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Vidura Neeti

From The Mahabharata
Udyoga Parva, sections XXXIII to XLI

Vaisampayana said: Kind Dhritarashtra endued with great wisdom (then) said to the orderly in waiting, 'I desire to see Vidura. Bring him here without delay.'

Despatched by Dhritarashtra, the messenger went to Kshatriya and said: O (thou) of great wisdom, our lord the mighty king desires to see you.

Thus addressed, Vidura (set out and) coming to the palace, spoke unto the orderly:" Appraise The King Dhritarashtra of my arrival. "

Thereupon the orderly went to Dhritarashtra and said: O foremost of kings, Vidura is here at thy command. He wishes to behold thy feet. Command me as to what he is to do.

Thereupon Dhritarashtra said: Let Vidura of great wisdom and foresight enter. I am never unwilling or unprepared to see Vidura.

The orderly then went out and spoke unto Vidura: O Kshatriya, enter the inner apartments of the wise king. The king says that he is never unwilling to see you.

Vaisampayana continued: Having entered Dhritarashtra's chamber, Vidura said with joined hands unto that ruler of men who was then plunged in thought: O thou of great wisdom, I am Vidura, arrived here at thy command. If there is anything to be done, here I am, command me!

Dhritarashtra said: O Vidura, Sanjaya has come back. He has gone away after rebuking me. Tomorrow he will deliver, in the midst of the court, Ajatashatru's message. I have not been able today to ascertain what the message is of the Kuru hero. Therefore, my body is burning, and that has produced sleeplessness. Tell us what may be good for a person that is sleepless and burning. Thou art, O child, versed in both religion and profit. Ever since Sanjaya has returned from the Pandavas, my heart knows no peace. Filled with anxiety about what he may deliver, all my senses have been disordered.

What Neeti says about : Sleeplessness

Vidura said: Sleeplessness overtakes thief, a lustful person, him that has lost all his wealth, him that has failed to achieve success, and him also that is weak and has been

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attacked by a strong person. I hope, O king, that none of these grave calamities have overtaken thee. I hope, thou dost not grieve, coveting the wealth of others.

Dhritarashtra said: I desire to hear from you words that are beneficial and fraught with high morality. In this race of royal Rishis thou alone are revered by the wise.

Vidura replied: King Yudhishtira, graced with every virtue, is worthy of being the sovereign of the three worlds; yet, O Dhritarashtra, however worthy of being kept by thy side, he was exiled by thee. Thou art, however, possessed of qualities which are thy very reverse of those possessed by him. Although virtuous and versed in morality, thou hast yet no right to share in the kingdom owing to thy loss of sight. [Note: King Dhritarashtra was blind]. In consequence of his inoffensiveness and kindness, his righteousness, love of truth and energy, and his remembering the reverence that is due to thee, Yudhishtira has patiently borne innumerable wrongs. Having bestowed on Duryodhana and Suvala's son and Karna, and Dussasana the management of the empire, how canst thou hope for prosperity?

What Neeti says about One who has the " Mark of Wisdom"

- One that is not served from the high ends of life by the aid of self-knowledge, exertion, forbearance and steadiness in virtue, is called wise.
- These again are the marks of a wise man, viz., adherence to acts, worthy of praise and rejection of what is blameable, faith, and reverence.
- One whom neither anger nor joy, nor pride, nor false modesty, nor stupefaction, nor vanity, can draw away from the high ends of life, is considered as wise.
- One whose intended acts, and proposed counsels remain concealed from foes, and whose acts become known only after they have been done, is considered wise.
- One whose proposed actions are never obstructed by heat or cold, fear of attachment, prosperity or adversity, is considered wise.
- One whose judgment dissociated from desire, follows both virtue and profit, and who disregarding pleasure chooses such ends as are serviceable in both worlds, is considered wise.
- One who exerts to the best of their might, and act also to the best of their might, and disregard nothing as insignificant, are called wise.
- One that understands quickly, listens patiently, pursues his objects with judgment and not from desire and spends not his breath on the affairs of others without being asked, is said to possess the foremost mark of wisdom.
- One who does not strive for objects that are unattainable, does not grieve for what is lost and gone, that do not suffer their minds to be clouded amid calamities, are regarded to possess intellects endowed with wisdom.
- He who strives, having commenced anything, till it is completed.
- One never wastes his time, and who has his soul under control, is regarded wise.
- One is wise, O bull of the Bharata race, who always delight in honest deeds, do what tends to their happiness and prosperity, and never sneer at what is good.

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- He who exults not at honours, and grieves not at slights, and remains cool and unagitated like a lake in the course of Ganga (Ganges), is reckoned as wise.
- That man who knows the nature of all creatures (viz., that everything is subject to destruction), who is cognisant also of the connections of all acts, and who is proficient in the knowledge of the means that man may resort to (for attaining their objects), is reckoned as wise.
- He who speaks boldly, can converse on various subjects, knows the science of argumentation, possesses genius, and can interpret the meaning of what is writ in books, is reckoned as wise.
- He whose studies are regulated by reason, and whose reason follows the scriptures, and who never abstains from paying respect to those that are good, is called a wise man.

Who can be called " The Fool "

- He, on the other hand, who is ignorant of scriptures yet vain, poor yet proud, and who resorts to unfair means for the acquisition of his objects, is a fool.
- He who, forsaking his own, concerns himself with the objects of others, and who practises deceitful means for serving his friends, is called a fool.
- He, who wishes for those things that should not be desired, and forsakes those that may legitimately be desired, and who bears malice to those that are powerful, is regarded to be a foolish soul.
- He who regards his foe as his friend, who hates and bears malice to his friend, and who commits wicked deeds, is said to be a person of foolish soul.
- bull of the Bharata race, he who divulges his projects, doubts in all things, and spends a long time in doing what requires a short time, is a fool.
- He who does not perform the Sraddha for the Pitris (oblations offered to the manes), nor worships the deities, nor acquires noble-minded friends, is said to be a person of foolish soul.
- That worst of men who enters a place uninvited, and talks much without being asked, and reposes trust on untrustworthy person , is a fool.
- That man who being himself guilty casts the blame on others, and who though impotent gives vent to anger, is the most foolish of men.
- That man, without knowing his own strength and dissociated from both virtue and profit, desires an object difficult of acquisition, without again adopting adequate means, is said to be destitute of intelligence.
- king, he who punishes one that is undeserving of punishment, pays homage to persons without their knowledge, and waits upon misers, is said to be of little sense.

But he that, having attained immense wealth and prosperity or acquired (vast) learning, does not bear himself haughtily, is reckoned as wise.

Who is called "The Heartless One "

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Who again, is more heartless than he, who, though possessed of affluence, eats himself and wears excellent robes himself without distributing his wealth among his dependents? While one person commits sins, many reap the advantage resulting there from; (yet in the end) it is the doer alone to whom the sin attaches while those that enjoy the fruit escape unhurt.

When a Bowman shoots an arrow, he may or may not succeed in slaying even a single person, but when an intelligent individual applies his intelligence (viciously), it may destroy an entire kingdom with the king.

Discriminating the two by means of the one, bring under thy subjection the three by means of four, and also conquering the five and knowing the six, and abstaining from the seven, be happy.

Who is "The One" - [lonely person]

Poison slays but one person, and a weapon also but one; wicked counsels, however, destroy an entire kingdom with king and subject.

Alone one should not partake of any savoury viand, nor alone reflect on concerns of profit, nor alone go upon a journey, nor alone remain awake among sleeping companions.

That Being who is One without a second, and whom, O king, thou has not been able to comprehend, is Truth's self, and the way to heaven, even like a boat in the ocean.

The Act of "Forgiveness"

There is one only defect in forgiving persons, and not another; that defect is that people take a forgiving person to be weak. That defect however, should not be taken into consideration, for forgiveness is a great power.

Forgiveness is a virtue of the weak, and an ornament of the strong.

Forgiveness subdues (all) in this world; what is there that forgiveness cannot achieve?

What can a wicked person do unto him who carries the sabre of forgiveness in his hand?

Fire falling on a grassless ground is extinguished of itself. And unforgiving individual defiles himself with many enormities. Righteousness is the one highest good; and forgiveness is the one supreme peace; knowledge is one supreme contentment; and benevolence, one sole happiness.

Beware of "These Two"

Even as a serpent devours animals living in holes, the earth devours these two, viz., a king who is incompetent to fight, and a Brahmana (Brahmin) who does not sojourn to holy places.

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A man may attain renown in this world by doing two things, viz., by refraining from harsh speech, and by disregarding those that are wicked.

O tiger among men, these two have not a will of their own, viz., those women who covet men simply because the latter are coveted by others of their sex, and that person who worships another simply because the latter is worshipped by others. These two are like sharp thorns afflicting the body, viz., the desires of a poor man, and the anger of the impotent.

These two persons never shine because of their incompatible acts, viz., a householder without exertion, and a beggar busied in schemes.

These two, O king, live (as it were) in a region higher than heaven itself, viz., a man of power endued with forgiveness, and poor man that is charitable.

Of things honestly got, these two must be looked upon as misuse, viz., making gifts to the unworthy and refusing the worthy.

These two should be thrown into the water, tightly binding weights to their necks, viz., a wealthy man that does not give away, and a poor man that is proud.

These two, O tiger among men, can pierce the orb itself of the sun, viz., a mendicant accomplished in Yoga, and a warrior that has fallen in open fight.

O bull of the Bharata race, persons versed in the Vedas have said that men’s means are good, middling and bad. Men also, O king, are good, indifferent and bad. They should, therefore, be respectively employed in that kind of work for which they may be fit.

The acts of "These Three"

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These three, O king, cannot have wealth of their own, viz., the wife, the slave, and the son, and whatever may be earned by them would be his to whom they belong.

Great fear springs from these three crimes, viz., theft of other’s property, outrage on other’s wives, and breach with friend. These three, besides, being destructive to one’s own self, are the gates of hell, viz., lust, anger, and covetousness. Therefore, every one should renounce them. [Note: Compare from The Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 16, verse 21. The Blessed Lord said: "Triple is the gate of this hell, destructive of the self – lust, anger and greed; therefore one should abandon these three."]

These three should never be forsaken even in imminent danger, viz., a follower, one who seeks protection, saying: ‘I am thine’, and lastly one who has come to your abode.

Verily, O Bharata, liberating a foe from distress, alone amounts in point of merit, to these three taken together, viz., conferring a boon, acquiring a kingdom and obtaining a son.

The These Four

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Learned men have declared that a king, although powerful, should never consult with these four, viz., men of small sense, men that are procrastinating, men that are indolent, and men that are flatterers.

O sire, crowned with prosperity and leading the life of a householder, let these four dwell with thee, viz., old consanguineous relatives, high-born persons fallen into adversity, poor friends, and issueless sisters.

