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The Shepherd's Treasure

An Iranian Folktale

SUMMARY OF THE LESSON

Once there lived a shepherd in Iran. He was very poor and illiterate. He had never been to any school.

Though he was poor and uneducated, he was very wise. He helped the people with his commonsense and sound advice. Soon he became famous for his wisdom.

The king of Iran heard about him. He decided to test the man. He dressed himself as a shepherd. He met the shepherd in his cave. The shepherd welcomed him. He shared his simple meal with the king, and talked wisely.

The king was greatly surprised as well as pleased. He appointed the shepherd the governor of a district.

The shepherd got power as well as high status. But he remained simple, just and hardworking. He was loved and honoured by the people.

The governors of other provinces became jealous of him. They spoke against him to the king. They reported that the new governor was dishonest and kept for himself part of the money that he collected as tax from the people. They added that his iron box contained his treasure.

The shepherd always carried his box with him. The king called him to the palace. He ordered him to open the box. The jealous governors saw only an old blanket in the box. They felt small. The king asked why the new governor carried his old blanket with him. The shepherd said that his blanket was his oldest friend. It would protect him if at any time, His Majesty took away his new cloak.

TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

EXERCISE

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1. The shepherd hadn't been to school because

- (i) he was very poor.
- (ii) there were very few schools in those days.
- (iii) he wasn't interested in studies.

Choose the right answer.

Ans. (ii) There were very few schools in those days.

2. Who visited the shepherd one day, and why?

Ans. The shepherd soon became famous for his wisdom and friendly nature. The king of Iran heard about him and visited him. He was riding a mule and dressed like a shepherd.

3. Why did the other governors grow jealous of the shepherd?

Ans. The common shepherd was appointed the governor of a small district. He was loved and honoured by the people. His fame spread far and wide. So the governors of other provinces grew jealous of him.

4. Why was the new governor called to the palace?

Ans. The jealous governors poisoned the king's ears against the new shepherd-governor. They reported that the new governor was dishonest, and he always carried his ill-gotten treasure in an iron chest. So the king called him to the palace to see that treasure.

5. Why was everyone delighted to see the iron chest on the camel's back?

Ans. Those who were present in the palace, thought that the iron-box contained valuables. If their report proved true, the king would dismiss the shepherd. So they were delighted. They waited anxiously to see the contents of the box.

6. (i) What did the iron chest contain?
(ii) Why did the shepherd always carry it?
(iii) Is it an example of the shepherd's humility or wisdom or both?

- Ans.** (i) The iron chest contained only an old blanket.
(ii) The shepherd always carried his blanket in the box because it was his oldest and time-tested friend. It would protect him in case the king took away his post and power.
(iii) Yes, it is an example of the shepherd's humility as well as wisdom.

7. How did the king reward the new governor?

- Ans.** The king was highly pleased with the new governor's humility and honesty. He rewarded him with a promotion. He made him the governor of a much bigger province the same day.