

Can Hell Beings Obtain Rebirth?

Among all beings in the worlds of ten directions, can the three evil paths, even the beings of “yamaraja realms”* (*refers to hell), attain rebirth if they recite Amitabha and seek Sukhāvātī rebirth? Yes, they can. According to the Sutras, no matter which kind of beings, as long as they are sufficient in the three provisions of **faith, aspiration, and practice**, they can all be reborn. The text here specifically mentions three evil paths, it shows that Amitabha is indeed filled with infinite compassion and mercy. His aspiration-power is particularly aimed towards liberating the beings of the three evil paths.

Who are the beings of the three evil paths? Of course, those beings currently in the realms of animal, hell, and hungry ghosts are the beings of the three evil paths, but what about ourselves? If we also create the karma of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying, as well as engage in the speech and actions of greed, resentment, ignorance, and arrogance, we are the beings of the three evil paths as well. There is only one step difference; our human life has not ended yet, once it ends, we will definitely fall into the three evil paths.

Learning Buddhism is also the same. If we have not yet renounced killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying, as well as have not let go of greed, resentment, ignorance, and arrogance, we will inevitably fall into the three evil paths. It is quite terrifying when we ponder about it.

Can We Carry All Our Karma Along to Be Reborn?

Fortunately, we have this Pure Land Method, we can recite Amitabha and carry our karma along at our rebirth. But we must know that we cannot carry new karma, only the old karma. What is new karma? That which is ongoing. If we are still creating karma, it indicates that we do not really want to go. If we do not want to go, how can we be reborn?

Rebirth or not, it is utterly up to whether our faith and aspiration exists or not. Only when we have genuine faith and imperative aspiration, can we then be reborn. So, if we genuinely believe and bring forth aspiration to seek rebirth, we must not create evil karma anymore! All karma created in the past can all be taken along, even if we made it yesterday or one hour ago. As long as we do not create new karma now, all can be carried. So,

*Repent our karma, no longer create it;
this condition is enough for our rebirth!*

We also talked about how we will never regress and never degenerate to an evil path once arriving in Sukhāvātī. Because people in Sukhāvātī have no condition to degenerate, unlike the Saha World where there are particularly many conditions of regression to hinder us, it does not take long for us to regress.

Despite many conditions to cause our regression, we should neither be discouraged nor be disappointed. We should find the courage to face them and lift up our spirit to diligently overcome our karmic defilements and habits. However, as an old saying goes, “Three feet of ice is not formed by one day’s chill.” These karmic defilements and habits have developed over infinite kalpas, how could it be possible to eradicate so easily? We must bring forth a sense of great shamefulness and repentance, making earnest effort to cultivate and correct our wrongdoings; hopefully, in this lifetime we can be reborn into Sukhāvātī successfully. As soon as we are born into Sukhāvātī, we will never regress! Because, as we have mentioned, we are free from those evil conditions. From this perspective, we can see the infinite compassion of Amitabha. He is genuinely merciful to those suffering beings of evil paths and all beings like us who have deep karmic habits.

The Indication of Our Deep, Heavy Karma

Pure Land Method is to entreat the blessing from Amitabha’s power based on the profound belief and understanding of our deep-ingrained karma that has accumulated throughout our innumerable kalpas’ reincarnations.

*What is the indication of our deep and heavy karma?
Knowing that we are making evil karma
yet having no way to stop it,
because those habits and the defilements
are truly deeply ingrained.*

We now bring forth a genuine heart, beseeching Amitabha's blessing to escort us; so long as our heart is genuine, we will definitely elicit Amitabha to escort us. Amitabha really has infinite compassion, we must not have any doubts or any worries in our mind. All matters in this world can all be renounced, we should strictly not have the

slightest disquietude in our mind. This way, we will definitely be reborn. So, whether we will be reborn or not, it is actually very simple, we should ask ourselves often,

“If Amitabha comes to escort me right now, am I willing to go?”

When we truly let go of all disquietude of worldly matters, we would want Amitabha to escort us as early as possible. If we still worry about family, children, grandchildren, spouse, properties, bank account, work, even worries about our bodies and thinking about where we can hide when disaster hits, we have not let go and our willingness to go is not real.

Look! Sukhāvātī is so phenomenal, so solemn, if we still do not want to go, aren't we ignorant and topsy-turvy? We must let go. When genuinely letting go of all, we will definitely attain rebirth. For those who are not willing to let go, they will be reincarnated in the six paths, and they may even fall into the three evil paths. That would be really wretched. Too painful! So, we should seriously think clearly. Once we realize it, we must make up our mind to seek and attain Sukhāvātī rebirth in this lifetime.

How to Obtain the Determination of Sukhavati Rebirth?

To be honest, if we have a genuine comprehension of the Sutra, we can then be unwaveringly resolute. This is exactly the merits of listening to the sutra and Dharma teachings. Those who are not willing to seek Sukhavati rebirth or still have some doubts, some disquietude in mind, they are all not the people with genuine comprehension. What can they do? **They must spend more time listening to the sutra teachings.** Just like Teacher Liu Suyun who we mentioned in our last episode, delve deeply into one subject for a long term practice. Once understanding Amitabha's inconceivable compassion and His blessing power, as well as believing in that we are mortals who are with deep and heavy ingrained karma, we can then naturally let go. This is the only way.

For this reason, if we do not want to fall into evil paths, what can we do? Listen to the sutra and Dharma teachings. As scripture states, the merit of “hearing Amitabha's name” is getting the blessing from Amitabha to reduce our karma, to let us renounce the disquietude, and to let go of our controlling, possession, and manipulation over people, matters, and things. Plus it helps us let go of fame, gain, interest, offerings, let go of the desires that are aroused from our senses, such as wealth, lust, prestige, eating, and

sleeping, and let go of greed, resentment, ignorance, arrogance, and selfishness. When we renounce all of these, we will surely be reborn, and disasters will not affect us at all.

These first two Vows: “The Land is free from evil paths,” and “Its inhabitants will never fall into the evil paths,” are the general outline of Amitabha’s Forty Eight Great Vows; in other words, to protect the world and eliminate disasters are actually the Fundamental Vows of Amitabha. As long as we bring forth aspiration, blessings will occur when our hearts resonate with Dao. We will definitely gain a remarkable effect in protecting our environment.

So far we have only discussed the first Vow, which is also the most important Vow. The later Vows are more detailed explanations.

See you next time! Amitabha!