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On being asked by the chief of the celestials, Vrihaspati, O mighty king, declared four things capable of fructifying or occurring within a single day, viz., the resolve of the gods, the comprehensions of the intelligent persons, the humility of learned men, and the destruction of the sinful.

These four that are calculated to remove fear, bring on fear when they are improperly performed, viz., the Agni-hotra (sacred fire ceremony), the vow of silence, study, and sacrifice (in general).

These Five

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O bull of the Bharata race, these five fires should be worshipped with regard by a person, viz., father, mother, fire (proper), soul and preceptor.

By serving these five, men attain great fame in this world, viz., the gods, the Pitris, men, beggars, and guests.

These five follow thee wherever you go, viz., friends, foes, those that are indifferent, dependants, and those that are entitled to maintenance.

Of the five senses beholding to man, if one springs a leak, then from that single hole runs out all his intelligence, even like water running out from a perforated leathern vessel.

These Six

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These six faults should be avoided by a person who wishes to attain prosperity, viz., sleep, drowsiness, fear, anger, indolence and procrastination.

These six should be renounced like a splitting vessel in the sea, viz., a preceptor that cannot expound the scriptures, a priest that is illiterate, a king that is unable to protect, a wife that speaks disagreeable words, a cow-herd that does not wish to go to the fields, and a barber that wishes to renounce a village for the woods.

Verily those six qualities should never be forsaken by men, viz., truth, charity, diligence, benevolence, forgiveness and patience.

These six are instantly destroyed, if neglected, viz., kine (cow), service, agriculture, a wife, learning, and the wealth of a Sudra.

These six forget those who have bestowed obligations on them, viz., educated disciples, their preceptors; married persons, their mothers; persons whose desires have been gratified, women; they who have achieved success, they who had rendered aid; they who have crossed a river, the boat (that carried them over); and patients that have been cured, their physicians.

Health, unindebtedness (being debt free), living at home, companionship with good men, certainty as regards the means of livelihood, and living without fear, these six, O king, conduce to the happiness of men.

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These six are always miserable, viz., the envious, the malicious, the discontented, the irascible, the ever suspicious and those depending upon the fortunes of others.

These six, O king, comprise the happiness of men, viz., acquirement of wealth, uninterrupted health, a beloved and a sweet-speeched wife, an obedient son, and knowledge that is lucrative. [Note: the sixth item was inadvertently omitted by the translator.]

He that succeeds in gaining the mastery over the six that are always present in the human heart, being thus the master of his senses, never commits sin, and therefore, suffers calamity.

These six may be seen to subsist upon other six, viz., thieves, upon persons that are careless; physicians, upon persons that are ailing; women, upon persons suffering from lust; priests, upon them that sacrifice; a king, upon persons that quarrel; and lastly, men of learning, upon them that are without it.

These Seven

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A king should renounce these seven faults that are productive of calamity, inasmuch as they are able to effect the ruin of even monarchs firmly established; these are women, dice, hunting, drinking, harshness of speech, severity of punishment, and misuse of wealth.

These Eight

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These eight are the immediate indications of a man destined to destruction, viz., hating the Brahmanas (Brahmins), dispute with Brahmanas, appropriation of a Brahmana's possessions, taking the life of a Brahmana, taking a pleasure in reviling Brahmanas, grieving to hear the praises of Brahmanas, forgetting them on ceremonious occasions, and giving vent to spite when they ask for anything. These transgressions a wise man should understand and understanding, eschew.

These eight, O Bharata, are the very cream of happiness, and these only are attainable here, viz., meeting with friends, accession of immense wealth, embracing a son, union for intercourse, conversation with friends in proper time, the advancement of persons belonging to one's own party, the acquisition of what had been anticipated, and respect in society.

These eight qualities glorify a man, viz., wisdom, high birth, self-restraint, learning, prowess, moderation in speech, gift according to one's power, and gratitude.

Nine

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This house has nine doors, three pillars, and five witnesses. It is presided over by the soul. That learned man who knows all this is truly wise.

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These Ten

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O Dhritarashtra, these ten do not know what virtue is, viz., the intoxicated, inattentive, the raving, the fatigued, the angry, the starving, the hasty, the covetous, the frightened, and the lustful. Therefore, he that is wise must eschew the company of these. In this connection is cited the old story about what transpired between Suyodhana and Prahlad, the chief of the Asuras in relation to the latter's son.

That king who renounces lust and anger, who bestows wealth upon proper recipients, and is discriminating, learned, and active, is regarded as an authority of all men.

Great prosperity attends upon that king who knows how to inspire confidence in others, who inflicts punishment on those whose guilt has been proved, who is acquainted with the proper measure of punishment, and who knows when mercy is to be shown.

He is a wise person who does not disregard even a weak foe; who proceeds with intelligence in respect of a foe, anxiously watching for an opportunity; who does not desire hostilities with persons stronger than himself; and who displays his prowess in season.

That illustrious person, who does not grieve when a calamity has already come upon him, who exerts with all his senses collected, and who patiently bears misery in season, is certainly the foremost of persons, and all his foes are vanquished.

He who does not live away from hope uselessly, who does not make friends with sinful persons, who never outrages another's wife, who never betrays arrogance, and who never commits a theft or shows ingratitude or indulgence in drinking is always happy.

He who never boastfully strives to attain the three objects of human pursuit, who when asked, tells the truth, who quarrels not even for the sake of friends, and who never becomes angry though slighted, is reckoned as wise.

He who bears not malice towards others but is kind to all, who being weak disputes not with others, who speaks not arrogantly, and forgets a quarrel, is praised everywhere.

That man who never assumes a haughty mien, who never censures others praising himself the while, and never addresses harsh words to others for getting himself, is ever loved by all.

He who rakes not up old hostilities, who behaves neither arrogantly nor with too much humility, and who even when distressed never commits an improper act, is considered by respectable men a person of good conduct.

He who exults not at his own happiness, nor delights in another's misery, and who repents not after having made a gift, is said to be a man of good nature and conduct.

He who desires to obtain a knowledge of the customs of different countries, and also the languages of different nations, and of the usages of different orders of men, knows at

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once all that is high and low; and wherever he may go, he is sure to gain an ascendancy over even those that are glad.

The intelligent man who relinquishes pride, folly, insolence, sinful acts, disloyalty towards the king, crookedness of behaviour, enmity with many, and also quarrels with men that are drunk, mad and wicked, is the foremost of his species.

The very gods bestow prosperity upon him who daily practises self-restraint, purification, auspicious rites, worship of the gods, expiatory ceremonies, and other rites of universal observance. The acts of that learned man are well conceived and well applied who forms matrimonial alliances with persons of equal positions and not with those that are inferior, who place those before him that are more qualified, and who talks, behaves and makes friendships with persons of equal position.

He who eats frugally after dividing the food amongst his dependants, who sleeps little after working much, and who, when solicited gives away even unto his foes, has his soul under control, and calamities always keep themselves aloof from him. He whose counsels are well kept and well carried out into practice, and whose acts in consequence thereof are never known by others to injure men, succeeds in securing even his most trifling objects.

He who is intent upon abstaining from injury to all creatures, who is truthful, gentle, charitable, and pure in mind, shines greatly among his kinsmen like a precious gem of the purest ray having its origin in an excellent mine.

That man, who feels shame even though his faults are not known to any save himself, is highly honoured among all men. Possessed of a pure heart and boundless energy and abstracted within himself, he shines in consequence of his energy like the very sun.

King Pandu consumed by a Brahmana’s curse, had five sons born unto him in the woods that are like five Indras (king of gods). O son of Ambika, thou hast brought up those children and taught them everything. They are obedient to thy commands. Giving them back their just share of the kingdom, O sire, filled with joy, be thou happy with thy sons. Then, O monarch, thou shalt inspire confidence in both the gods and men.

Dhritarashtra said: Tell me what may be done by a person that is sleepless and burning with anxieties, for thou alone amongst us, O child, art versed in both religion and profit. Advise me wisely, O Vidura, O thou of magnanimous heart, tell me what is thou deemest to be beneficial for Ajatasatru and what is productive of good to the Kurus. Apprehending future evils, I look back only on my previous guilt. I ask thee with anxious heart, O learned one, tell me what is exactly in Ajatasatru’s mind.

Correct Action

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Vidura said: Even if unasked, one should speak truly, whether his words be good or bad, hateful or pleasing, unto him whose defeat one does not wish. I shall, therefore, say, O

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king, what is for the good of the Kurus. I shall say what is both beneficial and consistent with morality.

Listen to me. Do not, O Bharata, set the heart upon means of success that are unjust and improper.

A man of intelligence must not grieve if any purpose of his does not succeed, notwithstanding the application of fair and proper means. Before one engages in an act, one should consider the competence of the agent, the nature of the act itself, and its purpose, for all acts are dependent on these. Considering these one should begin an act, and not take it up on a sudden impulse. He that is wise should either do an act or desist from it fully considering his own ability, the nature of the act, and the consequence also of success.

The king who knows not the proportion or measure as regards territory, gain, loss, treasury, population, and punishment, cannot retain his kingdom long. He, on the other hand, who is acquainted with the measures of these as prescribed in treatises, being necessarily possessed of the knowledge of religion and profit, will retain his kingdom.

Subdue the Senses

As the stars are affected by the planets, so is this world affected by the senses, when they are directed, uncontrolled, to their respective objects. Like the moon during the lighted fortnight, calamities increase in respect of him who is vanquished by the five senses in their natural state, which ever lead him towards various acts.

He who wishes to control his counsellors before controlling his own self, or to subdue his adversaries before controlling his counsellors, at last succumbs deprived of strength. He, therefore, who first subdues his own self regarding it as a foe, never fails to subdue his counsellors and adversaries at last.

Great prosperity waits upon him who has subdued his senses, or controlled his soul, or who is capable of punishing all offenders, or who acts with judgment or who is blessed with patience.

One's body, O king, is one's chariot ; the soul within is the driver; and the senses are its steeds (horses). Drawn by those excellent steeds, when well trained, he that is wise, pleasantly performs the journey of life, and awake in peace. The horses that are unbroken and incapable of being controlled, always lead an unskilful driver to destruction in the course of the journey; so one's senses, unsubdued, lead only to destruction. The inexperienced fool, who, led by this unsubdued senses, hopes to extract evil from good and good from evil, necessarily confounds misery with happiness.

He who, forsaking religion and profit, follows the lead of his senses, loses without delay prosperity, life, wealth and wife.

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He, who is the master of riches but not of his senses, certainly loses his riches in consequence of his want of mastery over his senses

[Note: Compare Katha Upanishad, I.iii.3 & I.iii.4.]

Translation by Swami Gambhirananda, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati

"Know the (individual) self as the master of the chariot, and the body as the chariot. Know the intellect as the charioteer, and the mind verily the bridle". (The mind is like the reins, which enable the charioteer, viz., the understanding or intellect to hold the horses, i.e., the senses, in check)

"They call the senses the horses; the senses having been imagined as horses, (know) the objects as the ways. (The road is the world of objects over which the senses move.) The discriminating people call that Self the enjoyer when It is associated with the body, senses, and mind."

