

# Le Kamma de la Libération

Bhante Bodhidhamma · International Talks · 49:14

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*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa Namō tassa bhagavato arahato  
sammāsambuddhassa Namō tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*

Homage to the Buddha, the blessed, noble and fully self-enlightened one. Homage au Bouddha, le noble bienheureux, totalement éveillé de par lui-même.

Yesterday, we looked at the proposition that no one can cause us psychological pain, and this led us to the suffering that we cause ourselves. In meditation we call these the hindrances, and our work is to know what to do when these hindrances arise and how to prevent them from arising. Remember, it's not about repressing what is there, but keeping it at the level of feeling.

We must remember that as soon as these hindrances become a thought, a stream of thought, they develop. It's impossible for me to remember my last sentence. My memory is very modern - I only remember little bits and pieces.

So now I want to take this a bit further and look at the proposition that we create our own worlds. Now I would like to go a little further and explore in more detail the idea that we create our own suffering, our own world. This leads us to a discussion about *kamma*, and there, perhaps we can understand a little more about non-self, or the teaching about non-self.

First, we need to be clear about what we mean by the word *kamma*, because the word karma is now in our language, meaning that everything that happens to us is our fault. So if you're walking down the street and you fall into a manhole, it's your fault. So if along the way you made a mistake, is that it? You fall into a hole. It's your fault. It's your karma.

The important thing is to understand the way the Buddha understood how things happened in the first place. Not in the first place historically, but how it happens now. He said there are two causes for something that happens now.

The first is something we understand very quickly: cause and effect. Something happens in the past that affects the future, and we experience something that was caused in the past. There is something positive and negative about this fact. Because I went to work, I received a salary, and because I didn't go, I didn't receive one. Of course, this takes on particular meaning in ethical life. The Catholic Church also recognizes this - one can sin by action or by omission. So not doing something we should do can also cause harm.

So we have a line of energy that comes into the present from the past. Now, in the present moment, there

is a meeting of several lines of *kamma*. In the present moment, there is a meeting of many lines of *kamma*. Before arriving here, we all came from different situations. But arriving here together, we were able to create this course. If one of you had not come, then it would have been a different course in a certain way.

If we think that everything that happens now is because of something in the past, because of an origin in the past, then it's difficult to understand how we can be creative. We might presume that there would just be repetition, a bit like an engine. On the other hand, if things happened simply because they happened without any connection to the past, then there would be no order. A thing arriving without reason, without reason in the past.

But it's the fusion of these two that the Buddha saw as the reasons why things happen. So there is an order in the universe but also something that cannot be known, because you never know which lines of cause are going to meet in a certain situation.

For example, let's take the very simple case of a car accident. A pedestrian is simply walking on the street and suddenly is killed. Now, if you said that to a traditional Buddhist, they would say it was that person's *kamma*. But this presumes that this person was in control of all the conditions that came together to make this accident happen. It presumes that they were somehow part of the cause of the driver being there. Even going so far as to say that they somehow caused the car to be built in the first place.

So there must be other laws that explain why things happen. In Buddhism, we speak of five laws.

The first law is physical laws - physics and chemistry. Because in those days, they saw the primary energy in the universe as heat. So it's called the law of heat, but we can translate this as the law of energy.

Then there is the law of biology, which is known as the law of the seed. If we think of these two laws, the first includes things like earthquakes. So if you are in a place where there is an earthquake and you are affected by it, it's difficult to see how you could be the cause of it. If you said it was their *kamma* to be there at the time of the earthquake, then you're making a statement that is impossible to prove. The Buddha actually said that you cannot find the causes for things that happen to you - it's impossible, there are too many causes.

For example, all the people who were drowned in the tsunami. It's difficult to imagine that they all drowned because in their past life they had drowned cats.

It's the same thing with biology. If someone is born with a congenital disease, a hereditary illness, the traditional understanding is that they deserve it because of a terrible action they did in their past life. But we know that the body in which we land is the product of past generations. It has its own laws, its internal laws, its genetic laws.

The third law is the law of mind, psychology. Writers also extend this to the law of society. How do we create societies? Because society is just a combination of minds.

There is also the law of *kamma*, and the law of *kamma* is concerned with ethics. The law of *kamma* is concerned with the wholesome and unwholesome actions that we do. The direct effect of these actions is to produce certain habits within us, and this is what we experience. Because at the root of our existence there is this mistake - this mistake of who we are or what we are - which then goes on to express itself as a sense of me. And this self finds itself in a world in which it tries to make itself happy.

