

1) The Gospel of Non-Violence

M.K. Gandhi

2. About the Author

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, more commonly known as 'Mahatma' which means 'Great Soul' was born in Porbander, Gujarat in North West India on 2nd October 1869 into a Hindu Moda family. His father was the Chief Minister of Porbander and his mother's religious devotion meant that his upbringing was infused with the Jain pacifist teachings of mutual tolerance, non-injury to living beings and vegetarianism. Born into a privileged caste, Gandhi was fortunate to receive a comprehensive education but proved a mediocre student. After coming from England and South Africa in 1916, Gandhi developed his practice of non-violent civic disobedience still further, raising awareness of oppressive practices in Bihar. He also encouraged oppressed villagers to improve their own circumstances, leading peaceful strikes and protests. His fame spread and he became widely referred to as 'Mahatma' or 'Great Soul'.

3. About the Lesson

The article "The Gospel of Non-violence" written by M.K. Gandhi is the source of "The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi". The article is about peace, non-violence and conflict resolution. Gandhi practised non-violence and he got independence for India only through his powerful weapon. Here Gandhiji addressed himself as a practical idealist. He mentioned the non-violence is not only for rishis and saints but also for the common people. Anything can be achieved through non-violence but nothing can be achieved through violence. This is Gandhi's firm belief.

4. Points to Ponder

1. Gandhi is not a visionary. He claims to be a practical idealist. Non-violence is not only for rishis and saints but also for common people.
2. Non-violence is the law of our species whereas violence is the law of the brute.
3. The rishis who discovered non-violence were nobler than Newton.
4. They knew very well about the uselessness of arms.
5. They found that salvation is only through non-violence but not through violence.
6. Gandhi knew only Ahimsa but not Himsa.
7. According to Gandhi Ahimsa is the help of the helpless.
8. Ahimsa comes to one's succour only when one throws himself on His mercy.
9. Gandhi cherishes the hope that God one day will show him the path to commend the people.
10. Gandhi learnt the non-violence from his wife when he tried to bend her to his will.
11. But she resisted to my will on the one hand and she submitted quietly to the stupidity of mine on the other.
12. Finally she became his teacher of non-violence.
13. The doctrine which has guided his life is the highest action.
14. Non-violence is the law of the human race.
15. It is superior to brute force.

16. It affords the fullest protection to one's self-respect and sense of honour.
17. It is a power which can be yielded by all people.
18. When people accept the non-violence as the law of life it must pervade the whole being.
19. We must cultivate truthfulness, humility, tolerance, loving kindness along with non-violence.
20. Honesty is the best policy. But in terms of non-violence it is not a mere policy.
21. Policies can be changed where non-violence is unchanged.
22. We take our food in certain quantities.
23. But we have to take in non-violence which is the spiritual food continually.
24. Violence can never be lawful.
25. A living faith is impossible without a living faith in God.
26. It is an active force of the highest order.
27. It is a soul force or the power of Godhead within us.
28. A man who is intentionally unarmed relies upon the unseen force called God by poets but called unknown by scientists.
29. God is the force among all forces known and unknown.
30. Gandhi believed and supported non-violence in its extreme form.
31. Non-violence is common to all religions.
32. It has found the highest expression and application in Hinduism.

33. There was warrant enough for Satyagraha in the Holy Koran.
34. Violence is concession to human weakness.
35. Muslims will never subscribe to unadulterated non-violence.
36. The use of non-violence is taught through the Holy Koran.
37. Ahimsa is not a mere matter of Dietetics. It transcends.
38. The restraint is commendable, even necessary.
39. Gandhi's love for non-violence is superior to every other thing mundane or supramundane.
40. It is impossible to seek and find truth without Ahimsa.
41. Ahimsa and truth are like the two sides of the same coin.
42. Ahimsa is the means but truth is the end.
43. But we are more concerned with Ahimsa since it is the means.
44. Non-violence is not a cover for cowardice but it is the supreme virtue of the brave.
45. The path of true non-violence requires much more courage.
46. Non-violence is impossible without humility.
47. If one has pride and egoism there is no non-violence.
48. When Gandhi was imprisoned, he got Faith in God.
49. There is no room for self pitying in it either when you say God gives you strength.
50. Gandhi was able to evolve the power of Satyagraha in South Africa.

2. About the Author

Jawaharlal Nehru was born in Allahabad to Motilal Nehru and Swaroopa Rani. We could say that he was born with a silver spoon. He took part in the freedom struggle movement along with Gandhiji. He spent most of his life time in prison. He became the first Prime Minister of India. He was a great statesman who was responsible for all progress and development of the nation. As a Prime Minister of India, Nehru shaped the foreign policy of the country. He gave big support for the development of science and technology. He was originally a lawyer but had wide knowledge in other subjects as well. Indians respected him and called him "Panditji". He liked and loved children very much. They called him "Chacha Nehru (Uncle)".

3. About the Lesson

India got independence from Great Britain on 15th Aug 1947. At the very stroke of midnight in the clock Nehru announced the happy news of the freedom of India to the entire world. During the colourful ceremony held at New Delhi, the Flag of Great Britain was pulled down. Then the new tricolour Indian flag was hoisted. After that Nehru delivered a historic speech which is entitled as "Tryst with Destiny".