Vidura continued:

One should seek to know one's self by means of one's own self, controlling one's mind, intellect, and senses, for one's self is one's friend as, indeed, it is one's own foe. That man, who has conquered self by means of self, has his self for a friend, for one's self is ever one's friend or foe.

[Note: Compare Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 6, verses 5 & 6.

(Translation by Swami Shivananda, The Divine Life Society, Rishikesh)

The Blessed Lord said: "Let a man lift himself by his own Self alone, let him not lower himself; for this self alone is the friend of oneself and this self alone is the enemy of oneself." (5).

The self is the friend of the self for him who has conquered himself by the Self, but to the unconquered self, this self stands in the position of the enemy like the (external) foe."]

Desire and Anger

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Desire and anger, O king, break through wisdom, just as a large fish breaks through a net of thin cords. He who in this world regarding both religion and profit, seeks to acquire the means of success, wins happiness, possessing all he had sought. He who, without subduing his five inner foes of mental origin, wishes to vanquish other adversaries, is, in fact, overpowered by the latter.

It is seen that many evil minded kings, owing to want of mastery over their senses, are ruined by acts of their own, occasioned by the lust of territory.

Friendship with the sinful should be avoided

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- As fuel that is wet burns with that which is dry, so a sinless man is punished equally with the sinful in consequence of constant association with the latter. Therefore, friendship with the sinful should be avoided.
- He that, from ignorance, fails to control his five greedy foes, having five distinct objects, is overwhelmed by calamities. Guilelessness and simplicity, purity and contentment, sweetness of speech and self-restraint, truth and steadiness, - these are never the attributes of the wicked.
- Self-knowledge and steadiness, patience and devotion to virtue, competence to keep counsels and charity, - these, O Bharata, never exist in inferior men.
- Fools seek to injure the wise by false reproaches and evil speeches. The consequence is, that by this they take upon themselves the sins of the wise, while the latter, freed from their sins, are forgiven. In malice lies the strength of the wicked; in criminal code, the strength of kings, in attentions of the weak and of women; and in forgiveness that of the virtuous.

Speech

To control speech, O king, is said to be most difficult. It is not easy to hold a long conversation uttering words full of meaning and delightful to the hearers.

Well-spoken speech is productive of many beneficial results; and ill-spoken speech, O king, is the cause of evil.

A forest pierced by arrows, or cut down by hatchets may again grow, but one's heart wounded and censured by ill-spoken words never recovers.

Weapons such as arrows, bullets and bearded darts, can be easily extracted from the body, but a wordy dagger plunged deep into the heart is incapable of being taken out.

Wordy arrows are shot from the mouth. Smitten by them one grieves day and night. A learned man should not discharge such arrows, for do they not touch the very vitals of others?

When defeat is ordained

He, to whom the gods ordain defeat, has his senses taken away, and it is for this that he stoops to ignoble deeds.

When the intellect becomes dim and destruction is near, wrong, looking like right, firmly strikes to the heart.

Thou dost not clearly see it, O Bull of the Bharata race, that clouded intellect has now possessed thy sons in consequence of their hostility to the Pandavas.

Endued with every auspicious mark and deserving to rule the three worlds, Yudhishtira is obedient to thy commands. Let him, O Dhritarashtra, rule the earth, to the exclusion of all thy sons, Yudhishtira is the foremost of all thy heirs.

Endued with energy and wisdom, and acquainted with the truths of religion and profit, Yudhishtira, that foremost of righteous men, has, O king of kings, suffered much misery out of kindness and sympathy, in order to preserve thy reputation.

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Dhritarashtra said: O thou of great intelligence, tell me again words such as these, consistent with religion and profit. My thirst for hearing them is not quenched. What thou sayest is charming!

Vidura said: Ablution in all the holy places and kindness to all creatures, - these two are equal. Perhaps, kindness to all creatures surpasses the former. O maser, show kindness unto all thy sons, for by that winning great fame in this world, thou wilt have heaven hereafter. As long as man’s good deeds are spoken of in this world, so long, O tiger among men, is he glorified in heaven. In this connection is cited an old story about the conversation between Virochana and Sudhanwan, both suitors for Kesini’s hand.

Story about the conversation between "Virochana and Sudhanwan"

Once on a time, O king, there was a maiden of the name of Kesini, unrivalled for beauty. Moved by the desire of obtaining a good husband, she resolved to choose her lord in Swayamvara. [Note: Swayamvara means self chosen husband from amongst an assembly of suitors.]

Then one of the sons of Diti, Virochana by name, went to that spot, desirous of obtaining the maiden.

Beholding that chief of the Daityas, Kesini addressed him, saying: Are Brahmanas superior, O Virochana, or are the sons of Diti superior? And why also should not Sudhanawan sit on the chair ?

Virochanan said: Sprung from Prajapati himself, we, O Kesini, are the best and at the top of all creatures, and this world is ours without doubt. Who are the gods, and who are the Brahmanas?

Kesini said: Well. O Virochana, stay here in this very pavilion. Sudhanawan will come here on the morrow, and let me see both of you sitting together.

Virochana said: O amiable and timid girl, I will do what you say. You will behold Sudhanwan and myself met together in the morning.

Vidura continued: When the night had passed away and the solar disc had risen, Sudhanwan, O best of kings, came to that palace where, O master, Virochana was waiting with Kesini. And Sudhanwan saw there both Prahlad’s son and Kesini. And beholding that the Brahmana arrived, Kesini, O bull of Bharata race, rising up from hers, offered him a seat, water to wash his feet, and Arghya. [Note: Arghya is a respectful offering to the deity in Hindu ritual worship, or puja, consisting of water, flower, Bel leaf, sandal paste, Durva grass, rice.]

And asked by Virochana (to share his seat) Sudhanwan said: O son of Prahlad, I touch your excellent golden seat. I cannot, however, suffer myself to be regarded as your equal, and sit on it with you.

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Virochana said: A piece of wooden plank, an animal skin, or a mat of grass or straw, - these only, O Sudhanwan, are fit for you. You do not, however, deserve the same seat with me.

Sudhanwan said: Know that O Virochana ~ Father and son, Brahmanas of the same age and equal learning, two Kshatriyayas, two Vaisyas and two Sudras, can seat together on the same seat. Except these, no other can seat together. Your father used to pay regards to me, taking a seat lower than that occupied by me. You are a child brought up in every luxury at home and you understand nothing.

Virochana said: Staking all the gold, kine (cows), horses, and every other kind of wealth that we have among the Asuras, let us, O Sudhanwan, ask them this question that are able to answer.

Sudhanwan said: Let alone your gold, kine, and heroes, O Virochana? Making our lives forfeited, we will ask them this question that are competent.

Virochana said: Wagering our lives where shall we go? I will not appear before any of the gods and never before any among men.

Sudhanwan said: Having wagered our lives, we will approach your father, for he, Prahlad, will never say an untruth even for the sake of his son.

Vidura continued: Having thus laid a wager, Virochana and Sudhanwan, both moved by rage, proceeded to that place where Prahlad was.

And beholding them together, Prahlad said: These two who had never before been companions, are now seen together coming here by the same road, like two angry snakes. Have you now become companions, you who were never companions before? I ask you, O Virochana, has there been friendship between you and Sudhanwan?

Virochana said: There is no friendship between Sudhanwan and me. On the other hand, we have both wagered our lives. O chief of the Asuras, I shall ask you a question, do not answer it untruly!

Prahlad said: Let water, and honey and curds, be brought for Sudhanwan. You deserve our worship, O Brahmana. A white and fat cow is ready for you.

Sudhanwan said: Water and honey and curds, have been presented to me on my way here. I shall ask you a question. Prahlad, answer it truly! Are Brahmanas superior, or is Virochana superior?

Prahlad said: O Brahmana, this one is my only son. You also are present here in person. How can one like us answer a question about which you two have quarrelled?

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Sudhanwan said: Give unto your son cow and other precious wealth that you may have, but, O wise one, you should declare the truth when we two are disputing about it.

Prahlad said: How does that misuser of his tongue suffer, O Sudhanwan, who answers not truly but falsely, a question that is put to him? I ask you this.

Sudhanwan said: Know that O great one the greatest cause of misery from the misuse of the tongue[false speech] is like that of ~

- The person that misuses his tongue suffers like the deserted wife, who pines at night, beholding her husband sleeping in the arms of a co-wife; like a person who has lost at dice, or who is weighted down with an unbearable load of anxieties.
- Such a man has also to stay, starving outside the city gates, into which his admission is barred.
- Indeed, he that gives false evidence is destined to always find his foes.
- He that speaks a lie on account of an animal, casts down from heaven five of his sires of the ascending order.
- He that speaks a lie on account of a cow casts down from heaven ten of his ancestors.
- A lie on account of a horse causes the fall down of a hundred;
- and a lie on account of a human being, the downfall of a thousand of one’s sires of the ascending order.
- An untruth on account of gold ruins the members of one’s race both born and unborn, while an untruth for the sake of land ruins everything. Therefore, never speak an untruth for the sake of land.

Prahlad said: Angiras is superior to myself, and Sudhanwan is superior to you, O Virochana. Mother also of Sudhanwan is superior to your mother; therefore, Sudhanwan has defeated you Virochana. This Sudhanwan is now the master of your life. But, O Sudhanwan, I wish that you should grant Virochana his life.

Sudhanwan said: Since, O Prahlad, you have preferred virtue and have not from temptation, said an untruth, I grant your son his life that is dear to you. So here is your son Virochana, O praahlad, restored by me to you. He shall, however, have to wash my feet in the presence of the maiden Kesini.

Vidura continued: For these reasons, O king of kings, it behoveth thee not to say an untruth for the sake of land. Saying an untruth from affection of thy son, O king, hasten not to destruction, with all thy children and counsellors. The gods do not protect men, taking up clubs in their hands after the manner of herdsmen; unto those, however, they wish to protect, they grant intelligence. There is no doubt that one’s objects meet with success in proportion to the attention he directs to righteousness and morality. The Vedas never rescue from sin a deceitful person living by falsehood. On the other hand, they forsake him while he is on his deathbed, like newly fledged birds forsaking their nests.

Drinking, quarrels, enmity with large numbers of men, all connections with connubial disputes, and severance of relationship between husband and wife, internal dissensions,

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disloyalty to the king, - these and all paths that are sinful, it is said, be avoided. A palmist, a thief turned into a merchant, a Fowler, a physician, an enemy, a friend and a minstrel, these seven are incompetent as witness.

An Agnihotra (sacred fire ceremony) performed from motives of pride, abstention from speech practised from similar motives, study and sacrifice from the same motives, - these four, of themselves innocent, become harmful when practised unduly.

