



# ***Karma Yoga or Destiny***

By Swami Durgananda

Much has been written and discussed about Karma; here I would like to dispel the myths surrounding it, especially the interpretations that have been adopted by many in the West.

Yogis say one should CONTEMPLATE - DISCRIMINATE-MEDITATE

Involvement of body, mind and soul, which is of course what most of us do anyway in our daily lives, personal and career wise. We tend to think, "Is this right for me? Will this make me happy? Will this bring good results? And then we go ahead and do it.

Mainly we think if we do such and such, what will happen? What is the motivation? What will be the results? For instance if we lose our temper with our boss and tell him his idea is wrong - will I get the sack? If I speed, will I get a ticket? If I don't practise my yogic disciplines will my teacher know?

So, without realizing it, we are actually practicing cause and effect in our daily lives.

AS YE SOW, SO SHALL YE REAP KARMA

So many people have jumped onto the band wagon and use or misuse the word "Karma". Not many people know the real meaning or the ramifications of Karma.

Karma comes from the ancient Sanskrit word "KRI" meaning "to do - action" It also means "the results of the action." So, its meaning is:

ACTION = CAUSE

REACTION = EFFECT

Many years ago I was living in India at the time when it was gripped by a terrible famine. Many people in the South were dying of starvation, especially the children. Nowadays we see such horror caused by these natural disasters from the television, but at that time many in the West were not aware of the horror and suffering of the starving masses.

During this particular disaster I was involved with a large charity organisation, together with many other local organisations and concerned people from all over India; we were helping to distribute relief to the stricken areas. As the situation deteriorated requests for help went out to the Western countries to send food, medical supplies, etc. I was very proud to hear that Australia had replied by sending a shipment of powdered milk - amongst other things - the powdered milk was to be given to the children.

But when the shipment arrived, I was amazed when the mothers of these children refused the milk. When I asked in my ignorance, why, the reply I received was that it was cow's milk and their religion forbade the drinking of it. I was completely shocked by the answer, and failed

to understand the reasoning. The milk was not distributed and later I was able to ask an Indian friend to explain the situation. Why not allow the children to take the milk? She smiled at me one of those conciliatory smiles and informed me that it was against their religion to take cow's milk. The cow is holy. They say that if they must die, it is their Karma, their destiny.

Many years later I was to hear a young Western woman tell me she was an adulteress in her last life so in this life she could not have a relationship with a man. It was her Karma, her destiny.

I was able to understand or rather come to terms with the illiterate village woman's interpretation of Karma, but not that of the educated Western woman. Westerners use it as a cop out - using a word that sounds good but takes us away from ourselves, from life; Taking us far away from our experiences and acting out our own sphere of cause and effect as embodied souls.

To become an embodied soul is such a great honor and aid to our evolution - our main task is to learn how to drive and maintain the body and mind. How we must learn to control the body...control the mind...become the controller not the controlled...to look within and get to know ourselves.

If we say, "This is my Karma" shrug our shoulders and walk away - turn away from action - there can be no reaction. We are denying ourselves our true destiny, our experiences.

Take, for instance, suicide, escapism. If we take the concept of reincarnation there is no escape. Who are we escaping from - ourselves? Perhaps we are neither what nor who we perceive ourselves to be.

## CONTEMPLATE DISCRIMINATE MEDITATE

Let me talk a little bit about KARMA YOGA, where all this comes from:

### YOGA PATH OF DISCIPLINE

### KARMA ACTION/RESULTS OF ACTION

For instance, everything is Samskara, which is the "disposition towards action" or your control towards action. If I associate myself with the physical body - oh yes, I am a physical being and I repeat what my parents have done, without realizing the cycle of cause and effect. Take the following example if I have an alcoholic drink every Saturday night and the next morning I get a hangover. Why? Because my father did, his brothers and sisters did, his mother did, her brothers did, and her father did, and so on.

Until one day I begin to raise my vibration, my higher self ( or soul state ) starts to wake up - "Why am I doing this? This is not being true to me? So I face this cycle of cause and effect - I begin to face this experience.

The following is an article from the Victorian newspaper Herald Sun, 29 December 1993:

**DRUG LINK REPORT NEW YORK:** The scientific team that found a genetic pattern common among severe alcoholics in 1990 has found the same evidence in cocaine addicts, according to the journal, Drug and Alcohol Dependence.

In 1990, Dr, Kenneth Blum and Dr Ernest Noble concluded the high level of a gene pattern called the A1 allele increases the odds of a person becoming addicted to alcohol.

In their latest study, they found the same gene pattern in 51% of 53 Los Angeles cocaine addicts, but only in 16% of 100 non-addicted people in a control group.

The researches also looked at behavioral and personality characteristics, plus family addiction history.

The A1 allele is a less common form of D2 dopamine gene which plays a key role in creating sensations of pleasure.

"Individuals with the A1 allele have fewer dopamine receptors in their brains, so may not experience as intense a sensation of pleasure from normal activities as do other people," Dr Blum said.

Yogis say this happens because I was born in this cycle to face up to and break the cycle. Not everyone has the courage to look within and break away from the bonds of this Karmic experience, but it is worthwhile to have a go. It is why you are here - to face the harvest of the seeds you have sown and control it and finish it and get onto the next experience, putting that one behind you.

Such cycles exist in the animal and plant kingdom - the ability to break it and go beyond, belongs to the human kingdom, to the embodied souls.

