

[Getting Even Is Such An Odd Thing to Do](#)

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Getting Even Is Such An Odd Thing to Do

Sages say it's wiser to not retaliate for injuries received and to let human and divine law do their own work

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Everyone has willpower. It is inherent to the makeup of the physical-astral-mental-emotional body. The center of willpower is the manipura chakra, located at the solar plexus. Unlike other energies, the more willpower we use, the more will we have to use. Actually, by exerting our willpower, we store up new energy within the manipura chakra. This happens when we work a little harder than we think we can, do a little more than we think we can do. By putting forth that extra effort we build up a great willpower that we will always have with us, even in our next life, the next and the next. Willpower is free for the using, actually.

When we relate willpower to actions and compare actions to dharma or adharma, we find that adharmic, or unrighteous, actions bring uncomfortable results and dharmic actions bring comfortable results. If we act wrongly toward others, people will act wrongly toward us. Then, if we are of a lower nature, we resent it and retaliate. This is a quality of the instinctive

mind. "You strike me once, I'll strike you back twice. You make a remark to me that I don't like, and I will put you down behind your back. I will make up stories about you to get even and turn other people's minds against you." This is retaliation, a terrible, negative force. When we use our willpower to retaliate against others, we do build up a bank account of willpower, to be sure, because we do have to put out extra effort. But we also build up a bank account of negative karma that will come back on us full force when we least expect it. When it does, if we remain locked in ignorance, we will resent that and retaliate against the person who plays our karma back to us, and the cycle repeats itself again and again and again.

Those living in the higher nature know better. Belief in karma and reincarnation are strong forces in a Hindu. Two thousand years ago South India's Saint Tiruvalluvar said it so simply, "Worthless are those who injure others vengefully, while those who stoically endure are like stored gold. Though unjustly aggrieved, it is best to suffer the suffering and refrain from unrighteous response."

Nevertheless, we see society tearing itself apart through retaliation. Beautiful organizations retaliate against their leader, against each other. Countries divide and retaliate. Political parties retaliate. Vindictive law cases are professionally handled retaliation. Retaliation means to pay back injury with injury, to return like for like, evil for evil, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. It seems to be a part of humankind, though it is a negative part of humankind. It does not have to prevail. It is not spiritual. We would say it is demonic. We would say it is asuric. We would say it is unnecessary behavior, unacceptable behavior, a wrong use of

willpower. People who have a lot of will can, if they wish, retaliate very, very well. They can ruin another person. Remember, the force will come back on them three times stronger than they ever gave it out because their strong willpower will bring it back with vigor. This is the law.

Therefore, the wise person chooses his actions according to dharma, which is quite specific as to how we must behave. Those who connive to retaliate after a misunderstanding comes up should know they are carving a destiny of unhappiness for themselves by digging a pit of remorse, self-condemnation and depression. They will fall into it in the far-off future.

Some might ask, "Does nonretaliation mean that one should not protect himself, his family, his community?" We are talking about revenge, not self-defense. To oppose the actions of an intruder to one's home or community at the time of the intrusion is very different from tracking him down later and vandalizing his home in retaliation.

We cannot hurt another without getting hurt back in the future through some other way, generally through other people not even associated with the person we hurt. Those who offend us or commit crimes against us, we can be sure, will receive justice in an unerring manner through the law of karma. If the matter is a serious one, we can seek reconciliation through the laws of the land. In criminal cases, justice can be sought through the courts. It is not wise to take matters into our own hands and be the instrument of punishment, for by doing so we reap the same negative karma as the offender. Retaliation

on a wide scale can be seen in cases of mob violence, terrorism and guerrilla warfare.

Therefore, it is wise to cultivate the powerful force of compassion, of righteous response, forgiveness, of admitting our own mistakes, of not saving face and lying our way out of a situation just to make ourself look good or putting others down so we can stand taller, so that we can save face. That is a face you would not want to save. It is a face not worth saving.

Those who accept the truth that retaliation is not the proper way to live, but are unable to stop trying to get even, are on the road to correcting themselves, especially if they feel remorseful about their impulses and actions. Through divine sight, the soul perceives unwise actions performed when in the lower nature as a hindrance to spiritual progress. Penance received from a guru or swami and well performed propels the soul into its natural state of bliss. All help is given by the divine devas to those seen performing a sincere penance. Gurus of every lineage receive the verbal confession of devotees and give out the appropriate penance, prayashchitta. They recognize divine absolution, knowing the penance has been fulfilled, when the inner aura is bright as a new-born child, the face happy and the testimony on the result of the penance discloses true atonement.

The problems in society reside within the low-minded people who only know retaliation as a way of life. To antagonize others is their sport. They must be curtailed off and seen for what they are. If you believe beyond a shadow of a doubt that a person is of a lower nature and incorrigible, then it is best to

avoid his company. To not antagonize the person is the best protection. Societies all over the world are trying to control these people. It is one of the purposes of government. Everything in the universe is in perfect law and order at every point in time. Peace on Earth only comes when the lower-natured people are lifted up and made to obey the higher standards where rural and national communities are giving way to an international community and high-minded, spiritual people are entering government and dynamically taking charge, making changes and managing affairs better than ever before. They are joining hands with others of like nature to control the negative forces. The prophecy of a global village is in sight.

Speaking of nonretaliation, this issue of Hinduism Today's Insight focuses on Buddhism, Hinduism's sister faith. The peace-loving Dalai Lama, exiled leader of Tibetan Buddhism, is setting an extraordinary example of not striking back at antagonists. While he has campaigned relentlessly for political assistance for his people's cause since 1959, when at age 15 he fled across the Himalayas for help, he approaches the Chinese with care and respect, though he never forgets China's armed takeover of his nation in 1957 and the extermination of 1.2 million Tibetans by 1972. This humble being has never failed to exemplify the dharma of compassion, advocating "the kind of love you can have even for those who have done you harm." He once wrote: "My enemy is my best friend and my best teacher because he gives me the opportunity to learn from adversity." If there was anyone who deserved to lash out in a vindictive way, it would be the Dalai Lama, but he has chosen a higher path. We listened to him appeal for Tibetan autonomy over the years at international conferences in Oxford, Rio de Janeiro and Chicago, and he

never deviated from his posture of love, trust and compassion, with full confidence that the divine law will finally manifest a righteous outcome, an agreeable solution. He is setting a noble pattern in the international arena, where spiritual people can forge new principles for a global dharma.

On an individual level, all can strive to give up the urge to "get even," heeding the Vedic admonition, "Here they say that a person consists of desires. And as is his desire, so is his will. And as is his will, so is his deed; and whatever deed he does, that he will reap." Every belief creates certain attitudes. Those attitudes govern all of our actions. Belief in karma, reincarnation and the existence of an all-pervasive Divinity throughout the universe creates an attitude of reverence, benevolence and compassion for all beings.