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EXPOSITION
OF THE
DOCTRINE OF KARMA

BY
"BROTHER ATISHA"

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EXPOSITION

OF THE

DOCTRINE OF KARMA

CHAPTER I.

THE FUNDAMENTAL MEANINGS OF KARMA.

There are five fundamental meanings of the word Karma, and no single word in any European language will suffice to convey all that is meant by that one Sanscrit word. It denotes—

1. Act, or Activity.
2. The Law of Action, of Cause and Effect, or of Causation.
3. Retribution, as a result of Acts.
4. One's "store" of Merits and Demerits, or one's Deserts.
5. Character.

The root meaning of the word Karma is Action, and as every action contains inherently its coming effect, we thus get at its second meaning, and it is in this sense that the word is most frequently used, and so we frame a general working Definition of Karma, viz. : It is the Law of Cause and Effect, absolutely inviolable in the mental, moral, and material worlds. Being so, it is infallibly the means by which we reap as we sow, so that no good deed can escape its reward, and no evil deed its fit penalty. By this Law our present character and development are the exact products of our past evolution from an embryonic and potential state through numerous and varied states and experiences. It follows, therefore, that our future is in our own hands now to make or mar. This is a great fact to be cognisant of, and a mere knowledge of this Law is sufficient to change our view of Life and Evolution. There is no escape from the Law, and its measurements are always just, and for our welfare. Our present life is a strange

admixture of good and evil, of strong and of weak points, of abilities and deficiencies, for it is in very deed the soil which we ourselves have prepared in the past, and *in* this soil, and *through* it, lies our growth. Do we have many sufferings? They are the results of evil done in the past somewhere and some-when, and, more than that, these very sufferings are the very best means of teaching us the *lessons we most need*. This also is a great fact to recognise, and when it is thoroughly grasped will change our pessimism to a boundless optimism. And what of our joys? These also are the results of past good deeds. Good *must* come out of good, and evil out of evil. We are here on a long, long pilgrimage through matter, and many are the lessons we have to learn ere the Great Goal is reached, but we are encouraged by the knowledge that we can shape our future if only we make use of this knowledge, and rise more and more swiftly to union with that Divine Self within that sitteth in

the Heart, which is *beyond* the reach of Karmic Law. Thus in the Anugîta, xviii., we read : " The True Self is beyond Action (Karma). Actions have a beginning and an end, and the body is tied down by action. With thy heart intent upon the Real Entity, thou wilt certainly come into My Self." These are the words of the Lord Krishna, speaking in the name of the Supreme Lord.

From this root meaning, all the other meanings of Karma flow naturally. Popularly it is synonymous with retribution, for retribution is the result of past deeds. We say of a man who has suffered some signal misfortune, or met with an unexpected stroke of luck, that it is his " Karma." It *seems* to be luck or chance, but it is not so ; it is the resultant of something done in the past. There can be no such thing as chance in a universe governed by a Wise Being.

Again, we speak of one's accumulated deserts, or stock of merits and demerits, as one's Karma. Events happen because it is our " Karma " that they should so

happen ; some events can never happen because they are not in our Karma. A certain kind of seed will only produce its like, and so we can get nothing that we do not deserve, nor reap what is not sown. We cannot bribe heaven, nor can we slip the noose of our own making. Weeping will not give us any more than we deserve. The very Angels or Gods are there because they deserve to be ; and the spirits of evil are there also, because it is their desert. And yet we are not in any sense children of a blind Fate, for just as we had the power in the past to make our present what it is, so we have equal power now to create a happy and useful future. The Law is really our best friend, for it is *bound* to help us if we keep it. If we smart the smart is from ourselves, for the Law may not be broken with impunity. What a song of triumph did the Lord Buddha sing when the Truth dawned upon him !

I, Buddh, who wept with all my brothers
tears,

Whose heart was broken by a whole world's
woe,

Laugh and am glad, for there is Liberty!

Ho! ye who suffer! know

Ye suffer from yourselves.

None else compels.

(“Light of Asia.” *Sir Edwin Arnold.*)

Lastly, Karma signifies Character, and rightly so, for our Character is the product of all past lives, with their thoughts, deeds, and words. We must learn to take people as they are, for they are the result of their own past; not that we must ever cease trying to better others, but that we must learn true tolerance, for if any are worse or more ignorant than we are, we must remember that once we were in their condition, and we must not refrain from helping if we are to expect encouragement from Those above us. How many turn up their noses and sit in condemnation on sinners! And this in spite of Jesus' rebuke to those who wished to condemn the Magdalen. It is not always those whose faults are

most visible that are the worst offenders, some faults are too deep down to be seen by others. Therefore a knowledge of Karma must of necessity make us tolerant.

CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT, AND CESSATION OF KARMA.

I. The Origin of Karma lies *essentially* in the nature of the Second Person of the Cosmic Trinity. The Second Logos is considered as inherently containing within Himself a Duality, in which Duality lies potential manifestation. It is the Duality of Life and Substance, of activity and passivity. But the Directing Agent of the operations of this Duality is the Third Person of the Cosmic Trinity, the Third Logos or Cosmic Intelligence. It is the Activity or rather Guidance of the All-Conserving Mind that brings about the manifestations of phenomenal nature out of the Duality of the Second Logos or Purusha-Prakriti. The Duality in Nature, however, is only apparent. The

male and female, the active and passive, the Life and Substance, and all other dualities in Nature are at the root One, — One in the First Logos. These dualities are opposite poles of one and the same thing. The pristine Activity or Karma has in it the germs of all future effects, of the whole universe in fact. Now it may seem strange on first hearing that it is sometimes spoken of as Pristine Avidyâ, Nescience, or Ignorance, or as Blind Activity; but with careful consideration it will be seen that in its incipiency Karma is of course incomplete, unevolved, and thus “ignorant.” This is indeed the primeval Chaos, and so with all reverence be it said that the Activity in Nature is primally “ignorant,” “blind,” or “chaotic.” There is a very deep significance in all this. Yet it is not so in actuality, for the Cosmic Intelligence throbs in it with divine power and directs all Karmic forces of evolution to one Divine End, to one Perfect Consummation.

2. The development of Karma is seen in its operations in manifested nature, and is practically the subject of this treatise, so nothing need be said here save that the fields of its development in man and in Nature lie in the Mental, Moral, and Physical realms.

3. The Cessation of Karmic activity in man is attained when the True Self Within is found, when the "Kingdom of Heaven" which is "*Within*" is reached. It is that Light which we seek, and yet at the same time carry always with us, nay, which is in very deed our Real Self, though not as we think it to be now. For all the time we are mistaking the *veils* of the True Self for the Self. One by one our fleeting Personalities flit into the Darkness, but the Light still burns and is never quenched. It is the True Ever-Burning Lamp of the Alchemists, unseen, buried, wrapped up, hidden, because our eyes are turned away from It. How true it is that we find

Ourselves by losing ourselves, that "he that loseth his life shall find it." When we cease to identify ourselves with the personality, we find THAT which never began and never can end. Then is the Cessation of Karma. Becoming one with the Lord of the Law, the Law holds us no more. "Joy! Joy! I triumph now!" sings Fariduddin Shakrgunj, "no more I know myself as simply me!" In the Kaushîtaki Upanishad, I., 6, we read, "Thou art the Self, what Thou art, That am I." No more is there Me and Mine and Thee and Thine, as sings Omar Khayyam, for we are all one with the Great Brahm, each in All, All in each, and All in the ONE. In the Anugîta, xxxvi., we read, "The Sage necessarily becometh that upon which his mind is fixed. This is the Eternal Mystery." Therefore reflect upon Brahm: and when the mighty rolling Manvantaras give up to the Eternal Divine One all that they held from Him,—all of Himself snatched

from Himself, then cometh the Great Rest which precedes another Manifesting Period, then cometh the Great Pralaya or "Night of Brahm," in which no more work is done, and in which Karma is no more for all those who have reached the Goal.

CHAPTER III.

ABSTRACT AND CONCRETE KARMA.

In the abstract, Karma is the Activity inherent in Nature, which was unfolded in the preceding Section under the Origin of Karma. Briefly, it is the Beginningless Principle of Formation essentially resident in the Second Logos. In this Abstract or Subjective World, Karmic Activity produces the Paradigms or Prototypes of all things and beings that ever will be. These correspond to Plato's "Ideas." "Thoughts and Acts integrate and form themselves into mental and material phenomena,—into what we call objective and subjective appearances. Everything is the integration of Acts or Thoughts, is Karma, or at least being conditioned by Karma. Nothing exists but what is caused by

Act or Thought." (Prof. Lafcadio Hearn, in *Gleanings in Buddha-Fields*.) Thus it will be seen that the whole universe is the "Thought" or Spiritual *Act* of God. "There is One Eternal Thinker, thinking non-eternal Thoughts!" (Katha Upanishad II., 14.) The Mystery of Creation was never more briefly stated.

In the Concrete sense, Karma is Activity in the Objective World, or World of Particulars, *i.e.*, Manifestation. This is the work of the Third Logos in Nature, and of the Mind Principle (Manas) in Man. The Karmic Activity of the Creative Mind or Spirit begets the infinite variety of forms in the Universe, evolving by containing intrinsically the germs generative of future and more perfect forms resulting from or effected by preceding activities. In the Abstract, Act and Effect are one. In the Concrete, they become separate. Karma is the lens that splits up Unity and the Everlasting Now into Diversity and the Flow of Time. Viewed from

Above there is no Cause and Effect, no Past, Present, and Future; but One Eternal. The whole Vast Spectacle of Nature is a Great Phantasm—Mâya—the Veilings of the Real! Out of these Waters into which Narcissus fell, we are destined to emerge; for though Pain and Death and Sin weave terrible Shrouds, yet the End is the only true Immortality and Bliss that is conceivable—Union with the Great and Only Immortal ONE.

CHAPTER IV.

KARMA IN THE PHYSICAL, MORAL, AND MENTAL WORLDS.

