

The Law of Karma in the Cosmic Cycle of Creation

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Abstract

The “law of karma” is integral to the philosophy of yoga and various spiritual and religious traditions. Whether this law can be established scientifically like the laws of physics is still an open question. Here some aspects and implications of the law of karma are described in elementary yoga philosophy. Quantitative and qualitative relationships about the law of karma – which relates mental actions and reactions to the evolution of the mind – can be called karmachanics. In yoga philosophy the law of karma describes how a person’s intentional good and bad mental actions produce quantitatively proportional reactions of pleasure and pain in the mind of the person doing the actions. The law of karma plays a fundamental role in benevolently guiding human beings towards the spiritual goal of life – the supreme consciousness – from which they evolved in the cosmic cycle of creation. The nature of free will, death, rebirth, and the spiritual goal of life are explained in terms of the law of karma, as described in the philosophical writings of a master karmachanic, P. R. Sarkar. Suggestions are given for testing the law of karma on the physical level.

Key Words: karma, free will, reincarnation, karmachanics, theory of everything

Introduction

The idea that one obtains happiness both in this life and in the hereafter by fulfilling one’s social and spiritual duties is an ancient one, as seen for example in the Bhagavad Gita (1). From a spiritual point of view, social duties should be consistent with spiritual duties, where there is a clear spiritual goal of human life that is accepted by society as a whole. According to universal spiritual philosophy, human beings follow their fundamental human characteristic or dharma, which is to seek infinite happiness and peace. At some stage, human beings become inspired to start making concerted efforts to achieve limitless happiness and peace by becoming one with a supreme consciousness. According to spiritual philosophy, this supreme consciousness created the cosmic system, or the cosmic cycle of creation. The supreme consciousness evolves the cosmic mind, which evolves matter. From there matter evolves into individual minds that evolve towards cosmic mind and finally merge with supreme consciousness, completing the cosmic cycle of creation. Spiritual philosophy describes this cosmic cycle of creation as strictly following natural physical and mental laws. These natural laws are more and more understandable by increasingly rational and intuitive human beings. The supreme consciousness with its infinite creative power evolves the cosmos and living beings in order to fulfill its desire to relate to and express its infinite love for all of its creation – and to ensure that all created beings continually evolve and finally become one with their creator.

Physical cosmology describes the evolution of our universe from a very hot, dense, expanding state called the Big Bang about 14.8 billion years ago. But cosmology has not yet recognized the spiritual origin and spiritual destiny of the universe and its inhabitants. Cosmic laws that act on the mental plane, such as the law of karma, have not yet been accepted by cosmologists except to the extent that they are reflected on the physical plane, such as the physical law of equal and opposite action and reaction, known as Isaac Newton's third law of motion in physics. The search by cosmologists and other physicists for a Theory of Everything is still limited to the physical world. Cosmologists may be surprised to learn that the mental laws of the cosmos may be just as quantitative and rationally understandable as the physical laws of the cosmos that they are now gaining a deeper understanding of. While religions and philosophies differ among themselves, ultimately there can be no conflict between spiritual science and physical science, since the underlying reality of the cosmos is one.

Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar (1921-1990), also known as Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, was a philosopher and guru whose rational and insightful descriptions of the law of karma and the cosmic cycle of creation may help bridge the current gap between physical and spiritual knowledge about the universe. In the excerpts below from his introductory book on spiritual philosophy, he describes some of the psychic and spiritual laws of the cosmos. He describes the quantitative nature of a hypothetical universal law often called the law of karma. Karma means action. The law of karma describes a quantitative and proportional relationship between good and bad intentional actions by human beings, and the resulting quantity of pleasure or pain these actions bring to the individual who has done the actions. A fixed quantum of pleasure or pain caused by a specific good or bad action can be experienced intensely in a short time or less intensely when spread out over a longer time. Karmic reactions that are not completely experienced in one's present life will carry over to another suitably selected new lifetime. P.R. Sarkar describes the law of karma as integral to the benevolent functioning of the cosmic cycle of creation. The cosmic cycle is guided by precise cosmic laws produced by the supreme consciousness that created the universe using its infinite creative power.

The Mental World Is Precisely Quantified in the Law of Karma

P. R. Sarkar uses the word "quantum" in describing the quantity of happiness or sorrow that is produced by specific positive or negative actions. In emphasizing the "quantum" nature of karma, P.R. Sarkar may be suggesting that the quantitative laws of karma are as strict, deep and broad as the laws of quantum mechanics and quantum electrodynamics and other physical laws describing matter, energy, space and time. When P. R. Sarkar talks about the relative world, he usually describes it as being relative to "time, place and person." The person (mind and consciousness) was mostly left out of physical science since the time of Galileo in 1600 until about 100 years ago, when the role of the conscious observer became increasingly important in the physical sciences with the development of quantum mechanics. It is the person (i.e. the human mind) that takes prominence in the law of karma, though P. R. Sarkar has mentioned elsewhere how time and place can influence the expression of the law of karma.

