

PARWATI'S TRIUMPH

SLIDE SET COMMENTARY

by J. R. Tipping

**This outline may also be adapted
as a drama or puppet play.**

The Leprosy Mission Health Education Centre
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COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL
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Koramangala
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India

- Slide 1** This is the story of Parwati. For many years she has been looking forward to the time she could get married
- Slide 2** At last, the great day has arrived ——the wedding day. Parwati is happy with her new husband and is full of hope for the future.
- Slide 3** Now Parwati, has left her home and is meeting her in-laws. As she touches their feet she feels a little nervous. Will they be kind to her?
- Slide 4** At first, Parwati enjoys working in the house with her mother-in-law. She soon learns how things should be done.
- Slide 5** "Go and get some more water from the well, see, the water pot is empty!"
- Slide 6** Parwati likes going to the well. She meets the other women there and has a chance to talk to them. However, today she must not linger. She has already been told off because she dropped the chappatis in the fire and made her husband late for work.

Slide 7 Oh, this is a terrible day for Parwati ! As she gets back and goes to put the water pot down, she drops it.

Slide 8 The pot is completely broken and all the water is spilt. Hie ! Hie ! Everything seems to be going wrong today.

Slide 9 Parwati's mother-in-law is angry with her for being so careless. "Why do you keep dropping things ? Why are you so clumsy these days ?" She shouts.

Slide 10 Parwati is very frightened. "I don't know what is wrong, my hand keeps tingling and it feels so weak", she cries. She shows her hand to her mother-in-law. Mother-in-law sees that Parwati cannot straighten her fingers.

Slide 11 She takes Parwati to Father-in-law. "See this, Husband", she says, "Look at this useless daughter-in-law we have got for our son —— Look ! She's deformed ! No wonder she is so careless ! What is wrong with her ?"

Father-in-law looks at Parwati's hand. He does not know what is wrong, but he is frightened.

Slide 12 When Parwati's husband comes home that evening, they tell him what has happened.

We can't keep her here. What will the neighbours think!" they say.

Slide 13 Mother-in-law tells her son: "You will have to take her back to her parents. We thought she was a good wife for you, but we don't want a deformed wife for our son" The son agrees.

Slide 14 Oh, what shame Parwati feels as her husband takes her back to her parent's home. She had been so happy when she got married. It wasn't her fault this thing had happened.

Slide 15 Her husband is also ashamed that his wife has turned out to be deformed. It makes him angry and he shouts at his father-in-law.

Slide 16 "What sort of trick are you trying to play on me? You never said she was deformed and useless. You keep your precious daughter here —— I don't want her as Mother of my sons!" He storms out and leaves Parwati in tears.

Slide 17 "Come sit down and tell us what has happened, Parwati" says her Father. She shows him her hand and explains what has happened.

Parwati's parents do not know what is wrong either. They talk about it late into the night. Finally they decide to take Parwati to the Sadhu. Perhaps he can do something to help.

- Slide 18** Next day Parwati and her father go to the Sadhu. After greeting him, the father explains about Parwati's hand.
- Slide 19** "She should bathe in the tank at midnight on the day of the full moon, and then worship the god at the temple." he advises. He hands Parwati some ashes from the fire. "Here, take this Rub some of it onto your hand and drink the rest in clean water".
- Slide 20** "Thank you Sadhuji, here is Rs. 50 for the dakshina" says the father. Parwati and her father both believe that the Sadhu's solution is going to cure her. Parwati carries the precious ash very carefully. She obeys the Sadhu's instructions on the next full moon.
- Slide 21** The next few months pass slowly. They are sad, dark days for Parwati. Her hand does not get better, in fact it seems to get worse. The sadhu's blessing and the holy ash were not enough.
- Slide 22** At last it is the month of May and Parwati's brother comes home. He is a school-master in the city. He is surprised to see Parwati at home as he thought she would be at her husband's home.
- Slide 23** Parwati's father tells her brother about the great sadness and shame that had come to the family because of Parwati's deformity.

- Slide 24** He explained that they had been to the Sadhu and had given dakshina but still Parwati's hand was weak and deformed, and now she could not feel anything.
"I think I know what is wrong with her," says the brother.
"I think she has leprosy". "Leprosy !" exclaims father," Nobody in this family has ever had leprosy ! Oh dear, oh dear, whatever shall we do now! This is a terrible curse on our whole family." He is very upset.
- Slide 25** "Don't be upset Father" says the brother" Nowadays leprosy is regarded as an ordinary disease. It can be completely cured. Only last week we had a lecture about it in my school. Tomorrow I'll take Parwati to the clinic at Nampur, then the doctor can tell us what is really wrong with her'.
- Slide 26** Next morning Parwati and her brother set off early for the clinic. The clinic is held at the road side under some trees.
- Slide 27** Already several other people are waiting to see the Doctor. At last it is Parwati's turn. She sits down and shows the Doctor her hand, and her brother explains what had happened to Parwati.

