Money in a Beggar’s Bucket

Where did I learn that a good deed guarantees another in return? Maybe not right away, maybe a little down the road, or perhaps next lifetime…but a good deed will be repaid in kind. Really? Has that been your experience? If so, you are luckier than me. I think of this today because my ‘good deed’ of this morning –handing a dollar bill to a beggar holding out a bucket at a stop sign got me rear ended by a man who could not wait the extra five seconds. I’m not complaining. I am simply making a point.

Or do we not secretly hope that those who have wronged us receive payback for their mis-deed, and how bad it feels when nobody doles out proper punishment? Rest assured, such thoughts do not make us bad people. Bad people act out on those thoughts. You are not about to do that. It simply means that part of us wishes the world worked in an orderly, predictable way. Good deeds beget good karma. Bad deeds beget bad karma, the old cause and effect. Maybe over hundreds of lifetimes it all might work out that way. But in the myopic view it simply does not.

So why do the right thing, why act in loving altruistic ways, why stop and put a dollar in the bucket of a beggar or go through all that trouble to shout out for justice for people we don’t even know? Let me put it this way. If it is tied to outcome or getting something, even getting your own approval for what a good person you are, you will be sadly disappointed. Truly the only reason is that the good deed itself is its own reward. Because when we are generous or loving or kind or benevolent or inclusive, we generate that state inside ourselves. Kindness fills us with inner sweetness, benevolence fills us with an inner sense of fullness and abundance. What we offer is returned in the offering, if we pay attention, and if we stop looking to be externally rewarded, or looking to receive that pat on the back for being a good person. No attachment to outcome is the beginning of true self-responsibility, and the opening to inner freedom.

Money in a beggar’s bucket, rear-ended, a drink from the well of kindness, another day on planet earth.