

Healing the Social Body

Recreating Living as if
People Matter

A Vision for Our Time

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People Matter

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Dhanesvara Das Goswami

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Replies may be delayed

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Disclaimer: With the exception of Appendix A, this book is written entirely by a flesh and blood human being. AI was used as an editor only, with this prompt: “Indicate all necessary/needed spelling and grammar corrections in square brackets. Also give any suggestions that will improve the book.”

All final editorial decisions were made at the discretion of the author.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my
Eternal Spiritual Master
His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
the greatest Vaishnava Acharya, and
courageous social reformer, who taught the
world the actual criteria of
human civilization

And to

The many wonderful souls who will
work together to manifest this
wonderful way of living
as if people matter

Appreciation

My deepest appreciation to my dear friends Vaishnavananda Dasa and his wife Hladini Shakti Devi Dasi, and Anonymous, for providing living accommodations while writing this book.

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Preface

Modern society no longer serves the people who make it function. Millions are now stretched to the limit. Prices of essentials continue to increase beyond affordability. Rent, food, utilities, gasoline, and insurance costs are increasing monthly, even weekly. Millions of Americans live in their vans or cars, and even storage units.

A growing sense of unreality is taking hold, and many people no longer know what to trust. Images and voices can be fabricated, information—the so-called narrative—is often manipulated, and basic foods are increasingly artificial and contaminated. The line between what is real and what is not is becoming increasingly fuzzy. What is real? People are asking this question—and are deeply unhappy with the answers they are finding.

On a personal level, millions are broke, sick, anxious, overworked, divided, lonely, unhappy, and flat out giving up. Life is too demanding. Young men and women have a difficult time forming stable relationships. Millions turn to drugs, and thousands who become addicted to fentanyl die. People have lost faith in all of their institutions—the government, their church, the police, and the schools. Young adults, seeing no future for themselves, stop trying before they even begin. Birth rates are far below replacement levels, and the aging population is a burden on society.

There are too many demands on time. People are too stressed trying to do everything that needs to get done—get out of work, pick up the kids, get home, make dinner, do the laundry, someone needs to get to the doctor, and on and on.

People sense something is very wrong but cannot quite put their finger on the problem. They think that perhaps it's their own personal problem, that if they just try to cope, everything will fall into place in time. And if you think I'm exaggerating about all of this check out these YouTube channels in this footnote. ^A

Is your life like this?

If so, I have good news: the problem is likely not what you are doing, or not doing—it's the modern way of life that needs to be fixed. This book explores redesigning living as if people mattered, inviting you to rethink your life and join the millions who are opting out of a sick world in which people must give all their time and energy to someone else, just to have the privilege of existing.

Some rationalize that life is just messy and that this is simply how life is meant to be. *We strongly disagree!*

But unless we accept that the system is broken we will never attempt to fix it. Where do we start? Who do we turn to when those persons who we traditionally would go to, are themselves using the broken system to exploit it?

a <https://www.youtube.com/@AcrossTheStates-c7j>

<https://www.youtube.com/@ahomesteadjourney>

<https://www.youtube.com/@raisingwildflowers/videos>

<https://www.youtube.com/@Talk2embro>

The social body is not only struggling, but is in critical condition, even terminal decline.

All is not lost, however. The method of finding the answer was given to us by that wise man of the early twentieth century, Mr. Einstein. He taught us that a problem cannot be solved at the same level of understanding at which it was created.

In this book, we offer the suggested higher understanding from which to analyze the problems, and examine the patient, the social body, through what may be called spiritual anthropology.

However, when solutions lie outside the box of current understanding, many people object. They won't recognize, or accept, that the things they like, or have become accustomed to, are making them ill.

Doctor: your obesity is due to eating cake and ice cream every day.

Patient: you must be wrong doc, it's got to be something else. I can't live without that. That's the favorite part of my day!

I hope that this is not the case with you, my dear reader. The social body is in critical condition and a clear diagnosis is needed and urgent. Very likely, some of the things that seem most natural to you, and that you hold most dear, will be identified as the very source of many of our current problems. Are you willing to at least consider letting go of them while you ponder what is presented here? And are you willing to consider letting go of them if doing so will restore social sanity and stability for yourself and others?

My request is that you put your current understanding on hold while reading this book, and give this diagnosis a fair hearing.

Or else save your time. Close the book, and pass it along to someone else.

Introduction

I'm sitting in my office, and one day a fellow opens the door and says: "Doc, you've got to help me. I'm in really bad shape."

"Oh my, yes, I see you have a severe case of inversion!" I replied. "Dear fellow, how have you come to this condition? We'll need to check your vital signs and do some tests. Please come in."

As I look him over, I see that his stomach is where his head should be, his legs are where his arms should be, his head is where his legs should be, and his arms are where his stomach should be.

Absurd? Yes. But this is the present condition of the social body. In this book we will diagnose the social body, determine the influences that have brought it to this condition, and present a prescription for total healing and rejuvenation.

The reason so many of us are exhausted, broke, and sick may not be a personal failure—perhaps it is because modern society extracts our energy rather than fostering our well-being. It matters little which part of the world we examine. Everywhere the condition is more or less the same because the cause is present in every part of the world to a greater or lesser extent. Because the cause

is universal, the cure presented here is universal as well, and can be applied in any part of the world. Although I will be directing my analysis to modern society in general, this diagnosis and the cure can be applied to any level of society, from megalopolises to small cities.

Those who have previously made efforts to remedy society's ills have only been dealing with the symptoms, which is easily understood because nothing is getting fixed. The simple reason for this is that the "fixers" deal only with areas where the system breaks down. They cannot, and do not, attempt to fix the entire system. But how can anyone heal a system they do not understand as a whole?

In engineering and biology, there is a very important design principle: *form follows function*. If we want to understand if a system is healthy, we must first know what its function is. What it is designed to *do*.

This forces a radical question that modern political economics completely avoids: *What is the essential and optimal function of a human being?*

If the purpose of human life is merely to accumulate calories and stuff before death, then our current social "Form"—though feverish and chaotic—might be considered "functional."

But if, as the world's great sages suggest, the highest purpose of human life is spiritual realization and emancipation, then we must look at our current civilization through a very different lens. If that is the function, then our current social form is not just "failing"—it is an anatomical catastrophe. It is a form that actively prevents its parts from performing their primary purpose.

And this is the greatest oversight—the fact that human beings are not simply biological machines, but have both material and spiritual aspects, of which the spiritual is the most important. Because they do not understand the spiritual nature of the person, they can do nothing but deal with the material aspects of an unhealthy society, perpetuating the same problems. This is like taking a fish out of water and giving it many tasty foods, drinks, and entertainments and expecting it to be happy. As long as the very nature of the fish is neglected, it cannot be happy. Only when placed in its proper environment will it be happy.



The problems of society stem from our failure to recognize, understand, and nourish the higher aspect of self. No amount of attempting to satisfy the appetites of the material body and mind, which manifest the symptoms of the problem, will satisfy the person who is the subject of all the efforts, that is, the soul.

What happens when a civilization tries to feed the body and mind while starving the soul? That is like spending all attention polishing the cage of a bird, but failing to feed the bird within. The consequences of this oversight are predictable and observable. The social body can be

restored to proper health only when each and every aspect of the social body is recognized, and its requirements satisfied.

The different perspective that will be employed here, and which provides the higher level of understanding needed to properly diagnose the condition of modern society, is the spiritual science of the Gaudiya Vaishnava spiritual tradition, and the world's oldest body of spiritual wisdom, the Vedas.



At this point, some readers may reasonably ask: “Why bring in the Vedas? Why not stay with what we can see, measure, and test?”

It’s a fair question. But let’s stop and consider: isn’t that what we have been doing all along? And how well has that approach served us? How long have the same persistent problems remained unresolved? Doing the same thing and expecting a different result is by now accepted as a common definition of insanity.

When we want to learn things beyond our ability we typically turn to authorities with experience in that particular subject, and accept their conclusions without personal verification—how many countries are in the world, the workings of the atom, chemical interactions, engineering principles, and so on. Similarly, for spiritual knowledge we must also turn to appropriate authorities. Although not widely known in the West, the body of

spiritual wisdom referred to as the Vedas, has been studied by many great people who praise them as containing uncommonly great wisdom.^A

The Vedas

It will be helpful for the reader to have a brief introduction to what is meant by Veda, or Vedas.

The Vedic worldview accepts that God has created this world, and placed countless living beings here to give them the opportunity to fulfill their desires. You are one of these multitudes, and you have many desires that you would like to fulfill. How will you do that? How does this universe work to allow you to fulfill your desires? There is a science behind that and that science is given to human beings in a vast body of knowledge called Veda.

Veda is a Sanskrit word which means “knowledge”—every kind of knowledge is presented in the Vedas: medicine from Ayurveda, the science of music and arts from Gandharvaveda, the science of astrology from *Jyotish*, the science of warfare from Dhanurveda, the science of statecraft and architecture from Arthashastra, and much more.

The Vedas are considered not to originate from a human source, but to have been received from the source of everything—Bhagavan (God).

A. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Arthur Schopenhauer, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Aldous Huxley, Albert Einstein, Carl Jung, Nikola Tesla, Mahatma Gandhi among many others have all studied and glorified Vedic wisdom. The American Transcendentalist movement flourished roughly from the 1830s to the 1860s.

