

21 Nuggets of Karmic Law



Karma is the vessel of our person and character

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1. Belief in Karma instils personal responsibility.

I have gone the whole round of Creation:
I saw and I spoke!
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose,
received in my brain
And pronounced on the rest of His handwork —
returned Him again
His creation's approval or censure:
I spoke as I saw.
I report, as a man may of God's work —
all's love, yet all's law.
Now I lay down the judgeship He lent me.
Each faculty tasked
To perceive Him, has gained an abyss,
where a dewdrop was asked.
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at
Wisdom laid bare.
Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank,
to the Infinite Care!
— ROBERT BROWNING: *Saul*, xvii
You should not increase your fate.
— CHALDEAN ORACLE¹

We are the brothers and teachers of all below us. See that you do not hinder and delay all nature by your failure in virtue.

“He killed a man on the way, in secret. He is a murderer at heart,” said my guide. “This is the truth that Abad meant to tell. Those atoms fly from all of us at every instant. They seek their appropriate centre; that which is similar to the character of him who evolves them. We absorb from our fellows whatever is like unto us. It is thus that man reincarnates in the lower kingdoms. He is the lord of nature, the key, the focus, the highest concentrator of nature's laboratory. And the atoms he condemns to fall thus to beasts will return to him in some future life for his detriment or his sorrow. But he, as immortal man, cannot fall. That which falls is the lower, the personal, the atomic. He is the brother and teacher of all below him. See that you do not hinder and delay all nature by your failure in virtue.”

Then the ugly picture faded out and a holy man, named in the air in gold “Abad,” took his place. From him the stream of atoms, full of his virtue, his hopes, aspirations, and the impression of his knowledge and power, flowed out to other Sages, to disciples, to the good in every land. They even fell upon the unjust and the ferocious, and then thoughts of virtue, of peace, of harmony grew up where those streams flowed.²

¹ Chaldean Oracle 37: Μη συναυξησης την επιαρμενην. Cf. “Fate is the full perfection of those divine illuminations which are received by *Nature*; but *Providence* is the immediate energy of deity. Hence, when we energize intellectually, we are under the dominion of Providence; but when corporeally, under that of fate. The oracle therefore admonishes to withdraw ourselves from corporeal energy.” (tr. & comment by Thomas Taylor)

² Judge W.Q. *The Persian Student's Doctrine*. In: *The Path*, October 1892, Vol. VII, p. 212; republished in: Judge W.Q. *The Heart Doctrine*. Bombay: Theosophy Co. (India) Private Ltd, 1951, 1963, p. 145; [article written under the nom de plume Bryan Kinnavan.]

2. Coping with “bad” Karma.

Resist without resistance.

The following three extracts are from W.Q. Judge's *Letters That Have Helped Me*, advising on how to cope with the darkness and despair of sentient existence:

What despair and agony of doubt exist to-day in all places! In this time of upturning, the wise man *waits*. He bends himself, like the reed, to the blast, so that it may blow over his head.¹

Do you know what it is to resist without resistance? That means, amongst other things, that too great an expenditure of strength, of “fortitude,” is not wise. If one fights, one is drawn into the swirl of events and thoughts, instead of leaning back on the great ocean of the Self which is never moved.²

No one should be taking information to another, for it fans a flame . . . Retire into your own silence and let all others be in the hands of Karma, as we all are. “Karma takes care of its own.” It is better to have no side, for it is all for the Master and He will look out for all if each does just right, even if, to their view, another seems not to do so. By our not looking at their errors too closely, the Master will be able to clear it all off and make it work well. The plan of quiet passive resistance, or rather, laying under the wind, is good and ought to work in all attacks. Retreat within your own heart and there keep firmly still. Resist without resisting. It is possible and should be attained.³

Echoing the last extract, here are some thoughts of the late Geoffrey Farthing:

You will of course find exactly the same difficulties in Greece as you have found in England and elsewhere in trying to propagate the message. In my experience one has to learn to be very passive in this and do just what comes to hand to be done. There is obviously a place for initiative but that has to be applied according to circumstance and what you might call the tide of events. Sometimes the tide will flow with you and sometimes against you.

3. Karma allots kinetic energy.

Therefore, at the death of a man or an animal, the manifestation of life or the evidences of Kinetic energy are only withdrawn to one of those subjective planes of existence which are not ordinarily objective to us. The amount of Kinetic energy to be expended during life by one particular set of physiological cells is allotted by Karma — another aspect of the Universal Principle — consequently when this is expended the conscious activity of man or animal is no longer manifested on the plane of those cells, and the chemical forces which they represent are disengaged and left free to act in the physical plane of *their* manifestation.⁴

¹ *Judge Letters*, I (XI) p. 37

² *ibid.*, (EXTRACT ON WISDOM IN ACTION) p. 126

³ *ibid.*, p. 124

⁴ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE LIFE PRINCIPLE) IX p. 76 *fn.*

4. Karma binds free will.

Free Will and binding Fate function together like Spirit and Matter, two aspects of the One Reality.¹

5. Karma corrects mental transgressions.

[Logos] can relate to the Universal and to the individual mind, to Mahat, or to the Higher Manas, or even to the lower, the Kāma-Manas or Brain-Mind. Because that which is desire, instinctive impulse in the lower, becomes thought in the Higher. The former finds expression in acts, the latter in words. Esoterically, thought is more responsible and punishable than act. But exoterically it is the reverse. Therefore, in ordinary human law, an assault is more severely punished than the thought or intention, *i.e.*, the threat, whereas *Karmically* it is the contrary.²

6. Karma is the vessel of our person and character.

The robbed that smiles
Steals something from the thief.
— WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE³

The Universal circuit is like a breeze, and the voyager, still or stirring, is carried forward by it. He has a hundred varied experiences, fresh sights, changing circumstances, all sorts of events. The vessel itself furnishes incident, tossing as it drives on. And the voyager also acts of himself in virtue of that individuality which he retains because he is on the vessel in his own person and character. Under identical circumstances individuals answer very differently in their movements and acts: hence it comes about that, be the occurrences and conditions of life similar or dissimilar, the result may differ from man to man, as on the other hand a similar result may be produced by dissimilar conditions: this (personal answer to incident) it is that constitutes destiny.⁴



¹ *Studies in the SD*, Bk. II (MISCELLANEOUS: “THE VOICE OF THE WILL”) pp. 64-65; [on “self-induced and self-devised efforts checked by the Karma of the long past.”]

