

The background of the cover is an abstract, swirling composition of colors including white, yellow, orange, red, and purple. In the center, there is a faint, ethereal figure that appears to be in a meditative or spiritual pose. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and spiritual transformation.

# THE ABSOLUTE LAW OF **KARMA**

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- PANDIT SHRIRAM SHARMA ACHARYA

# **What is Destiny?**

**(Absolute Law of Karma !)**



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# Abstract

Strange are the ways of life. We so often see instances where virtuous persons suffer endlessly while sinners lead pleasurable lives; indolents achieve success while hard-working persons fail repeatedly, the wise face adversity while fools live in prosperity; the egoists are held in high esteem while the righteous suffer contempt. The established human norms for achieving happiness and success do not always appear to hold good in practical terms. This book is an eye-opener for all as it gives very logical explanation of the relationship between human deeds and destiny. It lucidly explains in scientific light, the fundamental law of Karma, the secrets behind fortune and misfortune, the mystery behind collective suffering of large number of people at the same time and place, the three types of agonies man is afflicted with, and their cause and effect relationship. The method by which each one of our actions is recorded and how results of our actions affect us later on has been very scientifically explained in an interesting way.

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# What is fate, Who regulates it?

Most of us are generally curious to know our future. As rational beings we feel that it is by and large determined by our efforts but still can't create or predict it. Some of us may consider the uncertainty to be governed by some 'unknown' random law of Nature (or Murphy's Law!). Whatever be the case, the word "fate" or destiny is very much a part of our natural inquisitiveness to know — why different people have different fates, or why people born in the same family, brought up in same environment, having the same qualifications and talents end up getting drastically different destinies in their professional and social lives? To a varied

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extent, we do feel concerned about 'our stars', horoscope, palm-maps, 'cards', etc that are commonly regarded as 'indicators' of fate. So let us examine what this fate is?

The Indian mythology states that “*Chitragupta*” maintains the records of our *karma*, which shapes our future destiny. But who is *Chitragupta*? Is it another name of God? Or, does it refer to a superhuman, angel or is it simply an allegory?

The number of human beings inhabiting this earth itself is in several billions. If we take into account the other living beings of millions of non-human species, the total number would be beyond mathematical calculation. It would be an impossible task for an individual being, howsoever superbly evolved, to work day and night without rest for millions of years maintaining records of each moment of life of innumerable beings of the cosmos. Impracticability of maintenance of such a stupendous record puts a question mark on the very existence of *Chitragupta*. Modern science, however, substantiates the reality underlying the metaphorical descriptions given in the scriptures.

Science has now established that all mental, verbal and physical activities carried out by an individual having a discriminative mind leave subtle impressions on the deeper levels of the psyche. In this way, like the compressed audio-visual recordings of events on a microchip of the computer or compact disc, all good and evil deeds are being recorded in the hidden chambers of the

subconscious mind. This record, like that of an ultra compact disk, remains in storage till it is required to be processed at a desired moment through an appropriate mechanism.

In Indian science of spirituality, *karma* stands for any physical, verbal, mental or social activity. Because of the evolved state of human-consciousness, each *karma* 'automatically and instantaneously' generates a subtle mental imprint. These imprints cannot be erased before the *karma* results in the consequent effect (*karmaphal*) at the appropriate time – in this life or in any future life in any form.

The scriptures also describe that the Supreme Creator (Lord *Brahma*) inscribes the destiny on the forehead of a human being and this Divine Inscription cannot be erased by anyone. Let us examine this concept from a scientific point of view. Studies based on sophisticated mapping of brain activities by functional MRI etc, show innumerable furrows in the grey matter all over the brain. Medical science has not so far fully deciphered the biological implications of these indentations. Comparative studies of different subjects have shown that density of these crenulations in the grey matter of highly evolved persons and thinkers is much more, than in the case of common masses. It shows that these 'microscopic' lines in the grey matter of the brain are nothing but compact subtle impressions created by external activities. This finding supports the possibility of imprints of mental, vocal and physical actions.



The record of activities (good and evil deeds) on the neuronal 'memory chips' proves the existence of an adept, intelligent mechanism, which Hindu Mythology refers to as *Chitragupta*. Linguistically, the Sanskrit word "*Chitragupta*" means "a hidden picture" This refers to our inner mind, the unconscious mind or more precisely the "*chitta*" [The impressions recorded on *chitta* could be understood in simple terms by automatic backup storage in the CPU of all the programmes executed on a computer].

As per the deeper science of spirituality, human consciousness works at four subtle 'processors' or 'cores' of consciousness; namely – *mana* (conscious mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *chitta* (the subconscious and the unconscious mind, the core of intrinsic tendencies) and *ahamkāra* (the sense of self-identity). These collectively define an individual self (*jīvātmā*) and are carried forward with the subtle body life after life. The subtle imprints on the 'hidden register' of *chitta* — hence the *gupta-Chitta* (or *Chitragupta*) control the future course of life.

It is a scientifically established fact that the active part of the human brain, which is only a tiny fraction of its total capacity (~7% in case of the most trenchant, most intelligent and most active mind!), itself has an infinite potential for storage and processing of information. It has also been affirmed that the subconscious and the unconscious minds control the continuous functioning of the brain. Thus there is no doubt about the limitless capacities of the unconscious mind. So the "*Chitragupta*" referred in the

vedic texts is indeed ageless and limitless Super- consciousness which continuously maintains the records of every action, every thought, every feeling of individual beings.

### **How do 'records' of deeds account for fate?**

The self-regulated mechanism of the eternal Consciousness Force keeps a continuous micro-record of our deeds in a subtle form, as mental inscriptions. Upon death, these 'shorthand notes' (in the subconscious layers of *chitta*) serve the purpose of 'testimony' for objective evaluation of the total span of our present life.

As we all know, the human mind works at two levels: one external and the other internal. The outer mind, which we experience all the time except while in the state of sound sleep, is analytical. It analyses the pros and cons, accepts and discards, infers, aspires as per the urges of the senses and is driven by extrovert tendencies. It takes decisions with the help of intellect, but frequently changes its resolutions. The inner mind, on the other hand, is like an innocent but resolute child. It neither accepts nor discards anything, but as the true faithful representative of the divine, functions impartially toward divine justice.

The external mind may think of escaping punishment by suppressing or overlooking the recordings of the lines of evil deeds and highlight only the virtuous deeds for reward. The inner mind (conscience is one of its constituents), on the other hand, works

differently. It takes decisions like an unbiased judge of highest integrity, who cannot be influenced by allurements, fear or any vested interest. It is said that in each human being there co-exist a saint and a devil. You may consider the sublime inner mind as a representative of divinity and the external mind, which is ever engaged in reasoning, rationalizing, deliberating, conspiring and hypocrisy, as a tool of the devil. The external mind may deceive the soul by justifying each and every action of a person.

The inner-mind, on the contrary, is the flame of the soul and a projection of the Absolute Truth. It is, therefore, incapable of conceit and deceit and is innately calm and detached. That is why God has entrusted it with such crucial responsibility. For the common man, it is the deity *Chitragupta*. Being absolutely impartial, this deity has been given the high seat of Divine Judge. Like a secret service agent, this deity is all the time vigilantly shadowing a person and recording his actions in its secret diary.

In human society, there are two departments for punishing the violators of law- namely the police and the judiciary. The police arrests the accused, collects the evidence and presents these before the judicial court. Thereafter the process of justice takes over. The judge delivers the judgment after considering all aspects of the offence and related circumstances. Depending on the circumstantial evidence, individuals are handed down varied sentences for the same type of offence.

Let us consider an example. Three persons are accused of killing a person. Because of different circumstances associated with the crime, one is set free, the second person is sentenced to five years of imprisonment and the third is sent to the electric chair. The person, who was released, was a mason. While working at an elevated level, he had accidentally dropped a brick, which killed a passerby. The presiding judge found that the brick was dropped accidentally and unintentionally, without an ulterior motive. Hence the accused was released without punishment. The second accused was a farmer. Finding a thief stealing his crop, he had given him a fatal blow, killing the offender.

Taking into consideration the circumstances, which prompted the offence, the judge surmised that though it was natural for the farmer to show his anger towards someone stealing his property, nevertheless, since he had over-reacted to a small offence, a sentence of five years imprisonment was appropriate. The third person was a notorious robber who had robbed a rich man and intentionally killed him in the process. In this way the worldly court of justice pronounces judgment after minutely examining all circumstantial evidences.

In the inner-mind the 'coded' notes of *Chitragupta* discharge the dual responsibility of God's police and court of justice. In the material world, if the prosecutor presents inadequate or false evidence, the judgment of the court is likely to be flawed, but in the inner occult world there is absolutely no possibility of such

miscarriage of justice. The inmost mind, being the direct and transparent witness to all physical as well as mental activities of a person, is fully aware of the intentions, motives and circumstances of each and every action. Being fully aware, it does not require the testimony of the external mind or intellect to arrive at a conclusion.