1. Let us take the Physical Karma first. It may be considered under three headings :—

1. In the purely Physical Realm.
2. In the Biological Realm.
3. In the Kingdoms of Material Nature.

(1) In the purely Physical Realm, Karma is the Principle of the Conservation of Energy (Suzuki). It is a scientific law that no energy is ever lost. It may change its mode of manifestation ; for instance, mechanical energy can be changed into heat, heat into electricity, and so on. Energy, or Physical Karma or Activity, must produce energy in the same or in another form. These

matters are best studied from text-books, and need not be entered into any further in this treatise. (2) In the Biological World, Karma is the working of Evolution and Heredity (Suzuki). These are subjects which demand volumes in themselves, but enough must be said here to satisfy the demands of this treatise. With regard to Evolution, we read in the Jatakamala that "Karma affects all creatures, even down to the grass;" but Nâgasena, the great Buddhist philosopher, is more definite. We read in his Milindapañha these very significant words:—"It is by a process of Evolution that the Samskâras (soul-structures) come to be." Several times he repeats this statement and attributes the words to the Lord Buddha. Further on he says that "no Samskâra has sprung into being without a *gradual becoming*," and that these products of Evolution "are not combined indiscriminately," that "all that happens, happens through *natural slope*," "because of habit," and "on account of

an association." All this is just what modern scientists call the "path of least resistance" (see "Sacred Books of the East," vol. 35, pp. 83 fol., and Dr. Paul Carus's "Buddhism and its Christian Critics"). But the ancient sages never postulated a blind evolution through a "fortuitous concomitance of atoms,"—about the most insane doctrine that ever came from the mind of man. Evolution is directed by that Divine Intelligence which is manifest in the smallest blade of grass. Now with regard to the Samskâras, Buddha is the great authority here. He says that all organisms, of any kind whatever, physical, psychic, or mental, are made up of "combinations," "potentialities," or "samskâras," which have gradually developed out of the activities of Karma. We read in the Anguttara Nikaya, (Pancaka Nipâta): "My Karma is my possession, my Karma is my inheritance, my Karma is the womb which bears me, my Karma is the race to which I am akin, my Karma is my refuge." The

karmically - developed samskâras are therefore at the background of all evolution, which samskâras themselves have the One Reality for their background.

With regard to Heredity: it is a complex subject, for it necessitates the distinguishing between what we have received from our ancestors and what is our own inheritance from past lives. Most assuredly we inherit physical qualities, excellencies, and defects from our parents or more remote ancestors. There are also moral and mental qualities running in the same families. Why? We are now in a sea of difficulties, for the question at once arises, —why should we inherit anything non-physical from our ancestors if we reap what we ourselves sow? Is this not apparently a breaking of the Karmic Law that is so just? I think it will help us if we realise that there is such a thing as Family Karma. The family is a *psychic unit*, or perhaps it were better to consider a family as a stream comprised of certain qualities, and into

that stream the incarnating Souls dip and become immersed, and to a certain extent are borne along with the current. As there is an intimate union between the members of a family, the thoughts and deeds of one affect the others to a greater or less extent. It will be seen then how it is that the "sins of the fathers will be visited on the children." The Skandhas (or elements of the Lower Self's composition, psychic and physical confections), are transmitted from parents to children, which Skandhas blend with those that have been made by oneself in the past lives, and so a new personality is formed in which the Divine Ego continues his work of conquest and disentanglement from the trammels of the veils of illusion. It is also to be remembered that people are generally reincarnations of their own ancestors. Further, no incarnating ego will embody a personality which is not suitable for its progress, and if an Ego has no further need of those experiences which one

particular family offers, it passes out of it. There was a good illustration of the method of rebirth in one of the articles in "Buddhism," an English magazine issued in Rangoon. It mentioned the fact in optics that sodium light will travel until it reaches sodium vapour, that is *its own like*, when the vapour will *absorb the light*, because of the similarity of vibration; in the same way an incarnating Soul will be "absorbed" by just such physical conditions in a newborn babe as correspond or respond to the nature or character of such a Soul. So much for Heredity; a separate book could be written on this alone, in the light of Karmic Law. Many interesting sidelights appear in connection with this subject, for instance, a little reflection will show what is the true basis of that Ancestor Worship so prevalent in the East; and how an enlightened man or woman can purify the Family Stream by conscious effort and definite study and work along those lines. Moreover,

one gets glimpses of the true meaning of "Original Sin," when studying this subject. Does it not lie in that pristine "ignorance" which mistakes the fleeting and unreal for the Eternal and Real? And this outward-going tendency, bringing about the error of Separateness, the evil of thinking that each one is separate from another, instead of realising the Great Unity behind,—is it not this outgoing Activity that brings about the Skandhas or Elements of Being? And then, once begun, the Skandhas are handed down generation after generation, and we are all born with them, and made up of them? This is the Great Original Sin that the True Self has to burst through, and this is only done when we conquer all the realms of transiency and become one with the Great Brahm.

(3) Now for Karma in the Kingdoms of Nature. Professor Huxley says—"In the theory of evolution, the tendency of a germ to develop according to a certain specific type, *e.g.*, of the kidney bean seed to grow into

a plant having all the characters of *Phaseolus vulgaris*, is its 'Karma.' It is the 'last inheritor and the last result' of all the conditions that have affected a line of ancestry which goes back for many millions of years to the time when life first appeared on earth." Karma in the Vegetable Kingdom is the transmission of the subtle invisible skandhas or "confections" or "tendencies and potentialities" from the plant into its seed. In the Animal Kingdom, the skandhas are also transmitted, but the skandhas of animals include more than those of vegetables, for the "consciousness-group" of elements is much more developed. Evolution in the Mineral Kingdom seems to be confined to the imprisoned "life-atoms" which manifest most perfectly in the formation of crystals. The "life-atoms," when they have pushed their way through the mineral kingdom, enter into the vegetable world, to build up vegetable cells. I can say no more at present with regard to evolution-karma in the miner-

alogical regions, for it is so slow and different to evolution in the higher kingdoms. Evolution there must be, for there is no stagnation in all Nature. With regard to Evolution in the Human Kingdom, I must refer the reader to books dealing with Reincarnation, and with the threefold Evolution of Man, viz., physically, emotionally, and mentally,—yea, and spiritually; which last generally goes under the name of Involution, *i.e.*, of Spirit into Matter for the purpose of experience and growth.

2. With regard to Karma in the Moral World, it is the Immortality of Deeds (Suzuki). A thought (which is a mental deed) is an energy, and if we apply to the Moral World the law of the "Conservation of Energy" that we have seen holds good in the Physical World, we shall come to understand the *immense importance of thought* as a factor for good or evil; for thoughts are just as real in the moral world as deeds are in the material realm. "No thought remains traceless," says the Voice of the Silence,

and again, "Learn that no efforts, not the smallest—whether in right or wrong direction—can vanish from the world of causes. E'en wasted smoke remains not traceless. 'A harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed, but ever comes again.' The pepper plant will not give birth to roses, nor the sweet jessamine's silver star to thorn or thistle turn." Infallibly every thought works out its effect. A thought, as Plato said, is an entity; it is, indeed, a vibration in the Chittâkâsa, or Mind-stuff, and has a persistence. Our thoughts cling to us, and we cannot get away from them, thus it comes about that we reap what we sow. All our thoughts and deeds ascend into our inner nature as clouds, and thence they are *bound* to descend according as we determined. In the Anugîta, iv., we read: "There is no destruction here of actions good or not good. Coming to one body after another, these actions bear fruit in their respective ways." The Mahabhârata says, "The deed dieth not," that is, by itself; "the

result of the deed must be reaped, or destroyed, or mitigated" (Maharajah of Bobhili). Later on it will be shown how effects may be counteracted. The opening verses of the Dhammapada read thus:—"All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speak or act with an evil thought, pain followeth him as the wheel followeth the foot of the ox that draweth the car. . . . If a man speak or act with a pure thought, happiness followeth him like a shadow that never leaveth him" (Buddha). It will be seen from this how careful we must be of our thoughts, words, and deeds. This moral operation of Karma is taught by all great Teachers. Jesus said,—“With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you” (Matthew vii., 2). St. Paul more emphatically says,—“God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians vi., 7); and again, “He that soweth sparingly shall

reap sparingly ; and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully” (2 Cor. ix., 6). And in the Ta-Chwang-Yan-King-Lun, v. 57, is read,—“ As men sow, thus shall they reap.” Again we find it in the Mahabhârata, “ As a man himself soweth, so he reapeth,” and so on. One could find numberless quotations from all Scriptures saying the same axiomatic truth.

3. Karma in the purely Mental World, in that world where desires, passions and emotions are not mingled with mentation, acts very powerfully. Indeed Thought and Will in those lofty regions are creative ; and as a matter of fact, *to will is to effect*, and results follow immediately. One of the Ten Spiritual Stages (Dasabhumî) of Bodhisattvahood is called “ Acalâ,” and in that Stage the Disciple attains the Highest Perfect Knowledge, or Anutpattikadharmakshânti. “ This is the state of a divine mind, in which knowledge is Will and Action ; after practising all the virtues and constantly

striving for the goal, one enters this stage to find that all his previous efforts suddenly and mysteriously vanish from his consciousness, all desires disappear, desires even for Nirvâna or for Perfection, much less after worldliness. This is a state of saintly innocence and spontaneous activity. The man aspires and it is actualized, Nature having no power to restrain him. He follows no laws prescribed, but is perfectly and truly a real 'genius,' *i.e.*, one needing no laws, no rules, or formulæ" (Suzuki). Here we are in the Formless World (Arupa Loka), and on the quivering borders of the Great Nirvâna where Karma is no more. What are the Laws of Nirvâna we cannot tell, or whether there be any such thing as we understand by the word Law; unless Perfect Love can generate Law. Rather is it not spontaneous and uncontained? "Love," says Jacob Boehme, "enlarges the Soul as wide as the whole creation of God." What need then for Laws such as we understand?

CHAPTER V.

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE KARMA.

Active Karma, or Karmabhava, is the Karma that we are now making by our thoughts, words, deeds, and our life in general, and the good and bad in it. This will produce what is to be the Passive Karma of the next life, that is to say, its *environments and conditions*. In like manner the Active Karma of the past existence has produced the Passive Karma of this life.

Passive Karma, or as it is called technically, Upapattibhava, is the environment, conditions, and character in which we are born :—all those things in life over which it appears that we have no control, and which set us wondering why we should have such environments and hindrances to our progress. There is a strange passage in

the Mahabhârata which is worth consideration, although, be it remembered, it is not an authoritative doctrine, but certain words spoken by Bhishma to Yudhishthira, to the effect that the fruit of an act will appear at the corresponding period of life in the next birth. There may be, and probably is, a large amount of truth in this statement ; and it is quite possible that very strong or serious deeds do have their effect in the way stated. Is it possible to account for startling and unexpected events in our lives in this way? And is it possible to counteract these effects? Some of us go under a cloud for years, then all at once the cloud lifts and things seem to take a new turn and a new aspect. It is all on account of some past Karma that was too powerful to annul, until completely worked off.

