

[Editorial The Day Karma Ran Over an Old Dogma](#)

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Editorial The Day Karma Ran Over an Old Dogma the Editor

In our color poster this month we unravel the myths and mysteries of karma, that simple law which, like other simple things, is mostly misunderstood. Applying karmic principles to day-to-day events remains the obscure occupation of mystics, mentalists and monks. The following verifiably spurious press release, never before published, may help humanity comprehend what this world would be without karma. World's Nations Dismantle Karma, Unforeseen consequences FORCE ABOUT-FACE New Delhi, January 5, 2070 (Reuters/UPI/AP/TASS) At the largest press conference ever held on VideoInterNet, representatives of 429 nations announced their decision to reinstate the law of karma. The proclamation came after three days of agonizing, when the religious heads of the prestigious World Council of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders finally ironed-out sectarian rifts to join politicians in a last-minute voting flurry that barely met the midnight January 4th deadline set by angry Global Court justices in last month's emergency sessions. Chief Justice Priscilla Patel, who joined the all-women court on New Year's Day after resigning from her position as US President Akbar's Secretary of Multi-Culturalism, was scathing in her assessment of the delays, "The despair and social devastation caused by this unconscionable delay will surely be borne by those who refused to see the light and took refuge in their comfortable prejudices when the world was crying out. We know the law, and we can take some small solace in the fact that they will

suffer no less than they caused others to." The major obstacle was described by insiders as "religious politics, pure and simple." The Abrahamic Coalition elders had withheld their vote to restore the law of karma, fearing such a move would be interpreted as tacit admission that such a law exists. Coalition elder Cohen confided to reporters, "It was a no-win situation. Most had concluded privately that our Biblical principles of 'An eye for an eye' and 'As ye sow, so shall ye reap' are not fundamentally different from what Eastern faiths call the law of karma. Without karma, there is no connection between faith and salvation, life on earth and in heaven. But, for obvious reasons, we were reluctant to say so openly." With the vote now a done deed, leaders from government, science and business are anticipating a swift return to the social integrity that had been slipping ever since the law was revoked 70 years ago, on the first morning of the third millenium. As stock markets exploded this morning, U.N. spokesperson Sinnathamby Smith expressed the relief felt everywhere: "No one alive today does not understand the need for karma. We watched as the conscience of peoples in every nation eroded. We witnessed the popularity of pessimism, of Sarte in film and literature and the rise of the Predestination Brigade, with all their eager violence. We stood helpless as our individual and social security diminished and democracies of the earth-which depended more than we knew on things like trust, remorse for wrongs done and an innate sense of justice-fell one by one to the radical enforcement-style instrumentality of fascist governments. The return of karma, we feel certain, foreshadows the return of human conscience. That's our biggest hope for the future." Educationalists echoed Smith's hopefulness. Oxford deans issued a statement, "It's no secret what happened to the knowledge enterprise these past seven decades. Without karma and the sense of responsibility it evoked, we lost our

inner compass. We lost the sense of duty to others, the surety that what we did had logical, predictable, even fair consequences. Students stopped learning for noble reasons and applied all their scholarship to the one thing they felt they could count on: personal power. We especially lament the loss of our theology and ethics departments. In their stead we have the statistical exegesis of chaos theorists who are 34% of this year's Ph.D. candidates. The pure and political sciences have inherited our best minds. Graduates are just as smart as ever, but their inner motives, their ambitions, their hopes are missing. Look at the ideal of good character. It's become an anachronism, the butt of ridicule. Being good had become a bad joke. It has been a sad era." A less lugubrious reaction to today's announcement came from Durban, the world's rock musical capital. Record mogul Sushil Mandela was mirthful. "Not to worry, man. Loquacity is a communicable disease. Music will always do well, recession or no, karma or not. Without karma we enjoyed some of our best years. We made millions on the Punk Funk, No Good Deed Goes Unpunished and What Goes Around Keeps Going Around albums. Sure it was a rip off, but they sold like chapattis in Natal. Our bread-and-butter retrospective hit single Looking Out for Number One is number two on the charts. We're gearing up for the return of karma, writing songs where things connect again, where there is order in the cosmos. I've got three ditties here that are going to be stinkin' hot: Tit for Tat, Kiss Off Kismet and Luck Had Nothing to Do With It." In Port Louis, Mauritius, delegates attending the International Crime Conference spoke candidly: "Crime went through the roof when karma was abandoned. We knew it would be bad, but not like this. No one foresaw the implications. The classic example is sentencing for murder. Without karma in place, there was no need to distinguish between first degree murder and accidental death, such as highway accidents. So all were punished equally, with

no mitigating circumstances, no question by juries of an accused's intent. Today we will be releasing almost a million life-sentence prisoners who were locked up just because they ran a red light or slipped up in the operating room. Karma took with it our sense of retribution and just punishment, whether in the courts, the home, the temple or synagogue. Fairness was replaced by force, and lawfulness by legality." Later on Berlin's most popular talk-show What's It All About? a noted German sociologist warned, "Every city needs to watch out for the return of gangs. As law enforcement agencies know, gangs disappeared under the no karma rule. It's a puzzle, but our best people tell us that the inclination to being bad, socially rebellious, derived all its attraction from being different than the largely good social order. Without good and bad, gangs had no unique identity, no cachet, and criminals became loners. We expect that to change. We also expect that the lessons people will learn from karmic encounters will return most of the world to the relatively crime-free days of the late 1990s." Mental health officials have been notoriously reticent about the karma issue, but that silence was broken today by Jose Hiroshige, the Buddhist monk who relinquished a hermit's life to serve in what he felt was the more critical mental health field. Returning today to his monastery, Hiroshige reflected aloud, "What a happy day this is. Happy because people will now be able to learn again. That was our biggest loss all these years. Karma is the Great Instructor. Only when our good acts have a beneficent outcome and our error-filled thoughts fail us can we learn. When good stopped begetting good, and bad had no painful repercussions to endure, we stopped growing spiritually. No remorse. No guilt. No honor. No mental matrix in which experience, once born, matures. No building a mountain of good by a thousand good deeds and sitting upon it silently fulfilled. I have seen human consciousness move from anarchy and angst to aimless anomie and near autism. In a sense, the

entire human race was slowly going crazy. How else to put it?" At a yoga academy west of Madras, a misty-eyed master sat with editors of Kuala Lumpur's Dewan Masyarakat magazine. "Hinduism," he offered, "did not discover karma, only helped reveal the law to humanity. Our faith, perhaps more than others, has suffered without it. It was the cornerpost of our ethical and mystical life. To master karma is to master the mind, to know one's Self beyond the bounds of action and reaction, beyond pleasure and pain. Without karma, you cannot transcend action-bound existence and become immortal. Experience is merely what happens to us. Karma is the force that assures that experience ripens into knowledge. These things are known to Great Ones of all traditions. But, there are only a few holy ones left today. Karma was their teacher. Without it no one has become as pure, no one has become enlightened all these long years." As the world wrestled with the cataclysmic changes taking place and moved uneasily to adapt to the newly reinstated law, children were still playing in the street. This journalist overheard one boy, no more than eight, toss a child's verbal banter at a playmate, wielding words which were once an unkindly curse but on this day seemed ever so sweet a benediction, "I hope you always get just what you deserve." May we all.