

2

CHAPTER

The Judgment-seat of Vikramaditya

- *Sister Nivedita (Adapted)*
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◆ *About the Author*

Sister Nivedita was born on 28th October 1867. Her actual name was Margaret Elizabeth Nobel. She was an Irish lady and disciple of Swami Vivekanand. She opened a girls school in Baby Bazar area of Calcutta. She died on October 13, 1911 in Darjelling.



◆ *About the Lesson*

The name of king Vikramaditya is famous in Indian history. He was the king of Ujjain. After his death, his palaces were ruined. The people took their animals to graze at that place. Once a chair like thing appeared there. A boy of the village sat on it and started playing justice. The king ruling the kingdom at that time thought of taking out that chair. When he wanted to sit on that chair, the angels flew away with it. Read this interesting story to know the details.

We are all familiar with the name of Vikramaditya. His reign has been a landmark in the history of our country. The 'Vikram Samvat' owes its origin to him. Although his name is so famous, it is strange that we hardly know anything definite about his life. There is one thing certain about him, however, he loved justice and learning. He gave perfect justice to his people and gathered learned men about him in his court. It is said that he was the greatest judge in history.

Vikramaditya was never deceived. Nor did he ever punish the wrong man. The guilty trembled when they came before him for they knew that his eyes would look straight into their guilt. And those who came to him with difficult problems were always satisfied by the way he solved them. And so, in India after him whenever any judge pronounced his judgement with great skill, it was said of him, "Ah! he must have sat on the judgment-seat of Vikramaditya.

Has any one ever seen the judgment-seat of Vikramaditya? Perhaps not; because the seat does not exist any more. I am going to tell you how it disappeared.

After the death of Vikramaditya, the people of Ujjain, in due course of time, forgot him. His palace and his fortress were ruined. The heaped up ruins, having been covered with grass, dust and trees, were turned into a pasture for feeding the cattle. The village-people used to send their cows out to these pastures to graze. Early in the morning the cattle would go in the care of shepherd-boys and would not return till late in the evening. When it was time to return, a shepherd-boy would call out from the edge of the pasture and all the cattle along with their cow herds would gather round him and together they would turn homewards.

Such was the life of the shepherd-boys in the villages about Ujjain. There were many of them and in the long days on the pastures, they had plenty of time for fun. One day they found a playground. And, how delightful it was! The ground under the trees was rough and uneven. Here and there, the ends of a great stone peeped out, and in the middle, there was green mound, which looked very much like a judge's seat.

At last one of the boys thought so and seated himself on it. "I say, boys," he cried, "I'll be the judge and you can bring all your cases before me, and we will have trials." Then he straightened his face and became very grave to act the part of judge.

Others saw the fun at once and whispering among themselves, quickly picked up some quarrel and appeared before him. Each group stated their case, one saying that a certain field was theirs, another saying that it was not and so on. They all wanted him to settle the dispute.

But now, all of a sudden, a strange thing made itself felt. The boy who appeared so common before he sat down on the mound, looked so different now. He had become grave and serious and his tone and manner were so strange and impressive that the rest of the boys were a little frightened. Still they thought it was fun, and once again they put up a fresh case before him and once more he gave his judgment. And this went on for hours and hours together, he sitting on the judge's seat, listening to complaints and pronouncing sentences with the same gravity till it was time to return. And then he jumped down from his place and was just like any other cowherd.

From then onwards, so famous did this cowherd become that all the complicated disputes were put before him. And always the same thing happened. The spirit of knowledge and justice would come to him and he would show them the truth. But when he came down from his seat, he would be no different from the other boys.

Gradually, this news spread through the countryside. Grown-up men and women from all the villages would bring their disputes in the court of the cowherd boy and always they received a judgment that both sides understood and so went away satisfied.

Now the king, who lived far away from Ujjain, heard this story, "Well," he said, "that boy must have definitely sat on the judgment-seat of Vikramaditya." The king's guess was correct, as the ruins about the meadows were once Vikramaditya's palace. "If just

sitting on the mound brings wisdom and justice to the shepherd-boy," he thought, "let us dig deep and find the judgment-seat. I, too, shall sit on it and hear all the cases. Then the spirit of Vikramaditya will descend upon me as well and I shall always be a just king."

So, with spades and shovels, the grassy knoll where the boys played was overturned. The boy who had been the self-made judge was sorrowful; he felt that something very dear to him was being taken away.

At last the labourers came on something. They uncovered it and found a slab of black marble, supported on the hands and wings of twenty five stone-angels. Surely it was the judgment-seat of Vikramaditya.

