

THE LAW OF KARMA AND ITS OPERATION IN OUR DAY TO DAY LIFE

by John Pater

Throughout History religious texts were complemented with and added to from spiritual sources so as to deepen man's spiritual knowledge to suit his evolutionary development and needs. With Rudolf Steiner, who spoke from direct experience, we have an example where the deepest spiritual truths were for the first time openly presented to mankind in a manner where the ordinary intellect was able to comprehend the given concepts. In like manner a picture reincarnation and karma was given.

With many western peoples the concept of reincarnation and karma is new or unacceptable. The early Christian teachers did not speak of reincarnation and Karma for the reason of a required particular development of the peoples in the west in that they needed to develop the attitude that this life is the one and only life to achieve deeds on earth and thereby bringing out a greater sense of individual self. Now that this has been achieved the necessity for reincarnation and karma to be known and accepted by mankind in general is necessary for evolution to proceed in a wholesome manner. An example that comes to mind is that the hopelessness of some of our elderly who still have their mental faculties intact but with reduced physical mobility. If they believed that newly acquired mental skills could bear fruit in the next life then maybe there would be more activity without this hopelessness.

BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY PROOF? When Copernicus put forward his system of the solar system that the earth travels around the sun there was no real proof of this until in 1851 Leon Foucault demonstrated this with the aid of a pendulum. Before this Copernicus' world outlook was accepted by the majority of mankind as matter of faith. Likewise, reincarnation and karma must be made known but more rapidly than the acceptance of Copernicus' system and we can already see this happening even though it is still on a superficial level.

In Rudolf Steiner's 'Karmic Relationships' lecture series he warned of taking concepts of reincarnation and karma, logically reworking them and presenting them as fact as there are always exceptions to the generalisations given on karma and only direct spiritual sight is able to determine the exact karmic connections associated with an individual's lot in life and not logical speculation and inferences.

Karma - the law of cause and effect - an analogy.

If we see a beautiful rose, which makes a deep impression on us, when we are young but the memory of which then recedes into the background, it may be recalled by us seeing a bright red dress many years later. So in like manner could not the deeds committed by the individuality in one life be recalled in another life but in a different form?

When a man faces a canyon with cliffs on either side and shouts, within a short time an echo will be heard as a result of his shouting, different and yet related and caused by the initial action. Karma is similar where one's action causes a reaction in another life (although it 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 stage from a previous life).

There is some controversy in the eastern religions as to whether one is reincarnated in an animal body due to one's karma. (I once had a Hari Krishna devotee tell me that if one has an overactive sex life then one will come back as a pigeon in the next life as they have active sex lives). Karma is applicable to those beings that have an immortal spirit or ego (man and the Gods)

The following is a quotation from the first chapter of a book by a local "Indian" author. "When the ancient sages said that a human can take on the form of an animal when reborn depending on the type of deeds he has performed during his earthly life, it did not mean that a human is reborn physically as that animal.and on an evolutionary scale man is never reborn in the body of an animal" "all the animals that have ever existed are present in man's lower or animal nature". In other words as an example the nature of the dinosaurs, which are extinct, are now be embedded in man's lower nature

One can look at Karma from several perspective's such as world/epoch karma, national or group tribal karma and individual karma and I'd like to cover these briefly.

World/ Epoch Karma

We have situations today and in the past where nearly all humanity share in common experiences due to the physical and spiritual environment into which they incarnate into. Individuals have no choice but to reborn into 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 reincarnate will have as part of their own individual experience the world karma of materialism to deal with.

Many thousands of years ago, in the Lemurian times all human souls were embedded in the divine like a child in the mother's womb. this was known as the Golden age of the Hindu or paradise of the Christian and all of us present today shared in that experience.

In the middle of Atlantis man for the first time experienced himself as an individuality

Generally speaking one's karma in being a man is to be a woman in the next incarnation and vice versa (there are exceptions to this rule and a soul can be reborn, under certain conditions, up to seven times as a man).

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

Modern cures or prevention of diseases, such as 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.

National or Group Karma

Nations or groups are spiritually overshadowed by higher spiritual beings (can be referred to as folk spirits). 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”.

Hence when a soul is born into a particular group his outlook will be coloured by the group’s characteristics. Different group characteristics are necessary for souls to experience different facets of behaviour that will help them along in their evolution. eg. testa , koph and head are the same word in Italian, German and English , each having the effect of giving a different soul quality to the respective listener.

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

There may be situations where a nation goes to war and an individual’s karma may be interrupted due to the effect of the 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 with those people who died with him and as compensation.

The tragedy of Rwanda is an example where the spiritual fabric of the world weakened (due to our materialism and non spiritual values depleting the forces of the spiritual world) and found expression in a social weak spot. There were many individuals who died prematurely in this catastrophe. Their unused etheric forces strengthened the spiritual fabric of the world. The innocent deaths will be compensated for by karma in future lives.

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 whom he is casting judgement upon. Further, it may not be because of a person’s karma if he suffers but he will be compensated in the future for this suffering (a national disaster). Hence one can say that in general cholera is a result of a weak ego in a previous life but one cannot say that particular person who has cholera , has the disease because of previous karma. The knowledge of individual karma should be used for judging oneself and not others.

So, why do I have my talents or lack talents? Why am I ill or healthy? Why am I prone to accidents? Why am I liked or disliked? Why am I active or disinterested in the life around me? Why am I attracted to morality or immorality? Why am I attracted to spirituality or materialism? These questions can be answered by examining one's karma and its laws.

Bearing in mind the need for judgement in individual cases (other than one's own as one is able to develop a sense of the truth of one's own situation). A few brief examples of possible causes and effects have been given by Steiner

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

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

Malaria is the result of 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 work itself through three lives, firstly as a soul quality then as a temperament/habit then as a physical quality. for example A fickle or superficial life leads to habitual lying in the next life which then leads to an obtuse or dull consciousness because of ill-formed organs in the third life. If this were to keep on going then the soul would be lost to evolution. As one's karma is formed between death and rebirth where the forces are given and worked out for the formation of a new body and a new environment suited to our need for the fulfilment of our karma, hence in the example above Lucifer(light bearer) intervenes and lights the soul's way so that he may receive the necessary forces for his next life but in such a manner that the soul returns as an egotist here on earth, but still, the opportunity is there for the soul to get back on track.

If one can become aware of one's deficiencies/karma then one can avoid the potential illness by correcting the soul defect and thereby avoiding the necessity of catching the disease. However this is very difficult to accomplish with today's consciousness. However there is the potential for our education to pick up and work on the above soul/temperament difficulties as to moderate the harmful effects. Our modern education system of today generally does not work in the above manner as it does not work out of a spiritual basis

The karmic aim of illness is to progress and improve man. Smallpox was the result of uncharitableness in a previous life . Immunisation has effectively removed this disease from the earth, however that is only half the job ,the other half is to add the spiritual education to overcome the uncharitableness and as this has not happened then other physical means are found to karmically compensate this deficiency.

Whilst disease and suffering are outcomes of karmic adjustments one must do all that is possible to help cure the person (not to say "oh, that's his karma"). Through disease one may die as one may not be able to use the strength gained in fighting the disease in the current life and will be able to apply this strength gained in a new body. Beings of a higher nature will ensure karmic adjustment will happen in the proper way and we must not take on their role but must strive to cure the person.