

Four Discourses on Kamma



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by

Ñanamoli Thera

A Gift of Dhamma

Four Discourses of the Buddha
from
the Majjhima Nikaya

॥ နမော တဿ ဘဂဝတော အရဟတော သမ္မာသမ္ဗုဒ္ဓဿ ॥
॥ नमो तस्य भगवतो अरहतो सम्मसम्बुद्धस्य ॥
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Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

Translated by

Ñanamoli Thera

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Compiler's Preface

To understand the Buddha suttas on kamma is not easy; we need to know the entire Buddha's expositions of the kamma to understand clearly what are kamma and its results. There are four suttas that give the exposition of the kamma and its working of the kamma and its fruition:

The Dog duty Ascetic; (*Kukkuravatika sutta*);
The shorter exposition of Kamma (*Cula-kammavibhanga sutta*);
The Great exposition of Kamma (*Mahakammavibhanga sutta*); and
The Brahman of Sala (*Saleyyaka sutta*).

Superficially, if you just go through one sutta on kamma, you only know half the property and the characteristic of the working of kamma and its results. To will simply explain what is kamma and its results as:

**"Do good, find good,
do evil, find evil."**

This is not enough. This action of kamma does not mean the fruition will take place immediately, later or in future existence, the kamma fruition could be take place based on three factors:

1. *the good kamma producing his happiness was done by him earlier, or*
2. *the good kamma producing his happiness was done by him later, or*
3. ***the right view was undertaken and completed by him at the time of his death.***

The important factor that we need to know is whatever the kamma done in the past, at the time of making one's last breath, *the final dying hour*, and one should have wholesome (*kusala*) kamma to reflect upon to get good result in the next rebirth. Kamma action and its fruition are refined in this way:

1. there is kamma that is *incapable* (of good result) and appears *capable* (of good result);
2. there is kamma that is *capable* (of good result) and appears *capable* (of good result);
3. there is kamma that is *capable* (of good result) and appears *incapable* (of good result)."

Buddha admonishment to all of lay householders:

There are ten kinds of actions – *bodily, verbal* and *mental conducts*; as long as one maintains the ten righteous conducts, one could aspire for his next rebirth at any of the happy destinations.

19. *of the gods of the Realm of the Thirty-three..*
20. *...of the gods that have Gone to Bliss...*
21. *...of the Contented gods...*
22. *...of the gods that Delight in Creating...*
23. *...of the gods that Wield Power over others' Creations...*
24. *...of the gods of Brahma's Retinue...*
25. *...of the Radiant gods...*
26. *...of the gods of Limited Radiance...*
27. *...of the gods of Measureless Radiance...*
28. *...of the gods of Streaming Radiance...*
29. *...of the Glorious gods...*
30. *...of the gods of Limited Glory...*
31. *...of the gods of Measureless Glory...*
32. *...of the gods of Refulgent Glory...*
33. *...of the Very Fruitful gods...*
34. *...of the gods Bathed in their own Prosperity...*
35. *...of the Untormenting gods...*
36. *...of the Fair-to-see gods...*
37. *...of the Fair-seeing gods...*
38. *...of the gods who are Junior to None...*
39. *...of the gods of the base consisting of the infinity of space...*
40. *...of the gods of the base consisting of the infinity of consciousness...*
41. *...of the gods of the base consisting of nothingness...*

Those who do not believe in kamma and its fruits? They will be recycled in the round of rebirths, until they could come to accept the right view – the kamma and its fruition and have exhausted all the bad kamma.

The four suttas are to be studied together to know the inner working of kamma and its fruition.

Compiled for the serene joys and the emotions of the pious

1. The Dog-duty Ascetic (Kukkuravatika Sutta)

Introduction

Belief is often one thing, action another. While beliefs sometimes influence actions, for other people their beliefs are quite separate from what they do.

Buddha says all intentional actions, whether thoughts, speech or bodily actions, in whatever way expressed, are *kamma* and lead the doer to experience a result sooner or later (in this life or lives to come). In this sutta the Buddha classifies kamma into four groups:

- (i) dark with a dark result,
- (ii) bright with a bright result,
- (iii) dark and bright with a dark and bright result,
- (iv) neither dark nor bright with a neither dark nor bright result.

Dark (evil) kamma leads to dark (unhappy) result; and bright (beneficial) kamma leads to bright (happy) result.

* * *

1. Dog Duty Ascetic

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the *Koliyan* country: there is a town of the *Koliyans* called *Haliddavasana*.

Then *Punna*, a son of the *Koliyans* and an *ox-duty ascetic*, and *Seniya* a naked dog duty ascetic, together went to the Blessed One, and Punna the ox duty ascetic paid homage to the Blessed One and sat down at one side, while *Seniya* the naked dog-duty ascetic exchanged greetings with the Blessed One, and when the courteous and amiable talk was finished, he too sat down at one side curled up like a dog.

When *Punna* the ox-duty ascetic sat down, he asked the Blessed One:

1.1. What will be his destination? The dog-duty ascetic.

"Venerable sir, this naked dog-duty ascetic *Seniya* does what is hard to do: he eats his food when it is thrown on the ground. That dog duty has long been taken up and practiced by him.

What will be his destination?

What will be his future course?"[1]

"Enough, *Punna*, let that be. Do not ask me that."

A second time... A third time *Punna* the ox-duty ascetic asked the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, this naked dog-duty ascetic *Seniya* does what is hard to do: he eats his food when it is thrown on the ground. That dog duty has long been taken up and practiced by him.

What will be his destination?

What will be his future course?"

"Well, *Punna*, since I certainly cannot persuade you when I say 'Enough, *Punna*, let that be. Do not ask me that,' I shall therefore answer you.

"Here, *Punna*,

- someone develops the dog duty fully and unstintingly,
- he develops the dog-habit fully and unstintingly,
- he develops the dog mind fully and unstintingly,
- he develops dog behavior fully and unstintingly.

Having done that, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in the company of dogs. But if his view is such as this: 'By this virtue or duty or asceticism or religious life I shall become a (great) god or some (lesser) god,' that is wrong view in his case. Now there are two destinations for one with wrong view,

I say:

- *hell or*
- *the animal womb.*

So, *Punna*, if his dog duty is perfected, it will lead him to the company of dogs; if it is not, it will lead him to hell."

1.2. What will be his destination? The Ox-duty ascetic.

When this was said, Seniya the naked dog-duty ascetic wept and shed tears. Then the Blessed One told *Punna*, son of the Koliyans and an ox-duty ascetic: "Punna, I could not persuade you when I said, 'Enough Punna, let that be. Do not ask me that.'"

"Venerable sir, I am not weeping that the Blessed One has spoken thus. Still, this dog duty has long been taken up and practiced by me. Venerable sir, there is this *Punna*, a son of the Koliyans and an ox duty ascetic: that ox duty has long been taken up and practiced by him. What will be his destination? What will be his future course?"

"Enough, Seniya, let that be. Do not ask me that." A second time... A third time Seniya the naked dog-duty ascetic asked the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, there is this Punna, a son of the Koliyans and an ox-duty ascetic; that ox duty has long been taken up and practiced by him. What will be his destination? What will be his future course?"

"Well, *Seniya*, since I certainly cannot persuade you when I say 'Enough, Seniya, let that be. Do not ask me that,' I shall therefore answer you."

"Here, *Seniya*,

- someone develops the ox duty fully and unstintingly,
- he develops the ox habit fully and unstintingly,
- he develops the ox mind fully and unstintingly,
- he develops the ox behavior fully and unstintingly.