It takes a very brave Yogi or for that matter human being to look at this cycle and decide to begin to take responsibility for what has been happening to them. But by breaking the cycle with KNOWLEDGE one begins the journey of Karma Yoga in a positive way. Now I have become aware of my individuality, now I begin to be responsible for my own actions as the Vedas record, "no longer living in ignorance bound by Karma."

If we believe in reincarnation then what is the knowledge we take with us? This can only be the knowledge born of experience. Without that, how can we sow the seeds required to prepare for the next life?

We cannot escape, even if we say we don't believe in reincarnation, so it's O.K for me. Why deny ourselves a good quality of life now, peace of mind, a full and interesting life free of inhibitions, fulfilling our destiny to the best of our ability.

Karma is often described as an inescapable obligation or duty - inescapable writings written by one's own hand.

There are also:

PHYSICAL MENTAL SPIRITUAL Karmas

There is really no escape.

Let me tell you about a man who lived in the USA. My teacher would refer to this fellow as not far removed from the brute. He had committed a terrible murder and was sentenced to death by the electric chair. He appealed and later the sentence was reduced to life in prison. 3 months later sitting on the toilet mending a pair of head phones, he was electrocuted. No escape from this universal law, but I wonder what his reaction was! I am sure if you think about this you would have heard of similar stories.

Billy Graham a great evangelist of the 20th century was often quoted as saying in adversity we should repeat the following prayer "Thank you, God, for giving me this challenge. I'll show you what I'm made of," and respond with courage, enthusiasm and even joy.

There are many saints and highly spiritual prophets and teachers that one might enquire, do they also live by the laws of Karma, or are they exempt? No-one is exempt from the law of Karma.

SWAMI NITCHINANDA Arthritis (finished at death) SHRI RAMA KRISHNA Throat Cancer JESUS OF NAZARETH Tortured and Crucified JOHN THE BAPTIST Beheaded KRISHNA Shot by an arrow

Just imagine, I breathe, I live, I don't eat, I die. I have done this to myself. In this instant it is my personal responsibility, I am responsible for my actions and myself. I have nobody to blame for the results but myself.

If I have a problem be it physical, mental or spiritual, it is up to me to do something about it. It is my reaction to the action or experience which is important for the here and now. The seeds have already been sown; I can not do anything about it now. It's really up to me to do something about the experience - my reaction to the action is important, I must finish with it, in order to progress in order to grow. in order to evolve.

No knowledge comes from outside, all knowledge comes from experience. What one knows now is what one unveils, discovers or learns by experience. Some people call it maturity; some say its self discovery.

To block off experience is to close off all growth, as a person as well as to our higher self:

I AM TALKING TO YOU THAT IS KARMA YOU ARE LISTENING THAT IS KARMA WE BREATHE THAT IS KARMA WE WALK THAT IS KARMA

Everything we do, physically or mentally, is Karma and leaves its mark on us.

Yogis say Karma Yoga is by doing, learning, experiencing, we ripen, we mature, eventually reaching that state of the Higher Self. Here, where all gender ends, here where all yoga ends, where all religions end. Here, where the Higher Self emerges supreme, and here, yogis remind us is only the beginning, here we stand on the threshold of existence.

The greatest Karma Yogi is said to have been Buddha. He was the first to say, "Believe not because some old manuscripts are produced, believe not because it is your national belief,

because you have been made to believe it from your childhood; but reason it all out and after you have analyzed it, then, if you find it will do good to one and all, believe it, live up to it."

Yogis believe he works best who works without any motive, neither for money, nor for fame, nor for anything else and when one can do that, they will be a Buddha and out of them will come the power to work in such a manner as will transform the world. This represents the very highest ideal of Karma Yoga.

For every cause, there will be an effect nearly equal in intensity. If we make good use of our minds, skills and talents, these will become apparent in our outer lives.

Great souls often speak of the Universal Law, the Law of cause and effect, the all perfect Law of the Universe which is infinite. The Universal Law cannot be cheated.

We are in the physical experience to mould our character. It is the way we face our problems that builds our character. There is no problem that we can't overcome one must retain the belief that all the problems we are faced with are the problems that we were given to solve before incarnation, the bargain we struck and agreed to before entering into this life. No use blaming Mother, Father, money, others, according to the state we reached before this lifetime, the seeds previously sewn, according to the Universal Law of cause and effect. At the time we were given these obstacles, we were also given the ability to overcome them.

Can you understand that? No situation is impossible; no problem is too great for us to overcome, if that is our desire. We have our own free will - we have the power of the Universe within us, therefore nothing is impossible.

There is only one peace - the peace that comes when we are in harmony with the Universal Consciousness. That is the peace described as **THAT PEACE WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING.**

We are on this physical level, this dimension of intelligence for a reason, even when we forget or find it difficult to understand that reason. But when we take the time to sit in a quiet place and look within, we will be taking a step on the right path, a step towards understanding our existence the reason why we are here and now and a step towards our higher self on the well-trodden path of the saints.

We are of the Spirit, we will return to the Spirit. And, if we make good use of our time, this will give us a positive advantage, scarcely one in a thousand individuals puts their time to anything near its potential good use. Perhaps its time now for you to think of being true to yourself, to resolve to take control, and above all accepting responsibility for yourself and your own actions. In the final analysis we are the only ones from whom we can steal time and accomplishment.

Visit <http://samatayoga.com.au> for more about Swami Durgananda and Samata Yoga.

