

# Siddhartha

## Full Review

### Chapters 1-12

#### 1a

But he, Siddhartha, was not a source of joy for himself, he found no delight in himself. Walking the rosy paths of the fig tree garden, sitting in the bluish shade of the grove of contemplation, washing his limbs daily in the bath of repentance, sacrificing in the dim shade of the mango forest, his gestures of perfect decency, everyone's love and joy, he still lacked all joy in his heart.



#### 1b

"Will you always stand that way and wait, until it becomes morning, noon, and evening?"

"I will stand and wait."

"You will become tired, Siddhartha."

"I will become tired."

"You will fall asleep, Siddhartha."

"I will not fall asleep."

"You will die, Siddhartha."

"I will die."



#### 2a

And Siddhartha: "He has lived for sixty years and has not reached the nirvana. He'll turn seventy and eighty, and you and me, we will grow just as old and will do our exercises, and will fast, and will meditate. But we will not reach the nirvana, he won't and we won't..."



#### 3a

This is why I am continuing my travels--not to seek other, better teachings, for I know there are none, but to depart from all teachings and all teachers and to reach my goal by myself or to die. But often, I'll think of this day, oh exalted one, and of this hour, when my eyes beheld a holy man.



### 3b

I am deprived by the Buddha, thought **Siddhartha**, I am deprived, and even more he has given to me. He has deprived me of my friend, the one who had believed in me and now believes in him, who had been my shadow and is now Gotama's shadow. But he has given me **Siddhartha**, myself.



### 4a

For many years, he had been without home and had felt nothing. Now, he felt it. Still, even in the deepest meditation, he had been his father's son, had been a Brahman, of a high caste, a cleric. Now, he was nothing but **Siddhartha**, the awoken one, nothing else was left. Deeply, he inhaled, and for a moment, he felt cold and shivered.



### 4b

Nobody was thus alone as he was. There was no nobleman who did not belong to the noblemen, no worker that did not belong to the workers, and found refuge with them, shared their life, spoke their language. No Brahman, who would not be regarded as Brahmins and lived with them, no ascetic who would not find his refuge in the caste of the Samanas, and even the most forlorn hermit in the forest was not just one and alone, he was also surrounded by a place he belonged to, he also belonged to a caste, in which he was at home. Govinda had become a monk, and a thousand monks were his brothers, wore the same robe as he, believed in his faith, spoke his language. But he, **Siddhartha**, where did he belong to? With whom would he share his life? Whose language would he speak?



### 5a

In the night when he slept in the straw hut of a ferryman by the river, **Siddhartha** had a dream: Govinda was standing in front of him, dressed in the yellow robe of an ascetic. Sad was how Govinda looked like, sadly he asked: Why have you forsaken me? At this, he embraced Govinda, wrapped his arms around him, and as he was pulling him close to his chest and kissed him, it was not Govinda any more, but a woman...



 **5b** 

The next person who came along this path he asked about the grove and for the name of the woman, and was told that this was the grove of Kamala, the famous courtesan, and that, aside from the grove, she owned a house in the city. Then, he entered the city. Now he had a goal.



 **5c** 

You are learning easily, Siddhartha, thus you should also learn this: love can be obtained by begging, buying, receiving it as a gift, finding it in the street, but it cannot be stolen. In this, you have come up with the wrong path. No, it would be a pity, if a pretty young man like you would want to tackle it in such a wrong manner.



 **5d** 

"Very beautiful are your verses," exclaimed Kamala, "if I was rich, I would give you pieces of gold for them. But it will be difficult for you to earn thus much money with verses as you need. For you need a lot of money, if you want to be Kamala's friend."



 **6a** 

"Yes indeed. And what is it now what you've got to give? What is it that you've learned, what you're able to do?"

"I can think. I can wait. I can fast."

"That's everything?"

"I believe, that's everything!"



## 6b

At times he felt, deep in his chest, a dying, quiet voice, which admonished him quietly, lamented quietly; he hardly perceived it. And then, for an hour, he became aware of the strange life he was leading, of him doing lots of things which were only a game, of, though being happy and feeling joy at times, real life still passing him by and not touching him.



## 7a

Kamala owned a small, rare singing bird in a golden cage. Of this bird, he dreamt. He dreamt: this bird had become mute, who at other times always used to sing in the morning, and since this arose his attention, he stepped in front of the cage and looked inside; there the small bird was dead and lay stiff on the ground. He took it out, weighed it for a moment in his hand, and then threw it away, out in the street, and in the same moment, he felt terribly shocked, and his heart hurt, as if he had thrown away from himself all value and everything good by throwing out this dead bird.