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE) X p. 399; [on whether “mind equivalent to Mahat, or the Higher and Lower Manas.”]

³ Shakespeare: *Othello*, Act i, scene 3

⁴ Plotinus: *Ennead* III, v, “Our Tutelary Spirit,” ¶ 6; (*tr.* MacKenna & Page)

7. Karma is threefold: kriyamana, prarabdha, and sanchita.

Kriyamana karma: “Being made.” The karma being created and added to sanchita in this life by one's thoughts, words and actions, or in the inner worlds between lives. Kriyamana karma is also called agami, “coming, arriving,” and vartamana, “living, set in motion.” While some kriyamana karmas bear fruit in the current life, others are stored for future births.

Prarabdha karma: “Actions begun; set in motion.” That portion of sanchita karma that is bearing fruit and shaping the events and conditions of the current life, including the nature of one's bodies, personal tendencies and associations.

Sanchita karma: “Accumulated actions.” The sum of all karmas of this life and past lives.

Each of these types can be divided into two categories: arabdha (literally, “begun, undertaken”; karma that is “sprouting”), and anarabdha (“not commenced; dormant”), or “seed karma.”¹

8. Karma records every single deed and thought.

Desire, being the agent empowered by Karma, is fulfilled through thoughts, words, and action which, in turn, are new causes being enacted.

For this world is that of the invisible but ever-potent CAUSALITY, the subtle, yet never-breaking thread that is the action, agent and power of Karma, and Karma itself in the field of divine mind. Once acquainted with this no adept can any longer plead ignorance in the event of even an action, good and meritorious in its *motive*, producing evil as its result; since acquaintance with this mysterious realm gives the means to the Occultist of foreseeing the two paths opening before every premeditated as unpremeditated action, and thus puts him in a position to know with certainty what will be the results in one or the other case.²

The Seven Planetary Spirits are Eternal Ideation's amanuenses.

The *Lipikas*, from the word *lipi*, “writing,” means literally the “Scribes.”³ Mystically, these Divine Beings are connected with Karma, the Law of Retribution, for they are the Recorders or Annalists who impress on the (to us) invisible tablets of the Astral Light — “the great picture-gallery of eternity” — a faithful record of every act, and even thought, of man, of all that was, is, or ever will be, in the phenomenal Universe. As said in *Isis Unveiled* (I, 343), this divine and unseen canvas is the BOOK OF LIFE. As it is the Lipikas who project into objectivity from the passive Universal Mind the ideal plan of the universe, upon which the “Builders” reconstruct the Kosmos after every

¹ After http://www.experiencefestival.com/hinduism_and_karma

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (PRACTICAL OCCULTISM) IX p. 286

³ These are the four “Immortals” which are mentioned in *Atharva-Veda* (I, 31, 1-4) as the “Watchers” or Guardians of the four quarters of the sky.

Pralaya, it is they who stand parallel to the Seven Angels of the Presence, whom the Christians recognize in the Seven “Planetary Spirits” or the “Spirits of the Stars”; for thus it is they who are the direct amanuenses of the Eternal Ideation — or, as called by Plato, the “Divine Thought.” The Eternal Record is no fantastic dream, for we meet with the same records in the world of gross matter. Says Draper:

A shadow never falls upon a wall without leaving thereupon a permanent trace, which might be made visible by resorting to proper processes. . . . The portraits of our friends, or landscape views, may be hidden on the sensitive surface from the eye, but they are ready to make their appearance as soon as proper developers are resorted to. A spectre is concealed on a silver or a glassy surface, until, by our necromancy, we make it come forth into the visible world. Upon the walls of our most private apartments, where we think the eye of intrusion is altogether shut out, and our retirement can never be profaned, there exist the vestiges of all our acts, silhouettes of whatever we have done.¹

Dr. Jevons believes that every thought, displacing the particles of the brain and setting them in motion, scatters them throughout the Universe, and he thinks that “each particle of the existing matter must be a register of all that has happened.”² Thus the ancient doctrine has begun to acquire rights of citizenship in the speculations of the scientific world.

The forty-two “Assessors” who stand in the region of *Amenti* as the accusers of the Soul before *Osiris*, belong to the same class of deities as the Lipikas, and might stand paralleled, were not the Egyptian gods so little understood in their esoteric meaning. The Hindu *Chitra-Gupta* who reads out the account of every Soul’s life from his register, called *Agra-Sandhāni*; the “Assessors” who read theirs from the heart of the defunct, which becomes an open book before (whether) *Yama*, *Minos*, *Osiris*, or *Karma* — are all so many copies of, and variants from the Lipikas, and their Astral Records. Nevertheless, the Lipikas are not deities connected with Death, but with Life Eternal.

Connected as the Lipikas are with the destiny of every man and the birth of every child, whose life is already traced in the Astral Light — not fatalistically, but only because the future, like the PAST, is ever alive in the PRESENT — they may also be said to exercise an influence on the Science of Horoscopy. We must admit the truth of the latter whether we will or not. For, as observed by one of the modern adepts of Astrology:

Now that photography has revealed to us the chemical influence of the sidereal system, by fixing on the sensitized plate of the apparatus thousands of stars and planets that had hitherto baffled the efforts of the most powerful telescopes to discover them, it becomes easier to understand how our solar system can, at the birth of a child, influence his brain — virgin of any impression — in a defi-

¹ Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (1874), pp. 132-33

² W.S. Jevons, *The Principles of Science* (1874), Vol. II p. 455

nite manner and according to the presence on the zenith of such or another zodiacal constellation.¹

9. Karma-related terms.²

Karmabandha	The bonds of actions, i.e., being bound to rebirth.
Karmadosha	Sinful work or vice, blunder; evil consequences.
Karmadushta	Corrupt in action.
Karmaja	Act-born; resulting or produced from an act, good or bad.
Karmajiva	Livelihood earned by work, trade, profession.
Karmakshaya	Annihilation of work.
Karmakshetra	Place of religious acts.
Karmanirhara	The removal of bad deeds or their effects.
Karmanishtha	Diligent in performing religious actions.
Karmapaka	Ripening of acts, matured results of acts of former births.
Karmaphala	The fruit of actions.
Karmarambha	The commencement of an act.
Karmasamya	Equipoise of karma.
Karmashaya	“Holder of karma”; describes body of the soul.
Karmasiddhi	Successful action.
Karmatyaga	Abandoning worldly duties and obligations.
Karmavasha	The necessary influence or repercussion of actions.
Karmavidhi	Rule of action; mode of conducting ceremonies.
Karmayoga	“Union through action”; selfless religious service.
Kriyamana karma	Actions being made. Karma being created.
Prarabdha karma	Actions set in motion.
Sanchita karma	The entirety of all karmas of this life and past lives.

