

# Puspa Shrestha

Best Quality Resource Site for Class 11 And 12 Students  
(Based on Updated Curriculum 2077)

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## Reading

**“I am Sorry”- The Hardest Three Words to Say*****Before you read***

- Who is Desmond Tutu? What do you know about him?
- What do you understand by apartheid policy?
- Is forgiveness possible in all cases? If not, what kinds of cases cannot be forgiven?



**Read the following text to know how black people suffered from apartheid policy in South Africa and do the given tasks.**

There were so many nights when I, as a young boy, had to watch helplessly as my father verbally and physically abused my mother. I can still recall the smell of alcohol, see the fear in my mother’s eyes and feel the hopeless despair that comes when we see people we love hurting each other in incomprehensible ways. I would not wish that experience on anyone, especially not a child.

If I dwell on those memories, I can feel myself wanting to hurt my father back, in the same ways he hurt my mother, and in ways of which I was incapable as a small boy. I see my mother’s face and I see this gentle human being whom I loved so very much and who did nothing to deserve the pain inflicted on her.

When I recall this story, I realise how difficult the process of forgiving truly is. Intellectually, I know my father caused pain because he himself was in pain. Spiritually, I know my faith tells me my father deserves to be forgiven as God forgives us all. But it is still difficult. The traumas we have witnessed or experienced live on in our memories. Even years later they can cause us fresh pain each time we recall them.

If I traded lives with my father, if I had experienced the stresses and pressures my father faced, if I had to bear the burdens he bore, would I have behaved as he did? I do

not know. I hope I would have been different, but I do not know.

My father has long since died, but if I could speak to him today, I would want to tell him that I had forgiven him. What would I say to him? I would begin by thanking him for all the wonderful things he did for me as my father, but then I would tell him that there was this one thing that hurt me very much. I would tell him how what he did to my mother affected me, how it pained me.



Perhaps he would hear me out; perhaps he would not. But still I would forgive him.

Why would I do such a thing? I know it is the only way to heal the pain in my boyhood heart. Forgiveness is not dependent on the actions of others. Yes, it is certainly easier to offer forgiveness when the perpetrator expresses remorse and offers some sort of reparation or restitution. Then, you can feel as if you have been paid back in some way. You can say: “I am willing to forgive you for stealing my pen, and after you give me my pen back, I shall forgive you.” This is the most familiar pattern of forgiveness. We don’t forgive to help the other person. We don’t forgive for others. We forgive for ourselves. Forgiveness, in other words, is the best form of self-interest.

Forgiveness takes practice, honesty, open-mindedness and a willingness (even if it is a weary willingness) to try. It isn’t easy. Perhaps you have already tried to forgive someone and just couldn’t do it. Perhaps you have forgiven and the person did not show remorse or change his or her behaviour or own up to his or her offences – and you find yourself unforgiving all over again. It is perfectly normal to want to hurt back when you have been hurt. But hurting back rarely satisfies. We think it will, but it doesn’t. If I slap you after you slap me, it does not lessen the sting I feel on my own face, nor does it diminish my sadness over the fact that you have struck me. Retaliation gives, at best, only momentary respite from our pain. The only way to experience healing and peace is to forgive. Until we can forgive, we remain locked in our pain and locked out of the possibility of experiencing healing and freedom, locked out of the possibility of being at peace.

As a father myself, raising children has sometimes felt like training for a forgiveness marathon. Like other parents, my wife, Leah, and I could create a whole catalogue of the failures and irritations our children have served up. As infants, their loud squalls disturbed our slumber. Even as one or the other of us stumbled out of

bed, the irritation at being woken and the thoughts of the fatigue that would lie like a pall over the coming day gave way to the simple acknowledgment that this was a baby. This is what babies do. The loving parent slides easily into the place of acceptance, even gratitude, for the helpless bundle of tears. Toddler tantrums might provoke an answering anger in a mother or father, but it will be quickly replaced by the understanding that a little person does not yet have the language to express the flood of feelings contained in his or her body. Acceptance comes.

As our own children grew, they found new (and remarkably creative) ways of testing our patience, our resolve and our rules and limits. We learned time and again to turn their transgressions into teaching moments. But mostly we learned to forgive them over and over again, and fold them back into our embrace. We know our children are so much more than the sum of everything they have done wrong. Their stories are more than rehearsals of their repeated need for forgiveness. We know that even the things they did wrong were opportunities for us to teach them to be citizens of the world. We have been able to forgive them because we have known their humanity. We have seen the good in them.

