

# Re - incarnation

*Carne* is a Latin word that means **meat** or **flesh**. **Chili con carne** means chili with meat. So *incarnation* means 'in the flesh'. *Reincarnation* means to re-enter the flesh.

*Reincarnation is the belief that after death, the soul passes on to another body thru rebirth.*

**Karma** is your scorecard of all of your actions done in all of your lives and the unalterable consequences attached to them. It is assumed that this total is negative (more bad deeds than good ones). If you have more good deeds than bad ones in one life, you will be born into a pleasant womb in the next life. If you have more bad deeds than good ones, you'll be born into a less noble womb....maybe a lower position or an animal/vegetable. Its definitely where you **reap what you sow**.

*Samsara is this cycle of rebirth....or what we would popularly call reincarnation.*

**Moksha** is escape from **samsara**.

By having more good lives than bad lives, you eventually pay off your **karmic debt** (or get to zero in the good/bad deeds score). Then you be absorbed into **God** (if it's the personal reincarnation model you believe in) or **nothingness** (if it's the impersonal model you believe in). It is worth noting that the original concept of reincarnation comes from **Hinduism** (India). Hindu's main **God** is called **Brahma** and he is an **it** (not a personal God but an impersonal force). Look at figure 1.

In the 'Christianized' form of reinc., this amounts to universal salvation (everyone eventually gets to heaven) because if you don't accept Christ in this life, you've got an endless amount of lives to accept Him, as you eventually will. Look at figure 2.

## What's appealing about Reincarnation?

1. It entirely removes the possibility of eternal punishment (or so it says). In the end, everyone finally attains **Moksha**.
2. There is a fascination with **past lives**. Its 'cool' to see who you were in past lives (unless you were a jerk...or worse). Because past lives are recalled under *hypnosis*, they feel this may help with understanding of phobias, why we're good at some things and not at others, etc.
3. Suffering in this life isn't God's fault but is just an outworking of our **Karma** from past lives.

# What's wrong with Reincarnation?

1. ***What moral standard determines what good karma and bad karma is?*** Because Hinduism is pantheistic, which is based on moral relativity, there really are no standards. When you get right down to it, there is no difference between good and evil, right and wrong. You can't say that what someone else is doing is wrong....all you can say is that its wrong for you to do it. But by saying that all morality is relative, you've just made an absolute moral statement. Ultimately, if nothing is good or bad, then how do you define good karma or bad karma? **This is a real problem for the reincarnationists. Their own system is self-defeating.** So in the end, karma doesn't tell you what's right or wrong but it punished you for doing wrong. It's a system of retribution only.
2. **Fascination with past lives....**this is nothing more than 'comparing up'....to see if we're someone famous. Ultimately this fascination does nothing to make us better people.
  - A. There is nothing scientific about this either. Hypnosis is not very accurate at all. In fact, it can recall memories that a person NEVER had in the 1<sup>st</sup> place IN THIS LIFE (false/repressed memory syndrome). Furthermore, there is no way of testing this.
3. In relation to **suffering/evil....**reincarnationists say that if your 4 year old baby is dying, its because he/she was a scumball in another life and is just getting paid back for their previous lives actions. Reincarnation doesn't deal with suffering/evil, it just dismisses it by blaming it on past lives.
  - A. Is it really fair for karma/God to punish children for the sins of a past life adult....especially when they don't remember those sins?
4. **Reincarnation doesn't guarantee spiritual progress.** How do we know if we're getting better from life-to-life? No matter how many lives we take on, we may only be getting deeper in karmic debt.
5. ***Reincarnation doesn't deal with the problem of evil.*** Somehow, we get more bad karma than good karma but where did the bad karma come from in the 1<sup>st</sup> place? You can't just blame it on a past life because somewhere it had to start. Infinite regressions are impossible.
6. **Reincarnation is ultimately anti-humanitarian.**
  - A. Helping crippled, poor, sick or homeless people is wrong. If you help them, you're working against the law of karma. They're getting what they deserve. But the conundrum is....how do you then do good karma for yourself?
  - B. A society that believes in reincarnation will never produce a Mother Teresa or Martin Luther King Jr., hospitals, soup kitchens, medical researchers, etc.
  - C. People who have grown up with this worldview usually view it as a burden, not a blessing. Hence, they have never exported it like people have with Christianity. Only when the western world became enthralled with spiritual experiences did it become popular in the U.S....and then, only the 'good' stuff was exported.
  - D. Look at what this worldview produces. Look at India.



# What is Resurrection?

*Resurrection is the belief that after death, our physical body is made incorruptible.*

While reincarnation is a process toward perfection ( but not guaranteed), resurrection is perfection(guaranteed). Look at figure 3.

1Cor 15:50-54.....our resurrection body is:

**Material but immortal.....**

***Physical but imperishable***

***Our body is perfected not by doing away with it but by removing its imperfections.***

There are 2 resurrections....one to eternal life....and one to eternal punishment....Rev 20:4-15 & Daniel 12:2,3

These judgements are based on John 3:16-18.

**Atonement**.....the paying for of 'sins' (or karmic debt).

**Atonement:**

**Personal;**

Made by the offending person

Given by the criminal

Incompatible with mercy

**Vicarious;**

Made by the party offended

Received by the criminal

Highest form of mercy

There is an important difference between personal atonement (paying for your own sins) and vicarious atonement (having the penalty paid by another).

***Personal atonement = the Law of Karma***

***Vicarious atonement = the Law of Grace***

Since Christ was sinless (Heb 4:15), His death was not necessary to pay for His own sin. His life was voluntarily given to pay the penalty for the sins of others (John 10:17,18 & 2Cor 5:21). In a sense, Christ paid for all of our 'karmic debt' through His own suffering. He had no karma of His own, but He suffered and died for our karmic debt.

**Hebrews 9:27** says that after you've died, there is the judgement. There's no reincarnation or purgatory or multiple chances.

**2Cor 5:6-9** says that we're either alive in our body or we're dead and with Jesus.

Look at figure 4.

***Resurrection sure beats the heck out of reincarnation.***