

★ The Yaksha's Questions 49 - 73

Mahabharatha Collection



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Description: The profound dialogue between Yudhishtira and the Yaksha, exploring fundamental questions on dharma, morality, happiness, and life's essential truths



Tags: yaksha-prashna, yudhishtira, dharma, mahabharata, ancient-wisdom, philosophy



Section 1: Character, Soul, and Dharma (Q49-73)

No.	Question (English / Sanskrit)	Answer	Wisdom / Explanation
49	In what is comprised all happiness? (<i>Kimsvid eka padam sukham?</i>)	Śīlam (Good Character)	True character is <i>Sauśīlyam</i> (accessibility). Rama exemplified this by embracing Guha, Sugriva, and Sabari, transcending social barriers.
50	What is the soul of a person? (<i>Kimsvid ātmā manuṣyasya?</i>)	Putra (The Son)	A father fulfills desires through his child. As per the Vedas: "You are born from my limbs... my soul is named son."
51	Which is the friend bestowed by divinity? (<i>Kim devakṛtaṁ sakhā?</i>)	Bhāryā (The Wife)	The wife is the companion and friend bestowed upon man by the gods to walk life's path together.
52	What is it that aids to sustain him? (<i>Upajīvanam kiṁ?</i>)	Parjanya (Rain)	Rain is fundamental sustenance. Legend tells of a Pandya King who "arrested" clouds until Indra signed a treaty ensuring rain.

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53	What is his greatest resort? (<i>Kimsvidasya parāyaṇam?</i>)	Dānam (Charity)	Charity is the ultimate refuge for a human being, providing support in this life and the next.
54	What is the best among laudable things? (<i>Dhanyānām uttamam kiṁ svid?</i>)	Dākṣyam (Skill)	Nala's Story: Even after losing his kingdom, Nala survived because of his supreme skill in chariot driving and cooking.
55	What is the best among all assets? (<i>Dhanānām syād kim uttamam?</i>)	Śrutam (Learning)	Wisdom gained through <i>listening</i> . Like a musician listening to songs to gain <i>Gnana</i> , this wisdom provides "Tejas".
56	What is the best of all gains? (<i>Lābhānām uttamam kiṁ syāt?</i>)	Ārogyam (Health)	Draupadi's Story: Krishna ate the last grain from the Akshaya Patra, satisfying the universe's hunger and preserving the Pandavas' health.
57	What is the foremost happiness? (<i>Sukhānām syād kim uttamam?</i>)	Tuṣṭi (Contentment)	Happiness is realizing "this is enough." A watchman sleeping soundly is often happier than the restless, wealthy owner.
58	What is the highest Dharma in the world? (<i>Kasccha Dharma paro loka?</i>)	Ānṛśaṁsyam (Kindness)	Saving the Enemy: Yudhishtira rescued Duryodhana from Gandharvas, proving that kindness is the highest Dharma.
59	What is that Dharma which always bears fruit? (<i>Kasccha Dharma sadā balaha?</i>)	Trayi Dharma (Vedic Dharma)	Refers to the Three Vedas (Rig, Yajus, Sama). Practicing the rituals and knowledge preserved in these branches always yields fruit.
60	By controlling what do people	Manah (The Mind)	The mind must be controlled to prioritize duty over entertainment

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	never grieve? (<i>Kim niyamna śochanti?</i>)		(e.g., choosing chanting over a movie).
61	With whom does an alliance never break? (<i>Kai cha sandhir na jīryate?</i>)	Sat-sangam (The Good)	Associations with the wise never decay. As Shankara taught: Good association leads to detachment.
62	By renouncing what does one become lovable? (<i>Kim nu hitvā priyo bhavati?</i>)	Mānam (Pride)	Varaha Avatar: The Lord took the form of a boar to save Earth, abandoning pride. One must abandon <i>Abhimanam</i> (ego) to be dear to all.
63	By renouncing what does one never suffer grief? (<i>Kim nu hitvā na śocati?</i>)	Krodham (Anger)	Specifically referring to <i>Manyu</i> (long-term, suppressed rage). Abandoning deep-seated anger ensures one does not grieve.
64	By renouncing what does one become wealthy? (<i>Kim nu hitvā arthavān bhavati?</i>)	Kāmam (Desire)	Mysore Pak Analogy: Eating sweets satisfies desire but costs health. True wealth is <i>Vairāgyam</i> (detachment) from harmful desires.
65	By renouncing what does one become happy? (<i>Kim nu hitvā sukhī bhavet?</i>)	Lobham (Greed)	Gandhari's Envy: Her jealousy of Kunti led her to strike her own womb. Abandoning greed/envy leads to happiness.
66	Why does one make gifts to Brahmins? (<i>Kimartham brahmane dānam?</i>)	Dharmārtham (For Dharma)	The Story of Ghee: Sins transfer from the doer to the offering. A learned Brahmin neutralizes this "sin" through mantras.