The Vedas don't prescribe a single way of life. Rather, they provide the framework within which all legitimate human pursuits, organized into four categories, can flourish: *dharma*—religious codes, *artha*—prosperity and worldly success, *kama*—love, beauty, and pleasure, and *moksha*—liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Our effort here offers both a diagnosis and a prescription for healing the social problems of modern society using principles from the Vedas as a novel, and as yet untried, approach to the problem. These are not presented as dogmas that must be believed, but as conceptual tools to be used for analysis. This is offered as a social architecture, and remedial guide, for leaders seeking to restore the social body to a healthy state. You are invited to consider it as a working hypothesis for the purposes of this analysis, and then decide if you think the analysis and conclusions are worthy of application.

Vedic Wisdom Shared with the World

Until the last half of the twentieth century, the Vedas were all but unknown outside of India, except to the few religious scholars who studied Eastern religions. However, in the mid-1960s, an Indian sadhu (holy man) came to America to share the treasure of the spiritual wisdom of the Vedas.

The references to the Vedas made throughout this book are all from the works of that individual—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. With indefatigable effort throughout the senior years of his life, he translated more than 60 volumes of Vedic wisdom, and with the help of his disciples, his books



were translated into more than 80 languages. He also established more than 100 temples globally, from which this transcendental knowledge and culture were propagated. The interpretation of Vedic knowledge offered here is based on his teachings, and all references to Vedic lit-

erature are from his books, published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

Much is Left Unsaid

The word manifesto has, unfortunately, recently acquired a negative connotation through its association with nut jobs that go on killing sprees. But the word has utility, and this book is a manifesto in the original and proper sense of the word.

A manifesto typically identifies what is wrong with a society—or even with the world itself—describes what must be done to set things right, and proposes a path toward achieving it.

It is in this sense that this book is a manifesto and should be read as such. A manifesto, however, does not generally contain the complete thesis, nor does this book. It is intentionally brief. There is much more that can be said.

Intended Readers for this Book

This book is written for two groups of people: those who unwillingly find themselves disenfranchised as the present way of life breaks down and they are kicked to the curb, and those who, recognizing the devolution of modern society, are consciously seeking an alternative.

It will not appeal to those who continue to prosper within the present system and wish to preserve it.

Glossary of Sanskrit Words

There are a few words from the Sanskrit language used in this book, and understanding them will be helpful for the reader. Therefore this Glossary is put in the front of the book for easy access.

Ashrama – a place of spiritual learning and growth. Referring herein to learning and application of spiritual principles at every stage of life.

Brahmana – a person influenced primarily by *sattva-guna*. *Brahmanas* have the understanding and discrimination to act as the head of the social body.

Dharma – the essential nature of a thing. In reference to human beings Dharma means performing their duties according to spiritual principles.

Gunas – refers to the three modes, or qualities, of material nature collectively, which are *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Everything in the material world is associated with a specific combination of the three *gunas*, and when human beings contact them, their consciousness is influenced accordingly.

Jiva – particles of spiritual energy that are individual living beings. The jiva is the life essence of every living thing in the material world, including plants, insects, animals, fish, birds and humans. The jiva uses various

material bodies to have unique experiences with the material energy.

Ksatriya – persons influenced predominantly by *rajo-guna*. They are people of great ability and are qualified to be the rulers, or the arms, of the social body.

Rajas – one of the *gunas*. *Rajas* is the quality of passion which is involved in creation. Activity, desire to be the best, to win, to acquire, to get, and dissatisfaction, are some of the influences of the mode of passion. Also referred to as *rajo-guna*.

Sattva – one of the *gunas*. *Sattva* is the quality of goodness, which is the influence by which everything is maintained. Peacefulness, satisfaction, gentleness, modesty, purity, knowledge, honesty and wisdom, are some of the influences of the mode of goodness. Also referred to as *sattva-guna*.

Sudras – the workers of society, the legs of the social body.

Tamas – one of the *gunas*. *Tamas* is the quality of ignorance, degradation, decay and destruction, of persons and things. Also referred to as *tamo-guna*.

Vaisyas – persons who by their nature are inclined to build, create, grow and produce things. They are the stomach of the social body.

Varna – the psychophysical nature of every person that determines the type of activity or work that they naturally like to engage in. There are four *varnas*: *brahmanas*, *ksatriyas*, *vaishyas*, and *sudras*.

Yuga-Avatar – The Lord descends in every age, or *yuga*, and gives to the world the religion for the age. Such incarnations are called *Yuga-avatars*.

Chapter 1

Anatomy of the Social Body

The Social Body

The healthy social body is organized and functions in much the same way as a normal human body: The head department, the arms department, the stomach department, the legs department. Although all of us are equals in the political sense, we are all individually unique in the practical sense, and no two people are equal in every way. Some are smarter, some are stronger, some more beautiful, some more clever, and some have valuable skills that others don't. And thankfully so, as these different types of people are necessary to fulfill the different functions required by society.

The head department is the intelligentsia and advisors, the arms department is the governors, or government, the stomach department is the production of goods and economy, and the legs department is the labor force. These four sections of the social body are observed in every society, without exception. They are not hierarchies of human worth, but functional distinctions. In a healthy state each section gives service to the body as a

whole. But this has not been the case for some time, and consequently the social body has become distorted and no longer functions properly.

When referring to the different parts of the social body herein, references to a part of the social body may be either to the individuals who perform that function, or that section of the social body, and should be understood from context.

The Head Department

Our personal intelligence is used to discriminate between good from bad, accepting the former and rejecting the latter. The social body also requires such guidance. Those who provide guidance must be the genuine intelligentsia capable of understanding both the immediate and long-term consequences of any decision or action.

High priests traditionally filled this role in older cultures, taking both material and spiritual considerations into account. In more modern times less qualified secular academics and specialists fill this role.

The Arms Department

Every culture has administrators who see to the general welfare of the entire state. This group constitutes the arms department. Ideally, they see that all of the physical and social needs of society are supplied, and society is protected both materially and spiritually. The arms department is the government, whether that be a sole king or prelate, a senate body, or an elected government. Regardless of the form of government, its duty is to protect and guide the citizenry, and see to their overall welfare.

How well does the arms department perform today, or even historically, in this regard?

The Stomach Department

Food production, manufacturing and trade is the work of the stomach department. They are the producers—those who provide all necessities for proper living and health for all the members of society. Their function is properly fulfilled when every member of society has what they need, both necessities and luxuries. This is called the goods economy. In modern societies bankers and economists figure prominently in the stomach department. They have created a parallel economy, the money economy, whose object is to create money from money.

The Legs Department

The legs are the workers of the social body. They provide labor and service to others, and are the people who carry out the necessary tasks of daily life.

The Life Department

Modern society fails to recognize the most important aspect of the social body: the life department. Life does not arise from combinations of lifeless chemicals as we have been taught. Nor do unconscious chemicals somehow self-organize and develop consciousness. Life is independent of the body, and uses the body as a vehicle to fulfill its desires in a world of matter. The part that gives life to the body is the soul, or the spiritual energy. The body is a material machine that is always inert and without consciousness, which can easily be seen at the time

of death. When the living spiritual energy departs from the body, the body lies there lifeless.

Consider that our body is constantly changing, although we feel a continuity of our experience. We continue to be the same person despite the change of the body from childhood, to youth, to full adult and then old age. We look at pictures taken of us years ago as children and remember that we looked in the mirror at that time seeing “ourselves”, but when we look in the mirror now a very different image is reflected back to us. We continue to be the same person despite the changes of the body. Exactly the same sense of “I” exists now just as it had then. This experience alone informs us that we are different from the body, and the Vedic philosophy confirms this: *As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change.* Bg 2.13

Understanding this fact is crucial in analyzing human behavior and society, for how can we heal the social body if we ignore the life-giving principle of the body?

We cannot solve society’s problems without taking this fact into consideration, and failure to do so, to take the soul and its needs into account, has led to the deplorable condition the world is in today.

In Sanskrit the life principle, or soul, is referred to as the jiva, which means a particle of spiritual energy. All life comes from God, and the jiva is manifest directly from God, and is part and parcel of God. That is to say it is godlike, but not God. It has the same qualities as God, but in minute quantity.

The jiva is uniquely different from the material energy. Whereas material energy is temporary, the jiva lives eternally. It is never born, nor will it ever die. The body does not have a soul. Rather, the soul has a body. We are the soul or jiva. The symptom of the jiva is consciousness. The material energy is unconscious but we are conscious beings. Being conscious, the jiva has the qualities of consciousness: personality which includes the many qualities every person has: likes, dislikes, emotions, passions, desires, unique personality, and most of all, the desire to love and be loved, and especially the love that we sing about, and we long for: unconditional, continually expanding, and eternal love.

And since every one of us desires such unconditional, eternal love, this indicates that such love must be possible. But where do we find such love in a material world where everything is temporary, and no matter how wonderful the love we find here may be, it will ultimately come to an end?

Chapter 2

Spiritual Anthropology

The Human Enigma

Everywhere in the world cats act like cats, horses act like horses, doves act like doves, and goats act like goats. The behavior of each species and breed is completely predictable. But what's with the humans? Their behavior is totally unpredictable. It spans the full spectrum from saint to sinner, from totally driven to totally lazy, from the blissful to the suicidal, from passive to aggressive. Why are human beings so unique, and what accounts for the billions of ways they express their personality, desires and behavior?

Psychologists have been laboring with this question for centuries, and have developed many theories to explain human behavior. Yet they begin with a handicap: they do not understand the spiritual nature of the human being in all of its dimensions. If we are to heal the social body, we must understand the complete nature of the human beings that comprise it. If we misunderstand the human being, how can we hope to heal human society?

