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Dharma for Awakening and Social Change*

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Very Well Written, Inspiring, and Important

There are so many important subtleties to Dharma, and this book does a fantastic job in exploring them. I took my time reading; I wanted to savor the explanations and discourses, and feel the wisdom and truth come over me. This book is for anyone who is serious about learning about their connection to Dharma, and the lessons to be learned by living a life informed by Dharma. Very well written, inspiring, and important. - *C. Lopez ★★★★★*

Dharma

Dharma

For Awakening and Social Change

A Compilation of Inspired Discourses

Maetreyii Ma Nolan Ph.D.

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*Dedicated to
My Beloved Baba*

How These Writings Came to Be

The writings in this book are transcribed and edited from oral teachings given in a deeply connected mood where the material flows through from Divine Source. This is a brief story of how this connection to Divine Source came to be.

I first began to be aware of something transcendent as a young girl, perhaps around eleven or twelve. At that time, I began to feel the presence of a holy being near to me. I didn't know about the concept of past lives, but I was sure I had known this presence before. It was distinctly male, clearly divine and seemed to be dressed in white, emanating waves of compassion and unconditional love. I immediately fell in love. He was my guide, my comfort in the storms of life. He healed me when I was hurt or in need and walked with me when I was alone. He was profoundly kind. How could anyone not love him?

The years passed and I became involved with the normal social life of an American teen and forgot about these experiences until, in my early twenties, I learned meditation in an Eastern *Yogic* Tradition. After some months of doing regular meditation, I began to have experiences of non-ordinary states of consciousness and, again, this numinous divine presence came to me.

This time, he talked to me and revealed more of his nature. In his every word, I experienced the emanations of perfect justice, divine love and absolute beauty. Like the rays of the sun shining through a prism, his divine aspects

revealed themselves. His nature, revealed before me, was shining with brilliant light that stunned my mind. The experience of waves of divine love washed through my being. For many years this inner manifestation taught me, sheltered me, held me in my darkest hours and revealed to me the bliss of divine love in which all is one unitary whole.

When I first met this mysterious presence as a child, I thought he was Jesus and I cried that I had missed him and was here without him. Then later when he came in my twenties, he called himself *Baba*. I thought he was the inner expression of my guru, *Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*. Sometimes I saw him as *Krishna* and sometimes as *Shiva*. In yoga, they say *Guru*, God and Self are one. He is, for me, most certainly that God Self, my beloved *Guru deva*, my *Baba*.

When I met my physical guru, *Shrii Shrii Anandamurti Baba*, I felt the same blissful presence I did from my beloved *Baba* within. In *darshan*, *Guru's* talks, often *Anandamurti Baba* would refer to things my inner *Baba* had told me and would explain them. Inner *guru* and outer *guru* became one and the same.

The years passed and when, in 1990, my physical guru, *Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*, left his body, my inner *Baba* asked me to begin to share with others the teachings he had been giving to me for so long. I learned to sink into his flow of love and, melting into the *Bhava*, absorbed in this love, allow his words to be spoken through me as an expression of divine grace. This became the *Baba Talks* I have given ever since.

These talks do not come from the rational mind. Often, I have no idea what will be said until halfway through the first sentence. The knowledge just flows from a deeper source. This is not channeling another person, but a manifestation of the grace that flows from the eternal One, from *Guru*, from God.

As the years have gone on, I have come to realize that my beloved *Baba*, from whom these teachings flow, and my physical *guru*, *Shrii Shrii Anandamurti Baba*, are both expressions of the transcendent Self of all beings. An infinite source of love, knowledge and bliss we can all melt back into. I have come to realize *Baba* is my *guru* and the Self of myself. By the grace of that One alone do I even exist, a dream in the mind of the great dreamer that, on occasion, ceases to be when absorbed in him.

The writings in this book are directly inspired by the flow of unconditional love and wisdom from my *Baba*. They are a compilation of *Baba Talks* on the topic of *Dharma* that have been edited for readability. I hope that you enjoy reading them as much as I have enjoyed the blissful experience of editing them and that they help you along your path as they have helped me along mine.

Many Blessings,
Maetreyii Ma

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti Baba

Not everyone is fortunate enough to meet his or her *guru* in physical form. I feel blessed to have had this opportunity. My guru, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti walked this Earth from 1921 until 1990. He lived in northern India, Bihar and Bengal, and taught in the ancient traditions of classical north Indian *Tantra* and *Ashtanga Yoga*.

I had an opportunity to spend almost a year in India receiving his *darshan*, seeing him and hearing his talks, and had many profound experiences being near to him. *Baba* spoke on many topics, giving extensive teachings on the topic of *dharma* and on society, as well as *Tantra* and *Yoga*. He gave a new paradigm for social development that is based in *dharma* called PROUT. He also spoke of the value of all life and how all beings are a part of an interconnected wholeness. He called this idea Neohumanism.

Anandamurti Baba not only provided wisdom teachings that expanded my understanding, but he also emanated a divine bliss and unconditional love that I found myself melting into. That bliss was a wave of non-dual beingness, the truth of the teachings in a realm beyond words. I observed many miracles occurring around him. I saw people experiencing states of divine bliss simply from his glance, healings and bliss from his touch, heart openings and life changing experiences simply from being in his presence.

Baba reportedly spoke around two hundred languages, greeting those who came to see him in their native tongues.

People reported him visiting them in one location while at the same time he was giving a talk at another, nearly five hundred miles away. When he entered a room, he knew everything about you, including your deepest core feelings. He was an ocean of love, a true realized Master. When people looked into his eyes, they saw the universe. This is my *Guru* as I knew him.

Preface

The teachings contained in this book are from oral discourses that explore different aspects of *dharma*. The compilation of talks presented here offer understanding and insights about the path of *dharma* and how to apply it in your personal life and to the current world situation. Each discourse stands independent of the others and can be read in whatever order moves you.

The nature of the oral text has been preserved in its editing. A few *Sanskrit* terms important to exploration of the topic of *dharma* are used, as their meaning is more precise in *Sanskrit*. They are usually defined immediately after the word. However, for the convenience of readers wanting more extensive definitions or who are not familiar with these terms, they are also defined in a Glossary at the end of the book.

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Introduction

As *Dharma for Awakening and Social Change* makes profoundly clear, *dharma* is a most evolutionary concept. As our comprehension of it grows and its roots take greater hold in our being, it expands our awareness and transforms our lives. *Dharma* is often translated as the way or path, sometimes as one's duty or as the law of one's inner being. It comes from the Sanskrit word "*dher*," meaning "to hold firmly" or "to support." It applies to both the path towards one's higher nature and the actions one commits in the world. In essence, *dharma* is the guiding principle of our evolutionary quest to become higher, more truthful and more fully our unique selves.

The varied discourses presented within this book are quite inspiring, every talk is an independent expose in which the reader will learn a great deal about *dharma*. The book addresses *dharma* both as a path to personal happiness and awakening and as a critical component of social change for a balanced, working society. The book is not an accumulation of "New Age" vagaries and projected wish-fulfillments but, through a deep understanding of all aspects of *dharma*, very well and convincingly presented, it shines Light on the time-honored process of awakening and how we can change the world around us for the better. It is a truly inspiring work and could not have arrived at a better time.

It was the author's and my honor to re-discover, in far-flung India, the term and notion of *dharma* and to now do

what we can to bring it to the West. As for those most dedicated to seeing this planet restored, it must become their mission and purpose to sincerely apply *dharma* in thought, word and deed, and with enough dedication to turn the tide of the world they have inherited.

How *dharma* works in action can be understood through tales from ancient India. I am, by profession and inclination, a storyteller, so for those of you inclined to story, I will turn to India's paramount epic, the *Mahabharata*, to give a few potent examples of how *dharma* infuses, guides and defines character. The *Mahabharata*, by far the world's longest epic, chronicles the fall of the world from the last age to this present one, dark with ignorance and conflict. What moves through the many generations recounted and what thematically ties it all together is *dharma*. The *Bhagavat Gita*, the best known and most celebrated section of the entire epic, universally considered one of the world's greatest scriptures, is explicit in its extended sermon on *dharma*. In fact, the *Gita* begins with the word "*dharma*" as the blind king asks his counselor, "*Dharmakshetre... On the field of dharma, what actions did my sons and the sons of my brother perform there?*"

The *Gita* is a question-and-answer sermon between the hero *Arjuna* and his chariot driver *Krishna*, the incarnation of God for that age. In Chapter Four, verses 7 and 8, *Krishna* explains why he has chosen, at this time, to manifest His Divine Essence in a human form: "Whenever there is a rise of unrighteousness and the *dharma* is threatened to be lost, I incarnate myself into the human plane to restore the balance."

Arjuna, a warrior by caste, training and inclination, is confused when he sees people he loves on both sides of the battlefield and, in his confusion, loses sight of the purpose of his actions and the direction of his *dharma*. Essentially *Krishna* instructs him by verbal example and visual revelation that “there is nothing greater for a warrior than a fight based on *dharma*.” He reminds *Arjuna* that the cause is righteous and that it is his particular destiny to fight in this cause. “It is best to pursue one’s own *dharma*, even if performed imperfectly, than to attempt the *dharma* of another.” Ultimately, he shows *Arjuna* that the path of liberation lies in fulfilling one’s *dharma*. “Those who do not follow their *dharma* do not attain to liberation but return over and over again to the futile cycles of deaths and births in a material existence.” *Krishna* emphasizes a very important aspect to the fulfillment of *dharma* if one is to be liberated and that is that one must never attach to the results, outcome or fruit of the actions *dharma* dictates. One’s right and duty is to the action only. The success or failure of each or any action is in the hands of the Deity. *Arjuna* is awakened and, taking up again his arms, resumes his *dharma*.

Dharma is so important that it appears personified as a deity in the *Mahabharata*. The god *Dharma* is the divine progenitor of *Arjuna*’s elder brother *Yuddhishtera*. He appears to his son, the future king, three times during the epic: once as a crane who asks *Yuddhishtera* profound questions; once as a dog which follows *Yuddhishtera* on his trek to heaven; and once in His celestial form as the god. He never interferes with *Yuddhishtera*’s actions or path but lets his son discover

for himself the truth of his *dharma*. Like all of us, *Yuddishtera* struggles with the human choices that lie before him, and, as an inspiration to all of us, he almost invariably chooses the most righteous action. On the morning of the first battle (the morning after the *Gita* sermon was delivered), *Yuddishtera* goes completely unarmed into the ranks of the enemy forces. Risking his life, he falls at the feet of his former teachers *Bhishma* and *Drona*, who are now warriors on the opposing side and asks in advance for forgiveness for anything about to occur on the battlefield. He thus starts the battle, the great action of his life, without rancor or grievance but with a pure mind and heart.

The aged *Bhishma*, the great elder and teacher to all the generations now in conflict, is also a wonderful example of one who, despite any temptations and all arguments to the contrary, stays firmly committed to his *dharma*. In his youth, to procure his own father's happiness, *Bhishma* made a vow (his name means "auspicious vow") not to have children but to remain celibate all his life. He never breaks that vow. He is also true to his *dharma* to teach and counsel the highest ethics to all who come in his righteous path. Because *Bhishma* is true to his *dharma* over a very long lifetime, he is allowed to choose the moment and means of his own death. Though wounded and lying on a bed of arrows, *Bhishma* remains alive for 58 days, long enough to deliver to *Yuddishtera* a teaching on all he would need to know to become a just and righteous king.

There is a powerful example in the *Mahabharata* of a character who, although noble and generous, strays sufficiently

from his *dharma* to incur an ignoble death. *Karna* was sired by the sun god *Surya* but, unlike his five younger brothers, he was disavowed by his immature mother at birth. He hungers all his life for recognition and honor. He is very generous and never refuses anything asked of him. However, his greed for renown pulls him under the sway of evil forces and he commits at least two unforgivable crimes: the insulting of a queen and the perfidious slaughter of a prince. These serious deviations from his *dharma* cause his forfeiture of all the honor he might have otherwise received.

I have given a few examples of how, in the *Mahabharata*, the concept of *dharma* operates both as an organizing principle and as the extolled goal of life. It is, of course, more important that you understand *dharma* as an organizing principle and as the goal in your own life. I leave that to Maetreyii Ma, the inspired author of this book, with all confidence that she, under the guidance of her own teacher, can greatly help you along the *dharmic* path.

Hari Meyers
Mystic Storyteller

SECTION I

The Way of Dharma

Dharma

D*harma*, the poetry of the soul, is written in the heart of all that is. In fact, *dharmā*, often referred to as the path to essence, is your true duty, the deep law or Way. Human society, devoid of *dharmā*, loses integrity and a person, devoid of *dharmā*, becomes lost to themselves. For *dharmā* is the way of inner being, universal, an inherent deep law of existence.

Dharma cannot be confined to any limited sphere of influence, cannot be constrained to only certain actions or impulses; its creative freedom may not be restricted. It must be known in the moment, revealed in the present, understood anew in every fresh unfolding for, as unique and varied as its expressions may be, it is the Way.

Following *dharmā*, you are in harmony with essential nature. Not following *dharmā*, you move out of harmony, out of synchronicity, out of the path that leads to knowledge of true being. *Dharma* is not to be found watching social media nor written in any ledger. *Dharma* is to be known in the essence of your being.

Human beings have many desires. Most are superficial grasping and longing for that which is intended to bring happiness. But beneath all of these outer desires of the mind, there is an even deeper restlessness of the human spirit, a longing to transcend separation and the boundaries of self and other, to become one with your essential nature, with the Self of yourself. This longing for the Great, this longing to be whole, to be complete, to move beyond the divisions

of “I and thou,” this deep longing within the human spirit is the call of *dharma*. It is essential to human nature. And when this longing or inner calling is followed, you are upon the path of *dharma*. It does not matter what your social position may be, your religion, your beliefs, or your ethnic background. It matters only that you listen to this deep longing for the mystical, for the sublime.

All human beings have this deep yearning. However, for many, this longing becomes covered by incessant fears, desires and insecurities. Not knowing how to understand the nature of the restless spirit within and, unfortunately, never having been taught how to follow *dharma*, human beings, lost in ignorance, seek in name, fame and wealth, that which cannot be satisfied by these acquisitions.

This deep restlessness is a hunger of the human spirit. No matter how much you eat, no matter how many pizzas you consume, you will still have this hunger. It is a hollowness that cannot be fed by pizzas, movies, TV shows, new cars or fancy houses. Even relationships cannot fulfill this hunger. It may temporarily be satiated so you feel good for one or two hours, one or two days, one or two weeks or even one or two years, but inevitably it returns. This is because the restlessness within you is of a deeper nature. Its source lies in the longing to bridge the waters of duality and find your home of homes, the unitary Being from which you have sprung.

This essential longing to return to your divine nature is the call of *dharma*. *Dharma* does not belong to any religion. It cannot be owned or incorporated by anyone. Nor is the way of *dharma* written in any book, but rather in the human heart. Though it cannot be described, its path can be suggested in

your longing for the Great, its way can be indicated by your yearning to be whole. It is universal and belongs to everyone. All the ways which are in harmony and alignment with your true nature ultimately direct you to the path of *dharma*.

All the ways that bring separation and increase your distance from your essential nature, cover the mind in thicker and thicker veils of misunderstanding and confusion. They are the path away from *dharma*, known in *Sanskrit* as *adharma*.

Qualities of Dharma

In order to truly follow *dharma*, four qualities need to be cultivated. They are *Vistara*, or the expansiveness of vision; *Rasa*, flow, to be saturated with blissful awareness and movement towards your eternal essence; *Seva*, service, and *Tatstithi*, divine union, wholeness.

If you are to follow *dharma*, you need to have a vision of what your Source looks like. A *meditation* practice on the nature of divinity is essential for this. It assists you to expand your mind beyond your limitations and beliefs, to have a willingness to look afresh and move beyond all of the stale constructs that you have built.

If those constructs were true and promoted spiritual growth, then surely you would be enlightened by now. But the constructs in your mind, your beliefs and your opinions hold you back. They limit you by saying "I am this" or "I am that." You confine yourself in a little box. "I am a teacher." "I am a doctor." "I have a certain prestige." You confine and constrain yourself into very finite boxes. You box yourself in, so to speak. The call of your internal longing ever counters

this tendency, saying to you “Look beyond the box,” “See outside the box.” “Think outside the box.” You are far more than the boxes you have made. Your truth comes from deep within, and its calling is *dharma*. Following this call is known as the way of *dharma*.

So, to follow the way of *dharma*, you first need a sense of expanded awareness known as *vistara*. This is a widening of your inner sense of vision that comes from deep meditation and contact with your Divine source. “Ahh, I have felt the bliss so sweet, have beheld the unity of all beings. I have watched the sunset and felt love wash over me. I have seen the trees and smelled the freshness of the forest, felt that I am one with the forest, am one with all its little creatures. And I am one with my brothers and sisters and all the people of the world.” This is the experience of *vistara*.

In holding to this expansive vision, which carries you outside and beyond all of the little boxes you have made, you know that there is something more, more to know, more to feel, more to love. Once you have this sense of expansion towards Source, this vision of essential nature, what next? Do you just do what you have always done? No! To follow *dharma*, you must not only have an expanded vision of the One, but also the passion to stay connected to essential being. This quality is called *rasa*. *Rasa* is the taste of a thing. It means to be saturated with awareness of Divine presence, to feel alive with the joy of Divine connection.

Dharma is not only your individual path to follow, but it is also a collective or universal path. It has enormous social implications. A society may move towards *dharma* or away from *dharma*. For *dharma* to be expressed within a

society there must be expanded awareness, *vistara*, as well as dynamic flow towards Divine love and truth, *rasa*. People need the opportunity to perceive the interconnected wholeness of life and the love underlying all things. Then they can make all and every effort to move towards that beatitude.

There is another quality that is also essential to the path of *dharma* and that is *seva*, actions in the world which reflect your expanded vision of the wholeness of life and your deeply felt connection to wholeness. *Seva* is service, but it is a special kind of service in which you serve all beings as manifestations of the One. Seeing God in all, you offer service to God in the form of living beings. And, in the offering of service, you realize that it is in fact the power of the infinite that provides the service through your form. This is *seva*. Once *seva* is enacted, the three components of expansion, blissful connected experience of the whole and service to living beings are all in play. The result is *tatsthi* or Divine union, the fulfillment of *dharma*.

And how will you move in the world? How will you move towards beatitude in everything you do? How will you follow *dharma* in your life? To really follow *dharma*, you will need to perform *seva*, to do service to living beings in thought, word and deed. Let all of your expressions be sweet. Let them be done with the intention of loving kindness to all beings. For if you see the vision, the *vistara*, of the brightness of the Self, you will know that all living beings are a part of an integral whole. All are intimately connected. All are alive. All are manifestations of that One beatitude. And the nature of the One is compassion, is truth, is beauty, is love. When you see into the depths, when you move

from the longing in your heart, what can you do with your thoughts, with your words, with your deeds other than to give love and service to all beings?

In doing *seva*, do not indulge the feeling that it is the little “I” or ego, that is doing the service. No, no, no! Instead cultivate the feeling that the Lord of the universe is expressing his divine play, her *Lila*, dance, and you are dancing in this dance. Through you, the Lord of the Universe is serving all living beings. You see, everything is the manifestation of the One and it is by the grace, strength and capacity of the One that you are able to do anything at all. So, there can be no pride of ego in your accomplishments. Instead, kindly give of yourself in thought, word and deed and be generous of spirit. This is *seva*. Through *seva* you gain movement on the path of *dharma* towards essential Being.

Animal and Human Dharma

Movement towards essence and blessedness is the way of *dharma*. This movement is called *Bhagavat Dharma* and is the *dharma* of human beings. You know, every aspect of creation has its own essential nature. The nature of the different elements embodies their fundamental purpose. A fire burns. Water flows. That is their essential quality. But human beings are as the moon reflected in the puddle. They are reflections of the Divine. Each and every human being’s essential nature, if fully realized, is sublime.

The animals in the woods, who have not yet achieved human status, are governed by *Prakriti*, the force of nature. Mother *Prakriti* is very fond of her children and cannot

abandon them. Knowingly and unknowingly, animals, as well as humans, are all moving towards *Parama Purusha*, cosmic consciousness. Animals and humans are all being moved through the evolutionary chain to greater and more expanded awareness and complexity of mind.

Prakriti, or mother nature, is moving all creatures under her control. But there is a fundamental difference between animals and human beings. Human beings display a very unique characteristic, the capacity of self-reflection. They can contemplate “Who am I?” Not only can people perform actions, but they have the ability to reflect upon why the action was taken and who did the action. I suspect that creatures in the animal kingdom may have awareness of performing an action, but they are not likely to reflect upon why they did such an action. Those in the animal kingdom are moved by mother nature, or *Prakriti*, through the evolutionary chain. They take different births in which they naturally acquire more awareness and more complexity of mind, evolving by the laws of nature.

Human beings are in a different and unique position. Human Beings can be distinguished from those of the animal kingdom by their developed capacity for self-reflection. This self-reflection allows people to contemplate the nature of their own existence and thus evolve. Having the capacity for self-reflection, people also gain the capacity of choice. Human beings can choose to be mean-minded devils or can choose to be holy men and women expressing kindness and love.

Human beings have the capacity to choose between *dharma* and *adharma*. That choice, however, is greatly influenced by the demands and pressures of the society in which

you live. Living in a society, any society, many beliefs develop. People start forming those boxes we have mentioned, not only in the constructions of their beliefs about who they are, but in their beliefs about who everyone else is and how the world works. If these beliefs are rigid and confining, they become dogmas. Dogma and *dharma* do not mix.

Dogma keeps the mind stuck. In the collective society, it keeps the people as a whole stuck in repetitious inertia. If your society proclaims certain dogma, then you fear to think differently. Knowing that expressing thoughts other than those sanctioned by your society will result in your rejection, you choose to stay within the dogma. Society with its dogmas places a great burden upon the individual, creating thoughts, actions and tendencies, or *samskaras*, that conform to the norm. If you dare to step outside of these dogmas, then the whole society begins to throw stones at you.

The essential nature of human beings is expansive. Your mind wants to expand beyond its limitations, beyond its confines, beyond all of those beliefs, opinions and ideas which hold you locked into a position. A rigid belief system which confines and restricts and does not allow for progression and expansion is the very definition of dogma. On the one hand, you want to stay with that which confines and is habitual, because the known feels safe, but, on the other hand, there is this longing, this restlessness. You want to grow, you want to expand, you want to become all that you can be. You want to open your heart and fill it with love, until there is a dissolution of all that is small, all that is confined or restricted.

This expansion gets covered not only by society's dogmatic beliefs but by your individual *samskaras*, your habitual thoughts, actions, and tendencies that may arise in reactions to past experiences. They can also be learned from your culture or your society. Whatever their cause, they are the coverings which confine and restrict. *Dharma* burns away these restrictions of the mind, these limiting beliefs and confusing approaches to life. *Dharma* is not attributable to any one particular religion, though it has often been associated with different religions. It has also been thwarted by certain religious teachings, as well as many societal norms.

When you perform *seva*, when you imbibe the great compassion and omnipresent love of the Supreme Entity into your being and live your life in the world as an expression of that omnipresent compassion of the Divine, then surely you are on the path of *dharma*. You are immersing yourself in *dharma* and have become an illustration and example of *dharma*. Your words and deeds, your very life becomes a powerful reflection of *dharma* to others, for *dharma* and *seva* cannot be separated. You cannot perform true *seva* without *dharma*. You cannot have *dharma* without *seva*. There is no greatness without *dharma* and no path of *dharma* towards Source without the compassion and love *seva* engenders.

Individual Dharma

The type of service best suited to each person may differ. Every human being has their own unique, personalized path in life, determined by the *karmic* coverings of their mind

and their disposition. Within the vast expanse of our shared human *dharma*, *Bhagavat Dharma*, everyone is being moved in one direction towards Truth. Yet each individual, according to the configuration of time, place and person, is a unique flower opening to the vistas of the sublime and each has a different and unique way. If you are here, now, and another is in a different time and place, and, of course, has a different personality, it may appear that you are moving in different directions. But, in fact, you are both moving towards the same center, which is Truth. You both are being drawn towards a unified purpose and, in reality, moving in the same direction.

Your unique path towards *dharma* requires dynamic movement of both *rasa* and *seva* and is influenced by the type of *seva* you perform. There is service in the physical sphere, service in the psychic sphere, and service in the spiritual sphere. According to your inclination of mind, you will be drawn to do service in different areas. Everyone may realize the greatness of their essential nature, or Truth, but through different means. In the garden of this world, the *Divine* has created endless varieties of beautiful expressions. Each of you, like a beautiful flower, is unique and special, with your own qualities and characteristics, your own capacities, your own development and your own specific potentiality.

The realization of your own unique potential constitutes your *Svadharmā*, your personal expression in the world and unique path to enlightenment. It depends on the inclination of your mind, the development of your spiritual nature, and the *samskaras* (reactions to past experiences held in the subconscious) which have given you your specific manifestation. Just as each flower in the garden of the Great has its

own singular loveliness and no two are alike, though they share the *dharma* of flower-hood, so you are unique in your *Svadharmā*, though you share with all people the common bond of human *dharma*, of *Bhagavat Dharma*.