Slide 28 The doctor feels her nerves and examines Parwati to see if she has any pale patches or other signs of leprosy. "Yes, she has got leprosy, but it is still in the early stages. She will recover well. She must take one of these tablets every day to cure the disease, but she must also take great care of her hand. She can so easily injure her hand because she has no feeling in it. Go along with the nurse Parwati. She will show you what you must do."

Slide 29 First of all, the nurse shows Parwati how to massage her hands with oil. Then how to do some simple exercises to strengthen the muscles of her hand.

Slide 30 Next she explains that because Parwati cannot feel anything, she has to be very careful not to burn or injure her hand. When touching anything hot she must protect her hand with a thick pad of cloth or use a pair of tongs. Parwati thinks this is a good idea and promises to try and do all she has been shown.

Slide 31 She finds that it is quite easy to use the tongs to turn bread or to put wood on the fire. She also keeps two pads of cloth near the fire so that she can easily pick up the hot pans. Every morning she remembers to take her tablet and to oil and exercise her fingers. Each day she feels that her hand is getting stronger and that her fingers are straighter.

Slide 32 After taking her medicine regularly for six months it is again time for Parwati's monthly visit to the clinic "Oh, this is a great improvement" says the doctor. "Your fingers are already much straighter and stronger. I can see that you have worked hard at your massage and exercises Parwati".

Slide 33 Parwati's mother has something to ask the Doctor. "Doctor sahib, can she live with her husband? I have heard that this is a very infectious disease. Will she be able to have children?"

Slide 34 "Let me show you something" replies the Doctor. "See what this poster says — there are two kinds of leprosy. One kind is infectious while it remains untreated, but most people have the non-infectious kind. That is what Parwati has. She cannot pass on her disease to anyone else.

"Then she can live with her husband?" asked mother, "What about her children — is she likely to pass the disease on to them?"

"Not at all" replied the Doctor. "Leprosy is not a hereditary disease. She can live with her husband quite safely. Her children will not be affected at all".

"Oh, thank you Doctor for explaining to me. I didn't understand before."

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Slide 35 That evening, Parwati's brother goes to see her husband's family and explains to them that Parwati is now much better, and that the Doctor has said that she can safely live with her husband. They were amazed to hear it.

"You had better bring Parwati to us tomorrow, then we can see for ourselves" says Father-in-Law.

Slide 36 Next day her brother takes Parwati to her husband's house. "See, her hand is quite straight now and much stronger. She knows how to look after it and can cook and work quite normally. Of course she must still take her tablets each day, otherwise she is quite well."

Slide 37 Then Mother-in-law turns to Parwati and says, "Show me what you can do, daughter-in-law, come and make the men some tea!"

Slide 38 Parwati carries in the tray of tea for the men. They happily take it from her.

Slide 39 "Hmm, she's even learnt to make a good cup of tea," says Father-in-law, smiling. "May be we were too hasty sending her away like that. I'm glad to hear that leprosy is a curable disease and not something to be scared of any more."

Parwati stays at her husband's home and they lived happily together.

Slide 40

The whole family rejoice when their first son is born. He is a strong, healthy baby. They are all happy to know that there is no danger of Parwati passing on her disease to him. Parwati's story is unfortunately quite a common one because people are so afraid of leprosy and act in ignorance. This kind of misery can so easily be prevented. If you know of anyone with the early signs of leprosy — loss of feeling, slight deformity of the fingers or a pale patch on the skin, persuade them to go to a Doctor. It may be leprosy or it may be some other disease. Only a doctor can make a proper diagnosis. Leprosy can be cured without any lasting signs if treatment is started in the early stages. It is not a curse of the gods and it is not a hereditary disease either. Most people with leprosy have the non-infectious type so cannot pass the disease on to other.

THE END

This slide set was produced at The Leprosy Mission Health Education Centre, Naini, Allahabad. Those taking part were members of Staff of The Leprosy Mission Hospital, Naini.

EARLY SIGNS OF LEPROSY

* Things you can see.

Pale patches

Red patches

Swelling of the skin

Red, shiny, greasy face

Loss of hairs on the skin

Dry skin

* Things you can feel.

Tingling

Heaviness

Loss of feeling

Weakness of muscles

Swollen nerves

Painful nerves

If you see or feel any of these go to a Doctor for full examination.

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