That nature includes man's spiritual dimension, and the Gaudiya Vaishnava spiritual science provides a suffi-

ciently complex philosophy to explain the complex behavior of human beings and human society. Therefore, a brief introduction is required, but a full explanation lies beyond the scope of this book. A basic, but more complete, introduction will be found at these websites in the endnotes.¹

Laws of Behavior for Humans

Returning to the question asked above, why are human beings so different from animals? Animals are controlled by instinct, but humans can choose and act according to their own desire. We call this free will. Free will gives us freedom, but, it carries responsibility. Therefore society teaches its children standards of behavior, or moral codes of conduct. Authorities in our lives teach us morality. In school the teacher holds that authority. In public life the government does. A young man in the military may kill on the battlefield and be given a medal for it. But if he kills after being discharged from the military, he will be charged with a crime. Although the action was the same, in one case authority sanctioned it, but not in the other case. So the limits of our freedom, and our morality, must be sanctioned by higher authority.

Another authority is God who has also given us guidelines for our behavior. In Christianity these are called the Ten Commandments. The guiding principles of Islam are Sharia law. Every religion has its mandates, or religious principles, which guide action for both our material welfare and progressive spiritual development. We are encouraged to do good and refrain from evil.

Just as the state has laws to regulate our behavior, so has God. One of God's laws is karma, which, like other

laws, encourages proper behavior through reward and punishment. However, unlike human laws, the law of karma is infallible, and we will reap the commensurate reactions, both good and bad, in this, or future, lives.

Without answering to a higher authority, human life is no different than animal life, simply eating, sleeping, mating and defending, no matter how elaborate those activities may be. And when humans live like animals, what kind of society can we expect other than constant fighting over territory and resources?

As eternal spiritual beings we have been born many, many times, and it is our desires and karmic reactions that determine our next birth. Every birth thus has a purpose and is never a mistake. Life arranges everything to let us continue from where we left off in our last incarnation. Just as we continue our activities from one day to the next, our personality, desires, activities, and karma carry over from one life to the next.

Thus we are not born as blank slates. Some may have been very pious in their last life, and some may have been despicable, low characters. Although we all begin life as innocent children, our character and karma slowly manifest as we mature into adulthood, and we become, in large measure, the person we were in the last life. In this way we continue our spiritual evolution over the course of many lives.

The living beings of this world are here to experience, learn and grow, and for this we have unlimited time, and experience unlimited lives. We subtly remember lessons learned in the previous life when we enter the next, and gradually over the course of our sojourn in this material world we reach the state of perfection, and are

then qualified to enter the perfect spiritual world. In that world there is no suffering of any kind, there is no death and rebirth. It is a world of bliss and that perfect everexpanding love for which we all yearn.

The Environmental Forces of Material Nature

The material energy acts like an infection for the spiritual being. The material energy covers the pure spiritual being with material body and mind that are subject to influences called *gunas* in Sanskrit. As we come in contact with the various kinds of material energy the *gunas* infect and shape our consciousness, affecting our perception, understanding, knowledge and actions. Because the *gunas* influence us to such a degree, can any diagnosis of society succeed if it ignores these forces that shape consciousness? Therefore a rudimentary knowledge of them is necessary.

Let's first understand that consciousness is who we are, or rather, it is the symptom of our existence. Descartes' statement "I think, therefore I am" is an expression of his awareness of his consciousness. When we refer to consciousness therefore, we refer to ourselves, as individual persons, because consciousness is the most immediate expression of our existence.

Vedic wisdom explains that the entire material world operates under the influence of the *gunas*. The Sanskrit word *guna* translates directly as "rope" or "mode." Just as a rope binds a person, the *gunas* are the subtle ropes of material nature that bind, or condition us, to specific types of behavior, thought, and existence.

You can think of the three *gunas* like the three primary colors red, yellow, and blue. Just as those three

colors mix together to create every single color imaginable, the three modes of material nature mix together in different proportions to create every type of human personality, every mindset, and thought.

The three types of *gunas* are *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, an approximate translation of which is goodness, passion and ignorance respectively. Each of them has its unique nature and function.

Here are the basic qualities of the three modes:

Sattva-guna—The Mode of Goodness

This is the mode of light, wisdom, health, and peace. When a person's consciousness is primarily influenced by *sattva-guna*, they are clean, calm, truthful, cooperative, responsible, satisfied and peaceful. They can perceive the difference between right and wrong. A person in goodness is not controlled by their senses, but instead, they are in control of their senses. The mode of goodness illuminates the mind, allowing a person to understand spiritual truth, fulfill their duty, and live in harmony with the laws of God and nature.

Sattva provides the influence by which everything is maintained. *Sattva* is purer than the other *gunas*, and is therefore illuminating and gives understanding. From *sattva* one develops understanding, mercy, peace, truthfulness, clarity, empathy, discipline, cleanliness, satisfaction, knowledge, happiness, peacefulness, compassion, the ability to respect others, and understand their point of view. Working in *sattva* uplifts one spiritually.

Examples of sattva are: being responsible, keeping one's word, early to bed and rising, being cooperative, being in nature

at the mountains, forest, or seashore, hatha yoga and meditation, education, attending church, generosity, vegetarian foods, growing a garden, caring for animals and people.

Rajo-guna—The Mode of Passion

This is the primary mode of modern society. Endless desire, passionate romance, restless activity, and intense greed. When a person's consciousness is primarily influenced by *rajo-guna* they are active, competitive, ambitious, and enthusiastic. A person driven by *rajo-guna* defines themselves by what they have—their title, income, car, house, family, etc. Regardless of what they have they are never satisfied and still want more: more action, more results, more fame, more experiences, more money, more acquisition. They are always chasing after material success, money, prestige, and sensory pleasure, equating happiness with acquiring more things. While the mode of goodness brings peace and contentment, happiness in the mode of passion brings endeavor and anxiety. The main influence of *rajas* is creation and generation. *Rajas* stirs the creative impulse. As *rajas* increases, so does great attachment, uncontrollable desire, longing, hankering, envy, and intense endeavor. From *rajas* greed and grief develop. Work done under the influence of *rajas* results in distress to oneself and others.

Examples of rajas in modern society are: the continuing pursuit of more powerful artificial intelligence, the stock market and all for-profit business enterprises, fancy cars, body building, stimulating foods, prosperity churches, competition for college, or a company position, eagerness to fight, all competitive activities: sports, beauty pageants, etc.

Tamo-guna—The Mode of Ignorance

This is the mode of darkness, madness, illusion, and destruction. When *tamo-guna* dominates, it covers a person's knowledge. The result is dirtiness, laziness, depression, foolishness, and lack of direction. People heavily influenced by the mode of ignorance do not know what is beneficial for them and what is harmful. They are their own worst enemies. They often become addicted to intoxication, engage in violence, and cause pain to themselves and others. *Tamas* is the influence by which things decay and are destroyed, and it leads to degradation in humans. It causes delusion, misunderstanding, disagreement, laziness and sleep, and results in wrong or violent behavior. *Tamas* binds a person to the material conception of life, and drives that person to work against his own best interests, so that what he thinks is right is actually wrong, and what he thinks is wrong is actually right. From *tamas* ignorance, confusion, foolishness, and illusion develop. As *tamas* increases, madness, illusion, inertia and darkness increasingly manifest.

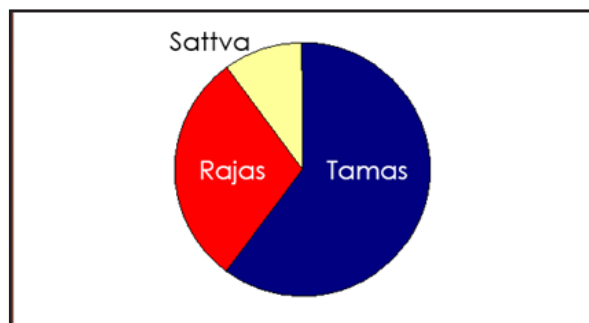
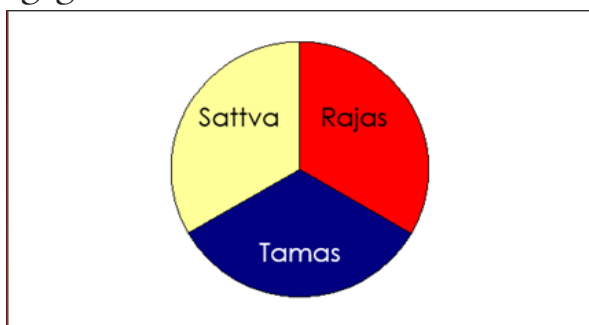
Examples of tamas are: laziness, procrastination, lying, cheating, stealing, taking intoxicants, drugs, gambling of all sorts, sexual perversion, prostitution, viewing pornography, violence, killing and eating flesh foods. The influence of tamas makes people confused, lazy, disagreeable, and creates a destabilizing and dangerous situation at all levels of society.

These three *gunas* are never static. Their influence dynamically changes in our minds, and in our environments as we contact them. What we eat, who we associate with, the work we do, times of day, and the entertainment we consume all dictate which influence is acting on us.

THE *Gunas* ARE NOT MORAL LABELS;
THEY ARE STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS,
FED BY THE ENVIRONMENT.

All three *gunas* are useful and have their proper place. In a healthy balance we rise up in the morning refreshed and calm feeling the influence of *sattva*, do our work throughout the day under the influence of *rajas*, and sleep and refresh ourselves during the night under the influence of *tamas*.