With great rejoicing, it was brought to the city and placed in the hall of justice. The king ordered his people to observe three day's prayer fasting and announced that on the fourth day he would ascend the throne publicly.

At last the great morning came and crowds assembled to see the king take his seat. Walking through the long hall, came the judges and priests of the kingdom, followed by the king, then as they reached the seat of judgment, they parted into two rows, the king walked up in the middle, bowed his head in reverence and went straight to marble slab. When the king was about to sit on the throne, one of the angels began to speak. "Stop", it said, "Do you think that you are worthy to sit on the judgment-seat of Vikramaditya? Have you never desired to rule over kingdoms that were not your own?" For a while the king could not think of an answer. He knew his life was unjust. After a long silence, he spoke. "No", he said, "I am not worthy". "Go then and fast and pray for three days," said the angel, "so that you may purify yourself and be worthy to sit on the throne." With these words it spread its wings and flew away.

The king prepared himself—with prayer and with fasting to come again and sit on the judgment-seat of Vikramaditya. But this time again the same thing happened. Another stoneangel asked him if he had never desired to possess the riches of others. The king admitted that he had done so and, therefore, he was not worthy to sit on the judgment-seat.

In this way, whenever the king tried to occupy the throne, he was questioned by an angel and he had to withdraw. This went on till only one angel was left supporting the marble-slab. The king went near the throne with great confidence, for he felt sure of being allowed to take his place that day.

But as he came near the seat, the last angel spoke, "Are you, then, perfectly pure in heart, O king? Is your heart as pure as that of little child? If so, you are indeed worthy to sit on his seat."

"No" said the king very slowly, "No, I am not worthy." And at these words the angel flew up into the sky, bearing the slab upon his head.

This was how the judgment-seat of Vikramaditya disappeared from the earth forever.

|| Glossary ||

Familiar	परिचित	known
Reign	शासन	rule
Exist	विद्यमान	present
Disappeared	गायब हो गया	vanished
Fortress	छोटा किला	small fort
Learned men	विद्वान्	scholars
Ruins	नष्ट होना	destroys
Guilty	अपराधी	Involved in guilt
Pasture	चरागाह	grassland
Edge	किनारा	end
Delightful	प्रसन्न	glad
Uneven	ऊबड़-खाबड़	rough
Peeped out	बाहर की ओर निकलना	gazed out
Mound	टीला	raised ground
Trails	मुकदमें	cases
Grave	गम्भीर	serious
Whispering	फुसफुसाते हुए	talking in low tones
Tone	लहजा	way of talking
Dispute	झगड़ा	quarrel
Settle	निर्णय करना	decide
Impressive	प्रभावपूर्ण	influential
gravity	गम्भीरता	seriousness
Complicated	जटिल	difficult
Pronounced	घोषणा की	declared
All of sudden	अचानक	suddenly
Spirit	आत्मा	soul
Descend	उतरना	come down
Definitely	निश्चित रूप से	certainly
Meadow	चरागाह	grassland
Knol	टीला	mound
Fasting	उपवास	keeping hungry
Assembled	एकत्र हुए	collected
Reverence	सम्मान	great respect
Parted	अलग हुए	separated

Rows	पंक्तियाँ	lines
Slab	पट्टिया	thin flate rectangular piece of stone
Purify	शुद्ध करना	to make pure
Riches	सम्पत्ति	wealth
Confidence	विश्वास	faith
Allow	आज्ञा देना	permit
Perfectly	पूर्णतया	completely
Prepared	तैयार	ready
Possess	रखना	to have
Indeed	सचमुच	infact

|| Exercise ||

(A) Short Answer Type Questions:

Answer the following questions in not more than 25 words each :

1. Do we know anything definite about Vikramaditya?
Or What do we know definitely about king Vikramaditya?
2. Why did the guilty tremble when they came before Vikramaditya?
3. What happened to the palace and the fortress of Vikramaditya after his death?
4. What did the village-boys find in the pastures?
5. What changes did the village boys find in the boy who sat on the green mound?
6. What did the king of Ujjain decide to do?
7. What did the first angel ask the king when he was about to sit on the judgment-seat?
8. What did the last angel say to the king? What was the King's reply?
9. Why do we call Vikramaditya, the greatest judge in the history?
Or Why is Vikramaditya said to be the greatest judge in history?
Or Why do we call Vikramaditya the greatest Judge in the history of India ?
10. Why was Vikramaditya praised by one and all?
11. What guess did the king of Ujjain make about the boy?
12. How and why did the judgement-seat of Vikramaditya disappear from the earth forever?
13. Who was Vikramaditya? Where did he reign?
14. Why did the king of Ujjain want to sit on the judgement-seat of Vikramaditya?
15. What is King Vikramaditya famous for?
Or What makes Vikramaditya the greatest Judge in the history?

