

Chapter 8

Reach for the Top

On Killing a Tree - Thinking about the Poem

Q. 1 Can a “simple jab of the knife” kill a tree? Why not?

Ans.: No, a simple jab of the knife cannot kill a tree because a tree takes countless years to grow and rise out of the earth’s surface. Its roots go on curling inside the cave of the deep earth which are well protected by absorbing years of sunlight, air and water. Therefore, a jab of the knife won’t be enough as the tree would rise again to its former size.

Q.2 How has the tree grown to its full size? List the words suggestive of its life and activity.

Ans.: The tree has slowly grown out of the earth’s surface to its full size and sprouted leaves by ingesting years of sunlight, air and water

The following words are suggestive of its life and activity:

- grown slowly consuming the earth
- rising out of it
- feeding upon its crust
- absorbing years of sunlight, air and water
- out of its leprous hide sprouting leaves

Q.3 What is the meaning of “bleeding bark”? What makes it bleed?

Ans.; "Bleeding Bark" here refers to the cutting of the tree with heavy and unbearable blows i.e. the axe. The continuous and rough blows of an axe by the wood cutter make the tree bleed.

Q. 4 The poet says "No" in the beginning of the third stanza. What does he mean by this?

Ans.: The word 'No' tends to provide a shift in the argument offered where the poet makes an attempt to lay emphasis on the fact that merely cutting a tree would not kill it. Its roots are deep seated inside the earth's surface which protect the tree and slowly help it in coming back to its original size.

Q.5 What is the meaning of "anchoring earth" and "earth care"?

Ans.: 'Anchoring earth' refers to the roots of the tree that are deep seated inside the earth's surface and play the most pivotal role in the healthy growth and nourishment of the tree by supplying it with water and nutrients. "Earth care" refers to the surface of the ground on which the basic structure of the tree is laid. It performs the significant function of holding the tree and helping it withstand different conditions of natural calamities.

Q.6 What does he mean by "the strength of the tree exposed"?

Ans.: The real power of a tree lies deep inside the earth's surface i.e. in the roots. The poet, therefore, suggests for a complete snapping of these in order to kill a tree. 'the strength of the tree exposed' is used by the poet in this context to signify the situation where the roots of the tree are completely pulled out of the earth and left exposed.

Q.7 What finally kills the tree?

Ans.: The tree is finally killed after its roots have been completely plucked out of the earth's surface with the help of rough and unbearable blows of an axe. Thus, its strength is eventually exposed which culminates in the death of the tree. Furthermore, the withering, browning and hardening of the matter left in the sun and air completely dries up its roots as well as its foundations.

Part I - Thinking about the Text

Q.1 Answer these questions in one or two sentences each. (The paragraph numbers within brackets provide clues to the answers)

Why was the 'holy man' who gave Santosh's mother his blessings surprised? (Para 1)

Ans.: The 'holy man' was surprised as the unborn child's grandmother acquainted him of their desire of not wanting a son. Since he was under the impression that Santosh's mother wanted a son, the request of a blessing for a girl came to him as a surprise.

Q.1B Answer these questions in one or two sentences each. (The paragraph numbers within brackets provide clues to the answers)

Give an example to show that even as a young girl Santosh was not ready to accept anything unreasonable. (Para 2)

Ans.: Santosh as a young girl was not ready to accept anything unreasonable and from the very beginning, lived life on her own terms and conditions. The instance where in other girls wore traditional dresses while Santosh preferred shorts throws light on her free-spirited attitude towards the conventional conceptions of life.

Q.1 C Answer these questions in one or two sentences each. (The paragraph numbers within brackets provide clues to the answers)

Why was Santosh sent to the local school? (Para 3)

Ans.: Santosh's parents were affluent landowners who could afford to send their children to the best of the schools but sent Santosh to the local school in accordance with the prevailing custom in the family.

Q.1D Answer these questions in one or two sentences each. (The paragraph numbers within brackets provide clues to the answers)

When did she leave home for Delhi, and why? (Para 4)

Ans.: When Santosh turned sixteen, she was pressurized for marriage. However, she threatened her parents that she would never marry if she did not get a proper education. It was then that she left home and got herself enrolled in a school in Delhi.

