

## Kamma ( Volitions) & Vipāka (Results)

### World Views about *kamma* and *vipāka* at the Time of the Buddha

#### 3 major views on *kamma* and *vipāka*

1. The belief that everything is results of actions done in the previous births (pubbekatahetuvāda)
2. The belief that everything is the result of a creation by a supreme ruler or a god/s (nimmaṇavāda) - Devine creationism
3. The belief that all rewards and punishments come without a particular reason or cause (ahetuvāda) - Anguttara Nikāya

#### Other views

- Kamma has no relationship to the vipāka - Can do whatever one pleases
- All kamma has vipāka - Impractical
- All vipākas are only due to kamma - deterministic, no free will - No one will be responsible

### Buddhist Definition about *Kamma* and *vipāka*

- Kamma simply means: moral/good and immoral/bad actions; do good and good will come to you, now, and hereafter. Do bad and bad will come to you, now, and hereafter.
- In the language of the harvest, if you sow seeds, you will reap harvests.
- In the language of science, kamma is called the law of cause and effect: every cause has an effect.
- The mind is the forerunner of all good and bad states. If you speak/act/think with a pleasant mind, then happiness follows you like your shadow which never leaves you. If you speak or act with a bad mind, then unhappiness follows you just as the wheel follows the hoof of the ox. (Dhammapada)
- Kamma means all moral and immoral volitions (kusala akusala cetanā)
- Involuntary, unintentional and unconscious actions do not constitute kamma because volition is absent.

### **Karma** - Causes = intentional actions

**Karma** (Pāli: *kamma*) is a Sanskrit term that literally means "action" or "doing". In the Buddhist tradition, *karma* refers to action driven by intention (*cetanā*) which leads to future consequences. Those intentions are considered to be the determining factor in the kind of rebirth in *samsara*, the cycle of rebirth.

#### 2 Categories of Karma

1. Wholesome actions
2. Unwholesome actions

#### 3 Roots of Unwholesome actions

1. Lobha - greed
2. Dosa - hatred
3. Moha - delusion/ignorance

#### 3 Roots of Wholesome actions

1. Alobha - Generosity
2. Adosa - Loving kindness
3. Amoha - Wisdom

## The Cause of Karma

Not knowing things that they truly are called *avijjā* (ignorance). This is the main cause of Karma. Dependent on ignorance arise Kammic activities (*avijjāpaccaya samkhārā*).

Craving (*tanhā*) and ill will (*dosa*) are other roots.

## The Five Orders

According to Buddhism, there are five orders or processes (*niyama*) which operate in the physical and mental realms.

1. **Utu Niyama** - physical inorganic order, e.g. seasonal phenomena of winds and rains. The unerring order of seasons, characteristic seasonal changes and events, causes of winds and rains, nature of heat, etc. all belong to this group.
2. **Bija Niyama** - order of germs and seeds (physical organic order), e.g. rice produced from rice-seed, sugary taste from sugar-cane or honey, peculiar characteristics of certain fruits, etc. The scientific theory of cells and genes and the physical similarity of twins may be ascribed to this order.
3. **Karma Niyama** - order of act and result, e.g., desirable and undesirable acts produce corresponding good and bad results. As surely as water seeks its own level so does Karma, given opportunity, produce its inevitable result, not in the form of a reward or punishment but as an innate sequence. This sequence of deed and effect is as natural and necessary as the way of the sun and the moon.
4. **Dhamma Niyama** - order of the norm, e.g., the natural phenomena occurring at the advent of a Bodhisattva in his last birth. Gravitation and other similar laws of nature. The natural reason for being good and so forth, may be included in this group.
5. **Citta Niyama** - order of mind or psychic law, e.g., processes of consciousness, arising and perishing of consciousness, constituents of consciousness, power of mind, etc., including telepathy, teleaesthesia, retro-cognition, premonitions, clairvoyance, clairaudience, thought-reading and such other psychic phenomena which are inexplicable to modern science.

Every mental or physical phenomenon could be explained by these all-embracing five orders or processes which are laws in themselves. **Karma as such is only one of these five orders.**

**Ānantarika-karma** is a heinous crime that through karmic process brings immediate disaster. They are called 'anantarika' because they are 'an' (without) 'antara' (interval), in other words the results immediately come to fruition in the next life, i.e. the participant goes straight to hell.

