



LEOBRAND

Letters on

Living Ethics

Introduction to Agni Yoga



10. Dharma and Life Task

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Cover picture: „St. Sergius the Builder“, painting by Nicholas Roerich 1925.

Dharma and Life Task

1. The Law of diversity

The law of diversity in the universe forms the basis of world harmony. Just as no human being has two absolutely identical hairs on the head, there are none two identical people all over the earth. Billionfold diversity prevails everywhere. Even if people were endowed with the same abilities, they would diverge in a short time because of their different character traits. These are related to the diversity of education, religion, race and nation, sex, age, status, and finally also to the hour of birth.

It can be observed that one person is diligent and therefore quickly achieves a pursued goal, while the other loves comfort and therefore cannot reach the desired goal. However, there are also cases where people achieve nothing despite their greatest efforts, while for others the hoped for fortune falls effortlessly into their laps. An astrologer would explain this only with the constellation of the stars during the minute of birth. He may be right about for the most part, because there is no earthling who stands outside of cosmic laws and does not already bring a mature karma on earth. But exactly this lawfulness demands diversity. Because a life of equality, a life that carries uniform features in all its forms and phases, does not exist in the universe. It would be absolutely intolerable and would exclude every development. The more pronounced the individuality is, the greater is the diversity. The more enormously the massification of the people increases, the more comprehensive features of the commonality of a uniformed herd can be determined.

Manifoldness and diversity are the keynote of a harmonious universe. The inequality arises from the striving of all thinking beings for development. The cosmic laws offer the possibility of a just balance, which cannot take place in one single life, but extends over hundreds of incarnations. This ensures the claim to absolute, equalising justice for all human beings. Only the interaction of a multiplicity of parts makes it possible to achieve a harmonious whole. Infinite manifoldness and differences as well as numerous connections of human beings among each other are supposed to manifest the divine law of evolution or unfolding, which expresses the totality of a life constantly striving for improvement and perfection. However, the cosmos can only attain perfection when each part fulfils its assigned task in its place, like the individual organs in a living being or the components of a machine.

Diversity is also necessary because it is the only thing that allows us to distinguish. Without distinction we would not know that we are thinking beings. Without differentiation there would be no growth of consciousness, which is the greatest treasure of man. Total equality does not allow for discernment. So this is absolutely necessary for the unfoldment of consciousness. But in the growth of consciousness lies the real meaning of life.

Therefore, not all human beings can be the same. Nor can they all possess the same abilities and thus fulfil the same tasks and exercise the same profession. What kind of life would it be if there were only labourers, only farmers, only soldiers or only priests? Such a state of affairs would be unimaginable. It is true that all professions entail different tasks and duties, whereby one has to overcome corresponding difficulties and this is however, indispensable for personal evolution.

But many a thinking person will ask himself: why has fate placed me, of all people, in this bad place, why do I, of all people, have to do an unpleasant or annoying job, why am I tormented and disregarded by my surroundings? Why do others rule over me and not the other way around? Why do some people not need to work at all? To all of these questions, of a complicated nature, posed by the law of diversity and development, Dharma, the law of duty, which is effective together with Karma and determines the particular task of man's life, gives us the answer.

2. What is Dharma?

In Dharma, we first have to see the individual mission in life as well as the duty that arises towards fellow human being in the course of human evolution, be it in the family, in the profession or in society. In the same way that every human being shapes his karma by

thinking and acting, he determines his new dharma in accordance with the cosmic law of evolution from life to life.

Dharma is also the moral law and the inner nature within us that has reached a certain stage of development and unfolding in every human being.

Due to the laws of development, we must also not overlook the fact that every human being is born in a certain circle of life and has to fulfil his or her life's work within it. This includes all professions and vocations, from the simplest to the most complicated and responsible. Every human being is placed on a certain place and is equally important and significant on this place. He also has to fulfil his duty in this place to the best of his knowledge and belief. It is not the place that beautifies man, but man beautifies the place where he works. We are called to work, and there is no work that could humiliate us. No matter how low and inferior a man's work may seem to him, he can increase its value by a conscientious attitude. The conscientious fulfilment of even a simple and insignificant work is a preparatory stage to a higher activity.

As long as man hasn't learned to invest in every work, even the lowest, all his skill, the greatest caution and maximum diligence, he cannot be called to the fulfilment of a greater and more responsible activity, nor will he be placed in such conditions as will raise him to a higher place. No one can be expected to do more than he is able to do on the basis of his level of consciousness and his abilities.

Let every man therefore be conscientious and the best in his respective place to which the laws of development have placed him. It is not office, dignity and title that determine our value, but the measure of conscientious fulfilment of duty and the carrying out of the vocation or life's work.

In addition, our true value is determined by our spiritual commitment and readiness to help in the service of the general welfare. Everyone is guided by their karma and dharma where they can best learn and fulfil the lesson of their development in that particular incarnation. It may often take a very difficult struggle for someone to get to their rightful place, because today the world order is totally disturbed and the supervision of births by the Lords of Karma and the Devas (angels) cannot always be resolved in terms of dharma because of the disturbed order. However, the lawful, cosmic opportunities to reach the right place of development are always there. The opportunities only have to be perceived through appropriate efforts.

No one is burdened with more in life than he is capable of creating, maintaining and achieving. Certainly in the age of the darkest epoch some people carry the heaviest burdens because the circumstances and the injustices of life caused by human hands demand it so. Serving the common welfare, however, is not a burden, but a glorious obligation. He who helps others helps himself; that is the law of nature. But one should never ask for reward and thanks, since these expectations are already binding, but work for the sake of work and serve for the sake of service. Then the best reward in the form of inner contentment, balance and bliss comes of its own accord.

3. Dharma and obligation

Few people want to understand that the highest attainments are neither in psychism¹ nor in astral visions, but only through the fulfilment of duty. The people of the Orient say only through the attainment of the Dharma. The revealed world develops and sustains itself exclusively through activity. Only this generates new energies.