4. Points to Ponder

1. Nehru started his speech by referring to the pledge made by Indians long back to win Independence for the homeland.
2. Freedom has finally come and the long suppressed soul of the nation is liberated.

Tryst with Destiny

- Jawaharlal Nehru²⁹ M.S.U-1

3. Nehru asked Indians to dedicate themselves to the service of India and to the service of the whole mankind.
4. India emerged as a new nation in the early hours of 15th Aug. 1947. The great sacrifice of the freedom fighters lies behind this grand success.
5. According to Nehru, Indians will collect their courage from the principles of the past.
6. The success celebrated on the 15th Aug is only an opportunity for the forthcoming successes in the near future.
7. He asks the Indians to accept the challenge and to serve the future generation of India.
8. Nehru reminds Indians that Freedom and Power bring responsibility.
9. Before 1947, India used to depend or rely on the Great Britain or England for leadership and guidance.
10. After 15th Aug. 1947, India is her own master.
11. The country has to take its own decisions, learn from mistakes and move forward.
12. India has to grow into a mature and wise nation and be a model to other nations.
13. Doing service to India means doing service to millions of poor people who suffer all over the country.
14. No one can live in isolation.
15. Peace, freedom and prosperity are the common property of all humanity.

2. About the Author

We may be legitimately proud of C. Rajagopalachari because he belongs to Tamilnadu. He was a freedom fighter. He was a Gandhian to the core and held many important positions in the post-Independence era. He wrote lucid commentaries in Tamil on the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* which both the young and the old read with pleasure.

3. About the Lesson

In the short 'Tree Speaks' he writes about one Colonel Johnson's love of nature. Johnson objects to felling of trees and makes Rajagopalachari write to newspapers, protesting against it.

4. Points to Ponder

1. Colonel Ray Johnson was District Medical Officer in Salem.
2. He was in the habit of talking to the trees on the roadside during his evening walks.
3. One of his tree friends was felled one evening. It was lying on the ground like a wounded giant.
4. Johnson called the tree his tall, beautiful girl.
5. Mrs. Johnson told the author that her husband was profoundly affected by the loss of the tree.

6. The tree had been cut because its roots grew close to the new District Board Office building.
7. Johnson said that the tree had been growing there for more than forty years whereas the building was constructed there only last year. By virtue of its seniority it had every right to grow there.
8. Only the building was an upstart.
9. The author shared the Colonel's view. The Colonel should not suppress his view.
10. The author sat on one of the branches of the felled tree. It was a giant of a pipal tree.
11. The author said that every branch of the tree had a separate life and the tree was an uprooted family.
12. Next, he thought that every flower had its own soul and the whole tree was a great city.
13. Suddenly, he heard the tree singing a melancholy tune on the flute.
14. That night the author had a strange dream. The tree told him to make a case for it. Being a lawyer, he was the fittest person to do this job.
15. The author said that the judge would not take up the case.

16. The tree retorted that there was a Judge above all of us who would listen to all cases and would punish the unjust. The case of the tree was referred to God.
17. The tree narrated its past glory. When it was just a sapling, the son of Subbayar, who was the Huzur Shiristadar, fell ill. Subbayar's pious wife prayed to the tree to cure her son. When the son was cured, Subbayar was very happy. He gave a feast to the local people who sat round the tree and ate merrily. That was a glorious occasion.
18. The author was moved. He wrote a letter to the 'Madras Mail,' protesting against the cutting of the tree.
19. The members of the Bar laughed at the author. They said that there were more important things such as the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai to worry about.
20. The author took part in all the political agitations of the time. At the same time, he continued to feel the loss of the pipal tree. He did not regret having written about it in newspapers.

2. About the Author

- Nissim Ezekiel

Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004) comes of a Jewish family in Bombay. After his early schooling he joined Wilson College, Bombay, and later went to Birbeck College, London, where he studied philosophy under C.E.M. Joad. His career as a clerk in the High Commissioner's office had not in any way dampened his taste for poetry. His work as Professor of English at Bombay University fostered his poetic bent. He began writing poems profusely in his middle age. His first book of poems, *A Time to Change*, was published in London in 1952. His other volumes are *Sixty Poems* (1953), *The Third* (1959), *The Unfinished Man* (1960), *The Exact Name* (1965), *Hymns in Darkness* (1976), *Latter-Day Psalms* (1982) which won him the Sahitya Akademi award and *Edinburgh Interlude Lightly* (1983). He has also written plays and collaborated on translations from the Marathi.

Ezekiel has edited a number of books, including *A Martin Luther King Reader* and *Writing in India*. He has also edited journals such as *Quest*, *Poetry* and *Freedom First*.

3. About the Poem

The poem 'Night of the Scorpion' has for its theme a familiar happening in the countryside that of a mother being stung by a scorpion on a rainy day. While the peasants, the father and the holy man were interested in the welfare of the mother, she is interested in the welfare of her children. She thanks God for sparing her children.

