

The Three Modes of Karma

In Samkhya Yoga, the philosophers of this tradition speak of three modes of Nature: Sato Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna]¹.

Sato Guna is the mode of purity and clarity of mind.

Raja Guna is the mode of passion and goal-oriented action.

Tama Guna is the state of inertia and nescience.

Applying this model to karma, we see that there are three modes of karma.

The *sattwic mode of karma* emphasizes acting, speaking and thinking consciously, and using meditation methods to control and transform karma.

The *rajasic mode of karma* explores how karma expresses in the present time, examining its motivation (where it originates), its impact and consequences.

The *tamasic mode of karma* details how karma is stored and layered in the unconscious mind, and its interface with the awakened vehicles of the mind.

The Sattwic Mode

As karma expresses through behavior, speech and thought, the sattwic mode seeks to actively control behavior and speech by moral guidelines and precepts to be observed, and ultimately to shape thought and identity. Meditation and prayer play a role in controlling these wellsprings of karma.

¹ Mishra, Ramamurthi (1959). *The Fundamentals of Yoga*. New York: The Julian Press

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| Sattvic Forms of Working on Karma | Controlling behavior by observing religious precepts or VOWS |
| | Controlling speech by observing religious precepts or VOWS |
| | Controlling thoughts by using techniques to focus the mind and to re-identify with a higher center |
| | Purification of the unconscious accretions by transformational method |

There are various ways meditation is used to change one's perspective, and with it, one's thinking. For example, meditation can utilize

1. A mantra to identify with a nucleus of identity
2. A mantra to identify with an ensouling entity
3. A mantra to identify with a spirit
4. Concentration on inner centers, e.g., holding the attention on a nucleus of identity, an ensouling entity or the spirit until identification occurs
5. Singing, chanting or dancing to awaken an inner center, leading to passive absorption in that center
6. Prayer from a nucleus of identity, ensouling entity or the spirit

7. Remembrance of the nature of a nucleus of identity, ensouling entity or the spirit.

Once identity with a higher center is achieved, it activates the inner center and the nexus around it. In the nexus surrounding the inner center of a nucleus of identity or an ensouling entity, there is

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| 1 st | Will, choice or apparent powers |
| 2 nd | Intellectual, intuitive or discriminative mental activity |
| 3 rd | Moral guidelines, apparent laws of behavior |
| 4 th | Creative or artistic inspiration, music, songs, poems, painting, architecture, etc. |
| 5 th | Description of the universe or inner worlds, cosmology, viewpoint of perception |
| 6 th | Emotional evocation, urge to prayer, worship, reverence, awe, songs of praise |
| 7 th | Ritual behavior, services, ritual worship ceremonies, holidays, celebration of sacraments, initiation ceremonies |

The expression of these qualities and abilities from this inner center cements the believer's identification with it. The believer then lives from this higher center by making choices condoned by scriptures or authorized by the spiritual teacher through this means, the believer can interiorize into this new state of identity by

- Understanding the world from that perspective.
- Observing and introspecting to see if one has lived up to the moral standards or expectations laid out by precept, scripture or ethical code
- Expressing creative inspirations that arise from interaction with the archetypes, forms and inner scenery surrounding the center
- Describing the cosmology and deriving theories, explanations, credos and scriptures from it
- Living a life of worship and prayer emerging from a relationship with and appreciation of the Supreme Being as known in that context

- Developing rituals, worship ceremonies, holidays, etc., where one must reenact union and/or participate from that center

This re-identification brings about a change in the thoughts, words and deeds that the individual expresses. The individual incarnates as a holy warrior, a saint or a yogi, and changes how he or she formerly lived through this means. The conscious work of meditation utilizes transformational methods to dissolve karma. This inner alchemical process transmutes the karmic material of the unconscious...

The Expression of Karma

In the rajasic mode of karma, we speak of karma as the Law of Cause and Effect. Thoughts, words and deeds yield consequences that eventually return to the individual. This is the Law of “as ye sow, so shall ye reap.” Some consequences are experienced immediately, while others may be delayed. Good actions yield eventual rewards as evil actions produce a legacy of misery.

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| Rajasic Forms of Karma find their expression as current actions and their consequences | Sphere of impact |
| | Center originating the action (octaves of the will) |
| | Karmic reward/retribution (direct consequences) |
| | Assimilation as shared/destiny karma (delayed consequences) |

The Sphere of Karmic Reaction

To understand the consequences of karma, we must recognize that each action, each word spoken, even every thought leaves an indelible trace on the Akashic Record. We cannot undo what we have done, said or thought – it does not go away.