In Divine Justice the gravity of a sin (vice) or merit of a virtue is decided on the basis of the motive and degree of emotional involvement with the deed. Whereas in the material world objects are measured materially on the basis of their mundane worth, this measure is irrelevant for dispensing Divine Justice. The material world may ignore a poor donor of ten cents and admire a person donating ten thousand dollars, but in Divine Jurisprudence the worth of such acts of altruism will not be assessed on this gross physical basis.

Let us take an example. In a remote, undeveloped tribal area, one may barter a kilogram of food grains for sugar, but in a developed country one has to pay in hard currency. In the material world, people do earn fame and name by making large contributions to charity, helping in popular welfare activities, joining religious or charitable institutions, delivering or listening to sermons and participating in pilgrimages; but the “Domain of *Chitragupta*” does not accept this currency. The ledgers of this domain record only debits and credits of motives and emotional involvements in the performance of deeds and convert these into virtues and sins accordingly.

Upon being exhorted by his Divine Teacher Lord *Krishna*, *Arjuna* got millions killed in the war of *Mahabharata*. This great Armageddon, during which the entire battlefield became littered with corpses, took place because *Arjun* agreed to take part in the war. In this way, *Arjuna* could have been considered a great sinner, but *Chitragupta* gave credit to his motive for waging the *Mahabharata* war. *Arjuna's* intentions were pious. He had fought only to re-establish the 'Supreme Moral Order' (*dharma sthāpanā*). *Chitragupta's* 'ledger' did not take into account the slain bodies of the soldiers. Physical objects have no relevance in the invisible realm. *Chitragupta* simply ignored the number of toys of flesh and bones destroyed during the war.

Does a king bother about the number of toys broken or the number of grains spilled? In this world billionaires are held in high regard but in the realm of God they are paupers and non-entities. On the other hand a poor man of this world, if he is kind hearted, could be counted in His realm amongst the king of kings. Whatever a man does, only his motives - good or bad - are recorded in the corresponding account of *Chitragupta*. A public executioner, who, in course of duty, hangs a person condemned to death without any malice, could be considered a virtuous person by *Chitragupta*, whereas a priest, who meticulously follows the rituals, but is secretly engaged in corrupt practices, will be labeled as a sinner.

In the realm of the Lord of Divine Law (*Dharmaraj*), the decorations of the exterior world have no values. There only the interior worth is evaluated. It hardly matters whether externally an action of a person appears good or bad. The determining factor is the interior or emotional input. The roots of vices and virtues unquestionably lie in the intentions, in the nature and intensity of the intrinsic tendencies, the motives, the desires, and not in the external deeds.

To understand that the type and intensity of motive is directly proportional to the gravity or greatness of the sin or virtue respectively, take the example of two individuals nursing a sick person. Apparently both are engaged in the same service, but whereas one is doing it indifferently, the other serves with tenderness, sympathy, large-heartedness and love. Here, in spite of apparently identical service, the measure of virtue will depend on the quality of emotional involvement and love. Similarly, amongst two thieves, one of which is compelled to steal because of starvation and the other steals for acquiring drugs, the sin will undoubtedly be considered greater in the latter case.

In the foregoing paragraphs we have discussed how *Chitragupta*, a component of our own inner self, impartially records our good and bad deeds on the sub-microscopic elements of our inner conscience and that this subtle recording is popularly known as the “Lines of Fate” (*Karma Rekha*). We have also understood that the process of divine justice does not regard an act as sinful or

virtuous by the external appearance of the activity but on the basis of the quality of the motive of the doer. In God's jurisprudence, there is significant clause for treating each individual independently according to the state of purity of the soul.

The laws of universal conscience hold that each soul is perpetually in the process of progressive evolution i.e. purification through the course of successive cycles of birth and death. That is, at each successive stage the soul acquires greater purity and is given a body in the species of higher consciousness (wisdom). Being born as a human being is regarded as the most precious gift of evolution of consciousness, as this is the only life form where the individual self gets a chance with full liberty to do good or bad *karmas* and accordingly write his/her destiny. Human life alone offers the chance for liberation from the cycles of birth and death. It is up to us how we, the architects of our own destinies, make use of this invaluable opportunity.





# The Secret of Unexpected Good or Bad Fortune

We often come across situations and incidents, which appear quite contradictory to the known laws of Nature, creating doubts about the impartiality of divine justice. For instance, an honest, duty-conscious, morally elevated person is often seen caught in adversities in one form or the other, or is suddenly struck with a great misfortune in life as though he/she was being punished by God for a great sin. On the other hand, we find persons engaged in worst types of corrupt practices living in peace and prosperity. An idler wins

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a jackpot or inherits a fortune from unexpected quarters, whereas a hard working intelligent person is found suffering endlessly for want of basic necessities. One person achieves great success with little effort, whereas another does not succeed in spite of his best efforts. Such phenomena are popularly ascribed to the role of fate (*bhāgya*).

Unprecedented natural calamities like famine, epidemics, tornadoes, floods, damage by lightning and earthquakes and 'untimely death' are also commonly attributed to the 'Will of God' and called predestined (*prārabdha*). Such unexpected happenings as financial loss, accidents, sudden mental/physical disability and physical separation from a dear one are also attributed to fate.

Such unexpected adversities are rare, but they do occur in life. At times, they leave such deep imprints on the psyche, that it is not possible to ignore them. Those who are not familiar with the mysteries of divine justice become very much perplexed by such experiences and form prejudiced opinions, which, in some form or the other, hinder their mental and spiritual progress. Many become resentful towards God, blame and abuse Him for 'favoritism' and injustice. A few even become atheists, considering the futility of worshipping God who does not respond to prayers in distress, despite their prolonged adherences to religiosity. Then there is a class of devotees who serve the saints and worship deities in expectation of some material gains.

However, if they are visited with some failure, unfavorable circumstances, or mishap coincidentally, their adoration changes to contempt or disbelief.

There are quite a few 'believers' in this world who correlate people, places and things with good and bad luck. Such superstitions have caused extreme miseries to innocent persons. The root cause for such irrational behavior is the belief that whatever come to pass is predestined by God and the beings created by Him have absolutely no role in shaping their own destiny.

Quite a few persons in this world forsake their responsibility in the mistaken belief that the gain and loss being predestined, there is no necessity of personal effort. They mistakenly believe that they cannot change the Will of God, who is supposed to have programmed their life beforehand. We often hear expressions like – “Whatever is destined cannot be changed” or “Who can change the fate predestined by God?” or “It was the Will of God”. As a matter of fact, man uses such expressions when he finds himself helpless, disturbed and confused while facing adversity.

In the absence of an understandable cause, the agitated mind finds a scapegoat in the Divine Will. Nevertheless, such outbursts do have an advantage. They help in releasing the stress of the disturbed mind, which would have otherwise triggered the stressed person towards suicidal acts or caused psychosomatic

disorders. There are however many mature persons who shirk their responsibility of self-effort to meet a given challenge under the pretext of inexorability of 'Divine Will'. Because of their influence, the less knowledgeable younger persons around them too begin to feel helpless and despaired because of the so-called "inevitability of fate"

Readers would appreciate how ignorance about the real causes of unexpected calamities creates ridiculous concepts, which distort and vitiate the value-system of life.

Since times immemorial, man has been attempting to correlate human activities with events of life over which he has no control. Research in deeper science of consciousness has discovered ways and means to find answers to such problems of life. Here, we shall discuss how mental and physical actions of individual and collective activities of the society become responsible for good fortune or misfortune of individuals and the community in future.



# Sufferings and Their Causes

All kinds of sufferings and agonies are classified in the ancient Indian texts into three categories: *Daivik*, *Daihiik*, *Bhautik Dukha*. These pertain respectively to the mental (including emotional) agonies, physical sufferings, and torments due to natural calamities. The scriptures say that the root cause of all agonies and sufferings is, directly or indirectly, self-generated (by the soul).

Sudden happenings of good fortune and misfortune are part of life and there is no escape from them. Saint-poet Soordas has

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rightly stated that the effects of actions (*karmas*) cannot be avoided even with the best of guidance from an enlightened and experienced person. In spite of having an agelic *rishi* like Vashishtha as his Guru Sri Ram had to face the agonies of exile, tragic death of his father, abduction of his wife Sita and subsequently her forced banishment to *rishi* Valmiki's ashram.

It would not be proper to assume that misfortunes are punishment given by an 'angry' God to chastise an erring person. The epic Ramayana says that each individual is himself responsible for his happiness and miseries ("*Kahu na kowū dukha-sukha dātā, Nij nij karma bhoga saba bhrātā ||*"- All beings reap the fruits of their own doings). They benefit and rejoice or wail, weep and suffer because of their own past actions. With each living being, God has provided an absolutely perfect and intelligent mechanism that continuously records the consequences of one's ongoing *karmas* and also determines the fruits of the *karmas* that have ripened at the present time.

