

1. Why did Aurangzeb ban the playing of pungi in his royal residence?

Answer: Aurangzeb banned the playing of pungi in his royal residence because he did not like its shrill unpleasant sound.

2. How many holes does a Shehnai have on its body?

Answer: It has seven holes in its body.

3. Who invented `Shehnai`?

Answer: A barber in Aurangzeb's court invented Shehnai.

4. Where was Bismillah Khan born?

Answer: He was born in Dumraon in Bihar.

5. Which highest civilian award in India was conferred on Bismillah Khan?

Answer: The Bharat Ratna.

6. What was the name of Bismillah's father?

Answer: His name was Paigambar Bux.

7. Who was Ali Bux?

Answer: Ali Bux was Bismillah's maternal uncle.

8. When was All India Radio in Lucknow opened?

Answer: In 1938.

9. To which foreign country did Bismillah Khan go on his first trip?

Answer: Afghanistan.

10. What name is Bismillah Khan fondly called?

Answer: He is fondly called `Khansaab`.

11. When Bismillah Khan was in Mumbai he missed two things badly. Name those two things.

Answer: They were Benaras and Ganga.

12. What did one of his students in the U.S.A. want him to do?

Answer: One of his students in the U.S.A. wanted him to head a Shehnai school in the U.S.A.

13. Why did Aurangzeb ban the playing of the *pungi*?

Answer: Emperor Aurangzeb banned the playing of the *pungi* because he considered it as a reeded noisemaker with its loud, shrill, and unpleasant sound. He prohibited its play in the royal court.

14. How is a 'shehnai' different from a *pungi*?

Answer: Though a reeded instrument like a *pungi*, a shehnai differs from it in width and sound. It is made with a longer and broader stem than a *pungi* and produces soft, melodious sounds instead of the loud, jarring sound of a *pungi*.

15. How did the 'shehnai' get its name?

Answer: It is believed that the barber (*nai*) who improved the *pungi*, played his instrument in the chamber of the emperor (*shah*). The combination of the two words 'shah' and 'nai' formed the name 'shehnai'.

16. How did Bismillah Khan bring the 'shehnai' onto the classical stage?

Answer: Traditionally, the shehnai was played in the royal court as one of the nine instruments together known as *naubat*. Bismillah Khan made it an independent instrument and gave its music a place among other classical instrumental music.

17. Where did Bismillah Khan usually sing at the age of five? How was he rewarded and by whom?

Answer: At the age of five, Bismillah Khan usually sang the Bhojpuri 'chaita' in the Bihariji temple in his native town Dumraon in Bihar. At the end of the song, he earned a big laddu weighing 1.25 kg which was given by the local Maharaja as a prize.

18. Who was Ali Bux? Where was he employed and what was his influence on Bismillah Khan?

Answer: Ali Bux was the maternal uncle of Bismillah Khan and may be regarded as his mentor and trainer. He was a great shehnai player and was employed to play the shehnai in the Vishnu temple of Benaras. At a very young age, Bismillah Khan started accompanying him and got lessons in playing the shehnai from him. The

young boy would sit for hours listening to his uncle and later practice throughout the day.

19. Which places were young Bismillah Khan's favourite haunts for practising music? Why?

Answer: The temple of Balaji and Mangala Maiya, as well as the banks of the Ganga, were young Bismillah Khan's favourite haunts because he could practice his music there in solitude. The flowing waters of Ganga inspired him to improvise and invent raagas which were earlier considered beyond the range of the shehnai.

20. When and how did Bismillah Khan get his big break?

Answer: The 'big break' came to Bismillah Khan when in 1938 the All India Radio was started in Lucknow. Khansaab was regularly invited to play the shehnai and soon became an often-heard shehnai player on the radio.

21. Where did Bismillah Khan go on his first foreign trip? How was he honoured there?

Answer: Bismillah Khan's first foreign trip took him to Afghanistan where King Zahir Shah was so impressed with the maestro's shehnai recital that he honoured him with gifts of priceless Persian carpets and other souvenirs.

22. Why did the film director Vijay Bhatt name his film "Gunj Uthi Shehnai"?

Answer: The film director, Vijay Bhatt, once heard the shehnai recital of Bismillah Khan in a festival. He was so fascinated by the performance that he decided to name his next film after the instrument and called it "*Gun Uthi Shehnai*"

23. Which films did Bismillah Khan provide music for? Why did he discontinue playing the shehnai for films?

Answer: Bismillah Khan ventured into the film world with Vijay Bhatt's "*Gunj Uthi Shehnai*". Then he played in a Kannada film – "*Samadhi Apanna*". Though he was very successful, he gave up the film world because his tastes did not tune well with the artificiality and glamour of filmdom.

24. How was Bismillah Khan's music appreciated and recognised on the international level?

Answer: Bismillah Khan's music was so much appreciated on the international level that he became the first Indian to be invited to perform in the prestigious Lincoln Central Hall, USA. He participated in the World Exposition in Montreal, the Cannes Art Festival and the Osaka Trade Fair. In Teheran, an auditorium was named after him.

25. Why did Bismillah Khan want that the children in India should be taught music?

Answer: Bismillah Khan had great regard for Indian music and considered Hindustani music to be its richest heritage. He wanted that children must not cut off their bond from this grand tradition which was fascinating even for the people of the west.