4. Paraphrase

The narrator says that he remembers the night his mother was stung by a scorpion. It was raining heavily and continuously. The scorpion released the poison stored in its diabolic tail by stinging the narrator's mother. Then the scorpion crawled out from under the sack of rice where it had hidden and boldly went into the rain, even though it was in danger of being killed. Mother began to scream with pain.

The peasants in the neighbourhood came in large numbers like a swarm of flies. Their caustic remarks only increased the old woman's pain. They were so much obsessed with the scorpion that they mistook the shadows cast by grotesque objects for the shadow of the scorpion. Thus deluded, they failed to trace the scorpion. The superstitious peasants thought that they could lessen the woman's pain by invoking divine aid. So they chanted the name of God a hundred times.

The villagers stupidly thought that the mother's pain would increase if the scorpion moved about. So they prayed to the Almighty to stop the scorpion. Next, they sought to console the mother by saying that her present suffering was God's punishment to her for the sins she had committed in her previous birth. Now that she has suffered for her sins, she would suffer less in the next birth. The peasants next talked about the general good and general evil

balanced against each other in this world. They were sure that the mother's suffering would reduce the quantum of evil in the world. They also said that suffering has a purificatory effect. Mother's suffering would purge her body and mind of desire and ambition. None of the philosophical explanations of the villagers had any effect on mother who continued to writhe with pain on the mat.

Father who was proud of his scientific thinking adopted a different method to cure mother. He applied all kinds of powders, mixtures, herbs and hybrids. Finally, he cauterized mother's bitten toe in order to arrest the ascent of poison. His efforts were all in vain. Next, a holy priest was brought to attend on mother. He tried to curb the poison by chanting mantras. He did in a professional manner what the unlettered peasants had already done crudely. The holy man's mantras were also of no avail. After twenty hours mother's pain abated automatically. Time, not any human agency, proved the great healer. The narrator was watching the scene passively.

Mother was relieved at last. She thanked God because the scorpion stung only her and did not do any harm to her children. Mother's self-effacing love for her children is brought out by this incident.

2. About the Author

A.K. Ramanujan was born in 1929. He received his school and college education in Mysore. Then he worked as a lecturer in English Literature. As a poet he is very popular. He is one of the most talented 'new poets' of the 20th century.

3. About the Poem

The poet reminisces about the family house where things came into but never went out. First the poet says about the wandering cows which came into the house and which were encouraged to get pregnant there. Then he speaks about the library to which books were brought in and were never read. The poet also says about epilepsy which passed on from generation to generation in the house. There were things which went out and returned soon like cotton bales, letters and even ideas. Daughters who were married returned as widows because they were married to short-lived idiots. The sons ran away, got married and returned with children who recited Sanskrit to old people. Nephews who went to war got killed and returned as corpses.

4. Paraphrase

First Ramanujan says in his poem 'Small Scale Reflections on a Great House' about the wandering cows which came into the house and which were encouraged to get pregnant there.

When cows were encouraged to get pregnant women were not allowed to see it. The elders supervised it.

SMALL SCALE REFLECTIONS ON A GREAT HOUSE M.S.U-1

The books in the library were never touched, dusted and read. So the vermins started laying eggs in the books. The silver fish bred dynasties of vermins.

Bales of cotton were sent to invisible Manchester. But they came back into the house in the form of bales of cloth. The non-delivered letters came back because of wrong addresses.

The daughters who were married also returned as widows. As their husbands were short-lived idiots, they became widows at young age.

The sons of the house were good-for-nothing. They ran away, got married and returned with children.

The nephews went to the wars. They won laurels for their bravery. But they died in the battle. Their corpses were brought back in aeroplanes, trains, or military trucks.

The grand children performed various services for the elders.

Sons-in-law forgot their own families and stayed in the house. They taught the children and checked the accounts.

The cut flowers

In the vases have begun to smell of human sweat. There is
No more singing, no more dance, my mind is an old
Playhouse with all its lights put out. The strong
man's technique is

Always the same, he serves his love in lethal doses,
For, love is Narcissus at the water's edge, haunted
By its own lonely face, and yet it must seek at last
An end, a pure, total, freedom, it must will the mirrors
To shatter and the kind night to erase the water.

2. About the Author and Poem

Kamala Das, writing frankly about woman's sexual problems, has become a most controversial writer. Her autobiography *My Story* turns the searchlight into the forbidden nooks and corners of her sex life.

The poem *The Old Playhouse* is about a wife's disgust with her husband's chauvinism.

3. Paraphrase

Lines 1-5

The poem is in the form of a soliloquy by a wife. The wife compares herself to a swallow and her husband to a bird-catcher. The husband planned to control the bird strictly and keep her confined to the summer of his love. He expected her to forget the place where she grew up and also her very nature. Before marrying him, she was impelled like the swallow to fly away from all restrictions in the pathways of the sky.

Unit II: The OLD PLAY HOUSE

MSU-I
KAMALA DAS

Lines 5-8

The wife says that she married him to learn not about him but about herself and to grow by learning about herself. Instead, after marriage, she was compelled to learn about him only.

Lines 8-13

He was pleased with her sexual response. But in reality her response was very shallow. His kissing was regarded by her as dribbling his spittle into her mouth. She was disgusted with his pouring his semen into her nooks and crannies.

