

Sin, Karma, and Conscience

In today's webinar, we will continue our discussion of Biblical themes, with an examination of sins and karma. We will discuss how sin is forgiven, how we know sin is forgiven, rites and rituals designed to absolve sins, how people punish themselves, parental punishment and how that impacts you, and how we heal the wounded conscience through therapeutic dialog.

Forgiveness of Sins

When a person "sins" there are several reactions that occur

1. The person senses a darkening of the consciousness, feels as if a veil or a curtain was dropped.
2. The person feels a sense of separation from the Source, or God, which may become greater as a result of performing the sin
3. There may be personal feelings of guilt, shame, regret, remorse, disappointment or depression in reaction to commission of this sin
4. The person may attempt to hide, cover up, lie about or evade responsibility for the action.
5. The person may attempt to make amends or undo the sin when it is possible to do so, or do good deeds to attract merit, or Favor from God
6. The person may confess the sin, and seek forgiveness or absolution from the person they harmed, or from clergy
7. The person may attempt to do some type of atoning prayer (e.g. Hail Mary or Our Father in the Catholic Church), or to do repetitions of a transformational technique like bija mantra or Kriya yoga to "erase the impact of the sin."

We must inquire, what exactly is sin and what does it mean to forgive sins?

- 1) Sin is new accretion of negative karma, it advances the darkening curtain of the unconscious, and pushes the Soul's consciousness down the scale of evolution—how much darkening occurs, is measured by the gravity of the sin.
- 2) It is associated with feelings of guilt or shame, anxiety or fear, disappointment and self-criticism, remorse and self-condemnation
- 3) The individual may attempt to forget (repress), attribute the sin to others (projection), give an explanation that justifies the behavior (rationalization), or do something to chastise or punish oneself (punitive introjection) in an attempt to deal with the dysphoric feelings
- 4) The individual may either be motivated to atone or make amends for the sin to remove it—or alternately, may give up trying to be virtuous, and continue sinning.
- 5) A variety of methods have been advocated to ostensibly forgive or atone for sins, which the individual may use to attempt to ameliorate the effects of committing sins
 - a) Confession (e.g., to clergy, or in psychotherapy)
 - b) Making amends by restoring another's loss
 - c) Undergoing punishment and justice (e.g., imprisonment, censure, or termination of employment)
 - d) Asking those who have been harmed for forgiveness
 - e) Praying to Jesus or another spiritual Master or Saint to forgive the sins via sending the Light, or the Holy Spirit, to “burn away” or “wash away” the sin.
 - f) Undergoing fasting, penance, or austerity to show sincere remorse and contrition for the sin

- g) Performing a ritual or rite to forgive the sin (e.g., transformational or invocational meditation)
- 6) One may feel that they have fallen out of favor with God, or His Grace is withheld
- 7) One may lose abilities, intuitive understanding, or virtues that are formerly possessed

How Do You Know a Sin Is Genuinely Forgiven?

What are the criteria to know the sin has been genuinely forgiven?

1. The curtain of darkness lifts, and the karma is burned away
2. The Soul's former station in Light is restored
3. The dysphoric feelings go away; one feels peace, and that one has been forgiven.
4. One feels that further acts of contrition, apologies or amends, or practice of rites for propitiation, are no longer necessary
5. One feels that the Grace, and favor of God have returned

We suggest that mere confession to clergy or a therapist, asking for forgiveness, or disclosing the sin may not be in itself sufficient to atone for the sin—the individual may be left with the lingering impressions in the mind

These impressions may be:

1. Ignored – they remain with the individual, unchanged
2. Argued with – being an irrational feeling, this may not resolve the issue
3. Processed – using process meditation may reveal the origin, and reduce emotional upset, but may not resolve it
4. Worked with through prayer, confession, penance, and asking forgiveness – this may not completely eradicate the impression, but may ameliorate the guilt to some degree

5. Evaded – using rationalization and other defense mechanisms only makes the burden of the sin greater
6. Taking action to right any wrongs that were done – this may assuage the guilt, and earn the forgiveness of those that were harmed.
7. Transforming them away – Invoking the Light, or using a transformation method will eradicate the impressions

When Jesus or another Initiate forgives sins, he or she actively burns away the karmic impressions that create the darkening of consciousness and dysphoric feelings. A disciple may also do the same things by performing transformational meditations.

