

## Moral Character

7-8:

One who stays focused on the beautiful,  
is unrestrained with the senses,  
knowing no moderation in food,  
apathetic, unenergetic:

Mara overcomes him  
as the wind, a weak tree.

One who stays focused on the foul,  
is restrained with regard to the senses,  
knowing moderation in food,  
full of conviction & energy:

Mara does not overcome him  
as the wind, a mountain of rock.

9-10:

He who,           depraved,  
                      devoid  
                      of truthfulness  
                      & self-control,  
puts on the ochre robe,  
doesn't deserve the ochre robe.

But he who is free  
                      of depravity  
                      endowed  
                      with truthfulness  
                      & self-control,  
                      well-established  
                      in the precepts,  
truly deserves the ochre robe.

19-20:

If he recites many teachings, but  
-- heedless man --  
doesn't do what they say,  
like a cowherd counting the cattle of  
others,  
he has no share in the contemplative life.

If he recites next to nothing  
but follows the Dhamma  
in line with the Dhamma;  
abandoning passion,  
aversion, delusion;  
alert,  
his mind well-released,  
not clinging  
either here or hereafter:  
he has his share in the contemplative life.

21-24:

Heedfulness: the path to the Deathless.  
Heedlessness: the path to death.  
The heedful do not die.  
The heedless are as if  
already dead.

Knowing this as a true distinction,  
those wise in heedfulness  
rejoice in heedfulness,  
enjoying the range of the noble ones.

The enlightened, constantly  
absorbed in jhana,  
persevering,  
firm in their effort:  
they touch Unbinding,  
the unexcelled rest  
from the yoke.

Those with initiative,  
mindful,  
clean in action,  
acting with due consideration,  
heedful, restrained,  
living the Dhamma:  
their glory  
grows.

25:

Through initiative, heedfulness,  
restraint, & self-control,  
the wise would make  
    an island  
no flood  
can submerge.

26:

They're addicted to heedlessness  
— dullards, fools —  
while one who is wise  
cherishes heedfulness  
as his highest wealth.

27:

Don't give way to heedlessness  
    or to intimacy  
    with sensual delight —  
for a heedful person,  
absorbed in jhana,  
attains an abundance of ease.

28:

When the wise person drives out  
    heedlessness  
    with heedfulness,  
having climbed the high tower  
of discernment,  
    sorrow-free,  
he observes the sorrowing crowd —  
as the enlightened man,  
having scaled  
    a summit,  
the fools on the ground below.

29:

Heedful among the heedless,  
wakeful among those asleep,  
just as a fast horse advances,  
leaving the weak behind:  
    so the wise.

30:

Through heedfulness, Indra won  
to lordship over the gods.  
Heedfulness is praised,  
heedlessness censured —  
    always.

31-32:

The monk delighting in heedfulness,  
seeing danger in heedlessness,  
advances like a fire,  
burning fetters  
    great & small.

The monk delighting in heedfulness,  
seeing danger in heedlessness  
    — incapable of falling back —  
stands right on the verge  
    of Unbinding.

54-56:

No flower's scent  
goes against the wind —  
    not sandalwood,  
    jasmine,  
    tagara.

But the scent of the good  
does go against the wind.  
The person of integrity  
wafts a scent  
in every direction.

Sandalwood, tagara,  
lotus, & jasmine:  
Among these scents,

the scent of virtue  
is unsurpassed.

Next to nothing, this fragrance  
— sandalwood, tagara —  
while the scent of the virtuous  
wafts to the gods,  
supreme.

57:

Those consummate in virtue,  
dwelling in heedfulness,  
released through right knowing:  
Mara can't follow their tracks.

71:

An evil deed, when done,  
doesn't -- like ready milk --  
come out right away.  
It follows the fool,  
smoldering  
like a fire  
hidden in ashes.

84:

One who wouldn't —  
not for his own sake  
nor that of another —  
hanker for  
wealth,  
a son,  
a kingdom,  
his own fulfillment,  
by unrighteous means:  
he is righteous, rich  
in virtue,  
discernment.

110-115:

Better than a hundred years  
lived without virtue, uncentered, is  
one day  
lived by a virtuous person  
absorbed in jhana.  
And better than a hundred years  
lived undiscerning, uncentered, is  
one day  
lived by a discerning person  
absorbed in jhana.  
And better than a hundred years  
lived apathetic & unenergetic, is  
one day  
lived energetic & firm.  
And better than a hundred years  
lived without seeing  
arising & passing away, is  
one day  
lived seeing  
arising & passing away.  
And better than a hundred years  
lived without seeing  
the Deathless state, is  
one day  
lived seeing  
the Deathless state.  
And better than a hundred years  
lived without seeing  
the ultimate Dhamma, is  
one day  
lived seeing  
the ultimate Dhamma.

124:

If there's no wound on the hand,  
that hand can hold poison.  
Poison won't penetrate  
where there's no wound.  
There's no evil  
for those who don't do it.

127-128:

Not up in the air,  
nor in the middle of the sea,  
nor going into a cleft in the mountains  
-- nowhere on earth --  
is a spot to be found  
where you could stay & escape  
your evil deed.

