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## **YOUR KARMA IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY**

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**A lecture delivered by Mrs. Madigan in the  
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Although a great many people believe in reincarnation, there are comparatively few in the Western world who would readily accept the idea of karma, the law of retribution, the law of cause and effect, described by Paul, "As you sow, so shall you reap." The Edgar Cayce readings indicate that we are the creators of our destiny. We live many lifetimes upon the earth, always in human form; and by the law of karma, whatever we have sent out into the lives of others will inevitably return to us at some future date. To quote from the readings, "when a soul enters a new body in a new environment a door is opened leading to an opportunity for building the soul's destiny. Everything which has previously been built, both good and bad, is contained in that opportunity. Changes come, and some people say luck has intervened. But it is not luck. It is the result of what the soul has done about its opportunity.

Several years ago I wrote a little poem which had a rather wide reception in metaphysical circles. It has a top-heavy title of "I Know That Man Can Conquer Destiny", and it went something like this:

"I know that man can conquer destiny: And shape his life by dreams and deep desire."

In writing this I meant that our destiny in this life could be built through faith, through prayer and through right desire. And the Cayce readings bear this out in part, for they say that mind is the builder, and whatever we experience must first begin in the realms of the mind.

Edgar Cayce once had a symbolic dream: He dreamed he went to heaven and while in heaven he visited the chapel of prayer. To his surprises the chapel was filled with packages wrapped and addressed to persons upon the earth. He asked the caretaker, an elderly man, the meaning of the packages which had not been delivered. And the answer was, "These are the gifts for which people have been praying but they lost their faith just before the date of delivery."

In many life readings there is this phrase: "He is your Lord, your Master. Let Him guide you day by day, for He has promised, what you ask believing, you shall have." But for the purpose of this one lifetime, there are karmic conditions which we cannot change. In fact, the soul chooses the lessons it wishes to learn before incarnating into the body. We cannot change our race, for instance, nor our natural parentage; and there are other conditions which are beyond our control. But in God's time, karma does not exist. There is neither physical, mental, nor emotional

pain in God's time. And perhaps in cases of instantaneous healing, such as have been recorded at Lourdes, we simply become one with the Creative Force of the universe, and we are no longer governed by karmic laws. Our karma is forgiven because we have forgiven ourselves. From the readings, it would seem that the memory of everything we have done, have felt, have ever been is located in the cell structure of the endocrine glands.

Karma does not come from without ourselves. We are not subject to the slings of an outrageous fortune. Our destiny is created by us. We punish ourselves in exactly the same manner in which an adult tends to punish himself for some half-remembered guilt experience in his childhood. By love, and by forgiveness for others as well as self, therefore, karma becomes an opportunity for good. The readings indicate that desire does influence not only this life but subsequent lives; and even negative desire will manifest itself. What we do where others are concerned, what we think, what we desire - these condition our future, for we are the builders of our destiny.

### **Opportunities from Negative Karma**

A case from one of the readings illustrates this very well: During the time of the persecution of the witches in Salem, there lived a rather outstanding minister in New England who was interested in a vision of the children of Salem who thought they saw the headless horseman, etc., etc. But far greater than his interest in psychic phenomena or in religion, this man was governed by an uncontrollable desire to obtain great wealth. This was during the period when many slaves were being brought from Africa; and not only did he have dealings with the slave trade but he urged others to do so in his letters and in his sermons. It does not seem, however, despite these activities, that he acquired wealth in his Salem incarnation.

Today, there is a middle-aged man living in the East who is very wealthy. and, if my understanding of the reading is correct, although it is not definitely indicated, this is the minister who lived in Salem. He was born into a home of wealth. His great desire for wealth had manifested itself. But there is one drawback: he is an imbecile; he has two nurses who care for him; he sleeps in a crib, and plays with toys such as a two-year-old might enjoy. His nurse, who had the reading, tells me that on Sundays when she turns on the radio to a religious program and he hears a sermon or hymn, even though he has no understanding of the meaning of the words, he becomes very quiet and the tears stream down his face. So it would seem that subconsciously he has a strong soul-memory of a past incarnation as a minister. But where he once attempted to enslave other, now is he enslaved within his own body-temple, within his own mind. The wealth which he so greatly desired has come to him, but it is in trust in the care of others, and he has no free will except in the sense of that of a small child.

We ask, "How can such a karma be an opportunity for this man?" For It seems that his condition for the period of this lifetime is incurable. Perhaps it is this only opportunity, the one way the soul can learn that he is his brother's keeper, that the suffering we cause another, even indirectly, must one day return to our own doorstep.

