

Chapter 8: Jalebis

Comprehension Check

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Question 1: Why didn't he pay the school fees on the day he brought money to school?

Answer: Master Ghulam Mohammed would collect the fees. That day he was on leave. Therefore the school fees would be collected the next day. That is why he could not pay the fees on the day he had brought money to school.

Question 2:

(i) What were the coins 'saying' to him ?

(ii) Do you think they were misguiding him ?

Answer:

(i) The coins were coaxing him to spend them. One coin said that Jalebis were meant to be eaten. Money is meant to be spent. Only they spend it, who like fresh, crisp and hot Jalebis.

(ii) Yes, the rupee coins were misguiding him. They were asking him to buy Jalebis with the amount meant for school fees.

Question 3: Why didn't he take the coins' advice ? Give two or three reasons.

Answer: He did not take the coins' advice because of the following reasons :

- He thought how he would show his face to Master Ghulam Mohammed.
- He used to get a lot to eat at home.
- He thought that it was a sin to spend the fees and funds money on buying Jalebis.

Question 4:

(i) What did the oldest coin tell him ?

(ii) Did he follow his advice ? If not, why not?

Answer:

(i) The oldest coin told him that they (the coins) were trying to tell him for his own good. He said that instead of listening to them, he was trying to strangle them. The oldest coin told him to spend them over Jalebis and pay the fees from scholarship money.

(ii) He did not follow the advice of the oldest coin. He thought that what the coin was saying was not right. It was not right for a boy of his status and prestige so. It was not right for him to stand in the middle of inht for him to stand in the middle of the bazaar and eat Jalebis.

Question 5: He reached home with the coins in his pocket. What happened then ?

Answer: When he reached home, he had the coins in his pocket. He sat on the bed. The coins began to speak and shriek. No more he could resist the temptation. So, he rushed out of the house and ran towards the bazaar to purchase Jalebis.

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Question 1:

(i) Why didn't he eat all the jalebis he had bought ?

(ii) What did he do with the remaining jalebis ?

Answer:

(i) He had eaten so many jalebis that it was not possible to eat more jalebis.

(ii) He handed out the remaining jalebis to the children who had assembled in the street.

Question 2: "The fear was killing me." What was the fear ?

Answer: He had eaten too many jalebis. He had a burp with every breath. The fear was with his burp one or two jalebis would pour out of his mouth.

Question 3: "Children's stomachs are like digestion machines." What do you understand by that ? Do you agree

Answer: It means that the children have highly digestive power. Their stomachs are like digestive machines. Even after eating too many jalebis, his stomach kept working throughout the night. He felt quite normal in the morning. I do agree with the statement.

Question 4: How did he plan to pay the fees the next day ?

Answer: He hoped to get the scholarship money next day. So, he planned to pay the fees the next day with that money.

Question 5: When it is time to pay the fees, what does he do ? How is he disobeying the elders by doing so ?

Answer: When it is time to pay the fees, he slips away from school. He spends his time beside a railway track. By doing so he is disobeying his elders. Instead of going to school, he misses the school and is cheating them.

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Question 1: What was the consequence of buying jalebis with the fees money ?

Answer: He had bought jalebis with the fees money. His scholarship was due to receive the next day. He hoped to pay the fees with that money. But it was postponed to next month. So, he slipped from school on the day the fee was to be collected. He absented himself from the school even the next day. Ultimately, the matter had reached his home.

Question 2: His prayer to God is like a lawyer's defence of a bad case. Does he argue his case well ? What are the points he makes ?

Answer: I think he argues his case quite well. He tells Allah Miyan that he is a good boy. He is His devoted servant. He had, however, made a mistake of eating jalebis but he gave these to many other children also. He requested God to just put four rupees in his bag. He won't accept more than four rupees. He assures God that he would never spend his fees money on sweets in future.

Question 3: He offers to play a game with Allah Miyan. What is the game ?

Answer: He offers to play game with Allah Miyan. In the game he will go to and from a signal, touch it and come back. God will secretly place four rupees underneath a big rock. He would then pick up the rock and find four rupees there.

Question 4: Did he get four rupees by playing the game ? What did he get to see under the rock ?

Answer: No, he did not get four rupees by playing the game. He got to see a worm coiled on the rock staring at him.

Question 5: If God had granted his wish that day, what harm would it have caused him in later life ?

Answer: As he himself realised later on, if Allah Miyan were to provide all for the asking, then man would not have learnt any skill. So, it would have caused him a great harm if God might have sent him four rupees.

Exercise

Work in small groups :

Question 1: Select and read sentences that show

(i) that the boy is tempted to eat jalebis.

(ii) that he is feeling guilty.

(iii) that he is justifying the wrong deed.

Answer:

(i) "But then, these jalebis are not common sort of jalebis either. They are crisp, fresh and full of sweet syrup."

(ii) "Now for the crime of eating a few jalebis, for the first time in my life I was absent from school, and crouching in the shade of a tree in a deserted corner of the railway station."

(iii) "So, Allah Miyan, just this once, help me out. There is no shortage of anything in your treasury. Even our chaprasi takes a whole lot of money home every month, and Allahji, after all I am the nephew of a big officer. Won't you give me just four rupees."

Question 2: Discuss the following points.

(i) Is the boy intelligent ? If so, what is the evidence of it?

(ii) Does his outlook on the jalebis episode change after Class VIII ? Does he see that episode in a new light ?

(iii) Why are coins made to 'talk' in this story ? What purpose does it serve ?

Answer:

(i) Of course, the boy is quite intelligent. He is a brilliant student and was never beaten by his teachers. He gets a scholarship also. He gives suitable arguments to resist the temptation of eating jalebis. The way he prays and tries to convey his message to God also shows that he is an intelligent boy.

(ii) Yes, after Class VIII the boy gets mature. And his outlook on the jalebis episode changes considerably. He thinks that if Allah Miyan were to provide all for asking then man would not learn any skill. Then the man would have been living in nests like vultures and crows.

(iii) In the story the coins are made to 'talk'. It serves the purpose of alluring and provoking the child to spend them and eat jalebis. If the child would not have eaten jalebis after spending fees money, the story would not have been so interesting and inspiring.