

The DHAMMAPADA

Introduction

- A collection of 423 stanzas/verses in 26 chapters, arranged according to subject matter, focusing on living a morally-pure life in a mental state of awareness.
- A source of daily inspiration to many.
- Full of illustrations and examples used by the Buddha in his discourses/lessons.
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#1 Evil begets evil

*Mind is the forerunner of (all evil) states.
Mind is chief; mind-made are they.
If one speaks or acts with wicked mind,
suffering follows one, even as the wheel follows
the hoof of the draught-ox.*

- All that we experience begins with thought.
- Our words and deeds spring from thought.
- If we speak or act with evil thoughts, unpleasant circumstances and experiences inevitably result.
- This is very much like the wheel of a cart following the hoofs of the ox yoked to the cart.
- The cart-wheel, along with the heavy load of the cart, keeps following the draught oxen.
- The animal is bound to this heavy load and cannot leave it.

#2 Good begets good

*Mind is the forerunner of (all good) states.
Mind is chief; mind-made are they.
If one speaks or acts with pure mind,
happiness follows one, even as one's shadow that
never leaves.*

- All that man experiences springs out of his thoughts.
- If his thoughts are good, the words and the deeds will also be good.
- The result of good thoughts, words and deeds will be happiness.
- That happiness will never leave the person whose thoughts are good.
- Happiness will always follow him like his shadow that never leaves him.

#3 Retaliation does not lead to peace

*"He abused me, he beat me,
he defeated me, he robbed me",
in those who harbour such thoughts,
hatred is not appeased.*

- When a person claims that he was insulted, assaulted, defeated or robbed, his anger continues to increase.
- The anger of such a person has no way of subsiding; the more he goes over his 'troubles', the greater is his desire to avenge it.

#4 Overcoming hatred

*"He abused me, he beat me,
he defeated me, he robbed me",
in those who do not harbour such thoughts,
hatred is appeased.*

- People often quarrel with one another.
- When such conflicts occur, people often keep thinking about the wrongs done to them by others.

- When that happens, their anger tends to grow.
- But in those who forgive and forget the wrongs done to them, anger quickly vanishes.
- They are then at peace.

#5 Hatred is conquered by love

Hatreds never cease through hatred in this world; through love alone they cease.

This is an eternal law.

- Those who attempt to conquer hatred by hatred are like warriors who take weapons to overcome others who bear arms.
- This does not end hatred, but gives it room to grow.
- What, then, is the correct strategy to overcome hatred? It is non-hatred.

#13 Lust penetrates the untrained mind

Even as rain penetrates an ill-thatched house, so does lust penetrate an undeveloped mind.

- A house should have a well-thatched roof to prevent rain from seeping through.
- Just as a badly thatched roof lets in rain, the uncultured mind is also vulnerable to passion. That mind is easily penetrable by lust.

#14 The disciplined mind keeps lust away

Even as rain does not penetrate a well-thatched house, so does lust not penetrate a well-developed mind.

- A well-thatched roof is not harmed by the rain, because rainwater cannot seep through it.

- Similarly, a well-cultured mind does not allow passion to take over it.

#16 Good deeds bring happiness

Here he rejoices, hereafter he rejoices.

In both states the well-doer rejoices.

He rejoices, exceedingly rejoices, perceiving the purity of his own deeds.

- A wise person does good deeds.
- Having done those good deeds, he rejoices here in this world and the next. He is thoroughly joyous seeing the goodness of his deeds.

#21 The heedless die; the heedful do not

Heedfulness is the path to the deathless, heedlessness is the path to death.

The heedful do not die; the heedless are like unto the dead.

- The path to the Deathless (Nibbana) is the awareness of experience.
- When one becomes totally aware, he is freed from the continuity of existence.
- Those who do not have that awareness are like the dead, even if they are physically alive.

#37 Free are those who control their minds

Faring far, wandering alone, bodiless, lying in a cave, is the mind.

Those who subdue it are freed from the bond of Mara.

- The mind is capable of travelling vast distances and in any direction. It can travel to the past or to the future.
- If one were to restrain the mind fully, he will achieve freedom from the bonds of death.