Since it is said that the world came into being through thoughts, or that deeds are produced through thoughts, many people immerse themselves in fantastic reveries because they believe that they are thinking. They also think that thought is higher than action and therefore see creative thoughts in dreams. That is why they avoid acting and forget that only the thought filled with fiery will and psychic energy is creative. But we can only attain this will by trying to put it into practice in life through persistent exercise, by learning to let it become effective.

¹ **Psychism** – see lesson 32

In their earthly life, all the great masters directed their thoughts towards uplifting deeds. Neither of them retreated into a hermitage. All of them paved the way to new achievements through deeds. That is why you should not insist on dreaming, but on deeds and the fulfilment of duty. In the present time more than ever, because humanity has to cope with the gigantic attacks of the dark forces. Therefore, everyone must also be concerned with the complete fulfilment of their earthly life tasks with all their energies and fulfil their duty to the end. Only this leads to the permanent progress of the spiritual soul.

"Everything that man does out of personal impulse has no value for the eternal. Salvation and reunion with God can only be attained by acting without regard to his very own self as an instrument in the hand of God and doing that which one has recognised as one's duty. Man will attain perfection by persistently fulfilling his dharma and duty." So taught KRISHNA, the sublime Son of God, five millennia ago (Bhagavad Gita III).

"It is far better to perform one's prescribed duties, even though faultily, than another's duties perfectly. Destruction in the course of performing one's own duty is better than engaging in another's duties, to follow another's path is dangerous." (Bhagavad Gita III/35)

"He who does not begin cannot attain to the state of eternal bliss. He cannot attain perfection by doing nothing, for no one can be completely idle, even for a short time, because everyone is compelled by his nature to do something even if he did not want to. He who is outwardly idle by preventing his organs from exercising their functions, but inwardly clings to earthly things, is a fool and is called a hypocrite, a hypocrite; but he who has subdued his senses to God, through fiery love for the Most High, is to be highly esteemed if he also occupies himself with outward things, but without allowing himself to be dominated by the same. Do what is your duty, for activity is better than inactivity. Even the preservation of your body requires means which you cannot obtain if you are idle." (Bhagavad Gita III/4-8)

"He who does not cooperate in the progressive evolution of this world, but lives in sins and sensual pleasure, lives in vain. Therefore, do what has to be done, but selflessly and without regard to personal matters. He who acts completely selflessly attains to the Alone. Janaka and others have attained perfection by deeds, therefore work out of love for humanity." (Bhagavad Gita III/16, 19, 20)

4. The Teaching of Dharma in the Bhagavad Gita

No other work of world literature is held in such high esteem by connoisseurs as the Bhagavad Gita, the high song of divinity and the doctrine of human perfection in divine existence. Older than the Christian Bible, more sublime than the Gospels and deeper in its content, it breathes the noblest and highest breath of oriental wisdom from that divine source which has fed mankind with religious knowledge and ethical values throughout the ages.

This is where KRISHNA, the divine world teacher of India, taught his disciple Arjuna, who symbolises humanity, how the awakening and perfection of the divine spirit in man must be achieved through the struggle with the desires and passions, false ideas and wrong views.

The Bhagavad Gita describes the struggle between good and evil that arises from the dichotomy of nature, both in the individual human being and in the universe. Arjuna - the human being (man) - is surrounded in his earthly existence by a host of delusions that must be overcome in order to attain the realisation of true divine being. But since many delusions have become dear to him and he is closely connected with them, it is difficult for him to fight against them. On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, the field of action, which symbolises earthly life, he finds himself between two hostile armies, one of which represents the higher soul forces (Pandavas), the other the forces of the lower self (Kurus). In the latter army are selfishness, self-will, conceit, desires, lust, passions, hatred, anger and all the lower qualities. On the other side fight the will to do good, devotion, love of truth and trust in God, faith, sublimity, conscientiousness, steadfastness, sincerity, sense of justice and self-control. Arjuna realises that the enemies are his closest relatives, friends and teachers, i.e. his personal qualities, which he should fight. Then his courage to fight sinks and he drops his bow - the will.

Now KRISHNA appears and chides Arjuna a coward. HE lectures him about the true nature of man and his relationship to God. The Divine Master explains to him that what the personal man believes to be his Self is only a delusion or Maya, and all the states, desires and

passions arising from delusion are only temporary phenomena, and man attains salvation in overcoming them and unites with GOD, the immortal Being of all beings. The Bhagavad Gita thus teaches the highest of all sciences, namely YOGA, the union of man with God and the path to immortality through self-conquest and the fulfilment of duty.

The battle on the Kuru field is therefore not a historical event, as it has often been wrongly understood by linguists and Bible scholars, but the spiritual battle between the higher and the lower self, between the Pandavas and Kurus, a battle that is constantly repeated in every human being striving for spiritual unfoldment and in all of humanity. This circumstance also emerges from the long conversation between KRISHNA and Arjuna on the battlefield before the fight began. This really doesn't seem to have been the moment for an extended philosophical-religious discussion.

5. The three Gunas

In the Bhagavad Gita (XIV/3-24), KRISHNA also explains how the innumerable differences are formed and how the diversity of nature and humanity comes about. It is said that ISHVARA, the manifested Deity in the PRAKRITI - the material or visible universe, or in nature, as the garment of GOD - manifests itself through three qualities or gunas, namely RAJAS, TAMAS and SATTVA, that is, activity, inertia and balance.

RAJAS is the activity, the energy of mobility expressed in attraction and repulsion. In TAMAS one has to understand inaction, inertia, an inertia that opposes and prevents activity. This also shows the bipolarity that can be observed everywhere in the universe, which forms the basis of tension and causes movement and life. Bringing this tension into the necessary balance is the task of SATTVA. Accordingly, this means creating a healthy balance between the two opposing poles in the sense of the greatest possible harmony, because there is no such thing as absolute balance.

The three gunas are divided among themselves into seven large groups, from which countless constellations arise through various combinations. One world divides into another because of the constant diversity caused by the everlasting change in the becoming and passing away of the universe. Material worlds merge into subtle ones and vice versa. The descending life is divided and subdivided and descends further and further into matter until it arrives at the periphery of the outermost spiral of involution, from where it now withdraws itself. This means that the turning point from centrifugal rotation to centripetal movement begins, which in turn draws matter towards the centre and thereby raises it an octave higher in its spiral development. It is the turning point to spiritual evolution where the life wave again begins to return to the deity. The temporary stage of involution serves to reveal and expand matter. In evolution, the powers that have come to unfold are refined and returned to the deity.

