

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 1: A LETTER TO GOD



A LETTER TO GOD

~Summary~

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Lencho's Hope of Good Harvest

Lencho was a farmer who lived on the crest (peak) of a low hill with his family. His was the only house in the entire valley. His field was full of ripe corn and easily visible from the house. He was eagerly waiting for a good rain to have a good harvest so he could earn money for his family.

Turning of Lencho's Hope into Despair

As Lencho hoped, it started raining at the time of supper (dinner) which gave Lencho a ray of hope. He was extremely delighted to see that. He compared the raindrops with silver coins which shows his joy. But soon his joy turned into despair as the rain changed into hailstones which ruined the crops. The field had been covered with snow like a layer of white salt. Lencho was worried for his family.

Lencho's Firm Belief in God

Though Lencho was a poor farmer and had lost all his crops, he had firm faith in God. He found in God his last hope and decided to write a letter to God for help. He asked God to send him a hundred pesos so that he could sow his field again and support his family until the new crops were harvested. He also wrote that if God didn't help him, his family would die of hunger.

He told the teacher that he should not spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children. The teacher accepted his mistake.

The Postmaster's Reaction to Lencho's Letter

After reading Lencho's letter to God, the postmaster laughed but soon realised that Lencho had firm faith in God and his belief should not be shaken. So, he decided to help Lencho with the help of his post office employees. He collected seventy pesos and handed the envelope to Lencho himself in which he also contributed a part of his salary.

Lencho Addresses the Post Office Employees 'A Bunch of Crooks'

Lencho became angry when he saw seventy pesos in the envelope as he had demanded a hundred pesos. He did not believe that God could do such a mistake and send him less money. So, he decided to write a letter again for the rest of money. In this letter, he requested God not to send the rest of the money through the money order because he thought that the post office employees were a 'bunch of crooks' who might have stolen his money.

Conclusion of A letter to God

In the chapter – A Letter to God, we learnt that faith in God has the power to move mountains and satisfy our needs. However, it should also be noted that humanity also prevails in the midst of one's faith in the Almighty. This story beautifully sketches Lencho's deep faith in God and how the post office employees helped him anonymously by contributing money from their pockets to help the poor man in crisis.

NCERT SOLUTION

Questions (Page No. 5-7)

(ORAL COMPREHENSION CHECK)

Question. 1 What did Lencho hope for?

Answer: Lencho hoped for rains as the only thing that his field of ripe corn needed was a shower.

Question. 2 Why did Lencho say the raindrops were like 'new coins'?

Answer: Lencho's crops were ready for harvest. All it needed was a good downpour before harvesting. These fully grown crops could be sold in the market for good money. That is why he compared the raindrops to 'new coins'. The big drops were as good as receiving ten cent pieces and the little ones five.

Question. 3 How did the rain change? What happened to Lencho's fields?

Answer: The rain was pouring down. But suddenly, a strong wind began to blow and very large hailstones began to fall along with the rain. The hail rained on the valley for an hour, because of which Lencho's fields were destroyed. There was not a single leaf left on the trees and the flowers were gone from the plants. The corn was completely destroyed.

Question. 4 What were Lencho's feelings when the hail stopped?

Answer: When the hail stopped, Lencho's soul was filled with sadness. He looked around at his fields and said that even a plague of locusts would have left more than what was left after the hailstorm. He said that they would have no corn that year and they would go hungry. He was full of sorrow.

Question. 5 Who or what did Lencho have faith in? What did he do?

Answer: Lencho had faith in God. He had been instructed that God's eyes see everything, even what is deep in one's conscience. Therefore, he wrote a letter to God expressing his need for a hundred pesos so that he could sow his field again and live until the crop grew again.

Question. 6 Who read the letter?

Answer: When the postman saw that the letter was addressed to God, he laughed and took the letter to the postmaster, who then read it.

Question. 7 What did the postmaster do then?

Answer: In order to keep the writer's faith in God alive, the postmaster decided to answer the letter. When he read that Lencho needed hundred pesos, he asked for money from his employees. He himself gave a part of his salary. He could not gather the entire amount, but

managed to send Lencho a little more than half the amount. He put the money in an envelope addressed to Lencho and signed it 'God'.

Question. 8 Was Lencho surprised to find a letter for him with money in it?

Answer: No, Lencho was not at all surprised to see the letter from God with money inside it. His confidence and faith in God was such that he had expected that reply from God.

Question. 9 What made him angry?

Answer: Lencho got angry when he counted the money. There were only seventy pesos in the envelope. He was confident that God could neither make a mistake nor deny him what he had requested. Therefore, he concluded that the post office employees must have taken the remaining thirty pesos.

Questions (Page No. 7-8)

(THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT)

Question. 1 Who does Lencho have complete faith in? Which sentences in the story tell you this?

