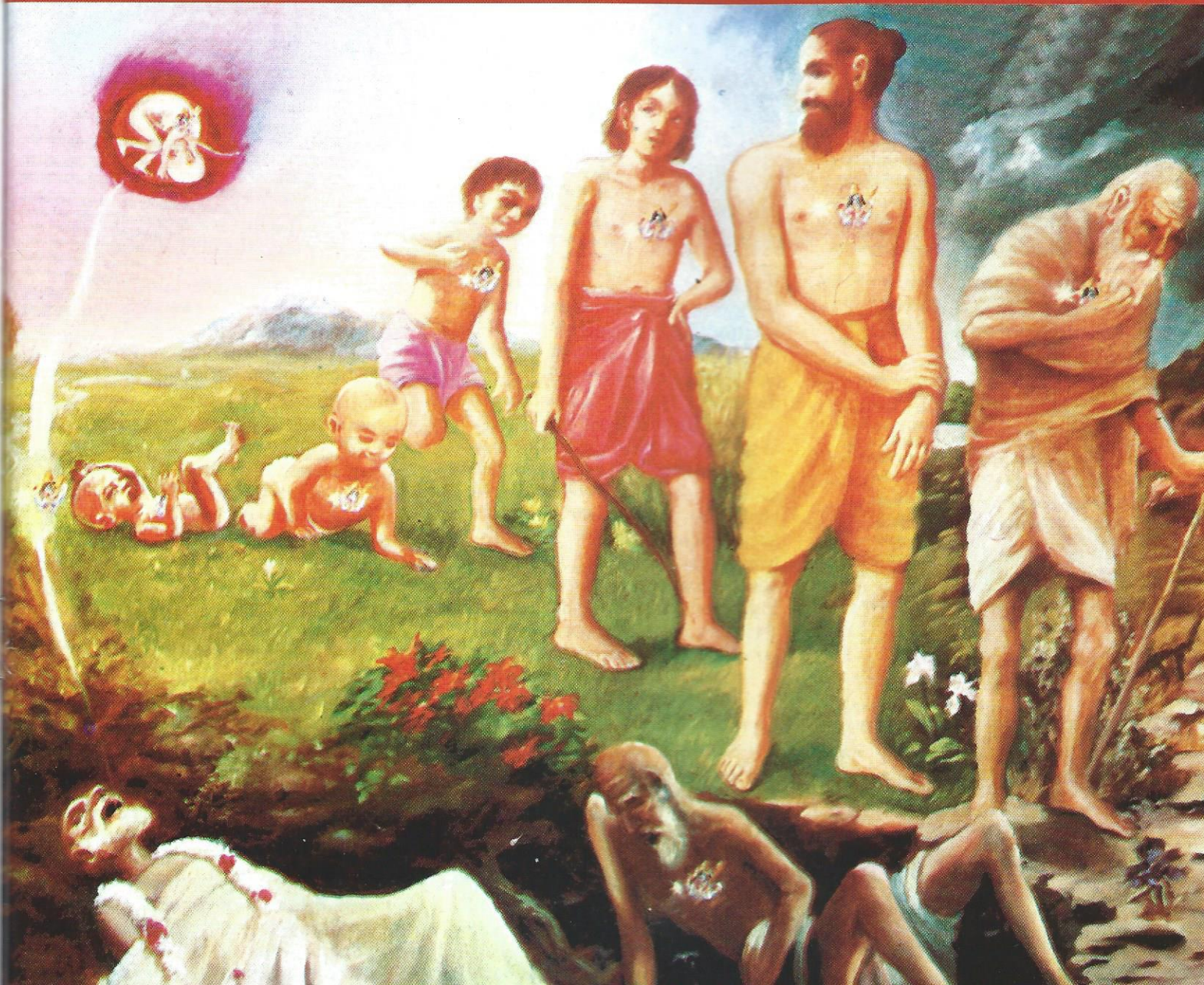




REINCARNATION

HOW TO BECOME KARMA NEUTRAL

We have to own our karma, both good and bad, and then decide what we want to do about it, advises T J Hobbs





Thai statue of Buddha and Karmic Wheel, representing the cycle of rebirths

“ I began to understand slowly that we are all interconnected by the karmic ties we have created and that it is important to try to stop creating more negative karma ”

IS IT possible to become karma neutral – to make good all the mistakes of our lives? Surely it must be worth trying as karma is like glue, it sticks to us throughout life (and perhaps many lives) until we do something about it.

