

[Goodness](#)

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In the 8,000-year-old wisdoms of the Vedas, holy scripture of Sanatana Dharma, we find solace, answers about life

Are Souls and World Essentially Good?

The intrinsic and real nature of all beings is their soul, which is goodness. The world, too, is God's flawless creation. All is in perfect balance. There are changes, and they may appear evil, but there is no intrinsic evil. Aum.

The soul radiates love, is a child of God going through its evolutionary process of growing up into the image and likeness of the Lord. Goodness and mercy, compassion and caring are the intrinsic, inherent or indwelling nature of the soul. Wisdom and pure knowledge, happiness and joy are the intrinsic nature of the soul. Can we believe the soul is anything but goodness itself, purity and all the refined qualities found within superconsciousness? When God is everywhere, how can there be a place for evil? The soul is constantly one with God in its ever-present Satchidananda state at every point in its evolution. How, then, arises the concept of evil and suffering? Anava, karma and maya, the play toys of the soul, are the source of this seeming suffering. Like a child, we play with the toys of anava in the playground of maya, fall and are bruised by karma, then run to our loving Lord for solace and release into spiritual maturity. The Vedas pointedly state, "As the sun, the eye of the whole world, is not sullied by the external faults of the eyes, so the one inner soul of all things is not sullied by the sorrow in the world, being external to it." Aum.

Why Do Some Souls Act in Evil Ways?

People act in evil ways who have lost touch with their soul nature and live totally in the outer, instinctive mind. What the ignorant see as evil, the enlightened see as the actions of low-minded and immature individuals. Aum.

Evil is often looked upon as a force against God. But the Hindu knows that all forces are God's forces, even the waywardness of adharma. This is sometimes difficult to understand when we see the pains and problems caused by men against men. Looking deeper, we see that what is called evil has its own mysterious purpose in life. Yes, bad things do happen. Still, the wise never blame God, for they know these to be the return of man's self-created karmas, difficult but necessary experiences for his spiritual evolution. Whenever we are injured or hurt, we understand that our suffering is but the fulfillment of a karma we once initiated, for which our injurer is but the instrument who, when his karma cycles around, will be the injured. Those who perform seemingly evil deeds are not yet in touch with the ever-present God consciousness of their immortal soul. The Vedas rightly admonish, "Borne along and defiled by the stream of qualities, unsteady, wavering, bewildered, full of desire, distracted, one goes on into the state of self-conceit. In thinking, 'This is I' and 'That is mine' one binds himself with himself, as does a bird with a snare." Aum.

What Is the Source of Good and Evil?

Instead of seeing good and evil in the world, we understand the nature of the embodied soul in three interrelated parts: instinctive or physical-emotional; intellectual or mental; and superconscious or spiritual. Aum.

Evil has no source, unless the source of evil's seeming be ignorance itself. Still, it is good to fear unrighteousness. The ignorant complain, justify, fear and criticize "sinful deeds," setting themselves apart as lofty puritans. When the outer, or lower, instinctive nature dominates, one is prone to anger, fear, greed, jealousy, hatred and backbiting. When the intellect is prominent, arrogance and analytical thinking preside. When the superconscious soul comes forth the refined qualities are born-compassion, insight, modesty and the others. The animal instincts of the young soul are strong. The intellect, yet to be developed, is nonexistent to control these strong instinctive impulses. When the intellect is developed, the instinctive nature subsides. When the soul unfolds and overshadows the well-developed intellect, this mental harness is loosened and removed. When we encounter wickedness in others, let us be compassionate, for truly there is no intrinsic evil.

The Vedas say, "Mind is indeed the source of bondage and also the source of liberation. To be bound to things of this world: this is bondage. To be free from them: this is liberation." Aum.

How Can a Benevolent God Permit Evil?

Ultimately, there is no good or bad. God did not create evil as a force distinct from good. He granted to souls the loving edicts of dharma and experiential choices from very subtle to most crude, thus to learn and evolve. Aum.

From the pinnacle of consciousness, one sees the harmony of life. Similarly, from a mountaintop, we see the natural role of a raging ocean and the steep cliffs below—they are beautiful. From the bottom of the mountain, the ocean can appear ominous and the cliffs treacherous. When through meditation, we view the universe from the inside out, we see that there is not one thing out of place or wrong. This releases the human concepts of right and wrong, good and bad. Our benevolent Lord created everything in perfect balance. Good or evil, kindness or hurtfulness return to us as the result, the fruit, of our own actions of the past. The four dharmas are God's wisdom lighting our path. That which is known as evil arises from the instinctive-intellectual nature, which the Lord created as dimensions of experience to strengthen our soul and further its spiritual evolution. Let us be compassionate, for truly there is no intrinsic evil. The Vedas admonish, "Being overcome by the fruits of his action, he enters a good or an evil womb, so that his course is downward or upward, and he wanders around, overcome by the pairs of opposites." Aum.

Should One Avoid Worldly Involvement?

The world is the bountiful creation of a benevolent God, who means for us to live positively in it, facing karma and fulfilling dharma. We must not despise or fear the world. Life is meant to be lived joyously. Aum Namah Sivaya.

The world is the place where our destiny is shaped, our desires fulfilled and our soul matured. In the world, we grow from ignorance into wisdom, from darkness into

light and from a consciousness of death to immortality. The whole world is an ashrama in which all are doing sadhana. We must love the world, which is God's creation. Those who despise, hate and fear the world do not understand the intrinsic goodness of all. The world is a glorious place, not to be feared. It is a gracious gift from Siva Himself, a playground for His children in which to interrelate young souls with the old-the young experiencing their karma while the old hold firmly to their dharma. The young grow; the old know. Not fearing the world does not give us permission to become immersed in worldliness. To the contrary, it means remaining affectionately detached, like a drop of water on a lotus leaf, being in the world but not of it, walking in the rain without getting wet. The Vedas warn, "Behold the universe in the glory of God: and all that lives and moves on earth. Leaving the transient, find joy in the Eternal. Set not your heart on another's possession." Aum.