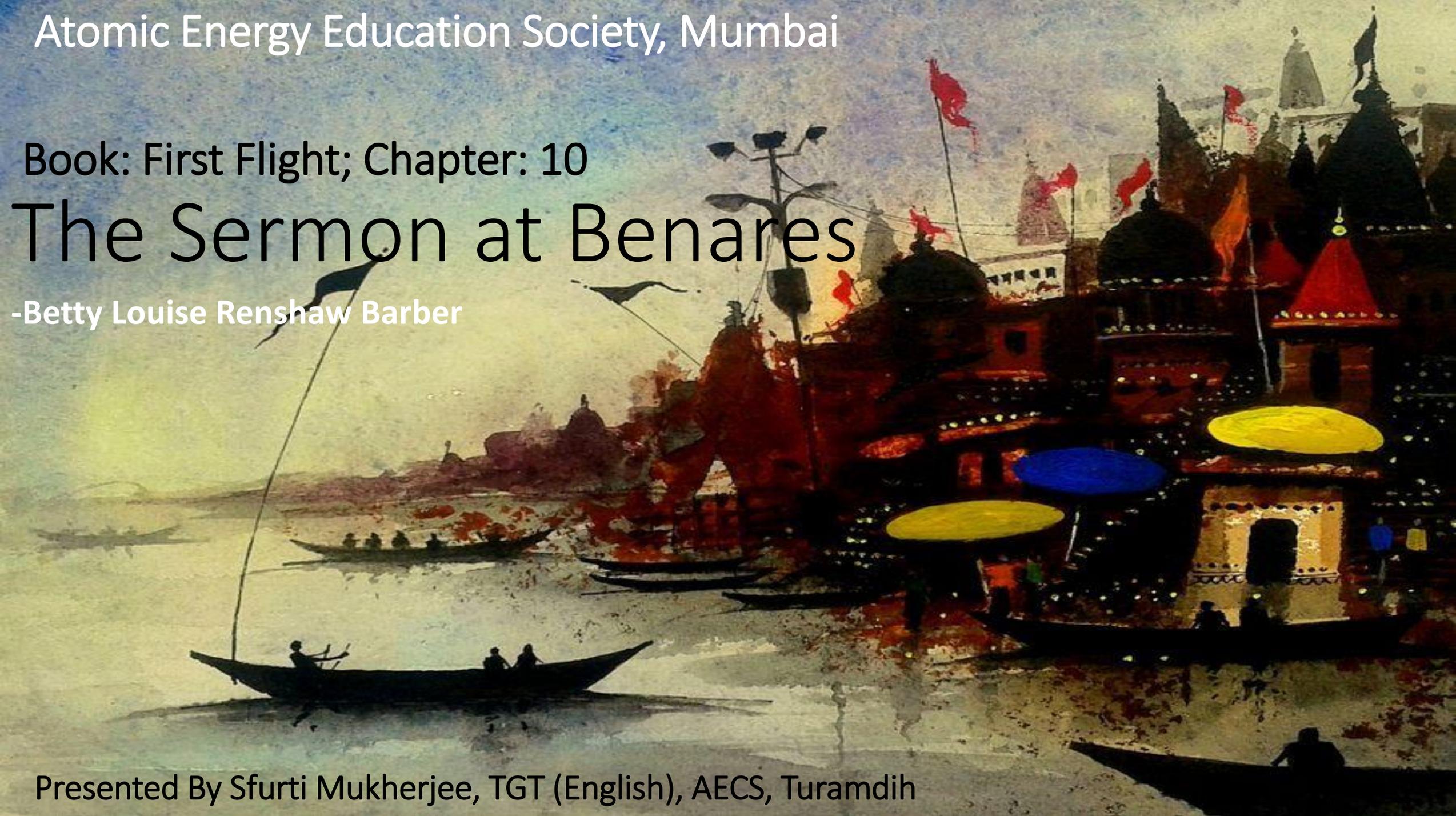


Atomic Energy Education Society, Mumbai

Book: First Flight; Chapter: 10

# The Sermon at Benares

-Betty Louise Renshaw Barber



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## THE THEME



The chance meeting of Lord Buddha and Kisa Gotami enlightens readers on the untangled, fine threads of life. The death of her son brings out all her emotions and makes her accept the bitter truth. Lord Buddha in his sermon reflects the same. Mortal life is beautiful yet fragile, prone to death and decay. Death knows no difference and carries all, leaving a dark void in its trail. Humans tend to give up in times of trouble. However, the wise is the one who remains calm, composed and accepts the truth without torturing his or her mind. He or she has nothing to lose and thus enjoys freedom and contentment.

