

## Cause, Effect, Influence and Choice

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The effect and influence of each action: thought, feeling, word and deed, is called karma. Whether you believe in rebirth or not is not important, as each action is deeper than the act, and its effects and influences also penetrate deeper than fruition.

### *Cause*

#### **What are causes?**

We often consider just the physical action and its tangible results but this is looking at things from a very shallow perspective. Action starts deeper, at the understanding level, and works its way into the physical level. The effects of action too are experienced at the same levels of action, from the understanding level to the physical level. Since the effects are experienced at the deepest levels of one's being, they impact understanding and this shapes or influences future actions and effects in a inner spiral by adding conditioning, or in an outer spiral which does not take on any new conditioning and which loosens existing conditioning.

### *Effect*

#### **What are its effects?**

Each action produces *in the performer* a double effect: in the inner nature in the form of tendencies—good or bad—and as tangible effects or fruition we see as reward or punishment.

**1. Tendencies (*inner effect*):** All forms of action are forms of expression in some way and are mostly shaped by the core of one's being or understanding. I say mostly because it is not always so—the seeker discovers action, or response to situations, without standing outside them where attention to each situation itself suggests the best response. Let us return to this point later and examine the inner effect of tendencies first.

**2. Fruition (*outer effect*):** The immediate or near perceptible results of our actions are their fruition.

## *Influence*

### **What are influences?**

**1. Character (*internal influence*):** The mind is constantly registering everything perceived and there is no harm in this. But, our perceptions are usually diluted with existing notions and our actions add to the build-up of these notions or conditioning. Favorable experiences register favorable notions not only about the experience but about the person, thing or situation in experience. Similarly, unfavorable experiences register negative notions or attitudes towards people, things or situations (let us just call it object, as it is objective in reference). These are not part of the object but an 'add-on' in our mind—something extra.

This build-up of notions or something extra has nothing to do with the object—it resides in our mind only. Each time the object is encountered physically or remembered mentally, existing notions insist on shaping and conditioning what is encountered so much that we are not seeing the object but only our own perceptions. The more this is repeated and the more we are heedless about the increase in inner coloring—the more conditioning becomes reality, and the object simply an occasion to experience our inner world of notions.

Since existing notions color and condition the object—they are called conditioning. These gain strength by repetition and become habits or automatic responses. The repetition of habits forms character which is more than likely a way we will respond to certain things, not because of the thing in itself, but because of an inner build-up or attitude towards the thing.

For the most part, it is our character or the sum and substance of understanding that responds to life. Life is a continuous sequence of action and so heedless action is action based on conditioning and not 'what is actually there in front of us'—and heedlessness adds to existing conditioning or creates new conditioning. The inner effect of each heedless act deposits a build-up of conditioning in the arteries of understanding, shaping our character which responds to life.

**Action to impression:** It is natural for each action to simply register an impression which is a harmless, perhaps useful, image of the object. There is no harm in this at all.

**Impression to tendency:** In heedlessness, values are seen in the object that are not part of the object and infused into the impression gathered, making it a tendency.

**Tendency to habit:** Each time a tendency is repeated, the mind is dulled, as awareness is lost—being that inner notions or conditioning is seen as real—not the thing in itself or exactly what is there. When tendency becomes an auto-response, it is called habit.

**Habit to character:** The sum of all habits is the substance of one's character—not the artificial behavior one displays to the world, but the actual inner stuff and substance of notions. Character is not something set in stone; it was given shape one way by heedlessness and

repetition, but it can be changed if one has awakened to the seriousness of damage caused and causable.

**Character to destiny:** Our character not only shapes our destiny—it *is* our destiny by its influence on our moment to moment expressions and resulting experience.

**2. Fate (*external influence*):** Fate is a set of conditions which comes about at a later time but has for its cause—actions in the past. Let's look at this in a practical way. You keep thinking about buying something but refrain from it in the present in some way or the other. Perhaps you cannot afford it now or just don't have the time to look into it further. You are still thinking about having it and this inward ideation keeps building up till buying it is not really a choice when either the self-created pressure builds or the situation allows buying it.

Fate is not caused by any external agency and external agencies, whoever they be cannot alter what has come or will come. With each thought, feeling, word and deed we are summoning conditions for experience—each expression summons experience. You are the architect of your destiny and shaper of your fate.

### *Bringing it Together*

**Perception to impression:** Life is action and each act registers an impression. These impressions are harmless if they are just impressions, but we heedlessly interfere with life by seeing some value in the object of experience that is not part of the object. This is just a certain feeling we have about the object. If it were part of the object, you, me and others would see the same value but we don't.

