

On Not Being A Philosopher-Robert Lynd

Section One

Very short Answer Questions: 1

Q. no 1. Who is the writer of the essay, 'On Not Being a Philosopher' ?

Ans: Robert Lynd is the writer of the essay "On Not being a philosopher".

Q. no 2. Who was Epictetus?

Ans: Epictetus was a Greek philosopher of stoicism of the first and second century. He was originally a slave.

Short Answer type Questions -1/2

Q. no 1. Who was Solomon?

Ans : Solomon was the son of David and king of the Hebrews. He was figured as one of the richest most powerful and wisest of the biblical kings.

Q. no 2. Who did Lynd look to for performing the 'laborious quest' for wisdom?

Ans: Lynd looked to the philosophers for performing the 'Laborious quest' for wisdom.

Q. no 3. Whose son is the 'slave' who does not bring warm water?

Ans: Zeus's son is the slave who does not bring warm water.

Q. no 4. Who was Marcus Aurelius?

Ans: Marcus Aurelius was a Roman emperor and a stoic philosopher born in 121 A. D. We find his philosophy in his book "Meditations".

Q. no 5. Who was Ralph Waldo Emerson?

Ans : Ralph Waldo Emerson was the American poet and philosopher.

Q. no 6. Who was Zeus?

Ans: Zeus is the king of the Greek pantheon of Gods and Goddesses. He is the symbol of Power and order.

Q. no 7. Who was Pliny ?

Ans: Pliny the elder was a Roman who lived between 23 and 79 A. D. He was one of the first naturalist in the

world. He produced the "Prodigious Natural History" that runs into thirty seven books.

Short Answer type Questions -1/3

Q. no 1. Why was the author of "On Not Being a philosopher " 'fearfully excited' ?

Ans : The author was fearfully excited as he had never read Epictetus, but had often looked at him on the shelf and even quoted him.

Q. no 2. What was Robert Lynd 'looking for a intervals ever since he was at school' ?

Ans : Robert Lynd had been looking for the book of wisdom at intervals ever since he was at school.

Q. no 3. Why does Lynd equate himself with Solomon ?

Ans : Lynd equated himself with Solomon because he wanted to acquire wisdom as eagerly as Solomon.

Q. no 4. If he so desired wisdom , was Lynd prepared to perform the hard and long quest for it ?

Ans : Thought Lynd desired wisdom , but he was not prepared to perform the hard and long quest for it.

Q. no 5. Why is Lynd unable to behave like Epictetus at a restaurant ?

Ans: At a restaurant Lynd was unable to behave like Epictetus as he could not achieve his imperturbability as bad waiting irritated him. Moreover Epictetus had more patience than the author.

Q. no 6. Is it, according to Robert Lynd, easy to 'like the life of a philosopher at all hours's ?

Ans : According to Robert Lynd, it is not easy to like the life of philosophers at all hours . Lynd liked them in theory but found himself completely unequipped when it come to real life situation. As per him, in a world where disagreeable things happen , it is impossible to imitate philosophers.

Q. no 7. What is everybody agreed upon about Socrates and Epictetus?

Ans: About Socrates and Epictetus everybody agreed that however diverse their philosophers might be, they were right.

Q. no 8. How do we regard wisdom ?

Ans : We regard wisdom as a spectacle on a stage which we should not attempt to invade.

Q. no 9. What, to Robert Lynd, is 'at once the most exciting and the most soothing of dreams' ?

Ans: To Robert Lynd, gaining wisdom by merely listening to or reading the philosophers is one of the most

exciting and the most soothing of dreams. It is the kind of dream in which he read Epictetus, only to realize that his dream remained a dream .

Q. no 10. Who was Socrates? What did he propagate?

Ans : Socrates was a Greek philosopher who lived between 469 and 399 B. C. He propagated the love of enquiry which would lead to knowledge and justice. While propagating his ideas, he stood staunchly against skepticism.

