

MOTHER INDIA

Subhash Chandra Bose

SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE (1897-1945), popularly called "Netaji", was a great nationalist leader of the first half of the 20th century. He led the revolutionary Indian National Army during World War II to liberate India. His first conscious step as a revolutionary was to resign from the civil services on the premise that the "best way to end a government is to withdraw from it." British insults to Indians in public places were offensive to him. On August 18, 1945, he was en route to the Soviet Union in a Japanese plane when it crashed in Taipeh. He is believed to have died in the crash. Netaji was religious and spent much time in meditation. This aspect of his life is best reflected in the letter 'Mother India' which wonderfully brings out the concern of a sensitive son.



A.1. Work in small groups and answer the following questions:

1. Do you celebrate Durga Puja? In what way do you celebrate it?
2. For what is Durga Puja celebrated?
3. What is the role of
4. Do you love your
5. Share any of your with your friends.



mother in our life?
mother?

experiences of Durga Puja

MOTHER INDIA

Cuttack, Saturday

Revered mother,

Today is the final day of the **Puja**; so you must now be in our country home - engrossed in the worship of the Goddess.

I expect the **Puja** this year will be performed with great **pomp** and ceremony. But, mother, is there any need of pomp and ceremony? It is enough if we **invoke** the One we seek to attain with all our heart and in all sincerity; what more is needed? When devotion and love take place of sandal wood and flowers, our worship becomes the most **sublime** thing in the world. Pomp and devotion are **incompatible**. This year I have a **pang** in my heart. It is a great sorrow - not an ordinary one...

I shall be **pining** away at this place on the **immersion day** but at heart I shall be with you all. There will be no happiness for me on such a sacred day. There is no help for it now - tomorrow evening we shall send you our *pranams* from here.

... India is God's beloved land. He has been born in this great land in every age in the form of the **Saviour** for the **enlightenment** of the people; to rid this earth of sin and to establish **righteousness** and truth in every Indian heart. He has come into being in many countries in human form but not so many times in any other country - that is why I say, India, our motherland, is God's beloved land. Look, Mother, in India, you may have anything you want - the hottest Summer, the severest Winter, the heaviest rain and again, the most heart-warming Autumn and spring - everything you want. In the Deccan, I see the *Godavari*; with her pure and sacred waters reaching up to its banks, **wending** its way eternally to sea, a holy river indeed!...

... I am reminded of another scene. The Ganges is on its course, carrying away all the filth of this world; the *yogis* have collected on its bank - some have half-closed eyes engrossed in their morning prayers, some have built images and are worshipping them with sweet-smelling flowers collected from the forest and with burning sandalwood and incense, *mantras* chanted by some of them are

being echoed and re-echoed through the atmosphere - some are purifying themselves with the holy water of the Ganges - some again are humming to themselves as they collect flowers for the *Puja*. Everything is so noble - and so pleasing to the eye as well as to the mind. But, alas! Where are those high-souled seers today? ... O Merciful God, take pity on us and save us!

B.1. Answer the following questions briefly :

1. To whom has Subhash written the letter and on what day?
2. Was Subhash writing this letter in happiness? If not, why?
3. "He has been born in this great land in every age" Who does 'He', here, stand for?
4. Why does Subhash call India God's beloved land?
5. Give the description of the Indian seasons as described by Subhash.
6. Discuss the significance of the river Ganga in our life.

Mother, when I sit down to write a letter I lose all sense of proportion. I hardly know what I am going to write and what I am able to write ...

... Mother, I wonder if Mother India in this age has one single selfless son - is our motherland really so unfortunate? Alas! What happened to our **hoary** past?...

You are a mother, but do you belong only to us? No, you are the mother of all Indians - if every Indian is a son to you, do not the sorrows of your sons make you cry out in **agony**? Can a mother be heartless? No, that can never be - because a mother can never be heartless. Then, how is it that in the face of such a miserable state of her children, mother remains unmoved! Mother, you have travelled in all parts of India - does not your heart bleed at the sight of the present **deplorable** state of Indians? We are ignorant and so we may be selfish but a mother can never be



selfish because a mother lives for her children. If that be so, how is it that mother is unmoved when her children are suffering! Then, is the mother also selfish?