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	Why does one make gifts to actors/dancers? (<i>Kimartham naṭa-nartake?</i>)	Yaśōrtham (For Fame)	Donations to performers or public functions are often done to achieve recognition, press coverage, or fame.
68	Why does one give presents to servants? (<i>Kimartham chaiva bhṛtyeṣu?</i>)	Bharaṇārtham (Maintenance)	Servants are given gifts for their support and livelihood. Masters should trust and support those who rely on them.
69	Why does one give to kings? (<i>Kimartham chaiva rājasu?</i>)	Bhayārtham (Out of Fear)	Taxes are paid to the King (or government) out of fear of punishment or audits, rather than love.
70	By what is the world enveloped? (<i>Kena svid āvr̥to lokaḥ?</i>)	Ajñānena (Ignorance)	Philosophically, the world is covered not just by atmosphere, but by the veil of Ignorance (<i>Ajñāna</i>).
71	Why does a thing not shine? (<i>Kena svin na prakāśate?</i>)	Tamasā (Darkness)	Silver Vessel Analogy: Just as silver tarnishes without polishing, the mind becomes dull due to <i>Tamas</i> (laziness).
72	For what reason does one give up friends? (<i>Kena tyajati mitrāṇi?</i>)	Lobhāt (Greed/Envy)	Friends are often abandoned when one becomes jealous of the other's success (e.g., a higher salary).
73	Why does one not go to heaven? (<i>Kena svargaṁ na gacchati?</i>)	Saṅgāt (Attachment)	Yashoda vs. Sumitra: Sumitra attained happiness through <i>Detached Attachment</i> —loving God (Rama) more than her own son.



Three Bonus Stories



Story 1: Detached Attachment - Yashoda vs. Sumitra

The concept of "Detached Attachment" is the balance of holding attachment to the Paramatma while remaining detached from the body.

- **Yashoda (Attachment):** She loved Krishna deeply but as her son. When he left, her profound personal attachment caused her immense sorrow (*varuttam*).
- **Sumitra (Detached Attachment):** She was the biological mother of Lakshmana. When he left for the forest, she was happy (*santōsham*).
 - **Why?** She told Lakshmana to look at Rama as his father (Dasharatha) and Sita as his mother (herself).
 - She instructed him to serve the Supreme Lord. Her attachment to God superseded her attachment to her son, leading to spiritual victory.



Story 2: Kopam vs. Krodham

The text distinguishes between two types of anger:

1. **Kopam (Short-term Frustration):** An instantaneous reaction with a cause. Example: A child steps on your toe, you yell in pain, but forget it quickly. This is temporary.
2. **Krodham / Manyu (Suppressed Rage):** Anger that is buried and cherished over a long period. Example: Remembering that toe-stepping incident 25 years later at the child's wedding.
 - **Lesson: Krodham** is the dangerous emotion that causes grief and must be abandoned.



Story 3: Tripura Samharam - The Argument to Shalya

To convince King Shalya to be the charioteer for Karna, Duryodhana used the story of Shiva destroying the three cities (**Tripura Samharam**).

- **The Chariot:** The Earth (Bhumi).
- **The Wheels:** Sun and Moon.

- **The Horses:** The Four Vedas.
- **The Weapon:** Mt. Meru (Bow), Vasuki (String), Vishnu (Arrow).
- **The Charioteer: Brahma.**

The Logic: Duryodhana argued that if Brahma (the Creator) could serve as a charioteer for Shiva, then Shalya should not feel it is beneath his dignity to drive for Karna. This broke Shalya's pride (*Mānam*).

Story 4: The Unique Namaskaram of Sri Vaishnavas

A unique aspect of the Sri Vaishnava Sampradayam, as witnessed and highlighted by **Kanchi Maha Periyava**, is the practice where elders prostrate before younger people, disregarding age differences.

The Observation by Kanchi Periyava

The incident occurred in **Kumbakonam** at the banks of the Kaveri river, where different bathing ghats existed for Advaitins, Dvaitins, and Visishtadvaitins.

- **The Wait:** After Kanchi Periyava finished his bath and cleansed his cloth, his disciples asked if he was ready to climb up the steps. Periyava refused, stating he wanted to stay and watch the Sri Vaishnavas arrive for their bath.
- **The Insight:** He explained that he specifically wanted to witness the unique sight of them prostrating to one another (*sevikkuna*) without looking at age distinctions—a practice he noted was specific to their Shastras.

Philosophical Significance

This unique custom is rooted in deep philosophical insight:

- **Divinity over Body:** The salutation is not directed toward the physical body or the individual soul (*Jivatma*), but rather to the **Paramatma** (Supreme Soul) residing within that person.
 - **Transcending Age:** This act demonstrates that salutations are not for the body, which is temporary and subject to aging, but for the eternal divinity within.
 - **Applied Philosophy:** This practice is cited as a practical application of "**Detached Attachment**"—maintaining attachment to the Paramatma while remaining detached from the physical body and social hierarchy.
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Reference

Watch the full discourse here: [Yaksha Prashna - Mahabharata Wisdom](#)



Acknowledgment & Disclaimer

These articles are based on discourses by **Sri Dushyanth Sridhar**, who renders discourses in English & Tamil on Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata, Vishnu Purāna, Bhagavad Gitā, Vishnu Sahasranāma, and Divya Prabanda in the upanyāsam, pravachanam, or kālakshepam style. Visit <https://desikadaya.org> for more information. These notes are presented solely for educational purposes to help viewers download and benefit from these teachings. Any incorrect interpretations or inaccuracies are mine and unintentional—please forgive me. For any feedback, please send an [email](#).