We are so likely to think in terms of one lifetime. We want to be rich, to be beautiful or handsome, famous, to be beloved, and perhaps have ten children all in one incarnation. All of life is continuous, however; and even when we step through

God's other door, we retain our individuality. One lifetime is actually just a day in the progress of the soul. If our longings, our desires, our needs are not answered on this day, then they will most surely be fulfilled if we have earned it in some happier tomorrow.

One of the most difficult experiences which we have to meet is that of being alone, or being separated from friends, from family from loved ones. Many people wrote to Edgar Cayce for readings because of the problem of great emotional frustration and loneliness in their lives. In most of these cases the reading indicated that the soul had been a suicide in a previous life. And the reading said in effect, "Because you have taken yourself out of the lives of others when you were greatly needed, others have been taken from you when you have needed them." The difficulty of having been a suicide in one life, aside from the karma in a subsequent life of being alone through death or circumstance, is that the desire for suicide will often be with us until we can overcome it by giving completely of ourselves in service to others. Moreover, we can never escape a problem which has been presented to us. We simply delay its solution because it will be presented again and it will be much harder to solve.

In one of our groups a young woman had lost a beloved father by suicide, a mother through sudden death, and other members of her family and friends through death and separation. For a period of fifteen years she had been absolutely alone and she was somewhat bitter because she was a person with a great deal of love to give. In research and in meditation, she was shown a lifetime in China where she had been deeply in love with her Chinese husband. Just before the birth of her second child, her husband, apparently for material reasons, chose to marry her older sister, who, it seemed, would inherit the family estate. This girl could not bear the humiliation of having been set aside for another woman, nor could she bear to share her husband even with her sister. She chose to take her life by what must have been a slow poison and just before the birth of her second child. Only just before her death did she realize that her husband and his wife still loved her. In her next life she was born into a Hebrew family near Mesopotamia; and again she had the same older sister. In the course of events, they both met the same man but he fell in love with the younger sister. The father, however, a very materialistic individual, insisted that he marry both sisters, as apparently he was afraid that the older sister would be left upon his hands to support. So once again this girl was to face the self-same problem, that of sharing the man she loved with another woman. And how did this work out? The younger sister who had taken her own life in China just before the birth of her second child was the beloved wife; but her older sister bore the husband several children, and in that day and age it was to lose face not to have a child. The younger sister prayed for a period of fourteen years and finally she bore a child, a rather unusual child, one of many gifts and talents. Then the greatest desire of her life became to bear her husband another son. Again she prayed for a period of fifteen years and when she was forty-nine her prayers were answered because she knew that she would have another child. But she died in the process of childbirth when her second son was born. You remember, she had committed suicide in China just before the birth of her second child. She had gained nothing by her suicide, but by giving her life in Mesopotamia in childbirth perhaps she met the karma of having taken herself out of life before the birth of the child. All these centuries later she is

still required to meet the karma of being alone so that she can learn the selfishness of talking her own life, or, as the readings say, 'Because you have taken yourself out of lives of others when you were needed, others have been taken from you.'

In Edgar Cayce's own life reading, he was told of an incarnation when he had committed suicide. Edgar Cayce had several previous lifetimes when he had been in a high position and of great service to his fellowman. And his reading pointed out that he had chosen to return to earth not of necessity but for a series of incarnations in order to help humanity. It seems that however highly developed we are - however high up the spiritual ladder we have climbed - when we incarnate again in a human body, our memory is blocked off. We are on our own so to speak. No angel whispers to us that we are different, just a little farther along the road than another person; and yet there is an element of childhood's innocence and trust, in a highly developed soul - a sensitivity which makes him much more keenly aware of the suffering of others and of his own suffering. Perhaps the man that you know as so much a little boy, or the woman you know who is so much a little girl - these may well be old souls.

In Cayce's reading, after having attained high degree of soul development, he chose to be born in Troy during the time of the Trojan wars with Greece. He became what we would term a general and during the siege of Troy he inadvertently gave away a military secret because of his trust in a friend. The Trojan battle was lost and he was disgraced. People were much more cruel at that time than even today and the sensitive man was laughed at, ridiculed, persecuted, until finally feeling that he could no longer bear the scorn of his fellowmen, the readings say that he chose to fall upon his sword.

In this lifetime hundreds of years later, he was again faced with the same situation which caused his suicide in Troy but for a different reason. Because of his great psychic gift people were healed of physical, spiritual and emotional conditions through Edgar Cayce; but because of this gift he was persecuted, he was laughed at. He chose, nevertheless, to serve his fellowman regardless of persecution; and in the giving of himself to others, he overcame the karma which he had created so long ago.

The karma we are dealing with in our lives, is self-created. If we have created suffering for others in a realm of the physical body, it must be met in the physical body. If we have created suffering for other in the mental body, we will meet ourselves in the mental body; if we have hurt others through emotions we ourselves shall meet our karma through the emotional body.