Q. no 11. In what context does Robert Lynd mention Solomon?

Ans : Solomon was one of the richest most powerful and wisest of the biblical kings. His name is synonymous with wisdom. Robert Lynd mentioned his name in the context of acquiring wisdom. He desired wisdom as eagerly as Solomon.

Q. no 12. What prompted Lynd to read Epictetus?

Ans : Robert Lynd overheard a conversation amongst two friends, in which one friend asked another if the latter had read Epictetus. Lynd who has been looking for a book to become wise , realizes that he has some works of philosopher Epictetus on his book shelves. This prompted Lynd to read Epictetus.

Long Answer type Questions -1/4

Q. no 1. Who did Lynd read at one time and why?

Ans : At one time Lynd read Ralph Waldo Emerson, and American transcendentalist philosopher. Lynd had a strong desire to get wisdom and he believed that wisdom can be acquired through books with little effort. He had no time or energy for the laborious quest of philosophy. He expected to get wisdom at the cost of few shillings so he read Emerson to gain wisdom with little effort.

Q. no 2. Does Lynd's reading of Emerson and Marcus Aurelius bring about any change in him ? What was their effect on him ?

Ans : No, Lynd's reading of Emerson and Marcus Aurelius did not bring about any change in him. Lynd read them with the pursuit of acquiring wisdom, and to become wise. But when he had finished reading, he was the same man as he had been before. While reading them , he agreed whatever was being said by them. But in real life situation he could not concentrate on the things on which they said. So browsing materials as diverse as those of Emerson and Marcus Aurelius had not achieved the desired result of making him wise.

Q. no 3. In spite of not being any wiser, does Lynd lose faith in books what does he still believe?

Ans: In spite of not being wiser , Robert Lynd never lost his faith in books Lynd had faith that wisdom could be found somewhere in the books and he wanted to get it at the cost of few Shilling . He read Emerson and Marcus

Aurelius but did not get the desired result of becoming wise. But Lynd never lost his faith as he had a firm belief that somewhere a philosopher exists from which he could absorb philosophy and strength of character.

Q. no 4. What opinions of Epictetus appeal to Lynd ?

Ans : Epictetus was Greek stoic philosopher, who discussed how men should behave in the affairs of ordinary life along with other things . Lynd was fascinated towards each opinion given by Epictetus like Epictetus he found death , pain and poverty as real evils. He also agreed to Epictetus that one should not be troubled about anything over which one has no control , whether it be the oppression of tyrants or the perils of earthquake. Lynd agreed to Epictetus's opinion in theory only he found himself completely unequipped when it come to real life situation.

Q. no 5. Though holding the same views as Epictetus on many things, why does Lynd fell himself 'far from wise' ?

Ans : Lynd had the same views as Epictetus on many things, but he felt himself far from being wise. Epictetus gave codes to follow in one 's life Lynd found himself agreeing to every point that the philosopher gave, but he agreed to him only in theory like Epictetus he found death, pain and poverty as real evils . Epictetus hold an ideal of imperturbability and assured that we would achieve this if we care little for material things. Epictetus was wise in holding his opinions. Lynd also held his opinions and agreed to Epictetus but he was far from

wise. Though Death, pain and poverty are to Lynd very real evils, except when he is in an arm chair reading a book by a philosopher. Lynd failed to achieve imperturbability in small affairs as he agreed Epictetus in theory but found himself completely unequipped when it come to real life situation.

Q. no 6. Who does Lynd consider himself an 'armchair philosopher'?

Ans : Lynd Considered himself an arm chair philosopher as he felt death, pain and poverty as real evils when he was in an arm chair reading a book by a philosopher . He failed to achieve imperturbability in small affairs. As per him during emergency like earthquake none would remember, the philosophy. Indifference to Pain, death and poverty would sweep away as during crisis both spirit and flesh become weak.

