

# What You Should Know About Karma

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The subject this morning, "What You Should Know About Karma."

That subject of karma is...certainly covers a lot of ground. And there are many ideas about karma; some peculiar. Karma is simply action, that's all, the law of action, and, therefore, reaction: the law of cause and effect. If I lift a book from the pulpit, it's bound to fall, because I have by the cause set in a reaction, the cause of lifting the book. And according to the law of that particular realm, Physical, Spiritual, or Causal, a reaction will take place, without question of a doubt.

One definition of karma is this: "karma is organized movement in space of animate and inanimate objects." Organized movement, that's all. You hear people say when things go wrong, "My karma certainly caught up with me." But that's not the answer at all, that's only part of it. How about those good things that caught up with you? That's karma just the same. Karma is good, or bad – cause and effect. And so, the next time something of an undesirable nature happens to you, don't think that's karma only, but think of the good things that have happened to you. They also come because of your karma. Remember, karma is simply action – the law of action; the law of cause and effect.

And whatever you do has a reaction. That reaction becomes the cause of a new chain of events. So we should watch out, what actions we perform so that they be desirable actions, which will not keep us in delusion, but will tend to lift us into the higher realms of God's Presence. These impulses, which come from cause and effect, they are the habits which govern our future action. Karma simply means action, the law of action.

In regard to organized movement in space, you can see the moon, the stars, the sun, moving in an organized way. That's the Law of Karma, Nature's karma, Sahaja karma. Now, if you look at men, you'll see them acting in an organized way. There is he who acts; why he does the action; and finally, the object of that action. That's the same with Nature, as I will discuss in a few minutes.

We always have those three things. Remember:

- Who is doing the action;

- Why you are acting that way; finally,
- The object of the whole business.

It is very interesting to watch karma. So the first thing we should know is what is karma? What karma really is.

Second question: different kinds of karma. Because we're, we're connected, so to speak, with the whole three states of karma:

- Nature's karma;
- Man's karma;
- Karma of the Spiritual world.

We're all connected, they're all interwoven. We must know a little bit about all of them. But those three things are there. Who's doing the action? Remember that. Why are you doing your action? And what's the object of your action? Why are you here? What's the object of Nature's Play? And finally, the third thing we will discuss is how to control karma. That's the important thing: "What You Should Know About Karma."

The greatest thing is how to control it; how to outwit it, so to speak; how to escape. We all want to escape it, if we can – the reactions of karma. Karma, the law of cause and effect, as I have said, can be good, or can be bad. Remember, good ties us just the same. Good karma produces habits, which we are, if we are not careful, will tie us.

You take the child that is indulged. See how he is being tied by the parent in his future action, and how the parents are being limited by their indulgence of the child. And this applies to family matters. We are prevented from expanding our consciousness into a freer state by family ties through karmic action. Now, if you avoid that, and your action is directed towards the higher Spiritual state, you will not lose your family ties, you will gain a greater security. And so, we must watch the Law of Karma as regards family ties. That's just one illustration.

I have a quotation, if you will remember it, you will understand how exact the Law of Karma is. It is this: "Every secret is told, every crime is punished, every

virtue is rewarded, every wrong redressed, in silence and in certainty.<sup>1</sup> That covers the whole thing. You do good, you needn't worry, you'll be repaid. You do, you do wrong, you better watch out. The action will set up a reaction. And even though you cannot see the Law of Karma working – in your meditations, you may meditate for hours, and seem to have no results – the result is there, as it says, “in silence and [in] certainty.” And so, never mind about whether you're going to be rewarded. Do right action. The result will take care of itself, without question of a doubt.

Now let us take, just for a few minutes, one or two instances of the working of the Law of Karma. Remember, the first thing we must know is what karma is. That old illustration the Master used to give about the young man, good young man, who was looking through the ballpark, watching the ball game inside, see, minding his own business, being a good boy, suddenly someone came up behind him, and gave him a big kick, and he went sprawling. And he said, "Lord," he said, "Why, why do I have to have this? I was just minding my own business, watching the ball game, hurting no one, and look what happened to me." Then he was a good boy, so his conscience said to him, "But you've forgotten, young man, that you did that same thing to that man in a previous life." You did the same thing, and so the reaction has set in. You are simply paying your debt of karma.

