

Karma is a law of spiritual dynamics that can be related to every act in daily life.

“Karma” is a Sanskrit word, meaning action and implies the entire cycle of cause and effect. The law refers particularly to the accumulation of effects brought about by causes set in motion through our attitudes and actions in the past, and includes the new causes initiated in the present that will result in future effects.

Physics demonstrates that no particle of energy can be emitted without a natural result following. A stone tossed into the air returns to earth as a result of the law of gravity. Similarly, in life, as we bring together actions, thoughts and feelings, the result may follow at once or be postponed in accordance with obscure factors. All thought, desire and action disturb, in some measure, the equilibrium through a process of readjustment. The operation of this law is as truly a moral law as it is a physical law and can be directly observed as such.

We Choose Our Destiny

The law operates whether or not we are conscious of it. Its continued action arises from, and depends solely upon, our own free will. Death does not settle the score, anymore than moving to a new town will cancel the debts incurred in the old one.

In reality all circumstances are opportunities for us, for they are natural results of past living and should be viewed as the stepping-stones for our future growth. Our destiny is not imposed upon us; it is of our own making.

Cause - and Effect

Sometimes the result alone is seen without the preceding cause, and therefore seems entirely unaccountable. Or the cause is witnessed and the result seems non-existent. But when viewed from the pattern of Immortal Life, living through successive lives, all events are perceived to have their natural cause and logical consequence.

Understanding the law of spiritual dynamics makes us self-reliant beings who can become self-conscious masters of our environment. This requires working with the law, by setting in motion causes that will produce desirable effects, and neutralising the undesirable.

Not Predestination

Karma is neither predestination nor fate. Fatalism or predestination implies that we are so bound by circumstances, or by some power outside ourselves, that no effort of our own can free us. Under the operation of the law of karma, we have in the present moment the power to modify our future.

Basic Principles

The working of the law may be very complex; with almost infinite permutations and combinations in human lives, yet certain basic principles may be grasped and employed immediately.

We are normally living in three worlds - physical, emotional and mental - in vehicles appropriate to each world. We generate energies or forces as we act in each of these worlds. These energies bring corresponding results on their respective levels. Physical acts or deeds create physical environment, desires determine family and social links and thoughts result in mental abilities or inabilities. The summation of all these modify character.

Action on the Physical Level

The law itself is impersonal, neither good nor bad. Good or right may be defined from the evolutionist point of view as being all that is in line with the furtherance of evolution, bad or evil is therefore all that opposes progress toward perfection. Even in the case of bad actions, the law functions to teach, not to punish.

Action on the Emotional Level

The force generated on the emotional level is that of desire or feeling. The pursuit of desire stimulates exertion. We may judge the wisdom of a particular desire by experiencing the results of its gratification.

Desire also makes opportunities. Once we perceive this principle, we will understand that if we wish to have future opportunities in any particular line of endeavour, we should not only cultivate the present desire, but try to put that desire into action now, as far as possible.

Action On The Mental Level

The third force is that of thought. The force generated in thinking increases our ability to think, and increases the power of the mind as an instrument.

Thought is also a great creative power by which one can build both habit and character, which is the sum total of our habits. This is our key to power. Knowing that we become that which we think, we can deliberately set our ourselves to think of those virtues and qualities which we desire to possess.. The process is as natural as that of developing muscles by exercise and can be scientifically employed.

Reincarnation A Necessary Means

Every human being is constantly generating these three types of force - physical, emotional and mental. These determine not only our mode of life now, with its successes or failures, and the state of consciousness after death, but also our environment and relationships with others in succeeding incarnations. Obviously the balance of justice is not always struck within the limits of one life. The cycles of reincarnation provide the necessary extension in time for the operation of karma.

Action and Motive

It is important in understanding karma to realise that motive must be differentiated from action; deeds react upon the environment; motive reacts on character.

Opportunities

Occasionally, an opportunity comes to us that we feel is impossible for us to fulfil. But it would not be there unless the law had brought it as a result of past desire and effort. Such opportunities should be seized bravely. If we can nearly do a thing, we have worked for it in the past. To the strength of past efforts we may be adding the final step to bring a latent power into active expression.

Very often the action of karma is not felt immediately. It is like a seed that lies dormant, but eventually sprouts, matures and is harvested. In the fertile soil of our physical, emotional and mental natures, we plant the seeds of our future, and carry with us the rich harvest of many past sowings.

Character is the visible record of the past, and the promise of the future. The qualities and capacities of today are the results of our yesterdays and rungs on the ladder stretching to greater tomorrows. As we climb we reshape the present more nearly in the image of the future. The failures become but steps up the ladder leading to perfection, when the whole of time is glimpsed at last as an Eternal Now.

Books Suggested for Further Reading

Karma by Annie Besant

The Ancient Wisdom by Annie Besant

Karma And Rebirth by Christmas Humphreys

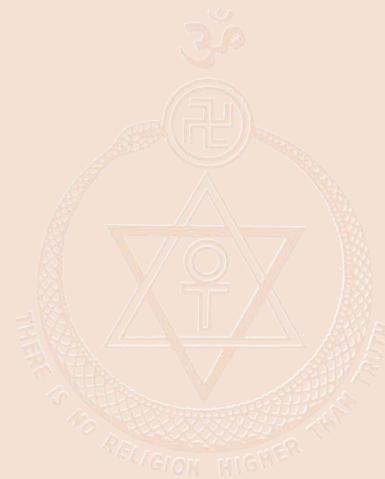
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Karma

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