Lines 14-17

As a wife, she had to discharge such duties as mixing saccharine in his cup, giving him the vitamin tablets as and when required by him. His needs kept growing and hers grew less and less. He became a monster and she became a dwarf.

Lines 17-20

She almost lost her reasoning as was evident from the incoherent manner she answered his questions. She remembered only the autumn of her native place and the smoke issuing out of leaves when burnt.

Lines 21-26

The husband's life was out and out artificial as evident from his air-conditioner and the cut flowers in his vase. The flowers smelt of his sweat.

Lines 27-23

She did not sing and dance any more. Her life was like a gloomy playhouse. His love was poisonous ('lethal'). His love was Narcissistic self-love. Narcissus gazed not at others but only at himself seen in the water. True love is erasing the image seen in the water or in the mirror and giving full freedom to the other person.

AN ASTROLOGER'S DAY

Unit III : — R.K. Narayan ^{MSU-1}

2. About the Author

R.K. Narayan is the easiest to read of all the Indo-Anglian novelists. His novels and short stories are set in an imaginary city called Malgudi. They say Malgudi is a thinly veiled representation of Lalgudi, a city near Trichi. R.K. Narayan is a mild humorist and ironist, like the English poet, Chaucer. He ridicules the superstitious beliefs of villagers. *An Astrologer's Day* is about a shrewd astrologer who gets the better of a gullible villager.

3. About the Story

The astrologer spreads out his equipment exactly at midday. The equipment consists of a dozen cowrie shells, a piece of cloth with unintelligible charts drawn on it, a note-book and a bundle of dry palmyra leaves with words scribbled on them. His physical features are calculated to impress on simple-minded people. He has thick sacred ash and a dot of kumkum on his forehead and a saffron-coloured turban on his head. The piercing look in his eyes is due not to any religious fervour but to his search for potential customers. He sits under a shady tamarind tree. Crowds of people walk up and down till late night. There are all kinds of cheats doing business there. Sellers of quack medicine and of stolen goods are busy selling their ware. An auctioneer is selling cheap cloth.

A vendor of fried groundnut gives new fancy names to his sweets. What he labelled 'Bombay Ice Cream' yesterday is called 'Delhi Almond' today and will be named 'Raja's Delicacy' the next day. People flock to him. The astrologer plies his trade mostly at

His surprise knows no bounds when the astrologer calls him by his name, Guru Nayak. In order to safeguard himself, the astrologer asks the villager not to come to the city. He further says that the man who had stabbed him was later crushed to death under a lorry. The villager rejoices to hear about the death of his enemy.

After the villager goes away, the astrologer packs up his belongings and returns home. The villager promised to pay one rupee but has paid only twelve and a half annas. Then he narrates to his wife how he quarrelled with a villager in a drunken state and even tried to kill him many years ago. He says that he is relieved to find that the villager has survived. He goes to sleep with a light heart. His wife is equally happy as she has enough money to make some sweet for her child.

4. Points to Ponder

1. The astrologer starts his work punctually at midday.
2. The astrologer's bag contains a dozen cowrie shells, a square piece of cloth with charts drawn on it, a notebook and a bundle of palmyra-writing.
3. The astrologer has smeared sacred ash and vermilion on his forehead.
4. The astrologer is wearing a saffron-coloured turban.

5. There is an abnormal gleam in his eyes. The gleam is *not* a prophetic light. The gleam is due to his searching for clients.
6. People are attracted to the astrologer as bees are attracted to the flowers, the cosmos and the dahlia.
7. The astrologer sat under a tamarind tree in the Town Hall Park.
8. There is a crowd in that area moving up and down from morning till night.
9. There are all kinds of cheats there—quack doctors, sellers of stolen hardware and junk, magicians, auctioneers, sweet vendors, etc.
10. A vender gives different names to the same sweet. One day the sweet is called 'Bombay Ice Cream'. The next day it is called 'Delhi Almond'. On the third day the same sweet is called 'Raja's Delicacy'. People do not know his tricks. They flock to him.
11. The astrologer did his business next to the vendor of groundnut.
12. Some traders had gaslights. Some had naked flames stuck on poles. Some were lit up by old cycle lamps. Some, like the astrologer, did not have lights of their own.
13. The astrologer is a trickster. He does not know anything about the influence of stars on human beings.
14. He impressed clients through sheer guesswork.

15. The astrologer was originally a peasant.
16. The astrologer has a working knowledge of the tangles of human ties.
17. The astrologer suggests to the client that he is not getting the fullest results for his efforts or that his problems are due to his impetuous nature or that there is a woman causing him all the trouble.
18. The astrologer calls the villager by his name, Guru Nayak.
19. The astrologer says that Guru Nayak was stabbed and thrown into a well by an enemy. That enemy was none other than the astrologer.
20. The astrologer asks Guru Nayak not to stir out of his village. The astrologer says that Guru Nayak's enemy was crushed to death by a lorry.
21. Guru Nayak gives the astrologer twelve and a half annas and not one rupee, as promised by him.
22. The astrologer confesses to his wife his effort to kill Guru Nayak years ago.
23. The astrologer is happy because he is not a murderer.
24. The astrologer's wife decides to use the money given by Guru Nayak to make sweets for her daughter.