Bhagavat Dharma is the core flow for everyone. But how do you move in this *Bhagavat Dharma*? What does it look like for each of you? Is it the same exact movement? Do you move like soldiers, each one exactly the same, wearing the same uniform, arms moving up and down in unison, legs marching to the same tune? No, that would be preposterous! That is not at all the way of *dharma*, certainly not the chosen method of *Parama Purusha*, the Supreme Consciousness. The Divine loves variety. This entire creation is made of variety. No one can possibly imagine all of the variety that there is in the universe. In this variety, you are unique in your journey, unique and special. You have your own way to move, your *Svadharmā*.

To maintain *vistara* or vision, you need a consistent meditation practice, called *sadhana*, and to have *rasa*, the feel or taste of life. You also need *seva*. The *seva* that is right for you, is unique to you and will be different from the *seva* of others. How a rose grows from the ground and blooms in the sun is different from how a lotus flower grows in the mud of a pond and blooms in the sun. One is coming through the water, one in the air. And their leaves take a different shape, their buds are different, their color and their fragrance are unique to each. Yet they both grow towards and open to the sun. In a similar way, your *Svadharmā* is unique to you and yet in harmony with the collective movement of all beings to open to the deep Source of Being.

Moving into Harmony

When you move on the path of *dharma*, you move in harmony with your own nature and with the essential nature of all beings. Can you feel those moments when your thoughts, words and deeds are in harmony with life? When you sense such harmony, such alignment, then you are truly following *dharma*. When that harmony is entirely present, your thoughts, words and deeds become surrendered to the Divine and you perceive the Sublime manifest in everything. When this happens, you begin to notice all the synchronicities, to see the great tapestry that is being woven in the universe and, beholding the harmonious substantive nature of all manifestation, you feel the shower of unconditional love falling gently upon you and every other being.

Moving in harmony, the foot does not crush the ground beneath. Moving in harmony, all nature becomes one flow. Thoughts, words and deeds express only the unconditional love of the Divine. The lotus growing in the mud and water brings forth buds that open to the sun. The rose winding around the trellis climbs upward and blossoms in the sun. Moving in harmony towards the Source, all beings have their place. Sun, moon and stars have their place in the harmony of all things. There is a balance in this universe, finely maintained, sublimely intricate, yet simple. To be in this balance, to move in this harmony, to breathe with the rhythm of the stars, is the way of *dharma*.

For one immersed in *dharma*, the words they speak become truth, not because they have foretold the future,

but because, being ensconced in *dharma*, they are in the rhythm of life. They live in truth. The words of one established in *dharma* are a balm to the heavy hearts of all beings, for true words are spoken from the heart of hearts, not from the mind or the desires.

Walk in the silence. Be still in the wood. Be as wild as the breeze upon the prairie. Be as vast as the night sky. Fly with the eagle above the mountain tops. Soar on the night breeze. Dive to the depths of the ocean. Live in the rhythmic harmony of the universe. This is *dharma*.

Can you walk this path? Really, can you? All religions have attempted to teach people how to live and act in harmony and to define in words the path of right action. But the way for each person is unique. You cannot define it or put it in a box, because the way itself moves outside of all boxes. To become whole, to learn to walk in the way of the universe, to move towards the essence of beatitude, to the depths of silence, follow *dharma* always. Stay connected to your innermost nature.

Do not forget. Do not forget.

The Noble Way

All things have an innate nature or *dharma*. The *dharma* of fire is to burn, and the *dharma* of a human being is to know and become one with the Great. In Chinese culture, they speak of the *Tao*. In the *Tao*, every object has its own innate quality and all life moves together in a flow. All of creation

moves in a coordinated whole. Mother Nature is sometimes called the great weaver, for she weaves the fabric of creation, but she is not a crazy lady. She does not randomly weave. She weaves in patterns. She weaves in a coordinated way so that the whole of her tapestry is harmonious.

The harmony resplendent in her tapestry of the universe is the *Tao* and is *dharma*. It is sometimes called “the Law.” However, this Law is not decided in a courthouse or made by legislatures. This Law exists within the fabric of the universe. When you drop into harmony with all creation, you come into contact with this Law and begin to move in a flow with the innate, inherent nature of all that is. You begin to perceive the movements of *dharma*, to walk in deep harmony with the abiding principles of being as they are manifest in creation. When you follow this way deeper and deeper, you come to the fundamental base of everything that is, the unitary whole of Divine Consciousness.

As the *Tao* is understood in Chinese culture, so, in shamanic cultures, there is the way of spirit. In American Indian cultures, there is the concept of walking in harmony with the Earth. Diverse people in different cultures have all expressed some insight or understanding of the deep laws of *dharma*. To lead a truly fulfilling human life is to find this way of *dharma* and to follow it.

Without the exploration of *dharma*, without the inspiration of something great in life, something larger than oneself, something noble that uplifts the human spirit, the minds and hearts of people become despondent. That is why materialism, as it dominates today’s world, will never satisfy the hearts and minds of people. As a way of life, it lacks a

deep connection to *dharma* and, therefore, does not connect people to their souls. Many people have much material wealth and feel physically comfortable, yet their hearts and minds become hollow and empty and they begin to experience despondency. In today's society, this despondency is epidemic with its corresponding depression and lack of hope. The illness in today's society lies in this despondency, this lack of wholeness, this spiritual void created by over-emphasis on materialism.

However, there is a remedy for this. It lies in the inspiration within the human heart to find and follow the path of *dharma*. It often begins with finding *Sangha*, the company of likeminded people, with whom you can create a vision that restores hope. Then, collectively, you can restore the hope that there is a way for your heart to be open, to be free. There is a way to feel you are doing something noble, something great for humanity. In this experience, there is light and brightness of spirit, a joy that can be attained and is natural to human life. There is a brightness of *dharma* to share with others in *Sangha*.

There is great need in the world for people to find this noble way and to bring others to hopefulness, connection, joy and divine love. It is time. It is time to bring inspiration, joy and hopefulness to the world, doing something noble for living beings. This is the fundamental purpose of your life, to realize the Great and to do something noble in this world, to do something that will make a difference for someone. Even Western psychology has realized the need people have to find meaning and purpose in life. There is a need to go beyond "I and Mine," to do noble acts, to realize there is something greater in the life, and to dedicate oneself to a

larger purpose than one's individual comforts. Western psychology calls this self-actualization. In Eastern terms, it is the path of *dharma*.

Find your way to *dharma*. Establish yourself in spiritual practice and actualize your meditation. Establish yourself in your association with the Divine, in your harmony with the Way, with the laws of the universe. Drink from that deep well. In this, you may do something noble in this life, something great, something for other living beings.

Svadharma and Bhagavat Dharma

Every person has a reason for living, a purpose for being here, something that is yours to do in life. Whether you are in touch with that calling or not, still it exists. In *Sanskrit*, this calling or duty is called *Svadharma*. Your *Svadharma* is your unique duty to express in your life. Connecting with this personal focus is vital to your happiness, but it is not all that is needed.

You also have an innate draw within you towards the divine Source of your being. This inherent longing for the Infinite, for love, for connection to your soul, is, in *Sanskrit*, called *Bhagavat Dharma*. This longing for wholeness and a return to Source is shared with all people. Everyone has this longing, whether they are in touch with it or not.

Your personal duty in life, or *Svadharma*, can only really be actualized when you are aligned with your universal human *dharma*, or *Bhagavat Dharma*. When you fulfill these

deep internal urges that enliven your spirit, happiness becomes accessible. When you really connect with your duty, your *Svadharmā*, you feel bright and alive. Then when you move towards the one essential Being, and fulfill your *Bhagavat Dharma*, you begin to experience a certain contentment, a feeling that your life is on track and as it should be. You feel it in your soul, this kind of feeling that comes to those who are fulfilling both their *Svadharmā* and their *Bhagavat Dharma*. You feel fulfilled in your life.

If you attempt to follow *Bhagavat Dharma* but suppress your *Svadharmā*, you may feel you are connecting with your higher purpose and yet have a sense of a lack of self-expression. You may be doing meditation, opening up to Cosmic Consciousness, even doing service work for others and still feel unfulfilled. This feeling comes when you are not in touch with or not living your personal mission in life, your *Svadharmā*. This lack of a personal expression which is aligned with your deep inner self, may cause feelings of depression and a muting of your vital force.

When you express your being in the world and follow your *Svadharmā* expressing who you are, your vital force expands. Then you feel vitality in your life and there is no feeling of frustration or suppression. The key to happiness in human life lies in the transmutation of stagnancy and inhibition into the fulfillment of *Svadharmā* and *Bhagavat Dharma*. This is the golden key to the door of fulfillment and happiness.

Each and every living being is inherently beautiful. Each and every one is a flower of divinity in the garden of the world. But due to difficult circumstances, the experiences of hardship and devastation, and the resulting impact on a

person, great suffering exists in human life and people can fall out of alignment with *dharma*. Due to this suffering and lack of alignment with *dharma*, people do ill deeds to their fellow beings, promoting the psychology of pain and suffering.

The solution to this dilemma of suffering is to realign with *dharma* and take the shelter of the Cosmic Being, making that One your all and everything. Then, through thick and thin, high and low, suffering and joy, Divine love is bound to be felt by you. That Cosmic Source will guide you, caring for your welfare, freeing you from the bondages of attachment and from illusions of mind. Thus, you see clearly the nature of your existence and, therefore, follow *Bhagavat Dharma*, which guides the noble life of a true human being.

All the strength, all the wisdom, all the capacity of each and every person has its base in the wisdom, strength and capacity of the Cosmic Being. If you come to realize that nothing belongs to you, that your success and failures are all expressions of the divine cosmic play, then you will be freed from the cycle of birth and death and suffering. Never think that you are without care or alone in this world, for the infinite force of the Cosmic Being is bound to guide you through darkness and into light.

Q: Can you give an example of Svadharma in connection with Bhagavat Dharma?

A: Yes, yes. For example, let us say that a certain individual in the past had been a seamstress in a small village and had enjoyed making clothes for people. When she died, the clothes she was working on were left unfinished in the shop. Her thought at the time of death was, "I need to finish sewing these garments for the people in the village, otherwise they

will be without them. I need to complete this task.” This thought was in her mind at the time of her leaving.

Then she was born again into a human life, at another time, in a different place. In this new life she is a good-hearted person that does kind deeds for others. She has a strong spiritual inclination and follows *Bhagavat Dharma*. Yet she has a nagging feeling that something is missing in her life. In this life she has become a bank teller but somehow continues to feel there is something she has not completed, though she does not know what it is. She remains unfulfilled as a bank teller.

What to do? She may quit her job and move to another town. When she arrives, she notices there is already a bank teller and no openings. And, in truth, she is most drawn to the tailor. She finds she has a fascination with the work of the tailor. She finds that, at least as a hobby, she enjoys making garments. And then, one day, as circumstances arise to fulfill her *karma*, the tailor is selling his business. So, this woman buys the business of the tailor and begins to do the work of the tailor in the town. Doing this she finally finds personal fulfillment.

Without the capacity to fulfill her driving *samskara*, the core pattern of her mind that had brought her to this very life, she was restless and unhappy. However, when the *samskara* was fulfilled, she was again sewing for a town and fulfilling her deep calling, she felt freed. She felt she had fulfilled her personal purpose and, in doing so, she grew happy. She fulfilled her *Svadharmā*. Thus, fulfilling her heart’s calling, or *Svadharmā*, and her spiritual life, or *Bhagavat Dharma*, she found fulfillment.

Dharma and the Tao

The teachings of the *Tao* come from the ancient teachings of *dharma*. When a being follows the *Tao*, they are in alignment with their inherent nature and they follow the laws that govern that inherent nature. These laws, the principles and operating forces of the universe, are the fabric of existence. Without them, the natural world would lose its integrity.

To understand the *Tao* is to understand the inherent nature of human beings, the inherent nature of rocks, the inherent nature of water, the inherent nature of Earth, and the inherent nature of each and every type of living being. When beings are in alignment with their inherent nature, *dharma* flows naturally. A sense of harmony with all life is the result. The *Tao* is the Way. *Dharma* is also called the Way, the law, the path. *Dharma* is inherent in all things.

Human beings have a longing for the Great. There is a restlessness in the hearts of people, because there is dissatisfaction with duality and feelings of separation from the whole. Sooner or later, most people experience the existential pain of separation from the unconditional love that is the source of their being. This separateness, and the restlessness that emerges because of it, brings a search for wholeness that may take many forms. People try to acquire things to feed the need inside of them. They grasp for solutions, not only in the physical world, but in the psychic and spiritual worlds as well. However, this need to reconnect with wholeness is met only when *dharma* governs a person's life and they move in harmony with their innermost Self.

Bhagavat Dharma, our human *dharma* channels our restlessness towards the Great. When we do this, our unique human expression moves towards unity and wholeness. We align ourselves in perfect harmony with our inherent, natural state of being. *Dharma* is followed when you are in alignment with the natural laws of the universe, with the laws of the Divine Mother. When people find harmony with all that is, life becomes an expression of love, a *seva*, a service to others. One feels alignment with the *Tao*.

When you are in the flow of *dharma* towards the Divine, all that you have seen and known comes into a harmonious alignment and becomes directed towards your innermost Self rather than towards pleasures or worldly acquisitions. When *dharma* governs your life, the little sense of "I" melts away and is surrendered to the love that is unconditional, that is the larger Self. The pain of duality is dissolved in *Moksha*, liberation from ignorance, a movement from ego-centered pleasure seeking to selfless love in the flow of *dharma*. This movement towards unitary wholeness and liberation is the natural, essential flow of human life, inherent in your own being.

Each person's expression of this flow of *dharma* will be unique. You move on the path of *dharma* when your life becomes a flower offered to the Infinite. When you live in love with all beings and with honor and respect for all life, when you direct the restlessness and pain within to the one true Self, you move on the path of *dharma*. Let love flow in you and through you, in all that you do, all that you say and in all that you are. Then, following *dharma*, you live in harmony with the natural laws and in harmony with all life. This is knowledge of the *Tao*.

Karma and Dharma

Karma is a *Sanskrit* word for action. The experiences we have, and the actions we do now and have done in the past, create reactions in our minds. In *Sanskrit*, these reactions are called *samskaras*, which can be translated roughly as “tendencies”. Due to past experiences and actions, mental reactions form in the mind and lay quiescent in the subconscious until such a time as a congenial environment brings them to fruition. When these latent reactions find expression in your life, people say it is your *karma*.

In other words, the experiences you have and the actions you do impact you. They leave an impression that effects who you are, how you think, the decisions you make and what happens to you in your life. When this impression is simply stored inside you, it is a *samskara*. When it starts impacting your life, it is your *karma*. It is said that when the seeds of past actions ripen, *karma* gets expressed.

For example, have you ever had the experience of taking something that wasn't yours? Maybe something small? Perhaps something you really wanted, and suddenly the opportunity presented itself to just pick it up. So, you just took advantage of the situation. At the time, you may have justified it with bravado, or secretly held it in guilt or shame. Deep inside, the guilt and shame may have lowered your self-respect. An unconscious need to balance this sense of guilt may have been formed, a *samskara*, if you will. This *samskara* may then lead to putting yourself in a situation where you lose something of value to you, a *karmic* situation that

lifts your unconscious sense of guilt and restores balance. This is *karma* in action.

Dharma is very different from *karma*. It is the path from darkness to light, from death to immortality. *Dharma* is said to be the release from all *karmas*. When you move from ignorance into knowledge, from fear to awareness of Divine Essence, then you move from a life dominated by your *karma* to a life governed by *dharma*. For *dharma* is the road from ignorance to wisdom. *Dharma* means law. It is the true law, the law of truth. If you follow *dharma* you live by the law, not the laws of men, but the universal laws of the cosmos. When you live in the ways of true wisdom and act with truthfulness, in its deepest sense, then you live in the way of the *dharma*.

When you act in accordance with the essential nature of Cosmic Being, you act in rhythm and harmony with the whole universe. This leads to an enhancement of love, knowledge and wisdom. Such actions we call *dharmic* actions. They are actions aligned with the path of *dharma*. But when actions are dictated by the urges and passion of your individual mental flow that is acquired through past action, through cultural and social bondage and associations, then you follow your *karma*.

The results of *karma* begin to balance when you find the true path of *dharma*. No longer do you feel, "I want this and that for my own pleasure." No, no. Your need is not to fulfill various feelings of inadequacy and egotism, for these are the result of *karma*. When *karma* dominates the mind, you may have a feeling of inferiority and want to puff yourself up, to show the world you are great. On the flip side, you may feel

an egotistical superiority that makes you self-absorbed and insensitive to others.

Under the influence of this mental tendency, your mind is not free and has become entrapped. You may succeed or not in fulfilling the desire, but in the process, all of your psychic force has been wrapped up in thoughts and efforts related to the issue and has now, by means of unintended cause and effect, created future *karma*.

You may ask, "If I am so dominated by different *karmas* from the past, and ever creating new *karma* when I take action, how do I follow the path of *dharma*?" There is a simple solution. First recognize the *karma* dominating your thoughts and actions. This is the first step, to become aware of it. Next, realize that the *karma* results from unknown experiences or influences from the past that are unconsciously impacting you (*samskaras*). As you bring awareness to these mental patterns, that alone begins to unwind the binding or your conditioned mind.

The most important step in unwinding the conditioned mind is to understand that *Brahma*, or God, is the only one who can perform an action. In reality, *karmic* mental reactions to past experiences do not belong to you. They are only the movement of the divine play of manifestation within the mind of *Brahma*. When you realize that all actions occur within cosmic mind and are done by the one Infinite Being, then the *karma* no longer belongs to you as an individual. When this realization comes, you become the witness of the play of thoughts and actions and are freed from your identity as the doer or initiator of actions. Thus, *karma* unwinds.

You may ask, does *karma* lead to *dharma*? The answer is no, but *karma* may open a door so that you may see the path of *dharma*. If, for example, you have done a significant amount of meditation in the past, then your past practices may assist you to develop a mental tendency to enjoy meditative states and thus to seek practices that bring you in alignment with *dharma*. So, due to your *karma* from past actions, you will do deeds that lead you towards the path of *dharma*. In this way, certain types of *karma* may be beneficial to finding the path of *dharma*.

Or, on the flip side, *karma* may hamper you, put you more under the influence of the little ego. It may increase your identification and association with the limited sense of “I-am-ness” and immerse you in your psychological issues and personal experiences. *Karma* that enhances your identification with your small sense of self creates greater and greater bondage.

When you find *dharma* in life, your experience changes. You find the glow of the sun through the filters of the mind. When a person follows that glow, it grows brighter and brighter. If your feet are upon the path of *dharma*, you begin to move in a rhythm and flow that has harmony with all life, with all beings, with all existence. Your actions become dominated by the passions and desires of the deeper Self and not by your *karma*.

When this happens, you may begin to feel that your life is an offering and that you are the servant of the infinite Self of all. You may begin to feel that the will of the Divine is guiding your every footstep. When this experience occurs, you are completely drenched in Divine Presence and your

existence is but an outer expression of this infinite Love. You may begin to feel that you have nothing of your own. That everything you have and you are belongs to the God within, the Self of yourself.

Thoughts of this nature begin to arise when you follow the path of *dharma*. Your actions become aligned with the one true Self. You find you can no longer think merely about the welfare of your own small existence. Love, compassion and care for the welfare of every living being becomes important to you. You begin to experience all beings as precious expressions of the one Infinite Being.

With this, interest in your personal achievements and accomplishments may start to diminish. You may begin to see your personal achievements as offerings to the Sublime rather than a way to get ahead in the world. You may want your every word and deed to bring infinite sweetness to all, to be for the welfare of all living beings. These sentiments become your main focus when following the path of *dharma*.

Only when your conscious awareness gets merged into the limited experience of your emotions, actions and self-identity does *karma* dominate the mind. When you realize that everything is *Brahma* and that only *Brahma* acts, then immediately your conscious awareness become the witness rather than the doer. As long as you maintain this, you are freed from forming future *karma*.

This freedom is instantaneous, as long as the mind maintains right understanding of the nature of your experience. When this right understanding is applied on a regular basis, you begin to follow the path of *dharma*, rather than following the influences of *karma*. Then you begin to fully perceive the

beatitude of the Self, the omnipresent nature of the Supreme Consciousness becomes Self-revealed.

As this occurs, the influence of your mental patterns, your various *samskaras*, diminishes. Then bindings become looser and you are freer to walk the road of *dharma*. The mind is detached from the association with *karma* and remains established in *dharma*. Vision of truth brings real freedom. Freedom allows you to break the fetters of the conditioned mind, *samskaras*, that have resulted from prior actions and associations. Thus, you become freed from *karma* and immersed in *dharma*. You live in the world, but you are not of the world.

When you are immersed in *dharma*, your very existence is a reflection of the rhythms and waves of Cosmic Essence. You are no longer bound in identification with mental constructs and experiences. You may have experiences, but the *karma* is perceived in a cosmic context and so the mind is freed. The sense of doer-ship is surrendered upon the altar of the Great, only the infinite One is seen as doing all actions, as being in all things, existing everywhere. You merely witness the play.

When realization of the infinite comes, you no longer need to grasp for this or that. This is because no matter which direction you turn, regardless of what you do, all is the one eternal Self. You are ever with the Self, witnessing the motions and play of manifestation. You feel pleasure and pain and observe variations of form, but you ever see the eternal, unchanging, immortal nature in all that is. Meeting the Divine Self in all that exists you may feel joy.

When the mind is freed from bondage, then the path of *dharma* becomes entirely natural. You walk freely in the

world, for all actions are done by the One Infinite Self and there is no feeling of identification with any type of limitation, with any constructed definitions of the mind. All is surrendered, all belongs to the One Infinite Being. There is nothing apart from that One, there is no action done that is not from that One. Though the dance of creation goes on and on, though bodies rise and fall, the One remains constant. So, follow the path of *dharma* to knowledge of the One Infinite Self and there you will find freedom from *karma*.

The Mahabharata and Dharma

In the drama of the *Mahabharata*, the epic war of India, much can be learned about the nature of *dharma* by understanding *Krishna's* relationships with the two warring families and their approaches to him.

Amid this family feud between two warring kingdoms, *Krishna* wanted to show the people where the path of *dharma* lay. His primary interest was for human beings to understand the nature of *dharma* and get a clear insight into the path of *dharma*. He was not so eager to say whose cause was righteous and whose was not or who approached him first. This was not the concern of *Krishna*. *Krishna's* concern was only that living beings understand the nature of *dharma*.

In the beginning of the war, *Krishna* was partial neither to the *Pandavas* nor the *Kauravas*. He was neutral. When the *Pandavas* and the *Kauravas* came to seek his help, they each established their relationship to him by their approach.

The *Pandavas*, represented by *Arjuna* and his brothers, took a devotional approach to *Krishna*, going to sit at his feet and ask his guidance. The *Kauravas*, represented by *Duryodhana* and his kin, took a more intellectual approach, wanting to meet him head-to-head, man-to-man. They were interested in his authority, his position, his army, his power and so they established a different type of relationship to him than the *Pandavas*. They went to sit at his head to ask him for his army and powerful resources.

Krishna separated himself from his army, position, and all of his resources and said: “*Duryodhana*, I quite believe you when you say that you came to me first. It does not need any repeated assertions to make me believe it. I do believe you. Of course, you came to me first. But I am caught in a terrible dilemma. I was sleeping when you both came. I knew nothing of the coming of either of you.

‘When I got up my eyes chanced to fall on *Arjuna* first. You came to me first: I saw *Arjuna* first. Hence, I think it is but right that I should help you both. You will have to choose. Since, in any choice, the younger of the two must be allowed to choose first, I will ask *Arjuna* to choose first. I feel that I am doing the right thing.’ They both agreed to his suggestion.

Krishna continued: ‘I have an army composed of terrible warriors who are my equals in valor. They are called the *Narayanas*. They make up an *Akshauhini*. That will be one of the alternatives. On the other hand, you have me, just me. I will not fight. I have decided not to carry a single weapon. Now you have both the alternatives before you. *Arjuna*, you had better think well before you make your choice.

You have the army consisting of *Akshauhini*, on the one hand, and, on the other, a weaponless, non-fighting *Krishna*.' He smiled at both of them and waited for *Arjuna* to speak.

Arjuna fell at the feet of *Krishna*. His eyes were blind with tears. He took *Krishna*'s right hand in his and said: 'You, my lord, I want you. I do not want anything else in this world. I want you.' *Duryodhana* was very happy to get the large army from *Krishna*. He felt that, without the army, and without the weapons, *Krishna* could not be of much help to the *Pandavas*. They were as good as defeated. He thanked *Krishna* profusely and left his presence after taking leave of him. A strange smile lit up the corners of *Krishna*'s lips as he watched him and his happiness."*

This was a test of *dharma* in which the goal of *Krishna* would be fulfilled while each of his relatives got from him what they most desired. He utilized the feuding situation to establish an understanding of the nature of *dharma*. For *dharma* is not won with mighty armies, powerful masteries and numbers. It is won by the grace of *Brahma*. *Dharma* is the path unto that essential existence which was embodied in *Shrii Krishna*.

Those who chose his might, rather than he himself, made in their choice a grave error. For they chose that which *Krishna* could give, wealth, power and success, rather than him. In so doing, then and there, the *Kauravas* lost the path of *dharma*.