Another point here arises. It would seem that the passive side of our lives is pretty well mapped out beforehand (by our own deeds of course), and that Fatality and Destiny and Predestination

are partly or wholly true ; but on consideration, we see that it is not so, but that whatever happens to us, so happens because we have brought it on ourselves. If our Karma was too powerful to be averted, we call it Destiny. As for Fate, it is, was, and will be in our own hands. A certain passage in the Vaishnava Dharmasastra, or Vishnu Sutra here comes to mind. It runs thus,—“ A man will not die before his time has come, even though he has been pierced by a thousand shafts ; he will not live after his time is out, even though he has only been touched by a blade of Kusa grass.” (xx.) This needs explanation. Although it is true that our life, being the product of past causes, must certainly be “fixed” as a logical result of past causes, or “mapped out” in its main features, yet it must also be borne in mind that we have the power every day to *modify or change* this so-called “Fate” that is ours. In practice, therefore, it must be very rare indeed, if ever, that anyone lives the exact length of time

that he has pre-fashioned for himself. The same book says :—"When the effects of one's acts in a former existence, by which his present existence is caused, have expired, death snatcheth away a man forcibly." In connection with this, it is well to remember that a man can *alter his fate*; and if length of days be a definite result of past Karma, most assuredly *fresh Karma* can be generated in this life, the effect of which is to counteract the results of past Karma. You may set a stone rolling down a hill, and by the law of Karma it must reach the bottom; *but* it may be stopped by running ahead and staying it or turning it aside. The Immortal True Self within is Lord of Karma, and by treading the Path of Union with that Hidden One we can master Fate, or at least modify it; otherwise it will master us. Let us, therefore, remember these words from the Shu-King ("Book of Annals"): "It is not Heaven that cutteth short men's lives; they bring them to an end *themselves*." (IV., ix., 1.)

CHAPTER VI.

KARMA CONSIDERED FUNCTIONALLY.

The Functional aspect of Karma is the consideration of it in its different ways of being effective. For information on this and on the next three chapters, the sources are the Chulakamma Vibhanga-Sutta (Uparipannasa), and chiefly Mr. Maung Shwe Zan Aung, B.A., in his article "On the Forces of Character," in the magazine "Buddhism," being his learned comments on the above-mentioned book in the Tripitaka.

There are four kinds of Functional Karma:—

1. Reproductive, or Janaka Karma,
2. Supportive, or Upathambhaka Karma,
3. Counteractive, or Upapilaka

Karma ; lit. "oppressive" or "obstructive" Karma, and

4. Destructive, or Upaghâtaka, or Upaccheda Karma.

1. Reproductive Karma is that which produces congenital character, and "which may or may not bear fruit in life according as the Reproductive Karma is maintained or opposed by other classes of Karma." It is always of the Passive Karma of the past existence, and "does not extend in its action beyond the moment of rebirth, *i.e.*, it is capable of producing only latent or innate consciousness, and congenital character" (Aung). The total effect that the environments and conditions of the past life have upon us, produces as result the necessity of a continuation of that same stream from which we temporarily emerged for internatal rest, so that Reproductive Karma belongs, for all practical purposes, to the past life.

2. Supportive Karma helps or

maintains the action of Reproductive Karma, and thus causes the latter to be effective. "Reproductive Karma is the mother that causes, Supportive Karma is the nurse that nourishes. If one is born wealthy, it is due to Reproductive Karma, if one continues wealthy, it is due to Supportive Karma. If this Karma is good as well, it produces further good Supportive Karma for the next life if it has also good Reproductive Karma by which it comes into operation" (Aung). It gives us a certain ability to improve our circumstances by the Character or *Sila* that we have inherited and by our Natural Disposition or *Bhava*, the which also is an inheritance from past lives.

3. Counteractive Karma "is that which weakens, interrupts, obstructs, or retards the fruition of Reproductive Karma by counteracting here and there, now and again, the action of "Supportive Karma. Here especially, the *quality* of the Counteractive Karma comes into play, for if good (kusala),

it may so counteract a definite bad (akusala) Supportive Karma as to prevent an existent bad Reproductive Karma from bearing fruit. Thus, *Virtue and Charity*, which are the chief causes of Good Counteractive and Good Supportive Karmas, may not only result in maintaining a happy state of life but may also result in the attenuation,—through this occasional action of Counteractive Karma,—of bad characteristics and of bad environments” (Aung). An understanding and recognition of the fact that we can, to some degree, modify the effects of past evil, is of the greatest assistance, and the most powerful destroyer and purger of evil is the Divine Fire of Love. By Virtue, Knowledge, and Love, one’s past Karma has a *changed aspect*. Those who live in sin, in ignorance, and loveless to God, man, or nature, are living in a state in which their past Karma *threatens* them. They live under the lash of the Furies. But when they are “converted,” that is, turned towards

Light and Wisdom, all the threatening Karma of their past varied existences now assumes the aspect of a *teacher*—and one of the best, too—and our sufferings have a greater purifying and purging effect. The more Love grows in the heart, the more evil Karma is burnt up.

4. Destructive Karma is much stronger in its effect than Counteractive. It completely annihilates a “Supportive Karma of opposite nature, and further, to produce its own dire effect.” This kind of Karma is rarer, for it generally needs, not only a strong will, but a strong deed, *i.e.*, of superlative good or evil. Circumstances may hinder one from consciously using Destructive Karma. Mr. Aung quotes, as an instance, the case of George Bidder, who suddenly, and apparently quite unaccountably, lost all his mathematical powers in middle life. It is, moreover, not only Supportive Karma that can be annulled by the Destructive, but it has its effects more or less on other forms of

Karma. Mr. Suzuki says :—“ Everything done is done once and for all, and its footprints are generative, good or evil. No deed can be done without leaving some impressions either in the individual or supra-individual (*i.e.*, collective) consciousness. No act remains traceless, but lives *potentially* or *actively* in the world of mind and deeds. . . .

Karma must, at however distant a date, act ; it leaves its mark never to be erased save by sheer exhaustion of the Karma, or by interruption of an overwhelming counter-karma.” (Outlines of Mahâyâna Buddhism). The forces

that can destroy or modify past ill deeds are, as before said, Love, Knowledge, and Virtue, or the “ Knowledge of God.” The Maharajah of Bobhili, commenting on the deathlessness of deeds, says that “ the result of a deed does not die by itself, and must be reaped, or destroyed, or mitigated by sacrifice. . . .

or repentance ; or it must be entirely destroyed by the Knowledge of God.”

Mr. W. Q. Judge beautifully remarks

that "there are valleys in which the greatest shadows are due to old lives in other bodies, and yet *intensity of universal love* and of *aspiration* will dissipate those in an instant of time." The Love of Mankind as constituting a Divine Brotherhood, and a deep Repentance arising out of pure sorrow for the wrongs done to *Humanity* by our sins, also has the effect of destroying some of our bad Karma ; for Love and Compassion belong to the Divine Self, and coming from That Source, they are Divine Streams potent to quench the fires of evil.

* * * *

To conclude this section, let us go to Mr. Aung once more. "Now while Reproductive Karma is *always* of the Passive Side of one's past life ; Supportive, Counteractive, and Destructive Karmas may *also* belong to the Active Side of the Present Life. That is, if we observe Passive Karma of the present life, we must take into account the

Reproductive, Supportive, Counteractive, and Destructive forces of a past Karma. If we observe Active Karma of the present, we must confine our consideration to the forces of the present Karma. Viewing an existence as a whole, we have a more complicated action of the forces.

“(1) The Passive State due to past Karma may be strengthened, counteracted, or terminated by another Passive State due to past Karma.

“(2) The Passive State due to past Karma may be strengthened, counteracted, or terminated by an Active State due to present Karma.

“(3) An Active State due to present Karma may be strengthened, counteracted, or terminated by a Passive State due to the past Karma, or

“(4) By an Active State due to the present Karma.”

There is not a deed or thought in our lives that cannot be made more operative by a Knowledge of the Law than if we were without that knowledge. Habits

Karma considered Functionally. 45

are to be destroyed by counter-habits, hatred by love, greed by generosity, and so on. To increase our Supportive Karma it behoves us to nourish and bring to maturity all the good in us, especially to call forth latent good : this "maturing of good stock" is called Kusalamûla ; and the "adding to our stock of good," more good, by accumulation, is called Punyaskandha. "If a man doeth what is good, let him do it again ; let him delight in it, for happiness is the outcome of good" (Buddha, in the "Dhammapada," ix., 118). But let it be remembered that the best and royal way to better ourselves is to labour for the welfare and good of others ; this takes away the selfish motive of doing good simply that we may reap our own good fruits. Those who are on the Path to the Highest Master will never consider for one moment whether any deed is going to bring a good reward to oneself or not.

CHAPTER VII.

KARMA IN THE POWER AND READINESS WITH WHICH IT TAKES EFFECT.

Here again there are Four Kinds :—

1. Weighty, Serious, or Garuka Karma,
2. Death - Proximate, Âsanna, or Maranâsanna Karma,
3. Habitual, or Acinna Karma, and
4. Cumulative or Katattâ Karma, lit., Karma in “state of having been made.”

“The first three are of the Active Side of the present life, and the fourth is the heritage of all our former existences.” (Aung).

