

PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES

KARAM – DHARAM (ACTION IS WORSHIP; HINDU WISDOM)

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Abstract

To continually benefit from the harmless wonders of traditional medicine, it is essential to pay attention to its inherent components of spiritual, mental, and physical alertness. This is both a duty and an obligation. In this treatise, we have decided to share information with you on the human, national, and medical aspects of traditional spiritual medicine, focusing on the themes of action and breath.

Keywords: amal, furqan, namai-amal, halal, karam, dharam, sansara.

Introduction

The article presented for your attention explores the impact of our daily activities and breathing on our health. It highlights that both processes involve invisible factors that significantly affect our four major organs. Understanding these factors can greatly benefit our efforts to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

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You might find the title of the first chapter somewhat strange. You might think, "Why not provide a clear translation of the unfamiliar term 'karma' for the majority?"

Yes, at first glance, it might be challenging to understand why a seemingly abstract term is included in the title. However, the concept of "karma" has been elevated to a special doctrine in Hindu religious philosophy, and so far, its philosophical and social interpretation has not appeared in local religious literature.

In the field of religious studies, we are not only on par with others but arguably quite advanced. A thousand years ago, our great ancestor Abu Rayhan Beruni mentioned the concepts of "karma," "dharma," and "samsara" in his work "India" when Western religious scholarship was still far from analyzing these topics scientifically. Please, don't rush to conclusions!

Admittedly, dispelling some doubts that may have arisen from the introduction of this treatise is not an easy task. If I were in your place, I might have similar thoughts. However, please do not think that the author's intention is to test the reader's patience. Discussing the health and breath factors in Hindu thought without a brief history, theory, and practice of the "karma doctrine," which is still unfamiliar to most Uzbek readers, would be inappropriate.

Additionally, you might have a related objection, such as: "Instead of delving into the history and details of 'karma,' why not start directly with 'good deeds'?" Yes, that could have been an option! However...

Before diving into the topic, we considered that the conversational method used in this discussion might seem tedious to some readers. However, we chose not to follow the preferences of some objectors for a particular reason. Unlike the ideological restrictions of the recent past, we now have the freedom to explore the

commonalities between various fields such as religious-philosophical teachings and medicine, grounded in human values.

Additionally, the concept of the "Book of Deeds," which serves as a standard for our religious and worldly life, is derived, according to Hindu theology, from the Vedas, which are said to have been revealed five thousand years ago. Our aim in presenting this universal perspective is to emphasize that actions based on faith, purity, and goodness are equally relevant to the health of people from all nations and beliefs.

ACTION AND BREATH

Finally, it seems we have addressed the ambiguities that may have caused questions and objections. Yet, I feel there might still be some lingering doubts about the connection between breath, the most unique and initial sign of life, and "karma," or actions.

To address this, let's delve deeper into the intricate relationship between actions and breath, and how this connection is vital for understanding our holistic well-being.

To fill in this gap, it can be confidently said that the outcomes of our activities, shaped by the guidance of perfect human virtues mentioned in the introduction of the first chapter, provide the most reliable guarantee for the continuity of mental health and the regularity of the breathing process.

From this perspective, the mental tranquility or restlessness, calmness or nervousness resulting from our positive or negative activities, even if not always physically noticeable during normal breathing, still exert their influence.

For instance, people who are content and at peace with their work typically breathe very quietly and smoothly. Conversely, in situations involving secretive or concealed activities, no matter how much a person prepares themselves mentally, their breath will still be affected by anxiety or excitement, manifesting as a sigh or a gasp. Numerous similar examples from our lives can be cited.

If we were to explore such obvious or subtle examples, paper would not suffice. Therefore, let's briefly summarize the ultimate results of our actions as follows:

THE BLESSING OR CONSEQUENCE

OF ACTIONS!

The outcomes of our daily actions, as highlighted in the title, include both blessings and consequences. These outcomes, mentioned in hadiths as "finding salvation from death" and the opposite, negligence, are just one aspect of the matter. In practice, our various temperaments, moralities, and intentions do not always show immediate results. However, whether pure or impure, lawful or unlawful, inclined towards goodness or evil, our actions will manifest their positive or negative impacts not only in the hereafter but also in our worldly life.

In the analytical prophecy of karma doctrine, the rewards of virtuous deeds and the consequences of sins can even affect one's descendants. This implies that the blessings or consequences of life, both physical and spiritual, are not just confined to the individual but may also extend to their progeny.

This fundamental principle of our actions, metaphorically speaking, serves as the barometer for both our worldly and spiritual lives.

If we consider the "blessing and consequence" concept from the perspective of our national mentality, the notion of karma or the "Book of Deeds," the rewards and consequences of good and sinful deeds, is ingrained in us from childhood with the lesson: "You reap what you sow."