# 'THE SECOND HALF' – WHAT IS THERE TO READ?

- Hopeless and in extreme anguish and pain, she found herself a place to rest and ponder at the edge of the road. She continuously watched city lights blinking and finally disappearing into darkness. As her thoughts went haywire, she realized that man's life was dynamic. It was just like these city lights that flickered and extinguished time and often. Mother Nature hides this interesting mystery inside her. However, humans tend to remain oblivious of this. She became conscious of her "selfishness". Her loss of her son had snatched away her ability to think and understand. She could not come to terms with the truth.
- She also concluded that though all men are mortal, immortality can be achieved by renouncing selfishness and all worldly pleasures. Celibacy is the path to salvation. According to Lord Buddha, the life of mortals is troubled because they have not made peace with the fact that the one who is born, must rest eternally. There is no way a living being can avoid facing death. Just like all earthen vessels break at some point, so do men. Whether old or young, foolish or wise, death leaves none. Just like ripe fruits are in danger of falling early, aged mortals also are bound to die one day. The only way death works is by withdrawing the person from the living world i.e, the person ceases to exist. No one has control over death, neither a father can save his son nor a kinsmen his relative. Just like an ox is taken to the slaughter house to be killed, so does death do with mortals, leaving none behind. Thus, the one who knows this truth and doesn't grieve at his loss is the one who has been called wise by Lord Buddha. According to Lord Buddha, one should not grieve, weep or be miserable at something which is bound to happen for it will keep man away from obtaining peace of mind. It will only multiply the pain and suffering thus leading to physical weakness and moreover, no amount of grief would bring back the dead. It is very important to understand that one must move past feelings like sorrow and grief as it is the only way that leads to the path of salvation. The dead cannot be brought back. Therefore, one who has become composed will obtain peace of mind and lead a blissful life.

## DIFFICULT WORDS & MEANINGS

- Kisa Gotami became weary and hopeless, and sat down at the wayside watching the lights of the city, as they flickered up and were extinguished again. At last the darkness of the night reigned everywhere. And she considered the fate of men, that their lives flicker up and are extinguished again. And she thought to herself, “How selfish am I in my grief! Death is common to all; yet in this valley of desolation there is a path that leads him to immortality who has surrendered all selfishness.”
- The Buddha said, “The life of mortals in this world is troubled and brief and combined with pain. For there is not any means by which those that have been born can avoid dying; after reaching old age there is death; of such a nature are living beings. As ripe fruits are early in danger of falling, so mortals when born are always in danger of death. As all earthen vessels made by the potter end in being broken, so is the life of mortals. Both young and adult, both those who are fools and those who are wise, all fall into the power of death; all are subject to death.”

SL NO	WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
1	WEARY	TIRED
2	HOPELESS	HAVING NO EXPECTATION
3	WAYSIDE	EDGE OF A ROAD OR LAND
4	FLICKERED / FLICKER	UNSTEADY MOVEMENT
5	EXTINGUISHED	ENDED / PUT OUT
6	REIGNED	RULED
7	CONSIDERED	CAREFULLY THOUGHT ABOUT
8	VALLEY OF DESOLATION	AN AREA FILLED WITH SORROW
9	IMMORTALITY	ETERNAL LIFE
10	TROUBLED	DISTURBED
11	BRIEF	OF SHORT DURATION
12	MORTALS	THOSE BOUND TO DIE
13	EARTHEN VESSELS	MADE UP OF EARTH, CLAY OR OTHER EARTHY SUBSTANCE
14	SUBJECT TO	LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING

## DIFFICULT WORDS & MEANINGS

- “Of those who, overcome by death, depart from life, a father cannot save his son, nor kinsmen their relations. Mark! while relatives are looking on and lamenting deeply, one by one mortals are carried off, like an ox that is led to the slaughter. So the world is afflicted with death and decay, therefore the wise do not grieve, knowing the terms of the world.”
- “Not from weeping nor from grieving will anyone obtain peace of mind; on the contrary, his pain will be the greater and his body will suffer. He will make himself sick and pale, yet the dead are not saved by his lamentation. He who seeks peace should draw out the arrow of lamentation, and complaint, and grief. He who has drawn out the arrow and has become composed will obtain peace of mind; he who has overcome all sorrow will become free from sorrow, and be blessed.”

SL NO	WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
1	OVERCOME	DEFEAT
2	DEPART	LEAVE
3	KINSMEN	OF A PERSON'S BLOOD RELATIONS
4	LAMENT	EXPRESSION OF SORROW, MOURNING OR REGRET
5	SLAUGHTER	KILLING OF ANIMALS FOR FOOD
6	AFFLICTED WITH	AFFECTED BY OR SUFFERING DISEASE OR PAIN
7	DECAY	ROT OR DECOMPOSE
8	GRIEVE	FEEL INTENSE SORROW / LAMENT
9	CONTRARY	OPPOSITE
10	PALE	WEAK AND LACKING COLOUR
11	COMPOSED	CALM / COLLECTED



THANK YOU