

**RESOURCES:**

[http://www.wikisummaries.org/wiki/Life\\_of\\_Pi](http://www.wikisummaries.org/wiki/Life_of_Pi)

<https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/lifeofpi>

<http://www.prezi.com/hpqjswashnyi/life-of-pi-on-anthropomorphism>

Oxford Exam Success Literature / Course Hero / Lit Charts / X-Kit Achieve / Macrat / Mrs Sperry.com

**PICTURE SOURCES:**

Google images

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**CHAPTER 2**

We return to the Author's narration and what he is starting to discover about Pi.

We learn that Pi Patel lives in Scarborough.

Pi is a small, grey-haired man of about forty. He wears a winter coat and speaks very fast. The author begins his story here.

Note that the author's chapters are written in italics to differentiate from the chapters where Pi is the narrator. Pi's chapters have a normal font.

Remember that Chapter 1 was the beginning of an interview, which continues in Chapter 2. These sections remind us of the book's 'nonfiction' framework – the story appears to be true / it creates the ILLUSION that it is a real story BUT it is actually FICTION – not real; they also introduce the adult Pi (physical description of Pi).

**CHAPTER 3**

Pi explains the origins of his name.

His father, Mr. Santosh Patel, has a good friend, Francis Adirubasamy, who is a former swimming champion. He tries to teach the Patel family to swim but he only succeeds with Pi. Swimming teaches Pi that pleasure is to be gained through discipline and hard work. His ability to swim and his self-discipline is essential to his survival later in the story. Pi calls Francis 'Mamaji' which means 'Respected Uncle'.

As Francis is a great fan of the swimming pools of Paris, especially the Piscine Molitor, Pi's parents name him Piscine Molitor Patel after this pool, to honour their friend, Francis Adirubasamy.

'Piscine' (pronounced pee-seen) is the French word for 'pool,' and in English 'piscine' (pronounced pie-seen) means 'fish-like'.

This creates the idea that Pi is a good swimmer and therefore survives his ordeal at sea.

#### **CHAPTER 4**

Pi describes his happy memories as a child in Pondicherry Zoo run by his father, Santosh Patel, who was a hotel manager before he bought the zoo.

Pi learns all about animal behaviour and their psychology as he is a keen observer of animals.

As a child, Pi feels he is living in paradise, surrounded by amazing animals.

His daily schedule revolves around the regular routines of animals.

EXAMPLE: The roar of lions is his alarm clock every morning.

Pi compares the keeping of a zoo to the keeping of a hotel, 'a hotel keeper's worst nightmare.'

The animals seem like hotel occupants:

- The guests do not leave their rooms.
- They demand meals.
- They have noisy, rude visitors.
- They do not clean up after themselves.

Pi made a lot of observations in the zoo and compared life in the wild to life in the zoo. He defends zoos against people who feel that animals in the wild are happier.

Pi said, 'I spent more hours than I can count a quiet witness to the highly mannered, manifold expressions of life that grace our planet.'

### **LIFE IN THE WILD**

- Animals are always looking for shelter and safety from predators.
- There are constantly in search for food.
- They are driven by 'fear and urgent necessity'.
- Therefore, animals in the wild do not truly have freedom.

### **LIFE IN THE ZOO**

- Animals have shelters.
- They are safe and secure from predators.
- Animals are provided with food.

Pi also points out the importance of boundaries and territories for animals.

### **BOUNDARIES & TERRITORIES IN THE WILD**

Animals (and soon Pi) struggle constantly to maintain order in the midst of danger.

### **BOUNDARIES & TERRITORIES IN THE ZOO**

- Animals, like humans, like structure and a support system.
- Pi compares a zoo to a house: animals feel comfortable in familiar territory. Humans feel the same about their houses they live in.
- A good zoo provides a sense of **order** – animals have **no desire to escape from a zoo**.
- Animals prefer to have set territories, so they are happy to accept the edges of their cages as their territory.
- There are instances of animals who had the option of escaping the zoo but refused to do so e.g. the chimpanzee did not leave its open cage; the bear escapes from its enclosure then returns to it a couple of hours later.

Pi ends the Chapter 4 by telling us that the Pondicherry Zoo does not exist anymore and that many people now lost respect for both zoos and religions.

Zoos and religion 'are no longer in people's good graces....'

## CHAPTER 5

Piscine is unhappy with his name as a child in primary school.

Many children deliberately and mockingly mispronounce his name as 'Pissing' when it is meant to be pronounced as 'Pea-seen'. Even teachers mispronounce his name.

