

# Karma and Consciousness

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‘TO KNOW’ implies ‘to be at peace with oneself’ because there is ‘full union between the Knower and the Known’. In this state the operation of Karma ceases. Until then one is faced with the vast, incomprehensible picture which the Law of Karma presents. Madame H. P. Blavatsky says:

To give the merest outline of the States of Consciousness is the most difficult thing in the world, since the Universe is embodied Consciousness, and a knowledge of the States of Consciousness means a knowledge of the Planes of the Universe, and of all correspondences in the Cosmos, the Solar System and Man.

Let us not merely dwell on the didactic and theoretical aspects, but rather consider the practical aspects of our journey towards self-realization. The complex and sometimes inexplicable ways of the Law of Karma cannot be understood by the uninitiated and the laity. Yet it is by carefully following the path of self-denial that one transgresses the *mayavic* world of the psyche and ascends into realms that leave no footprints on karmic sands which need to be revisited to face

retribution at a later time, on a later day and, perhaps, in a later life.

There are said to be three kinds of Karma: Sañchita Karma, Prārabdha Karma, and Āgāmi Karma.

1. Āgāmi: Bodily actions good and bad — done after the acquisition of discriminative knowledge.

2. Sañchita: Actions formerly done, serving as seeds to grow in countless births; the store of former actions preserved.

3. Prārabdha: The actions of this body (i.e. birth) which give pleasure or pain in this life alone.

*The Theosophist* (vol.X, p.235) says:

*Sañchita-karma* includes human merits and demerits accumulated in the preceding and in all other previous births. That portion of the *Sañchita-karma* destined to influence human life in one or the present incarnation is called *Prārabdham*. The third kind of karma is the result of the merits and demerits of the present acts. *Āgāmi* extends over all your words, thoughts, and acts. What you think, what you speak, what you do, as well as whatever results your thoughts, words, and acts produce on yourself, and on those affected

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by them, fall under the category of the present karma, which will be sure to sway the balance of your life for good or for evil in your future development.

Man operates in the phenomenal world using his mind or *manas*. Creation of karma depends largely on the motive that propels action. Madame Blavatsky says: ‘The law of Karma is a moral law, and where no moral responsibility exists, there can be no application of the law of Karma.’ This means that action without either good or evil motive, can create no Karma. Śri Kṛṣṇa, in the *Bhagavadgītā* explains further and clarifies this aspect.

We find the instruction or exhortation that we should aim to reach the state of consciousness which is beyond the reach of Karma and beyond the mind. The more we try to comprehend what this plane of consciousness or state of being may be, the more we are led to understand that it is not personal but universal and is actually the ‘centre of life’ and of consciousness.

Mme Blavatsky says: ‘Every transgression in the private life of a mortal is, according to Occult philosophy, a double-edged sword in the hand of Karma; one for the transgressor, the other for the family, nation, sometimes even for the race, that produced him.’ Nirvāna too should not be exclusive.

J. Krishnamurti, the mystic philosopher, declared:

So, your consciousness, with which you have identified yourself as your ‘individual’ consciousness, is an illusion. It is the consciousness of the rest of mankind.

You are the world and the world is you.

Please see the responsibility that is involved in it. You have struggled all your life, as an individual, something separate from the rest of humanity, and when you discover that your consciousness is the consciousness of the rest of mankind, it means you are mankind, you are not an individual. You may have your own particular skill, tendency, idiosyncrasy, but you are actually the rest of mankind, because your consciousness is the consciousness of every human being.

What does this mean? In a cut-throat world where the rat race escalates into war and finally, terrorism, we need to find this oneness, this spirit of universal brotherhood. We have been taught that the only secure foundation for universal morality is universal brotherhood. This cannot be where there is the motive of self. It cannot be where the mind is closed. It cannot be where the thoughts and motives of human beings are impure. Apart from the fact that thought influences one’s own action, thought influences others’ thoughts and actions as well. We should dwell on this aspect, from the point of view of not only what mystics and philosophers have said, but that of what scientists have to say today.

Annie Besant says (*Thought Forms*):

It is our earnest hope — as it is our belief — that this little book will serve as a striking moral lesson to every reader, making him realize the nature and power of his thoughts, acting as a stimulus to the

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noble, a curb on the base. With this belief and hope we send it on its way. . . .

