

The Outworking of Karma

T128 The Inner Teachings 14th July 1942 St Mary Abbot's Place, London

Invocation:

My brethren, let us with one accord approach the heart of all wisdom and love; let us close the outer courts and enter the sanctuary of silence, praying with bowed heads, bowed intellects. Father-Mother, blessed God, we come to commune with Thee, to absorb Thy rays of light and life; we thank Thee for Thy Son, the Light within each breast. May this light shine forth in our lives both here and in the spheres beyond so that we may live to add to Thy glory, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Brethren, we turn to the subject chosen at our last gathering—the outworking of karma. This subject is one of the most important in all religious teaching, since throughout the ages the deeper students of religion have recognised it as one of the laws governing man's* life on earth. All life is governed by law; get this truth firmly established in our minds and it will prove of great help. We are forced to accept our lessons for the law is inescapable. Many will shrink from this doctrine. Well, it makes no difference. Man may not like the thought of death, he may not believe in an afterlife, [but] it makes no difference—truth goes on manifesting irrespective of men's opinions. Truth is like the ocean, rhythmic and irresistible. Do you remember what happened to the king who sat on the shore and commanded the waves to recede? They harkened not, but continued to roll in until he himself had to move.

*[*For editorial policy around gender, see the introduction]*

These divine laws operate throughout human existence, but we would like to put a different angle upon the idea of karma as being a sort of punishment meted out for misdeeds. God is love, and the cry of the man or the child in spirit is, 'If God is love, why does He permit this and that suffering?'

It is the way of life. Man has to witness the suffering of those he loves and to suffer himself. He feels resentful at times when he sees a beloved relative or friend suffering or passing on, perhaps at the most promising time of their lives. He naturally questions the love of God. And today, looking across the world and seeing the bloodshed and the suffering, there rises from the heart of the compassionate man or woman the cry, 'Where is God and why does God permit this terrible war? Why does God permit little children to suffer, to be ill-treated and starved?'

Pause with us and think. God is good—God means good. God is continually, every moment, revealing to man in his heart beauty, feeling which is indescribable, of ecstasy and gratitude. [There is] not one soul here but who has had cause to say 'Thank God'. It may even have come whilst on some much enjoyed holiday, or after the passing of a cloud, a sorrow or a hurt, or after a reconciliation, or perhaps at the coming of the beloved into one's life. This human love which comes to many people is really an answer by God to that inward longing and searching for some ideal, for a companion, for beauty; it is the search for God which urges man to seek his mate. The searching for God is the urge behind all nature, the search for the blooming of the flowers.

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This urge brings to man a certain satisfaction, so God comes and speaks in man's heart, but man does not recognize the voice as God, so puts it down to 'nature'. But every emotion of joy and happiness, every appreciation of beauty in whatever form through the senses, is the result of the expression of God through the physical organism. We all know the joy of companionship of the friend who is in harmony with us, this expression through them and through our own hearts, of this inexpressible something beyond the human mind. The human mind cannot analyse God. Books concerning God are stacked from the floor to the ceiling in libraries, but the mind will never unveil God to man. God is only found at a certain point on the path of experience and He speaks to man through the heart, and when that happens, man knows and he will never again question the love of God. The man who is the son of God consciously never questions God's love.

Therefore, we come to this realization that God is love and everything manifesting on earth is the result of God's love.

Here let us pause again to create for ourselves an ideal of God. Some there are who cannot accept the idea of the Mother God because of age-long prejudice. Yet all humans love their mothers, and their wives, the mothers of their children. It is the inner voice urging them to see in the mother an expression of divinity. The Roman Catholic church worships the mother of Jesus, but this worship of the divine motherhood has always been. I would have you meditate sometimes upon the Divine Mother. All men seek the perfect mother love. Therefore, turn your thoughts to the Mother God, the expression of all that is compassionate, warm, kindly, loving, understanding, and remember that the wise mother knows what is good for the child and does not fail in her duty. She also administers correction if need be, but with deep love.

