

## Jalebis

### Comprehension Check (Page 65)

**Question 1:**

Why didn't he pay the school fees on the day he brought money to school?

**Answer:**

The boy did not pay the school fees on the day he brought money to school because his teacher, Master Ghulam Mohammed who collected the fees was on leave that particular day and so the fees would be collected the next day.

**Question 2:**

- (i) What were the coins 'saying' to him?
- (ii) Do you think they were misguiding him?

**Answer:**

- (i) The coins in the boy's pocket were actually his inner self which was urging him to buy hot and fresh jalebis.
- (ii) Yes, the coins were misguiding him because the money was actually meant for paying school fees. However, when he saw the hot, sweet and syrupy jalebis, the boy couldn't resist his sweet tooth temptation.

**Question 3:**

Why didn't he take the coins' advice? Give two or three reasons.

**Answer:**

Initially, the boy didn't take the coins' advice because of the following reasons:

- (i) He was an honest boy.
- (ii) He could not spend the money meant for school fees on buying jalebis.
- (iii) He was fully aware of the consequences of not paying the fees on time i.e. the teacher would punish him by beating him with a cane.

**Question 4:**

- (i) What did the oldest coin tell him?
- (ii) Did he follow his advice? If not, why not?

**Answer:**

- (i) The oldest coin convinced him that they were telling him to buy jalebis for his own good. It also said that he can also pay his fees the following day with his scholarship money. Hence,

he should not suppress his desire for jalebis or resist himself from this temptation.

- (ii) No, the boy did not follow the coins advice initially. He was an honest and promising student and thought he couldn't defame his reputed family by spending his school fees to buy jalebis. Moreover, he was aware of the harsh punishment that the teacher will inflict upon him if the school fees are not paid on time.

**Question 5:**

He reached home with the coins in his pocket. What happened then?

**Answer:**

Upon reaching home, the coins in his pocket kept persuading him. When he went inside to have lunch, they began to shriek. Thoroughly fed up, he rushed out of the house barefoot and ran towards the bazaar. Unable to suppress his temptation and totally terrified, he told the halwai to weigh a whole rupee worth of jalebis quickly. The halwai opened up a whole newspaper and heaped a pile of jalebis on it.

**Comprehension Check (Page 68)****Question 1:**

- (i) Why didn't he eat all the jalebis he had bought?  
(ii) What did he do with the remaining jalebis?

**Answer:**

- (i) He didn't eat all the jalebis that he had bought because the quantity of jalebis was too much for him to finish all on his own. After eating many pieces, he was completely full. He felt if anyone pressed his stomach a little, jalebis would have popped out of his ears and nostrils.
- (ii) He distributed the remaining jalebis to the children who had assembled in the same gali where he was relishing on the jalebis. Initially he bought a rupee jalebis, but later he bought jalebis with the rest of the money that he had with himself.

**Question 2:**

"The fear was killing me." What was the fear?

**Answer:**

After spending the school fees amount in buying jalebis and eating them, it made the boy realise that he had done some big mistake. He was in complete fear of getting caught and thought that if his parents found out about his act, they would not spare him. With every breath came a burp, and with every burp, the danger of bringing out a jalebi or two; this fear was killing him.

**Question 3:**

"Children's stomachs are like digestion machines." What do you understand by that? Do you agree?

**Answer:**

This means that children have an active digestive system as they perform physical activity like walking

and playing games every day. The boy had popped in so many jalebis and felt his digestive system would digest it by morning.

Yes, I do agree to this statement as children do have the capacity to digest a lot of things even if they overeat sometimes.

**Question 4:**

How did he plan to pay the fees the next day?

**Answer:**

He planned to pay the fees the next day with his monthly scholarship that he would receive on that day.

**Question 5:**

When it is time to pay the fees, what does he do? How is he disobeying the elders by doing so?

**Answer:**

When it is time to pay the fees, the boy tucked his bag under his arm and left the school. He simply followed his nose and walked on hoping that some miracle would save him in that situation. He was so engrossed in his thoughts that soon he reached the point where the Kambelpur railway station began. The elders had warned him to never cross the railway tracks or eat sweets with one's fees money. Hence, he had a deep sense of regret and remorse for disobeying their words.