Thus, the recognition that our actions have far-reaching implications underscores the importance of living a life rooted in virtue, both for our own well-being and for the generations that follow.

In our lives, the hidden inappropriate or improper deeds we commit without facing immediate consequences sometimes encourage us to new "heroic" acts. In this regard, people can be divided into two categories:

- a) Those who seem to avoid misfortune no matter what they do.
- b) Those who face misfortune even with the slightest wrongdoing.

It is no secret that the distinction between these two categories essentially boils down to one benefiting from the rewards of honesty and the other suffering from the consequences of sin. The only subjective difference in our understanding is that some people believe that while someone might pay for food they haven't eaten, others eat the food without any repercussions—neither choking nor suffering any ill effects.

Such thoughts and opinions about the actions of acquaintances or strangers can be found in almost every family. If some find solace in these admissions and objections, others understand the eventual outcomes of these trials and draw their own conclusions from them.

Just like the conclusions we have drawn, the Hindus resolve such issues through the concept of karma and the law of samsara—reincarnation. According to their beliefs, the consequences of one's conscious sins in their lifetime will inevitably catch up with the sinner unless forgiven by the Creator. They firmly believe that the repercussions of these sins will not spare the sinner.

Imagine that a certain Hindu fails to fulfill the responsibilities of their caste or disobeys the higher caste throughout their life. According to the doctrine, as a result of such a lifestyle, the sinner will not only be reborn

but will also be reborn into a lower caste family than before.

This concept of "reincarnation" serves as both a punishment and an opportunity for the Hindu to free themselves from their sins!

Although the Hindu belief in "reincarnation" might be entirely foreign to us, we can see its core principle that no deed goes unnoticed, aligning with the truth of "what goes around comes around" that we firmly believe in. The only difference between these doctrines is the timeline of "karma." For us, a misdeed may come back to us in forty years, while for Hindus, this period might span multiple lifetimes.

Interestingly, these Eastern concepts have also caught the attention of Western psychologists in recent times. Essentially, the philosophy of "what goes around comes around" is not new to the Western mindset either. However, the precision with which this truth is addressed seems to be more refined and well-structured in our context. Given this, let's delve into the structure of the concept of action (amal).

STRUCTURE OF AMAL (ACTION)

In Islam, as in other world religions, the structure of action primarily has two characteristics: good and evil, or beneficial and harmful consequences. Despite the plethora of definitions for these traits, we will focus on the most authentic and reliable interpretations. For instance, the Quran emphasizes an intellectual approach to adhering to its verses:

"When the verses of their Lord are recited to them, they do not fall upon them deaf and blind" (Furqan, 25:73).

Similarly, a hadith urges acting according to one's heart, even when a fatwa is issued:

"Goodness is what brings peace to your soul and comfort to your heart. Sin is what wavers in your heart and causes hesitation, even if people give you their legal opinions".

As you might notice, both sacred sources highlight a crucial element: the human intellect and heart's consent. Thus, any action, regardless of its positive or negative outcomes, must be validated by the intellect and the heart.

While we have repeatedly mentioned "action" (amal), we haven't yet discussed how it transforms from a simple act to a holistic practice with a unique quality. For this, let's first understand the essence of "quality":

"It is such a flawless possession that it will never perish, age, be destroyed, decrease, or be affected by conflicts. Indeed, there are no contradictions or disagreements in it".

If we apply the idea that "there are no contradictions or disagreements" in quality to the consequences of actions, it suggests that both outcomes are the result of premeditated actions. Success or failure in any activity is always reflected in its quality.

For example, consider the betrayal of someone's trust or conflicts in transactions without mutual consent. In my thirty years of observations, whether in our country or abroad, I have seen that wealth acquired through betrayal often leads to greater losses later and can have severe consequences on one's well-being. The conclusion from these observations is that betrayal for

personal gain, whether through deliberate intent or mental calculation, carries its own repercussions—what one sows, one reaps.

No matter how we define the essence of an action, whether positive or negative, it ultimately comes down to the dichotomy of *halal* (lawful) or *haram* (unlawful) sustenance and the urges of the *nafs* (ego or greed). While the ultimate destination of our material needs may be clear in either direction, the return of "what goes around comes around" is beyond our control and remains obscure to us. Even though life includes both gain and loss, the unchangeable principle of predestined sustenance is such that no amount of trading or finding and losing can alter it.

As Ali (r.a.) wrote:

"Rizquka yatlubuka fastarikh" – "Be at peace, your sustenance will come to you."

