

## **Apannaka Sutta** **(Majjhima Nikaya No. 60)**

- I. *Nihilism and Affirmationism*
- A. Examination of Nihilism (*natthikavada*) = philosophical materialism; doctrine that life ends in death, deeds do not bring results in future lives (for full statement of view, see MN 76, p. 619; in DN 2 view is ascribed to Ajita Kesakambali)
1. Effect on conduct: avoidance of wholesome action; leads to unwholesome deeds of body, speech, and thought.  
Reason: not seeing the danger in unwholesome states & benefits in renouncing them.
  2. Negative consequences (following from judgment that the view is wrong): wrong view, wrong intention, wrong speech, contradicting arahants, leading others astray, self-praise, disparagement of others
  3. Reflections of a wise person
    - (a) If there is no other world, this person escapes a bad rebirth but is criticized by the wise.
    - (b) If there is another world, he loses on both counts: blamed by the wise in this life, and in the next he gets a bad rebirth.
    - (c) “It extends only to one side”: he is safe only if there is no afterlife.
    - (d) “Excludes the wholesome alternative”: he excludes right view, right intention, right speech, etc., and their consequences
- B. Examination of Affirmationism (*atthikavada*)  
= *kammavada*, doctrine that life continues beyond death; actions bring results in future lives
1. Effect on conduct: avoidance of unwholesome action; leads to wholesome deeds of body, speech, and thought.  
Reason: seeing the danger in unwholesome states & benefits in renouncing them.
  2. Positive consequences (following from judgment that the view is right): right view, right intention, right speech, conformity with arahants, leading others to true teaching, no self-praise or disparagement of others
  3. Reflections of a wise person
    - (a) If there is no other world, this person misses a good rebirth but is praised by the wise.
    - (b) If there is another world, he wins on both counts: praised by the wise in this life, and in the next he gets a good rebirth.
    - (c) “It extends to both sides”: he gets both benefits, here and now and after death.
    - (d) “Excludes the unwholesome alternative”: he excludes wrong view, wrong intention, wrong speech, etc., and their consequences.

- II. *The Doctrines of Non-doing and Doing*
- A. Examination of doctrine of non-doing (*akiriyavada*) = doctrine that moral distinctions are not real: no evil in bad actions, no merit in good actions (for full statement of view, see MN 76, pp. 620-21; at DN 2 ascribed to Purana Kassapa)
- B. Examination of doctrine of doing (*kiriyavada*) = doctrine that moral distinctions are real: evil in bad actions, merit in good actions (Details as in the treatment of the nihilist and affirmationist views.)
- III. *The Doctrines of Non-causality and Causality*
- A. Examination of Doctrine of Non-causality (*ahetukavada*) = predestination (*niyativada*), doctrine that there is no cause for the defilement and purification of beings (for full statement of view, see MN 76, p. 621; at DN 2 ascribed to Makkhali Gosala)
- B. Examination of Doctrine of Causality (*hetukavada*) = doctrine that there is a cause for the defilement and purification of beings (Details as in the treatment of the nihilist and affirmationist views.)
- IV. *The Existence of the Immaterial Realms*
- A. “There are no immaterial realms”: If true, then it is still possible to be reborn in fine-material realms, but no point striving for immaterial realms.
- B. “There are immaterial realms”: If true, then there are immaterial realms and one can reborn there.  
 “B” leads to effort to attain immaterial states and rebirth in those realms.
- V. *Liberation from Being (i.e., Nibbana)*
- A. “There is no cessation of being”: If true, then it is still possible to be reborn in immaterial realms but not to attain Nibbana.
- B. “There is cessation of being”: If true, then Nibbana exists and one can attain it.

SYNOPSIS

	<i>Positions rejected by Buddha</i>	<i>Positions held by Buddha</i>
1	Nihilism: no survival, no fruits of action	Affirmationism: survival of death, actions bring fruits
2	Non-doing: no valid moral distinctions	Doing: moral distinctions are valid
3	Non-causality: predestination, effort is futile	Causality is real, effort makes a difference
4	No immaterial realms	There are immaterial realms
5	There is no liberation from samsara	There is liberation from samsara