We suggest that this is the only truly effective method that sins are genuinely removed, and not just ameliorated or evaded.

Rites and Rituals Designed to Absolve Sins

Absolution or ritual forgiveness of sin—removing the darkening effects of karma—has taken a variety of forms in different cultures throughout history. Among the forms that it has taken include:

- (1) Sacrifice of something of value in an attempt to “pay back” the sin—such as formal offerings of money, property, or possessions to a religious organization. This is called *propitiation*.
- (2) Blood sacrifice, either an animal, or in some cultures, human
- (3) Ritual punishment, fasting, or penance
- (4) Use of formal priestly rites, offerings to gods or goddesses
- (5) External punishment through exercise of ecclesiastical law, or through a formal inquisition, after a trial. These punishments include public displays of humiliation, subjecting the sinner to torture, stoning, or amputation. The most severe punishments result in killing the sinner.

- (6) Acceptance of an atoning sacrifice of one's behalf, such as the temple sacrifices done by the Jewish priests, or the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
- (7) Idiosyncratic personal rituals, which may take the form of obsessive compulsion behavior, or self-injurious behavior

How People Punish Themselves

When the guilt of sin becomes oppressive, it may take many tortuous expressions. These odd attempts to rid oneself of evil can express in different ways. They include:

- (1) Exorcism – This may take the form of explicit oaths designed to expel the evil within, such as: “Come out, thou vile and evil spirit! Baaa! Come out!” [This is said emphatically, with bulging eyes and tongue extended.]
- (2) Superstitious actions – These may be done prevent sin, such as wearing sacred underwear to avoid the temptation to sin. They may perform actions to atone for a sin, such as repeatedly bathing, or washing of their hands to remove the “stain of sin.”
- (3) Withholding of pleasure in punishment for doing wrong – This may take the form of denying oneself dessert, or seeing a movie, for example.
- (4) Confessing for crimes that one did not commit – The desire for punishment becomes so strong for some individuals that they feel they must confess to crimes they did not commit, and be punished.

(5) Saying oaths to expunge the error – The conscience may demand that the individual say an exculpatory phrase, such as:

“Now say in loud voice [and smile as you say it], I have been evil and wicked. I have been despicably wicked. I have been demonic and evil. I have been vile and despicable. I have done evil, vile, and despicable acts.” [This can be done standing on a chair, kneeling in a penitent posture, or in front of a mirror to increase the humiliation and shame.]

(6) Self-injury – This may take the form of self-mutilation, cutting, burning, or tattooing.

(7) Flagellation – This is hitting or whipping oneself to punish oneself for doing evil.

Self-punishment via the conscience is common; in mental illness, this drive to punish oneself becomes compulsive, sadistic, and brutal, resulting in interference with living and functioning in society.

Most people have ways to express their displeasure at themselves for doing something wrong, or not living up to a personal expectation. If this has progressed in you to obsessive and harmful levels, however, it is time to see a mental health professional and get help.

Parental Punishment

With an aim to inculcate values and behavior acceptable to the society in which they live, parents often use some of these punishment modalities. While most parental admonitions are restrained and moderated, sometimes they begin using some of these sadistic and injurious punishments of their own conscience on their children. Here “correction” and “redirection” turns into frank child abuse.

Parental discipline can be relatively benign, with episodes of denial of privileges and pleasures (3), and some spanking (7). But in many cases, when parents are stressed and troubled, these punishments of children can become out of control, and turn into abuse.

Many adults still bear the wounds of this parental mistreatment. It has shaped their values, and may influence the way they discipline themselves. Sometimes it is dramatized in obsessive-compulsive rituals; as sadistic and anti-social behavior towards others; in the self-injury and self-hatred of borderline personality disorder; or the serious mistrust of others seen in paranoia.