The three excerpts below are from P. R. Sarkar's book *Ananda Marga: Elementary Philosophy*. Here and in a number of other lectures describing the law of karma. P. R. Sarkar shows a mastery of knowledge of the law of karma and its relation to the cosmic cycle of creation that puts him in the front rank of modern philosophers. P. R. Sarkar's clear descriptions of the working of karma

in the cosmic cycle of creation could inspire the development of a more quantitative theory of karmachanics – the quantitative working of karma in the mental world. If quantum mechanics with its probabilities and quantum jumps applies in the physical world, and if the physical world and the mental world fit together seamlessly, then it seems highly likely that the karmic world of intentional actions and the consequent experienced pleasures and pains will be found in the future to be highly and systematically quantitative as well.

As explained in the excerpts below, if good or bad actions are committed in one's life, and the consequences are not experienced by the actor in the same life, then the law of karma requires that the experiencing of the reactions to the actions be carried over to a future life of a person in order for the karmic scales of mental action and reaction to balance again.

The Law of Karma and Reincarnation

P. R. Sarkar explains the benevolent motivation of a Supreme Entity in creating the mental law of karma that teaches human beings to distinguish good actions from bad actions through their pleasant and painful consequences, and leads human beings on a path of accelerating spiritual progress. A person learns that to progress spiritually, one has to avoid bad actions that will block one's spiritual progress until the painful reactions to the bad actions are experienced. Good actions, unless done with a non-egoistic ideation, will create pleasant reactions which also have to be experienced over time, and this also delays spiritual progress. What is the solution? It is to avoid doing bad actions, and to do good actions without letting one's ego be linked those good actions. In this way one's ego is freed from the delaying consequences of good actions. This is a practical way to accelerate one spiritual progress towards the spiritual goal of life, while living in a world in which one is constantly performing actions.

Significant empirical research has been done by Stevenson (2) to gather evidence to test the possible occurrence of reincarnation. Stevenson examined many reports of past life memories reported by children. He followed up the children's reports of past life experiences with research efforts to confirm the children's stories. He wanted to see if physical birthmarks and birth defects of the children correlated with the stories about how the child died in their reported previous life. Stevenson found many interesting confirmations of the children's stories. He found correlations between the location of birthmarks and birth defects of the children who had past-life stories about how they died in their past life, and the way the persons who Stevenson identified from the past-life stories had actually died. These correlational results do not provide a physical mechanism or proof of reincarnation, and could possibly be explained by other mechanisms as well as by reincarnation. A scientific hypothesis for how reincarnation actually occurs is needed as well, to add support to Stevenson's empirical research and to use in making predictions for testing in further research.

The Law of Karma and Free Will

The question arises, does a human being have free will to do or avoiding doing good or bad actions? There is no cosmic benevolence if the individual has no freedom of choice in the actions they make, and always dances like a puppet pulled by strings of fate. i.e. the consequences of previous actions committed mechanically. True, some actions of a person are internally forced,

and therefore not freely performed, in order to create actions necessary for experiencing the pleasurable or painful consequences of previous actions. But in the case where a person's actions are not forced in order to experience previous reactions, the human intellect and will are free to choose between doing good actions or refraining from bad ones. Therefore, the law of karma is premised on human freedom of will, to be able to freely choose to perform good or bad actions that will either accelerate or retard one's evolution towards the spiritual goal of oneness with the supreme consciousness.

P.R. Sarkar was a master of the Sanskrit language as well as spiritual philosophy and often uses Sanskrit words that have psychological and spiritual meanings, such as "yoga", which mean "to yoke or unite". In several places in P. R. Sarkar's book excerpts below, where a Sanskrit word was not translated in the original article, I have provided an English equivalent. Excerpt 1 below is chapter 6: "How should human beings live in this world?" from P.R. Sarkar's (3,4) introductory book on spiritual philosophy named *Ananda Marga Elementary Philosophy*. This was his first book, produced from a series of discourses given by him in 1955. Excerpts 2 and 3 below are from chapter 5: "What is my relation with the universe and the cosmic entity?". These two excerpts describe how mental actions create potential reactions or samkraras in the mind, and how the law of karma works in relation to death and rebirth.

Excerpt 1 – Chapter 6 of *Ananda Marga Elementary Philosophy*

The purpose of the Qualified Supreme Entity (Saguña Brahma or God) in bringing about the creation is to liberate every unit being and make it emancipated like Itself. It is only with this intention that in the last stage of the evolutionary movement from crude to subtle, human beings, representing a few units only, appear with a fully-reflected unit consciousness. The influence of Prakrti (the creative power of the Supreme Consciousness) on the unit consciousness decreases with its advance towards the subtle, as we find that the unit consciousness in human beings is under a lesser influence of Prakrti than the unit consciousness in animals. This decrease in the influence of Prakrti over unit consciousness is obviously at the mercy of Saguña Brahma. The Qualified Supreme Entity (Saguña Brahma) and Prakrti must have entered into an alliance at the very beginning of creation for this to happen; otherwise, Prakrti (whose very nature is to qualify Puruśa (Supreme Consciousness) as much as possible) would not release Puruśa from Her influence. In the phase of creation where the movement is from crude to subtle, it is found that Prakrti releases Consciousness (Puruśa) from Her bondage at Her own will. Yet the unit consciousness remains under bondage, because the movement of the creation from crude to subtle does not come to an end. If, in this subjugated position, any conscious entity acts independently, it is the nature of Prakrti to punish it. As a result of punishment, the further evolutionary movement of unit consciousness towards subtlety is temporarily affected.

