

From Eastern to Western Thought

Karma, in the context of Hinduism, differs from what we Filipinos thought of. Hindus believe that it is a cosmic tool that helps us evolve, just like the law of cause and effect, it helps us maintain balance in nature. In order to obtain knowledge with the definition of karma in the sense of Eastern context, we must first understand their beliefs about reincarnation. They believe that when we die, we will be reincarnated or reborn according to the deeds we do in life. Karma is an outside force that governs and determines the future of Hindu life. It is said to be a cosmic belief where if an action is done, it comes back to the doer, whether it is good or bad. Karma is not a bad thing since it reminds us to do good if we want a better future, so with that it's settled as a reminder to be good and encourage morality to other people. A reflection on the law of karma by Goldstein (2008) relatively talks about karma in a Buddhist standpoint. He states that:

Karma, the action of body, speech, and mind, affects every aspect of our life.

Actions affect both doers and those around them in unimaginable ways, and the seeds of karma shape our lives and our worlds, though different Buddhist traditions give different weight to whether the action is willed or not. In either case, through mindfulness, we become aware of the nature of these actions and can in fact change our karma, the concept of cause and effect.

As Catholics and Christians, some of us still subscribe to the concept of karma albeit not in the context of Hinduism, since we greatly differ in beliefs. Perhaps we need not to see it from our religions' point of view but merely as ordinary humans who perform common everyday activities. The most basic idea of karma is that whatever physical, verbal or mental action you put out into the world, good or bad, will come back to you. In these kinds of situations, sometimes people just need to rely on an outside force to validate themselves, and we believe

karma is one of them. When we look at karma, we need to dig deeper and see not the action by itself but the intention as well. You might encounter a person who does good deeds not for the sake of helping those in need but to look charitable in front of others. Conversely, you may encounter a person with good intentions but is not able to exercise it properly with the right action. When that is the case, it is then within each of us to do good deeds with the right intentions. This ties in with the Western concept of change; in order for us to do better we must change for the better as well. The idea of Cosmocentrism is to view universal life and nature as an integral part of who we are. It is not set in stone that we are ‘only good’ or ‘only bad’ because both exist in us. We may not notice ourselves changing but it is a fact dictated by nature, one that we follow as humans. Aristotle defines change as “coming-to-be” from *what is* or from *what is not*. To him there are three ingredients to change: a *subject*, a *form* (positive property), and a *lack* of that form. When we relate this to karma, that *subject* is the person, and the *form* and the *lack* is the action and intention, or vice versa.

On the subject of *digital heroin*, parents must be responsible in monitoring the use of gadgets of their children. They should care about their child's well-being and guide them not only for the real world but for the virtual world as well because we now live in an age that is heavily influenced by digital devices and online platforms. Lenhart et.al (2011) stated that parents are the most often cited source of advice and the biggest influence on teens’ understanding of appropriate and inappropriate digital behavior. Parents are also responsible for keeping their children safe online and offline and have a number of tools at their disposal to do so. In relation to the previous research of Lenhart, parents should teach their child about the proper etiquette while using their gadgets. They can talk to their teens about safe online practices

and appropriate behavior for them to be able to exercise the right attitude in dealing with online matters. Anderson (2016) revealed that 61% of parents say they have checked which websites their children have visited, while 60% report checking their teen's social media profiles. Teens are increasingly using mobile phones to communicate and nearly half (48%) of parents say they have looked through the phone call records or messages on their child's cellphone. Because this is an issue of their children's privacy as well, it is still recommended for the parent to directly ask their children instead of sneakily looking at their devices without their permission. Communication is key regarding these matters. On the other hand, it is good to know that parents are taking steps to influence their child's digital behavior, from checking up on what their teen is posting on social media to limiting the amount of time their child spends in front of various screens. Parents should address these problems as early as possible because excessive use of gadgets such as mobile phones, tablets, and computers can cause physical and mental damage to children.

To quote Fieser (2020), the quality of our existence in the new life is largely a function of our good or bad actions in our present and previous lives. This is known as the doctrine of karma. As stated in the first paragraph, Hindus believe that when we are reincarnated, the deeds we have done according to our past life will affect the life we are living presently. So to be able to live a good life, we must exercise good deeds, thoughts, and words with good intentions. Furthermore, Fieser (2020) stated that to break this endless cycle of struggle, we must be released from the rebirth cycle by accumulating an abundance of good karma throughout the lives we live. In this sense we are given many chances to change into the better version of ourselves. To relate this concept to the case of *digital heroin*, we may say that the parents'

intention of guiding their child to practice appropriate online behavior is an example of good karma; but when their actions demonstrate a lack of communication or respect for privacy for their children, we may say that it will turn into bad karma. In the example given all they need to change is the action in which their good intentions should be properly met. As a suggestion, they may talk to their children about their addiction to gadgets, social media, etc. with consideration and an open mind. Life is a moral journey (Fieser, 2020). In this moral journey, we continue to grow and develop to become better beings with a full understanding of our actions, thoughts and words.

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Submitted by:

Li, Bingnan - BSCS-I
Mercado, Bernadine Velle B. - BSP-II
Ong, Earl David Q. - BSCS-I
Paulo, Angelica - BSCS-I
Serafina, Jamaica - BSCS-I
GROUP 1