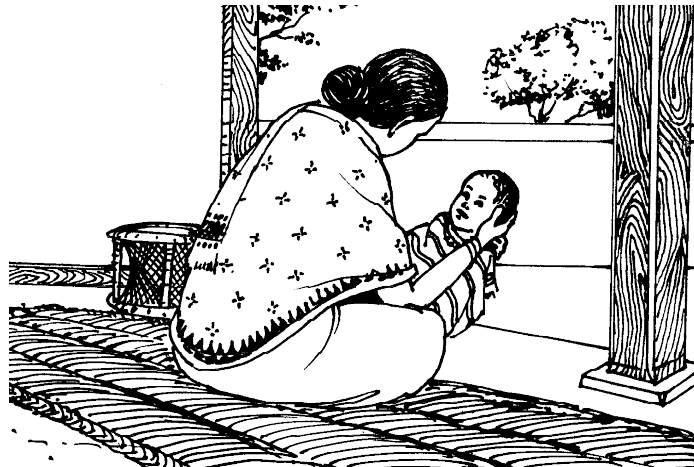


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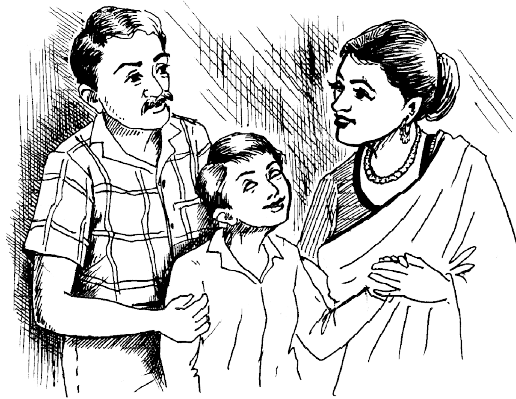
FACING THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE



I am a boy. I am twelve years old. I am the lone child of my parents. They call me Ma-ngal very lovingly. They say that the meaning of Ma-ngal is light. But I do not know what light is because I was born blind. My mother tells me that she was thrilled with joy on my birth but a few days later, all her happiness turned into despair. They took me to doctors and also to temples. I was examined by the doctors and the priests showered me with blessings. Yet my eyes refused to open and see the light of the world. I grew up without knowing what 'seeing' was. But I could sense my parents and the things around me. I could also smell them as I grew up.

As I started crawling on my hands and knees, my mother would never leave me alone. She even made my father do the household chores to be with me. She was worried that I might hurt myself. I still didn't know what seeing meant.

One day, as I started walking on my feet, I got myself blocked on the door and I fell down. I didn't know that it was closed. I cried out loudly with pain and my mother rushed to pick me up. She embraced me and cried a lot, "Oh, my child! How unfortunate you are! You cannot see anything. Why were you born blind? What an ill-fated mother I am!"



"Mummy," I asked, "what is 'seeing'?"

"My child," she replied, "Seeing is noticing something with your eyes. If you had eyes, you could see me, your father and all the things around you."

"Are all children born blind? Can't they see anything as I?" I enquired.

"No, my child," she cried, "All children except a few can see. They are not blind."

"Why am I born blind then?" I asked. "Shall I ever be able to see you, Mummy?"



"Oh ! What should I tell you?" She broke down. I could feel her tears wetting my face.

"Yes, my child," said my father. He had come in. "Don't worry. Today, medical science can do wonders. I will take you to the best eye-hospital of the world."

"Let's pray to God, my child," my mother held me tighter, " only God can help us."

When I was eight years old, my parents took me to a school for the blind for admission. My mother could not help breaking down before the principal, “Sir, what is the use of studying for a blind boy?”

“Please control yourself,” said the principal. “It is bad for both you and the child. Blindness is neither a curse of God nor a totally helpless thing. Your child is as good as any other child except for seeing things. He can make up even that by using his other senses. He can lead a perfectly normal life.”

“How is it possible for him to live a normal life?” my mother almost choked.

“It is possible,” assured the principal. “A blind man is no longer treated as a parasite today. He is self-dependant. He has got everything except eyes. Why should we make life miserable for a blind man?”

My parents kept silent. The principal continued, “Life is not for seeing alone. It is also for feeling, tasting, hearing, touching, smelling and even for imagining. The days are gone for a blind man to curse his birth. Have faith in your child, and he will work wonders in life.”

From that day, I could feel a change in the attitude of my parents towards my blindness. My mother grew strong and she would not cry before me now. My father helped and encouraged me in my studies.



Slowly and gradually I started learning the alphabet. I was given wooden alphabet. I was taught to feel the alphabet with my fingers and memorise them. I learnt to identify and name the different objects around me either by touching or smelling or tasting or hearing. Surprisingly my sense of smell was much sharper than that of my parents. Now, I could even smell fire which they usually could not feel.

One night, an unusual smell woke me up. It was the smell of cooking gas. I remembered having smelt it when my father changed the gas cylinders. Immediately I shouted and woke my parents up. They acted very quickly and took the leaking gas cylinder out of the house. They praised me that I had saved the house from burning. I felt very proud and victorious.

One morning, my father told me that a blind student had passed the class X examination in the first division. It inspired me to work harder and harder. He also narrated to me the life-story of a lady called Helen Keller who became not only blind but also deaf from infancy. But she succeeded in becoming a writer and lecturer. She took her drawbacks in her own stride and overcame the challenges of physical handicaps. I was told that she could learn what a person spoke by keeping her finger on the lips of the speaker.

