

Haven Newsletter

August 2003

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Karma -

"What goes around comes around" or does it?

I recently watched and re-watched (much to my children's dismay!) the series "Shogun" by James Clavell. Not only is it excellent viewing but perhaps the major theme of the entire series is the idea of karma.

The belief that ones actions are entirely dictated by the actions committed in a previous life comes up repeatedly. Early in the show, a captured Samurai warrior remarks before killing himself that "A mans life is but karma and life is an illusion". There in a brief sentence two of the most important ideas found within virtually all eastern (and many western) religions are stated simply. Life is an illusion (Maya) and each person's life is dictated by his previous actions (karma).

The word karma originally meant the ritual actions done by a Vedic (Hindu) priest in order to produce some result from his prayers/spells/rituals. The word evolved just prior to the advent of the Renouncer religions (Buddhism, Jainism, etc) around the 5th century B.C. It came to mean all actions by everyone eve-

KARMA:
The belief that ones actions are entirely dictated by the actions committed in a previous life

rywhere. The attitude of common people within Hindu and Buddhist thought is that karma can be good or evil, but according to most Eastern scholars of both religions karma should not be judged in that way. Terms like good and evil, positive and negative and so on are merely reflective of one's unenlightened attitudes towards things we do not understand. For example, if I lose my job and am upset and think that this is "bad" karma, this shows that I don't understand the true meaning of the word.

Karma is seen as perfect justice - one gets exactly what one has done previously. As such, loaded terms like good and evil merely confuse the issue. Why do people still tend to react in this way? It is because they do not understand the illusory state of the world. The Matrix and the Matrix

MATRIX Reloaded play upon the theme that the visible or perceptual world is merely an illusion. Only the enlightened can "rise" above and see the true reality. In the Matrix the true reality is that machines are controlling the universe - In Hindu thought (generically) the true reality is the all encompassing oneness of Brahman - In Buddhist thought (generically) the true reality is the incomprehensible oneness of Nirvana. In Hindu and Buddhist thought to perceive something in this world, say for example the Holocaust, as evil is a mistake, because one who makes that

judgment has not understood the "true" nature of the event. The true nature is that in this illusory state each person in the Holocaust is merely receiving their just rewards - they had all been murderers in previous lives and are now having their karma balanced.



Many New Ager and sadly some I meet who call themselves Christian, believe that this is a Biblical theme as well. They always misquote Galatians 6:7 where it says "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap". (Emphasis added for what is actually quoted!) While the context of this passage makes it quite clear that this passage is about helping each other deal with our frailties and sins, and coming along side each other to help out, it is always quoted as if the intent was to give a Christianized version of Karma. Let's look at some of the more basic differences.



Eastern Religions

- Karma - all actions are without moral quality or consequences.
- Maya - the perceived world is an illusion.
- Karma is perfect justice - in that an impersonal force or law gives out over the process of reincarnation what each person deserves.
- God is impersonal and beyond

(Continued on page 2)

Haven Newsletter

Karma continued..

(Continued from page 1)

love/hate, good/evil or corn-
prises both essentially.

- Grace and mercy and forgive-
ness are all part of the illusory
world and therefore meaning-
less in any real sense.

Christianity

- All actions are judged by their
intent and consequence – God
will righteously judge and out
of his very essence or being is
goodness and love. The deter-
mination of what is good and
what is evil is determined by
the creator - God.
- The world was created and
sustained by God. It is nei-
ther illusory nor evil in itself
(as Gnostics claim)
- Forgiveness and mercy and
grace are all central to the
Christian message. God is
holy and it is not that sins
have no consequences, but
that these consequences were
taken by Jesus upon himself
at the cross. The justice re-
quirement is fulfilled by the
sacrifice Jesus made. But
God is more than holy; he is
also loving and full of mercy.
So grace (unmerited favor) is
offered to all who believe in
Jesus. This is why this is
good news, we as believers do
not have to pay for our sins for
this life or any other alleged
life.

In conclusion, what Shogun
showed was the result of
what thousands of years of think-
ing on karma could produce, an
incredibly fatalistic culture where
violence was routine and justified
for the simplest "violation". While
our new age and Wiccan friends
want to downplay the fatalism, it
is inherent in the belief itself. The
ancients knew this, and called
upon the enlightened to surrender

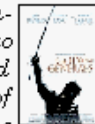
to it and strive to do nothing – so
that one would not return in the
next life to this illusory world.
Even good karma brings one back
upon the wheel (samsara) of rein-
carnation. Contrast this with the
mercy and grace offered through
Jesus Christ. Even most new
agers I have spoken to know that
our actions (good or bad) have
real consequences because this is a
real world. They may talk about
Maya, but they still live in this
very real world. They know that
forgiveness and mercy and grace
are good things, but they struggle
to see how they can still be mean-
ingful if the world is illusory.
Others questions about karma in-
clude things such as; "Who com-
mitted the first karma" (ignored
by Buddhists, part of Brahman's
dream for Hindus)? If there is no
moral component to karma, in
what sense can the word
"judgment" be used? One might
ask new age activists if all is an
illusion then why worry about
what ever cause they are driven
by? (Free Tibet, the environment,
animal rights, etc.) The Bible
gives solid explanations and an-
swers for these and many other
questions. Don't be shy – we have
much to say and offer to this
world.