When I started on my own journey of spiritual development, I was mainly interested in my past lives. As a young child I had often spoken to my mother about other times and places I had lived in. Luckily for me, she was a spiritual woman who did not freak out about what I told her.

I felt that I had lived many times and that what had happened in those lives had some bearing on what I was experiencing now.

Fortunately, while studying complementary medicine, I met Kathy, whose husband, Dennis Burt, was a trance medium specialising in past life readings. I immediately booked one and was fascinated by what he told me, especially that all these lives were interlinked.

In each of them, he said, my soul and the soul who was my father in this life had had difficult relationships, to say the least. We had built up a lot of bad karma between us and part of what I was born to do now was to reduce it.

This made sense as my father could

But it was not easy to hear this, or to be told that I had to let go of my anger and pain or I would have to do it anyway in some future life!

This was motivation enough, so I really made an effort. I hope that by the time my father passed on I had, at least, reduced the karmic load we shared, though it wasn't easy to be forgiving and tolerant.

The greatest irony was that in later life he developed dementia and I had to be his carer, which was the hardest period of my life, testing my patience almost beyond its limits. I had to try and remember that the Creator “never gives us more than we can handle” – even if it sometimes feels like it.

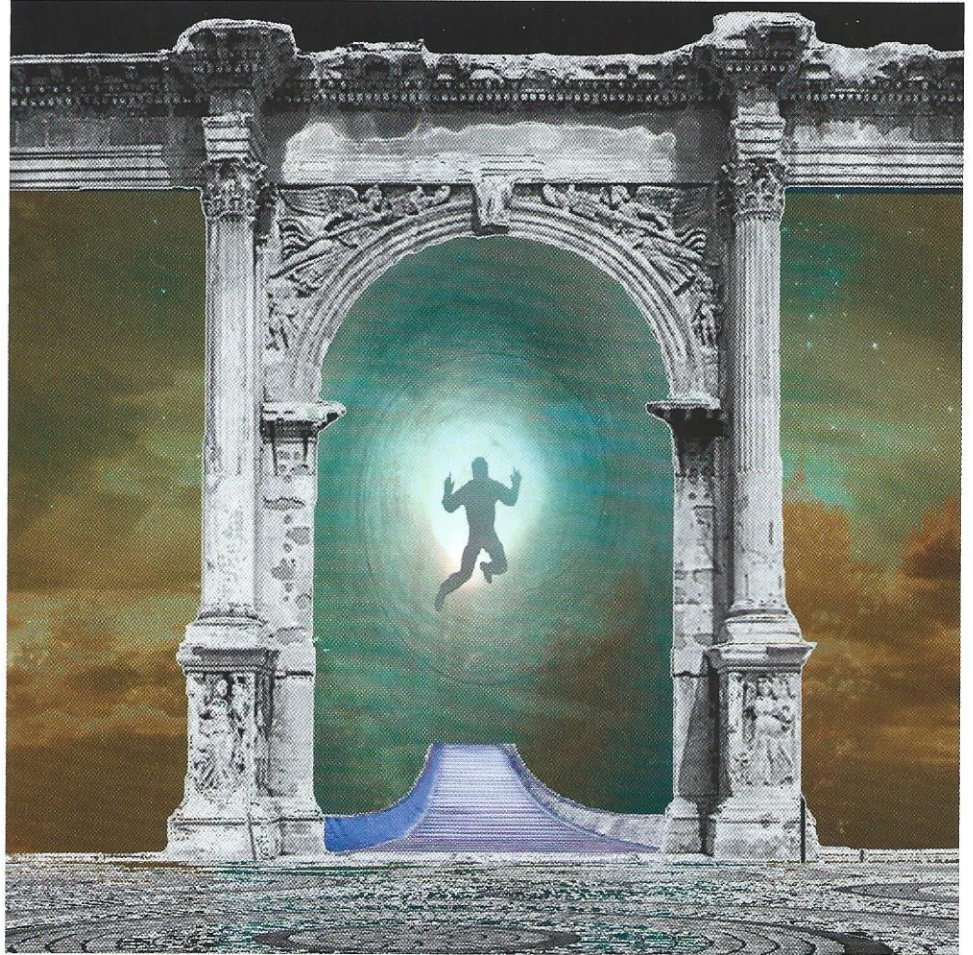
I then joined Dennis' spiritual development group and in the next few years had many meditations where snippets of past lives were, apparently, revealed to me. I began to understand slowly that we are all interconnected by the karmic ties we have created and that it is important to try to stop creating more negative karma.