In the creation it is observed that the influence of Prakrti is less where the reflection of Consciousness is clearer. If the unit consciousness could expand and enlarge the reflection of Consciousness, it would be increasing its speed towards subtlety, as the influence of Prakrti on it would be decreased. It would then be possible for unit consciousness to get back to complete subtlety quickly. Therefore, good deeds are those which enlarge the reflection of Consciousness without leading one to go against the laws of Prakrti. Following the laws of Prakrti and working according to Her dictates will eliminate the suffering of the consequences of actions (karmaphala), while enlarging the density of reflection of Consciousness will diminish the hold of Prakrti. This

enables one to go back to the supreme rank very quickly. Actions which make one follow the laws of Prakṛti and also increase the density of reflection of Consciousness, are called *uttama karma* (ideal actions), and are also called *Vidyámáyá* – which is associated with *vaerágya* (non-attachment) and *viveka* (mental discrimination).

Vaerágya is commonly understood to mean retiring from the world and leading a life of strict self-denial by practicing excessive austerity. *Vaerágya* does not mean this. It does not make one a recluse. It only means to attempt to understand the proper use of things and to use them correctly (of course without working under the control of the crude objects of mind only). For example, alcohol is an intoxicant which is harmful for both body and mind, and hence the use of alcohol as an intoxicant is to be given up. Doctors prescribe alcohol in medicine for various diseases, and the intoxicant alcohol then becomes a medicine which relieves the patients of their suffering. Thus the same alcohol through difference in its use, changes its character from a harmful intoxicant to useful medicine. The use of alcohol as a medicine is its proper use, and anyone using it for this purpose does not place himself under the dominant influence of alcohol. This right use of a thing is *vaerágya*. Right use of anything within the idea of *vaerágya* does not make one's mind a slave to a constant longing for the object. One becomes indifferent to it. By developing indifference or not being constantly attracted by crude things, one's mind becomes subtle. Mind's movement towards subtlety means a decrease in the influence of Prakṛti over it, and that is an advance towards liberation (*mukti*), as liberation is only possible when one is released from the influence of Prakṛti.

Discrimination between good and evil is *viveka*. To consider the use of alcohol as an intoxicant to be evil and its use as a medicine to be good is *viveka*. The same thing by change in its use can become good or evil, and discrimination between the two is *viveka*. It is with discrimination (*viveka*) only that mind can determine the goodness or evil in a thing or in its uses. *Viveka* is, therefore, necessary for following *vaerágya*, and *vaerágya* is a great contributory factor in achieving emancipation (*mukti*). Thus *vaerágya* and *viveka* alone are good deeds or *Vidyámáyá*.

Evil deeds or *Avidyámáyá* are just the opposite of these. Actions which dim the reflection of Consciousness and also lead one to go against the laws of Prakṛti are evil deeds. Evolution of unit consciousness only means that the reflection of Consciousness becomes clearer and greater in density because of the mind becoming more subtle. This would be possible only when the speed of movement towards subtlety is increased, as then alone will mind tend to become more subtle. The more the mind is absorbed in crude objects the more unit consciousness is dragged backwards, because the reflection of Consciousness becomes dimmer with greater expression of Prakṛti. Mind being absorbed in crudeness remains more under the influence of Prakṛti, with the result that the onward march of unit consciousness is halted. Then actions that lead one to go against the laws of Prakṛti also halt the evolutionary march towards subtlety, because the consequences of the punishment inflicted by Prakṛti for defying Her have to be suffered before progressing further, and unit consciousness is debarred for that time from gaining its subtlety.

Actions which draw mind to crude objects and lead one to act against the laws of Prakṛti are evil or *Avidyámáyá*. *Avidyámáyá* is the creator of the *śádrīpu* (six enemies) and the *aśtápásha* (eight fetters). *Káma* (longing for earthly objects), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (avarice), *moha* (attraction), *mada* (vanity) and *mátsarya* (envy) are the six enemies, while *bhaya* (fear), *lajjá* (shame), *ghrńá* (hatred), *shaunká* (doubt), *kula* (high descent), *shiila* (complex of culture), *mána* (vanity) and *jugupsá* (backbiting) are the eight fetters. *Śat* means “six” and *ripu* means “enemies”. These six faculties in human beings are termed as enemies, as they absorb the mind in crudeness and stop its

march towards the subtle. The supreme rank for unit consciousness is subtle, and anything which holds it back from reaching the supreme rank, is its enemy. These six faculties are, therefore, termed as six enemies. Aśtápásha means the eight fetters. Anyone bound by fetters will lose his or her capacity of movement. In the creation we find the movement of human beings is from the crude to the subtle. That is, human beings have to move towards the subtle, but by their leaning towards the eight fetters such as lajjá, bhaya, and ghrúá, they get absorbed in crude things only and their progress towards the subtle is stopped.