Then we can take the illustration of this life. You've seen people who have done no sin in this life, and yet they have been sick, and have suffered according to the laws of this life. Yet, they broke no law, committed no sin, but they've suffered. Why? Because either the results of previous action in a previous life, or, in rare cases, the taking on of karma of others. But the Law of Karma works – exactly.

Then there are other cases of people who have a nice, well-rounded, healthy early life. And then, in middle life, they begin to get sick, and all sorts of things happen to them. Why? Because of the Law of Karma. Those reactions were set up. And through various impulses, they were so weakened, that sickness was able to make an inroad in their health. So the Law of Karma works – exactly.

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<sup>1</sup> Theosophical Siftings, R.W. Emerson, Volume 6, 1893-1894, “So Emerson tells us that ‘every secret is told, every crime is punished, every virtue rewarded, every wrong redressed, in silence and certainty. What we call retribution is the universal necessity by which the whole appears wherever a part appears.’ ‘The specific stripes may follow late after the offence, but they follow because they accompany it.’ ‘Let man learn that everything in nature goes by law and not by luck, and that what he sows he reaps.’”

Then we have other cases of people who have the various tendencies toward disease. You've seen some families, let's say have a tendency toward stomach troubles; others, nervous disorders; and others, say, circulatory troubles. Why? Because, through the Law of Karma, through the practice in the previous life, they laid up certain causes. They have those *tendencies* in this life to have such weaknesses. That's how karma works, by laying up within us, through cause and effect, tendencies, which cause us to have sickness, or cause us to have a weak nervous system, cause us to refrain from practicing self-control. That's the greatest thing. So karma is exact. Karma works in these various ways.

And, finally, an illustration of how karma works: I have seen, perhaps, you have seen, that when something is performed against a saint, or a man of God, the action is swift and severe. There are laws governing karma, especially on the Spiritual side. Not only on the Physical, the Astral, the Spiritual, and the Causal – karma works in all those realms. And when anything, action, is taken against a man, like the Master, the reaction is severe, and usually prompt. So you can see these are simply illustrations of karma.

Now, there are a few axioms, which, if you will remember, they'll help you very much in this Law of Karma. They are these:

First: we may forget our karma, but our karma does not forget us. Something happens to you, you think, "Why should I, why do I have to go through this?" You've forgotten, that way back, you did something that had to be paid for. So even though we forget our karma, our karma does not forget us.

Second: all action should be done without attachment. That's the point. Do for, or do as a duty, or do for God. It is the attachment that binds you through desire. Now action comes, is the Law of Karma. Watch your desires. Have the one desire to do as a duty, or for God. That's the safest way.

Another axiom: When an action is done, it cannot be undone. Now those of you who count ten – count 20, count 30, 40 – don't do the action until you're sure. The minute it's done the cause is laid up, and the axe is gonna fall, sure. So remember, an action when it is done, it is done.

We have, also, another one: We have free choice in action – before it is done – not after it is done. That's the thing. We have free choice. We can do this, or we can do that. We can do the action, which will be beneficial; or we can do the action, which will be detrimental. After it is done, the choice is gone. Now, these

are very important axioms, given by the Master a long time ago when he first came here.

And, finally: An action done, an action done – like a display of temper – an action done, becomes then an impulse, or the cause of future action, which limits our free will, deprives us of our birthright as free children of God. Remember, the action done, then changes into another cause, as an impulse, which limits our free action as children of God. These actions work as latent impulses. That’s the point. Every action you do lays up a cause, or an impulse, which influences your future free action. Remember that. Now those are known as latent impulses, or *samskaras*<sup>2</sup>, s-a-m-s-k-a-r-a-s, *samskaras*. *Samskaras* can be good or bad. *Samskaras* can be good or bad.

And so you have there, in a few words, just what karma is. And these axioms, if you will remember, as given by the Master, are most wonderful, because they contain the gist of the whole Law of Karma.

Now, secondly, secondly, we should understand just a little about the different kinds of karma. I will go over it quickly.

- First we have Sahaja karma, or Nature’s karma;
- Second, Jiva karma, or human action; and
- Finally, action in the Spirit world, or action when we’re through with this plane. That is known as O-e-s-h-a-h karma. I will not attempt to pronounce it. I don’t know, I think its Oeshah. Oeshah karma, which means karma of the Spirit world. And that is important with us, because we are all going to go there sometime. So let’s go intelligently, and understand what we are doing.