In the 1960s, South Africa was in the fierce grip of apartheid. When the Bantu Education system of inferior education for black children was instituted by the government, Leah and I left the teaching profession in protest. We vowed we would do all in our power to ensure our children were never subjected to the brain-washing that passed for education in South Africa. Instead, we enrolled our children in schools in neighbouring Swaziland. Six times each year we made the 3,000-mile drive from Alice in the Eastern Cape to my parents' home in Krugersdorp. After spending the night with them, we would drive five hours to Swaziland, drop off or pick up the children at their schools and drive back to Krugersdorp to rest before the long drive home. There were no hotels or inns that would accommodate black guests at any price.

During one of those trips, my father said he wanted to talk. I was exhausted. We were halfway home and had driven 10 hours to drop the children at school. Sleep beckoned. We still had another 15-hour drive back to our home in Alice. Driving through the Karoo – that vast expanse of semi-desert in the middle of South Africa – was always trying. I told my father I was tired and had a headache. «We'll talk tomorrow, in the morning,» I said. We headed to Leah's mother's home half an hour away. The next morning, my niece came to wake us with the news: my father was dead.

I was grief-stricken. I loved my father very much and while his temper pained me greatly, there was so much about him that was loving, wise and witty. And then, there was the guilt. With his sudden death I would never be able to hear what he had wanted to say. Was there some great stone on his heart that he had wanted to remove? Might

he have wanted to apologise for the abuse he had inflicted on my mother when I was a boy? I will never know. It has taken me many, many years to forgive myself for my insensitivity, for not honouring my father one last time with the few moments he wanted to share with me. Honestly, the guilt still stings.

When I reflect back across the years to his drunken tirades, I realise now that it was not just with him that I was angry. I was angry with myself. Cowering in fear as a boy, I had not been able to stand up to my father or protect my mother. So many years later, I realise that I not only have to forgive my father, I have to forgive myself.

A human life is a great mixture of goodness, beauty, cruelty, heartbreak, indifference, love and so much more. All of us share the core qualities of our human nature and so sometimes we are generous and sometimes selfish. Sometimes we are thoughtful and other times thoughtless; sometimes we are kind and sometimes cruel. This is not a belief. This is a fact.

No one is born a liar or a rapist or a terrorist. No one is born full of hatred. No one is born full of violence. No one is born in any less glory or goodness than you or me. But on any given day, in any given situation, in any painful life experience, this glory and goodness can be forgotten, obscured or lost. We can easily be hurt and broken, and it is good to remember that we can just as easily be the ones who have done the hurting and the breaking.

The simple truth is, we all make mistakes, and we all need forgiveness. There is no magic wand we can wave to go back in time and change what has happened or undo the harm that has been done, but we can do everything in our power to set right what has been made wrong. We can endeavour to make sure the harm never happens again.

There are times when all of us have been thoughtless, selfish or cruel. But no act is unforgivable; no person is beyond redemption. Yet, it is not easy to admit one's wrongdoing and ask for forgiveness. "I am sorry" are perhaps the three hardest words to say. We can come up with all manner of justifications to excuse what we have done. When we are willing to let down our defences and look honestly at our actions, we find there is a great freedom in asking for forgiveness and great strength in admitting the wrong. It is how we free ourselves from our past errors. It is how we are able to move forward into our future, unfettered by the mistakes we have made.

- Desmond Tutu

### **Working with words**

**A. Pair the following words as opposites.**

despair, kind, fresh, strange, normal, fierce, hope, selfish, corrupt, stale, familiar, eccentric, gentle, generous, cruel, honest

**B. By adding a suitable suffix to each word in the table, form another word as in the examples below.**

**Examples:** *willing - willingness; heart - hearty; strength - strengthen*

into noun	into adjective	into verb
open-minded	pain	less
accommodate	differ	sure
rehearse	behave	real
transgress	remark	glory
angry	indifference	power
mix	thought	prison

**C. Pronounce the following words with the help of a dictionary.**

- viewer, sure, cure, fluent, poor, affluence, flower, curious, tourist, allowance, usual, intellectual, visual, mature, endure
- join, coin, boy, voice, noise, soil, hoist, moist, avoid, toy, toilet, annoy, enjoy, poison

## Comprehension

**A. Write True or False after each statement. Give reason for your answer.**

- The author says his father was an ideal person in the family.
- The author wanted to forgive his father but he did not get an opportunity.
- It's worth forgiving a person if he/she realizes his/her mistakes.
- South Africa had dual type of education system in the 1960s.
- The author lived in a joint family.
- The author regretted for not getting a chance to talk to his father.
- According to the author, all our glories and splendours are short-lived.