Having done that, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in the company of oxen. But if his view is such as this: 'By this virtue or duty or asceticism or religious like I shall become a (great) god or some (lesser) god,' that is wrong view in his case. Now there are two destinations for one with wrong view,

I say:

- *hell or*
- *the animal womb.*

So, *Seniya*, if his ox duty is perfected, it will lead him to the company of oxen; if it is not, it will lead him to hell."

When this was said, *Punna*, a son of the *Koliyans* and an ox-duty ascetic, wept and shed tears. Then the Blessed One told Seniya, the naked dog duty ascetic: "Seniya, I could not persuade you when I said, 'Enough, Seniya, let that be. Do not ask me that.'"

"Venerable sir, I am not weeping that the Blessed One has spoken thus. Still, this ox duty has long been taken up and practiced by me. Venerable sir, I have confidence in the Blessed One thus: 'The Blessed One is capable of teaching me the Dhamma in such a way that I may abandon this ox duty and that this naked dog-duty ascetic Seniya may abandon that dog duty.'"

1.3. The lesson on the four kinds of kamma

"Then, Punna, listen and heed well what I shall say."

"Yes, venerable sir," he replied. The Blessed One said this:

"*Punna*, there are four kinds of kamma proclaimed by me after realization myself with direct knowledge.

What are the four?

- (i) There is dark kamma with dark ripening,
- (ii) there is bright kamma with bright ripening,
- (iii) there is dark-and-bright kamma with dark-and-bright ripening, and
- (iv) there is kamma that is not dark and not bright with neither-dark-nor-bright ripening that conduces to the exhaustion of kamma.

1.3.1. What is dark kamma with dark ripening

"What is dark kamma with dark ripening?"

Here someone produces a (kammic) :

- *bodily process* (bound up) with affliction,^[2]
- he produces a (kammic) *verbal process* (bound up) with affliction,
- he produces a (kammic) *mental process* (bound up) with affliction.

By so doing, he reappears in a world with affliction. When that happens, afflicting contacts ^[3] touch him. Being touched by these, he feels afflicting feelings entirely painful as in the case of beings in hell. Thus a being's reappearance is due to a being: he reappears owing to the kammās he has performed. When he has reappeared, contacts touch him.

Thus I say are beings heirs of their kammās.

This is called dark kamma with dark ripening.

1.3.2. What is bright kamma with bright ripening?

"And what is bright kamma with bright ripening? Here someone produces a (kammic)

- bodily process **not** (bound up) with affliction,
- he produces a (kammic) verbal process **not** (bound up) with affliction,
- he produces a (kammic) mental process **not** (bound up) with affliction.

By doing so, he reappears in a world without affliction. When that happens, unafflicting contacts touch him. Being touched by these, he feels unafflicting feelings entirely pleasant as in the case of the *Subhakinha*, the gods of Refulgent Glory. Thus a being's reappearance is due to a being; he reappears owing to the kammass he has performed. When he has reappeared, contacts touch him.

Thus I say are beings heirs of their kammass.

This is called bright kamma with bright ripening.

1.3.3. "What is dark-and-bright kamma with dark-and-bright ripening?"

"What is dark-and-bright kamma with dark-and-bright ripening? Here someone produces

- a (kammic) bodily process both (bound up) with affliction and not (bound up) with affliction...
- a (kammic) verbal process both (bound up) with affliction and not (bound up) with affliction.
- a (kammic) mental process both (bound up) with affliction and not (bound up) with affliction

By doing so, he reappears in a world both with and without affliction. When that happens, both afflicting and unafflicting contacts touch him. Being touched by these, he feels afflicting and unafflicting feelings with mingled pleasure and pain as in the case of human beings, some gods or some inhabitants of the states of deprivation. Thus a being's reappearance is due to a being kamma; he reappears owing to the past kammass. When he has reappeared, contacts touch him.

- Thus I say are beings heirs of their kammass.
- This is called dark-and-bright kamma with dark-and-bright ripening.

1.3.4.. What is neither-dark-nor-bright kamma with neither-dark-nor-bright ripening that leads to the exhaustion of kamma?

"What is neither-dark-nor-bright kamma with neither-dark-nor-bright ripening that leads to the exhaustion of kamma? As to these kinds of kamma:

- any volition in abandoning the kind of kamma that is **dark** with dark ripening,
- any volition in abandoning the kind of kamma that is **bright** with bright ripening, and
- any volition in abandoning the kind of kamma that is **dark-and bright** with dark-and-bright ripening.

This is called neither-dark-nor-bright kamma with neither-dark-nor-bright ripening.

"These are the four kinds of kamma proclaimed by me after realization myself with direct knowledge."

1.4. Punna – accepted as Lay follower for life

When this was said, *Punna*, a son of the Koliyans and an ox-duty ascetic, said to the Blessed One: "Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama! The Dhamma has been made clear in many ways by Master Gotama as though he were turning upright what had been overthrown, revealing the hidden, showing the way to one who is lost, holding up a lamp in the darkness for those with eyesight to see forms.

"I go to Master Gotama for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of bhikkhus. From today let Master Gotama remember me **as a lay follower** who has gone to him for refuge for life."

1.5. Seniya – became Ven. Seniya Thera

But *Seniya* the naked dog-duty ascetic said: "Magnificent, Master Gotama!... The Dhamma has been made clear... for those with eyesight to see forms.

"I go to Master Gotama for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of bhikkhus. *I would receive the going forth under Master Gotama and the full admission.*"[4]

"*Seniya*, one who belonged formerly to another sect and wants the going forth and the full admission in this Dhamma and Discipline lives on probation for four months. At the end of the four months bhikkhus who are satisfied in their minds give him the going forth

into homelessness and also the full admission to the bhikkhus' state. A difference in persons has become known to me in this (probation period)."

"Venerable sir, if those who belonged formerly to another sect and want the going forth and the full admission in this Dhamma and Discipline live on probation for four months and at the end of four months bhikkhus who are satisfied in their minds give them the going forth into homelessness and the full admission to the bhikkhus' state, I will live on probation for four years and at the end of the four years let bhikkhus who are satisfied in their minds give me the going forth into homelessness and the full admission to the bhikkhus' state."

Seniya the naked dog duty ascetic received the going forth under the Blessed One, and he received the full admission. And not long after his full admission, dwelling alone, withdrawn, diligent, ardent, and self-controlled, the venerable Seniya by realization himself with direct knowledge here and now entered upon and abode in that supreme goal of the holy life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the home life into homelessness. He had direct knowledge thus: "*Birth is exhausted, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more of this to come.*"

And the venerable Seniya became one of the arahants.

* * *

Notes

1. Of births in samsara, the wandering-on in birth and death.
2. A defiled kamma expressed through the body (speech, mind).
3. Painful "touches" through eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind.
4. That is, the novice ordination and the full ordination as a bhikkhu or monk.

2. The Shorter Exposition of Kamma (Cula-kammavibhanga Sutta)

Introduction

You want: long life, health, beauty, power, riches, high birth, and wisdom?

Any or some of these things do not appear by chance. It is not someone's luck that he is healthy, or for one lack of luck that he is stupid. Such inequalities among human beings come about because of the kamma they have made individually. The truth is each person reaps his own fruits. So if one is touched by short life, sickness, ugliness, insignificance, poverty, low birth or stupidity and one should not let the past kamma work its way. If one is going through the bad kamma, he could change his future kamma by making the right kind of kamma now.