The life that ISHVARA gave was not yet developed, but was only destined to develop. Everything exists in the beginning only as a germ. These germs grow between the two poles of activity and inertia in all the kingdoms of nature of the divine consciousness towards increasing harmony until they are absorbed into BRAHMA, the impersonal ALL-GODNESS and are subject to new transformation.

One who follows one's own Dharma must attain perfection. The personal Dharma of each individual forms that stage of perfection on which the divine seed in man also finds itself. In addition, there is the life law of growth, through which man should not only get to know his own development, but also the laws of karma, the fulfilment of which enables him to grow further.

In order to know the next stage, man must first explore his present one. In order to attain perfection in all areas of life, he must know why he has been placed in this particular place and what tasks await him in the distant future. This is a lengthy process stretching over millions of years. Those who recognise their Dharma and know that they have to fulfil their duty in the best possible way on the respective position will accelerate their development through this.

It must be remembered that man cannot skip any stage of development. Our immediate goal is not what is best in the cosmos per se, but what requires the fulfilment of duty in

our present state in our respective positions. Man can only grow step by step from life-task to life-task and assume more significant callings in each case.

One cannot anticipate any ideal, but must strive for each goal at the right time in the right place. This also explains why the fulfilment of our own dharma is better than the performance of someone else's duty, which we may not yet be equal to and which is not in the line of our development and growth. Therefore, one must also learn the lesson of patience and consider that only in the course of numerous rebirths will we be offered all the possibilities that other people or divine beings who have hurried ahead of us already have today.

6. Satisfaction of desires and spiritual growth

What drives the animal to act? - The desire to get rid of an unpleasant sensation. For example, the animal feels hunger and desires food. That is why it sets out to satisfy the hunger. It is well known that even dangerous predators only kill when they are hungry or have to defend themselves, but never murder out of lust, like intellectually degenerate humans. The animal goes out to satisfy its desire for life support. Once this is done, it will be calm again. In the animal there is no motive for an action originating from itself. These motives for action only arise in the human intellect.

Even in primitive man we still find the satisfaction of desires in the law of his actions. These desires are extended by the intelligence developed in man beyond the necessary need of life, to the limit of insatiability. The fulfilment of earthly desires increasingly proves to be maya (illusion), because the material life, is only a short-term phenomenon in comparison with the true life of the immortal spirit. Therefore, on the path of evolution, the desires directed towards earthly life must be limited and overcome. As long as man's desires are still directed towards the purely earthly world, he is on the centrifugal path of involution into matter, but not on the centripetal one of spiritual internalisation and spiritual evolution.

Desires and cravings must therefore be tamed and finally completely extinguished, yet not through suppression, but through meaningful overcoming on the path to higher knowledge. This is the meaning of spiritual growth. On the lower level, the satisfaction of desires remains exclusively a law of development. If the desires cannot be lived out, i.e. overcome, there is no further development. No morality is yet known at the level of the animal kingdom, although even the wilderness has unwritten laws that reveal a remarkable fairness, practised primarily for the purpose of general self-preservation. In the wild, therefore, killing is absolutely not wrong because the preservation of life requires it.

So also with the savage the satisfaction of every desire is still his dharma. One does not find in him any consciousness that the satisfaction of desires could be forbidden by a higher law. This is even true today with regard to the killing of animals in highly developed cultures.

So without living out the lower desires, there is no further growth. The spiritual development must be promoted gradually through expansion of consciousness, increase of power of judgement and reason. The satisfaction of desires also leads to certain experiences and only through these does man learn what is good and bad for him in the long run and that he lives in a world of laws that demand evolution from him in the sense of perfection and ennoblement. How else could man, and through him matter, evolve, i.e. return to the divine consciousness of the universal spirit? Natural law works by two means: it grants pleasure when we obey it, it causes pain when we act contrary to it. At all stages of life, man comes into contact with cosmic laws and learns their absolute purposefulness and necessity.

In this way he comes to recognise the distinction between right and wrong, between good and evil. Here again we find the necessary opposites of bipolarity in the universe. One cannot recognise light without darkness, movement without standstill, pleasure without pain and good without evil. However, since in the long run only the good grants lasting joy, this realisation inevitably leads us forward on the path of good, because we would be our own enemies if we persisted on the path of evil. However, many people blinded by Satan do not want to see this.

If man wanted to gather all the necessary experiences on his own, he would need more time for his development. That is why "Brothers of Humanity", who obey the Law of Sacrifice,

have at all times appeared as teachers in humanity to instruct the younger brothers of humanity. They are higher intelligences who have hurried ahead of us. Since there is no absolute beginning in evolution, there have been higher beings at all times who taught the recognised laws of nature and made all their experience available to humanity. However, they have never received any thanks for this, like the example of the great Nazarene proves, because the spirit of darkness has ruled the earth for thousands of years.

KRISHNA was also one of these great teachers and has left behind spiritual values of timeless character in the Bhagavad Gita, for which all of humanity should thank Him. It is terribly difficult to apply in life these glorious instructions, which are pure Living Ethics, because the law of Sloth or Tamas is more or less predominant in all human beings.

7. The types of Dharma and the four castes of the Bhagavad Gita

In order to express the law of orderly development, the spiritual growth of humanity was once divided by KRISHNA into four successive stages. However, this division could only be made when humanity had reached a certain stage of development and there was the possibility of supervising incarnations through devas (angels), as was the case in ancient India. Over a long period of time, people were born into the caste in which they belonged in accordance with their stage of development. But nowadays, a complete confusion and mixing has occurred there too, and social life has been shaken.

Moreover, this fourfold division is found in every nation, even without a written law, because the diversity and the resulting inequality of humanity requires it. This inevitably leads to the harmony of life - the equilibrium - or sattva.

According to the Bhagavad Gita, the four castes divide themselves in terms of duties and tasks in life as follows:

"The duties of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras have been assigned to them according to the qualities of their nature. The duties of a Brahmin (priest) originated from his own nature and consist in calmness of mind, self-control, purity, patience, righteousness, knowledge of truth, learning and knowledge of religious customs."