His brother, Ravi, who is three years older than him, often teases Pi about his name.

(Ravi is popular at school due to his impressive and athletic physique as he is good at sports, especially in cricket.)

Pi feels deeply hurt and compares his childhood experiences to the persecutions of the Prophet Muhammed and the early Christians:

Pi says, 'The sound would disappear, but the hurt would linger.....' and 'I walked in last, wearing my crown of thorns.'

Pi needs to change things to improve his quality of life. He finishes primary school, St. Joseph's School, and starts a new secondary school, Petit Seminaire.

On the first day of school during roll call in class, each student states his name to the teacher.

When it is Pi's turn, he stands up, goes to the blackboard, grabs a piece of chalk and writes the following:

Pi announces to the class that his name is 'Pi' illustrating it with the mathematical Greek symbol  $\pi$  on the chalkboard which represents the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter.

He uses repetition to train the teachers and his classmates to accept his name. This highlights the fact that he wants people to remember his name. [NOTE: Repetition is a method he uses in his ordeal at sea when he trains the tiger.]

The adult Pi says, 'I found refuge...in that elusive, irrational number with which scientists try to understand the universe.'

The number is irrational and unending yet is used to calculate things logically and rationally. This is symbolic of Pi who is not limited by reason/logic.

## QUESTIONS:

'Repetition is important in the training of animals but also humans.'

### 1.1 State the reason Pi knows so much about the training of animals. (1)

His Pi owns and runs the Pondicherry Zoo.

### 1.2 Explain how his knowledge of training animals later saves Pi's life. (3)

When Pi is stranded on the lifeboat with a tiger, his only hope of survival is to intimidate the tiger and show him that he is the alpha male.

He does this by training him in the same way the lions were trained in the zoo.

He associates the whistle with seasickness, he shows him that he is the provider of food and water and marks the tarpaulin with his own urine to keep him out of his territory.

### 1.3 According to you, is Pi suggesting that humans and animals are similar in some respects? Substantiate (give evidence from the novel) your answer. (2)

Yes, as he states that both animals and humans are trained by using repetition.

This implies we are similar in the way we learn and respond.

**The author** interjects again in **CHAPTER 6**. He tells us that Pi is an adventurous cook and his kitchen in Canada is well-stocked, enough to '*last the siege of Leningrad.*'

[Thousands died of starvation during the siege of Leningrad which lasted 900 days between 1940 and 1944.]

*The author gives more hints of Pi's ordeal. Pi suffered great hardship during his ordeal at sea, and as a result, he now seems prepared for any disaster and has a special appreciation for food.*

## CHAPTER 7

**'It was my luck to have a few good teachers in my youth, men and women who came into my dark head and lit a match.'**

Pi remembers meeting Mr. Satish Kumar, a biology teacher (one of his favourites) who is also a communist, atheist.

On a visit to the zoo, Pi describes for Satish Kumar the need for goats within the Rhino enclosure to keep the Rhino's company. Mr. Kumar comments that politicians can learn from the goats that live in harmony with the rhinos.

Pi discusses religion with Mr. Kumar and says that religion will save them.

Mr. Kumar states that he does not believe in religion: '*Religion is darkness.*'

Pi is shocked because religion is seen as '*light*' for him.

Mr. Kumar states that science, experience and intellect show that religion is superstition. Mr. Kumar believes in reason but not God.

Mr. Kumar believes that all things can be described scientifically. He describes his bout with polio and how medicine saved him as a child, not God: 'It wasn't God who saved me-it was medicine.' Pi cannot accept and agree with the story until he learns to accept Kumar's beliefs as a faith all by itself. He comments on how atheists are more acceptable than agnostics, who are full of doubt.

## CHAPTER 8

Visitors to the zoo are responsible for performing horrible things with the animals. Their cruel actions result in many animals suffering terribly and dying.

To prevent animal abuse, Pi's father sets up a curtain and a sign, challenging visitors to see the most dangerous animal in the zoo. Behind the curtain was a mirror declaring humans as the most dangerous of all animals.

He mentions that what is most dangerous is anthropomorphizing animals – making them seem human. *Animalus anthropomorphicus* are people who invest animals with human qualities, who see an animal, not for what it is, but as cute or devoted or vicious and treat it accordingly, in an unnatural way. Pi's knowledge of this protects him later during his ordeal at sea.