One must learn how to make good kamma and know not to make the bad kamma. Learn the true dhamma and set a course direction in life and have control over your future kamma.

* * *

2. The Shorter Exposition of Kamma

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at *Savatthi* in *Jeta's Grove*, *Anathapindika's Park*.

Then *Subha* the student (brahman), *Todeyya's* son, went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him, and when the courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side. When he had done so, *Subha* the student said to the Blessed One:

2.1. Why is inequality among humankind?

"Master Gotama, what is the reason, what is the condition, why inferiority and superiority are met with among human beings, among mankind?

- *For one meets with short-lived and long-lived people,*
- *sick and healthy people,*
- *ugly and beautiful people,*
- *insignificant and influential people,*
- *poor and rich people,*

- *low-born and high-born people,*
- *stupid and wise people.*

What is the reason, what is the condition, why superiority and inferiority are met with among human beings, among mankind?"

- "Student, beings are owners of kammass,
- heirs of kammass,
- they have kammass as their progenitor,
- kammass as their kin,
- kammass as their homing-place.

It is kammass that differentiate beings according to inferiority and superiority."

"I do not understand the detailed meaning of Master Gotama's utterance spoken in brief without expounding the detailed meaning. It would be good if Master Gotama taught me the Dhamma so that I might understand the detailed meaning of Master Gotama's utterance spoken in brief without expounding the detailed meaning."

"Then listen, student, and heed well what I shall say."

"Even so, Master Gotama," Subha the student replied. The Blessed One said this:

2.2. Why people reappear in the state of deprivation?.

2.2.1. Reappear in hell.

"Here, student, some woman or man is a killer of living beings, murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings. Due to having performed and completed such kammass, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell.

2.2.2. Reappear in human world – short lived.

If, on the dissolution of the body, after death, instead of his reappearing in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell, he comes to the human state, he is short-lived wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to short life, that is to say, to be a killer of living beings, murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings.

2.3. Why people reappear in the happy destination?

2.3.1. Reappear in heavenly world.

"But here some woman or man, having abandoned the killing of living beings, abstains from killing living beings, lays aside the rod and lays aside the knife, is considerate and merciful and dwells compassionate for the welfare of all living beings. Due to having performed and completed such karmas, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.

2.3.2. Reappear in human world – long lived.

If, on the dissolution of the body, after death, instead of his reappearing in a happy destination, in the heavenly world, he comes to the human state, he is long-lived wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to long life, that is to say, to have abandoned the killing of living beings, to abstain from killing living beings, to lay aside the rod and lay aside the knife, to be considerate and merciful, and to dwell compassionate for the welfare of all living beings.

2.4. Why people reappear in the state of Deprivation?

2.4.1. Reappear in the state of Deprivation

"Here, student, some woman or man is one who harms beings with his hands or with clods or with sticks or with knives. Due to having performed and completed such karmas, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation...

2.4.2. Reappear sickly in the human world.

If instead he comes to the human state, he is sickly wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to sickness, that is to say, to be one who harms beings with one's hands or with clods or with sticks or with knives.

2.5. Why people reappear in the Happy destination?

2.5.1. Reappear in Happy destination

"But here some woman or man is not one who harms beings with his hands, or with clods, or with sticks, or with knives. Due to having performed and completed such karmas, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination...

2.5.2. Reappear healthy in the human world.

If instead he comes to the human state, he is healthy wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to health, that is to say, not to be one who harms beings with his hands or with clods or with sticks or with knives.

2.6. Why people reappear in the state of Deprivation?.

2.6.1. Reappear in the state of deprivation.

"Here, student, some woman or man is angry, much given to rage; even when little is said, he is furious, angry, ill-disposed, resentful, he shows ill-temper, hate and surliness. Due to having performed and completed such karmas, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation...

2.6.2. One Reappear Ugly in the human world.

If instead he comes to the human state, he is ugly wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to ugliness, that is to say, to be furious, angry, ill-disposed, resentful, and to show ill-temper, hate and surliness.

2.7. Why people reappear in the Happy destination?

2.7.1. Reappear in the heavenly world

"But here some woman or man is not angry or not much given to rage even when much is said, he is not furious, angry, ill-disposed, resentful, nor does he show ill-temper, hate or surliness. Due to having performed and completed such karmas, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination...

2.7.2. Reappear beautiful in the human world.

If instead he comes to the human state, he is beautiful wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to beauty, that is to say, not to be angry or given to much rage; even when much is said, not to be furious, angry, ill-disposed or resentful, or to show ill-temper, hate or surliness.

2.8. Why people reappear in the state of Deprivation?.

2.8.1. Reappear in the state of deprivation

"Here, student, some woman or man is envious; he envies, begrudges and harbors envy about others' gains, honor, veneration, respect, salutations and offerings. Due to having performed and completed such kammass, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation...

2.8.2. Reappear insignificant in the human world.

If instead he comes to the human state, he is insignificant wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to insignificance, that is to say, to be envious, to envy, begrudge, and harbor envy about others' gain, honor, veneration, respect, salutations and offerings.

2.9. Why people reappear in the Happy destination?

2.9.1. He Reappear in the heavenly world

"But here some woman or man is not envious, he does not envy, begrudge or harbor envy about others' gain, honor, veneration, respect, salutations and offerings. Due to having performed and completed such kammass, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination...

2.9.2. Reappear influential in the human world.

If instead he comes to the human state, he is influential wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to influence, that is to say, not to be envious, not to envy, begrudge or harbor envy about others' gain, honor, veneration, respect, salutations and offerings.

2.10.. Why people reappear in the state of Deprivation?.

2.10.1. Reappear in the state of deprivation

"Here, student, some woman or man is not a giver of food, drink, cloth, sandals, garlands, perfumes, unguents, bed, roof and lighting to monks or brahmins. Due to having performed and completed such kamma, on the dissolution of the body, after death he reappears in a state of deprivation...

2.10.2. Reappear poor in the human world.

If instead he comes to the human state, he is poor wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to poverty, that is to say, not to be a giver of food, drink, cloth, sandals, garlands, perfumes, unguents, bed, roof and lighting to monks and brahmins.

2.11. Why people reappear in the Happy destination?

2.11.1. Reappear in the heavenly world

"But here some woman or man is a giver of food, drink, cloth, sandals, perfumes, unguents, bed, roof and lighting to monks and brahmans. Due to having performed and completed such kamma, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination...

2.11.2. Reappear rich in the human world

If instead he comes to the human state, he is rich wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to riches, that is to say, to be a giver of food, drink, cloth, sandals, garlands, perfumes, unguents, bed, roof and lighting to monks and brahmans.

2.12. Why people reappear in the state of Deprivation?.

2.12.1. Reappear in the state of deprivation

"Here, student, some woman or man is obdurate and haughty; he does not pay homage to whom he should pay homage, or rise up for whom he should rise up, or give a seat to whom he should give a seat, or make way for whom he should make way, or worship him who should be worshipped, or respect him who should be respected, or revere him who should be revered, or honor him who should be honored. Due to having performed and completed such kammass, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation...

2.12.2. Reappear low-born in the human world.

If instead he comes to the human state, he is low-born wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to low birth, that is to say, to be obdurate and haughty, not to pay homage to whom he should pay homage, nor rise up for..., nor give a seat to..., nor make way for..., nor worship..., nor respect..., nor revere..., nor honor him who should be honored.