"The duties of a Kshatriya (warrior) originated from his own nature and consist in bravery, strength, endurance, agility, determination, nobleness and a sense of ruling. The occupation of a Vaishya (peasant) arises from his own nature and consists of farming, husbandry and trade. The duties of a Sudra (servant) arise from his own nature and consist in obedience and service."

"He who attains true satisfaction in whatever he does, whatever it may be, attains perfection. Hear how he can find perfection: He attains it by loving, honouring and glorifying by his works HIM who is the source of all and has spread out the whole universe. It is better to do one's own duty, however weakly, than to do the work that is meant for another, however well. He who does the duty which his own nature imposes upon him does not sin." (Note: Due to its eminent importance, KRISHNA here repeats the sentence already expressed in Chapter III/35 about the necessary fulfilment of one's own duty).

"Do not refrain from the work that your higher nature imposes on you even if you find it difficult to accomplish it, for all doing is surrounded by inconvenience, like fire and smoke. When your heart isn't attached to anything outside yourself, when you are self-controlled in every respect and are not captivated by any desires, you attain perfect liberation from all karma through great renunciation." (Bhagavad Gita XVIII/41-49)

8. Dharma and morality

We have to realise that morality also changes with the range of duties. The boundaries of right and wrong are also very different between people and nations. What is allowed by some people, may be forbidden by others and therefore immoral. This distinction also depends on the level of development of human consciousness and the observance of cosmic laws. Morality may be simple for a less developed man with a narrow conception and limited

knowledge, but the more advanced the ability of judgement and the more profound the spiritual knowledge, the deeper the insight into the mysteries of the universe, and the more difficult is the study of morality and its clear ascertainment.

Morality is therefore determined on the one hand by the level of consciousness and on the other hand by Dharma, the duty and life task. KRISHNA, in His discourse on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, expressed himself on the difficulties of action with regard to this question as follows:

"What is action, what is nonaction? This question embarrasses even wise men. One has to distinguish between action, illicit action and nonaction. Mysterious is the way of action." (Bhagavad Gita IV/16-17)

Morality is not the same for all people. It changes with the dharma of the individual. Therefore, there is no absolute morality and nor absolute right or wrong, just as there is nothing absolute at all in a conditional universe. Right and wrong are relative and must therefore be judged in relation to the individual's dharma.

9. The four types of Dharma according to the Bhagavad Gita

a) The first Dharma: Service

(Caste of Sudra)

The first Dharma is that of service. At the first stage of development, man's inner nature needs training through service. Only through service can one attain all those qualities that are necessary for advancement to the next stage. People of the first stage still have poor judgement, an awkward mind, little experience of life and, above all, no urge for independent action and greater responsibility. Such a person is therefore a Sudra, no matter in which country he lives and in which caste he was born, even if it should be in the cradle of a prince.

At this stage, the law of growth demands submission, obedience and loyalty above all else. One to whom the dharma of service falls must blindly obey his superior without criticising or scrutinising his orders, regardless of whether the order given is wise or not. The dharma of obedience is especially important between servant and master. Nature knows no equality. Therefore, the diversity of human beings and their different dharma cannot be eliminated by any political program. It is remarkable that precisely those systems which are built on the basis of alleged equality demand more obedience and are more concerned with submission than those nations which respect the law of diversity and thus human freedom by nature. Only through service does man learn to prepare himself for the next stage.

However, one who is already in an authoritative position and has to give orders to subaltern associates must always bear in mind that the karma of a Sudra is fulfilled when he obeys and is devoted to his master. He should not be expected to have any higher virtues, especially not to be able to make decisions on his own and to be able to grasp things in a flash. It is the duty of the one in command to show higher virtues, but he must not demand them from his subordinate. If the servant shows loyalty, obedience and goodwill, he is satisfying his Dharma entirely. The superior and spiritually evolved must always bear in mind that the younger and less developed souls need guidance and good example. Therefore, any harsh treatment is to be avoided. The power of love and wisdom must inspire the superior and leader.

b) The second Dharma: Independent work

(Caste of Vaishya)

If the soul has learned the dharma of service through many rebirths, it will be called to ever better and more responsible tasks, following the law of growth. Then its further dharma is to take up self-employment and acquire wealth at that level.

The dharma of the Vaishya at the second stage involves becoming accustomed to independent thought and action while developing creative abilities. Of course, the improvement of character traits must not be forgotten, because both must go hand in hand. Thus, the

Vaishya should strive to acquire not only wisdom, perspicacity, efficiency and manual skills, but also purity, honesty, justice and generosity. He must also develop decency in the sense that he only allows himself to be rewarded for his achievements according to their true value and pays his subordinates a just wage. Furthermore, he must learn thrift and moderation as well as to make correct and quick decisions. All his actions promote qualities that are absolutely necessary for perfection in the future.

c) The third Dharma: Defend

(Caste of Kshatriya)

In the third stage, the person must learn to defend the material and spiritual goods he has acquired. The dharma of the Kshatriya is to learn courage, fearlessness, loyalty and magnanimity and to witness them through deed. He must also be prepared to willingly sacrifice even his own life in defence of the right, of the weak and oppressed. It is his duty to defend what has been entrusted to him against all attacks from outside, even if it costs his life. Whoever falls in the struggle for justice, peace and freedom, triggers good karma. The ranks of the Kshatriyas, you can find police officers, professional soldiers, officers, defenders of the law and rulers.

Protecting weak and helpless people and defending the law even at the risk of one's life is a high task. Wickedness and darkness would reign absolutely if no one were prepared to oppose them. One must therefore oppose evil at all costs, and there is active and passive defence. As is well known, Master JESUS himself gave an example of this, in that HE on the one hand forcibly purged the temple in Jerusalem of money changers, but on the other hand, he also recommended the method of passive resistance: "If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn your left to him as well." It all depends on which method is better and more correct at a given moment. The passive method can also completely disarm and defeat an opponent. However, there is no such thing as absolute pacifism.