Pi's father decides to display the dangers of animals to Pi and Ravi. He does not want them to ever reach into a cage again. He shows the boys the Bengal tiger, Mahisha, who has not been fed for three days. A goat is introduced to the cage which scares 'the living vegetarian daylight' out of him. Their mother is there too and feels uncomfortable

about this scene. His father describes the strength of every animal in the zoo against human beings, except guinea pigs.

## CHAPTER 9

Pi discusses animal characteristics. He explains that zoo keeping is an 'art and science' which has to do with reducing an animal's 'flight distance'—the minimum distance at which an animal will keep away from a predator or an enemy.

For animals to get used to the presence of humans in a zoo and diminish flight distance, Pi's dad gets to understand the animals well, then ensures that their needs are well provided for by means of a stable environment, good shelters, ample food and water. Taken care of in this way, zoo animals rarely if ever run back to the wild.

On the exceptional occasions when they do, it is usually because someone or something has invaded their territory and frightened them away.

## CHAPTER 10

Pi describes animals that will not enjoy captivity, those that were captured and brought to the zoo or those few 'zoo bred creatures' that temporarily feel the instinctual call to leave. He describes how animals are leaving something not seeking something when they escape.

### **QUESTION: Discuss the reason for animals escaping the zoo. (3)**

Unsuitable enclosures

Inability to adapt to change

There is a '*measure of madness*' found in all living creatures

According to Pi, animals escape 'from something' than 'to somewhere'

## CHAPTER 11

As an example, Pi tells of a black leopard outside Zurich in the mountains of Switzerland who survived there for two months without hurting anyone. He proves his point that escaped animals are not aggressive.

**QUESTION: The stories about the escaped animals end with Pi laughing about a failed search in a Mexican jingle. What is the writer's intention? (1)**

The real author, Martel, is reminding the reader that Pi, the narrator, has experienced some ordeal and **foreshadows** the events to come.

## CHAPTER 12

Going back to the author: we learn that Pi is often upset about something, that whoever Richard Parker is, he still *'preys on his mind'*. He mentions that he visits Patel often and that every time he is at Pi's house, Pi cooks very spicy food.

**QUESTION: The diction in Chapter 12 foreshadows the story Pi is relating to the author. Critically comment on one example from the text. (3)**

*'Memory is an ocean and he bobs on its surface.'* The words *'ocean'* and *'bobs'* imply that Pi's story has something to do with the ocean.

*'Richard Parker preys on his mind'*. The reader is wondering what role Richard Parker plays in Pi's life and how important he is to Pi. The word *'preys'* implies that Richard Parker could be dangerous.

## CHAPTER 13

Pi focuses on animal training especially lion taming.

Pi says that if you fall into a lion's pit, he will eat you because you invaded his territory – NOT because he was hungry or aggressive. He discusses the act of establishing dominance over a lion with a whip to accomplish the alpha male status.

The tamer uses his brain to control the animal; he does not need physical strength to establish this. Pi mentions Mr Hediger, a director of the Basel Zoo, who said that superiority is gained by intimidation.

Animal trainers enter empty cages, then let the animals in. This shows the animals that the trainer is the leader, the alpha male.

An omega male is more likely to be submissive to taming than an alpha male, which is usually the dominant and most powerful male in a pack or pride. This calms most animals to know their place in the order of things.

**QUESTION: According to Pi, state what makes lion taming possible. (3)**

Lions are territorial.

Lions know they can overpower the animal trainer but they accept his leadership because he provides food, safety and order.

In this way, the lion tamer becomes the alpha-male and the lion becomes submissive to the lion trainer.

**CHAPTER 14**

Pi notes the lion with the lowest social standing in the pride—the ‘*omega animal*’—is easiest to train. In general, ‘*socially inferior*’ animals will make better efforts to befriend their keepers.

**QUESTIONS:**

**1. State the important point Pi makes about the animal kingdom in this chapter.(2)**

Socially inferior animals are the most compliant because they have something to gain from the relationship with their keepers. This explains why an animal that is strong will submit to a human being.

**2. Discuss the terms used by Pi to describe the social hierarchy in animals. (3)**

He uses the Greek alphabet to show the social ranking of animals. He describes the position of each lion in their relationship to one another. They have ordered places within the alphabet.

1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>A</b>	=	<b>ALPHA</b>	<b>leader</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>B</b>	=	<b>BETA</b>	<b>strong and dangerous</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Γ</b>	=	<b>GAMMA</b>	<b>strong and dangerous</b>
Last	<b>Ω</b>	=	<b>OMEGA</b>	<b>weak and follow followers</b>

Pi's own nickname,  $\square$  is unending and irrational.

