



22

THE TRUTH

Our Holy Scriptures, reformers and preachers have always emphasised the need for controlling strong emotions and ambitions, in order to maintain a calm and peaceful attitude. Strong negative emotions like anger, jealousy etc., if uncontrolled, are destructive in life.

Read a few lines from the ‘Atharva Veda’ below and think over them.

Words can confer strength
They can drown it off
Words can gain friends
They can turn them
Into enemies



Figure 22.1



Figure 22.2

Words can elevate or
Lower the individual
One must learn the habit
Of making one’s words
Sweet, soft and pleasant

What kind of ‘words’ are being recommended in the above lines?

**DO YOU KNOW**

The Atharva Veda is one of the four Vedas, which are the Hindu scriptures. The four Vedas are the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sam Veda and the Atharva Veda. The Hindus believe that the origin of all knowledge and wisdom lies in these Vedas.

**OBJECTIVES**

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- enjoy reading the poem;
- explain the central idea of the poem;
- state the effect of harsh and impolite words on our mind and heart;
- justify the need for effective communication for problem solving and positive relationships;
- identify the comparisons used to relate certain ideas in the poem;
- explain the literary devices used in the poem to create an impact on the reader;
- explain the significance of the title of the poem, and
- analyse your own behaviour in reaction to a particular situation.

**22.1 LET US READ THE TEXT**

Have you ever been hurt by what someone said to you? Did the pain last for a long time? Did you think at that time that the other person could have said the same thing in a less hurtful manner. Read the poem 'Truth' and find out what the poet has to say.

TRUTH

Sticks and stones may break my bones
 But words can also hurt me.
 Stones and sticks break only skin
 While words are ghosts that haunt me.

Slant and curved the word swords fall
 To pierce and stick inside me.
 Bats and bricks may ache through bones
 But words can mortify me.

haunt: (here) come to the mind continually to create a disturbing effect.

mortify: to make someone feel extremely embarrassed or ashamed.

scar: permanent mark on body due to a wound.

bruise: discoloration of the skin due to an injury.

Pain from words has left its scar
On mind and heart that's tender.
Cuts and bruises now have healed;
It's words that I remember.

- Barrie Wade



22.2 LET US UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

22.2.1 PART 1 (Stanza I)

Sticks and stones that haunt me.

Read the above stanza and answer the questions that follow. The brief explanation below would help you understand the poem better.

As you know when we are physically hurt people see our wounds and express sympathy for us. But can people see our suffering when we go through emotional or mental pain? No, they cannot. So we suffer alone. In this stanza the poet speaks about the pain caused by weapons and the hurt caused by unkind language. Sticks and stones hurt us physically. But we get hurt emotionally by rude and harsh language. We feel mentally upset and disturbed. The wounds caused to our body heal up fast but the insult caused by words disturbs our mind for a long period of time.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.1

Answer the following questions

1. Which objects mentioned in the stanza can cause physical injury?
2. What have “words” in the poem been compared with?
3. Complete the following statement in your own words.
Words are called ghosts that haunt us because _____
 - (i) they trouble our mind for a long time.
 - (ii) they are invisible.
 - (iii) we cannot fight them or overcome them.
4. Words, sticks and stones hurt us. In what way do they differ in their impact? Write your answer in about 50-60 words.
5. Your sister takes your pen without your permission to write her examination. This causes inconvenience for you. Hence, you are angry with her. How would you react to her action?



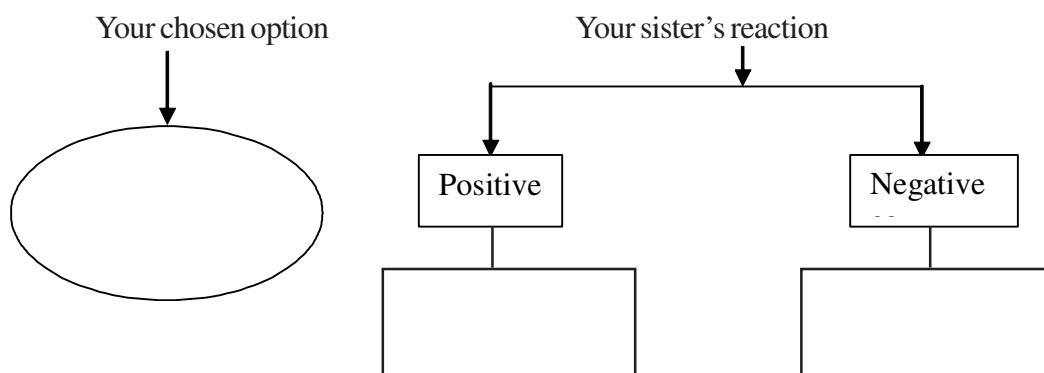
Notes

(a) Given below are four options. Choose one out of them to complete the sentence.

