

## **You Create Your Own Future: Deeds and Their Consequences**

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THERE is a law in Nature which links together causes and effects. In its most general form it may be stated in the accepted axiom of Science: Action and Reaction are equal and opposite. This law means that when the equilibrium of Nature is disturbed, that equilibrium tends to be restored; this is a universal truth in Nature.

No one who has studied anything of Science will deny the existence of the Laws of Nature. *Those laws are not commands.* They are simply statements of certain successions, or sequences, that have been observed to happen, so that when one thing has happened, another definite thing invariably follows it. This is fundamental for the understanding of what is called Karma, and must be clearly understood. The laws of men are commands to do or to abstain from doing, and the penalty connected with their breach is arbitrary. But with regard to a Law of Nature it is different. Certain conditions are stated, and wherever these are present some other definite conditions will and must follow. Nature leaves you perfectly free to sow [Page 21] whatever you please. But if you want rice it is of no use to sow barley, or thistles. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap". That is Karma; neither more nor less.

You will have no difficulty in extending the idea of Law to the mental and moral worlds. All the worlds are connected, and in all, Law holds sway. There is nothing of the nature of a command; it leaves you free to choose, but points out that such and such conditions will inevitably follow as the consequence of your choice. The statement of this might make a person think he is not a free agent, and can do nothing. But take the law of gravitation — that bodies tend to move towards the centre of the earth. An ignorant person might think: "How is it possible for you to move upwards? ". By putting against the force of Nature that draws you to the centre another force of Nature by which you may raise yourself away from it — *i.e.*, muscular force. You do not break the law of gravitation. You feel its working in the exertion by which you lift yourself against gravity. As you go on studying, you find that, because laws are inviolable, therefore a man can move freely among them; but on one condition only — that he knows and understands them; otherwise he is a slave. "Nature is conquered by obedience". You cannot fight against Nature, she is too strong for man's puny powers; but you can make her do exactly [Page 22] what you will, if you know the laws within which her forces work.

Man is not commanded by Nature, is not her slave; he is in the midst of discoverable and calculable laws and forces, by knowing which he can rule and use. Nature will neither fail him nor swerve from her changeless road. When man fails, it is because his knowledge is imperfect, and that imperfection has betrayed him.

Ancient religions and some modern religions say that it is possible to transfer the certainty of Law, that changeless inviolable security, to the realms of mind and morals. Then man is indeed the master of his destiny, for he can work in those worlds which shape the future, and make himself what he wills to be.

There are three subsidiary laws under the general Law of action: (1) That thought is the power that builds up character; as you think, you will become. (2) That the force which we call desire, or will, (two forms of the same force) draws together you and the thing you desire. (3) That the effect of your conduct upon others, causing them happiness or misery, brings you happiness or misery in return. If a man understands these three laws and knows how to apply them, he becomes master of his own future, maker of his own destiny.

1) *Thought builds character*. — You may test that statement either by the authority of the “past in the world's great Scriptures; or by your own experience, which is, perhaps, better; because your own experience [Page 23] remains with you as yours and cannot be shaken. If you want to know with absolute certainty that thought makes character, try. The way of trying is very simple. Let us take as an example that you are irritable; this is not a crime, but a very common and ordinary weakness. You recognize that you are very easily annoyed. Having recognized it, never think of it again, because if thought builds character, thinking will put more life into it and make it grow; think about the opposite quality — patience — for some five minutes every morning. Do it regularly, for this is a scientific experiment. Think of it in any way you like; imagine yourself perfect in patience; then think of the most aggravating people you know. There must not be, in your thought, the least giving way to irritability. You must be patient in this mental picture. Repeat this every morning for a week. You will find that the thought of patience comes up in your mind without being summoned in the course of the day. That is the first sign that your morning thought is working. At first it will come up after a burst of irritability. Go on until the thought of patience comes before the provocation. You will find at the end of a few months that you have established patience as part of your character. In that way we can go on eliminating weakness after weakness. We can definitely build up character, build it as certainly [Page 24] as a mason can build up, brick by brick, a wall.

2) *Desire draws together the Desirer and the Desired*. — You see the one motive power in the universe as attraction everywhere. So long as it is drawn out from you by outer objects, we call it Desire. When the same power is directed from within, we call it Will. Everything you desire to possess is drawn towards you by desire, because there is One Life in all, and the lives separated by their different forms are ever trying to rejoin.

3) *As you give Happiness or Misery to others, so shall you reap Happiness or Misery for Yourself*. — According to the effect of our action upon others comes a similar reaction upon ourselves. As by sowing rice you reap rice, so by sowing pleasure you reap pleasure. But if done for a selfish motive, it works out as a selfish character.

Realize those three laws and that you can make your future by applying them. A little knowledge of Karma is often distinctly dangerous, for one of the results is a tendency to sit down and say: “It is my Karma”. Like all Laws of Nature, it is not a compelling but an enabling force. Remember that “Exertion is greater than destiny”. The thought and desire of the moment is often just enough to balance the opposing forces. You may fail for the moment, but you will conquer tomorrow, or the [Page 25] day after, or later. You

should help when another suffers under his Karma, for if you do not do your best to help him, then you are making a Karma which will entail absence of help in the hour of your own need. Besides, your duty is always to help.

Our duty always is kind action.