When the *gunas* are balanced there is harmony. However, overemphasis on one *guna* strengthens it at the expense of the others. In the example illustrated below, too much engagement in *tamasic* behavior reduces *sattva*.



The *gunas* and their influences are powerful energies of the Supreme Lord by which this entire material world, and everyone in it, is controlled, and their influences are significant in understanding how this world functions. From the Bhagavad-gita we learn: *“Everyone is forced to act helplessly according to the qualities he has acquired from the modes of material nature; therefore no one can refrain from doing something, not even for a moment.”*²

Recall that the word *guna* means “ropes,” and the *gunas* are the “ropes” that bind the rebellious soul to reincarnation in the material world. However, when the jiva agrees to surrender to the Lord and agrees to follow His instructions, he is freed from control of the *gunas*, freed from the prison house of the material world, and allowed entry into the all-perfect spiritual world: *“This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.”*³

With this working understanding of the *gunas*, now consider:

- Which *gunas* are best for a culture? Which will destroy a culture?
- Which *guna(s)* are encouraged in modern society? Neglected?
- Which *gunas* are reflected in inner cities? In nature? On the job?
- Which *guna* influences would you prefer in employees? Your neighbors? Society as a whole?
- Which influences do you want to develop in your own life? For your children?

Anyone interested in human behavior will benefit from learning the qualities of the *gunas*, because they shape the understanding and actions in *every* sphere of human activities.

The *gunas* can also be used as a diagnostic tool to evaluate the trajectory of a society, both individually and collectively. To demonstrate this, Appendix A analyzes the cultural shifts in music and dance across the twentieth century, which illustrate our devolution.

Appendix B provides more detailed information about the *gunas* and how they affect individual thinking and behavior.

Origin of the Social Body

The concept of the social body seems natural enough based on the different types of work required by a functioning society. This is not by chance. The social body has, in fact, been created by the Supreme Lord. In the Bhagavad-gita Lord Krishna states: “*According to the three modes of material nature and the work associated with them, the four divisions of human society were created by Me.*”⁴ The four sections—the head, arms, stomach and legs—are respectively known as *brahmanas*, *ksatriyas*, *vaisyas* and *sudras*, in Sanskrit, and are referred to collectively as the *varnas*.

The *gunas* and karma each of us acquired in our previous life determines the mix of *varnas* forming our nature in this life: “*Brahmanas, ksatriyas, vaisyas and sudras are distinguished by the qualities born of their own natures in accordance with the material modes.*”⁵

Varna is determined by *guna* and karma—qualities and work—not by birth, and should not be confused with

the Indian caste system. The caste system known today is a degraded form of this original arrangement, corrupted by pride, exploitation, and the influence of *Kali-yuga*. More will be said about this later.

Spiritual Sustenance

Just as food is essential for survival, joy is the essential need that sustains the soul, and that spiritual sustenance comes from regular contact with the source that sustains everything: God. The jiva is a part of God and is sustained through regular contact with God in worship and prayer, which should match the level of spiritual understanding of the individual. There is no one size fits all for religion. Real religion is not merely a matter of belief. Religion is a series of steps each individual makes on its sojourn through the material world to achieve spiritual emancipation. Worship is meaningful only if it assists the person in making the next step in their progressive spiritual evolution.

What happens if, not understanding this important need, a person, or society, gives all care to the body, but starves the jiva? How will a jiva, hungry for spiritual succor, feed itself without knowing how to do so?

Happiness

Everyone seeks happiness. We want to be happy because that is our eternal spiritual condition. The very nature of the jiva is sat, chit, ananda, meaning it is eternal, full of knowledge, and is completely blissful. Therefore naturally death is abhorrent to us, we always seek to learn, and we want to be happy. Genuine happiness is found within. It is internal, not external. The happiness

we seek is our inherent nature, but we have forgotten this due to becoming distracted by the temporary happiness we get from the experiences and things of this world.

Three types of material happiness are derived from the three *gunas*. Accomplishment and acquisition bring the happiness of *rajas*. Getting something we wanted, or winning the game, makes us feel happy, but that happiness is temporary, and is soon gone and forgotten. Intoxication and drugs provide one of the sources of happiness of *tamas*. They give a different sense of happiness, but that happiness, which is also very temporary, results in degradation and suffering. Going to church or being in nature are sources of happiness of *sattva*, which has an uplifting, wholesome quality, and is longer-lasting than the happiness of *rajas* and *tamas*.

The real happiness we seek, however, is internal, and stems from our very self, our spiritual nature, and it is eternal. That happiness never ends. We attain it when we establish our relationship with God. Going to church and other spiritual activities, gives us a slight taste of that wonderful experience.

Place and Purpose

Human life is meant for growth. Although physical growth stops within a few decades, emotional, psychological, intellectual and spiritual growth can and should continue throughout life. In order to grow properly, however, we need a proper place. Place means not only a physical place such as a household, but proper relationships with others, and proper activity. All three of these are essential for optimal growth.

A potted plant offers a very good example of having a proper place. The pot provides the physical place where the plant lives, but the plant also requires a proper environment in terms of soil conditions, atmosphere, temperature, water, and sunlight. When these conditions are minimally met the plant can live, and when they are optimal the plant can thrive.

Likewise we are meant to thrive, not just live. We need a clean house and environment where we can care for, and give rest to our body, along with nourishing food. Next, we all desire to have interesting and meaningful activity appropriate to our nature. In the modern world we generally call this “work.” Ideally that work will be a bit challenging so that we may make use of our faculties of understanding, ability, and reasoning. The challenge helps us grow. If the work is too easy we will be bored and unengaged, and if the work is beyond our capacity or ability we will be overworked and stressed.

And we also need a place in relationship to others. These relationships must be appropriate to our respective stages of life and theirs. Thus we will have different relationships with those senior to us, than we have with our peers, or with our juniors. Having a proper place according to these criteria will help us to be happy and balanced individuals.

If any of these aspects of life are meager or missing life can run from drudgery to torture, conditions under which growth of any kind is difficult, or impossible.

Another essential aspect of a well-adjusted and happy individual is the need to have a feeling of purpose. As living beings we need to do something, and ideally, something that we find meaningful and fulfilling. This

is a significant component of happiness. It is very difficult for those without purpose to feel well-adjusted and happy. The driving force behind this stems from our spiritual nature, which finds its ultimate fulfillment in serving God, and thereby experiencing the happiness of our own nature. Forgetting that our actual purpose is to serve God, we seek purpose by serving at our job, serving our family, society, or our pets.

How are we taught the significance of relationships and service in modern Western culture? How are they reinforced? Historically churches would instill such values in their congregants, but how is this done today when approximately 70% of Americans rarely attend church?

What happens to people when social circumstances strip away purpose?

Chapter 3

The Degrading Influence of Kali-yuga

The Influences of the Age

Before we begin our diagnosis of the social body, there is something more we must understand that is affecting today's population—the influences of the present age—the age of *Kali*—the Age of Quarrel and Hypocrisy. The influences of this age exert pressure on consciousness, and affects our behavior, and we cannot diagnose society accurately without taking it into consideration.

This earth is a multipurpose arena, used for different purposes in different times by people of different spiritual inclination. There are four grand epochs of time, known as *yugas*: the Satya-*yuga*, Dvapara-*yuga*, Treta-*yuga*, and *Kali-yuga*, which continually rotate like the seasons of spring, summer, fall, and winter. During Satya-*yuga* the environment is completely sattvic, and the earth is used by people of high spiritual inclination. As time progresses, the influence of the lower *gunas* is increasingly felt, creating an environment suitable for people of an increasingly degraded nature.

We entered *Kali-yuga* some 5,000 years ago, and the influence of *tamas* is now most dominant, while *sattva*,

the influence by which everything is maintained, is almost completely lost. Thus the degeneration of the age.

The Symptoms of This Age Foretold

Kali-yuga is the age in which everything is degraded. Religion, truthfulness, mercy, cleanliness, self-restraint, memory, and strength decline, while hypocrisy, greed, deceit, lust, and irreligion rise. Wealth becomes the measure of worth, power replaces justice, appearances replace substance, and leadership devolves into organized exploitation. Under these conditions, social order breaks down, spiritual knowledge is forgotten, and the population becomes increasingly anxious, degraded, and alienated, until the lowest of human beings are born. Humans will be reduced to the level of animals, or worse.

The great Vedic scripture, *Srimad Bhagavatam*, written at the beginning of the Age of *Kali*, some 5,000 years ago, predicted the degradation of this age ⁶:

In Kali-yuga, wealth alone will be considered the sign of a man's good birth, proper behavior and fine qualities. And law and justice will be applied only on the basis of one's power. Men and women will live together merely because of superficial attraction, and success in business will depend on deceit. Womanliness and manliness will be judged according to one's expertise in sex, and a person's spiritual position will be ascertained merely according to external symbols. A person's propriety will be seriously questioned if he does not earn a good living. And one who is very clever at juggling words will be considered a learned scholar.

A person will be judged unholy if he does not have money, and hypocrisy will be accepted as virtue. Mar-

riage will be arranged simply by verbal agreement, and a person will think he is fit to appear in public if he has merely taken a bath. Filling the belly will become the goal of life, and one who is audacious will be accepted as truthful. He who can maintain a family will be regarded as an expert man, and the principles of religion will be observed only for the sake of reputation.