Evil exists only where the good is not sufficiently developed or is not steadfast enough and where the representatives of light are weaker than the phalanx of darkness. The defence of right and of good is therefore the duty of a separate caste. Even if standing armies could be dispensed nowadays, it is impossible to dispense with police forces and courts. Those who believe in absolute pacifism do not understand the laws of development.

„Even when facing the greatest battle, we must continue to follow our usual daily plan. It would not be correct for a battle to disrupt the current of life. Battle is our destiny, and one must simply include it in the daily plan.“ (AY, § 179.)

“If, motivated by pride, you think, “I shall not fight,” your decision will be in vain. Your own nature will compel you to fight. O Arjuna, that action which out of delusion you do not wish to do, you will be driven to do it by your own inclination, born of your own material nature.“ (Bhagavad Gita XVIII/59, 60).

The struggle is therefore an inevitable necessity of life. However, it must never lead to deliberate murder and wars of aggression with the intention of robbing other people. This is a crime that must be confronted in order to establish law and order. Therefore, soldiers and wars cannot be completely eliminated from the world. As long as there are no higher levels of development on earth, the most important task is to raise humanity to a higher spiritual and moral level, since by virtue of religious knowledge a peaceful coexistence of all people and peoples is possible.

Today, even the pacifist still needs the police to protect himself from thieves and common criminals. This applies not only to individuals, but also to peoples and races.

There is no human being who can skip the Dharma of the Kshatriya; women too are given opportunity to fulfil this task, through the change of gender (see Lesson No. 7). In order to ascend to the position of teacher and priest, every person must have previously learnt certain disciplines, such as self-discipline, fearlessness and faithfulness. He must also develop a certain sense of rulership as well as resourcefulness, quick decision-making and bravery. Wars are certainly terrible and horrible, but a strict distinction must be made between fighting and murder. Anyone who wrestles down his opponent in defence without a personal

motive of killing does not create karma, for otherwise natural self-defence would not be justified. Master MORYA speaks in this regard in the book Fiery World:

„Premeditated murder is one thing, self-defense is another. When one is subjected to an attack by the dark forces, it is necessary to defend oneself. Thought about defense is not murder. Each one can defend himself first of all by the strength of his spirit. Some strengthen their protective net, picturing it as a shield. But the fiery heart does not limit itself to a shield; it sends forth the spiral of Agni, which blunts the most malevolent arrows. Of course, courage and resourcefulness are needed for such action.“ (FW I, § 558.)

Apart from that, far too much importance is attached to the death of the physical body. The soul cannot be killed and that is what matters. The purpose of the physical body is to allow the life of the soul to develop. But the moment the soul, which uses the body, has fulfilled those tasks which are necessary for its ascent, the body can quietly perish. The soul attains freedom and can build itself a new body through rebirth, which will enable it to tackle the next task and develop higher powers. Death is therefore only the resurrection to a higher life.

The tongue can often be more dangerous than the sword, and more people have been killed by it, as well as by bad thoughts, than have ever fallen in war. Even an anti-militarist can injure and kill by his tongue. True pacifism, therefore, consists in spreading good and uplifting thoughts and in remedying religious ignorance and immorality. Only then will the necessary conditions be in place for a peaceful paradise on earth.

Humanity is approaching the hour of a great decision with giant strides. In the age of the atomic bomb, the dharma of the Kshatriya as "warrior" has become largely illusory. It doesn't take courage to drop bombs on defenceless women, children and old people from the air or from a safe distance. This kind of warfare is a crime under all circumstances. Therefore, the dharma of a Kshatriya of today is to prepare political conditions that will bring about a UNIVERSAL EMPIRE in which all wars between peoples will cease and peaceful conditions will prevail. His task will then be limited to maintaining justice and order.

d) The forth Dharma: Teaching

(Caste of Brahmin)

And the final stage is that of a teacher, whether as an educator in the schools or as a called priest and teacher of humanity. As soon as one has learnt as a Kshatriya to sacrifice one's body at any time in the defence of justice and freedom, the soul also acquires the indispensable power for complete self-sacrifice of the personality in order to truly ascend to the fourth caste.

Most priests of the present day, however, are not called teachers of humanity and are not true representatives of the Hierarchy of Light. The soul of the Brahmin must have become knowledgeable and wise and must have ascended through the spiritual path of discipleship. A priest who does not know the esoteric contexts of the world religions cannot be a true Brahmin. Only someone who has grasped the coherences is also a spiritual born-again or twice-born person, as the deeper meaning of the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus says (John 3/3-8). The spiritually reborn can of course only enter the Kingdom of God by way of numerous incarnations. However, this goal cannot be reached through meditation courses and the like, but only through persistent effort in the sense of self-conquest, self-sacrifice and strenuous work on oneself.

The soul must have processed and absorbed all the lower experiences of the preceding stages before it can teach and instruct itself. If it had not acquired the necessary wisdom through obedience, effort, struggle, loyalty and self-sacrifice, how could it teach and be a teacher to the ignorant brothers of man?

Women too, like men, possess the Dharma of the Brahmin, and it is therefore a great injustice that they have been deprived of this vocation for thousands of years. In the coming development, therefore, women too should regain their rightful place at the altar in the temple of the Lord.

The Brahmin becomes the friend of every creature. This also requires a vegetarian way of life, for the animals are the younger brothers of humanity. The law of growth demands knowledge and again knowledge from him. Ignorance is the greatest enemy of humanity. Piety,

humility, purity, modesty, forbearance and self-control are other important qualities. The end of his spiritual growth is salvation from earthly existence.

Even though today the caste system has become completely disordered, according to its original meaning it continues to form the basis of human development, which cannot be circumvented. Today's disorder is primarily due to the failure of the priestly caste and the rulers themselves. In some churches, priests have degenerated through celibacy; they often refuse to marry out of selfish motives in order to thereby preserve the material substance of their church and its power. By doing so, however, they prevent the chosen souls of true priests from being born into their caste. Similarly, the ruling families in the courts are effeminate and demoralised. Due to their negative karma and as a result of moral decay, they are also no longer able to attract higher evolved beings and prepare for their birth. Eugenics² is left to chance. Rulers and even appointed priests must therefore be born in the family of a Sudra or Vaishya in order to fulfil their dharma.