Q. no 7. What are Epictetus's opinions about material possessions?

Ans: Epictetus, the great, Greek stoic philosopher gave codes to follow in one's daily life. Epictetus expressed his opinion on material possessions. He gave opinion that we should be indifferent to material possessions and we should not object to their being stolen. Epictetus hold an ideal of imperturbability and assured that we would achieve this if we care little for material things. But as per Lynd imperturbability that Epictetus desired for in the case of loss of material possessions is the result of a spiritual attitude of which he is incapable .

Q. no 8. Why would people regard as insanity in an acquaintance what would otherwise be considered wisdom in Epictetus?

Ans : Epictetus gave code to follow in one's daily life. Epictetus expressed his opinion on material possessions and counsels as to be indifferent to them even in the case of theft . Epictetus hold an ideal of imperturbability and assured that we would achieve this if we care little for material things. Lynd argued that in real life if a person behaves according to Epictetus's wisdom people will regard it as insanity. If our war ones began to put the philosophy of Epictetus into practice too, literally we would be alarmed and consider the person as psychic. It woy perturbed the lookers as psychic . In fact imperturbability in the case of loss of material possessions would be considered wisdom in Epictetus, but people will regard it as insanity in case of a commoner.

Q. no 9. Does Lynd find any similarity in his and Epictetus's view point? Is he , then able to imbibe Epictetus's philosophy in his life?

Ans : Yes Lynd found similarities in his and Epictetus's view point. He found close resemblance between their opinions . Like Epictetus he realized that indifference to Pain death and poverty is eminently desirable. Though Lynd agreed to Epictetus's view point, but he could not imbibe his philosophy in his life. He agreed to him in theory but found himself completely unequipped when it come to real life situation like Epictetus he found

death, pain and poverty as real evils. He believed that one should not be troubled by anything over which one has no y, whether it be the oppression of tyrants or the perils of earthquake. Even in small affairs of life Lynd failed to comfort himself like a philosopher of the school of Epictetus. He failed to achieve imperturbability as he realized that in a world where disagreeable things happen , it is impossible to imitate Epictetus.

Long Answer type Questions-2/5

Q. no 1. 'It was only a dream' - Explain what the author meant by this.

Ans : since his childhoods, Lynd had a strong desire to attain wisdom and he wanted to get it at the cost of few shillings. He desired to become wise by reading books of Emerson and Aurelius . But he did not get the desired result, so he turned to Epictetus. He agreed to Epictetus nearly in everything he said like Epictetus he found death , pain and poverty as real evils . He also believed that one should not be troubled about anything over which one had no control, whether it be the the oppression of tyrants or the perils of earthquake. He agreed to Epictetus only in theory and found himself completely unequipped when it come to real life situation even though he believed that philosophers however diverse their philosophers might be, were right. As per him philosophy is impractical given the sort of lives we lead. His dream of gaining wisdom by merely listening or reading was merely a dream for him as he could not equip himself with it in real life situation. To

him realization his dream remained a dream as he could not follow or obey Epictetus's philosophy in real life.

Q. no 2. Is instant wisdom attainable? How does Robert Lynd propose to go about his quest for instant wisdom?

Ans : Instant wisdom is not attainable.

Robert Lynd has a desire to attain instant wisdom, so he had been looking for a book that would make him instantly wise . He had a faith that wisdom could be found somewhere in the book . He wanted to acquire it at the cost of few shillings. He read the books of Emerson and Marcus Aurelius and realized that browsing material as diverse as those of Emerson and Aurelius had not achieved the desired result of making him wise overnight. After finishing, he remained the same man as he had been before. So he turned to Epictetus for wisdom and found resemblance between their opinions. Like Epictetus he felt death, pain and poverty as real evils. Lynd found himself agreeing to every point the philosophers made, but only in theory but in real life situation he could not entertain them for a moment. So , he finally realized gaining wisdom instantly is merely a dream, it could never be entertained in real life situation.