So only when we act with clear wisdom do we not act from this mistake. A moment of unconsciousness or a moment of unawareness reinforces this original error.

The fifth law is spiritual laws. This is the Buddha's teaching of the Four Noble Truths and so forth.

So we see that in Buddhist understanding there are laws that manifest at every moment for us. At every moment we experience physical laws - this is what keeps this table here, what keeps this room here. We experience biological laws right now in our body. We experience psychological laws in our mind and in our heart. And there are also karmic laws in this present moment that have to do with our intention - preferring cats to the speaker or teacher. And spiritual laws are also acting all the time. Just because someone says they are an atheist doesn't mean that spiritual laws are not there within that person. There is suffering - that's already the first law. All these things are happening in the present moment to create the existence of this person.

Now, if we try to look at this differently. In the West, we had our enlightenment, the enlightenment of the 18th century. It was the end of a process that had begun 300 or 400 years earlier. It was that we could experience the world objectively. What this achieved was our incredible science and technology.

But this gave Westerners in particular the impression that what they experienced, everyone experienced. So when we look at a tree, we generally think we all see the same tree. And that in a certain way, we can have the same experience of the tree.

Recently, through the science of neurobiology, they have begun to understand that in reality there is no objective world for the human being. All the things we experience are completely subjective. This was the view of the Buddha and the ancients.

Some of you know that the Buddha did not answer all the questions that were asked of him. They are called the undetermined questions, the indeterminate questions. For example, the question: What happened to the Buddha when he died? Did he exist or not? Did he both exist and not exist, or did he neither exist nor not exist? The Buddha was silent.

The reason was very simple. The one who asked the question always had in mind that someone was dying or someone died. This becomes even more evident with the next two questions: Is the world eternal or not? Is it infinite or not?

Now, because there was no distinction between the world and consciousness, this created a dilemma for

the Buddha. If he said the world was infinite and eternal, he would have been accused of being an eternalist - in other words, consciousness lived forever. If he had said it was infinite and not eternal, he would have been accused of being an annihilationist. If he had said the world was finite and not eternal, he would have been accused of being a nihilist. He would have been accused of saying that the soul died - the soul meaning the self. It was the same thing at that time.

So he remained silent. This is very much like the question you can ask an innocent person: "Have you stopped robbing banks?" If he says yes, it means he has been robbing banks and now he's stopped. If he says no, it means he's going to continue robbing banks. So you have to be careful with the question.

His answer to these questions was always that things happen because they depend on other things, and that he could not see the beginning of *kamma*. Whatever happens, it's from there that we draw our sense of continuity. We don't experience the body disappearing and reappearing completely different. No. It's this long process, moment after moment, of something dying and something appearing. The connection between the two keeps certain causes from the past. It keeps causes. So it's neither the same nor different.

So where are we now? Here we have a consciousness that through the body and the senses is constantly constructing the world. The world it constructs is the only world it can know. So my world, the world in which I live, is not the same as your world. We are in this room now. Buddhism would not deny the reality of this room - Theravāda Buddhism. Some of you may know that Buddhism became much more idealistic later. But we all experience and see the room differently.

So subjectively, there are as many rooms here as there are people. And we cannot know the other's room. We can try to describe it, we can paint it, we can write a poem, but we cannot experience it.

So when we understand that we create our own world, we can see that no one can cause us suffering. But there is this place of contact where the mind contacts the world through the body. When the Buddha speaks of the body in meditation, he doesn't refer so much to the physical body but to the body that feels, the body through the senses. So the retina of the eye is the point where mind touches matter. Whatever the capacities of these sense bases, they are the limits of our experience.

For example, if we are blind, we will not see the world. So here we see that the world we create is dependent on contact with the world.

Mais ce que nous faisons à l'intérieur de nous vient d'un endroit différent - notre réaction à lui. Donc pour retourner aux gens qui sont nés avec des maladies héréditaires.

Quand j'étais à Amarawati, il y avait un jeune homme qui était là-bas. Il souffrait d'un handicap qui rendait tout son corps paralysé et déformé. Et cela a commencé à arriver à l'âge de 10 ans. Ses parents ont été dit par les docteurs qu'il y avait une très petite chance que l'enfant d'après ait la même maladie. Donc ils ont eu une petite fille qui a finalement développé cette maladie.