More importantly, what we do, speak or think affects much more than ourselves. It ripples out to influence the very universe. This ripple effect of cause and effect is shown in the figure below:

It is our shortsightedness that gets us into trouble with the Law of Karma. Let us analyze the karmic impact of a crime of robbing against someone unknown to the thief:

| Zone | Karmic Impact of Crime |
|---------------|--|
| Self | Commits the robbery, gets money, apparent short-term benefit for self, long-term risk of arrest, imprisonment, fine, loss of freedom, reputation and civil rights (if a felony) |
| Intimate | Family may become accessories to a crime or conspirators, threat to family, potential loss of a breadwinner, incurring legal fees, shame of having a family member arrested and imprisoned, stress of not knowing how long he will be in prison |
| Social | Issues of secrecy, shame, loss of reputation, bad result for others, can lose job if crime is revealed, bad results for self and others |
| Community | Increased costs for police, investigation, criminal prosecution, members of the community do not feel safe, victim and family are harmed, bad for victim and community |
| Society | Media reports news of the crime, it leads to the impression that the community is not safe, businesses do not want to relocate here, existing businesses put up security, homeowners do not want to live in the area based on their perception of the crime, bad for society |
| International | Negligible impact |
| Ecological | Negligible impact |
| Universal | Negligible impact |
| Spiritual | Adding to the magnetic vortex of fascination of the Lower Astral Plane with theft, increases the atmosphere of collective evil, bad for everyone |

Many decisions we make only consider the Egoic Zone of the Self and sometimes the Intimate Zone of family and close friends, but we do not examine the wider impact. We act, but we do not see the big picture. We seek an immediate reward without considering the wider repercussions of

what we do. We may reap a financial profit, but do we destroy the ecology of the planet, cause cancer in our community or remove the livelihood of these that we lay off in order to show greatest profit?

Meditation on Action, Word and Thought

- Contemplate an action and notice the impact through these nine spheres.
- Contemplate a word spoken and notice its impact through these nine spheres.
- Contemplate a thought and notice its impact through these nine spheres (consider that the thought may be made manifest as written material or an idea discussed among others, or as a belief transmitted from one person to another).

The yogic virtue of non-injury (Ahimsa) is based upon a consideration of the impact of thoughts, words and deeds through these nine spheres. If you can show kindness and respect to your uncle, can you also show it to a nation, to an insect, to a blade of grass, to a stone, to the earth, to the cosmos or to the spirit of another?

The Origination of Karma

From what does a thought, a word or an action arise? You may contemplate the 13 focal points of the will:

| Number | Focal Point | Description |
|---------------|---|---|
| 1 | The Unconscious | A sub-personality or entity that acts outside of volitional control, as in an addiction arising from the unconscious mind |
| 2 | The Ego | Identified with the body, life, possessions and fulfillment of desire |
| 3 | The Etheric Habit Matrix of the Subconscious Mind | Following habit |
| 4 | The Volition of the Self | Choices arrived at by reflection, planning and careful study |
| 5 | Collective Octave I | Choices made in synchrony with nature, in harmony with the needs of the tribe |
| 6 | Collective Octave II | Enactment of myth, cultural ethos, ritual worship and the rites of magic and ceremonial invocation |
| 7 | Collective Octave III | Biological union, union with the earth, enactment of courtship rituals and sexual communion, establishment of family |
| 8 | Collective Octave IV | Expression of gifts from the Abstract Mind Plane |
| 9 | Collective Octave V | Expression of gifts from the Psychic Realm |
| 10 | Collective Octave VI | Expression of the Moral Will and the Mind of Wisdom, inspiration by the Holy Spirit |
| 11 | Collective Octave VII | Expression of the Creative Fist of the Soul, speaking the Word |
| 12 | Collective Octave VIII | Expression of the Soul's genius and abilities through the Transpersonal Octave of Will |
| 13 | Collective Octave IX | The Will of the Monad, the Will Divine |

When a thought arises, from which of these octaves does it come? A word? An action?

As the potential of a human being is activated, it becomes possible for that person to access and express these higher octaves of the will. It brings the possibility to express something other than the selfishness, the defensiveness and the combativeness of the ego. A deeper, more thoughtful, more compassionate choice becomes manifest in humanity.

Instant and Delayed Karma

Some karmic repercussions are nearly instant. Hit a highly agitated, angry man in the face without provocation, and you will reap a fight in an eye-blink. Karmic consequences that are not encountered immediately become layered in the unconscious, waiting to fructify according to twelve orderly cycles:

| Number | Cycle | Description |
|--------|-----------------|--|
| 1 | Diurnal | Within a 24-hour cycle |
| 2 | Semi-Lunar | Between a full moon and a new moon, or a phase of the moon and its complement after a fortnight (i.e., two weeks) |
| 3 | Lunar | A whole moon cycle (approximately one month) |
| 4 | Seasonal | Between three and four lunar cycles, comprising a season of Nature |
| 5 | Solar | 12 to 13 lunar cycles: one revolution of the earth around the sun (one year) |
| 6 | Coronal | 11 to 13 years, marked by the emergence of great solar flares from the surface of the sun (approximately one revolution of Jupiter around the sun) |
| 7 | Constellational | Movement of the sun through one sign of the Zodiac (approximately 2,000 years) |
| 8 | Zodiacal | One revolution of the sun through all 12 signs of the Zodiac, equal to one Age (Yoga: 24,000 years) |