2.13. Why people reappear in the Happy destination?

2.13.1. Reappear in the heavenly world.

"But here some woman or man is not obdurate or haughty; he pays homage to whom he should pay homage, rises up for whom he should rise up, gives a seat to whom he should give a seat, makes way for whom he should make way, worships him who should be

worshipped, respects him who should be respected, reveres him who should be revered, honors him who should be honored. Due to having performed and completed such karmas, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination...

2.13.2. Reappear high-born in the human world.

If instead he comes to the human state, he is high-born wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to high birth, that is to say, not to be obdurate or haughty, to pay homage to whom he should pay homage, to rise up for..., to give a seat to..., to make way for..., to worship... respect... revere... honor him who should be honored.

2.14. Why people reappear in the state of Deprivation?.

2.14.1. Reappear in the state of deprivation

. "Here, student, some woman or man when visiting a monk or brahman, does not ask: 'What is wholesome, venerable sir? What is unwholesome? What is blamable? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What, by my doing it, will be long for my harm and suffering? Or what, by my doing it, will be long for my welfare and happiness?' Due to having performed and completed such karmas, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation...

2.14.2. Reappear stupid in the human world.

If instead he comes to the human state, he will be stupid wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to stupidity, that is to say, when visiting a monk or brahman, not to ask: 'What is wholesome?... Or what, by my doing it, will be long for my welfare and happiness?'

2.15. Why people reappear in the Happy destination?

2.15.1. Reappear in the heavenly world.

"But here some woman or man when visiting a monk or brahman, asks: 'What is wholesome, venerable sir?... Or what, by my doing it, will be long for my welfare and happiness?' Due to having performed and completed such karmas, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination...

2.15.2. Reappear wise in the human world.

If instead he comes to the human state, he is wise wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to wisdom, that is to say, when visiting a monk or brahman, to ask: 'What is wholesome, venerable sir?... Or what, by my doing it, will be long for my welfare and happiness?'

2.16. Summary

"So, student,

- The way that leads to short life makes people short-lived,
- the way that leads to long life makes people long-lived;
- the way that leads to sickness makes people sick,
- the way that leads to health makes people healthy;
- the way that leads to ugliness makes people ugly,
- the way that leads to beauty makes people beautiful;
- the way that leads to insignificance makes people insignificant,
- the way that leads to influence makes people influential;
- the way that leads to poverty makes people poor,
- the way that leads to riches makes people rich;
- the way that leads to low birth makes people low-born,
- the way that leads to high birth makes people high-born;
- the way that leads to stupidity makes people stupid,
- the way that leads to wisdom makes people wise.

Student:

- "Beings are owners of kammās,
- heirs of kammās,
- they have kammās as their progenitor,
- kammās as their kin,
- kammās as their homing-place.
- It is kammās that differentiate beings according to inferiority and superiority."

When this was said, *Subha* the student, *Todeyya's* son, said to the Blessed One: "Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama! The Dhamma has been made clear in many ways by Master Gotama, as though he were turning upright what had

been overthrown, revealing the hidden, showing the way to one who is lost, holding up a lamp in the darkness for those with eyes to see forms.

"I go to Master Gotama for refuge, and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of bhikkhus. From today let Master Gotama accept me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge for life."

3. The Great Exposition of Kamma (*Mahakammavibhanga Sutta*)

Introduction

In this sutta, Buddha gave his Great Exposition of Kamma based upon four "types" of people:

- a) the evil-doer who goes to hell
- b) the evil-doer who goes to heaven,
- c) the good man who goes to heaven, and
- d) the good man who goes to hell (or other low birth).

The Buddha then shows how wrong views can arise from only partial understanding of truth. One can see the stages of this:

- (1) a mystic "sees" in vision an evil-doer suffering in hell,
- (2) this confirms what he had heard about moral causality,
- (3) so he says, "evil-doers always go to hell," and
- (4) dogma hardens and becomes rigid when he says "Only this is true; anything else is wrong."

The Buddha explains his Great Exposition of Kamma in which he shows that notions of "the evildoer goes to hell" are much too simple. The minds of people are complex and they make many different kinds of kamma even in one lifetime.

The kamma made at the last moment of before death influences the basis for the next life.

* * *

The Great Exposition of Kamma

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at *Rajagaha*, in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Feeding Place. Now on that occasion the venerable *Samiddhi* was living in a forest hut.

Then the wanderer *Potaliputta*, walking and wandering for exercise, came to the venerable *Samiddhi* and exchanged greetings with him, and when the courteous and

amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side. When he had done so, he said to the venerable *Samiddhi*:

"Friends *Samiddhi*, I heard and learned this, from the monk Gotama's lips:

Potaliputa: 'Bodily kammās are vain, verbal kammās are vain, only mental kammās are true.' But there is actually that attainment having entered upon which nothing (of result of kammās) is felt at all."

Samiddhi: "Not so, friend *Potaliputta*, do not say thus, do not misrepresent the Blessed One; it is not good to misrepresent the Blessed One; the Blessed One would not say so: 'Bodily kammās are vain, verbal kammās are vain, only mental kammās are true.' And there is actually that attainment having entered upon which nothing (of result of kammās) is felt at all."

Samiddhi: "How long is it since you went forth, friend *Samiddhi*?"

Potaliputa: "Not long, friend, three years."

"There now, what shall we say to the elder bhikkhus, when the young bhikkhu fancies the Master is to be defended thus? After doing intentional kamma, friend *Samiddhi*, by way of body, speech or mind, what does one feel (of its result)?"

Samiddhi: "After doing an intentional kamma, friend *Potaliputta*, by way of body, speech or mind, one feels suffering (as its result)."

Then neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the words of the venerable *Samiddhi*, the wanderer *Potaliputta* got up from his seat and went away.

Soon after the wanderer *Potaliputta* had gone, the venerable *Samiddhi* went to the venerable *Ananda* and exchanged greetings with him, and when the courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side. When he had done so, he told the venerable *Ananda* all his conversation with the wanderer *Potaliputta*.

When this was said, the venerable *Ananda* told him: "Friend *Samiddhi*, this conversation should be told to the Blessed One. Come, let us go to the Blessed One, and having done so, let us tell him about this. As he answers, so we shall bear it in mind."

"Even so, friend," the venerable *Samiddhi* replied.

Then they went together to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, they sat down at one side. When they had done so, the venerable Ananda told the Blessed One all the venerable Samiddhi's conversation with the wanderer Potaliputta.

When this was said, the Blessed One told the venerable Ananda:

Buddha; "I do not even know the wanderer by sight, Ananda. How could there have been such a conversation? The wanderer *Potaliputta's* question ought to have been answered after analyzing it, but *Samiddhi* answered it to this misguided man without qualification.[\[1\]](#)

When this was said, the venerable *Udayin* said to the Blessed One: "But, venerable sir, supposing when the venerable Samiddhi spoke, he was referring to this, namely, 'Whatever is felt is suffering.'[\[2\]](#)

Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ananda: "See, Ananda, how this misguided man *Udayin* interferes. I knew, Ananda that this misguided man *Udayin* would unreasonably interfere now. To begin with it was the three kinds of feeling that were asked about by the wanderer Potaliputta. If, when this misguided man Samiddhi was asked, he had answered the wanderer Potaliputta thus:

Buddha:

- *'After doing an intentional kamma by way of body, speech and mind, whose result is to be felt as pleasure, he feels pleasure;*
- *after doing an intentional kamma by way of body, speech and mind, whose result is to be felt as pain, he feels pain;*
- *after doing an intentional kamma by way of body, speech and mind, whose result is to be felt as neither-pain-nor-pleasure, he feels neither-pain-nor-pleasure' –*

by answering him thus, *Ananda*, *Samiddhi* would have given the wanderer *Potaliputta* the right answer. Ananda, who are the foolish thoughtless wanderers of other sects that they will understand the Tathagata's Great Exposition of Kamma?