[The last triplet is amplified below.]

10. Karma, Tanha, and Skandhas are the almighty trinity.

KARMA, TANHA and SKANDHAS, are the almighty trinity in one, and the cause of our re-birth. The illustration of painting our own present likeness at death, and that likeness becoming the future personality is very poetical and graphic, but we claim it as an occult teaching. What H.R.H. means to infer, as we understand it, is this. At the solemn moment of death no man can fail to see himself under his true colours, and no self-deception is of any use to him any longer. Thence the following thing happens. As at the instant of drowning man sees marshalled past his mind's eye the whole of his life, with all its events, effects and causes, to the minutest details, so at

¹ Dr. Ély Star, *Les Mystères de l'Horoscope*, 1888, pp. x-xi. *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 103-5; [Commentary on Stanza IV.6. . . . THEN THE SECOND SEVEN, WHO ARE THE LIPIKAS, PRODUCED BY THE THREE (WORD, VOICE, AND SPIRIT.) THE REJECTED SON IS ONE. THE “SONS-SUNS” ARE COUNTLESS.]

² After Monier Monier-Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*

the moment of death, he sees himself in all his moral nakedness, unadorned by either human flattery or self-adulation, and, as he is; hence, *as he*, or rather, as his astral double combined with his *Kāma* principle — *shall be*. For the vices, defects and especially the passions of the preceding life become, through certain laws of affinity and transference, the germs of the future potentialities in the *animal* soul (*Kāma rūpa*), hence of its dependent, the astral double (*linga śarīra*) — at a subsequent birth. It is the *personality* alone which changes; the real reincarnating principle, the EGO, remains always the same; and it is its KARMA that guides the idiosyncrasies and prominent moral traits of the *old* “personality” that was (and that the EGO knew not how to control), to re-appear in the *new* man that will be. These traits and passions pursue and fasten on the yet plastic third and fourth principles of the child, and — unless the Ego struggles and conquers — they will develop with tenfold intensity and lead the adult man to his destruction. For it is they who are the tools and weapons of the Karmic LAW OF RETRIBUTION. Thus, the Prince says very truly that our good and bad actions “are the only tools with which we paint our likenesses at death,” for the *new* man is invariably the son and progeny of the old man that was.¹

11. Man and angel are alike under Karmic Law.

For, instead of remaining a mere blind, functioning medium, impelled and guided by fathomless LAW, the “rebellious” Angel claimed and enforced his right of independent judgement and will, his right of free-agency and responsibility, since man and angel are alike under Karmic LAW.²

The holy youths had to suffer for their refusal to create in later births.

[Stanza VI] 5. AT THE FOURTH (*Round, or revolution of life and being around “the seven smaller wheels”*) (a), THE SONS ARE TOLD to CREATE THEIR IMAGES. ONE THIRD REFUSES — TWO (*thirds*) OBEY.

THE CURSE IS PRONOUNCED (b): THEY WILL be BORN IN THE FOURTH (*Race*), SUFFER AND CAUSE SUFFERING. THIS IS THE FIRST WAR (c).³

“*The holy youths [the gods] refused to multiply and create species after their likeness, after their kind. They are not fit forms [rūpas] for us. They have to grow. They refuse to enter the chhāyās [shadows or images] of their inferiors. Thus had selfish feeling prevailed from the beginning, even among the gods, and they fell under the eye of the Karmic Lipikas.*”

They had to suffer for it in later births.⁴

¹ Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (FOOTNOTES TO “A BUDDHIST PRINCE’S VIEW OF THE UNIVERSE AND THE NATURE OF MAN”) X pp. 176-77

² *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 193-94

³ *ibid.* p. 191

⁴ *ibid.* p. 192

Gautama's "unintentional mistake" in failing "to conceal certain dogmas, and trespassing beyond the lawful lines" shows that we are all fallible.

Karma little heeds intentions,¹ whether good or bad, if they remain fruitless.²

Even Dharmakayas can be fallible when exploring the "Causeless" World.

Ālaya alone having an absolute and eternal existence, can alone have absolute knowledge; and even the Initiate, in his Nirmānakāya body may commit an occasional mistake in accepting the false for the true in his explorations of the "Causeless" World. The Dharmakāya is alone infallible, when in real Samādhi . . .³

12. Neophyte's Karma precipitated.

The study of true Occultism, or the walking on its path, brings up the entire latent character of the person.

In what manner does entrance on the path of occultism cause the special evil latent in the individual to express itself in his life and acts? Is it because early steps in occult knowledge destroy the force of the conventional ideas of morality and abrogate the laws which society and formal religion have adopted for their security; and that, therefore, for a time, until the principles of altruism assume definite sway over his mind and motives, the individual is without practical and efficient restraints upon his *Lower Self*? Or is it, on the other hand, the operation of a *Karmic Law* upon the character of the individual, making use of his *personal vanity* as a fulcrum for forcing the special weakness of his Lower Self into a reckless expression of itself?

While the questioner answers his question himself, it only gives half of the subject. The real study — on the path — of occultism not only brings out latent evil but also latent good. The right way to express it is, "the study of true occultism, or the walking on its path, brings up the entire latent character of the person." Hence while some in this case suddenly seem to grow worse and worse, others suddenly grow better, deeper, broader, and finer. It is customary to look at the shadow in these matters. While it is true that the majority of men are inherently bad, there are examples of the opposite. The study of occultism does not destroy rules of right and wrong, but the student, having opened up the fires below the surface, may be easily carried away in the sudden heat engendered. The dweller on the threshold in *Zanoni* is no fiction.⁴ It is ever with each student, for it is the baser part of humanity that he begins in real earnest as never before to fight. At the same time, the brightly shining Adonai is also there to help and save if we will let that be done. Karma that might not operate except after years or lives is called upon and falls, as H.P.B. has so clearly stated, in one mass upon the head of him who has called upon immutable law.