1. Weighty Karma is of two kinds—Good, or Bad ; Kusala or Akusala. Good Weighty Karma is operative in

the "Three Worlds," namely, of Form, Sense, and the Formless (Rupa-, Kama, and Arupa-Lokas). The most Weighty or effective Good Karma consists of what is called the Rupa-Vâchara-Jhâna-Chittani, *i.e.*, the five Ecstatic Mental States producing results in the Rupa-Lokas, or Lower Heavens; and the Arupa-Vâchara-Jhâna-Chittani, or four Superconscious Contemplative States producing results in the Arupa-Lokas *i.e.*, the Highest Formless Heavens beyond which is Nirvâna. All these are collectively termed Lofty Karma, or Mahaggata Karma (Aung). The five Rupa States are the same as the Four Dhyânas, one of which is split in two, they are as follows: The First Dhyâna or Jhâna brings about the Slaying of that Ignorance of mistaking the Unreal for the Real, the Mortal Self for the True but Hidden Immortal Self. When this Ignorance is slain, we reach a "state of joy and gladness born of seclusion full of investigation and reflexion." The Second Dhyâna brings

about the Slaying of all Passion, and "is born of that deep tranquillity without reflexion or investigation." The Third Dhyâna brings about the Destruction of Sin, which makes a man an Arhat or Holy One, and then he has passed into the Fourth Dhyâna. Nirvâna is his, even in this life. In the four Dhyânas the Ten Fetters fall off one by one, namely, Delusion of Personality, Doubt, Dependence on rites and ceremonies, Sensuality, Hate, Desire for material existence, Desire for Heaven, Pride, Self-righteousness, and Original Ignorance. The Four Arupa Dhyânas, are those four states immediately ushering one into Nirvâna, and are thus described in Buddhist metaphysics: — (1) The sense of Individuality is lost, ideas and forms become extinct, and the consciousness of the Infinity of Space arises. (2) The sense of Space vanishes, and there comes the idea of Infinite Thought or Reason. (3) This is the "State-of-Nothing-to-take-hold-of." Thought or Reason vanishes, and is superseded by

the Sense of Infinite Nothingness (no-thingness"). The action of this sense ceases and leads to (4) "The State of Neither Namelessness nor Not-Namelessness." Here is the limit of Karmic action, faint and vague, between consciousness and that non-consciousness which is super-consciousness. Everything ceases to exist, save the Real Higher Self, which soon quits this highest of all the Heavens, for entry into Nirvâna—that Great Revelation of the Sleeping Evolving Self, which is to the Objective Self an Annihilation, but to the Subjective it is True Awakening into Immortality. All the above is the reward of the highest Good or Lofty Karma. The Good Weighty Karma that operates in the higher Kamaloka or on earth, is brought about by any good of a strong superlative nature.

Bad Weighty Karma belongs entirely to the World of Sense — Kamaloka (which includes earth-life). It is produced by (1) The five Grievous Crimes, viz., Parricide, Matricide, the Murder

of an Arhat, the Wounding of a Buddha or a Christ, and the Creating of a Schism by one who has received Divine Illumination. Any of these may result in some signal and terrible punishment, even in the present life, most certainly in the *post-mortem* state. Bad Weighty Karma also results from what is called Permanent Scepticism, which term denotes a persistent mental denial of a Moral Law and of all high and lofty motives governing mankind. This technical meaning of it does not imply mere unbelief through lack of knowledge, but a denial of the Goodness and Righteousness of the Law : briefly, a Denial of Dharma, and the "hardening of the heart."

Weighty Karma is therefore so called because it acts more quickly and powerfully than any other kind. It is said that the most serious evil Karma is the creating of false and evil teaching by anyone who *knows* what the Divine Truths are, *i.e.*, by a Truly Initiated person.

Weighty Karma therefore “ may be good or bad in cause and effect, and may be either Reproductive, Supportive, Counteractive, or Destructive in its mode of Action ” (Aung). An intense act of good or evil may bring its result even on the very day of its committal.

2. Death-Proximate Karma. “ The thoughts when death is near (death-proximate thoughts) are of high importance in determining the character of our next life, and is next in importance to Weighty Karma, and may operate in all four modes of the Functional Group. This is why at the death of a person, a pious Buddhist will recall to the dying one all his good deeds, &c. ” (Aung). This is decidedly more healthy than the darkening of one’s last moments by wailings for sins that are past, and vivifying the bad instead of reviving the good in order to give the Soul a “ push ” onwards to something better. “ At the moment of death, ” says Aung, “ Karma, as it were, takes a leap, a move ‘ per saltum ’ ;

the Karmabhava or Active Karma of the ending life being changed or transformed into the Upapattibhava or Passive Karma of the next life. The direction given to it largely determines the course of a future life (in the absence of Weighty Karma)." This is an important piece of information to remember and make use of. To be sure there is every grade of efficiency from that of a Master Soul who can absolutely determine his next life, down to one whose Death-Proximate Will has only very partial or no effect at all, owing to pre-created hindrances.

3. Habitual Karma is the result of the constant repetition of any thought or deed. The Jatakamala says, "Action repeated in one life becomes changed into inherited nature." Thus it is important to repeat often our good thoughts and deeds, and so give no time for evil habits to form. Indeed it is not well to dwell upon our past evil too much, unless evoking good lessons from it. To repent is to turn from evil,

having recognised with depth of soul, its folly and harm to others as well as to self, and having realised how it hides the Sun of our Souls from our view. It is not needed to be ever weeping over our "miserable" sinfulness, though for some people a shower is healthy. We must remember that the Higher Self is divine, and there is nothing at all miserable about That, for it is the Source of all Good and Bliss. Having repented and having been sorry for the ills done, dismiss the past and *face the Light*. "The Past! What is it? Nothing. Gone! Dismiss it. You are the past of yourself. Therefore it concerns you not as such. . . . So follow the Hindu maxim: 'Regret nothing; never be sorry; and cut all doubts with the sword of spiritual knowledge.' Regret is only productive of error. I care not what I *was*, or what anyone *was*. I only look for what I am each moment. Regret is a thought, hence an energy. If we turn its tide upon the past, it plays upon the seeds of that past and vivifies

them ; it causes them to sprout and grow in the ground of the mind : from thence to expression in action is but a step." (W. Q. Judge). In her "Voices of a Still Night," Mary Konopnitsky says,—“Do not curse, my Soul, thy failures and thy errors ; they are steps of the ladder which thou must climb if thou wouldst lift thyself from the dust of earth to the sunny skies.” In the case of one who has definitely set his feet on the higher Path, the “Voice of the Silence” says,—“Long and weary is the way before thee, O Disciple. One single thought about the past that thou hast left behind, will drag thee down, and thou wilt have to start the climb anew. Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences. Look not behind or thou art lost.”

Habitual Karma tends to produce a repetition of similar events or effects in one's life, until that habitual karma is altered. Our evil habits have to be counteracted by the cultivation of their counter-habits. For instance, if thoughts

of hate are often in our minds, they must be banished, and thoughts of love must take their place. It is not easy for all to do this, but one can try to switch off one's thoughts to someone or something that we do love, even if we cannot conjure up love for a person disliked. In time it gets easier, but the disciple must harbour no hate at all; if he does, it is clear that he does not see the Truth, for Love is taught by every Master. "Hatred ceaseth not by hatred at any time; hatred ceaseth by love; this is an ancient rule." (Buddha, in "Dhammapada" 5).

4. Cumulative Karma. This is the store or reserve of potential good and evil inherited from every past existence;—a stock of latent Karma, a bundle of potentialities, of rewards and punishments,—all awaiting the suitable opportunity to bear fruit now or in the future.

* * * *

Here it is fit to consider the question of Freewill. "The secret of reforming

Character (Karma) is in the Counter-active and Destructive forces in the Active Side of the present life. The Karma may be modified by addition to, or by suppression of the Accumulated Karma (Character) inherited from the whole of the Past. . . . Each increment or decrement (to our Karma) is made in the form of the Weighty, Death-proximate, or Habitual Character (Karma) formed on the Active Side of an existence, under what is commonly called Free-Will. Will, however, is not free. Under a given set of conditions, the action of a person—his choice of one or more lines of action — is absolutely determined by the nature of his Character at the time, so that one acts only in the way his character determines for him; he may, by dint of mental and moral training *alter the nature of that character itself*. This is the victory of Culture over Character, the triumph of Nurture over Nature." (Aung). This Doctrine is the Middle Course between Necessi-

tarianism and absolute Free-Will, and is the Eastern teaching on the subject. If our Will was absolutely free to choose, then there would be no restraining operation of the Law,—Law would be powerless ; but if, on the other hand, the Will had no freedom at all, then we could never be held responsible for any wrong we did, and perfection could never be reached. Among the higher schools of Eastern philosophy there are systematic methods of training, by which our character can be altered or improved so that one grows more and more able to choose what is for one's own or the general good. Experience shows that the will is freer to act in some people than in others, for some can more easily give up bad habits—drink for instance—than others. It all depends on the Character which has been built up in past ages ; still, everyone, without exception, has quite sufficient free-will to improve himself if he choose, in however slight a way ; and one step leads to the next. As we journey onward to the

Perfect Goal, the Will becomes *freer and freer*; it is no sudden achievement to reach that stage of Acalâ, which was described towards the end of Chapter IV., when the Disciple "aspires and it is actualized. He wills and it is done. He has become Nature herself, and has no restraint" (Suzuki). Then we can truly say the Will is Free!

CHAPTER VIII.

KARMA CONSIDERED ACCORDING TO TIME IN WHICH EFFECTS ARE WORKED OUT.

Again we have four kinds :—

1. Immediately-Effective, or Ditt-hadhammavedaniya Karma,
2. Remotely-Effective, or Upapajjavedaniya Karma,
3. Indefinitely-Effective, or Aparapariyavedaniya Karma,
4. Non-Effective, or Ahosi Karma.

These are all dependent upon the Cognitive Faculty or Javana, which determines whether Karma will act soon or later. According as a thought is received by the Cognitive Faculty, so is the depth of the impression it makes in the Retentive Faculty or Tad-ârammana. And it is according to this depth of impression that Karma acts at an earlier

or later date, being immediately-effective or otherwise as above outlined, or else it is too weak to leave any impression, and so becomes Non-effective. The Soul-life is an ever-flowing Stream or Bhavanga, receiving tributaries every day and casting out its products every day. In studying the eighty-nine States of Consciousness, one learns how life opens with a mixture of sixteen Bhavangas which result from the past, and these generate the Faculty of Representative Cognition which "weighs up," so to speak, the rationale of the new life. The seven Cognitives result from these, and produce a great desire (or Trishna) to live the earth-life again; then come the Waters of Lethe, when past existences are forgotten, or rather, the memory of past lives is *transmuted* into the character, abilities, talents, and potentialities with which life is started. The Cognitives are always passing on what they receive into the Retentive Faculty, which registers all impressions. If impressions are *very* fleeting, so that

they do not reach the Tad-ârammana, then the Karma of those impressions is non-effective, just as a stone may be made to skim a stream without sinking into it, but reaches the other shore. The study of this branch of Metaphysics will throw a flood of light on this group of Karmas, for it will show us, to a great extent, how it is that some Karma is suspended for future effect. But, I think, another reason for the suspension of some Karma lies in the fact that it awaits the suited occasions and surroundings to call forth its effect, so that a deep impression may "come out" sooner than a faint one, if a strong force, or suited occasion calls it forth.

