does not have only one birth. He has many births. Man goes to heaven for his virtuous acts and enters into hell because of his sins. After passing the prescribed period in heaven or hell, he takes a new birth in a new form in a new body. However, his soul remains the same. The reason behind this is the harvest of his deeds. His birth in a particular form depends on the harvests of his deeds.

## Harvest of Deeds

This world is full of varieties. And vast is its working places. Here every one has to do some work. The word 'deed' refers to some activity. Deeds are of different kinds. For example, study, games and sports, trade and commerce, cultivation etc.

There is some purpose or other behind these deeds of ours. And that purpose is to gain something in return.

But at times we do such works, for which we desire nothing. We do such works out of our sense of duty.

Deeds or works are of two kinds: desireful deeds and desireless deeds. Desireful deeds mean the works for which we want something in return and desireless deeds mean the works for which we want nothing in return. Of these two types, desireless deeds are mentioned as the better deeds in the Holy Books.

We know that Ishwara is the Master of creation, nourishment and destruction of this world. Everything of this world is being done at His command. So, all the deeds are the deeds of Ishwara. Deeds are of Ishwara, so are the harvests of deeds. He is making us do all what we do. We are doing as He wants us to do. So the responsibility of win or defeat, gain or loss, for that reason the harvests of all our deeds does not lie with us. If we do our works thinking in this way, we shall do desireless deeds. Desireless deeds set us free. It brings welfare for the world as a whole. It makes men happy and cheerful.

There is a relation between harvests of deeds and rebirth. Men have to reap the harvests of his desireful deeds. For this purpose he has to be born again and again. He gets a good birth for good deeds and a bad birth for bad deeds. The created beings move in a circular manner based on their good or bad harvests. Death after birth and birth after death.

This rotation of all creatures is what we call rebirth.

Man gets a new birth because of his harvests in the previous birth. He gets a new body. The soul of his previous birth also resides in his new body. Then it reaps the harvests of the previous birth. Rebirth and harvests for deeds are linked to each other. We shall realize it well from some story of rebirth. Below is given such a story.

The battle of Kurukshetra. The Kauravs are on one side, and the Pandavas are on the other. In this battle, Gandhari, the mother of the Kauravas, lost her hundred sons. She was much grief-stricken for her dead sons.

She asked Bhagaban Shrikrishna, 'O Krishna, I can remember my fifty births. I made no sin during all these births. Then why should I endure this grief for the death of my hundred sons?'

Bhagaban Shrikrishna replied, 'Though you know your fifty previous births, you cannot remember births before that. In that birth you had killed hundred insects as an act of play. Harvests of the sins of that birth are piled together. You have got rid of all your sins in the previous births mourning for the death of your hundred sons.'

So we can see that men's harvests of deeds remain heaped up. In some birth or other man has to reap his harvests. This is why man should do good works for a better birth. Good works shall ensure him a better life in the next birth. He would not be born again, if he does desireless works.



## Exercise

### 1. Answer the questions below:

- a. Write a paragraph on rebirth.
- b. Narrate in short the story of Gandhari's previous births.

### 2. Answer the following questions in short:

- a. What is the nature of soul?
- b. Write the sloka on soul from the Gita with meaning.
- c. What is a deed?
- d. How many kinds of deeds are there? Which one is better according to the Holy Books?
- e. What is a desireful deed?
- f. What is a desireless deed?
- g. What is the relation between the harvest of deeds and rebirth?
- h. Who is Gandhari? How were her hundred sons killed?
- i. What kind of deed should we do to have a better birth?

### 3. Fill in the blanks:

- a. There is \_\_\_\_\_ in every animal and living creature.
- b. The soul has no \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Deeds mean \_\_\_\_\_
- d. All the deeds are the deeds of \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Ishwara is the Master of creation, nourishment and \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Match the words from the right side with the words in the left:

Rebirth means	harvest of deeds and rebirth.
Desireless deeds	their harvest in the previous
There is a relation between	births.
Men are reborn because of	set man free.
In the battle of Kurukshetra	and the Pandavas were on the other.
the Kauravas were on one side	being born again.

**5. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers.**

a. The purpose of desireful deeds is

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. to want something. | 2. to want nothing. |
| 3. win or defeat.     | 4. Loss and gain.   |

b. Better deeds are

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. desireful deeds.   | 2. desireless deeds. |
| 3. deeds with desire. | 4. all deeds.        |

c. Desireless deeds bring

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. harm.   | 2. evil.    |
| 3. misery. | 4. welfare. |

d. Gandhari was the mother of

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. the Kauravas. | 2. the Pandavas. |
| 3. Shrikrishna.  | 4. Ganapatimata  |

e. How many sons of Gandhari were killed in the battle of Kurukshetra ?

- |                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. ten sons.     | 2. fifty sons.       |
| 3. hundred sons. | 4. two hundred sons. |

## Chapter Three

# Religious Books, The Ramayana, And The Mahabharata

The Holy books deal with the purpose of religion, its subject-matters, rituals and religious rites. The books which contain the stories and episodes of Hindu religion are called Hindu religious books.

There are many books of Hindu religion. These are the Vedas, the Upanishada, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Puranas, the Shrimadbhagabatgita, the Shirimadbhagabod, the Shrishrichandi etc. Though the Hindus have different religious books, the Vedas are their fundamental sacred scriptures. The Vedas are divided into four parts - the Rigveda, the Samaveda, the Yagurveda and the Atharbaveda. These four parts taken together are called the Vedas. There are many mantras hymns in the Vedas. These mantras contain reference to numerous deities and prayers to them. The Upanishada is the book of knowledge among all the Vedas. Both Brahma and soul are mentioned in the Upanishada. The Shrimadbhagabatgita is the collection of the sayings of Shrikrishna. Shrikrishna is also mentioned in the Shirimadbhagabod. In Shrishrichandi the Shaktidevi or the mother power has been mentioned.

These Hindu religious books are written in the Sanskrit language. However, the main religious books of Hindus are translated into Bangla. For example saint Valmiki wrote the Ramayana in Sanskrit. Poet Krittibas translated this Ramayana into Bangla. Krishnadaipayana Vedavyasa wrote the Mahabharata in Sanskrit. Kashiram Das translated the Mahabharata into Bangla. Let us first learn the story of the Ramayana and after that the story of the Mahabharata.

## The Ramayana

The Ramayana is the story of Rama. The story of the Ramayana is divided into seven chapters. Each of these chapters is called a kanda or event. There are seven events in the Ramayana. These are Adi Kanda, Ayodhya Kanda, Aranya Kanda, Kishkinda Kanda, Sundara Kanda, Yuddha Kanda and Uttara Kanda.

Earlier we learnt about the first four events. Here we will recollect them in brief. Then we will discuss the later three events, such as Sundar Kanda, Yuddha Kanda and Uttara Kanda in details.

### The Early Event (Adi Kanda)

Long ago there was a king named Dasaratha in Ayodhya. He had three queens. They were Kausalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra. Kausalya was the eldest queen and Rama was her son. Kaikeyi was the second wife and Bharata was her son. The youngest queen Sumitra had two sons named Lakshmana and Shatrughna.

One day saint Viswamitra came to the royal court of Dasaratha. He returned to his Tapobon with Rama and Lakshmana. On the way to Tapobon Rama and Lakshmana killed Tarka, one of the demons. They killed many demons in the Tapabon of Viswamitra. After that Viswamitra went to Mithila along with Rama and Lakshmana. At that time Mithila was ruled by a king named Janaka. Janaka had two daughters Sita and Urmila. Marriage between Sita and Rama was settled. Dasharatha came along with his two sons named Bharata and Shatrughna. Kushadhwaj was Janaka's brother and he had two daughters as well. Their name was Mandavi and Shrutakirti. Rama and Sita, Lakshmana and Urmila, Bharata and Mandavi, Shatrughna and Shrutakirti got married to each other.

## **The Ayodhya Event (Kanda):**

In Ayodhya there were lots of celebrations. Time flew away in joy. Dasharatha became old. He wanted Rama to become the crown Prince. As Rama was the eldest son he should become the crown Prince. But Kaikeyi protested that. Kaikeyi did it not of her own accord. Kaikeyi had a maid named Manthara. She gave evil counsel to Kaikeyi.

Once upon a time Dasharatha wanted to grant Kaikeyi two boons. It means, he wanted to fulfil two of her wishes. Manthara told Kaikeyi to ask for the two boons to Dasharatha. One of the wishes would be to crown Bharata, son of Kaikeyi as king. The other wish would be to send Rama, son of Kausalya for fourteen years to the forest for exile. Kaikeyi asked for these two boons to Dasharatha. To hear this Dasharatha was heart broken. He knew that if he did not give the boons it would be the breaking of promise. And if he agreed then Rama would have to go for exile.

Rama came to know everything. To fulfill his father's promise he went to the forest. Sita and his younger brother Lakshmana accompanied him. Dasharatha was not able to bear this sorrow. He passed away.

At that time Bharata was staying at his maternal uncle's house. Hearing the news he came back to Ayodhya. He went to Rama to make him come back but Rama was not ready to do that. So, Bharata came back with Rama's shoes. He placed it on the throne and this way Bharata ruled the kingdom.

### **The Forest Event (Aranya Kanda):**

Rama, Lakshmana and Sita started living in the forest. Thirteen years had passed. At that time a danger appeared. Ravana was the king of Lanka then. It was an island. It was very difficult to reach there. Ravana came from Lanka and abducted Sita. He then took her to Lanka with him.

### **The Kishkinda Event (Kanda)**

Rama and Lakshmana started searching for Sita. Continuing their search, they reached the monkey kingdom Kishkinda. There lived the monkey tribe. One of their heroes named Sugriva became friend of Rama and Lakshmana. He was the younger brother of Vali, the king of Kishkinda. But there were disagreements between the two brothers. Rama agreed to help Sugriva. Vali got killed. Sugriva became the king of Kishkinda. Sugriva and Rama sent the monkey soldiers in various directions in search of Sita.

### **The Beautiful Event (Sundara Kanda)**

A bird named Sampati gave the whereabouts of Sita. He informed that Ravana had taken Sita to Lanka. They would have to rescue Sita from Lanka. Sugriva's monkey army was ready to do that. But Lanka was surrounded by the ocean. How could they reach there? They could find no way to cross the ocean. Pabannandan Hanuman came forward to rescue them from this situation. Hanuman expanded his body to enormous proportions on Mahendra mountain. Then in one jump he reached Lanka. Lanka looked very beautiful. The palaces of Lanka were made of gold. Horses, elephants and chariots were kept in the gate of the palace. Precious things were all around the palace. A beautiful garden stood there with many ponds in it.

Hanuman moved around the country looking for Sita. Continuing his search, he came to a beautiful forest. It was called Asoka forest. There he discovered a beautiful lady. She was imprisoned in a garden of Ashoka trees. Her eyes were full of tears. She looked very sad. She released deep sighs at times. She was guarded by some demons. Hanuman thought that she was Sita.

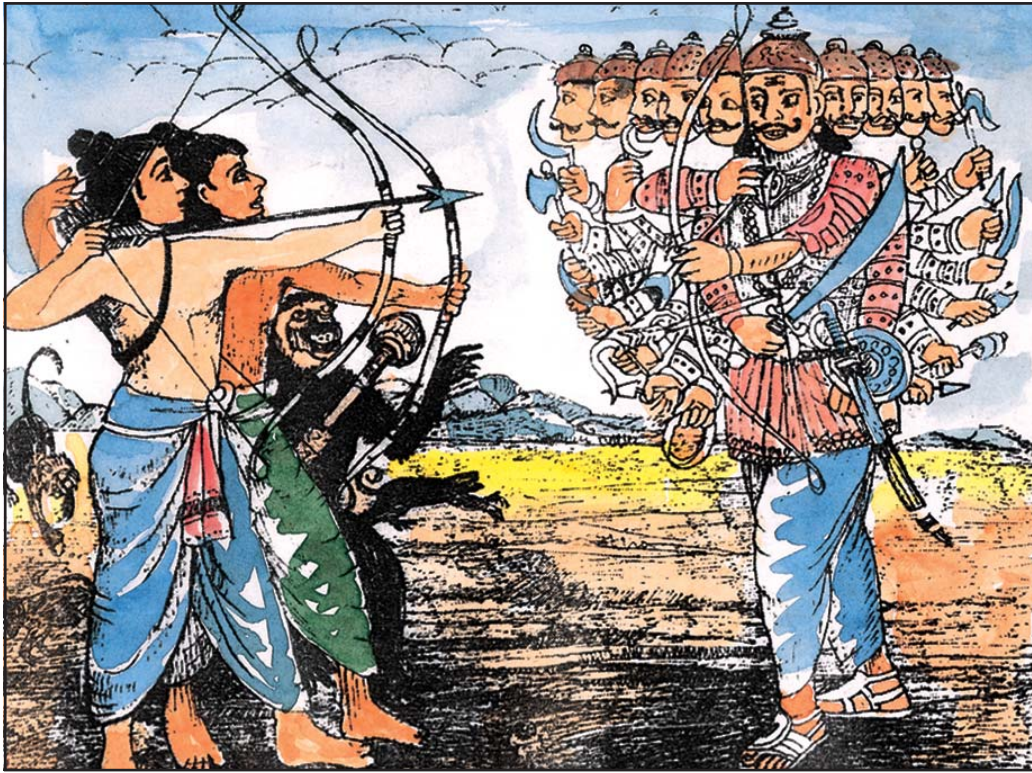
How Hanuman would introduce him to Sita? Some of the demons were sleeping. Some of them were roaming here and there. Hanuman sat on top of a tree. He started telling the story King Dasharatha and his elder son Rama. He narrated the exile of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana. Assuming the form of a tiny monkey, Hanuman crept down the tree. He gave her the ring of Rama and took the one from her. Hanuman assured Sita that soon Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva and his monkey army would rescue her.

Hanuman did not come back at once. He wanted to measure the strength of the enemies. In his rage, Hanuman destroyed trees of the forests. He attacked the army. Many soldiers of Ravana got killed. But at last he was captured by the Ravana's soldiers. They set fire in his tail. With that fire Hanuman burnt Lanka. Then he went back to Rama. He carried the ring and other materials from Sita that gave her identity. Rama took preparations along with his brothers, friends and army to rescue Sita.

### **The War Event (Yuddha Kanda)**

To reach Lanka one has to cross the ocean. Rama decided to bridge the ocean. Otherwise it was impossible for any one but Hanuman to cross it. One of the monkey's name was Nal. He made a bridge across the ocean. Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva and the army went to Lanka over the bridge. Both the sides were ready to fight. Ravana's brother Vibishana and grandmother Malyaban became thoughtful.

They advised Ravana to give back Sita without any war. Ravana decided not to give back Sita. He scolded Vibishana. Vibishana deserted Ravana and joined hands with Rama.



War between Rama and Ravana

Fierce fighting started between the two armies. The war had been fought for some time. A great number of troops on both sides were killed. Many were wounded. Ravana's all sons were killed. One of his sons was Indrajit. Ravana's brother Kumbhakarna also died. At last Ravana came to the battle field. Rama killed Ravana with the weapon named Brahmastra.

After Ravana's death Vibishana became the king of Lanka. Rama, Sita and Lakshmana went back to Ayodhya .



## **The Later Event (Uttara Kanda)**

Returning to Ayodhya Rama took charge of the kingdom from Bharata. Rama dedicated himself to the welfare of his subjects. For a time everything went well. But soon whispers about Sita's long stay in Lanka spread through the city. Rama was very sad to hear that. Sita was not guilty of anything. Sita was pregnant then. Under the pressure from the citizens of Ayodhya, Rama banished her to the forest for exile.

Sita made no protest. She came to the forest. There she found the hermitage of Valmiki. The saint gave her shelter to his hermitage. There she gave birth to twin sons, Lava and Kush.

A long time had passed after Sita's exile. Rama became determined to start Ashvamedha, the great sacrifice. Sita should be with him during the sacrifice. So, Rama made a statue of gold of Sita. Valmiki taught Lava and Kush the songs of Ramayana, based on the life of Rama and Sita. Rama was delighted to hear those songs. He thought that Lava and Kush were Sita's sons. Struck with remorse, Rama recalled the sufferings of his wife Sita. He invited Valmiki to join the rituals along with Sita.

Sita came to the Ashvamedha Jagga. Many saints came to attend it. Valmiki came along with Sita. He glorified Sita there. No one is as virtuous as Sita. Rama also knew it. There was none to be compared with Sita. But Rama was the king. He had to satisfy his subjects. He asked her to give assurance of her chastity by getting into the fire. Sita was sad to hear that. She appealed to the earth with folded hands, 'Mother Basumati, please open your bosom and take me into it.' The earth opened near Sita's feet. A gorgeous throne appeared. And mother Basumati, the goddess of earth, was seated upon it. She took Sita beside her.

The throne vanished in a moment. Sita entered the underworld. People were astonished to see the scene of Sita's entering into the underworld. People were repenting in grief. Rama did not want to live anymore. He handed over the kingdom to his sons. The later story is more painful. Lakshmana committed suicide in the river Sarju.