The question arises, will *dharma* prevail in the world or wealth and power? The ensuing battle was to demonstrate

* Pages 333 and 334 of the 1977 edition of a reduced version of the *Mahabharata* by Kamala Subramaniam published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.

that *dharma*, though appearing very simple and powerless, is, nonetheless, the strongest force. The true power, the true victory lay not in *Shrii Krishna's* army and prestige, nor in the power he could give, but in himself. He was the embodiment of *dharma*. And thus, those who chose *Krishna*, chose *dharma*. Those who chose his power and force chose the illusions of the world.

In the ensuing battle, *dharma* was pitted against power and prestige, to demonstrate that even in such overwhelming situations, *dharma* would ever prevail. That which embodies *dharma* is stronger than armies and the might of the world, and, in the end, *dharma* will prevail and nothing else.

These cousins fought viciously with each other in a war that *Shrii Krishna* utilized to teach them and all living beings. The *Mahabharata* was a great war, a war for the purpose of the establishment of *dharma*. From that experience, a wave went forth that has lasted for many thousands of years and has shown to all that strength, in the end, resides in the path of *dharma*.

Dharma cannot be won without struggle, for struggle is essential in the evolution and growth of consciousness. When human beings know nothing but their primitive desires, they are but animals in human form. Then as human beings grow a bit, they gain intellectual development. They analyze and criticize and live out their desires for achievement in the world, but still they have not found the path of *dharma*. Only when they come to feel the eminent presence of the Divinity that lies within do they see the radiant aura of *Shrii Krishna*. When they begin to understand the cherished goal of enlightenment and the subterranean flow of

dharma, they put their feet upon the road towards Divine Consciousness and begin to walk in the path of *dharma*.

The path of *dharma* takes courage. There are always obstacles and pushes and pulls upon the path. It takes courage to move from animal consciousness to become a godly man or a godly woman. Courage is required to face the obstacles and bondages that arise and to walk steadily down the path of *dharma* towards the cherished goal.

Krishna staged the drama of the *Mahabharata* to teach about *dharma*, for every person's life is a small *Mahabharata*. Isn't your life a war with all those mental tendencies that pull you into the lures of the lower propensities of the mind, rather than the lure of the pure eminence of *Shrri Krishna*? The fight for *dharma* is going on in the life of each and every person, not to mention in the collective life of society. The choice between the feet or the head of the Divine One, between love and ambition exists for all of us.

Dharma and the Evolution of the Ego

You cannot have *dharma* without *Parama Purusha*, that sublime Divine Being. In *Sanskrit* *Parama* means "most excellent, or highest," and *Purusha* is "Being, Self or Consciousness." *Purusha* is a very important concept in Eastern thought, as *Purusha* is understood to be the base, the clay, so to speak, out of which all beings are formed. All existence is molded

by the laws of nature out of the substantial essence of the universe or consciousness, *Purusha*. *Purusha*, when not bound by these laws, resides in its own nature, pure, limitless, unmanifest being.

If you take away the idea of *Purusha*, *dharma* ceases to exist, for the purpose of *dharma* is to lead one to this inherent essence of Being. Without this homeward movement towards *Purusha*, there is no *dharma*. When you follow *dharma*, you awaken the eternal longing within, the desire to find the deepest truth of your being, the limitless, timeless, formless *Purusha*.

To understand *dharma*, it is important to grasp the different aspects to *dharma*. You have a natural draw towards *Parama Purusha*, that most excellent, infinite Being. This *dharma* is called your *Bhagavat Dharma* and is something you share with others, an inherent part of your human nature. You also have a *dharma*, a deep calling that is unique to you, called *Prana Dharma* in *Sanskrit*. This is your core characteristic or traits that distinguish you from everyone else. It is your unique existence in the world. When your unique qualities and purpose in life are expressed in your work and life activities, you are following your *Svadharm*a. Following your *Svadharm*a entails getting in touch with your own unique personal *dharma* and manifesting it in your life.

When your personal *dharma*, your *Svadharm*a, is aligned with your *Prana Dharma*, expressing your essential nature and purpose in life and is aligned with your *Bhagavat Dharma*, your inherent draw toward the Great, then you have harmony between your spiritual nature, your unique

individuality and your life. This is a formula for happiness in life.

For example, let's say you have a natural love of learning. You love to read and find out new facts. You are especially fascinated by history. This passion for learning is a core aspect of who you are. It is your *Prana Dharma*. If you end up going to college and becoming a history teacher, then your work will likely line up with your core interests and talents. Your *Svadharmas*, personal duty in life, will express your *Prana Dharma*, your passion for learning and history.

If, on the other hand, you became a cook or engaged in another profession that does not involve your core passions, you may not be fulfilling your *Svadharmas*, as you might not find opportunity to express your *Prana Dharma*, your love of learning and historic facts. This clearly would lessen your fulfillment in life. Also, if you do not find a way to bring your teaching and involvements in life in alignment with *Bhagavat Dharma*, the love of your heart and spirit, then again, your energy shuts down. Life can become stale, lacking meaning. But if you can connect your work or other involvements in life to enlivening your spirit and moving towards wholeness, maybe using your teaching skills and knowledge to help people understand their roots and connect with their spirit, then you also fulfill your *Bhagavat Dharma*. Fulfilling all of these *dharma*s, moves you forward in your ego development and brings happiness and well-being.

However, this harmony between your inner self, your work or life in the world and your spiritual nature is something that occurs as a result of ego development. Maturation of ego is necessary to even have an interest in *dharma*,

otherwise you are too busy taking care of “number one” to care about others and seek God consciousness.

Your ego identity brings with it a sense of incompleteness that is rooted in your very experience of individuality, a feeling of being separate from all else. In the sense of smallness that arises from separateness, comes a feeling of vulnerability. This occurs because you are a very small person in a very large universe. When you consider all the living beings on this planet, let alone all of the stars, galaxies and countless other planets, then naturally you feel a little diminished and a little vulnerable. How you cope with this depends on your level of ego development.

The Four Aims of Human Life

In *Tantra* there is a system of energy centers in the body called *chakras*. Each of the five lower *chakras* is associated with an element and with different tendencies of mind, often depicted as lotus leaves around the *chakras*. The first *chakra* at the base of the spine, called *Muladhara Chakra*, is said to control the four fundamental directions that your life can take, represented by four lotus petals. These four directions are actually different stages of ego development.

The four directions represent the ways in which you may express your existence and find resolution to your experience of smallness and vulnerability; each represents an avenue you may take to meet your needs in life. They are *Kama*, the seeking of pleasure and the fulfillment of desires; *Artha*, personal achievement and accomplishment in the world, purpose, or seeking prosperity; *Dharma* seeking to live in

alignment with the inherent nature of reality and *Moksha*, liberation from ignorance. If looked at from a psychological perspective, they roughly correlate to progressive stages of ego development, similar in many ways to Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

When the mind is undeveloped and the ego self-absorbed, the path to security becomes a desire to build yourself up physically in the world, to acquire food and shelter, to procreate, simply to meet your physical needs and enjoy pleasures. Finding safety and pleasure are foremost. This is *Kama*, dominance of the desire mind. *Kama* represents the undeveloped ego. A person at this stage will be self-absorbed with their personal wants, needs and desires and perhaps have very little ability to notice and care for the needs of others.

As mind grows in magnitude, the desires change and you begin to want to build monuments to your individuality, to make your personal mark upon the world. The intent is the same. You are still trying to build yourself up and secure yourself in a big world. However, now it is done through personal achievement and success. This is *Artha*. When a person evolves to the stage of *Artha*, they are much more aware of those around them, but all of their energy is focused on being a success in the world. Their aim is to express themselves, to develop a career, to have a family and so on. Thus, when *Artha* is the aim, a person goes from merely seeking pleasure to the desire for self-expression. Others are important only in so far as they further the person's personal goals.

Neither *Kama* and the fulfillment of desires for pleasure or *Artha* and the fulfillment of personal ambitions fulfill the human heart. Thus arises the desire to find *Dharma*, to seek something greater than yourself and find a way to truth and wholeness. Then as mind grows in magnitude and ego expansion occurs, you begin to feel that it is not enough to simply live for your own pleasure or for success. You feel a sense of incompleteness in these personal achievements.

Then you begin to seek something more essential, something deep in the psyche, deep in the heart and mind that can bring you a more eternal happiness. At this point, spirituality comes into play and *Dharma* comes into existence. You seek to quench your thirst by association with the Supreme rather than by mere pleasures and self-attainments. When you discover *Dharma*, you begin to feel there is a higher purpose to your life, something greater than yourself.

The ability to really understand and care for others begins to evolve. You begin to utilize your capacity to better serve living beings and to realize the Great. When *Dharma* becomes the aim of life, a strong desire to connect with the deep selfless love in the essence of everything emerges and personal welfare becomes secondary to the larger whole. This is similar to what Maslow refers to as self-actualizing ego development, where a person dedicates themselves to something greater than their personal existence.

It is establishment in *Dharma* that leads to *Moksha*. You begin to dedicate your life, not only to personal pleasure, enjoyment and self-expression but also now to the welfare of living beings. You have a higher purpose directed toward the

welfare of all, towards the Divine Consciousness, towards God. You devote yourself to an idea or an understanding that there is something more important than your own individual self-expression or pleasure.

At the stage of *Dharma*, the ego becomes less self-absorbed and more aware of others and their needs. You become aware of the needs of the whole and you are drawn to ideologies and belief systems that support that understanding.

The ideologies that you may enjoy at the stage of *Artha* may be those that support personal development and success. As mind grows in magnitude, the ideologies that one finds appealing are those that ascribe to the larger good, a higher destiny, a more expansive self, leading towards harmony of the universe, God, Divine Consciousness, whatever name or concept one envisions. With the change in your beliefs and ideas, you begin to make efforts, not only for your personal expression, but for the larger good, to serve something greater than yourself.

You begin to feel that there is something expansive and you are in service to that. As mind grows in magnitude, understanding of that expansiveness grows. You begin to understand wholeness, the interweaving and the interconnectedness of all life. You begin to see the substantive nature behind the forms. Knowledge grows in magnitude until finally the Self becomes visible and you move into the stage of *Moksha*, liberation of mind and liberation from bondage in the world of duality. This is the evolution of ego development towards expansiveness.

Finally, when *Moksha* becomes the aim of life, ego dissolution, or perhaps ego expansion, occurs to the point where

you are liberated from the bondage of identity with the small sense of self. You begin to see yourself in all beings and all beings within yourself. There ceases to be an ego driven sense of 'self' and 'other' and life becomes one continual flow of unitary wholeness.

Moksha is a complete dissolution of your ego and of your sense of a separate self. When the sense of duality, the sense of "I and Thou" and of separateness, is surrendered completely, you realize that you are *Purusha*, Eternal Consciousness. You realize that all things witnessed and experienced in the body and the mind are but a play within the cosmic realm of existence, and that your inherent nature is eternal, aware intelligence, an undying consciousness that has always been and always will be.

From Dharma to Moksha

The eightfold path of *Ashtanga yoga*, laid down by Patanjali in the *Yoga Sutras*, gives the *yogic* practices of *Yama* and *Niyama*. They are recommendations for behaviors, or ethical codes, that assist you to transform your ego development towards *Dharma* and the realization of *Moksha*. The sense of honesty, nobility, compassion, kindness, mercy, love and truth become the qualities and emotions that surround those who dedicate themselves to *Dharma* and the one eternal Self of all beings.

In dedicating yourself to that eternal unitary consciousness, you find that the sense of "I and mine" begins to fall away like layers of old skin. What remains is the radiant heart of loving kindness and compassion for all beings.

When you see yourself in others and others in yourself, when you know a love that does not divide or judge, then you begin to see that all are One, not only in the blissful high of *samadhi* but in pain, in struggle and in sorrows. In your humanity, you are one with other people and with all of the living beings.

When ego evolves in the natural cycle from *Kama* to *Artha* to *Dharma* and finally to *Moksha*, your *Prana Dharma* or core characteristics, evolve. You may have the same personality, but you begin to resonate more closely with your spiritual essence. This is the natural flow of *Dharma*, from the little and bound to the great and expansive. Thus, your *Prana Dharma* is actualized.

However, when the evolution of ego gets blocked, then *Prana Dharma* becomes suppressed. When a person feels that they cannot get ahead in life, that, no matter what they do, life isn't working, they may turn to drugs, alcohol, or other addictive or self-destructive behaviors. These behaviors tend to emerge when a person cannot express their core self in an ego expansive movement towards the Divine.

When you have animals you are close to, you will notice their pains, their joys, their struggles, their happiness and their love. You can feel unity with them. This can also happen with plants as well. All life is bound together in the struggle to live and survive, in the difficulties, in the shortcomings, in love and in the height of spiritual awareness. In all these ways, you find there is unity and that all beings are part of your own Self.

When you begin to feel this way, your *Prana Dharma* is no longer a limited personal path. It is the path of love. It is at every moment an expression of a love that unifies all living beings in compassion, kindness and caring, even the smallest and the least.

This cannot be achieved in the halls of the intellect, but it can be known when you dedicate yourself to the service of living beings and to the service of *Parama Purusha*, the infinite Divinity. It is through meditation, that you begin to soften the outer encrustations that may surround the heart due to pain you have experienced. When you let the fear to really love, to really care, fall away and let self-consciousness dissolve, love is there in your meditation and in your day-to-day life.

Let love and compassion be your guiding force, not your intellect or your ideas. When your intellect is subservient to your love and compassion and you surrender your will to Divine will, then you can attain wisdom and *Moksha*. Love understands what the mind cannot. A loving heart has compassion for all life and care for all beings. It knows that each and every one is part of itself. When *Dharma* lives in you, whatever you do, large and small, will surely bring wellbeing to all.

When you realize your immortal nature, you realize that Eternal Consciousness, *Parama Purusha* is the “seer” that has experienced your life and is the same *Purusha* that witnesses all existence. *Dharma* is the great way to knowledge of this immortal nature and *Moksha*, liberation from ignorance into your universal existence.

Expressions of Dharma

All things have their way, their own properties and place in the whole of what is. To find *dharma* is to find your place, your way. Your *Prana Dharma* defines your personal seat, your way or destiny, what is right for you. For example, someone may have the inherent characteristics of a warrior and thus an urge to protect and defend property, family and country, valuing in their heart noble deeds and defense and protection of people. This may be a core quality for them.

Another person's core characteristic may be a desire to work with their hands, to make or fix things. They may want to become a carpenter or plumber and live a simple, unperturbed family life. They don't want to do anything grandiose.

The expression of these two individuals will differ. Each will express their own *Prana Dharma*, or core characteristics. When you express your *Prana Dharma* or true leanings in the world, you follow your *Svadharmā*, the duty or role you are meant to fulfill. If you fail to do this, you will lack alignment with yourself and feel some discontent. The inner person needs to be expressed in the outer world. So, express your inner characteristics and potential. That is your personal *dharma*.

You also have a universal human *dharma*, a movement towards your Divine source. It is an innate human tendency to want to find expansiveness, freedom and an unchanging inner sanctuary where you are not lonely or separate. When you want to follow *dharma*, to move towards the Divine,

you will naturally begin to admire and, if possible, incorporate behaviors that reflect a love for living beings. To be closer to the Supreme, you will want to adopt integrity, nobility, truthfulness, loving kindness, compassion and all higher qualities. The closer you come, the more divine qualities and characteristics you display.

Some people simply believe only in the material world and base everything in the physical universe. For them the body and the brain are all that is; life ends there. However, there are other people who are not quite as materially based and believe that animals, plants and humans have a relationship to each other. They understand the interwoven, interconnected network of life and how all of the ecosystems of the world are interdependent.

From an ecological point of view, one can say there is a web of life, a network, and that no one is an island. Everyone is a part of this interdependent network and no one is entirely separate. There is a need to realize your place, your *dharma*, in the web of life. When people are out of balance and out of place with this network of life, they create disturbance in the ecosystem and their world goes out of balance. By centering yourself and harmonizing with all life, you can feel the integrated wholeness that extends even beyond the planet to the stars and into the whole of the cosmos. We all exist in this harmonious web of life, even the planets, the solar system and the universe.

We are all together in this magnificent living connection. All life on the planet is like one organism; it all functions together as the liver and spleen and kidneys all function together. Different species function together to form *Gaia*,

the living organism we call Earth. To create and experience such harmony of being there is a need for people to follow *dharma*, a need to find their place in the scheme of things, individually and collectively.

Krishna says in the *Bhagavat Gita*, "It is better to die following one's own *dharma* than to live following the *dharma* of another." When you follow your own *dharma*, naturally you are in your seat of power. When you come out of that seat, you come out of your strength. The deeper you connect to Divine Consciousness, the more you feel the flow of divine energy. Rather than your egoism being behind your actions, Divine Consciousness transforms them into a deeper, stronger more sublime expression.

When you move towards the Great, you realize that your purpose is to open the bright sunshine of your soul. Surely that will bring happiness to you. When the fetters of "I and mine" dissolve, you feel the wholeness of unitary being, and you have something to give to humanity, a knowledge that goes beyond ordinary capacity. It is no longer your capacity but the capacity of Divine Being.

Only the ego stands between you and the Infinite. Take down that umbrella of ego and let the One divinity flow in you. Let the Divine Consciousness express through you. Be the hands and feet of the Divine in this world and keep your mind immersed in unconditional love and the truth of your being. Then your human potential will be realized, and your human life will be great. To move towards the Supreme is *dharma*. The spiritual path, properly applied, is the path of *dharma*, of harmony with essential being. May your path ever run true and your deep source ever shine bright.

The Suppression of Dharma and Disease

Each and every person wants to be able to realize their destiny, their personal *dharma*. Each wants to be able to feel that they can fully express who they are and can offer something to this world. To want to express your innermost essence, the true feelings of your heart, and to have them be well-received in this world is a natural desire.

From within you, comes this natural urge to express that which is nearest and dearest to you, to give it voice. This is your *Svadharmā*, your duty. It is a fulfilled human life when one can find one's own destiny, one's own *dharma* and the means to express it in this world. This is an important part of a successful human life, leading to physical and mental health, to be able to find this expression, this voice of one's inner being, of one's heartfelt thoughts and feelings.

When your self-expression is suppressed and your deepest heartfelt feelings cannot be successfully shared with others, a dampening of the heart comes about. A little sorrow sets in. You feel an inhibition of the natural flow that occurs from within your heart, from within your soul. Certain illnesses can occur in the body when the expression of your vitality and your heartfelt sentiment is suppressed. It creates a backing up of vital forces within the psyche and within the physical form that eventually can lead to conditions of disease. For health, there is need for a receptive, clear mind that can process your experiences in life. The mind, like the

body, has a digestive capacity. It receives and integrates your experiences.

When this capacity is lacking, there will be an inability to receive psychic nutrients, if it is on the mental plane, or physical nutrients, if the digestive difficulty is on the physical plane. If there is fear or some other barrier that prevents this receptive capacity, then that karmic barrier needs to be explored and addressed so that you can increase your ability to digest life experiences and integrate them, just as you digest food. If this mental indigestion continues over time, it can become physical, creating diseases in the body.

If your expressive capacity is blocked, then the energies of your vital force that flows out into the world becomes suppressed. Your voice in the world is not heard. Your ideas, your heartfelt sentiments are not appreciated. When you lead a life that is out of sync with your inner being, leading to suppression of your inner self, then this backing up of vital force will also eventually result in disease.

In today's modern world, a primary difficulty for many people is that the personality they present to the world is not the same as the person they are on the inside. If there is a gap between the inner man or inner woman and the outer man or woman, there will be an unhealthiness to the same degree as the gap. Be exactly who you are, in every word you speak, in every action you perform. Express what you truly think and feel. When the inner person and the outer person are the same and you are not putting on false airs to please or appease others, then the potential for health increases.

This dichotomy between the inner experience and the outer presentation is all too common and leads to a kind of dual life where the real person does not find expression. You may find this disease in yourself. You certainly will find this condition in others. It is a condition of the modern world. It has not always been thus, but, in today's world, people feel a great deal of pressure to be other than their authentic self.

What happens when you take on pseudo-identities? You become confused as to who you are, what you really think, what you really want, what you really intend, what you really feel. You become confused between the impressions you leave with others and who you are inside. After some time, who you are and what you really think becomes inaccessible. You feel that you cannot be yourself, that people won't accept you. This breeds inferiority feelings and the suppression of your *Svadharmā*. Your expression of your innate core characteristics, *Prana Dharma*, is also suppressed and you cannot feel the full happiness that comes with complete self-expression.

These seem like simple concepts, but in these fundamental problems with the expression of energy and with the reception of love and vitality, the seeds of disease are fostered. This is because love is whole and unconditional. Your nature is not divided; you are one. You are an integrated whole with all that is around and within you. All that you are wants expression within the wholeness of being.

All is waves of love in movement and waves of consciousness in movement. When the movement freezes, disease arises. The longer it stops moving, the greater the

problem. If it becomes a habitual pattern, the energetics surrounding your life eventually become a pattern affecting your physical form.

Disease does not start in the physical form. It starts in the subtle body and moves from the subtle body into the mind and into the physical body. It will often first move into the mind as a particular mental pattern. Then it will move into the physical body. Disease cannot be cured in the physical body alone, because its seeds lie in the subtle body. If the seeds of a disease are not addressed, even though you temporarily heal the symptoms in the body, the problem will arise again in one form or another.

In breathing in and breathing out, you are an expression of divine love. You are an expression of divine existence in this world. You breathe in the reception of divine existence in the form of this world and you breathe out the inner expression. You are ever in a perpetual state of moving energy. When this energy is flowing properly in the subtle body from the inner world to the outer world and the outer world to the inner world, you stay in balance and enjoy physical and mental well-being.

When the energies of the subtle body are flowing, there is no block. So, the origin of disease lies in the fundamental imbalances of this process of movement and the blockage of *Prana Dharma* or flow of your inner self out into the outer world.

When the energy channels of the body are blocked for long periods of time, then the disease process causes a solidification of the energy and becomes physical. As stated, the process of disease does not start in the physical body, and if

you attempt to cure the physical body but do not adjust the energetic flows, then the movement in and out stays blocked with inhibitions, fears, inferiority complexes, superiority complexes, so many complexes.

Without healing the underlying energetic cause, though medicines are applied, and therapies tried, you may find that the disease healed in one part of the body reemerges six months later in another part of the body in another form. The real healing comes on a deeper level, comes with the release of the blockage in the energetic body, in the pain body, in the mind and in the heart of a person, in the flow of vital energy through the body.

Healing Practices

The *yogic* practice of *asana*, or *yoga* postures, is very effective in releasing energetic blockage. It gets the body moving and stimulates the glands, *chakras* and nerve centers, and this encourages subtle energetic flows. *Pranayama*, breath techniques, also do this. But it is through meditation practices that the deepest healing may occur.

When the mind can settle and sink deep, then the real connection with the vital energy of the cosmos occurs. When this vitality floods through the body, it brings all manner of healing. It balances and regulates all of the biochemistry of the body. Through meditation practice, great vitality and healing is brought to the body and mind. It is like getting plugged in to the current of Divine Consciousness. A person may experience a great deal of vital energy, rearranging, balancing and healing of all the areas of depletion.

When the flow of divine energy gets blocked, it is like blocking the flow of blood to your appendages. If you do this, they will wither. They will grow weak, having no vital flow to feed them, and eventually begin to die. When the *pranic* body and subtle energetic flows are blocked, the same is true; a type of withering occurs. When the body receives vital life force in meditative practices, it begins to resonate with the vibration of that life force and, if it is not too far gone, it will come back to life.

So, meditation is not only for your self-development; it is your greatest tool to heal the body and the mind. Through association with the Divine and the maintenance of the flow of vital force through you, balance can happen in both the physical and subtle bodies. It is very healing.

Through deep meditation, many conditions and diseases will just go away. You may feel that you don't know what happened; they just, one day, disappeared. Then you think, "Oh, maybe it was in my mind." That is not necessarily so. If you are doing deep meditation, it can transform the very cells of your body.

Dharma and Adharma

To discriminate between *dharmic* and *adharmic* action, you need to first understand *dharma*. You cannot know *dharma* by mere external activities, nor by thinking. *Dharma* emanates from the cosmic nucleus. You know it through deep self-inquiry.

People think they represent *dharma* and are *dharmic* but what is the truth? How can you know who is *dharmic* and who is not? Although it is the birthright of all, very few possess *dharma*. People struggle to realize it; they fight for it; they even give their lives for it. But those who possess *dharma* are very rare. There is little understanding of the deeper laws. Many wars are fought, and battles waged, because so few possess this great quality.

Adharma arises when individuals or societies lose balance and begin to move out of harmony with universal law. *Adharma* moves away from cosmic source and arises when your true calling in life is suppressed. This lack of alignment leads to personal degeneration and sorrow and to collective ills and suffering. *Adharma* arises when people put greed and personal gain over love and human kindness. It leads to fights, wars, and harm to living beings. *Adharma* is a movement towards the darker side of life and the lower, less savory, inclinations of human nature. *Dharma*, on the other hand, supports the more generous and sentient aspects of people.

Following *dharma*, there are those who, by dint of deep meditation, unite with the will of the Sublime. They align themselves with the divine flow of cosmic love. They do not want anything, do not hurt others but lift the society upwards towards noble ideals. How do we discern those who are established in *dharma*? They can be known, not by their slogans but by their kind and compassionate actions. They may be stern, but their sternness will result in benefit to all. They do not claim that their cause is the only important one. They do not proclaim themselves above others.