2. About the Author

Ruskin Bond was born to Edith Clerke and Aubrey Bond. He did most of the schooling from the Bishop Cotton Schools, Shimla. During this period, he won many accolades in winning like the Irwin Divinity prize and the Halley Literature prize. He was better perceived as the Indian Wordsworth. His autobiographical work called *Rain in the mountain* majorly includes his life spent in Mussoorie. It also has information about how his parents were and his relationship with them. He was a successful prolific writer.

3. About the Story

"The Woman on Platform 8" by Ruskin Bond is a story about love and affection that transcends all barriers of kinship. It is narrated in the first person by a school boy named Arun. All the events are viewed from his point. The story revolves around Arun's encounter with a stranger - a mysterious woman. The woman in a white sari treats him as her son. She offers him tea and snacks. She helps him feel comfortable. Her dignity and humanity come in sharp contrast with the vanity and arrogance of his mate Satish's mother. Arun's calling her 'mother' at the time of passing is a sweet gesture of recognition of a loving relationship. As a matter of fact there is no platform 8 at the Ambala station.

The Woman on Platform No. 8
MSU-1**4. Points to Ponder**

1. Arun was waiting for his train for going to his school. He lived in the boarding house there. He was coming from home.
2. He had come to Ambala much earlier. He was to change the train at Ambala Railway Station for his school.
3. His parents considered him old enough to travel alone as they felt he could travel safely. He had come there much earlier. So he had been passing his time at the station itself.
4. The train was to arrive at midnight. He sat on his suitcase. He gazed at the railway-tracks in a boring manner.
5. When a boy leapt across the rails, the woman in white sari was utterly frightened. She imagined the possible grave danger to the boy. She clutched Arun's arm.
6. She had pain, fear and sadness on her face because anything could happen at that time.
7. Satish's mother was a large and imposing woman. She wore spectacles. She looked very hard and stern. She behaved naughtily and in a complaining manner. She had been born to be a dominating woman.

8. Arun did not like Satish's mother looking so stern and harsh. She had a complaining attitude towards everything. She found fault with one and all as she had a critical and criticizing nature.
9. She began advising the boys to be careful about strangers and not to talk to them. Indirectly, she insulted the woman in white sari.
10. Arun moved closer to the woman who had befriended him. Satish, standing behind his mother, grinned at Arun. He was taking delight in Arun's possible clash with his mother.
11. Arun sat near the window. He kept talking to her. He looked straight into the eyes of the stranger. She was holding his hand into hers. She was smiling in a gentle and understanding way.
12. Finally, Arun leaned out of the window and kissed her at the cheek. He said to her, "Good-bye-mother", as if he meant that she was his own natural mother.
13. Arun had established a natural relationship due to the stranger woman's intrinsic qualities.

IDGHAH 205 FESTIVAL OF MSU-1
EID
UNIT - III

3. About the Story

The story depicts a very poor boy about 4-5 years of age named Hamid. He lives with his Dadi (Grandma) Ameena. Hamid is the protagonist of the story. He has lost his parents. His aged grandmother Ameena fulfills their daily needs by doing some needle work for others. His grandma has told him that very soon his father and mother, who are actually dead, will return home with lots of money, sweets and gifts for him from the house of Allah. He is full of hope and happily awaiting that day.

The story begins on Eid morning, Poor Hamid doesn't have new clothes or shoes like other children had. He has only three paise (a meagre sum) as Id for the festival to spend in a fair. His friends spend their pocket money on rides, candies and buying beautiful colourful clay toys. The toys are such as Bhisti, Lawyer, Policeman and a milkmaid. Hamid dismisses these as a waste of money for momentary pleasure. While his friends are enjoying themselves he overcomes his temptation and goes to a hardware shop to buy a pair of tongs. He remembers how his Dadi (grandma) burns her hand while cooking *rotis*.

The story concludes with a touching hope when Hamid gifts the *chimta* to his Dadi. At first she is shocked and annoyed by his stupidity that instead of eating anything or buying any toy at the fair, he has purchased a *chimta*. But when Hamid reminds her of how she burns her fingers daily while making *rotis*, she bursts into tears at this and blesses him for his kindness.

4. Points to Ponder

1. Hamid is a small boy of four. He is full of love and compassion.
2. Dadi says that his father would return with lots of money and his mother would bring lovely gifts.
3. Hamid goes for Idgah along with his friends to offer Namaz.
4. Hamid does not have new clothes or shoes. He has only three paise.
5. The other children enjoy rides like Hindola and Charkhi. They buy colourful toys.
6. Hamid dismisses spending money on toys.
7. Hamid sees a pair of pincers and a pair of chimta tongs in a hardware shop.
8. Hamid wants very much to buy some nice gift, the chimta for his Dadi.
9. Dadi is taken aback when Hamid comes home with a pair of tongs. She bursts into tears with joy.
10. Hamid makes a personal sacrifice. The love behind the gift is immense.