Reflections on the Conscience

Excerpted from *Religions, Cults, and Terrorism: What the Heck Are We Doing?*

The Personality or Soul Ray can influence Conscience, which is the faculty of the Metaconscious mind that structures and orders values and rules for behavior. While Conscience normally is attuned to the 4th Ray, there are a variety of influences that can color how Conscience expresses. These influences we call the Sub-Rays of Conscience.

These Sub-Rays are shown below.

Sub-Ray One – In conjunction with the 1st Ray, these individuals are dogmatic and impose their beliefs and values on others. There can be forcible attempts to convert others to their way of believing, even to the point of intimidation or outright violence. They are intolerant of other faiths or doctrines.

Sub-Ray Two – In conjunction with the 2nd Ray, these individuals seek to understand the beliefs of others, and to get along with them. They may set up ecumenical gatherings where those of other faiths may find a common forum, and they seek to find the common threads of morality, values, and beliefs that unite them. In their urge to accommodate and get along with others, they may overlook incompatible aspects of the values of others.

Sub-Ray Three – In conjunction with the 3rd Ray, these individuals seek to change the beliefs and values of others by education, persuasion, and discussion. They may systematize the doctrinal elements of faith into creeds, commandments, or steps (e.g., the 12-step movements). They tend to categorize and compartmentalize the elements of belief, or to create value arrays that rank levels of virtue or attainment of holiness.

Sub-Ray Four – In conjunction with the 4th Ray, these individuals look to a mystical dharma or sense of truth that is known innately to the individual's spiritual essence. It is a way of life, a living of truths beyond words or doctrines that is emphasized here.

Sub-Ray Five – In conjunction with the 5th Ray, these individuals intensely analyze and make judgments and commentaries upon scripture, theology, law, or doctrine. They use careful analysis to argue for their interpretation.

Sub-Ray Six – In conjunction with the 6th Ray, these individuals are highly devotional. They love first, and then make up the rules later. They can be innocent and naïve, but they seek the truth by experiencing it directly. After long experience, they may codify rules to guide others in mystic immersion—but the rules are simple. They value loyalty, devotion, obedience, love, forgiveness, purity, and surrender to the Divine Will.

Sub-Ray Seven – In conjunction with the 7th Ray, these individuals are aware of the way that language and standards structure perception, belief, and behaviors. They may experiment with changing the rules, changing perception or experimenting with alternate belief or behavior. They may try on different faiths and belief systems to see how it impacts them. They are experimental and creative but sometimes can use their perception of the rules of language and standards to manipulate others.

Strong 1st Ray influence can lead to fanaticism, bigotry, and intolerance seen in religious groups with rigid, inflexible doctrines.

The accepting 4th ray, the conscience's native attunement, is by distinction, harmonious and aligned with the dharmic flow of living in union with the Soul's guidance and innate sense of truth.

The 3rd Ray emphasis is more common in the Judeo Christian faiths, whereas 6th Ray emphasis typifies devotional and mystic sects.

Scholars and erudite theologians demonstrate the analytic 5th Ray influence.

Cult leaders, spiritual charlatans, and those exploiting religion to make money, fall under the 7th Ray influence, which sees religion and spirituality like an open template that can be structured at-will.

Those with the 2nd Ray influence take an ecumenical approach. They attempt to build bridges between those of different sects within the same religion, or between different religions. They are the peacemakers who seek to establish good will and good relations between those of different faiths.

Those individuals who are emotionally polarized at the level of the Conscience may more readily be moved by these personal and transpersonal influences than those who are polarized at the level of the desire body or persona.

We conjecture that imbalanced spiritual development on paths that unfold nuclei of identity or the spirit outside of the cutting edge of spirituality may intensify these influences, whereas development along the cutting edge of spirituality emphasizes 4th Ray, "living in harmony with Dharma" approach.