This circumstance, however, inevitably leads to social upheavals, as the born ruler will in any case strive upwards and push the unbidden one from the throne. The rulers born in the lower castes will therefore everywhere try to overthrow the ossified and rotten social order in order to reach the top.

It is even more difficult for a priest born in a lower caste to assert himself, because the religious development is even more ossified and disturbed than the social development and needs a complete renewal. Thus the caste system in India has also become a paragon of social injustice and, in the original sense, a plague on the whole people.

This, however, does not preclude humanity's learning of late the true meaning of this natural institution, so that every man may become familiar with the law of his own growth, which he cannot escape even without an official caste system. Let everyone, therefore, try to learn the stage of his own development and to recognise his own Dharma by its characteristic features, which the inner nature makes us find.

An unprepared soul, however, must not be held up to too high an ideal, and a real Sudra must not be brought up to be a real Brahmin. It is true that there are many differences in each caste as a result of the different levels of consciousness. Therefore, each one must experience what is good for him in his own place. However, the gates of ascent are not closed to anyone. Therefore, it is important to always raise one's ideals one step higher, to direct one's aspirations to the next rung of the ladder, and never to look to the past, but only to think of the future and the unlimited development that lies ahead.

10. The Indian caste system - today

It is often claimed that knowledge of the law of rebirth has produced in Indian man inertia, immobility, indolence³ and quiet contemplation⁴ which ultimately result in a slow pace of life, stagnation and lifelessness (torpor).

Helena Roerich, the High Mother and transmitter of Agni Yoga, writes in one of her letters: „... You write that *“the Eastern man became so passive because of his knowledge of reincarnation, and this finally resulted in a slowing of the tempo of life, stagnation and lifelessness.”* This is not quite so. Many other reasons are responsible for this stagnation. Of course, all that hardens and develops the strength of man—severity of nature, severity of climatic conditions and the struggle for existence in connection with this—is almost entirely absent in the East. On the other hand, climate and other conditions were favorable to the meditative life. But the real evil of India, which resulted in stagnation and degeneration, is not *“in their knowledge of reincarnation”* but in the dead system of castes. This system, with the loss of a real knowledge of the past and with the corruption of the governing class, became like an iron vise upon a most capable nation of teeming millions. Who has not lived in India is unable to imagine completely the terror of this slavery! At the moment, there are, apart from the four main castes, a vast number of all sorts of subdivisions—as many as there are occupations and professions.

² **Eugenics** - the term for the application of human genetic knowledge since 1883

³ **Indolence** - indifference

⁴ **Contemplation** - contemplativeness

Each caste is limited by all sorts of absurd prohibitions, and the higher the caste, the more prohibitions; hence, the well-known degeneration of the higher castes.

Even if we take into consideration the unsurpassed heights of their main spiritual Teachings and, on the other hand, the covetousness and ignorance of most of their present priesthood, even then it is hard to understand how could such absurdity, such crying cruelty, such criminal monstrosity of forms take place! But such is the sad reality. Apart from the caste system, child marriages are bringing degeneration. It is not unusual to see a nine-year-old girl married to a sixty-year-old man and already a crippled mother of a stillborn child. Yes, there are many wonders in India, but also many terrible things! It is as if this would prove the law: "the brighter the Light, the deeper the darkness." That explains why nowhere else do you meet such spirituality and refinement as here. If this beautiful country could succeed in curing the dreadful scourge which is destroying it, the development of this country would amaze the whole world. There are some signs of revival. The woman of India is awakening and her heart reacts to the suffering of the degraded; therefore, she is destined to revive her country. ... " (HIR I, 8 February 1934)

11. Performance and character must decide

Even if caste and its system were legitimate in ancient times, today it is completely outdated and its maintenance is a crime against human evolution. Development is taking a different path today, even if the diversity of people's inner nature cannot be eliminated.

The estates and castes have created a gulf between the so-called educated classes and the common people. In the Occident, too, despite the lawful constitution of human equality, we observe gross antagonisms caused by the arrogance of sophisticated intellectuals. This is precisely what creates an abysmal separation of consciousnesses, which is terrible and threatens the entire culture. A tremendous jolt arose in the consciousness of the masses in the second half of the eighteenth century. Instinctively they have sensed the cosmic law of the fundamental equality of the spirit, and since in their state of ignorance they are unable to recognise the great principle of the lawfulness of the Hierarchy. For not everyone can be on the same rung of the ladder, because otherwise it would have collapsed long ago, they are rising up in anger all over the planet.

Diversity reigns uninfluenced in evolution, that is: people are distributed on all rungs of the ladder according to their development of consciousness. However, this does not exclude the fundamental equality of human beings. However, it can only have an effect in that those who are on the lowest rung of the ladder have the same right to climb the upper rungs as those who have gone before. This shows the perfection in all areas of life.

Differences can never be eliminated immediately, which is why the absolute equality of all human beings is impossible. Only the law of rebirth and evolution gives even those on the lower levels the possibility of rushing upwards. However, this is by no means a disadvantage, because if the beginning did not take place at the same time, the goal cannot be reached at the same time.

Therefore, the main task of a modern and deepened religion must be to enlighten people, otherwise the hydra⁵ of darkness will devour everything on earth. Only real knowledge, great achievements and an example of character, all in all a spiritual nobility may and must enjoy certain privileges, but not a caste, which on top of that is founded only on birth or privileges of blood. However, spiritual nobility also requires a spiritual preparation of births.

12. Dharma and service

All Dharma is service, regardless of which caste or level in the social order one belongs to. Even appointed kings have called themselves the first servants of the state. Therefore, under all circumstances, we have to live in an exemplary manner in the environment in which fate has placed us because of our inner growth. As uninteresting as this place may often be, there is hardly a better place for us at our respective level. The place we are in is that point where our

⁵ *Hydra* - nine-headed sea monster of Greek mythology -

respective journey to further completion begins and not the place we are supposed to flee in order to fall off or fall back. If we cannot prove ourselves where we are and in the very place we are in, then we will not be offered a better opportunity until we do. This is the field of our probation and the ongoing test of readiness for service.