What has all this to do with the outworkings of karma? Everything, my brethren; it is the kernel of the truth. We try to give an impression that karma is not so much a punishment meted out to humanity, but an opportunity given to mankind to learn truth. To a child the idea of lessons is often objectionable—so we will say that karma gives the opportunity to experience God. If you can get that thought clearly in your mind, whatever you are faced with in life will take the form of an experience planned to bring to you in the end the joy of God. And thus we say that God is Mother and Father, divine wisdom, divine love, divine power, ever at work behind all forms and manifestations of life, so that God's children, sparks of the divine love come forth from the heart of God, may live and grow and develop as children of God; may learn how to express that happiness which God knows and which God has placed as a seed within each breath, or each spark of His life force.

In the beginning the child is as a babe, innocent of divine law, without experience, and exactly as a child has to learn how to sit, to feed, to stand and talk and play, and then how to develop its brain and learn certain facts about life, so by exactly the same process the spirit grows from babe to spiritual manhood. This young child in the beginning, albeit innocent, has within itself the dual aspect, called good and evil; it is expressing both what is called 'evil' and what is called 'good' and is creating a 'balance sheet' in the heavens. Therefore we accumulate both debts and credits. The purpose of life is balance, equilibrium, and, as we

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have already stated, the outworking of God's law gives mankind experience enabling it to enjoy all the gifts of the God nature.

If this truth is established, if all people could see for themselves that as they act so they will reap, they would pause before rushing to commit murder of all that is beautiful and harmonious in life. Even violent temper is murder. You are murdering God. Hasty speech, cruelty, is murder. Yet we would not slay our brother. In the story of Cain and Abel*, Cain, the aspect of evil, slew his brother Abel—a deed perpetuated throughout human evolution. My dear ones, think about this and then realize how much better it is to follow the path of self-discipline and strive towards God and not allow the forces of self-destruction to keep on crushing down your better self. The son of God within is building, creating good, and then Cain comes and wipes it out and puts an item on the liability side of the balance sheet.

[*Genesis ch. 4]

Every act creates karma. Karma does not necessarily wait to be discharged at some future time long hence. It very often faces the soul a few hours after, or a week after the debt has been contracted. Do not think that you can put off the evil day when you make bad karma. You know not the day nor the hour when the Lord cometh to reap. This is demonstrated very simply. If you walk along the road unheedingly, clumsily, not looking where you are going, you may fall and be hurt. You will say, 'O, I am hurt. Oh well, I suppose it is my karma'. Yes, an immediate outworking! Therefore, karma teaches us to be very careful and precise and Godlike in the conduct of our lives. That is the whole purpose of karma—that by feeling pain we may gain experience and wisdom.

Supposing you are robbed of precious things, you say, 'O, it is my karma'. Now the whole point is: what has that experience taught you? Has it taught you anything? If not, it may return in this day of life, or when a few lives have passed, but the point is that the soul has to learn what it feels like to be robbed, because the soul once inflicted that feeling upon another soul. So karma is to enable us to learn our lessons, and it is also helping us to understand and to help our brother to learn his lessons. This is a subtle point, because the question arises, 'If we are helping our brethren to learn lessons by making them suffer, does it much matter?' Well, the law is, do unto others as ye would have them do unto you; by wilfully inflicting hurt upon your neighbour you are creating fresh karma which will rebound upon you later for you will feel exactly the same pain that you have inflicted. The law of karma works both ways and its purpose is to awaken the soul to a realization of the perfect life, of the divine life.

The question arises, 'Can karma be overcome?' For instance, in spiritual healing we see in the sufferings of the body—karma. Therefore is it right to try to alleviate the sufferings of our brethren by giving them spiritual healing? The good Samaritan raised the injured man and took him to the inn, the place of lodgement and peace and harmony, and left him in the care of this landlord of that inn. The good Samaritan did not say, 'O, it is that man or woman's karma'. No, my brethren, the good Samaritan always gathers up the sufferer and does his best to heal.

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[*Luke 10 : 30-37]

What part has the patient to play in this little drama? The patient is given a magnificent opportunity (which is the patient's good karma)—an opportunity to rise above the affliction of the body and soul. The patient has earned that good karma in the past, as well as the bad karma which brought the sickness. If the man be wise, he will respond to the opportunity and endeavour to learn his lesson. Then that good within might, and in many cases does, rise and aspire to God, to Christ, and in raising itself it is raised by Christ beyond its karma. Karma is thus worked out, or transmuted.