Rama was very upset of Lakshmana's death. He also committed suicide in the river Sarju. Bharata and Shatrughna also sacrificed their lives in the water of the river Sarju. Afterwards all of them met in the heaven with their divine body.

## Exercise

### 1. Answer the following questions:

- (a) What is a Holy Book? Write down the names of the main Holy Books?
- (b) What are the Vedas? How many parts of the Vedas are there? What are they?
- (c) Write down the subject matter of the Adi Kanda and the Ayodhya Kanda of the Ramayana.
- (d) Write down the subject matter of the Sundara Kanda of the Ramayana.
- (e) Write down the subject matter of the Lanka Kanda of the Ramayana.
- (f) Write briefly the Ashvamedha Yajna of Rama.
- (g) Write down the subject matter of the Uttara Kanda of the Ramayana.

**2. Answer the questions in short:**

- (a) What is the Upanishada?
- (b) What is the language of the original Ramayana? Who is the Bangla translator of the original Ramayana?
- (c) Write down the names of the seven Kandas of the Ramayana?
- (d) What did Bharata do after coming back from his maternal uncle's house?
- (e) Who became Rama's friend in the Kishkinda Kanda? How did he help Rama?

**3. Fill in the blanks:**

- (a) \_\_\_\_\_ is the main religious book of the Hindus.
- (b) The Vedas are divided into \_\_\_\_\_ parts.
- (c) Saint Valmiki wrote the original Ramayana in \_\_\_\_\_.
- (d) Janaka had \_\_\_\_\_ daughters.
- (e) To hear Kaikeyi Dasharatha was \_\_\_\_\_.
- (f) Rama would go for exile for \_\_\_\_\_ years.
- (g) Bharata came back with Rama's \_\_\_\_\_.
- (h) Rama killed \_\_\_\_\_ with the weapon named Brahmastra.
- (i) Rama, Sita and Lakshmana went back to \_\_\_\_\_ .

**4. Write 'True' or 'False' against the following statements :**

- (a) In Shrishrichandi there is a story of Shaktidevi or the mother of power.
- (b) Krittibas wrote the Ramayana in Sanskrit.
- (c) The Shrishrichandi is a Holy Book of the Hindus.
- (d) Bharata was in Ayodhya when Rama went to the forest in exile.
- (e) Manthara gave Kaikeyi evil advice.
- (f) Dasaratha gave Kaikeyi evil advice.

- (g) Hanuman introduced himself to Sita as the messenger of Ravana.
- (h) Rama dedicated himself to the welfare of his subjects.

**5. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

(a) What is the name of the main Holy Book of the Hindus?

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. The Vedas   | 2. The Upanishada  |
| 3. The Puranad | 3. The Mahabharata |

(b) In which language were the main Holy Books of the Hindus written?

- |             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| 1. Bangla   | 2. Hindi |
| 3. Sanskrit | 4. Pali  |

(c) Who is the original writer of the Ramayana?

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Krittibas | 2. Valmiki |
| 3. Vyasa     | 4. Narod   |

(d) How many Kandas does the Ramayana have?

- |         |          |
|---------|----------|
| 1. four | 2. five  |
| 3. six  | 4. seven |

(e) Who was married to Lakshmana?

- |               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| 1. Sita       | 2. Urmila  |
| 3. Srutakirti | 4. Mandavi |

(f) Whom did Dasharatha want to grant two boons?

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Kausalya | 2. Kaikeyi  |
| 3. Sumitra  | 4. Manthara |

(g) For how many years was Rama in exile?

- |           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1. eight  | 2. ten      |
| 3. twelve | 4. fourteen |

- (h) Who gave the news of the missing Sita first?
1. Sugriva
  2. Hanuman
  2. Sampati
  4. Vali
- (i) Which ornament of Rama Hanuman gave to Sita?
1. ear ring
  2. necklace
  2. bangles
  4. ring
- (j) Who built the floating bridge on the sea?
1. Rama
  2. Nala
  2. Sugriva
  4. Hanuman
- (k) Who of the Lanka kingdom took side of Rama?
1. Indrajit
  2. Vibhishana
  2. Kumbhakarna
  4. Virabahu
- (l) What was the name of Ravana's chariot?
1. Akashratha
  2. Drutaka
  2. Pushpaka
  4. Pankhiraj
- (m) Why did Rama banish Sita to the forest in exile?
1. being angry
  2. to please the subjects
  2. as Sita desired
  4. as Kausalya ordered
- (n) Where did Sita enter?
1. a city
  2. underworld
  2. a forest
  4. the cave of a mountain.

## **The Mahabharata**

The Mahabharata, a religious book of the Hindus is a vast one. It is based on the story of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. But along with the main story there are sub-stories or upakhyanas in the Mahabharata.

The Mahabharata is divided into 18 parvas or chapters. These are (1)Adi-parva, (2) Sabha-parva, (3) Aranyaka-parva, (4) Virata-parva, (5)Udyoga-parva, (6) Vishma-parva,(7) Drona-parva, (8) Karna-parva, (8) Shalya-parva, (9) Sauptika-parva,(10) Striparva,(11) Shanti-parva, (12) Anusasana-parva, (13) Ashwamedhika-parva, (14) Ashramavasika-parva, (15) Mausala-parva, (16) Mahaprasthanika-parva, (17) Swargarohana-parva

We have read the first eight parvas in details earlier. Now we are going to know the later nine parvas in details. But we will recall the first eight parvas in brief.

### **(1) Adi-parva:**

Long ago there was a kingdom called Hastinapura. It was ruled by a king named Santanu. His eldest son was Vishma. Vishma vowed that he would never get married and would never ascend the throne. So, after Santanu Bichitrabirja became the king. Bichitrabirja had two sons named Dhritarashtra and Pandu. Dhritarashtra was a born blind. So, after Bichitrabirja Pandu became king. Dhritarashtra had one hundred sons. His eldest son was Duryodhana. Pandu had five sons. His eldest son was Yudhishthira. After the death of Pandu Yudhishthira became crown prince. But Duryodhana did not accept it. He tried hard to kill the Pandavas but in vain. Later Dhritarashtra gave half of the kingdom to the Pandavas. Khandavprashtho was the name of their kingdom.

**(2) Sabha-parva:**

Duryodhana hit upon a plan. He called Yudhishtira to play the dice game. Yudhishtira lost the game. According to the terms of the competition, the Pandavas went in exile along with their wife Draupadi.

**(3) Aranyaka-parva:**

Pandavas started roaming about in different forests. Thus elapsed twelve years. They entered the kingdom of the King Virata.

**(4) Virata-parva:**

The term of conditions given to the Pandavas was spending twelve years in exile and next one year in disguise so that nobody could discover their whereabouts. Here in the kingdom of Virata the Pandavas spent one year in disguise.

**(5) Udyoga-parva:**

The Pandavas fulfilled their part of the bargain and returned to Hastinapura with Draupadi. Duryodhana did not give them back their kingdom. Yudhishtira requested to give at least five villages to the five brothers. But Duryodhana said that he would not give even an inch of the land without a fight. All the efforts of establishing peace went in vain. Both the Pandavas and the Kauravas were ready to fight.

**(6) Vishma-parva:**

There was a vast field called Kurukshetra near Hastinapura. The two sides were at war there. Vishma was the commander-in-chief of the Kauravas. Arjuna was the commander-in-chief of the Pandavas.

Krishna was the charioteer of Arjuna. Arjuna's heart ached at the sight of his elders and relatives in the battle field. He told Krishna that he would not be able to enjoy the life in the kingdom if the relatives were killed in the war. Krishna then gave him some advice that calmed down Arjuna. Arjuna was inspired to fight. There is a holy book containing the pieces of advice to Arjuna by Krishna. The name of the holy book is Shrimatbhagavatgita.

A deadly war took place and continued for ten days. Thousands of arrows stroke Vishma in waves. He lay fully supported by the arrows. No part of his body touched the earth. This is called 'Vishma's bed of arrows'.

### **(7) Drona-parva:**

After Vishma's lying on the bed of arrows Drona became the commander-in-chief of the Kauravas. A heavy fight began. Arjuna was busy fighting on one side of the battle field. Drona formed the iron disc of war by positioning the armies on the other side. Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna, entered the iron disc of war. He fought alone with many a great warrior. The Saptarathis together attacked Abhimanyu who was defeated and killed. Arjuna became furious at the death of his son. As the war continued Drona was killed. Dhristodumno killed him. Ashwatthama, son of Drona got furious at his father's killing.

### **(8) Karna-parva:**

After Drona's death Karna became the commander-in-chief of the Kauravas. A heavy fight continued. Karna defeated all the Pandavas except Arjuna. Yudhishtira was hurt. Vima killed the brothers of Duryodhana one after another. Thus was killed Dushasana by Vima. At last there was a fight between Karna and Arjuna. Karna was killed.



### (9) Shalya-parva:

After the death of Karna, king Shalya became commander-in-chief. A heavy fight took place. Many soldiers of both the sides were killed and injured. At last Yudhishtira killed Shalya. Sahadeva killed Shakuni, the maternal uncle of Duryodhana. Duryodhana escaped out of fear. He hid himself in Lake Dwaipayana. But the Pandavas came to know this. They went to the bank of Lake Dwaipayana. They rebuked Duryodhana in a bitter manner.



Duel with mallets

Duryodhana came out of the lake. Then there was a duel fight between Vima and Duryodhana with mallets. Vima broke the thigh of Duryodhana with the mallet. He fell down on the earth only to live with the broken leg.

### **(10) Sauptika-parva:**

The word 'Supta' means sleeping. In this parva Ashatthama killed the sleeping soldiers of the Pandavas. This is why the parva is named Sauptika-parva.

Ashatthama vowed to kill the Pandavas. The night had far advanced. Everybody fell asleep. Ashatthama entered the camp of the Pandavas stealthily with a sword in hand. First he killed Dhrishtodumno, the killer of his father. Then he killed many great warriors and soldiers. He also killed the five sons of Draupadi. Panchapandavas were not there in the camp that night.

As it was dark Ashatthama took the five sons of the Pandavas for Panchapandavas. Then he took the five heads of the five sons of Draupadi and Panchapandavas to Duryodhana. Duryodhana became very happy to see the heads. But later he realized that these were not the heads of the Panchapandavas but of their sons. Duryodhana became very sad because these five sons were the last descendants of Kuru dynasty. Duryodhana died in grief. On the other hand Draupadi was wailing for her sons. The camp of the Pandavas was full of grief and mourning.

### **(11) Stri-parva:**

The war of Kurukshetra came to an end after eighteen days. None of the one hundred sons of Dhritarashtra was alive. Many others were killed. Inmates were wailing in grief in every house of Hastinapura. Vyasa consoled Dhritarashtra. Gradually they could endure the loss of their near and dear ones. Everybody came to the battle field along with the wives of the Kauravas. They saw the dead bodies of their relatives. They broke into tears. But they must not continue mourning. They were to make necessary arrangements for the cremation of the dead bodies.

A number of funeral pyres were made ready for cremation. The dead bodies were cremated. Then all came to the bank of the Ganges. They bathed in the water of the Ganges. They offered water in the memory of the dead. Gandhari became almost mad at the loss of her sons. Krishna consoled her much.

### **(12) Shanti-parva:**

All came back from the battle field of Kurukshetra, but they did not enter Hastinapura.

Now Yudhishtira was supposed to be the king, but he refused. There was much bloodshed and loss of life for the sake of the kingdom. So, he lost interest in the kingdom. He decided to go to the forest and meditate there. Krishna advised him to have patience. Then Yudhishtira entered Hastinapura with his brothers. Others also followed him. He became the king of Hastinapura. Then he went to Vishma and touched his feet to seek his blessings. Vishma gave him much advice.

### **(13) Anusasana-parva:**

Yudhishtira was much benefited from Vishma's advice. He came to know about religion, peace and other things from him. Yudhishtira said to Vishma that he was pained at heart to see him wounded on the bed of arrows. Vishma then said to Yudhishtira that it was the duty of a Kshatriya to fight and that he had done that duty. He further said that there was nothing to be ashamed of. And there is no reason to consider one to be a sinner. Vishma then advised him about the benefit of hospitality, fate and self-power, the greatness of Shiva, the greatness of Ganga, respect towards gurus and the duty of a disciple, benefit of vows and gifts, good conduct etc.

Vishma had the boon of wishful death. He was waiting for an auspicious moment for his death. The moment arrived after his lying on the bed of arrows for fifty eight days. He embraced death wilfully. His dead body was cremated with due respect.

#### **(14) Ashwamedhika-parva:**

After the death of Vishma, Yudhishtira was overwhelmed with grief. Dhritarashtra and Krishna consoled and requested him to be attentive to royal duties. At the suggestion of Vyasa Yudhishtira agreed to do Ashwamedha Jagga.

A horse was let loose formally. Arjuna would be the custodian of the horse. It would come back after traveling many countries for one year.

The horse went through different countries. Sometimes there were fights between Arjuna and those who stopped the horse. Arjuna came out victorious in all the fights. Arjuna invited all the kings to attend the Jagga ceremony. He returned to Hastinapura with the horse.

Then the Ashamedha Jagga began. The Munis, saints, kings, relatives and many other people of the country assembled there. People praised highly of Yudhishtira after the ceremony was over.

#### **(15) Ashramavasika-parva:**

The Pandavas behaved very well with all after the recovery of the kingdom. Dhritarashtra and Gandhari were very much pleased with them. Thus elapsed fifteen years. Dhritarashtra decided to go to the forest with his wife and meditate there. Yudhishtira requested them to remain at home. But Dhritarashtra did not change his decision.

It was the night of the full moon of the month of Kartika. Dhritarashtra, Gandhari, Bidur and Sanjay started their journey to the forest. Kunti and the Pandavas followed them. Even the citizens followed them crying. After coming out of the city Dhritarashtra requested all to go back. At this all excepting Bidur, Sanjay and Kunti went back. The Pandavas were stricken with grief to see Kunti going to the forest.

After a few days Yudhishtira along with his brothers went to the forest to see them. In the presence of Yudhishtira Bidur died while meditating. Yudhishtira spent some time there and returned to Hastinapura with his brothers.

Two years later Devarshi Narada came to Yudhishtira. He informed that there was a big fire in the forest when Dhritarashtra, Gandhari, Kunti and Sanjay were absorbed in meditation. Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti were burnt into ashes. Sanjay could however escape it and later went to the Himalayas.

Hearing the news Yudhishtira burst into tears. There was wailing everywhere in Hastinapura. Narada pacified them. They performed the Sraddha rites in honour of Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti.

### **(16) Mausala-parva:**

Thirty six years of Yudhishtira's reign was completed. Many strange incidents took place. There was a sign of danger. But the danger was more to the Jadavas than to the Pandavas. Krishna was born of the Jadu dynasty. The people of this dynasty are known as Jadavas.

The danger occurred because of a little cause. One day Maharrshi Viswamitra, Kannwa and Narada came to Dwaraka. Then some of

the Jadavas took Shamva to them in the guise of a pregnant woman. They asked the Maharshis if this lady would give birth to a son or a daughter. The Maharshis became angry at the trickery they played with them. They said that Shamva would give birth to an iron club. This club would destroy the Jadavas dynasty.

Krishna knew that the time of destruction of the Jadu dynasty was knocking at the door. So he did nothing about it. Next day Shamva gave birth to an iron club. Krishna ordered them to crush the club and throw it into the sea. It was done so. Later Sharavan (a forest of arrows) grew in the place where the club was crushed.

One day the Jadavas went on a pilgrimage to Pravasha. There they made much fun and frolic. Suddenly they picked a quarrel that turned into a fight. They picked up the arrows from the Sharavan and started hitting each other. These caused their death. All this happened in front of Krishna's eyes.

Then Krishna went in search of Balarama. Balarama died in front of Krishna. The sad Krishna was lying in a forest after losing Balarama. All on a sudden a hunter shot an arrow at the feet of Krishna taking him for a deer. This caused Krishna's death.

All this news reached Hastinapura. Having received this ill news Arjuna rushed to Daraka. He started for Hastinapura with Bajro, the grandson of Krishna and the women folk of Daraka. A strange thing happened. No sooner had Arjuna left Daraka than it sank into the sea. On the other hand Arjuna became powerless. On the way back Arjuna suffered in the hands of bandits.

Vyasa heard the tragic story of Arjuna. Then he said Arjuna should no longer stay in this world. He had completed his work and hence the tragedy took place.

**(17) Mahaprasthanika-parva:**

The Jadavas dynasty was destroyed. Krishna also died. This discouraged Yudhishtira to live any more in the land of the living ones. Then Parikshita, son of Abhimanyu was made king. The Panchpandavas along with Draupadi left the kingdom for good. This was what they called the Mahaprasthan of the Pandavas. The citizens followed them with tears in the eyes for quite a long distance and then came back. The Pandavas and Draupadi advanced towards the Himalayas. A dog followed them. They became tired of walking. Draupadi, Shahadeva, Nakula, Arjuna and Bhima died one after another. Yudhishtira kept on going and the dog also followed him. After some time Devaraj Indra came to Yudhishtira in his chariot. He wanted to take Yudhishtira to heaven. But Yudhishtira refused to go to heaven leaving Draupadi and his dear brothers behind. Indra assured him that he would meet his wife and brothers in heaven.