As the earth thus becomes crowded with a corrupt population, whoever among any of the social classes shows himself to be the strongest will gain political power. Losing their wives and properties to such avaricious and merciless rulers, who will behave no better than ordinary thieves, the citizens will flee to the mountains and forests. Harassed by famine and excessive taxes, people will resort to eating leaves, roots, flesh, wild honey, fruits, flowers and seeds. Struck by drought, they will become completely ruined. The citizens will suffer greatly from cold, wind, heat, rain and snow. They will be further tormented by quarrels, hunger, thirst, disease and severe anxiety.

The maximum duration of life for human beings in Kali-yuga will eventually be reduced to fifty years. By the time the Age of Kali ends, the bodies of all creatures will be greatly reduced in size, and the religious principles will be ruined. The path of the Vedas will be completely forgotten in human society, and so-called religion will be mostly atheistic. The kings will mostly be thieves, the occupations of men will be stealing, lying and needless violence, and all the social classes will be reduced to the lowest level. Homes will be devoid of piety, and all human beings will have become like asses.

When there is a predominance of cheating, lying, sloth, sleepiness, violence, depression, lamentation, bewilderment, fear and poverty, that age is Kali, the age of the mode of ignorance. Because of the bad qualities of the Age of Kali, human beings will become shortsighted, unfortunate, gluttonous, lustful and poverty-stricken. The women, becoming unchaste, will freely wander from one man to the next. Cities will be dominated by thieves, the Vedas will be contaminated by speculative interpretations of atheists, political leaders will virtually consume the citizens, and the so-called priests and intellectuals will be devotees of their bellies and genitals.

These symptoms indicate increasing *tamo-guna* throughout the duration of *Kali-yuga*.

Does this description sound remote and ancient, or is it uncomfortably familiar?

Chapter 4

General Diagnosis

Recall the current condition of today's social body: his stomach is where his head should be, his legs are where his arms should be, his head is where his legs should be, and his arms are where his stomach should be. In this chapter we will diagnose the social body and determine the influences that have brought it to this condition, and answer the question: what happened to the social body so that its organs now work against their proper function?

Misalignment of the Social Organs

Carrying out the tests, we find that the social body is pale and anemic, has an extremely weak immune system, and has allowed itself to be infected by a dangerous pathogen, which leaves it delusional, and further, produces an autoimmune condition. His living environment is itself infectious, and that environment greatly worsens its condition.

The stomach, the economic class, has usurped the functions of the head, and now directs the activities of the entire organism to serve its purposes at the expense of the other organs, a condition of autoimmunity, con-

suming the very body it was meant to sustain. The head has ceased its proper function of discrimination, and now uses its intelligence only to acquire more wealth, and is thus subordinated to being an “order carrier” for the entire body, but principally for the stomach. The arms, which should be men capable of administering the government, have taken on the role of acquiring nourishment, and so are working with the stomach. The legs have usurped the position of the government, meaning that unqualified men of a low nature now fill the halls of government. This is the initial diagnosis.

How has it come to this state?

The Immune System

Forgetting God, and making plans to satisfy ourselves, our community, society, or nation, on the basis of material improvements alone, has simply resulted in trouble, as we now see everywhere. This is the actual root of the world’s present problems—the entire world has become forgetful of God. We are making so many plans to become happy, but the result is simply suffering. This approach can never be successful.

As spiritual beings living in a material world, we are in a foreign environment. The material environment is infectious (the *gunas*), and to remain in a healthy condition our immune system must be kept strong. A strong immune system protects us from the illusion that we are products of the material world, and that the purpose of life is simply to enjoy our senses, which, although giving temporary pleasure do not give lasting happiness. Thus we find ourselves constantly searching for material happiness, often in *tamasic* activities.

Without maintaining a healthy immune system we easily fall into the illusion that we are the material body, and can find happiness and meaning in material relationships and things alone.

The weak immune system makes the social body susceptible to infections, and the resulting fever and delusion. It hasn't the strength to resist the temptations and influences of the lower *gunas*, *rajas* and *tamas*. At present the social body is both weak and anemic, indicating the lack of the life-giving oxygen of *sattva-guna*. Thus the social body engages unrestrictedly in the self-destructive behaviors of *tamas*—drugs, intoxication, gambling, and unrestricted pleasures of the flesh.

Infection and Fever

In the healthy social body the stomach department provides the things and services needed in society. This is called the goods economy. But the leaders of modern society have established a so-called “mechanism of convenience” for trading goods, which is money, and in creating and using it, developed another parallel economy of money and finance. Society has arranged that everyone uses money to purchase goods, and because of this no one can survive without it—and they must all obtain it from someone else, making them extremely dependent on the good grace of others.

Under the influence of *tamo-guna*, modern money is created by cheating, and brings the influence of *tamas* to everything it touches. A select group of people have the prerogative of creating money from nothing, a form of currency that has no value in and of itself. It is therefore called fiat currency. And note the definition of fiat—a fiat

is an “authoritative, arbitrary decree, order, or sanction, often issued by a person or group with absolute power, and signifies a command that creates something by will-power alone.” A very apt description of modern money.

Due to its ability to acquire anything, money has developed a value far different than simply facilitating the exchange of goods, and become an end unto itself. In doing so it subverts the original intended purpose, as a medium of exchange, and has become a toxic pathogen to a healthy society.

Due to the influence of *tamo-guna*, the stomach department has become less interested in the production and trade of goods, than acquiring profits by any means. It has created a money economy in which money is made from money alone, without the necessity of producing any goods. When it does produce goods, it does so on a vast scale. These gargantuan industries now rape the earth to achieve economies of scale to maximize profits. Rather than cleaning up after themselves they pollute nature, to save money. Farmers grow money, not food, and thus exploit the soil with herbicides and pesticides, producing food devoid of nutrients and taste. Other farmers treat cows as income producing machines and exploit them as much as possible. Businessmen exploit their suppliers, workers, distributors and customers as much as possible. Doctors use the medical arts as a means to get money, not providing cures but “medicine” that simply manages symptoms.

Q: The stomach department has created great wealth, but has it fulfilled its role in seeing that all sections of society have what they need for a decent life?

A: Are there any slums in the world?

The fever of money produces the illusion of security, that with enough of it all of one's problems are solved. But money creates as many problems as it solves. Think of how many relationships are spoiled over money. Money alone cannot protect health or prevent death. Under the influence of *rajas* and *tamas*, people develop a fever of selfishness and greed, exploiting everyone they can, forgetting that greed is one of the gates to hell. And because everyone needs money, desperate people will do things they would otherwise never do, and in doing so, ruin their lives spiritually. Far from being a simple medium of exchange, this one item, money, is the mechanism creating the degraded condition of the world and the social body.

Because money has been a constant throughout our lives, many people simply accept it as the natural state of affairs, never thinking about it objectively. But it is a product of *rajas* and *tamas*, and breeds *rajas* and *tamas*, and therefore society will never be peaceful and satisfied as long as it exists. This world functioned very nicely without money for thousands of years, and can continue without its degrading influence in the future.

How can a society remain healthy when its medium of exchange becomes its ruling purpose?

As a confirmation of all of the above, let's examine modern society by applying the design principle that form follows function. Asking AI for an unbiased evaluation, I posed the question: What is the actual function of modern society as revealed by its form?

Fragmented communities, debt-based economies, and the hyper-commercialized culture of modern society

reveal a system designed primarily for economic extraction. Its structural reliance on endless consumption and wage labor indicates that its true function is to convert human energy and natural resources into concentrated material wealth. By isolating individuals and severing their connection to the natural world, the societal framework functions to maintain perpetual dependency rather than independence or spiritual awakening. Ultimately, the overarching form of modern civilization exposes a machine engineered to prioritize profit and control over holistic human flourishing.

This question will be asked again as applied to the form of living suggested in our “Prescription and Cures” chapter below.

The Fever of Acquisition

We all must have some sense of self, and thus the jiva in the material world adopts a material identity called *ahankara*, or false ego. This illusory identity is made up of both identification with the body, and its extensions, such as family members, but also on the possessions it has acquired, a sense of “I and mine.” When infected with the fever of *rajas* everyone is constantly on a treadmill to get and acquire. When they see something that appeals to their sense of “I and mine” they want to acquire it. And thus everyone gets more and more until their houses and garages are stuffed with goods. Unfortunately people do not understand that the result of *rajas* is dissatisfaction, which puts them forever on the treadmill of getting. What kind of life can people have in a culture built on perpetual dissatisfaction?

Remember—everything in this world is maintained by the quality and influence of *sattva*, which is almost

absent in today's world. Without the balancing influence of *sattva*, *rajas* develops into greed, and combined with *tamas* degrades to theft and exploitation. Exploitation of everything and everyone includes the land, animals, and the weak, including even, unfortunately, children. The fever of *rajas* and *tamas* is now in a destructive doomloop in which the strong take from the weak, the rich take from the poor, governments take from their citizens, where everyone cheats, laws are an anachronism, nobody can agree, and fighting and killing become the solution to all problems. The social body urgently requires the medicine of *sattva* to reduce this infection and fever.

Delirium

The infection of money and fever of *rajo-guna* has not only created an artificial way of living but also the many delusions of the bodily conception of life. We develop artificial concepts of ourselves, and strive to become Hollywood stars, businessmen, entrepreneurs, fashion models, prominent social influencers, rich and famous, or simply ordinary people who identify as plumber, driver, cook, and so on. Any of these can only be temporary designations that vanish along with the body at death. We are not, and cannot be, any of these things. We are spiritual beings. The happiness we seek can only be found in realizing our spiritual nature. This illusory materialistic conception of life instills in us the idea of becoming some temporary identity, and thus we are always in a state of becoming, forgetful of our normal healthy state of being. And what is added to the mental health crisis when an entire civilization is oriented toward becoming, and forgets the state of simply being?