These are all reckoned as equal in moral turpitude as the slayers of Brahmanas.

- One that sets fire to a dwelling house,
- an administerer of poison,
- a pander,
- a vendor of the Soma juice,
- a maker of arrows,
- an astrologer,
- one that injures friends,
- an adulterer,
- one that causes abortion,
- a violator of his preceptor's bed,
- a Brahmana (Brahmin) addicted to drink,
- one that is sharp-speeched,
- a raker of old sores,
- an atheist,
- a reviler of the Vedas,
- and takers of bribes,
- one whose investiture with the sacred thread has been delayed beyond the prescribed age,
- one that secretly slays cattle,
- one who slays him who prays for protection,

- these are all reckoned as equal in moral turpitude as the slayers of Brahmanas.

Gold is tested by fire; a well-born person, by his deportment; an honest man, by his conduct. A brave man is tested during a season of panic; he that is self-controlled, in times of poverty; and friends and foes, in times of calamity and danger.

Decrepitude destroys beauty; ambitious hopes destroy patience; death destroys life; envy, righteousness; anger, prosperity; companionship with the low, good behaviour; lust, modesty; and pride destroys everything.

Theses eight qualities shed a lustre upon their possessor.

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Prosperity takes its birth in good deeds, growth in consequence of activity, drives its roots deep in consequence of skill, and acquires stability owing to self-control.

- Wisdom,
- good lineage,
- self-control,
- acquaintance with the scriptures,
- prowess,
- absence of garrulity,
- gift to the extent of one’s power, and
- gratefulness,

- these eight qualities shed a lustre upon their possessor.

But, O sire, there is one endowment which alone can cause all these attributes to come together; the fact is, when the king honours a particular person, the royal favour can cause all these attributes to shed their lustre (on the favourite). Those eight, O king, in the world of men, are indications of heaven.

Of the eight (mentioned below) four are inseparably connected, with the good, and four others are always followed by the good. The first four which are inseparably connected with the good, are

- sacrifice,
- gift,
- study and
- asceticism,

while the other four that are always followed by the good, are

- self-restraint,
- truth,
- simplicity, and
- abstention from injury to all.

The eight different paths of righteousness

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Sacrifice, study, charity, asceticism, truth, forgiveness, mercy, and contentment constitute the eight different paths of righteousness. The first four of these may be practised from motives of pride, but the last four can exist only in those that are truly noble.

Assembly

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That is no assembly where there are no old men, and they are not old who do not declare what morality is. That is not morality which is separated from truth, and that is not truth is fraught with deceit.

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Truth, beauty, acquaintance with the scriptures, knowledge, high birth, good behaviour, strength, wealth, bravery, and capacity for varied talk, - these ten are of heavenly origin.

Sin

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A sinful person, by committing sin, is overtaken by evil consequences. A virtuous man, by practising virtue, reaps great happiness. Therefore, a man, rigidly resolved, should abstain from sin. Sin repeatedly perpetrated, destroys intelligence; and the man who has lost intelligence, repeatedly commits sin.

Virtue

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Virtue repeatedly practised, enhances intelligence; and the man whose intelligence has increased, enhances intelligence; and the man whose intelligence has increased repeatedly practises virtue. The virtuous man, by practising virtue, goes to regions of blessedness. Therefore, a man should, firmly resolved, practise virtue. He that is envious, he that injures others deeply, he that is cruel, he that constantly quarrels, he that is deceitful, soon meets with great misery for practising these sins.

He that is not envious and is possessed of wisdom, by always doing what is good, never meets with great misery; on the other hand, he shines everywhere. He that draws wisdom from them that are wise is really learned and wise. And he that is wise, by attending to both virtue and profit, succeeds in attaining to happiness.

Do that during the day, which may enable thee to pass the night in happiness; and do that during eight months of the year, which may enable thee to pass the season of rains happily. [Note: India has four months of rainy season known as the Monsoon.]

Do that during youth, which may ensure a happy old age; and do that during thy whole life here which may enable thee to live happily hereafter.

The wise prize that food which is easily digested, that wife whose youth has passed away, that hero who is victorious and that ascetic whose efforts have been crowned with success.

The gap that is sought to be filled by wealth acquired wrongfully, remains uncovered, while new ones appear in other places. The preceptor controls them whose souls are under their own control; the king controls persons that are wicked; while they that sin secretly have their controller in Yama, the son of Vivaswat. [Note: Yama is the god of death].

These cannot be ascertained

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The greatness of Rishis, of rivers, of riverbanks, of high-souled men, and the cause of woman’s wickedness, cannot be ascertained.

These rule the earth for ever

O king, he that is devoted to the worship of Brahmanas, he that gives away, he that behaves righteously towards his relatives, and the Kshatriyaya that behaves nobly, rule the earth for ever.

He that is possessed of bravery, he that is possessed of learning, and he that knows how to protect others, - these three are always able to gather flowers of gold from the earth.

Of acts, those accomplished by intelligence are first; those accomplished by arms, second; those by the thighs, and those by bearing weights upon the head, are the very worst.

Reposing the care of thy kingdom on Duryodhana, on Sakuni, on foolish Dussasana, and on karna, how canst thou hope for prosperity? Possessed of every virtue, the Pandavas, O bull of the Bharata race, depend on thee as their father, O, repose thou on them as on thy sons!

Vidura said: In this connection is cited the old story of the discourse between the son of Atri and the deities called Sadhyasis as heard by us.

In days of old, the deities known by the name of Sadhyas questioned the highly wise and great Rishi of rigid vows (the son of Atri), while the latter was wandering in the guise of one depending on eleemosynary charity for livelihood.

The Sadhyas said: We are, O great Rishi, deities known as Sadhyas. Beholding thee, we are unable to guess who thou art. It seems to us, however, that thou art possessed of intelligence and self-control in consequence of acquaintance with the scriptures. It, therefore, behoveth thee to discourse to us in magnanimous words fraught with learning.

Slanders and reproaches

The mendicant Rishi answered: Ye immortals, it has been heard by me that by untying all the knots in the heart by the aid of tranquillity, and by mastery over all the passions, and observance of true religion, one should regard both the agreeable and the disagreeable like his own self. One should not return the slanders or reproaches of others for the pain that is felt by him who bears silently, consumes the slanderer; and he that bears, succeeds also appropriating the virtues of the slanderer. Indulge not in slanders and reproaches.

Do not humiliate and insult others. Quarrel not with friends. Abstain from companionship with those that are vile and low. Be not arrogant and ignoble in conduct. Avoid words that are harsh and fraught with anger. Harsh words burn and scorch the very vitals, bones, heart, and the very sources of the life of men. Therefore, he, that is virtuous, should

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always abstain from harsh and angry words. That worst of men is of harsh and wrathful speech that pierces the vitals of others with wordy thorns, bears hell in his tongue, and should ever be regarded as a dispenser of misery to men. The man that is wise, pierced by another’s wordy arrows, sharp pointed and smarting like fire or the sun, should, even if deeply wounded and burning with pain, bear them patiently remembering that the slanderer’s merits become his.

He that waits upon one that is good or upon one that is wicked, upon one that is possessed of ascetic merit or upon one that is a thief, soon takes the colour from that companion of his, like a cloth from the dye in which it is soaked. The very gods desire his company, who, stung with reproach, returns if not himself nor causes others to return it, or who being struck does not himself return the blow nor causes others to do it, and who wishes not the slightest injury to him that injures him.

Silence and Truth

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Silence, it is said, is better than speech. If speak you must, then it is better to say the truth. If truth is to be said, it is better to say what is agreeable; and if what is agreeable is to be said, then it is better to say what is consistent with morality.

Company

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A man becomes exactly like him with whom he lives, or like him whom he regards, or like that which he wishes to be. One is freed from those things from which one abstains, and if one abstains from everything he has not to suffer even the least misery. Such a man neither vanquishes others, nor is vanquished by others. He never injures nor opposes others. He is unmoved by praise or blame. He neither grieves nor exalts in joy.

That man is regarded as the first of his species who wishes for the prosperity of all and never sets his heart on the misery of others, who is truthful in speech, humble in behaviour, and has all his passions under control.

That man is regarded as a mediocre in goodness who never consoles others by saying what is not true; who gives having promised; and who keeps an eye over the weakness of others.

These, however, are the indications of a bad man, viz., incapacity to be controlled; liability to be afflicted by dangers; proneness to give way to wrath, ungratefulness; inability to become another’s friend, and wickedness of heart. He too is the worst of men, who is dissatisfied with any good that may come to him from others, who is suspicious of his own self, and who drives away from himself all his true friends.

He that desires prosperity to himself, should wait upon them that are good, and at times upon them that are indifferent, but never upon them that are bad. He that is wicked earns wealth, it is true, by putting forth his strength, by constant effort, by intelligence, and by prowess, but he can never win honest fame, nor can he acquire the virtues and manners of high families (in any of which he may be born).

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High Families

Dhritarashtra said: The gods, they that regard both virtue and profit without swerving from either, and they that are possessed of great learning, express a liking for high families. I ask thee, O Vidura, this question, - what are those families that are called high?

Vidura said: Asceticism, self-restraint, knowledge of the Vedas, sacrifices, pure marriages, and gifts of food, - those families in which these seven exist or are practised duly, are regarded as high. There are high families who deviate not from the right course whose deceased ancestors are never pained (by witnessing the wrong-doings of their descendants), who cheerfully practise all the virtues, who desire to enhance the pure fame of the line in which they are born, and who avoid every kind of falsehood.

Families that are high fall down and become low owing to the absence of sacrifices, impure marriages, abandonment of the Vedas, and insults offered to Brahmanas (Brahmins). High families fall off and become low owing to their members disregarding or speaking ill of Brahmanas, or to the misappropriation, O Bharata of what had been deposited with them by others.

Those families that are possessed of members, wealth and kine (cows), are not regarded as families if they be wanting in good manners and conduct, while families wanting in wealth but distinguished by manners and good conduct are regarded as such and win great reputation.

Therefore, should good manners and good conduct be maintained with care, for, as regards wealth, it comes or goes. He that is wanting in wealth is not really wanting, but he that is wanting in manners and conduct is really in want. Those families that abound in kine and other cattle and in the produce of the field are not really worthy of regard or fame if they were wanting in manners and conduct. Let none in our race be a fomenter of quarrels, none serve a king as minister, none steal the wealth of others, none provoke intestine dissensions, none be deceitful or false in behaviour, and none eat before serving the Rishis, the gods and guests. He, in our race, who slays Brahmanas, or entertains feelings of aversion towards them, or impedes or otherwise injures agriculture, does not deserve to mix with us.

Straw (for a seat), ground for sitting upon, water (to wash the feet and face) and fourthly sweet words, - these are never wanting in the houses of the good. Virtuous men devoted to the practice of righteous acts, when desirous of entertaining (guests), have these things ready for being offered with reverence. As the Sandal tree, O king, though thin, is

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competent to bear weights which timbers of other trees (much thicker) cannot; so they that belong to high families are always able to bear the weight of great cares which ordinary men cannot.