The readings say again and again "Condemn not, for that which you condemn shall be met in self." The fault which was so greatly despised in another is a fault which exist deep within self.

A woman who had the problem of an alcoholic husband had a reading. She was told that in her last incarnation she had lived in New England where she had been a devout Christian. She had been happily married, the mother of children, and her husband was apparently close to her in every respect. However, he had one weakness. Not often, but once in a great while, he imbibed a little too freely of the cup of Christmas cheer, and this woman spent the rest of the year condemning him for his weakness until her condemnation became a very part of herself. In this life she was attracted as if by a magnet to a husband who is an alcoholic and once again

she is condemning. Her reading says, "Unless you cease condemnation you will one day meet the problem which you condemn within yourself." Or, in other words, she herself is building up the image of alcoholism through her condemnation.

### **All Karma Is Opportunity**

You should never judge another person's karma. In most cases, by reversing the situation in our own lives we can know almost exactly the thing we have been guilty of ourselves in a previous lifetime. But everything which comes into our lives, it seems, is not always karma in a negative sense. It may sometimes be simply an opportunity for helping another. In a case of a young couple who had prayed for a child, a child was finally born to them and they felt that in some way this child was a particularly blessed child because it was the child of a prayer. And after a short time they noticed that some thing was wrong, radically wrong, with the baby and it seemed to be a mongolian idiot. The father wrote to Edgar Cayce for a life reading because he had some knowledge of reincarnation and karma and he believed that he had done some thing to deserve such a child. His reading pointed out otherwise. The reading said that this child was one who had brought great suffering to its fellowman, so much so that it was necessary that it be born to a home where a great love and a great faith existed, so that it could evolve and could learn even in such a body. The parents were told that this child would live only three years or so and it was their opportunity to give it all the love which they were capable of giving.

In this case there was no indication of karma in the sense that they had inflicted suffering upon others. The reverse was true. They seemed to have been chosen because of their compassion and understanding, because of their ability to love, and it was their opportunity to aid this child in its soul development.

A man who is a rather well-known theologian was told a few months ago by his physician that he was slowly dying of an incurable disease. For years this man has carried a great resentment and hatred against life because of an unhappy emotional experience. For twenty-seven years he has been in love with a woman who has been married to another man. Perhaps because of the shock of learning that he was seriously ill he began to have strange dreams, and he said that upon awakening they were as real to him as if he had actually lived them. Finally he had a dream which disturbed him more than all the others. He dreamed that he was his own great-grandfather living in New England. He journeyed into India in his dream where he met an Indian woman of high caste. He fell in love with her and they were married. He chose to keep his marriage a secret because he feared the ridicule of his snobbish New England family. For eight years he and his wife were supremely happy and then his work called him back to the States. He was faced with the terrible decision of whether to take his wife with him and face the scorn of his family or whether to desert his wife; and after weeks of indecision he decided to leave his wife. He slipped away without even a word of goodbye, leaving behind him the woman who loved him. And what was so strange about this vivid dream was just this: the wife of the dream is the self-same woman with whom he has been in love in this life for twenty seven years.

This man is .a factual person, and, moreover, he does not completely accept the theory of reincarnation. However, he went to great pains to check his family history and he discovered that his great-grandfather actually lived in India under

rather mysterious circumstances for a period of eight years. No marriage is recorded. Is this perhaps a subconscious memory of a past life? Or was it created by his intellect only as a source of consolation for the unhappiness in his present life? There is no way that we can know. But where once this man was filled with great bitterness against an unjust God, an unjust fate, for the first time he is beginning to look within himself for the circumstances of his life which seem to have been created by him. Perhaps only through the loss of love from one incarnation can he learn the value of love; for in this life he was given the things which he counted so highly before, position, family, even a work in which he has attained a small degree of fame. But his whole life has been one of frustration and longing for the love which he has been denied.

On the positive side of karma, there are many cases recorded in the Cayce readings. And we must remember that there is much more of good karma than bad! Our talents are the result of what we have done in the past lives and all the situations - the happy situations - in our lives stem from good karma. There are a number of case histories regarding talents and so on which were brought over from past lives. Briefly, a young woman who was unhappy in her job at a telegraph office was told that she had done painting in a past life and was advised to take art in a night school. She kept her job at Western Union and had several years' study. She sold her first painting for more money than she had earned in all the time in which she was employed at the telegraph office.

### **Karma and Perfection**

Many people ask the purpose of continuous lives in the flesh, in the body. At what point do we reach perfection so that never again do we have to reincarnate upon the earth? There are some who teach that we continue to come back into the body until we have reached a point of perfection - that is, in every area of experience. For instance, we may become an artist in one life, or a poet, or a musician, until we have perfected every area of created endeavor. That isn't the understanding I gain from the Edgar Cayce readings.