Like a fish swimming in the water, or a snake crawling on sand, one's *karmas* (emotional, mental or physical actions) leave behind their 'footprints'/traces on the 'surface' of his unconscious mind. These sublime but deep impressions are known as *sanskāras* in spiritual parlance. Evil feelings, demonic thoughts or vicious actions generate highly distressful and negative *sanskāras*, which in due course of time sprout as sufferings, like self-growing thorny bushes.

Happiness and peace are the natural states of mind. Man (a human being) is intrinsically inclined in his inner core self to act for welfare of self and others, which naturally results in peace and joy. But he does not know what the best way is to do this; so his mind wanders here and there. His mind therefore gets disturbed or emotionally perturbed many times and thus results in feelings of suffering. As suffering or unhappiness is against the will of the inner self, one dreads mental turbulence, sorrow and grief. But one keeps facing and experiencing them in some form or the other. Let us look at the causes that generate such circumstances, occasions or situations of unhappiness.

As the medical science has two independent streams, one for promotion of health and another for treatment of diseases, there are two branches of spiritual effects – one for promoting happiness and the other for allaying or eliminating unhappiness. Righteous living is essential for inner peace and happiness just as nutritional food is for physical health. For effectiveness of a therapy it is necessary to first have a correct diagnosis and then look for suitable treatment. There is yet another way to remain healthy and that is 'prevention of the disease' The same holds true for 'treatment' of unhappiness. By discarding the *karmas* that would generate bad *sanskāras*, we can prevent the resultant suffering and pain.

Let us now discuss in detail the types of sufferings and the *karmas* that cause them. As mentioned earlier, misfortunes influence a person by creating three types of adverse reactions: Mental (or emotional) sufferings, Physical ailment or pains, and Suffering

caused by natural disasters. In Indian texts on spirituality these are referred respectively as “*Daivik*”, “*Daihik*” and “*Bhautik*” - *Dukhas*.

### **Mental Sufferings (*Daivik-Dukhas*):**

All types of sorrows, mental suffering, are results of 'Mental Sins'. Worry, anxiety, irritation, humiliation, animosity, anguish of separation from a beloved one, fear, grief, etc. are signs of divine justice for mental sins. Mental sins are those willful *karmas* (deliberate acts) of mind, which are carried out intentionally in a state of mental awareness. These are generally triggered by egocentric strong negative emotional stimuli.

We may call mental sins as corrupt functions of mind like jealousy, perfidy, deception, scandalous planning, revengeful annoyance, cruelty, etc, which pollute the environment around the inner psyche. These kinds of mental sins do not provide any physical gratification; they may only temporarily satisfy the doer's arrogance or selfish cravings. Like a smoke-filled room, the environment created by pollutants of mind suffocates the soul.

Sins like theft, burglary, robbery, adultery, kidnapping, violence, etc are apparently committed physically. However, as these are triggered and guided intentionally by the mind, such acts also fall in the category of mental sins.

The soul, being a spark of the omnipresent divinity, is intrinsically pure. It does not permit accumulation of sinful thoughts around



itself and is always eager to eliminate those 'internal' pollutants in someway or the other, in the same manner, as the body expels the harmful food.

The soul is meticulously careful about its purity. The moment it finds any mental sins adulterating its sublime ambience, it feels uncomfortable and immediately, though transcendently, reacts to discard the 'pollutants'. Although our extrovert conscious mind is hardly aware, the inner, subtle (unconscious) mind is always seeking the opportunity to throw off this burden (of mental or emotional vices). Sometime, somehow, from somewhere, it puts the concerned individual in certain types of circumstances that neutralize some of the bad *sanskāras* – sublime impressions, inscriptions or assimilations in the unconscious mind – created by evil desires, sentiments, thoughts and deeds. For example, such circumstances could make one face scornful humiliation, failure, demotion, disrepute, etc.

Death of a beloved person or separation from him/her, loss in business and property, public- defamation, poverty, etc also cause acute mental agonies. Such experiences bring out the inner pain to the surface; the aggrieved person weeps, wails, cries from the depths of his heart. He/She feels a void in life and is reminded (by the inner self) of the transience of worldly possessions and futility of selfish obsessions, attachments, and false pride. The agonized person thus gets motivated to refrain from committing sinful deeds in future and to follow a righteous path in life.

While attending funerals, people are reminded of the uncertainties and short span of life and thus made to realize the importance and urgency of living a purposeful life. When suffering from financial loss, one seeks God's help. On being defeated or facing failure, one's vanity is deflated. It is like a drunkard beginning to talk sense when the intoxication is over.

The above examples illustrate that the only purpose of mental distress is to awaken the mind, to cleanse the garbage of mental pollutants like jealousy, ingratitude, cruelty, selfishness, apathy, cunningness, hypocrisy, false pride and arrogance. Through such sufferings, the divine mechanism indwelling the soul also alerts the mind against accumulation of untoward *sanskāras*<sup>1</sup> that generate and nurture such negative tendencies and mental vices.

### Physical Sufferings (*Daihiḱ Dukhas*):

The cause of congenital deficiencies and genetic diseases is misutilisation of the corresponding organs in some previous lives. After death, the soul leaves the physical body but carries forward the subtle body (*Sukṣma Śarīra*) to the next life. In the succeeding birth, the new body is shaped by this 'mental-vital-energy' body. The subtle body carries with it in the *chitta* (unconscious mind), the nuclei (seeds) of *sanskāras* assimilated from earlier lives. It thus contains 'blue prints' of one's physical body and mental potentials and tendencies that are going to be manifested (via the genetic machinery) in the next birth.

The *sanskāras* subliminally 'stored' in the subtle body, include the imprints of the wrong actions committed by the sense organs. The corresponding components of the physical organs, which are sinfully or otherwise wrongly used in the previous life, lose their vitality in the subtle body and manifest as impaired or malfunctioning in the physical body of the next birth. For example, it is possible for a sexually indulgent person to be born with congenital impotence or with imperfections in sexual organs in the next life (Note that Roman Catholic Church defines indulgence as "a partial remission of the temporal punishment that is still due for sin after absolution"). This way, by giving cautionary punishment (through physical deformity or infirmity) for over-indulgence in sensual pleasure, the divine justice also provides the soul an excellent opportunity for self-upliftment.

The temporary period of non-functioning or malfunctioning of the affected faculty serves the purpose of caution as well as rejuvenation for the next life. That is to say, whichever organ of the body is recklessly misused for sensual gratification is deemed to be engaged in a physical sin. In the next life that organ is either found missing or appears as a congenital defect. Thus congenital physical deformities or diseases are for remission of sins (*c.f.* Absolution–Roman Catholic Theory). The compulsory rest 'imposed' by Nature in the present life rejuvenates that organ of the body and also relieves the burden of corresponding *sanskāra* from the subtle body through repentance. When a mental sin is intermixed with a physical sin

and has not been neutralized in the present life by punishment by the state, society or by atonement, it is also carried over to the next life.

However, if the sin is basically physical with little or no input of the mind (deliberate attempt or intention), the biological system immediately takes care of it. For instance, man gets intoxicated and deranged on taking drugs, falls sick because of dietary irregularities or dies on consuming the poison. This is a physical punishment for a physical sin. The body cleans itself of the minor physical sins speedily and these are neutralized in this very life. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, serious physical vices, which are also associated with mental stimuli, are carried over by the astral body for being worked out in the next life.

### Sufferings Due to Natural Calamities (*Bhautik Dukhas*):

Of late, science has begun to appreciate the damaging impact of lop-sided human activities on global life-sustaining elements of nature. Indiscriminate use of chloro-flouro carbons by some developing countries is damaging the global biosphere for entire humankind by producing the greenhouse effect. Reckless deforestation in certain parts of the world is creating worldwide ecological imbalances. Such examples illustrate that basic elements of Nature are globally interdependent and local changes in them have universal implications. The following observations bring out this eternal truth.

“*Prāṇa*” - the universal life force, is one of the vital elements of Nature, which is an integral constituent of all animate beings. The entire human race is inter-connected with this all-pervasive element. Each spark of life in the individual animate being, which is known as “*Jivātmā*” in spiritual parlance, is part of the omnipresence of THAT Omnipresent Life Force.

The science of spirituality (c.f. the Upanishads) maintains that, because of their existence in the Omnipresent consciousness force, the *karman*s and *sanskāras* of all living beings are mutually interactive. In social milieu these reactions are quite prominent. A criminal brings shame to his parents and family as well. The latter suffer disgrace because of disregarding their responsibilities or not performing their duties adequately to make that person a good citizen, or to prevent his criminal activities, or to inform the police, other concerned authorities, or reformatory counselors, etc.

