

Question
#2

(40) In the destruction of family, the eternal *dharmā* of family perishes; when *dharmā* perishes, its absence also conquers the whole family.

(41) Son of Vrishni,¹⁹ when the absence of *dharmā* has conquered, the women of the family are defiled, and caste-confusion is born in the corruption of women;²⁰

(42) the caste-blending of the family and the family-destroyers indeed brings them hell: bereft of offerings of rice and water,²¹ their ancestors will surely fall.

(43) The *dharmā* of caste, and the eternal *dharmā* of family, are uprooted by these wrongful acts of family-destroyers, since they create a blending of caste.²²

(44) Mover of Men, those humans whose *dharmā* has vanished will live for ever in hell; we have heard this over and over again.

(45) Oh! we are set upon doing a great harm; we are eager to kill our own people, all for the sake of pleasure and a kingdom.

(46) If the sons of Dhritarashtra, weapons in hand, should strike me unarmed in battle, this would be greater peace for me!

(47) After he spoke, Arjuna sat down on the chariot seat, in the midst of battle, and let go of both his bow and arrow, his whole being recoiling in grief.

Sanjaya said:

Question
3

(1)

Krishna,
Killer of Madhu,
spoke these words
to the despairing one
whose eyes were
filled with tears,
and who was overcome
with pity.

AGAVAD GITA

THE SECOND DISCOURSE

19

both armies,
spoke these words
to the despairing one:

The Blessed One said:

(2)

How does
this faint heart
come to you
in time of difficulty?
This is not suitable
for a noble one;¹
it is not heavenly,
and brings on disgrace.

Reason to fight:
to not be a
coward.

(11)

You speak as if
with words of wisdom,
[but] you have mourned
that which is
not to be mourned.
Wise men mourn neither
those whose life-breath is gone,
nor those whose breath remains.

Do not become

a cowardly eunuch,²

Son of Pritha;

(3)

Retort: do not pity the dead.
pity the living, and above
all, those who live
without love - JKR

I have never

not existed;

nor have you, nor have

these lords of men.

Nor will we

cease to exist,

all of us;

from now onwards.

9

Scorcher of the Enemy,³

after speaking

to bristling-haired Krishna,

thick-haired Arjuna

said: 'I will not fight!'

He spoke this way

to Krishna, the cow finder,

and then became quiet.

(10)

Son of Bharata,

bristling-haired Krishna

seemed to

begin to laugh,

and in between

(13)

Just as childhood,
youth and age
exist in the body
of the embodied self,⁴
in this way, one takes on
another body.

Those who see clearly
are not confused by this.

Krishna
says
nobody is
eternal so
kill them all
five.

14

Son of Kunti,
the touches of the senses,
bringing pain and pleasure,
heat and cold:
they come and go,
and they don't last for ever.
You must try to endure them,
son of Bharata.⁷

15

Bull among Men,
the one whom
these touches
do not make tremble,
the one for whom
pain and pleasure are alike,
that one is ready
for immortality.

16

Being is not found
in that which does not exist.
Non-being is not found
in that which exists.
The limit of both
being and non-being
is perceived by those
who see the truth.



17

Know this:
that with which
all this world is woven
is not to be destroyed.
No one is able

to effect
the destruction
of the imperishable.

18

These bodies
have an end;
but they are said
to belong to the eternal
embodied self -
that which is never lost
and cannot be measured.
So fight, Son of Bharata!

19

The one who perceives
the self as a killer,
and the one who perceives
the self as killed:
neither of them know
that this self
does not kill,
nor is it killed.

20

"The self is not born
nor does it ever die.
Once it has been, this self will
never cease to be again.
Unborn,⁸ eternal,
continuing from the old,
the self is not killed
when the body is killed.⁹

21

The one who
knows the eternal
and the indestructible,

that which is unborn,
and imperishable,
how does he cause to die,
Son of Pritha, and whom?
How does he kill, and whom?

(22)
Just as one
throws out old clothes
and then takes on
other, new ones;
so the embodied self
casts out old bodies
as it gets
other, new ones.

(23)
Weapons do not
cut the self,
nor does fire
burn it,
nor do waters
drench it,
nor does wind
dry it.

(24)
The self
is not to be pierced,
nor burned,
nor drenched,
nor dried;
it is eternal,
all-pervading and fixed –
unmoving from the beginning.

(25)
The self
is not readily seen;
by sight or mind;
it is said to be formless
and unchanging;
so, when you
have known this,
you should not mourn.

(26)
And even
if you think
the self is
eternally born,
or eternally dead –
still, you should not
mourn it,
Strong-Armed One.¹⁰

(27)
Death is fixed
for those
who are born,
and birth is fixed
for those who die;
since such an end
is certain,
you should not grieve.

28
Son of Bharata,
beings have beginnings
which are formless,
and middle states
which do have form,

Don't
cling to
actionLet effort
be
intrinsic to
the same

(47) Your authority is
in action alone,
and never
in its fruits;
motive should never be
in the fruits of action,
nor should you cling
to inaction.¹⁴

(48) Abiding in yoga,
engage in actions!
Let go of clinging,
and let fulfillment
and frustration
be the same;
for it is said
yoga is equanimity.