Je connaissais ce jeune homme et il était extrêmement à l'aise avec cette situation. Il l'avait vu comme une voie spirituelle. Quand on le rencontrait, on avait l'impression qu'il était globalement heureux, comme la plupart d'entre nous. Bien que je n'aie jamais rencontré la sœur, j'ai entendu dire qu'elle en souffrait beaucoup. Elle était très amère.

Ici nous avons une réaction complètement différente à une situation donnée, et le monde dans lequel cette jeune femme vit est créé par elle.

Donc quand on contemple le fait que le monde dans lequel je vis, c'est le monde que je crée, cela nous conduit à investiguer comment est-ce qu'on le fait, comment est-ce qu'on le crée. Et où est-ce qu'on a faux? Comment ça se fait que souvent on finit en étant souffrant?

Ici cela nous donne un certain espoir. Parce que maintenant on connaît les confins de notre investigation. On n'a pas besoin d'aller à l'extérieur de nous-mêmes. Non. La réponse réside juste à l'intérieur. Juste ici. Ça ne vous rend pas heureux? Je n'ai rien à faire au sujet de quelqu'un d'autre. Même pas de vous.

Donc quand nous investiguons et que nous regardons à l'intérieur de nous-mêmes comment nous créons le monde, ça nous amène dans le noyau de notre problème. Quand nous nous investiguons nous-mêmes, cela devrait nous conduire à la cause, à l'origine même de nos problèmes.

Quand nous méditons, nous trouvons cette position en nous-mêmes de pouvoir objectifier le monde intérieur. Chaque chose que vous voyez c'est quelque chose que vous regardez, et nous sommes laissés avec ce sentiment d'être l'observateur, celui qui ressent, celui qui expérimente. Donc même à ce niveau il y a un sens de soi.

Si nous continuons à guider l'attention en direction de l'objet - que ce soit quelque chose d'agréable, désagréable ou simplement la respiration - il se peut que nous expérimentions même pour un simple moment une absorption dans l'objet. Souvent, quand on sort de ça, on reconnaît que juste pour ce moment, il n'y avait ni soi, ni temps. Et pourtant, il y avait une expérience directe. Et nous sommes allés dans cette expérience sans avidité et sans haine, seulement avec le désir de comprendre.

Quand cela nous arrive, réfléchissons sur la qualité de l'expérience. Maintenant, quand on retourne à l'observateur - selon la psychologie bouddhiste il ne peut y avoir qu'une conscience à un moment donné. Donc ce qui arrive c'est qu'à un moment il y a la perception de la douleur et le moment d'après il y a la perception du soi dans l'état de l'observateur.

Dans l'état de l'observateur où vous vous ressentez vous-même comme étant l'observateur, ce sentiment d'être l'observateur est aussi un objet. Donc vous ne pouvez pas être ça. C'est juste autant un objet que le ressenti que vous expérimentez. La conscience de soi est quelque chose qui d'une certaine manière attrape un sentiment de soi ou attrape un concept fin de soi, une perception de soi.

Chaque chose qui vient dans l'esprit est organisée sur un écran - ce qu'on appelle perception. Et la capacité

de l'esprit de tenir un objet suffisamment longtemps pour que nous puissions le percevoir. Pour ceux d'entre vous qui connaissent le Pali, c'est *saññā*. Cette qualité de connaissance et voir l'objet de sensation - donc le ressentir et l'expérimenter - et cela attrape le propre sens de lui-même à l'intérieur même du processus de perception. C'est comme un écran de télé.

Parfois, quand vous regardez la télévision, vous pouvez voir une image de vous-même à l'écran, en regardant la télévision. Donc, quelle image allez-vous regarder?

Quand vous avez un sens très fort d'un observateur, d'un quelqu'un qui ressent, et que tout le reste est calme, tranquille, immobile - donc tournez toute votre attention vers ce sens de la présence. C'est le premier objet que nous fabriquons. C'est le premier objet que nous pensons être. Et c'est là que le soi commence ses constructions. Et puis le monde.

Je peux seulement espérer que mes mots n'ont pas ajouté à votre confusion mais ont clarifié le chemin, et que de cette manière vous arriverez très vite à votre destination - que vous soyez libérés de toute souffrance plus tôt, plus tôt que plus tard.

Merci.

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