The responsibility for spiritual development of the child (a virtuous *karma*) rests on the parents and other adults of the family. Hence, though in the material world only the offender receives the punishment from the law enforcers and the society, the souls of the parents and other family members too have to suffer partially for this dereliction of duty, which the divine jurisprudence considers as a sin. When the neighbor's house is on fire, you cannot remain a silent spectator, since soon you may also become a victim. If in spite of being capable of preventing, one looks on at acts of theft, burglary, rape, murder, etc indifferently,

the society would look down upon such a person contemptuously and the law would also not spare him. The laws of divine justice follow stricter norms in foolproof manner.

Divine law expects man to abide by time-tested moral codes of conduct and, as a social responsibility, also exerts sincere efforts to prevent others from violating them. If some country or community or race does not make an attempt to dissuade any of its citizens or members from committing wrong deeds, or to prevent expansion of evil or debouching tendencies, in spite of being in a position to do so; or does not promote morality and ethics despite having the means to do so, it too has to suffer the dire consequences. Such collective sins of inactivity or indifference invite combined punishment from divine justice.

Earthquakes, deluge, drought, famine, world wars are consequences of collective sins of humanity — in which *karmas* for vested interests were given priority and welfare of the rest of the humanity, of future generations, or other beings, was ignored. Examples of such collective sins are — blind pursuit of luxurious life-style at the cost of squeezing out natural resources, environmental pollution, drug abuse and alcoholism, spread of sensual indiscipline and consequent diseases and disorders like AIDS, disintegration of families, juvenile delinquency, terrorism, etc. The developed countries are suffering consequences of their smug indifference towards the welfare of the underprivileged masses elsewhere.

# Categories of *Karmas* (Deeds) and Consequent Blueprints of Future

The “Law of *Karma*” described in the Vedic scriptures explains the science of destiny associated with continuity of life (of the individual self). The intrinsic impressions (*sanskāras*) of consequences of one's mental *karmas* (deeds) and physical actions committed with mental awareness are instantly engraved in the *chitta* — the unconscious mind. These sublime mental imprints (*sanskāras*) are carried forward with one's subtle body even after death of the physical body. The *sanskāras* carve one's nature, intrinsic

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tendencies, mental development, intellectual potentials, etc and collectively account for the fate of a person in future.

The ancient Indian texts refer to three principal categories of *karmas* and corresponding major classes of fate. These categories or deeds are — (i) *Sanchit Karmas*; (ii) *Kriyamāṇa Karmas*; and (iii) *Prārabdha Karmas*. While going through the following further details, we must keep in mind that 'Chitragupta' — the inner conscience, which is impartial, pure and wise, continuously keeps recording (in the unconscious mind) the *sanskāras* consequent to each and every good and evil deed for dispensing absolute justice at an appropriate time in future.

### *Sanchit Karmas:*

This term broadly refers to involuntary mental *karmas*. Unknown to the conscious mind of the individual, association with good and bad company and the sublime influence of the ambience around leave some marks on the psyche. Unless willingly and consciously accepted, *sanskāras* produced in this process are faint, weak in potency and feebly reactive. The *karmas*, which produce such weak *sanskāras*, are known as *sanchit karmas*. The consequent *sanskāras* remain stored in some odd corner of the inner consciousness, buried in a dormant state. Then there are *karmas* unwillingly, reluctantly performed under compulsion or in a state of helplessness. If one



is compelled to carry out some activities with revulsion and these are not made into a habit, these too fall in the category of *sanchit karmas*.

Being extremely feeble, the *sanskāras* produced by *sanchit karmas* may remain in a dormant state in the psyche for thousands of years through successive births. These *sanskāras* generally remain inactive, but if a suitable stimulant is provided to them by deliberate, strong, conscious repetition of similar deeds, these, too become active. In the company of strong healthy horses, a lame horse too begins to trot.

With good soil and adequate rains even rotten seeds germinate. Association with identical *sanskāras* makes the weak *sanskāras* gain strength, whereas if the past *sanskāras* repeatedly come in contact with the opposite type of *sanskāras*, the former are completely wiped out. (For example, generosity and whole-hearted altruistic service of others wipe out one's own evil tendencies and vices). If for a long duration evil *sanskāras* face a long continuous inflow of good *sanskāras*, the latter destroy them totally. As a matter of fact, the good as well as bad *sanchit sanskāras* bear fruit in favorable environments and are destroyed when confronted with an adverse milieu. Pilgrimages, sacraments, and *satsang* (company of saintly persons), etc, recommended in religious practices, are meant to wipe out the weak, evil *samskāras* accumulated as *sanchit karmas*.

### Kriyāmāṇa *Karmas*:

Physical actions fall in the category of *kriyāmāṇa karmas*. These produce almost concurrent results. For instance, consumption of drugs is followed by intoxication. Death follows consumption of poison. Human body is made up of five natural basic elements. Interaction between these natural elements produces immediate reaction. As soon as we touch fire, fingers are burnt. Laws of nature govern interactions between natural elements. Defiance of these laws invites almost instant punishment by nature.

When the physical body is compelled to live on foods and habits incompatible with its physiology, there is an immediate disturbance in the natural balance of the body, which results in disease, and weakening of the harmonious working of the biological system. This is Nature's mechanism for rectification. Physical actions are 'mechanically' carried out by the body without any intention or mental or emotional involvement; unlike *sanchit* and *prārabdha karmas*, they produce fruits in a short time.

### Prārabdha *Karmas*:

Mental or bodily actions, which are performed intentionally, voluntarily, or deliberately under strong emotional stimuli and mental involvement, are termed as *prārabdha karmas*. Being motivated by intense emotions, such *karmas* subtly result in

carving deep impressions and consequent powerful *sanskāras*. Reactions of violent acts like murder, robbery, betrayal, felony or immoral passionate acts like adultery are very strongly felt by the inner conscience. The innate spiritual purity (of the soul) is ever eager to get rid of this extraneous deleterious impurity of the *chitta* at the earliest opportunity. These are the *karmas* that lead to destiny that cannot be altered, or diluted by any means. If a *sanchit karma* was like a 'substance that has potential to be used as explosive', a *prārabdha karma* would be like 'a time-bomb that cannot be defused and that will certainly explode at an appropriate time and circumstance — in some life of the individual self, as found feasible in the sublime system of Nature. It should be understood here that this system has to constantly take care of individual as well as interlinked and collective destinies of all individual selves'.

It has already been mentioned that our inner conscience keeps a constant watch over each of our *karmas* and determines greater or lesser punishment for each offence (or reward for a good deed) according to the nature of the act. For example, a mental offence (e.g. provoking someone to commit a crime), would lead to destined punishment that would amount to a mental suffering and chastisement.

In simple terms, this is the law of “As you sow, so will you reap” keeping in mind that several lives (of the individual self who sows and hence reaps) may be traversed between the time of

'sowing' and the time of 'harvesting'. In order to effectuate an appropriate result for a *prārabdha karma* of a person, his/her inner conscience waits for a suitable environment in the subtle world (called *sukshma loka* in spiritual parlance) where the sublime system of Nature, evaluates the *sanskāras* and, as per the absolute *Law of Karma*, creates suitable 'plots' (blueprint) of destiny for materialization of the consequent effect in the present life or in some future life of that person (individual self).

Occasionally this process is spread over a long time. For instance, for redemption of a mental sin of treachery, the sinner is required to be punished by grief. '*Chitragupta*' (*inner conscience*) evaluates the grade of treachery to decide the degree of sorrow required for atonement. For punishing a murderer, the divine system will associate the soul of the sinner with the soul of an individual who, according to his own *karmas*, can some day in some life, inflict the same degree of pain and grief on the sinner, which latter has caused to the aggrieved person. For instance, *Chitragupta* may plan birth of a son or daughter in the family of the sinner, who (the new born) is destined to die at a young age according to its own past *karmas*. The inner conscience of the killer will wait for grief-producing event when the son/daughter meets death by disease or accident. In this way, for *sanskāras* carried over to next life, divine justice creates an environment for punishment corresponding to the type and gravity of the sin.

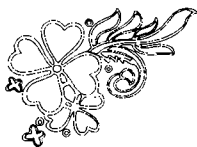
It is obvious that this process is not unilateral. Divine justice makes souls of both the sinner and the sinned interact in complementary environment. This complex process at times takes several cycles of life and death. We know that in this world, too, it requires a long time and consideration of numerous factors before two individuals become life partners as husband and wife. (The popular saying that “Marriages are made in heaven” indirectly refers to the compatibility of *sanskāras* and mutually correlated destiny of the bride and the groom. The pain of separation in a divorce, too, is a consequence of sinful *karmas* of past lives.)

We may further try to understand the course of divine justice by an analogy in a natural phenomenon. A shrub in Africa called Venus grows to a height of about three meters. Out of its branches spread out thin thread-like offshoots. These keep on growing and swaying in the air till they meet another shrub and they become mutually intertwined. Sometimes these shrubs meet each other barely after a growth of a few centimeters, whereas the others succeed in doing so after growing for a few meters. This is the way the fruits of *karmas* ripen for interaction over different spans of time.