**Impression to tendency:** Impressions infused with the 'something extra' or values seen in it become the object and it is these 'extra something' that we long for or try to avoid—never the object as it is. These are our tendencies or the way we tend to feel, though it is never about the thing in itself—it is always about our own feeling. A tendency is a feeling in the present about a feeling in the past, and the content of this feeling is thought. So, we are thinking about thought while we feel we are thinking of someone, something or a condition.

**Tendency to habit:** When we continue to visit or dwell on tendencies (never the object, always the tendencies), we form deeper groves in the mind and these become habits. The strength of habit is the amount of 'ourselves' that we have invested in it. Habits are ourselves only, and that is why they seem hard to overcome.

**Habits to character:** The sum of all habits forms our character or internal make-up. Character is what responds to life—strengthening old habits, making new ones or seeing the danger in any habit—and tries to find a way to live that does not take on any new conditioning, and gets rid of existing conditioning.

**Character to destiny:** When one realizes that character acts in life shaping our destiny and is formed with either care or heedlessness in perception, the quality of attention that becomes natural avoids heedlessness and ill fate.

### *Choice*

We feel that we do many things, but we do not really do many things, we only do one thing and that is we either evolve or we don't. No matter if you travel much between countries or remain in one village—life is either an inner journey to light or to darkness. Light is understanding and expression in light of the existing unity, and darkness is an insistence on division which only exists in the mind that sees division.

What we experience externally is the result of movement internally. Even when you wish to get a glass of water, you feel the need to drink and the inner intelligence takes the body to water, fills and raises the glass and assimilates it too. What else do you do consciously? Nothing, really! This may seem rather incredulous and you may feel that actions requiring depth of thought involve far more than ideation, but ideation or willing is really all we do, and demands are placed on the inner intelligence to offer solutions and the body to see that these take some form.

Earlier I mentioned life is a continual sequence of actions; this is true, but there is something else going on below the hood, so to say, and that is a conscious attempt to either bring about clarity or let our own heedlessness trip us into ignorance.

Our pains, sorrows and sufferings are the experience of the latter choice—being heedless and selecting ignorance whose face is sorrow. Each action has the fullest potential to remove conditioning, which is the root of ignorance, and allow us to lead a happy and normal life without stress, with better conditions, or to let things go into disarray. This is not to say that if we are eternally vigilant everything will go our way, but no matter how things go or take shape, we will not be disturbed—knowing that are living expertly and not contributing to our own downfall. It is the 'go our way' that led to pain, sorrow and suffering when it did not materialize. Why should things go 'our way'? Can a wave expect the ocean to be a certain way for its entertainment? The wave *is* the ocean and if it feels grief—it is only experiencing its own delusion, as suffering is perhaps the only wake-up call it will heed.

### **Wake-up to what?**

Wake-up to the understanding of the vital interconnectedness of all and everything. Why look at this in a cosmic context? Let us consider it closer. We are vitally part of each situation and environment we find ourselves in—why, then, do we think, feel, speak and act as though standing outside it? To put our interests first, we have to stand outside things and deny the existing unity.

We never really *see* the situation and hence we can never be clear about the best response. In putting our interests or a certain group to which we feel we belong 'first', we see our interests or feelings which are notions in our minds only. The inner intelligence will not face untruth—thought! This inner intelligence will only face reality—that which actually *is*, and as long as we attempt to come up with a course of action based upon thought, it has to be made by thought only and therefore is conditioned—limited.

No matter how sophisticated the action, if it is based on personal interests, which is thought, it can only be answered by thought—thought looking within itself to only take care of its interests; and since thought is always of the past, and is therefore old—results can only be acceptable at best.

### **Forget my interests?**

Since 'my' is a notion, its interests must be notions, too, and never a part of what actually *is*. Since these notions exist only in the mind entertaining them, they create the impressions we spoke about earlier as being their home. These impressions become tendencies, habits, character and destiny. One error creates several errors till at last we experience it as fate or destiny—the conditions that come about.

### **See what is actually there**

Can we not look at every situation to find out what it actually is without interference of this 'something else'? To look to discover what it is with a the clarity of perception free of thought or direct perception will itself summon the right response from you. Children play a game with pegs and holes; they look at the holes which are of different shapes and push through them with the peg of identical shape—it is not different. Doctors look at the patient, his vitals and charts and the treatment at once becomes quite clear to them. Firemen look at the type of fire and the way to deal with it at once becomes clear.

To see things as they are requires our fullest attention, as through this attention is seen the rise of conditioning and its attempt to interfere with perception by coloring it, and through action by the prioritizing of self-interests as being the only way. The inner intelligence is fully roused as the need to 'see' the real—the actual situation (without any coloring) and the vehement attempt of thought interference—and it is this challenge which awakens the inner intelligence so that one may see. The clarity of seeing makes the best response effortless. When there is clarity in perception, there is clarity in response, and never is any inner wobbling felt.