Now the question of taking the dog to heaven arose. Dogs were not allowed to enter heaven. So Yudhishtira had to go to heaven without the dog. Yudhishtira did not agree to that because the dog followed him so long though he suffered much. So he could not leave it behind. Then the dog disappeared. Dharma stood before Yudhishtira. He said with affection to Yudhishtira, "Dear child, you have been ready to sacrifice the heaven for the sake of the dog. This shows that you are a very pious man. You would go to heaven with this very body."

Yudhishtira went to the heaven physically in the chariot of Indra. But he did not find peace even in the heaven. He did not want to stay in the heaven without Draupadi and his brothers with him. Yudhishtira expressed his desire to go to the place where they were staying.

**(18) Swargarohana-parva:**

Devaraj Indra could read the mind of Yudhishtira. He ordered the angels to take Yudhishtira to his wife and his brothers. They were in the hell. One will have to go to the hell if one commits a sin. They committed sins. The angels proceeded towards the hell taking Yudhishtira with them. Fire was burning there. The sinners were screaming as they were being fried in the boiling oil. Yudhishtira wanted to return from there at the sight of this. They said, "O great Yudhishtira, all our sufferings in the hell have stopped because of your presence. A gentle breeze is blowing." Yudhishtira wanted to know their identity. They started introducing themselves. He got the identity of Draupadi, Shahadeva, Nakula, Arjuna and Vima along with many others. He said to the angel, "I won't go to the heaven without my relatives."

Then Devaraj Indra said to Yudhishtira, "It has been established that no one is as pious as you are. You don't want to enjoy heavenly bliss without your relatives. You are great. You take a bath with me in the holy water of the river Mandakini."

Yudhishtira was blessed with divine body by taking a bath in the holy water of the river Mandakini. Then he was amazed to see Draupadi, Shahadeva, Nakula, Arjuna and Vima there. He also saw Kunti, Madri, Pandu, Vishma, Drona and many others. He met Krishna with all of them. They all started dwelling in the heaven.

We have learnt the story of the Mahabharata in brief. This story is as good as ambrosia. The main theme of the story is that truth prevails over false. Truth prevails in the long run. Religion is victorious everywhere.

We will read the Mahabharata and follow the advice therein. This will benefit us a lot



## Exercise

### 1. Answer the following questions:

- (a) How many Parvas of the Mahabharata are there? Write down the names of the Parvas.
- (b) Write down the story of the Shalya-parva in brief.
- (c) What did Ashatthama do in the Sauptika-parva?
- (d) Write down the story of the Stri-parva in brief.
- (e) Write down the main points of the Anushasana-parva in brief.
- (f) Describe the Ashvamedha Yajna of the King Yudhishtira.
- (g) What was the result of the quarrel among the Yadavas?
- (h) What did Arjuna do in the Mausala-parva? Describe his story in brief.
- (i) Whom did Yudhishtira take with him to the heaven?  
Why did he not want to go to the heaven without him?
- (j) Tell the story of the Mahabharata in brief.

### 2. Answer the questions in short:

- (a) What was the vow made by Vishma?
- (b) Who became king after the death of Bhisma? Why?
- (c) Why did Yudhishtira lose his kingdom?
- (d) What did Yudhishtira say when Duryodhana refused to give back his kingdom?
- (e) Why did Arjuna refuse to fight?
- (f) What does 'the bed of arrows of Vishma' mean? Write in brief.
- (g) Who defeated Abhimanyu?
- (h) Why was the Sauptika-parva named?
- (i) Who was Gandhari? Whose death made her almost mad?

- (j) What was the decision taken by Dhritarashtra and Gandhari sometime after Yudhishtira's becoming king when the war was over?
- (k) What was the news given by Narada to Yudhishtira in the Ashramavasika-parva?
- (l) With whom did some Jadavas play tricks?
- (m) For how long did the Panchapandavas go away after making Parikshita ascend the throne?

**3. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

(a) How many Parvas are there in the Mahabharata?

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. ten     | 2. twelve   |
| 3. sixteen | 4. eighteen |

(b) What was the name of Shantanu's kingdom?

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Hastinapura | 2. Shivapura |
| 3. Krishnapura | 4. Gauripura |

(c) Who was born blind?

- |                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| 1. Pandu         | 2. Shatanu |
| 3. Dhritarashtra | 4. Vishma  |

(d) What was the name of the eldest son of Dhritarashtra?

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Shishupal | 2. Jarashadha |
| 3. Balarama  | 4. Duryodhana |

(e) What Yudhishtira asked for as Duryodhana refused to return the kingdom?

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. riches              | 2. five villages       |
| 3. death of Duryodhana | 4. exile of Duryodhana |

(f) Where did the fight between the Kauravas and the Pandavas take place?

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. at Indraprastha | 2. at Khadabprastha |
| 3. at Kurukshetra  | 4. at Hastinapura   |

(g) Who was killed in the iron disc of Saptarathi?

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Arjuna      | 2. Vima      |
| 3. Yudhishtira | 4. Abhimanyu |

(h) Who killed Karna?

- |           |              |
|-----------|--------------|
| 1. Arjuna | 2. Vima      |
| 3. Nakula | 4. Shahadeva |

- (i) Who became commander-in-chief of the Kauravas after Karna?
1. Vishma
  2. Shalya
  3. Drona
  4. Ashatthama
- (j) Who broke the thigh of Duryodhana?
1. Yudhishtira
  2. Balarama
  3. Vima
  4. Arjuna
- (k) Who did Yudhishtira go to for advice in the Shanti Parva?
1. Krishna
  2. Vishma
  3. Dhritarashtra
  4. Ghandhari
- (l) How long did the war of Kurukshetra continue?
1. ten days
  2. twelve days
  3. eighteen days
  4. twenty six days
- (m) How did Dhritarashtra, Ghandhari and Kunti die?
1. because of old age
  2. in the fire
  3. by drowning
  4. of disease
- (n) Where was Daraka drowned?
1. in the river
  2. in the sea
  3. in the earth
  4. in the fire
- (o) Who went to the heaven physically?
1. Yudhishtira
  2. Vima
  3. Arjuna
  4. Draupadi

**4. Match the words from the right side with the words in the left:**

The Mahabharata	by Yudhishtira
Pandu	in Lake Dwaipayana
The game of dice was lost	is a vast book
Vishma lay on the bed of arrows	a collection of sayings of Krishna
Bajra was	had five sons
Shrimadbhagabatgita is	
Ashatthama killed	the five sons of Drupadi
Duryodhana hid himself	on board the Indra's chariot
Ashamedha Yajna was done	by Yudhishtira
Yudhishtira went to the heaven	the grandson of Krishna for fifty eight days

## Chapter Four

# Holiness and Cleanliness

Holiness and cleanliness are very important for life. It is, indeed, necessary to practise holiness and cleanliness to make our life beautiful. Cleanliness makes our mind pure and cheerful. Sanctity and cleanliness are integral parts of life. We should always remain neat and clean. Everybody likes the children who remain neat and clean. And nobody likes the ones who are dirty.

Clean children's teeth are dazzling bright. Eyes are transparent. Hair is tidy and neatly combed. Dress is well washed and adjusted. On the other hand, unclean boys and children have dirty teeth and eyes. Hair is messy and untidy. Dress is full of dirt. So everybody dislikes the unclean boys and girls.



A neat and clean girl    A neat and clean boy

Cleanliness means, in general, the dress and environment are beautiful and clean. Keeping the body and mind pleasant and tidy is also cleanliness. The Holy Books have mentioned about the necessity of cleanliness. According such scriptures, cleanliness is called 'Suchita' which means purity and sanctity.

It is necessary to maintain cleanliness for social and religious purpose. 'A sound mind lives in a sound body' - this is what people say. It means that if your body is healthy, your mind is also pure. If the body is sick, the mind also sickens. So holiness and cleanliness are necessary to keep your body and mind pleasant.

Dirtiness causes various diseases. If the organs and limbs of the body are not cleaned regularly, various troubles may happen. Unclean teeth bring bad smell in the mouth. It may cause sores in the gum. Teeth should be cleaned early in the morning and before sleeping at night in order to prevent such diseases.

Hands, mouth, teeth and eyes should be cleaned well after waking early in the morning. Eyes and face should be washed with pure water several times a day. The body should be wiped clearly by a towel while taking a bath. Nails of hand should be trimmed after a few days. Big nails help gather dirt under them. This dirt causes severe diseases after entering into our stomach.

The whole body is to be washed by water. The dirt of body has to be cleaned by towels during bath. After every two or three days one should take bath with soaps. So our body shall not get dirty. The pores of our skin are closed when the body is dirty. Sweats and other polluted materials can not get out of the body. It causes skin diseases of various types.

We should eat fresh and clean food. Polluted food causes harm to us. There are germs of various diseases in the rotten, left-over and dirty food. We should never take such food. Instead we shall take fresh and good food.

We should be careful about drinking water. Water must be kept free of dirt and pollution. We should always drink pure water. We must wash our hands, face and plates well before taking our food.

We should also keep our clothes clean. It makes our mind cheerful. Well washed and clean clothes are index of our good taste. Clean dress keeps your body in good health too.

On the other hand, unclean dress is the indicator of man's bad taste. Dirty and unclean dress may cause illness. Our duty is to keep our houses, living rooms, beds, reading table and environment neat and clean.

Environment means everything around the place where we live. Throwing dirty materials and wastages here and there pollutes the air and the surrounding. Polluted air may cause various diseases. So dirty materials and wastages should not be thrown here and there. We have to develop the habit of cleanliness since our childhood.

Cleanliness or sanctity is the part and parcel of religion. It is the pre-condition of all prayers, worships, rituals and other religious activities. Hands and face have to be washed properly before worship and prayer. Clean dress should be worn. The necessity of taking baths and brushing teeth regularly is also mentioned in the Holy Books.

We knew earlier that cleanliness is purity and holiness. There are two kinds of holiness or sanctity mentioned in the religious books. External holiness means the cleanliness of body, dress, bed, environment etc. And internal holiness means the cleanliness of heart. It means thinking honest and not being jealous of others etc. Then the heart will be holy. External holiness is not enough for the prayer or worship of God. Worship cannot be done without the purity of body and mind. Holiness of heart is very important for prayer and worship. Our heart can also be dirty just like our clothes. Thinking of evil and harmful things for others makes human mind unholy. So we should give up evil thinking. It will make our mind sacred.

Our good thinking and desire for doing benefit to others purify our mind. The mind becomes sacred. So we must shun evil thoughts and do honest thinking all the time. Study and discussions of Holy Books and biographies of noble men augment the holiness and sanctity of human mind. The holiness of mind makes it delightful. So we have to think of Ishwara and worship Him with a holy mind. Cleanliness is also urgently needed to keep our body and mind holy.

Considered from all angles it is clear to us that the necessity of the holiness of mind as well as cleanliness of all kinds is immense. We should build the habit of cleanliness from our childhood. We have to learn about the utility of holiness and cleanliness. We must keep in mind that holiness and cleanliness are pre-requisite to all religious activities. These are also parts of our religion.



## Exercise

### 1. Answer the questions below:

- a. What should we practice to make our life beautiful?
- b. What is holiness?
- c. What is cleanliness?
- d. 'A sound mind lives in a sound body' - explain.
- e. What are problems created when body gets dirty?
- f. What makes human mind cheerful?
- g. What are the pre-conditions of prayer and worship?
- h. How can human mind be holy?

### 2. Answer the following questions in short:

- a. Who are the children liked by all?
- b. Who are the children disliked by all?
- c. What happens if dirty food is taken?
- d. What is the food infected with germs?
- e. What is the holiness of mind?
- f. What holiness and cleanliness are parts of?

### 3. Fill in the blanks:

- a. If the teeth are not cleaned regularly, it will cause \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ in the mouth.
- b. Nails should be \_\_\_\_\_ after few days.
- c. Nails get \_\_\_\_\_ when they are long.
- d. We should eat fresh and \_\_\_\_\_ food.
- e. Neat and clean dress indicates \_\_\_\_\_ of a person.
- f. Unclean dress indicated \_\_\_\_\_ of a person.
- g. We have to build the habit of \_\_\_\_\_ from childhood.

- h. Cleanliness or \_\_\_\_\_ is a part and parcel of religion.  
 i. Internal holiness makes a mind \_\_\_\_\_.  
 j. \_\_\_\_\_ is needed for the holiness of our body and mind.

**4. Match the words from the right side with the words in the left.**

Cleanliness makes our mind	neat and clean children.
Everybody likes	‘Suchita’.
Everybody dislikes	holiness of mind.
According to Holy Books	sound body.
Cleanliness is called	rotten, dirty and left-over food.
A sound mind goes with a	get closed.
When body gets dirty the	
Pores of skin	holy.
There are germs in the	prayer and worship.
Mind also becomes	unclean children.
cheerful	
Cleanliness is the pre-condition of	any religious activity.
Internal holiness means	for the holiness of body and mind.
Cleanliness is a must for	if we wear clean clothes.
Holiness of mind is needed	

**5. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

(a) Everybody \_\_\_\_\_ neat and clean children.

- |           |              |
|-----------|--------------|
| 1. hates  | 2. likes     |
| 3. adores | 4. dislikes. |

(b) According to Holy Books cleanliness is called

- |               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1. impurity   | 2. suchita  |
| 3. unholiness | 4. honesty. |

- (c) We should brush our teeth \_\_\_\_\_
1. in the morning
  2. at noon
  3. at night
  4. early in the morning and before going to sleep.
- (d) Our dress should be \_\_\_\_\_
1. neat and clean
  2. untidy
  3. cheap
  4. costly
- (e) Without purity of body and mind, worshipping God is \_\_\_\_\_
1. possible
  2. impossible
  3. near possible
  4. sometimes possible
- (f) To pray and worship we need \_\_\_\_\_
1. discipline of mind
  2. holiness of mind
  3. jealousy
  4. evil thoughts
- (g) Suchita is divided into \_\_\_\_\_
1. two parts
  2. three parts
  3. four parts
  4. five parts
- (h) Suchita brings \_\_\_\_\_ to our mind
1. sorrows
  2. pleasure
  3. sadness
  4. evil thoughts

## **Simplicity, Generosity And Good Manners**

### **(A) Simplicity**

Simplicity is a noble virtue. It is a property of human character. The easy and humble state of mind is called simplicity. Only the religious and honest people have this quality.

Simplicity is expressed in conversation, manner, behaviour and even in the dress of a person. A person with simplicity hides no truth. He deceives none. Humble is his life. He is satisfied with simple clothes and common food. A simple person believes the words of his elders as true.

Simplicity is part of religion. A simple mind is fit for the meditation of Ishwara. A person wins affection of all by dint of his nature. Everybody loves a humble person.

One cannot be religious without simplicity. We shall also become simple. We shall speak the truth. We shall walk on the right path. We shall not conceal truth. We shall not even hesitate to confess our own faults. We shall exercise simplicity in our day-to-day life. We shall remember:

Most precious clothes and jewels  
Can't augment the nobility of mankind.  
Knowledge, clothes and religion as ornaments  
Can extend the greatness of mankind.

The mercy of God can be attained by simplicity. Let us listen to a story about simplicity.

## A Simple Boy and Madhusudan

Long long ago there lived a boy called Jatil and his mother in a village. Jatil's father died. They were very poor.

Jatil used to go to a teacher in a school for his study. There was a deep forest on his way to school. The walk went through the forest. Jatil was much afraid to walk alone there. One day he said to his mother weeping, 'Mother, I'm afraid of going to school alone. Give someone to accompany me. Otherwise I shall not go to school.'

Mother listened to Jatil and said, 'We are poor. How shall I appoint a man for you, my child? There lives an elder brother of yours in the forest. His name is Madhusudan. Call him if you are afraid. He will go with you.'

Jatil got some courage listening to his mother. He has no more fear. The elder Madhusudan will go with him. On the next day he again walked through the forest. Going ahead a little he called loudly, 'Madhusudan, O my elder, come quickly to me. I'm much frightened.'

But where was Madhusudan? Nobody came to him. Jatil loved his mother very much. He also trusted her. How could her mother tell a lie?

In fact, Madhusudan is one of the names of Bhagaban. He got this name by killing a giant. Jatil's mother told him of that Madhusudan. Who is there more than Bhagaban for them who are poor and have-nots? So Jatil's mother asked him to rely on Bhagaban out of her good faith.

Jatil firmly believed that his elder Madhusudoan would come. He called again and again in a piteous voice, 'Madhusudan, O my elder, come to me quickly.'

Madhusudan could not disregard the humble faith of Jatil. He appeared before him in the guise of a boy. He said to Jatil, 'Look my little brother, I'm here. You have nothing to fear now.'

Jatil was very much delighted. Every day his elder Madhusudan took him to school and he also brought him back to his home after the school was over.

As they walked together Madhusudan told him many interesting stories. Jatil was much delighted at that. So Bhagaban can be won by simplicity.

### **(B) Generosity**

Men have many virtues including conscience and intellect. The constituents of men's humanity are honesty, simplicity, generosity, nobility, sympathy for other's distress, tolerance for other's views, good manners etc.

