

BASICS 13

No one can be blamed... in the broadest sense of the phrase

Why blame a person for what he does if his higher faculties have not yet awakened and possessed him? He is only doing what he can. Moreover it is prudent never to condemn others. For others will then by karmic law condemn you.

Try to understand other persons not in order to blame them but in order to understand better the operations of mind itself, the human mind.

His goodness, forgiveness, and comprehension should go out to those who seem to have misjudged him. What they feel about him seems to them to be the truth about him. It is the best they know—why blame them if appearances deceive them? If he continues to send them such kind thoughts, he actually lifts himself out of his own ego, he vanquishes his own egoism.

With each coming of this experience, there is a going of bitterness out of his heart. More and more he sees that people cannot help being what they are, the products of their own past experience and present characteristics, the living milestones of a cosmic evolutionary process. How can he blame, resent, or condemn them? More and more, therefore, does tolerance suffuse his attitude and acceptance mellow his contacts with the world.

When others ridicule the idea of immortality, the aspirant should not be upset nor allow his own faith to be weakened; he must remember that these people are merely expressing their own opinions, not passing on knowledge. The fact that many persons are not too happy about the idea of physical annihilation—and fail to take into consideration the fact that the "I" endures—has, of course, coloured their personal tastes. Their opinions are, however, incompatible with truth.

Both Shankara and Ramana Maharshi blame identification with the body as ignorance, which the first says results in "no hope of liberation" and the second says is "the root cause of all trouble." What they say is unquestionably so. But what else can happen in the beginning except this identification? It is the first kind of identity anyone knows. His error is that he stays at this point and makes no attempt to inquire further. If he did—in a prolonged, sustained, and continued effort—he would eventually find the truth: knowledge would replace ignorance.

From a long-range point of view, is anyone really "lost"? It is sometimes consoling to remember that we have Eternity before us, and we can only do what we are capable of at a given time.

He needs to recover his conscious relationship to the Overself: the subconscious one is never lost.

When considered from the long-range karmic point of view, each of us creates his own world and atmosphere. Therefore, we have no one but ourselves to thank or blame for our comfort or wretchedness. It should be remembered, too, that present correct or incorrect use of free will is right now deciding the conditions and circumstances of lives to come.

We must recognize that men are at different stages of response to the commands of Moses, the counsels of Jesus, the admonitions of Gautama, and the teachings of Krishna. Consequently it is vain to hope that they will accept or obey a universal rule of behaviour.

A man can respond to events or to prophets, to demands or to experiences, only on the level of his own capacity and mentality. We have no right to ask that he shall be better or wiser.

Constant association with him [the Sage] can only benefit the sensitive after all. It exalts and tutors them. But it leaves the insensitive exactly as they were before. Long ago Jesus pointed out the futility of casting seed on stony ground. Not that this lack of sensitivity is to be deprecated. Nature has set us all on different rungs of her evolutionary ladder. No one is to blame for being what he or she is.

Let us stop judging and condemning others... let's leave it up to Karma.

If the aspirant has any grievance against another person or if he be conscious of feelings of anger, resentment, or hatred against another person, he should follow Jesus' advice and let not the sun go down on his wrath. This means that he must see him as expressing the result of all his own long experience and personal thinking about life and therefore the victim of his own past, not acting better only because he does not know any better. The aspirant should

then comprehend that whatever wrongs have been done will automatically be brought under the penalty of karmic retribution. Consequently, it is not his affair to condemn or to punish the other person, but to stand aloof and let the law of karma take care of him. It is his affair to understand and not to blame. He must learn to accept a person just as he is, uncondemned. He certainly should try not to feel any emotional resentment or express any personal ill-will against that person. He must keep his own consciousness above the evil, the wrong-doing, the weaknesses, or the faults of the other man and not let them enter his own consciousness—which is what happens if he allows them to provoke negative reactions in his lower self. He should make immediate and constant effort to root such weeds out of his emotional life. But the way to do this is not by blinding himself to the faults, the defects, and the wrongdoings of the other.

If he blames other men for his troubles, he thereby confesses his egoism. If he blames conditions as being their cause, he confesses his weakness. Every time he points outside himself in complaint he is unconsciously pointing to himself!

Alas! the ego pursues him wherever he goes. This is bad enough but when he fails to recognize it and blames other egos only for his troubles it is pathetic and even saddening.

It is easy and common to blame others who cross our path or belong to our surroundings as being the provocative cause of our irritability or resentment. But if we forgive them instead and hold them in the thought of goodwill, not only will our relationship with them improve but we ourselves will profit exceedingly.

Your suffering may be shortened or even ended if you will express the fullest self-inculpation and throw no blame for it on others. For their misbehaviour does not absolve you from the responsibility for your own.

