

THE SERMON AT BENARES

Setting: The English classroom. **Teacher:** Mr. Achari 🙏 **Students:** Ravi 🧒, Aisha 🧒, Rohan 🧒, and Meera 🧒.

Mr. Achari 🙏: Good morning, students! Today we will discuss a very deep and philosophical chapter: "**The Sermon at Benares.**" It tells us how Gautama Buddha preached his very first sermon (teaching) in the holy city of Benares. 🏰

Ravi 🧒: Sir, before we talk about the sermon, who exactly was Buddha? Was he born as a monk?

Mr. Achari 🙏: No, Ravi. He was actually born as a royal prince named **Siddhartha Gautama**. He lived a luxurious life, completely shielded from any suffering. But when he was 25, he went out hunting and saw four sights that changed his life:

1. A sick man 🤒
2. An old man 🧓
3. A funeral procession 🚼
4. A monk begging for alms 🙏

Aisha 🧒: That must have been a shock for a prince! What did he do after seeing them?

Mr. Achari 🙏: He was deeply moved, Aisha. He realized that the world is full of suffering. He left his palace, his wife, and his son to seek enlightenment (true knowledge). After wandering for seven years, he sat under a **Peepal tree** (Bodhi Tree) until he found the truth. He then became known as the **Buddha** (The Awakened One). ☀️

Rohan 🧒: Okay, so he became the Buddha. But what is the story about the lady in this chapter?

Mr. Achari 🙏: Ah, that is the heart of the lesson. The story is about a woman named **Kisa Gotami**. She had an only son who had died. She was so filled with grief that she

carried the dead child to all her neighbours, asking for medicine to cure him. People thought she had lost her mind. 😨

Meera 🧑 : That is so sad. Did she find anyone to help?

Mr. Achari 🧑 : A man told her he couldn't give medicine, but he knew a physician who could: **The Buddha**. She went to Buddha and asked him to cure her son.

Ravi 🧑 : Did the Buddha bring the boy back to life?

Mr. Achari 🧑 : No, Ravi. Buddha decided to teach her a lesson instead. He told her: *"Bring me a handful of mustard seeds, and I will cure your child."* 🌱

Aisha 🧑 : That sounds easy! Mustard seeds are found in every Indian kitchen.

Mr. Achari 🧑 : Wait, there was a condition! 🙅 Buddha said the seeds must come from a house **where no one had ever died**—no child, husband, parent, or friend.

Rohan 🧑 : Oh! That sounds impossible. Did she find such a house?

Mr. Achari 🧑 : She went from door to door. Everyone was willing to give her seeds, but when she asked if anyone had died in their family, the answers were always "Yes." Someone had lost a father, someone a sister, someone a child. She could not find a single house not visited by death. 🏠🚫

Meera 🧑 : So, what did she realize?

Mr. Achari 🧑 : She sat down by the roadside, watching the city lights flicker and go out. She realized that human life is just like those lights—it flickers up and is extinguished. She understood that **death is common to all**. She realized she was being selfish in her grief.

Ravi 🧑 : That's a heavy lesson. So, what exactly was the "Sermon" or the message Buddha gave?

Mr. Achari 🧑 : Excellent question. Buddha taught that:

1. **Life is fragile:** Just like a ripe fruit is in danger of falling, mortals are always in danger of death. 🍎

2. **We cannot stop death:** Just as earthen vessels (clay pots) break, life ends in death.



3. **Grieving helps no one:** Crying does not bring the dead back; it only makes the living person sick and pale.

Aisha 🧑 : So, how does one find peace?

Mr. Achari 🙏 : By drawing out the "arrow of lamentation" (grief). He who has overcome sorrow will become free from sorrow and be blessed. Peace comes from **acceptance**, not from crying. 🌿

Key Takeaways:

- **The Prince:** Siddhartha saw suffering and became the Buddha.
- **Kisa Gotami:** Could not accept her son's death.
- **The Test:** Could not find a house where death had not knocked.
- **The Moral:** Death is inevitable. Wisdom lies in accepting it calmly, not in grieving endlessly.