2. An outline of the story

The Play – a mock court trial

Vijay Tendulkar's three-Act play *Silence! The Court is in Session* is in the form of a mock court trial. The Sonar Moti Tenement Association which stages shows frequently for the enlightenment of the masses has arranged a mock trial of President Johnson who has produced atomic weapons and proved a menace to mankind. The first participant in the mock trial to arrive is a lady school teacher by name Leela Benare. Since she is new to the place, she is escorted to the auditorium by a local villager by name Samant. Benare talks very freely with Samant, expressing her wish to run away to some far-off place where she can live undisturbed. She says vehemently that she is a perfect teacher, teaching her lessons and correcting students' exercises without giving room to anybody to complain against her. Hence, the authorities of the school have no right to probe into her personal life. From her talk we can guess that she is faced with the prospect of severe punishment on account of her personal lapses.

SILENCE! THE COURT IS IN SESSION - VIJAY TEJENDULKAR

The trial of an unwed mother

At this time the other participants in the proposed trial arrive. They are Kashikar, a hypocritical social activist, his childless wife and their adopted son Balu Rokde, an unpopular lawyer by name Sukhatme who spends most of his time swatting flies, an inter-failed, self-styled scientist by name Ponkshe and an actor of the Modern Theatre movement by name Karnik. They all feel that the Johnson trial, conducted several times, has become very hackneyed. They want to experiment with a new theme. When Benare is in the inner room, the others decide to conduct a trial of an unwed mother charged with infanticide. Benare is assigned this role because the others, especially Rokde, Ponkshe and Karnik, suspect her to be pregnant, though unmarried. Benare is unwilling to play this part but is persuaded by the others who say that this is only a show and does not refer to anyone in reality. The characters are said to be fictitious ones. But the point is that Benare is in reality pregnant and the scandal-mongers are determined to use the mock trial as a tool to expose her misconduct. It is like the drama arranged by Hamlet in Shakespeare's play to bring to light his uncle's villainy.

Sukhatme's antithetical roles

A great deal of the fuss is made in the beginning about quite insignificant matters such as the usher's staff, the judge's wig and gavel, the positioning of the chairs, etc. For want of persons, Sukhatme comes forward to play the two antithetical roles — prosecuting counsel and counsel for the accused.

The assaults slapped on Benare

The trial begins in a deceptively harmless manner, with Sukhatme seeking an adjournment of the trial by fifteen seconds to enable the participants, including the judge, to go out and spit *paan* juice. The adjournment here is a parody of the adjournment for silly reasons that scuttles the functioning of real courts. People are afraid of giving incriminatory evidence and either remain dumb or give evasive replies. This is represented by the 'world-famous scientist' Ponkshe who says vaguely that Benare is in the habit of running after men but does not specify any man in particular. Again, he says that Benare sometimes behaves erratically, as if she were off her head. When asked to cite instances, he gives a humorous twist to the trial by saying that she is sticking out her tongue at him like a lunatic. Karnik is equally evasive. When asked to define motherhood, Karnik puts both human mothers and

bitches on the same plane as both give birth to young ones. When Sukhatme tries to pin him down by asking whether he has ever seen Benare in a compromising situation, he again evades and says that Rokde knows much more about Benare's personal life than he. He explains away his evasiveness when he tells Ponkshe :

"You passed the buck to me! I passed it to him."
(Rokde)

Rokde comes to the witness-box, shaking in his shoes. After much persuasion, he says that he saw Benare in Damle's room one late evening. Benare argues that it is wrong to misconstrue the mere fact of her sitting with a man. She has sat with the 65-year-old Principal several times. It is foolish to argue that she was having an affair with him. Vexed, Benare says that she has sat with more than twenty five men. What Benare says is quite true. It is stupid to suspect a man and a woman who merely happen to sit side by side. Sukhatme argues with perverse pleasure that her own statement is a solid proof of her promiscuous contacts with innumerable men.

The den of vicious calumniators

Samant who is called upon next to give evidence adds flesh and blood to the skeleton sketch given by Rokde.

He says that he overheard the conversation between the illicit lovers. Benare, pregnant, was appealing to Damle to marry her and save her from ignominy but Damle turned a deaf ear to her appeal. He did not budge even when she threatened to commit suicide, killing her unborn child along with herself. The innocent Samant plays into the hands of the scandalmongers by borrowing apt sentences from a book in his hand. He does not understand why Benare takes exception to his charges because he believes it is all a show. Benare wants to walk out of the den of vicious calumniators but cannot do so because the door is accidentally locked on the outside.

Instructions to dismiss Benare from service

Samant's evidence having tightened the grip on Benare, Ponkshe, Rokde and Karnik come forward to give evidence for the second time. They vie with one another in slinging mud at the helpless victim with Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar unhesitatingly adding fuel to fire with their vicious remarks. Rokde says that one late night Benare met him and pressed him to marry her. Rokde says that he not only refused to yield but slapped her on the cheek, ignoring her threat. Ponkshe says that Benare tempted him also and, when rejected, said that she was only joking and was not after him seriously. Karnik refutes

Rokde's earlier statement and says that he saw Benare beat Rokde for not yielding to her. Kashikar, setting aside his role as judge, condescends to give evidence. He contributes his mite, saying that he heard the Chairman of the Education Society giving instructions over the phone to dismiss Benare from her teacher's post for running after men and becoming pregnant without getting married.