Animals prefer clear boundaries and will choose order over ambition.

## CHAPTER 15

The visiting writer observes adult Pi's home, which he describes as 'a temple.' Pi has shrines to the Hindu god Ganesha and to the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, a Christian icon.

His home is decorated with images of other Hindu gods, a Bible, a crucifix, a cloth with Arabic writing and a prayer rug.

### **QUESTION: What do these items of devotion suggest about Pi? (3)**

The house is like a temple.

There are statues and shrines of Hindu divinities, representations of Christianity (the Cross, the Virgin Mary, the Bible) and items of Islam (Kaaba, prayer rug).

Pi appears to be a very pious (holy) man and seems to be practising all three religions simultaneously.

## CHAPTER 16

Pi believes we are all born in limbo 'until some figure introduces us to God.'

He tells how he was born into Hinduism and went to a Hindu temple with his Auntie Rohini at a young age.

Pi describes the symbols, rites and images that define his Hindu faith.

Hinduism helps him 'see my place in the universe.'

He talks about feeling comfortable in Hinduism and his 'hunger' for prasada, a Hindu ritual where the person cooks food for God who blesses it so that the person can be blessed when he eats it. Religion is more than a rite and ritual.

Life makes sense to Pi when he practices Hinduism.

Pi tells a story of women dancing with Lord Krishna. When they tried to keep him, he vanished. He states that we must not be possessive of God.

He believes Christians, Hindus and Muslims are all reflections of one another.

They all want to understand the universe and join their souls to the cosmic world.

All three religions see the divine, or God, in everything, and believe in an all-embracing love.

## **QUESTIONS:**

**1.1 'We are all born like Catholics, aren't we – in limbo, without religion, until some figure introduces us to God?' Explain what Pi means by this statement. (2)**

We are not born as Catholics but we are born without religion.

We are in 'limbo' (a state of uncertainty) until we discover God for ourselves.

**1.2 Explain what point Pi is making when he tells the story about Lord Krishna. (3)**

This parable is teaching us a spiritual lesson.

Pi believes that there is more than one truth and people should not be possessive about their own religions or insist upon one religious truth.

## **CHAPTER 17**

Pi relates how Lord Krishna leads him to Jesus Christ. He relates how at age 14, he goes on a family vacation to hills of Munnar.

There are three hills in Munnar and each has a holy building.

One hill has a Hindu Temple, the other hill a mosque and the last one a Christian church. Pi is amazed by the church's beauty but confused by the notion of sacrifice associated with Christianity.

He gets to know Father Martin, the parish priest. Pi does not think Christianity's human and vulnerable Jesus compares to Hinduism's magnificent gods, but he is still fascinated by the faith.

**QUESTION: Why is it easy for Pi to embrace two religions i.e. Hinduism and Christianity, at this stage? (3)**

Hinduism embraces a diversity of beliefs so Pi is used to many manifestations of one God.

For Pi, another version of religion is not in conflict with his Hindu religion.

On the contrary, it enhances his existing beliefs by providing another way of knowing God.

## CHAPTER 19

Pi continues to visit the baker and learns more about Islam, which he calls 'a beautiful religion of brotherhood and devotion.' He begins joining Muslims in prayer.

Pi goes to the mosque with the baker, listens to the Imam, the religious leader, and prays. Pi kneels and touches his head to the floor just like the baker does and Pi feels a deeply religious contact

## CHAPTER 20

The baker, named Mr. Satish Kumar like Pi's biology teacher, is a Sufi or Muslim mystic.

The two Mr. Kumars were 'prophets of my Indian youth,' says Pi.

Mr. Kumar the mystic's humble living quarters feel sacred to him.

Pi experiences an incredible closeness with the divine on two occasions:

Once in India, after praying and looking at the sea; then he feels the same closeness years later in Canada on a snowy day when seeing a vision of the virgin Mary.

Pi says, 'The presence of God is the finest of rewards.'

### QUESTION: Explain why Pi finds the Muslim Sufi's name so pleasing? (3)

His name is Satish Kumar, the same name as his atheist and biology teacher.

Both Kumars have a positive influence on Pi's life.

The first Mr. Kumar inspires Pi to study zoology in college, while the second Mr. Kumar inspires him to study theology.

Satish Kumar, the  
religious Muslim baker  
seeking union with God

Satish Kumar, the atheist  
biology teacher seeking  
understanding through  
science

Pi said both Mr. Kumars were his prophets.