1. Immediately Effective Karma. This bears fruit in this life, unless opposed by a powerful Destructive Karma, when it never becomes effective, just as a ball set rolling down a hill may be voluntarily stopped. Being devoid of Reproductive Force it is inoperative. One often notices how some of our deeds seem to fructify more quickly than others.

2. Remotely-Effective Karma. This will produce results in the next life by virtue of the Reproductive Karma, but may fail for ever on account of opposing Karma, just as in the preceding case. For instance, an adjustment of some wrong done to a person who has passed away cannot act until that person is met again.

3. Indefinitely - Effective Karma. This will fructify as soon as the conditions needed for its fructification are suitable, and may be in any incarnation after the next. Most of our Cumulative Karma is thus indefinitely-effective.

4. Non-Effective Karma. This may be of two kinds—(1) Karma which has been destroyed by Destructive Karma, and (2) that which is too feeble to take effect, owing to the deed or thought not impressing the Retentive Faculty ; for instance, the wish of a feeble-minded person or an imbecile may never take effect, or even of one who is not feeble-minded if his or her desire is apathetic and not really meant.

CHAPTER IX.

GOOD AND BAD KARMA AND THE PLACES IN WHICH EFFECTIVE.

Good and Bad Karmas operate in one or all the Three Worlds of Existence.

1. Bad Karma (Akusala-karma, lit., unskilful-karma) is reaped only in Kamaloka. Kamaloka is the World of Sense, and consists of life on Earth and life in Hades; the word is generally limited in Theosophical Literature to "Hades," or the State between Earth and Devachan, but metaphysically speaking it refers to all Worlds or States resulting from the Desires (Kama), and in which Desire is expressed. It refers also to the Hells (Narakas), or purging regions (Pâtalas), which are the lowest sub-planes of the

Astral World. In the vast majority of cases, bad Karma is worked off in both these portions of Kamaloka. In the succeeding earth-lives we adjust the wrongs done to our fellow-men and learn the lessons in which we have failed, while in the Narakas and Pâtalas we wear out passional tendencies.

2. Good Karma (Kusala-karma, lit., "skilful-karma") is worked out in all the Three Worlds—the Sense (Kamaloka), the Heavens of Form (Rupa-loka), and the Formless Heavens (Arupa-loka). In this case, as far as Kamaloka is concerned, it will be in the higher levels or sub-planes of it where any good can be reaped, and these regions correspond to the Paradise in Christian terminology, the Elysian Fields in Greek philosophy, and to Amenti in the Egyptian religion. It is a state of pleasure devoid of spirituality, and may detain a Soul longer from its entry into Devachan or Heaven than even the Narakas or Pâtalas, on account of a certain satisfaction it gives to the personality. It is a

sort of little heaven for those who are and do good simply for their own welfare.

All our punishments and all our joys are made by ourselves, and according to the height of our aspirations so will we ascend. The Lord Krishna said that "those who worship the Gods will go to the Gods," that is to the Ideals they conceive; but "those who worship Me will come unto Me." "At the end of life the Soul goeth forth alone, whereupon only our good deeds befriend us" (Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King, v. 1560); and in the "Mulamuli" we read:—"When a person doeth evil, he lighteth the fire of hell and burneth with his own fire"; and in the Chhândogya Upanishad, III., xiv., 1, there are these definite words:—"Now Man is a creature of Will. According to what his Will is in this world, so will he be when he hath departed this life." All these show our great power—potential or actual—for all these States of Heavens and Hells which exist, are also *within* us, and it is by building up

within us and into our nature the elements pertaining to those states that we become assimilated to them. Or rather, it is the *uncovering* of all those Veilings of Ignorance and Sin, that hide the Inner Glory. "I myself am Heaven and Hell" sings Omar Khayyam.

CHAPTER X.

THE JUSTICE AND COMPASSION OF THE KARMIC LAW.

The Law is Just, for it gives to each one precisely what is due of good or evil. No one will suffer more than he or she merits. No one will enjoy rewards that have not been won, and no one will be exalted at the expense of another. The Law is Just, because it is God's Law or Method. We are apt to confuse our harsh notions of justice with the Justice that is of God. Our justice is invariably mingled with other qualities, consciously or unconsciously, hence "His ways are not our ways, nor are His thoughts our thoughts." Not yet. When our ways and thoughts are as His, we shall have reached the Goal and become one with Him—"perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect"—who is the Great

All-Self in each heart. We think sometimes that we suffer unjustly, and that but for this or that person's action we could have avoided such and such suffering. Indeed! Are we cognisant of all the hidden workings of the Law? Do we think that a Good God punishes for what was not committed? Be sure that the arm that smites us is our own arm risen against ourself, it is the result of something or other that we have done in the past; the darkness that enshrouds us is a fog of our own conjuring.

Because this Law is divinely just, it is for that reason divinely compassionate. It is Love; for we need never fear about not getting our deserts; moreover, even the very afflictions and pains of life are rendered by means of this Law so many lessons meant for our good, so many merciful chastenings, so many means of true growth, for it is by resisting and overcoming evil that we become purified "as by fire;" and the more we perceive the truth about Karma, the better able we shall be to bear sorrow and pain

There is no doubt about that. When we have learnt the lesson of suffering, suffering will cease, or be changed into that sweet voluntary suffering taken upon ourselves for the sake of others ; for it is true that the Man of Sorrows, Jesus, was also the Lord of Joy, and the Sorrowing Buddha was the Happy One.

Now while this Law is just and compassionate as we view it from our lowly standpoint, it is quite true that it is neither. From the higher levels, Karma is impartial and void of the idea of Justice or Mercy, it is *True*. For it is not the Law really that punishes us or rewards, but we ourselves. If you don't put your finger in the fire, it will never burn you, and so if you never break the Law it cannot hurt you ; and if you serve it, it helps. It is the "Arm of the Lord," and we may be lifted up by it, or fall and hurt ourselves by leaving hold of it.

CHAPTER XI.

HUMAN, PLANETARY, AND COSMIC KARMA.

There is a "divine end" towards which Humanity *as a whole* sweeps onward. It is the Great Resurrection from the Dead. At the end of the Manvantara the fruits of the accumulated Karma of an evolved Humanity are transmitted to a field of operation which transcends materiality, and the evolved Super-Men enter into the next period of evolution (after a Rest or Pralaya) as the guiding factors, to a large extent, of the new Humanity arising out of the animal Kingdom. But that is not the end; on and on the climbing Humanity goes, from glory to glory, and power to power, to what no man can contemplate or even imagine.

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A Planet too has a Karma. All the forces and potentialities amassed in its evolution are transmitted to the planet that has to succeed it. We have absorbed all the potentialities of our preceding planet (now the Moon), and we too shall give way to another.

A Solar System, in like manner, takes over all the Karmic forces from the preceding system, after a long period of cessation from manifestation. Thus the work of "Creation" or "Evolution" goes on for ever.

It is out of place to go any further into the Evolution of Nature in a work like this, and so theosophical literature must be consulted which deals with these stupendous subjects.

CHAPTER XII.

THE THREE AND THE FOUR KINDS OF KARMA.

His Highness the Maharajah of Bobhili, in an article in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, a year or two ago, mentions three kinds of Karma, as follows :—

1. Agami or Vartamana Karma. “This comprises all that we do in this life and reap in this or a future life.”

2. Sanchita Karma. “This comprises all the Karma that could not be reaped in one existence, and is left back without being reaped in previous lives.”

3. Prarabdha Karma. “This comprises all that Karma whose results we reap but could not avoid by our own exertions in this life.”

I leave these as they stand in

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his Highness's article. These three divisions are sometimes stated thus :—

1. Karma that we reap now as a result of the past.

2. Karma that we are now making for future harvest (Agami, or Vartamana Karma).

3. Karma suspended from the past for reaping when occasion demands.

To these a fourth is sometimes added, viz. :—

4. Karma sown in the past and done with or reaped in the past. This leaves, as result, some lesson learned, some force woven into the Immortal Self.

CHAPTER XIII.

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE KARMA.

Individual Karma is that which each one reaps and sows for himself. It is what we have been dealing with so far in so many different forms. Now we come to consider Karma in its more complex inter-workings; and here it may seem that in dealing with Collective (Social, or Supra-Individual) Karma, we are treating of what may seem to be modifications or even violations of the rigidity or justice of the Karmic Law. But it is not so, as we shall see.

Collective Karma may be divided into Six Main Groups, as follows :—

1. Conjugal Karma.
2. Family Karma.
3. Mutual Karma.

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4. National Karma.
5. Racial Karma, and
6. Universal Karma.

