



The Insight of Karma

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Karma is a concept closely tied to the idea of reincarnation. Karma is a word from the Sanskrit language derived from the root "kri" meaning "to do" or "to make." Literally, karma means "the doing" or "the making" of an action. Karma can best be translated into English as the word "consequence."

Karma is based on the principle of cause and effect. Simply put, for every action there is a reaction. Most of us realize this principle in our physical world. We acknowledge that our own actions and decisions have consequences. Karma is the consequences of what we say, do, feel, and think. Karma creates and colors our existence and our future condition. For example, if I have a ball in my hand and I drop the ball, it will fall. We call this the law of gravity. Karma proceeds with the same principle into the emotional, mental, and spiritual realms. All this acquired karma then becomes the knot of personality that we suffer with, trying to sort out and understand what is best for us.

Reincarnation explains that whatever karma is created will present itself later in this life or in a future life. "We are born into the environment which will give us the circumstances, the problems and difficulties that we need to further our growth." So says James Long in *Expanding Horizons*.

Karma is often portrayed inaccurately in the West as a reframed Christian version of punishment and reward. The Dalai Lama says, "Karma is the shape of your future rebirth." It is about understanding the lessons from your experiences and gaining wisdom from them, thus avoiding more work and spiritual effort for yourself. Karma is not about punishment and reward, rather it is about receiving the appropriate response from actions you have set in motion.

If you superimpose Karma onto the concept of reincarnation, if you examine the experience of living over many lives, karma takes on deeper and more complex layers of understanding. For instance, it is not necessarily good karma to be born a prosperous American. It just means that you probably will not be dealing with the same issues that other people are in developing third world countries. Instead, you will still be dealing with different lessons that match your birth time and place. For a prosperous American that might be issues such as health, bankruptcy or career choices.

Even when you are familiar with memories from recall of your own past lives gained through skill development in the arena of reincarnation, your own karma is still not easy to see. One of the lovely young girls who recently finished our *One Truth Many Paths* seminars reported a pattern of illness or injury in every memory recall experience she encountered. Not coincidentally, she is about to enter medical school. She has gained insight into the experience of physical suffering and probably will make a very good doctor. Her recall experiences could be

misconstrued as thinking she is a bad person or deserves pain because bad things were always happening to her. Not so. She gained spiritual insight and compassion from her injuries which motivated her into attending medical school in her life today.

One more metaphor, in an attempt to explain karma, -- if you toss a pebble into a pool, it causes ripples in the water, and these ripples spread and finally impact upon the bank surrounding the pool. Thus modern science tells us, the ripples are translated into vibrations, which are carried outward into infinity. At every step of this process there is a corresponding reaction from each and every one of the myriads of atomic particles affected by the spreading energy. Karma is the same way.



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