Q.1E Answer these questions in one or two sentences each. (The paragraph numbers within brackets provide clues to the answers) Why did Santosh's parents agree to pay for her schooling in Delhi? What mental qualities of Santosh are brought into light by this incident? (Para 4)

Ans.: When Santosh's parents refused to pay for her schooling in Delhi, she informed them of her alternate plans of working part time in order to pay for her school fees. Then, eventually, her parents agreed to pay for her education. This incident portrays that Santosh was a mentally strong person who was not only determined towards working hard but also had the courage to challenge the norms of the society bravely.

Q. 2 A Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (or about 30 words). How did Santosh begin to climb mountains?

Answer :

Santosh often observed the villagers going up the Aravalli Hills and then vanishing after a while from her room in Kasturba Hostel. However, on investigating regarding the truth behind it, she found only a few mountaineers and asked if she could join them. They instantly agreed to this and even motivated her to take up Mountain Climbing. In this way, Santosh was acquainted with mountaineering and began to climb mountains.

Q. 2 B Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (or about 30 words).

What incidents during the Everest expedition show Santosh's concern for her team-mates?

Ans.: During her expedition to the Everest, Santosh showed immense concern for her team mates. Though, she was unluckily unsuccessful in saving one of the climbers who lay dying at the South Col., she managed to save another climber, Mohan Singh, who could have met with the same fate had she not shared her oxygen with him timely.

Q. 2 C Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (or about 30 words).

What shows her concern for the environment?

Ans.: Santosh was a fervent and courageous environmentalist. The instance where she collected and brought down 500 kilograms of garbage from the Himalayas reflect her deep concerns for the safety of the environment as well as the well-being of the people.

Q. 2 D Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (or about 30 words). How does she describe her feelings at the summit of the Everest?

Ans.: When Santosh was at the summit of the Mount Everest her joy knew no bounds. She claimed that her feeling was 'indescribable'. Unfurling the Indian Flag at the top was a spiritual moment for her and she felt proud as an Indian.

Q. 2 E Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (or about 30 words). Santosh Yadav got into the record books both times she scaled Mt. Everest. What were the reasons for this?

Ans.: Santosh Yadav got into the record books both times she conquered Mount Everest. She was successful in reaching at the top due to her climbing skills, immense physical fitness, and mental strength. Moreover, she was a very courageous and an iron-willed girl from the very beginning which significantly contributed towards her professional success as a mountaineer.

Q. 3 Complete the following statements:

- (1) From her room in Kasturba Hostel, Santosh used to-----
- (2) When she finished college, Santosh had to write a letter of apology to her father because----
- (3) During the Everest expedition her seniors in the team admired-----
- while-----endeared her to fellow climbers.

Ans.: (1) From her room in Kasturba Hostel, Santosh used to watch villagers going up the hill and suddenly vanish after a while.

(2) When she finished college, Santosh had to write a letter of apology to her father because she had got herself enrolled in a course at the Uttarkashi's Nehru Institute of Mountaineering without seeking his permission.

(3) During the Everest expedition her seniors in the team admired her climbing skills, mental strength and physical fitness while her concern for others and the immense desire to work together as a team endeared her to fellow climbers.

Q. 4 Pick out words from the text that mean the same as the following words or expressions. (Look in the paragraphs indicated.)

(1) Took to be true without proof (Para 1):

(2) Based on reason; sensible; reasonable (Para 2)

(3) The usual way of doing things (Para 3):

(4) A strong desire arising from within (Para 5):-

(5) The power to endure, without falling ill (Para 7):

Ans.: (1) Took to be true, without proof - assumed

(2) Based on reason, sensible, reasonable - rational

(3) The usual way of doing things - custom

(4) A strong desire arising from within - urge

(5) The power to endure, without falling ill – resistance

Part II - Thinking about the Text

Q.1 Working in small groups of 4-5 students, go back over the two passages on Santosh Yadav and Maria Sharapova and complete the table given below with relevant phrases or sentences.

Points of Comparison/Contrast	Santosh Yadav	Maria Sharapova
(1) Their humble beginning		
(2) Their parents' approach		
(3) Their will power and strong desire to succeed		
(4) Evidence of their mental toughness		
(5) Their patriotism.		

