

## The Who, When, Where, What, Why, And How? Of Wholesome and Unwholesome Actions and Thoughts

Note on making an attempt at keeping the talk brief, but concise. And also that everyone there is not superior or inferior, but are here to find Truth. Even if not the Buddha-Dhamma (Buddha-Dharma). And we all share at least one quality, we suffer.

Who engages in wholesome and unwholesome actions/thoughts?

We all engage in these actions/thoughts. Everyone in the world does, with the exception of the Arahants who take actions that are neutral. Why? Because they take action without the intention of a wholesome action or an unwholesome action/thought.

When do we engage in wholesome and unwholesome actions/thoughts?

All the time. Whether it has occurred in the past, occurring now, or will occur in the future unless there is the achievement of Enlightenment and realization of Nibbana (Nirvana).

Where do these actions/thoughts take place?

Everywhere. Whether it be in a public environment, in a private environment or in secret. In public more than one person can perceive these actions, but not thoughts necessarily. In private, few actually perceive the actions or thoughts, if at all. In secret only one human being can be aware of these actions and thoughts, and that is the person themselves.

Kamma (Karma) is relevant to these actions and thoughts, because kamma is based on our intentions when the actions our thoughts take place. If I become envious of someone, it is likely that unless I let go of that envy I will engage in unwholesome actions or more unwholesome thoughts as a result of not letting that go. This would be private, perhaps, but since the intention is itself tainted, then the kamma that accumulates may become tainted as well. Sooner or later, that generated kamma will ripen and eventually the results will be experienced whether that be physically, mentally, or spiritually.

Unfortunately, kamma can not be simplified into a formula, and contemplating it is not advised unless you reach certain meditative achievements called jhanas [Come up with a way of describing this in detail—any time you have a funny foreign word, elaborate the hell outta it]. The best simile I have encountered is that of a flower. In order for a flower to spring out of the ground, you need the seed to be in good soil, have adequate sunlight and moisture, and the relative absence of weeds. Without these conditions, the flower will likely never grow and mature. Kamma works something like this. When the conditions are correct for the kamma to mature, then it is experienced by the person.

I will leave kamma at that for now, since it is a vastly difficult and a topic that requires much time in meditation and study.

What can be defined as whole and unwholesome action/thoughts?

Ask to form groups of perhaps 3 or 4, compile and compose a list of what they define as wholesome and unwholesome actions/thoughts. Guidelines: Categorized as bodily conduct/misconduct, verbal conduct/misconduct, and mental conduct/misconduct.

Reference to Read from the Salyeyaka Sutta on the 3 bodily, 4 verbal, and 3 mental wholesome and unwholesome actions (MN 41). Mention of the three roots of unwholesome and wholesome actions.

Brahmin householders ask why some are reborn in hell and others in a heavenly state.

- Buddha says based on unrighteous conduct and righteous conduct in accordance with the dhamma.

Brahmin's ask why

Response

- Three kinds of unrighteous body conduct: killing living beings, stealing, and sexual misconduct (sexual relations with one protected by mother, father, mother and father, brother, sister, or relatives, who have a husband, who are protected by the law, and those already engaged.)

Four kinds of unrighteous verbal conduct: Speaking falsely, speaking maliciously (division), speaking harshly, and idle chatter.

Three kinds of unrighteous mental conduct: covetous thoughts, mind of ill-will, wrong view (nothing given, nothing offered, no fruit or result of good and bad actions; no this world, no other world; no mother, no father; no beings who are born spontaneously; no good and virtuous ascetics and brahmins in the world who have themselves realized by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.)

And then the opposites constitute righteous body, verbal, and mental conduct.

Why should we practice taking wholesome actions and thinking wholesome thoughts?

- Culakammavibhanga Sutta MN 135 Why are beings inferior and superior?

Abandoning the taking of life and violence leads to long life and health

Abandoning anger leads to beauty in appearance

Abandoning envy one becomes influential

Giving results to wealth

Paying respect to those worthy of respect leads to a high birth

Visiting spiritual teachers and asking relevant questions leads to wisdom

How do we know that these are wholesome and unwholesome actions/thoughts?

- Kalama Sutta explanation of knowing for oneself

“Do not go by oral traditions, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning, by inferential reasoning, by reflection on reasons, by acceptance of a view after pondering it, by the seeming competence of a speaker, or because you think 'The ascetic is our teacher.' But when you know for yourselves, '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.”

“...But when you know for yourselves 'These things are wholesome, these things are blameless; these things are praised by the wise; these things, if undertaken and practiced, lead to welfare and happiness,' then you should engage in them.”

Questions or comments?