The punishment for the exclusively physical sins is physical and is given without much delay. (Consumption of poison results in immediate death.) Mental chastisement, on the other hand, is neither instantaneous nor is it unilateral. For instance, if,

because of his cruel nature, someone commits a murder and is caught red-handed, the state awards a death sentence. On the contrary, if the killer commits the offence secretly, the inner conscience does not punish him immediately. It would wait for an environment for creating in his psyche an aversion for violence, by making the sinner feel the same degree of pain, which was felt by his victim. That is why, at times, morally vile persons are found rejoicing and righteous ones suffering in life. The sublime enforcer (Nature) of Divine Law takes time in preparing an appropriate environment for dispensing the just rewards and punishments.

Having understood the basic principles of the science of *karma*, one may like to decipher other aspects of destiny. We shall look into these successively in the following chapters.



# God's Role in Your Fate!

Misfortune occurs in life in a particular order and according to a well-defined process of divine justice, but people reconcile to their inevitability by believing in so-called “Wrath of God”, “God’s Will” or “Natural woeful state of this world”, ..., etc. As a matter of fact, God neither creates any good fortune nor misfortune for anybody, nor does God desire to put anyone in distress. Neither is this world full of woes.

A spider gets confined and entangled in its own self-woven web. Similarly, man himself makes his mind vicious,

## chapter 5

undisciplined, corrupt and sinful; and when the evil mind works to create a distressing situation, he weeps, wails and blames others, including God. Here it should be clearly understood that the fruits of *prārabdha* are always received as unprecedented events. (e.g., unexpected death due to disease or accident, collapsing of a house, winning a jackpot, injury due to accident, accidental loss of limbs or cessation of vital functions of body, etc.)

God does not involve other beings directly in enforcing divine justice because the person enforcing divine punishment on behalf of God would create resentment against his own self – thus beginning a chain of counter reaction between himself and the person being punished. Moreover, the enforcer would have to be unnecessarily involved in the complex process of cause-effect by committing undesired *karmas* and reaping their fruits.

Here, we may once again recapitulate the characteristics of *sanchit karmas* and *prārabdha karmas*. *Sanchit karmas* bear fruits only on coming across a suitable environment or otherwise get destroyed in a counter environment (one may create such counter environment by self-purification, benevolent deeds and *sādhana*s of soul-realization, etc).

*Prārabdha karmas* invariably bear fruits. Though it may take a period of several life cycles for materialization of the effects of *prārabdha karmas*, nothing can annul or prohibit these. Deeds



carried out deliberately, intentionally or with full involvement of mind despite awareness, in the present life amount to the future *prārabdha karmas*. The unexpected, sudden happenings are the fruits of *prārabdha karmas*. It should be noted that any failure in the present life due to indolence cannot be attributed to the result of *prārabdha karmas*. Unlike the *prārabdha karmas*, the physical activities — *kriyāmāṇa karmas* bear definite fruits within a short time.

### Misfortunes Need Not Always be the Results of Misdeeds:

For most of us misfortunes are unwelcome. These are popularly believed to be the result of past sins and displeasure of God. However, this view is not fully correct. It is true that one of the reasons for adversities or sufferings without one's fault is past sins, but all failures, hardships, unfortunate or unhappy events do not necessarily have their roots in past misdeeds. It may appear paradoxical, that at times misfortunes also befall us because of the grace of God and accumulation of past virtues. Unhappiness may also be experienced while undergoing hardships in course of virtuous activities. When God shows His condescension towards an evolved soul and wants to emancipate that soul from all attachments and bondage of worldly life, He creates distressful situations in life. Such unhappy events jolt the individual out of his slumber and make him/her realize the futility of attachment to worldly things. The shock of grief in such cases serves as a Divine Wake-Up-Call.

Our addiction to worldly attachments, infatuations and passions is so strong and alluring that we cannot be easily de-addicted by a casual approach. There are fleeting moments of wisdom in life when one thinks that life is extremely valuable and must be used for achieving some lofty objective, but soon thereafter attractions and delusive calls of the world drag him back to the erstwhile lowly routine of animal-like existence. Through misfortunes, God exerts a strong pull to extricate the devotees from the self-created quagmire of ignorance, and the illusions of this world. Mishaps shake us and wake us up from our slumber in ignorance and darkness. Unpleasant, heartbreaking happenings, such as a near fatal accident or disease, death of an intimate friend or relative, sudden financial loss, humiliation, or treachery by a trusted friend, unexpected failures, etc, may sometimes occur to give a strong shock treatment so that one may correct the course of his life.

Sometimes, the virtuous *intrinsic tendencies* and sublime impressions assimilated in the unconscious mind on account of our past *karmas* also produce unhappy events! Virtuous *karmas* also act as shields to ward off sinful temptations. They do not permit the sinful tendencies to dominate and offer stiff resistance. Many times commitment of sin is foiled by some unforeseen obstacle. If a thief breaks his leg while going for theft, it should be taken as a consequence of his good *karmas* of past that saved him from committing a crime.

Those who work hard for expansion of moral values, upliftment of the society and meticulously follow their course of duty, face stupendous problems, adversities and lack of resources. They also have to face antagonism of people who find such activities detrimental to their vested interests. Besides, they are also tormented by selfish, dishonest or unscrupulous people around in many ways. Persons treading the royal highway of righteousness have to face testing moments and hardships at each step. Misfortunes are like goldsmith's furnace, in which the validity of past virtues and tolerance to hardships undertaken for virtuous deeds are tempered. After going through misfortunes, the character and personality of an upright person becomes all the more strong and lustrous.

Hence while passing through an unfavorable period, do not be under the impression that you are a sinner and a wretched person deserving Divine Wrath. It could be that the distress is a blessing in disguise, with hidden boons, which you are unable to foresee at the moment because of lack of clear vision.

Innocent persons may be found suffering because of unfair ideologies or oppression by others. Any one may become a victim of exploitation, suppression and injustice. The exploiter has to face the consequences of his *karmas* in due course of time, but the sufferer should blindly accept such happenings as outcome of his *prārabdha*. A student has to face many hardships in the course of his education. A mother bears so many pains and difficulties

while raising the child. Ascetics, social reformers and righteous persons undergo arduous hardships while working for reformation of the society and evolution of the human soul. Such voluntarily undertaken hardships, confrontations and problems faced towards fulfillment of self-assumed responsibilities cannot be considered as consequences of past misdeeds.

It would not be proper to regard every “happy-go-lucky” person as a virtuous person in his past life or every sufferer as a sinner of his past birth. Such a conception would be unjustified and misleading. There is no reason for someone to have self-pity or feel remorseful on such a false premise. The course from *karma* to destiny depends upon countless interactive pathways of present and past lives of the self as well as others. It is, therefore, an occult and mysterious process known only to the Omniscient Creator.

We have to remain ever vigilant towards our duties and responsibilities and leave the rest to impartial Supreme Justice of God. Let us face the misfortunes and good fortunes of life with equanimity. God has made us responsible only for our duties as human beings. There could be many reasons for successes-failure and happiness-unhappiness. Only the Creator knows their purpose. Let us wisely make use of the freedom of *karma* (to write our own future destiny) the Almighty has entrusted upon us, and surrender our expectations, desires and self-obsessed identity to Him.

# Know Yourself, Know Your World

Each individual has different identities for different roles in life. This identity depends on the relationships with the people with whom he or she interacts. For a mother he or she may be an object of maternal affection, for a father an obedient child, for the teacher an intelligent pupil and for friends a dependable good-humored buddy. A wife looks at a man as her beloved darling, whereas his son relates to him as his father. The same person appears to his enemy as an adversary; to the shopkeeper as a customer; to the servant as a master; to the horse as a rider; to the caged bird as the jailor. Bed bugs and mosquitoes find him as nothing else but a source of delicious blood.

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If one could visualize the various mental images that people have of an individual, it would be found that each has one's own peculiar concept and none of these agree with the others. Furthermore, none of these images accurately identify the whole individual. Everyone conceptualizes other people according to the particular ways that he or she relates to them.

It is even more amusing that man himself begins to adopt all of these interpersonal identities. Throughout life, he lives with multiple self-identifications. Various thoughts like “I am an adulterer”; or “I am honest”; or “I am wealthy”; “I am old”; “I have no family”; “I am ugly”; “I am popular”; “I am unhappy”; “I am surrounded by vile persons”;....., etc, continuously churn and circulate in his ideosphere. As other persons form an image about an individual according to their interests, the individual too builds an eclectic and lop-sided image of himself based on the perceptions of his sense organs. Like a drugged person he lives in the perpetual hallucination of his numerous momentary identities. If he could truly identify with his own inner self, he would be surprised to know how far he has strayed from the Truth.