Ans.:

Points of Comparison/Contrast	Santosh Yadav	Maria Sharapova
(1) Their humble beginning	-Born in the small village of Joniyawas in Rewari district of Haryana	-Poised beyond her years -The Siberian born teenager
(2) Their parents' approach	-in line with the prevailing customs in the family	-she was packed off to train in the United States

	<p>At sixteen, most of the girls in her village used to get married. Santosh was also under pressure from her parents to do the same.</p>	<p>-That trip to Florida with her father Yuri launched her on the path to success and stardom.</p> <p>-But it also required a heart-wrenching two-year separation from her mother Yelena.</p>
<p>(3) Their will power and strong desire to succeed</p>	<p>-her urge for more education</p> <p>-she left home and got herself enrolled in a school in Delhi.</p> <p>- saved money and enrolled in a course at</p>	<p>- I became more quietly determined and mentally tough</p> <p>- unwavering desire to succeed and mentally tough</p> <p>- I work hard at what I do</p>
<p>(4) Evidence of their mental toughness</p>	<p>- she began living her life on her own terms from the start</p> <p>-she decided to fight the system in her own quiet way when the right moment arrived</p>	<p>- I learnt how to take care of myself</p> <p>- I never thought of quitting because I knew what I wanted</p>

	- mental strength impressed her seniors	- That toughness runs through Maria even today
(5) Their patriotism.	-It took some time for the enormity of the moment to sink in -Then I unfurled the Indian tricolor and held it aloft on the roof of the world. The feeling is indescribable. The Indian flag was flying on top of the world. It was truly a spiritual moment. I felt proud as an Indian.	-I'm Russian. It's true that the U.S. is a big part of my life. But I have Russian citizenship. My blood is totally Russian. I will play the Olympics for Russia if they want me.

Speaking

Q. 1 Imagine that you are Santosh Yadav, or Maria Sharapova. You have been invited to speak at an All India Girls' Athletic Meet, as Chief Guest. Prepare a short speech to motivate the girls to think and dream big and make an effort to fulfill their dreams, not allowing difficulties or defeat to discourage them. The following words and phrases may help you:

- self confident / confidence/ sure of yourself
- self assured / assurance / belief in yourself
- moral / boost morale / raise morale
- giving somebody a boost / fillip / lift
- demoralizing / unsure of yourself / insecure / lack confidence

Ans.: Respected Academicians and my dearest girls. You all know that the All India Girl's Athletic Meet is winding up today with great enthusiasm. All the participants have performed to show their capabilities in different games. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate both the participants as well as the spectators who have encouraged their morale. We all know sports are an indispensable part for our lives. They help us in keeping our mind and body healthy and at the same time inculcating the fellow feeling of teamwork and cooperation and most of all, the zeal to succeed.

My journey as a mountaineer has been a quite struggle. Right from facing the challenging norms of the society and receiving education in Delhi to the beginning of my life of expeditions, it has been a very meaningful and memorable journey. All these have inculcated a sense of confidence within me and played the most crucial role in making me what I am today.

So dear students never allow obstacles in your way to let you down but rather encounter them with full confidence. I hope all of you will try your best and show your capability and reach your destinations. Wishing you all the very best for your future endeavors.

Thank you!

*NOTE- Students can add more to this speech using phrases and words apart from those suggested in the question above.

Thinking about Language

Q. 1 Look at the following sentences. They each have two clauses, or two parts each with their own subject and verb or verb phrase. Often, one part (italicized) tells us when or why something happened.

(i) I reached the market when most of the shops had closed. (Tells us when I reached).

(ii) When Rahul Dravid walked back towards the pavilion, everyone stood up. (Tells us when everyone stood up.)

(iii) The telephone rang and Ganga picked it up. (Tells us what happened next.)

(iv) Gunjan has been with us ever since the school began. (Tells us for how long he has been with us.)

Identify the two parts in the sentences below by underlining the part that gives us the information in brackets, as shown above.

(1) Where other girls wore traditional Indian dresses, Santosh preferred shorts. (Contrasts her dress with that of others)

(2) She left home and got herself enrolled in a school in Delhi. (Tells us what happened after the first action.)

(3) She decided to fight the system when the right moment arrived. (Tells us when she was going to fight the system.)

(4) Little Maria had not yet celebrated her tenth birthday when she was packed off to train in the United States. (Tells us when Maria was sent to the US.)

