

Class – 10th Subject – English

First Flight Chapter 10

The Sermon at Benares

Thinking About the Text (Page 135)

1. After the death of her only son, Kisa Gotami was overcome with grief. She carried the death body of her son in her arms and went from door to door asking for medicine to cure her child, but nobody could provide any medicine. For there is no such medicine available which can bring a dead person back to life.
2. Gautama Buddha asks Kisa to bring a handful of mustard seeds from a house where death had never knocked at the door. Kisa Gotami went from door to door, but couldn't find a single house where death had not taken a beloved away. Kisa Gotami could not get it as death is inevitable and anyone who is born is bound to die one day.
3. After failing to procure a handful of mustard seeds from a house where death had never knocked at the door, she sat down by the riverside feeling helpless. She saw the lights of the city that flickered and were extinguished. At last, it was darkness everywhere.
She realised that death was common to all and she was being selfish in her grief. Yes, this is what Buddha wanted her to understand, that everyone who is born has to die one day.
4. Earlier, she could see only grief. When she went from door to door the second time, she understood that everyone was dealing with the loss of a beloved one. There was not a single house in the town, where death had not taken a father, mother, a sister, a

brother, son or a daughter. Everyone, at some point or the other, had experienced the death of his loved ones. Gautama Buddha helped her to understand all this, as he told her to bring a handful of mustard seeds from a house where death had never knocked at the door. This way she got aware of that death is a common to all human beings.

5. A selfish person is one who only thinks about himself or herself, and to some extent Kisa Gotami was being selfish because we are humans and it is natural for us to die. We do not easily accept the death of our loved ones. Same has happened with Kisa Gotami. As it was her only child, she did not want him to die and finally went to Buddha to ask for help.