¹ [Is there any difference between intention and motive?]

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE MYSTERY OF BUDDHA) XIV p. 388

³ *ibid.*, (A FEW MORE MISCONCEPTIONS CORRECTED) XIV p. 439

⁴ [Full text in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.]

“Fools rush in where angels fear to tread,” and, rushing in before they have the slightest idea of their own character even on its surface, they are often destroyed. But the practice of altruism is not by itself occultism, and it saves from danger and prepares one for another incarnation in some body and age when everything will favour us. We have yet left some few hundred thousand of mortal years, and, ought not to be too precipitate.¹

The Theosophist who desires to enter upon occultism takes some of Nature's privileges into his own hands by that very wish, and soon discovers that experiences come to him with double-quick rapidity. His business is then to recognise that he is under a — to him — new and swifter law of development, and to snatch at the lessons that come to him.²

“And who are you to find fault with us? Are you, who claim nevertheless, communion with the Masters and receive daily favours from Them; Are you so holy, faultless, and so worthy?” To this I answer: I AM NOT. Imperfect and faulty is my nature; many and glaring are my shortcomings — and for this my Karma is heavier than that of any other Theosophist. *It is* — and must be so — since for so many years I stand set in the pillory, a target for my enemies and some friends also. Yet I accept the *trial* cheerfully. Why? Because I know that I have, all my faults notwithstanding, Master's protection extended over me. And if I have it, the reason for it is simply this: for thirty-five years and more, ever since 1851 that I saw my Master *bodily* and personally for the first time, *I have never once denied or even doubted Him*, not even in thought. Never a reproach or a murmur against Him has escaped my lips, or entered even my brain for one instant under the heaviest trials. From the first I knew what I had to expect, for I was told that, which I have never ceased repeating to others: as soon as one steps on the Path leading to the *Ashrum* of the blessed Masters — the last and only custodians of primitive Wisdom and Truth — his Karma, instead of having to be distributed throughout his long life, falls upon him a block and crushes him with its whole weight. He who believes in what he professes and in his Master, will stand it and come out of the trial victorious; he *who doubts*, the coward who fears to receive his just dues and tries to avoid justice being done — FAILS. He will not escape Karma just the same, but he will only lose that for which he has risked its untimely visits.³

I regret exceedingly all your troubles and difficulties. They are all, it goes without saying, matters of Karma, and must right themselves in process of time. Meantime, your work and duty lie in continuing patient and persevering throughout. The troubles of your friends and relatives are not your Karma, though intimately associated with it by reason of the very friendship and relation. In the lives of all who aspire to higher things there is a more or less rapid precipitation of old Karma, and it is this which is affecting you.⁴

¹ First published in *The Theosophical Forum*, April 1889 through April 1895, Questions 2 through 345, in Numbers 1 to 70 (First Series). Republished in: Dara Eklund (Comp.). *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*. 2nd ed. Pasadena: Theosophical University Press: Vol. II, 2009; Question 28, pp. 264-65.

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (“LET EVERY MAN PROVE HIS OWN WORK”) VIII p. 168

³ *ibid.*, (“THE THEOSOPHICAL MAHATMAS”) VII pp. 247-48

⁴ *Judge Letters*, II (EXTRACTS ON OCCULT PHILOSOPHY) p. 121

The Path of the Elect is far steeper than Golgotha.

The real “Path” to esoteric knowledge is very different.¹ Its entrance is overgrown with the brambles of neglect, the travesties of truth during long ages block the way, and it is obscured by the proud contempt of self-sufficiency and with every verity distorted out of all focus. To push over the threshold alone, demands an incessant, often unrequited labour of years, and once on the other side of the entrance, the weary pilgrim has to toil up on foot, for the narrow way leads to forbidding mountain heights, unmeasured and unknown, save for those who have reached the cloud-capped summit before. Thus must he mount, step by step, having to conquer every inch of ground before him by his own exertions; moving onward, guided by strange landmarks of nature of which he can ascertain only by deciphering the weather-beaten, half-defaced inscriptions as he treads along, for woe to him, if, instead of studying them, he sits by coolly pronouncing them “indecipherable.” The Doctrine of the “Eye” is *māyā*; that of the “Heart” alone, can make of him an elect.²

13. No one and nothing can hide from the All-seeing Law.

Not only European Sanskritists but also exoteric Yogis, fall into the grievous mistake of supposing that, in the opinion of our sacred writers, a human being can escape the operation of the law of *Karma* by adopting a condition of masterly inactivity, entirely losing sight of the fact that even a rigid abstinence from physical acts does not produce inactivity on the higher astral and spiritual planes. Sri Śamkara has very conclusively proved, in his Commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita*, such a supposition is nothing short of a delusion. The great teacher shows there that forcibly repressing the physical body from working does not free one from *vāsana* or *vritti* — the inherent inclination of the mind to work. There is a tendency, in every department of nature, of an act to repeat itself; so the Karma acquired in the last preceding birth is always trying to forge fresh links in the chain and thereby lead to continued material existence; and that this tendency can only be counteracted by unselfishly performing all the duties appertaining to the sphere in which a person is born — that alone can produce *chitta suddhi*, without which the capacity of perceiving spiritual truths can never be acquired.

A few words must here be said about the physical inactivity of the Yogi or the Mahatma. Inactivity of the physical body (*sthūla śarīra*) does not indicate a condition of inactivity either on the astral or the spiritual plane of action. The human spirit is in its highest state of activity in *samādhi*, and not, as is generally supposed, in a dormant quiescent condition.