Our illusory identification with the body also extends to identification with those things that we “own.” But who can own anything at all? We may possess some things for the time that we are here, but they are all left behind when we return to a higher reality after this life is over. The idea of ownership is legally defined. It is a concept that came to us with Roman jurisprudence. The Romans held that a Roman citizen could legally own as much wealth as they could manage to acquire, including land and people. Thus everyone today—from billionaires to ordinary people—are in a fever to acquire as much as they can possibly own. Thus we have four individuals who “own” more than two million acres of land in the United States, far more than they can individually conceivably personally use. Only in a world ruled by passion and ignorance is such a situation allowed to occur.

Autoimmune

The economic interests (stomach) fight with and exploit the other parts of the body, preventing them from performing their natural and proper function. The stomach forces the intelligentsia to work for it—only to determine how to get more money, rather than guiding the entire society. The stomach, directing the social body, has the arms (the government) exploiting the world to bring more business and more money. And the economic interest (stomach), in delusion, is reluctant to give the workers (legs) what they need to be healthy, to the point where they struggle to survive. When the nourishing organ strives to consume the body it was meant to sustain, what else should we call it but auto-immunity?

Finding Our Place and Purpose in Today's World

Above we mentioned the need for everyone to have a place in society, however, modern culture has no methods that automatically provide a place—we have to find our place, beginning even in childhood. Parents, pressed for time, find it much easier to do everything themselves rather than taking time to teach their children, and guide them in building their skills, so that they may be of value in the household. Many have never washed a floor or even a dish by the time they leave home. They are told to “go play,” or they entertain themselves with television or their devices. Although they do not have an active role in life, they are somehow suddenly expected to fit right into the adult world upon graduation from school. However, they often cannot, and it is taking increasing numbers of years for them to find their place in the adult world.

Today most people do not marry until they are almost thirty years of age, indicating that this is when they are able to find their place in society, whereas just several generations back, in the 1950s, they would marry and begin their family lives just after high school. The many dislocations of modern society—the lack of inclusion as children, lack of a livable income, lack of affordable housing, lack of affordable health care, combine together to make it extremely difficult for young adults to find their place in today's world.

Going back to the years when society was more formally structured, and there was a subsistence economy, children had a part in adult society and could take responsibility at much younger ages. For example, David Farragut (later Admiral Farragut) was a mere 12 years

old during the War of 1812 when the Navy gave him his first command of an ocean-going vessel, commanding men two, and three, times his age. Those who have visited India have undoubtedly witnessed children of very young ages taking responsibility to manage the shop of their father, caring for their junior siblings, and even carry on entrepreneurial activities without any adult supervision.

Mythologist Joseph Campbell also observed that many young men have great difficulty finding their place in modern society because our society has no rituals, and no rites of passage, by which they become members, and no rules of expected behavior. For these reasons he attributed the attraction of gang membership, where they have “invented their own morality, rites of passage, and honor among thieves.” These boys later become involved with the mafia, whose “codes of honor” do provide a place along with attendant duties and supportive relationships. He suggested that until adult society finds some way to provide a place for young men, they will naturally continue their involvement in gangs.

For most people their work provides their place and their orientation to the world—a way to think of themselves and their relationships with others. It provides the income with which they pay for their home, another aspect of place. Work is therefore an essential element of finding one’s place. Although we now have the freedom to choose our work, to be and achieve anything to the limit of our ability, this is a challenge that many people struggle with. Despite the many books to help people find the right job or occupation, despite the many career counselors and job placement companies, some 80

percent of workers remain dissatisfied with their work. This indicates that their work is not according to their nature, their *guna* and karma. Being improperly situated they can make a mess of things, especially in positions of leadership or management, and it is almost certain that in such situations they cannot grow.

Disconnection & Alienation

Personal connection, something that every one of us requires to have a happy life, is in catastrophic collapse. Of men in the 18–29 age group, 67% reported “frequent or constant” loneliness, yet in that same age group, 45% of the men have never approached a woman for a date. In 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General called loneliness a public health crisis. Approximately half of U.S. adults report measurable levels of loneliness. The decline of community and “Third Places” (other than work or home) are often cited as the reasons for widespread loneliness. However, this is not a new phenomenon.⁷

Pioneer sociologist Emile Durkheim studied the rapidly changing social and economic conditions during the industrial revolution of the late 18th C. He found that in rapidly changing environments people have no sense of place and the support that comes with it. They become unsure of what is expected of them, and what they could or should expect from others. These expectations, known as social norms, are the basic rules of the culture. Durkheim observed that without having a place where they are guided by known norms, people become dissatisfied, purposeless and alienated, leading to conflict, crime, suicide and other social deviancies. He called this condition anomie, and wrote about it in his books “The Division of Labor in Society” and “Suicide.”

Does this not describe the same social dislocation we now see all across society?

Purpose

As important as place is for mental wellbeing, so also is a sense of purpose. This stems from the fact that service to others is inherent in our nature. Some people derive their sense of purpose from their work. However, for most people, their sense of purpose is derived from their close relationships, marriage, and family life. Children of course require constant attention and service, and parents derive their sense of purpose in serving them.

But what of the childless young adults? Some 60% report lacking meaning or purpose in their lives, also reporting that this affects their mental health. This is the predictable result of a society steeped in *rajas*, where purpose is reduced to productivity.

The importance of having a sense of purpose was documented by Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl, who saw that the prisoners in Nazi concentration camps who had a sense of meaning and purpose had a significantly greater chance of survival. He documented this in his book “Man’s Search for Meaning.”

We are social beings. We need other people in our lives! Then what becomes of society when increasing numbers of people have no connection and no sense of purpose? The social glue of civilization—strong, committed relationships—has been breaking down for years, as more and more people forego marriage and family, living empty lives of chronic loneliness and disconnection.

Chapter 5

Diagnosing the Social Body with the Gunas

When we look at the immense problems in the world today, the situation seems overwhelmingly complex. Politicians, economists, and sociologists offer endless theories, but usually end up treating the symptoms rather than the disease. This is because the actual disease is spiritual and only perceivable to those who know and can apply the knowledge of the *gunas*. In diagnosing the social body the *gunas* are our primary tool. The *gunas* cannot be seen directly, but their effects can be seen—just as you cannot see the wind, but you can see the wind swaying tree branches.

To correctly diagnose the sickness of the modern social body, we must first understand that the *gunas* act as both cause and effect.

The Cause: A Poisonous Diet of Passion and Ignorance

Think of the *gunas* as the food you feed a society. If you feed the public a constant diet of *rajo-guna* (relentless pursuit of profits, desire to compete and be the best and have the best, endless acquisition, etc.) and *tamo-gu-*

na (dirtiness, violent entertainment, violent food, pornography, intoxication, theft, etc.), that conditioning will cause the population to think and act in those same *rajasic* and *tamasic* ways—becoming something, achieving something, dishonest, cheating, exploitative, and destructive. This conditioning is the cause of the disease. A society subjected to this environment day in and day out will inevitably become feverish, sick, and destructive.

Sattva-guna is the *guna* by which everything is maintained, therefore, a healthy society requires a substantial portion of *sattva-guna* (goodness)—characterized by truth, cleanliness, purity and worship of God—qualities that are all but absent in today's world.

The Effect: The Terminal Stage of Tamas

The anxiety, the crime, the broken families, and the civilizational collapse we are experiencing right now are the natural effects of living under those lower modes.

Modern Western society is currently in an advanced state of disease because it is relentlessly driven by *rajo-guna* (the fever for economic growth), with the help of lying, cheating, stealing, and other *tamo-guna* skull-dugger to achieve its ends. In the process, morality and consciousness are degraded by *tamo-guna*. The extreme corruption, the exploitation of the most vulnerable, the madness of global war, and the loss of basic human decency, are the undeniable symptoms of a civilization drowning in the mode of ignorance. When *tamas* becomes the dominant operating frequency of a society, destruction and collapse is the unavoidable result.

Oil Fuels Rajas and Tamas

The discovery and use of oil, and its derivatives, are the very basis on which modern society has developed. Due to its very high energy density it is capable of performing enormous work compared to animal traction, which was used until petroleum engines were developed. Oil and gas allowed men to do much more work, and to travel much farther, in much less time than previously. These are the hallmarks of *rajas*—do more, get more, etc. The power of oil has enabled the development of gargantuan machines that rape the earth, and development of likewise gargantuan ocean vessels to distribute these commodities all over the globe. Oil has of course enabled the grand development of modern civilization, which on its face is a tremendous achievement, but which has brought with it the negative influences of *rajas* and *ta-mo-guna*.

The Gunas are seen in the Face

Look at the images of these well-known personalities: Richard Branson, Steve Jobs, and Serena Williams:



Their accomplishments have been significant, and you can see it in their faces. Their faces reflect the *rajas* of determined effort, and the *sattva* of the discipline required to get to the top.

Now here's a picture of a highly situated sattvic monk. Notice his very bright colorful face, purity, serene and alert expression.