(49) Winner of Wealth,
action is far inferior
to the yoga of insight.
Look for refuge
in insight;
for those who are
motivated by fruits
are to be pitied.

(50) The one who is
joined to insight
casts off
both good
and evil acts.
So join yourself
to yoga;
yoga is ease in action.

yoga ... that we
of insight
understand this
are self

Question
#3
(31-35)

(31) And as you discern
your own dharma,
you should not waver.
For the warrior,
there can be found
nothing greater
than battle
for the sake of dharma.

(34) And people
will tell stories
of your own
eternal disgrace;
and for those
who are esteemed,
disgrace
surpasses death.

(35) The warriors
in their great chariots
will think you shrunk
from the joys of battle
because of fear;
and where they once
thought of you highly,
they will now think you unworthy.

(37) If you are killed,
you shall reach heaven;
or if you triumph,
you shall enjoy the earth;
so stand up,
Son of Kunti,
firm in your resolve
to fight!

(38) When you have made
pleasure and pain the same -
also gain and loss,
and victory and defeat,
then join yourself
to battle;
and in this way,
you will not cause harm

Question
#3
(37 - 38)

Question
#4

(51)
The wise ones
joined to insight,
and who have
let go of the fruit,
freed from
the bonds of birth,
they go to that place
which is without pain.

(52)
When your insight
crosses well beyond
the tangle of confusion,
then you will
become disillusioned
with those revelations
which had been heard,
and may be heard [again].¹⁵

(53)
When your insight
is in deep focus,
and when it stands
motionless,
ignoring the revelation
which had been heard,
then you will
reach yoga.

Arjuna said:

54
Lovely-Haired One,
what language is there
for a person
whose wisdom is firm
and meditation steady?

How would the one
whose thoughts are firm
speak? Or sit? Or move about?

The Blessed One said:

(55)
Son of Pritha,
when a person renounces
all the desires
in the mind,
that one is said
to be content
in the self, by the self,
and firm in wisdom.

(56)
The person whose mind
is free from anxiety
about sorrows,
and free from greed
for pleasures,
with rage, passion and fear gone,
whose thoughts are firm,
that one is said to be a sage.

57
The person who has
no longing anywhere,
coming across
this and that,
pure and impure,
who neither loves nor hates,
that one's wisdom
stands firm.

the one whose senses
are in control -
that one's wisdom stands firm.

(62)
Clinging is born
to someone
who dwells on
the spheres of the senses;
desire is born
from clinging;
and anger is born
from desire.

(63)
Confusion arises
from anger;
and from confusion
memory strays;
from the fall of memory
comes the loss of insight;
and one is lost
when one's insight is lost.

(64)
One not joined
to passion and hatred,
always moving
in the spheres of the senses
by the senses,
the one who thus restrains the self,
and who governs the self,
attains peace.

(65)
In calmness,
there occurs
the withdrawal

of all pain;
for that person
whose thought is placid,
insight becomes steady
right away.

(66)
There is no insight
for one who has not
practised yoga;
there is no peace
for the one
who does not concentrate;¹⁸
and from where does pleasure come
for the one who has no peace?

67
When the mind
is led by
the roving senses,
then it steals
one's wisdom,
like the wind
steals a ship
on the water.

68
Strong-Armed One,
the wisdom
of the person
who has drawn in
the senses
from their objects
in every sphere,
that one's wisdom stands firm.

"And so, also, when he thinks, or reasons, or feels, let him so regard his thought that being strenuous, thoughtful, and mindful he may, whilst in the world, overcome the grief which arises from the craving due to ideas, or to reasoning, or to feeling.

"Those who, either now or after I am dead, shall be a lamp unto themselves, relying upon themselves only and not relying upon any external help, but holding fast to the truth as their lamp, and seeking their salvation in the truth alone, shall not look for assistance to any one besides themselves, it is they, Ananda, among my bhikkhus, who shall reach the very topmost height! But they must be anxious to learn....

"My age is now full ripe, my life draws to its close:

I leave you, I depart, relying on myself alone!

Be earnest then, O brethren, holy, full of thought!

Be steadfast in resolve! Keep watch o'er your own hearts!

Who wearies not, but holds fast to his truth and law,

Shall cross this sea of life, shall make an end of grief."

Part II: Treading the Path to Nirvana

Introduction

One may master the teachings contained in the preceding discourses and still not quite catch the spirit communicated by Gautama to his early disciples—the spirit which animated Buddhism as it spread more and more widely and began to be a significant force in the religious life of India. But no great religion can be fully understood unless that spirit is apprehended. Only then does one realize what the essential emphases are and how the basic ideas are related together; he sees only then, in the case of Buddhism, what they meant in the living experience of those who followed Buddha into the homeless life to seek the spiritual goal, leaving behind the distractions of the world in order to achieve the freedom and peace of Nirvana.