. . . the initiatory training of a true Vedāntin Raja Yogi must be nourishing of a sleepless and ardent desire of doing all in his power for the good of mankind on the ordinary physical plane, his activity being transferred, however, to the higher astral

¹ [As opposed to that preferred by the modern student who “demands and expects that his ‘Path’ shall be engineered with all the selfish craft of modern comfort, macadamized, laid out with swift railways and telegraphs, and even telescopes, through which he main, while sitting at his ease, survey the works of other people; and while criticising them, look out for the easiest, in order to play at the Occultist and Amateur Student of Theosophy.” v.s.]

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (MISTAKEN NOTIONS ON THE SECRET DOCTRINE) XII p. 236

plane and spiritual planes as his development proceeds. In course of time as the Truth becomes realized, the situation is rendered quite clear to the Yogi and he is placed beyond the criticism of any ordinary man. The *Mahanirvana Tantra* says:

Charanti trigunātīte ko vidhir ko nishedhovā.

“For one, walking beyond the three *gunas* — *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* — what duty or what restriction is there?” — in the consideration of men, walled in on all sides by the objective plane of existence.¹

. . . there *can* be such a thing as the obliteration of the human individuality as the result of very evil environment;²

Now that which the students of Occultism ought to know is that THE “THIRD EYE” IS INDISSOLUBLY CONNECTED WITH KARMA. The tenet is so mysterious that very few have heard of it.³

But in the presence of Virtue men do many evil and ugly things, supposing that they are not regarded by her because they do not see her. Yet she is present everywhere because she is immortal, and she honours those who are good to her, but casts off the bad. Therefore, if men knew that she is watching them, they would be impatient to undergo the toils and the discipline by which she is hardly to be captured, and would achieve her.⁴

For no one can ever fly from the punishment which it becomes to him to suffer for unjust deeds. For the divine law is inevitable, containing at once in itself the power of accomplishing what it has now judged to be fit.⁵

Hence the unjust conduct of one man towards another, is indeed unjust to the doer, and the agent is not without blame, yet being co-ordinated in the universe, it is not unjust with reference to it, nor to him who suffers the injury, but it was thus fit that it should take place. But if he who is injured is a worthy man, the end of these things is good to him.⁶



¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (MORALITY AND PANTHEISM) V pp. 338, 339; [later printings made clear that Mohini Mohun Chatterji was the author of this article.]

² *ibid.*, (THE DRIFT OF WESTERN SPIRITUALISM) II p. 109; [on differences between theosophical and spiritualistic theories.]

³ *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 302

⁴ Xenophon: *Kynegetiké* [On Hunting] 12.18-19, 21-1; (tr. Marchant)

⁵ Taylor T. (Tr. & Annot.). *Collected Writings of Plotinus*. (Vol. III of The Thomas Taylor Series) Frome: The Prometheus Trust, 2000; [*Ennead* IV, iii ¶ 24, p. 353.]

⁶ *ibid.*, *Ennead* IV, iii ¶ 16, p. 346

14. No praise for homicide.

139. One class observing that men are miserable, confine themselves merely to not killing them. 140. For there is a class that deems the killing of a man praiseworthy. COMMENTARY. — By this he marks out a class, who, in order to appease the Mighty and Angels, kill men with the sword, and put themselves to death, supposing that God will be gratified.¹

15. No vicarious atonement for sins.

As a living contrast to the atheist, stands the theist believing in other lives or a life to come. Taught by his creed that prayer, repentance and offerings are capable of obliterating sin in the sight of the “all-forgiving, loving and merciful Father in Heaven,” he is given every hope — the strength of which grows in proportion to the sincerity of his faith — that his sins will be remitted to him. Thus, the moral obstacle between the believer and sin is very weak, if we view it from the standpoint of human nature. The more a child feels sure of his parent’s love for him, the easier he feels it to break his father’s commands. Who will dare to deny that the chief, if not the only cause of half the misery with which Christendom is afflicted — especially in Europe, the stronghold of sin and crime — lies not so much with human depravity as with its belief in the goodness and infinite mercy of “our Father in Heaven,” and especially in the vicarious atonement?²

. . . no Adept of the Right Path will interfere with the just workings of Karma. Not even the greatest of Yogis can divert the progress of Karma or arrest the natural results of actions for more than a short period, and even in that case, these results will only reassert themselves later with even tenfold force, for such is the occult law of Karma and the Nidānas.³



¹ *Desātīr*, “The Book of the Prophet, the Great Abad”; p. 19

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (SOME WISE WORDS FROM A WISE MAN) IV p. 499

³ *ibid.*, (WHY I DO NOT RETURN TO INDIA) XII pp. 160-61

16. Parental Karma.

Ha! Ha! the earth from beneath bellows at these as far as to their children.

— CHALDEAN ORACLE¹

We must not *hurt their*² *feelings* by insisting that every child who dies before the age of reason — when only it becomes a responsible creature — reincarnates immediately after its death — since, having had no personal merit or demerit in any of its actions, it can have no claim upon Devachanic reward and bliss. Also that as it is irresponsible till the age of say, seven, the full weight of the Karmic effects generated during its short life falls directly upon those who reared and guided it. They will hear of no such philosophical truths, based on eternal justice and Karmic action.³

Abortion is a crime against nature.

“At no age as under no circumstance whatever is a murder justifiable!” and occult Theosophy adds: — “yet it is neither from the standpoint of law, nor from any argument drawn from one or another orthodox *-ism* that the warning voice is sent forth against the immoral and dangerous practice, but rather because in occult philosophy both physiology and psychology show its disastrous consequence.” In the present case, the argument does not deal with the causes but with the effects produced. Our philosophy goes so far as to say that, if the Penal Code of most countries punishes attempts at suicide, it ought, if at all consistent with itself, to doubly punish foeticide as an attempt to *double suicide*. For, indeed, when even successful and the mother does not die just then, *it still shortens her life on earth to prolong it with dreary percentage in Kāmaloka*, the intermediate sphere between the earth and the region of rest, a place which is no “St. Patrick’s purgatory,” but a fact, and a necessary halting place in the evolution of the degree of life. The crime committed lies precisely in the wilful and sinful destruction of life, and interference with the operations of nature, hence — with KARMA — that of the mother and the would-be future human being. The sin is not regarded by the occultists as one of a *religious* character, — for, indeed, there is no more of spirit and soul, for the matter of that, in a foetus or even in a child before it arrives at self-consciousness, than there is in any other small animal, — for we deny the absence of soul in either mineral, plant or beast, and believe but in the difference of degree. But foeticide is a crime against nature. Of course the sceptic of whatever class will sneer at our notions and call them absurd superstitions and “unscientific twaddle.” But we do not write for sceptics. We have been asked to give the views of Theosophy (or rather of occult philosophy) upon the subject, and we answer the query as far as we know.⁴

¹ Chaldean Oracle 36: Α τοὺς δε χθῶν καταρῶεται ἐς τέκνα μέχρις. Cf. “The meaning of the oracle is, that even the very children of the impious are destined to subterranean punishments; and this, with the greatest propriety: for those who, in a former life, have perpetrated similar crimes, become, through the wise administration of Providence, the members of one family.” (tr. & comments by Thomas Taylor)

² [The parents of a stillborn. — ED. PHIL.]