The seeker needs to examine

- (1) The external sources of guidance and direction that have provided the basic framework of their conscience
- (2) Personal decisions that have modified this basic framework
- (3) These higher influences that may alter the native, dharmic attunement of the conscience.

We believe that a healthy conscience is one that blends self-acceptance with adherence to innately realized truths that are lived.

Therapeutic Dialog with the Conscience

It is possible to change these [dysfunctional personal or parental influences] through skillful questioning, as the seven bands of the conscience can be accessed in psychotherapy or dialogue. In the table below, we list some evocative questions to plumb these strata of the mind.

Therapeutic Intervention	Example of a Question Evoking this Level
Clarifies if an action is right or wrong	"Is [action] in your opinion, right or wrong?"
Identifies where a value or standard was learned	"You hold that [action] is not right to do. Where did you learn this value?"
Identifies what behavior is delimited by a value or standard, and what would be the end result of doing that action	"Your values state that it is not OK to do [action]. What would happen if you did [action]? What would happen to you, your spouse or partner, your family, your community?"
Identifies the decision behind the establishment of a value or standard	"What made you choose this value or standard?"

Therapeutic Intervention	Example of a Question Evoking this Level
Identifies the values anchored at deeper levels of the psyche by dialoguing with archetypal forms at discrete stages of the spiritual journey	[Speaking to the archetype] “What do you require of [client's name]? Why must this be done? What good will happen to [client's name] if it is done? What evil will befall [client's name] if it is not carried out? What is the ultimate purpose of [client's name] doing this?”
Identifies the client's relationship with a construct that presents itself as a universal law of the mind. Invites decision and affirmation to align human belief and attitude with these laws.	[These will typically be encountered as an affirmation, e.g., “I am the Divine Law of Prosperity.” These affirmations will typically arise at the end of a process meditation at the stage of break through.] “Would you be willing to create and experience that in your life now?” [If no] “Why not?” [Explore the limiting belief.]
Uncovers core morality, or Soul truths	“What are the final truths that guide your life?” “What truths resonate with you most deeply?” What do you <i>know</i> is true, as opposed to what you <i>believe</i> is true?” [Or more simply] “What is true for you?”

Certain people, who are psychotic, as well as deeply religious people, may be in touch with the prophetic band of the conscience, which is the innermost level of the conscience. This may emerge as their admission that God is commanding them to do something, or they feel led by God to carry out specific tasks such as founding a church, etc.

God is very real to the individual who is opening this inmost stratum of the conscience. Our guidance should not discount the person’s experience, but rather dissuade them from acting on irrational or unrealistic “commandments.”

Psychotics opening this band of the psyche do see themselves in archetypal form as prophets, sages, or even as Christ. In their experience, God does speak to them and give them guidance or injunction.

For psychotics, this guidance is usually not very rational, however. It does not proceed along an orderly path to accomplish a discrete goal. It is rather a momentary inspiration or revelation that orders the client to do something. It can be grandiose, or mundane. It is at once terrifying, yet inspires awe and wonder.

To overcome these illusions of the prophetic band, psychotics must work to break through into the Second Chord of Jnana Yoga. Here the activation of the intellect, with its orderly processing of information, problem solving and reality-testing can curb the excesses of the prophetic band's inspirations.

Those who have not lost their rationality, but feel they are inspired by the Divine to carry out religious missions should carefully sound the depth of their psyche to insure that they are indeed hearing the voice of God or the Holy Spirit, and not the dictates of the prophetic band of conscience or a siren voice of the Astral.

Towards Finding Integrity

When your conscience is whole, it is a beacon for personal integrity. When the conscience is shaped from without through indoctrination by parents, religious organization and other influences in your social network, your task is to discover your innate sense of truth, or Dharma. When these influences come from within as the Sub-Rays impacting the conscience, you must carefully tease out what comes from the Soul and the Self, and what part is due to indoctrination or external sources of influence. When this overlay upon the light of the conscience is removed, you can again hear the still small voice that is your true guide amidst the vicissitudes of life.