



## **The Dhammapada**

*Anonymous , Gautama Buddha , Eknath Easwaran*

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*Dhammapada* means “the path of dharma,” the path of truth, harmony, and righteousness that anyone can follow to reach the highest good. Easwaran’s translation of this classic Buddhist text is the best-selling edition in its field, praised by Huston Smith as a “sublime rendering.”

The introduction gives an overview of the Buddha’s teachings that is penetrating and clear – accessible for readers new to Buddhism, but also with fresh insights and practical applications for readers familiar with this text. Chapter introductions place individual verses into the context of the broader Buddhist canon.

Easwaran is a master storyteller, and his opening essay includes many stories that make moving, memorable reading, bringing young Siddhartha and his heroic spiritual quest vividly to life.

But Easwaran’s main qualification for interpreting the Dhammapada, he said, was that he knew from his own experience that these verses could transform our lives. This faithful rendition brings us closer to the compassionate heart of the Buddha.

## The Dhammapada Details

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## Abailart says

To read forever.

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## Surgat says

It's mostly just an assortment of platitudes.

Examples:

Ch. VI, 78.

>>"Let one not associate  
With low persons, bad friends.  
But let one associate  
With noble persons, worthy friends."

Ch. VIII, stanza 100.

>>"Though a thousand the the statements,  
With words of no avail,  
Better is a single word of welfare,  
Having heard which, one is pacified."

Ch. XXI, stanza 290.

>>"If by sacrificing a limited pleasure  
An extensive pleasure one would see,  
Let the wise one beholding extensive pleasure,  
A limited pleasure forsake."

Thanks, I couldn't figure that out for myself.

Some of the passages are pretty cool though. Example:

Ch. XI, stanza 153-154.

"I ran through samsara, with its many births,  
Searching for, but not finding, the house-builder.  
Misery is birth again and again.

House-builder, you are seen!  
The house you shall not build again!



beliefs.  
Be Blessed.  
Diamond

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### **Foad says**

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### **Ahmed Oraby says**

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### **7jane says**

A re-read, this time in English translation. I got the Oxford version, because its form looked good in Amazon review (also its introduction is very clear and interesting; its explanatory notes are very useful too, very clear).

I think I got more out of this this time, maybe a few years really changed things. I'm not a Buddhist, not believing in reincarnation for example, but even so I got a lot of enjoyment and inspiration out of this. It's a slim volume, so it can be read quickly, but it can also be savoured by reading slowly.

One can see clearly how it can be such a classic, and a good starting place for anyone practicing Buddhism or just having an interest in it. Clear and simple yet also deep and visual, beautiful. Enjoyable and recommended. :)

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### **Caroline says**

So this happened to be the just-in-case-I-get-stuck-waiting-somewhere book I had thrown in my purse on the day my car, later, wouldn't start as the temperature marched toward 100 degrees (F). I had plenty of time standing in the parking lot to consider Buddha's message since the tow truck got stuck in Senior Open golf tournament traffic and took three hours to arrive. Did the advice to let go of sensory impressions, perceptions, anger and conditioned reactions help? Yes, I think it did, although I've gotten there myself over the decades as well.

Easwaran's overview of the Buddha's life and the general tenets of Buddhism in the introduction are quite helpful, as are the introductions to each chapter. I am still confused by what the self *atman* that persists through multiple incarnations is, once the disparate components of form, personality, etc of a particular life are removed, but it seems as if I have plenty of company. I am also somewhat put off by all the numbered things: the Eightfold path, the four dhyanas, the four Noble sights, the four stages of enlightenment, the Four Noble Truths, the three Refuges. I was given just the trinity, which is enough to twist your mind up for a lifetime by itself.

As in most religions, it seems as if the subsequent legions of disciples have created libraries of volumes of exegesis, and multiple strands of practice, but this is reputedly the simple version for the masses, as the Buddha himself said it.

At any rate, it is a useful introduction for someone who wants an understanding of Buddhism to inform his or her reading of the history and literature of Asia.