³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THOUGHTS ON KARMA AND REINCARNATION) XI p. 140

⁴ *ibid.*, (IS FOETICIDE A CRIME?) V pp. 107-8

17. Punishment and persecution differ.

To punish a man because he has committed a crime, or because he is believed, though unjustly, to have committed a crime, is not persecution. To punish a man, because we infer from the nature of some doctrine which he holds, or from the conduct of other persons who hold the same doctrines with him, that he will commit a crime, is persecution, and is, in every case, foolish and wicked.

— THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY¹

18. Seemingly unmerited suffering.

There seems to be a glaring inconsistency not only between the two answers to the question [No. 257] in *Forum* 51 about unmerited suffering and its reward, but between what W.Q.J. says now and what he said when answering a question in relation to the unmerited Karma of some of the people who perished in the Johnstown flood.² In his old answer he took for granted the existence of some unmerited suffering, but now he says there is no such thing.

Quite possibly the reply made by me in *Forum* 51 may not agree with the Editor's, but that is only because my view and his are not the same, and in the T.S.³ each man is entitled to his own opinion. But I find no inconsistency between my answer and what I said respecting the Johnstown sufferers; however, as the question does not say where the Johnstown matter is printed, it may be left on one side.

I do not think any suffering or any enjoyment is unmerited. Whatever we have comes by law and justly. But as this is a world governed by cause and effect, the mental attitude of those who suffer or enjoy must be considered; it has its force and effect; it must be provided for. Men in their ignorance do not always see why they suffer, as no connection is visible between the punitive circumstances and the prior cause, which, indeed, had arisen in some long-gone life. Hence, while suffering, the person feels deeply that he does not merit it. This is what is meant by "unmerited suffering." In the mind is lodged the thought that pain has been suffered which was not merited. Devachan provides for this just as it provides for many another supposed ill or injustice. There the person — due to the thought I have spoken of — finds for himself the reward for "unmerited suffering." If he were fully enlightened, of course he would see that all that had happened was just, and no unmerited suffering would exist in that case.

Modern minds are always dwelling on objective modes of thought which constantly ignore the truth that the mind is the source alike of pain and pleasure, of punishment and reward. The Universe is a vast ideation alone, and everywhere we must

¹ T.B. Macaulay: repr. in: *Critical and Historical Essays* (1843), "Hallam's Constitutional History," Edinburgh Review, September 1828

² [The Johnstown Flood (locally, the Great Flood of 1889) occurred on May 31st, 1889, after the catastrophic failure of the South Fork Dam on the Little Conemaugh River 14 miles (23 km) upstream of the town of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. The dam broke after several days of extremely heavy rainfall, unleashing 20 million tons of water (18 million cubic meters) from the reservoir known as Lake Conemaugh. With a flow rate that temporarily equalled that of the Mississippi River, the flood killed 2,209 people. — *Wikipedia*.]

³ [Theosophical Society]

remember that the mind rules. Until the mind is free, illusion exists on every plane. In Devachan and in Earth-life the illusions are equally great. Inasmuch as the mind is the ruler, the guide, and the standard, it must happen that we will often suppose we have been unjustly treated. Now the mere fact that we were not does not prevent the feeling of unmerited suffering unless the person is fully aware of the fact and accepts it. And as most of us are not fully enlightened, we are constantly subjected to what seems unjust. Criminals often think they have been victims of injustice. This must be taken into account in nature, for their minds and thoughts are as much a part of it as any other mind. Hence a large sum of suffering must exist that is classed as unmerited. This is provided for in Devachan. But in Earth-life exact objective as well as mental results follow. If this “unmerited suffering” is not to be so classed, we will have to find some other word. At present we would have to use a long sentence to express the idea, thus: “In Devachan the person finds compensation for those sufferings which in Earth-life were supposed by the sufferer to be unmerited, in consequence of prior causes not being known.”

But most certainly every circumstance, all suffering, all pleasure, each reward and every punishment, are the due and exact result of causes set up by the person who is the experiencer. And the richness or the barrenness of Devachan itself is in each case also an exact result of causes set up in the preceding Earth-life, which in turn are the outcome — due to evolved character — of all previous lives.¹

Karma compensates for unmerited suffering.

We say that man suffers so much unmerited misery during his life, through the fault of others with whom he is associated, or because of his environment, that he is surely entitled to perfect rest and quiet, if not bliss, before taking up again the burden of life.²

. . . it is not the *injustice* or *mistakes* of Karma which are the causes of such “undeserved misery,” but other causes, independent of the past Karma of either the producer or the innocent victim of their effects, new *actions* generated by the wickedness of men and circumstances; and which arouse Karmic law to fresh activity, *i.e.* the punishment of those who caused these *Nidānas* (or causal connections), and the reward of him who suffered from them undeservedly.³

True Hell is life on Earth.

Theosophy, on the contrary, teaches that *perfect, absolute justice* reigns in nature, though short-sighted man fails to see it in its details on the material and even psychic plane, and that every man determines his own future. The true Hell is life on Earth, as an effect of Karmic punishment following the preceding life during which the evil causes were produced. The Theosophist fears *no hell* but confidently expects rest and bliss during the *interim* between two incarnations, as a reward for all the

¹ First published in *The Theosophical Forum*, April 1889 through April 1895, Questions 2 through 345, in Numbers 1 to 70 (First Series). Republished in: Dara Eklund (*Comp.*). *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*. 2nd ed. Pasadena: Theosophical University Press: Vol. II, 2009; Question 262, pp. 335-36.