It is stated in many a sacred script that our thoughts and deeds affect others to a greater or less extent. On this fact is based the fact of Collective Karmic activity. We are all one Spiritual Unity or Brotherhood, deny it as we may, and we all swim in one Ocean of Life. Therefore, every evil thought pollutes, to however small an extent, this ocean, and every good thought helps to purify it. In other words, we are to an appreciable extent our brothers' keepers. There is no separateness in Reality. It is the delusion of separateness from our fellow-beings that is the Great Heresy, and the root of all evil. We ought to realise that every good thought that we send forth for the help of others *must* have its effect; so every evil thought is a befouler. The thought-currents move according to the force behind

them. Pure thoughts make a pure aura around the person who has them, and is peaceful and restful. Says Eliphas Levi,—“ We are often astonished when in society at being assailed by evil thoughts and suggestions that we would not have imagined possible, and we are not aware that we owe them solely to the presence of some morbid neighbour ; diseased souls have a bad breath, and vitiate the moral atmosphere ; that is to say, they mingle impure reflections with the astral light which penetrates them, and thus establish deleterious currents.” Seeing how we affect each other, we learn to guard our thoughts and acts, and to live for the sake of the public weal as well as for our own. We read in the Fo-Pen-Hing-Tsih-King, v. 43,—“ our duty is to do something, not only for our own benefit, but for the good of those who shall come after us ;” and in the “ Light on the Path,”—“ Remember that the sin and shame of the world are your sin and shame ; for you are part of it.” *Remember!*

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alas! how often we forget! forget the woes of others that are ours to share or help to bear; forget that we must not condemn the evil in others so long as any evil lies in ourselves. "Let him that is without sin, cast the first stone" (Jesus.) Mr. Suzuki in his "Outlines of Mahâyâna Buddhism" states the case very ably. He says;—"All social sufferings are not necessarily produced by past Karma, but may be engendered by imperfections in the present social system. The region of Karma is not in the social and economical world, but in the moral world. Poverty is not necessarily the consequence of evil deeds, nor plenitude of good deeds. The reward of good is spiritual bliss,—contentment, tranquillity of mind, meekness of heart, immovability of faith,—all heavenly treasures . . . Deeds, good or evil, leave permanent effects on the *general system* of sentient beings; and not on the actor himself, but everybody, constituting a grand psychic community called Dhar-madhâtu (spiritual universe), that suffers

or enjoys the outcome of a moral deed . The universe is a great spiritual community,—most complicated, most subtle, most sensitive, and the best organised mass of spiritual atoms, and transmits its currents of moral electricity from one particle to another with utmost rapidity and surety. Because the community is at bottom an expression of ONE Dharmakâya (God).” Affecting one another, a pious individual will “turn over” or make a “parivarta” of his merits to the benefiting of all beings ; and this will arise out of his love for all, and his desire to help in the salvation of the race. “Every good we do is absorbed in the universal stock of merits which is no less than the Dharmakâya (God). Every act of loving-kindness is conceived in the Womb-of-the-Tathâgata (Womb of the Universal Lord), and therein nourished and matured, is again brought out to this world of Karma to bear its fruit” (*ib.*) The doctrine here is very clearly and beautifully put ; but it is to be noted that what he says about the region of

Karma not being in the Social World means, as applied to moral good and evil fruits, for in another part he says that Karma is also Social, *i.e.* Collective.

To do good for the welfare of Humanity is our holiest work, and to "turn over" our merits, as far as possible, to the saving of others, is to help the Saviours in Their Work, who out of love and compassion for Humanity have renounced their final entry into Nirvâna so long as there are any outside its portals. "To work for Humanity is the *first step*," says the "Voice of the Silence," and there is no service of God that does not resolve itself into the service of Mankind. The sweets of the higher realms are for everyone, and we must bring down celestial incense to mortals.

"For all the world is full of blasts
To bear the sweets away."

Those who do not see the divine object of all Life, who separate themselves from others, whose thoughts are

for the joys that can be plucked for self,— these are the children of Mâra, the Evil One, who hinder the progress of humanity like the grit that clogs the wheels of a machine and hampers its work. Yet we must not turn away from them, for they are just the ones that need light and help. “I consider the welfare of all people as something for which I must work” said the pious and noble Emperor Asoka in his 6th Edict.

Having considered in a general way the mutual interaction of all human beings, and how the only way to serve God is to serve Man—the Son of God—we will now consider the six Groups.

1. Conjugal Karma. The husband and wife share each other's Karma, but especially is this so when a perfect union of man and wife exists, for their respective Karmas *may* blend, especially if the union has existed in past lives, whether as man and wife or friends, and so they share each other's joys and sorrows, feeling alike each other's interests. In a highly spiritual union

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of purest love, the tie once made is never severed, and two souls linked thus together will be drawn back life after life, although not necessarily as man and wife ; they may return as strong friends. This doctrine of Conjugal Karma gave rise to sutteeism in India and parts of China, which is the self-immolation of a faithful widow on the funeral-pyre of her late husband. A sad custom which is fortunately dying out, but one which nevertheless shows a highly noble soul in the woman who followed it, and a great faith in meeting after death. The pity is that this noble quality could not be transmuted into the higher patience that the knowledge of Karma should cause, which would teach her to await the day of death instead of determining it for herself. Not in the East only, but in the West too, it has often happened that the surviving one loses all zest for life, and grief and a broken heart will open a grave only too soon. How many suicides have resulted from a lost love ! A knowledge of the Law of Karma

will tend to mitigate these evils, and render life more bearable, and show that the day of meeting is *best* determined by Karma, which acts by the love of God, and not by any self-prompted act, which after all is selfish. There are plenty of people whose lives would be brighter for a little love, and there is room for work for the bereaved. It is thus that they sweeten their loss, and show that love for one person was not eclipsing the love of the Lord of Love.

2. Family Karma. In Chapter IV., when dealing with heredity, we saw how members of a family affect each other. Good and bad Karma from one member, may *sometimes* affect the whole family; but to what extent we affect each other is not possible for an ordinary mortal to know, the relation being so intricate. The Maharâjah of Bobhili says "that unless one tries to destroy his paternal sin by his good acts, that sin will never leave the family without reaping." All this sets us thinking, for it shows how respon-

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sible we are to mankind generally, and how we must seek to eradicate bad Family Karma for the sake of posterity, and for the lessening of its burdens, for assuredly the "sins of the father will be visited on the children." One has the power to call down upon oneself voluntarily, the family burden, and by suffering it, thus destroy the bad Family Karma. In the Kaushîtaki Upanishad is read,—“The son releases the father from the wrong he has done,” and is said to take upon himself his father’s Karma at the latter’s death; for that portion of Karma which belongs to the family and is borne by the father, must, on his death, pass on to the remaining members, for there is no Family Karma beyond the grave, it is confined to physical and astral life. Suzuki says,—“One can overcome the evil Karma of his family, and thus the evil Karma may be a means of lifting him. His virtues can eclipse the evils of the past and turn a new page for him. This spiritual phenomenon is due to the virtue of

the upâya (expedient means) of the Dharmakâya (God)." A knowledge of all these facts is of high practical value. It contains food for reflexion, and one can work out for himself or herself the lines of action suggested by the above statements. There is room for much to be said and done under the many ramifications of this kind of Karma. It is not to be thought that Family Karma is unjust, for, no doubt, suffering that is engendered by the family must have a counteracting effect on one's own evil personal Karma, so we should not grumble, but realise it is for a good purpose, or else we should not have incarnated in the particular family we are in. When the lessons are learnt from one family, the Soul seeks another family for its next rebirth. This goes on continually.

There is a curious belief held by many in certain parts of India. The dead ancestors, which they call "smasas" or "devourers," are said to destroy the good Karma of one who is

not properly buried. How came this curious belief? May it not have reference to the Karma or fate of the subtle-body or Etheric Double? It would be interesting to trace this belief to its source. There is a strange passage, stranger still in being found in the Kaushîtaki Upanishad. On entering the Heaven-World, it is said that one drops his Karma, and his relatives who are dear to him receive his good deeds, and those not dear to him receive his evil deeds. Not a bad way of getting rid of one's Karma! But what lies behind it? This: that Family Karma being generated by Family associations and interests, &c., belongs to the Family *as a whole*, and not to its single members. This Karma remains in the family *on earth*, and so when one dies, so much of the family-begotten Karma remains with the surviving members of the family; and those dearest to us, by the fact of the sympathetic or magnetic bond established, will naturally receive the good, and those not dear, or sympa-

thetically united, will receive the ill. But this, of course, must not be taken absolutely, for no-one can say *how* the Family Karma really is distributed, and so these two beliefs are given for what they are worth. Moreover, one's *personal* Karma belongs to oneself *alone*, and can go nowhere else.

3. Mutual Karma. This is of many kinds. Friends *may* share their Karmas, especially if the friendship is true and deep. When and to what extent we cannot say. Societies, Brotherhoods, &c., have a sort of common Karma. So with Teachers and Pupils. In all these cases the working of the Law cannot be traced, and in many cases the Mutual Karma is of the faintest degree. Its strongest action is in the case of the deepest and truest friendships, and also in the case of a Guru or Spiritual Teacher and his Disciple. The Guru shares in his disciple's suffering; and with all Masters and Their Disciples this happens because of the spiritual union

between them. Out of love to our Teacher, in whatever grade he may be, we should fit ourselves to become worthy followers. In the higher Path it is only "when the pupil is ready that the master will appear." Again, the disciple shares to a greater or less degree in the spiritual benefits of the Master, and brethren of one order or united society share in each other's merits and demerits.

4. National Karma. Each nation has a "character," a Karma, which is built up slowly, and there is no escape from the results thereof, save by powerful opposing Karma. The future of each nation is in accordance with its deeds done in the past, and the nature of the fall of a nation is in accordance with what its past history decrees by its moral and social evolution, with all its admixture of right and wrong.

5. Race Karma. Each Root-Race, Sub-Race, and Family-Race has a Character or Karma, and when its work

is done it gives place to a new race. There are some races which afford very interesting Karmic studies, and one can see how the fall of each race has been in accordance with its character, especially with the initial characteristics it showed forth in the beginning. The Romans and the Jews are excellent subjects for study.

6. Universal Karma. This refers to the whole Human Race, to the Gods or Celestial Powers, and to all classes of beings evolved in a Solar System. Every planet is destined to evolve along certain lines, but all will meet in the end. But we must extend the influence of Universal Karma beyond the grave, for the spiritual unity of all beings cannot be altered in any way whatever by the mere shedding of the body. Those who suffer in the Nârakas or Hells or Purgatories—whatever we may like to call them—need our utmost help. In those deep and dark places of the Astral World, where violent passions are being worked off—deep and foul and miserable and

rayless, where the most degraded and seemingly hopelessly wicked inevitably sink and grovel in thick gloom and blackness—in those realms it behoves us to find another field of work. Many people do a good work amongst their denizens, and every good thought is a little help, every feeling of love for them is a balm; better still, every powerful *will-prayer* for their deliverance is potent. We should realize that our good thoughts, and the higher forces of those above us, are the only bits of light and comfort they ever get. Light and more light! Ease from the aching pains!—pains of unsatisfiable cravings! Cries for help in the darkness! these surely should move our compassion, for they yearn for the sight of one face over which a ray of love ripples and blesses, for the touch of one hand that can heal and uplift. The Christ descended into Hades: the Buddha likewise, for His love also embraced the lowest planes of the Cosmos. Human love can aid in the quenching of their self-

begotten fires, and the Masters have shown the way, as history and legend tell. Of Orpheus—the Great Teacher of ancient Greece whose true life is involved in divine Myths—we learn that he descended into Hades. Most Religions have taught this doctrine. The Jews, or sections of them at least, believed it, for we read in the Second book of Maccabees xii., 46, — “It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins.” Among the Hindus, two of the “Five Acts of Worship” (five Yajnas) are Pitri-yajna and Bhuta-yajna, or reverence and remembrance for one’s ancestors and for spirits of all sorts. They offer symbolical libations and gifts for their welfare. In the Buddhist Scriptures we read :—

“As rivers poured on mountain tops
Must soon descend and reach the plain ;
So surely what is given here
Will reach and bless the spirits there.”