...Faith and **bigotry** have become rampant - leading to so much sin and so much misery for the people... Mother, does not the sight of all this and the thought of all this move you too deeply and to tears? Do you not really feel this way? That can never be. A mother can never be heartless!

· Mother, please take a good look at the miserable condition of your children. Sin, all manner of suffering, hunger, lack of love, jealousy, selfishness... have made their existence a **veritable Hell**...

Alas! What have we come to!... Mother, when you think of such things, do you not become restless? Does not your heart cry out in pain?

Will the condition of our country continue to go from bad to worse - will not any son of Mother India in distress, in total disregard of his selfish interests, dedicate his whole life to the cause of the Mother?

Mother, how much longer shall we sleep? How much longer shall we go on playing with non-essentials? Shall we continue to turn a deaf ear to the **wailings** of our nation?...

How long can one sit with folded arms and watch this state of our country...? One cannot wait any more - one cannot sleep any more - we must now shake off our **stupor** and **lethargy** and plunge into action. But, alas! How many selfless sons of the Mother are prepared, in this selfish age, to give up completely their personal interests and take the **plunge** for the Mother? Mother, is this son of yours yet ready?

Yours ever affectionately
SUBHASH

B.2. Answer the following questions :

1. According to Subhash why is Mother India unfortunate?
2. What does Subhash mean by "hoary past"?
3. Subhash calls himself and the people of India selfish. Why?
4. Why can a mother never be selfish?
5. What happens when a mother sees her children in sorrow?
6. What are the causes of the misery of people?
7. What things have made the existence of Indian people "a veritable Hell"?

GLOSSARY AND NOTES

- Puja** (n): Durga puja
pomp (n): pageantry, show
invoke (v): pray to
sublime (adj): elevating, inspiring
Incompatible (adj): irreconcilable, mismatched
pining (v): suffering, yearning
immersion day (np): the day of submerging Devi's idol
Saviour (n): redeemer
enlightenment (n): illumination
hoary (adj): age-old, silvery
agony (n): woe, pain
deplorable (adj): awful, unpleasant
bigotry (n): prejudice, narrow-mindedness
rampant (adj): widespread
veritable (adj): actual, real
wailings (n): moans, cries
stupor (n): daze, trance
lethargy (n): sluggishness, weariness
plunge (n): immerse oneself, charge

C.1. LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. In the letter it appears that Subhash is arguing with his mother. He repeatedly asks her questions. What are these questions? Why does he repeatedly ask questions?
2. Write a short note on the piousness and sacredness of the river Ganga.
3. Change this letter into a diary entry.
4. The letter creates a picture of Subhash's personality - his love for his mother as well as for his motherland. Discuss Subhash as a son.

C. 2. GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the following in **groups** or **pairs**:

- a. Mother can never be selfish
- b. We cannot repay our mother's love

C.3.COMPOSITION

- a. Write a letter to your father, describing how you feel about Subhash. Do not exceed 100 words.
- b. Write a short paragraph in about 100 words discussing your love for nation.

D. WORD STUDY**D.1. Dictionary Use**

Ex. 1. Correct the spelling of the following words:

bailings	sik	atain	fullfillment	engroossed
sakred	cin	inboke	insense	ceremoney

Ex.2. Pick out the words which show Subhash's agony.

D.3. Word-meaning

Ex. 1. Match the words given in **Column A** with their meanings given in **Column B**:

Column A

sublime
lethargy
stupor
hoary
veritable
bigotry
incompatible
pomp
invoke

Column B

show
pray to
elevating
mismatched
age-old,
narrow-mindedness
actual, real
daze, trance
sluggishness, weariness

D. 4. Phrases

Ex.1. Read the lesson carefully and find out the sentences in which the following phrases have been used. Use them in sentences of your own:

be with you	to rid	into being	with all our heart
reminded of	give up	can never be	pleasing to the eyes
if that be so	to go	collected from	

E. ACTIVITY**Project work**

Ex. 1. Take help from your teacher / reference books and do a project work on the art of Letter writing. Discuss various types of letters, showing how the language and format change from one type of letter to another.

Ex.2. Write a short life sketch of Subhash Chandra Bose and discuss his role as a patriot. Take help from your teacher.

Ex.3. Make a list of the Indian words used in the letter.

Ex.4. How many interrogative sentences are there in this letter? Why does Subhash use them?