To follow Vidyámáyá would be a good deed while to follow Avidyámáyá would be an evil one. Vidyámáyá gradually leads one to the subtle and Avidyámáyá stops one's progress towards the subtle. According to the rule of creation, human movement is towards the subtle, and everyone will have to follow Vidyámáyá so that their movement towards the subtle is accelerated and one gets back to the supreme rank quickly.

Those who follow Vidyámáyá can be put into four categories: First, those who follow the laws of Prakṛti and make an effort for the progress of unit consciousness. They are the good people. Second, those who follow the laws of Prakṛti but are indifferent to making efforts for the progress of unit consciousness. Third, those who do not follow the laws of Prakṛti and are indifferent to making efforts for the progress of unit consciousness. These are called the low. Fourth, those who do not follow the laws of Prakṛti and also become the cause of the degradation of their unit consciousness. Such as these are lower than the lowest.

The purpose of the Qualified Supreme Entity (Saguña Brahma) in creating human beings is to make them follow Its course towards the subtle so as to take them back to the supreme rank. This forms the nature (dharma) of human beings. To get back to the supreme rank, effort for the elevation of unit consciousness is necessary, and actions should also be in keeping with the laws of Prakṛti so that She does not create obstacles to progress. Hence the people of the first category, that is, good people, are natural (prákrta manuśya), as they work according to their nature (dharma), and they alone serve the purpose for which the Qualified Supreme Entity (Saguña Brahma) made them.

Animals also follow Prakṛti, but due to the absence of clear reflection of consciousness they are not able to make any effort for the elevation of their consciousness. Persons of the second category who only follow the laws of Prakṛti are in no way different from animals. They make no use of a fully-reflected unit consciousness in them. They can hence be called nothing better than beasts in the guise of humans.

Those in the third and fourth categories are really lower than the beasts. Beasts follow the laws of Prakṛti and do not make any effort for the elevation of unit consciousness as it is not clearly reflected in them. Being dependent entirely on Prakṛti for all their actions, animals with the passage of time develop a clearly-reflected unit consciousness. While the low and the lowest of people in the third and fourth categories make no use of the fully-reflected unit consciousness in themselves and work against the laws of Prakṛti, the lowest not only work against the laws of Prakṛti but also bring about further degeneration in the reflection of unit consciousness through their actions. These two are not only beasts in human form but even meaner than the beasts.

In the preceding chapter it was shown that reactions of actions (karmaphala) have to be experienced. No one is spared from experiencing them; the reactions of all one's actions will have

to be borne by oneself alone. There are many who with the intention of escaping this suffering of reaction (karmaphala) try various methods. To what extent their attempts and methods are based on reasoning and logic, and whether they can succeed in escaping the experience of reactions (karmaphala), is discussed below.

Many believe that by neutralizing the influence of the stars (grahashánti) and by rituals of offering sacrifice in repentance (práyashcitta), they will be able to escape the consequences of their actions. This belief is not correct, because according to the rule of Prakrti every action has to be followed by its reaction. The mind has to regain its normality through reactions. This is the law of Prakrti and no one can set it aside. There is, however, the possibility of accelerating or slowing the speed of the reactions which will bring the mind back to normality. For instance, the reactions which would take one month to bring the mind back to normality may, with the help of Tantra, be completed in a day or a year by accelerating or slowing the speed of reactions, but it will never be possible to eliminate them altogether. One may borrow one hundred rupees on the condition that the same will be returned within a month. It may be possible to persuade the creditor to waive the condition of payment and increase the period to a year or even to two years. The period of the return of the money can be extended, but the return of the money cannot be escaped. Similarly, a person having 150 rupees' credit in their account with a condition that they will spend all the money in a month at the rate of five rupees a day, may spend all the 150 in one day, or may follow the original condition and take one month to spend the money. The money will only be used by the depositor whether they do it in a day or a month.

The mode of experiencing the reaction can be changed with the help of Tantric practices, like the two examples cited above, but the experience of the reaction, or fate, cannot be evaded. Karmaphala, consequences or reactions of one's actions, will have to be experienced by a person, and at best only the intensity of suffering at a time can be reduced or increased by slowing or accelerating the speed of reactions. It is possible that the condition of returning one hundred rupees in one instalment may be too hard for the debtor and he or she may have to suffer great mental agony, but if the same amount is returned in several small instalments the debtor may not feel it at all. The period of suffering is thus increased with the help of Tantric practices with the result that one does not feel the intensity of suffering and wrongly concludes that the experiencing of reactions (karmaphala) has been evaded or stopped because of grahashánti (that is by neutralizing the influence of stars). For example, if on reading the future of a person it is found that he or she has to bear the mental suffering of fracture of an arm, it may be possible to stop the fracturing of the arm with the help of grahashánti. But the quantum of mental suffering cannot be changed or done away with. The suffering could be spread over a longer time due to a number of minor incidents. For instance, the person's hand might get scratched, and later on he or she might fall sick. The person would go suffering in instalments till the quantum of his or her suffering equaled the mental suffering he or she was destined to get from the fracture of the arm. To revert to our earlier example, it would mean that the debtor of one hundred rupees would have to keep on repaying his or her debt in small instalments of a rupee or so until they had paid off the full hundred. Here the payment of the debt of one hundred rupees represents the mental suffering from the fracture of the arm, which was supposed to be completed in one instalment; but through flattery and persuasion of the creditor, that is, by neutralizing the influence of the stars (grahashánti), it is being paid back in small instalments. Hence as the return of the hundred rupees is not complete, the payment will have to continue.