26. How did Evelyn sense the sounds and vibrations of the music?

Answer: Evelyn sensed the sounds and vibrations of the music by opening her mind and body to them. She felt different notes through different parts of her body.

27. What was the contribution of Forbes in helping Evelyn to learn music?

Answer: Forbes played a crucial role in shaping Evelyn's musical talents. He asked her to sense the sounds and vibrations through her different body parts. He turned two large drums to different notes and asked her to feel the different notes and sounds some other way.

28. Why does Evelyn remove her shoes on the wooden platform?

Answer: While playing instruments she removes shoes on the wooden platform. It allows the vibrations to pass through her bare feet and up to her legs. She is able to feel the music through every part of her body. She can also feel the echo of sound flowing into her body by leaning against the drums.

29. How did Ron Forbes give training in music to Evelyn?

Answer: He took two large drums for tuning Evelyn at once realised higher drums from the waist up and lower drums from the waist down. He motivated her to feel the music in different parts of her body.

30. Bismillah Khan loved India and Benaras the most. Justify it by giving two instances from the text.

Answer: He was fond of Benaras and Dumraon. They remained for him the most wonderful towns in the world. He said that whenever he was in a foreign country, he kept yearning to see India. While in Mumbai, he thinks only of Benaras and the holy Ganga. And while in Benaras, he misses the unique mattha of Dumraon.

31. How was Evelyn able to get admission to the Royal Academy of Music?

Answer: Ron Forbes spotted Evelyn's potential in music. She never looked back from that point. By the time she was sixteen, she had decided to make music her life. She auditioned for the Royal Academy of Music and scored the highest marks in the history of the academy.

32. How was Evelyn a source of great pleasure to her audience?

Answer: Evelyn was very young. She performed despite her handicap. Her music was better than those of her double age. She was an inspiration to the handicapped. Thus, she has given enormous pleasure to millions.

33. "Music has no religion." How did Bismillah Khan's Shehani prove it?

Answer: Music is the voice of the soul. It is sacred beyond the religions. It is eternal and acts as a source of inspiration for everyone. A musician never plays music for any particular religion. Bismillah Khan who belonged to the Muslim community played Shehnai in temples. He was deeply attached to the holy city of Benaras and the holy river Ganga. The river Ganga and its flowing water were the main source of inspiration for him. He could never think of leaving Benaras and holy river Ganga. Since his childhood, he was fond of music. As a five-year-old child, he used to visit Bihariji temple at Dumraon to sing Bhojpuri Chaita. His love for music was so deeply influenced by Benaras and Ganga that once a student from the USA wanted him to head a Shehnai school there. He promised to recreate the atmosphere of Benaras in the USA by replicating the temple. But Bismillah Khan refused to say that he couldn't take the Ganga there.

34. What important lesson does the life of Bismillah Khan teach us?

Answer: Bismillah Khan teaches us a very remarkable lesson of life. People make advancement in life by dint of hard work and devotion. He was very interested in music as he was born in the family of a musician. He used to sing Chaita in the Bihariji temple. When he was in Benaras, he was greatly influenced by his maternal uncle, who was a great Shehnai player. He copied his uncle in the true spirit and practiced Shehnai in the

peaceful environment of the Ganga. His hard work and devotion brought him good fruits. He was awarded the greatest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna.

35 You have now read about two musicians, Evelyn Glennie, and Ustad Bismillah Khan. Do you think that they both worked hard? Where did they want to go?

Or

Evelyn Glennie and Bismillah Khan shared the values of hard work and perseverance. Discuss.

Or

What important lesson does the life of Evelyn Glennie and Bismillah Khan teach us?

Answer: Evelyn Glennie and Bismillah Khan, the two eminent music maestros, through their achievements, have proved to the world that the values of hard work and unstaggering efforts are always rewarded. Evelyn Glennie became an internationally admired multi-percussionist only because of her untiring work which could conquer even her handicap. Instead of yielding to her deafness, she made all-out efforts to sense the sounds of music through different parts of her body and never looked back. With her persistent efforts, she made it to the Royal Academy of Music, London and bagged the most prestigious awards. Her sincere devotion to her art has given percussion a new place on the international stage.

Bismillah Khan, like Evelyn, was dedicated to his art and attained the greatest heights as a 'shehnai vaadak'. He too worked diligently and transformed the shehnai into a classical instrument. He added enormously to what he had inherited by widening the range of the shehnai. He invented many new raagas spontaneously. Starting with playing in the temples of Benaras and on the banks of Ganga, he reached the stage of international acclaim. His hard work enabled him to win the most prestigious awards in India and in the world.

Thus, the lives of both Evelyn Glennie and Bismillah Khan are perfect examples of how dedicated efforts and persistent hard work lead to grand achievements.

35. Why is Benaras so important to Bismillah Khan?

Answer: Mr Bismillah Khan is fondly called Khansaab. He has travelled all over the world. He got honours in every country. In Tehran, an auditorium was named after him. He has seen many cities, but he remains very fond of Benaras and Dumraon. He calls them the most wonderful towns in the world. He has a special fascination for Benaras

because of the Ganga there. In his youth, he used to practice Shehnai in solitude on the banks of the Ganga. Once one of his students in the USA requested him to head a Shehnai school there. He said that he would recreate the atmosphere of Benaras by building similar temples there. But the Ustad asked him whether he would bring the Ganga also there. Once he said, “Whenever I am in Mumbai, I think of only Varanasi and the holy Ganga”