Ans.:

- (1) Where other girls wore traditional Indian dresses, Santosh preferred shorts.
- (2) She left home and got herself enrolled in a school in Delhi.
- (3) She decided to fight the system when the right moment arrived.
- (4) Little Maria had not yet celebrated her tenth birthday when she was packed off to train in the United States.

Q. 1 Now re-write the pairs of sentences given below as one sentence.

- (1) Grandfather told me about the old days. All books were printed on paper then.
- (2) What do you do after you finish the book? Perhaps you just throw it away.
- (3) He gave the little girl an apple. He took the computer apart.
- (4) You have nothing. That makes you very determined.
- (5) I never thought of quitting. I knew what I wanted.

Ans.:

- (1) Grandfather told me about the old days when all books were printed on paper.
- (2) After you finish the book, perhaps you just throw it away.
- (3) He gave the little girl an apple and took the computer apart.
- (4) Having nothing then makes you very determined.
- (5) I never thought of quitting because I knew what I wanted.

Writing

Q.1 Working in pairs, go through the table below that gives you information about the top women tennis players since 1975. Write a short article for your school magazine comparing and contrasting the players in terms of their duration at the top. Mention some qualities that you think may be responsible for their brief or long stay at the top spot.

Top ranked women players:

The roll of honor of women who enjoyed life at the summit since everybody's favorite player, Chris Evert took her place in 1975.

Ans.:

Name	Ranked on	weeks as nu. 1
Maria Sharapova (Russia)	22 August, 2005	1
Lindsay Davenport (US)	October, 2004	82
Amelie Mauresmo (France)	13September 2004	5
Justine Henin-Hardenne (Belgium)	20 October2003	45
Kim Clijsters (Belgium)	11 August 2003	1
Serena Williams (US)	8 July 2002	57
Venus Williams (US)	25 February2002	11
Jennifer Capriati (US)	15 October 2001	17
Lindsay Davenport (US)	12 October 1998	82
Martina Hingis (Switzerland)	31 March, 1997	209
Arantxa Sanchez- Vicario (Spain)	6 February 1995	12
Monica Seles (US)	11 March 1991	178
Steffi Graf (Germany)	17 August 1987	377
Tracy Austin (US)	7 April 1980	22
Martina Navratilova(US)	10 July 1978	331
Chris Evert (US)	3 November 1975	362

Answer :

Women Tennis

Tennis is one of the most suitable sports for women and is also a popular worldwide spectator sport. It is a selective game and women have been successful setting massive records in this praiseworthy and interesting event. From 3 November 1975 to 22 August 2005, near about sixteen women from different countries have ranked high. Among them women from the United States, Germany and Switzerland are the toppers. Because of their endurance, tenacity of effort and a constant desire of playing tennis, they have been helpful in emerging victorious. Merit, being high in number or small is at the end of the day merit which has been achieved by each player through constantly driven mind and energy towards playing tennis. Therefore, Be it Maria Sharapova with the shortest record of a week or Steffi Graf with the highest record of 377 weeks stand equal in terms of their passion towards succeeding in reaching their goals.

NOTE- Students can include more information according to the length of the article they wish to keep.

Q.2 Which of these words would you use to describe Santosh Yadav? Find reasons in the text to support your choices, and write a couple of paragraphs describing Santosh's character.

contented determined resourceful
polite adventurous considerate
weak-willed fearful independent
pessimistic patient persevering

Ans.: Character of Santosh

The following words in the box can be used to describe Santosh Yadav, the conqueror of the Mount Everest:

contented determined patient
adventurous polite
resourceful considerate
independent persevering

Santosh Yadav is one of the most determined mountaineers of India who has been successful in setting a world record. It was due to her persevering attitude that she managed to reach the golden heights of victory in such a short span of time. Santosh, being an independent individual determined towards her ambitions in life, possessed the zeal to go beyond the conventions of the society when she left her home to continue her studies in Delhi.

The stay in Kasturba Hostel was inadvertently the turning point in Santosh's life as she discovered her mountaineering skill and the passion to pursue it. Her journey of expeditions that began at the Uttarkashi's Institute of Mountaineering throw light on her adventurous and positive attitude which helped her in reaching the highest peak i.e. The Mount Everest.

Not only did she possess immense potential and mental strength, Santosh Yadav was also a considerate person. During her expeditions, she often used to help and take care of her fellow-climbers which helped her in winning the hearts of her seniors as well.