

9-4-2016 Readings: Karma & the Spiritual Purposes of Suffering

The Law of Cause & Effect

The Law of Cause and Effect tells us that every cause has an effect and every effect has a cause and also that all visible effects have non-visible causes. As with the Law of Vibration, higher vibrations are able to transform lower vibrations, while this is not the other way around. That is why causes always have a higher vibration than effects. And because the physical world has the lowest vibrations, what we perceive as the physical reality is the visible effect of higher vibrations in the non-visible world of causes. In other words, every visible activity is the result of a causative activity at the non-physical, non-visible levels of reality. What we know as the manifested world comes into existence as a result of the non-visible dynamics of more subtle energetic interactions. . . . Consciousness, thoughts, feelings, intention, attention, inspiration, intuition, knowing and all forms of energy create in the non-visible world of cause the visible world of effect. . . When we know the dynamic operation of the universal laws we can understand the multitude of seemingly complex effects at the physical level of reality.

The Law of Cause and Effect tells us that all our thoughts, words and actions are a part of the chain of cause and effect. . . In other words, every thought, every word and every action has its consequences, for our self as well as for the larger whole. . . We can find this insight in all wisdom traditions, for example as in the phrase “As we sow, so shall we reap” from the [Christian] Bible.

This is why not only in all wisdom traditions and belief systems but also in all the great world religions we can find the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” or “Do as you would be done by.” This advice is based on insight into the Law of Cause and Effect and makes us aware of the fact that what we do to other people will eventually return to ourselves. . . . Many ancient cultures and indigenous people who live close to nature apply the Golden Rule. . . also to their relationship with nature, because they consider themselves as a part of nature. To them the Golden Rule is therefore: “What we do to nature, we do to ourselves. What we do to ourselves, we do to the world.”

From the perspective that everything that exists is energy [vibration] and that everything flows and is in permanent movement [rhythm] – all relationships become a form of exchange. This principle also concerns the insight that holding on tightly to what we have only blocks the flow of energy to us. When we are not prepared to give as well, we block the stream of this energy and therefore also the flow coming our way.¹

The Law of Karma

The Law of Karma is the Law of Cause and Effect in the long term and concerns the development and growth of our soul, of our consciousness. According to the Law of Karma we can – in line with the Law of Cause and Effect – develop our consciousness, based on the lessons we learn from the *consequences* of our actions. According to the Law of Karma our development process as a soul takes place – conforming to the Law of Rhythm – according to multidimensional spiral cycles of incarnation and reincarnation of the soul in a physical body. . . The soul’s only wish is to develop itself in the direction of higher levels of consciousness. From this perspective we can consider difficult situations [suffering] as opportunities or challenges for growth.

According to the Law of Karma it is possible that we experience events in our physical life, which are the effect of our thoughts, words and actions during a previous incarnation of our soul in a physical body. This cycle of soul gives our soul the opportunity to develop itself, based on the operation of the Law of Cause and Effect and therefore based on the unconscious and conscious choices we have made.²

The Law of Karma really concerns, or is based on causes that are inherent in the constitution of matter itself and on the interaction between atomic units, whether we use this expression in connection with an atom of substance, a human being, a planetary atom, or a solar atom. . . .

When a person speaks of karma, he is dealing with something much wider than the interplay of effect and cause within the sphere of his own individual routine. . . . Every human atom is under the dominance of forces outside his own consciousness, which sweep him and others into situations from which there is no escape and which are to him incomprehensible.

Nevertheless, within limits, a person definitely does “control his/her destiny”, and can initiate action which produces effects recognizable by him as being dependent upon his activity along a particular line. . . .

Though he may be the meeting place of forces outside his control, yet he can utilize force, circumstance and environment and can turn them, if he so wills, to his own ends.³

The Law of Karma, rightly understood and rightly wielded, can bring that which produces happiness, good, and freedom from pain more easily than it brings pain, with its chain of consequences. . . . The idea of retribution runs through much of the teaching on karma because people seek a plausible explanation of things as they appear to be, and are themselves fond of dealing out retribution. Yet there is far more general good karma than bad, little as you may think it when immersed in such a period as the present.