The five crimes are

1. Intentionally murdering one's father.
2. Intentionally murdering one's mother.
3. Killing an Arhat (fully enlightened being).
4. Shedding the blood of a Buddha.
5. Creating a schism within the Sangha, the community of Buddhist monks, nuns and pariṣā who try to attain enlightenment.

Not by birth is one a brahmin or an outcaste, but by deeds (*kamma*)

***Kamma Vipāka*** - (=phala) - Effect, consequences/results/maturation/ripening

Potential seed is Kamma, Fruits, arising from the tree is Vipāka.

Good intent and good deeds contribute to good karma and future happiness, while bad intent and bad deeds contribute to bad karma and future suffering

***Karmaphala*** - fruits of action, ***Ānisamsa*** are the concomitant advantageous Psychological, material social conditions, such as happiness, love, beauty, prosperity, health, longevity, respect, honour etc. .

***karmavipāka*** - the maturation of *karma* ***Ādinava*** (evil consequences) are disadvantageous, and appear as unsatisfactoriness, sorrow, hate, ugliness, poverty, disease, short life span, disrespect, [dishonor](#) etc.

The consequences envisioned by the **law of karma** encompass more (as well as less) than the observed natural or physical results which follow upon the performance of an action. Karma is a law in itself, which operates in its own field without the intervention of any external, independent ruling agency.

*One sows a seed, there is a time lag during which some mysterious invisible process takes place, and then the plant pops up and can be harvested*

In the Anguttara Nikaya, it is stated that karmic results are experienced either in this life (*ditṭhadhammika*) or in a future lives (*samparāyika*)

Four categories of Karmic results - come to effect;

1. Immediately effective – this life
2. Subsequently effective – next life
3. Indefinitely effective – any time
4. Defunct or ineffective – first two kamma if not become to fruition, become defunct.

As we sow the seed, so shall we reap the fruits. - The Buddha

When mind is unguarded, bodily action, speech and thought are unguarded. When the mind is guarded bodily action, speech and thought are guarded. (Atthasālini)

Kamma does not necessarily mean past actions. It embraces both past and present deeds. In one sense, we are the result of what we were, we will be the result of what we are. In another sense, we are not totally the result of what we were, we will not absolutely be the result of what we are. Kamma is complex. A criminal today may be a saint tomorrow, a good person yesterday may be a vicious one today.

The Buddha says, 'There is no place to hide or to escape from kammic results.

**Some quotes on *kamma* and *vipāka* from the Buddha's teachings**

- ❖ One indeed is one's own refuge; how can others be a refuge to one? (*Attā hi attano nātho ko hi nāthō paro siyā*)

- ❖ Putting oneself in another's place, one should not harm or kill others (attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā na haneyya na ghātaye)
- ❖ If someone does something bad, he/she has to repent and weep with a tearful face (Na taṃ kammaṃ kataṃ sādhu yaṃ katvā anutappati yassa assumukho rodaṃ vipākaṃ patisevati)
- ❖ That deed is well done if one has not to repent for having done it, and if one is delightful and happy with the result of that deed (Tanca kammaṃ kataṃ sādhu yaṃ katvā nānutappati yassa patī to sumano vipākaṃ patisevat).

### **Nibbedhika (Penetrative) Sutta:**

"Kamma should be known. The cause by which kamma comes into play should be known. The diversity in kamma should be known. The result of kamma should be known. The cessation of kamma should be known. The path of practice for the cessation of kamma should be known."

"Intention, I tell you, is kamma. Intending, one does kamma by way of body, speech, & intellect.

"And what is the cause by which kamma comes into play? Contact is the cause by which kamma comes into play.

"And what is the diversity in kamma? There is kamma to be experienced in hell, kamma to be experienced in the realm of common animals, kamma to be experienced in the realm of the hungry shades, kamma to be experienced in the human world, kamma to be experienced in the world of the devas. This is called the diversity in kamma.

"And what is the result of kamma? The result of kamma is of three sorts, I tell you: that which arises right here & now, that which arises later [in this lifetime], and that which arises following that. This is called the result of kamma.

"And what is the cessation of kamma? From the cessation of contact is the cessation of kamma; and just this noble eightfold path — right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration — is the path of practice leading to the cessation of kamma.