You will...

- (i) scold her in strong words.
- (ii) forgive her but make her understand that it is a bad habit.
- (iii) punish her so that she does not repeat it in future.
- (iv) not talk to her for three days.

(b) Now based on your chosen option write one positive and one negative reaction you might expect from your sister in the spaces provided below.



22.2.2 PART 2 (Stanza II)

Slant and curved _____ *mortify me.*

You have been treated unfairly by someone. How do you feel? Do you think being intolerant and aggressive is always an effective way of dealing with people? Read what Gandhiji has to say about this:

“Keep your thoughts
 Positive because your
 Thoughts become your
 Words, keep your words
 Positive because your
 Words become your,
 Behavior _____
 – M.K Gandhi

The stanza describes the intense pain caused by bitter words. Read the explanation below to find out how painful it was for the poet when he was humiliated by bitter words.

The poet says that objects like swords injure our bodies deeply. But don't you think that angry and harsh words can also hurt equally? Don't you think that such words can



humiliate us and make our life miserable? You must have experienced this in your day to day life.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.2

Answer the following questions:

1. Words have been called ‘swords’ in Stanza II. Why?
2. Which two words describe the ‘swords’?
3. Select the meaning out of the ones given below that best explains the line ‘pierce and stick inside’ in Stanza II.
 - (a) The impact of bitter words is deep and long lasting.
 - (b) Swords injure sharply.
 - (c) The wound caused by a sword doesn’t heal up.
4. Identify the word from Stanza II that describes the effect of ‘words’ on the poet.



Your friend Anand is unhappy and dejected because his father has objected in very strong words to his decision to go abroad. Now his father is upset to see him dejected. How do you think his father can help him to overcome his dejection?

Three options are given below. Which of the three options would you choose if you were the father?

- a. Empathize with him and try to convince him that he did not mean to hurt him.
- b. Accept his decision and allow him pursue his plans.
- c. Remain indifferent and unconcerned thinking that time is a great healer.

22.2.3 PART 3 (Stanza III)

Pain from words that I remember.

Think of a physical injury you have suffered in the past. Think of some unkind words someone said to you and which hurt you badly. Which experience did you forget earlier? In this stanza the poet explains that the damage caused by harsh language is more than the damage caused by physical injury. Both leave scars - one on the body and the other on the mind and heart. But the scars on the mind and heart do not let us forget the experience. Find out if the poet could overcome the pain caused by bitter words.



Notes



INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.3

Answer the following questions.

1. Where has the pain left the scar?
2. What happened to the poet's physical injury?
3. Why could he not forget the words?
4. Why do words hurt more than weapons?

22.3 APPRECIATION

In this poem the poet says a lot in a few words. He does this by using literary devices such as metaphor, alliteration and repetition. These literary devices create an impact, and help the readers to infer the meaning on their own.

Literary devices used by the poet:

Metaphor : It compares two things that are not very similar. It describes two things in terms of a single quality or feature that they both share.

Example: The road was a ribbon of light.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the Lion of Punjab.

Alliteration : It is the repetition of the initial sounds in words to create an emphasis and a pleasing and musical effect. It helps the reader to appreciate & enjoy the poem.

Example: Seema's seven sisters slept soundly by the sea.

Lovely lilies in lush lawns send out the sweet sound of songs.

Repetition : It is the repetition of words that emphasizes important ideas.

Example: Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall



LET US DO 22.2

Now you know what metaphor, alliteration, and repetition are. Read the poem and identify the literary devices used in it.

**Literary Devices**

Metaphor	Stanza No.

Alliteration	Stanza No.

Repetition	Stanza No.

**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

Our choice of words in day to day communication is extremely important. It can make or mar (break) our relationships. By using harsh, rude and impolite words we hurt others mentally and emotionally. The pain caused by unpleasant words is much stronger and lasts longer than the physical injury caused by weapons. Hence we should control our language and negative emotions such as anger and hatred.

**TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

1. State the theme or central idea of the poem in 50-60 words.
2. Why do you think the poet has titled this poem “Truth”? Write your answer in 50-60 words.
3. Which word has been repeated? How many times has it been repeated in the poem. Why has the poet repeated it?
4. What literary devices has the poet used? How have the literary devices in the poem helped you to understand and enjoy the poem?
5. What do you think is the strong emotion that prompts us to be aggressive and intolerant? Tick one of the four emotions below. Give reasons for your choice in 50-60 words:
 Anger Ambition Hatred Jealousy
6. Think of a situation in which your relationship with your friend becomes unpleasant. You want to maintain your friendship. What would you do to be good friends again? Write your answer in 50 - 60 words.



Notes

7. Describe in 50-60 words how would you feel if someone used harsh and hurtful words to you.
8. (a) Given below is a list of emotions and values. Put them in appropriate columns in the space provided below. Refer to the dictionary if necessary to understand the meaning of each word before doing the exercise.

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| greed | respect for others |
| lust | abusive language |
| jealousy | compassion |
| empathy | pleasant communication |
| sharing and caring | violence |
| revenge | gratitude |
| forgiveness | selflessness |
| tolerance | kindness |
| selfishness | |

Qualities

- (b) Which one of the above positive qualities would you like to develop in yourself and which negative quality would you like to give up
9. Read the following dialogue between a student passenger and the bus conductor. Rewrite it to make it an effective communication.

Student Passenger: Give me a ticket for the Red Fort.

(gives a 50 rupee note)

Conductor: Give me Rs 15 only.

Student Passenger: I have a 50 rupee note only.

The Truth

Conductor: Didn't you know that you need coins to pay?

Student Passenger: You already have so many coins in your pouch. You want to harass me.

Conductor: Give me the change or else get down from the bus.

Student Passenger: Why should I get down? I have to reach there on time.

Conductor: I'll throw you out.

Student Passenger: How dare you! You are a public servant. Don't forget it.



Notes



ANSWERS

22.2.1 PART 1

INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.1

1. sticks and stones
2. ghosts
3. The words have been called 'ghosts that haunt us' because they trouble our mind for a long time.
4. Words hurt our mind and heart while sticks and stones cause physical injury. (explain 50-60 words)
5. Individual response.

22.2.2 PART 2

INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.2

1. Both swords and unkind words are sharp and hurt deeply.
2. slant and curved
3. a. The impact of bitter words is deep and lasts long.
4. mortify

22.2.3 PART 3

INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.3

1. on his mind and tender heart
2. It got healed.
3. They were painful.



Notes

4. Physical injuries caused by weapons heal up, but pain caused by words does not go away.

TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- (1) Individual responses.

Suggested response: The impact of words on the mind is powerful. Unkind words are more painful than wounds caused by weapons. Physical wounds heal up but emotional injury lasts long because words linger and haunt us, and never allow us to be at peace.

- (2) Individual responses

Suggested response: Being truthful in our lives is very important. But if a truth is conveyed in ugly words it leaves a scar on the heart and becomes painful. It is important to be truthful but also to be kind.

- (3) The word 'words' has been repeated six times. It has been repeated to emphasize its importance and significance. The effect of words on us is the focal point in the poem.

- (4) The poet has used:

metaphors

Metaphors help to feel the intensity of pain caused by words by comparing words with a sword..

alliteration

Alliteration contributes the sound effect.

repetition

Repetition helps to emphasize the central idea.

- (5) Individual responses.

Suggested response if **anger** is the selected option: It is usually the underlying emotion of our negative attitude & intolerance. We use unkind, strong and bitter language to express our anger. Anger may be due to many reasons but its expression is always painful for others.

- (6) Individual responses

Suggested response: Show empathy, be understanding of the reason for his /her behaviour, communicate the desire to normalize relations.

- (7) Individual responses

- (8) (a) Qualities

The Truth



Notes

Positive	Negative
empathy	lust
sharing and caring	greed
forgiveness	jealousy
tolerance	revenge
respect for age	abusive language
soft and pleasant communication	comparison
spirit of sacrifice	selfishness.
gratitude	
selflessness	
kindness	

8 (b) Individual Responses

9. Individual Responses