² *Key to Theosophy*, p. 35

³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (MISCELLANEOUS NOTES) X p. 47; [on a writer's statement that the Devachanic state “is purely a state of bliss, in which man receives compensation for the undeserved misery of his past life.”]

unmerited suffering he has endured in an existence into which he was ushered by Karma, and during which he is, in most cases, as helpless as a torn-off leaf whirled about by the conflicting winds of social and private life. Enough has been given out at various times regarding the conditions of post-mortem existence, to furnish a solid block of information on this point. Christian theology has nothing to say on this burning question, except where it veils its ignorance by mystery and dogma; but Occultism, unveiling the symbology of the Bible, explains it thoroughly.¹

The reader must bear in mind that the esoteric teaching maintains that save in cases of wickedness when man's nature attains the acme of Evil, and human terrestrial sin reaches *Satanic* universal character, so to say, *as some Sorceress* do — there is no punishment for the majority of mankind after death. The law of retribution as *Karma*, waits man at the threshold of his new incarnation. Man is at best a wretched tool of evil, unceasingly forming new causes and circumstances. He is not always (if ever) responsible. Hence a period of rest and bliss in Devachan, with an utter temporary oblivion of all the miseries and sorrows of life. *Avichi* is a *spiritual* state of the greatest misery and is only in store for those who have devoted *consciously* their lives to doing injury to others and have thus reached its highest spirituality of EVIL.²

19. Warning to Esotericists.

There is a strange law in Occultism which has been ascertained and proven by thousands of years of experience; nor has it failed to demonstrate itself, almost in every case, during the fifteen years that the T.S. has been in existence. As soon as anyone pledges himself as a "Probationer," certain occult effects ensue. Of these the first is the *throwing outward* of everything latent in the nature of the man: his faults, habits, qualities, or subdued desires, whether good, bad, or indifferent.

For instance, if a man is vain or a sensualist, or ambitious, whether by Atavism or by Karmic heirloom, all those vices are sure to break out, even if he has hitherto successfully concealed and repressed them. They will come to the front irrepressibly, and he will have to fight a hundred times harder than before, until he *kills* all such tendencies in himself.

On the other hand, if he is good, generous, chaste, and abstemious, or has any virtue hitherto latent and concealed in him, it will work its way out as irrepressibly as the rest. Thus a civilized man who hates to be considered a saint, and therefore assumes a mask, will not be able to conceal his true nature, whether base or noble.

THIS IS AN IMMUTABLE LAW IN THE DOMAIN OF THE OCCULT.

Its action is the more marked the more earnest and sincere the desire of the candidate, and the more deeply he has felt the reality and importance of his pledge.

Therefore let all members of this School be warned and on their guard; for even during the three months before the esoteric teaching began several of the most promising candidates failed ignominiously.

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (ANSWERS TO QUERIES) VIII p. 299

² *ibid.* (THEORIES ABOUT REINCARNATION AND SPIRITS) VII p. 180 *fn.*

The ancient occult axiom, “Know Thyself,” must be familiar to every member of this School; but few if any have apprehended the real meaning of this wise exhortation of the Delphic Oracle. You all know your earthly pedigree, but who of you has ever traced all the links of heredity, astral, psychic, and spiritual, which go to make you what you are? Many have written and expressed their desire to unite themselves with their Higher Ego, yet none seem to know the indissoluble link connecting their “Higher Egos” with the One Universal SELF.

For all purposes of Occultism, whether practical or purely metaphysical, such knowledge is absolutely requisite. It is proposed, therefore, to begin the esoteric instruction by showing this connection in all directions with the worlds: Absolute, Archetypal, Spiritual, Mānasic, Psychic, Astral and Elemental. Before, however, we can touch upon the higher worlds — Archetypal, Spiritual, and Mānasic — we must master the relations of the seventh, the terrestrial world, the lower Prakriti, or Malkuth as in the *Kabala*, to the worlds or planes which immediately follow it.

It is clear that once the human body is admitted to have direct relation with such higher worlds, the specialization of the organs and parts of the body will necessitate the mention of all parts of the human organism without exception. In the eyes of truth and nature no one organ is more noble or ignoble than another. The ancients considered as the most holy precisely those organs which we associate with feelings of shame and secrecy; for they are the creative centres, corresponding to the Creative Forces of the Kosmos.

The Esotericists are therefore warned that unless they are prepared to take everything in the spirit of truth and nature, and forget the code of false propriety bred by hypocrisy and the shameful misuse of primeval functions, which were once considered divine — they had better not study Esotericism.¹

20. We are all unconscious agents of Karma.

However, most unwise are those who set up themselves as Karmic Agents, for any purpose.

Does an individual when acting as an agent for Karma entail any Karmic consequences upon himself because of the acts thus committed?

A great many of the things said by the Editor in the foregoing are very good, but I am compelled to differ from him on the main point. And I may say that while the articles “Topics in Karma” are very well written, they do not by any means dispose of the question raised here. In the first place, the questioner assumes in the first ten words of the question that a human being sometimes is not an agent of Karma. According to my studies, and as I think inevitable according to the law of Karma, there is no time when a human being is not an agent of Karma, for in every act and thought we are carrying out Karma, making new Karma, suffering old Karma, or producing effects on other people, or all these together. This is clearly stated by the Editor in the first paragraph of his answer. So I take it that the questioner means to ask whether one is justified in attempting, of his own motion, to administer as judge, jury, and

