
title: "Consequences of Morality-MN 41"

description: "This teaching recounts when the Awakened One described the types of immoral actions which lead to births in hell."

order: 6

Conversation with the Brahmins of Sāleyya

What, Mr. Gotama, is the cause, what is the reason, by which some beings with the breakup of the body, after death, arise in the netherworld, a bad destination, the inferno, hell?

And what Mr. Gotama, is the cause, what is the reason, by which some beings after the breakup of the body, after death, arise in a good destination, the heavenly world?

Poor quality behavior, unethical behavior, landowner. This is the cause by which some beings with the breakup of the body, after death, arise in the netherworld, a bad destination, the inferno, hell.

Quality behavior, ethical behavior, landowner. This is the cause by which some beings with the breakup of the body, after death, arise in a good destination, a heavenly world.

...

"Landowner, three-fold is quality behavior, ethical behavior by body. Four-fold is quality behavior, ethical behavior by speech. Threefold is quality behavior, ethical behavior by mind.

Quality Behavior of Body

How, landowner, is there threefold quality behavior, ethical behavior by body?

Now, landowner, someone having abandoned the killing of living beings, refrains from killing living beings. Having put down the stick, having put down the knife, one lives conscientious, empathetic, sympathetic for the well being of all living beings

Having abandoned taking what is not given, one refrains from taking what is not given. That which is another's wealth and belongings, whether in town or in a distant place, one does not take that which is not given and considered theft.

Having abandoned wrong sexual behavior, one lives refraining from wrong sexual behavior. One does not have relations with one who is protected by her mother, protected by her father, protected by her brother, protected by her sister, protected by her relatives, protected by her extended family, protected by the quality, who has a husband, who one is punished for, even one who has been betrothed with a garland. This, landowner, is threefold quality behavior, ethical behavior of the body.

Quality Behavior of Speech

And how, landowner, is there fourfold quality behavior, ethical behavior of speech?

Now, landowner, someone having abandoned lying, refrains from lying. Having gone to an assembly, or gathering, or among relatives, or among a social group, or among royalty, having been led, having been questioned, "Come, good man, say what you know." He not knowing says "I don't know," knowing he says "I know," not having seen says "I haven't seen," having seen he says "I see." So, for one's own sake, for the sake of another, or for some trifling worldly thing, one would not speak a conscious lie.

Having abandoned divisive speech, he refrains from divisive speech. Having heard something here, one doesn't go there and tell them to break them up. Having heard something there, one doesn't come to tell these ones to break them up. So, bringing those who are divided together, keeping those who are united connected, one who likes unity, enjoys unity, delights in unity, speech that is conducive to unity is spoken.

Having abandoned coarse speech, one refrains from coarse speech. That speech which is soft-spoken, nice to listen to, loving, which goes to the heart, polite, which is liked by many, which is pleasant for many, that type of speech is spoken.

Having abandoned useless chatter, one refrains from useless chatter. One speaks at the appropriate time, speaks what is true, speaks what is purposeful, speaks about the quality, speaks about the training, words worth preserving are spoken—timely, systematic, well thought through, connected with a purpose.

This, landowner, is the fourfold quality behavior, ethical behavior by speech.

Quality Behavior of Mind

And how, landowner, is the threefold quality behavior, ethical behavior by mind?

Now, landowner, some are without greed. One isn't greedy for those things of others, others' wealth and belongings— "Oh, if only that which is someone else's were mine."

One has no hostility in the psyche without corrupted resolutions of mind, "May these beings keep themselves well, without vengeance, without hostility, without malice."

One holds right view, seeing without distortion:

"There is what is given. There is what is sacrificed. There is what is offered. There is the maturing of the results of well done and badly done deeds. There is this world. There is a world beyond. There is mother. There is father. There are beings spontaneously born. There is in this world attained, well practiced samāṇas and brahmins, who have realized for themselves direct knowledge of this world and a world beyond and made it known."

This type of quality behavior, ethical behavior is the cause now that some beings with the breaking up of the body, after death, arise in a good destination, a heavenly realm.

Majjhima Nikāya 41