

Purification, Ethics and Karma in Early Buddhist Discourse

by Bhikkhu Anālayo

lecture 10

review MĀ 15

introductory statement:

"If a person does an action intentionally, then he will have to experience its result, either in this life or in the next life, I say.

If a person does an action unintentionally, then he will not have to experience the result, I say."

after development of the *brahmavihāras*:

"If the learned noble disciple, whose mind is [now] thus immeasurable and well-cultivated, had earlier been negligent because of bad friends and had done unwholesome actions, then he will no longer be led along by them. They cannot corrupt him and will not accompany him further."

after the simile of the young boy or girl:

"Monks, you should think like this: 'Formerly, I was negligent, and did unwholesome deeds. Let all their results be experienced now, not in the next life!'

One who practices liberation of the mind through loving-kindness in this way, immeasurable and well-cultivated, will definitely attain the fruit of non-returning, or else attain that which is still higher."

main points of MĀ 15:

10 pathways of action (*kamma*patha)
 overcome hindrances & cultivate *brahmavihāras*
 good rebirth / non return or arahantship

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review MĀ 16

after Kālāmas report different views to the Buddha:

MĀ 16: "Kālāmas, do not doubt! Why? When there is doubt, hesitation arises."

AN 3.65: "It is enough for you to be perplexed, it is enough for you to have doubt. Doubt has arisen in you in regard to a perplexing matter."

followed by listing of different grounds for knowledge, and then (AN 3.65):

"when you know for yourself: these things are unwholesome, these things are blamable, these things are censured by the wise, these things, if undertaken and practiced, lead to harm and suffering, then you should abandon them."

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four step-investigation of the Buddha
 in the *Vīmaṃsaka-sutta* (MN 47) and its parallel (MĀ 186):

- 1) Searching for impurities by empirical observation
- 2) Scrutiny of the attitude of the teacher
- 3) Direct query of the teacher

4) Personal verification

Upakkilesa-sutta MN 128 and its parallel MĀ 72:

MN 128: "doubt arose in me, on account of doubt my concentration fell away ..."

MĀ 72: "'What in the world does not exist, can I see, can I come to know that?' – in my mind this doubt arose. Because of this doubt, my concentration was lost ..."

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Four assurances in MĀ 16 and AN 3.65

3rd assurance

MĀ 16: "Whatever I have done, I have certainly done no evil, and I recollect no evil"

AN 3.65: "If by [merely] acting, evil is done, [at least] I am not intending evil for anyone."

main points of MĀ 16:

three roots of evil action are desire, hatred and ignorance
free from these three evils, develop four divine abodes
resulting in four assurances, independent of various views

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MĀ 17 – Discourse to Gāmaṇi

(Parallel to the *Asibandhakaputta-sutta* or *Pacchābhūmako-sutta*, SN 42.6/
SN IV 311)

‘You men and women, who have been lazy and indolent and have behaved in evil ways ... because of this, conditioned by this, after the breaking up of the body, at death, you shall reach a good realm of existence, and be reborn in a heavenly realm.’ ...

Suppose, Gāmaṇi, that there were a deep lake full of water located not far from a village, and a man were to throw a large heavy rock into it. If a crowd of people came along, placing their palms together, praising and imploring, and said: ‘Rock! May you float up and come out!’, what do you think, Gāmaṇi? On being urged by that crowd of people who come, placing their palms together, praising and imploring, because of this, conditioned by this, would that large heavy rock come out? "...

‘You men and women, who have been diligent and energetic and practice the sublime Dharma, undertaking the ten wholesome courses of action ... after the breaking up of the body, at death, you shall reach a bad realm of existence, be reborn in hell.’...

Gāmaṇi, suppose there were a deep lake full of water located not far from a village, and a man were to throw into the water a jar full of ghee and oil and then break it, so that fragments of the jar sank downward, while the ghee and oil floated upward.

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main points:

rebirth in hell or heaven
depends on one's own conduct
not on prayers by others

just as a stone thrown in water will sink to the bottom
just as oil thrown in water will rise up to the surface

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MĀ 18 – Discourse to Sīha
(Parallel to the *Sīha-sutta*, AN 8.12/ AN IV 179)

- 1) ... based on inaction
- 2) ... based on annihilation
- 3) ... based on abhorrence
- 4) ... based on Dharma and Vinaya
- 5) ... based on asceticism
- 6) ... based on not entering a womb [to be reborn],
- 7) ... based on attaining peace, and he proclaims to people a teaching of attaining peace.'

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AN 8.12

- 1) inaction
- 2) annihilation
- 3) abhorrence
- 4) nihilism
- 5) asceticism
- 6) against rebirth
- 7) attaining peace

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on meat consumption:

Jīvaka-sutta (MN 55 / MN I 371)

demerit on five occasions:

- when giving the order to bring the animal to be slaughtered
- when the animal to be slaughtered suffers on being brought
- when giving the order to slaughter the animal
- when the animal suffers on being slaughtered

- when offering the meat of the slaughtered animal to a disciple of the Tathāgata

threefold purity in regard to
abstaining from killing (SN 55.7 / SN V 353)

"A noble disciple reflects: 'I am one who wants to live, who does not want to die ... if someone were to take my life, that would not be agreeable and acceptable to me. Now if I were to take the life of another – of one who wants to live, who does not want to die – that would not be agreeable and acceptable to the other.

What is disagreeable and unacceptable to me is disagreeable and unacceptable to the other too. How can I inflict upon another what is disagreeable and unacceptable to me?'

Having reflected in this way, he abstains himself from killing, establishes others in abstaining from the killing and praises abstinence from killing.

Thus his bodily conduct is purified in three respects".

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main point of MĀ 18:

reinterpretation of concepts like

“non-action”

“annihilation”

“asceticism”