

6. Sri Aurobindo's Childhood

Worksheet 1

COMPREHENSION

Narendranath, who became famous later as Swami Vivekananda, was born on 12 January 1863. His father was a successful attorney at the High Court of Calcutta (now Kolkata). Swami Vivekananda was proficient in English and Persian, studied the Bible and the poems of the Persian poet Hafiz, and was a great music lover. His mother was intelligent, generous and learned in the Ramayana and Mahabharata and also fluent in Bengali and English. Naren was deeply influenced by his parents.

Even as a boy, he did meditation and had strange experiences. At the same time, he was naughty and hard to manage. He teased his sisters too. Even at six years, he was a bright little student. When he was seven years old, he joined the Metropolitan Institution founded by Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. His exceptional intelligence was recognised and he was also a favourite with his companions. He invented new games and was interested in several sports like wrestling, rowing, etc.

As Naren grew older, he became more involved in intellectual pursuits. Books, newspapers, public lectures and debates saw him interested. Naren moved with his father to Raipur, returning to Calcutta in 1879. He studied at Presidency College, Calcutta, later joining the Institution founded by the Scottish General Missionary Board.

He was restless in his intellectual and spiritual search; he sought the Ultimate Reality but was governed by rationality in his search. He was initially influenced by the Brahmo Samaj and its intellectual atmosphere, but it failed to satisfy him. In this state of intellectual, spiritual and emotional conflict and confusion, he met Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Sri Ramakrishna was the antithesis of Narendra Nath. He was a poor, orthodox Brahmin priest in the temple of Goddess Kali at Dakshineswar, untouched by western civilisation and with barely any secular learning. When the sceptical seeker, Narendranath, met the saint, it was as if Sri Ramakrishna had found a long-lost dear one. It took the bewildered Naren a little time and a few visits before he was completely won over by the love of Sri Ramakrishna who saw his potential greatness. Reluctantly at first, but finally, Narendra surrendered himself and his life to his great Master.

[Adapted from: A Short Life of Swami Vivekananda—Published by Advaita Ashrama]

A. Read the above brief biography and answer the questions.

1. How is Narendranath better known today?
2. Describe Naren's parents briefly.
3. Which school did the little Naren attend?
4. What influenced him initially in his search?
5. To whom did Naren surrender?

B. Fill in the blanks with suitable words from the passage.

1. Naren's father was a successful _____ at the High Court.
2. His mother was _____, _____ and learned in the _____ and Ramayana.
3. He was _____ and hard to _____.
4. He was _____ in his intellectual and _____.
5. When the _____ seeker met the _____, it was as if Sri Ramakrishna had found a _____ dear one.

C. 'Sri Ramakrishna was the antithesis of Narendranath'. Explain the comment briefly.

Worksheet 2

GRAMMAR

Use the correct tense of the verbs given in the brackets as directed to fill in the blanks.

1. We _____ ourselves very much. (enjoy) (past perfect)
2. Sunita and I _____ to school today. (walk) (simple future)
3. She _____ her book at home every day. (forget) (present progressive)
4. The others _____ I _____ us shortly at the gate. (join) (future continuous)
5. INS Vikrant _____ from the harbour today. (sail) (simple past)
6. They _____ the road then. (cross) (past continuous)
7. Could the boys _____ to see the match? (go) (present perfect)
8. Please _____ this basket on the table. (put) (simple present)
9. They _____ dinner when the news came. (eat) (past perfect continuous)
10. My father _____ on his project for more than a week. (work) (present perfect continuous)

Worksheet 3

VOCABULARY AND WRITING

A. There are idioms in the following sentences. Underline them and explain what they mean in other words.

1. I have made up my mind to learn music. _____
2. He was beside himself with grief. _____
3. She is not in the good books of the maths teacher. _____
4. The thief took to his heels when he saw me. _____
5. I'm sorry I lost your book. I'll make good the loss. _____

B. Join words from Column A and Column B to form new words.

- | Column A | Column B |
|----------|------------|
| 1. Back | (a) lay |
| 2. Over | (b) deep |
| 3. Way | (c) bite |
| 4. Skin | (d) strong |
| 5. Head | (e) hear |

C. Write a brief speech of about 100 words introducing a new classmate to the class.