3. Explain what reference to the context:

(a) I desire wisdom as eagerly as Solomon, but it must be wisdom that can be obtained with very little effort-wisdom , and it were , that is caught by infection. I have no time or energy for the laborious quest of philosophy.

Ans : "I desire wisdom as eagerly as.....

Philosophy" The above lines are quoted from the essay "On Not Being a philosopher. The author of the essay is Robert Lynd.

In the present context the author has dealt with his desire to gain wisdom without doing much effort.

Robert Lynd wanted to acquire wisdom as eagerly as Solomon who was one of the wisest of the biblical kings. But Lynd had a desire to acquire it without much effort. He had a faith that wisdom could be found somewhere in the book and could be easily gained . Lynd did not have much time and energy for the laborious quest of philosophy. He desired wisdom but not at the cost of labour rather at the cost of few shillings. He wanted to read books of great philosophes to acquire wisdom rather than delving deep into the philosophy.

(b) Even so, I have never lost faith in books, believing that somewhere one exists from which one can absorb philosophy and strength of character while sitting smoking in an armchair.

Ans : " Even so, I have Smoking in an armchair" .The above lines are quoted from Robert Lynd's essay "On Not Being a philosopher". In the essay the author has given a humorous account of how difficult it is to become one that you are not.

In the present context the author has dealt with his desire to gain wisdom through books, even though he failed to achieve it by reading Emerson and Marcus

Aurelius. Lynd had a strong desire for wisdom since his childhood. He found that wisdom could be found somewhere in the book. He desired to become wise by reading so he read the books of Emerson and Aurelius. But when he finished the reading, he was the same man as he had been before. He realized that browsing material as diverse as those of Emerson and Aurelius had not achieved the desired result of making him wise. Still he never lost his faith in books as he believed that somewhere one exists from which he could absorb philosophy and gain wisdom while resting on an armchair. Finally Lynd turned to Epictetus in order to acquire wisdom.

(c) For, indeed, though I held the same opinions for purposes of theory, I could not entertain them for a moment for purposes of conduct. Death, pain, and poverty are to me very real evils, except when I am in an armchair reading a book by a philosopher.

Ans : "For indeed, though book by a philosopher". The above lines have been extracted from Robert Lynd's essay "On Not Being a philosopher". Here the author has given a humorous account of becoming one that you are not.

In the present context the author shown that philosophy is impractical in real life situation. Robert Lynd had a strong desire for wisdom. So he turned to Epictetus for wisdom. Epictetus gave codes to follow in one's daily life. Lynd agreed nearly everything the philosopher said and found close resemblance between their opinions.

Like Epictetus he believed that we should be indifferent to death , pain and poverty as they are real evils. But Lynd entertained these ideals , till he was in his armchair reading a book by philosopher. But during emergency he did not follow his philosophy. The author has cited an instance of earthquake. During an earthquake none would remember the philosophy of life. Indifference to death, pain and poverty would sweep away because during crisis rather than philosophy. One would think how to avoid tumbling walls and chimneys. So Lynd agreed to Epictetus in theory but found himself completely unequipped when it come to real life situation.

(d) Even in the small things of life I cannot comfort myself like a philosopher of the school of Epictetus. Thus, when he advises us how to ' eat acceptably to the gods' and bids us to this end to be patient even under the most atrocious service at our meals, he commends a spiritual attitude of which my nature is incapable.

Ans : "Even in the small Incapable"

The above lines are quoted from Robert Lynd's essay 'On Not Being a Philosopher" .In the present context the author has shown that even in the small things of life he failed to achieve imperturbability.