If you, Ananda, would listen to the Tathagata expounding the Great Exposition of Kamma (you might understand it).[\[3\]](#)

"This is the time, Blessed One, this is the time, Sublime One, for the Blessed One to expound the Great Exposition of Kamma. Having heard it from the Blessed One, the bhikkhus will bear it in mind."

"Then listen, Ananda, and heed well what I shall say."

"Even so, venerable sir," the venerable Ananda replied. The Blessed One said this:

3.1. The four kinds of persons

"Ananda, there are four kinds of persons existing in the world. What four?

(i) "Here some person kills living beings, takes what is not given, misconducts himself in sexual desires, speaks falsehood, speaks maliciously, speaks harshly, gossips, is covetous, is ill-willed, and has wrong view.^[4] On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, for punishment in hell.

(ii) "But here some person kills living beings... and has wrong view. On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.

(iii) "Here some person abstains from killing living beings, from taking what is not given, from misconduct in sexual desires, from false speech, from malicious speech, from harsh speech, from gossip, he is not covetous, is not ill-willed, and has right view.^[5] On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.

(iv) "But here some person abstains from killing living beings... and has right view. On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell.

3.2.1. One with wrong view goes to hell.

"Here, Ananda, in consequence of ardor, endeavor, devotion, diligence, and right attention, some monk or brahman attains such concentration of mind that, when his mind is concentrated, he sees with the heavenly eyesight, which is purified and surpasses the human, that some person kills living beings here, takes what is not given, misconducts himself in sexual desires, speaks falsehood, speaks maliciously, speaks harshly, gossips, is covetous, is ill-willed, has wrong view. He sees that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, for punishment in hell.

He says: 'It seems that there are evil karmas and that there is the result of misconduct; for I have seen that *a person killed living beings here... had wrong view. I have seen that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he had reappeared in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, for punishment in hell.*'

He says: *'It seems that one who kills living beings... has wrong view, will always, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappeared in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, for punishment in hell.*

Those who know thus know rightly; those who know otherwise are mistaken in their knowledge.' So he obstinately misapprehends what he himself has known, seen and felt; insisting on that alone, he says: **'Only this is true, anything else is wrong.'**

3.2.2. One with wrong view goes to heaven

"But here in consequence of ardor, endeavor, devotion, diligence and right attention, some monk or brahman attains such concentration of mind that, when his mind is concentrated, he sees with the heavenly eyesight, which is purified and surpasses the human, *that some person kills living beings here... has wrong view. He sees that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.*

He says: 'It seems there are no evil karmas, there is no result of misconduct. For I have seen that a person killed living beings here... had wrong view. I have seen that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.'

He says: *'It seems that one who kills living beings... has wrong view will always, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.* Those who know thus know rightly; those who know otherwise are mistaken in their knowledge.' So he obstinately misapprehends what he himself has known, seen and felt; insisting on that alone, he says: **'Only this is true, anything else is wrong.'**

3.2.3. A good person goes to Heaven

"Here in consequence of ardor, endeavor, devotion, diligence and right attention, some monk or brahman attains such concentration of mind that, when his mind is concentrated, he sees with the heavenly eyesight, which is purified and surpasses the human, *that some person abstains from killing living beings here... has right view. He sees that, on the*

dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.

He says: 'It seems that there are good kammās, there is result of good conduct. For I have seen that a person abstained from killing living beings here... had right view. I saw that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he had reappeared in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.'

He says: *'It seems that one who abstains from killing living beings... has right view **will always**, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.* Those who know thus know rightly; those who know otherwise are mistaken in their knowledge.' So he obstinately misapprehends what he himself has known, seen and felt; insisting on that alone, he says: **'Only this is true; anything else is wrong.'**

3.2.4. A good conduct right view person reappear in hell

"But here in consequence of ardor, endeavor, devotion, diligence and right attention, some monk or brahman attains such concentration of mind that, when his mind is concentrated, he sees with the heavenly eyesight, which is purified and surpasses the human, *that some person abstains from killing living beings here... has right view. He sees that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, for punishment in hell.*

He says: 'It seems that there are no good kammās, there is no result of good conduct. For I have seen that a person abstained from killing here... had right view. I saw that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he had reappeared in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, for punishment in hell.'

He says: *'It seems that one who abstains from killing living beings... has right view, **will always**, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, for punishment in hell.*

Those who know thus know rightly; those who know otherwise are mistaken in their knowledge.' So he obstinately misapprehends what he himself has known, seen and felt; insisting on that alone, he says: **'Only this is true; anything else is wrong.'**

3.3. Analysis of Kamma

3.3.1. Statement No. 1 - An evil person goes to hell.

"Now, Ananda, when a monk or brahman says thus:

'It seems that there are evil kammās, there is the result of misconduct,' I concede that to him.

"When he says thus:

'For I have seen that some person killed living beings... had wrong view. I saw that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he had reappeared in the states of deprivation, for punishment in hell,' I concede that to him.

3.3.2. Statement No. 2 - An evil person not always goes to hell

"When he says thus: 'It seems that one who kills living beings... has wrong view, **will always**, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappeared in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell,' **I do not concede that to him.**

"When he says thus:

'Those who know thus know rightly; those who know otherwise are mistaken in their knowledge,' I do not concede that to him.

"When he obstinately misapprehends what he himself has known, seen and felt; and insisting on that alone, he says: '**Only this is true; anything else is wrong,**' **I do not concede that to him.**

"Why is that? The Tathagata's knowledge of the Great Exposition of Kamma is different.

3.3.3. Statement No.3 - An evil person goes to heaven.

"Now when a monk or brahman says thus: 'It seems that there are no evil kammās, there is no result of misconduct,' I do not concede that to him.

"When he says thus: 'For I have seen that a person killed living beings... had wrong view. I saw that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he had reappeared in a happy destination, in the heavenly world,' I concede that to him.

"When he says thus: 'It seems that one who kills living beings... has wrong view, **will always**, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappeared in a happy destination, in the heavenly world,' I do not concede that to him.

"When he says thus: 'Those who know thus know rightly; those who know otherwise are mistaken in their knowledge,' I do not concede that to him.

"When he obstinately misapprehends what he himself has known, seen and felt; and insisting on that alone, he says: '*Only this is true; anything else is wrong*,' I do not concede that to him.

"Why is that? The Tathagata's knowledge of the Great Exposition of Kamma is different.

3.3.4. Statement No. 4 - A Good person goes to heaven.

"Now when a monk or brahman says thus: 'It seems that there are good kammass, there is a result of good conduct,' I concede that to him.

"When he says thus: 'For I have seen that a person abstained from killing living beings here... had right view. I saw that on the dissolution of the body after death, he had reappeared in a happy destination, in the heavenly world,' I concede that to him.

"When he says: 'It seems that one who abstains from killing living beings... has right view *will always*, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a happy destination, in the heavenly world,'^[6] I do not concede that to him.

"When he says: 'Those who know thus know rightly; those who know otherwise are mistaken in their knowledge,' I do not concede that to him.