Does not my own privacy require that I leave others alone and not try to take on their affairs or problems?

Each man has to work on himself and leave others alone. To criticize and to condemn them is easy, but it is to fail to mind one's own business. And what is one's own business? It is to work on oneself until one is aware of the divine part of oneself.

His thoughts, his feelings, and his actions must work in combination to effect this great self-purification which must precede the dawn of illumination. And this means that they must work upon themselves and divert their attention from other persons whom they may have criticized or interfered with in the past. The aspirant must reserve his condemnation for himself and leave others alone to their karma.

From the time that he perceives that he does not and cannot know all the circumstances, he ceases to condemn others.

Some well-meaning moralists who say that the disciple should no longer look for the evil in others, swing to the other extreme and say that he should look only for the good. Philosophy, however, does not endorse either point of view, except to remark that we have no business to judge those who are weaker than ourselves and less business to condemn them. It further says that to look only for the good in others would be to give a false picture of them, for a proper picture must combine the bright and the dark sides. Therefore it prefers mentally to leave them alone and not to set any valuation upon them, to mind its own affairs and to leave them to the unerring judgement of their own Karma. The only exception to this rule is when a disciple is forced to have dealings with another man which make it necessary for him to understand the character of the person with whom he is dealing; but even this understanding must be fair, just, calmly made, impartial, and unprejudiced. Above all, it must not arouse personal emotions or egoistic reactions: in short, he will have to be absolutely impersonal. But it is seldom that a disciple will have to make such an exception. He should refrain from giving attention to the imperfections and shortcomings of others, and he should certainly never blame them for these. He should turn his critical gaze towards himself alone—unless he is specifically asked by others to examine them—and exercise it to correct himself and improve himself and reform himself.

He is able to determine precisely what ethical principle is their guiding and dominant force, and what mental status they have reached. Yet paradoxically enough, the greater clarity with which he can now view the souls of others does not diminish his tolerance but, on the contrary, increases it. For he understands that everything and everyone are the result of the previous experience which life has given them, that they cannot help being other than what they are, and that all occupy a certain place at some stage or other in the universal evolutionary scheme—even those who are actuated by devilish and evil characteristics. Instead of placing himself in inward opposition to the wicked and thus setting up conflict, he silently pities them in his own heart, for he knows that the karmic law will reflect back to its perpetrator suffering for every evil deed. On the other hand, he will not hesitate impersonally to perform a drastic punitive duty should it be his duty to do so according to his position in the outer world.

If the ego were as prone to condemn itself as it is to justify itself, or to justify others as it is to condemn them, how quick and easy would the quest be.

Whether he evokes the past or dreams the future, he will stand aside from his own ego and judge the one or plan the other with impersonal, detached wisdom.

We must cultivate the philosophical spirit which seeks, through calm reflection, to learn and profit by the widest experiences and the commonest errors. It is important that disillusionment should not create bitterness, that we should blame no one but ourselves for our premature judgements. We shall be shamefully defeated in our quest of the Overself if the pain of our experiences makes us less generous intellectually when it ought to make us more so. Yes, our heart must not shrink; the more it has suffered, the more it should expand in forgiveness, in compassion, and in freedom from prejudice.

It is not enough to learn to bear with others, to excuse and accept their shortcomings. He must also learn to bear with himself, to accept his own shortcomings.

Although we must cease to blame others for our troubles, or conditions for our misfortunes, and assume responsibility for the self which we have created and the actions it has done, we need not push our sense of guilt to the point of morbidity. Although we have attracted so many of our misfortunes by our own thoughts and feelings and actions, we need not feed pessimism until it becomes despair. Too many persons on the Long Path fall into these errors through expecting more from themselves than they actually realized.

One advantage of the Short Path is that whoever takes to it thoroughly gets rid of guilt complexes, of sorrowing over his past, his errors, his sins.

In looking back over the past, he humbly perceives his mistakes and sadly apportions the blame for his failure to himself. He no longer wastes his time in hunting alibis or in criticizing other people for his troubles. Nor does he complain of fate. He now sees that in aspiring for spiritual growth and praying for spiritual help, those very experiences which exposed his weaknesses and brought out his faults were the answers to his prayer, the grace shed upon his aspirations.

Some part of the philosopher remains an untouched, independent, and impartial observer. It notes the nature of things but does not allow itself to be swept away by the repulsiveness of unpleasant things or lost in the attractiveness of pleasant ones. It is the same with his experience of persons. He is well aware of their characteristics; but however undesirable, faulty, or evil they may be, he makes no attempt to judge them. Indeed, he accepts them just as they are. This is inevitable since, being aware of his and their common origin in God, he practises goodwill towards everyone unremittingly.