

Karma – September 24 ~ October 1, 2019

The Sanskrit term, Karma, has its roots in the ancient Indian texts called the Upanishads, and have found broad acceptance in cultures worldwide. Often misunderstood as 'sin', the term literally means action, work, or deeds. It is often described as the spiritual principle of cause and effect, or action and reaction.

The philosophy of karma is closely associated with the idea of rebirth in many schools of Indian religion (particularly Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism) as well as Taoism. The concept of rebirth or reincarnation was also held by various early Christians. In these schools, karma in the present affects one's future in the current life, as well as the nature and quality of future lives - one's Samsara. Another causality characteristic, shared by Karmic theories, is that like deeds lead to like effects.

Thus good karma produces good effect on the actor, while bad karma produces bad effect. Buddhist monks are known to refuse to walk on grass so as not to kill insects and earn bad karma, others refuse to eat living things. Some people believe that good Karma can even be saved and stored for future lives. This effect may be material, moral or emotional — that is, one's karma affects one's happiness and unhappiness. The effect of karma need not be immediate; the effect of karma can be later in one's current life, and in some schools it extends to future lives. Note that often good deeds are primarily motivated by self-interest in the hope of preparing a better future personal life. But this affects the purity of the intent, and may affect the Karma as well. It is said that if one thinks rightly, happiness will follow like a shadow. Thus Karma can be viewed as a state of mind, and this involves the notion of 'intent'.

Less understood is the passive aspect of the law as to the importance of one's intent in initiating an action and how that intent becomes equally as important as to the creative active force which continues to generate future actions and reactions. All intent puts the creative mind in motion, manifesting through the thought process, and any thought becomes a created independent life-form (pseudo identity) in itself, which seeks to follow its own independent nature aiming precisely toward the goal it was designed.

According to the ancient writings, the doctrine of Karma applies itself both to the universal and to the particular; and to the evolution of Brahma's thought in the creation starting from the absolute of the initial 'Bindu', the point of creation, expanding outward in duality, and then ultimately reabsorbed at the end of the

world: the Pralaya.

The creation is viewed as succeeding actions in time. Every action can be active or passive and remains present in the state of potentiality that can in turn become new causalities for new action in the coming moment. For instance, mental or physical depression can be caused by Karmic consequence.

The law of Karma in other words is different from the civil laws of society that abides by rules considering that only proofs and evidence from acts which actually occurred, and care very little about the notion of intent, a notion that is much tougher to prove rationally. The law focuses on the notion of good or bad as a conclusion based a particular action, and even uses the “syllogism” of deductive reasoning to establish its quality even though it might only from circumstantial reasoning.

However, intent is the true trigger of “cause”. Even if a crime, or other action fails, or does not occur for whatever reason, the intent alone will generate the Karma. Every thought has a consequence even though no one knows about it. It is true that you can't hide what you think. All such 'intent' becomes stored as a potentiality in one's Samsara. One often tends to ignore and closes that door, forgets about it, however, it remains nonetheless potent and awaits the opportunity to spring into its own action. Fate is the passing of that intent into action. Of course, one can try to neutralize this accumulating force, or just wait...and eventually let it to explode forth.

Each action is free but may be influenced (good or bad) by preceding potentialities that manifest actively or passively. Cause and effect is a rule of physical nature, but between the two there is a space for spiritual action, an opportunity for the actor to check with his or her heart, wherein is the 'true knowing'. Purity of heart is the moral guidance for one's life. One cannot control his or her Karma, since the intent, the true cause, is already in potential realization ...such is so-called fate. However, one can control his or her intent, although most do not. This is the free will of choice. Mastery of one's intent, one's thoughts is the great aim of all spiritual practice throughout the religious teachings.

Thus, each action cannot be only described by the operational result but also by the motivation of the individual operating from the standpoint of Ethics or moral intent. That is to say for instance that a man who committed a crime is most likely to commit another crime or be himself the victim of a similar crime.

The accumulation of these 'potentialities' constitute the Samsara which for humans is the true original sin that now is inherited at each rebirth. Many religions have administered a lot sacrament (i.e. Baptism) and cleansing rituals to soften the effect of the Samsara, but, nonetheless, never completely abolish it.

Each individuality must face his or her responsibilities since our 'psyche' keeps at each rebirth the Samsara created by his or her actions in an earlier existence. Similarly, an inebriated man who commits a crime does not have a diminished responsibility since he was responsible for his drunkenness, the origin of the crime.

Karma is not a peculiar law that applies only to the living. But it applies to the universal creation as a whole in all its parts. It includes an infinite number of entities. According to Buddhism every atom of life has its own individuality.

The creation itself taken as a whole has its own Karma, which is the common or collective Karma for all creatures. Having been born, the universe with all its Creation, will inevitably come to an end (Pralaya).

It goes without saying that countries and cities alike have their own Karma, with each city acting therefore under one name and its own pseudo-individuality and personality. The collective and common Karma of all creatures, including even all atoms, holds an infinite number of separate entities such that the free will of all individuals neutralizes itself and is submitted to the 'law of numbers'. All creatures respect the law of numbers, even a school of fish band together for protection, and as a group they appear much bigger to a predator. Thus they enter into a speculative determinism based on the mathematical laws of probability.

Probabilities are very useful tools to apprehend and navigate through the uncertainty of the future. Weather prediction rests mainly on probabilities, but the exceptions here can lead to catastrophe when a storm veers 'off course', or, as in the case of recent hurricanes, can lead to a great scare that never materialized.

This notion of a determinism, or fate, is entirely based on material considerations and does not consider the moral aspects of action as part of the law of probability. Therefore this determinism as such is just an illusory belief system that rests only upon material causes. Modern science then draws its conclusion based merely upon a 'law' that blindly follows the greatest probability, and tends to ignore the exceptions that, as we know, may be the better path forward.

Humans operate also under a 'herd mentality', believing in strength in numbers. It

becomes such a habit that one usually follows the course of the herd, not questioning the direction, not thinking about options, just blindly floating down the river of life, following the path of least resistance. In essence surrendering your individual Karma to the one of the bigger group. Often they are indeed protected by the probability of the greater numbers, but at some point they may find themselves in the wrong, and may have missed opportunities to correct things... according to their true own path.

Karma however does not need to flow on blindly, on auto-pilot. Free will, and pure intent, is always available to offer a pause, an opportunity to think morally about what's the consequences of our actions, and make therefore the better choice. Whenever one brings the heart into the process, and reflects upon the course being taken, true freedom in the karmic sense awaits because it will always be a neutral action.