Today, many supposed "disciples on the path" and esoterics still fail these very tests. They fail in life, make fools of themselves with their quirks and neglect their duties, their professional obligations and even their family. The ideal of the future is not the conceited initiate and mysterious occultist, distinguished by his domestic disorder and unworldliness, but the clean and practical world servant, who stands in the midst of his life in the fulfilment of his duty and strives for the progress of the world. He will not only set an example at work, in the family, in society and in life as a whole, but will at the same time be a servant of the Hierarchy of Light.

On this path, however, severe trials are inevitable. The trials on the spiritual path are so severe that only a small part ever passes through this "eye of the needle". Most fall prey to seductive illusions for a long time and then furiously and with the courage of despair defend their errors by performing true feats in twisting the truth and elevating the lie to truth in order to drag other seekers on the path with them into the abyss.

The purpose of an examination is to test our strength, especially our moral strength. It brings out the last in us and reveals where our weaknesses and flaws lie. Today we need reliable people who have been steeled in trials so that they do not break down or fail when difficulties arise or when they are confronted with the dark shadows of life. Every "disciple on the path" should learn to walk on the edge of the abyss. He who is anchored in absolute fidelity in the Hierarchy of Light will not fall even while walking on the ridge, because help is assured to him from above. However, all the help that is necessary comes only at the last moment, when one's own possibilities are exhausted and all abilities and efforts have reached their maximum tension. Nevertheless, a pupil must also accept the help of his teacher, even if it should be a necessary humiliation. He who rejects the helping hand of the master falls into the abyss. How else should we be able to transform our high energies into higher psychic powers? Even according to the laws of physics, all energies transmute only at the limit of highest tension! That is why we want to shape our life into a single heroic deed and fulfil even the simplest and lowest work with the same joy as a glorious mission of GOD. Whoever acts in this way will hear HIS next call to further and more beautiful work in building up the universe.

13. The meaning of duty

Leobrand 1968

It is difficult to define the term "duty" because it is different for all religions and nations. Although the Quran differs from the Christian Bible, which in turn differs from the Hindu Vedas, they have a certain concept in common: every deed that brings us closer to God is a good deed, and this is therefore our duty. Any deed that leads downwards and harms others is bad. That is why all the major world religions, which are inspired by the common divine source of light, demand: Do no offence to any being, but love your neighbour as yourself.

We must never consider ourselves as individuals as the standard for morality and ethics, but have to adapt to the world. Therefore, we also see that duty changes with the environment. Let one conscientiously perform those duties which come to one by birth and position in life. Everyone is great in his own place, and let no one feel humiliated when others are in a better position. The law of diversity creates a just balance, but not in a single life, that would be impossible; many incarnations are necessary for that.

Development in life is gradual, and first man must have learned service in simple matters before he can be called to higher duties. That is why it is necessary to fulfil the duty of his assigned place, that is, to conscientiously fill one's own place. In the first incarnation, no human being will already be an appointed king or ruler. Notwithstanding this, the road sweeper in his place is as great and honourable as the king on his throne. Diversity in development results in harmony in the cosmos. There is no point in overturning this order. History

has shown what comes of throwing appointed rulers into the street and elevating the man of the street to the throne. It is also foolish to believe that the man who has withdrawn from the world and lives in solitude is greater than the man who lives in the world and works there to do his duty. It is, of course, much harder to live in the world and do one's duty than to give it up and live a free and unattached life. Those who are called to give up the world must also have the experiences and duties of the world behind them and will serve higher cosmic tasks in solitude. This too is service to humanity.

On the other hand, let those who remain in the world not take the hermit for a lay about; for in his place he will do more good for the world through the power of his concentrated, positive thoughts than he would be able to do through work. Everyone is great in their place to which the order of the world calls them.

Fulfilment of the duty assigned to us by destiny is an important prerequisite for spiritual ascent, in order to climb higher levels. Therefore, no duty should be regarded as insignificant. People should not be judged according to their status, dignity and title, but according to the degree to which they have fulfilled their duty. The value of work will give rise to a sense of duty. One's own heart must tell one that carelessness, forgetfulness and subterfuge are reprehensible.

Fulfilment of duty creates JOY, and above all, fulfilment of duty towards humanity creates great joy. All heroes were duty bearers.

Serve the peace and good of the world.



Build a “Star”

Many responsible-minded and worried people today demand a practical action that promises maximum success without attracting much attention, without affiliation to a club or without political risk. In this way they live up to positive expression to their sense of responsibility towards the world situation. Working on the "Star" helps to alleviate not only spiritual but also material distress. It is therefore important to be concerned, at least a few times a day, sending out good thoughts, not for oneself, but above all for the world and for peace. Then the general mental work will also become accustomed to selfless aspirations, and there will be the hope that through such concentrated powers of thoughts the power of evil can be successfully reduced and averted. If millions of people voluntarily made themselves available to such a work, those men and women who would be fit for their purified thinking and noble character, could be able to protrude without great difficulty in religion, politics and social life in order to establish a fair and peaceful world order for the benefit of all people.

„Aum – Tat – Sat – Aum“

*Source of light in the universe,
pour out light into human thinking,
it become brighter on Earth!*

*Source of love in the universe,
pour out love into all human hearts,
May love blossom on Earth!*

*Source of wisdom in the universe,
pour out knowledge and wisdom,
let cognition prevail on Earth!*

*Source of peace in the universe,
strengthen peace and justice,
may felicity and joy be on Earth!*

*Source of power in the universe,
seal the door to evil,
that the plan of the good will be fulfilled!*

„Aum – Tat – Sat – Aum“

(For further information see Lesson no. 6).