He is not friend whose anger inspires fear, or who is to be waited upon with fear. He, however, on whom one can repose confidence as on a father, is a true friend. Other friendships are nominal connection. He that bears himself as a friend, even though unconnected by birth of blood, is a true friend, a real refuge, and a protector.

He, whose heart is unsteady, or who does not wait upon the aged, or who is of a restless disposition cannot make friends. Success (in the attainment of objects) forsakes the person whose heart is unsteady, or who has no control over his mind, or who is a slave of his senses, like swans forsaking a water tank whose waters have dried up. They that are of weak minds suddenly give way to anger and are gratified without sufficient cause; they are like clouds that are so inconstant.

The very birds of prey abstain from touching the dead bodies of those who having been served and benefited by friends, show ingratitude to the latter. Be thou poor or be thou rich, thou should honour thy friends. Until some service is asked, the sincerity or otherwise of friends cannot be known.

Sorrow

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Sorrow kills beauty; sorrow kills strength; sorrow kills the understanding; and sorrow brings on disease.

Grief, instead of helping the acquisition of his object, dries up the body, and makes one's foes glad. Therefore, do not yield to grief. Men repeatedly die and are reborn; repeatedly they wither away and grow; repeatedly they ask others for help, and they themselves are asked for help; repeatedly they lament and are lamented.

Happiness and misery, plenty and want, gain and loss, life and death, are shared by all in due order. Therefore, he that is self-controlled should neither exult in joy nor repine in sorrow. The six senses are always restless. Through the most predominant one amongst them one's understanding escapes in proportion to the strength it assumes, like water from a pot through its holes.

Dhritarashtra said: King Yudhishtira, who is like a flame of fire, has been deceived by me. He will surely exterminate in battle all my wicked sons. Everything, therefore, seems to me to be fraught with danger, and my mind is full of anxiety, O thou of great intelligence, tell me such words as may dispel my anxiety.

Vidura said: O sinless one, I see thy good in nothing else than knowledge and asceticism, in nothing else than restraining the senses, in nothing else than complete abandonment of avarice. Fear is dispelled by self-knowledge; by asceticism one wins what is great and valuable; by waiting upon superiors learning is acquired; and peace is gained by self-restraint.

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They that desire salvation without having acquired the merit attainable by gifts, or that which is attainable by practising the ritual of the Vedas, do not sojourn through life, freed from anger and aversion. The happiness that may be derived from a judicious course of study, from a battle fought virtuously, from ascetic austerities performed rigidly, always increases at the end.

Relatives (1)

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They that are no longer in peace with their relatives, obtain no sleep even if they have recourse to well made beds; nor do they, O king, derive any pleasure from women, or the laudatory hymns of bards and eulogists. Such persons can never practise virtue. Happiness can never be theirs in this world. Honours can never be theirs, and peace has no charm for them. Counsels that are for their benefit please them not. They never acquire what they have not, nor succeed in retaining what they have, O king, there is no other end for such men save destruction.

Strength in unity

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As milk is possible in kine (cows), asceticism in Brahmanas, and inconstancy in women, so fear is possible from relatives. Numerous thin threads of equal length, collected together, are competent to bear from the strength of numbers, the constant rolling of the shuttlecock over them. The case is even so with relatives that are good, O bull of the Bharata race, separated from one another. Burning bran produce only smoke but brought together they blaze forth into a powerful flame. The case is even so, O Dhritarashtra, with relatives. They, O Dhritarashtra, who tyrannise over Brahmanas, women relatives, and kine, soon fall off their stalks, like fruits that are ripe. And the tree that stands singly, though gigantic and strong and deep rooted, has its trunk soon smashed and twisted by a mighty wind. Those trees, however, that grow in close compact are competent owing to mutual dependence to resist winds more violent still. Thus he that is single, however, endowed with all the virtues, is regarded by foes as capable of being vanquished like an isolated tree by the wind. Relatives, again, in consequence of mutual dependence and mutual aid, grow together, like lotus stalks in a lake. These must never be slain, viz., Brahmanas, kine, relatives, children, women, those whose food is eaten, and those also that yield by asking for protection.

Health

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O king, without wealth no good quality can show itself in a person. If, however, you are in health, you can achieve your good, for he is dead who is unhealthy and ill.

Anger

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O king, anger is a kind of bitter, pungent, acrid, and hot drink, painful in its consequences; it is a kind of headache not born of any physical illness, and they that are unwise can never digest it. Do thou, O king, swallow it up and obtain peace.

They that are tortured by disease have no liking for enjoyments, nor do they desire any happiness from wealth. The sick, however, filled with sorrow, know not what happiness is or what the enjoyments of wealth are.

Beholding Draupadi won at dice, I told thee before, O king, these words: "They that are honest avoid deceit in play. Therefore, stop Duryodhana!". Thou did not, however, act according to my words. That is no strength, which is opposed to softness. On the other hand, strength mixed with softness constitutes true policy, which should ever be pursued.

Prosperity

That prosperity which is dependent on crookedness alone is destined to be destroyed. That prosperity, however, which depends on both strength and softness, descends to sons and grandsons intact. Let therefore, thy sons cherish the Pandavas, and the Pandavas also cherish thy sons, O king, let the Kurus and the Pandavas, both having same friend and same foes, live together in happiness and prosperity. Thou art, today, O king, the refuge of the sons of Kuru. Indeed, the race of Kuru, O Ajamida, is dependent on thee. O sire, preserving thy fame unsullied, cherish thou the children of Pandu, afflicted as they are with the sufferings of exile. O descendant of Kuru, make peace with the sons of Pandu. Let not thy foes discover thy holes. They all, O god among men, are devoted to truth. O king of men, withdraw Duryodhana from his evil ways.

Vidura said: O son of Vichitravirya, Manu the son of the Self-created, has, O king, spoken of the following seven and ten kinds of men, as those that strike empty space with their fists, or seek to bend the vapoury bow of Indra in the sky, or desire to catch the intangible rays of the sun.

These seven and ten kinds of foolish men are as follows:

1. He who seeks to control a person that is incapable of being controlled.
2. He who is content with small gains.
3. He who humbly pays court to enemies.
4. He who seeks to restrain women's frailty.
5. He who asks him for gifts who should never be asked.
6. He who boasts having done anything.
7. He who, born in a high family, perpetrates an improper deed.
8. He who being weak always wages hostilities with one that is powerful.
9. He who talks to a person listening scoffingly.
10. He who desires to have that which is unattainable.
11. He who being a father-in-law, jests with his daughter-in-law.
12. He who boasts at having his alarms dispelled by his daughter-in-law.
13. He who scatters his own seeds in another's field.
14. He who speaks ill of his own wife.

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15. He who having received anything from another says that he does not remember it.
16. He who having given away anything in words in holy places, boasts at home when asked to make good his words.
17. He who strives to prove the truth of what is false.

The envoys of Yama (god of death), with noose in hand, drag those persons to hell. One should behave towards another just as that other behaves towards him. Even this is consistent with social polity. One may behave deceitfully towards him that behaves deceitfully, but honestly towards him that is honest in his behaviour.

Old age kills beauty; patience hope; death kills life; the practice of virtue, worldly enjoyments; lust, modesty; companionship with the wicked, good behaviour; anger, prosperity; and pride kills everything.

Dhritarashtra said: Man has been spoken of in all the Vedas as having hundred years for the period of his life. For what reason then, do not all men attain the allotted period?

Vidura said: Excess of pride, excess in speech, excess in eating, anger, the desire of enjoyment, and intestine dissensions, - these, O king, are six sharp swords that cut off the period of life allotted to creatures. It is these, which kill men, and not death. Knowing this, blessed be thou!

Contact with these requires expiation

He who appropriates to himself the wife of one who has confided in him; he who violates the bed of his preceptor; that Brahmana, O Bharata, who becomes the husband of a Sudra woman, or drinks wines; he who commands Brahmanas or becomes their master, or takes away the lands that support them; and he who takes the lives of those who yield asking for protection, are all guilty of the sin of slaying Brahmanas. The Vedas declare that contact with these requires expiation.

These succeed in attaining to heaven.

He that accepts the teaching of the wise; he that is acquainted with the rules of morality; he that is liberal; he that eats having first dedicated the food to the gods and Pitris (departed ancestors); he that envies none; he that is incapable of doing anything that injures others; he that is grateful, truthful, humble and learned, succeeds in attaining to heaven.

They are abundant, O king that can always speak agreeable words. The speaker, however, is rare, as also the hearer, of words that are disagreeable but medicinal. That man who, without regarding what is agreeable or disagreeable to his master but keeping virtue alone in view, says what is unpalatable, but medicinal, truly adds to the strength of the king.

These may be sacrificed

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For the sake of the family a member may be sacrificed; for the sake of the village, a family may be sacrificed; for the sake of a kingdom, a village may be sacrificed; and for the sake of one’s soul, the whole earth may be sacrificed.

One should protect his wealth in view of the calamities that may overtake him; by his wealth one should protect his wives, and by both his wealth and wives one should protect his own self.

Gambling

From very olden times it has been seen that gambling provokes quarrels. Therefore, he that is wise should not resort to it even in jest. O son of Pratipa, at the time of that gambling match, I told thee, O king, - this is not proper. But, O son of Vichitravirya, like medicine to a sick man, those words of mine were not agreeable to thee. O king, thou desirest to vanquish the sons of Pandu, who are just as peacocks of variegated plumage, whereas thy sons are all as crows. Forsaking lions thou art protecting jackals! O king, when the time comes, thou wilt have to grieve for all this.

Servants

That master, O sire, who does not give vent to his displeasure with devoted servants zealously pursuing his good, enlists the confidence of his servants. In fact, the latter adhere to him even in distress. By confiscating the grants to one’s servants or stopping their pay, one should not seek to amass wealth, for even affectionate counsellors deprived of their means of life and enjoyment, turn against him and leave him (in distress).

Reflecting first on all intended acts and adjusting the wages and allowances of servants with his income and expenditure, a king should make proper alliances, for there is nothing that cannot be accomplished by alliances. That officer who fully understanding the intentions of his royal master discharges all duties with alacrity, and who is respectable himself and devoted to his master, always tells what is for his master’s good, and who is fully acquainted with the extent of his own might and with that also of those against whom he may be engaged, should be regarded by the king as his second self.

That servant, however, who commanded by his master disregards the latter’s injunctions and who enjoined to do anything refuses to submit, proud as he is of his own intelligence and given to arguing against his master, should be got rid of without the least delay. Men of learning say that a servant should be endued with these eight qualities.