Man always lives in a make-believe world created by his imagination. In his dream world, one may build castles in the air, fight with windmills like Don Quixote, fall in a well, derive pleasure from embracing and kissing his beloved, or, find himself flying in the sky, etc. Even while not in the state of apparent sleep

or dream, most of us, deluded by ignorance, are all hallucinating in an imaginary world. One thinks that he is living in a palace. Another trembles because of imaginary fears. Yet another daydreams of being engaged to the most beautiful damsel in the world. Some insane person is found rejoicing in showing off the wealth of his 'kingdom'

This world is like a mental asylum in which every variety of lunacy can be found. With varied degrees and types, everyone here has his own eccentricity. For instance, even among learned scholars, everyone, at one time or another, considers his viewpoint as the most perfect or relevant; or considers himself to be the most intelligent in comparison with his neighbors and directly or indirectly attempts to prove it. If you go to a mental asylum and observe the fantasies of the long-term inmates, you will find a close parallel to the daydreamers of this world, who consider themselves to be completely sane and sober. And not only the so-called 'daydreamers', many of the 'rational' or 'realistic' ones too are often driven by the mirage of false pride, cravings or other kinds of illusions.

### **Your World – A Reflection of Your Mind:**

In this world, we find people complaining about many types of misfortunes and feeling euphoric on insignificant occasions of pleasure. There are habitual pessimists blaming everyone for everything. Expressions like — “This world is very bad”, “Times

are bad”, “Honesty is a virtue of the past”, “Religion has been buried for good” etc, are very commonly talked about. If someone is in the habit of repeating such phrases, he is expressing only the impressions of his mind and you can safely assume that he himself might, in some testing or lucrative moment would not mind compromising with moral values.

One's mind gradually builds the image of his unhappy world by interacting with pessimistic people. If someone is in the habit of complaining about lack of opportunities for work, widespread unemployment, failure of good industries and non-availability of good jobs, take it for granted that his ideosphere is full of thick clouds of indolence, torpor and incompetence. This he finds reflected everywhere in the world. If someone sees this world as full of self-centered hypocrites or sinners or evil and uncivilized persons, infer that the individual himself has an abundance of corresponding negative tendencies in his own mind. This world is like a magnificent large mirror, which reflects the viewer's own ideosphere. As mentioned earlier, elements of this world precipitate three types of fundamental, intrinsic tendencies of Nature — namely *sat*, *raj* and *tam*. Whichever attribute dominates in the personality of an individual, it attracts its counterpart from the world at large.

Wherever a short-tempered person goes, he finds someone to quarrel with. One who has hatred in mind will always find out an object to be hated. To an unfair person everyone appears, ill-



mannered, uncivil and worthy of punishment. Whenever an individual interacts with someone, he views the latter in the same light with which his own personality is colored. A person of impeccable morality rarely comes across someone of fallen character. Scholars do get avenues for higher learning. Seekers of truth always find opportunities for quenching their thirst for wisdom. Enlightened souls have always been living on this earth. Wherever they live, vibrant ambience around them attracts virtuous persons.

It may be noted that Nature manifests itself through different combinations of *sat*, *raj* and *tam*, so there are good as well bad elements pervading in the sublime as well physical domains of its existence. Good, average and bad coexist in this world but one most often experiences what one gets tuned into.

The mirror of world reflects happiness for the virtuous and the optimist hard-workers, and unhappiness for the pessimistic evildoer. As soon as we change our attitude, see the good qualities only and thoughtfully resolve to transform the wrong into right, the vice into kind, with love, endurance, and understanding, the entire world showers us respectfully with petals of love. In doing so you would also receive uninterrupted blessings of the angelic souls from the invisible heavenly world.

The glaring and burning blaze of hot summer changes into the soothing luster of the full moon. The creation of the Omniscient

is full of beauty and joy. When you look for happiness, each particle of Nature is prepared to give you peace and joy. Your mind can give you the taste of royal-style lavish dishes in your own dry morsel of bread. Mind always seeks peace and happiness. You should cultivate an optimistic temperament to see the good in the world. This will keep your mind energetic, alert and contended.

No doubt, in this world one has to face adversities and unhappiness as well, but one can bear it if one adopts righteous attitude. Adversities of all kinds, including pre-dominance of wicked persons around you occur to test your endurance and to accelerate the pace of your self-evolution. Without a system of examination, how would there be a differentiation between a learned person and a rustic illiterate?

In essence, being inert, this material world is incapable of giving us pleasure or pain. The world is a mirror reflecting the beauty or ugliness of our own mind. When the philosopher calls this world “An existence in virtual reality”, it is implied that one sees the world according to one's own state of mind. It is like the many blind persons giving their description about the shape of an elephant after feeling only a part of animal's body. You can transform your circumstances by changing your outlook and inner ambience. Expand your brotherliness, benevolence, love, sympathy and optimism and project them in your conduct and you will find it reflected back to you as a world full of bliss like the Biblical Garden of Eden.

# Relativity of the Good and the Bad

The assessment of a person based on his/her good and bad qualities is always relative. On either scale you would find persons who belong to a grade lower than yours, those who are in the same grade as your own, and others who have a much higher grade than yours. When it comes to good qualities, the persons having more virtuous tendencies, strength of character and refined talents i.e., who are more *satogunī* would be in the highest grade; the *rajogunī* fellows – who,

## chapter 7

like majority of people, are dynamic, ambitious and may be talented, but are not free of negative instincts of ego, lust, attachment, passions, etc, are like average grade characters; lethargic, idle, sluggish ones aiming at only easily available carnal pleasures would be *tamoguṇī* and would thus fall in the lower grade on this scale. But amongst people in each of these broad groups also there would be relative grading.

For instance, amongst the criminals, a thief is better in comparison to a bandit, because the latter is at least more humane. Compared to both the thief and the dacoit, a laborer has more *satoguṇa*. A social reformer would have more *satoguṇa* than a common man, and a spiritual seeker more than that of the social worker. Thus, on the scale of *satoguṇa*, a spiritual seeker stands at much higher level than a bandit, but he would be graded lower than his enlightened master, silent presence of whose liberated soul itself is the greatest of sermons. But this does not mean that the dacoit is the most degraded soul. He may be better than a beastly, cruel dictator and so on....

The superiority of spiritual level of a person is measured by his selfless love and altruistic compassion for every being. At the lowest level are the self-centered people whose aims and actions are confined only for selfish motifs and at the most for the gains of their own families. A dacoit does not rob members of his family. A thief does not commit theft in his own house or even in the house of a closed-friend in the neighborhood. Welfare

activities of a social worker generally pertain to a particular type of work, to a particular class or community.

A true spiritual master works for the welfare and ascent of all beings. The enlightened souls see all living beings, as manifestations of God, be it a human being, plant or animal. In a nutshell, in the process of progressive evolution of consciousness, before attaining self-realization, all living beings are at different stages of awakening. Everyone lives with lack of some virtues or the other. When all impurities are removed, nothing can stop a person from reaching the ultimate state of blissful salvation from all thralldoms and cycles of birth and death. This is the ultimate goal of human existence. Human life is regarded as a precious opportunity to march ahead towards further evolution.

If we see and analyze human life more deeply, we shall find that, taken together, virtues in this world are far in excess of vices. No doubt, immorality is also there, but, though less visible, the roots of morality are much stronger and more prevalent in the conscience. There is more enlightenment than ignorance in this world. There may appear bad people everywhere in the world, but most of them too have more virtues than vices in them. We should keep in sight only the goodness of the world, enjoy the beauty of the virtues and work for the enhancement and expansion of virtuous tendencies.

Nature has made a provision of cyclic occurrence of day and night to teach us how to behave in the world. During the day we keep awake, take advantage of the sunlight for working and prefer to live in an illuminated place, than in darkness. Light gives us the advantage of acquiring knowledge through sight. When darkness of night descends, we go to sleep or, if required to work, use artificial light. Because of the natural structure of eyes, man intrinsically prefers to live in an illumined environment. Light makes our perspective illuminated. In the light we clearly see objects as they are and dispel our ignorance about them. It shows that we should ignore the dark side of the world and illumine our outlook by preferring to look only at the brighter aspects of human personality i.e. good qualities and potentials.

We should make an endeavor to enjoy, imbibe and encourage the good qualities of a person. This does not mean that we close our eyes to the blemishes. Be aware of the vices but do not get involved in them.

There is a well-known story of Rishi Dattatreya. As long as he continued to compare the bright and dark aspects of life he remained troubled and unhappy. When he concentrated only on the positive aspects of Nature's creation, he found that in this world all living creatures were sacred and adorable. He realized that he could learn something from each of them. It is said that he acquired his spiritual insights from twenty-four teachers. Amongst these were insignificant creatures like dog, cat, jackal,

spider, fly, vulture, crow etc. He recognized that nobody was despicable; that each one had within it, the soul, which is a spark of that Super-Being; that every being is a link in the spiraling chain of evolution.