For this purpose, one looks for a collection of hymns expressing

the eager enthusiasm of Gautama's early disciples, and for a document summarizing his teachings—not in terms of the setting in which they were uttered, but as they were selected and arranged by someone who wanted them in the form of a manual capable of giving inspiration, support, and practical guidance in the daily lives of his devoted followers.

Happily, this need is ideally met in the ancient Buddhist scriptures. We find there the *Psalm of the Early Buddhists*, which express in very revealing fashion the grateful devotion and aspiring commitment of the monks and nuns who for the sake of Nirvana renounced the entanglements of ordinary life, as Buddha did, and gave themselves single-mindedly to their spiritual task. And we also find the *Dhammapada* (the "Way of Truth," or the "Way of the Doctrine"). No other compendium of Buddha's teaching gives such a clear disclosure of the dynamic zeal as well as the religious perspective which was absorbed from his energetic and winsome personality by his followers. The reader can hardly fail to catch the vigor of this spirit—especially the note of hopeful pursuit of the path of self-conquest, of aggressive alertness in face of the temptation to sloth and inertia, and of eager determination to allow nothing to block the way to the final achievement.

Let us take the *Dhammapada* first.

1. The Way of Truth

No one knows just when this magnificent document was composed. It forms a part of the Sutta Pitaka; and it consists of selected utterances presumed to have been spoken by the Buddha, organized under topical heads and arranged in a sequence believed by the composer best to clarify the gospel of early Buddhism. It was apparently in existence by the time of the Emperor Asoka, 250 B.C., and it quickly became popular with all schools of Buddhist thought and practice. It is unmatched for its powerful use of the technique of partial repetition, and for the sustained note of moral earnestness which pervades it. Lin Yutang calls it "a great spiritual testimony, one of the very few religious masterpieces in the world, combining genuineness of spiritual passion with a happy gift of literary expression."¹ The selections that follow comprise ap-

¹The Wisdom of China and India (Random House, 1942), p. 326.

The virtuous man is happy in this world, and he is happy in the next; he is happy in both. He is happy when he thinks of the good he has done; he is still more happy when advancing on the good path.

The thoughtless man, even if he can recite a large portion of the law, but is not a doer of it, has no share in the religious life, but is like a cowherd counting the cows of others.

The follower of the law, even if he can recite only a small portion of it but, having forsaken passion and hatred and foolishness, possesses true knowledge and serenity of mind; he, attached to nothing in this world or that to come, has indeed a share in the religious life.

Question
#8

Chapter II ON EARNESTNESS

Earnestness is the path of Nirvana; thoughtlessness the path of death. Those who are in earnest do not die; those who are thoughtless are as if dead already.

Having understood this clearly, those who have progressed in earnestness delight in earnestness, and rejoice in the knowledge of the elect.

These wise people, meditative, steady, always exerting strong powers, attain to Nirvana, the highest happiness.

If an earnest person has roused himself, if he is not forgetful, if his deeds are pure, if he acts with consideration, if he restrains himself, and lives according to law—then his glory will increase.

By rousing himself, by earnestness, by restraint and control, the wise man may make for himself an island which no flood can overwhelm.

Fools follow after vanity. The wise man keeps his earnestness as his best jewel.

Follow not after vanity, nor after the enjoyment of sense pleasures and lust! He who is earnest and meditative obtains ample joy.

When the man of understanding drives away vanity by earnestness, he, the wise, climbing the terraced heights of wisdom, looks down upon the fools; free from sorrow he looks upon the sorrowing

¹The *dhamma*, or doctrine.

crowd, as one that stands on a mountain looks down upon them that stand upon the plain.

Earnest among the thoughtless, awake among the sleepers, the wise man advances like a racer, leaving behind the hack.

By earnestness did Maghavan [Indra] rise to the lordship of the gods. People praise earnestness; thoughtlessness is always blamed.

A bhikshu who delights in earnestness, who looks with fear on thoughtlessness, moves about like fire, burning all his fetters, small or large.

A bhikshu who delights in earnestness, who looks with fear on thoughtlessness, cannot fall away from his perfect state—he is close to Nirvana.

Chapter III THOUGHT

As a fletcher makes straight his arrow, a wise man makes straight his trembling and unsteady thought, which is difficult to guard, difficult to hold back.

As a fish taken from his watery home and thrown on the dry ground, our thought trembles all over in order to escape the domination of Mara, the tempter.

It is good to tame the mind, which is difficult to hold in and flighty, rushing wherever it lists; a tamed mind brings happiness.

Let the wise man guard his thoughts, for they are difficult to perceive, very subtle, and they rush wherever they list; thoughts well-guarded bring happiness.

Those who bridle their mind, which travels far, moves about alone, is incorporeal, and hides in the chamber of the heart, will be free from the bonds of Mara, the tempter.

If a man's faith is unsteady, if he does not know the true law, if his peace of mind is troubled, his knowledge will never be perfect.

If a man's thoughts are not scattered, if his mind is not perplexed, if he has ceased to think of good or evil, then there is no fear for him while he is watchful.

Knowing that his body is fragile like a jar, and making his thought firm like a fortress, one should attack Mara, the tempter, with the