

Mr. and Mrs. Duck and the Brahmin



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Very early in the morning Mr. and Mrs. Duck Went out for their morning walk. Simultaneously they did walk and run As the medieval postal runners used to run . They adjusted and balanced their footsteps They had little time to lose in their gosesteps They must reach the nearest water body in time. From dawn to dusk they must keep their time Coming near the water on the ground They stood still and looked around . And then suddenly, as if taken aback, They stopped and held themselves back At the edge of the water on the ground. And after a few more times looking around And before deciding to get into the water, Dipping their bills and picked up a few drops of water They sprinkled them on their heads. After shaking off the drops of water And adjusting their body temperature And following their anatine second nature They flew and plunged into the water.

Who learned from whom to sprinkle water On one's head before splashing into the water? Did the ducks learn it from the Brahmin, Or from the ducks it was learnt by the Brahmin ?

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Recalling Helen Keller--the beacon for the blind

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WORLD acclaimed greatest woman Helen Keller was born on June 27, 1880 at Ivy Green in Tuscumbia, Alabama USA. June 27, 2003 is her 123rd birth anniversary and will be observed in so many countries of the world including Bangladesh. At the age of only one year and six months she was attacked by scarlet fever and permanently lost her sight and hearing. But as Helen Keller said later "blind people are just like seeing people in the dark. The loss of sight does not impair the qualities of mind and heart".

After being visually and hearing impaired (blind and deaf), her struggle started. Her parents were too worried and ready to do anything for her. They met the great scientist, telephone inventor Dr. Alexander Graham Bell (interestingly he was a son of a deaf mother to get suggestion for a suitable teacher for Helen. Dr. Alexander became very kind to them and managed a teacher for Helen, named Anne Sullivan. Ms. Anne was also visually impaired and after a series of operation her sight was regained. She was graduated from the Perkins School for the Blind in America. Helen was seven years old.

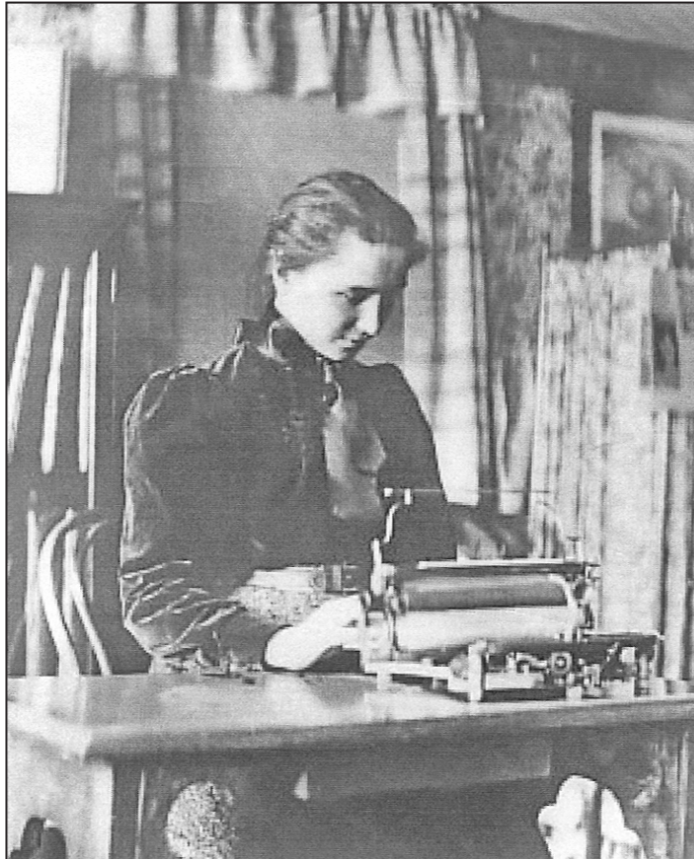
It was 1887 on. Anne Sullivan was really committed, dedicated and an ideal teacher. Helen would always refer to that day her teacher arrived to her. as "most important".