What do we mean by generosity? Generosity means to think all men equal. A generous man thinks no one as big or small. All persons, big or small, rich or poor, strong or weak are equal to him. There is no distinction between the self and other to a generous man. He considers as his relatives all persons belonging to all religions, communities and countries. 'Udaracharitanam tu basudhaiba kutumbokom' - it means, everybody of this earth is a relative of a generous man. He considers other's misfortune as his own and tries hard to remove the same. Without generosity one cannot be religious.

We shall be generous. We shall exercise generosity. It should be reflected in every sphere of our life and behaviour. You are not hurt by getting nothing if you are generous.

On the other hand, your mind is full of delight and peace if you can do something for others. The real happiness lies in generosity. Poet Kamini Roy says,

Sacrificing your interest for the sake of others  
Give all your life and mind,  
Is there any happiness like that  
Forget the interest of your own kind.

Let us listen to a story of a saint. He forgot his own interest for the sake others.

### **Generosity of Dadhichi**

Long long ago. There lived a saint called Dadhichi in the woods of Naimisharanya. He worshipped Lord Shiva. On one hand, he worshipped hard and on the other he prayed for the welfare of all the creatures of the world. Wishing good for the others was one of the religious vows of his life.

At that time, a giant called Bhrata became very powerful. He got a boon by dint of divine contemplation from Shiva. The boon was that he could not be killed by any weapon. This made him more and more aggressive. He captured the kingdom of heaven. He drove out Devaraj Indra and other gods from the heaven. The gods took shelter to Lord Shiva.

Lord Shiva advised them to go to Vishnulok or the realm of Vishnu. There Bhagaban Vishnu might give them appropriate advice. The gods then went to Vishnulok and started eulogizing Vishnu. Vishnu was satisfied at their eulogy and said, 'Go all of you to the saint Dadhichi Muni of Naimisharanya.'

The saint Dadhichi received them all with due respect and honour. Then they wanted to know the purpose of their coming. Devaraj Indra informed

him of their problem. They must find out the way to kill the giant Britra, the oppressor. They must restore the kingdom of heaven from his hand.

Then the saint Dadhichi said, 'You have to look for other ways since giant Britro can't be killed with any conventional weapon. I shall do good to gods even at the cost of my life. Please listen to me, Devoraj. One day this mortal body of mine shall perish. I shall just now leave out my body for your sake. If I die you can kill the giant Britra with the weapon made of my bones. My bones are not traditional weapons. The saint Dadhichi left out his body by dint of his yoga. Then Vishwakarma, the engineer among all gods, made Bajra or thunder with the bones of Dadhichi's body. Indra killed the giant Britra with this thunder. Thus the lost kingdom of heaven was regained. Everybody praised the generosity of Dadhichi Muni. Generosity is part of religion. Saint Dadhichi Muni complied with his religion and became immortal in his death.

### **(C) Good Manners**

Good manners mean the manners which are gentle. It also means soft and polite behaviour. Any beautiful behaviour is a good manner. Good manners are great qualities of man. Men are different from animals and birds for these qualities. Good manners are like ornaments of honest and religious persons. Every pious person owns this quality.

Men's heart can be won by good manners. You can win love of man if you have this quality. A good manner is a part of religion. So we shall always behave befitting good manners. We shall never behave in a bad and impolite way. We shall remain gentle to our elders. We shall put questions to them politely. We shall reply to their questions politely. We shall show affection to our younger ones.



We shall behave well with them. We shall exercise good manners in our daily life.

## Exercise

### 1. Answer the questions below:

- a. What is simplicity? Explain in short.
- b. Rewrite the story of 'A Simple Boy and Madhusudhan' in your own words.
- c. 'Generosity is a noble virtue' - explain.
- d. How did Dadhichi Muni show his generosity?
- e. What is 'good manner'? Why should we exercise it?

### 2. Answer the following questions in short:

- a. How would you define simplicity?
- b. What is the benefit of simplicity?
- c. Why did gods lose their kingdom of heaven?
- d. How did Dadhichi Muni help gods?
- e. How do you gain from the quality called good manners?

### 3. Fill in the blanks:

- a. Simplicity is a noble \_\_\_\_\_
- b. A simple mind is \_\_\_\_\_ for the meditation of Ishwara.
- c. One cannot be \_\_\_\_\_ without simplicity.
- d. The elder \_\_\_\_\_ will go with the boy.
- e. The \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ can be attained by simplicity.
- f. \_\_\_\_\_ means to think all men equal.
- g. Everybody of this earth is a relative to a \_\_\_\_\_ Man.
- h. Generosity is a part of \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Good manners are \_\_\_\_\_ of man.
- j. Men's heart can be conquered by \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

- k. We shall exercise \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ in our daily life and behaviour.

**4. Match the words from the right side to the left:**

Simplicity is part of	through good manners.
Jatil was much afraid to	generosity.
We can gain men's love	in his death.
We shall show	religion.
Dadhichi became immortal	walk alone in the forest.

**5. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

**i. A simple man**

1. meditates five hours a day.
2. believes the word of his uperiors as true.
3. lives alone.
4. does not speak to any one.

**ii. Whom did Jatil call his elder brother?**

1. Rama.
2. Dasharatha.
3. Madhusudan.
4. Dadichi Muni.

**iii. What did Dadhichi Muni show?**

1. simplicity.
2. courage.
3. anger.
4. generosity..

**iv. What was made by the bones of Dadhichi?**

1. trishul.
2. bojra.
3. scimitar.
4. sword.

**v. Why should we exercise good manners?**

1. for money.
2. for long life.
3. for it is a part of religion.
4. for being strongest of all.

## Chapter Five

# Devotion To Ishwara And Elders

Our parents, other elderly members of the family and our Gurus or preceptors always wish us good. They always advise us for our well-being. It is our duty to follow their advice and to show respect to them. We show respect to Ishwara by showing respect to them. Ishwara is the Creator of everything of this universe. He has created everything from a particle of dust to a big mountain. But we cannot see this beneficial Ishwara. It is really difficult to show respects to Ishwara directly. Our parents, superiors and elderly persons are in front of us. We feel the presence of Ishwara through them. To offer our devotion and reverence to them means to offer the same to Ishwara. When we make obeisance to their feet, it reaches Ishwara. According to Holy Books, 'Pritrideva Bhaba', 'Matrideva Bhaba', 'Acharyadeva Bhaba'. It means, we have to seek God in our father, mother and preceptor. According to Holy Books,

Pita Swarga Pita Dharma Pita Hi Paramantapah.

Pitari Preetimapanne Preeyante Sarbadevata.

It means father is the heaven, mother is the religion and father is the absolute devotion. All gods are pleased, if father is pleased. About mother the Holy Books say,

'Bhumergareeyosee Mata'.

'Trishu Lokeshu Nasti Matrisamo Guruh.'

It means mother is greater than heaven. In the three worlds there is no preceptor as great as mother. Here we can see that parents are direct Ishwara to us. To serve and obey them is to serve Ishwara. So parents and superiors should be respected as Ishwara. There are many stories about this in the Holy Books. Two stories are given below.

### **Devotion of Nachiketa to His Father**

In the ancient times, there was a saint called Bajshraba. The name of his son was Nachiketa. Nachiketa was a boy then. Bajshraba was performing sacrificial ceremony for Vishwajit. He bought some aged and sickly cows for offering.

The boy Nachiketa began to think that his father's offering and sacrificial rites would not be fulfilled by some aged cows. His purpose would not be served either. Rather it was better for his father to sacrifice Nachiketa, which would completely serve his purpose.

Thinking so Nachiketa said to his father, 'Tell me father, whom you will offer me to?' Being angry at the insistence of his son, the father replied, 'OK then, I shall offer you to the god of death.'

Nachiketa decided to keep the words of his father. Then he said, 'Send me to the god of death, father. Let your promise be kept.' Father said, 'I told it out of anger. I did not mean it at all.' Nachiketa said, 'Father, you are a truth-seer saint. The promise of a saint is never broken. You should keep your words by sending me to the god of death.'

Nachiketa went to the god of death to keep his father's words.

### **The Story of Dharmabyadh**

In the ancient times, there was a Brahmin named Kaushik. He gained supernatural powers by meditation and studying Holy Books. One day he was reading the Vedas attentively sitting under a tree. There was a crane sitting on that tree. Suddenly the crane made stool and it fell upon Kaushik's body. Kaushik was much furious at this. He gazed upwards angrily. In a moment the crane fell down dead. Kaushik was proud to discover his powers.

A few days later Kaushik went to a village for alms. He entered a house. The housewife asked him to sit down and went inside the house to bring him alms. The housewife was making delay to come back. It made him furious, too. He looked at the housewife with anger.



Kaushik and Housewife

Then the housewife smiled a little and said, 'I am not that crane.' Kaushik was surprised to hear that. The housewife said about the event that had happened to him earlier. She must possess supernatural powers. The housewife was very pious. She used to perform her duties properly. Kaushik talked to her about religion and responsibilities. Then the housewife said to Kaushik, 'Please go to Mithila. There lives Dharmabyadh. He will tell you about religion.'

Kaushik went to Mithila. He saw Dharmabyadh selling meat there. Dharmabyadh also saw Kaushik. He came close to the newcomer. Then he said, 'That pious housewife has sent you here. I know why you have come here.' Kaushik was surprised to hear that. How could a meat-seller know about the unknown matters! How could he tell the things that happen in other's mind! Dharmabyadh could read Kaushik well. He took him to his house.

Dharmabyadh said to Kaushik, 'Selling meat is our family tradition. It is our profession from generation to generation. I don't kill animals myself. I sell the meat of animals killed by others. I don't even eat meat. Everyone has a tradition of his family. It's not a sin to follow this tradition.'

Dharmabyadh told also about his supernatural powers. He attained this power by serving his parents. Parents were everything to him. They are gods. They are Ishwara. He used to serve his old parents first. Then he cared for other things.

At last Dharmabyadh said to Kaushik, 'You have come here without your parents' consent. You have not done the right thing. They are now bed-ridden in your grief. Go back to your home quickly. Make your parents happy. Otherwise all your religious activities will go in vain. There is no better religion on earth than serving one's parents.'

Kaushik got surprised again. Dharmabyadh disclosed his earlier life. He said to Dharmabyadh, 'A pious man like you is very rare. I am lucky to meet you. I shall go back to my home right now. I shall serve my parents.' Saying this, Kaushik showed respect to him. Then he made his way back to his home.

## Exercise

### 1. Answer the questions below:

- a. How should we behave with our elders?
- b. What happens if we pay respect to our parents?
- c. Why did Nachiketa ask his father to take him as a sacrifice?
- d. How did Dharmabyadh gain supernatural powers?
- e. Briefly narrate the story of Nachiketa.
- f. Briefly narrate the story of Dharmabyadh.

### 2. Answer the following questions in short:

- a. Why should we respect our parents and superiors?
- b. What is mentioned about father in the Holy Books?
- c. What is mentioned about mother in the Holy Books?
- d. What is mentioned about preceptors in the Holy Books?
- e. What is the name of Nachiketa's father? What sacrificial rite did he perform?
- f. Whom did Nachiketa's father offer Nachiketa to?
- g. Why did Brahmin Kaushik feel proud?
- h. Why did Dharmabyadh sell meat?
- i. What did the housewife say to Kaushik when he looked at her angrily?
- j. What did Dharmabyadh advise Kaushik?

### 3. Fill in the blanks:

- a. They always \_\_\_\_\_ our welfare.
- b. Pitri Preetimapanne Preeyante \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Trishu Lokeshu Nasti \_\_\_\_\_ Guruh.
- d. In the ancient times there was a saint named \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Father, whom would you \_\_\_\_\_ me to?
- f. \_\_\_\_\_ went to the god of death to keep his father's words.





## Keeping Promises and Patriotism

We are human beings. We live together in a society. For collective living we have to abide by some rules and regulations; for examples, keeping promises, maintaining regularity, perseverance, patriotism etc. Regularity is the habit of following rules and regulations. It also means doing the duties in time. For example, reading at the time of reading, playing at the time of playing. Perseverance means continuous endeavours. 'If you can't do it at one attempt then try it hundred times'. No man can prosper in life without perseverance.

Keeping promises is also a quality of human beings. Keeping promises means to maintain consistency in words and deeds. It is also a religious virtue. Keeping promises brings virtue to oneself and welfare to a society. It is a sin not to keep a promise. Breaking promises brings chaos and evil in a society.

Patriotism is also a noble virtue of man. It is a part of religion. Patriotism means to love the country where we live in. It also means to work for the development of the country. Above all it means to protect a country's independence from external aggression.

To be a real human being and a pious soul, a man has to possess the qualities like keeping promises, regularity, perseverance, patriotism etc. More to it, a man has to apply them in his life.

We shall practise keeping promises, showing our patriotism and other attributes of similar kind.

Two stories are given below about keeping promises and patriotism from our religious book the Mahabharata:

### Karna Keeps His Promises

Karna was a famous hero of the Mahabharata. He was not only famous for his heroism, but also for his charity and quality for

Mahabharata he fought for the Kauravas. Great king Duryodhana gave him the kingdom and established him as a king.

It is described in the Mahabharata that many of the gods helped either the Kauravas or the Pandavas. For example, Devaraj Indra was on the side of the Pandavas, especially for Arjuna. On the other hand, Suryadeva was on the side of the Kauravas.

Karna was born with a koboch and a kundal. These were natural koboch and kundal. A koboch is an armour, a metallic coat to protect one from the blow of a weapon. A kundal means an ear-ring. At that time the warriors used to wear both armours and ear-rings.

Karna pledged that he would not refuse anyone if he begs something from him, whatever might be the price of the thing asked for, Devaraj Indra wanted to take this advantage for the benefit of Arjuna. He thought Karna was invincible for his natural koboch and



Karna and Indra in the guise of a Brahmin

kundal. It means no one can kill him. If his koboch and kundal are taken away, he would be weak. Then Arjuna could defeat him early

Thinking this Devaraj Indra came to him as a Brahmin. He would ask for both koboch and kundal as gifts. If Karna gave the same, he would be weak. And if he did not give it, he would do an irreligious act by not keeping his promise. It will bring him bad names.

Devaraj Indra wanted the koboch and the kundol from Karna as gifts. Karna said, 'O Brahmin, want something else. These koboch and kundal are parts of my body. I am invincible for these things. If you want land, cattle, elephants, horses, houses or even kingdom, I will give it to you.

But Indra in the guise of a Brahmin was irrevocable. He would not take anything other than the koboch and the kundal. What else to do? Karna cut the koboch and the kundal to separate them from his body. Then he gave them to Indra. Karna did so knowing fully well that it might cause him some danger. This is how he kept his promise. He became famous for what he did. We shall also follow him and keep our promises. Keeping promise is also a part of religion.

### **Patriotism of Bidula**

Jona and her son Prabir set a glorious example of patriotism. We know the story of their true patriotism. Now we will learn about another patriotic lady. Her name is Bidula. Both the stories are written in letters of gold in the Mahabharata.

The kingdom was called Sauvira. Bidula was the noble queen of this kingdom. The king of Sauvira and Bidula had a son. His name was Sanjay. When Sanjay was a young boy, the king died suddenly. At that time the king of Sind took this opportunity and attacked the kingdom of Sauvira. Sanjay was defeated easily. The king of Sind occupied the kingdom of Sauvira without much effort. Losing the kingdom the frustrated Sanjay lay on the ground with a pale face. He made no more attempt to regain his kingdom. But Bidula could not tolerate such subjugation by an external power. She inspired his son

Sanjay to prepare for a war against the occupants. She censured him and said, 'It seems that you are not my son. My son can never be a coward like you. Remember your father, the valiant king of Sauvira. How powerful and courageous he was! He could never tolerate such domination by others. Be fearless, defeat the enemy and reoccupy the kingdom.'

Sanjay said, 'If I get killed in the war, what will you do with the whole world, mother?'

Bidula got very angry. She said, "Death for freedom is the death of a hero. We must die some day. If you have to sacrifice your life by fighting for your independence and free your country from the grip of your enemy, let it be so then. Man becomes immortal even after his death in a religious war and he wins heaven in the next world. So go to war like a hero with the vow 'Freedom or death.' "

Sanjay could realize his mistake at his mother's inspiring words. He fought bravely against the enemy. The king of Sind was defeated. Sanjay regained his lost kingdom.

The kingdom of Sauvira trembled with the victorious cries of all its subjects. They congratulated their king. And Bidula became memorable for his unique example of patriotism. It is really astonishing to think what extent of patriotism the mother had in order to send her son to a battle risking his life. Bidula's patriotism was so deep and incomparable.

## Exercise

### 1. Answer the questions below:

- a. What do you mean by keeping promises?
- b. What is the benefit of keeping promises?
- c. Explain the saying, 'Keeping promises is an act of religion'.
- d. Write the story about 'Keeping Promises by Karna' in short?

- e. Explain what patriotism is.
- f. Briefly narrate the story of Bidula's patriotism.

**2. Answer the following questions in short:**

- a. What happens if promises are not kept?
- b. What did Indra in the guise of a Brahmin want to Karna?
- c. What is a koboch?
- d. What is a kundal?
- e. How did Karna keep his promises?
- f. What did Sanjay say when Bidula asked him to fight?