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### **Arun Divakar says**

There are books to be read and books to be comprehended. The second class is like learning to ride a bike : you climb on it to fall down & you keep repeating the gesture until at least shakily you can move forth a few feet unaided. What is contained in this book while at a first read is absurdly simple in its spartan-ness is a very difficult set of guidelines to live with.

The inspiration to know more about the Buddha was an unlikely source, a little trinket I bought. It was a resemblance of the Ashoka Pillar. After glancing at it for long minutes during which it refused to do anything at all, I started checking the internet for the Buddhist Emperor and found it very amusing. A wildly passionate follower even drew a comparison saying that Alexander would have been but a Thug against the leadership practices of Ashoka. Everywhere resounded but one principle behind this legend of a man : Buddhism. Scouring this water body of information named the internet, I came up with the name of this book.

There is but one foundation that underlies Buddhism that I could comprehend even with what little reading I have on this topic. This is about suffering (in Buddhist terms *Dukha* ). The identification of pain or suffering, the cessation of pain and the path to the cessation of pain is what this entire belief system seems to be based out of. It is very easy to read a book that speaks to you on letting go of your desires but to implement that in practice would need more steel than even an army training camp can instill in you.

There are many parallels here to the Hindu & Eastern Mysticism schools of thought. For eg : There is mention of life lived without an eye to victory or loss for a life of tranquility. With a few modifications here and there, Krishna suggests the same to Arjuna during the discourse of the Bhagavad Gita. If memory serves me right, it was about the need to perform one's duties without a thought of victory or loss for it is such thoughts that lead one to sorrow. Then again many a teaching here are akin to the ten commandments in that all time bestseller as well.

The translation as offered by Glenn Wallis is interesting and insightful to read. I in fact spent more time going through his notes than reading through the core text. The next time around I would want to stick to the core text and take it in little sips as a hot brew on an extremely cold and wretched day. In short : It is an energizer !

Something from the text which bears an uncanny resemblance to the society we belong to now as it was centuries ago :

*Atula, this is from long ago, it is not recent:  
they find fault with one who sits silently,  
they find fault with one who speaks much,  
they find fault with one who speaks but little.  
There is no one in this world who is not faulted.*

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### **Tiffany Reisz says**

Read every word! Now I'm wise AF!

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### **Bookdragon Sean says**

This really is the ultimate guide to optimism, positive thinking and, in a sense, idealistic happiness. Some of the ideas in here speak with clarity and wisdom, the logic behind them is clear and strong; however, I know that practising them is not an easy thing. I tried some of them for a time, a few were easy. Simple things like forgiveness and proactive thinking aren't too complex or difficult to put into practice, but others require a great deal of willpower and perhaps a deep understanding of the concepts themselves.

I have to be careful what I say here, these are religious matters after all. I don't wish to offend in my ramblings. Some of the teachings in here feel vague and a little unobtainable. The section on transient pleasure was particularly so. It suggests that being free of things such as passion, pleasure and lust will subsequently prevent fear and sorrow. Isn't passion a good thing? Can one not be passionate about something and use it to do kindness? Can pleasure then not be derived from such an act? Could this not create lust, a drive of further perusal, in such a passionate thing? Would this not make one happy as well as kind? I don't understand the logic behind the offered argument. It doesn't make a great deal of sense to me, so I need to read more about this subject.

This wasn't all negative for me, far from it. There are a lot of inspirational passages in here; there are a lot of inspirational things in the Buddhist ethos. Such as these:

*"The one who has conquered himself is a far greater hero than he who has defeated a thousand times a thousand men."*

*"You are what you think. All that you are arises from your thoughts. With your thoughts you make your world."*

These words are very powerful, indeed.

I find many of the ideas attractive and convincing, those on the treatment of animals especially so. But, there were several I found hard to grasp. Perhaps this isn't the best introductory text; perhaps I should try





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### **Roxana Saberi says**

Just reread this. Little and big gems of wisdom throughout.

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### **tighe says**

Very reflective and wholesome moral truths for living, quite a fresh read in the world of inconsequential candy reads. While one might not agree with every Buddhist principle for living, as I myself don't, the general truths that you pick up and contemplate throughout the day are hard to escape. Easy and quick, yet full of substance and worthy of review time and again.

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