Now, first, the Law of Nature – Nature’s Law. This karma of Nature is the source of all Natural Law: the source of the law of harmony, the source of Cosmic Action. You see, it’s Nature action. Now we have the three questions:

- Who acts?
- Why Nature acts? and,
- The object of Nature’s action?

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<sup>2</sup> Yoga Journal, by Bo Forbes, “The word *samskara* comes from the Sanskrit *sam* (complete or joined together) and *kara* (action, cause, or doing). In addition to being generalized patterns, *samskaras* are individual impressions, ideas, or actions; taken together, our *samskaras* make up our conditioning. Repeating *samskaras* reinforces them, creating a groove that is difficult to resist. *Samskaras* can be positive—imagine the selfless acts of Mother Theresa. They can also be negative, as in the self-lacerating mental patterns that underlie low self-esteem and self-destructive relationships. The negative *samskaras* are what hinder our positive evolution.”

Now who is it that acts in Nature? It isn't God. That would be limited. God is not limited. He is beyond limitation. We have Spirit and Spirit's Power. Spirit is Intelligence of God in all things, but the Power of Spirit is Nature – that is what acts. Nature is Spirit's Power acting in an intelligent way, but rather automatic. But Nature is intelligent, because She is associated with Spirit. That's why you see some semblance of intelligence in Nature. A great intelligence there, as far as the producing of this world, and the flower, and so forth, because She acts because of Her association with Spirit. That's why Nature acts.

Now, what is the object of Nature's acts? Well, that's a hard question, but we can answer it this way. There is no question Nature is working out some plan in an automatic way, but there is intelligence there.

Now, what is that plan? God's Dream. You see now? All karma has those three things: Who is acting; why the action is done; and the object. So we, also, as human beings, have those three things to contend when we discuss human karma.

Now, let us say a word or two about karma of the Spirit world. This is very important, because we have to occupy that place sometime. Now, that karma can be divided just the same.

Who is acting? Who's gonna act in the Spiritual realm? We're gonna act, of course, but those who are conscious in that realm. Isn't that so? Unless you're conscious of the Spiritual side, how are you gonna act intelligently? You will go there automatically, if you are not conscious in this life of Spiritual things, but you also, your progress will be automatic. But, if you go consciously, then you can act. On the other side you can carry out your karma in an intelligent way, without question of a doubt.

And so, "Those who will be conscious," as the Master says, "are those who, try by devotional yogic methods while here on earth to understand," as I often say, "the states of sleep and death." To understand it while we're here, in a conscious way, they will be conscious on the other side, and they can work out, intelligently, their karma. So you see it is important to know a little about karma, to perform action in this life, now, while we're conscious, that will lay up good karma on the other side. That is very important.

Now, what environment will we be under on the other side when we work out our karma? We'll be under the environment of the Subtle Body, the Subtle Universe; the Causal Body, the Causal Universe; and finally, the Spirits of God, which has made all things, made the three universes, and Christ Consciousness. I haven't time to go into it deeply, but that'll give you an idea of your environment on the other side.

You won't have this body – you'll be through with it – but, you'll have the Subtle Body. Now know the Subtle Body in this life. You have the Subtle Universe. Know a little about it. The Om vibration goes all through the Subtle Universe. And you have the Causal Body, and the Causal Universe. You can know a little something about that right from here [Doctor points to the Medulla which is reflected in the Spiritual Eye] to the top of the head. That's the Causal Body. That's where the Causal Body is contacted. That's why we meditate and look there. So that will be your environment on the other side.

Now, what is the object, what is the object of karma of the Spirit world? What is it? That you may increase your evolution, that's all. If you're conscious on the other side, then you can perform independent action, just like you can right here on this earth, and independently act to go toward God. Now that is possible, if you are conscious of the other side while here on earth. So much for karma of the Spirit world; just a few words to give you an idea.