Sukhatme's dual argument

In his summing up Sukhatme, prosecuting counsel, says that Benare, if left unpunished, will dynamite the institution of marriage and ruin society. Playing the other role as counsel for the accused, Sukhatme says that human nature is prone to err and therefore Benare should be treated with the utmost sympathy.

Benare defends herself

Benare is at last given a chance to defend herself. She says that when she was barely fourteen her maternal uncle seduced her. When she insisted on his marrying her he 'turned tail'. The next to play havoc in her life was Prof. Damle whose intellect cast a spell on her. But Damle did not care for her soul of devotion. He liked only her body. Having enjoyed sex with her and got her

pregnant he deserted her. Needing a husband and a stable home to protect her child, Benare sought many a man but they all scorned and rejected her.

Kashikar's ruthless attack on Benare

Kashikar stops her short and says that she has proved a menace to society. Her immorality will spread on and ruin the society if she is not punished. So he recommends her sacking from the school. He orders that she shall live but that her child shall be destroyed. Benare is shocked and falls down unconscious.

Benare commits suicide

At this time an outsider peeps in and asks when the show is going to begin. All the participants leave hastily, remarking that Benare has taken the show to heart. Kashikar notices a bottle of TIK-20, a dreadful poison, lying by the side of the unconscious Benare. He realizes that Benare has swallowed poison and committed suicide. He knows that it is risky to stand by and so sneaks away noiselessly along with the others. At the end of the play, light is focussed on the dead body of Benare and the surroundings are enveloped in darkness. A song about the pillaging of a sparrow's nest, symbolic of the ruin of Benare's life, is heard from 'somewhere unseen'.

3. DRAMATIS PERSONAE

1. MISS LEELA BENARE

- She is a thirtyfour-year-old spinster.
- She is the heroine of the play.
- She symbolizes the emancipated modern woman.
- She is a member of the Sonar Moti Tenement Progressive Association, an amateur dramatic troupe in Bombay.

2. MR. KASHIKAR

- He is a social worker.
- He is the chairman of the amateur group of players belonging to the Sonar Moti Tenement Progressive Association from Bombay.
- His prime objective is spreading enlightenment among the people about social awareness.
- His group is very popular for enacting its 'Living Law Court'.

3. MRS. KASHIKAR

- She is the wife of Mr. Kashikar.
- She is a very talkative woman.
- She is quite uneducated.

- She and her husband have adopted a poor boy by name Balu Rokde.
- She is a tradition-bound, orthodox married woman.

4. SUKHATME

- By profession he is a lawyer.
- He belongs to the amateur troupe of dramatists of 'Sonare Moti Tenement Progressive Association of Bombay.
- He is a failure in his professional life as a Lawyer.
- He really performs wonders as the lawyer of the mock-trial.

5. PONKSHE

- He is one of the members of the amateur dramatic troupe, 'Sonar Moti Tenement Progressive Association' of Bombay.
- He is a clerk in the Central Telegraph Office.
- He has failed in his Intermediate Examination twice.
- He is introduced as a great scientist in the play, 'Silence ! The Court is in Session'.
- He is a pipe-smoking scientist.

6. BALU ROKDE

- He is the adopted son of Mrs & Mr. Kashikar always keeps him under her thumb.
- Mrs. Kashikar always keeps him under her thumb.
- Mr. Kashikar falls foul of him for his commissions and omissions.
- He plays a significant role in the trial of Benare in exposing her private life.

7. KARNICK

- He is one of the members of amateur dramatic troupe, 'Sonar Moti Tenement Progressive Association' of Bombay.
- He is introduced as a great actor belonging to the school of 'Intimate Theatre'.
- He has dramatic sense.

8. SAMANT

- He is a simple villager but an interesting character.
- He is a bachelor.
- He earns enough to keep body and soul together.
- He is sympathetic towards Benare.

Unit V : UNTOUCHABLE

3

— ANAND

2. A brief outline of the story of 'Untouchable'

The setting

Untouchable describes the experiences of an eighteen-year-old toilet-cleaner by name Bakha in the course of a single day. The boy lives with his father Lakha, his brother Rakha and sister Sohini in the outcastes' colony, situated outside the town of Bulandshahr in the Punjab Province. The outcastes' colony is inhabited by the untouchables cast out of the Hindu society, such as scavengers, leather-workers, washermen, barbers, water-carriers, grass-cutters, etc. At some distance from the outcastes' colony is the cantonment where the sepoy and the military officers live in barracks. The outcastes' colony reeks with a most foul smell because all the refuse and effluents from the latrines in the city stagnate here.

Bakha's duty

Bakha's duty is to clean the three rows of public latrines. His work is doubly hard as these latrines are used by men both from the cantonment and the town. Bakha has worked for some time in the barracks of the British regiment. He has been fascinated by the dressing style of the whites and, using their *bakshish*, bought some items of Western dress in a rag-shop.