Source:Works of the blessed Mahatma Maitreya Morya:

Blossoms of Morya`s Garden:

Abbreviations:

Leaves of Morya's Garden I, LMG I §§ 387**Leaves of Morya's Garden II,** LMG II §§ 358

New era:

COMMUNITY COM §§ 275

Doctrine of Living Ethics in seven themes:

AGNI YOGA AY §§ 670**INFINITY I** INF I §§ 400**INFINITY II** INF II §§ 518**HIERARCHY** HIE §§ 460**HEART** HEA §§ 600**FIERY WORLD I** FW I §§ 666**FIERY WORLD II** FW II §§ 470**FIERY WORLD III** FW III §§ 618**AUM** AUM §§ 600**BROTHERHOOD** BH §§ 610**SUPERMUNDANE** SMU §§ 955**Letters of Helena Ivanova Roerich**

2 Books: HIR I, HIR II

Bhagavad Gita

MORYA – Indian Rajput prince, whose spirit had been raptured to the great spirit of MAITREYA and was enlightened or overshadowed by him. This portrait drawing commissioned by the artist Hermann Schmiechen in 1884 was often repainted. However, the copies only achieved a resemblance to the "face of the teacher", which is why repainted copies can lead to failure in meditations!

Living Ethics shows the way of a rational self-education through applied ethics.



LEOBRAND – Leopold Brandstätter (* 20th February 1915 Wallern, † 26th February 1968 Linz), was an Austrian nature philosopher and humanist.

His writings are concerned with ethics, humanities, psychology, philosophy, politics, ideology of the world and architecture.

In the 1950s he translated the Agni yoga doctrine from Russian together with a Baltic-German team, thus paving the way for this philosophy in German-speaking countries.

Leobrand founded a (non public) school for Living Ethics. Decades before the introduction of teaching ethics in public schools he had already written 36 lessons of Living Ethics, as the first interdenominational teaching aid for ethical training. He gave countless lectures and conducted seminars. Recordings of Leobrand's lectures are available. These historical audio documents offer the possibility to understand/think along the philosophical analysis of the great thinker Leobrand and open up new horizons for life's spiritual dimension. Philosophical accuracy and clarity of expression are Leobrand's trademarks.

The new concept of God is particularly noteworthy. For this new and completely independent concept of God, a new term was created: "UNIVERSALO". Leobrand's concept is explained on a hierarchical basis, it detaches itself from the abstract and merges with the whole existence. It includes many philosophical and historical concepts as well as advanced knowledge of relatively immortal spiritual fields of force. Leobrand therewith expressed the first and only humanistic definition of God within a new world-view and pulls the rug from under atheism. The new concept of God is as dynamic as nature itself and thus indicative of the forthcoming independent humanities.

Other highlights are his work for a united Europe and for a forthcoming pannational world union. Many of those great-sounding ideas of Leobrand are already self-evident reality.

Works:

1955 - 1961: 36 lessons, **Briefe über Lebendige Ethik** (*letters on Living Ethics* - in translation)

1957: **Psychische Energie** (*Psychic energy* - humanities and psychology)

1958: **Heilung durch psychische Energie** (*Healing by psychic energy* - humanities and health)

1966: **Freude** (*Joy* - philosophy)

1967: **Der Ausweg** (*The way out* - politics)

1968: **Neues Europa und Welt ABC** (*New Europe and World ABC* - politics)

1968: **Das neue universelle Weltbild** (*The new universal world view* - world view)

1968: **Spiralik** (*Spiralik* - architecture of the future)

1953 - 1968: reprint, articles in magazines (partly unpublished manuscripts)

1976: **Der auferstandene Gott** (*The resurrected god* - humanities, compilation of articles)

1962 - 1967: **Lectures** and seminars on all his works (recordings MC in German language)

Activities:

1949: Establishment of a **peace league**

1953: Establishment of the (not public) „**School for Living Ethics**“ and magazine

1960: Publication of the magazine „**Spirale und grüne Wacht**“ (nature protection and biotechnology)

1961: Publication of the magazine „**Weltreichspirale**“

1962: Establishment of the association „**Welt-Spirale**“ - ethical society of progress and renewal of the world, and magazine.

© 1955, 1967, Leopold Brandstätter, the first edition was published in German by „Schule für Lebendige Ethik“ Verlag für Lebendige Ethik, Linz, Austria. Translation from German: 2023 Welt-Spirale, Ethische Gesellschaft für Fortschritt und Welterneuerung, Linz Austria. weltspirale@aon.at, www.Welt-Spirale.com, Correction status 2026/02/24, Electronic Edition. Gratuitously distribution of data carriers and printouts of this electronic edition are permitted.

Joy – Peace – Freedom

Serve peace and welfare of the world!

Overview of the „letters on living ethics, Introduction to Agni yoga“ from LEOBRAND:

Basic information ethics

1. The truth about yoga
2. Problems of spiritual renewal
3. The meaning of life
4. Karma and forming of fate
5. Might and meaning of thoughts
6. Self-help through proper thinking
7. Reincarnation – yes or no?
8. The meaning of suffering
9. Absolution or personal responsibility?
- 10. Dharma and life-task**
11. Death and Rebirth
12. Devotions and sacrifice
13. The relationship of the sexes
14. Marital problems
15. Living Ethics and education
16. Living Ethics and everyday life
17. Living Ethics and nutrition
18. Living Ethics and art

Spiritual training

19. Living Ethics – doctrine of life
20. Chakras or centers of higher consciousness
21. The spiritual meaning of the heart
22. The widening of consciousness
23. The subtle constitution of man
24. Monad or spiritual grain
25. The construction of the universe and Cosmoses
26. Subtle world
27. Fiery world
28. Brotherhood
29. The universal understanding of God
30. The Mother of the world
31. Occultism – yes or no?
32. Danger and meanders of occultism
33. Good and evil
34. The coming new world
35. Infinity
36. The path to become a master

In Dharma we first have to see the individual life task as well as the duty that arises towards fellow human beings, be it in the family, in the profession or in society, in the course of human evolution. Everyone is guided by his karma and dharma to where he can best learn and fulfil the lesson of each development in that particular incarnation. Man can only grow step by step from life task to life task and take on more significant callings each time. Man will reach perfection by persistently fulfilling his dharma and duty. All Dharma is service, no matter what caste or level in the social order one belongs to. Even appointed kings have called themselves the first servants of the state. The purpose of an examination is to test one's strength, especially one's moral strength. It brings out the last in us and reveals where our weaknesses and flaws lie.

„Welt-Spirale“
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Ethical society for progress and world renewal