**3. Fill in the blanks:**

- a. Keeping promises is also a \_\_\_\_\_ of man.
- b. It is \_\_\_\_\_ to make a promise, but not to keep it.
- c. Patriotism is a part of \_\_\_\_\_
- d. We shall \_\_\_\_\_ regularly the quality of keeping promises.
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ was on the side of the Pandavas, especially for Arjuna.
- f. Karna was born with a \_\_\_\_\_ and a kundal.
- g. Kundal means \_\_\_\_\_
- h. \_\_\_\_\_ was the great queen of the kingdom.
- i. Man becomes immortal even after his death in a \_\_\_\_\_
- j. Bidula remains memorable for ever for her glory of \_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Find out what is right or wrong:**

- i. The Hero Karna was born with a koboch and a kundal.
- ii. Suryadeva was on the side of the Pandavas.
- iii. Keeping promises is a great virtue.
- iv. Indra came to Karna in the guise of a golden deer.
- v. Bidula was the queen of Sind.
- vi. Bidula inspired Sanjay to fight against the occupant in order to reoccupy his kingdom

**5. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

a. Which of the following deeds are of virtue?

- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. making promises. | 2. stealing.      |
| 3. telling lies.    | 4. earning money. |

b. For whom Karna fought?

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Pandavas.   | 2. Kauravas. |
| 3. Panchalads. | 4. Nishads.  |

c. Whom did Devoraj Indra support?

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. Karna.  | 2. Vishma.  |
| 3. Arjuna. | 4. Shakuni. |

d. Who has become famous for patriotism?

- |            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| 1. Kunti.  | 2. Draupadi. |
| 3. Bidula. | 4. Gandhari. |

e. Who occupied the kingdom of Sauvira?

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Sanjay.       | 2. Sauvira.         |
| 3. King of Sind. | 4. King of Magadha. |

## **Keeping the Truth and Religion**

Keeping the truth is also an act of religion. Say right to the right; say good to the good. Keeping the truth means never to take shelter of falsehood.

There is no act of religion greater than truth. Truth is Ishwara-like. Speaking the truth makes everybody happy. It makes Ishwara happy, too.

Speaking the truth is a virtue and telling a lie is a vice. No one likes the persons who do not keep promises and truth. Those who keep the truth are respected by all. They become immortal even after their death. Here is a story of keeping the truth from the Mahabharata.

### **Keeping the Truth by Prahlad**

In the ancient times, there was a king called Prahlad. He belonged to the dynasty of demons. Demons are always malicious to Vishnu. But Prahlad was a devotee of Vishnu since his boyhood in spite of his birth in a demon family. For this reason his father Hirinyakashipu tried to kill him on several occasions. But he was saved by the mercy of Vishnu. Contrary to it, his father was killed by Vishnu, who came in the guise of Nrisingha. Prahlad never went away from truth even at a time when his life was at stake. Keeping the truth was the vow of his life.

After his father's death Prahlad became the king and ruled over his kingdom. Prahlad always complied with truth while ruling his country. King Prahlad had a son. His name was Biracan. Biracan became famous as a courageous hero. But the young Biracan was very ill-tempered. He was proud of being a prince and a learned man.

As a proud man he did not look at Sudhanna affectionately. Sudhanna was of his age. He was the son of Saint Angira. The relation between the two was not good at all.

Once there was a debate between the two on who was greater. This greatness was not of age, but of wisdom and virtue.

Biracan said, 'I'm superior.'

Sudhanna replied, 'No, it can't be so. I am superior to you in all respects.'

Then the matter went to the court of king Prahlad.

Sudhanna said, 'O the great king, please decide who is wiser between the two of us.'

Sudhanna also told the king, 'I know, you always keep the truth. Heaven cannot be attained by telling a lie. So please keep the truth in your judgment.'

The king listened to everything. Then he thought for a while. In the long run he gave his verdict and said, 'Sudhanna, although Biracan is a prince, his courage and wisdom is not less than those of yours. But he is a bit boastful. Moreover, he is ill-tempered. So you are superior to him. You possess in a greater extent the qualities like truthfulness, generosity, sacrifice and self-control.'

Once again the king Prahlad proved his nobility by keeping the truth. He did not do partiality out of his affection for his own son.

Everybody was full of praise for king Prahlad.

Keeping the truth is, indeed, an act of religion.

## Exercise

### 1. Answer the questions below:

- a. Write in short the meaning of 'Keeping the Truth'.
- b. What is the benefit of keeping the truth?
- c. How did Prahlad keep the truth?
- d. How was Sudhanna superior to Biracan?



- e. Why didn't Prahlad take the side of his son?
- f. 'Truth is an act of religion' -- explain.

**2. Answer the following questions in short:**

- a. What is the effect of keeping the truth?
- b. Who was Prahlad?
- c. How was the relation between Prahlad and Biracan?
- d. Which qualities did Sudhanna possess to a greater extent?

**3. Fill in the blanks:**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ is also an act of religion.
- b. There is no \_\_\_\_\_ greater than truth.
- c. Ishwara also becomes \_\_\_\_\_ if the truth is spoken.
- d. Prahlad always kept the \_\_\_\_\_ in ruling his kingdom.
- e. Once again the king proved his \_\_\_\_\_ by keeping the truth.

**4. Find out the right or wrong sentences:**

- a. There is no act of religion greater than the truth.
- b. Truth is Ishwara-like.
- c. There is no sin in telling lies.
- d. Sudhanna was the son of Prahlad.
- e. Biracan never got angry.

**5. Match the words from the right side with the words in the left:**

Keeping the truth is  
Sudhanna is saint Angira's  
The story 'Keeping the Truth  
by Prahlad ' is  
King Prahlad did not do  
partiality

son.  
taken from the Mahabharata.  
to his son.  
an act of religion.

**6. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

i. What is the effect of keeping the truth? Everybody becomes

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. happy.  | 2. rich.    |
| 3. strong. | 4. unhappy. |

ii. Telling lies is

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1. a sin.    | 2. a virtue. |
| 3. pleasant. | 4. good.     |

iii. Who attempted to kill Prahlad on several occasions?

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. Sudhanna.       | 2. Biracan.      |
| 3. Hiranyakashipu. | 4. Hiranyakshma. |

iv. Who was the father of Biracan?

- |            |                    |
|------------|--------------------|
| 1. Indra.  | 2. Hiranyakashipu. |
| 3. Angira. | 4. Prahlad .       |

v. What is the reaction of Ishwara if the truth is kept?

- |           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1. happy. | 2. unhappy. |
| 3. angry. | 4. fearful. |

## Unity of Ishwara and Religious Equality

This earth is the dwelling place of diverse people. Their clothes, manners, behaviours, customs and religion are also different.

We are the Hindus. The customary name of our religion is Hinduism. This religion is very ancient. It prevailed in the past, it is prevailing at present and it will prevail in future, too. This is why it is called Sanatana Dharma or eternal religion. It means the religion that exists for ever.

There are many religions in the world. For example, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam etc. Religion originates from Ishwara. It is true of all religions. One can reach the same Creator by observing one's own religion. To be obedient to one's own religion is the instruction of all the Holy Books.

We call the Creator Ishwara. The Christians call Him God. The Muslims call Him Allah. In fact, Ishwara, God and Allah are the different names of the same Creator. The same Ishwara has been in different religions, in different languages, in different names.

There are differences of opinions and ways of worship and prayer. But the basic principle of all religions is the same. And it is the fact that Ishwara exists. We must gain His mercy and do good to all created beings. The common purpose of all religions is to attain one's salvation and to do good to all creatures. So we should not neglect any religion. Ishwara Himself does not do so. In the Shrimadbhagawatgita Shrikrishna says,

'Je Jatha Mang Prapadyante Tangstathaiba Bhajamham.  
Mama Bartmanubartante Manushyah Partha Sarbashah.'  
(Geeta 4/11)

It means that I satisfy one the way one worships me. Men follow my way in all directions. From this point of view Paramhangsadeva said, 'many views, many ways.'

So we must have respect for all religions. We should keep in mind that all human beings are the creation of the same Ishwara. We shall not consider the religion, the caste and the colour one may belong to. We shall remain sympathetic to all irrespective of their caste, religion and colour. We shall stand by the side of all persons in the hours of their danger and misfortune as well as in the hours of their joy and festivity. We shall accept the followers of other religions as our friends. We shall stress upon the fact that despite differences in the rites and rituals, the goal of all religions is the same. There is no difference among human beings. Poet Satyendranath has said,

Only outward complexion  
may be black or white  
But all are equally red inside.

This world will be a wonderful place if religious equality is maintained in this manner. The brotherhood among people shall develop rapidly. Everybody shall love one another. Nobody shall hate others. Having deep faith in the unity of Ishwara and religious equality we shall say,

'Man is true above all, none is above man.' We shall utter, 'All men of all religions are brothers to one another'.

The sense of equality shall grow, if we remember that Ishwara exists in all created beings. And the world shall become an abode of peace if the sense of equality wakes up.

### Exercise

**1. Answer the questions below:**

- a. What is the basic principle of all religions?
- b. Mention some of the names of Ishwara given by the followers of different religions.

- c. Write down the meaning of the following sloka:  
' Je Jatha Mang Prapadyante Tangstathaiba Bhajamham.  
Mama Bartmanubartante Manushyah Partha Sarbashah.'
- d. How should we treat the people of other religions?
- e. What is the effect of maintaining religious equality?

**2. Answer the following questions in short:**

- a. 'Diverse is this earth, so are its people' - explain.
- b. Write down the names of four religions on this earth.
- c. Whom do we reach by observing our own religion?
- d. 'Many views, many ways' - who said so?
- e. What will happen on this earth if religious equality is maintained?

**3. Fill in the blanks:**

- a. This earth is the abode of \_\_\_\_\_ people..
- b. Men's \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are different.
- c. Sanatana means \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. All religions originate from \_\_\_\_\_
- e. The Hindus call the Creator \_\_\_\_\_
- f. No religion should be \_\_\_\_\_.

**4. Find out what is right or wrong:**

- a. Ishwara is the origin of all religions.
- b. Obedience to own religion is the instruction of all the Holy Books.
- c. Ramthakur said, 'Many views, many ways.'
- d. Different religions tell about different Ishwaras in different languages.

**5. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

a. How is the behaviour of all the people of the world?

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. same.          | 2. different.    |
| 3. all are angry. | 4. all are calm. |

b. 'Only outward complexion may be black or white

But all are equally red inside.' - who said so?

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Rabindranath Tagore. | 2. Madhusudan Dutt.    |
| 3. Kazi Nazrul Islam.   | 4. Satyendranath Dutt. |

c. 'Many views, many ways' - who said so?

- |                                 |                       |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Ramkrishna Paramhangshadeva. | 2. Swami Vivekananda. |
| 3. Swami Swarupananda.          | 4. Shankaracharya.    |

d. 'Man is \_\_\_\_\_ above all.'

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. wisdom. | 2. true.    |
| 3. long.   | 4. diverse. |

## Chapter Six

# Avotar (Incarnation)

Ishwara is Almighty and Merciful. Sometimes Ishwara comes down to the earth for the well-being of the world. This coming down of Ishwara is called descending. He descends in any earthly appearance. This is called Avotar.

Ishwara appears on the earth hiding his riches by dint of his illusion. So, common people cannot recognize him. He looks like exactly as he appears. For example, when he appears as a human being, he is seen to behave like a common person. Like a man he takes birth from a mother's womb. Like a man he possesses hunger, thirst, infirmity and diseases. But in spite of these characteristics, he has some distinction. He owns some special qualities. He becomes a great man. Avotar (Incarnation) can be classified mainly into three categories:

These are

- 1) Angsha Avotar (Part Incarnation)
- 2) Shaktyabesh Avotar (Power Incarnation)
- 3) Gunavotar (Virtue Incarnation)

**Angsha Avotar:** Avotar with the partial (incomplete) figure of Ishwara is called Angsho Avotar. For example Matsya, Kurma, Baraha, Nrishingha, Bamana, Parshurama, Rama, Balarama, Buddha and Kalki.

**Shoktyabesh Avotar:** The Avotar in which the power of Ishwara is expressed, is called Shaktyabesh Avotar, such as Sanak, Prithu, Vyasa etc.

**Gunavotar:** When Ishwara appears with the special qualities of creativity, nourishment and destruction, then he is called Gunovotar, such as - Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

This world of ours does not always remain the same. Sometimes there exist very adverse situations. There come some awful disasters, too. Evil powers defeat auspicious powers. Men take the shelter of irreligion instead of religion. Groans are heard all around. Having witnessed the same, the hearts of some great men cry out. They pray eagerly to Ishwara to get rid of distress and suffering. The merciful Ishwara then becomes sympathetic to suffering humanity. He appears on the earth responding to his devotees. He comes to establish peace driving out disorders. He comes to destroy the miscreants, to save the virtuous and to establish religion. Then he takes birth on this earth assuming some form. We call this state of Ishwara Avotar. Bhagaban Shrikrishna said in 'Gita'

"Jada Jada Hi Dharmasya Glanirvabati Bharat.

Avyuthanamdharmasya Tadattanang Srijamyaham.

Paritranae Sadhunang Binashae Cho Dushkritam.

Dharmasangsthapanarthae Sombhrabami Juge Juge."

It means, whenever religion is disgraced and irreligion increases, I appear then. I appear in the ages for the salvation of the virtuous, for the destruction of the miscreants and for the establishment of religion.

So, Avotars have three types of activities: 1) to save the virtuous 2) to destroy the miscreants and 3) to establish religion. Besides, mass education is also another objective of all Avotars.

The Avotars are majestic in many ways. An Avotar is a living role model to us. He teaches us religion referring to the events of his own life. Countless people gather before him and seek peace under the shelter of religion.

Common people may come in contact with an Avotar and attain salvation quite easily. Redeeming the sinners is also a special duty of all Avotars. We cannot easily guess Ishwara who has endless

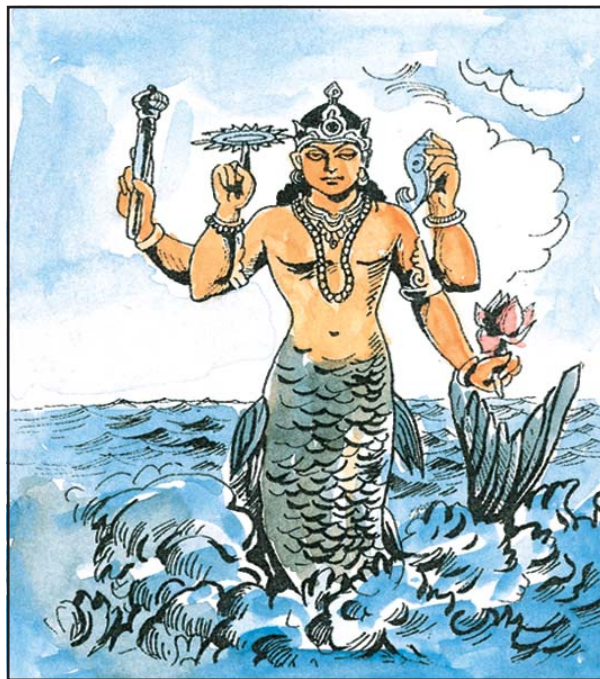


We get Him close to us in the figure of an Avotar. We get blessed at His nearness. He fulfills the desire of our mind. Men praise the Avotars for ages together. They worship them. Innumerable Avotars are mentioned in the Puranas. Here we will get acquainted with ten prominent Avotars.

**Introduction of ten Avotars:** According to Purana Bhagaban Vishnu has revealed himself in ten Avotars. They are Matsya, Kurma, Baraha, Nrisingha, Bamana, Parshurama, Rama, Balarama, Buddha and Kalki.

### 1) Matsya Avotar:

Thousands years back there lived a very pious king named Satyabrata. At that time the earth was suffering many kinds of oppressions. The pious king prayed for the mercy of Ishwara and the welfare of the world.



Matsya Avotar

One day king Satyabrata was taking his bath in a pond. Then a 'Punti' fish came to the king and begged for its life. He took the fish in his bowl and brought it home.

The fish grew up hugely day by day. It could not be contained in the pond, the lake or the river wherever it was kept.