The horizons of our vision change, when we make ourselves receptive to good qualities. Shortcomings are overlapped by excellence, wickedness by goodness and prevalence of unhappiness by abundance of joy. The world that we earlier thought to be full of wicked persons now appears full of decent, well-mannered, helping and inspiring persons.

Every individual has his own personal perspective of people, places, things and events. On account of the prejudiced perspective, someone would find the world as bad, whereas someone else would find it good. Therefore, throw away the cobwebs of your old and biased perspectives. Use your 'third eye' (wisdom) to penetrate the illusions of your old world. Let your present wicked world (of *Kaliyuga*) destroy itself and in its place create your own bright and happy world (of *Satyuga*) in your inner self. Stop being deluded by the negativity and darkness of the world (*tamoguna*) and focus your vision at the brightness (*satoguna*). You will find the same world as 'transformed' into a heaven. When you change your outlook, you will find your disobedient child as not so bad, or as getting improved into an obedient one. Your worst enemies, quarrelsome wife and hypocrite neighbors, everyone will then appear totally different.

In fact, the factor of negativity in the character or behavior of a person is usually very small. Antagonism in the mind of the observer magnifies it manifold. Suppose your spouse does not behave as per your expectations because of preoccupation or some other valid reason; when you are not aware of it, you are likely to take it as an affront and become resentful or angry. With the anger, the evil traits lying dormant in the inner folds of your mind get activated and produce negative mental image of the subject.

1 Darkness makes out a monster out of a bush. Similarly, anger, due to distortion caused by inner turbulence, produces a defiant, disobedient, disrespectful picture of an otherwise simple, innocent person who receives a harsh punishment for a small lapse. On the other hand, this unjust reaction also infuriates the recipient of the undeserved treatment. The counter-reacting angry person too begins to see wickedness, foolishness, cruelty and many other negative traits in the other person. On repetition of such trivial incidents, the two imaginary ghost personalities continue to grow and their confrontations convert two simple-hearted, friendly persons into bitter antagonists.

On many occasions, I have succeeded in reconciling the differences between bitter adversaries by making them understand the triviality of the root-cause, which had made a mountain out of a molehill. Such situations often arise because of gap in communication. With mutual understanding, sharing of feelings, and objective analysis of each other's expectations,



behavior and psychological background, ninety percent of estrangements can be amicably resolved. In fact the factors responsible for such estrangements are very minor. We may compare their incidence with the quantity of salt in our food. Salt and pepper themselves are distasteful, but a small quantity of these makes food palatable. Occasional cooling off of warmth in close relationships is required to break the monotony of life. With mutual trust, we maintain relationship with deeper understanding and warmth. It has already been discussed earlier that since birth, the subtle body of everyone brings with it many imperfections and traits of its past lives including those in sub-human species.

A newly born human child is very little qualified to live amongst human beings. He falls asleep anytime during the day, keeps awake during nights, soils the clothes and makes loud hues and cries for his biological needs of fondling, food and water. Nevertheless, neither these baby-tantrums disturb the household, nor does addition of one more member make the house unlivable. On the contrary, the innocent and immature child becomes a means of entertainment for the family. The morally less evolved persons of the society should be treated in the same way.

For evolutionary growth of the soul it is the duty of the wise to work for the progress of other persons, who are at lower stages of soul-growth and encourage them, to work for their own

upliftment. Wickedness will always be there in this world. There is no reason to be afraid of it. Whosoever is desirous of self-enlightenment should learn to face and overcome the disturbances caused by the wicked. It is necessary to restrain the evil and prevent the beastly traits from polluting humane values.

Flies have to be kept away from sweets. The efficiency of one's *karmas* is demonstrated in preventing spread of sinful traits in the society. A great deal of caution is required in this endeavor. It is like walking on the razor's edge. This truly is a *karma-yoga*: the *yoga* of best transactions of duties sans self-interest and attachment, the art of equanimity of temperament in the face of all circumstances.



# Expansion of Good

For expansion of good we need to sow the seeds of goodness in our heart and mind and also in the world around us. For this, we need to plough the land and uproot the evils.

What should be our course of action in this world to eliminate the vices? In this context example of the Sun is worth emulating. Its light dispels the darkness. Its heat forms the clouds; clouds bring down rain and cool the heat. When we take food, hunger goes by itself and when we follow laws of health, weakness is removed without much effort. In order to remove ignorance, we try to

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acquire knowledge. An adept way of checking the spread of infectious disease is to educate the masses about the significance of laws of hygiene and health. For making the world free of evils, we should work for proliferation of good qualities and benevolent tendencies. The physically sick may be cured by medicines, but no amount of medication and number of hospitals can cure the 'moral' illness. Law enforcement machinery works like a hospital for the wicked — the morally sick. It can take care of only contingencies. However, law cannot remove the root causes of societal ills.

### Acquiescence of Evil Acts is Also Sinful:

It is seen that in a society the affluent and powerful exploiters suffer much less from natural disasters than the poor, under-privileged masses. The brunt of excessive rains or droughts is mainly borne by the poor farmers. Such events of Nature on a mass scale are 'lessons' to alarm the latter against their inaction and fearfulness. The misdeeds of an oppressor or exploiter would any way add to his *prārabdha karmas*. But those who tolerate or meekly watch his wrong doings would receive the awakening 'shove' or penalty in this life itself.

The laws of divine justice regard tolerance of a sin without any attempt of counter action or protest, as a greater offence than its committal. There is a saying that “the father of a tyrant is a coward”. Cowardice and timidity tend to invite suppression and

oppression from some quarter or the other. Big powerful fish is always on the prowl for the timid small fish. The latter may manage to escape from one but some other big fish will devour it.

Laws of divine justice regard cowardice, sluggishness, weakness of character, and ignorance (of the purpose of life and its duties) too as sins. It is not surprising that these negative tendencies invite harsh punishments. Natural disasters should be taken as stealthy acts of divine grace. These are frequently manifested by the invisible Supreme Justice for removal of laziness, cowardice and corruption from the society. Natural calamities are not aberrations of Nature. Instead, these are reactions of out-of-tune actions of living beings themselves. It is like the process of refining in the blast furnace. Through such loud warnings, God mercifully tells us again and again to work for eradicating sins from the society. In the next chapter we shall discuss how and when divine justice gives rewards and punishments for the various types of good and evil *karmas*.

It is not possible to eradicate evils by violence or by suppression or use of force. Violent opposition would only incite a stronger counter reaction. A surgeon does not act like a butcher. He makes a precise incision. Instead of direct confrontation, blabbing, showing resentment, expressing helplessness, follow the positive path of forgiveness, reformation and love. According to a philosopher, "A word of love creates much greater impact than a blow on the head" Everyone has more or less goodness in him.

Make an effort to identify your own virtues and make them more effective in life. Also find out the good qualities and potential of the other person and try to encourage him to cultivate more and more virtues. Do not fight your battle in the darkness of ignorance. Make your battlefield illuminated. Do not get frustrated or disappointed by the spread of immorality. Counter it by promoting constructive reformation and morality at your level best.

### A Positive Approach:

The only way to remove evils from this world is to encourage and expand goodness. If you want to empty all air from a bottle, fill it with water. Do not associate with vices. Why should you like to collect the garbage (of evils)? Let others do this dirty job. Your work is to disinfect the rot. Why should you do skinning of dead animals (finding faults of the evildoers)? Assume the more dignified role of a teacher. Remember! In this world quite a few persons have a faultfinding attitude. Perhaps there are more persons inclined to punish the guilty than are necessary.

When a child teases another one, quite a few of his companions slap him on the cheek. But how many in this world are prepared to give free food and clothes to a needy child? One day or the other, the evildoers would suffer the consequences of their misdeeds. You don't have to penalize them. Take the venerated seat of the mother, who feeds the infant by the extract of her own

blood; who suffers in cold but shields the child in her bosom. You nurture goodness in the society with the affection of a mother. Like a learned teacher, distribute the wisdom acquired by you amongst the immature, ignorant and the way-lost people.

The glorious path of reformation is not easy to follow. People may make you suffer, insult you, make fun of you. They may even regard you as a crackbrain, may oppose you and create hurdles to block your work for no rhyme or reason. Be least apprehensive about such persons. Do not deviate from your path. The 'impact' of such habitual leg-pullers is always insignificant. In the end, the number of these denunciators will be very small against the large number of appreciators of your good work. Their antagonism, too, will come to you as a token of Divine Grace. It would provide you opportunities for introspection and corrective action. This will charge you with higher potency energy for speedy progress.

You might have understood that significance of persons, events and objects, which come in our lives in this ever-changing material world, is momentary and illusory. Therefore material objects and relationships are not worthy of blind pursuit for their acquisition or attachment thereto. Such detached attitude would in no way discourage us in performance of our duties. On the contrary, only by being detached to the material world, we can pay attention to our progress without worry. It is a great misconception to regard this world as full of misery.