"When he obstinately misapprehends what he himself has known, seen, and felt; and insisting on that alone he says: '*Only this is true: anything else is wrong*,' I do not concede that to him.

"Why is that? The Tathagata's knowledge of the Great Exposition of Kamma is different.

3.3.5. Statement No.5 - A Good man goes to hell?

"Now when a monk or brahman says thus: 'It seems that there are no good kammass, there is no result of good conduct,' I do not concede that to him.

"When he says thus: "For I have seen that a person abstained from killing living beings here... had right view. I saw that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he had reappeared in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell," I concede that to him.

"When he says thus: 'One who abstains from killing living beings... has right view **will always**, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell,' I do not concede that to him.

"When he says thus: 'Those who know thus know rightly; those who know otherwise are mistaken in their knowledge,' I do not concede that to him.

"When he obstinately misapprehends what he himself has known, seen and felt; and insisting on that alone, he says: 'Only this is true; anything else is wrong,' I do not concede that to him.

"Why is that? The Tathagata's knowledge of the Great Exposition of Kamma is different.

(The Great Exposition of Kamma)

3.4. An evil person touches by suffering:

"Now, Ananda, there is the person who has killed living beings here... has had wrong view. And on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell.[7] But (perhaps) :

- *the evil kamma producing his suffering was done by him earlier,*
- *the evil kamma producing his suffering was done by him later, or*
- *the wrong view was undertaken and completed by him **at the time of his death**.[8]*

And that was why, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappeared in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell. But since

- he has killed living beings here...
- has had wrong view,
- he will feel the result of that here and now, in his next rebirth, or `in some subsequent existence.

3.5. An evil person goes to heaven?

"Now there is the person who has killed living beings here... has had wrong view. And on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.[9]. But (perhaps):

- *the good kamma producing his happiness was done by him earlier,*

- *the good kamma producing his happiness was done by him later, or*
- *the right view was undertaken and completed by him at the time of his death.*

And that was why, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappeared in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.

But since he has killed living beings here... has had wrong view, he will feel the result of that here and now, or in his next rebirth, or in some subsequent existence.[\[10\]](#)

3.6. A good person goes to Heaven

"Now there is the person who has abstained from killing living beings here... has had right view. And on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.[\[11\]](#) But (perhaps) :

- *the good kamma producing his happiness was done by him earlier, or*
- *the good kamma producing his happiness was done by him later, or*
- *the right view was undertaken and completed by him at the time of his death.*

And that was why, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappeared in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.

But since he has abstained from killing living beings here... has had right view, he will feel the result of that here and now, or in his next rebirth, or in some subsequent existence.

3.7. A Good person goes to hell

"Now there is the person who has abstained from killing living beings here... has had right view. And on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell.[\[12\]](#) But (perhaps):

- *the evil kamma producing his suffering was done by him earlier, or*
- *the evil kamma producing his suffering was done by him later, or*
- *wrong view was undertaken and completed by him at the time of his death.*

And that was why, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappeared in the states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell.

But since he has abstained from killing living beings here... has had right view, he will feel the result of that here and now, or in his next rebirth, or in some subsequent existence.[\[13\]](#)

3.8. Summary

"So, Ananda,

- there is kamma that is *incapable* (of good result) and appears *incapable* (of good result);
- there is kamma that is *incapable* (of good result) and appears *capable* (of good result);
- there is kamma that is *capable* (of good result) and appears *capable* (of good result);
- there is kamma that is *capable* (of good result) and appears *incapable* (of good result)."[\[14\]](#)

This is what the Blessed One said. The venerable Ananda was satisfied and he rejoiced in the Blessed One's words.

* * *

Notes

1. These are two of the four ways of answering a question, the other two being: replying with a counter-question, and "setting aside" the question, i.e., replying with silence.
2. This is a quotation from the Buddha's words: see Samyutta Nikaya, Vedana Samyutta, Rahogata-vagga Sutta 1.
3. This is an addition necessary for understanding this sentence.
4. These are the ten unwholesome courses of kamma.
5. These are the ten wholesome courses of kamma.
6. This amounts to the belief in theistic religions where virtue and faith (=whatever is held to be right view) are supposed to guarantee salvation.
7. *Devadatta*, for instance, who persuaded prince Ajatasattu to murder his father (who was a stream-winner), three times attempted to murder the Buddha and once succeeded in wounding him, and *caused a schism in the Sangha*; the last two actions are certain to lead to birth in hell.

8. This series of three phrases appears to mean: *earlier*, either earlier in life before he undertook either the wholesome or unwholesome courses of kamma, or in some previous life; *later*, later in that very life, for even if a person does much evil kamma, usually he will also make some good kamma occasionally; *wrong view... time of his death*, this kind of wrong view will be of the type, "there is no kamma, no results of kamma, no evil, no results of evil," and so on.

***** *The next birth actually depends on the object of the last moments of a dying person's consciousness. At that time one should recollect all one's good kamma: generosity, loving-kindness, compassion, pure precepts and so on.***

***** *Evil should not be thought of then though heavy evil kamma done previously may force itself into the mind and make recollection of one's generosity and virtue in keeping the precepts difficult or impossible.***

9. A good example of this is the story of "Coppertoath," the public executioner who, after a career of murder as a bandit, then as the killer of his own bandit comrades and subsequently executioner of all criminals for fifty years, was taught by venerable Sariputta Thera and his mind eased of the heavy weight of evil kamma so that he attained heavenly rebirth. See Dhammapada Commentary, ii, 203-209.

10. Though such a person attained a heavenly rebirth the evil kamma made will still mature sooner or later; he has not escaped its results.

11. King Pasenadi of Kosala, for instance.

12. This was what happened to Queen Mallika, wife of King Pasenadi, who had led a good life, generous, keeping the Five Precepts, and the Eight Precepts on Uposatha days and so on, but once she did evil, having sexual relations with a dog. This unconfessed evil weighed heavily on her mind and she remembered it when dying. As a result she spent seven days in hell. Her power of goodness from the doing of many good kammās then gave her rebirth in a heavenly world. See Dhammapada Commentary, iii, 119-123.

13. Though this virtuous and good person has obtained a low rebirth through the power of previously done evil kamma, still the good kamma made by him will mature sooner or later, when it gets a chance.

14. This final terse paragraph may have been clear to the venerable Ananda Thera, or he may have asked for an explanation, as we require and find in the Commentary, which says:

i. A strong unwholesome kamma (incapable of good result), the result of which will come before the results of weaker unwholesome kammās.

ii. Wholesome kamma (which appears capable of good result) is followed by unwholesome death-proximate kamma which makes the former incapable of good result immediately.

iii. A strong wholesome kamma will mature even before much accumulated unwholesome kamma.

iv. Unwholesome kamma (which appears incapable of good result) is followed by wholesome death-proximate kamma which will mature first and is capable of good results.

The Brahmins of Sala (Saleyyaka Sutta)

Introduction

The brahmins of this discourse, asked a question about the causality of rebirth -- why is one reborn in the states of deprivation (the hells, animals, and ghosts) while others make it to the heaven worlds?

The Buddha analyzes the kind of kamma that will take one to a low rebirth. There are ten courses of unwholesome kamma that could or expected to result in this life or "on the dissolution of the body after death.

The aspiration for rebirth at the time of death is critical for all to consider. However, one's previously made kamma must also support such aspiration. A miser might aspire for riches but his kamma will give him poverty.