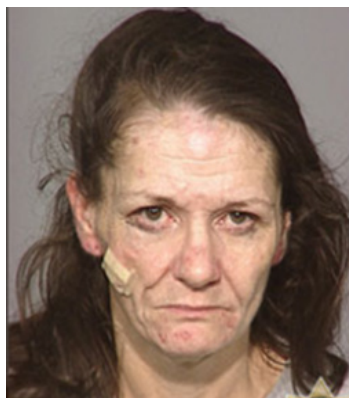


Compare him to this unfortunate drug addict whose face is downcast, marred with sores, and who looks unhealthy, unhappy and forlorn. Now imagine this woman being the face of our collective culture and you get some understanding of the state to which we have brought ourselves. Nobody can act with

impunity! Acts of *tamo-guna* degrade us individually, and society collectively, because we are all strands in the social fabric.

The Environment

The fever of money has facilitated an artificial way of living—in cities—where sustenance depends not on the produce of the earth, but on money and the mercy of others. In addition, the consumer economy has resulted in destruction, depletion, and pollution of nature. That is due to our intense desire to enjoy at nature's expense. Until we find a higher, non-destructive enjoyment, we cannot stop the harm to nature. Stopgap measures (technology, politics) do not work. Money has fostered the creation



of megalopolises where tens of millions live in a state of *rajas*, who will never know what it means to be satisfied, and further, generates *tamasic* self-destructive behaviors. The 97% of the American public living in cities cannot avoid the infection and feverish condition of *rajas* and *tamas*, the two degrading qualities of nature.

We must recognize that the city environment itself creates the diseases the social body suffers from, but being in *rajas* themselves, modern institutions and government authorities cannot recognize this. Despite many programs being enacted to assist parts of the social body that are in need, these can never be successful because the living environment itself creates the problems—cities themselves are places of *rajas* and *tamo-guna*.

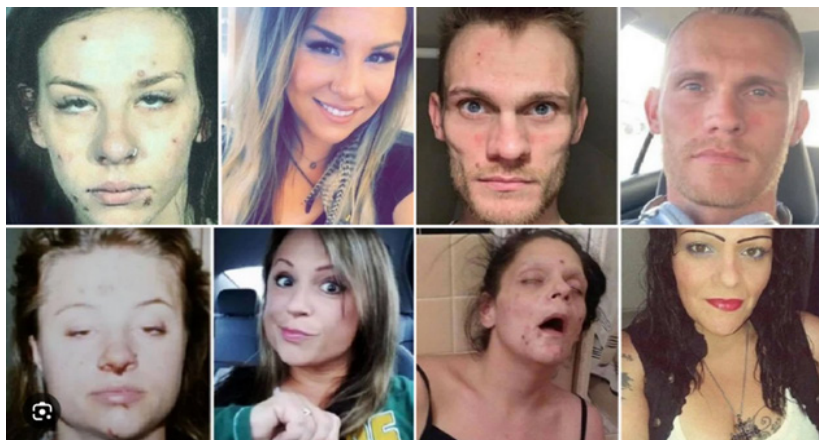
Is it possible for any treatment to be successful as long as the patient remains in the very environment that is making him sick?

Let's now take a closer look at how the lower *gunas* affect consciousness and behavior.

Changing Gunas

Significantly, the influence of the *gunas* acts as both cause and effect: repeated and sustained contact with a specific *guna* causes the jiva to become conditioned to, and desire, that same experience, whether it be tastes, drinks, behaviors, thoughts, etc., and their behavior becomes predictable. This is how people develop addiction to anything.

A graphic example of this is demonstrated in these before and after pictures of heroin addicts who became clean.



The before picture indicates the influence of *tamas*—the dull countenance, lifeless, no smile. In the after pictures, when they have become free from the influence of heroin (*tamas*), they have shifted upward to *rajas* and *sattva*, and become aware, present, and even bright-faced.

The alert faces being those reflecting *sattva* and *rajas*, can also be viewed in the opposite direction. By taking drugs, which carry the influence of *tamas*, their bright faces became dull and lifeless.

Readers interested in a detailed explanation of the *gunas* may consult my book “Lessons in Spiritual Economics from the Bhagavad-gita,” wherein I use economics as a subject to demonstrate the influence of the *gunas*.⁸

Misplaced Varnas

The social body and all of its parts exist in every culture, and the quality of the culture is determined by the quality of the people and the nature of their interactions. In our modern culture, people are not trained to know their *varna*, nor to seek work in harmony with their nature, resulting in some 80% of people being unhappy with their work. This is a tragedy both personally and collectively.

Consequently many people strive to, and do, achieve positions for which they are unqualified. Have you ever had a boss that was unfit for their job? And don't unfit people achieve offices from which they are able to create more problems than they solve? Is this why people are so unhappy with their jobs and their government?

What if you take a simple machine—say a bicycle—and rearrange the parts? Put a wheel where the seat should be, and the handlebars where that wheel is supposed to go, and the seat where the handlebars should be? Can such a contraption function at all?

With such a comparison there is no mystery in understanding the failures of modern society when the parts of the social body are so misplaced—the legs trying to do the job of the arms, the stomach doing the job of the head, and the head forced to serve the body like the legs.

The Misplacement of the Arms

The arms of the social body represent the administrative class—the government. Formerly in Vedic culture the arms were saintly kings. Men of very high character and morals. However, due to the influence of *Kali-yuga* the kings became self-serving, corrupted and fallen. This is also true of the kings of Western culture, and thus representative democracy became the favored arrangement of government. However, today elected officials routinely use the levers of government not to protect the weak and vulnerable, but to serve the financial elites who fund them.

Everyday citizens are acutely aware of this betrayal, and trust in the Congress is almost in single digits—a

mere 10%. People watch as their tax dollars are siphoned off for foreign wars and corporate bailouts while they struggle to afford the very basic groceries and rent. We are left with a government that acts as an extraction arm for special interests, completely detached from the moral obligation to protect the people it governs.

We could say that the arms are where the stomach should be, but it is more accurate to state that the arms are altogether absent, as the government no longer functions as originally conceived.

To say that the legs are where the arms should be is to say that unqualified people fill the halls of government. Unqualified by not performing their roles as representatives of the people, and further unqualified in that they are for sale.

It is impossible to have a good government without God, and our founding fathers recognized this. George Washington has said “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.” John Adams added: “Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

This idea that religion and morality are essential pillars for a successful republican government was so common among the founding generation that historian James Hutson has called it the “founding generation’s syllogism” where republican government requires a moral citizenry, and morality requires religion.

Is the quality of government we have today a reflection of the nation’s morality?

The Misplacement and Abuse of the Legs of Society

The legs of society—the working class—are very important and required elements of the social body, when they stay in their proper role.

However in the degraded age of *Kali*, no one knows their nature or qualifications according to their *guna* and karma, and thus unqualified people aspire to, and achieve political office. Lacking the understand of how to properly govern, nor having the character to resist bribery, and happy to sell their votes, they sellout the interests of the common citizens that they were elected to represent.

I am not saying that all government employees are unqualified, but judging from the results, it is largely made up of unqualified people, to the point that people of good character want nothing to do with it.

Most of the workers remain in their roles as workers, but with the highest intention as *Kali-yuga* progressed they are increasingly exploited. The point here is that the legs are presently where the arms should be: unqualified men at the helm of the government.

The legs continue to do their humble work, but are they taken care of for their efforts? Can the body remain healthy when it neglects or overburdens its legs?

Diagnosis Summary

Our analysis finds these major problems in the social body:

1. The parts of the social body are severely out of place due to the lack of culture and cultural guidelines that each part must play in service to the whole.
2. A depleted immune system: the number of people participating in regular church attendance is half of what

it was 50 years ago. Although many continue to believe in God, some 30% have no religious affiliation.

3. The social body is deeply infected with a foreign element, money, which has distorted the values of everything.
4. The fever resulting from the infection causes everyone to think that they will be happy and satisfied if they only get more stuff. People are on a treadmill of acquisition, yet nobody is satisfied.
5. The living environment is also infected with *rajas* and *tamas* and lacks the sustaining element of *sattva*. Thus we find continual degradation of the populace.
6. The influence of *Kali-yuga* and materialism has resulted in the delusion that people believe themselves to be the body, and act only for the needs and desires of the body.
7. Given the condition that the infection of money causes, the body attacks and exploits itself rather than caring for itself.
8. There is no intelligentsia giving direction to the social body, nor is there a mechanism for the social body to respond to the intelligentsia. Therefore it is anything goes, and the health of the social body shows it.
9. Widespread disconnection and alienation occurs as a result of having no social structure, and nobody knows their place, nor the protocols for interaction.
10. There is no concept of purpose for people in this society beyond chasing enjoyment, and whatever else they invent for themselves.

Chapter 6

Prescription and Cure

All of the problems of modern society result from excess engagement with *rajas* and *tamas*, and they can be healed by developing a greater preponderance of *sat-tva* among the people. This is not easy, however, since many people are averse to the change, and will remain in the unfortunate condition they are in. Alas. This world is perfect and we all get the situation that we both want and deserve.

Can we really expect the kingdom of God while rejecting God Himself? We may want the kingdom of God without God, but that is not possible.

Very often the patient wants to be cured, but continues the lifestyle that has made him ill. This may be the case for many, but those willing to accept the cure must acknowledge the circumstances that made them ill in order to remain in a happy and healthy state.

We must understand that our current ways of living are the cause of our problems, which must be changed if we expect to become, and remain, healthy. Like a drug addict, we resist the necessary changes because of attachment, and to not recognize that once we attain a healthy state we will be healthier and happier.

