

FORMATION OF KARMA - During Life And After Death

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In one lecture one can only touch upon one view of these aspects with much being left unsaid. Rudolf Steiner, a spiritual philosopher/seer who died in 1925, gave more than a hundred lectures concerning aspects of this topic and still did not cover all areas fully. With this in mind the following will be an overview where a brief glimpse of karma will be presented .

Before I begin I'd like to tell two short stories which describe the same event but in different ways. Both stories tell of the origins of the Ancient Indian civilisation.

A long time ago in the ancient mythical land of Atlantis the mysteries were betrayed and the land was becoming corrupted with evil practices. The mighty leader of the Sun Oracle, the great Manu, saw this and gathered around him the most advanced human souls and, with this group of people, a great migration occurred through Northern Europe, across the top of Asia and into a region in the vicinity of the Himalayas where they were settled and could develop in isolation from other peoples. In the mean time the land of Atlantis was destroyed by mighty water and storm catastrophes because of the betrayal and misuse of spiritual powers. The great Manu, after a long period of time, passed on the leadership of his people to seven disciples. These seven disciples or teachers worked as though by magic through their wisdom of the spiritual world onto the peoples of Ancient India. Some of their teachings formed what was later written down in the Vedas. The Ancient Indian civilisation was the centre for mankind's evolution. From these teachings the first religion arose. These teachers are known as the seven Holy Rishis. This story is derived from spiritual philosophy.

Around 1400 BC this same story, in another part of Asia, is recounted in a different way as follows:- God saw that man had now become evil in his ways except for a few people so God decided that he would end humanity except for Noah who had found favour in the eyes of God because he was a righteous man and still obeyed God's laws. God spoke to Noah and told him to build a wooden ark together with his family and to take at least two of every animal on board as he was going to destroy the world by a flood. Noah set about and completed his task, then, when he and his family were safely on board the ark, God sent rains for forty days and nights and flooded the entire earth. None were saved except for Noah and his family. After several weeks the ark settled on land from which the flood waters receded. Humanity then developed and continued from Noah and his family. This story is derived from a religious perspective of the Jewish religion.

Can both stories be describing the same event ? Can both be true ? Why were they described differently?

The first story describes the events as they actually happened whilst the second story uses pictorial language suitable for the people to whom it was given. In the both stories we have:- man was becoming evil, a small group of people were chosen and led by a great leader, the land in which they were living was destroyed by water catastrophes because of man's evil and at the end of their journey the chosen group was to continue and be the leaders of human evolution. But isn't it amazing that it is common for the writers of religious documents to choose major spiritual events to happen close to where the people live. In this case the ark settled on a place called Mount Ararat but in reality the Great Manu settled his people in the vicinity of the Himalayan Mountains

So when we read religious texts we must be very careful in their interpretation and we must try to understand what was behind the text **when it was given** and not interpret the text from what we think today out of our own egotistical self because we will end up in similar situations where today there are some poor souls who are seeking the wooden remains of the ark on Mount Ararat in Turkey because they don't understand the true meaning of the story.

In the same way when we read religious texts on Reincarnation and Karma we must see what was behind the meaning of the words at the time that they were given and to whom the texts were directed to.

Karma - is known the law of cause and effect and is where one's action causes a reaction generally in another life. One can look at Karma from several perspective's such as **world/epoch karma**, national or group tribal karma and **individual karma**.

World/ Epoch Karma

We have situations through man's history where a large part of humanity share in common experiences due to the physical and spiritual environment into which they incarnate into. Individuals have no choice but to be born into and experience these situations.

Today a large portion of the world's population is being propelled into materialism and intellectual thought. This process began around the fifteenth century and within one hundred years there will not be a place on earth where one can escape its influence. Hence all souls reincarnating, will have, as part of their own individual experience & development the world karma of materialism to deal with.

Galileo discovered the telescope seemingly 'by chance' when he peered through two lenses placed in that position, accidentally, by children. This was arranged for by the Spiritual World so that mankind could now have use of the telescope.

Modern cures or the prevention of diseases, eg through immunisation, is world karma and other means will be employed to bring about karmic compensation eg smallpox, a karmic consequence of uncharitableness has virtually been eliminated by vaccination. Thereby much external suffering has been reduced when compared with that of previous ages however inner suffering has replaced the outer suffering and the outer suffering is more difficult to bear than was previously the case.

Spiritual Philosophy, which was previously taught only in inner spiritual sanctuaries to the most advanced students of spiritual streams can now be taught openly as mankind, in general, has matured sufficiently to be able to comprehend these truths so that our present religions can be enlivened to further man's progress.

National or Group Karma

Nations or groups are endowed with particular characteristics . Their influence can be seen in the gestures, appearance, embodiment of impulses and language of the particular group. For example Italians have a characteristic gesture of hand movements when they speak, the English have a "stiff upper lip".

Many religions are given specifically to particular peoples to assist them in their evolution and hence have a specific colouring to suit those particular souls eg the story Noah's Ark in the Jewish religion now becomes understandable.

Certain groups are prepared so as to be able to bring necessary impulses into world evolution. For example the Ancient Indian peoples were the vessel for the first religion to enter the world. The western European peoples, who were regarded as little more than savages until after the early centuries AD, were the peoples destined to bring materialism into the world.

There may be situations where a nation goes to war and an individual's karma may be interrupted due to the effects of that war. An individual may die in a common catastrophe such as an earthquake which

was not part of that individual's karma but will be his karma in future lives in that he will be compensated for the premature death in a future life.