Now, I am learning braille in the school. Braille is a type of writing where letters are represented by raised dots. People who are blind read the dots by feeling them with their fingers. Besides this, I also learn painting. I don't know anything about colours and shapes. But I wish to draw what I feel. For me, feeling is seeing. By sensing a thing, I build up its shape in my mind and I wish to present it to the world. I hope to prove myself worthy of my name.

New Words:

despair : lose hope

chores (chor) : daily task

curse : call or bring evil down on

parasite : plant or animal that lives on or in another

challenges : calls to a contest

braille : system of printing for the blind.

EXERCISES

1.(a) *Answer the following questions:*

- (i) What is the meaning of Ma-ngal?
- (ii) Why did the joy of the mother on the birth of Ma-ngal turn into despair?
- (iii) Why did Ma-ngal's mother refuse to leave him alone as he grew up?
- (iv) What is 'seeing'?
- (v) How old was Ma-ngal when he was admitted in the school for the blind?
- (vi) When did Ma-ngal experience a change in the attitude of his parents towards his blindness?
- (vii) What is braille?
- (viii) How did Ma-ngal save his house from burning?
- (ix) Who was Helen Keller?
- (x) How could Helen Keller read when a person spoke to her?

(b) *Study the sentence given below :*

He can't feel as he is atrophied.

Now, fill up the blanks :

- (i) He can't see as
- (ii) He can't speak as
- (iii) He can't walk as
- (iv) He can't hear as

2. *Read these sentences:*

The sun gives us **light**.

Cotton is **light**.

In the first sentence '**light**' is used as a naming word (noun). In the second sentence 'light' is used as a qualifying word (adjective).

Some words are given below. Now, fill up the blanks in the following sentences using these words.

<i>plane</i>	<i>flat</i>	<i>cold</i>	<i>grave</i>	<i>fine</i>
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- (i) The is taking off within ten minutes.
- (ii) The surface of the ground is.....
- (iii) His family lives in a at New Delhi.
- (iv) We have to put the refrigerator on a surface.
- (v) He has been suffering fromand cough for three days.
- (vi) Winter season is very.....
- (vii) The child is offering flowers on the of his grandmother.
- (viii) He gave a very speech in yesterday's meeting.
- (ix) The students have to pay a if they do not submit their forms on time.
- (x) How are you?
I am Thank you.

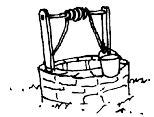
3. (a) ***Make new words by adding 'de' to these words.***

<i>Example : De + light = Delight</i>				
<i>throne</i>	<i>lay</i>	<i>fine</i>	<i>merit</i>	<i>compose</i>

Now, use those newly formed words in their correct forms in the sentences below:

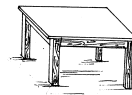
- (i) Shahjahan was by his own son.
- (ii) The bad weather willthe Imphal–New Delhi flight.
- (iii) The teacherthe difficult terms very well in the class.
- (iv) Before doing a work, we should first think of its merits and
- (v) The waste materials will very soon.

(b) **Combine what is indicated by the pictures with the words given against them and form new words:**



+ *wisher*

=



+ *lamp*

=



+ *man*

=



+ *knob*

=



+ *man*

=



+ *lace*

=



+ *boy*

=



+ *knife*

=



+ *ball*

=



+ *fish*

=

(b) **Now , fill in the blanks in the following sentences with newly formed words :**

- (i) Joy is a very famous player.
- (ii) The sea fish which resembles the shape of a star is
- (iii) The principal of the school will be the of the function.
- (iv) A is one who thinks for your success.
- (v) He uses the to sharpen the pencil.

- (vi) My father gave my mother a gold..... on her 35th birthday.
- (vii) It is good for the eyes to use an electric for reading.
- (viii) We will need to hire a for boating in Loktak lake.
- (ix) The looks after the cattle on the ranch.

4.(a) Look at the given sentences and study how some words are changed to mean “many” :

- (i) There is *an apple*.
There are *two apples*.
- (ii) There is only *a leaf* on the vine.
There are *two leaves* on the vine.
- (iii) Kolkata is *a big city*.
There are *many big cities* in India.
- (iv) Her mother bought *a dress* for her.
Her mother bought *many dresses* for her.

Now change the following sentences to give the meaning of “many” or “more than one”.

- (v) *This electric wire is* made of copper.

.....

- (vi) I see *a fly* there.

.....

(vii) Please give me a loaf of bread.

.....

(viii) My father brought a bunch of grapes.

.....

(b) Here are some words which mean *only one*.

Write the words which mean many in the blanks. Use a dictionary :

<i>One</i>	<i>Many</i>
(i) shelf	
(ii) thief	
(iii) knife	
(iv) life	
(v) hero	

(c) Read these sentences :

(i) Mani walks to school everyday.

(ii) Mani and Deben walk to school everyday.

(iii) A child goes to school.

(iv) The children go to school.

(v) Each child is given a separate seat.

In the above sentences the Verb in each case agrees with the number and Person of the Subject. Thus, Mani walks. Mani and Deben walk.

(d) Pick the correct Verb from the brackets and complete the following sentences :

(i) Romen home late every night. **(comes/come)**

(ii) Everyone of them told to get back early.
(was/were)

(iii) Which way the cow gone ? **(has/have)**

(iv) Each girl given a dress for the occasion.
(was/were)