Just as it is possible to increase the period of experiencing the reactions with the help of grahashánti, it is also possible to decrease this period. For instance, some persons wear different stones such as blue sapphires which change the mode of their experiencing the reactions. It is possible that by this one may get a fortune by winning a prize in a lottery or may get a promotion in one's employment. This makes people believe that all this has happened due to grahashánti, but it is actually not so. Fate, or the quantum of experiencing the consequences of one's actions, can neither be changed nor evaded. It was explained earlier that one's actions that give happiness to others will beget happiness to oneself to the same extent in mental measure. This quantum of experiencing happiness and pleasure cannot be changed. Only the time required for experiencing it can be increased or decreased. Taking again the example of the deposit of 150 rupees, we see that the money intended to be spent in a month at the rate of five rupees a day, can be spent in one day by shortening the period of expenditure and leaving nothing for the remaining twenty-nine days of the month. The change in fate brought about by grahashánti is similar to this. For instance, the one thousand rupees that one gets as a prize in a lottery due to the influence of the blue sapphire, is the person's own money scheduled to be received by him or her in small instalments over a long period of time. This money is received in one instalment, leaving no balance for the rest of the instalments. Yet getting a huge amount at once makes one believe that grahashánti, or the wearing of a blue sapphire, has changed one's fate.

In fact, fate or the experiencing of reactions (karmaphala) can never be changed. It is only the duration of reactions that can be changed. That is why those who carry on intuitional practice (sádhaná) with the intention of achieving emancipation, experience pleasure and pain, happiness and agony quickly, so that they may complete the experiencing of reactions in as short a period as possible. Those who desire liberation (mukti) want it in this life itself, and so they experience everything quickly, according to their potential reactions (sańskáras), so that nothing is left for the future life and they can obtain release from the bondage of Prakrti.

Some believe that the results gathered due to evil deeds can be compensated or washed off by the good results earned by good deeds. According to them, if the bad and good deeds are the same in number, there should be nothing left as balance to be experienced. This neither happens nor is it possible. It has been seen earlier that all actions, whether good or evil, cause a deformity in the mind. In the process of mind regaining its normal form the deformity is removed by an equal and opposite reaction. Hence deformity caused by evil actions cannot be removed by good actions as they would only make the mind more deformed. There will have to be an independent, equal and opposite reaction to every action. When every deformity is removed by an independent reaction, one will have to experience the consequences of good and bad actions separately. Hence the results of good actions cannot help one to evade the suffering of bad results due to bad actions. Evil consequences of evil deeds and good consequences of good deeds will have to be experienced separately. This is the law of Prakrti.

Logically it has been proved that the experiencing of the reaction (karmaphala) of an action cannot be evaded. That being so, blaming God (Bhagaván) for the consequences of our actions or praying to be released from bearing the consequences is only foolishness. One who performs actions will have to bear the reactions also. If you plunge your hand in fire you will surely burn it. To blame God for burning your hand is merely ignorance or stupidity. It is the nature of fire to burn, and whatsoever comes in contact with it will be burnt. Similarly, it is a self-evident law of Prakrti or Her very nature that all actions will have reactions. God (Bhagaván) is not in the least responsible for it. The performer of the actions is responsible for it. The performer of the actions is responsible

for the reactions also, since God has not performed the actions. He cannot be responsible for the reactions. It is only people who are responsible for actions as well as for bearing the consequences of these actions.

Prayer is the act of asking for a favor with earnestness. It also means a solemn petition addressed to the Supreme Being for certain benefits. One prays to God for something which one does not possess or thinks one does not possess. One asks God for these favors with the faith that He alone can bestow everything and by His mere wish all wants can be satisfied. By prayer or by begging one wants to awaken His wish so that one may be granted the things one lacks. Does not one's attempt to rouse the wish of God to fulfil these needs, upon careful and rational thinking, appear to be a reminder to God to give one something of which God has kept one deprived? It would otherwise not be necessary to remind Him in prayer of that thing or to try to arouse His wish to give. For instance, if one is in need of money, one would, with the faith that God alone can give, pray to Him for the favor of giving one money. Does not this request show God's fault in keeping one in want of money, when He alone can give it? God alone is blamed for it, and by praying to Him for money one is precisely pointing out to Him His partiality in not giving one the money one needed. Therefore, prayer or asking for favors from God is only pointing out to the Sole Giver His mistakes in the distribution of His favors. It only presumes lack of impartiality in Him, and that is why He is blamed for making some very rich and others very poor. Praying to God for favors is only to bring to His notice the charge of partiality levelled against Him. When prayer leads to such a conclusion, it is only ignorance to ask for favors. One who performs actions will also bear the consequences, and blaming God for it as His partiality is not going to save one from bearing the consequences.

