

Lesson-4

Father, Dear Father

Summary

The lesson describes Rahul's relations with his father and how his father did not appreciate his second rank in school and bluntly told him to pay more attention to his studies. Rahul loved a natural and simple life, while his father enjoyed a complicated life. He believed that peace of mind and happiness are more important than anything in the world. Rahul always admired his grandparents as they had a lot of experience and shaped a philosophy that Rahul found ideal.

Important points from the text:

1. It is an unsent letter written by a student named Rahul to his father.
2. It describes that Rahul came second in class and he told his father about it.
3. His father did not appreciate his second rank, rather he bluntly told him to be more careful in the future. He rebuked the poor little boy for securing the second rank in school. This shows that the father-son relation was not close.
4. His grandfather had a free and easy childhood. His childhood days were spent playing marbles and gilli danda, plucking the mangoes and guavas from their fruit gardens. Studies were additional and living and experiencing were the major subjects.
5. Rahul's father was highly educated and provided well for the family. But was far from experiencing the precious things in life.
6. Rahul questions, "What's the point of learning and studying things like the Pythagoras' Theorem or Newton's Law of Gravity when he can't use them in his departmental store, his doctor friend and his Lawyer brother also don't use these theorems."
7. He further dwells on the difference between the attitude of his grandmother and his mother.
8. His grandmother was semi-literate but she was at peace with her pots, pans, her flowers, and garden. She was complacent in Bhagvad Gita and its scriptures.
9. Whereas his mother was highly qualified and educated yet she was always highly strung, tense and nervous.
10. He further questions, whether literacy makes one fidgety, agitated, afraid, and frustrated.
11. Rahul had gone to his Biology teacher hoping to find a solution to get rid of the pests attacking his rose plant.
12. His teacher asked him to go ask the gardener instead. He questions the attitude of his school teacher and finds it strange that he has studied pesticides but still doesn't know how to use them.

13. He is frustrated to learn about gravity because that doesn't help him much.
14. All he wants to learn is about the stuff that helps him in his daily life, like how to keep the rose plant healthy, how to make a desk with his carpenter's tools, and what to do when there is a fuse in the house. These topics are not written about and not discussed in schools. He feels like he is not living life.
15. Rahul is a student who prefers to learn for life and not for a mere examination. In his opinion scoring, high marks were not as important as applying theoretical knowledge into practice.

Learn new words:

1. Transgression: an act of going against a rule or code of conduct
2. Philosopher: thinker, a wise man
3. Carefree: free and easy
4. Mouth-watering: delicious food
5. Ancillary: giving additional or necessary support to the primary activities
6. Topsy-Turvy: upside down/inverted
7. Scriptures: sacred writings of a religion
8. Fibbing: to lie
9. Prattles: to chatter/blabber
10. Adamant: inflexible/ firm
11. Anguish: severe mental pain/ torture

Do you know?

The Yellow Train School in Tamil Nadu focuses on practical knowledge like; walking in fields, learning about wildlife, playing instruments, swinging on a tyre in corridors. The teachers communicate like friends, take you on walks on organic farms, and teach you pottery. This school seems like a never-ending vacation where students grow together, learning the values they actually need in life. The focus is more on the development of a child rather than on textbook lessons.

Extend your horizon.

Rahul writes a letter to his father expressing his hurt and anguish. How do you deal with your feelings when you are hurt and in pain?

Give your opinion about what kind of education is most useful these days?

Evaluate yourself

1. Is the writer a good student? Why had he written the letter?

2. What kind of life did the writer's grandfather lead when he was a small boy? What was considered important in those days?
3. What difference does the writer see in his mother's nature and his grandmother's?
4. What kind of education does the writer think is most useful? Do you agree with the writer?
5. Will Rahul's father ever get the letter? Why is Rahul hesitant in sending the letter?

Maximize your marks

- Read the chapter carefully and attempt all the questions.
- Rahul is not satisfied with the education he is getting. Do you agree with Rahul's notion of practical knowledge over theoretical knowledge?