Answer: Lencho had complete faith in God. The sentences in the story that show this are as follows:

- But in the hearts of all who lived in that solitary house in the middle of the valley, there was a single hope: help from God.
- All through the night, Lencho thought only of his one hope: the help of God, whose eyes, as he had been instructed, see everything, even what is deep in one's conscience.
- "God," he wrote, "if you don't help me, my family and I will go hungry this year."
- He wrote 'To God' on the envelope, put the letter inside and, still troubled, and went to town.
- God could not have made a mistake, nor could he have denied Lencho what he had requested.
- It said: "God: of the money that I asked for, only seventy pesos reached me. Send me the rest, since I need it very much."

Question. 2 Why does the postmaster send money to Lencho? Why does he sign the letter 'God'?

Answer: The postmaster sent money to Lencho in order to keep Lencho's faith in God alive. He turned serious when he read Lencho's letter and wished he had the same faith in God. Even after he saw that Lencho had requested for money, he stuck to his resolution of answering the letter. He gathered as much money as he could and sent it to Lencho. He signed it 'God' so that Lencho's faith would not get shaken.

Question. 3 Did Lencho try to find out who had sent the money to him? Why/Why not?

Answer: No, Lencho does not try to find out who had sent the money to him. This is because he never suspected that it could be anybody else other than God who would send him the money. His faith in God was so strong that he believed that God had sent him the money.

Question. 4 Who does Lencho think has taken the rest of the money? What is the irony in the situation? (Remember that the irony of a situation is an unexpected aspect of it. An ironic situation is strange or amusing because it is the opposite of what is expected).

Answer: Lencho thought that the post office employees had taken the rest of the money. The irony of the situation was that the employees whom he called a “bunch of crooks” and suspected of taking some of the money were the same people who had contributed and sent him the money in the first place.

Question. 5 Are there people like Lencho in the real world? What kind of a person would you say he is? You may select appropriate words from the box to answer the question.

(greedy naive stupid ungrateful selfish comical unquestioning)

Answer: There might be a few people like Lencho in the real world. He is an unquestioning, naïve kind of a person.

Question. 6 There are two kinds of conflict in the story: between humans and nature, and between humans themselves. How are these conflicts illustrated?

Answer: The conflict between humans and nature is illustrated by the destruction of Lencho’s crops by the hailstorm. Lencho had worked really hard on his fields and the harvest was really important for him. He required the money to feed his family. However, the nature turned violent. The rains were accompanied by a hailstorm, which destroyed the crops. The story also illustrates another conflict, between humans themselves. The postmaster, along with the help of the other post office employees, sent Lencho the money that they could manage to collect. They were not related to Lencho in any manner. It was an act of kindness and selflessness on their part. Even though they did a good deed, Lencho blamed them for taking away some amount of money. He called them “a bunch of crooks”. This shows that man does not have faith in his fellow humans, thereby giving rise to this conflict.

Questions (Page No. 8-11)

(THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE)

Question. 1 Look at the following sentence from the story.

Suddenly a strong wind began to blow and along with the rain very large hailstones began to fall.

'Hailstones' are small balls of ice that fall like rain. A storm in which hailstones fall is a 'hailstorm'. You know that a storm is bad weather with strong winds, rain, thunder and lightning.

There are different names in different parts of the world for storms, depending on their nature. Can you match the names in the box with their descriptions below, and fill in the blanks? You may use a dictionary to help you.

(gale, whirlwind, cyclone, hurricane, tornado, typhoon)

1. A violent tropical storm in which strong winds move in a circle: ____ c ____
2. An extremely strong wind : __ a ____
3. A violent tropical storm with very strong winds : ____ p ____
4. A violent storm whose centre is a cloud in the shape of a funnel: ____ n ____
5. A violent storm with very strong winds, especially in the western Atlantic Ocean: ____ r ____
6. A very strong wind that moves very fast in a spinning movement and causes a lot of damage: ____ l ____

Answer:

1. A violent tropical storm in which strong winds move in a circle **Cyclone**.
2. An extremely strong wind **gale**.
3. A violent tropical storm with very strong winds **typhoon**.
4. A violent storm whose centre is a cloud in the shape of a funnel **tornado**.
5. A violent storm with very strong winds, especially in the western Atlantic Ocean **hurricane**.
6. A very strong wind that moves very fast in a spinning movement and causes a lot of damage **whirlwind**.

Question. 2 Notice how the word 'hope' is used in these sentences from the story:

I hope it (the hailstorm) passes quickly.

There was a single hope: help from God.

In the first example, 'hope' is a verb which means you wish for something to happen. In the second example it is a noun meaning a chance for something to happen.

Match the sentences in Column A with the meanings of 'hope' in Column B.

A		B	
1	Will you get the subjects you want to study in college? I hope so.	1	A feeling that something good will probably happen.
2	I hope you don't mind my saying this, but I don't like the way you are arguing.	2	Thinking that this would happen (It may or may not have happened.)

