

Karma

I think the word 'karma' is sloshed around a lot in our society as a way of saying, 'see, you got what you deserved'. In other words, seeing outcomes as a law of retribution or as punishment, rather than seeing outcomes as a law of cause and effect. Or I hear often 'that's karma for ya', when something unfortunate happens to another person. It is highly judgmental, as I hardly hear anyone say 'see, look at the wealth of what your kindness towards others, has given you.' I hope to provide enough information and guidance in this teaching, for you to begin to see karma, not as reward or punishment, not even as good or bad, but as 'just is'. Karma flows constantly like a thread, warp and weave, through each day of our lives.

Understanding our karma and proclivities, is key to free will thinking, acceptance, and happiness, in this lifetime here on earth in our human spacesuits¹, and in our evolution through many lifetimes searching for contentment, acceptance and Samadhi. **In this teaching, I will discuss 1. What is karma 2. Why some people have a lot of constrictive karma 3. Karma and how it relates to addiction 4. What triggers our karma 5. How to soften Karma 6. What is Samadhi**

What is Karma? According to the Dhammapada, 'In Buddhism there is no one sitting in judgment to punish us for wrong actions, nor is there anyone to reward us for our good works. Instead, reward and punishment issue from the self-fulfilling law of karma, which permeates every aspect of the Buddha's teachings. Put simply, the law of karma states that as we sow, so shall we reap: everything we do, say, or even think has consequences, good or bad, and sooner or later those consequences must come back to us.'² I like this definition as it embodies the idea that karma is self-fulfilling. But what I wish to get away from is the judgment of karma good or bad, reward or punishment of which I would like to suggest that karma is not one or the other, but is map to our evolution. The Buddha states in the first of the Four Noble Truths, All life is suffering and the second of the Four Noble Truths, the root cause of suffering is desire. And the Four Noble Truths have great Merit, as we will talk about throughout the program, but I feel as if my addiction to alcohol was a stepping stone towards deep healing and contentment, Santosha. I am not fond of the word suffering as it denotes judgment, which in this program, I would like to share life as just movement on a path to self-realization, to self-healing to self-love with the promise to eventually see that self-love is really universal love. While I navigated life in addiction, I was asleep, unaware, fulfilling my karma without exercising my little bit of freewill. But what I want to make clear is, I was not a bad person. My life asleep was not because I was somehow a horrible person, but rather, I was constricted from seeing that my uncontrollable desire for alcohol was karma or desires from my past. And one day, when the timing was right, when a less constrictive piece of karma ripened, I woke up and exercised my free will to heal and to find joy and happiness in life. So what have I said? I will quote my Guru Goswami Kriyananda 'The law of karma is not the law of retribution. Extremely Important!!! The law of karma is law of cause and effect. If you give love, you will receive love, if you give knowledge you will receive knowledge.'³ I remember what a revelation it was when I realized that when I stopped shouting and cussing at others, others stopped shouting at me. With addiction, if we allow alcohol to control our lives, it will. Cause and effect! Not good or bad, just cause and effect.

Why do some people have more constrictive karma than others? Kriyananda would say because they worked really hard to get it. People are constantly putting each down. Communication has nearly ceased to exist. We do not ask each other for clarification, we let our imagination and anxiety dream up all kind of stories in which the other guy is the villain. Are we doing this to make ourselves less of a villain? Well if karma is the law of cause and effect, then when we are harsh, and judgmental towards others, judgment and harshness will come back towards us. As my example earlier, when I learned to stop screaming, people stopped screaming at me. And not only could I have more conversations that brought resolution, I

¹Ram Daas, Becoming Nobody reference to our human bodies as spacesuits we wear while on earth

²Dhammapada, translated by Eknath Easwaran Chapter nine

³Goswami Kriyananda audio on Karma

didn't have a horse voice anymore. There is another very important factor here. You must understand that karma operates on the physical plane with words and actions, but also, karma acts on the ethereal plane as thoughts, conscious or unconscious. So thinking a thought will result in karma, or is held to the law of cause and effect. Many thoughts, unless they are constructive thinking thoughts, come from the subconscious or unconscious mind. And the subconscious and unconscious mind cannot tell the difference between you and me. So when a thought pops into your mind about another person, and you grab onto that thought and build a story, even a very short story, the unconscious mind relates this story unto itself. Have you ever just flashed a quick thought, 'they deserve to be hit by a car running across the street like that', the unconscious mind just got filled with you wishing to be hit by a car. What this is saying, is when you put others down, you are putting yourself down. When you hurt others, you are hurting yourself. When you send acceptance and love to others, you are sending acceptance and love to yourself. "Om shanti, shanti". And visa versa, when you accept your own limitations and commendable traits, you bring an acceptance and acknowledgment to others. Another important piece is, the subconscious does not know time. This is a big one. If something happened to you as a child, and then in your adult life the event reoccurs, your subconscious mind will see the event in the same light as when you were a child, even though as an adult you might have handled it differently. For example, if you were nipped at by a brown dog as child, even if it was a love bite, and reacted with fear or needing comfort, then as an adult you see a similar brown dog who starts to play a little rough, your subconscious will come in and try to persuade you to fear and move quickly away from the dog. To be fearful of brown dogs is pretty restrictive karma.

