

In the last edition of WWW, Krishna Prakash wrote an introductory article on the Vedic tradition of India. "Veda" means "knowledge" and it comes from the root word "vid," means "to know." This system is not only a repository of knowledge connected to day to day living, but also contains in itself the knowledge that helps oneself to realise the "absolute reality."

"Rights" Based Life Versus a "Duties" Based Life

The majority of the world is tricked into believing that the world as a whole is a "rights based" society and seldom importance is given to "duties." Even at the level of the United Nations (UN), we have the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) but we do not have an international level committee to look into the duties that each human being should do, which is non-negotiable.

As you read this, just stop for a moment to peep out of your window or take a walk to the balcony. You would notice that the trees, insects, and birds are moving freely as if nothing happened, but the entire human race is forced to suspend its free movement and has placed our very survival at risk during this current pandemic.

Such precarious situations arise when we do not allow nature to discharge her dharma (duties). When we do not stop meddling with the lives of other beings in the world, we too are consciously or unconsciously practicing adharma i.e. opposite of dharma. The other beings are designed to co-exist but we in our infinite greed, wish to control, subjugate, exploit and commercialize anything and everything. The great Mahatma Gandhi once said, "there is sufficient in the world for man's need but not for man's greed."

The ancient Vedic tradition gives us a simple framework that contains the 5 types of debts that each of us need to discharge. Once implemented, these would help us to develop gratefulness and also consciously give back in a structured way to society. These are debts adapted to today's need and shared here:



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1) Deva (the Light beings):

being considerate and kind to nature by moving to a sustainable lifestyle, to not pollute to her water bodies, do not indiscriminately breakdown mountains or mine the earth, and generate as little waste as possible. Those who follow any religious or spiritual path can practice meditation, mindfulness etc.

2) Pitru (the ancestors):

being understanding and loving towards parents, elders and other senior citizens. Whatever issues we may have with them, however tough an early life experiences might have been, still be thankful and serve them because they were the gateway through which we entered this beautiful world. Those who follow rituals of the dead, can do so as per the tradition and culture you belong to, as an opportunity to show gratitude.





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3) Rishi (the seers):

being thankful and appreciative of the body of knowledge handed over to us - particularly spiritual knowledge (like this information from ancient traditions that are ever relevant). However much we may like to think that we are more advanced than our forefathers, the reality is that we are not. We may be materially well off but spiritual depth and intellectual rigor is absent. A simple example is that no one in the last 100 years, despite revolutionary new inventions and discoveries, has been able to add a single alphabetical character to any language! (The English language continues to have 26 characters.) Today's situation is a grim reminder of how far we have travelled from the simple yet fulfilling life which our grandparents lived. Thus, we need to respect and facilitate the transfer of the body of (spiritual) knowledge to the next generation.

4) Manushya (mankind):

being mindful and responsible towards fellow human beings. After completing our dharma (duties) towards our near and dear ones, we are supposed to help others in need. It could be achieved through helping someone prepare a CV or to set up an interview for them, or by helping blind or old people to cross the road. These simple acts help us to get over our "I, me, myself" attitude where we feel that the only important person in the entire universe is the self, and others are just there to serve our needs and desires etc. The discharging of this debt helps us to develop compassion and empathy.





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5) Bhoota (other beings left out of the above 4 debts):

Ants, grasshoppers, butterflies, birds, animals, microorganisms, the entire flora and fauna have all equal rights to live as peacefully as we do. We cannot be callous by infringing upon their rights. In the eyes of Mother Nature, all of us are her children. Thus, the practices of natural farming, afforestation, refraining from manufacturing or usage of harmful pesticides, chemicals etc, would allow these beings to survive and live as nature intended.

To conclude, if we understand the importance of living according as per dharma, all the above can be easily practiced and we can co-exist peacefully and happily with all other beings in the world.



About Krishna Prakash

Krishna Prakash is the founder of Shrimath Yoga (India), a residential Yoga school. Since 2011, participants from 40 countries have studied the 21 days course on self discovery through Yoga. TripAdvisor ranks Shrimath Yoga constantly at #1 or #2 in Southern India. His online course on "Enlightened Living" is well received. One of the World's leading Yoga blogs, @blog.yoga.in frequently publishes his writings.

*These are the times when one can consciously decide to move from "mere living" to "enlightened living." An online workshop on *enlightened living* is offered by Krishna who has more than 10,000 hours of experience in sharing principles & processes from the ancient tradition of Yoga, Veda & Tantra. This online workshop does not promise magic but ensures that one works hard to achieve the effortless ability to experience "enlightened living."*

He is also shortlisted for Forbes India 2020 Great Manager's list.

Visit www.shrimathyoga.com/enlightenedliving for more details.