Book Note

I am still encour-
aging everyone to
read this book. It is
heartbreaking in a way
but sometimes harsh
medicine is good for the
soul. The book is entitled "A Mat-
ter of Basic Principles – Bill
Gothard and the Christian Life".
It is written by Don and Joy Vei-
not and Ron Henzel and pub-
lished by 21st Century press. You
can find it at the website for the
Midwest Christian Outreach at
www.midwestoutreach.org.
Though again I know many of
you respect Bill Gothard and
were influenced greatly by his
teachings, there are both personal
and theological reasons to see him
in a different way. Before you re-
act, I would encourage you to
read the book, check out the facts
and then make your decision.



I also want to en-
courage everyone to
see the movie "Gods and
Generals". Regardless of
your own thoughts of the
Civil war, it is an excellent pres-
entation of the faith that drove
both combatants. A true tear-
jerker from our historical perspec-
tive.

**Website Update**

The website is finally
up and running for
good, (Lord willing!). We
have our newsletters, many of the
philosophy papers I've written,
many of the seminars that we
have in print and other things as
well. We hope to have numerous
audio downloads available of the
presentations as well. We are
also in the baby step stage of up-
loading info files on numerous


religions, groups and practices.
This will take time but should be
helpful. I know that I have said
this before, but this time it can ac-
tually work – if you would rather
receive your newsletter by email,
please let us know. Email me at
honz1@msn.com and we will
switch you over. I want to thank
Matt and Mike and Duane for
their tremendous help getting the
website up.

Haven Newsletter

Prayer Requests

- 1) Please continue to pray for my family's salvation. Our son Scott has moved back to California and unfortunately he is still struggling with the same issues. Please keep him in your prayers.
- 2) Please pray for marriages that have been destroyed or damaged by sin and cultic activity. Included here are Bruce and Diane, Don and Peggy, Mike and Cheryl, Jen, Dave, Paul and Sheila, Jeannette and Brad, and too many more.
- 3) Please pray for many friends who suffer from chronic sickness, like Sherry, Rebecca, Liz, Julie and others. Pray also for a friend Frank who has cancer in his liver. My wonderful wife Terri has been diagnosed with Lupus, but was then told that they are not sure. She is undergoing many exams to see what is going on. Please keep her in your prayers, and pray that we (the family) will help ease her load at home.
- 4) We are so thankful that the kids have now been home for six months and are doing well. If you would like a new prayer card, please let us know. The picture is really great.
- 5) Praise the Lord! We are so thankful for the response in giving. Please continue to pray for our ministry support. We are currently at about 75%. We are so thankful for all of who bless us through your help. Like many other ministries, summer is a slow time for support and we are no different. Please pray that new supporters will come and help out. We have over two thousand people who receive the letter who are not regular supporters of this ministry. Please prayerfully consider becoming a part of what the Lord is doing here. God bless yall!
- 6) Please continue to pray for those that we are talking too. New people we have witnessed to at the Peoples fair in Denver include Eckankar believer Jeannie, and Tarah who is a Bahai. Very good and friendly conversations with both.
- 7) I passed my first comp! Praise the Lord. I have two more in October. Pray that I don't get lazy or complacent.
- 8) Please pray for Terri's mom Angie. She has gotten her dentures but still needs help with the costs.
- 10) Our Bible study is going quite well. Pray that we can better minister in that venue.
- 11) We thank you again for your help and care in so many ways. Pray that Terri and I will mature as Christians, as husband and wife, and as parents. (We will always keep this request going! J)
On a major miracle note - by the time yall read this Terri and I will have been married 25 YEARS! God

Non-Profit Update

 *ur computers still work, the world has not ended, and we are still here. This can only mean one thing - that the wave of Millennial prophets were wrong (again) and we still have work to do for the Kingdom of God. I do believe the Lord's return is eminent, but beware of letting the newspapers determine your theology! There is still no word about the "Concerned Christians", who for some reason don't want to answer my emails, hmmm, wonder why that is?*

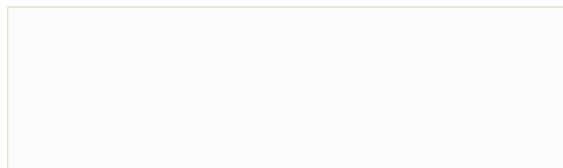


Speaking Schedule

- August 4-6 - World Religions at the Youth with a Mission Headquarters, Arvada, CO
- August 8-10 - Philippines Heritage Camp, Edgewater, CO
- September 7 - A Christian Perspective on Islam - Grasonville Bible Church, Grasonville MD.
- September 13 - Psychic Fair in Colorado Springs, CO
- September 19-20 - Young Defenders Boot Camp, Grace Chapel, Englewood, CO
- October 10-12 - Metaphysical Fair in Denver, CO
- November 8-9 - Missions Conference and Banquet - Lushton Bible Church, Henderson, NE
- There are numerous other speaking engagements and ministry opportunities in the works. Please be in prayer for all of these.

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Address Note:

Our Father truly has blessed us with all of you. Your support for this ministry is beyond our comprehension, but is something we are so thankful for. God's great mercy and blessing on all of you. Please know that we love you and we pray for y'all!

Bill and Terri Honsberger

And all the kids!

Address for Ministry Support:
Haven Ministries
P.O. Box 460366
Aurora, CO. 80046-0366

Address for Adoption Fund:
Hand in Hand International
Adoptions
Lynn Klint
6523 S. Kearney Circle
Englewood, CO 80111

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