Absence of pride

Ability

Absence of procrastination

Kindness

Cleanliness

Incorruptibility

Birth in a family free from the taint of disease, and

Weightiness of speech

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One should not

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No man should confidently enter an enemy’s house after dusk even with notice. One should not at night lurk in the yard of another’s premises, nor should one seek to enjoy a woman to whom the king himself might make love. Never set thyself against the decisions to which a person has arrived who keeps low company and who is in the habit of consulting all he meets. Never tell him: ‘I do not believe thee’, but assigning some reason send him away on a pretext.

Lending and borrowing money

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A king who is exceedingly merciful, a woman of lewd character, the servant of a king, a son, a brother, a widow having an infant son, one serving in the army, and one that has suffered great losses, should never be engaged in pecuniary transactions of lending or borrowing.

These eight qualities shed a lustre on men:

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wisdom
High lineage
Acquaintance with scriptures
Self-restraint
Prowess
Moderation in speech
Gift to the extent of one’s power
Gratefulness

These high qualities, O sire, are necessarily brought together by one only by gifts. When the king favours a person, that incident (of royal favour) brings in all others and holds them together.

He that performs ablutions wins these ten:

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Strength
Beauty
A clear voice
Capacity to utter all the alphabetical sounds
Delicacy of touch
Fineness of scent
Cleanliness
Gracefulness
Delicacy of limbs
Beautiful women

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He that eats sparingly wins these

Health

Long life

Ease

His progeny also becomes healthy

Nobody reproaches him for gluttony

One should not give shelter to these in his house

One that always acts improperly

One that eats too much

One that is hated by all

One that is exceedingly deceitful

One that is cruel

One that is ignorant of the proprieties of time and place

One that dresses indecently

A person, however distressed should never solicit these

A miser for alms

One that speaks ill of others

One that is unacquainted with the shastras (scriptures)

A dweller in the woods

One that is cunning

One that does not regard persons worthy of regards

One that is cruel

One that habitually quarrel with others

One that is ungrateful

A person should never wait upon these six worst of men

One that is a foe

One that always errs

One that is wedded to falsehood

One that is wanting in devotion to the gods

One that is without affection

One that regards himself competent to do everything

One’s purposes depend (for their success) on means; and means are dependent, again, on the nature of the purposes (sought to be accomplished by them). They are intimately connected with each other, so that success depends on both. Begetting sons and rendering them independent by making some provision for them, and bestowing maiden daughters on eligible persons, on should retire to the woods, and desire to live as a Muni (a sage; an

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austere person). One should, for obtaining the favours of the Supreme Being, do that which is for the good of all creatures as also for his own happiness, for it is this which is at the root of the success of all one’s objects.

What anxiety has he for a livelihood that has intelligence, energy, prowess, strength, alacrity and perseverance?

Behold the evils of a rupture with the Pandavas, which would sadden the very gods with Sakra. These are:

First, enmity between them that are all thy sons
Secondly, a life of continued anxiety
Thirdly, the loss of the fair fame of the Kurus
And lastly, the joy of those that are thy enemies.

The wrath of Bhishma, O thou of the splendour of Indra (king of gods), of Drona, and the king Yuthishthira, will consume the whole world, like a comet of large proportions falling transversely on the earth. Thy hundred sons and Karna and the sons of Pandu can together rule the vast earth with the belt of the seas. O king, the Dhritarashtras constitute a forest of which the Pandavas are, I think, tigers, O, do not cut down that forest with its tigers! O, let not the tigers be driven from that forest! There can be no forest without tigers, and no tigers without a forest. The forest shelters the tigers and tigers guard the forest!

They that are sinful never seek so much to ascertain the good qualities of others as to ascertain their faults. He that desires the highest success in all matters connected with worldly profit should from the very beginning practise virtue, for true profit is never separated from heaven. He, whose soul has been dissociated from sin and firmly fixed on virtue, has understood all things in their natural and adventitious states. He that follows virtue, profit and desire, in proper seasons, obtains, both here and hereafter, a combination of all three. He that restrains the force of both anger and joy, and never, O king, loses his senses under calamities, wins prosperity.

Listen to me, O king.

Men are said to have five different kinds of strength.

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Of these, the strength of arms is regarded to be of the most inferior kind.

Blessed be thou, the acquisition of good counsellors is regarded as the second kind of strength.

The wise have said that the acquisition of wealth is the third kind of strength.

The strength of birth, O king, which one naturally acquires from one’s sires and grandsires, is regarded as the fourth kind of strength.

That however, O Bharata, by which all these are won, and which is the foremost of all kinds of strength, is called the strength of the intellect.

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Having provoked the hostility of a person who is capable of inflicting great injury on a fellow creature, one should not gather assurance from the thought that one lives at a distance from the other.

Cannot place trust on these
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Who that is wise that can place his trust on women, kings, serpents, his own master, enemies, enjoyments, and period of life?

There are no physicians nor medicines for one that has been struck by the arrow of wisdom. In the case of such a person neither the Mantra of Homa (sacred fire ceremony), nor auspicious ceremonies, nor the Mantras of the Atharva Veda, nor any of the antidotes of poison, are of any efficacy.

None of these should be disregarded
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Serpents, fire, lions, and consanguineous relatives, - none of these, O Bharata, should be disregarded by a man; all of these are possessed of great power. Fire is a thing of great energy in this world. It lurks in wood and never consumes it till it is ignited by others. That very fire, when brought out by friction, consumes by its energy not only the wood in which it lurks, but also an entire forest and many other things. Men of high lineage are just like fire in energy. Endued with forgiveness, they betray no outward symptoms of wrath and are quiet like fire in wood. Thou, O king, with thy sons art possessed of the virtue of creepers, and the sons of Pandu are regarded as Sala trees. A creeper never grows unless there is large tree to twine round. O king, O son of Ambika, thy son is as a forest. O sire, know that the Pandavas are the lions of that forest. Without its lions the forest is doomed to destruction. And lions also are doomed to destruction without the forest (to shelter them).

Guests
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Vidura continued: The heart of a young man, when an aged and venerable person comes to his house (as a guest), soars aloft. By advancing forward and saluting him, he gets it back. He that is self-controlled, first offering a seat, and bringing water and causing his guest's feet to be washed and making the usual enquiries of welcome, should then speak of his own affairs, and taking everything into consideration, offer him food. The wise have said that man lives in vain in whose dwelling a Brahmana (Brahmin) conversant with Mantras does not accept water, honey and curds, and kine (cows) from fear of being unable to appropriate them, or from miserliness and unwillingness with which the gifts are made.

A physician, a maker of arrows, even one that has given up the vow of Brahmacharya (celibacy) before it is complete, a thief, a crooked minded man, a Brahmana that drinks, one that causes miscarriage, one that lives by serving in the army, and one that sells the Vedas, when arrived as a guest, however undeserving he may be, the offer of water should be regarded (by a householder) as exceedingly dear.

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A Brahmana should never be a seller of salt, of cooked food, curds, milk, honey, oil, ghee (clarified butter), sesame, meat, fruits, roots, potherbs, dyed clothes, all kinds of perfumery, and treacle.

He that never gives way to anger, he that is above grief, he that is no longer in need of friendship and quarrels, he that disregards both praise and blame, and he that stands aloof from both what is agreeable and disagreeable, like one perfectly withdrawn from the world, is a real Yogi of the Bhikshu order. That virtuous ascetic who lives on rice growing wild, or roots, or potherbs, who has his soul under control, who carefully keeps his fire for worship, and dwelling in the woods is always regardful of guests, is indeed, the foremost of his brotherhood.

Having wronged an intelligent person, one should never gather assurance from the fact that one lives at a distance from the person wronged. Long are the arms which intelligent persons have, by which they can return wrongs for wrongs done to them.

Trust

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One should never put trust on him who should not be trusted, nor put too much trust on him who should be trusted, for the danger that arises from one's having reposed trust on another cuts off one's very roots.

One should renounce envy, protect one's wives, give to others what is their due, and be agreeable in speech. One should be sweet tongued and pleasant in his address as regards one's wives, but should never be their slave. It has been said that wives that are highly blessed and virtuous, worthy of worship and the ornaments of their homes, are really embodiments of domestic prosperity. They should, therefore, be protected particularly.

One should devolve the looking over of his inner apartments on his father; of the kitchen, on his mother; of the kine, on somebody he looks upon as his own self; but as regards agriculture, one should look over it himself.

One should look after guests of the trader caste through his servants, and those of the Brahmana caste through his sons.

King Craft

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Fire has its origin in water; Kshatriyayas in Brahmanas; and iron in stone. The energy of those (i.e. fire, Kshatriyayas, and iron) can affect all things but is neutralised as soon as things come in contact with their progenitors. Fire lies concealed in wood without showing itself externally. Good and forgiving men born of high families and endued with fiery energy, do not betray any outward symptoms of what is within them. That king whose counsels cannot be known by either outsiders or those about him, but who knows the counsels of others through his spies, enjoys his prosperity long.

One should never speak of what one intends to do. Let anything thou doest in respect of virtue, profit and desire, be not known till it is done. Let counsels be not divulged.

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Ascending on the mountain top or on the terrace of a palace, or proceeding to a wilderness devoid of trees and plants, one should, in secrecy, mature his counsels. O Bharata, neither a friend who is without learning, nor a learned friend who has no control over his senses, deserves to be a repository of state secrets.

O king, never make one thy minister without examining him well, for a king’s finances and the keeping of his counsels both depend on his minister. That king is the foremost of rulers, whose ministers know his acts in respect of virtue, profit and desire, only after they are done. The king whose counsels are kept close, without doubt, commands success. He that from ignorance commits acts that are censurable, loses his very life in consequence of the untoward results of those acts. The doing of acts that are praiseworthy is always attended with ease. Omission to do such acts leads to repentance.

As a Brahmana without having studied the Vedas is not fit to officiate at a Sraddha (in honour of the Pitris or ancestors), so he that has not heard of the six (means for protecting a kingdom) deserves not to take part in political deliberations.

O king, he that has eye upon increase, decrease, and surplus, he that is conversant with the six means and knows also his own self, he whose conduct is always applauded, brings the whole earth under subjection to himself. He whose anger and joy are productive of consequences, he who looks over personally what should be done, he who has his treasury under his own control, brings the whole earth under subjection to himself.

The king should be content with the name he wins and the umbrella that is held over his head. He should divide the wealth of the kingdom among these that serve him. Alone he should not appropriate everything. A Brahmana (Brahmin) knows a Brahmana, the husband understands the wife, the king knows the minister, and monarchs know monarchs.

A foe that deserves death, when brought under subjection should never be set free. If one were weak one should pay court to one’s foe that is stronger, even if the latter deserves death; but one should kill that foe as soon as one commands sufficient strength, for, if not killed, dangers soon arise from him. One should, with an effort, control his wrath against the gods, kings, Brahmanas, old men, children, and those that are helpless.

