

THE TRACKS OF GOOD KARMA

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For years I assumed that “good karma” was something very desirable that I never could get enough of. And I knew that I was a magnet in attracting that bad karma; it was that good karma I hoped to accumulate more of.

Imagine my surprise to discover that while good karma is preferable to the bad stuff, it is ultimately not that useful or worth having. How is that?

The Tibetans explain that good karma also leaves tracks in our mindstream, deep grooves that can last a long time but they too eventually wear out. Good karma lasting a long time sounds great to me, a nice patch of karma that will be with me for a long time. I need more of that.

Well, as the teachings go, it turns out that whatever goes up comes down and that, as nice a dreamy place as good karma puts us in, it too eventually wears off and we descend back into regular karma or even descend into worse karma. What’s the answer?

The idea is simple. While we bask in our good karma, we are making no effort to actually get beyond karma, good and bad, and get on with learning to know the true nature of our mind. We are still, as the Buddhists put it, right in samsara, this cyclic world of ups and downs and with no way to deal with it properly.

After some 37 years of actual practice (doing my best) it is clear to me that both good karma and bad karma are sidetracks. Bad karma makes life tough and good karma takes us on a pleasant trip, but either one of these (and we have both going on all the time) is just a major distraction that keeps us from actually getting to know the true nature of our own mind.

The Tibetans are clear that karma of either kind, good or bad, is just a major distraction and that sooner or later, when we are ready, we will stop entertaining ourselves in Samara and actually learn more about the true nature of our mind.

My singer/songwriter daughter May describes Samsara brilliantly in the following lyrics from her a tune she called “Heart Song.” I enclose the actual song below and encourage you to actually listen to it.

FROM "Heart Song"
by [May Erlewine Bernard](#)

"Everything goes round and round,
And up and down,
And side to side.

"My Heart is a rodeo clown,
Distracting the pain,
So that I can just ride...
Ride on by,
So that I can just ride.