The Buddhist ceremony of Pirit is

for the benefit of spirits and souls of the departed. The old Peruvians and Egyptians were very devout in this particular. Amongst Christians, the vast majority believe in prayers for the dead, viz., the Greek and Roman Churches, as well as some divisions amongst Protestants. The Naraka-dwellers are therefore helped by our "will-prayers" inasmuch as their Karma will allow, and how much that may be we cannot say. Though we may not take away their burdens, yet we can sometimes shorten their stay or brighten it to a certain degree. Universal Karma operates everywhere in the Three Worlds of Tribhuvana, and just as we can help the departed, those in Devachan can help us.

CHAPTER XIV.

KARMIC INTELLIGENCES.

Karma is not a blind Law, nor is it in any way undirected. There are Great Intelligences behind it, and must be so, especially for the direction of its numerous currents and in guiding the time and manner and place of rebirth. All Mythologies have something to say about this. The Greeks were masters in personifying or making concrete in some way, the wonderful and sometimes dazzling abstractions of the Eastern Sages and Philosophers. The East revels in infinite and limitless abstractions, the West personifies. Thus, for example, the Karma of Eastern teaching is changed by the Westerns into the Goddess Nemesis, or Necessity, with the Three Fates and Three Furies. Another instance, the immortality and

persistency of thoughts and deeds, as taught in the East, is changed by the West into the doctrine of the Recording Angel who books our good and bad deeds.

Let us glance at the personifications of the Karmic Intelligences. The Karmic Rulers are really Fourfold, but their fourfold nature is sometimes hidden under the number three. In the Book of Revelations we read of the Four Angels of the Four Quarters of the Earth. These, stationed symbolically at the cardinal points, show them to be directors of mundane affairs ; and in Ezekiel we have the graphic vision of the Four Living Creatures whose " voice was as that of the Almighty." The Scandinavians believed in the Three Norns or Fates (Urd, Verdandi, and Skuld). Their parent would complete the Four. The Greeks were most successful in the personification of the Karmic Gods ; indeed they are unapproachable in that art. The fourfold Powers of Karma are Nemesis and the Three Fates. Now

Nemesis is sometimes called Adrastia (Justice), and sometimes called Necessitas (Necessity), and by the Neoplatonic Theosophists She is also designated "Nature," and again, the "Divine Herakles" or Hercules. Nemesis is the best name, as She was the rewarder of good and the punisher of evil ; but there is great truth in every one of the other names, for they each one bring out some characteristic of Karma :—It is Just (Adrastia), Necessary (Necessitas), the Way of all Nature (Natura), and it is strong and powerful (Herakles). As the punisher of evil, She uses the Three Furies, Tisiphone, Megæra, and Alecto. When rewarding the good, the Furies become the Three Eumenides (Benevolent Ones). But the directors of Karmic Law, besides Nemesis, were the Three Fates :—Clotho, who presides over birth ; Lachesis, who spins the thread of life ; and Atropos, who cuts the thread of life with her scissors. All good and all evil were supposed to come from them, and they were considered as inexorable, but

nevertheless worthy of proper respect and reverence.

In the secret tradition which Theosophy has made known, these Powers are called the Fourfold Lipika (lit. "Scribes" or "Recorders," "who are the adjusters or 'assessors' of the destiny which a man has made for himself;" (see "Stanzas of Dzyan," translated by H. P. Blavatsky). These Four Holy Ones are in and of and behind the Karmic Law, and by Their means the Supreme Lord controls the operations of man and nature karmically.

CHAPTER XV

MODIFICATIONS OF THE DOCTRINE OF KARMA AND SOME BELIEFS ATTACHED THERETO.

The Rule is that we reap what we sow. The apparent modification of the Rule is that we can sometimes reap what we do not sow, and sow what we shall not reap (on this side of Nirvâna at any rate). Looked at from below this is a modification; looked at from above it is a wider field of karmic activity. All modifications, so-called, practically come under Collective Karma. Some Scriptures indicate what is apparently the reaping of a greater harvest than was sown. For instance, "He who now giveth in love shall surely reap where

he hath given ; for whosoever piously bestoweth a little water shall receive return like the great ocean" (Ta-Chwang-Yan-King-Lun, 20). If you put a seed in the ground you don't go back to reap the seed, but it grows into a plant bearing more seed. So it is with a good deed or thought ; it is sown in the Heart of Divine Life, and being watered by Love, it grows and blesses the recipient and the donor. The Supreme Lord repays a hundred-fold any good deed done to his glory. Mercy, as Shakspeare has it,

"is twice blessed,
It blesseth him that gives and him that
takes."

We cannot see all the good that can come out of one good deed, but it works and grows. Bad deeds, too, have their wide range of action.

With regard to curious beliefs concerning the modificability of Karma, they have been described under sutteeism (13th Chap.), and also under

Family Karma, viz., the beliefs regarding the improperly buried, and the distribution of one's karma amongst relatives on entering Devachan.

The last apparent modification we will now consider under what is termed Patti-dâna, or the "voluntary transfer of merit to others." It is practically the same as "making parivarta" or "turning over" one's merits to aid mankind. In reading the sacred writings, some passages seem to condemn the belief and others to uphold it. In the Jatakas (No. 494) it is repudiated, and so in the Mahabhârata in one passage which says, "No man inherits the good or evil act of another person." Yet all the Scriptures and Mystical Writers declare that we can and do affect others, as shown before. There is truth in both statements according as we distinguish what we can transfer and what we cannot. The Maharajah of Bobhili interprets the passage from the Mahabhârata to mean that no one inherits the good or evil act of another person done in his

previous existence, and *not* in this life ; so that it is in the power only of our Active Karma to aid others, and even then, only if nothing obstructs. His Highness goes on to say that we can help the sick, and that by bestowing alms we help to relieve the recipient as also the donor. An alms-deed helps *provided only* if the "aparachetana" (or "thought behind the act," *i.e.*, motive) is pure and devoid of any desire to reap a reward therefrom. If there is no pure aparachetana, there is no benefit reaped.

We can always desire to transfer our good deeds and thoughts to the good of others. But does this not interfere with the karma of others ? Not if we understand the *how* it is done. As a matter of fact, it is quite impossible and beyond our power to interfere with anyone's karma. No one can receive good indiscriminately, at the same time we cannot say who is ready to receive aid and who is not. Let us take an illustration of how we do help others. Suppose a man walking along a weary

road and carrying a heavy burden ; suppose also another man full of sympathy who comes up to him, talks to him, engages his interest, so that time passes quickly as we say, and lo ! the journey's end is reached, and the burden was half forgotten in the mutual interest. Now, in this case the man carried the burden he made for himself, it was his Karma to bear his own burden, yet in a very real sense, too, his companion helped to lighten the burden. That is *how* we help to bear one another's burdens. It is the learning how to use the yoke of the Christ, that makes Christ to bear the burdens of those who take His yoke, that is, His way of carrying the burden, and His way was that of patience, humility, and love. Real love, sympathy, and compassion towards others help them to bear their loads and shorten the journey to the goal. Conversely, the depressed and unsympathetic affect the conditions of all they come in contact with ; those, for instance, who not content to bear sorrow, but

must air their woes unnecessarily to everyone about them, making them uncomfortable too. Still, it is well sometimes to "weep with those who weep," for sympathy soothes, and many cannot bear their sorrows alone, and need all the sympathy we have.

Thus the Saviours, the Buddhas, the Nirmanakâyas, are always helping, always "making parivarta" for the salvation of others. It is Their divine task, it is Their *nature*,—to sweeten life's sorrows, *if only we walk by Their side!* How simple, yet how hard to remember, because we have not Faith. They are ever seeking us—these Lords and Masters—not in a metaphorical sense, but really and truly. *They seek us*, and do so with untiring Love and Compassion. The Buddhas, *i.e.*, the Enlightened Ones of all times, are always with us; from the great Akanishtha Heaven where the Arhats dwell down to the lowest of the Hells, Avitchi, the Buddhas of Compassion, are with us, waiting for us to speak to

Them. Who knows what disasters They have averted ; who knows, even when disasters and misfortunes come, what Hand has mitigated them ? Is there not a deep truth in the statement that the Masters can bear our sorrows and feel the weight of our iniquities ? That is why among the Mahayâna Buddhists the pious always pray that the Nirmanakâyas or Buddhas of Compassion may never leave us, that Those Great Ones who reaching Nirvâna renounce with great sacrifice the enjoyment of Nirvâna, may remain spiritually present to help the world,—and physically present if need be.

In the above remarks anent this inter-operative working of Karma, there is no shirking of one's responsibility implied, and we must reap what we sow in the long run. If we get some good or evil from others, it is for a purpose, and the evil may mitigate some of our own wrong, whilst the good externally received helps us in the fruition of our own good or in the power to help

others ; and although it is impossible to penetrate the labyrinthine maze of karmic operations, we must realise that no injustice can ever be done to us, and we are quite safe in the hands of the Great Brahm. So also we can remember that just as the man in the illustration given above was really helped by the presence of a sympathetic companion although he must perforce carry his own burden, so we too can surely have our burdens sweetened if only we walk by the side of the Lord and Master and converse with Him, and listen to His Voice, which speaks where no sound can be heard in the ineffable depths of our Souls.

CHAPTER XVI.

LESSONS TAUGHT BY KARMA.

The more we understand the Law of Karma the more we see how careful we must be of our acts and thoughts, and how responsible we are to our fellow-beings. Living in the light of this knowledge, we learn certain lessons day by day.

1. Patience. Knowing that the Law is our great helper if we serve it, and that no harm can come to us if we work with it, knowing also that it blesses us *just at the right time*, and the end of it all is final good, we learn the grand lesson of patience, and that impatience is a check to growth. In suffering, we know that we are paying a debt, and we learn, if we are wise, not to create more suffering for the future. In rejoicing, we are thankful for its sweetness. Patience

includes resignation and contentment, and brings forth peace and security. "That man" says the Bhagavad Gîta, "reacheth perfection who is content with his own lot." (xviii., 45.) Banish anxiety, the Law does not heed it; it breeds further anxieties; and work on calmly and confidently.