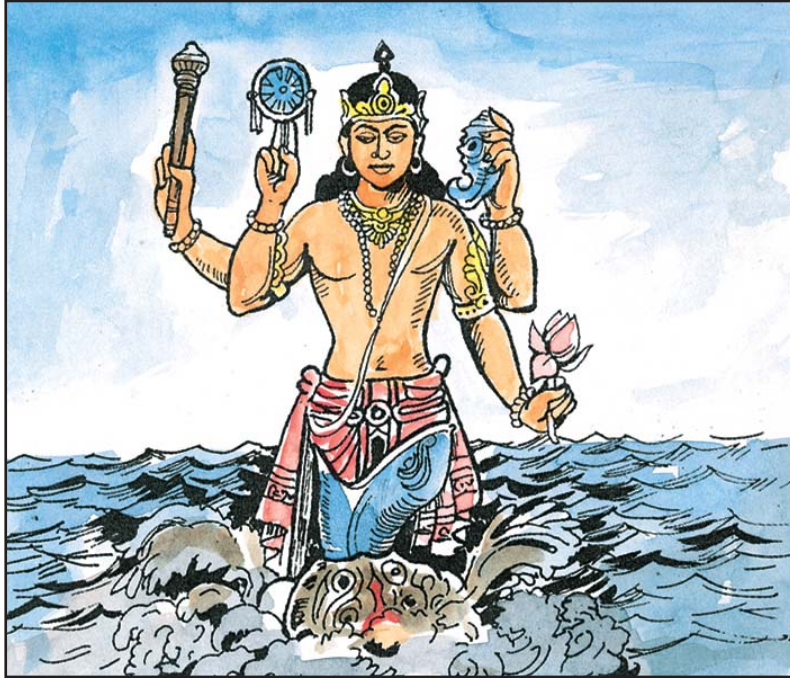
Everybody got scared to see it growing so large. Then the king began to praise the fish taking it as God. At this the frontal part of the fish turned into Narayana. The Narayana in the figure of fish said, "Satyabrata, the time of universal dissolution will appear within seven days. At that time a golden boat will come to your wharf. You would get into the boat with all types of creatures in couples, food grains and seeds. I will appear then as a horned fish. You would fasten the boat with my horn."

The dissolution began. The king followed the direction of Narayana in the guise of fish. The boat was saved from destruction. When the dissolution was over the king came down with everything. Every thing was created again in a gradual manner. Thus the creations and the Vedas were saved by the Matsya Avotar.

## **2) Kurma Avotar:**

Once the demons living under the earth defeated the gods and occupied the kingdom of heaven. The distress of the gods knew no bound. Then Brahma and Indra went to Shrihari and discribed their distress in details.

Shrihari suggested the gods to churn the sea along with the demons. He said that nectar would come out of the sea as a result of churning. By drinking that nectar the gods will get back their strength to defeat the demons



Kurma Avotar

The gods started the process of churning. The mountain 'Mandar' was the churning stick. And the snake Basuki was the churning string. The huge mountain Mandar began to sink under the sea. The gods began to invoke Shrihari whole-heartedly.

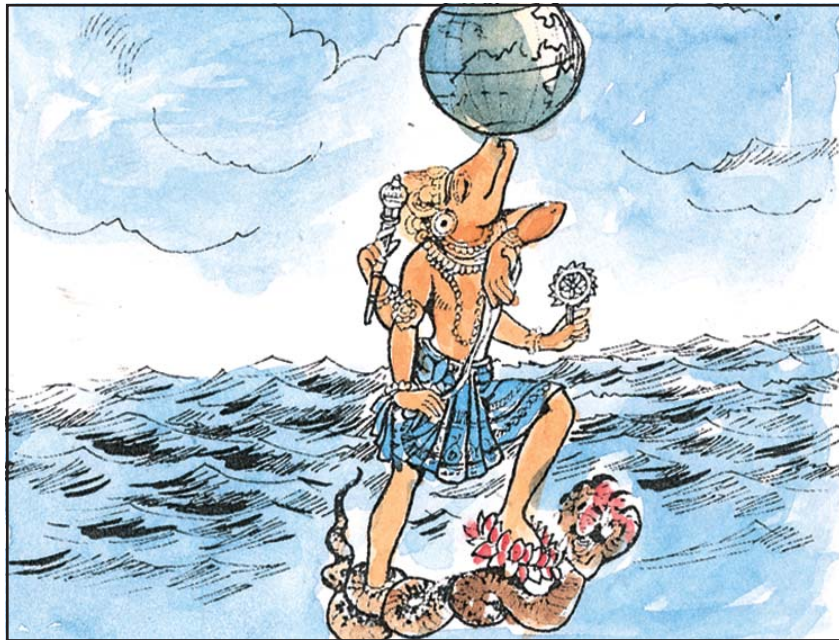
Shrihari then entered the sea in the guise of a huge kurma, which means a turtle. He held the mountain Mandar on his back.

The process of churning continued. Nectar came out of the sea. Gods drank the nectar. Then they defeated the demons. Gods got their kingdom of heaven back. And thus Narayana as the Kurma saved the three worlds.

### 3) Baraha Avotar:

Once the earth was sinking down the sea. Then Shrihari appeared as Baraha or pig and saved the earth. He with his huge teeth held the earth above the water. The earth was saved.

Besides this, Shrihari in the figure of a Baraha did another great thing. Hiranyaksha, the king of the demons was an oppressor. He established peace on the earth by killing Hiranyaksha.



Baraha Avotar

### 4) Nrisingha Avotar:

Hiranyakshipu was the brother of Hiranyaksha, the king of the demons. Hiranyakshipu became very angry to hear that Shrihari had killed Hirohyaksha. He looked for an opportunity to take revenge. Gradually he became very much malicious to Ishwara. But the strange thing was that, his only son Prahlad was devoted to Vishnu. Hirannyakshipu asked his son to leave the company of Vishnu. But

Prahlad did not agree to do that. At this Hiranyakshipu got very angry with Prahlad. He tried to kill him in many ways. But God Vishnu saved him.

One day Hiranyakshipu asked Prahlad, "Where does your Vishnu live?"

Prahlad replied, "God Vishnu is everywhere."

Hiranyakshipu: (showing a pillar nearby) "Does Vishnu exist even in this pillar?"

Prahlad: "Yes father, he is here also."



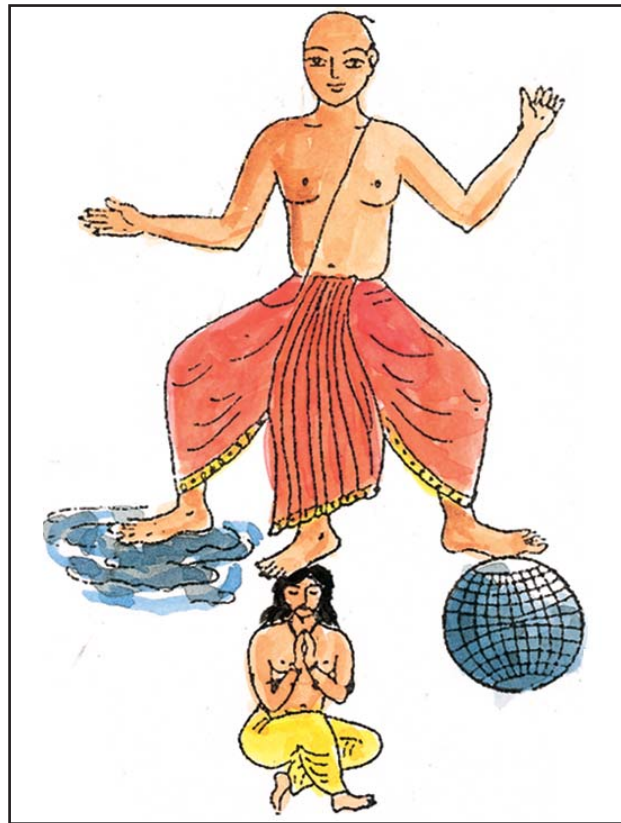
Nrsingha Avotar

Hiranyakshipu then kicked the pillar and broke it. At once God Vishnu appeared from inside the pillar in the figure of Nrsingha. Nrsingha with his dreadful nails rent the chest of Hiranyakshipu.

Thus Hiranyakshipu was killed. Devotees of Vishnu got rid of his oppression.

### 5) Bamana Avotar:

Once there was a king named Bali. He was the king of demons. Bali conquered the heaven. Gods were in danger losing the heaven. Then Vishnu came to save the gods. He took the appearance of a Bamana (a dwarf).



Bamana Avotar

Bali was a great donor. One day Bamana went to Bali and wanted a land of three steps. Three steps only. Bali agreed to it laughing. At

once Bamana took a huge size. He kept one step on the heaven and the other on the earth. There was no place to keep his third step. So Bali told him to keep it on Bali's head. The God Vishnu in the figure of Bamana kept his step on Bali's head and forced him to go down under the earth. This is how gods got their lost heaven back.

### 6) Parshurama Avotar:

In the beginning of the age 'Treta' the kings of the Kshatriyas became very powerful. They became unruly. They did not want to follow any religious instructions. They disregarded the virtuous persons. Religion began to abolish from the country. In such a situation the great saint Richik started to meditate in order to awaken religious atmosphere in the society. Being pleased at his meditation, Vishnu took birth as grandson of Richik and son of Jamdagni.



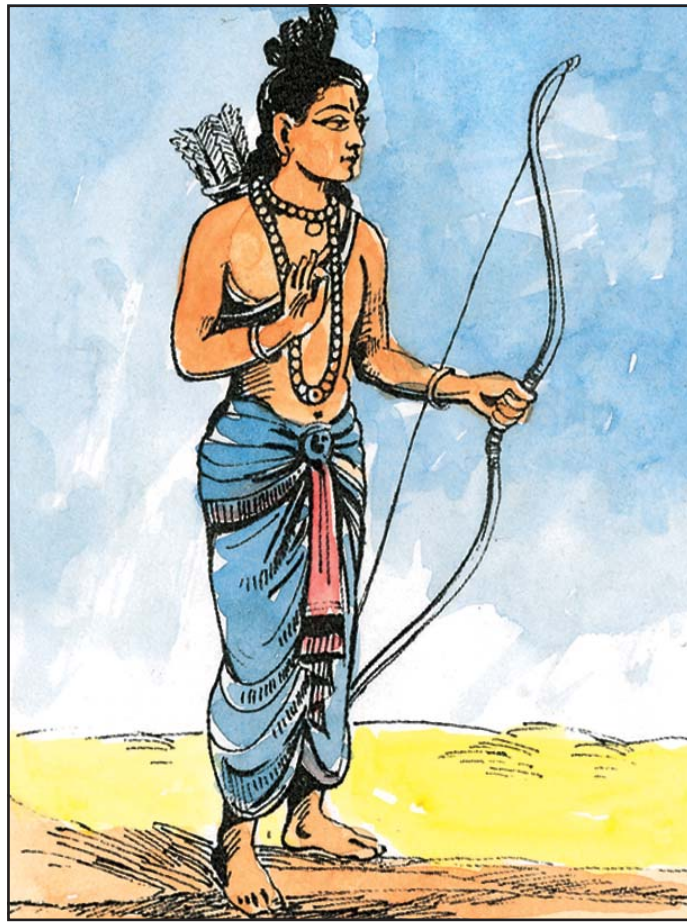
Parshurama Avotar

He was named Rama. Rama was the worshipper of Mahadeva. Being pleased at his worship Mahadeva gave Rama a Parshu or an axe.

This Parshu was his weapon. No one could defeat him as long as he carried this axe in his hand. After this axe or Parshu he was named Parshurama.

Porshuram destroyed the oppressor Kshatriyas fighting twenty one times against them. So peace was established in the earth. The people of earth got rid of oppression.

**7) Rama Avotar:** It was the last of the age of Treta. Rakshas king Ravana had become very powerful. He conquered the heaven. He oppressed the gods. There was disorder again on earth. This time



Rama Avotar

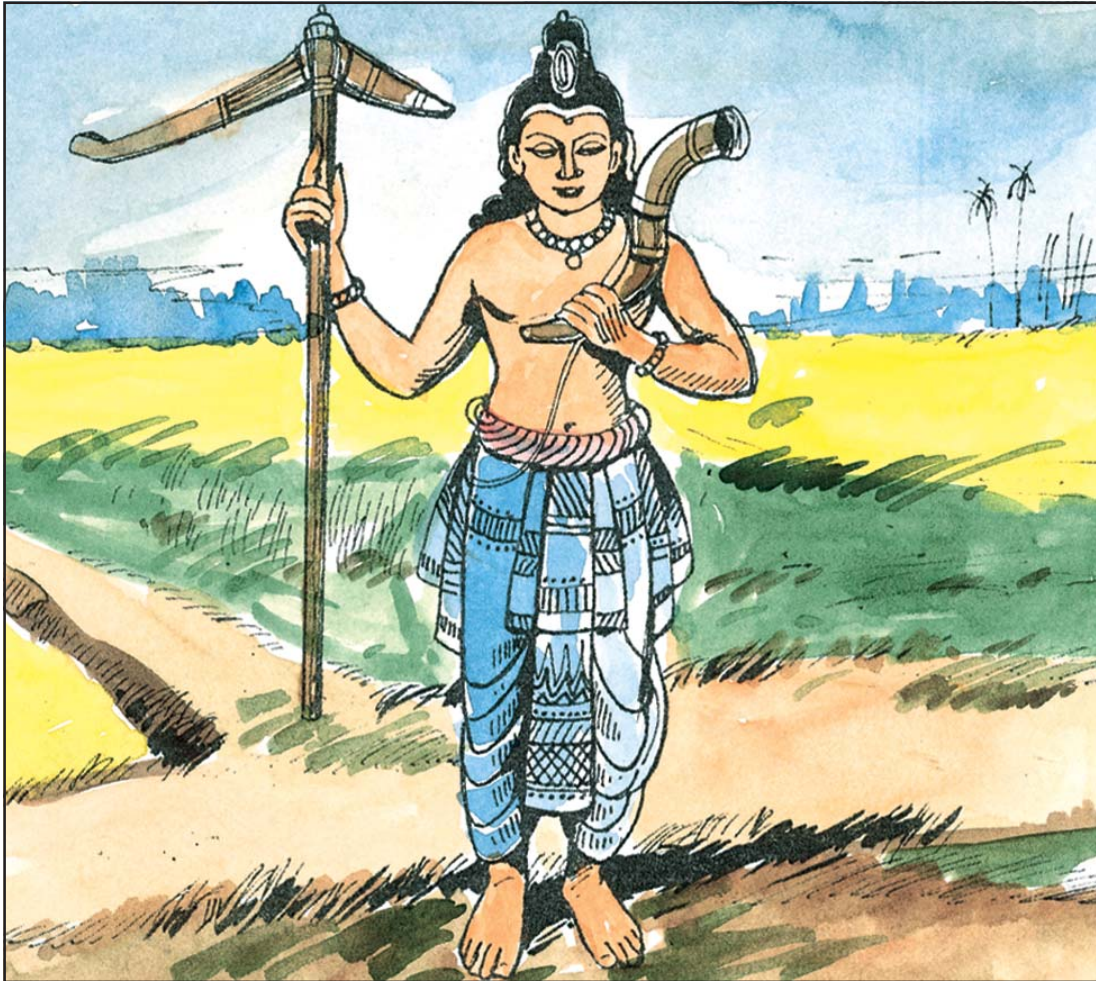


god took birth as Rama in the house of pious king Dasharatha. Rama with his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana went to the forest to abide by the truth of his father. Ravana kidnapped Sita from this forest. There was a terrible fight between Rama and Ravana for rescuing Sita. Ravana was destroyed along with his entire family. Rama rescued Sita. The earth was saved from the oppression of the Rakshas. There was peace back again in the heaven and earth. We can know everything about Rama from the Ramayana.

### **8) Balarama Avotar:**

It was the age of Dwapar. At that time many of the kings of the earth had become oppressors. Their oppression caused disorder on the earth. Then God appeared as Balarama for the peace of men. Balarama's father was Vasudeva. He was the elder brother of Shrikrishna.

Balarama was the greatest hero of 'Goda War'. He used to have a plough in his hand. He fought with this 'hal' or plough-shaped weapon. So he is called haldhar or haliram. Balarama punished many oppressor kings. It removed the distress of men. Peace and religion were established in the country.



Balarama Avotar

### 9) Buddha Avotar:

On this our earth eternal peace is never established. Disorder has taken place again and again. Violence became more serious. Many beasts were being sacrificed in the sacrificial ceremonies. It seemed that the offering and sacrifice was the one and only act of religion. Then God appeared as Buddha. He took birth as the son of king Shuddhudhon. He was named Gautam. He was known as Buddha after acquiring 'Bodhi' or wisdom. Goutama Buddha asked to stop killing animals. He showed men the way to peace preaching the Message of non-violence.

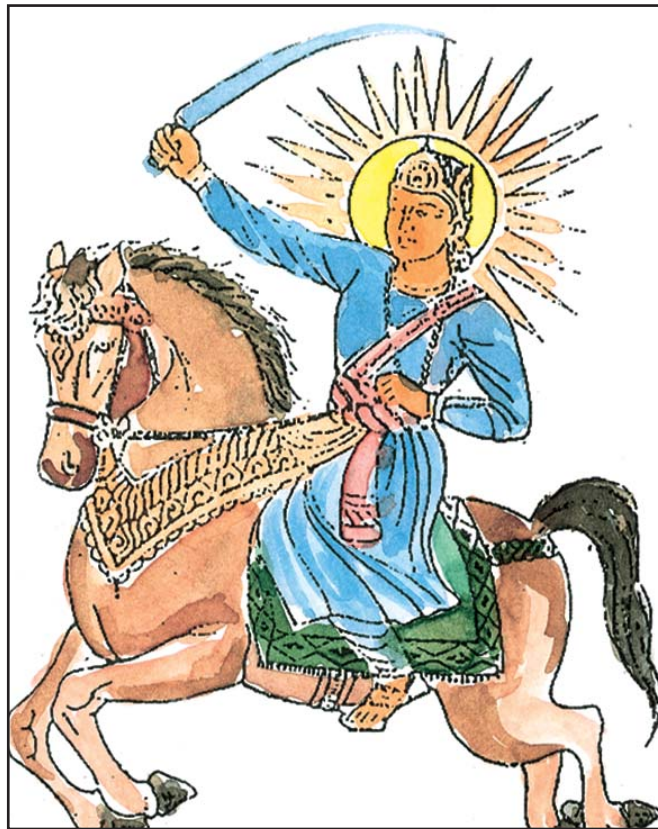
The principle of his religion was, 'Serving creatures' and 'non-violence is the absolute act of religion.' There is no other great act of religion than non-violence.