### **Standing one with things**

Say some friends have come over to visit. Once they leave, looking at what needs to be done is not different from doing. You see what needs to be put away and it is done. The seeing *is* the doing—they are not different. If you are a little under the weather and feel a slight fever

coming on, you put on some warm clothes, have a cup of tea or do what needs to be done. All situations in life are really quite simple if we do not stand apart from them.

Divisions exists in the mind of the divider—the mind is itself division. This is not to say that the mind is not useful; it is very useful if *it* is used, but mostly *we* are used by the mind. We created habits and now habits create us. This cycle must be stopped if we are to have peace.

Conditioning has assumed entityship and now works overtime, struggling to be you, and it not only fumbles continually but it also generates tremendous confusion between 'being' or who you are and 'notions' or ideas that feel *they* are 'being'. Confusion results when ignorance tries to live life. How much sorrow and pain it brings.

### **Break the cycle now**

Whatever happens, happens on your watch—be watchful, vigilant. Don't just look, actually see what is in front of you each moment afresh—because each moment *is* fresh—and see what needs to be done. If something needs to be done, do it; and if nothing needs to be done, that is what you do—do nothing.

Can we do what needs to be done without interference of thought telling you what is in front of you, how you should be doing it, and most eager to take credit for what was done? All this inner chatter is the sapling of suffering that need not be watered by dwelling on it—it will perish by malnutrition. This inner noise has increased by dwelling on it but will perish by dwelling in the present moment—in actually what *is* without getting stuck.

Each situation is eager to leave just as it has come; let it go. If you hold the tail of a snake that is slithering away, it will let its displeasure be known to you in its own way—let it go. The 'I' and 'mine' are not part of any situation. We are not only part of each situation, we are one with things—with all things. The trying to stand apart from things causes much confusion and sorrow, as you can never really stand apart no matter how much you try, as apartness does not exist.

### **The present moment**

Everywhere you go and in whatever situation you find yourself—you are not only part of the environment, but one with it. There is no need to anticipate anything, as when it comes, the clarity of observation or attention will itself tell you what needs to be done. Seeing clearly is not different from doing or the natural response when there is inner clarity. All the 'what if...' worrying is seeing worry and not the situation.

The present moment is never difficult but for conditioning, which not only makes things difficult but is itself the difficulty. Why let it interfere at all? Why give conditioning any importance? What use does it have? Information is useful but notions about things are destructive as they

are not and can never be part of any situation—they are notions in the mind, fancies, ideas, habits, preferences—likes and dislikes.

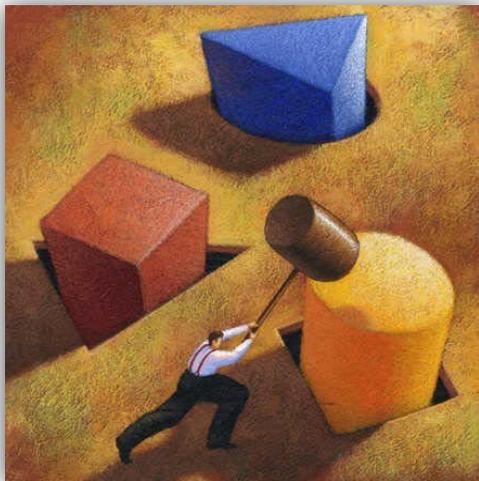
We have come to identify the sense of 'being' with these and there is tremendous frustration when the inner world finds little semblance in the outer world, and so we struggle. What we want does not seem to come, and what we don't want seems to be here to stay. You can dispense with this confusion right now if you will only be attentive to what actually is from moment to moment and do what needs to be done—not because of personal gain but because where you find yourself—it is what needs to be done.

### **We make our destiny**

Heedlessness is another word for fate or destiny. When things turn out exactly as 'we wish', we never feel that fate has done something, but when things do not turn out as 'we wish'—oh, it is fate! It must be my destiny!

Let situations be just as they are, one way or the other, there is no problem. The problem is the '...wish' that arises and wishes for something different and then exerts to change each situation in what it considers the best possible way. Think for a while how chaotic it would be if 7 billion people (which is the human population on earth about now) were all trying to tinker with things

as they are and trying to get along—this is not necessary.



Life does not invite you to change it, but through living expertly invites you to see yourself and bring about a complete transformation of being by returning to your own natural state of *being*. This natural state is standing inseparable with all beings and things *inwardly*. It is when this inward recognition of the existing unity becomes natural, all actions that flow from one's being reflect this and there is perfect peace even in the midst of tremendous activity.

What we call karma or fate is the effect and influence of ignorance resulting from heedlessness. If it rains, take an umbrella—what is the difficulty? If it is a nice sunny day, dress lightly and enjoy the sunshine. Suffering is an optional feature; it does not come with you and can be dispensed with right now if you wish.

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*Edited by Sivananda-Usha*