| Number | Cycle | Description |
|--------|----------------------|--|
| 9 | Galactic | Movement of our galaxy around a fixed nebula: 1,000 Ages (24,000,000 years) |
| 10 | Universal | Creation and dissolution of a universe: 1,000 Galactic Ages (24,000,000,000 years) |
| 11 | Meta-Universal | Creation and dissolution of a Brahmanda, comprising a causal mental universe, an astral universe and a physical universe |
| 12 | Grand Meta-Universal | Emanation and dissolution of countless Brahmandas, 1,000 meta-universal cycles |

Tamasic Expressions of Karma

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| Tamasic Forms of Karma Accretion as Unconscious Mind | Pralabdha |
| | Sinchit |
| | Kriyaman |
| | Adi |

As karma is extruded from its reservoir in the unconscious, it arises as

- Desire and craving for a person, object or experience
- Fantasy and mental fascination with a person, object or experience
- Powerful ideas that evoke strong emotions that come into awareness
- Obsession or compulsion, a sense that one is driven to act in a certain way.
- Spontaneous thoughts upwelling into conscious awareness
- Suddenly perceiving a person, object or experience in a new way
- Feeling strong attraction or revulsion for a person, object or experience

Karma may arise from various depths of the unconscious. Typically, about 60% to 85% arises from the first 48 nodal points past the liminal edge of conscious awareness. Another 10% to 35% arises from the 49th through 96th nodal points. Roughly only about 5% arises from unconscious bands deeper than the 96th nodal point.

Pralabdha Karma

The template of human life is the repository of the Pralabdha Karma. This helix-like structure, which Shakespeare referred to as “the mortal coil,” has 12 filaments, in which karma can be embedded, crossing over at 18 points, which correspond to anatomical locations in the physical and etheric bodies. These 18 nexus points are:

1. Ankles
2. Knees
3. Hips
4. Base of spine
5. Navel
6. Solar plexus
7. Heart
8. Left palm
9. Right palm
10. Medulla (base of skull where it meets the neck)
11. Point between the eyebrows
12. Fontanel at the top of the physical brain
13. A point three fingers' breadth below the navel in the etheric body
14. Solar plexus center in the etheric body
15. Heart center in the etheric body
16. Throat center in the etheric body
17. Point between the eyebrows in the etheric body
18. Fontanel of the brain in the etheric body

Each filament in which karma is embedded has seven strands, which correspond to the expression of karma in:

| Number | Strand | Karmic Expression |
|--------|---------------------|--|
| 1 | Physical-Etheric | A genetic/constitutional component that expresses as acute or chronic disease |
| 2 | Emotional | A psychological issue that continues to repeat, nurtured by changes in mood and reaction to events |
| 3 | Mental | The activity of mental processes to resolve the problem, the formulation of beliefs and expectations |
| 4 | Volitional-Behavior | The actions that arise out of the karmic thread; seen in conditions of craving, compulsion or addiction |
| 5 | Astral-Fantasy | The images, voices and feelings arising within the mind |
| 6 | Causal | Core mental tendencies [samskaras] – this is the substrate on which karma is remembered |
| 7 | Seed or Essence | This is the original issue from which the karma originated, the choice-creation point – it can usually be traced to a discrete event in the current or a past life |

As more than one strand is typically embedded with karmic matter, issues arising from Pralabdha Karma may be seen to simultaneously have physical symptoms, emotional, mental and volitional aspects, fantasy components, deep memory traces, and may bring spontaneous remembrance of a particular incident.

How to Identify Pralabdha Karma

Pralabdha karma typically has one or more of the following markers:

- Constitutional or genetic conditions, long-standing health issues, aches, pains or inflammations for which a medical cure cannot be identified

- A recurrent emotional theme enacted in interpersonal relationships
- Irrational beliefs, delusions, fixed or obsessive ideas, cravings, compulsions or addictions that resist reason, moral injunction and volition
- Recurrent fantasies, hallucinations or repetitive dreams
- Obsessive memories and distracting thoughts that continue to bring up upsetting or troubling memories.
- Remembrance over and over and over of a particular incident in the present or a former life

Issues that you seem to live over and over and over again, repetitive patterns or problems that don't resolve, are markers of Pralabdha Karma. These issues are not burned up by transformation spiritual practices and typically must be lived through. They do eventually resolve, however.