The passport to heavenly birth will be:

- For heavenly world, one must kept the *Upasatha* and all the precepts and have been generous and truthful.
- For a rebirth in the first four Brahma world, one must kept the Upasatha and all the precepts and have been generous and truthful and in addition to be proficient in jhana.
- For rebirth in the next five Brahma-planes, one must attain the *Anagami* (non-returner state).
- For the cessation of rebirth, one must strive for arahatship – go forth and strive hard to training practice and gain the insight-wisdom.

* * *

The Brahmins of Sala

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was in the *Kosalan* country with a large Sangha of bhikkhus, and eventually arrived at a Kosalan brahmin village called *Sala*.

The brahman householders of Sala heard: "A monk called Gotama, it seems, a son of the Sakyans who went forth from a Sakyan clan, has been traveling in the Kosalan country with a large Sangha of bhikkhus and has come to *Sala*. Now a good report of Master Gotama has been spread to this effect: 'That Blessed One is such since he is arahant and Fully Enlightened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct, sublime, knower of worlds, incomparable teacher of men to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, enlightened, blessed. He describes this world with its gods, its Maras, and its (Brahma) Divinities, this generation with its monks and brahmans, with its kings and its people, which he has himself realized through direct knowledge. He teaches a Dhamma that is good in the beginning, good in the middle and good in the end with (the right) meaning and phrasing, he affirms a holy life that is utterly perfect and pure.' Now it is good to see such arahants."

The brahman householders of *Sala* went to the Blessed One; and paid homage to the Blessed One and sat down at one side; exchanged greetings with him, and when the courteous and amiable talk was finished, sat down at one side; raised hands palms together in salutation to the Blessed One. Some pronounced their name and clan in the Blessed One's presence and sat down at one side; some kept silence and sat down at one side.

When they were seated, they said to the Blessed One:

4.1. What are the reason and condition for rebirth?

"Master Gotama, what is the reason,

- What is the condition, why some beings, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in states of deprivation, in an *unhappy destination*, in perdition, even in hell? and
- What is the reason, what is the condition, why some beings here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world?"

4.1.1. By reason of unrighteous conduct

"Householders, it is by reason of conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, by reason of unrighteous conduct, that some beings are on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappearing in states of deprivation, in an *unhappy destination*, in perdition, even in hell.

4.1.2. By reason of righteous conduct

It is by reason of conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, by reason of righteous conduct, that some beings are on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappearing in a happy destination, even in the *heavenly world*."

"We do not understand the detailed meaning of this utterance of Master Gotama's spoken in brief. It would be good if Master Gotama taught us the Dhamma so that we might understand the detailed meaning of Master Gotama's utterance spoken in brief without expounding the detailed meaning."

"Then, householders, listen and heed well what I shall say."

"Yes, venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

4.2. There are ten kinds of conducts

- "Householders, there are *three kinds of bodily conduct* not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct.
- There are *four kinds of verbal conduct* not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct.
- There are *three kinds of mental conduct* not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct.

4.2.1. The three kinds of bodily unrighteous conduct

"And how are there three kinds of bodily conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct?

1. *Here someone is a killer of living beings: he is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, and merciless to all living beings.*
2. *He is a taker of what is not given: he takes as a thief another's belongings and property in the village or in the forest.*
3. *He is given over to misconduct in sexual desires: he has intercourse with such (women) as are protected by the mother, father, (mother and father), brother, sister, relatives, as have a husband, as entail a penalty, and also with those that are garlanded in token of betrothal.*

That is how there are three kinds of bodily conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct.

4.2.2. There are four kinds of verbal unrighteous conduct

"And how are there four kinds of verbal conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct?

1. Here *someone speaks falsehood*: when summoned to a court or to a meeting, or to his relatives' presence, or to his guild, or to the royal family's presence, and questioned as a witness thus, 'So, good man, tell what you know,' then, not knowing, he says 'I know,' or knowing, he says 'I do not know,' not seeing, he says 'I see,' or seeing, he says 'I do not see'; in full awareness he speaks falsehood for his own ends or for another's ends or for some trifling worldly end.
2. He *speaks maliciously*: he is a repeater elsewhere of what is heard here for the purpose of causing division from these, or he is a repeater to these of what is heard elsewhere for the purpose of causing division from those, and he is thus a divider of the united, a creator of divisions, who enjoys discord, rejoices in discord, delights in discord, he is a speaker of words that create discord.
3. He *speaks harshly*: he utters such words as are rough, hard, hurtful to others, censorious of others, bordering on anger and uncondusive to concentration.
4. He is a *gossip*: as one who tells that which is unseasonable, that which is not fact, that which is not good, that which is not the Dhamma, that which is not the Discipline, and he speaks out of season speech not worth recording, which is unreasoned, indefinite, and unconnected with good.

That is how there are four kinds of verbal conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct.

4.2.3. The three kinds of mental unrighteous conduct

"And how are there three kinds of mental conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct?

1. Here *someone is covetous*: he is a coveter of another's belongings and property thus: 'Oh, that what is another's been mine!'
2. Or he *has a mind of ill-will*, with the intention of a mind affected by hate thus: 'May these beings are slain and slaughtered, may they be cut off, perish, or be annihilated!' Or
3. he has *wrong view*, distorted vision, thus: 'There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed, no fruit and ripening of good and bad karmas, no this world, no other world, no mother, no father, no spontaneously (born) beings,^[1] no good and virtuous monks and brahmins that have themselves realized by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.'^[2]

That is how there are three kinds of mental conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct.

"So, householders, it is by reason of conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, by reason of unrighteous conduct, that some beings here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell.

4.3. There are ten kinds of righteous conduct.

1. "Householders, there are three kinds of bodily conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct.
2. There are four kinds of verbal conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct.
3. There are three kinds of mental conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct.

4.3.1. Three kinds of bodily righteous conduct

"And how are there three kinds of bodily conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct?

1. Here someone, abandoning the killing of living beings, becomes one who abstains from killing living beings; with rod and weapon laid aside, gentle and kindly, he abides compassionate to all living beings.
2. Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he becomes one who abstains from taking what is not given; he does not take as a thief another's chattels and property in the village or in the forest.
3. Abandoning misconduct in sexual desires, he becomes one who abstains from misconduct in sexual desires: he does not have intercourse with such women as are protected by mother, father, (father and mother), brother, sister, relatives, as have a husband, as entail a penalty, and also those that are garlanded in token of betrothal.

That is how there are three kinds of bodily conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct.

4.3.2. The four kinds of verbal righteous conduct

"And how are there four of verbal conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct?

1. Here someone, *abandoning false speech*, becomes one who abstains from false speech: when summoned to a court or to a meeting or to his relatives' presence or to his guild or to the royal family's presence, and questioned as a witness thus, 'So, good man, tell what you know,' not knowing, he says 'I do not know,' or knowing, he says 'I know,' not seeing he says 'I do not see,' or seeing, he says 'I see'; he does not in full awareness speak falsehood for his own ends or for another's ends or for some trifling worldly end.
2. *Abandoning malicious speech*, he becomes one who abstains from malicious speech: as one who is neither a repeater elsewhere of what is heard here for the purpose of causing division from these, nor a repeater to these of what is heard elsewhere for the purpose of causing division from those, who is thus a reuniter of the divided, a promoter of friendships, enjoying concord, rejoicing in concord, delighting in concord, he becomes a speaker of words that promote concord.
3. *Abandoning harsh speech*, he becomes one who abstains from harsh speech: he becomes a speaker of such words as are innocent, pleasing to the ear and lovable, as go to the heart, are civil, desired of many and dear to many.
4. *Abandoning gossip*, he becomes one who abstains from gossip: as one who tells that which is seasonable, that which is factual, that which is good, that which is the Dhamma, that which is the Discipline, he speaks in season speech worth recording, which is reasoned, definite and connected with good.