Anne encouraged Helen to believe she could do anything she set out to do.

Anne taught Helen that learning is an adventure. First she spelled D-O-L-L (doll) by finger into Helen's hand and tried to make the meaning

visually impaired). After that the manuscripts were typed with manual typewriter.

Some excerpts from Helen Keller: "Every child has a right to be well born, well nurtured and well taught and only the freedom of woman can



Helen Keller typing her manuscript in Braille

clear by giving a real doll to Her. Thus the learning of Helen started and step-by-step she learnt about a lot of objects and subjects. Anne became very pleased and astonished realising the excellent merit of her student! As a part of Helen's academic education, Anne sat beside Helen in her classes at the school and college, spelled lecture after lecture of the lessons into Helen's hand by "finger spelling"(the system of teaching/learning for the people with visual impairment). With the help of the great teacher like Anne Sullivan, Helen Keller received her Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in 1904 from Radcliff College.

It is also interesting that from the student life Helen Keller started writing articles and books on disabilities, social issues, protesting genocide and war, promoting woman and child rights etc. She used to write/type the manuscript in "Braille" (the language for the visually impaired invented by Louis Braille of France, who was also

guarantee him this right". "Never in the history of the world has woman held a position of such dignity, honour and usefulness as now...I think the degree of a nation's civilisation may be measured by the degree of enlightenment of its women". "We are never really happy until we try to brighten the lives of others". "Life is an exciting business and most exciting when it is lived for others". "If I, deaf, blind, find life rich and interesting, how much more can you gain by the use of your five senses"! These are imitable at this period of transition of nations and for the welfare of the disabled, victims of war, destitute women and children and the less fortunate.

It is really easy to understand her strong sense of mission in life from her works. Though the fate sentenced her to a lifetime of silence and darkness, but she became a tireless advocate for human rights, poverty alleviation, prevention of disabilities, restoration of sight, treatment and rehabilitation of the

disabled.

Some of Helen Keller's books: The Story of My Life, Optimism, An Essay, The World I live In, The Song of the Stone Wall, Out of the Dark, My Religion, Midstream, My Later Life, Peace at Eventide, Helen Keller in Scotland, Helen Keller's Journal, Let us Have Faith, Teacher Anne Sullivan Macy, Open Door. A number of her books have been translated into 50 different languages including our mother tongue Bangla.

Helen Keller became able to overcome handicaps with her self-confidence, firmness of mind, regular/continuous study, traveling many countries, motivating people, presenting herself as an example to the disabled to be self-reliant, writing articles/books, etc. She devoted her life for the visually impaired of any race, any country of the world. Helen Keller also placed

her nobilities and generosity to the world by founding Helen Keller International in 1915 (during the time of First World War).

Helen Keller International is working in many countries of the world including Bangladesh as a leading voluntary organisation to fulfil her dreams, as she said, "I would like to live to see the day when every child has an opportunity of an education and every blind grown-up has the chance for training and job placement". Helen Keller International has been working as a division of Helen Keller Worldwide with the noble aims and objectives to help millions of poor people around the world to adjust with life without sight by educating/rehabilitating them, preventing their visual impairment (blindness) and overcoming disabilities.

Jimmy Carter, former president of USA and Nobel Peace Prize Winner

of 2002; wrote, "Helen Keller was a woman of modesty, because despite her remarkable accomplishment she did not view herself as remarkable...Without sight, she saw clearly in to the souls of her fellow men and women and without hearing she heard plainly the cries of people who suffered from poverty, from war, from disabilities, from discrimination..."

Winston Churchill commented about Helen Keller: "The greatest woman of the twentieth century". Mark Twain one-step ahead, commented: "Helen Keller is the most extraordinary product of all the ages". On June 1, 1968 only 26 days before her 88th birth anniversary Helen Keller passed away in her sleep, but motivating us to do a lot for the disabled at home and abroad.

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