A hand plunged in fire will surely get burnt. No amount of praying is going to save it. For God's granting such a prayer would mean either removing the burning property of fire or changing the very composition of the hand so that it is not affected by fire and does not get burnt. This is not possible. In God's creation there is no flaw, only because all things, small or big, follow their own nature (dharma). Otherwise there would have been disorder at every step. Prayers, which only serve as a reminder to God of His partiality, cannot induce Him to change the laws of His creation. Anyone who hopes to make God change His laws through prayer only displays utter ignorance.

According to the laws of Prakrti, every action has a reaction which has to be experienced by the person who performs the action. This law is unchangeable, and praying to change this law is only wasting one's time. Prayers cannot change fate, and the experiencing of reactions (karmaphala) is inevitable.

Stuti is lauding or eulogizing the qualities of God in a song or hymn of praise, and it cannot be given a higher status than flattery. Flattery is usually practiced on one who is capable of granting a favor and from whom one seeks something. Singing the qualities of God is obviously done with the intention of pleasing Him, or else there would be no use in telling God, who is all-knowing, that He is merciful, He is almighty and He is benevolent. The intention behind eulogizing these qualities is to flatter God so that He may bestow some of His mercy. He, being almighty, may exempt one from the consequences of one's actions by His authority. Stuti or lauding the qualities is, hence, only flattery, behind which is hidden a prayer for seeking favors. Stuti is, therefore, just as ineffective as prayer and indulging in it is also a waste of time.

Prayer and stuti serve no purpose and indulging in them is only wasting time, since obvious begging and flattery is not likely to achieve anything. Bhakti, or devotion, however, is not like this. Let us see what bhakti is. Bhakti is a Sanskrit word derived bhaj + ktin, which means “to call with devotion”. It is not stuti or flattery. It is different from prayer also. It is only to call God with devotion. The utility of this calling has to be seen. The unit consciousness which follows the purpose of creation laid down by the Qualified Supreme Entity by making an effort to return to the omnipresent Cosmic Consciousness, or those who desire emancipation, have to take recourse to bhakti. The only path that leads to Cosmic Consciousness is to devote oneself to Him completely by calling Him.

The quality or nature of the human mind is such that it becomes like the idea or entity to which it is devoted. For instance, if one starts thinking oneself to be mad, one actually becomes mad, as one’s mind is largely given over to that idea. Similarly, if one is given to believe that one is suffering from consumption, one becomes so concerned with the idea that one actually develops consumption. The human mind is so made that it has the capacity of becoming like the object to which it is attached. The unit consciousness that wants to return to Cosmic Consciousness quickly has to become devoted to Cosmic Consciousness, and this is bhakti. “I am That” is the idea to which the unit consciousness has to be completely devoted in order to become That one day. Bhakti, devotion, or calling Cosmic Consciousness, thus leads one to become like That. Bhakti or devotion is neither prayer nor stuti. Some, however, say that wanting to merge with Cosmic Consciousness or wanting emancipation is also a favor that one seeks through bhakti, and so it is also a prayer. This is not so, because the very purpose of God in creating humanity is to make the unit consciousness emancipated like Himself and to return it to the supreme rank. This is the wish of God, and everything in this creation is with that purpose and is directed towards that. One who makes an effort through bhakti to achieve the purpose for which one was brought into being, or for fulfilling the wish of God, does not pray for any favor. For even if one does not make an effort and digresses from that path, one will sooner or later be made to follow it again. Bhakti or devotion is, therefore, neither prayer nor eulogizing God (stuti). These two do not help one to achieve any result and are merely a waste of time. Bhakti is the method by which one can be completely devoted to Cosmic Consciousness, and that is the only way to achieve the quickest return to the supreme rank.

The consequences of actions (karmaphala) have to be borne. There is no way to escape them. Even prayer and lauding the qualities of God is of no help. What then is the way out? The only way is to give up evil deeds, the consequences of which keep one bound to the influence of Prakrti, by taking a lesson from the consequences that one suffers. For instance, if a hand is plunged in fire, it is bound to get burnt. This is bound to happen, and even prayer cannot relieve one of such a consequence. The only way to avoid burning is not to plunge one’s hand into fire. Similarly, if there are no evil actions the question of evil consequences does not arise.

