

The Questions of Milinda

First Night:

The King, the Monk, and Pain

Ignorance and Pain

मिलिन्दप्रश्न

The Questions of Milinda
Chapter II, Section 18

अध्वानोऽविद्यामूलकाः

Ignorance as the Root of the Three Times

राजाऽहं भन्ते नागसेन अतीतस्यध्वनः किं मूलं अनागतस्याध्वनः किं मूलम्
प्रत्युत्पन्नस्याध्वनः किं मूलमिति ॥

And the King said, "O Venerable Nagasena, what is the root of the past, and the root of the future, and the root of the present?"

अतीतस्य च महाराज अध्वनः अनागतस्य चाध्वनः प्रत्युत्पन्नस्य चाध्वनोऽविद्या
मूलम् ॥

"The root of the past, my King, and the root of the future, and the root of the present as well, is ignorance.

अविद्याप्रत्ययात् संस्काराः

"And because of ignorance, we collect new karma."

संस्कारप्रत्ययाद् विज्ञानं

"And because of new karma, a new consciousness grows."

विज्ञानप्रत्ययान्नामरूपं

"And because of this consciousness, name and form [the mind and body in the womb] begin."

नामरूपप्रत्ययात् षडायतनां

"And because of this name and form, the six doors of sense begin."

षडायतनप्रत्ययात् स्पर्शः

“And because of the six doors of sense, contact is made with the outside world.”

स्पर्शप्रत्ययाद् वेदना

“And because of this contact, we start to have feelings.”

वेदनाप्रत्ययात् तृष्णा

“And because of these feelings, we start to crave things.”

तृष्णाप्रत्ययादुपादानं

“And because of this craving, we begin to grasp for things.”

उपादानप्रत्ययाद् भवः

“And because we grasp for things, our karma becomes ripe.”

भवप्रत्ययाजातिः

“And because our karma has become ripe, we are born once again.”

जातिप्रत्ययाज्जरामरणशोकपरिदेवदुःखदीर्घनस्योपायासाः सम्भवन्ति ॥

“And because we are born once again, everything else begins again—we begin to age again, and we die, and we live in misery, and cry out in pain, and suffer, and all the rest—all this weeping in the mind.

एवमेतस्य केवलस्याध्वनः पूर्वा कोटिर्न प्रज्ञायत इति ॥

“And thus it is that we can see no beginning point at all, to any one of these times.”

कल्योऽसि भदन्त नागसेनेति ॥

And the King said, “You are so good, my Venerable Nagasena!”



A Broken World

Katha Yoannain

The Gospel According to John, 3:6

*To gegennaimenon ek tais sarkos
sarks estin,
kai to gegennaimenon ek tou pneumatos
pneuma estin.*

That which is born of the flesh is flesh;
and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.



The Gospel of John 6:27

*Ergadzesthe mai tain brosin tain apollumenain,
alla ten brosin tain menousan
eis dzoain ainoion.*

Labour not for the meat which perisheth,
but for that meat which endureth
unto everlasting life.



The Gospel of John 12:25

*Ho filon tain psukain autou
apolluei autain,
kai ho mison tain psukain autou
en to kosmo touto
eis dzoain aionion fulaksei autain.*

He that loveth his life
shall lose it;
and he that hateth his life
in this world
shall keep it unto life eternal.

The Questions of Milinda

Second Night:

Alexander, Love, and the Horse of Wood



Ultimate Love

From Book IV, Chapter 4.16, of the Questions of Milinda (Rhys-Davids translation, for education purposes only!):

And the King said, "Venerable Nagasena, it has been said by the Blessed One:

Eleven advantages, O brethren, may be anticipated from practicing, making a habit of, enlarging within one, using as a means of advancement, and as a basis of conduct, pursuing after, accumulating, and rising well up to the very heights of the emancipation of heart, arising from a feeling of love (towards all beings).

And what are these eleven?

He who does so sleeps in peace, and in peace does he awake.

He dreams no sinful dreams.

He becomes dear to men, and to the beings who are not men.

The gods watch over him.

Neither fire, nor poison, nor sword works any harm to him.

Quickly and easily does he become tranquillised.

The aspect of his countenance is calm.

Undismayed does he meet death, and should he not press through to the Supreme Condition (of Arhatship), then he is sure of rebirth in the Brahma world.



A New Commandment

Katha Yoannain

The Gospel According to John, 13:34-35

*Entolain kainain didomi humin,
hina agapate allailous,
kathos aigapaisa humas,
hina kai humeis agapate allailous.*

A new commandment I give unto you,
That ye love one another;
as I have loved you,
that ye also love one another.