2. Confidence. The Law being divine, how is it possible to be uneasy about it? If we are uneasy and have no confidence, it shows clearly that we have not grasped the reality of the Law. Really we are quite safe beneath its wings, and there is nothing to fear in all the wide universe save our own misdeeds. Confidence strengthens or rather deepens our Peace,—that internal quiet that all the hosts of Mâra are powerless to disturb, that peace shown so perfectly in the lives of the Buddha and of Lao-Tsze. Our home is the Cosmos, and the Law is the great host that bids us be comfortable and forget the exterior darkness. Wherever we go the Law is our Protector.

3. Self-Reliance. As we in the past have caused ourselves to be what we now are, so by what we do now will our future be determined: a knowledge and recollection of this fact, and that the glory of the future is limitless, must in time give us great self-reliance, and will take away that tendency to appeal for external help, which is really no help at all. Thoreau said, "I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavour." And the last words of the Buddha were,— "Work out your salvation with diligence!" It is said also in the Dhammapada, that "by oneself evil is done; by oneself one suffereth; by oneself evil is left undone; by oneself one is purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself, no one can purify another."

4. Restraint. Naturally, if we realize that the evil we do will return to strike us, we will grow to be very careful lest we do or say anything that

is not good, and pure, and true. Knowledge of Karma will restrain us from wrong-doing, for others' sakes as well as for our own. Guard the thoughts; a sin is done by a positive thought, even if that thought is not carried into effect; for thoughts are as real in the mental world as deeds are in the material world. Jesus said,—“Every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. v., 28). The constant sending out of good thoughts to others is of paramount importance, and is the best of prayers,—but put intention and energy and *will* into them. Another thing to be learnt is that we must beat down every wrong thought that comes to the mind, by the power of the Higher Self.

5. Responsibility. The fact of the spiritual unity of the Human Race, since it is one at root, brings out the fact also of our responsibility one to another. At the beginning of Chap. XIII. we saw how interdependent we are one

upon another, and how it was our duty to Humanity at large to abandon evil and do good.

6. Power. The more we make the Doctrine of Karma a part of our lives, the more power we gain not only to overcome evil, but to direct to a great extent our future, and to help more effectively, our neighbours. This is because, becoming self-reliant, we draw down strength from the Higher Self within. By that Divine One within our life should be guided, and in His strength we overcome limitations, we destroy the fetters that keep us from Nirvâna, and we are enabled to become conscious Helpers of Humanity.

7. Renunciation of the Fruits of Action. Here is the essence of the whole philosophy in a nutshell. It is only Action that keeps us bound to the Wheel of Birth, Death, and Rebirth, for Action *is* Karma. It matters not whether the action be physical, moral, or mental, it binds us to the spheres of activity where Karma rules. But are

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we to give up doing anything on this account? No! *How then are we to act without allowing the act to have any binding force* on us? Here is the secret, and there is no book in the world that states the way more clearly than the "Lord's Song" or "Bhagavad Gîta." It teaches us to work and act, sacrificing all action to the Supreme Lord, and leaving the consequences to Him. If we work for rewards on earth, aye, even if we work for rewards in heaven, the fruits will ripen where the seed is sown; and Earth and Heaven will hold us from Nirvâna, will keep us from what is immeasurably greater than the highest Heaven,—Union with the Supreme ALL-SELF. Heavens and Earths and Hells are all within the Wheel of Existence, where Karma operates. "Those who worship the Gods, go to the Gods, but he who worshippeth Me, abiding in all beings, that man cometh to Me, whatever his mode of existence" (Bhagavad Gîta).

"Thy business is with action only,

never with its fruits ; so let not the fruit of action be thy motive, nor be thou to inaction attached." (*ib.*) "Perform action, dwelling in union with the Divine, renouncing attachments, and balanced evenly in success and failure" (ii., 47-48). "Performing action without attachment, man verily reacheth the Supreme" (iii., 19).

"The disciplined Self, moving among sense-objects with senses free from attraction and repulsion, mastered by the SELF, goeth to Peace" (ii., 64) "Affection and aversion for the objects of sense abide in the senses ; let no man come under the dominion of these two ; they are his adversaries" (iii., 34).

"Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest, whatsoever thou doest of austerity, do thou as an offering unto Me" (ix., 27). How this reminds us of St. Paul's words : "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. x., 31). "Come unto Me alone

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for shelter ; sorrow not, I will liberate thee from all sins ” (Bh. Gîta xviii., 66).

In these inspired words the Voice of the Master is heard teaching us the secret of Action in Inaction ; and so we learn how actions may have no binding force, and we escape the Karmic web to become “ one with Life, yet live not.”

CHAPTER XVII.

SUMMARY AND COROLLARIES.

I. The meaning of Karma is five-fold :—

1. Act, action, or activity.
2. The Law of Action, or of Cause and Effect, or of Retribution.
3. Retribution.
4. One's stock of merits and demerits ; one's deserts.
5. Character ; which is the result of past sowing and experiences.

- II. 1. The origin of Karma lies inherently in the Second Logos, but is guided by the Third Logos or Demiurgus.
2. The Development of Karma is Evolution in the widest sense, —physical, moral, mental, and spiritual.

3. The Cessation of Karma is Nirvâna.
- III. 1. Abstract Karma. The Formative Principle in Nature ; nature-activity in the Subjective World.
2. Concrete Karma. Activity in the World of Particulars, *i.e.*, in the Objective World or Universe.
- IV. 1. Physical Karma.
- (a) In the purely physical realm, it is the Law of the Conservation of Energy.
 - (b) In the Biological Realm it is
 1. Evolution.
 2. Heredity.
 - (c) In the Kingdoms of Nature it is their respective Evolutions and the Laws governing the persistence of types, species genera, etc.

2. Moral Karma. The Immortality of Deeds.
 3. Mental Karma. Simultaneity of Will and Action, of Deed and Effect.
- V. 1. Active Karma. The thoughts and deeds of the present life ; a sowing for the future.
2. Passive Karma. The Environments and Conditions into which one is born, as a result of past lives.
- VI. 1. Reproductive Karma. Congenital Character or Natural Disposition resulting from the past. That which starts the new life.
2. Supportive Karma. Ability to nourish, add to, or develop the Reproductive Karma.
 3. Counteractive Karma. Actions that weaken, obstruct, interrupt, or retard Reproductive Karma.
 4. Destructive Karma. Actions

that annul completely a Supportive Karma.

- VII. 1. Weighty Karma. Good or Bad of a superlative or very serious nature, taking effect more quickly than other kinds.
2. Death-proximate Karma. The Will or Force behind one's dying thoughts, which have power to affect the conditions of the next rebirth, and that power is more or less effective according to the development of the Soul.
3. Habitual Karma. Karma engendered by Habits.
4. Cumulative Karma. The store of merits and demerits held at the time being as an inheritance of all past lives, and awaiting suitable occasions to fructify.
- VIII. 1. Immediately-Effective Karma. That which fructifies in this life, unless destroyed.

2. Remotely - Effective Karma.
That which ripens in the next rebirth, or else fails for ever.
 3. Indefinitely - Effective Karma.
That which is held over until circumstances will allow it to have effect.
 4. Non-effective Karma. That which is too weak to have effect, or that which is inhibited by Destructive Karma.
- IX. 1. Bad Karma. Reaped in Worlds of Sense.
2. Good Karma. Reaped in Worlds of Sense, Form, or Non-form ; *i.e.*, on Earth and the higher astral levels, in the Heavens of Form and of Formlessness.
- X. 1. Justice.
2. Compassion.
 3. Impartiality that is True.
- XI. 1. Human. Evolution of Man to God.

2. Planetary. Law of the birth, growth, and decay of Planets.
3. Cosmic. Law of the Succession of one period of Manifestation to another; of successive "Creations."

- XII. 1. Agami or Vartamana Karma.
2. Sanchita Karma.
3. Prarabdha Karma.

Which are practically :—

1. Karma done with in the past.
2. Sown in the past and reaping now.
3. Sown in the past and held over until suitable future.
4. Sowing now for reaping in the near or distant future.

- XIII. 1. Individual Karma. That which pertains to one's self.
2. Collective (Supra - Individual, Social, or Inter-Individual) Karma.
 a. Conjugal Karma.
 b. Family Karma.
 c. Mutual Karma.

d. National Karma.

e. Racial Karma.

f. Universal Karma.

All of the above are different ways in which the Law affects "en masse" those of united sympathies, psychic bonds, or whose lives run into each other, or blend. All Humanity is one at its Root and the deeds of one affect all.

XIV. Karmic Intelligences. The Four Lipika, Ministers of the Logos, or Karmic Gods, who direct the working of the Law intelligently. Personified by the Greeks as Nemesis and the Three Fates.

Corollaries to the Doctrine.

1. Destiny and Fate. Explained in Chap. V. We are the decreers of our own Fate. Destiny is a very powerful Karma which we cannot

prevent, but which was set going by ourselves.

2. Freewill. Explained in Chap. VII. The Will is only partly free, and as we improve our Character we gradually make our wills freer and freer. Culture and Nurture improve Character.
3. Transfer of Merits to others. This can only be partial, and may not be exactly in the way in which we intended. It is in the hands of the Karmic Intelligences. See Chapters XIII. and XV.,— Parivarta and Pattidana.
4. Ancestor-Worship. Based on Family Karma, which see.
5. Aiding the Suffering Departed. See Chapter XIII. Based on the Law of the underlying unity of all Souls, and the fact that we must on that account affect each other, here or departed.

In conclusion, let me quote a beautiful passage from "Light on the Path." "He who desires to be Karmaless must look to the air for a home, and after that to the ether. He who desires to form good Karma will meet with many confusions, and in the effort to sow rich seed for his own harvesting, may plant a thousand weeds, and among them the giant. DESIRE TO SOW NO SEED FOR YOUR OWN HARVESTING; desire only to sow that seed the fruit of which shall *feed the world*," and thus, O Traveller on the Path, thou wilt be treading the Holiest Path of the Buddhas of Compassion.

* * * *

May whatever merit there may be in this Exposition be universally distributed among all beings! And may all beings reach That Other Shore—the Bliss and Enlightenment of Nirvâna—Supreme, Perfect, Great, and Everlasting!

OM MANI PADME HUM!

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