The rule of Prakrti that one has to bear the consequences of one’s actions must also have some purpose behind it for the welfare of humanity. The purpose of the entire creation is to enable every unit to become emancipated. That is the great object of the Qualified Supreme Entity in bringing about the creation, and hence It can only be called the Great Benefactor. Even though It is emancipated, It came under the influence of Prakrti for the welfare of every unit. Karmaphala or bearing the consequences of one’s actions has been made a very strict rule only for the welfare of human beings, as it is by means of this that He (Bhagaván) restrains human beings from evil actions and leads them to emancipation. God, by His punishments, teaches humans not to indulge in evil

deeds, but humans out of their ignorance only blame Him for inflicting pain and suffering. Blaming God for being partial and unkind and for inflicting pain and suffering, or even prayer and flattery for relief from suffering, are not the correct courses to adopt. The wise take the pain and suffering as a lesson through which the Great Benefactor teaches them to refrain from evil actions and develop in them discrimination. Hence abstaining from evil action is the action of the wise and the duty of every human being.

Excerpt 2, from Chapter 5 of *Ananda Marga Elementary Philosophy*

The process or reaction which restores mind to its original form, the deformity being due to the actions of mind, is experienced as karmaphala (result of actions). The intensity with which an action is performed and thus deforms the mind will be exhibited to the same extent in the reaction or karmaphala. The pressure employed against Prakrti in causing deformity in the mind will be met in order to restore mind to its normal form. For instance, a rubber ball pressed with a finger forms a depression, but on being released it returns to its original or normal form. The finger will experience an equal and opposite force at the time of reaction. Here the rubber ball is comparable to mind, and the finger to the human being's "I" entity that makes the mind work and thereby creates depressions in it. Hence one would feel the reaction of mind returning to its original form with the same amount of intensity as was employed in creating the depression. The intentions of Prakrti to restore the original form of mind and also to punish the "I" that inspired the mind to work, are both achieved by this process of reaction. According to the rules of Prakrti, the nature of mind is to come back to its normal form by reacting to every action. Hence human beings have to bear the consequences of any type of work as reaction (karmaphala). According to the law of Prakrti, a person will experience the reaction to all their deeds, whether good or evil. For instance, if a person steals and causes suffering to the person whose things are stolen, the first person will create a distortion in his or her mind by using his or her faculty of inflicting pain. The mind will react to remove this distortion, and the person inflicting pain will experience an equal amount of pain (in mental measure) as a result of this reaction. Similarly, if people by their deeds give happiness to others, they will, as a result of the mind's reaction attempting to come back to its normal form, experience an equal amount of happiness. This is because according to the laws of Prakrti one will experience an equal and opposite reaction in the process of mind regaining its normal form. Thus Prakrti makes a human being bear the consequences (karmaphala) of all his or her actions with the help of the instrument of mind created by Prakrti, and whatever a human being does, good or evil, they will have to experience a similar reaction (karmaphala).

Excerpt 3: From Chapter 5 of *Ananda Marga Elementary Philosophy*

Action, whether good or bad, causes deformity in the mind, and in the process of regaining its normal form one experiences as reactions good results for good deeds and bad results for bad ones. After death, mind takes the shelter of unit consciousness as reaction in its potentiality (saṁskāra). The unit consciousness, in order to have those potential reactions expressed, will have to seek a body suitable for the expression of these reactions. For instance, Rama dies, and his mind takes the shelter of his unit consciousness (ātman) as reactions in their potentiality (saṁskāra). Rama according to his actions in this life should experience as reaction (karmaphala) the pain equivalent in mental measure to a fracture of an arm at the age of eight, the happiness of getting a fortune at

the age of ten, and the suffering of becoming fatherless at the age of eleven. He will have to experience all this as his deformed mind regains its normal form. It is important to clarify here that the actual form of suffering is not predetermined. It cannot be said what might be the actual reaction of a particular action. For example, it is not preordained that if one commits theft his things of the same value will be stolen as a reaction. The suffering is measured in terms of mental suffering to the extent which was inflicted on others by stealing their property. Thus the measure of experiencing the result of an action is mental and is in terms of pleasure and pain, and the actual form of experience has relatively no importance. Rama has to experience the pain and pleasure of all these happenings, and so his unit consciousness will have to seek a body on rebirth, where an opportunity to experience all this will be available. In order to suffer the mental agony of loss of his father at the age of eleven years, Rama has to be born of parents where the father, according to his own actions, has also to die when Rama attains that age. If it is not so, Rama will not be able to experience his reaction (karmaphala) of the suffering of the loss of his father. Thus it is seen that unit consciousness and the potential reaction (saṁskāra) cannot take shelter in any body for rebirth indiscriminately. A suitable body where the opportunity and field for experiencing their reactions (karmaphala) is available will have to be sought out. It is only in such a body that unit consciousness, along with total reactions in their potentiality, will seek shelter and be reborn.