By this shall all men know
that ye are my disciples,
if ye have love
one to another.



Ye Are Gods

The Gospel of John, 10:34

*Apekri-thai autois ho Yaisous,
ouk estin gegrammenon
en to nomo humon hoti
ego eipa: Theoi este.*

Jesus answered them,
Is it not written in your law,
'I said, Ye are gods'?

ALEXANDER'S CAMPAIGNS IN EUROPE AND ASIA 336-323 BCE



The Questions of Milinda

Third Day:
Moses, Christ, and Worldview



28. Buddha attended by Vajrapani



वज्रपाणि वज्रासुरहर्षिः

The World is Available

मिलिन्दप्रश्न

The Questions of Milinda

द्वितीयः परिच्छेदः लक्षणप्रश्नः

Chapter II: Questions on the Signs

रथोपमया ऽनात्मवाददीपनम् ॥१॥

Section 1: Shedding Light on the Question of No-Self, using the Example of the Chariot

अथ खलु मिलिन्दो राजा आयुष्मन्तम् नागसेनमेतदवोचत्

And then King Milinda said to the venerable monk Nagasena:

कथां भदन्तो ज्ञायते किंनामाऽसि भदन्ते ति ।

“How is the Venerable One known? By what name should we address the Venerable One?”

नागसेन इति खल्वहं महाराज जाने । नागसेन इति खलु माम् महाराज
सब्रह्मचारिणः समुदाचरन्ति ।

Venerable Nagasena replied: “I am known, O Great King, as ‘Nagasena.’ The ones of pure conduct with whom I live call me by the name of ‘Nagasena.’

अपि च मातापितरौ नाम कुर्वन्ति नागसेन इति वा शुरसेन इति वा वीरसेन इति
वा सिंहसेन इति व ।

“But it doesn’t really matter whether my parents had chosen to call me ‘Nagasena,’ or ‘Shurasena,’ or ‘Virasena,’ or ‘Sinhasena.’

अपि च खलु महाराज संख्य समज्ञा प्रज्ञप्तिर्व्यवहारो नाममात्रम् यदिदं नागसेन
इति । न ह्यत्र पुद्गल उपलभ्यत इति ।

“You see, Your Highness, they are all just different names for the same thing, names that are applied to me. It is all just names, and so is ‘Nagasena.’ There is no person to be found here, none at all.”



Section 1 (continued):

किन्तु खलु त्वं पादेनागतोऽसि उताहो वाहनेनेति ।

“May I ask, Your Highness, whether you came to this meeting on foot, or did you ride on something?”

नाहं भदन्ते पदेनागच्छामि । रथेनाहमागतोऽस्मीति ।

“I did not, of course, O Venerable One, come here on foot. I came by chariot.”

चेत्त्वं महाराज रथेनागतोऽसि रथं मे आरोचय । किन्तु खलु महाराज ईषा रथ इति ।

“If you did come in a chariot, Your Highness, then I’m sure you can show me where the chariot is. Is it the pole, Your Highness, which is the chariot?”

न हि भदन्तेति ।

“No, Venerable One.”

अक्षो रथ इति ।

“Is the axle the chariot?”

न हि भदन्तेति ।

“No, Venerable One.”

चक्रानि रथ इति ।

“Are the wheels the chariot?”

न हि भदन्तेति ।

“No, Venerable One.”

रथपञ्जरं रथ इति ।

“Is the frame the chariot?”

न हि भदन्तेति ।

“No, Venerable One.”

रथदण्डको रथ इति ।

“Is the crossbar the chariot?”

न हि भदन्तेति ।

“No, Venerable One.”

युगं रथ इति ।

“Is the yoke the chariot?”

न हि भदन्तेति ।

“No, Venerable One.”

रश्मयो रथ इति ।

“Are the reins the chariot?”

न हि भदन्तेति ।

“No, Venerable One.”

प्रतोदयष्टी रथ इति ।

“Is the goad the chariot?”

न हि भदन्तेति ।

“No, Venerable One.”

किन्तु खलु महाराज ईषाक्षचक्र रथपञ्जररथदण्डयुगरश्मिप्रतोदारथ इति ।

“Then, Your Highness, are all of them together—the pole, the axle, the wheels, the frame, the crossbar, the yoke, the reins, and the goad—the chariot?”

न हि भदन्तेति ।

“No, Venerable One.”