How does karma relate to addiction? There are two things I wish to cover here. 1. How our addiction came to be and 2. As long as our desires and addiction dictate our lives, how it is creating more constrictive karma. How our addiction came to be. Karma carries over from past lifetimes. And in this lifetime when the seed of an addictive piece of karma arose, it either was not watered and fed through free will and awareness, or it was watered and once the seed sprouted, and manifest as an addiction to alcohol, pain meds, sugar or whatever the piece of karma was. For me it was my 16th birthday. At the time, as a teenager it was a very fun experience. I never quit drinking until I was 43. The seed had sprouted and it fully bloomed. Drinking itself is not the karma, it is our strong desire and attachment to something that is the desire. And the more I desired alcohol the more the karma intensified. Recovery from alcohol was pretty intense and an incredible happening in my life, but what was more incredible is the road to detachment of the original desire. It is one thing to not drink ever again, but if the desire is still there, the karma is still there. My hopes for this recovery program is to create the knowledge and self love to fill your karmic container with more love and bliss as to have no more desire for artificial happiness in a bottle. The second important thing here is addiction results in doing harm to others. The addiction comes first, others last. Harm to others is an inevitable and universal dimension of addiction. The Dalai Lama says 'Once you make a choice to use drugs, consequences are unavoidable.' As addiction happens so does karma. We are always producing karma, but under the influence you are more than likely producing karma that will constrict you and produce more intense emotion. With that said, I wish you healing on your journey. As we move through this healing journey together there may be times of sadness, shame, self anger and self pity. Karma just is. We are here to learn and evolve through our karma. And help others along the way. You are not a bad person. There are no bad people. I repeat, there are no bad people. Actions with intent-with desire cause karma. Who we are, in these spacesuits, are pure loving spirit. We are that which is sacred in all living sentient beings. AA asks that we make amends for our hurtful actions. And we will learn how to do this in many of our rituals and techniques in the Santosha Recovery Program. But again I want to stress that actions are harmful not people, so I hope you can always know that you are a loving soul, who at this very moment in your lives have started an action with healing intent, a volitional action. This is Kriya Yoga.

What triggers our karma? * TV is one of them. What we see on TV drags up memories from the subconscious and this triggers karma. Where do you think much of the violence of today comes from?

Violence is everywhere, movies, TV, video games, comic books ect... **BE very careful on what you watch and what you experience!** * **People trigger our karma.** Be mindful about who you hang around with. Or if you have to be with these people try to see their actions as karma playing out. **“Ahh, isn’t that interesting, Martha is judging me again to Tim. Om shanti, may Martha someday awaken from the bonds of her ignorance.”** * **Memories associated with karma triggers karma.** When I quit drinking, I had to quit listening to rock n roll music because it triggered my alcohol karma. * **Our stories of trauma, and looping minds trigger karma and intensify karma.** When our minds loop around trauma or how hard it is to quit drinking, the karma intensifies. **Emotion intensifies karma.** I used to drink more on the days that I was trying to limit myself verses the days I just let life happen. * **Reasoning triggers karma.** “Well cousin Bobby drinks whenever we get together. Why can’t I?” Thinking that what is good for another must be good for you is deadly, my teacher would say. We are all different. And we need to come to know ourselves, our weakness and our strengths. **Our strengths are here to help balance our weakness’.** Our astral natal chart is a great way to study our proclivities.

Share time with what triggers our karma:

What can we do to soften our karma? Attitude is everything! Kriyananda tells his story of an experience he had as a medic in the army. One of his fellow soldiers had his right arm blown off and as Kriyananda sat with him to administer aid, the soldier proclaimed, ‘good thing I am left-handed.’ Another example, after many months of drinking and being on the wagon, I finally realized that I had sat around done all the things you do while you are getting high so many times. I had been there, done that, became my attitude and I was ready to experience something new, I was ready to think a new thought. That is when I knew I had softened my addiction karma. We can also soften our karma by creating as much love karma and balanced karma as possible. Doing for others will help bring opportunities for self healing. Meditation will help quiet the mind to decrease our thought patterns from producing or intensifying karma. Become aware of your proclivities so that you can see them coming and detach. This program will give you the know how to do that. But easily, stop screaming, stop complaining, find joy in the beauty of life!

What is Samadhi? Free from all limitations and constrictive karma. It is pure bliss. Ananda, ananda, ananda.