## 7b

He had been captured by the world, by lust, covetousness, sloth, and finally also by that vice which he had used to despise and mock the most as the most foolish one of all vices: greed. Property, possessions, and riches also had finally captured him; they were no longer a game and trifles to him, had become a shackle and a burden. On a strange and devious way, Siddhartha had gotten into this final and most base of all dependencies, by means of the game of dice.



## 7c

Only Kamala had been dear, had been valuable to him--but was she still thus? Did he still need her, or she him? Did they not play a game without an ending? Was it necessary to live for this?

No, it was not necessary! The name of this game was Sansara, a game for children, a game which was perhaps enjoyable to play once, twice, ten times--but for ever and ever over again?



 **7d** 

**When she received the first news of Siddhartha's disappearance, she went to the window, where she held a rare singing bird captive in a golden cage. She opened the door of the cage, took the bird out and let it fly.**



 **8a** 

**"I believe you, my dear Govinda. But now, today, you've met a pilgrim just like this, wearing such shoes, such a garment. Remember, my dear: Not eternal is the world of appearances, not eternal, anything but eternal are our garments and the style of our hair, and our hair and bodies themselves. I'm wearing a rich man's clothes, you've seen this quite right. I'm wearing them, because I have been a rich man, and I'm wearing my hair like the worldly and lustful people, for I have been one of them."**

**"And now, Siddhartha, what are you now?"**

**"I don't know it, I don't know it just like you. I'm travelling. I was a rich man and am no rich man any more, and what I'll be tomorrow, I don't know."**

**"You've lost your riches?"**

**"I've lost them or they me. They somehow happened to slip away from me. The wheel of physical manifestations is turning quickly, Govinda. Where is Siddhartha the Brahman? Where is Siddhartha the Samana? Where is Siddhartha the rich man? Non-eternal things change quickly, Govinda, you know it."**



 **8b** 

**Thus he praised himself, found joy in himself, listened curiously to his stomach, which was rumbling with hunger. He had now, so he felt, in these recent times and days, completely tasted and spit out, devoured up to the point of desperation and death, a piece of suffering, a piece of misery. Like this, it was good. For much longer, he could have stayed with Kamaswami, made money, wasted money, filled his stomach, and let his soul die of thirst; for much longer he could have lived in this soft, well upholstered hell, if this had not happened: the moment of complete hopelessness and despair, that most extreme moment, when he hang over the rushing waters and was ready to destroy himself. That he had felt this despair, this deep disgust, and that he had not succumbed to it, that the bird, the joyful source and voice in him was still alive after all,**

**this was why he felt joy, this was why he laughed, this was why his face was smiling brightly under his hair which had turned gray.**

**"It is good," he thought, "to get a taste of everything for oneself, which one needs to know. That lust for the world and riches do not belong to the good things, I have already learned as a child. I have known it for a long time, but I have experienced only now. And now I know it, don't just know it in my memory, but in my eyes, in my heart, in my stomach. Good for me, to know this!"**



**Wondrous indeed was my life, so he thought, wondrous detours it has taken. As I boy, I had only to do with gods and offerings. As a youth, I had only to do with asceticism, with thinking and meditation, was searching for Brahman, worshipped the eternal in the Atman. But as a young man, I followed the penitents, lived in the forest, suffered of heat and frost, learned to hunger, taught my body to become dead. Wonderfully, soon afterwards, insight came towards me in the form of the great Buddha's teachings, I felt the knowledge of the oneness of the world circling in me like my own blood. But I also had to leave Buddha and the great knowledge. I went and learned the art of love with Kamala, learned trading with Kamaswami, piled up money, wasted money, learned to love my stomach, learned to please my senses. I had to spend many years losing my spirit, to unlearn thinking again, to forget the oneness. Isn't it just as if I had turned slowly and on a long detour from a man into a child, from a thinker into a childlike person? And yet, this path has been very good; and yet, the bird in my chest has not died. But what a path has this been! I had to pass through so much stupidity, through so much vices, through so many errors, through so much disgust and disappointments and woe, just to become a child again and to be able to start over. But it was right so, my heart says "Yes" to it, my eyes smile to it. I've had to experience despair, I've had to sink down to the most foolish one of all thoughts, to the thought of suicide, in order to be able to experience divine grace, to hear Om again, to be able to sleep properly and awake properly again. I had to become a fool, to find Atman in me again. I had to sin, to be able to live again. Where else might my path lead me to? It is foolish, this path, it moves in loops, perhaps it is going around in a circle. Let it go as it likes, I want to take it.**



## 9a

"I thank you," said Siddhartha, "I thank you and accept. And I also thank you for this, Vasudeva, for listening to me so well! These people are rare who know how to listen. And I did not meet a single one who knew it as well as you did. I will also learn in this respect from you."

