

# The Problem Of Karma

Karma is the Hindu belief that one's action in this life affects their future destiny for better or worse. Life in the present state is seen as the accumulated result of actions done in past lives. It has mainly to do with one's position in society (their caste), and their physical condition. For example, in this view, human infirmity such as being lame, blind, deaf, dumb etc. – are seen as a result of 'wrong or evil' actions in past life. Karma is linked with samsara – the belief that the soul after death goes on to another life in another body, and this cycle is repeated over and over.

The only solution to 'non karmic' life – is actions done without any desire. As Krishna teaches Arjuna in the Gita, actions which are performed from duty and in a disinterested way stemming from 'no desire' have no 'karmic effects'. (Gita 4:10)

In observing our own lives, and of those around us, we can certainly agree that any evil or wrong action brings feelings of guilt and shame. The depth of this feeling depends on severity of the wrongness. Even hardened criminals who feel no remorse whatsoever for their crimes might regret their crimes later on. However, it is not possible to 'observe' how the misdeeds of past lives bear consequences on present life. This would conflict with our uniqueness as individual human beings.

In addressing the issue of karma we need to understand the nature of God, His creation, and of evil and its effects in our world. God is a gracious and good Creator. He has created mankind and the world with extraordinary beauty & richness. God as Creator has designed mankind with a unique spirit, soul, mind and physical body. He has made us to display His kingship in our world. Mankind is to flourish and be fruitful in reflecting their Creator God, in every area of life social, spiritual, and in relation to natural world.

The problem of karma arises because humanity is in rebellion against God and His created order. Man has chosen to live independently of God's rule. This self-rule has left a dark blot in the very nature of what it means to be human. Man is now corrupted by presence of evil. This affects every aspect – spiritual, social, physical body (we are now subject to pain, sickness & death) and nature. Thus man experiences a constant struggle and is not able to fulfil God's purposes. He devises his own ways to 'be right in himself and with his Creator God'.

Our efforts to save ourselves, and experience a release from the bondage of karma (actions) are in vain, since we are neither powerful nor sufficient to reverse the effects of evil. Thus moksha (redemption) is a mere illusion. If we are left to our own efforts this would be utterly hopeless.

God is all wise and all powerful. He has not left humanity to our own ends, but He has made a way. God has visited humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. He has experienced our grief and sorrows, yet did so without rebelling against God's Kingship. There is no sin tainting His life. He was able to lay His life as a sacrifice to remove the effects of sin and evil. This is God's way of making His world right. The Bible says 'For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God' (1 Peter 3:18). Jesus on the Cross some 2000 years ago became the sacrifice to reverse the effects of evil and Satan. He now reconciles humanity with their Creator God. This is the good news of hope for all humanity.