Generally speaking **national and world karma will take precedence over individual karma.**

Individual Karma

Only one who is clairvoyant can see the true nature of karmic events associated with individuals hence, one should not ever judge another as to why one suffers in life. It could be that the one making the judgement did not obtain the courage in his life before birth to resolve his karma whilst the one suffering distress did and the one making these judgments may have much greater karma to work out than the one on whom he is casting judgement upon. Further, it may not be because of a person's karma that he suffers but he will be compensated in the future for this suffering. For example a mother may be chosen to have a stillborn child. The chosen mother may be the instrument used to fulfil the karma of the soul associated with the stillborn child. The mother in this case will be compensated later on.

Bearing in mind the need for restraint in the judgement of others a few examples in the operation of individual karma are as follows:-

Pneumonia is the result of over active sexual activity and a desire to lead a sensual life in a previous incarnation.

Cholera is the result of weak Ego activity in the previous life - As the blood is the physical carrier of our ego or spirit, the ego is strengthened by meeting great resistance in the thickening of the blood in cholera.

Malaria is the result of a too strong ego activity in the previous life - The thinning of the blood has the effect of compensating for too strong an ego.

Karma can be worked through in stages in one life eg inappropriate parents or education causes poor health in later life are karmic effects being worked out in two stages from a previous life or it can be worked out **over a period of three lives**. Firstly as a soul quality then as a temperament/habit & then as a physical quality. For example a superficial life leads to habitual lying in the next life which and then because of ill-formed organs in the third life leads to an obtuse or dull consciousness.

Love in one life metamorphosed to joy in the next life and in the third this metamorphoses into openness to life and new ideas whereas a life of joyless duty leads to indifference from others in the next life which in turn leads to restlessness and being unconnected to life in the third incarnation.

Hatred in one life lead to hypersensitivity to suffering in the next life which then, in the third life leads to obtuseness and lack of understanding of the surrounding world

Hence the possibility arises, as we have the potential for freedom, that if we are perceptive **we can overcome and avoid our future bad karma if we takes on a rigorous self developmental process** where we achieve qualities that would be achieved by passing through an illness or suffering but it must be acknowledged that this is very difficult to accomplish with today's consciousness and lack of will.

One's karma is created by actions here on earth and is then elaborated between death and rebirth where the forces for the formation of the future physical body and a new environment suited to the need for the fulfilment of karma are given by spiritual beings. Hence, we need to look at what will happen to us after death, so as to gain an insight as to how karma is formed.

The departed soul or Jiva, after death, journeys into a condition known as Kamaloka or the Moon sphere. Here the departed experiences its life sequentially in a backward manner. The last day of one's life is experienced then the day before and so on. Now the departed does not experience what it had experienced personally but what its companions and the environment experienced through its deeds. Hence, if one had been cruel to one's wife and children and inflicted physical or mental pain, then one will feel the pain that they had experienced except to a much heightened degree. We now truly see how imperfect we have become through our deeds and we now **resolve** to make amends for our past misdeeds. This is the **first step in the shaping our karma in** our future life on earth. **There is virtually no possibility of making amends for past misdeeds in the life after death and hence the need for rebirth for the fulfillment of karma.**

The soul now journeys into further spiritual planes or spheres where its resolve to correct its imperfections is now imbued with the forces to build up its future body which will be suitable for the fulfillment of its karma. The spheres or planes can be called lokas, devachan, mental, budhic, nivarna planes in Hindu philosophy or they can be known as Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter Saturn planes and the starry Cosmos. These planes are related in space to the names of the heavenly bodies mentioned.

Spiritual beings bestow these forces onto the soul as it journeys through these planes but the forces received vary from individual to individual. One's ability to receive forces or gifts from the spiritual beings depends upon how the soul is able to light up its way from within and this ability depends upon its previous actions here on earth. It is not as though the spiritual beings withhold their forces from a journeying soul but the soul itself rejects these spiritual gifts being offered.

Those souls, whose consciousness is dimmed early on after death and are not able to light up their way, do not receive the appropriate gifts or forces from spiritual beings for their new life on earth and they thereby encounter deficiencies in their future body, disposition and events that will come to meet them.

In the moon sphere, through reviewing and re-experiencing one's life, a resolve is made to make amends for the inappropriate deeds that one had committed.

In the Mercury sphere a soul is able to light up its way, if it led a moral life whilst in the Venus sphere if it led a religious life.

In the sun sphere recognition of the divine in all human beings irrespective of their race, religion or nation is necessary. For the majority of souls the sun sphere is where most time is spent by the departed and here, the major part of their karma is elaborated. The first half is spent concerned with the elaboration of one's future physical body whilst the second half is spent elaborating the moral side of karma. Specific talents are then further elaborated in the Mars, Jupiter and Saturn spheres.

To be conscious in the Mars sphere one needs to have absorbed concepts similar to those given by spiritual philosophy. The soul can pass consciously through the Jupiter region only if it has liberated itself from the particular religious confession to which it belonged i.e. the soul has absorbed all the fruits that can be offered by that particular religion.

To be conscious in Saturn sphere one needs to exercise a certain degree of **self knowledge**, in a completely unbiased manner, as is given by spiritual philosophy. And only by being able to put this self knowledge into practice can the soul find entrance and companionship into the regions beyond Saturn where the soul is imbued with impulses to bring about major changes in mankind's progress on earth.

On the return journey the departed soul contracts and builds up a new soul and life body, in accordance with the forces received, before it takes on a new birth.