Now, we come to human karma, which, of course, is important to us. Now listen carefully, I'm just going to say one or two words, then we're through. The thing is this, human action, human action, compared to Nature's action is quite different. Nature is sort of automatic. But we have full freedom to act in any way we like. And the highest action is virtue, or independent action, which is governed not by these latent impulses of ordinary karma, but by Soul Consciousness. Remember that. That is the power we have to act independently, and not be governed by latent impulses, and habits, and be automatons. We can act from the Soul. Swadinata it's called in Sanskrit. S-w-a-d-i-n-a-t-a. "Swa" means Self; "adinata" means to act from the Self. This independent action gives us true freedom, because it comes directly from the Self.

Now, the important thing is this. All other action, all other action that we do – now you think of it – is not independent action. Every other act you do – unless it's from the Soul, from Soul Consciousness – every other act, is not independent

action, but is influenced by environment, judgment, and, finally, latent impulses. These are important things.

Environment, you know, is human, worldly, and from Nature. We have the family we're born in; we have the society we're born in; we have the different epochs of civilization. It's different now than it was in the dark ages. Those things influence our action. We also have Nature's influence as climate, and these different senses, which we are endowed with. Senses, mind, intellect and all those things are Nature's. Those influence our actions.

And so, it is that environment, which influences all action except, except independent action. But the worst things are those latent impulses. Those latent impulses, which we have brought over, by the Law of Karma, from a previous life – they influence us. Also, latent impulses from this life, that's a very important thing. People say, "Oh, my karma's caught up with me. I must have done something awful bad in a previous life." What are you doing right now? Every action you perform lays up an impulse.

And so, human action, other than independent action, remember, is automatic, makes us automatons, takes away the freedom of our Souls. So that's very important. We as human beings have that free choice, I spoke of in the axioms, to do a certain action, or not, as we desire. Now, when we act from the Soul, we perform independent action, which gives us progress towards virtue. When we act from latent impulses, we do not act in freedom, but automatically. We have suggested many things in our life is simply one habit after another.

Now, we come to the last thing, the third and important thing. How, how to control, how to control this business of karma? As you know we are mostly automatons – acting from suggestion; from habit. You cannot deny it. You go out, and down the street, and you say, "I'm going to act independently today." And the first thing, you are doing things you're not thinking about is you go in the bakery, you get the big pies, and all those things. It's automatic, it's habit. Well, we're gonna stay right in that realm of automatism, if we do not watch out, and act from the Soul. So it's very important, this third and most important thing, is what we're going to do about this karma. How are we going to control it?

*The first, and most important thing is:* do not lay up anymore undesirable karma – right from this minute. Remember that. That is, from this minute, act independently, from the Soul; then, you will not lay up any new undesirable

habits and karma. Is that clear? That's the first and important thing. Stop right now laying up undesirable karma! We've got enough to contend with that which we have brought over. We can work it out, but if we keep on laying up new, we'll never get out of it. It's a vicious circle.

It says most beautifully in the Gita<sup>3</sup>, in the 5<sup>th</sup> Discourse the 10<sup>th</sup> Line it says, "He who acteth, placing all actions in the Eternal, abandoning attachments, is unaffected by sin as a lotus leaf by water."<sup>4</sup> You know, you put the water on the lotus leaf, and it runs right off like on a nasturtium leaf. So, "he who acts from the Eternal," with independent action from the Soul, with only God in his consciousness, acting as a duty, he who does that, and abandons attachment thereof, he goeth to the Supreme.

"Yogis, having abandoned attachment, perform action only by the mind, by the body, by the Reason, and even by the senses..." You can take God with you in sensation. You can take Him with you when you eat. And so, they do these things for one reason, "...(*sic*) the purification of the self."<sup>5</sup> So remember, that's the first thing. The first thing is not to lay up any new undesirable karmic impulses. We've got enough of them.

*And the second thing is:* to offset those which we already have laid up. And I don't wanna know how many I've got, and I think you do not know how many you have, want to know how many you have got. You've got enough. So have I. But, we can offset those by following the meditation of Self-Realization Yoga, and Kriya Yoga where those impulses are offset. When those impulses come into the spinal region, when you're doing your meditations and Kriya, they cannot bear fruit. Evolution increases, so that in time they'll all be washed away. And remember, as the Master used to say, "Roasted seeds do not germinate."<sup>6</sup> And when those seeds come out, out of the subconsciousness into your consciousness in meditation, they will be either done up in time, they cannot bear fruit, or they will be roasted in the fire of your Spiritual consciousness and perception.