This world is full of things of beauty and joy. Had it not been so, the free, spotless, illumined blissful soul, which is a spark of the Supreme, would not have chosen it as its abode. Unhappiness is nothing but absence of happiness. Unhappiness means abandoning a highway and wandering astray through the thicker of thorny bushes. As discussed earlier, mostly the unhappiness, antagonism, enmity, distress and conflict faced by us is illusory and people are not as wicked as we assume them to be. If we clear our minds of prejudices, and throw away the 'stained glasses' of faultfinding from our eyes, only then things will appear in their true colors.





# Create Your Own Happy World

Distress is always unwelcome. Its immediate experience is bitter. Nevertheless, it is ultimately meant for the well-being and happiness of man. Distress is an extraordinarily effective mechanism provided by God for the rectification of evil traits and the augmentation of positive values. A human life is a blissful and self-enlightened spark of the Supreme-Being. That force of eternal consciousness has self-created this world to be intrinsically blissful.

## chapter 9

The brief periods of unhappiness in life are provided to give the needed momentum to the progressive evolution of the soul. Such periods do so by reminding the being about the true purpose of human life, the awakening to its original nature as a reflection of the divine. Events producing unhappiness in life are few and their impact is self-evident. But, we must remember that whatever suffering we experience, is the result of our forgetfulness of our true self. Destiny and circumstances are the result of our mental and physical deeds but how we face them is entirely up to us. Being a spark of the Blissful Supreme Being, the soul is intrinsically blissful, and so there can be no 'real' existence of unhappiness for the inner self. Neither is there any natural unhappiness in the orderly and harmonious indwelling of Nature.

Do not be afraid of misfortunes that generate adversity and unhappiness. Do not lose your mental equilibrium. Face misfortunes boldly. Instead of getting worried or anxious, be prepared to sail through them.

Embrace misfortune as though it were an ill-mannered but warm-hearted friend, who uses foul language and makes unpleasant criticism but always wishes for the best outcome for you. Do not forget that when misfortune passes away, it leaves behind the gift of increased self-confidence, wisdom and insight. Like a brave soldier, face misfortune defiantly and say, "Oh, oncoming misfortunes! You are like my children. I am your creator.

Therefore, I welcome you with open arms. You are my legitimate offspring, so how can I disown you? You are free to play in the courtyard of my life. I am not a coward. I won't shed tears in desperation on meeting you. I am not morally so bankrupt that I will avoid paying for my own misdeeds. Being a creation of that Supreme Being, I am an 'expression' of that Absolute Truth, Absolute Benefaction and Absolute Virtue. Come, you ugly products of my ignorant karmas! Come! I have the courage to accommodate you in my life. I don't need help from anyone. You have arrived to test how courageous I am? I am prepared to face you.”

Friends! Don't commit blasphemy. Don't ever say this world is bad, wicked, torturous and full of unhappiness. In this world created by God, each element is a masterpiece. Nothing is bad or uncalled for in the holistic view of creation. If you blame creation, you are also casting aspersions on its Creator. Saying that the pot is badly-made is equivalent to questioning the capability of the potter. How could you dare to underrate the qualifications of your Omnipotent parents? When you say that this world is full of misery and disparity, you are casting aspersions on the integrity of God. In this celestial creation, there is not one iota of unhappiness. Our ignorance itself is the cause of our bad karmas and consequent miseries. Come! Let us cleanse and purify our inner selves of our evil thoughts and wickedness so that we are totally and finally released from our miseries and acquire ultimate deliverance.

## Create Your Own World:

The physical cosmos, according to one philosopher, is made up of inert components, which can be moulded into any desired configuration. The doer – man, is animate, whereas elements of the cosmos are inert. The animate doer has the capacity to utilize an inert substance in accordance with his will. A potter is free to make any object of pottery out of raw mud. A goldsmith can make any ornament from gold. With the needle and thread, a tailor can make any shirt or pair of trousers. The world, as we perceive it, is comprised of the full array of forms and the formless in cosmic creation. All of these are manifestations of different levels and combinations of the three intrinsic impulses of Nature.

In spiritual parlance these three inherent attributes or tendencies (guṇas) of Nature are known as *Sat*, *Raj* and *Tam*. Broadly speaking, *Sat* means the most refined, cohesive and super conductive medium of the spirit; *Tam* for the most opaque (ignorant), and inert form, and *Raj* as most perturbed, active and unstable tendency in which both *Sat* and *Tam* coexist in a continuous state of disequilibrium. Man is free to vary the combination or extent of these guṇas with the one predominant over the other two or refine their expressions in his tendencies.

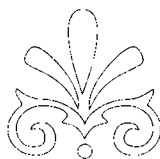
In a garden there is mud and muck as well as the fragrance of flowers. Worms creep in the mud, flies are drawn to the muck and the bees go straight to the flowers. Everyone receives the things of

his or her choosing. Bats and owls can see even during the darkest of nights. Honeybees are able to detect fructose in the tiny flowers hidden in a thick bush and poisonous snakes can manufacture venom out of harmless organic substances. In this world, good and bad things, virtues and vices, morality and immorality exist everywhere. It is like that super cafeteria, where the customer has free choice to procure sweet, sour or bitter food. The shelves of the supermarkets of the world are stocked with unlimited variety. Customers enter the shop and purchase items that are to their liking. Our Supreme Mother has prepared dishes to suit everyone's taste.

The Ideosphere (the 'energy field' of one's thoughts and emotional currents) of a thief is consumed with thievery. This ideosphere will easily interact with the compatible ideospheres of other thieves. Be it a prison, a society or a house, everywhere a thief goes, he will find thievery being discussed. His family members will generally talk about thievery. Some will support his avocation others oppose it. When the thief moves in the society, persons known to him will pass good or bad comments about his profession. When he meets fellow thieves, they will talk only about the tricks of the trade. In a prison, thieves will flock together and immediately discuss their favorite subject. In this way a thief will find the entire world revolving around thievery. He will regard thievery as the most important trade and think very little of anything else. He will be indifferent to other things in life.

Similarly an adulterer or adulteress will see an adulterer in each man and woman. He or she will collect and display erotic photographs, paintings and literature in his or her house. Friends and acquaintances having similar inclinations will be easily found. In his or her mind, sex will become the most important issue in life. In the same manner drunkards and drug addicts create their own worlds.

Conversely, positive and constructive thoughts of wise persons generate an ambience that attracts and inspires similar thoughts and thus helps expansion of good thoughts and activities. Thus, by refining ones thoughts, one can get support from the powerful ideospheres of compatible thoughts and gradually refined the ambience and hence the quality of your life. Your life and your world is by in large a reflection of your thoughts and aspirations. So it is up to you to create the world of your choosing.



# Prediction of Future Fate!

It is clear from our previous discussion that though life is not strictly bound by predetermined course of events, by and large its course depends on the results of *prārabdha karmas* — mental or physical *deeds* of previous lives the effect of which has been activated to be materialized in the present life. Human beings undoubtedly are bestowed with the power of creating their own future destiny by the *karmas* they do in the present life. When would the fruits of one's present *deeds* get ripened? It depends upon the nature of his *karmas* of

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previous lives and that of the present life. Moreover it also takes into account the countless interacting forces pertaining to his past and present interactions with others. So it is almost impossible for us to predict our own future in general.

Some *yogis or seers* endowed with paranormal powers accurately predict the future events. By virtue of their evolved wisdom and supernatural faculties, the prophets and seers are able to foresee the ultimate outcome of the *prārabdha karmas* of individuals and also of groups of individuals. Experts of a scientific discipline can often predict the probable outcome of certain process or predict a natural phenomenon, on the basis of comprehensive data. Upon learning the details of legal proceedings, an experienced juror may foretell the judgment most likely to be delivered. This does not mean that there is no relevance of prosecutors, defendants, evidence, lawyers and cross-examinations.

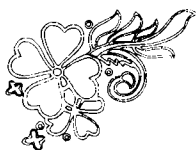
Foretelling of events also does not mean that certain events can be correlated to some particular past *prārabdha karmas*. In fact, fate and self-effort (*taqdīra* and *tadbīra*) are two faces of the same coin. Self-efforts (*karmas*) are given the name of destiny when they bear fruit.

We may compare the current *karma* with any raw fruit, which is going to ripen in future as destiny. The fate of today is the *karmas* of the past. *Prārabdha karmas* and *prārabdha* (fate) are two



names given to the same phenomena — with an indefinite time lag in between.

So gist of the matter is that don't worry about knowing your fate or predicting the future, you can create it by your own deeds in the present. Make best use of the present, refine your qualities, welcome the sufferings as the golden chance to eliminate your weaknesses, and deploy the good fortune as an impetus to excel along the path of light. Chisel your personality, cultivate positive attitude, expand your domain of 'self' to embrace the spirit of pure love and oneness, awaken the divine-self indwelling within you. This life is a precious gift that the Almighty has showered upon you to create your own happy world full of beauty and joy, beatify it further by your virtuous *karmas*.



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