Bakha starts his work

It is the dawn of an extremely chilly day. Bakha is sleeping in a corner of his father's one-roomed mud-house. His sister Sohini is sleeping on a cot next to him. His father Lakha and brother Rakha are sleeping on the other side of the cot. Lakha is the first to get up. He gruffly shouts at Bakha as a bastard and asks him to get up and start his work of cleaning the latrines. Havildar Charat Singh, a well-known hockey-player, also shouts to him to clean a latrine specially for his use. To tempt him to get up, he promises to present a hockey-stick to Rakha that afternoon.

Bakha cleans up the three rows of latrines allotted to him as man after man comes. After finishing the work, he goes back home to have some tea. His sister Sohini says that there is no water. She goes with a pitcher to the public well but has to wait till a Hindu pours water into her pitcher. Being an untouchable, she is not allowed to draw water from the well direct. In return for his help, the priest asks Sohini to come and clean the courtyard of his house daily.

Lakha says that he is ill and asks Bakha to do his work of cleaning the streets in the town. Picking up his father's big groom and basket, the boy goes to the town

to clean the roads and streets. This job, Bakha consoles himself, is not as dirty as cleaning the latrines.

Bakha's experiences on the way to the town

The toilet-cleaners are the lowest among the outcastes in the colony. Compared to them, the washermen and the leather-workers are a bit higher up the social ladder. Ram Charan, a washerman's son, and Chota, a leather-worker's son, are both friends with Bakha because they share his interest in playing hockey. Ram Charan says that his sister is getting married that day. Bakha is upset on hearing this because he is amorously inclined towards her himself and had wanted to hold her in his arms. Bakha next meets the two young sons of a *babu* who is a military officer. Bakha wants to speak English like the *sahibs*. The elder son of the *babu* agrees to teach him English. Bakha is willing to pay at the rate of an anna per lesson.

Walking towards the town, Bakha has some more humiliating experiences. He buys a packet of Red Lamp cigarettes and the vendor throws the packet at him instead of handing it over to him because he is an outcaste. Next, he buys four annas' worth of *jalebis* and the seller of sweets flings the *jalebis* at him for fear of being polluted by the scavenger.

A caste Hindu accuses Bakha

A caste Hindu shouts obscenely at Bakha, calling him, 'son of a bitch' and 'offspring of a dog', simply because the latter comes too close to him. Now, Bakha did not do it deliberately. An angry crowd gathers round the boy and calls him names. Bakha cannot bear this insult. All his jalebis fall to the ground. He weeps bitterly. But nobody pities him.

Bakha's next experience is far more harrowing. He wants to enter the temple situated on the road and see the statues of the gods. No sooner does he go near the main door of the temple than he hears a priest shouting 'polluted' at his sister Sohini standing by his side. Now also a crowd collects round Bakha and charges him with having polluted the temple with his intrusion. Sohini runs down the steps and reports to Bakha that the priest asked him to come to his house and clean his latrine, and that, while she was doing this work, he molested her by grabbing her breasts. Bakha is enraged. He wants to murder the priest.

Housewives' humiliation of Bakha

Bakha is tired out. He sends Sohini back home and then proceeds to get food from those housewives from whom his father used to get food. He goes from

door to door, saying : 'Mother, give food to the sweeper'. But nobody gives him food. Tired out, Bakha sits on a doorstep. The mistress of the house complains that he has polluted her house and drives him out. Another woman living on the fourth storey throws down some chappattis at him from there. Poor Bakha has no other alternative but to pick them up.

A series of kind acts

Bakha goes to Ram Charan's house to see his sister's wedding. But his caste is lower than Ram Charan's. So he cannot enter the latter's house. However, Ram Charan is generous enough to bring him some sweets secretly. Later, Bakha goes to the military barracks where Charat Singh presents him a hockey stick which is almost new.

Bakha, Chota and Ram Charan take part in a hockey match against a Punjabi team. A tussle breaks out between the two teams. The younger son of the *babu* is hit by a stone thrown by Ram Charan. Bakha carries the injured boy to his (the boy's) house. But the boy's mother, instead of thanking Bakha for his help, roundly scolds him for having touched and polluted her son. Bakha is once again depressed by the discriminatory treatment against him.

Bakha meets Colonel Hutchinson

Colonel Hutchinson is a pious Christian. He wants to convert Bakha to Christianity. He says that Christ would forgive Bakha's sins if he confesses. Bakha likes Hutchinson's kindness but does not want to be converted to Christianity.

Bakha listens to Gandhiji

Bakha attends a meeting addressed by Gandhiji. Gandhi wants all schools and temples and public places to be thrown open to untouchables. He says that he would like to be reborn as an untouchable and not as a Brahmin. He does not see anything disgraceful in scavenging. Bakha is pleased with Gandhiji's according an equal status to untouchables.

Poet Iqbal's suggestion

Bakha hears a heated discussion between poet Iqbal Nath Sarashar and Barrister Bashir. The barrister says that Gandhi is a humbug, a fool and a hypocrite. The poet says that untouchability will disappear if the flush system is installed in all latrines. The machine can do the work of removing the human dung. Bakha immensely likes this revolutionary idea and rushes home to inform his old-fashioned father of this valuable suggestion.