And so remember, that's the second thing, is to do away with the impulses we already have. First, lay up no new ones. There's no excuse now. The others we

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<sup>3</sup> The Bhagavad Gita or the Lord's Song, Translated by Dr. Annie Besant, 1939

<sup>4</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Discourse, 10<sup>th</sup> Line

<sup>5</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Discourse, 11<sup>th</sup> Line, "Yogis, having abandoned attachment, perform action only by the body, by the mind, by the Reason, and even by senses for the purification of the self."

<sup>6</sup> Autobiography of a Yogi, 1946 Release, Chapter 16, "A clear intuition came to me one night that the prophecy was wholly false. I set fire to the horoscope scroll, placing the ashes in a paper bag on which I wrote: 'Seeds of past karma cannot germinate if they are roasted in the divine fires of wisdom.'"

are saddled with. We brought them with us, we have to bear them, but, we can, and there is no excuse, [to] not lay up any new ones. Is that clear? Watch your actions – introspect. Watch your actions. See that it comes from the Soul.

And finally, finally, the greatest thing, most important thing, is God. Remember, in God there is no karma. I told you in the beginning, I had a reason for telling you, even Nature's karma is *not* God's karma. It is Nature's karma. In God there is no karma. So that's the greatest thing to offset, to outwit, karma, is to be in God. Merge in Him.

First, every action you do, as it says in the Gita, do without attachment; do as a duty; do for God.<sup>7</sup> Secondly, get in, through the techniques of Self-Realization Fellowship, to the Great Holy Ghost, the Great Light beyond the atoms. And in that Light you'll find God's Love. Get in there. There's no karma there – absolutely no karma.

You can prove this. If you have a severe pain, or you feel terrible, mentally and physically, by the power of your will, following the right techniques, you can go into that Light of God; merge in it; there is no karma there. Nothing can touch you. And so, you can see if we do that, then we can prove, without a doubt, that karma belongs to other realms than to the Eternal Consciousness of God. That's our escape.

And so, in conclusion, in conclusion, remember this: do not lay up, as I have said, any more new karma. Stop it right now, by performing independent actions from your Soul. You will not be deprived of anything. You'll have a fuller life.

And secondly, secondly, overcome those latent impulses which are in you, and which are working, keeping, you an automaton. Overcome those by proper meditation; merging in the Great Light and Consciousness of God. In that, in that you will find they are all burned up; all done away with. That's the beauty of Self-Realization. It gives us the ways and the means to contact the Great Holy Vibration; to be in God's Presence. And by performing Kriya Yoga, the different techniques of Self-Realization, we automatically burn up and eradicate those latent impulses which are stored up within us from previous lives, and from this life. And so, that is the secret of outwitting karma. Do not lay up any new. Do away with the old.

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<sup>7</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Discourse, 11<sup>th</sup> Line.

And one other thing, which I do not forget is this: that if things come too fast, the Master used to say, “When things get too bad, I sleep them off.” Sleep it off. In sleep you’re in God. In sleep you’re – you may be not conscious – but you’re with Him. There is no karma with God. And you’ll find, after a good sleep, things look different.

So remember those things. Lay up no new karma. If things get too bad, go to sleep in God. But consciously, every day, work to offset the old karma, which you have brought over with you by the performance of the techniques and meditations of God, which have been given to you through the channel of Self-Realization. By doing that, those two things – working for God without attachment, and by independent action, the greatest of which is the performance of the techniques of Self-Realization – do away with the old, old karmic impulses, and then, that way, you will keep in the Divine Trend. Nothing can touch you, karma cannot touch you. You are a child of God.

And I’ll close by this reference about keeping in the Divine Trend. Isaiah, the 30<sup>th</sup> Chapter, 21<sup>st</sup> Verse. If you perform the techniques of Self-Realization, you will hear, as is said here: “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, This is the way, walk in it, when you turn to the left, and when you turn to the right.”<sup>8</sup> (*Sic*)

You will hear the Word, the Holy Vibration. There is no karma there. There is nothing can touch you there. But there is the Word of God, His advice through the Intuition of the Soul. You will be guided properly in His Great Light and in His Love. You will hear His Voice telling you what action to perform, and thereby lay up good and proper karma.

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<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 30:21, “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”