Pain is the guardian of form and the protector of substance; it warns of danger; it indicates certain definite stages in the evolutionary process; it is related to the principle whereby the soul identifies itself with substance. When the identification ceases, pain and disease and also death lose their hold upon the disciple; the soul is no longer subject to their requirements, and the person is free because disease and death are qualities inherent in form, and subject to the vicissitudes of form life.⁴

Suffering and Pain

Pain is that upward struggle through matter which lands a person at the Feet of the Logos; pain is the following of the line of greatest resistance and thereby reaching the summit of the mountain; pain is the smashing of the form and the reaching of the inner fire; pain is the cold of isolation which leads to the warmth of the central sun; pain is the burning in the furnace in order finally to know the coolness of the water of life; pain is the journey into the far country, resulting in the welcome to the Father's Home; pain is the illusion of the Father's disowning, which drives the prodigal straight to the Father's heart; pain is the cross of utter loss, that renders back the riches of the eternal bounty; pain is the whip that drives the struggling builder to carry to utter perfection the building of the Temple. The uses of pain are many and they lead the human soul out of darkness into light, out of bondage into liberation, out of agony into peace. That peace, that light and that liberation, with the ordered harmony of the cosmos, are for all the [children of humanity].⁵

Humanity is an expression of two aspects of the soul – the animal soul and the divine soul – and these two, blended and fused in the person, constitute the human soul. It is this fact that is the cause of man's special problems [that lead to pain and suffering], and it is these two factors that involve him in the long struggle which eventuates in the liberation of the divine soul, through the sublimation of the animal soul.

Individualization was the first result of this process. Its final consummating effect can be seen in the five stages of the initiatory process, leading to eventual transfiguration and liberation. The entire work is one great unfolding revelation of the soul of God, and it is only when we divorce humanity from that process of revelation that we find the secrets, the problems, the difficulties and the mysteries insoluble. A consciousness, an awareness and a sensitivity to an ever-widening and more inclusive contact is gradually being developed. . . . The two factors that are of major importance, during manifestation, are the evolving consciousness and the manifesting life.

When a unit of life is immersed in form and when the consciousness is identified (in time and space) with any particular form, it is not possible for it to realize its divinity or to express it consciously. Its psychology is that of the partial and the particular, and not that of the universal and the whole. The greater and closer the identification with the form aspect, the greater is the lower unity and synthesis, but at the same time, the greater the darkness and, speaking symbolically, the denser the prison. Such is the consciousness in the lower or subhuman kingdoms in nature. The more the unit of life is identified with "the one who is conscious," the greater again is the higher, yet different, unity and synthesis. . . . The tragedy, the problem and the glory of man is that he/she can identify himself with both aspects—the form and the life; and his/her psychological state is such that during the period wherein he/she forms part of the human kingdom, his consciousness fluctuates between these pairs of opposites. He can identify himself with the subhuman forms, and this he invariably does in the early stages. She can identify herself with the life aspect, and this she does in the final stages. In the midway stage of the average person, he/she is torn violently between both, and is himself the battleground.

With this consciousness, incident upon an awareness of the pairs of opposites, is connected the entire problem of pain and suffering. The animal suffers, but suffers entirely physically and sentiently [emotionally]. Man suffers, but suffers physically, sentiently, and also mentally, and the mental suffering is due to the development in him of certain aspects of the lower mind—anticipation, memory, imagination, the power to

visualize, remorse, and the inherent urge to reach out after divinity, which brings with it a sense of loss and of failure. . . . The sufferings of humanity are primarily personal; of God [the divine aspect], they are preeminently impersonal and related to the whole. . . . Endeavor to think in wholes, and try not to fit every point of detail into the whole, but remember that what may appear to be a contradiction may be but a fragment of temporary detail for which you—as yet—see no place or explanation.⁶

Definitions:

The Law of Cause & Effect: Nothing happens by chance or outside the Universal Laws. Every action (including thought) has a reaction or consequence "We reap what we sow".

The Law of Karma: *Karma* is the Sanskrit word for action. One can think of karma as the spiritual equivalent of Newton's Law of Motion. "For every action there is an equal but opposite reaction." Basically, when we exhibit a negative force in thought, word, or action, that negative energy will come back to us. In Hinduism and Buddhism it is the sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences.

Suffering: The state of undergoing pain, distress, or hardship.

¹ *The Whole Elephant Revealed*, Marja de Vries, pp. 209-211.

² *Ibid.*, p. 208/218.

³ *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, Alice Bailey/The Tibetan, p. 798 and p. 807

⁴ *Esoteric Healing*, Alice Bailey/The Tibetan, p. 20/22 and p. 502.

⁵ *Discipleship in the New Age I*, Alice Bailey/The Tibetan, p. 677.

⁶ *Esoteric Psychology I*, Alice Bailey/The Tibetan, pp. 248-250.