Sinchit Karma

Sinchit Karma is stored in the tubules of the Nadamic current, which passes through the 12 domains of spirituality. Sinchit Karma plugs up these inner tubules in which the spirit dwells. This form of karma takes the form of desires, fantasies, temptations, cravings and passions. These impressions, once purified, become the holy virtues of serenity and effortless self-restraint seen in a saint. The spirit traveling back through these Nadamic tubules works out this form of karma. This practice has been variously referred to as udgit, Surat Shabd Yoga or soul travel. We call it Nada Yoga (we teach the fundamentals of Nada Yoga in the Mudrashram® Master Course in Meditation, the Accelerated Meditation Program, the Mudrashram® Advanced Course in Meditation and the Way of the Heart workshop).

Kriyaman Karma

Kriyaman Karma has three aspects:

1. New karma that is set into motion by current thoughts, words and deeds (this is the Rajasic aspect of Kriyaman Karma)
2. The sublimation of the will, so that the individual is able to relate to each situation from the higher centers, and make wiser, kinder and gentler choices (this is the Sattwic aspect of Kriyaman Karma)
3. The layering of the patterns of Kriyaman Karma behind each vehicle (this is the Tamasic aspect of Kriyaman Karma). These comprise
 - a. Unfinished goals or objectives
 - b. Unfinished business in relationships, which must be resolved by communication of truth, apology, forgiveness, restitution or amends
 - c. Latent abilities or gifts that the Soul needs to bring into expression
 - d. Unawakened intuitive wisdom that has yet to be realized; insights that have yet to be cognized
 - e. Unawakened potential states of ministry or service, marked by a pattern of expressed Soul purpose (a work that must be accomplished in this current life), an inner Star of expression, an inner spiritual throne, an inner wheel, or a glorified etheric form on the Inner Planes
 - f. Rehabilitating the cords that pass from the personality into the Superconscious, building the Bridge of Will, the Bridge of Intuition and Understanding (Antakarana), the Bridge of Faith and the awakening of dormant awareness and energy (kundalini) to enliven and purify each vehicle

- g. Freeing the blocked energy of the Spirit behind each vehicle, awakening the experience of the power of Love and Life as supernal bliss, ecstasy and joy.

Kriyaman Karma is overcome by transformational methods such as Kriya Yoga, Transformational (bija) Mantra and Light Immersion.

Adi Karma

Adi Karma is layered on the Path of the ensouling entity. It is sometimes referred to as Soul Purpose Karma. It represents the future initiations of the Soul. As transformation unfolds the potentials of the Soul, it concomitantly unfolds each vehicle. Thus, as Adi Karma is transmuted, the stored aspects of Kriyaman Karma are concomitantly resolved and actualized. Since they are directly linked, the same transformational methods that work out Kriyaman Karma are used to work out Adi Karma.

In the Mudrashram® System of Integrated Meditation, we disseminate methods to directly work out Sinchit, Kriyaman and Adi Karma. As the Soul evolves, there is a spontaneous sublimation of the will: the patterns of karma-creation change, with concurrent changes in perception, character and behavior following closely behind.

Purpose in Karma

Karma persists until its purpose is fulfilled. We characterize four major purposes inherent in karma, which are represented by the following inner centers:

| Type of Purpose | Type of Karma | Center | Context |
|---------------------|---------------|--|--|
| Innate Soul Purpose | Adi Karma | The seed of the other side of the higher unconscious | The calling of the Soul, the goal of this track of spiritual evolution |

| Type of Purpose | Type of Karma | Center | Context |
|------------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| Expressed Soul Purpose | Kriyaman Karma | Inner wheels, stars, vortices and thrones of other centers awakened by the Soul in its spiritual evolutionary journey | The expression of the Soul's gifts and its service to other living beings, utilizing the higher octaves of the Will |
| Domain Purpose | Sinchit Karma | Mirrored in the 12 upper toruses of the Purpose Center in the Subconscious mind | The relative opening of the Nadamic path and development of potential states of Spiritual Mastery in each of the 12 domains are mirrored in these centers: as the Spirit opens the path of the Nada, these toruses (or crowns, as they are called in the <i>Bible</i>) change from black to golden |
| Life Destiny | Pralabdha Karma | Mirrored in the lowest torus of the Purpose Center in the Subconscious mind | The 18 radii of this torus mirror the relative purification of the karma imbedded in the helix of Destiny Karma |

The conscious intention to complete and work out these four types of karma serves to fulfill the grander purposes of Supreme Nature. When this intention dawns on the mind, the individual is said to have embarked upon the spiritual path. When this intention is sustained until all karma has been resolved, the individual achieves Spiritual Mastery.

In this article, we have discussed the three modes of karma. It is to the degree that an individual can adopt the sattvic mode, to be able to consciously work on and work out karma, that transformations of the potentials of consciousness becomes possible.

Thank you for attending our webinar today!