¹ Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (ESOTERIC INSTRUCTION No. I – A WARNING ADDRESSED TO ALL ESOTERICISTS) XII pp. 515-16

executioner, to another the effects of Karma. This is involved in the question, as well as whether any consequences are entailed upon a person so acting. Now the first paragraph of the Editor's answer stating clearly the law, it must follow that consequences are entailed upon some one in this supposed case of a person making himself a direct Karmic agent. Certainly both the actor in the case and the person to whom the punishment or reward is administered must have consequences entailed upon them, because the "Karmic agent" is the centre from which the action flows, and upon whom it must react, and the other person is the person who receives the present consequences. Merely to say to yourself that you are enforcing a right or administering what you conclude is punishment or reward does not absolve you from the consequences, whatever those may be. And those consequences will come to you in two ways. First, through your own attitude, and second, from what you set up in the other person. Involved in the first is a seemingly third possibility, which is a possible violation by you through ignorance of a law of nature. For instance, if you assume to administer punishment, considering yourself a Karmic agent, it is more than possible that you are simply gratifying some old spite or ill-feeling, under the guise of a judicial enforcement of right or punishment for wrong. We see this possibility every day in those cases where a person, declaring himself to be impartial and judicial, administers on the one hand to persons whom he does not particularly like punishment which he considers their just due, and withholds similar punishment from another person for whom he has such a regard that he fails to administer punishment, but exercises instead forgiveness and charity. This being a common human experience, does it not indicate that inasmuch as a person is through old Karmic likes and affinities led to be kind and charitable through what is called partiality, he may on the other hand, through old dislikes and antipathies, be led by a repulsion to administer punishment, when he might as well have exercised forgiveness? Each man, I think, can be left to himself to decide what is his duty in redressing wrong done to another, which redressing involves perhaps the punishment of a third. But in my opinion no one is wise who considers himself a Karmic agent for any purpose. Further, and overlooked by the Editor and apparently by the questioner, the term "Karmic agent" has a technical significance under which only certain persons are so considered; that is, the larger class of men are not Karmic agents, except in the mere sense that they are in the very act of life making or experiencing Karma in the mass. A few persons are what is known as "Karmic agents," that is, human beings who by a certain course of training and previous life have become concentrated agents for the bringing about of certain definite effects which are well foreseen by the trained and initiated seer. This is one of the declarations of the Initiates who are supposed to know about these matters, and therefore any person assuming to be a Karmic agent may possibly be assuming too much altogether, and be bringing himself within the range of laws which will operate upon him with tenfold force in future lives. It is therefore more charitable, more wise, more kind, more theosophic to follow the words of Jesus, Buddha, and hosts of other Teachers which direct us to forgive our brother seventy times seven times, which tell us that charity covers a multitude of sins, and which warn us against the self-righteousness that might induce us to presume we

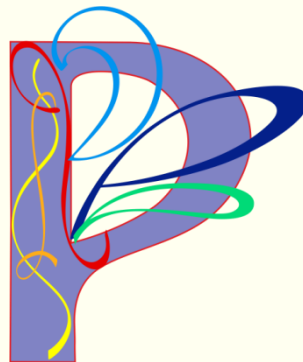
have been raised up from the foundation of the world to correct abuses in other men's actions rather than to attend to our own duty.¹

21. A last and parting word, by Madame Blavatsky.

And now a last and parting word. My words may and will pass and be forgotten, but certain sentences from letters written by the Masters will never pass, because they are the embodiment of the highest practical Theosophy. I must translate them for you:

“ . . . Let not the fruits of good Karma be your motive; for your Karma, good or bad, being one and the common property of all mankind, nothing good or bad can happen to you that is not shared by many others. Hence your motive, being selfish, can only generate a double effect, good and bad, and will either nullify your good action, or turn it to another man's profit . . . ”

“There is no happiness for one who is ever thinking of Self and forgetting all other Selves.” “The Universe groans under the weight of such action (Karma), and none other than self-sacrificial Karma relieves it . . . How many of you have helped humanity to carry its smallest burden, that you should all regard yourselves as Theosophists. Oh, men of the West, who would play at being the Saviours of mankind before they even spare the life of a mosquito whose sting threatens them, would you be partakers of Divine Wisdom or true Theosophists? Then do as the gods when incarnated do. Feel yourselves the vehicles of the whole humanity, mankind as part of yourselves, and act accordingly . . . ”²



¹ First published in *The Theosophical Forum*, April 1889 through April 1895, Questions 2 through 345, in Numbers 1 to 70 (First Series). Republished in: Dara Eklund (Comp.). *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*. 2nd ed. Pasadena: Theosophical University Press: Vol. II, 2009; Question 244, pp. 325-27.

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (SECOND LETTER OF H.P. BLAVATSKY TO THE AMERICAN CONVENTION) XI pp. 168-69

Suggested reading for students.¹



From our Secret Doctrine's Second Proposition Series.

- BLAVATSKY ON KARMA AND REINCARNATION
- BLAVATSKY ON THE MIND IN NATURE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE SECRET CYCLES
- BLAVATSKY ON THE THEORY OF CYCLES
- INSIGHTS TO THE OPERATION OF KARMA IN EUROPEAN HISTORY
- KARMA IS THE UNCREATED LAW OF TRUTH AND JUSTICE
- KARMA OPERATES ONLY WHEN THERE IS A LIVING BEING TO MAKE IT
- KOSMOS IS ETERNAL NOETIC MOTION UNMANIFESTED
- MAN IS THE SOLE AUTHOR OF HIS FORTUNE AND FUTURE
- PROPOSITION 2 – COMPASSION: THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH²
- PROPOSITION 2 - DIAGRAM.JPG
- PROPOSITION 2 - DIAGRAM NOTES
- PROPOSITION 2 - UNKNOWN AND UNKNOWABLE
- RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE IN THE CAVE OF THE ECHOES
- SERPENTS BRINGING OUT COMPASSION
- THE ELECT SOUL IS PUNISHED THROUGH MARTYRDOM
- THE SECRET DOCTRINE ON KARMA AND REBIRTHS
- THE WHEEL OF EZEKIEL.JPG
- THOUGH FATE COMPREHENDS INFINITE, IT IS FINITE IN ITS OPERATIONS
- WALKER ON REINCARNATION, A FORGOTTEN TRUTH (1888)



¹ Students should be fully conversant with the metaphysical concepts and learning aids set out in our Secret Doctrine's Propositions Series 1 and 3. — ED. PHIL.

² C.A. Bartzokas (*Comp. & Ed.*). *Compassion: The Spirit of Truth*, Gwernymynydd: Philaletheians UK, 2005; v. 05.88.2021; 398pp. This is our first Major Work.



Further Reading.

- KARMA AND KRIYA
- KARMA, NEMESIS, ADRASTEIA, THEMIS

— *in our Confusing Words Series.*

