

WORKSHEET (MODULE 2)

Answer the following questions in about 30 – 40 words.

1. Why do you think Kisa Gotami understood the reality only the second time?
2. In what way did Lord Buddha change the woman's understanding of life?
3. What were the basic ideas of the Buddha's preaching?
4. Do you find the character of Kisa Gotami impressive? Justify yourself in brief.
5. Why is there a reference to the flickering lights of the city?

Read the following extracts and answer the following questions.

1. "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."

- a) Why did the Buddha give this sermon to Kisa Gotami?
- b) Why don't the wise men grieve?
- c) Pick out the word from the passage that means the same as – 'killing of animals for their meat'.

2. 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."

- a) How is Kisa Gotami selfish in her grief?
- b) Why is "valley of desolation" important?
- c) Pick out a word from the passage that means "gave up".

ANSWERS

1. Kisa Gotami understood this only the second time because she turned hopeless when all the houses failed to provide her the mustard seeds as each one of them had lost its near and dear ones at one point or the other. She had become selfish in her grief which prevented her from seeing the truth.
2. Lord Buddha had consciously asked her to get a handful of mustard seeds from a house where no one had died. He wanted her to realise that death is natural and inescapable. And this realisation dawned upon her when she could not gather the mustard seeds as none of the houses could help her out.
3. The basic ideas of the Buddha's preaching was that death is the ultimate truth of life. Every living being has to die one day. Death overpowers humans with all its might. Secondly, grief cannot console anyone. It only increases the pain and sorrow. Wise people know the truth and accept it.
4. Yes, I find the character of Kisa Gotami quite impressive. As readers, we realise the truth that all mortal beings are subjected to death and lamenting only increases our trouble. We should all give up our selfishness and try to become more humane. This leads to immortality as she realises when she could not procure mustard seeds for her dead son's cure.
5. The flickering lights of the city reflect the flickering lives of mortals. The lights flicker and get extinguished leading to complete darkness all around. This is how death envelops lives and spares none. It is a universal truth.

ANSWERS

1. a) The Buddha gave this sermon to Kisa Gotami to console her because her son had died.
 - b) The wise men do not grieve because they are aware of the terms of the world.
 - c) slaughter
2. a) Kisa Gotami's unbearable pain of her son's death makes her blind and she requests Lord Buddha to bring her son back to life.
 - b) The "valley of desolation" is important because it is only pain that shapes a person and brings out his or her best, helping him to see the truth.

c) surrendered