

LESSON - 12



THREE QUESTIONS



Long, long ago, there lived a very brave and kind king. He wanted to serve his people well. Once a thought came to the mind of the king. He thought he would never fail if he knew three things. Those three things were (1) What is the right time to begin something? (2) Which people should he listen to? (3) What is the most important thing for him to do?

The king therefore, sent messengers throughout his kingdom, promising a large sum of money to anyone who would answer these three questions.

Many learned men came to the king but all with different answers. In reply to the first question, some said- the king must prepare a timetable and follow it strictly. Others said- it was impossible to decide in advance the right time for doing something. Yet others said that the king needed a council of wise men who would help him act

at proper time. Some others said- only magicians could look into the future and tell the right time for an action.

Equally different were the answers to the second question. Some said- the right people for the king to listen to were his advisers. Others said that his soldiers were the most important to him.

To the third question, some said the most important thing was science, others said it was warfare; still others said it was religious worship.

The king was not satisfied with any of these answers so he decided to seek the advice of a renowned hermit. The hermit lived in a wood which he never left. He only met common people. So the king put on simple clothes. He left his horse with his bodyguards and went alone to see the hermit.

As the king reached the hermit's hut, he saw the hermit digging the ground in front of his hut. The hermit was old and weak. He breathed heavily as he worked.

The king went upto him and said, "Oh! Wise hermit, I have come to seek the answers to three questions: How can I learn to do the right thing at the right time? Who are the most important people for me? And, what affairs need my first attention?" The hermit listened to the king, but said nothing. He went on digging. "You are tired," said the king. "Let me take the spade and dig for you."

"Thanks," said the hermit. Giving the spade to the king, he sat down on the ground. One hour passed, and another. The sun went down

behind the trees. At last the king stuck the spade into the ground and said, "Oh wise man! Please answer my questions. If you can give me none, tell me so and I will return home."

"Here comes someone running," said the hermit. "Let us see who he is."

The king turned round and saw a bearded man running towards them. His hands were pressed against his stomach from which blood was flowing. When he reached the king's side, the man fainted. There was a large wound in his stomach. The king washed and bandaged it with his handkerchief and re-bandaged it until the bleeding stopped. The man felt better and asked for water. The king brought fresh water for him. By this time, the sun had set and the air was cool. The king, with the help of the hermit, carried the wounded man into the hut and lay him down on the bed. The king was tired by now. He too lay down on the floor and slept all through the night. When he woke up he saw the bearded man looking at him.

"Forgive me," said the bearded man in a weak voice.

"I don't know you, and have nothing to forgive you for," said the king. "You don't know me, but I know you. I am an enemy of yours. You had put my brother to death and seized our property. I knew that you had gone alone to meet the hermit. I had planned to kill you. But when you did not return, I came out from my hiding place and your bodyguards wounded me. Somehow I escaped and reached you. You dressed my wounds and saved my life. Now, if I live, I will serve you as your most faithful servant. Forgive me!"

The king was happy to have won over his enemy so easily. The king promised him to give back his property. The bearded man thanked the king and left.

Before leaving, the king wanted to meet the hermit. The hermit was sowing seeds in the field. The king said to him, "Please answer my questions." "Your questions have already been answered," said the hermit.

"Answered? What do you mean?" said the king.

"Yes, if you had not dugged the field for me you would have gone away. Then that man would have attacked you and you would have wished you had stayed with me. So the most important time was when you were digging the field. And I was the most important man and to do me good was your most important thing. Afterwards, when the man ran to us, the most important time was when you were caring for him. So he was the most important man and what you did for him was your most important thing.

"Remember, there is only one time that is important and that time is 'Now'. The most important person, is the person you are with, at a particular moment for no one knows what will happen in the future. The most important thing is to do that person good because we are sent to this world for that only."

-Adapted from the story 'Three Questions' by Leo Tolstoy.

New Words

Word	Meaning
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- council-सलाहकार परिषद्
- warfare -युद्ध के तरीके
- renowned-प्रसिद्ध
- hermit -सन्यासी
- affairs -मामले
- seized -कब्जा कर लिया

Comprehension Questions

1. Answer the following questions:

- What were the king's three questions?
- Why did the king want to know the answers to these questions?
- Did the wise man win the reward? If not why?
- How did the king help the hermit?
- Who wounded the bearded man?
- Who was the bearded man? How did the king and the hermit help the wounded man?
- What did the bearded man promise to do for the king?
- Which is the most important time, the most important person and the most important thing to do?

2. Who said these lines and to whom:

- "Let me take the spade and dig for you".
- "Here comes someone running."
- "Forgive me."

Word Power

1. Fill in the blanks with the opposites of the words given in the brackets:

- I am not an ___ of yours. (friend)
- The old woman was too ___ to walk. (strong)
- He is a very faithful ___ of mine. (master)
- I have warned him for the _____ time. (first)
- You should ___ these rules of grammar. (forget)
- They are going to ___ him for his bravery. (punish)

2. Instead of saying 'light of the moon', we can say 'moonlight' which is a compound word. Give compound words for each of the following:

- The time to go to bed. _
- The shine of the sun.
- Cloth of the table. _
- Room for a class. _
- Work to be done at home. ___
- The pot for flowers. ___

Language Practice

1. Combine each pair of sentences, using 'ing' phrase. One has been done for you:

Example 1-The girls saw the teacher.2-They stopped talking.

Seeing the teacher, the girls stopped talking.

Shravana carried his blind parents.

He went from place to place.

She sought permission from her mother.

She went to the party.

The robbers saw the policeman.

They ran away.

Sheena concentrated on the target.

She shot the arrow.

The teacher looked at the painting.

The teacher praised it.

2. Write the questions to which the words underlined are the answers:

- Indu reached home at 4:00 p.m.
- When _____
- He became successful by working hard.
- How _____
- They want to sell their old car.
- What _____
- Meetu's parents are going to the museum.
- Where _____

Activity

To forgive others, you should have some qualities. Put a tick against those that would let you forgive. Put a cross (x) against those that would not let you forgive:

- anger
- compassion
- kindness
- trust
- sympathy
- selfishness
- consideration
- love