He that is wise should avoid unprofitable quarrels such as fools only engage in. By this one wins great fame in this world and avoids misery and unhappiness. People never desire him for a master whose grace is fruitless and whose wrath goes for nothing, like women never desiring him for a husband who is a eunuch.

Intelligence does not exist for the acquisition of wealth, nor is idleness the cause of adversity. The man of wisdom only knows, and not others, the cause of the diversities of condition in this world.

The fool, O Bharata, always disregards those that are elderly in years, and eminent in conduct and knowledge, in intelligence, wealth and lineage.

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Calamities soon come upon them that are of wicked disposition, devoid of wisdom, envious or sinful, foul-tongued, and wrathful.

Absence of deceitfulness, gift, observance of the established rules of intercourse, and speech well controlled, bring all creatures under subjection.

He that is without deceitfulness, he that is active, grateful, intelligent, and guileless, even if his treasury were empty, obtains friends, counsellors, and servants.

Intelligence, tranquillity of mind, self-control, purity, absence of harsh speech and unwillingness to do anything disagreeable to friends, - these six are regarded as the fuel of prosperity's flame.

The wretch who does not give to others their due, who is of wicked soul, who is ungrateful, and shameless, should, O king, be avoided. The guilty person who provokes another about him that is innocent cannot sleep peacefully at night, similarly like a person passing the night with a snake in the same room.

They, O Bharata, who upon being angry endanger one's possessions and means of acquisition, should always be propitiated like the very gods. Those objects that depend upon women, careless persons, men that have fallen away from the duties of their caste, and those that are wicked in disposition, are doubtful of success. They sink helplessly, O king, like a raft made of stone, who have a woman, a deceitful person, or a child, for their guide.

They that are competent in the general principles of work, though not in particular kinds of work are regarded by men as learned and wise for particular kinds of work, are subsidiary.

That man who is highly spoken of by swindlers, mimes and women of ill fame, is more dead than alive. Forsaking these mighty bowmen of immeasurable energy, viz., the son of Pandu, thou hast, O Bharata, devolved on Duryodhana, the cares of a mighty empire. Thou shalt, therefore, soon see that swelling affluence fall off, like Vali fallen off from the three worlds.

Dhritarashtra said: Man is not the disposer of either his prosperity or adversity. He is like a wooden doll moved by strings. Indeed, the Creator has made man subject to Destiny. Go on telling me, I am attentive to what thou sayest.

One becomes agreeable by

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Vidura said: O Bharata, by speaking words out of season even Vrihaspati (the Creator) himself incurs reproach and the charge of ignorance. One becomes agreeable by gift, another by sweet words, a third by a force of incantation and drugs. He, however, that is naturally agreeable, always remains so. He that is hated by another is never regarded by that other as honest or intelligent or wise. One attributes everything good to him one loves; and everything evil to him one hates.

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Gain and Loss

O king, as soon as Duryodhana was born I told thee, - thou shouldst abandon this one son, for by abandoning him thou wouldst secure the prosperity of thy hundred sons, - and by keeping him, destruction would overtake thy hundred sons. That gain should never be regarded highly which leads to loss. On the other hand, that loss even should be regarded highly which would bring on gain. That is no loss, O king, which brings on gain. That, however, should be reckoned as loss, which is certain to bring about greater losses still. Some become eminent in consequence of good qualities; others become so in consequence of wealth. Avoid them, O Dhritarashtra, that are eminent in wealth but destitute of good qualities.

Dhritarashtra said: All that you say is approved by the wise and is for my future good. I dare not, however, abandon my son. It is well known that where there is righteousness there is victory.

[Note: Compare from the Bhagavad Gita, chapter 18, verse 78. Sanjaya said: "Wherever there is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, wherever there is Arjuna, the archer, there are prosperity, victory, happiness and firm policy; such is my conviction."]

Vidura said: He that is graced with every virtue and is endued with humility is never indifferent to even the minutest sufferings of living creatures. They, however, that are ever employed in speaking ill of others, always strive with activity quarrelling with one another and in all matters, calculated to give pain to others.

Friendship

There is sin in accepting gifts from, and danger in making gifts to them, whose very sight is inauspicious and whose companionship is fraught with danger. They that are quarrelsome, covetous, shameless, deceitful, and are known as unrighteous, their companionship should always be avoided. One should also avoid those men that are endued with similar faults of a grave nature. When the occasion that caused the friendship is over the friendship of those that are low, the beneficial result of that connection, and the happiness also derivable from it, all come to an end. They then strive to speak ill of their (late) friend and endeavour to inflict loss on him, and if the loss they sustain be even very small, for all that they, from want of self-control, fail to enjoy peace. He that is learned, examining everything carefully and reflecting well, should from a distance, avoid the friendship of vile and wicked minded persons such as these.

Relatives (2)

He that helps his poor and wretched and helpless relatives obtains children and animals and enjoys prosperity that knows no end. They that desire their own benefit should always succour their relatives. By every means, therefore, O king, do thou seek the growth of thy race. Prosperity will be thine, O monarch, if thou behave well towards all thy relatives. Even relatives that are destitute of good qualities should be protected. O

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bull of the Bharata race, how much more, therefore, should they be protected that are endowed with every virtue and are humbly expectant of thy favour?

Favour thou the heroic sons of Pandu, O monarch, and a few villages be assigned to them for their maintenance. By acting thus, O king, fame will be thine in this world. Thou art old; thou should therefore, control thy sons. I should say what is for thy good. Know me as one that wishes well to thee. He that desires his own good should never quarrel, O sire, with his relatives. O bull of the Bharata race, happiness should ever be enjoyed with one's relatives, and not without them. To eat with one another, to talk with one another, and to love one another, is what relatives should always do. They should never quarrel.

In this world it is the relatives that rescue, and the relatives that ruin (relatives). Those amongst them that are righteous rescue; while those that are unrighteous sink (their brethren). O king, be thou, O giver of honours, righteous in thy conduct towards the sons of Pandu. Surrounded by them, thou would be unconquerable by thy foes. If a relative shrinks in the presence of a prosperous relative, like a deer at the sight of a hunter armed with arrows, then the prosperous relative has to take upon himself all the sins of the other. O best of men, repentance will be thine (for this thy inaction at present) when in future thou wilt hear of the death of either the Pandavas or thy sons. O think of all this. When life itself is unstable, one should in the very beginning avoid that act in consequence of which one would have to indulge in regrets having entered the chamber of woe.

True it is that a person other than Bhargava, the author of the science of morality, is liable to commit actions that go against morality. It is seen, however, that a just notion of consequence is present in all persons of intelligence. Thou art an aged scion of Kuru's race. If Duryodhana inflicted these wrongs on the sons of Pandu, it is thy duty, O king of men, to undo them all. Reinstating them in their position, thou wilt, in this world, be cleansed of all thy sins and be, O king of men, an object of worship with even those that have their souls under control.

Reflecting on the well-spoken words of the wise according to their consequences, he that engages in acts never loses fame. The knowledge imparted by even men of learning and skill is imperfect, for that which is sought to be inculcated is ill understood, or, if understood, is not accomplished in practice. That learned person who never does an act, the consequences of which are sin and misery, always grows. The person, however, of wicked soul, who from folly pursues his sinful course commenced before falls into a slough of deep mire.

He that is wise should ever keep in view the (following) six conduits by which counsels become divulged, and he that desires success and a long dynasty should ever guard himself from those six. They are:

- Intoxication
- Sleep
- Inattention to spies, set over one by another,
- One's own demeanour as dependent on the working of one's own heart

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- Confidence reposed on a wicked counsellor
- Unskilful envoys.

Knowing these six doors (through which counsels are divulged), he that keeps them shut while pursuing the attainment of virtue, profit, and desire, succeeds in standing over the heads of his foes.

Without an acquaintance with the scriptures and without waiting upon the old, neither virtue nor profit can be known (or won) by persons blessed even with the intelligence of Vrihaspati.

A thing is lost if cast into the sea; words are lost if addressed to one that listens not; the scriptures are lost on one that has not his soul under control; and a libation of ghee (clarified butter) is lost if poured over the ashes left by a fire that is extinguished.

He that is endued with the intelligence makes friendships with those that are wise, having first examined by the aid of his intelligence, repeatedly searching by his understanding, and using his ears, eyes, and judgment.

Humility removes obloquy, failure, prowess; forgiveness always conquers anger; and auspicious rites destroy all indications of evil.

One's lineage is tested by his objects of enjoyment, place of birth, house, behaviour, food and dress. When an object of enjoyment is available, even that one who has attained emancipation is not unwilling to enjoy; what, again, need be said of him that is yet wedded to desire?

A king should cherish a counsellor that worships persons of wisdom, is endued with learning, virtue, agreeable appearance, friends, sweet speech, and a good heart. Whether of low or high birth, he who does not transgress the rules of polite intercourse, who has an eye on virtue, who is endued with humility and modesty, is superior to a hundred persons of high birth. The friendship of those persons never cools, whose hearts, secret pursuits, and pleasures, and acquirements, accord in every respect.

He that is intelligent should avoid an ignorant person of wicked soul, like a pit whose mouth is covered with grass, for friendship with such a person can never last. The man of wisdom should never contract friendship with those that are proud, ignorant, fierce, rash and fallen off from righteousness. He that is grateful, virtuous, truthful, large-hearted, and devoted, and he that has his senses under control, preserves his dignity, and never forsakes a friend, should be desired for a friend. The withdrawal of the senses from their respective objects is equivalent to death itself. Their excessive indulgence again would ruin the very gods.

Humility, love of all creatures, and respect for friends, -these, the learned have said, lengthen life. He who with a firm resolution strives to accomplish by a virtuous policy purposes that have once been frustrated, is said to possess real manhood.

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Prosperity (and forgiveness)

That man attains all his objects, who is conversant with remedies to be applied in the future, who is firmly resolved in the present, and who could anticipate in the past how an act begun would end.

That which a man pursues in word, deed and thought, wins him for its own; therefore, one should always seek that which is for his good. Effort after securing what is good, the properties of time, place, and means, acquaintance with the scriptures, activity, straightforwardness, and frequent meetings with those that are good, - these bring about prosperity. Perseverance is the root of prosperity, of gain, and of what is beneficial.

The man that pursues an object with perseverance and without giving it up in vexation, is really great, and enjoys happiness that is unending, O sire, there is nothing more conducive of happiness and nothing more proper for a man of power and energy as forgiveness in every place and at all times. He that is weak should forgive under all circumstances. He that is possessed of power should show forgiveness from motives of virtue; and he, to whom the success or failure of his objects is the same, is naturally forgiving.

That pleasure the pursuit of which does not injure one's virtue and profit should certainly be pursued to one's fill. One should not, however, act like a fool by giving free indulgence to his senses.

Prosperity never resides in one who suffers himself to be tortured by a grief, who is addicted to evil ways, who denies Godhead, who is idle, who has not his senses under control, and who is divested of exertion.