"You will learn it," spoke Vasudeva, "but not from me. The river has taught me to listen, from it you will learn it as well. It knows everything, the river, everything can be learned from it. See, you've already learned this from the water too, that it is good to strive downwards, to sink, to seek depth. The rich and elegant Siddhartha is becoming an oarsman's servant, the learned Brahman Siddhartha becomes a ferryman: this has also been told to you by the river. You'll learn that other thing from it as well."



## 9b

"You've experienced suffering, Siddhartha, but I see: no sadness has entered your heart."

"No, my dear, how should I be sad? I, who have been rich and happy, have become even richer and happier now. My son has been given to me."

"Your son shall be welcome to me as well. But now, Siddhartha, let's get to work, there is much to be done. Kamala has died on the same bed, on which my wife had died a long time ago. Let us also build Kamala's funeral pile on the same hill on which I had then built my wife's funeral pile."

While the boy was still asleep, they built the funeral pile.



## 10a

"Pardon me," he said, "from a friendly heart, I'm talking to you. I'm seeing that you are tormenting yourself, I'm seeing that you're in grief. Your son, my dear, is worrying you, and he is also worrying me. That young bird is accustomed to a different life, to a different nest. He has not, like you, ran away from riches and the city, being disgusted and fed up with it; against his will, he had to leave all this behind. I asked the river, oh friend, many times I have asked it. But the river laughs, it laughs at me, it laughs at you and me, and is shaking with laughter at our foolishness. Water wants to join water, youth wants to join youth, your son is not in the place where he can prosper. You too should ask the river; you too should listen to it!"

Troubled, Siddhartha looked into his friendly face, in the many wrinkles of which there was incessant cheerfulness.

**"How could I part with him?" he said quietly, ashamed. "Give me some more time, my dear! See, I'm fighting for him, I'm seeking to win his heart, with love and with friendly patience I intent to capture it. One day, the river shall also talk to him, he also is called upon."**



## **10b**

**"Get the brushwood for yourself!" he shouted foaming at the mouth, "I'm not your servant. I do know, that you won't hit me, you don't dare; I do know, that you constantly want to punish me and put me down with your religious devotion and your indulgence. You want me to become like you, just as devout, just as soft, just as wise! But I, listen up, just to make you suffer, I rather want to become a highway-robber and murderer, and go to hell, than to become like you! I hate you, you're not my father, and if you've ten times been my mother's fornicator!"**

**Rage and grief boiled over in him, foamed at the father in a hundred savage and evil words. Then the boy ran away and only returned late at night.**

**But the next morning, he had disappeared. What had also disappeared was a small basket, woven out of bast of two colours, in which the ferrymen kept those copper and silver coins which they received as a fare. The boat had also disappeared, Siddhartha saw it lying by the opposite bank. The boy had ran away.**



## **11a**

**For a long time, the wound continued to burn. Many a traveler Siddhartha had to ferry across the river who was accompanied by a son or a daughter, and he saw none of them without envying him, without thinking: "So many, so many thousands possess this sweetest of good fortunes--why don't I!..."**



## **11b**

**For the goal, the river was heading, Siddhartha saw it hurrying, the river, which consisted of him and his loved ones and of all people, he had ever seen, all of these waves and waters were hurrying, suffering, towards goals, many goals, the waterfall, the lake, the rapids, the sea, and all goals were reached, and every goal was followed by a new one, and the water turned into**

vapour and rose to the sky, turned into rain and poured down from the sky, turned into a source, a stream, a river, headed forward once again, flowed on once again.



## 12a

**“Look, my dear Govinda, this is one of my thoughts, which I have found: wisdom cannot be passed on. Wisdom which a wise man tries to pass on to someone always sounds like foolishness.”**



## 12b

**"This here," he said playing with it, "is a stone, and will, after a certain time, perhaps turn into soil, and will turn from soil into a plant or animal or human being. In the past, I would have said: This stone is just a stone, it is worthless, it belongs to the world of the Maja; but because it might be able to become also a human being and a spirit in the cycle of transformations, therefore I also grant it importance. Thus, I would perhaps have thought in the past. But today I think: this stone is a stone, it is also animal, it is also god, it is also Buddha, I do not venerate and love it because it could turn into this or that, but rather because it is already and always everything..."**