That is how there are four kinds of verbal conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct.

4.3.3. The three kinds of mental righteous conduct

"And how are there three kinds of mental conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct?

Here someone is not covetous: he is not a coveter of another's chattels and property thus: 'Oh, that what is another's been mine!'

He has no mind of ill-will, with the intention of a mind unaffected by hate thus: 'May these beings are free from enmity, affliction and anxiety, may they live happily!'

He has right view, undistorted vision, thus: 'There is what is given and what is offered and what is sacrificed, and there is fruit and ripening of good and bad karmas, and there is this world and the other world and mother and father and spontaneously (born) beings, and good and virtuous monks and brahmins that have themselves realized by direct knowledge and declared this world and the other world.'

That is how there are three kinds of mental conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct.

"So, householders, it is by reason of conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, by reason of righteous conduct, that some beings here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.

4.4. Make your aspiration for noble birth with great property

"If a householder who observes conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct, should wish:

'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of the warrior-nobles of great property!' it is possible that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he may do so.

Why is that?

Because he observes conduct that is in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct.

4.5. Make your aspiration for birth in Brahman of great property

"If a householder who observes conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct, should wish:

'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of the brahmans of great property!'

it is possible...

4.6. Make aspiration for rebirth as householder of great property

"If a householder who observes conduct in accordance with the Dhamma,...'... I might reappear in the company of householders of great property!'

it is possible...

4.7. Make aspiration for rebirth with the gods of four kings

"If a householder who observes conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct, should wish:

'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of the gods of the Four Kings!' it is possible that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he may do so. Why is that? Because he observes conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct.

19. ...of the gods of the Realm of the Thirty-three...[\[3\]](#)
20. ...of the gods that have Gone to Bliss...
21. ...of the Contented gods...
22. ...of the gods that Delight in Creating...
23. ...of the gods that Wield Power over others' Creations...
24. ...of the gods of Brahma's Retinue...
25. ...of the Radiant gods...
26. ...of the gods of Limited Radiance...
27. ...of the gods of Measureless Radiance...
28. ...of the gods of Streaming Radiance...
29. ...of the Glorious gods...
30. ...of the gods of Limited Glory...
31. ...of the gods of Measureless Glory...
32. ...of the gods of Refulgent Glory...
33. ...of the Very Fruitful gods...
34. ...of the gods Bathed in their own Prosperity...
35. ...of the Untormenting gods...
36. ...of the Fair-to-see gods...
37. ...of the Fair-seeing gods...
38. ...of the gods who are Junior to None...
39. ...of the gods of the base consisting of the infinity of space...
40. ...of the gods of the base consisting of the infinity of consciousness...
41. ...of the gods of the base consisting of nothingness...

4.7. Make aspiration for rebirth in the world of Gods

"If a householder who observes conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct, should wish: 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of the gods of the base consisting of neither-perception-nor-non-perception!' it is possible that, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he may do so.

Why is that?

Because he observes conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct.

4.8. Make aspiration for realization of direct knowledge

"If a householder who observes conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct, should wish: 'Oh, that by realization myself with direct knowledge, I may here and now enter upon and abide in the deliverance of the heart and the deliverance by wisdom that are taint-free with exhaustion of taints!' it is possible that, by realization himself with direct knowledge, he may here and now enter upon and abide in the deliverance of the heart and the deliverance by wisdom that are taint-free with exhaustion of taints.

Why is that?

Because he observes conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct."

When this was said, the brahman householders of Sala said to the Blessed One:

"Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama! The Dhamma has been made clear in many ways by Master Gotama, as though he were turning upright what had been overthrown, revealing the hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, holding up a lamp in the darkness for those with eyes to see forms.

"We go to Master Gotama for refuge, and to the Dhamma, and to the Sangha of bhikkhus. From today let Master Gotama accept us as followers who have gone to him for refuge for life."

Notes

1. Beings who appear due to the force of past action (kamma) in some states of birth: all gods and divinities, ghosts, inhabitants of hells; see Majjhima Nikaya Sutta 12 (Mahasihanada Sutta).

2. For an explanation of these views held by some teachers in the Buddhist time, and which were a rejection of all moral values, see Ledi Sayadaw, *The Eightfold Path and its Factors Explained* (BPS Wheel No. 245/247)

3. The rendering of the various gods' names are based on the commentary to the Hadayavibhanga (in the *Vibhanga*, second book of the Abhidhamma: see *The Book of Analysis*, P.T.S. Translation Series).

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Appendix – A

Moggallana's Last Days

Even though Moggallana had supernormal powers and was an Arahant he did not, unlike his friend Shariputra, have a peaceful death. Moggallana's ability to see into other realms and explain the operation of the law of kamma, together with his extraordinary teaching skills, made him very popular. Many disciples of other teachers were placed in the Buddha's Noble Path by Moggallana.

Ascetics of other sects, seeing their numbers dwindle, decided to kill Moggallana. Unwilling to perform the evil deed themselves for fear of exposure, they hired assassins to kill Moggallana. Moggallana was meditating in his hut in Black Rock on Mount Isigili on the outskirts of Rajagaha when they made the first attempt.

Moggallana used his supernormal powers to escape unseen. The second time too the assassins found an empty hut. On the third attempt Moggallana's supernormal powers momentarily deserted him. The assassins battered and crushed his bones and left him for dead.

Moggallana, however, was the second chief disciple of the Buddha. He was not going to pass away without first paying homage to the Buddha and obtaining permission for his Parinibbāna. Gathering his battered body with supreme effort, using astral travel, Moggallana went to where the Buddha was residing and asked permission to die. Then, as was the custom for the chief disciple, he dispensed the Dhamma to those in attendance, performed many miracles to give confidence to the multitude gathered, and passed away to Parinibbāna. Moggallana passed away two weeks after his friend Shariputra, in the month of Kattika (October/November).

The monks and disciples were outraged at the untimely death of their beloved teacher. The king ordered an investigation into the murder and caught the assassins, who informed him that they had been hired by Niganthanatha ascetics. The king then had the ascetics tortured and killed, in keeping with the laws at that time for murderers.

The devotees also asked the Buddha why Maha Moggallana had come to such a painful death. The Buddha explained the law of kamma that even an Arahant could not avoid, and spoke of a grave crime that Moggallana had performed in a previous birth.

At the instigation of his wife, Moggallana had murdered both his parents, who were blind, by pounding them to death. His aged parents, who thought that they were being attacked by a band of robbers, implored their son, whom they loved, to save himself. Little did they know that it was their own son, who, in the guise of robbers, had committed this evil act. Moggallana suffered in hell for many thousands of years and had

to die a violent death even as an Arahant, for killing one's parents is a grave (garuka) crime, the effects of which are not easily extinguished.

Moggallana's ability to teach and his supernormal powers assisted him in his role of training the Sangha and the multitude. It was also Moggallana who, together with his friend Shariputra, brought the errant monks back to the Buddha when Devadatta caused a schism in the Sangha. He also assisted in the consolidation of the Dhamma and the administration of the Sangha.

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!

Note: *Do some wholesome kamma so that one could reflect upon that wholesome kusala kamma and feel the joys and and enjoy the next rebirth.*