The man that is humble, and who from humility is modest is regarded as weak and persecuted by persons of misdirected intelligence. Prosperity never approaches from fear the person that is excessively liberal, that gives away without measure, that is possessed of extraordinary bravery, that practises the most rigid vows, and that is very proud of his wisdom. Prosperity does not reside in one that is highly accomplished, nor in one that is without any accomplishment. She does not desire a combination of all the virtues, nor is she pleased with the total absence of all virtues. Blind, like a mad cow, prosperity resides with some one who is not remarkable.

The fruits of the Vedas are ceremonies performed before the (Homa) fire; the fruits of an acquaintance with the scriptures are goodness of disposition and conduct. The fruits of women are the pleasures of intercourse and offspring; and the fruits of wealth are enjoyment and charity. He that performs acts tending to secure his prosperity in the other world with wealth acquired sinfully never reaps the fruits of these acts in the other world, in consequence of the sinfulness of the acquisition (spent for the purpose).

In the midst of deserts, or deep woods, or inaccessible fastness, amid all kinds of dangers and alarms or in view of deadly weapons upraised for striking him, he that has strength of mind entertains no fear. Exertion, self-control, skill, carefulness, steadiness, memory and

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commencement of act after mature deliberation; - know that these are the roots of prosperity.

Austerities constitute the strength of ascetics; the Vedas are the strength of those conversant with them; in envy lies the strength of the wicked; and in forgiveness, the strength of the virtuous.

These eight, viz., water, roots, fruits, milk, ghee (clarified butter), what is done at the desire of a Brahmana, or at the command of a preceptor, and medicine, are not destructive of a vow.

That which is antagonistic to one's own self, should never be applied in respect of another. Briefly even this is virtue. Other kinds of virtue there are, but these proceed from caprice. Anger must be conquered by forgiveness; and the wicked must be conquered by honesty; the miser must be conquered by liberality, and falsehood must be conquered by truth.

One should not place trust on a woman, a swindler, an idle person, a coward, one that is fierce, one that boasts of his own power, a thief, an ungrateful person, and an atheist.

Achievements, period of life, fame, and power, - these four always expand in the case of him that respectfully salutes his superiors and waits upon the old.

Do not set thy heart after these objects, which cannot be acquired except by very painful exertion, or by sacrificing righteousness, or by bowing down to an enemy.

A man without knowledge is to be pitied; an act of intercourse that is not fruitful is to be pitied; the people of a kingdom that are without food are to be pitied; and a kingdom without a king is to be pitied.

These constitute the source of pain and weakness to embodied creatures:

1. The rains, decay of hills and mountains
2. Absence of enjoyment, anguish of women
3. And wordy arrows, of the heart.

The scum of the Vedas is want of study>; of Brahmanas, absence of vows; of the earth, the Vahlikas; of man, untruth; of the chaste woman, curiosity; of women, exile from home. The scum of gold is silver; of silver, tin; of tin, lead; and of lead, useless dross.

One cannot conquer sleep by lying down; women by desire; fire by fuel; and wine by drinking.

His life is, indeed, crowned with success that has won his friends by gifts, his foes in battle, and wife by food and drink; they who have thousands live; they, who have hundreds, also live. O Dhritarashtra, forsake desire. There is none who cannot manage to live by some means or other. Thy paddy, wheat, gold, animals, and women that are on

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earth all cannot satiate even one person. Reflecting on this, they that are wise never grieve for want of universal dominion. O king, I again tell thee, adopt an equal conduct towards thy children, i.e., towards the sons of Pandu and thy own sons.

Vidura said: Worshipped by the good and abandoning pride, that good man who pursues his objects without out stepping the limits of his power, soon succeeds in winning fame, for they that are good, when gratified with a person, are certainly competent to bestow happiness on him. He that forsakes, of his own accord, even a great object owing to its being fraught with unrighteousness, lives happily, casting off all foes, like a snake that has cast off its slough. A victory, gained by an untruth, deceitful conduct towards the king, and insincerity of intentions expressed before the preceptor, - these three are each equal to the sin of slaying a Brahmana.

Students

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Excessive envy, death, and boastfulness, are the causes of the destruction of prosperity. Carelessness in waiting upon preceptor, haste, and boastlessness, are the three enemies of knowledge.

Idleness, inattention, confusion of the intellect, restlessness, gathering for killing time, haughtiness, pride, and covetousness, - these seven constitute, it is said, the faults of students in the pursuit of learning. How can they that desire pleasure have knowledge? Students, again, engaged in the pursuit of learning, cannot have pleasure. Votaries of pleasure must give up knowledge, and votaries of knowledge must give up pleasure.

Fire is never gratified with fuel (but can consume any measure thereof). The great ocean is never gratified with the rivers it receives (but can receive any number of them). Death is never gratified even with the entire living creatures. A beautiful woman is never gratified with any number of men (she may have).

O king, hope kills patience; Yama (god of death) kills growth; anger kills prosperity; miserliness kills fame; absence of tending kills cattle; one angry Brahmana destroys a whole kingdom.

Let goats, brass, silver, honey, antidotes of poison, birds, Brahmanas versed in the Vedas, old relatives, and men of high birth sunk in poverty, be always present in thy house. O Bharata, Manu has said that goats, bulls, sandal, lyres, mirrors, honey, ghee (clarified butter), iron, copper, conch shells, salagram (the stony image of Vishnu with gold within) and Goro-chana should always be kept in one's house for the worship of the gods, Brahmanas, and guests, for all those objects are auspicious.

Highest of all teachings

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O sire, I would impart to thee another sacred lesson productive of great fruits. And which is the highest of all teachings, viz., virtue should never be forsaken from desire, fear, or temptation, nay, nor for the sake of life itself. Virtue is everlasting; pleasure and pain are transitory; life is, indeed, everlasting but its particular phases are transitory. Forsaking those which are transitory, betake thyself to that which is everlasting, and let contentment be thine, for contentment is the highest of all acquisitions. Behold, illustrious and mighty kings, having ruled lands abounding with wealth and corn, have become the victims of the Universal Destroyer, leaving behind their kingdoms and vast sources of enjoyment.

The son brought up with anxious care, when dead, is taken up and carried away by men (to the burning ground). With the dishevelled hair and crying piteously, they then cast the body into the funeral pyre, as if it were a piece of wood. Others enjoy the deceased's wealth, while birds and fire feast on the elements of his body. With two only he goes to the other world, viz., his merits and his sins, which keep him company. Throwing away the body, O sire, relatives, friends, and sons retrace their steps, like birds abandoning trees without blossoms and fruits. The person cast into the funeral pyre is followed only by his own acts. Therefore, should men carefully and gradually earn merit of righteousness.

In the world above this, and also in that below this, there are regions of great gloom and darkness. Know, O king, that those are regions where the senses of men are exceedingly afflicted. Oh, let not any of those places to thine.

Carefully listening to these words, if thou can act according to them, thou wilt obtain great fame in this world of men, and fear will not be thine here or hereafter.

O Bharata, the soul is spoken of as a river; religious merit constitutes its sacred baths; truth, its water; self-control, its banks; kindness, its waves. He that is righteous purifies himself by a bath therein, for the soul is sacred, and the absence of desire is the highest merit. O king, life is a river whose waters are the five senses, and whose crocodiles and sharks are desire and anger. Making self-control thy raft, cross thou its eddies which are represented by repeated births.

Worshipping and gratifying friends that are eminent in wisdom, virtue, learning, and years, he that asks their advice about what he should do and should not do, is never misled.

One should restrain one's lust and stomach by patience; one's hands and feet by one's eyes; one's eyes and ears by one's mind; and one's mind and words by one's acts.

That Brahmana who never omits to perform his ablutions, who always wears his sacred thread, who always attends to the study of the Vedas, who always avoids food that is unclean, who tells the truth and performs acts in honour of his preceptor, never falls off from the region of Brahma.

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Having studied the Vedas, poured libations into fire, performed sacrifices, protected subjects, sanctified his soul by drawing weapons for protecting kine (cows) and Brahmanas, and died on the field of battle, the Kshatriyaya attains to heaven.

Having studied the Vedas, and distributed in proper time his wealth among Brahmanas, Kshatriyayas, and his own dependents, and inhaled the sanctified smoke of the three kinds of fires, the Vaisya enjoys heavenly bliss in the other world.

Having properly worshipped Brahmanas, Kshatriyayas, and Vaisyas in due order, and having burnt his sins by gratifying them, and then peacefully casting off his body, the Sudra enjoys the bliss of heaven.

The duties of the four orders are thus set forth before thee. Listen now to the reason of my speech as I discourse it. Yudhishtira, the son of Pandu, is falling off from the duties of the Kshatriyaya order. Place him, therefore, O king, in a position to discharge the duties of kings.

Dhritarashtra said: It is even so as you always teach me. O amiable one, my heart also inclines that very way of which you tell me. Although, however, I incline in my mind towards the Pandavas even as you teach me to do, yet as soon as I come in contact with Duryodhana it turns off in a different way. No creature is able to avert fate. Destiny, I think, is certain to take its course. Individual exertion is futile.

From The Mahabharata
Udyoga Parva (Sanat-sujata parva)
Section XLI

Dhritarashtra said: If there is anything still left unsaid by thee, O Vidura, say it then, as I am ready to listen to thee. The discourse is, indeed, charming.

Vidura said: O Dhritarashtra, O thou of the Bharata race, that ancient and immortal Rishi Sanat-sujata who, leading a life of perpetual celibacy, has said that there is no Death. That foremost of all intelligent persons will expound to thee all the doubts in thy mind, both expressed and unexpressed.

Dhritarashtra said: Do thou not know what that immortal Rishi will say unto me? O Vidura, do thou say it, if indeed, thou hast that degree of wisdom.

Vidura said: I am born in the Sudra order and, therefore, do not venture to say more than what I have already said. The understanding, however, of that Rishi, leading a life of celibacy, is regarded by me to be infinite. He that is a Brahmana by birth, by discoursing on even the profoundest mysteries, never incurs the censure of the gods. It is for this alone that I do not discourse to thee, upon the subject.

Dhritarashtra said: Tell me, O Vidura, how with this body of mine I can meet with that ancient and immortal one (Sanat-sujata)?

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Vaisampayana said: Then Vidura began to think of that Rishi of rigid vows. And knowing that he was thought of, the Rishi, O Bharata, showed himself there. Vidura then received him with the rites prescribed by ordinance. And then after having rested a while, the Rishi was seated at his ease.

Vidura addressed him, saying: O illustrious one, there is a doubt in Dhritarashtra’s mind which is incapable of being explained away by me. It behoveth thee, therefore, to expound it, so that listening to thy discourse, this chief of men may tide over all his sorrows, and to that gain and loss, what is agreeable and what disagreeable, decrepitude and death, fright and jealousy, hunger and thirst, pride and prosperity, dislike, sleep, lust and wrath, and decrease and increase may all be borne by him.



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