Telepathy, clairvoyance, movement without contact, though not yet admitted to the scientific table, are approaching the Cinderella-stage. The fact is that science has pressed its researches so far, has used such rare ingenuity in its questionings of nature, has shown such tireless patience in its investigations, that it is receiving the reward of those who seek, and forces and beings of the next higher plane of nature are beginning to show themselves on the outer edge of the physical field.

Her words written almost a century ago have proved prophetic; today many an enlightened and inspired scientist's work is moving rapidly from what can be called fringes to what modern exact science accepts as verified fact. However, this is a long journey and an arduous task for the earnest scientist who seeks the spiritual. It would be important to mention some of the interesting work being done by some of these scientists. Their work has an impact not only on the scientific world, but also on the moral and spiritual worlds.

Rupert Sheldrake, the so-called controversial biologist, declares:

The morphic fields of mental activity are not confined to the insides of our heads. They extend far beyond our brain through intention and attention. We are already familiar with the idea of fields extending beyond the material objects in which they

are rooted: for example magnetic fields extend beyond the surfaces of magnets; the earth's gravitational field extends far beyond the surface of the earth, keeping the moon in its orbit; and the fields of a cell phone stretch out far beyond the phone itself. Likewise the fields of our minds extend far beyond our brains.

In an interview with Mathew Cromer, Rupert Sheldrake states the view that science is a method and not a position. This indeed embodies the spirit of inquiry.

Moving on to other researches, we find amazing discoveries of interconnectedness between two living beings. *Dream Telepathy*, a book co-authored by Montague Ullman MD and Stanley Krippner PhD with Alan Vaughan, gives details of the work of the dream research team at the Maimonides Medical Center in New York City. Over a ten-year period, they conducted pioneering scientific experiments in telepathic dreaming. We are told that the team investigated how one person could transfer thoughts to another while the second person was sleeping and thereby influence the second person's dreams.

They accord with what is written in *Distant Mental Influence: Its Contributions to Science, Healing, and Human Interactions* by William Braud:

Concisely stated, the evidence compiled in this volume indicates that, under certain conditions, it is possible to know and to influence the thoughts, images, feelings, behaviours, and physiological and physical activities of other persons and living

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organisms — even when the influencer and the influenced are separated by great distances in space and time, beyond the reach of the conventional senses. Because the usual modes of knowing and influence are eliminated in these studies, their success reveals modes of human interaction and interconnection beyond those currently recognized in the conventional natural, behavioural, and social sciences. Besides indicating areas of incompleteness and misapprehensions about such phenomena that exist in current scientific theories, these distant mental influence findings have important implications for our fuller understanding of consciousness, health and wellness, our typically untapped human potential, and the spiritual aspects of our lives.

There are other valuable researches such as these. The symbiotic relationship between human beings is nothing new. It is an indisputable and immortal fact that Mother Nature has bound us all

together in bonds of brotherhood and ties of sympathy.

*Mumukshutva* is sometimes interpreted as ‘a state of intense desire for liberation’. Our teachings constantly remind us that it is indeed the opposite of selfishness. It is a state of Compassion or Love. This love encompasses all sentient beings and all life. When Patañjali speaks of performing *samyama* on the path of *kaivalya*, it is not an ‘exercise’ or process that is referred to. Most practitioners only look at *āsana* and *prānāyāma* when talking of Yoga. It is unravelling of the mystery of consciousness that reveals to us that, whether it is Karma or Nirvāna, it is not just individual but collective. He who perceives this not, is but blind.

Since there is hope for man *only in man*  
I would not let *one* cry whom I could  
save! . . .

These words ring in our ears. All we can do is invoke the Highest with them.

The only decree of *Karma*, an eternal and immutable decree, is absolute Harmony in the world of Matter as it is in the world of Spirit. It is not, therefore, *Karma* that rewards or punishes, but it is we who reward or punish ourselves, according as we work with, through and along with Nature, abiding by the laws on which harmony depends, or breaking them.

H. P. Blavatsky  
*The Secret Doctrine*