In one life reading a woman had been a mistress of a Roman nobleman. She had laughed at the Christians in the arena and had been responsible for their sufferings. Her life reading says that "through several lifetimes since the time of Nero she has held to the Christian ideal in her service to others so that the entity has advanced from a low degree to that which may not even necessitate another incarnation again in the earth. Not that it has reached perfection, but there are other realms of instruction where the entity may go." This woman was born in a deformed physical body but she had been able to rise above her physical defects and to attain a high degree of spiritual development.

In many readings There were indications that the person had returned to earth to help others toward further spiritual enlightenment, although the soul is what the readings call an Arcturian soul. It seems that Arcturus is the next port of call after we are finished in this solar system.

In one case a Jewish girl had lived during the time of Joshua; she is Jewish also in this life. She had been even then a highly developed soul. In this lifetime she was told that she had great healing ability, both physical and mental, and when she entered a room of people so great was her inner radiance that others were helped

and healed by her.

We are like actors upon a stage. We play many parts. We have many roles to perform. But the ultimate is simply that we become humble in self that we forget self, in order to become one with God.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I would like to speak of the good karma for all of us, in having contacted the work of Edgar Cayce. If he had never lived, reincarnation and karma would be just as true as they are now. But because of his great gift, not only as a physical reader, but in the sense of reading our soul records, he has offered a valuable contribution to mankind.

Harmon Bro, a young Christian minister, in working for his doctorate degree, used as his thesis the story of the readings of Edgar Cayce. Harmon went to Virginia Beach to prove to his mother, who had had a life reading, that, as he said, Edgar Cayce was "off his rocker". He went to scoff; he stayed to pray,

In a lecture several years ago Harmon told of a mother who phoned Edgar Cayce and thanked him for his reading which saved the life of her baby son after the doctors had given up hope. Harmon said that as he walked away from Cayce for a moment he thought "This man will feel pretty puffed up; he'll feel pretty good about all this" and just as he walked out of the room he heard Edgar Cayce whisper "Thank you, God. Thank you, God." In Harmon's words, "God pulled the curtain aside for just a little while." He picked a man who was humble, who was sincere, who was true, and one who faced the persecution of his fellowmen. Because of this man, we have been given a reason for the circumstances with which we are confronted. There are heart-hungry people all over the world who are searching for clues to the problems within their own lives. Part of the answer may lie in reincarnation and karma. Now seems to be the time when this truth is ready to bear fruit in the Western world.

Through meditation and dreams you can discover your own past incarnations. The readings say that through meditation you can discover anything from how to write a better sonata to how to dig for fishing worms. You are not just one person but many people. You are a unique and wonderful individual with many and varied personalities – with hidden talents which lie within your own soul-memory. We are not all Arcturian souls. Some of us are just the ordinary garden variety, but for each of us there is a task which we alone can accomplish, a purpose for which we entered the earth plane, a work which we can do. As for the problems in our lives, They are self-created and must be self-erased. Whatever the karma, however difficult it may be, it is the answer to our greatest need. It is that which we are given. It is the opportunity to overcome so that we can climb one step higher upon the ladder of spiritual evolution.

Karma is like a magnificent mirror in the sky . . . a cosmic mirror which embraces the whole universe. As we look into this mirror we believe that we are beholding the face of our friends, our families, our children our enemies. But this is an illusion, because we are beholding only ourselves. If we wish to change the face within the mirror, we must change the face within our own consciousness. We know, if we believe in karma, that we cannot enslave others unless we become enslaved; we cannot condemn unless we be condemned; we cannot oppress unless

we be oppressed. And we must say with Socrates, "I am not a citizen of Athens or Greece; I am a citizen of the world." For we can no longer war against our neighbor whether he lives next door or thousands of miles away. We cannot hate for any reason; for we can only hate that which lies within us. We must look into this mirror and whatever problem we behold, we must first seek to change within ourselves. Whatever there is of suffering in our lives, we know that we have created the pattern and it is our opportunity to change the pattern; and in helping ourselves we are able to help others.

For we are not one person; we are all people; now, in this moment, we are a cell in the bodily of God. We are truly our brother's keeper and we can say with the poet:

I am a part of all who live

And I am all who die . . .

I am every living thing

That dwell beneath the sky.

I am the stars, the sun, the sea,

The grass, the blade, the sod.. .

In all that is, or that shall be,

For lo, I'm one with God.

<p><b>NOTE:</b> This is a REPRINT of a former monthly publication of the Association for Research and Enlightenment, Inc.</p>
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