Unit consciousness and the potential reaction (saṁskāra) have to seek a body for their shelter which provides them with a suitable field for experiencing the results of their actions. What is the agency that selects this suitable field for them? Unit consciousness cannot perform any action. It is only a spectator, and mind has taken shelter in it as potential energy or force, as reactions in their potentiality (saṁskāra), and so mind is also non-functional. It has been seen earlier that one has to experience reactions according to the law of Prakṛti, and so it is also the responsibility of Prakṛti to make us experience the remaining reactions. It is, therefore, Prakṛti under whose law one has to be reborn, and Prakṛti that has to find the required field and shelter for the potential reactions (saṁskāra) and the unit consciousness. That is why it is said that after death Prakṛti selects the proper field to suit the potential reaction. Such a field may be available in a day, or it may even take millions of years to discover it, for the mind cannot take shelter in a body till a field which suits the requirements of potential reactions is obtained. Hence it is never possible to say where and when one is to be reborn after death. There may be innumerable worlds where life exists. Unit consciousness and potential reactions may get a suitable field in any of them. Thus it is not even necessary that one be reborn only on this earth. It is thus clear that those reborn on this earth have a suitable field here alone and that they have adopted a body only for the purpose of experiencing the reactions of their previous actions. Human beings keep on performing new actions also, while experiencing the reactions of previous actions. This experiencing of the result of previous actions is called the unknown future or fate (adrśīta). One experiences the result of one's actions in a subsequent life and cannot then recollect the actions whose results bring happiness and grief, because a person's memory is not large enough to remember or know the deeds of their past lives. Reactions which humans experience were collected in previous lives, and in present life they cannot make out the cause of such experiences, and hence term these experiences as fate or the unknown future. People often hold Parama Puruṣa (the Supreme Consciousness) responsible for calamities that befall them, but in fact they alone are responsible, as the suffering of fate is only reaction of their own previous actions. How can Parama Puruṣa be responsible?

Human beings themselves are answerable for their fate as it is their actions alone which create it. They alone will have to bear the consequences of all their actions. No one else can substitute for

them. Their good deeds beget good results, while bad ones beget bad results, and they will have to experience both without any exception. This is the law of Prakrti and no one can change this law.

The Law of Karma and the Theory of Everything

Physicists have been searching for a final physical theory which will unify all four known forces of physics—the strong, weak, electromagnetic and gravitational forces—in a set of unified equations. They call this highly sought-after theory the Theory of Everything (TOE). Currently this theory is incomplete since it does not include dark matter and dark energy, which together compose about 95% of the matter/energy of the universe. The current physics theories also do not reconcile the fundamental incompatibility between quantum mechanics and the theory of gravity described in Einstein’s general theory of relativity. Physicists’ highly sought-after Theory of Everything also leaves out the mind and consciousness, and therefore leaves out possible mental laws like the law of karma. A complete Theory of Everything would need to include cosmic mental laws (if any) as well as physical laws. Efforts to develop and experimentally test a quantitative theory of the law of karma, would be a big step forward in creating a complete Theory of Everything. Also, P. R. Sarkar (5) introduced the concept of microvita—subtle subatomic living entities that create fundamental particles, atoms, living bodies and minds in the universe. Microvita, if they exist, would have their own laws that would need to be included in a complete Theory of Everything. Gauthier (6), applying the concept of microvita on a cosmic scale, proposes a mathematical model where our universe was produced from a superluminal quantum particle emanated from a cosmic quantum field within a cosmic mind.

If cosmologists are to develop a complete Theory of Everything, their current theories need to be expanded to give a fuller description cosmic evolution and cosmic laws than they are currently able to give. The currently accepted fundamental physical laws contain experimentally-measured physical constants that would lead to a universe like ours that is apparently fine-tuned to evolve stable galaxies, complex life forms and minds. There is currently no scientifically accepted explanation of why a universe like ours should even exist. Our universe could be one of many similar or very different universes with different fundamental physical constants. The universe appears to be governed by mathematical laws that can be discovered by scientific research. At least this is the basic faith of physicists and other scientists. If universal mathematical laws include laws of physical and mental evolution, this could provide support for the hypothesis that a conscious creator produced and implemented these universal laws.

How can the hypothesis of the law of karma be researched by physicists or other physical scientists? The law of karma is a mental law both on the level of mental actions (mental intentions for good or bad) and mental reactions (experiences of pleasure and pain). But mental actions and reactions have correspondences in the physical world, specifically the physical brain. Thoughts in the mind are correlated with electromagnetic, biochemical and biophysical processes in and around the brain. These physical processes can be measured by physicists, biophysicists, biochemists and biologists. So indirect tests of the law of karma by its effects on the brain and physical body of a person can be developed and tested. The law of karma will probably not be established by one experiment. Rather, a large and multifaceted research program would be required to test and possibly establish the law of karma by physical methods, similar to the international multifaceted tests for dark matter. Confirmation of the law of karma by physicists would require them to rethink

and expand the Theory of Everything to contain mental laws of the universe as well as physical laws.

Conclusion

The law of karma, while considered a fundamental psychological law in spiritual philosophy, is still hypothetical from a scientific point of view. But its quantitative nature, broad applicability and significance for free will and reincarnation, as seen from its quantitative and qualitative description by spiritual philosopher P. R. Sarkar, make it a strong candidate for further scientific research and possible inclusion as a cosmic law in a genuine Theory of Everything.

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