

# The Urban Well

## The Mercy Seminar 2026, Term I.4

### *Dhammapada*

1. Experiences are preceded by mind, led by mind, and produced by mind. If one speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering [*dukkha*] follows even as the cartwheel follows the hoof of the ox (drawing the cart).
2. Experiences are preceded by mind, led by mind, and produced by mind. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness [*sukkah*] follows like a shadow that never departs.

#### **1. Rebirth/Samsara**

309. A heedless man who resorts to the wives of others comes by four (evil) states: acquisition of demerit; not sleeping (soundly) as desired; thirdly, blame; (and) fourthly, (rebirth in) a state of woe.

318. Those who think what (morally) is blameable not blameable, and who see what (morally) is not blameable as blameable, such beings, taking upon themselves wrong views, go to an evil state.

325. When one is sluggish and gluttonous, given to sleep, (and) a roller-about like a great hog fed on grains, such a stupid person goes again and again to a womb (to be reborn).

334. The craving of the man who lives carelessly increases like the *maluva* creeper. He runs from existence to existence, like a monkey in the jungle (leaping from tree to tree) in search of fruit.

342. Attended upon by craving, the race of men run about in terror like a trapped hare. Fettered and bound (as they are), suffering befalls them again and again for a long time.

343. Attended upon by craving, the race of men run about in terror like a trapped hare. Therefore let him allay craving, the almsman [*bikkhu*] who is desirous of his own freedom from passion.

347. Those who are attached to passions fall back into the torrent (of repeated existence), like a spider, to a self-spun web. Having cut off even this, the wise proceed free of expectation, relinquishing all suffering.

## 2. Death threatens the opportunity of human birth

182. Difficult is the attainment of the human state. Difficult is the life of mortals. Difficult is the hearing of the Real Truth (*saddhamma*). Difficult is the appearance of the Enlightened Ones.

315. Like a frontier city well-guarded within and without, so guard yourself. Let not the (fortunate) moment (of human birth etc.) pass you by. Those who allow the fortunate moment to pass by grieve when they go to the woeful state.

237. You are now of advanced age; you have gone forth into the presence of Death [*Yama*]. There is no (resting) place for you in between, (and) you do not even have provisions for the road.

238. Make a lamp for yourself; strive quickly! Become a wise one; with stains blown out, free from blemish, you will not undergo repeated birth and old age (any more).

47. As a great flood carries away a sleeping village, so death bears off the man who, possessed of longing, plucks only the flowers (of existence).

287. That infatuated man whose delight is in offspring and cattle, death goes and carries him off as a great flood (sweeps away) a sleeping village.

288. Sons are no protection, nor father, nor yet (other) relatives. For him who is seized by the End-maker (i.e., Death), there is no protection forthcoming from relatives.

289. Knowing the significance of this, let the wise one, the man restrained by good conduct, speedily [clear] the Way leading to Nibbana.

## 3. The only true refuge from suffering, death, and rebirth

188. Many people, out of fear, flee for refuge to (sacred) hills, woods, groves, trees, and shrines.

189. In reality this is not a safe refuge. In reality this is not the best refuge. Fleeing to such a refuge one is not released from all suffering [*dukkha*].

190. He who goes for refuge to the Enlightened One [the Buddha], to the Truth [the *Dhamma*], and to the Spiritual Community [the *Sangha*], and who sees with perfect wisdom the Four Noble Truths –

191. namely, suffering, the origin of suffering, the passing beyond suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Way leading to the pacification of suffering –

192. (for him) this is a safe refuge, (for him) this is the best refuge. Having gone to such a refuge, one is released from all suffering.

273. Best of ways is the Eightfold (Way). Best of truths are the Four (Truths). Passionlessness is the best of (mental) states. The Man of Vision (*cakkhuma*) is the best of bipeds.

275. Following this Way you will make an end of suffering. This indeed is the Way proclaimed by me ever since I knew how to draw out the darts (of craving).

277. ‘All conditioned things are impermanent [*anicca*].’ When one sees this with insight (*panna*) one becomes weary of suffering. This is the Way to Purity.

278. ‘All conditioned things are painful [*dukkha*].’ When one sees this with insight (*panna*) one becomes weary of suffering. This is the Way to Purity.

279. ‘All things (whatsoever) are devoid of unchanging selfhood [*anatta*].’ When one sees this with insight (*panna*) one becomes weary of suffering. This is the Way to Purity.

169. Live practicing the *Dhamma*. Do not live behaving badly. One who lives practicing the *Dhamma* (*dhammacari*) dwells happily [*sukham*] (both) in this world and the other (world).

354. The gift of the *Dhamma* surpasses all gifts. The taste of the *Dhamma* surpasses all tastes. Delight in the *Dhamma* surpasses all delights. The destruction of craving overcomes all suffering.

#### **4. Escape death by following *Dhamma***

44. Who shall conquer the earth and the Realm of Death with its deities? Who shall pluck well-taught Verses of Truth as an expert picks flowers?

45. The Learner (of the Transcendental Path) shall conquer the Realm of Death with its deities. The Learner shall pluck the well-taught Verses of Truth as an expert picks flowers.

276. By you must the zealous effort be made. The Tathagatas (i.e., the Buddhas or Enlightened Ones) are only proclaimers (of the Way). Those who are absorbed (in higher meditative states) (eventually) win release from the bondage of Mara.

274. This indeed is the Way; there is no other that leads to purity of vision. Enter upon the Way; this Way is the bewilderment of Mara.

46. Seeing the body as froth, (and) thoroughly comprehending its mirage nature, let one proceed unseen by the King of Death, having broken the flower-tipped arrows of Mara.

170. Look upon (the world) as a bubble; look upon (it) as a mirage. The King of Death does not see one who looks upon the world in this way.

57. Mara does not find the path of those who are virtuous, who live mindfully, and who are freed through Perfect Knowledge (*sammadanna*).

## 5. Freedom from rebirth

153. I ran through *samsara*, with its many births, seeking the builder of the house and not finding him. Painful [*dukkha*] is birth again and again.

154. House-builder, (now) you are seen! Never again shall you build (me) a house. Your rafters are all broken, your ridgepole shattered. The (conditioned) mind too has gone to destruction: one has attained to the cessation of craving.

351. The one who has arrived at (spiritual) perfection, who is devoid of fear, free from craving, and without (moral) blemish, (that person) has wrenched out the darts of (mundane) existence. This is the last body (he will wear).

400. I call him a *brahmana* who is without anger, who (scrupulously) observes (religious) vows, who is ethical, free from lust, (and) controlled, (and) who wears his last body.

402. I call him a *brahmana* who in this very life has personally known the destruction of suffering, who has laid down the burden (of conditioned existence), (and) who is detached (from the world).

416. I call him a *brahmana* who, having here (in the world) given up craving, goes forth as a homeless one, and who has destroyed craving for (conditioned) existence.

423. I call him a *brahmana* who knows his previous lives (lit., abodes), who sees the heavens and the states of woe, who has reached the extinction of births, who is a silent sage, a master of the higher knowledge (*abhinna*), (and) who has accomplished all that is to be accomplished.