16. What special qualities did Vikramaditya Possess?
17. Where did King Vikramaditya reign! What did he decide to do?

(B) Select the most suitable alternative to complete each of the following statements:

1. **King Vikramaditya is famous for his :**
(a) justice and learning (b) injustice and learning
(c) honesty (d) affection
2. **The Vikram Samvat owes its origin to :**
(a) Samudra Gupta (b) Ashok
(c) Vikramaditya (d) Chandra Gupta Maurya
3. **In due course of time, the palace and fortress of Vikramaditya were :**
(a) ruined (b) decorated
(c) rebuilt (d) lost
4. **The judgment-seat of Vikramaditya was made of :**
(a) iron (b) silver
(c) gold (d) stone
5. **The judgment-seat of Vikramaditya was found in :**
(a) Ujjain (b) Agra
(c) Delhi (d) Lucknow
6. **The king of Ujjain could not sit on the judgment-seat of Vikramaditya because :**
(a) he did not keep fast
(b) he could not pray
(c) his people did not like him
(d) his heart was not pure as that of a little child
7. **The angel asked the king to go and fast and pray for three days so that :**
(a) no one might occupy the Judgment-seat
(b) the king might purify himself and be worthy to sit on the throne
(c) somebody else could try to ascend the throne
(d) the throne might disappear from the world
8. **The guilty trembled before Vikramaditya because :**
(a) he was very cruel
(b) he was unjust

- (c) he was intelligent enough to discover their guilt
(d) he looked very fearful
9. **The angels took the judgment-seat to :**
(a) the sky (b) another kingdom (c) the sea
10. **The shepherd boy sitting on the mound looked changed because he :**
(a) listened to the complaints
(b) had to decide the disputes
(c) got the spirit of knowledge and justice
(d) was an ordinary boy
11. **When the mound was dug deep, the king found.....**
(a) seven jars of gold coins
(b) skeletons of dead soldiers
(c) rare musical instruments
(d) the judgement-seat Vikramaditya supported 25 stone angels.
12. **Vikramaditya was never deceived because**
(a) he was the king
(b) he would see straight into their guilt
(c) he was a magician
13. **At last the labourers found a slab of black marble supported on the hands and wings of**
(a) thirty five stone-angels
(b) twenty five stone-angels
(c) twenty one stone-angels
(d) twenty seven stone-angels

(C) Say whether each of the following statements is 'true' or 'false':

1. The Vikram Samvat owes its origin to Vikramaditya.
2. The King Vikramaditya never failed in getting at the Culprit.
3. Vikramaditya did not love justice and learning.
4. No one knows the name of Vikramaditya in India.
5. After observing three days prayer and fasting, the king ascended the throne.
6. The first angel said to the king "Are you worthy to sit on the throne?"
7. The judgment-seat of Vikramaditya did not disappear from the earth for ever.
8. Vikramaditya loved justice and learning.

9. Vikramaditya was never deceived.
10. Vikramaditya always punished innocent.
11. The king of Ujjain, at last, sat on the throne of Vikramaditya.
12. Vikramaditya is famous for his justice.
13. The judgment-seat of Vikramaditya was lying buried in the pasture.
14. The beautiful palace of Vikramaditya stands even today in Ujjain.
15. Vikramaditya was always deceived.
16. The Judgement seat of Vikramaditya never disappeared from the earth.
17. It is said that Vikramaditya was not greatest Judge in history.
18. Vikramaditya loved experiments.
19. When the boy jumped down from his seat, he was quite different from other boys.
20. Vikramaditya loved injustice.
21. King Vikramaditya is remembered for his love of justice and learning.
22. The judgement-seat of Vikramaditya was supported on the hands and wings of twenty-five stone angels.
23. The judgement seat of Vikramaditya was a slab of white marble.
24. King Vikramaditya did justice.
25. Vikramaditya was the king of Ujjain.
26. The beautiful palace of Vikramaditya stood in Delhi.
27. When the shepherd boy sat on the moved the spirit of knowledge and justice would come to him.
28. Vikramaditya never punished the guilty.

(D) Complete the spellings of the following words :

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| (i) Famil— —r | (ii) r— —gn | (iii) g— —lty |
| (iv) str— —ght | (v) m— —dow | |

↳ Project Work

- (a) There are so many stories on the life of Vikramaditya. Find out any other story based on his life from internet, library or any other source. Write a **short report** on your finding.
- (b) Make a **model** of The Judgment-Seat of Vikramaditya which is popular in India.
- (c) Make a **list** of qualities of Vikramaditya and paste his picture on it.