Buddha Avotar

### 9) Kalki Avotar:

Present age is the 'Kali' age or Iron Age. The distinguishing characteristics of this age are falsehood and shrewdness. At this age, natural calamities like diseases, epidemics, grief, excessive rainfall, drought etc. will occur on this earth. This will lead many people to



Kalki Avotar

death. Many people will be oppressed. There will be no peace or happiness in human mind. Then God will appear as Kalki. Kalki will become a great scholar studying the Vedas from very early age.

Being stricken with the distress of the creatures he will start worshipping Mahadeva. He will get skilled in the art of bowmanship.

In his hand he will have a large sword. He will kill the oppressors with this sword. Distress of the people will be removed. There will be peace on earth. The golden age will flourish again.

### Exercise

**1. Answer the following questions:**

- a. What does Avotar mean? What are the main kinds of Avotars and what are they? Describe in brief.
- b. Give a short description of 'Matsya Avotar'.
- c. Write about Kurma Avotar in short.
- d. Write about Buddha Avotar.

**2. Answer the following questions in short:**

- a. What is an Avotar?
- b. Why an Avotar is called great man?
- c. Why does Ishwara appear on the earth in different ages?
- d. Write the message of god Shrikrishna about Avotar from Gita with simple meaning.
- e. What does the Avotar do in the world?
- f. Why do men praise and worship Avotars in ages?
- g. According to the Puranas, in how many Avotars god Vishnu has revealed himself? Write their names accordingly.
- h. How did Shrihari in the form of 'Baraha' save the earth?
- i. How did God in the form of Ninsingha kill Hiranyakashipu?

- j. How did God in the form of Bamana make Bali go down under the earth?
- k. Who is Parshurama? How did he establish peace in the earth?
- l. Why did Rama go to the forest? Who kidnapped Sita? Why was there a fight between Rama and Ravana?
- m. Who were the father and mother of Balarama? Why is Balarama called Haladhar or Haliram?
- n. When was Goutama known as Buddha? What is the principle of his religion?
- o. When will God appear as Kalki?

### 3. Fill in the blanks:

- a. Ishwara is Almighty and \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. Men take shelter of \_\_\_\_\_ instead of religion.
- c. An Avotar is a role \_\_\_\_\_ for us.
- d. There was a \_\_\_\_\_ king named Satyabrata.
- e. The characteristics of Kali age are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Match the words from right side with the words in the left:

Like men he takes birth in	than non-violence.
The pious king prayed for the mercy of Ishwara for	from the forest.
Ravana kidnapped Sita	from his very early age.
There is no other act of religion greater	mother's womb
Kalki shall be a great scholar	the welfare of the world.

**5. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

- a) Avotar with the partial figure of Ishwara is called
1. Angsho Avotar
  2. Shaktyabesh Avotar
  3. Gunavotar
  4. Brahma.
- b) Who of the following is 'Gunavotar'?
1. Balarama
  2. Buddha
  3. Vyasa
  4. Vishnu
- c) According to the Puranas, in how many Avotars Vishnu has revealed himself ?
1. seven
  2. eight
  3. nine
  4. ten
- d) The name of the father of Prahlad was
1. Hiranyaksha
  2. Satyabrata
  3. Hiranyakshipu
  4. Gautam Buddha
- e) For how many times Parshurama fought against the oppressor Kshatriyas to destroy them?
1. twenty times
  2. twenty-one times
  3. twenty-two times
  4. twenty-three times.

## Chapter Seven

# Moral Stories

We know what is good and what is bad. This power of understanding good or bad is called morality. Gaining knowledge about morality is called moral teaching. Moral teaching is part of religion. Morals are beneficial rules and regulations for man and society. Accepting moral teachings and abiding by good advice bring welfare to men. They bring good to society. In Hindu religion importance has been given on abiding by good advice and morality. The Vedas, the Upanishada, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Puranas etc. are the Holy Books of Hindu religion. There are many moral stories in these Holy Books. Through these stories man can learn moral teachings easily and delightfully. Reflection of some principle or other has been made through these moral stories. It means each moral story teaches about a particular moral. And exercise of those morals in life will bring us well-being.

We shall learn about some moral stories. We shall learn moral sayings from these stories and apply them to our life.

## Consequence of Jealousy

Long, long ago. There lived a Varondo bird in a forest. It was a strange bird. It had two faces. Other organs of its body were normal like other birds'. It could eat with its two mouths. But the food went to the same stomach. The result was same, too. If it ate nutritious fruits by one mouth it could nourish its body. And taking of something bad food would cause a bad result.

There was a vast sea near the forest. Huge waves of sea dashed against the shore. Many things came floating with those waves.



These included a number of fruits, too. The bird Varondo used to eat those fruits.

One day a beautiful fruit came floating with the waves. The first mouth of the Varondo bird began to eat that fruit. It was called Amrita or ambrosia fruit. The fruit was very beautiful to look at as well as sweet to eat.

While eating, it said to the second mouth, "In my life I have eaten many floating fruits from the sea. But I have never taken such a tasty fruit."

Then the second mouth said, "Is it so? Then don't eat the whole. Let me have a share of it to satisfy myself."

The first mouth said laughing,

- "What is the need of it? We have the same stomach. Anything taken by anyone of us will go to the same stomach. "

Saying this, the first mouth ate the whole fruit. The second mouth was very angry not to have the share of it. It was jealous. It decided to teach the other mouth a good lesson by any means. It began to look for an opportunity.

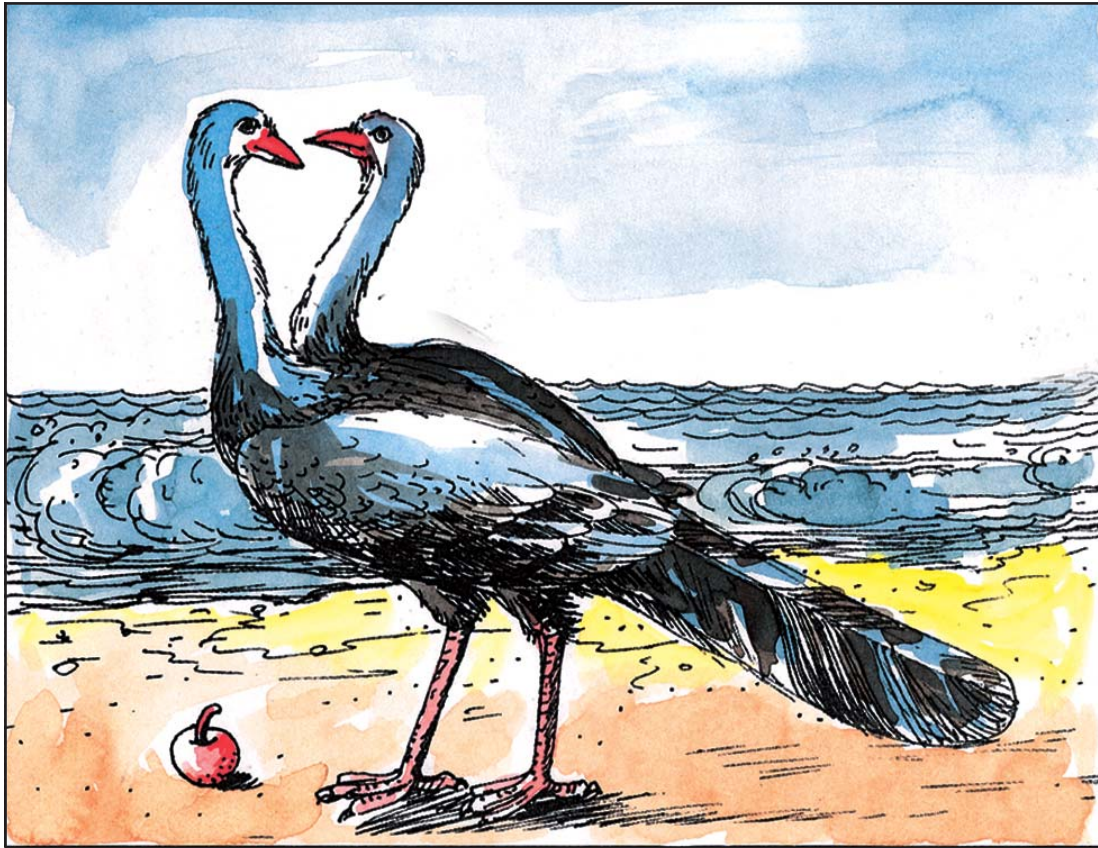
A few days later the second mouth found a poisonous fruit beside the sea. Then it called the first mouth and said, "You the selfish, you didn't give me share of the Ambrosia fruit the other day. Today I will eat this poisonous fruit. By eating this I will take revenge of that humiliation."

Hearing about the poisonous fruit the first mouth became scared. It shouted, "O, never make such a mistake. Don't bring danger on ourselves. Neither of the two mouths will survive if this fruit is eaten."

But then the second mouth was burning with jealousy. It did not pay heed to the first mouth. In a moment it swallowed the poisonous fruit. And then?

And then there happened the most terrible thing.

Though the mouths were two, the stomach was one. The Varondo bird survived no more. It fell dead.



Varondo Bird with two mouths

Such intention of causing harm to others is called jealousy. The consequence of jealousy is never good. Jealousy brings harm not only to others but also to one's own self. Having no jealousy may be called non-malice.

We shall not bring distress to others and ourselves by jealousy. We shall remember that 'Malice to None' is an absolute virtue.

## Exercise

### 1. Answer the following questions:

- a. What are 'morality' and 'moral teaching'?
- b. What is the benefit of abiding by the moral teachings?
- c. Name some of the Holy Books containing moral stories.
- d. Why was the second mouth of the Varondo bird jealous of the first mouth?
- e. What did the second mouth of the Varondo bird do to the first mouth after being jealous?
- f. What happened as a result of jealousy of the second mouth of Varondo bird?
- g. What did you learn reading the story 'Consequence of Jealousy'?
- h. Tell the story 'Consequence of Jealousy' in brief.

### 2. Answer the following questions in short.

- a. What was the special characteristics of the Varondo bird ?
- b. Where did the ambrosia fruit come floating from?
- c. What did the first mouth say to the second while eating the fruit?
- d. What did the first mouth say to the second as it desired to eat the fruit?
- e. What did the second mouth do out of jealousy?

### 3. Fill in the blanks:

- a. Moral teaching is part of \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Abiding by good advice brings \_\_\_\_\_ to man.
- c. There are many \_\_\_\_\_ stories in Holy Books.
- d. We shall learn moral sayings and \_\_\_\_\_ them in life.
- e. Many fruits also came \_\_\_\_\_.
- f. Let me have a share and get \_\_\_\_\_.
- g. Hearing about the \_\_\_\_\_ fruit the first mouth got scared.

#### 4. Match the words from the right side with the words in the left:

Moral teaching is part of	a holy book
The Vedas is	dead
The bird Varondo was	jealousy
The intention of causing	non-malice
other's harm is called	religion
Having no jealousy may be called	

#### 5. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers :

- a. What is the bird mentioned in the story 'Consequence of Jealousy'?
1. Eagle
  2. Kite
  3. Varondo
  4. Crow.
- b. How many mouths did the Varondo have?
1. one
  2. two
  3. three
  4. four.
- c. What was there beside the forest?
1. a river
  2. a city
  3. a village
  4. a sea.
- d. What food did the first mouth of Varondo praise while eating ?
1. Ambrosia fruit
  2. Lichi
  3. Jackfruit
  4. Black Berry
- e. 'Any thing taken by any one of us will go to the same stomach'-- who said this?
1. first mouth of Varondo
  2. second mouth of Varondo.
  3. peacock
  4. fox.
- f. What is called not to be jealous?
1. non-malice
  2. mercy
  3. sacrifice
  4. forgiveness
- g. What moral did you get reading the story, 'Consequence of Jealousy'?
1. We should not love anyone.
  2. We should not be kind to anyone.
  3. We should not be jealous of anyone.
  4. We should not forgive anyone.

## Benevolence

We have learnt from the Mahabharata that there was fierce enmity between the Kauravas and Pandavas. The Kauravas were one hundred brothers. They were arrogant and proud. They tried to do harm to the Pandavas whenever they got a chance. One day the Kauravas tried to burn the Pandavas and their mother Kunti to death. But the Pandavas saved themselves by dint of their intelligence. Then they took the guise of Tapashwi Brahmin hiding their identity of Kshatriyas. At that time they lived in a city named 'Ekchokra'. There they took shelter in the family of a Brahmin. They lived on begging and collecting fruits from the forest. Every day they gave to Vima the half of what they got, since Vima had a large body. He needed huge food. His huge body had much strength.

One day Kunti and Vima were staying in the house. Yudhishtir along with his other brothers went in search of food. Suddenly the members of the Brahmin family began to cry. Kind-hearted Kunti asked anxiously,

'Why are you all crying? Tell me the cause of your suffering. I'll try to remove it if I can.'

Then the Brahmin said,

'Do you want to know about our suffering? Listen then, but you won't be able to take any remedial measure.'

Kunti said,

'Tell me first. See if I can do anything'

The Brahmin began to say,

- 'There is a deep forest near this city. A demon lives there. His name is Bok. Everyday one man, much rice and two buffaloes are to be given for his food. Today is the turn of our family. Who will go to the demon to give away his life? That is why we are crying. I am saying that I will go. The lady Brahmin is saying that she will go.

And the sons and daughters are saying that they will go. None of us wants to be alive sending any other member of our family to death. But one must go. So, we have decided to go the demon Bok all together. Let him eat us all.'

Listening to everything Kunti said to the Brahmin,

'Don't worry. I have five sons. One of them will go to the demon.'

The Brahmin said,

'What are you saying? You are my Brahmin guests coming for shelter. None of your sons should be killed because of us.'

Kunti said,

'My second son will go. You can see how huge is his body and so is his strength. Demon Bok cannot do any harm to him. But there is one condition.'

The Brahmin asked, 'What is the condition?'

Kunti said, 'You have to keep it secret. You can't disclose it to anyone.'

Kunti told Vima the reason of their crying and asked him to go to the Demon Bok. Vima agreed to go with enthusiasm. One is delighted if one is able to do good to people. Besides, there was an opportunity for Vima to go to fight after a long time. They were Kshatriyas in the guise of the Brahmin. It is the duty of the Kshatriyas to establish peace by fighting and to protect the one who comes for shelter even at the cost of own life.

Vima set out his journey towards the forest with two buffaloes and much rice. Going to the forest he started to call the demon Bok,

'Where are you Bok? Come and have your food.'

Demon Bok was very angry. He said,

'Who calls me there by my name?'

He came forward and became more furious. He saw that Vima himself was eating the rice brought for him. Bok said roaring,

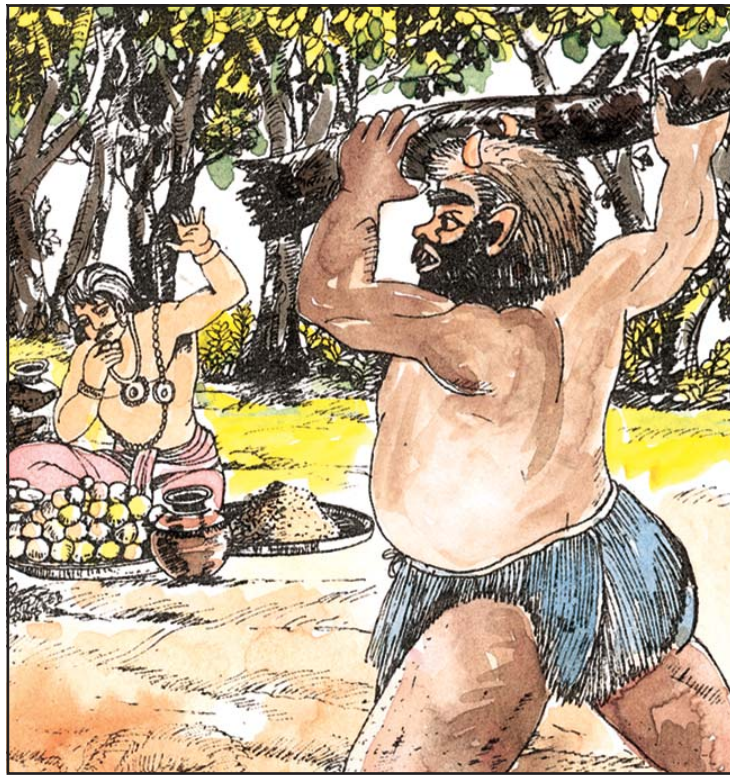
'Who are you? Why are you eating my food in front of me? Do you wish to go to the house of death earlier?'