Their attitude is that of a simple man or woman with no great ambition or agenda. They will not condemn you. They will not impose themselves on you but will do their best to aid you. The results of their actions are benign.

Dharma is a rare possession, but it is an ideal that all should strive to realize. It comes when individuality becomes subdued and Supreme Consciousness finds expression. *Dharma* consists of everything that leads to this end. Human beings have one *dharma* and that is to establish themselves in the Sublime. Carry the flag of *dharma* to all! Be steadfast in your adherence to it.

All deep and ethical, social and political philosophies have been given so that human beings may have the opportunity to realize their *dharma*. That is not to say that people do not falter when they attempt to understand and to implement the tenets of *dharma*. When you falter, pick yourself up, brush yourself off and start anew. Never become disheartened. The Supreme Being is guiding and blessing each and every one of you who struggles to establish yourself in *dharma*. Oh, my children, be great!

Your Dharmic Connection to Nature

Human beings have a fundamental relationship to the natural world. We do not live in a vacuum but are a part of an integral whole. You and all living beings are part and parcel of a natural world with a vast network of life. Mountains, seas, animals, plants, trees, all are a part of an integrated

whole of existence. Even the soil and rocks of the Earth itself are part of this integrated whole.

At times, human beings isolate themselves in cities and in man-made structures where their only association is with other human beings, human technology, and human artifacts. As a result, they become disconnected, disassociated from their essential nature. They are isolated from an immense portion of their being and, in this situation, tend to forget their relationship to the life around them. Their association with *dharma* diminishes.

When people then go into settings that are not man-made but part of the natural world, they feel an expansiveness, a connectedness. They feel their essential nature in connection to the mountains, to the sea, to the stars in the heavens. Feeling connected to animals and plants in the natural world is often an exhilarating experience. People become impassioned to spend time in nature. This is because, in a natural setting, the experience of connectedness to the wholeness of their being is far more accessible. In nature, with life all around them, people feel a vitality that association with human artifacts, human buildings and human-made materials alone does not supply. These objects made by human hands have a certain lifelessness that does not reflect the vitality of the living world that surrounds us. When people relate to their inner nature, they find they are connected to the outer nature as well; and when they relate to the outer nature, it stirs their relationship to their inner nature. All the so-called natural world is connected, interwoven. Everything is a part of living ecosystems that weave together and interconnect. The trees, the mountains, the animals, they're all alive.

Communion with the Natural World

There is *Prana*, or life force, in all of nature, a *Pranic* vitality in living beings with minds of their own. The vast network of roots under the Earth form a communication system, a network of intelligent life that we barely understand. But, when you are around the trees in a natural setting, the life-force and intelligence can be felt. When people are open and paying attention, a communion takes place on a nonverbal level.

We may not speak the language of the trees. We may not speak the language of the animals. Each has their own language, their own means of communication. But when we are around them and our minds are quiet and we slow down a bit, then we can feel our relationship to the trees, to the animals, to the plants. Then, if we really listen, we can begin to intuitively perceive the language of these beings.

When we make our minds receptive, communication with life around us, with trees, animals, the different species of plants become visible, audible, tangible. We are able to intuitively communicate. We begin to feel their experience of their existence. This is called empathy. With empathy we can feel the experiences of another. When we begin to feel the feelings of different living beings, we are able to know them fully, to relate to them.

There is a *yogic* practice for enhancing this ability. It is called *Samyama*. In *Samyama*, the *yogi* ideates on a particular form, whether it be a tree, a rock, an animal or a particular plant, and focuses full concentration upon it. In the process of *Samyama*, you imagine the form before you and

put yourself into that form. That is to say, you feel the experience of that life form being itself. When your mind is subtle and attuned, you can begin to know that being's experience and are able to commune and communicate. This is a *yogic* ability that comes with quieting the mind and concentration upon a given form. The form should be a natural form, not an object, though this concentration of *Samyama* can be done on any form.

With your mind attuned and subtle, you have the capacity to hear the language of the trees, a language not spoken in words. Movement in the minds of trees is different than in humans, but communication can occur, nonetheless. Trees speak in a different way. They speak of the wind and of the sun and of the rain. They speak of the silence and the harmony. They speak the language of *dharma*, of the eternal laws of the cosmos.

Trees live in harmony with *dharma* and remind us of our connection to all of life and our place in the world. The minds of trees are very calming to human beings. Their life force is a kind of counterbalance to human form. While we absorb oxygen and give off CO₂, they absorb CO₂, and give off oxygen. The same counterbalance is true in their mental patterns. While we engage in frenetic activity, they engage in peace and calm and the slowness of the Earth. Thus, trees can be great healers of the human mind and even the human body. There can be friendship between people and trees. Deep in the silent realms of *dharma* this harmony abides.

In this age, the age of humans, many younger trees are not so expressive of their being. Their minds are inward, quieter. There have been ages in the world where the trees

were more prominent and their mental flows more expansive. This can still be felt in the great trees, the ancient ones, but it is not as common as before. Most trees have drawn their vital force inward and are more difficult to draw out into communication. Yet it can occur.

The Nature of Trees

Trees generally live in great forests and are not entirely individualized entities. They are a part of a community with their life force blended together. There is often a leader, a great tree from whom all the other trees will take signals, a mother or father tree, a great tree that leads the collective of the trees. The trees have such interwoven connectedness with the forest and the other trees around them that they become almost one entity, though they have their individual expression as well.

Frenetic activity is far less in trees than in animals and humans. Their growth is slow and calm. There is indeed movement, but it is slower and contained, so they can rely on an interwoven mindset. There is less of a sense of individuality, which, though present, is just not as developed as in animals and particular mammals and human beings.

Some trees are highly evolved spiritually and to be around those beings is of great benefit to human beings. Our connection to *dharma* in general, and specifically to our *Bhagavat Dharma*, our human *dharma*, is supported by the natural world. It is significantly harder to follow *dharma* when we are disconnected from the life that surrounds us, and those ancient, wise beings of different species have much to teach us of *dharma*.

The Power of the Earth

The Earth itself is also alive but the life force of the Earth, of the rocks and mountains, is quite different from that developed in animate beings. There is indeed *Prana* in the Earth when it is unmolested and untouched. The rocks themselves have life force and hold a balance. The Earth itself has mental movement, but its mental movement is very slow, not on the radar of human beings; though too slow for human perception to appreciate, we can nonetheless feel the *Prana*, the vital energy.

The rocks have an order of their own in which they relate to each other and evolve. They develop crystals and other types of rock that have greater capacity to focus vital force through this process of crystallization. Rocks in the Earth have their own life cycle, their own way of growing. There is a relationship between the rocks, the water, and the air. The elements express in the Earth itself. The water, air and Earth all form relationships, studied in the human science of geology. But what the human sciences do not study is the mental flow and *Pranic* force of this great Earth upon which we abide. This Earth is our mother. Your body is made of the elements of this Earth.

The Earth is composed of five basic elements: matter, water, fire, air, and ether or space. These elements are, in turn, each a combination of the three fundamental modes of existence or attributes of *Prakriti* called *Gunas*. They are *Tamas*, the static attribute that make things solid or fixed, *Rajas*, the capacity of movement and activity and *Sattva*, subtle sentience, purity, essence. The varied combinations of

the fundamental modes of the *Gunas* form the five elements in harmony with the cosmic mind.

The five elements are the paint brush of cosmic creation, and the Earth is its progeny, its created expression. The Earth is a living planet with its own vitality, its own mental existence, and its own urge to grow and evolve. Out of the desire to grow and evolve and increase in sentience has come the whole gamut of life as we know it. Your own body and mind are an expression of this vital life evolving.

The Healing Power of Nature

As a human being you have a great treasure, the ability to quiet your restless physical energy and open to the natural world around you: to the mountains, the sky, the stars and all the living beings on the planet. You have the potential to feel life around you and merge into it, to become connected to the vitality of life and become part of this marvelous cosmos. With this awareness, you gain the capacity to melt into the cosmic Source of this network of life.

This experience is much easier to access in a natural setting, but the human mind is so subtle and supple that even visualization of a natural setting can bring it to life. With your mind, you can go out into that vital living environment, leaving behind the houses, factories and creations that humans have made. Those creations of man cannot compare to the creations of Earth. The creations of humankind are brittle and lack *Prana* or vital life force, so they do not nurture people as the creations of the Earth nurture people. The creations of the five natural elements, expressed in Earth, water, fire, air, and

space, nurture the human heart and the human soul because they are our very origin. We are connected, interwoven with the life that surrounds us.

A person sitting on the 15th floor of their skyscraper, in their room in front of their computer, day in and day out, can become disconnected. They may feel isolated, alone and even depressed because they are cut off from their origin. A month in nature is often a very good cure when a person is unable to find renewal in an environment made by human hands. Towns and cities often lack the *Pranic* vitality that can be found in a natural setting where life abounds.

Children who have become mentally ill or behaviorally disturbed will often improve vastly if brought out into the woods or other natural settings. At first their minds may react negatively to the experience, but, after some time, the healing properties of the trees and the vitality of the life around them begin to break down their closed-off, isolated experience. The shell starts falling away and their spirits become alive. These children return to their schools changed.

Sometimes children can be adversely affected by settings where there is no life but human life. They do not feel their spirit connection to the land, the Earth, the animals, and the trees. So, they build a psychic wall of indifference and numbness around themselves. Within their walled-off world they often become depressed, angry or even violent.

However, if they can find the link and reconnect with the natural world, then this shell begins to break down and their spirits become alive. Then they can be true human beings. Otherwise, the encrusted coverings of material existence, which does not fulfill the human heart, suppresses their spirit

and they head into difficult realms of depression and anger.

It is vital to human beings to have this relationship to the natural world, to the trees, animals and plants; to remember and feel again that we are a part of a whole of life on this planet. If you get separated from it for very long, you will feel the negative impact. So, take time to connect to this network of life. Feel the vitality in the roots of the trees, singing the song of life all around you, beneath your feet in the Earth. Feel the animals, the birds, the fish, all life in the water, the life of the mountains. Feel the life around you. Walk connected to the life around you. Don't isolate. Then your spirit can fly.

How Much Time to Spend in Nature

I do not know if there is a minimum or a maximum amount of time to spend in nature. Some people spend many hours in nature but are shut down and don't feel the connection. Most farmers or woodsmen who live near nature are very attuned, but some think only about what they want or need. They don't notice the nature around them, though they are still impacted. On the other hand, there are those who have little time to spend in nature but, when they go out in a natural setting, they are thrilled, exhilarated. They feel it very strongly.

So, there is no minimum or maximum exposure time, but I will say this: It is important that some portion of each day, of each week, be spent in a natural setting or near to nature. In the cold months, when all the leaves have fallen and the trees turn inward, if you go outside and stand near them you may not feel them any more than you feel them in your house. But the *Prana*, the vital energy, is there at all times

in nature, even in the winter. If your house has some trees nearby or you live with animals, it can be helpful. If you are around people or other living beings, it helps. There are those *yogis* and religious individuals who may discourage you from having animals in your home, noting that animals are a lesser form, and will adversely affect you if kept too close. I say “no” to this notion. The animals are living beings and it is important that you are connected with the living world around you.

There are even research studies confirming that an elderly person will maintain better health if they have as a companion a cat, dog or other animal, much better than if they are alone. This is because the affection that arises in the person for the animal that they care for increases their *Prana*, their meaning in life and connection to life. This sustains them.

For optimal physical and mental health, it is important to take time each day to either be with the animals that surround you or with plants. Take walks in nature. They are revitalizing, especially if you let your mind open and roam into the nature around you and do not spend the entire time in your head, thinking about different things you need to do.

Notice the nature around you. That is when you begin to open your heart and mind and you feel the web of life. This ability to be in harmony with all beings of the world is a part and parcel of the way of *dharma*. When you disconnect from the web of life around you, you disconnect from *dharma*. To send your spirit to soar on wings of an eagle, to be at peace on a mountain top, dive deep in the sea and know the interwoven interconnected wholeness of life, moving towards the essential nature at the core of all existence, this is *dharma*.

SECTION II

Dharma
and Social Change

Dharma and Life in Balance

D*harma* needs to be followed both by individuals and by the collective society as a whole. When an individual is out of alignment with *dharma*, their life becomes disjointed and they cease to have a harmony with the world around them. They become self-centered and self-absorbed. When a society, a nation, state, social or religious group, is out of alignment with *dharma*, the society begins to fragment and lose its balance. *Prama*, the cosmic principle maintaining a stable balance in the universe, is lost.

Prama is very significant in understanding *dharma* and living harmony. It refers to the basic balance maintained in the interwoven web of life, the harmony that makes the universe work as a whole. All beings obey the rhythm of nature's flow and, in doing so, are in a smooth and blissful relationship to life. People can live in complete composure, unhindered joy and happiness when life is in balance and *prama* is present. However, this situation of blissful harmony changes with the emergence of desires such as greed, domination, and power, which create a civilization out of alignment with its surrounding world. It also changes in a person's life when they lose this delicate balance and *prama* evades them.

The collective spirit of a people awakens when fed by the whole of the society. Society needs to support the development of the people within it. If not, it becomes a hindrance to its citizens and members, imposing social structures and

norms that impede a person from being able to realize their own personal *dharma* and feel happiness and success in life. People suffer when their basic needs for food, clothing and shelter, as well as their needs for access to expansive thinking, devotion, and a way to find mysticism in their lives are not met. The heavy hand of oppression weighs down on people under these circumstances.

A person who is hungry, who does not have shelter, or other basic needs met, food for their family, a house and home, will have difficulty pursuing spiritual goals. So, first and foremost, the fundamental physical needs of a person for adequate food, health and home need to be met. It is the responsibility of the collective society to look to the welfare of its members. Once these needs are met, immediately the inner need for something expansive, something noble, some higher values and connection to deep internal source arises. Then, an understanding of *dharma* becomes possible. Religions of the world have been formed to assist people to find meaning and the deeper esoteric teachings; the mystical path has come into existence for those whose hearts are most sincere to discover *dharma*.

Many societies in the world today do not foster this mysticism, or even religion, due to the strong dominance of materialism. Materialism has brought the world into disharmony. The societies of the world, the nations, the states, have lost their balance, lost their fundamental relationship with all the other living beings on the planet and with the rhythms and harmonies of the world. People, without *Prama*, without balance with the world around them,

become disconnected, self-absorbed. They lose the path of *dharma* in their lives.

The materialism of today is the result of the age of the merchant societies, the *Vaishya* age, coming to a close. The emphasis upon material well-being and material wealth has, in many parts of the world, become so dominant that people absorbed in this material life lose their spiritual hearts. The materialistic society fosters an attitude of dominance over nature, abusing and mistreating animals and disturbing the balance of life upon the planet. As a result, devastation occurs. Devastation today is reaching the point where not only are animals suffering and the environment being destroyed, but the existence of human beings themselves is threatened by the planet's reaction to out-of-balance material approaches to human life and to exploitation at large.

Chaos results when *dharma* has been forsaken and *prama* is lost. The natural laws that bring harmony to the planet and to all the species of living beings are being violated, and thus the ecological systems and natural order of the world are disrupted. The result is loss of many species, loss of environmental stability and changes in weather patterns. Nature, out of balance, becomes wild, destructive. People have formed societies with the attitude of a conqueror, rather than in harmony with the planet and its natural laws, and those societies are now threatened. The atrocities done to living beings upon the planet in the name of progress have an impact. As the planet moves from order to disorder, from harmony to chaos, the forces unleashed are powerful,

and they will reorder the world until harmony is regained and *dharma* restored.

When there is harmony between all beings, and the natural order of the planet restored, calm will return to this world. But until such a time, there is bound to be chaos, because *dharma* is not being followed. For *dharma* inherently establishes harmony with the natural order of all that is. *Dharma* is the law, the law of this universe, not the law of man. It is the law which governs the relationship of all beings and their cosmic source. When followed, that law brings balance. When not followed, it creates grave difficulties, for a world without *dharma* cannot survive.

So, what to do when living beings lose *dharma* and society loses *prama*, balance? What to do? First and foremost, remember that you are a part of an interwoven, interconnected tapestry of life. When the threads of this tapestry are being pulled apart, you can be a force to weave those threads together by aligning yourself with *dharma* in your spiritual life. Connecting with the deeper Source of your being, connecting with *Parama Purusha*, the highest being, the highest consciousness, allows the harmony that flows from that One to flow into you, into your life and into your actions in the world.

Each and every one of you has the capacity to make change by changing yourself. Internally, in your spiritual life, align yourself with *dharma*, with the harmony of all existence and the path towards the One eternal being, towards *Parama Purusha*. By doing this, you bring that consciousness, that force of enlightened being into yourself and closer to the Earth. That force is the source of *dharma*. It will harmonize and heal and bring society back in order.

This shift that needs to happen, will happen, not by the rise of one ruler or another, but by the efforts of each and every person to follow *dharma*, to live for *dharma*, and to bring *dharma* into the world. Follow *dharma* wherever it leads, whether it be saving the lives of living beings, saving the seeds and food sources, working with the political system, or simply deep meditation, bringing psychic harmony and love into the world by helping people come to their spiritual source. Whatever good work you do, you can be a force for *dharma* and light, for the harmonizing and reworking of the tapestry of life on this planet Earth.

We are in a great transition, a movement towards a unified global *Samaj*, a society based in *dharma*. But this transitional time is one of great upheaval. Human beings have matured in their development to a point where they are capable of greater creativity and accomplishment than ever before on this planet. People have developed great modern technologies and ability to share information beyond the scope of anything ever imagined in the past. Yet these first efforts and newfound skills have been dominated by people's old habits of thinking, focusing on dominion, self-protection, warfare, power, and money. This has led to the technological advancement of weaponry that threatens the very existence of living beings on this planet.

The weapons have become so sophisticated that their destructive power is a threat to life itself. And as the world grows smaller and more interwoven and interconnected through these technologies, through the Internet, through international travel, the old habits of protectionism and the identity with one's nation, one's state or religion tends to

bind people in fear of losing what they have. In this protectionism, people threaten each other and their own existence on this planet.

As a result of human beings living out of balance with the natural order of life and the laws of *dharma*, the planet itself has become imbalanced. The winds of change begin to rise and sweep across the surface of this globe, threatening, not only the animals and plants, but also human societies. The threat of the weapons of mass destruction has become critical but the threat of environmental climate change is equally critical, as the out-of-control forces of nature are unleashed, sweeping across the planet in an effort to bring the planet back into harmony with natural laws.

Today there are rising seas, violent storms and extreme weather patterns, massive fires, species extinctions and changes in the water table, all due to human use and exploitation. These changes have been caused by human beings, but what the Earth will do, in the chain reaction that follows, is due to the natural interactive process of earthly chain-reactions and responses. The world is a fragile ecosystem, and, if you alter one thing, you can cause a chain reaction that will change everything. This can happen very quickly, as is the situation today. When this happens the process of change and destruction is taken out of our hands, as the Earth recalibrates.

The Earth has gone through similar dramatic reactions and responses in the distant past. However, without the greed of human beings, who in their ignorance, are exploiting resources, creating pollution and causing harm to the planet, these changes would not be triggered at this time. It is human intervention and abuse of the planet that is causing

climate change and the resulting extinction burst and loss of so many species.

The triggers for massive Earth changes and extinctions have varied over the eons of Earth's history. In the early development of the planet, when the land was still unstable, there were many great volcanic explosions. The reasons for dramatic changes in the past have been geological, but the dramatic changes of today are triggered by the actions of human beings.

This disruption could possibly take many lifetimes to settle. But human beings are no longer living in the Dark Ages. Human society has vast technologies and great ability. If that ability were directed in accordance with *dharma*, in harmony with the natural laws of the universe, rather than in self-protection, self-centered greed and selfishness, then *prama* would be restored.

Balance could come much faster if technology was utilized in the flow of compassion, love, and harmony that comes from *Parama Purusha*, divine Being, to support the natural order in our world. The disruption of *dharma* on the planet could be resolved and the planet restored to its natural order.

However, to make this change in how we utilize our resources would take a more evolved psychology on the part of many people. The dramatic disruptions to climate, threats of weapons of mass destruction, pollution and extinctions of species are ultimately a result of humanity getting stuck in a self-centered, self-absorbed psychology and a pressing need for us to evolve. The cutting edge of the evolution of consciousness on Earth rests with human beings.

I have noted before that people are but the children of the Earth. The Earth evolves to greater levels of conscious awareness and intelligence via the evolution of the different species living upon it. They are the very form Earth, or *Gaia*, manifests as she develops greater and greater conscious, intelligent awareness. So, I would say that, in the end, the evolution of consciousness is triggering this tumultuous change. It is a stage of evolution. The child is old enough to play with fire, but not to know what it does, or that he or she can be burned by it.

Consciousness is developing. It will continue to develop, and as it does, the greed and self-centered ego orientation that dominates humanity will evolve to a more mature intelligence. The Earth is one being, and the children of the Earth are part of it. Awakening of consciousness is the evolutionary change needed to bring human beings beyond this destructive stage.

As a child grows, he or she becomes more intelligent and does not engage in the silly, childish actions of a young one! As mind grows in magnitude and human beings evolve, maturity will come. But right now, we are at a critical turning point: evolve or die.

There is a new day coming, a bright future for humanity. But there are difficult times ahead. In all of this change, there is a shift from a *Vaishyas* or merchant-based society, through a *Shudra* revolution of the people, to a *Kshatriya* or an orderly, structured society. With this shift, there will also be a change in the relationship of patriarchy and matriarchy. This alteration in the role of women is an integral part of the evolutionary shift.

The overarching archetype of Mother brings grace to the world and the will to live. The Mother brings life forward and affirms life. She never wants her children to suffer or harm to come to them. The archetype of the Mother embodies the desire to nurture. The instinctual realm of patriarchy brings territorial values, protectionism and dominance over nature. But with the rise of the Divine Mother in the human psyche, there is a rise of compassion for living beings, embodying the nurturing of the mother for the child.

As the strength of the feminine grows in magnitude in the psyche of living beings, so does this attitude. With this compassion, both populations on the move and populations residing in more stable areas, will find their common, caring integration. Care for the welfare of all beings, for the welfare of people from all countries, all races will emerge in the world. Care will be given to the welfare of animals and plants and to sustaining the planet itself. This will become the dominate movement in the world and the territorialism of patriarchy, that divides the world into countries, regions and separate places owned by people, will fade from the human psyche.

This change is coming. It is part of this great change which is now beginning. Due to the rise of the feminine in the world, humanity will survive. The masculine and feminine forces in the world will now find their balance, bringing both protection and strength, nurturance and love. Together these forces will bring the world back into harmony.

But, for this to happen, the societies of men and women will need to adopt *dharma* and let go of self-centeredness, self-protection, and fear of each other. The vitality and

technology used to build weapons of mass destruction can be rechanneled into methodologies to restore balance and harmony within the natural order of this planet. When human beings learn to put all of their modern capacities and abilities to this task, a more developed human society with right purpose and right action will be formed. Human beings can evolve, and the destructive force that threatens the very existence of life as we know it can be turned around.

This change starts with each and every one of us. It is not something that is someone else's responsibility. It is your responsibility. When enough people begin to follow *dharmā*, begin to stand for life, truth, kindness, compassion, and the harmony of all beings, the welfare of all beings, then positive change will occur. Humanity will transition to a new level of consciousness, but this change starts with each and every one of us. How much destruction, how much threat will it take for enough people to wake up? That is the question.

Human beings have a very strong inherent instinct for survival. There was a time when building armies and conquering the lands of others benefited people. They grew, they developed, they enhanced their resources. But those times are over. Now these very aggressive forces and the psychology of power and self-aggrandizement, for acquiring more money and resources for yourself or your state, religion or nation, will only lead to destruction for you and for your society. Now, people need each other, if we are going to survive. We need to let go of our self-centered, self-seeking, material emphasis, and place value on the welfare of all beings on this planet.

When you dedicate your heart, your mind and your actions in the world to this intent, the world will change. You may think, "I'm just a little person, what can I do?" But when you and millions of others take this approach, the world will change. When it does, human beings will rally and begin to align with *dharma*. They will work in coordinated cooperation with each other throughout the globe to build harmony and make peace with the natural world.

The psychology of exploitation will be replaced by the psychology of harmony for the collective good of all beings and the planet itself. This change will save the world. And I am very certain it will happen, even though people seem very hard-headed and want to keep trying to succeed by dominance and exploitation. That psychology will crumble in the recognition that the survival of friends and family, clan, state, nation and world will depend upon making this change.

When balance is restored and all the efforts of humanity are directed towards making peace with the natural order, and following the laws of *dharma*, then these winds of change that come from the disruption in the order of the planet will settle and a new society, in harmony with all life, will exist in this world.

Though a great threat faces the world today, and, in this transition, much destruction may occur, the results will certainly be positive. There is a bright future awaiting humanity, a noble future in which people live in balance with all life and become the guardians and caretakers of this planet, rather than the exploiters. You will see. Surely this is the future for humanity.

So, never be downhearted, never let the turmoil of the day oppress your spirit, even though it may look very dark at times. Know that the future is bright, and *dharma* will be restored to this planet and to the lives of all beings residing on this Earth.