**B. Answer the following questions.**

- How does the author remember his family environment when he was a small boy?
- Why does the author blame system more than his father?
- How does the principle of forgiveness work?
- How does the author interpret the noises, squalls and tantrums of his children?
- Why did the author decide to educate his children in Swaziland?
- How does the author define human life?
- According to the author, is it heredity or environment that shapes a man's

character? Explain.

- h. Why is forgiveness important in our life?

### Critical thinking

- a. Desmond Tutu once said, “Forgiving is not forgetting; it’s actually remembering—remembering and not using your right to hit back. It’s a second chance for a new beginning.” Does this quotation apply to this text? Analyze.
- b. The author interprets ‘I am sorry’ as three hardest words to say. How does it apply to your life?

### Writing

The author talks about dual education system based on race in South Africa in the second half of the twentieth century. We also have private schools and public schools in Nepal. What should be done to make education equal to all citizens of Nepal? Write a couple of paragraphs expressing your views.

### Grammar

#### Connectives

**A. Join the following pairs of sentences using *when* and *while*.**

- a. Bibha Kumari was doing her homework. The doorbell rang.
- b. I heard the telephone ring. I picked it up.
- c. Dil Maya found a thousand rupee note. She was washing her pants.
- d. Tenjing gave his measurements to the dressmaker. He was visiting the market yesterday.
- e. I was at the butcher’s shop. I met Harikala.
- f. The sales agent was dealing with the customer. A thief stole the jewels.
- g. My small brother was sleeping. I played chess with my father.
- h. The old lady fell down. She was climbing up the stairs.
- i. The leader was giving a speech loudly. He lost his voice.
- j. Kanchan broke her backbone. She was lifting up the load.

**B. Study the following sentences.**

- a. I know my father caused pain **because** he himself was in pain.
- b. All of us share the core qualities of our human nature and **so** sometimes we are generous and sometimes selfish.
- c. My father has long since died, **but** if I could speak to him today, I would want to tell him that I had forgiven him.

Now, fill in the blanks with one of the connectives from the box.

so	because	as	since	due to	owing to	because of
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- a. We didn't go for a morning walk today .....it was raining
- b. I wanted to go home early ..... I was not feeling well.
- c. My brother stayed at home.....his illness.
- d. I was late in the class .....traffic jam.
- e. He didn't like dogs.....he was not happy when his wife brought a puppy home.
- f. He was not included in the team .....his knee injury.
- g. ....I was tired, I went to bed early.
- h. He was very unhappy .....he lost one million rupees in share market.
- i. We cancelled our trip to Rara Lake ..... the bad weather.
- j. These two lines intersect with each other. ....they are not parallel lines.

## Listening

A. Answer the following questions.

- a. Who is Nelson Mandela?
- b. What is Nelson Mandela remembered for in the world?



B. Listen to the audio and write whether the following statements are *True* or *False*.

- a. Nelson Mandela spent nearly three decades in prison.
- b. He came out of the prison with a strong desire of revenge towards his oppressors.
- c. The interviewer is impressed with Mandela's attitude.
- d. Mandela wanted to show himself as a great man in the world.
- e. The interviewer says Mandela is a celebrity.

- f. Mandela says only an honest man can change the society and the world.
- g. According to Mandela, humility is not an essential quality for a leader.

**C. What do you know more about Nelson Mandela? Talk to your friends.**

## Speaking

### Criticising

**A. Observe how Anil's room looks.**

- The room is messy.
- Things are scattered on the floor.
- The table is filthy.
- He hangs the washing on a line in the room.
- He doesn't make his bed.
- He doesn't sweep the floor.
- He rarely dusts the furniture.
- He is indolent.



**Now, discuss in groups. What should (or shouldn't) he do?**

**B. Work in groups. Have similar conversations about the following people as in the example.**

**Example:** Anu always fails her exams.

*Sanket:* Anu always fails her exams.

*Muskan:* It's her own fault. She should have been regular to the class.

*Ramila:* She should have taken tuition classes.

*Ankit:* And, she shouldn't have watched TV a lot.

- a. Kailash was bitten by a dog.
- b. Gaurav was short of sleep.
- c. Sabina hit the lamppost while she was driving.
- d. Kriti couldn't submit her project on time.
- e. Chhiring got COVID - 19.
- f. Lunibha was scolded by her parents.
- g. Abdul got a huge loss in his business.

## Project work

There may be different kinds of discrimination in terms of race, gender, age, religion, disability, region, etc. in your community. Write a paragraph remembering an incident in which you experienced/witnessed discrimination and raised your voice against it. Share it to the class.