Vima gave no importance to what he said. He smiled. He continued his eating. He got delicious food after many days.

The Demon Bok started to hurt Bhima in his back with all the strength of his body. Yet Vima was laughing and eating.

Then Bok, the demon pulled up a huge tree. He rushed towards Vima. Vima had finished his eating then. He washed his hands without hurry. By that time the demon had thrown the tree to Vima. Vima caught the tree with his left hand. Then Vima and Bok started fighting.

Vima threw the demon on the ground. Then he killed him.



Vima and Bok

More demons came running at the screaming of demon Bok. Vima said to them 'Be careful. Don't come forward even a step more.

Or I will make your condition just like him. Moreover, you must not do any harm to men.'

The demons being scared promised to do as Vima said. Vima killed Bok, the demon and then left the dead body in front of the main gate of the city.

After that Vima went to the house of the Brahmins. All the people of Ekchokra city saw the demon Bok lying dead. They started rejoicing. No one knew that Vima had done this. The Brahmin complied with the condition given by Kunti. However, the Brahmin kept on saying that a mighty man had killed the demon Bok being kind to us.

Benevolence is also part of religion. It brings welfare to others and virtues to the benevolent.

### Exercise

#### 1. Answer the following questions:

- a. How was the relation between the Kuarovas and the Pandovas? What measure did Kaurovas take against Pandovas?
- b. Whom did Kunti hear crying in Ekchokra city? Why did they cry?
- c. What did Kunti do hearing the problem of the Brahmin family?
- d. How did the demon Bok create a problem in Ekchokra city?
- e. Describe the fight between Vima and the demon Bok in short.
- f. What advice do you get from the story 'Benevolence'?

#### 2. Answer the following questions in short:

- a. Who was Vima? Introduce him.
- b. What are the items offered as food to demon Bok?



- c. What did the Brahmin say when Kunti wanted to send one of her sons for the demon Bok?
- d. What did Vima do reaching the forest?
- e. What did the demon Bok say on hearing someone calling him by his name?
- f. What happens if you do good to others?

### 3. Fill in the blanks:

- a. The Kourvas were \_\_\_\_\_ brothers.
- b. Then they took the guise of \_\_\_\_\_ hiding the identity of Kshatriyas.
- c. There they took shelter in a family of \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Everyday a \_\_\_\_\_, much rice and two buffaloes are to be given for his eating.
- e. Where are you \_\_\_\_\_? Come and have your food.
- f. All the people of \_\_\_\_\_ city saw the demon Bok lying dead.
- g. Benevolence is also part of \_\_\_\_\_.

### 4. Match the words from the left side with the words in the right:

There are stories of the Kauravas and the Pandavas in	by burning
The Kauravas tried to kill Kunti and the Pandovas	who comes for shelter.
The name of the demon was	virtue
It is the duty of the Kshatriyas to protect the one	Bok
Benevolence brings	the Mahabharata

**5. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

a. How was the relation between the Kauravas and the Pandavas?

- |                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. sweet             | 2. enemitic            |
| 3. both good and bad | 4. no relation at all. |

b. What was the name of the city where Kunti and the Pandavas went for hiding.

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Ekchokra  | 2. Dichokra   |
| 3. Trichokra | 4. Doshchokra |

c. What guise did five Pandavas take during hiding?

- |             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. of mad   | 2. of Brahmin |
| 3. of Byadh | 4. of Muni.   |

d. Who came forward hearing the Brahmins cry?

- |          |                   |
|----------|-------------------|
| 1. Vima  | 2. Nokul          |
| 3. Kunti | 4. the demon Bok. |

e. Who killed the demon Bok?

- |                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| 1. Yudhisthira | 2. Arjuna |
| 3. Sahadeva    | 4. Vima.  |

f. Whose name did the Brahmin say as the killer of Bok?

- |                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| 1. Vima         | 2. Kunti   |
| 3. a mighty man | 4. Arjuna. |

## Story of a Traitor Merchant

Long time ago there lived a merchant in a country. His name was Jirnadhan. Once he decided to go abroad. He would earn riches from abroad and come back. In his house he had a pair of iron-made scales of his ancestors. It was very heavy and durable. He could not decide the person to whom he would keep the pair of scales. Suddenly he remembered a merchant friend of his. The house of that merchant was nearby. That merchant was rich enough. Jirnadhan went to his house and said,

-My friend, I've decided to go abroad. I want to keep this pair of scales to you. These were precious belongings of my ancestors. I'll take it back when I would return from abroad.

The friend merchant said,

-That's fine. A friend surely comes to his friend in times of need. Leave your pair of scales here.

The merchant kept the pair of scales happily. Jirnadhan felt much relieved and went abroad.

After many days Jirnadhan returned home. Then he went to his friend and wanted his pair of scales back. In fact, this merchant friend of his was very greedy. He liked the pair of scales of his friend very much. So he was not willing to give it back. He came with a sad appearance on his face and said,

-Brother Jirnadhan, what should I say? I couldn't protect the pair of scales of yours. I kept it in the store room. After a few days I found that the mouse had eaten it up.

Jirnadhan thought, it was impossible for a mouse to eat those heavy scales made of iron.

He realized that the merchant did not want to give it back. So he played tricks too and made a story of his own.

He replied to the merchant with a sympathetic voice,

-OK then. What to do, if the mouse had eaten the pair of scales. You have no fault. Don't be upset. Let it go. I've come after a long time. I like to take a bath in the river. Your son Dhonadeva has grown up enough. He is healthy also. Please tell him to come with me.

The merchant said,

-Why should I to tell him this? You may order him to do so.

The merchant sent his son Dhonadeva with Jirnadhan. Jirnadhan took his bath in the wharf of the river. Dhonadeva also took his bath. On the way back Jirnadhan left Dhonadeva in a hole beside the river. He covered the surface of the hole with a stone and came back home.

Not finding his son with Jirnadhan the merchant asked,

-What's wrong with Jirnadhan, why are you alone? Where is my son Dhonadeva?

Jirnadhan replied,

-I'm just thinking of saying that. But how should I say! It's a matter of great pity. A falcon has pounced on your son and took him away.

The merchant became very angry hearing this.

-What nonsense you are saying? Is it possible to pounce on a young boy? Bring my son or I will complain about your false statement in the royal court.

Both of them went to the royal court for justice.

The merchant complained that Jirnadhan had kidnapped his son.

Then Jirnadhan replied,

-If a mouse can eat a heavy pair of iron-made scales, then a falcon can also pounce on a boy.

The king said

-What does it mean?

Jirnadhan then told everything that happened.

The falsehood and betrayal of the merchant were exposed at the query of the king. The merchant confessed his guilt and wanted to return the pair of scales to Jirnadhan. Then Jirnadhan also gave the son of the merchant back. Jirnadhan got his pair of scales back. The merchant got his son back. But the merchant had to pay fine for his betrayal.

Betrayal is an evil deed. The person who does not keep his word is called a betrayer. No one likes a betrayer. Betrayal is a great sin. We shall never break our trust.

### Exercise

#### 1) Answer the following questions:

- a. What did Jirnadhan deposit to the merchant and why?
- b. What did the merchant say when Jirnadhan wanted his scales back?
- c. Why did Jirnadhan keep the son of the merchant in hiding?
- d. What was the judgment of the king?

#### 2) Answer the following questions in short:

- a. What did Jirnadhan say to his friend merchant before he went abroad?
- b. What did the merchant say when Jirnadhan wanted his pair of scales back?
- c. What did Jirnadhan say about the absence of his friend's son?
- d. What did Jirnadhan reply to the king?
- e. What is the moral of the 'Story of a Traitor Merchant'?

#### 3) Fill in the blanks:

- a. In his house he had a pair of \_\_\_\_\_ scales of his ancestors.
- b. My friend, I've decided to go \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. The merchant friend was very \_\_\_\_\_.

- d. I couldn't \_\_\_\_\_ the pair of scale you deposited to me.
- e. I like to take \_\_\_\_\_ in the river.
- f. But the merchant had to pay a fine for his \_\_\_\_\_.

**4. Find out the true or false sentences:**

- a. The merchant who decided to go abroad was called Jirnadhan.
- b. Jirnadhan deposited a bag of gold coins to his friend merchant.
- c. The pair of scales was very heavy and durable.
- d. A falcon pounced on the son of the merchant.
- e. Betrayal is a great sin.

**5. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

- a. Where did Jirnadhan decide to go?
  - 1. abroad
  - 2. on pilgrimage
  - 3. to royal house
  - 4. to the temple.
- b. Who ate the scales of Jirnadhan as the merchant said,
  - 1. cat
  - 2. mouse
  - 3. fox
  - 4. tiger.
- c. What was the name of the merchant's son?
  - 1. Boldeva
  - 2. Sohodeva.
  - 3. Dhonadeva
  - 4. Shukdeva.
- d. What did the king do when the guilt of the merchant was proved?
  - 1. imposed a fine on the merchant
  - 2. imposed a punishment of death
  - 3. sent him into exile
  - 4. scolded him.
- e. What is the consequence of betrayal?
  - 1. great sin
  - 2. virtue
  - 3. joy
  - 4. fame.

## Greater Intelligence in a Smaller Brain

Somewhere there was a huge forest. There was a lake not far away from the forest. Beside the lake there lived some rabbits. They were in great peace. Suddenly black clouds of unrest gathered in the sky of peace.

In the forest there lived a herd of elephants. They had a leader. His name was Lombodonto or Long-teeth. Once there was scarcity of water in that forest.

Then Lombodonto with his companions came beside the lake. They occupied the place, where the rabbits lived. The water of the lake was very sweet. There were many banana trees, too. The elephants ate and went roaring as they wished. After a few days the elephants said to their leader,

-This place is very good. We want to stay here.

The leader Lombodonto said,

-Well then. I agree to your desire.

The elephants occupied the living place of the rabbits. The rabbits were in a great problem. They could not even go out. They got killed under the feet of the elephants whenever they came out. After the death of some rabbits they sat in a meeting. The meeting was called to find out a way to survive.

The leader said,

-This is our place. Our ancestors lived here for ages. And we are living here. But elephants have occupied this place by force. They are big and we are small. Their strength is more, ours is less. So we have to live by dint of tricks and intelligence. We have to regain our control over this place.

All other rabbits supported him,

-That's right.

The leader said,

-If there is someone brave among you, I can suggest him a plan. Tell me, who will go to the leader of the elephant?

No one said anything. All were quiet! No one wanted to meet with death willingly.

At last a pious old rabbit said,

-I've grown old enough. How long would I live! I will think myself fortunate if I die a bit earlier for the benefit of my society.

He said to the leader,

-Tell me your plan.

The leader told the plan to the old rabbit whispering.

It was a moonlit night. The sky was glowing with the light of the moon. The light of the moon was reflected in the water of the lake. The lines of the waves were trembling. The reflection of the moon was trembling also.

The old rabbit chose that moonlit night and went to the leader of the elephants.

He said loudly,

-O the leader of the elephants, your body is fat and your brain is also dull. I've come to you with a bad news.

Being surprised the leader of the elephants said,

-I don't know you, who are you?

The old rabbit said,

-How will you know me? I live in the moon. How will you know me being a beast of the earth? I'm the messenger of Chondrodeva or the god of the moon himself.

Elephant: What message you have brought?

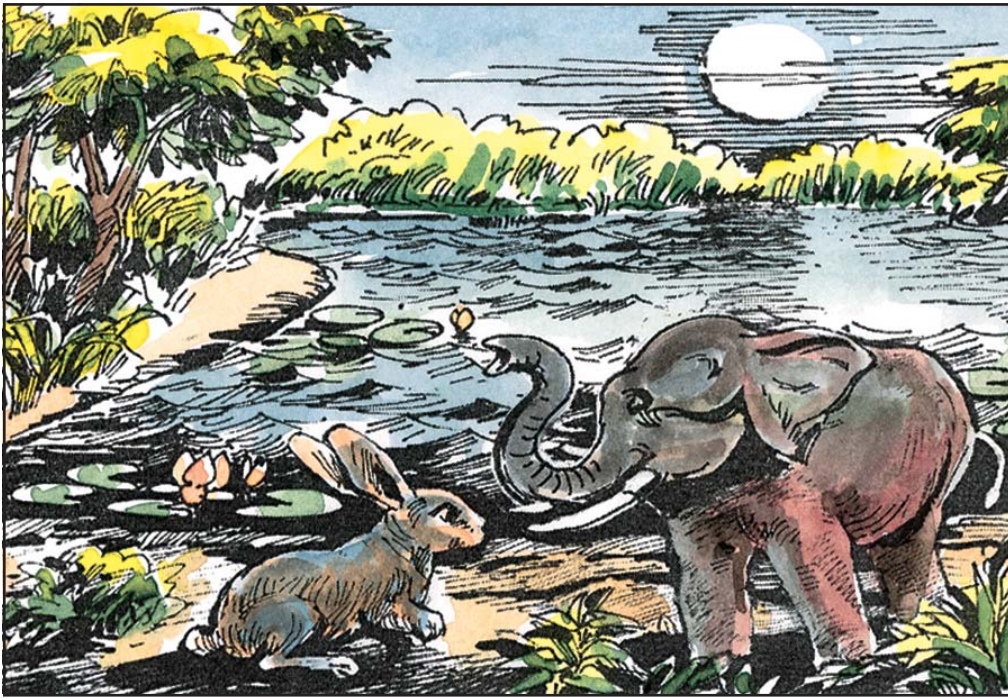
Rabbit: Chondrodeva has become very much angry with you. Because you have occupied other's place leaving that of your own. It's a misdeed to occupy other's place by force. If you want to survive, go to your own place along with your companions.

Elephant: Where is Chondrodeva now? I'll leave the place with my companion just after visiting him.



Rabbit: Chondrodeva has become very angry. So he has been sitting in that lake of sweet water. Come with me; see with your own eyes. Saying this, the old rabbit brought the elephant near the lake. Just as he said before, the reflection of the moon was trembling with the waves in the water. Showing that the rabbit said to the leader of the elephants,

-There you see, how Chondrodeva is hissing and swinging with anger watching your injustice.



Elephant and rabbit

The leader of the elephants saw that the rabbit was right. Chondrodeva was hissing and swinging. He said to Chondrodeva, -God, I was wrong. I have done something very unjust. I will never occupy other's place by force. I will never snatch other's belongings

either. We are leaving our occupied place today and going to our own place. Please forgive us.

Saying this, the leader of the elephants left the place along with his companions as they bowed to Chondrodeva.

This is how small creatures defeated the elephants by dint of their intelligence. They drove away the elephants which were bigger and stronger than them. They began to live by the side of the lake happily.

Intelligence is greater than might.

The saying goes, 'Intelligence is the strength.'

## Exercise

### 1. Answer the following questions:

- a. Who lived by the side of the lake? What caused them trouble?
- b. Why did the herd of the elephants come by the side of the lake from the forest? Why did they stay there?
- c. What did the leader of the rabbits say to the rabbits?
- d. What did the old rabbit say to the leader of the elephants?
- e. Why did the leader of the elephants go back from the side of the lake?
- f. Write the story 'Greater intelligence in a smaller brain'

### 2. Answer the following questions in short :

- a) What did the old rabbit say after listening to their leader?
- b) When did the old rabbit go to the leader of the elephants?
- c) What was the message of Chondrodeva? Did Chondrodeva send any message /
- d) What did the rabbit do to make understand the anger of Chodrodeva ?
- e) What did the leader of the elephants say watching the swinging of the moon in the lake ?
- f) What moral do we learn from the story, 'Greater intelligence in a smaller brain' ?

**3. Fill in the blanks:**

- a. There was a \_\_\_\_\_ not far away from the forest.
- b. Once there was \_\_\_\_\_ of water in the forest.
- c. The water of the lake was very \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. The rabbits were in a great \_\_\_\_\_.
- e. Their \_\_\_\_\_ is more, ours is less.
- f. It was a \_\_\_\_\_ night.
- g. I'm the \_\_\_\_\_ of Chondrodeva himself.
- h. \_\_\_\_\_ is the strength.

**4. Match the words from the left side with the words in the right:**

Beside the lake there lived some	Lombodonto
The name of the leader of the	to save them from elephants
elephants was	is a misdeed
The rabbits called upon a	swinging
meeting	rabbits
To occupy others place	
Chondrodeva is hissing and	

**5. Put tick marks (✓) on correct answers:**

- a. This place is very good, we want to stay here'. Who said this?
  - 1 Lombodonto
  - 2 Chondrodeva
  - 3 the elephant
  - 4 the rabbits

- b. How did the old rabbit introduce him to the leader of the elephants?
1. as a king
  2. as a minister
  3. as a messenger
  4. as a cheif commander.
- c. What type of news did the rabbit want to let the leader of the elephant know?
1. good news
  2. bad news
  3. news of invitation
  4. news of marriage.
- d. How were the rabbits saved from the danger?
1. by dint of force
  2. by dint of intelligence
  3. with the help of others
  4. by the mercy of

Chondrodeva.