Dharma and Social Change

It is part and parcel of the way of *dharma* to become active putting your spiritual values into action. Opportunities to make positive changes in the world around you are bound to present themselves over time. Taking advantage of those opportunities to do something noble, something that serves living beings, is an integral part to following *dharma*. Supporting *dharma* may include becoming active in community and making social changes. In the call to express your impassioned heart in care and love of all beings in the world, lies the path of *dharma* today.

When you put your spiritual values and the integrity of your practices into action in the world, you express *dharma*. Without *dharma* there can be no right action, for *dharma* is alignment with the way or laws of universal being. Without *dharma* you cannot find the path, for *dharma* is the path. Assisting people to find the way of *dharma* is a great service.

However, when human beings are going hungry, when their minds are afflicted with anger and resentment due to oppression by false ideologies, such as materialism, it is difficult for them to grasp the path of *dharma*. Materialism is the

greatest cause of oppression in today's world. It oppresses the human spirit and makes people feel disheartened, depressed and disassociated from the power of their spirit. The solution to life's problems that is offered to them is "Don't worry; just buy something more." "Just consume." People, under the influence of materialism, are offered the identity of being a consumer.

What is a consumer? What depth of the heart responds to consumption? What depth of the soul responds? In the shadow of materialism, people become like hungry ghosts. Their communities, extended families and even their nuclear families are broken by the values of consumerism. People become lonely. The television tells them not to worry, "Just buy something more." In this way, emptiness develops in the heart. Hollowness and oppression lead to the diminishment of the human spirit. This is the great affliction of millions and millions of people in today's world. It began as an affliction in the West and it has now spread to the East.

This consumerism cannot satisfy the human heart. It is a false ideology. It oppresses the entire planet as large multinational corporations rise to power with their limited vision that locks people in place as production workers and consumers, exploiting them in order to make a profit and exhausting the world's natural resources. For these large capital entities to have success, people must buy into materialism as the god of their world. But it is a hollow god that will not carry people through their lives to a successful end.

Beneath this widespread materialism and related issues, there is the rallying of the human spirit to new paradigms, new ways of thinking. Spirituality in the world today cannot

be separated from these issues, because the spirituality of today lies not only in one's personal development alone but also in answering the clarion call to action in human society.

The Impact of Materialism

When living beings are treated badly, disrespected, oppressed, tortured, humiliated or killed, all for the comfort and benefit of other living beings, it is an offense to *dharma*. Each and every living being is an expression and manifestation of divinity. Nothing is outside of God. All beings are within him. Living beings, small or great, are all a part of the One. None should be harmed. This harming of living beings by others causes a psychic imbalance in the world.

It is natural for human beings to love each other, to love the smallest of creatures, to be close, to associate and to connect. In that connection, the boundaries of "I and mine" dissolve and people feel the completeness of spirit. When we laugh in spontaneous joy with friends and loved ones, we feel the connection of spirit. We experience a union where the sense of separateness disappears. No one is an island, even those living a lonely life without the community of fellow beings. Some may be in human form, some in other forms, but all living beings are a part of a whole. Together we share this world.

It is a tragedy when so many living beings suffer unwanted pains and sorrows because of the greed of others. It creates an imbalance in the world and disharmony enters society. This disharmony is like a record out of its groove. It has a sour note. A disharmony in vibration results in alienation

and feelings of separation. As society becomes more established in this disharmony rather than *dharma*, the sour note grows in magnitude. It creates a resonance that destroys the wholeness of the community. Many things fall away.

Due to the oppression of materialism and the ideology of capitalism and related issues, there has been destruction of the fabric of society, leaving many people with much pain, suffering and unmet needs. In today's world, too often the needs of human beings do not drive social values but rather the ideology of greed and consumerism drive the needs of human beings, so that a few become very wealthy at the expense of the many.

In the West there is a growing awareness that this materialistic society is not working. However, in the East, materialism is still gaining in popularity in many areas because it is new and fascinating, and the true hidden poison has not yet been as widely acknowledged. In the West, this ideology has been around longer, and the true poison has been ingested. People are sick with it. It has destroyed families, communities and homes. People find themselves lonely, displaced, unhappy and restless. They look around, analyze, and see what they do not have. Thus, in the West, this ideology of materialism is losing status with many people.

With the shared threat of global climate change, loss of species, the increasing migrations of people who cannot sustain in their current situations and related issues, there is tension today between the values of materialism that dominate the world and the growing awareness of how potentially desperate our collective situation is becoming. This tension is about *dharma*. It is about our lack of harmony with

the nature of what is and the cost of being out of alignment. We have fallen into *adharma*, life without *dharma*.

There is a fundamental urge within us, both individually and collectively, to move into balance. The pendulum has swung to one side. Any ideology that does not breed balance breeds great imbalances in the human society. Now the pendulum needs to swing to the other side. That is why you find so much receptivity to change. This receptivity will now grow in magnitude as times get more difficult.

People will gladly receive concepts that support a balanced society, ideas that honor and support life, follow *dharma* and are based in spirit. People want it. Their hearts want it. People want to come together to feel nurtured, to see that all living beings are well treated, and our planet brought back into balance. It is time. It is finally time to bring forward new ideologies that counterbalance the defective ideology, with all its ills, that is in place today. Receptivity to this will grow and grow. The movement in society will happen spontaneously.

Three Approaches to Social Change

When the world needs to make a significant change, as is the situation today, you may ask, "How can it happen?" How can *dharma* be restored in the world, so that we are in harmony with the planet on which we live as well as with each other?

There are three ways in which this social change may occur, and each is a revolution in thinking and action. The first is to change the leadership and is called Palatial Revolution. The problem with this approach is that it does

not usually lead to substantive change of the institutions or ideology. In other words, you basically have the same situation with different people in charge. The lifestyle remains in place. The fundamental problems continue to exist. Only the person reflecting them has changed. There is an illness in the society and the illness has put the man or woman and the regime in office. It is the result not the cause. So, if you merely remove a given leader from office, will that alone solve the problem? No. It will not, as society out of balance requires deeper solutions that address the causes.

When a visionary leader arises and tries to make substantial changes, it is known as a Pyramidical Revolution. From the top down. However, this also does not solve the problem. An enlightened leader can initiate a wave of transformation in society that inspires the masses. They will want to do the opposite of the current oppressive actions of leadership, but it will not solve the problem, because it still does not change the fundamental condition. It is still from the top down. The foundation of the society remains unchanged. So, what is the third type of social change?

The third type of social change is Nuclear Revolution. Nuclear Revolution is a deep cultural and ideological shift that begins with ordinary people. It has a deep impact on the hearts and minds of people. When people change, then political change happens as a result. It doesn't start with political change. It causes political change, because the hearts and minds of people begin to want something different. They mobilize this change.

When there is hope and a vision for a way forward, people wanting change will rush to it. We see this in all of the

current movements around the world to bring the human spirit awake, save seeds, help animals, help suffering people, work with climate changes. The world is changing, and it is ordinary people changing it. This wave of value change will grow and change everything. This is the revolution.

Because people are hurting and starting to realize the difficulty the planet faces, change will occur. People are looking for solutions. The human spirit wants to expand. It doesn't want to be stuck in materialism and out of alignment with *dharma*. One more thing to consume, to eat, to wear will not satisfy the human heart. The human heart wants expansiveness. It wants to feel that moment of transcendence, whether in human relations, in relationship to the natural world or in deep meditation. The human heart wants to expand, wants to feel unconditional love, wants to be in harmony with all things, wants to be in the flow of *dharma*.

The fundamental spirit of humanity wants expression. When it is dampened, depression becomes the number one illness. The solution is the unfolding of the human spirit in interconnectedness and wholeness. As human beings awaken en masse to their spiritual nature and throw off the bondage of materialism in favor of human connectedness and love, a bright future awaits humanity, awaits the whole planet. This is a great time of transformation. There may be a little struggle here and there, but great and positive things will happen as more and more people awaken to spirit. Human beings will become more in touch with each other, more connected to each other. There is no need to fear anything. Despite difficulties, the future of humanity is bright!

Dharma and Society

For thousands of years, human beings have struggled to find happiness and secure themselves in the world. Through their efforts, society has moved forward and developed, but this development has not been linear. There are cycles in the life of any society. As there are cycles of the moon, there are cycles in the collective development of human beings, times of prosperity and times of difficulty. There are times when society is rising, growing and fighting to attain cohesive development and then there are times of stagnancy and decay.

When there is insufficient spiritual focus in society, there is a loss of development within society. When a society reaches a point of significant imbalance, eventually the society collapses. Many different cultures and societies throughout history have come, existed for a time, and passed away. All that remains are the ruins of their cities. We wonder about these people. What was their life like? What happened to them? We wonder why their societies disappeared.

Without *dharma*, human society goes astray, and great imbalances can occur that lead to stagnancy and decay. We have spoken of *Svadharmā*, the personal way for each of us to realize our individual potential. But there is also the shared human *dharma*, *Bhagavat Dharma*. In *Bhagavat Dharma* all human beings are being drawn towards their divine essence. If these two forms of *Dharma* do not work together, then problems arise both individually and collectively.

If you are following your individual calling, and, at the same time, moving towards increased awareness of the

one sublime consciousness, then *Svadharma* and *Bhagavat Dharma* come into a kind of harmony. You may decide to be a baker to actualize your individual calling but, in doing your work, put the love you feel for all living beings into the baked goods. You love to bake and are actualizing your individual *Svadharma* in the work, but you are also offering the baked goods to God. Thus, you actualize your *Bhagavat Dharma* at the same time. You perform your spiritual *seva* while expressing your heartfelt work in the world. When this happens, these two *dharma*s work together and bring harmony and happiness to your life.

When a society is in balance, it fosters the development of human beings in both their individual callings and in their deeper spiritual *dharma*. They move in a single flow, swaying in the rhythm of the universe, in harmony with life. Society in balance is built upon the assumption that human life is an expression of something great, something significant, and that all life is a part of an integral whole.

This universal respect and reverence for life is the foundation and cornerstone of a balanced society. In the development of the laws and the codes of the society, everything in that society including its culture, holidays, and so on, will say, "We want to revere and to celebrate our divinity. And we want to respect all beings and give them place in the world." This is the earmark of a society which is following *dharma*. The development of the culture, the laws, the ethics, and the whole society will be built to foster the *Svadharma* of the individuals in the society and the *Bhagavat Dharma* of the collective. In this way, society becomes an asset to those

who live within it; it supports the people's self-expression and the realization of their essential nature.

Unfortunately, societies can become just as off-track as individuals, but of course the ramifications are much greater. If the main goal of general society is to acquire wealth and physical prosperity for the elite, the people will be influenced by the cultural norms and the values within that society. They will be encouraged to find their welfare in the achievement of individual success in the material world: wealth, power, name and fame become the desired achievements.

When this is fostered by the institutions and the cultural values within the society, then the capacity of people to express the mysticism of their hearts is greatly diminished. The capacity of people to express alignment with their *Bhagavat Dharma*, and align their individual expression with their essential nature, goes down. Unable to do this, people become discontent. They become restless of spirit, angry and sorrowful.

As a result, depression can become widespread, as has happened in today's society. This is because society is not fostering the development and expression of the human spirit in alignment with *Bhagavat Dharma*. *Bhagavat Dharma* has been ignored and physical wealth and well-being has become the focus of many societies today. This is due to the long rule and excessive development of the *Vaishyan* age (the age of the merchants and materialistic values). A degeneration of the values of the society comes at the end of every age. Today it comes as a natural end of the *Vaishyan* or merchant cycle.

The Social Cycles

There are four *Varnas*, meaning types of people, and at different times in history one type or another may dominate society. *Varna* refers to the choice of occupation and the values that surround that dominant form of expression in the world. They are sometimes confused with the caste system but are not the same concept. A person's *Varna* is determined by their choice, the idea of a caste is a social class one is born into. It is not relevant to *Varna*.

The *Varnas* tend to follow a sequence and are in a cycle that repeats again and again over time. Different parts of the world have been evolving through these cycles at different times, but as the world grows more closely knit through travel and the Internet, the different regions come in contact with one another and their cycles of development are being impacted.

The four *Varnas* that dominate human history at different stages of the social cycle are *Kshatriyas*, people motivated by noble sentiments and orderly societies, administrators, rulers, warriors; *Viprins*, (also called *Brahmins*) scholars, teachers, spiritual leaders; *Vaishyas*, merchants, traders, farmers; and *Shudras*, laborers and service providers, blue collar workers.

Each of these four groups of people tend to rise to dominate the values and approaches of a society for an extended period. For example, medieval Europe was dominated by the *Viprins*, an approach that worked in the feudal societies for hundreds of years, but eventually ceased to meet the

needs of the people. When this happened, the people began to turn to cottage industries and the idea of being merchants. The *Vaishyas* began to rise in status, leading to the rise of small local businesses, then to the industrial age and finally to the current age of large multinational corporations and excessive materialism.

Now the age of material values has moved from the noble act of saving people from poverty and serfdom, as it did in the beginning of the cycle, to oppressing the hearts and minds of people. When a social cycle nears its end, it ceases to meet people's needs and the next phase of the social cycle emerges. The age of materialism and *Vaishya* values is followed in the social cycle by the rise of the common people, the *Shudras*. However, ordinary people do not usually want to be leaders and they soon turn over their uprising to the *Kshatriyas*, those noble warriors who will fight for the good of all and establish an orderly society that works for everyone. Thus, harmony and *dharma* will again be restored, until this approach degenerates and change is again called for.

The End of an Age

Vaishya merchants, capitalists and corporations are no worse than anyone else. But, at the end of every age, the predominant tendencies become excessive and degeneration occurs. Society, bound in the individualism and materialism of the current age, with the sole goal of physical comfort, forgets about the tender needs of the human heart. It forgets that people need to feel love and to be cared for. Society forgets

to nurture the human spirit, forgets to give people the encouragement to express themselves in alignment with *Bhagavat Dharma*.

Bhagavat Dharma has become diminished due to the excesses of materialism and society has degenerated. Society has ceased to support those institutions, social values and approaches which place the kindness of the human heart, reverence for life and the care for others first. Families have broken apart. The aunts, the uncles, the old people lay in nursing homes all by themselves. There is no one to care for the young children. Everyone is busy just surviving as an individual. So much individualism is the result of society ceasing to reflect *Bhagavat Dharma*.

In a capitalist society of today, you tend not to be valued for caring for your neighbors, friends and families. People will say you're a nice guy, but if you make a hundred thousand dollars in a year, or two hundred thousand dollars, then you're an important person. If you can fix a computer you earn good money, but if you give care to another human being, you earn very little for your work. The values of human society have become misplaced, with too much value on the development of physical prosperity and getting money, rather than on caring for others.

The result is that a lot of lonely people have a lot of money. Does it buy them happiness? No. The values in society begin to wound the people themselves. Then the society begins to break down, because the people cannot tolerate the wounding they feel. People, feeling the emptiness of their lives, realize something is wrong. Even though they are successful, they are miserable. People wonder, "What is wrong?"

Something is wrong. Something is missing.” Then they begin to search. They begin to yearn for a new way, and they will find a new way.

For the human heart cannot be confined within the sterile walls of materialism. The heart seeks to find that which is mystical, that which is profound, that which is of its own nature. Like attracts like. The essential nature of people calls to them, “There is something more. Come to me. Come to me. You are lost in the forest. Come. I will lead you from darkness.” The essential nature calls to each and every one.

The oppression of the human spirit cannot go on forever; the human heart cannot tolerate it. It will change. Society will change. It has always changed. Periods such as this have come and gone. Societies have risen, dissolved and come again. For the institutions in society, the values in society, are obliged to reflect the needs of the human heart; the feelings of love, closeness, family and intimacy. In the heart is the longing for union, for the dissolution of the separation.

You all bear the difficulties of the society in which you live. These difficulties are not mere intellectual points of challenge. The values of the society do not support you in the development of your family and home. They do not bring you the security to know you have family around you to care for you when you are old. In the past, if you had children, there would be family members and community to care for you in a warm family environment. This is gone in most places in the Western world. Even in other countries where this still remains, it is dissipating.

In very fundamental ways, this imbalance, created by an overemphasis of material success, has impacted each and every one of you. The burden of society upon the individual is very great. To pursue *dharma* and a spiritual life, in such an atmosphere, takes a great deal of energy, because it is not supported by the society. Even the Christian faith, which has been dominant in the Western world, has been impacted by materialism. Most who still call themselves Christians pay only lip service to the teachings of a man who preached that you should give to the poor. How many devout Christians, reading their book each night, going to the church, lighting candles, worshiping Christ, asking always for His grace, how many are there compared to the numbers of people in the society? Even religion in the current age has succumbed to materialism.

Transformation

Materialism will not feed the human heart or the human spirit. Love and care for each other can. Be family to each other and to all the people you know. Change society by changing yourself and by spreading ideas about *dharma* to others. In this way, those people who want to follow *dharma*, who understand the way of *dharma*, can link hands around the world to transmute and transform society by bringing the values of loving kindness, care and compassion back to society.

It will happen. It most definitely will happen. So, do not be discouraged. Do not think your efforts are in vain. A stone

wall is built one rock at a time, until it grows very tall. So, you are building the foundation. Those of you all around the world who value living beings, who value life, who value love, who want your individual *dharma* and *Bhagavat Dharma* to be aligned, can change the world. When you transform yourself, you transform the world. It is a service to yourself and to all living beings.

When Buddhism was first introduced into China, it was not brought to the emperor with any sort of grand or formal entrance. Rather, the monks and nuns came humbly as servants in the households of people. They entered in a very quiet way, talking to the people, bringing them to *dharma*. *Dharma* spread with the movement of Buddhism throughout the world in a simple way, in a humble way, in an innocuous way. But it spread.

Dharma can spread in the hearts, minds and lives of individuals and when a sufficient number of people have changed, the values of the culture will change. With this, the laws will also change. Already you can see cultural values in our society beginning to change. The force of a more enlightened approach is growing in magnitude each and every day. Many of you are a part of this force. May you be the harbingers. You will be the ones, who, by bringing yourself in alignment with *dharma*, transform yourself and transform society.

The Fall of Capitalism and the Birth of a New Era

Capitalism is an ideology that is associated with the *Vaishya* or merchant era. The values of the merchant era are individual initiative and progress through material gain. People are considered successful in this *Vaishya* era if they can be successful through their own personal, individual efforts and if they have more financial wealth than others. These are the heroes of the merchant class and the *Vaishya* era, and the ones to which society bows. Their values dominate everything during this era.

Today, there is a war going on, not just in the United States but in the world: a war between the values of the *Vaishya* era, which entail personal wealth, individual effort, and individual acquisition, and those of the coming era of the *Kshatriya*, the era of those who value loyalty, honor, the collective good, and service to the whole of society.

Vaishyas are often considered capitalists. *Kshatriya*, that will come into power in the next era, are often considered the warrior class, though they consist not only of warriors but anyone who protects or administrates. A war-like mentality is not what defines the *Kshatriya*, but the importance they give to protecting the collective good of the society and the honor, integrity, and nobility that are their core values. To follow orders and to be a contributing member of the collective are valued actions in a *Kshatriya* society.

The *Kshatriyas* do not particularly value the promotion of individual accomplishment, power and prestige. These are the values of the *Vaishyas*, of the merchant class, where the acquisition of personal material wealth is important. When this value becomes corrupted over time, it leads to a level of greed and self-centeredness that becomes destructive to the collective whole, and that is what is seen in society today.

I have often said that the situation today is like the Wild West, where those who have the biggest, most powerful position, collect what they can and rule in the world. The simple merchant values of the *Vaishya* of the past have grown in magnitude to be multinational corporations, which have their own kingdoms, under the power and prestige of the mighty and the wealthy. These rulers, these powerful, wealthy men are autocrats. They rule with an iron hand. They rule countries with their economic power, and they do not support democracy. Now the power of these multinational financial entities has grown in magnitude and democracies are failing.

Yet, there is a fundamental struggle going on that will bring the fall of this current era. It is between those who are concerned for the collective welfare of the planet and the collective survival of the whole, and those who are concerned with perpetuating their personal power, wealth, and prestige. It is a war between two value systems. One coming to its end, the other arising out of the ashes.

Capitalism will fall, dramatically. In its place will emerge an orderly *Kshatriya* society. There is a clash between them,

as one social force falls and another rises, amid a *Shudra* revolution, a revolution of the ordinary people. The result is already written. It is a sure guarantee that the *Shudra* revolution will occur. The *Vaishya* era will fall, and the *Kshatriyas* will rise to power, not as warriors, but as the noble spirit of the warrior dedicated to the values of nobility, integrity, and the welfare of society at large.

Do you know these young warriors? They are rising from the ashes. They are teens today or young people in their twenties, maybe thirties, but most are teens today. This is the wave of the future rising. These youths want to survive and want society to survive. The old way is dying, will die. The new way will arise and take power. There is no stopping it.

So, if you see darkness before you, if you see selfishness and greed for personal gain and wealth bringing destruction to society, do not be afraid. Do not be passive, but do not be afraid. Now is the time to rally and make your voice heard, to bring forward your leadership, to stand for *dharma* and the way towards truth. Walk through the darkness without trying to hide from it. Do not try to bury your head in the sand but, at the same time, do not become despondent or discouraged.

A bright new dawn arises and when the light becomes brighter, the shadows becomes darker. At first the shadows are long, but they will shorten as the light rises. The light of a new dawn, a new society, is rising. It is no longer hidden. The new dawn is already here. Now the sun rises brighter and brighter and the dark shadows cannot remain. They will be dissipated. It is a certainty. So, know that in your heart. Know it is a battle already won, and do not become discouraged when the darkness seems so bleak.

How Long Before this New Dawn

Ah, timelines; they are variable. They depend on the actions of human beings. The inevitability of the change is a certainty, but how people act makes a difference. If you are passive and do nothing, your impact will be minimal. If you are dynamic and stand for *dharma*, each of you doing what you can, then that will make a difference. The sooner people, en masse, with righteous leadership, rise up, the less damage there will be.

It is true that there is, indeed, much at stake now. The planet is in a very uncertain position. The evolution of human beings has reached a stage of difficulty. It is not a time to be blind but a time to take your spiritual background and be warriors for *dharma*.

Dharma Samaj

Samaj essentially means society. There are different types of societies but the term *Samaj* tends to refer to a society that follows *dharma* and exists for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of its members. The *Prana Dharma* of a society is its core characteristics or traits as a culture or group of people. If a *Samaj* supports the expression of a people's *Prana Dharma*, their essential cultural group identity and their journey towards wholeness, then undoubtedly the *Samaj* moves in alignment with *dharma*.

Some societies have a long history of isolation in their development and, in that long history, have established their own unique language, their own style of interaction, as well as their own values and beliefs. They have their own understanding of the roles of men and women, their relationships to each other, and other important issues. They have a whole system of beliefs and behaviors that has evolved over time, with little influence from people outside of their geographic area.

This type of society may even have genetic consistency among the people in the group, so that you find certain genetic characteristics are prevalent. People may tend to look a certain way. They may have a unique way of talking, or a certain style of interaction that is common. This genetic similarity is a result of the group's relative isolation and interbreeding over a long period of time. In a big enough genetic pool, this is not a problem, but it does cause similarities to arise within the ethnic group. Similarities to each other also arise due to their shared language, their shared beliefs and understanding about the world, themselves and each other that they have developed in their relative geographic isolation. All of these shared experiences and traits begin to define the society.

The society "may or may not be" a *Samaj* aligned with *dharma*. It may or may not fulfill the core needs of the people involved in the society. However, if it is a *Samaj*, by definition, it needs to fulfill the basic needs of its citizens. If the society is healthy and forward directed, it will be in alignment with *Prana Dharma*. That is, it will support the expres-

sion of the core characteristics of its people and aid them in the journey of spirit.

Many societies have arisen around the world, in relative geographical isolation, that have struggled to give rise to *dharma*. In olden times, when there were fewer people and a great deal of space between the groups of people, the different societies usually had very little interaction. Yet over time, different groups of people became associated with each other, due to economic and political necessities, and eventually moved into homogeneous societies. Due to inter-marriages, interactions and common needs, smaller clans, tribes, fiefdoms and kingdoms were absorbed into larger societies forming states or nations.

As society grows, smaller pockets of people within the larger society, or nation, maintain their own uniqueness, their own *Prana Dharma*. The movement of *Prana Dharma* in the larger society required these different smaller regional groups of people to sustain harmony and flow with each other. They blend their local ethnic, spiritual and cultural approaches, their unique *Prana Dharmas*, to form the development of the larger nation state.

A Global Samaj and Dharma

The transition we are in today is similar but a little different. We are no longer developing nation states. They are already established. The needs of the time are demanding an even larger social network, one that can address global issues. The Internet, international travel, the global population

explosion, the role of multinational corporations, climate change issues, the global economy and the socioeconomic problems that face the world today can only be successfully addressed on a global level.

All of these issues speak to the de facto existence of a current global society, one that is already facing these issues and dealing with these global changes. Our human society of the planet Earth is a collective society. Whether it has a name, whether or not there is a government, we are a global society. Everyone is a world citizen, knowing it or not, accepting it or not, it is a fact. You live on this planet, and in today's world, what happens around the globe impacts you. We are all facing this transition together and how successful we are at establishing *dharma* and addressing the global issues before us, can and will impact all of our lives.