Spiritual healing is an angel's work, my brethren, and the healer may look upon it as good karma, an opportunity which has come in this day of life as a result of kindness you have shown in the past. So it goes on, and the good karma of today will be realized tomorrow or in the years to come, in ever-increasing happiness and realisation of the divine qualities of the soul.

There will be many difficult questions and I am afraid that it will take a Solomon at least to answer them, but I will pray that wisdom may come. There is so much that could be said, but it is no good giving you mental indigestion.

Q.Is all bad karma created by an absence of love, or sin against love, and as soon as we can more fully realize love without ourselves, are we enabled to transmute that karma?

A.Yes, but also bad karma is created by an absence of wisdom—through ignorance. Until a soul experiences for itself, it does not know nor understand nor appreciate nor realize what love is. Through this experience the soul acquires love; the white rose and the red rose—the two symbols of life, the white rose being the pure spirit, the red rose being the spirit or soul of man after it has passed through deep human experiences. If the soul can express love, learning its lesson through love, it is certainly opening and growing to God, but karma is actually created through ignorance.

Q.Then would you say that the present war has been brought by humanity upon itself because of the karma created through ignorance?

A.We get into complex waters, because man knows quite well in himself that selfishness and greed are wrong (he is not as ignorant as all that)—nevertheless, he still persists, and therefore brings upon himself suffering. There is a difference between innocence and wilful ignorance—when people turn away from what the inner Voice is teaching them.

Q.When one has recognized misdoing and repented, does that transmute the karma?

A.Recognizing the mistake is half the battle, because the soul opens its eyes and sees, but there remains the service towards the one who has been sinned against. That would be natural. If you see that you have hurt someone, you are full of compassion. 'O, my brother,

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let me bind your wound!' and in that very expression there is something indescribable; the peace and loveliness and light of God warms and comforts.

Q.Would you say that the practice of confession and absolution has anything to do with the old belief in karma?

A.Well, yes; I should say that there is beneath the ceremony the idea of washing the sins, cleansing the soul from ignorance and darkness of the sin and helping it to arise.

Q.What would account for the same affliction running through families?

A.An incarnating ego may be born into a family where a tendency to a certain physical affliction or disease exists, because that soul has certain work to accomplish, certain opportunities to be presented to it. That soul may or may not, according to its strength, take on that disease. That is a subtle point, because the soul need not succumb but can so strengthen itself that it does not take that particular way of learning its lesson. We would not accept heredity as a foregone conclusion, because every soul has within it the power to determine to a degree its method of working out its karma. A child may solve its sum in more ways than one, which is where freewill comes in. You will ask me if karma can be speeded up? Most certainly, more particularly when the soul awakens on the path; then it gets a vision of God in greater or lesser degree. 'I want to reach God! I must get there quickly.' 'Very well, my son, but first there is much to do, much to clear away.' So when the time comes for reincarnation, the karma is hastened. Such an incarnation may appear to others very difficult, but those who have seen the vision do not mind, they accept the karma because they know that through it they will reach the goal. Therefore we cannot judge, we dare not judge another person's life. From our standards what appears an easy life might prove very difficult for the soul in question, and what appears to others to be a hard life, to the participant brings an inward grace, a joy and tranquillity which makes a joy of all experience.

If every member of the human race could be presented with a copy of his karmic balance sheet, what a change would follow! And if every member of the human race could be shown with what certainty every act comes 'home to roost', man would think twice, nay, many times, before giving pain. We cannot help our past karma, but we can help that which we make for the future; therefore, my brethren, do you not accept the wisdom of endeavouring to discipline yourself to the laws of God? Control yourself, your thoughts, your speech; be kind and loving—it all boils down to that one thing, be kind and compassionate and never wilfully inflict pain on any living creature through thought, speech or act. Those who have learnt how much the thoughtlessness or ignorance or wilfulness of another can hurt will not be heedless in the future. The masters of wisdom never inflict pain—they are all love, all compassion, but they also recognize the law. They know that every life must eventually become balanced and literally polarised to the Divine Light, the Source of all life.

Benediction:

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We leave you now, praying that peace and tranquillity will abide in the hearts of all present. And unto the Great White Spirit, Father-Mother, Divine Parent, we give our love, our allegiance, forever.

Amen.

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