When discussing the two poles of action—destiny and desire—let us not forget the invaluable gift of wisdom and intellect bestowed upon us to achieve divine favor. This blessing can bestow upon us unassailable wealth, success in our endeavors, and a healthy and prosperous life. To illustrate this with an anecdote I heard from philosopher Muzaffar Ortikov, let me share a symbolic story that took place in a foreign land.

"In the United States, a large company installed specialized machines to automate the production process that was previously done manually. Not long after, one of the machines broke down. Despite their best efforts, the company's engineers could not repair it. Finally, the company's management called in a renowned mechanic known for his skill and experience across America. The mechanic arrived, thoroughly inspected the machine, and then struck it twice with his small hammer, making it run smoothly again.

When it came time to discuss his fee, the mechanic asked for \$102. At that time, the value of a dollar was very high, so the company manager couldn't believe such a hefty sum was warranted for just two hammer strikes and asked the mechanic:

'Are you really asking for almost a month's salary for two taps with a hammer? Where's the fairness in that?'

The mechanic replied:

'Yes, I am being fair, and that's why I'm only asking for \$102: \$2 for the two hammer strikes and \$100 for knowing exactly where to strike, sir!'

There are many such instructive stories around the world, and we have plenty of our own. However, where there is instruction, there is also flaw. While flaws often result from unintentional actions, they sometimes become an inseparable part of our conscious activities due to their frequent repetition. In light of this, let us compare the consequences of knowingly committing a sinful act with the karmic implications described in the teachings of Hinduism.

According to the teachings, the cycle of rebirth offers a sinner another chance to avoid repeating their sins and to cleanse themselves of previous transgressions, as granted by the divine. In Islam, unlike Hinduism, the responsibility of forsaking sins and living a virtuous life is emphasized in this life itself:

"If you commit a wrong, make amends by doing good..."

By offsetting evil deeds with good ones, the possibility arises in the heart that previously committed and subsequently repented sins can be forgiven. This hope is justified only if the past sin is not merely repented for verbally but is actively cleansed through actions inspired by faith. For:

"Faith and actions are very close to each other. They are not complete without one another".

Thus, according to the logic of the hadith, any good or bad deeds are the outward reflections of actions carried out with or without faith.

When discussing the interplay or separation of faith and actions, one cannot ignore another factor: the activity of Satan, who misguides people wherever he can. His effort to lead his captives astray is a well-known reality for all of us.

"Well, aren't there people who, despite having faith, still succumb to Satan and commit sins?" you might ask. Our response is that it is difficult to conclude definitively how many such people exist; otherwise, it might seem as though we are excluding ourselves from our conclusions.

However, it is clear that all sins, except for *shirk* (associating partners with God), are forgivable, provided they are not repeated after sincere repentance.

Moreover, the forgiveness of existing sins, regardless of whether the action is good or bad, depends on the sincerity of the initial intention, whether it is heartfelt or merely verbal.

The following hadith elucidates this:

"Know that there is a piece of flesh in the body; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupted, the whole body is corrupted. Verily, it is the heart."

Modern psychology concludes that various psychological and consequent physical disorders do not result from external events or changes in the world but from personal flaws. This includes the notion that the "inevitable misfortunes" that constantly plague us are:

"We usually seek danger in our surroundings, whereas the primary danger lies within us, operating unnoticed. The root of this danger is misunderstanding the world, misinterpreting events, and fundamentally misunderstanding what gnaws at us internally. The calamities, tragedies, and horrors we perpetually battle in our minds are all consequences of our imperfect psyche".

Let's consider the symbolic example of the impact that unpleasant events around us can have on our psyche through the observations of Ibn Sina on the sheep and the wolf.

"Just a little from the tied sheep, the wolf is kept in a cage — the interpretation of how the presence of the wolf can affect the animal." This scene, well-known to the older generation, is depicted in the film "Ibn Sina."

It is clear that the constant fear of the nearby wolf leaves the sheep in a state of distress, without the need for further elaboration. Similarly, the human heart, overwhelmed by daily fears, anxieties, or threatening thoughts, can be affected even more severely than the sheep.

May God protect us from such mental disturbances affecting our actions! Otherwise, we risk being

like a ship without a sail, drifting in the ocean of depression, ultimately sinking into the whirlpool of futility.

By "the whirlpool of futility," I mean engaging in tasks without any clear purpose or destination. Yes, our hands are at work, but our hearts are ruled by anxious thoughts.

The state of our protagonist, described in the verses you just read, is essentially a consequence of past mistakes or sinful actions committed thoughtlessly for personal gain. The severity of this "response" or consequence depends on how consciously these mistakes and sins were made. We believe that the various internal states depicted in the examples above, including highs and lows, inevitably affect one's health.

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