When, out of necessity, societies merge, there is always turbulence, because people have an affinity for their own nation, their own culture, their own religion, socioeconomic group, racial identity and/or language. The issue of *dharma* comes into play as we begin to consider the transition we are in and the needs of our developing global society. Can a larger planetary global society be a *Samaj* and follow *dharma*? Can the collective *Prana Dharma* move towards the welfare of all beings and knowledge of the one true Self? These questions arise as nations become interwoven and interconnected and begin to become part of the larger global network.

As survival, the very capacity to live on the Earth, comes into question, the need for autonomy within nations, religions and social groups becomes overshadowed by their shared need to survive and, thus, by the need for a world

Samaj. It is a turbulent time. Many cultures and countries are fighting for their traditional autonomy, which they may still maintain to some degree in the larger global society, but not as it is now. Societies change as they become part of a larger order, a unified world.

When the feudal kingdoms were first unified into what we know as the European countries or nation states, it was not without tensions. For centuries, the feudal fiefdoms had problems with each other, due to identification with the history, culture and ways of their smaller kingdoms. Their *Prana Dharma*, or essential identity, was still woven into their local history. Yet they managed to live together under the rule of their nation states, due to fundamental economic, safety and practical day-to-day benefits that living as one nation provided. As time went on, identity with the nation and national leaders took precedence over their local leaders, protecting them from wars with stronger enemies that they could not stand up to alone.

Current nations are established, but the challenges of today again require change and it is time to shift. The world is overpopulated, and pollution is an extreme danger to everyone. Due to human actions, there is an extinction burst with loss of many species and a climate change causing extreme weather that is dramatic and not necessarily survivable. Whole communities of people are on the move. Lives, in certain areas of the world, are getting disrupted, even devastated, and the calm autonomy of any given nation is threatened. Society is out of balance and *Prana Dharma* disturbed. It is not supporting life in balance and harmony with the universal forces. So, there is, as a whole, lack of a

clear movement of the *prana* of people on the planet Earth towards *dharma*.

Many governments around the world are not effective in addressing problems. Unable to cope with the problems that face the world, many are resorting to protectionism. Corruption runs like wildfire around the planet. The rich want to become richer, vested businesses put their interests above those of the planet, with little care for the consequences. The exploitation is like a wildfire spreading wide and burning the planet. Even in bastions like the United States, now these forces burn wildly through the society. Why?

Because there is no central focus for a larger planetary *Samaj* able to address the issues that face us all at this time; no global body able to bring us back to harmony with *dharma*. Without leadership that has a vision, *vistara*, for the future, there is no coordinated movement to bring resolve to global issues and form a human society that aligns with service to living beings. It will emerge, but it does not presently exist.

In its place is the Wild West, the lawlessness of corruption, graft, self-centeredness and greed. Nations find themselves incapable of fighting this fire of corruption, greed, and worldwide dominion by individuals and financial entities purely out for themselves. Nations are thus becoming unstable and ineffectual at meeting the needs of people. Until they unite to work together to fight this degenerative wave that has crept into the crevices of world politics, they will not be able to effectively address the issues of today.

Until they unite, they are not strong enough to correct the problems, just as the feudal states were not strong enough

to combat the difficulties of their times. It was only when strong leadership came and united the clans, fiefdoms and small kingdoms and formed nations that the smaller kingdoms became strong again and cohesive in the context of the larger whole. Once protected by the larger nation state, smaller local groups were able to realign with their *Prana Dharma* so that their core traits and their vital force as a people again began to move them towards a better life.

When different groups of people unite, they need to blend their culture, people and activities to the extent that their *Prana Dharma* becomes entwined. But they do not necessarily lose the uniqueness of the varied cultures. Different cultural pockets in which people have grown and developed, to one degree or another, remain intact. A great deal of confusion happens when the societies melt together, but that does not mean that the people forget their roots. They can enjoy their cultural backgrounds and yet be a part of a greater whole.

A good example of this is the United States, said to be a “melting pot.” Immigrants have come over the years from all parts of the world to form this nation. There are always troubles and confusion in such integrations as occurred in the United States, as those immigrating bring their language and culture with them, and the current residents tend to look down upon and even reject the new arrivals. When there are racial or socioeconomic differences, as well as cultural differences, the integration of new groups of people becomes even more challenging. If the current residents, for some reason, begin to feel threatened by the immigrants, they may even become hostile. The process is not always easy. Each group

brings their cultural heritage, religion, language and so on, but over time all new groups are integrated, even racially different groups, and they melt together to form one society with one overriding *Prana Dharma*.

Just as the United States has become a melting pot, so the world needs to become an integrated *Samaj* that honors the unique ethnic origins of all, a true one human society dedicated to the survival and welfare of this entire planet and all living beings that reside here. Society is one and indivisible. Only when all of the nations of the world join forces to form a larger *Samaj* can the problems of today be effectively addressed.

The welfare of all people, even the survival of all, depends upon the formation of a cohesive world *Samaj* with good leadership that is in service to all, rather than dominated by corruption and greed. This is coming. This chaos will not last. As it did not last when the feudal states formed into nation states, so it will not last as nations form into a cohesive world *Samaj*. *Dharma*, which comes from the innate understanding in the human heart, will take hold and rule the society. *Prana Dharma* will get established worldwide. It is a certainty.

However, at the moment there is upheaval. As change occurs on a planetary scale, this upheaval is of greater proportions than in the past. So now is the time to support the development of a *Dharma Samaj*. Let yourself be a part of this world movement, this new positive *dharmic Samaj*. It will arise out of the good intentions and will of the people of the world. Our clear hearts will bring society back in order and form a true *Samaj*.

Aspects of a Dharma Samaj

Prana is life force energy. Each and every individual has *prana*. When a person's life force energy is constructively directed, they are able to follow their path in life towards the Infinite. Their *prana* is flowing in the way of *dharma*. They are aligned with their *Prana Dharma*. The same holds true for the collective society. When a *Samaj*, a geo-ethnic grouping, with its unique cultural attribution, beliefs, attitudes, and even genetic similarities, is in alignment with *dharma*, the society supports people in their journey towards the Infinite, as well as in their self-expression. When *prana* flows vibrantly through a culture, that culture is in alignment. They are following its *Prana Dharma* and their society is a true *Samaj*.

When a society is in alignment with *dharma*, that *Samaj* has a positive, hopeful and constructive vision for the future. It supports its citizens' well-being; supports them in achieving a healthy, good life where they can realize their full potential to the best of their ability. This vision for a positive future for its citizens that supports movement towards Source is an essential component of a *Samaj* established in *dharma*.

A *Dharmic Samaj* also needs to be in service to its citizens and all the living beings, even the animals and the plants. A collective attitude of service brings alignment and harmony to the world around. The leaders in a healthy *Samaj* will not be despots, will not be totalitarian rulers who just want their own pleasure and their own power. No, if a *Samaj* is following its *Prana Dharma*, the leaders will be the servants of the people, whether they are called kings, presidents or

chancellors, they will be humble servants of the *Samaj*. They will take the welfare of all the living beings that come under their geographical authority into account.

And finally, the *Samaj* will have a strong sense of divine grace. The people of the *dharma* oriented *Samaj* will have a powerful connection to the harmony of all life. They will feel their union, their wholeness with all existence. And that experience will be supported by the way the *Samaj* operates. Each *Samaj* struggles to be in alignment with their *Prana Dharma*, to bring forward leaders who will lead them in directions that support the harmony and the welfare of the society. In a truly healthy *Samaj* society, following *Prana Dharma*, you will see the emergence of enlightened leaders and guides, spiritual holy men and holy women. Those enlightened leaders will give guidance and positive direction to the *Samaj*.

The Role of Yoga and Meditation in Changing Society

For you to follow your *Prana Dharma*, means to live in harmony with all life and move towards your essential nature. In order to do this, it is helpful to engage in practices that assist you to be in harmony with yourself and with the divine nature of all that is. The *yogic* lifestyle, especially meditative practice, is very beneficial for this.

The *yogic* lifestyle, a formula for personal development and expansion of mind, includes: *sadhana*, meditation upon the one essential Self; *pranayama*, balancing the mind through control of the breath; the value-based psychological practices of *yama* and *niyama*; *yoga asanas* or postures to keep

the body healthy. Though yoga has come from the traditions of one *Samaj*, namely India, it has become popular world-wide. Today millions of people are doing these practices. Why? Because they work.

These ancient practices of *yoga* have offered modern practical behavioral solutions to personal problems and difficulties. As a whole, the popularity of these practices is part of a collective movement of consciousness in which the people of the world are changing, not only doing practices for their own health and well-being but adopting practices that help them align with *dharma* and right understanding.

It is not only *yogic* practices, but deep meditative disciplines done within many cultures, that are awakening the human spirit. By doing meditation, whether from a *Yogic*, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim or Sufi tradition, people engage in esoteric practices that help them align with *dharma*. In today's world, millions of people are finding inner peace and interconnectedness through meditative practices. The way of *dharma* unfolds in a deeply personal spiritual connection that links people to the harmony of life and the source of Being. By nature, society must change in a positive direction as people with this deep inner connection to *dharma*, fostered by spiritual practices, emerge en masse.

At this time in history, there is a contrast like shadow and light, between corruption, exploitation and greed, on the one hand, and subterranean positive movements, such as the yoga movement, on the other. The amount of people awakening to the needs of the world and the Way of *Dharma* is very great at this time. Many people globally are becoming aware of saving our planet, working for the environment,

working to save our food supply and to educate people. Exponentially growing numbers of people are working with humanitarian intentions in their hearts to care for the welfare of animals, plants and other people. This movement is spreading across the globe. The forces of light are more powerful than any other force upon the planet today. This movement of consciousness and awakening awareness is spreading to millions upon millions of people. Out of this grassroots revolution of consciousness will come the transformation that is needed.

So, do not be discouraged. Rather encourage this growth in all around you. Affirm your positive support for this emerging global society and share it with the masses of people who are awakening on the planet today. There is a clarion call to *dharma*, to right action, right thinking, and the ways of truth resounding around the world. Those who are caught in fear and ignorance will come around one by one. It is only fear and the greed of a few that holds them back. Those greedy leaders will topple, and *dharma* will prevail. You will see. But there are problems to solve and they are not easy problems. Loss of life will occur, I am sorry to say, before the planet becomes balanced again.

Yet, I would add, the future is very bright. This revolution of the people is a change of the social cycle. It is a revolution of thought. It will unite people in *dharma* around the globe. It is a global movement, a global change that will sweep through cultural barriers, through ethnic barriers, through language barriers, and out of it will form the world of the future, a world in balance, aligned with *dharma*, a *Dharma Samaj*.

Immigration and the Spread of Nationalism and Conservatism

I will speak on the subject of conservatism, nationalism and immigration. There is, indeed, a trend throughout the world towards conservatism, accompanied by the promotion of nationalism and fear of immigrants. This trend of today is a reaction to a changing world. You see it in different countries throughout the world because the change that is occurring is on a global scale. Though there is no distinctive central authority in the world, there is a world-wide dilemma.

The world today has an extensive population. It is a population that is increasing and cannot be sustained with the world's current resources. This lack of sustainability, combined with the pollution that has caused the climate situation, leaves the world in a critically unsustainable position. It is a global problem with no global body to address it fully and effectively. Therefore, each and every nation looks at how it views issues and tries to protect itself as best it can. You find rising sentiments of conservatism in countries that are more stable, less impacted by climate change and political unrest. In countries with more effective governments and prosperous lifestyles, you find fearfulness about the amount of people wanting to enter the country. There are a growing number of immigrants throughout the world, and people in more stable countries, in which the immigrants want to take residence, are becoming fearful that they will lose their

cultural or ethnic autonomy and their economic security, taking on the weals and woes of the world.

Because there is no global authority to turn to, each country must fend for themselves and do the best they can to protect themselves. What you see in people's reactions is a general perception that there is danger. People may not be able to identify the danger, other than that it is coming from someone outside of their nation, race, culture or religion. In such a situation, where people begin to feel threatened and overwhelmed by the number of immigrants in trouble and needing assistance, you find a reaction of self-preservation. That reaction makes people want to turn away the troubles of the world and secure their own nation or ethnic group.

In this type of circumstance, you find many inequities occur, and people can become cruel in their fear of what will happen if they allow so many needy people into their country. They fear being overpowered if they allow too many people of another religion, culture or race into their country. In a situation of threat, people tend to, as the old saying goes, "circle the wagons." They tend to return to their primary national, cultural or racial group with which they identify and try to strengthen that group to keep themselves safe.

By biological nature, human beings are social animals and, as a social animals, it is in the welfare of the group that safety abides. People will even sacrifice their personal welfare for the group, because they feel the greater safety is in group welfare. When the primary group a person identifies with become threatened in some way, people become defensive in their attitudes and approaches.

What you see in the world today is a situation of potential threat from regions throughout the world that are becoming less inhabitable and from increasing populations that are unsustainable. There are increasing numbers of displaced persons in untenable situations due to lands ravaged by climate change. You have more needy people, crime, violent extremist groups, and wars forming in these regions. The human costs are very high in these regions, and people flee, seeking shelter in more stable and secure areas of the world, where there is more ability to simply lead an ordinary life.

I have said before that this immigration cannot be stopped. I gave the example of the Indians. Some tribes accepted the settlers, the immigrants who came to America, and some fought them. But, in the end, neither tactic stopped the immigration. It was unstoppable, due to the extreme needs that drove people to America.

The needs of immigrants today are even greater, so the world is in trouble and you are seeing the initial response to that brewing trouble. There is a rise in population that is unsustainable, combined with a diminishment of inhabitable lands, resulting in violence, wars, gangs, and extremely difficult living situations.

As a result of those variables, populations are on the move and stable countries are threatened. They don't know what to do. They are not accustomed to working together in any serious way, so the solution for some is to try to defend themselves. Other countries, such as the European Union members, try to work collectively and distribute the refugees. But their psychology also will not be sustainable. There will be too many refugees.

So, either there is war at the border and the taking of lives, or allowing of refugee populations to enter, potentially bringing down the nations of the world. Nations that have stable economies and resources, order and law, can only sustain caring for a certain number of needy people. Beyond that point, those economies will become unstable and will fall. Their laws and orderly life will crash. So, taking in poor, needy and starving people beyond a sustainable number, will destabilize nations. Closing borders and fighting refugees will be a bloody mess and unsuccessful in the long run.

Neither of these solutions addresses the problem. The problem is on a global scale and no nation is able to address it alone. It can only be addressed globally. The problem lies in the diminishment of useable land due to climate change and that problem is soon to become extreme and will affect everyone.

Those nations trying to close their borders, fearing people from displaced areas, will soon find themselves in deep trouble from within their borders. And those refugees, who have sought security in what they think are stable countries, will soon find that where they have gone is not so good. The world is in trouble, not just one country or another. Countries are seeking solutions, to what people in their gut, in their feeling, sense as trouble.

That is why you have this conservatism and nationalism rising. That is why you have the rise of anti-immigration sentiments. People are trying to find solutions, but the solutions cannot be found in either the conservative approach or in the liberal approach. Both approaches will lead to destruction.

Neither will lead to a safe country. Borders that get closed will not stay closed without guns. When the border situations are pushed it will be terrible. To defend them will be a war against innocence. And will it stop the problem? No. Still it will come.

The solution is not in either approach. The solution is only in all of the people of the world, all of the leaders of the world, all of the countries of the world joining together; not in a somewhat disempowered United Nations, nor a climate accord agreement that has no meat behind it, no substance. The solution lies only in a solid, united confederation of nations, that will create and enforce global standards, that address the world's problems causing the humanitarian crisis.

Until such a governing body can be established, the crisis will grow. When such a governing body exists, it will be the beginning of a *kshatriyas* society, and its rule may be harsh, in order to impose law and order in what can otherwise become a lawless situation. Greed and corrupt government is a natural result of the type of forces at work in today's world. However, so is the reaction which will breed those who value honor, duty, and the collective good. Thus, will rise the *kshatriyas*, those who put nobility above personal welfare and will look only to the collective good.

The world is moving into a critical period. People sense this and, want to pull in, circle the wagons to find safety in their religion, their race, their nation, in whatever group they have found safety in the past. This is the nature of people. They are social and the welfare of their primary social group, which keeps them secure, will be foremost to them.

Only when people begin to see that they must unite, that all races, religions and nations must unite, can they act adequately to survive. People must come under the rule of those noble leaders, from their own ranks and around the world, who care for all living beings and will unite people; their actions and laws will restore *dharma*. Then it will change.

The world will never be as you have known it. It is changing. So this conservative movement will not produce a world as it was. It produces a different world. And the reaction to that, will produce yet a still different world.

Q: When you're talking about global governing body compared to United Nations, what will that mean - confederation of countries?

A: It will mean that that global body is empowered more than any national body. This is not the case in the United Nations.

Q: What are the pathways to bring that about, and what small micro-step can be practically done to distribute these talks or do something?

A: The United Nations, the EU, the global accords are all efforts but what will bring it about is necessity. When both the liberal approach and the conservative approach fail, and imminent disaster exists, people will re-evaluate. They will see that there is only one solution and that solution is to address the problems globally.

The EU cannot address the problem. All it can do is try to distribute the current level of immigrants. But, when there are a thousand times as many immigrants, will the EU be able to distribute them without bringing down the entire EU and all the countries in it? No. Then what will they do?

Do you think that closing the borders in England will last? Do you think that they will have the military power to close those borders and not crash within themselves to dust and then be overrun?

The United States can close its borders in humanitarian shamefulness. The United States also has the ability to adapt and accept the current level of immigration, but when it is a hundred times more, a thousand times more, what to do then?

When parts of the United States become uninhabitable and the immigrants are not from foreign countries but from other states, what to do then? Try to crash the Canadian border with American citizens? And then what does Canada do? Close their borders, defend them with military against Americans, or let them overrun Canada? You see where this goes?

In such chaos people will want law and order. They will want someone who can save them. And they will see that the groups and structures that they have built are not doing it. But right now the problem is just beginning. People still think that they can turn to their primary group that they have relied on in the past, their nation, race, or religion, and it will be able to secure them. But that will not work.

However, I am most optimistic. Though it may get difficult, I am most optimistic that a new dawn rises and the world will change in ways that are dynamic. Change will bring about a revolution leading to a *dharmic*, unified human society in which human beings may thrive and live in peace. The future of humanity is bright and a time will come when people will live in order and harmony and have good and very long lives

on this planet. But before that, there will be a time of chaos. It is soon approaching and it is unavoidable at this stage.

Scientists say that there are only so many years to avoid the climate crisis, but the practical person knows that human beings will push that edge. They will not change quickly. The greed of capitalism will not fall without a fight. The world of today will not be the world of tomorrow but people may resist changing until they are on the very brink.

Yet, there is a great change coming and all of those things which are out of balance will be restored to balance. Human beings will still reside on this planet when it is finished, as will other species, though not as many as now exist. The planet will come back to harmony, to *dharma* and to balance. All things change in this manifest world and when they go out of balance, the resultant reaction brings them back to balance. This is the natural way.

Questioner: What's the time frame - twenty years, ten years, five years?

A: What was the time frame for the severe impact of global change forty years ago? What did they say the time frame was? Can anyone tell me how long they thought this problem would take?

Questioner Answer: A century and a half.

A: Even twenty years ago or fifteen years ago, how long did they think it would take?

Questioner Answer: Fifty years or longer, next century or something.

A: And five years ago how long did they think it would take?

Questioner Answer: Longer than it seems now anyway.

A: And now, in the latest reports of this year, how long do scientists say before we feel the impact? Oh, it's already occurring. And five years from now, ten years from now? But it's already occurring and its impact is at the border. And this is just the beginning.

Q: Will people be able to hold on to their cultural heritage and *samaj* from which they have come?

A: *Samaj* changes. The nature of the society, the nature of the primary identity group, changes. If you look at people one thousand years ago, or five thousand years ago, ten thousand years ago, in any location, different cultures have arisen, come to fruition and died away. It doesn't mean all the people died. They changed their *samaj*.

So, in the Indus Valley, the Harappan culture thrived for thousands of years and then died, vanished. Does that mean every last person who was a part of that society died? No. They went through hardship. They moved on. They became part of something else. People change. In ancient Egypt there was a great society, now long dead. What happened to the people who identified with that *samaj*? They moved on. They acquired new identities.

The world will indeed blend. Race, national origin, religious background, all of these things will be mixed and mingled until they become simply identities of ancestry, not of one's personal primary *samaj*. Primary *samajs* will be reorganized in this process. What are nations today may maintain as primary *samajs* of the future, but as part of a larger *samaj*, just as nations became the broader *samaj* of different regional *samajs*. Religion and spiritual movements of today

will have to learn how to live together and to find their spiritual commonalities.

Thus, those institutions and primary groups or *samajs* established in the past, in the wake of the *Vaishya* era, that era of the merchants, will have to find a new orientation in the era of the administrators and warriors, in the *Kshatriya* era. The world is changing. The orientation and values are changing. It will settle, but for now and the near future, there is upheaval; the sins of excess will need to be dealt with first, and the planet brought back into peace and harmony.

So, there will not be the *samaj* of a certain religion or a certain racial group. These will be a mix and mingle, and find new identities in a new orderly world. One that may at first seem a bit orderly for most of you, but such strict order is what will prevent the excesses that threaten societies in today's world. People will remember this serious disaster and they will want and accept such order. The *samajs* will restructure.

Questioner: What can we do practically?

A: Follow *dharma*. Fight for *dharma*. Support cooperative approaches between nations. Create places of haven for people in trouble. Support the creation of spiritual sanctuaries for people. That you can do. You can bring people to spiritual life, that they may have the courage to follow *dharma* and the Divine connection; this will carry them with *dharma* through change and challenge. Do your spiritual work. It is the greatest service you can do in this time. The more people are connected to their Divine Source, the greater their ability to manage these times and themselves be agents of positive change. Alright?

Technology and Evolution of Consciousness

The evolution of human consciousness is part of the path of *dharma*. As we grow and evolve in our collective journey towards wholeness, we move in a natural alignment with *dharma*. Human beings, following their *dharma*, move towards the One. There is a natural path, in harmony with life, that brings an evolution of consciousness in alignment with *dharma*.

People have a natural inclination to gather in groups as a part of their *dharma*. Part of the human psyche wants to join a clan, a tribe, a large family, some form of society. Genetically the human body and mind are geared to be a part of a social community that can protect them and ensure safety. This genetic tendency is universal. Whether people live in natural settings or cities, in the arctic or the tropics, all share this inclination to build societies, to form villages, cities, kingdoms, corporations, religious groups, and nation states.

Now humanity stands on the brink of a new possibility. The possibility that the society of living beings can become the social identity for people, expanding the inclination to congregate in groups to include all beings, both human and non-human.

This leap in human consciousness would be an evolutionary leap, a biogenetic leap to facilitate adaptive transformation in alignment with *dharma*.

The expansion and linking of mind with others is also genetically imprinted in human beings. As this latent tendency evolves, human society will change. There is in every person a sub-genetic coding to link to a group, a society larger than one's individual self. This genetic adaptation is driven by a raw and primal need for safety and security in being part of a larger whole. But there is an even deeper inherent genetic coding within people, a coding that extends this need to be a part of a group, part of a clan, part of a tribe, part of a family to survive. It expands this process to include the development of the intuitive mind.

There is in this universe a physical world and a non-physical world, a psychic world, if you will, and, in that psychic world, there is the ability to expand beyond body and ordinary mental functions to perceive a larger context. Intuitive abilities allow people to expand their perceptual fields beyond the five senses with clairvoyance, clairaudience, knowledge of past and future and similar abilities. Human beings have the potential to delve into deeper realms, deeper sub-structures of their existence where time and space alter in relationship.

A subtle, undeveloped genetic strain that expands this intuitive, but so far dormant, capacity in human beings is being pulled by circumstances to the forefront. In the biophysiology of human beings, the potential of psychic links becomes stronger. This is a potential that is being triggered by certain circumstances in the society and the surrounding environment.

Discovering Our Collective Potential

Today, people have discovered that by building machines they can pour their knowledge into a single source and have it available to the collective of human beings. Computers have allowed people to link their minds. This could not happen if that potential did not already lie within the bio-physiology of the human structure. This linking makes a collective composite of knowledge and information accessible to all, increasing the capacity of every human being far beyond what previously could have been imagined.

This is just the beginning. As people's linking capacity expands and opens to intuitive abilities, a direct link to the minds of other people becomes accessible. Knowledge and information now stored in computers, in machinery, becomes a collective warehouse of information within the human psyche in which all human beings are interconnected.

As an evolutionary adaptation, individual minds linked together have the greatest potential. People are just beginning to explore this potential, which will weave them together, as they share a wide variety of knowledge on many different subjects.

There are those today who would put up barriers, who would claim national boundaries or the fiefdom of their corporate powers. But this type of thinking and these types of actions are not evolutionarily productive. They will fade away as poor techniques for survival. This type of thinking will become a thing of the past as people explore this

newfound ability and realize that, through their collective psychic network, they become a whole with a much better capacity for survival.

Even the fierce instabilities created by personal greed that have caused the planet systems to become unstable, creating what is known as global warming, even this can be resolved with collective links and the knowledge it provides. However, at this point, this process is still at a primitive stage.