किम् पुनर्महाराज ईषाक्षचक्र रथपञ्जररथदण्डयुगरश्मिप्रतोदा रथ इति ।

“But is, Your Highness, the chariot something *other* than all of them together—the pole, the axle, the wheels, the frame, the crossbar, the yoke, the reins, and the goad?”

न हि भदन्तेति ।

“No, Venerable One.”

तमहं महाराज पृच्छन् पृच्छन् न पश्यामि रथम् । रथशब्द एव नु खलु महाराज रथ इति ।

“And so no matter how much I keep asking you, I don’t see any chariot here. Is it the case then that the mere word, ‘chariot,’ is the chariot?”

न हि भदन्तेति ।

“No, it is not, Venerable One.”

क पुनरत्र रथः । अलीकं त्वं महाराज भाषसे मृषवादं नास्ति रथः ।

“Well where then is your chariot? Have you lied to me then, Your Majesty? Cannot you speak the truth? There is no chariot!”



World-Seeds

तृतीय परिच्छेदः विमतिच्छेदनप्रश्नः ।

Chapter III: Questions Meant to Remove Doubts

कर्मस्वकाः सत्वाः

Section 2: On the Karma that People Have Taken Upon Themselves

राजाऽह भदन्त नागसेन केन कारणेन मनुष्या न सर्वे समकाः

And the King said, “O reverend one, Nagasena, what is that makes people so different, in so many different ways?

अन्येऽल्पायुष्काः अन्ये दीर्घायुष्काः

“Some live only a short life, while others live a long one.

अन्ये बह्वाबाधाः अन्येऽल्पाबाधाः

“Some get hurt by life a lot, while others aren’t hurt so much.

अन्ये दुर्वर्णाः अन्ये वर्णवन्तः

“Some are ugly, while others are beautiful.

अन्येऽल्पशक्ताः अन्ये महाशक्ताः

“Some are weak, while others are strong.

अन्येऽल्पभोगाः अन्ये महाभोगाः

“Some have only a little money, while others have a lot.

अन्ये निचकुलीनाः अन्ये महाकुलीनाः

“Some are born in a lowly family, while others are born in high family.

अन्ये दुष्प्रज्ञाः अञ्जे प्रज्ञावन्त इति

“Some are poor in wisdom, while others are rich in wisdom. Why is that?”}

स्थविर आह कस्मात् पुनर्महाराज वृक्ष न सर्वे समकाः

And the elder replied, “Well what is it, Your Highness, that makes the fruits of plants so different, in so many different ways?”

अन्येलाः अन्ये लवणाः

“Some are sour, while others are salty.

अन्ये तिक्तकाः अन्ये सट्टकाः

“Some are bitter, while others are acidic.

अन्ये कषायाः अन्ये मधुरा इति ।

“Some have a metallic taste, while others sweet.

मन्ये भदन्त बीजानं नानाकरणेनेऽति ।

“It seems to me, my Venerable One, that it each of the different types of seeds that causes these things.”

एवमेव खलु महाराज कर्मणां नानाकरणेन मनुष्या न सर्वे समकाः ।

“And thus too is it, my good Highness, that it is each of the different types of karmic seeds that makes people so different, in so many different ways.”



The Ten Commandments

אלוהיך 'ה אנכי
I am The Lord, your God

פני על אחרים אלוהים לך יהיו לא
Do not worship other gods

לשוא 'ה שם את תשא לא
Do not take God's name in vain

לקדשו השבת יום את שמור
Keep the Sabbath

אמך ואת אביך את כבד
Honor your father and your mother

תנאף לא
Do not commit adultery

תרצח לא
Do not murder

תגנוב לא
Do not steal

שקר עד ברעך תענה לא
Do not bear false witness

תחמוד לא
Do not covet



God the Father

Katha Yoannain

The Gospel According to John, 6:27

*gErgadzesthe tain brosin . . .
hain ho huios tou anthropou
humin dosei;
touton gar ho pater
esfragisen ho theos.*

Labor rather for that meat
which the Son of man
shall give unto you:
for him hath
God the Father sealed.



What Causes Bad Things

The Gospel of John, 5:14

*Meta tauta heuriskei auton
ho Yaesous en to hiero
kai eipen auto:
Ide hugiais gegonas.
Maikei hamartane,
ina me kheiron
soi ti genaitai.*

Afterward Jesus findeth him
in the temple,
and said unto him,
Behold,
thou art made whole:
sin no more,
lest a worse thing come unto thee.



Understanding is What Frees Us

The Gospel of John, 8:32

*Kai gnosesthe tain alaitheian,
kai hai alaitheia
eleutherosei humas.*

And ye shall know the truth,
and the truth shall set you free.

