

English-302

Chapter -9

My son will not be a beggar

Summary

Every girl and boy in the world, according to the author, has wonderful recollections of their youth. The author did not have fond recollections of seeing because he went blind at such a young age. Ved Mehta's blindness was followed by his inability to function as a result of shock illness. His father was a trained doctor, but he couldn't help him because he was blind. So he braced himself for the god-given lifelong tragedy.

Ved's parents have only encountered blind beggars. Ved's father couldn't bear the thought of his son being a beggar. His father was willing to go to any length to keep Ved from begging. Ved's father wrote to the principal of the Dadar School for the Blind in Bombay. The principal told the parent that he would personally take care of his son. Meanwhile, his mother was only half-heartedly prepared to send her son go to study.

Important points from the text:

- Ved Mehta worked as a writer and editor. Ved Mehta went blind when he was three and a half years old, in 1937. He became blind as a result of a prolonged (long) attack of meningitis and began living in a world of four senses.
- It was a world where colours, faces, light, and darkness were hidden.
- Unable to accept that her son's sight would never return, Ved Mehta's mother blamed the tragedy on something from her own history. She invited pandits and hakims to perform prayers, and she treated his eyes with special medications. Each pandit's instruction was carefully heeded. Because his mother knew such techniques would be frowned upon by his father, she kept them concealed, making things much more difficult for herself.
- His eyes were burnt and hurt by the surmas, which were delivered at all hours of the day and night, and the only thing that made the agony tolerable was his mother's loving caress afterward.
- Ved's father overheard him and interfered one day when he was protesting loudly. He grew furious and warned her she couldn't return to the hakims or buy any more surmas.
- He went on to give him the best medical care and treatment possible. In recounting his early days of blindness, Ved Mehta says that a blind person is at ease because he or she does not have to worry about many things that sighted people do.
- Despite the fact that his age and illness had deprived (lost) him of his treasured (valued) recollections of sight, he recognized that many things seen and uttered in the lives of sighted people are worthless phrases. For a blind person, nature is a place without the flood of sunshine flowing through the nursery window, the colours of the rainbow, a sunset, or a full moon.

- His father persisted and researched the future of blind people. He discovered that almost all of India's blind people had turned to begging for a living, or had opened pan and biri shops and spent their days rolling nuts and condiments in a betel leaf or tobacco in a cigarette paper.
- He was determined that this would not be his second son's fate, and he began corresponding with prominent educational authorities, seeking their advice. The responses were pessimistic. Educational facilities and personnel were limited for the blind, and schools frequently became semi-asylums, with students of all ages grouped together in classes with no gradation system.
- His father was well aware that if he remained at home, he would be pampered, even more, turning him into a spoilt brat. As a result, his father enrolled him at Bombay's Dadar School for the Blind. Ved's mother was taken aback and couldn't comprehend why her son was being sent nine hundred miles away to attend school with orphans and youngsters from the lowest socioeconomic levels. Despite this, she trusted his father's greater judgment and consented silently.

Important words from the text:

1. Prolonged: continued for a long period
2. Spattering: splashing with drops/water
3. Fumbling: to feel or express something in a clumsy manner
4. Faltering: to hesitate
5. Endangered: put someone or something at risk
6. Intensive: thorough/exhaustive
7. Concocted: preparing something by combining various ingredients
8. Prohibited: not allowed/banned
9. Insurmountable: impossible
10. Appalled: horrify/ Shock
11. Superior: high in rank/status

Evaluate yourself;

1. What happened to Ved when he was three and a half years old?
2. Ved Mehta's mother and father had different plans for his future. How did the two differ in their plans?
3. How does Ved compare the limitations of a blind person with those of the blessings of a sighted person?
4. How does a blind person understand and enjoy the beauty of nature?
5. How did Ved's family react to his blindness? Were they very unhappy, or did they think he would recover? What did they do about his problem?

Do you know?

Marla Runyan is a legally blind marathon runner, she has won three national championships in the women's 5,000 meters. Most notably, she became the first legally blind athlete to participate in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, where she was placed eighth in the 1,500 meter – the highest finish by an American woman at that event.

Expand your horizon:

Visit a blind school, talk to the students, and try to ask the following questions:

- What is the right way to guide someone who is blind?
- Do blind people have any sensation of light or colour?
- What type of assistive technology do blind people rely on the most?
- Do blind people completely trust their service animals?
- How do blind people pick out what clothes to wear?
- Do people who lose their sight later in life have the ability to learn Braille?