Robert Lynd turned to Epictetus with an aim to acquire wisdom and agreed him nearly in everything he said . But he agreed to him in theory and found himself completely unequipped when it come to real life situation. In his work , Epictetus stated that one should

not get angry at not getting desired services at a restaurant. Lynd found it difficult to refrain from annoyance in such a situation. Epictetus advised us to have a spiritual attitude, while eating, even during the most atrocious service. Our attitude towards others should be accepted to the Gods and we must refrain from anger. But Lynd in his humorous tone argued that he could not attain a spiritual attitude like Epictetus . As per him Epictetus could have done it because he might have never dined outside. Lynd has failed to achieve his imperturbability even in the small things of life. He realized that in a world where disagreeable things happen, it is impossible to imitate the Philosopher of the school of Epictetus.

(e) Again, when Epictetus expresses his opinions on material possessions and counsels us to be so indifferent to them that we should not object to their being stolen, I agree with him in theory and yet in practice I know I should be unable to obey him.

Ans: "Again when Epictetus expresses..... Unable to obey him" .These lines have been quoted from the essay 'On Not Being a Philosopher" . The author of the essay is Robert Lynd.

In the present context the author has shown that philosopher is impractical in real life situation. As per author, Epictetus gave codes to follow in one's daily life. He suggested that one should not get angry at not getting the desired things . Epictetus expressed his opinion on material possessions and opined to be

indifferent to them even in the case of the case of theft. Lynd argued that imperturbability that the philosopher asked for in case of loss of material possession was the result of the spiritual attitude of which Lynd was not capable. It would be possible in the world where nothing really happened. Epictetus hold an ideal of imperturbability and assured that we would achieve this if we care little for material possessions Lynd agreed to Epictetus in theory but found himself completely unequipped to follow him in real life situation.

(g) The reasoning is sound, yet neither individually nor as a society do we live in that contempt of property on which it is based. A few saints do , but even they are at first a matter of great concern to their friends. When the world is at peace, we hold the paradoxical belief that the philosophers were wise men, but that we should be fools to imitate them.

Ans : "The reasoning is sound Fools to imitate them. These line have been extracted from the essay "On Not Being a philosopher" . The author is Robert Lynd.

In the present context the author has shown that we do not possess the sort of contempt towards material possessions as philosophers do.

Epictetus gave codes to follow in one's daily life he suggested that we should not get angry at not getting desired result. Epictetus hold an ideal of imperturbability and assured that we would achieve this if we care little for material things. Lynd in humorous tone argued that in

real life, if a person behaves according to Epictetus's wisdom, he will be considered as an insane . We would never accept Epictetus's theory in real life situation. Though a few saints followed the philosophers, still they were a matter of concern for their friends. In our hear ones began to put the philosophy of Epictetus practically, literally we would be alarmed and consider the person as psychic.

It would perturbed the onlookers. Even during peace, we could not follow the principles of philosophy in real life we have the paradoxical belief that the philosophers were wise in giving codes to follow in one's life but if we imitate them in real life situation it is considered as insanity. They author meant to say that imperturbability in the case of loss might be wisdom for Epictetus but for a commoner it is insanity.

(h) To become wise without effort..... by listening to a voice, by reading a book... it is at once most exciting and the most soothing of dreams. In such a dream I took down Epictetus . And, behold, it was only a dream.

Ans: "To become wise without..... it was only a dream".The above lines are expected from Robert Lynd's essay. "On Not Being a philosopher".

In the present context the author has dealt with his quest for freedom and his realization that instant wisdom is merely a dream.

Robert Lynd wanted to acquire wisdom with very little effort. He had no enthusiasm for laborious quest of

philosophy. He thought to become wise by reading so he turned to Epictetus for wisdom. But he agreed to him in theory and could not obey and follow him in practice. As per Lynd philosophy is not possible in real life situation though we believe that philosophers, however diverse their philosophies were, were always right. It is impractical given the sort of lives we lead. So Lynd concluded that gaining wisdom by merely listening or reading is merely a dream.

A dream in which he read Epictetus, and his quest for instant wisdom remained a dream. It was thought he enjoyed wisdom as a spectacle on the stage as it would be unseemly for the audience to invade. This dream of gaining wisdom was merely a dream as he could not equip himself with it in real life situation.