

3:05

## SECTION B

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Read the following passage before answering the questions.

Those of us who do not live according to the Buddhist program of morality and meditation have, therefore, no means of judging this claim. The Buddha was always quite clear that his Dhamma could not be understood by rational thinking alone. (1) It only revealed its true significance when it was apprehended 'directly,' according to yogic methods, and in the right ethical context. The Four Noble Truths do make logical sense, but they do not become compelling until an aspirant has learned to identify with them at a profound level and has integrated them with his own life. (2) Then and only then will he experience the 'exultation,' 'joy' and 'serenity' which, according to the Pāli texts, come to us when we divest ourselves of egotism, liberate ourselves from the prison of self-centeredness, and see the Truths 'as they really are.' (3) Without the meditation and morality prescribed by the Buddha, the Truths remain as abstract as a musical score, which for most of us cannot reveal its true beauty. (4)

(Source: extract from *Lives: Buddha*, Karen Armstrong, Phoenix Press, 2002, Edexcel Anthology)

- 3 (a) Clarify Buddhist ideas about meditation shown in this passage.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

Meditation is said to be a key in the 8-fold path as it is part of the "program of morality and meditation" the Buddha claimed could lead us out of the cycle of samsara. Under meditation (samadhi) - there is right effort, mindfulness and meditation showing that it has intrinsic value in releasing us from samsara and helping us become enlightened as one of the cornerstones of Buddhist belief.

In addition, the dhamma or the Buddha's teaching "could not be understood by rational thinking alone". This means although you may study the Buddha's teachings as theory, without meditation



that brings clarity and enlightenment, you will never be able to need them to understand Nibbana as the Buddha did.

Moreover, Amstrong believes that meditation is key in having a personal connection to the dhamma as ~~they~~<sup>it</sup> does not become compelling until an aspirant has learnt to identify with them as a profound level. The 'profound level' can only be reached by meditation, namely vipassana, which leads to profound insight into the nature of reality and helps us to personally understand concepts such as anicca, anatta and dukkha as we see we are also personally affected by them through reflecting in meditation.

The purpose of meditation is also expected to 'direct ourselves of egotism, liberate ourselves from the prison of self-centeredness'. This clearly shows how through meditation we can realise anatta and detach from reality making ourselves closer enlightened beings. This is essential therefore, in the journey to enlightenment, in which the ego and concepts of a self must be destroyed as they are illusions. The



only way we can realise this is through meditation.

In addition, Armstrong talks of the states we can enter in meditation 'exultation by and serenity' which can all lead to good karma or 'morality' making us better people. The importance of meditation to gain morality and put it into practice is key in Buddhism.

Armstrong also calls the Chetana only 'a musical score' meaning meditation is what brings it alive as a musician does the music. This means we can only deeply understand the Truth once we meditate deeply on it and this can give it meaning. Therefore meditation is a key part of helping us reach Nirvana.