Cell Phones, Computers and Evolution

Parents worry for their children who want to be on their cell phone twenty-four seven. Why do they spend so much time online? Why can't they just function as people used to function? But they will not, because they are searching for the link that will bring them closer to the collective whole. They are searching for the intuitive link, and right now all they have are computers and cell phones.

They will be the ones to discover a more subtle technology. With that more subtle technology, the linking process will be greatly enhanced and very rewarding for people. As youths are drawn to their cell phones and computers, because they feel some connection with others that appeals to them, they will be drawn further into this link. It is the natural evolutionary draw for the human psyche, the way of survival, bringing people into harmony and connection that makes all of the corporate influences and national boundaries irrelevant.

Naturally, there are those in the current psychology of greed who will try to own and monetize or somehow control this collective process. But it cannot be contained. It is a process of evolution beyond their abilities to subjugate. Vested interests will be unable to succeed in monetizing or controlling the process. As it evolves and technology becomes enhanced, it will become less physical and more psychic technology.

There is an evolutionary shift going on for the human race right now, a movement to realign with *dharma*, and you are a part of this change. There are those of you who have discovered the deepest linking already, the linking to your divine Source, to the one collective Being. For in truth, there is only one, not many. That is why linking is built into the genetic codes of every species in this universe, but it does not manifest until the right time in evolution. That capacity of melding together, that yearning to be one, to be whole, is in every living being individually and collectively. And living beings gather in groups for survival, for safety because they are drawn to the collective.

Many people are now being drawn to a wider, vaster collective that entails the whole of human society. And those human beings who have stepped deeper still, go beyond even the human society to the collective whole of existence. Reaching into the deeper realms of the psyche and the subtle layers of existence, they find unitary wholeness and discover their sense of individuality has been an illusion. There is only one vast infinite, eternal intelligence, a vast love that underlies all creation and is the very real nature of all that is.

All roads lead to the same place. All threads of evolution ultimately lead to the same realization, the same understanding, the same truth, *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, one eternal, infinite Intelligence, Being, God, Self, Universe, Consciousness, Infinity, Truth, Love. This Lord of love, this eternal One, known by so many names, is the only one that exists. You are his or her form, believing yourself to be an individual, believing you are separate. Your deep yearning in your heart brings you always towards that One. This is true for all beings, whether they know it or not.

So, young people are drawn to their cell phones and their computers where they find their friends and can feel a connection. Connections do not lie only in being physically next to one another. They lie in the psyche, a realm where there is no spatial differentiation. People want to go deeper and deeper into their connections, into being part of something larger than themselves, to escape the isolation created by the belief in their individuality. When that recognition of being part of a whole becomes truly deep and discriminative, the realization comes that there is only the whole and you have always been part of that whole.

When you are freed from the belief in 'I' and 'mine', you become whole, free in your natural state of being. This is the realization of *Bhagavat Dharma*, when the latent potentials of your expanding consciousness become realized and no longer are there two, but only one. This state of being is beyond the functioning of the mind. The mind, in the depths of being, become stunned and cannot comprehend the depths. The boxes of words and beliefs cannot contain

the vastness of truth. It won't fit in the boxes. Essential Being demands a much larger context, much larger than the mind.

So, the mind, unable to grasp such vastness, simply gives up. And then what happens? The larger mind, the cosmic collective of all knowledge, all existence of the past and future and the now, becomes accessible. The evolution of human beings moves from the cave man struggling for survival in groups, to families, tribes, clans, city-states, fiefdoms, nations, and finally the world...and then, ultimately, the cosmos and returning home to a natural state of being.

This is the collective *dharmic* evolution of the human psyche going on today. Those who have touched the deeper realms, who have known the true nature of existence, are the vanguard of the future of all on this planet. Never doubt the veracity of this evolution.

Q: How long before this psychic shift from technology to collective intuitive technology becomes more obvious?

A: Long is a matter of time. Time assumes space. Time, place, and person assume a relationship of witness, time, and space. That is a matter of relativity. Within the relativity of time and space, circumstances emerge which force evolution and the turning on of your suppressed genetic capacity. I think humanity stands on the brink of a precipice that would stimulate such evolution. That is why so much guidance has been given to the living beings here at this time.

Q: So gradually will there be collective consciousness between humans, animals, plants and other cosmic beings?

A: Ummmm, and why not?

Q: I wondered if it will help evolution very much if there is contact with many races from different galaxies.

A: Do you think you are alone here? Not all beings move in the physical universe. You are not alone. Those who are wiser and older are with you, guiding and helping.

Q: So, is there any use to try to contact psychically these beings or will they contact us if needed?

A: I think you already have help.

Q: Help, even we do not know we are being helped?

A: Some know. Not all happens in this physical realm. Dive deep into the light of eternal being. Follow that light to its source and there you will find true help. The infinite intelligence which has innumerable forms will surely do what is needed. This Source has only one intention, that all beings should return to their natural state. On the one hand, out of this vast intelligence flows the infinity of creation and the multiplicity of the universe. And on the other, all creation is drawn back into this loving, infinitely intelligent source from which it has come.

All feel the yearning for unity. Certain ones find the connection. Through them, that source, that infinite intelligence, guides and acts, sometimes in physical form, sometimes in non-physical form. But who guides, who assists? Is it not that one Infinite Intelligence manifesting its mandate towards unity that is expressing through countless other living beings with *dharma*? Are you also one that serves that purpose?

Call to Action

Nothing is won in human life without struggle. The babe, when first born, struggles to breathe in order to survive; the child struggles to learn, to grow, to understand the world around them. Struggle is a part and parcel of human life.

Today there are struggles between the forces that bring us in alignment with the planet on which we live and the forces dominated by personal greed and desires for power. It is a struggle between *dharma* and *adharma*. These two forces are in a battle, a natural struggle that comes when there is great change taking place in the human society.

The light of a new era grows brighter, the light of a new beginning in which harmony abides between humanity and all the living beings of this world. This light of human awareness and consciousness rises out of the ashes of the ignorance, greed, and self-centeredness that have come to dominate many spheres of human life.

There is no time now to ignore this struggle that will require each and every one of us to apply ourselves to the best of our ability, in our own ways, to bring the light of a new dawn into this world. That light rises. It grows bright. It is a new beginning which cannot be stopped, cannot be changed. The winds of change and the light of *dharma* both grow stronger in this world today. There is no diminishing this movement.

Struggle is a part of it, a struggle in the world today between the people that cling to greed and self-interest and

those that recognize this planet is an integrated whole. This world is like a ship, a contained ecosystem. All who live aboard this spaceship Earth are together in its destiny. This is an integrated system. The welfare of one cannot be separated from the welfare of another. The journey is one that all who live here make together. It cannot be made alone. It cannot be made single-handed.

When some try to exploit others, the consequences become evident much faster now than in the past. This is not because there are darker forces in the world today than have previously existed, but because the brighter light in the world today illumines the darkness. Where the light is bright, darker shadows are cast.

When love for the Supreme and love for all beings dominates the psyche and humanity is aligned with *dharma*, then there is a harmony here on Earth with humans, with animals, with plants, with the rocks, with the sea. This harmony seeks to be acknowledged, seeks to be expressed.

The potential for harmony to grow as the light rises brings with it the challenges that we face today. It is a struggle to bring light into the world and to dissolve ignorance, a struggle to learn to work together and to recognize that our welfare is interwoven. We are connected with each other, with the animals, with the plants, with the Earth, with the oceans. Harm to one brings harm to all.

Today's world is changing. It is not a time when you can sit on the sidelines and enjoy the bliss of ignorance and complacency. It is a time when the struggle for our very existence on this planet will demand your attention. It is a time to stand up for *dharma*. A time to stand for, not

only humans' rights, but the rights of all living beings on this Earth.

It is time to rise up and meet the new dawn, to be a force of light and love in this world; to stand for *dharma*, stand for truth, stand for the unity of life and the wholeness of being. Make your voice heard in the world. Make your intentions firm and clear. Do not be daunted. Do not be discouraged. The forces of light, grace and love are the strongest forces that exist, and they are rising in the world today. The welfare of all living beings requires that we stand together as a universal humanity bringing *dharma* into action.

Darkness cannot hide the light of the sun for long. A new dawn rises and its brightness grows. The darker the shadows of struggles we face, the brighter the light will shine. So do not be afraid of struggle. Do not be afraid to let your light shine in the world. Do not be daunted by any resistances you feel. Go forward. Be bright. Shine bright. Let the light of truth, love, and Divine grace shine through you. Be courageous. It is time to stand in your light and let it shine. The world needs you now.

SECTION III

Dharma
and the Spiritual Path

Dharma, Sangha and the Enlightened One

The Lord Buddha gave three cornerstones of great significance in spiritual life. The three jewels for a deep and productive journey of spirit. The first basic element is *dharma*. Without *dharma* there is no direction in life. For, as we know, *dharma* is that force that draws you towards Divinity. It is your *Bhagavat Dharma*, your basic human *dharma*, to yearn and search for that cosmic source from which you have come.

Another cornerstone to spiritual life that the Buddha pointed out is *sangha*. *Sangha* means those who come together in any size group to study and practice meditation with a desire to help or be helped. Without *sangha* you don't have the interaction with those on the path to remind you of your goal and your intentions. You are on your own. Without the support of *sangha*, you are lost amid people who have only worldly desires to make their mark in life or to fulfill their pleasures. When you are surrounded by people with only those intentions, it is very easy for your animal nature to take over and to become involved primarily in fulfilling your desires and gaining achievements in the world.

When you keep the company of people whose hearts are dedicated to God, then there are people to support you in your intention to live a *dharmic* life and to move towards your innermost destiny. We human beings are social animals. Our biology conditions us to follow leaders and to

be a part of groups for our safety and well-being. These biological urges of your body are conditioned and genetically imprinted over thousands of years. A man or woman alone in the jungle would have a difficult time to survive, but with a clan, with a tribe, survival becomes much easier. So the desire to belong to groups, to find safety in the group, and to align one's thinking with the group so that you survive, is well conditioned in the human mind. However, what group you align with is a decision of importance. Alignment with a *sangha* of spiritually minded people, who will support your inner goals, will bring you forward on your path.

The Buddha understood this. He gave *sangha* as one of the three foundations of the spiritual path. *Dharma*, *sangha*, and finally the Enlightened One are the cornerstones. So, not only is it important to have the company of like-minded people and to be rooted in the path of *dharma*, directed towards your spiritual goal, but it is important to receive the sacred teachings of the Enlightened Ones and have that guidance in your life. Without spiritual guidance and the grace that comes with it, it is a difficult path.

Ultimately the *guru* lies within you, within your own heart. But to access the *guru* within requires deep inner contemplation and awakening of the *kundalini shakti*, or divine spiritual energy. When that *shakti* can rise to the head at *Ajna chakra*, and awaken your association with the masters, then clear internal communication is possible. Before that time, you may get some intuitions and guidance. They may be accurate, they may be inaccurate, but for them to be the true teachings of the *Sadguru*, there must be

a deep association with Divine Source. You need to establish a deep heartfelt connection and purify that connection through your meditation practice. Then the guidance you receive will be true. Until such a time as your inner guidance is fully developed, it is important to have the teachings of the living masters.

In truth, there is no internal and no external. There is only the infinite *Brahma*, manifesting in endless forms, in your own mind, in your own thoughts, in the cells of your body; in every living being, in every object, in every atom of the universe, this infinite consciousness abides. So you cannot say that God is within you or without. In reality, inner and outer do not exist. The *guru* lies within you and the *guru* is outside of you. *Guru* gives you the true guidance of your life. For those with “eyes to see” and “ears to hear,” the reflection of the moon on the water and the whisper of the wind may teach you the truth that we are One.

But until such a time as that truth is seen and heard in such ways, it can be learned from teachers, from those who have found the way themselves and from the teachings that they give. It can be learned from the *guru* in subtle form and the *guru* in outer form. The connection you have to the Enlightened One is the connection that you have in your heart to the infinite God that is within you and all around you. That One, who is the Beloved of your heart and the soul of your soul, may speak in different ways to each of you.

The way, the community and the guide are the three jewels of spiritual life. All three are essential as a part of your journey towards wholeness. Always keep the *Dharma*, the *Sangha*, and the Enlightened One in your life.

Human Life as an Ideological Flow

Human life is a flow of ideas, a movement from crudity to subtlety. The most fundamental and basic thoughts we engage in are our desires for survival -- food, clothing, shelter and procreation. What is the difference between the fulfillment of these desires by a person and the fulfillment of the life of any animal in the forest? There is none. Many animals have significant development. You may find creatures that have a capacity for higher intellectual functions or a full range of emotions, but are they human beings? What constitutes a human being, as opposed to one of the creatures of the animal kingdom? Living solely to fulfill basic physical desires does not really constitute human life.

Your humanity cannot be defined by the physical structure alone. What is different in the physical structures of humans than our brothers and sisters of the animal kingdom? We have a mouth to eat food. We have organs for digestion and organs for procreation. What is the difference? Is it that your brain is large? An elephant has a larger brain than a human. You can reason? But there are animals that are good at reasoning. Perhaps you walk on two feet. Someone else walks on four feet. You stand upright and have an opposable thumb, so the scientists may say you are a human being.

I say you are only an animal, advanced in development, unless you exercise your human capacities. What are these human capacities? Human capacities lie beyond the mere fulfillment of basic needs for survival and procreation.

Many people live lives that do not distinguish them from other living beings in the animal kingdom. Human life is distinguished by self-reflective thoughts and subtlety of ideas. Human beings have one unique trait that distinguishes them from other animals. It is not merely standing upright or having an opposable thumb, but the ability for self-reflection.

A human being may ask “Who am I and why am I here?” Others in the animal kingdom may be intelligent, able to reason, hunt and outwit their prey. They may even have compassion and love for others. But they do not question their own existence and place in the scheme of things. Beyond the realm of intellect, human beings move into intuitional capacity and the specialty of human life comes to light, which is the capacity for self-reflection. This self-reflection is the true distinguishing characteristic of humans from their fellow beings in the animal kingdom.

Now that is not to say, that, in the vastness of the universe, there may not be other species, other intelligent life forms, that are by definition human, but may not look like us. It would be, perhaps, egocentric to assume we are the only humans to exist. Human life is, indeed, an ideological flow, an ability to form subtle reflections, not a particular physical structure. To live a truly human life is to exercise this very special human capacity, otherwise you are merely engaging in activities that are a part of animal life.

If you want to use the full potential of your human life, delve into the most subtle intuitional capacities of your mind and pursue the ideological flow from the crude unto the subtle. Your human mind has great subtle potentials.

There are layers of mind that grow more and more subtle. When you begin to use this subtle intuitional capacity, you begin to reflect on the nature of the Self. In deep contemplation, you can make great strides to move into the realm of intuition. In the realm of intuition, humanity and divinity touch each other and not only do you transcend your animal nature but also your human nature. Consciousness moves from focus on human existence to the Divine. This is the great and culminating capacity of human life, to move from animality to humanity to Divinity.

It is the *dharma* of human beings to follow an ideological pursuit from the crude to the subtle. This is *Bhagavat Dharma*, the natural inclination of human beings to explore the most subtle realms of their humanity. A human being's natural yearning is the urge within to cross the boundaries of "I and mine" into the ocean of Divinity. People naturally want to perceive that which is expansive and to become free, liberated from bondage.

This desire is inherent within the human psyche, and causes pulls and pushes in the psyche, a restlessness experienced within. It is the restlessness to become free from bondage, to become free from separateness and loneliness, to become whole once again in the arms of the Divine. This is the fundamental longing of humanity.

When longing has no proper scope for expression, it may be diverted into self-destructive activities. So many defeatist thoughts may come in the mind. So much cynicism may come in the mind, because the path to that feeling of wholeness and freedom cannot be seen. Sometimes, a person becomes a little discouraged and may even think there is no

point to life. Perhaps they try to find happiness in various human pursuits for pleasure or in pursuit of power or money or so many other things. All these pursuits leave the person eventually feeling dry and used up, empty. These activities may distract a person for a while, but then the restlessness will return, and the person again feels longing.

When you have not had the fortitude to follow or the good fortune to be exposed to the path of *dharma*, your heart may become heavy. You may become disappointed and discouraged in life. In this day and age, this type of discouragement is rampant in society, but it need not be. It is due to a lack of brightness of spirit or an optimism based upon supportive encouragement. All beings search for happiness. Every creature and every being from the small ant to the most subtle human wants to be happy.

Real happiness comes to people when they fulfill their *Bhagavat Dharma*, when they live up to the potential of their human life. Then a person really finds fulfillment and can fully express the creativity of their spirit, enjoy the taste of life with love and buoyancy. Following *dharma*, you see your bright future with optimism and realize that there is hope in life. Your spirits grow bright. This pursuit and expansion of spirit into brightness is the path of spirituality.

To actualize your human potential and find the way from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from death to immortality, one of the best approaches is the path of *yoga*. *Yoga* means “to yoke” or to unite the little self with its Divine Source. It is a path to unity, the transmuting of consciousness from identification with material existence to association with the Sublime. When you move from darkness to

light, from the realm of death to the realm of immortality, you shed your identification with material existence. You begin to realize, "I am more than this body. I am more than this mind. I am more than my desires and needs."

The longing in your heart that wants fulfillment is the fundamental, basic urge to find union with the Great. It is the urge to end all separations, dualities, pains and sorrows -- to merge that which is limited, confined and bound into that which is free, timeless and immortal. It is to merge into a love as unconditional as a mother's love for her child. This deep longing within is ultimately the inherent pull within you to return to your home of homes. This is the way of *dharma*.

You are, thought bound in the feeling of "I-ness", the child of the Great. Your spirit is boundless, despite your limiting constructs and beliefs about yourself: "I am a psychologist. I am a student. I am a young person. I am an old person. I live in this body and this body is me." All these beliefs confine you in definitions of self that become a prison for your conscious being. They bind you within walls that define and limit self. The true nature of your conscious, intelligent Self is expansive, beyond definitions, pure, unbound love divine, supreme and sublime.

In reality, sublime conscious being abides as the witness of your experiences of perception and expression. It forgets its own nature when immersed in limited beliefs. Your consciousness self cannot find happiness, cannot find relief from the never-ending restlessness, the search for happiness, until it is free of confines and limitations. It needs to move to the pinnacle of human existence, where "I and mine" dissolve into the ocean of infinitude.

There, all smallness washes away. There, the unstruck music plays. There, sweetness abounds and unimaginable is its expression. Where this unconditional love abides, "I and mine" give way. "I and thou" become one. There, the sweet nectar of freedom is tasted in the mind. All sense of limitation and all causes of suffering are put to an end. This timeless shore is your birthright, your home of homes.

Always remember that your human life is a rare and precious opportunity. Spend it wisely! On the path of discovery become fulfilled in love and freedom, in the one pure consciousness that appears to be many. When the blinders are removed, you can see unitary existence. This is your destiny, my children.

Know the Self

To reveal the nature of the Self, there is a need to dissolve the veil of ignorance that covers the mind. This haze of illusion makes truth difficult to see. So, burn away this fog with the light of the eternal Self. As the bright sun rises with the new dawn and burns the haze away, so the dawn of knowledge of the Self burns away the haze of ignorance from the mind. The radiant light of the Self dispels all darkness and reveals truth. Knowledge of the one undifferentiated Self shines forth when mind lies suspended within Consciousness. Then the light of the Self reveals itself.

To know the light of the Self, it is important to understand the nature of this creation, essential to learn how to dissolve

all that binds us to ignorance. In the last several chapters of the *Bhagavat Gita*, the classic text of *yogic* wisdom, *Krishna* dissolved the world of separate forms for *Arjuna*, by revealing his true and full universal Self. Then *Krishna* proceeded to put the world back together for *Arjuna*, delineating for him the proportions of the *gunas*, the core qualities of creation, that reside in the everyday things of this world, such as food, activities, forms of worship and in the minds of living beings.

There are three of these qualities *Krishna* revealed, called *Gunas* in *Sanskrit*. They are the fundamental building blocks of creation, the operative forces that appear again and again in various combinations throughout all of creation. They are *sattva guna*, the sentient principle; *raja guna*, the mutative principle; and *tama guna*, the static principle. *Tamas* brings forward static energy and forms matter and the material universe. It creates lethargy in the mind and makes things solid and static. *Rajas* is kinetic energy and causes movement. It generates activity and causes restlessness and thoughts in the mind. *Sattva* causes sentience and conscious awareness. It encourages subtle thoughts, intuitions and insights. These three primal attributes move in varying combinations to form the entire manifestation. They are the tools of the Lady *Prakriti*, Mother Nature, and are her operative principles.

When your mind is predominantly *tamasic*, it becomes thick and clouded. It sees only the material world. When you are dominated by *tama guna*, you will be a little thick and sluggish. You will be very practical, very material, and your vision will be only of material objects. When your mind

grows a little, *rajas* dominates the mind, taking on an active quality. Such a mind is ever-moving, very inquisitive. The mind of *tamas* has no inquisitiveness at all. It feels, "I know how it is. I know what is right. I know what is wrong. I know what I should do." In that knowledge, it is very material and static. The mind dominated by *rajas* tends to be quick, active and inquiring. It is always seeking new ideas, new theories and new avenues. The natural *dharma* of a human being does not slumber in such a mind.

In the mind dominated by *tamas*, the *Bhagavat Dharma*, the longing towards the Great, is inactive. In the *rajasic* mind, that *Bhagavat Dharma*, the human *dharma*, becomes very active, the mind inquiring and seeking knowledge in all areas. All knowledge appeals to a *rajasic* mind. It will want to know, grow and learn. It doesn't want to stagnate, so it will pursue spirituality. It will pursue knowledge and be quite excited.

Bhagavat Dharma, alive in the *rajasic* mind, is always quick, active, moving and restless. The problem is that the knowledge it seeks is not in this *rajasic* movement. When the mind becomes more *sattvic*, the movement is calmer, quieter and the Sublime is more visible. All minds are influenced at different times, to differing degrees, by all three *gunas*. People have a tendency towards one or the other *guna*, according to their *samskaras*, their reactions to past experiences.

Sattva guna is a sentient principle that wants to rest in a sublime state. *Sattvic* people tend to be subtle and prone to mystical experiences. They are not drawn to eat meat or crude food because it is incompatible with *sattva*. Sweet milk, honey and fresh fruit are preferred. People dominated by *sattva* feel

naturally drawn to foods that grow in the sunlight and are in love with the beauty and harmony of nature. They may enjoy poetry or other arts. *Sattvic* people are in love with the vibrancy of life and feel the brightness and vitality of spirit. They are inclined to meditation and mystical experience.

When a *sattvic* person does not have sufficient *rajas* in the mind, they will tend to be somewhat inactive. This is not the stagnation of *tamas* but is because of their inclination to rest in the angelic realm where things are sweet and subtle and filled with light, rather than to engage in physical activities. Such people love very pure environments. They will be inclined to spiritual life and to quieting the mind in the state of unconditional love.

However, mind cannot exist without movement. As long as mind is active, *rajas* is present to some extent. The primary quality of mind is that it moves. Its second quality is that it takes the shape of whatever it focuses attention upon. Whatever it focuses on it gains knowledge of and merges into, thus forming within your conscious awareness the image perceived by the senses or any thought that arises. If you watch a movie, your mind takes the shape of the movie. You may feel you are the character in the movie. The mind takes the shape of that upon which it focuses. However, it can only stay so long in one experience and then wants to move again. Mind is, by nature, restless. It moves about, taking the shape of different objects or thoughts. However, mind also has the potential, if influenced by *sattva guna*, to focus upon consciousness, to be self-reflective and self-aware.

You, not the objects your mind focuses upon, are the conscious aware knower of your experiences. But who is

this knower? The knower is the Self, the seer, the one who knows all objects that the mind focuses upon, the one who is conscious, awake. This mind is a great tool. When you train your mind to focus on the seer rather than on the seen, the mind begins to take the shape of the knower, the Self of yourself, the one you really are. As the mind grows in magnitude, it becomes expansive and the *rajasic* quality gets quieter. Slowly as mind begins to quiet and the *rajasic* quality lessens, there are less thoughts in the mind and *sattva* begins to shine through.

When *sattva* dominates, the mind focuses upon the nature of Self and thoughts begin to fade away, replaced by more subtle feelings of love, beauty, truth and *guru*. These more subtle thoughts begin to influence the mind with images of the divine or of light. The cruder associations with objects begin to lessen. *Tamas* fades from the mind first. Then *rajas* fades as the mind gets more absorbed in ideation upon the Self. As *rajas* fades, thoughts float from the mind like clouds drifting away in the sky and the radiance of the Self becomes known. In pure *sattva*, you come into the direct experience of knowing. You know the Self. You, the knower, know yourself and the mind relaxes into its natural state, which is consciousness.

Mind is consciousness in motion. When motion dissolves from the mind and *tamas* and *rajas* float away, the mind returns to its natural *sattvic* state of awakened consciousness. Meditative practices foster the dissolving of motion in the mind and the cessation of thought so that the bright light of the one Self shines through in awareness. Then the knower, known, and the process of knowing become one. In this, the

Self reveals itself. Ignorance comes when the seer associates with the seen. When this association is broken and the seer knows itself, then true knowledge arrives. Thus, the haze of ignorance is burned from the mind.