## Comprehension Check (Page 72)

**Question 1:**

What was the consequence of buying jalebis with the fees money?

**Answer:**

The ultimate consequence of buying jalebis with the fees money was that for the first time in his life, the boy had to stay absent from his school. He knew that he disobeyed his parents for the first time and felt sorry for spending the fees money to fulfill his sweet tooth craving.

**Question 2:**

His prayer to God is like a lawyer's defence of a bad case. Does he argue his case well? What are the points he makes?

**Answer:**

The boy tried very hard to please God with his requests and recited verses from the entire namaz. He said that he even knew the last ten surats of the Quran by heart. He could also recite the entire ayat-al-kursi for the Almighty right away. He deeply regretted his act of eating jalebis with the school fees money. He admitted that he made a grave mistake. He added that he wouldn't have spent the fees money on jalebis if he was aware about the delay in scholarship that month. He also mentioned that he knew that there is no shortage of anything in God's treasury. Even the chaprasi at his place took a whole lot of money to home every month. Furthermore, he stated that he was the nephew of a big officer and therefore, pleaded to God to give him just four rupees. Having said all this, he prayed earnestly to Allah Miyan and argued his case like a lawyer in front of Him.

**Question 3:**

He offers to play a game with Allah Miyan. What is the game?

**Answer:**

The game was that he would go up to the signal, touch it and return. In the meantime, God should secretly put four rupees under a big rock. Once he lifts it, he should be able to find the four rupees underneath the rock.

**Question 4:**

Did he get four rupees by playing the game? What did he get to see under the rock?

**Answer:**

No, the boy didn't get four rupees by playing the game with God. However, when he lifted the rock, he found a big hairy worm curling and twisting that wriggled towards him.

**Question 5:**

If God had granted his wish that day, what harm would it have caused him in later life?

**Answer:**

If God had granted his wish that day, he would have never learnt a lesson from his mistake. He felt he would have continued doing wrong and bad deeds and that God would always save him upon persuasion.

**Exercise (Page 72)**

Work in small groups.

**Question 1:**

Select and read sentences that show

- a) that the boy is tempted to eat jalebis
- b) that he is feeling guilty
- c) that he is justifying a wrong deed

**Answer:**

- a) that the boy is tempted to eat jalebis
  - (i) Jalebis are meant to be eaten, and those with money in their pocket can eat them.
  - (ii) But then, these jalebis are no common sort of jalebis either. They're crisp, fresh and full of syrup.
  - (iii) My mouth watered.
  - (iv) Thoroughly fed up, I rushed out of the house bare foot and ran towards the bazaar.
- b) that he is feeling guilty
  - (i) My head started to spin.
  - (ii) When the recess bell rang I tucked my bag under my arm and left the school.

- (iii) Now for the crime of eating a few jalebis, for the first time in my life I was absent from school.
  - (iv) Sitting there under the tree, at first I felt like crying.
- c) that he is justifying a wrong deed
- (i) I didn't eat them all by myself, though I fed them to a whole lot of children too.
  - (ii) 'Allah Miyan! I'm a very good boy. I have memorised the entire namaaz. I even know the last ten surats of the Quran by heart.

**Question 2:**

Discuss the following points.

- a) Is the boy intelligent? If so, what is the evidence of it?
- b) Does his outlook on the jalebis episode change after class VIII? Does he see that episode in a new light?
- c) Why are coins made to 'talk' in this story? What purpose does it serve?

**Answer:**

- a) The boy is definitely intelligent. The first evidence is that he was a promising student who had won a scholarship at school. He knew the difference between what is right and what is wrong. He had never been absent from school and listened to his elders always. Besides, he also puts valid points of his case before God just like a defence lawyer.
- b) Yes, certainly his outlook changed after class VIII. He kept wondering what harm it could have caused anyone if God would have sent him four rupees the other day. He later realised that everything comes with a price. This means that if God provides all that man asks, then man would be living in nests like birds and would have never learnt the art of making jalebis too.
- c) The coins are made to 'talk' in this story and indicate the greedy inner self of the boy. Although he was an honest and virtuous boy, he couldn't resist his temptation from eating jalebis with the school fees money. His inner greed pushed him to buy the jalebis and devour them, thus projecting that the coins in his pocket urged him to indulge in the sweet.