3	This discovery will give new hope to HIV/AIDS sufferers.	3	Stopped believing that this good thing would happen.
4	We were hoping against hope that the judges would not notice our mistakes.	4	Wanting something to happen (and thinking it quite possible).
5	I called early in the hope of speaking to her before she went to school.	5	Showing concern that what you say should not offend or disturb the other person: a way of being polite.
6	Just when everybody had given up hope, the fishermen came back, seven days after the cyclone.	6	Wishing for something to happen, although this is very unlikely.

Answer:

A		B	
1	Will you get the subjects you want to study in college? I hope so.	4	Wanting something to happen (and thinking it quite possible).
2	I hope you don't mind my saying this, but I don't like the way you are arguing.	5	Showing concern that what you say should not offend or disturb the other person: a way of being polite.
3	This discovery will give new hope to HIV/AIDS sufferers.	1	A feeling that something good will probably happen.
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5	I called early in the hope of speaking to her before she went to school.	2	Thinking that this would happen (It may or may not have happened.)
6	Just when everybody had given up hope, the fishermen came back, seven days after the cyclone.	3	Stopped believing that this good thing would happen.

Question. 3 Relative Clauses

Look at these sentences

- a. All morning Lencho — who knew his fields intimately — looked at the sky.
- b. The woman, who was preparing supper, replied, "Yes, God willing."

The italicised parts of the sentences give us more information about Lencho and the woman. We call them relative clauses. Notice that they begin with a relative pronoun who. Other common relative pronouns are whom, whose, and which.

The relative clauses in (a) and (b) above are called non-defining, because we already know the identity of the person they describe. Lencho is a particular person, and there is a particular woman he speaks to. We don't need the information in the relative clause to pick these people out from a larger set.

A non-defining relative clause usually has a comma in front of it and a comma after it (some writers use a dash (—) instead, as in the story). If the relative clause comes at the end, we just put a full stop.

Join the sentences given below using who, whom, whose, which, as suggested.

1. I often go to Mumbai. Mumbai is the commercial capital of India. (which)
2. My mother is going to host a TV show on cooking. She cooks very well. (who)
3. These sportspersons are going to meet the President. Their performance has been excellent. (whose)
4. Lencho prayed to God. His eyes see into our minds. (whose)
5. This man cheated me. I trusted him. (whom)

Answer:

1. I often go to Mumbai, which is the commercial capital of India.
2. My mother, who cooks very well, is going to host a TV show on cooking.
3. These sportspersons, whose performance has been excellent, are going to meet the President.
4. Lencho prayed to God, whose eyes see into our minds.
5. This man cheated me. I trusted him. (whom)

Question. 4 Using Negatives for Emphasis

We know that sentences with words such as no, not or nothing show the absence of something, or contradict something. For example:

- a. This year we will have no corn. (Corn will be absent)
- b. The hail has left nothing. (Absence of a crop)
- c. These aren't raindrops falling from the sky, they are new coins. (Contradicts the common idea of what the drops of water falling from the sky are)

But sometimes negative words are used just to emphasise an idea. Look at these sentences from the story:

- d. Lencho...had done nothing else but see the sky towards the northeast. (He had done only this)
- e. The man went out for no other reason than to have the pleasure of feeling the rain on his body. (He had only this reason)
- f. Lencho showed not the slightest surprise on seeing the money. (He showed no surprise at all)

Now look back at example (c). Notice that the contradiction in fact serves to emphasise the value or usefulness of the rain to the farmer.

Find sentences in the story with negative words, which express the following ideas emphatically.

1. The trees lost all their leaves.
2. The letter was addressed to God himself.
3. The postman saw this address for the first time in his career.

Answer:

1. Not a leaf remained on the trees.
2. It was nothing less than a letter to God.
3. Never in his career as a postman had he known that address.

Question. 5 Metaphors:

The word metaphor comes from a Greek word meaning 'transfer'. Metaphors compare two things or ideas: a quality or feature of one thing is transferred to another thing. Some common metaphors are .

The leg of the table: The leg supports our body. So the object that supports a table is described as a leg.

The heart of the city: The heart is an important organ in the centre of our body. So this word is used to describe the central area of a city.

In pairs, find metaphors from the story to complete the table below. Try to say what qualities are being compared. One has been done for you.

Object	Metaphor	Quality or Feature Compared
Cloud	Huge mountains of clouds	The mass or 'hugeness' of mountains
Raindrops		
Hailstones		
		An epidemic (a disease) that spreads very rapidly and leaves many people dead.
	An ox of a man	

Answer:

Object	Metaphor	Quality or Feature Compared
Cloud	Huge mountains of clouds	The mass or 'hugeness' of mountains
Raindrops	A curtain of rain	The draping or covering of an area by a curtain
Hailstones	The frozen pearts	The resemblance in colour and hardness of a pearl
Locusts	A plague of locusts	The consequences (destruction) of plague
Locusts	A plague of locusts	An epidemic (a disease) that spreads very rapidly and leaves many people dead
Man	An ox of a man	The working of an ox in the fields (hard work)=