This seer is the very source of all and everything, truth, beauty, compassion and love. These are its qualities and characteristics, its outermost expressions. Yet the seer is beyond all description, beyond all words, beyond the movements of mind. The seer lays in quietude, is self-radiant, self-resplendent, without beginning or end. The seer is the true Beloved, the most beloved Self of yourself, the Self of all. The knowledge of the Self and the deep association with the Beloved comes when the mind stops moving. Then the radiance of the Self shines directly.

The *yogis* say that when one realizes the Self, the nature of Self becomes your experience twenty-four hours a day, not only in quietude when the mind loses all capacity of movement and establishes direct knowledge, but also in the waking state. When you see forms and colors and movements, *rajas* and *tamas* are active. So, the question arises as to how you can know the Self in your everyday experience of life? The *yogis* say that when you are established in knowledge of the true Self, all forms and movements become like transparencies upon the body of the Self. Knowledge of the one eternal nature of all that is fills your experience. Forms rise and fall within it as you move through life. Yet the solid, eternal, changeless One is the true experience, even while living in the world.

We see that with form and without form, the Self is One. No longer are we dominated by the sense of individuality

or the separateness of “I and mine” from all else. The real cause of suffering lies in the feeling of individuality and separation. As long as you think you are a little person separate from the whole, these sufferings will come to you. When the bubble of ignorance pops open, when ignorance drops away, you know only the Self. Even in the physical body with the five senses, you perceive only the Self. The Self has endless beautiful forms and colors made of Divine Consciousness.

You see, the Lady *Prakriti*, Mother Nature, delights in creating forms and ever-changing costumes in the body of God. She dresses him, *Purusha*, in all her delightful colors using the *gunas*. Being most creative, and loving high drama and beautiful, dramatic colors, she paints the many varied shapes and hues of creation. In her delight, she dances for her Lord, that he might be very pleased. Together they endlessly dance their love of creation and its dissolution. In this endless dance there are times when she grows weary and wants to join with *Purusha*, and they lay in a state of quiescence. After a time, again she rises to dance the colors of creation for her Beloved. Thus, the universe goes on and on in a delightful dance, a *lila*, a play of light and shadows.

Knowing the truth of the Self, you know that everything that exists lies within the Self. The soul is untouched, pure and ever resplendent. Know the Self and you will find your home, your shelter in the storm of life. Live in these deeper waters.

Aligning with Divine Qualities and Dharma

Cosmic Consciousness, or *Purusha*, is beyond any description. It has neither form nor gender nor definable boundaries. It is unconditional, limitless and beyond the experiences of the mind. Emanating from this cosmic nucleus are qualities and characteristics associated with the manifest emanations closest to the nondual realm of *Purusha*.

The first of these is infinite love. God is often described as infinite love, because this quality emanates so strongly from the essential core of being, *Purusha*. People who experience divinity often describe being immersed in a shower of love that brings them into communion with the divine Essence. The path of *bhakti*, or devotion, often engenders the experience of the lover and the divine Beloved, culminating in a supreme experience of union. Thus, it is said that God is love. This cosmic love is the primary characteristic of Divine Consciousness, or *Purusha*.

Infinite Consciousness is also called *sat*, or truth, because it is the deep, core truth of existence. *Purusha* is the ultimate truth, the absolute in a relative universe. So not only does the divine Being have the quality of unconditional love, it has ultimate truth. It is the very source of truth, the essence of truth. Infinite consciousness is the core truth of your being. That truth reflects in everything, even in the way you talk. Do you align with truth? Do you act with love? Do you practice loving kindness? When you incorporate these divine

qualities and characteristics within yourself, you move closer to your divine Source, to *Parma Purusha* and follow the universal laws of *dharma*.

There is another divine quality and that is beauty. The divine One is the most beautiful Being in the universe. The quality of beauty surrounds that infinite One, the beauty of absolute truth, the beauty of perfect love. The beauty of the mountains, the beauty of the sky, the beauty emanating from the Soul are all expressions of this divine characteristic. When, in the depths of the soul, the beauty of the Divine is revealed, it is beyond the human mind to comprehend. So exquisite is that One that the mind, unable to endure such beauty, is stunned.

Another quality of divine Being is perfect justice, the justice that arises from freeing of the mind from inequities, the justice of rightness of truth. Divine justice is life in perfect balance, exquisite, undefinable, sublime. Then there is the quality of peace, absolute peace and perfect stillness; the peace that surpasses understanding, profound, infinite, immortal. To know such peace is to lose oneself in the deep abiding stillness of the cosmos.

All of these qualities emanate from the cosmic nucleus like rays of color from a crystal dancing in sunlight. As rays of sunlight hitting a gem disperse light into colors, so divine Consciousness splays rays of divine essence into manifestation, surrounding the Earth with blissful avenues by which to know the one, true Source.

All of these qualities arise within the divine play and depending on your heart's calling, you will be drawn to one or another.

The practices of *yoga* bring you in alignment with these qualities and characteristics. When you are aligned with them, you are drawn to dance in the cosmic dance to the source of Being. The Supreme is calling all beings with the beautiful emanations of sublime love, absolute truth, perfect justice, exquisite beauty and unending peace. When you follow this call to the core of existence, your mind becomes still, and you are lost in the presence of the Infinite.

Dharma is the path to the eternal One. *Dharma* is the way home. When you follow *dharma*, you align with these divine qualities and characteristics in your actions in the world. *Dharma* will bring you into alignment with the beauty that cannot be spoken, the truth that is beyond words, the love that is beyond all boundaries. It will bring you home.

The path of *dharma* begins in very practical ways: how you live your life, what you stand for in the world, in your work, in your relationships. *Dharma* does not waver. It is the law of cosmic principles. When these cosmic qualities are expressed in the world, they become the law of *dharma*. The law of human beings stems from humanity's effort to bring justice, truth, fairness and loving kindness into the society of living beings. These efforts of people are imperfect, due to human limitations. They do not often reflect purely these perfect qualities and characteristics.

But the good men and women who have built society have intended in their hearts, as best they were able, to imbue their work with *dharma*, founded in these divine qualities and characteristics. When these divine qualities are violated, naturally you feel upset. You feel frustration.

You feel as if you want to do something to bring the establishment of *dharma* back into the world. You may feel anger, you may feel helplessness, but the light of the Supreme that expresses in these divine qualities and characteristics cannot be suppressed, though the forces of ignorance and confusion may try to waylay them in society and even in your personal life.

Remember always that the light is stronger than the dark. Align yourself with the qualities and characteristics of the Divine. Express them in your behaviors to the best of your ability. Stay with love. Stay with truth. Stay with justice. Stay with beauty. Stay with peace. Find how to express this in your own being and when you are disturbed by the lack of it around you, do what you can, in any way you can.

For some it may be through meditation, for others through establishing themselves in these qualities and bringing this light closer to the world in service, *seva*. For others it may be social actions, through your work or your job, through your relationships with others and how you treat those around you. It may be just taking a little step here, a little step there, but a thousand steps, a million steps become a giant movement.

Never think any small step you take is too little. Just take it. Bring the light of Divine Consciousness into this world, one small step at a time. Better to take small steps and establish yourself, as best you can, in these qualities and characteristics of the Supreme Being. Let them shine through you into the world of men, and shine through you into the hearts of women.

What Brings Lasting and True Happiness

Within human experience there is both pain and joy, suffering and freedom. Human life is a spectrum of experience and sometimes you might find that your experience is on one end of the spectrum or on the other. For most people, life is spent avoiding suffering and pain and acquiring happiness, joy and well-being. So, the primary aim of human life becomes the pursuit of happiness.

This is of significance when relating to *dharma*, as people seek happiness in different ways. For some people, happiness may take the form of material possessions, while for others it may be jobs and careers, social status or friends and family. And for some, it may be a deep, abiding relationship to God. What you imagine happiness to be and what constitutes the path you take to find that happiness changes the course of your life.

If happiness revolves around the acquisition of material wealth or being in a position of power or prestige, your success will be limited in scope and transitory in nature. When you put all of your energy into attaining these goals, you often end up in situations where there is a lot of struggle and competition with others and, when you finally achieve what you desire, you find out it isn't enough. If it's money, you want more money. If it's material possessions, you need more. If it's power, there is never enough power. If it is name and fame, well, there is always more to be attained.

The moment you achieve something, you have a momentary pause of happiness, but then you need more, and more.

Even when you seek happiness in family and friendships, there are difficulties and disappointments as well as joys. But the difference is that the type of happiness that comes from your interpersonal relationships is often more lasting. You find that those relationships can be ongoing, and when you find fulfillment in a relationship, it doesn't mean that you crave more and more. That one relationship becomes very satisfying to you. When you acquire friends and enjoy the benefits of friendships, you don't need to have more and more friends. A limited number of good friends or family is fine. Friendships and family relationships are more lasting in nature and do not require as much restless striving to continually achieve more in order to be happy.

Still, the very relationships that are your joy become your sorrow when those relationships are disrupted. The experiences that are the source of your well-being become the source of your suffering, just as they do when you put your well-being in money, power and fame. Relationships provide a more lasting happiness, but one that is still tempered by external circumstances.

When you discover *dharma* in your life and begin to seek happiness in dedication to something greater than your own personal needs and in your inner relationship to your essence, then that happiness is both enduring and substantive. Dedicating your life to serving others or a noble cause, your happiness goes beyond meeting your personal needs alone and is broader in scope. This makes it more enduring and engenders higher values such as compassion, loving

kindness and generosity that assist you to have healthier more adaptive psychological attitudes.

Moving in alignment with *dharma*, you connect with the deeper longing within you that is beneath all of your restless searching for happiness. Then you become able to access a connection to the God within and there is great joy and bliss, *Ananda*. This bliss is something available to you as you turn your mind inward and focus your attention on finding your inner relationship to the deeper nature of your existence.

It is enduring and will not fall away from you as does the happiness you seek in outer circumstances, such as material wealth or emotional relationships. This is because happiness that comes from following your *dharma* to eternal realms is not dependent on circumstances that change over time. It is timeless and follows you even beyond the loss of mortal form. The more you focus on it, the stronger your experience becomes of the bond that you have to your eternal nature. The one divine Being is the essence of your existence, and that eternal nature is always yours.

With connectedness to that eternal essence, many things change in the life. Your mental strength and your psychological health are enhanced. Your capacity to love grows, opening within your heart, and the sense of duality begins to fade away. When that duality is entirely faded, the experience of separation that stems from identity with physical form fades. When you identify with your body and mind, you see yourself as that manifestation and everything and everyone else as separate from you. This separation is the fundamental cause of suffering and the fundamental barrier to real happiness.

When you seek happiness in external experiences, you do not really address the cause of your suffering. But when you seek happiness in your internal relationship to the divine Self of yourself, your identity expands beyond the limited persona and body-mind experience. You begin to feel that there is a bright light, a unitary whole that you are a part of, an eternal Self of yourself, that has always been and will be.

As mind grows in magnitude and you deepen in your experience of your inner nature, you begin to realize that there is no inside and no outside. The experience of inner and outer comes from identity with living in a body and having an individual mind. But when you come closer to your eternal nature, then you find an expanded sense of self.

You realize that you abide in all beings and all beings abide in you, that there is no boundary of "I" and "thou." You realize that the separation you tend to experience from everything and everyone else is an illusion caused by a false identity with the limited idea of being a body and a mind. These limited beliefs about who you are and what you are cause your suffering. When you delve deep within, you see that the living vital awareness or consciousness that is you is not limited to the body, the thoughts that you have or the past experiences you have accumulated.

Your awareness is a conscious intelligence that can span outward into all that is. It exists within all that is, so there is no differentiation between you and other. There is nothing to be inside of and nothing to be outside of. You are eternal Being, expansive, immortal, undying, not bound by any limited construct or belief. The constructs are the illusions of mind in which you have bound your immortal Self. All

the beliefs about who you are, all the beliefs that confine and define you, and separate you from your immortal nature, become the cause of your suffering.

When your health goes bad, a relationship ends, you didn't get the job you wanted, you have money problems or something else goes wrong in life, the problem becomes the focus of your distress. You struggle with it, as if that problem is the cause of your suffering. But all of the problems that arise in your life are only transitory situations that come when you are trying to achieve health and well-being for your individual body-mind structure. When you live in a body in this world, there will be both pain and difficulty and joy and temporary happiness. This is the nature of life in this manifest world. The transitory, identified problem of the moment, is not the true cause of your suffering.

When you can bring awareness to your immortal nature, understanding that your identities and beliefs are confining limitations, then you have the opportunity to go to the root of suffering. The root does not lie in the fact that you have a cold, or that your boyfriend left you. The root lies in the pain of your separation from your immortal nature. The root lies in your beliefs that you are limited and small.

Surrender your limited beliefs about who and what you are at the altar of unconditional love. Let the great compassion and love of the universe dissolve your separateness until you are whole again in the arms of love, in the truth of immortal being. There the dualities of pleasure and pain, suffering and temporal happiness, are no more. When you dissolve separation and bring the truth of eternal love into your awareness, then you become one who lives in the joy of

being. You become able to see the beloved of your heart all around you, in all forms.

Know that you are interwoven and interconnected with all of creation, and there is no separation between you and the endless love and grace of infinite Being. Though you walk through difficult struggles or achieve the joys of human life, you will see, in both, the undying flow of unconditional love that is your immortal nature. These highs and lows, like waves on the sea, matter little when you dive deep in the depths. Thus, is the Way of *Dharma* realized.

How the Soul Grows

There are different types of experiences in human life, running the gamut from very difficult and painful to very joyous and meaningful. But all of those experiences have something in common. They happen to you.

In all of them, your own conscious awareness experiences the distress or the joy. Some situations can be very difficult, and people suffer a great deal. You may think, “Why does God allow there to be such suffering in the world, where innocent children suffer? Innocent people who have done nothing are brutally killed or harmed. Why does this happen?”

This is the realm where light defines shadow and shadow defines light, the contrast between the two defines the fabric of life on Earth and creates the circumstances in which the spirit of your being can grow and mature. When a soul is young and has had very little experience in the world,

there tends to be identification with ego-centered pride and accomplishment. There also tends to be a quality of self-centeredness, absorption in individual interests rather than the larger fabric of life on the planet. From this life experience many teachings come to pass.

Due to life upon life of such teachings, the young and exploring soul begins to mature. In some lives there may be great tragedies and unaccountable suffering, to be balanced in other lives by joys and abundance. So, it is most likely, in the gamut of all of your existence, you have experienced the most abject and the most abundant and joyous; they're both a part of human experience.

Some lives are more balanced, where both pain and loss and joy and wisdom occur. With the experiences of many lives, the soul matures, leading to spiritual wisdom. Eventually an understanding dawns that leads to compassion, forgiveness, unconditional love, and wisdom. A person may learn to walk in the subtle realms, to be of the light.

Though still manifest in the earthly realm, many potentials begin to open as the soul matures. When you become connected to the fabric of existence, you are able to traverse the lines of wisdom to the true source of your being. Due to this knowledge, you are able to move beyond simply reacting to suffering and to opportunities. You become able to reflect, to live in wisdom and to bring spiritual light to the earthly realm.

Slowly, as the soul continues to mature, mind grows in magnitude, heart expands, and then guidance unfolds. You walk the ways of wisdom, in the world but not of it. Spreading truth, wisdom and compassion for yourself and

for all living beings. Divinity flows through you to the world. Your life ceases to be centered on your personal needs, but becomes a manifestation of gracious love, in simple ways and in great ways: Perhaps in a kind word spoken, help to a plant, an animal or to bring peace and harmony around you.

As you connect to the subtle realms of divine wisdom, your focus ceases to be your ego-centered identity, but rests in the divinity which abides in all beings. The love which is at the source of all life becomes your shelter in the storm. It becomes your expression in the world, and some place along the line, all your small fears and needs somehow begin to loosen and become absorbed in the larger, greater, master consciousness unto which you surrender and in which you abide.

Thus, you move from darkness and ignorance to light and wisdom, from the unreal to the real and from death to immortality.

Dharma Through Devotion

Following *Bhagavat Dharma* your life flows towards the Infinite, moving with expansiveness that opens the heart towards the depths of being. In this movement, the sense of separation and duality dissolve and you become united with your deepest source.

This movement is from the little to the great, from identity with your body and mind, to awareness of the Source of your being. This is the path of *dharma* and the fundamental calling of human life. This movement can be slow, taking

many lifetimes, or, if you find a deep spiritual well within, it can be quick and dynamic.

The question for many people is “How do I attain this movement towards the Great? How do I follow the path of *dharma*? How do I move from identity solely with this body and mind to a deep fundamental knowledge, not mere intellectual knowledge, but deep fundamental knowledge of my unity with all beings? How do I move towards that oneness where there is no duality, no time, no space, no separation at all?”

It is said that devotion to God, *bhakti*, opening your heart and feeling love for your divine Beloved, is the fastest path. Strong emotional attachment to the Divine creates a fire in the mind that burns away all lesser passions. If you have impassioned love for your Divine Beloved, then all desires of this world become dim by comparison.

Ultimately, whether you follow a path of *jnana yoga* and acquire knowledge of the Nondual or do good works in the world on the path of *karma yoga*, in the final stages of *sadhana*, (meditation) *bhakti* always emerges. The path of *Bhakti* can include practices such as chanting the name of God, hearing stories about the Gods and Goddesses, devotional singing and dancing (*kirtan*) and other practices that enhance devotional sentiments.

Yet true devotion does not arise from simply doing practices. Though you may engage in practices to develop devotion, read scripture and do good works, true *bhakti* requires more. It requires the grace of that most divine Beloved. All disciplines and practices exist so that you might feel the

waves of divine grace and surrendering before your Lord, enter into communion with the Great.

It is only through internal communion with the one God that you may come to deeply, profoundly know that all forms are made of the same substance. Though they have a relative reality, for one who has “eyes to see,” all is composed of one sublime awakened awareness or *Parama Purusha*. In this world there appear to be many forms. Yet the reality beneath the appearance of multiplicity of form is one continual flow of awakened Being.

True devotion and knowledge of Divinity cannot be acquired. If you hope to cultivate devotion to God as one more acquisition, you will be quite disappointed. If you wish to acquire it to gain wealth, name or fame, this will benefit you very little. If your desire is to love the Supreme in order to acquire enlightenment, bliss or knowledge, this approach also has a limitation.

It is limited because it is the ego-self that wants to acquire the true devotion or enlightenment. The possessive nature of this approach is self-defeating. As long as you continue to desire acquisitions, you remain in a state of aversion and grasping. The only way to move out of this state of suffering is to let go, to surrender, “Lord, I have great love for you. I don’t want anything for myself. I only want your happiness.”

Ceasing to make efforts to acquire for yourself, you step outside of your ego-centered existence and move in alignment with *dharma*. When you have the highest form of *bhakti*, it is a deep love of the heart that is given freely in service, a desire for the happiness of your Beloved, without any intent

of personal acquisition. With this selfless devotion, grasping and aversion cease to apply. Self-absorption diminishes when there is surrender and love is freely given. Then the shower of loving grace from the all compassionate Divinity can be felt.

Can you love fully, giving freely of yourself without any thought of getting something in return? If so, then you can begin to feel the Lord, because his nature is boundless love without definitions, without limitations, a unitary love that dissolves the boundaries of "I and Thou." This love is known as grace. When you feel this love all around, permeating everything, that is grace. It is a grace that carries you across the final ocean of duality to the farthest shore.

Though you may do so many spiritual practices, perfecting the body, perfecting your mental capacities, opening your heart in devotion, only when you lay all of this before the Infinite and give it freely in surrender can the real *yoga* occur. Then the endless shower of infinite grace and love can be known. Grace is always surrounding you and showering upon you. You are ever enfolded in grace. It is only the umbrella of ego that blocks you from experiencing it. In grasping and fear, you become preoccupied with doing, acquiring and avoiding and you fail to notice the endless shower of grace and unconditional love falling upon you.

Letting go, ceasing all striving, in genuine surrender of expectations, fears and desires, you will find the infinite One. There are not two. There is only One. Before this world sprang into existence and when this world dissolves from view, there has been and will be only the eternal, pure,

boundless One appearing in endless forms, yet, unbound by time, unbound by space, unbound by form.

The supreme Divinity permeates all creation. You cannot be apart from that divinity. Your separation is a condition of mind, a belief, an assumption. Dive deep. The *yogis* train their minds to know truth so that these beliefs and assumptions do not remain. There is knowledge of truth, but the truth that can be known by the mind is limited. For the rational mind is limited in scope. Only when the intuitional mind awakens can one know, directly, the Supreme. For this awakening, not only knowledge is needed but, as we have been saying, the heart is necessary.

When you combine the paths of knowledge of the nondual, *jnana*, right action in the world, *karma* and love of God, *bhakti*, you get the most effective approach to spiritual awakening. When you finally surrender all that you are and all that you have at the feet of the most Beloved of your heart, then grace is granted and the peace that surpasseth understanding is known.

Glossary of Sanskrit Terms

ADHARMA: Without dharma. Not dharma.

ARTHA: The path of self-expression in the world and material wealth.

ASANAS: Yogic postures performed for health and mental balance.

ASHTANGA YOGA: Eight-limbed path of yoga practice.

BABA: Father. A term of endearment for spiritual masters.

BHAVA: To become. Devotion. A state of absorption in spiritual feelings and thoughts of God.

BHAGAVAN: A Divine Being.

BHAGAVAT DHARMA: Universal Human Dharma involving a longing for spiritual union and wholeness.

BHAKTI: Devotion for God. The path of devotion.

BRAHMA SADHANA: Spiritual practices that aim towards liberation.

BRAHMA: Cosmic existence. The Universe. God.

CHAKRA: 'Wheel' in Sanskrit. A chakra is an area in the subtle body connected with life energy. There are 7 chakras.

DHARMA: Fundamental nature; essential characteristic. The law, order of things, your duty. The way or path toward your eternal Source.

DHARMIC: Actions that align with Dharma.

GUNA: Three primary building blocks, qualities or attributes of creation or Prakriti, the creative force of nature.

GURU: One who leads from darkness to light; an enlightened master. A teacher.

ISHTA MANTRA: A mantra that leads to the spiritual goal.

ISHVARA PRANIDHANA: Surrender to God. Meditation. One of the 5 Niyama, or observances of yoga.

JNANA: Spiritual knowledge. Wisdom.

KAMA: The path of pleasure; desires.

KARMA YOGA: The yoga of action; action done in accordance with Dharma, without attachment to the consequences.

KARMA: Experiences you have in life as a result of reactions to actions or experiences from the past. (When held in the mind and not yet expressed, it is samskara).

KUNDALINI: Dormant spiritual force (Shakti) that arises from the base of the spine to the top of the head in awakening.

KSHATRIYAS: Rulers, warriors and administrators.

LILA: "Divine play". The play of creation.

MAHABHARATA: One of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India.

MANTRA: A word or grouping of words with a sacred meaning to focus the mind in meditation or chanting.

MAYA: The illusion or appearance of the phenomenal world; e.g. duality.

MOKSHA: Liberation. Enlightenment. Emersion in the nondual.

NIYAMA: Moral observances to engage in of yoga.

PARAMA PURUSHA: Most Excellent or Supreme Consciousness.

PRANA: Vital subtle energy in the body.

PRANA DHARMA: The cardinal characteristics of a person or society.

PRANAYAMA: Yogic breath-control practices.

PRANIC: Vital life force energy.

PRANIDHANA: Dedicate, devote, or surrender.

PURUSHA: Cosmic Consciousness.

PRAKRITI: Mother Nature. The basic nature of intelligence by which the Universe exists and functions.

RAJAS: The quality of movement, being active, dynamic energy. (One of the three Gunas)

RASA: Movement of flow towards essence.

SADHANA: Spiritual practices; meditation.

SAMAJ: A society or congregation that usually involves common socio-economic interests; a church or religious body.

SAMSKARA: Reactions to past experiences held in the subconscious. Samskara becomes karma when it begins to find active expression.

SAMYAMA: From the Yoga Sutras. A yogic practice of focusing on a being or object to know its true nature.

SAT: Truth. The true essence. That which is unchangeable.

SATSANGA: Being in the company of the truth, right association.

SATTVA: The quality of sentience, purity, wholesomeness.

SEVA: Selfless service.

SHRII: Title of veneration for deities, gurus etc.

SHUDRA: Manual laborers, service providers or blue-collar workers. One of the 4 Varnas.

SVADHARMA: Your calling or duty in the world; in alignment with your unique nature.

TAMAS: One of the 3 gunas. The static attribute. Fixed.

VAISHYAS: The merchant class, agriculturalists and traders. One of the 4 Varnas.

VIPRA BRAHMINs: Priests, scholars and teachers. One of the 4 Varnas.

About the Author

Maetreyii Ma Nolan, PhD, is a student of mysticism, a licensed psychologist, and an expert in yoga philosophy. Through years of meditative practice and her own personal connection to Source, as well as, directing and teaching retreats, yoga teacher trainings, yoga therapy trainings, meditation trainings, and running her Ashram, she has gained profound insights and understanding that she shares in these deeply insightful writings. She is a Psychologist in private practice, an Acharya or Ordained Minister of Yogic Meditation, a certified Yoga Therapist, and a 500-hour certified Yoga Teacher.

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She currently spends her time working with people as a psychologist in private practice, giving spiritual *"Baba Talks"*, teaching and publishing books of these beautiful discourses and giving

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Other Books by Maetreyii Ma

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