

The Extinction of Kamma

I declare, monks, that actions willed, performed and accumulated will not become extinct as long as their results have not been experienced, be it in this life, in the next life or in subsequent future lives. And as long as these results of actions willed, performed, and accumulated have not been experienced, there will be no making an end to suffering, I declare.

There are, monks, tainted failures in living caused by unwholesome volition, issuing in suffering, resulting in suffering. These tainted failures are threefold in bodily acts, fourfold in verbal acts and threefold in mental acts.

How are these tainted failures in living caused by unwholesome volition threefold in bodily acts?

There is a person who destroys life; he is cruel and his hands are blood-stained; he is bent on slaying and murdering, having no compassion for any living being.

He takes what is not given to him, appropriates with thievish intent the property of others, be it in the village or the forest.

He conducts himself wrongly in matters of sex: he has intercourse with those under the protection of father, mother, brother, sister, relatives, or clan, or of their religious community; or with those promised to a husband, protected by law, and even with those betrothed with a garland.

In this way tainted failure in living is threefold in bodily acts.

And how is tainted failure in living fourfold in verbal acts?

There is one who is a liar. When he is in the council of his community or in another assembly, or among his relatives, his guild, in the royal court, or when he has been summoned as a witness and is asked to tell what he knows, then, though he does not know, he will say, "I know"; though he does know, he will say, "I do not know"; though he has not seen, he will say, "I have seen"; and though he has seen, he will say, "I have not seen." In that way he utters deliberate lies, be it for his own sake, for the sake of others, or for some material advantage.

He utters divisive speech: what he hears here he reports elsewhere to foment conflict there; and what he hears elsewhere he reports here to foment conflict here. Thus he creates discord among those united, and he incites still more those who are in discord. He is fond of dissension, he delights and rejoices in it, and he utters words that cause dissension.

He speaks harshly, using speech that is coarse, rough, bitter, and abusive, that makes others angry and causes distraction of mind. It is such speech that he utters.

He indulges in frivolous chatter: he speaks what is untimely, unreasonable, and unbeneficial, having no connection with the Dhamma or the Discipline. His talk is not worth treasuring, it is inopportune, inadvisable, unrestrained, and harmful.

In this way, tainted failure in living is fourfold in verbal acts.

And how is tainted failure in living threefold in mental acts?

There is a person who is covetous; he covets the wealth and property of others, thinking: "Oh, that what he owns might belong to me!"

There is also one who has ill will in his heart. He has depraved thoughts, such as these: "Let these beings be slain! Let them be killed and destroyed! May they perish and cease to exist!"

He has wrong views and perverted ideas, such as these: "There is no moral value in a gift, offering or sacrifice; there is no fruit or recompense from deeds good or evil; there is neither this world nor another world; there are no duties towards mother and father; there are no spontaneously reborn beings; and there are no ascetics and brahmins in this world, living and conducting themselves rightly, who can explain this world and the world beyond, having realised them by their own direct knowledge."

In this way tainted failure in living, which is caused by unwholesome volition, issuing in suffering and resulting in suffering, is threefold in mental acts.

As to that tainted failure in living, which is threefold in bodily acts, fourfold in verbal acts and threefold in mental acts, and which, having been caused by unwholesome volition, issues in suffering, results in suffering—it is due to that very failure in living that with the breakup of the body, after death, beings are reborn in the plane of misery, in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell.

Just as a perfect throw of dice, when thrown upwards, will come to rest firmly wherever it falls, similarly, due to those tainted failures in living caused by unwholesome volition, beings will be reborn in the plane of misery ... in hell.

I declare, monks, that actions willed, performed and accumulated will not become extinct as long as their results have not been experienced, be it in this life, in the next life or in subsequent future lives. And as long as these results of actions willed, performed, and accumulated have not been experienced, there will be no end to suffering, I declare.

There are, monks, successes in living caused by wholesome volition, issuing in happiness, resulting in happiness. They are threefold in bodily acts, fourfold in verbal acts and threefold in mental acts.

How are these successes in living caused by wholesome volition threefold in bodily acts?

There is a person who abstains from the destruction life; with the rod and weapon laid aside, he is conscientious and kindly and dwells compassionate towards all living beings.

He does not take what is not given to him and does not appropriate with thievish intention the property of others, be it in the village or the forest.

He gives up sexual misconduct and abstains from it. He does not have intercourse with those under the protection of father, mother ... nor with those betrothed with a garland.

In this way, success in living is threefold in bodily acts.

And how is success in living fourfold in verbal acts?

There is a person who has given up false speech and abstains from it. When he is in the council of his community or in another assembly, or among his relatives, his guild, in the royal court, or has been summoned as a witness and is asked to tell what he knows, then, when he knows, he will say, "I know"; and when he does not know he will say, "I do not know"; when he has seen, he will say, "I have seen"; and when he has not seen, he will say, "I have not seen."

He will not utter any deliberate lie, be it for his own sake, for the sake of others or for some material advantage.

He has given up divisive speech and abstains from it. What he has heard here he will not report elsewhere to foment conflict there; and what he has heard elsewhere he will not report here to foment conflict here. In that way he unites those who are divided and encourages those who are in harmony. Concord gladdens him, he delights and rejoices in concord, and he utters words that foster concord.

He has given up harsh speech and abstains from it. His words are gentle, pleasant to hear, endearing, heartwarming, courteous, agreeable to many folk, pleasing to many folk.

He has given up vain talk and abstains from it. He speaks at the right time, in accordance with facts and of matters that are beneficial. He speaks on the Dhamma and the Discipline and talks in a way that is worth treasuring. His talk is opportune, helpful, moderate, and meaningful.

In this way success in living is fourfold in verbal acts.

And how is success in living threefold in mental acts?

Here a person is free from covetousness; he does not covet the wealth and property of others, thinking, "Oh, that what he owns might belong to me!"

He has no ill will in his heart. He has pure thoughts and intentions, such as these: "May these beings be free from enmity, free from anxiety! May they be untroubled and live happily!"

He has right view and a correct perspective, such as this: "There is moral value in gifts, offerings and sacrifice; there is fruit and recompense from deeds good or evil; there is both this world and another world; there are duties towards mother and father; there exist beings who have been spontaneously reborn; and there exist in this world ascetics and brahmins living and conducting themselves rightly, who can explain this world and the world beyond, having realised them by their own direct knowledge."

In this way, success in living, which is caused by wholesome volition, is threefold in mental acts.

As to that success in living which is threefold in bodily acts, fourfold in verbal acts and threefold in mental acts, and which, having been caused by wholesome volition, issues in happiness, results in happiness—it is due to that very success in living that with the breakup of the body, after death, beings are reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world.

Just as a perfect throw of dice, when thrown upwards, will come to rest firmly wherever it falls, similarly, due to success in living caused by wholesome volition, beings will be reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world.

I declare, monks, that actions willed, performed, and accumulated will not become extinct as long as their results have not been experienced, be it in this life, in the next life or in subsequent future lives. And as long as these results of actions willed, performed, and accumulated have not been experienced, there will be no making an end to suffering, I declare.

(Anguttara Nikāya 10:206)

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