Not up in the air,  
nor in the middle of the sea,  
nor going into a cleft in the mountains  
-- nowhere on earth --  
is a spot to be found  
where you could stay & not succumb  
to death.

143:

Who in the world  
is a man constrained by conscience,  
who awakens to censure  
like a fine stallion to the whip?

144:

Like a fine stallion  
struck with a whip,  
be ardent & chastened.  
Through conviction  
virtue, persistence,  
concentration, judgment,  
consummate in knowledge & conduct,  
mindful,  
you'll abandon this not-insignificant pain.

145:

Irrigators guide the water.  
Fletchers shape the arrow shaft.  
Carpenters shape the wood.  
Those of good practices control  
themselves.

172-173:

Who once was heedless,  
but later is not,  
brightens the world  
like the moon set free from a cloud.

His evil-done deed  
is replaced with skillfulness:  
he brightens the world  
like the moon set free from a cloud.

217:

One consummate in virtue & vision,  
judicious,  
speaking the truth,  
doing his own task:  
the world holds him dear.

229-230:

If knowledgeable people praise him,  
having observed him  
day after day  
to be blameless in conduct, intelligent,  
endowed with discernment & virtue:  
like an ingot of gold —  
who's fit to find fault with him?  
Even devas praise him.  
Even by Brahmas he's praised.

240:

Just as rust  
— iron's impurity —  
eats the very iron  
from which it is born,  
so the deeds  
of one who lives slovenly  
lead him on  
to a bad destination.

241-243:

No recitation: the ruinous impurity  
of chants.

No initiative: of a household.

Indolence: of beauty.

Heedlessness: of a guard.

In a woman, misconduct is an impurity.

In a donor, stinginess.

Evil deeds are the real impurities  
in this world & the next.

More impure than these impurities  
is the ultimate impurity:  
ignorance.

Having abandoned this impurity,  
monks, you're impurity-free.

244-245:

Life's easy to live

for someone unscrupulous,  
cunning as a crow,  
corrupt, back-biting,  
forward, & brash;

but for someone who's constantly  
scrupulous, cautious,  
observant, sincere,  
pure in his livelihood,  
clean in his pursuits,  
it's hard.

246-248:

Whoever kills, lies, steals,  
goes to someone else's wife,  
& is addicted to intoxicants,

digs himself up  
by the root

right here in this world.

So know, my good man,  
that bad deeds are reckless.

Don't let greed & unrighteousness  
oppress you with long-term pain.

303:

The man of conviction  
endowed with virtue,  
glory, & wealth:  
wherever he goes  
he is honored.

304:

The good shine from afar  
like the snowy Himalayas.  
The bad don't appear  
even when near,  
like arrows shot into the night.

305:

Sitting alone,  
resting alone,  
walking alone,  
untiring.  
Taming himself,  
he'd delight alone —  
alone in the forest.

306:

He goes to hell,  
the one who asserts  
what didn't take place,  
as does the one  
who, having done,  
says, 'I didn't.'  
Both — low-acting people —  
there become equal:  
after death, in the world beyond.

307-308:

An ochre robe tied 'round their necks,  
many with evil qualities  
— unrestrained, evil —  
rearise, because of their evil acts,  
in hell.

Better to eat an iron ball  
— glowing, aflame —  
than that, unprincipled &  
unrestrained,  
you should eat the alms of the country.

309-310:

Four things befall the heedless man  
who lies down with the wife of another:  
a wealth of demerit;  
a lack of good sleep;  
third, censure;  
fourth, hell.

A wealth of demerit, an evil destination,  
& the brief delight of a  
fearful man with a  
fearful woman,  
& the king inflicts a harsh punishment.  
So  
no man should lie down  
with the wife of another.

331-333:

A blessing: friends when the need arises.  
A blessing: contentment with whatever  
there is.  
Merit at the ending of life is a blessing.  
A blessing: the abandoning of all  
suffering  
& stress.

A blessing in the world: reverence to your  
mother.

A blessing: reverence to your father as  
well.

A blessing in the world: reverence to a  
contemplative.

A blessing: reverence for a brahman, too.

A blessing into old age is virtue.

A blessing: conviction established.

A blessing: discernment attained.

The non-doing of evil things is  
a blessing.

360-361:

Restraint with the eye is good,  
good is restraint with the ear.  
Restraint with the nose is good,  
good is restraint with the tongue.  
Restraint with the body is good,  
good is restraint with speech.  
Restraint with the heart is good,  
good is restraint everywhere.  
A monk everywhere restrained  
is released from all suffering & stress.

362:

Hands restrained,  
feet restrained  
speech restrained,  
supremely restrained —  
delighting in what is inward,  
content, centered, alone:  
he's what they call  
a monk.

363:

A monk restrained in his speaking,  
giving counsel unruffled,  
declaring the message & meaning:  
sweet is his speech.

364:

Dhamma his dwelling,  
Dhamma his delight,  
a monk pondering Dhamma,  
    calling Dhamma to mind,  
does not fall away  
from true Dhamma.

Compiled by: B. Matthews, September 1999

Source: Bhikkhu, T. (1997). Dhammapada: A translation. Barre, MA: Dhamma Dana Publications. Retrieved September 1999, from  
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