Like many others, I suspect, I still have a mental image of an angel “up there”, with a huge tally book with my name on it: good deeds get a tick but whenever I am negative or unkind I get a cross. I hate to think what the score is. Still, it does inspire

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Our lives are a series of inter-related strands of energy that draw us closer to those people we need to meet. The reason could well have karmic overtones even if we do not recognise it at the time

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This subject is so vast. It is not just personal karma that we are caught up in: there is national, racial, religious and planetary karma too. Even organisations such as political parties and multinational companies can also create karma that affects us without our knowing it.

Delving into karma is like opening Pandora's Box – lots of horrors come pouring out that we might not want to face.

Karma is often used by all of us as a convenient excuse for anything bad that happens in our lives and we fail to take responsibility for our own part in it. It becomes so easy to blame others. But karma does not appear from thin air and nor can it be wished away; we have to own our karma both good and bad and then decide individually what we want to do about it.

The first mention of karma comes from the ancient religions of the East and it is a key concept in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Taoism. Each of these has a different take on karma and gives it a multitude of definitions, which isn't helpful. But they all agree that our souls reincarnate and that we meet the same souls in multiple guises through many lifetimes.

Thus, we build up karma with those in

mostly influenced by Christian beliefs, where there is no tradition of reincarnation as it was removed from the Bible by the Council of Nicaea. The recovery of "lost gospels" has shed new light on what was lost in this editing process and it is clear that karma was a major casualty.

So what is karma? At its simplest, it is the law of cause and effect, or "what you sow so shall you reap". But nothing about karma is that straightforward. For example, paying back one's debts does not necessarily mean that the people we owe are the ones we must directly pay the debt back to. Often, that is just not possible in practice.

The key is that we should try always to be compassionate, kind, friendly, tolerant and loving; this will go a very long way in clearing our karma. And it is not just our words and actions but also our thoughts that have a real effect on others, as well as ourselves. Our karma is the result of all the many decisions and choices we make. (And if you believe in past lives, just imagine how much karma can be collected over several centuries!)

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makes sense to assume that every event or meeting has a purpose for us, and this positive attitude will help us to see opportunities to offer help and kindness to others. At least we shall be putting some ticks in our angelic tally books.

But more than this, every time we create good karma it surely helps to raise the level of our planet's karma, so necessary in these dark times. Many believe this also helps those in higher spiritual realms to influence humanity in positive and constructive ways, so by taking responsibility for our own karma we are also helping everyone else.

Perhaps there are indeed some – the enlightened or evolved souls – who have succeeded in becoming "karma neutral" and who can show us by their example the ways to become better people, to reduce our own karma by doing good work for others.

If life here has a meaning, surely it is that we must carry on learning and growing, so understanding the effects of karma is all part of our evolution.

T.J. Hobbs is the author of *Karma Neutral*, a novel published by Local Legend. For more