One challenge here is that those immersed in *rajas* and *tamas*, as most of the present world is, do not find *sattva* very attractive. Their conditioning causes this resistance, but once healed they will be able to appreciate and value being truly healthy.

A Proper Diagnosis Indicates the Cure

A thorough and correct diagnosis will define the correct treatment to bring about a healthy state of the social body.

From our diagnosis we have learned that:

1. The immune system is extremely weak
2. This weakness results in an infection and consequent fever
3. This fever brings about a condition of delirium
4. The living environment contributes greatly to this condition
5. The great majority of the social body does work unsuitable to their nature
6. Exaggerated emphasis on economic pursuits has distorted the entire body, creating an autoimmune condition
7. The parts of the social body, not having a proper place, suffer from disconnection and alienation

The required prescription and remedies therefore are:

1. The social body must be lifted from *rajas* and *tamo-guna*, and brought to the level of *sattva*
2. We must restore the immune system by spiritual education, regular religious and spiritual worship

3. The living environment must be changed
4. The parts of the social body must have the freedom to understand their psychophysical nature and engage in work according to their nature
5. The head must be established in its proper place and guide society
6. The arms must be established in their proper place and protect society
7. What is given to the stomach must be distributed to the entire social body
8. The legs must be limited to work only according to their nature

We must also consider: what are the main obstacles that must be dealt with?

Let us now explain what is required for this to be accomplished. Accomplishing it, however, is another thing altogether.

Environmental Therapy

What kind of environment naturally makes people calmer, saner, and more cooperative?

Village Living

The first, and necessary step, is to reestablish the social body living directly on the land, specifically, in small villages. This one step alone will satisfy many of the above requirements:

The village is a sattvic environment. Simply living in a village lifts the consciousness. This one step alone will significantly improve the health of the social body by reducing the fever of *rajas* and *tamas*. Village life is a Sattvic Boot Camp.

Village life allows one to grow their own food, requiring putting one's fingers in the soil, and grounding oneself by doing so. Such work done in association with others reduces the individual load, and provides natural relationships based on shared experiences, eliminating isolation and alienation. In such a setting people need the help of others and naturally come to depend on each other, immediately giving a sense of place, belonging, and purpose. Growing one's own food put's us in close contact with nature, allowing us to experience our connectedness with all things.

What happens when people receive their food directly from the earth instead of an impersonal market? By growing food one realizes that their sustenance comes from God, not from a store, does not require money, and that their sustenance comes from the earth and is a gift from God. One thus learns to be thankful for God's gifts, and naturally will want to reciprocate with thanks. Working with the earth is also therapeutic because it is grounding. By working with the earth, people become calm and peaceful—qualities of *sattva*.

Animals are natural helpers in village life. Dogs herd the sheep and warn of intruders. Chickens eat insects in the gardens. Cats keep the mice out of the food stock. Cows and goats provide nourishing milk, and the bull-ocks provide traction for plowing or pulling wagons. Associating with, and caring for these animals is healing, because they give love in return. By working with these animals one learns the benefits of proper order. Cows and bulls are extremely peaceful and *sattvic*, and caring for them practically forces one to come to *sattva*.

Village life slows the pace of living, reduces artificial stimulation, and restores natural rhythms of sleep-

ing, eating, working, and worship. That rhythm quiets the mind, regulates the senses, and restores sound judgment.

Economic Realignment

The very structure of economics can generate greed and selfishness, thinking only of ourselves, or else can foster charity and care for others. Which way is better for people as a whole?

It is strongly recommended that people in the village practice a subsistence economy, which means producing their own necessities as far as possible, and living on what can be produced. There are a number of important reasons for, and benefits, from this.

Survival in a subsistence economy, also known as group sufficiency (as opposed to self-sufficiency), requires the help of others. Nobody can do everything, and everyone needs assistance from their clan. If I am dependent on you, I want you to be the best person possible: dependable, honest, responsible, proficient, give attention to detail, do the best work, etc. Likewise, you want the same from me. Therefore, because we depend on each other, we lift each other up and support each other in personal responsibility and growth.

Let's be clear that in a subsistence economy money is greatly restricted or entirely eliminated. Money separates people and destroys group cohesion, invites undesirable artificial values, the profit motive, and the fever of *rajas* with all of its undesirable qualities. By eliminating money with its attendant *rajas*, villagers free themselves from many undesirable influences.

With a village subsistence economy, people will grow their own food and create their own housing, and retain

their dignity without having to beg from, or be exploited by, others, or the government.

In a subsistence economy everyone works together as a group, and shares in the results of the group. There is no sense of “I” in the subsistence economy. “I and mine” is replaced with “we and ours.”

The mutual dependence of a subsistence economy provides the strongest form of social security. It literally is one for all and all for one. The community leaves nobody alone to fend for themselves. Contrast this with the money economy where people are discarded if they cannot make money for someone else. When people lose their income, many lose their homes as well. More than one million people in America are homeless. This is a crime against humanity, which can easily be solved by reestablishing village living, with a subsistence economy.

Everybody has a place in a subsistence economy, which gives them a sense of self-worth, eliminating the isolation and alienation of so many in modern society.

In an era when the economy has become so fragile, and when companies are laying off workers by the tens-of-thousands because AI and robotics are taking their jobs, village group-sufficiency gives people the opportunity to provide for themselves and remain dignified. Significantly, economic upheavals of the artificial money economy are eliminated by village life. Unemployment, recessions and other economic woes are eliminated with a natural subsistence economy.

In a group-sufficiency subsistence economy everyone has the freedom to learn their own nature and do work that they love, thus there is no longer any “work” in the

sense of a money economy because everyone does work they enjoy, contributing to the group as an act of love.

In a village group-sufficiency setting, the fever of misidentification with money and possessions that accompany *rajas*, will naturally diminish simply because of the sattvic environment. In such a setting people will, in a short time, become happy to be who they naturally are.

Of course, conditioned by the *rajas* and *tamas* of modern life, there will be some people who will want to keep the results of their work, reluctant to give to others without reciprocation. Accommodation must be made for such people because there will be many of them. These people can create and use a commodity currency, such as a kilo of wheat, or local private currency, with which they can easily measure and exchange the value of their work.

Spiritual Sustenance

If human beings are spiritual by nature, is it possible for society to remain healthy if we are cut off from our spiritual sustenance?

The Vedic scriptures explain that we cannot be happy or satisfied without having a connection with God. Therefore we need daily immune system maintenance, a connection with God, to keep from descending into the abyss of ignorance.

Given the degraded nature of *Kali-yuga*, the process has been arranged to be as easy and enjoyable as possible. The *Yuga-avatar* in *Kali-yuga* is Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Who has given the *Yuga-dharma*—the religion for the age—singing, dancing, and feasting! Yes, we all enjoy singing, dancing, and eating delicious food, and

doing so in glorification of God is the easy and recommended process of self-realization.

Food sanctified by being offered to the Lord has the power to purify the consciousness, as does singing the Lord's names and dancing in small or large groups. There are no special rules for this, and it may be done any time, any place, and with any bona fide names of God.

Note that any bona fide name of God can be used. The Muslims, for example, accept 99 names of God, based on His attributes:

- Al-Rahman—The Most Gracious
- Al-Rahim—The Most Merciful
- Al-Malik—The King/Sovereign
- Al-Quddus—The Most Holy
- Al-Aziz—The Almighty

In Hinduism there are 1008 names of God also based on His attributes, among them:

- Krishna—the Most Beautiful
- Rama—the Most Powerful
- Vishnu—the All-pervading Supreme One
- Jagannath—the Lord of the Universe
- Mahaprabhu—the Great Lord

There are many mantras that invoke the mercy of the Lord, and any of them are acceptable because God is the one Supreme Being known by many names.

And what is the effect of this? Remember Einstein's suggestion that a problem cannot be solved at the same level of understanding at which it was created? This is the unexpected demonstration of that wisdom—practicing the chanting of the names of God has the power to turn this world around because God is absolute and

is non-different from His names. By reciting/chanting/singing the names of the Lord we directly associate with Him. And as they say—we become like the company we keep—so in associating with God by chanting His names our heart consciousness becomes purified, and we become God-like.

Vaishnavas are popularly known as the “Hare Krishnas,” because for decades they have been chanting the Maha-mantra for decades on public streets in every major city of the world: *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.*

The Vedic texts return to this point again and again, emphasizing the transformative effect of sacred sound: *“Although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality about this age: Simply by chanting the Hare Krishna maha-mantra, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom.”*⁹

In the Srimad Bhagavatam it is repeatedly and clearly said that the essence of religion in the Age of *Kali* is the chanting of the holy name of Krishna. In the Age of *Kali* the chanting of the holy name of the Lord is the method of religion approved by all Vedic scriptures.¹⁰

Group singing and dancing while glorifying the Lord is known as kirtan. Kirtan has become quite popular, and many Christian churches perform kirtan accompanied by a full band.

God is the root of our existence, and we are all part and parcel of God, just like the leaves and branches of a tree are part and parcel of the tree. Therefore, just as the entire tree is nourished if we water the root of the tree,

by endeavoring to please God, automatically we will be pleased.

Now, how much is required? Is weekly worship sufficient? Can you eat just once a week? Just as the body needs daily nourishment, we also need regular spiritual nourishment—for ourselves, the spiritual being within. And why not daily if the practice actually brings us happiness and joy?

Besides worshiping the Lord through kirtan, one can worship the Lord by reading and hearing scriptures describing the pastimes and glories of God. One of the Vaishnava scriptures, the Srimad Bhagavatam, explains:

“Sri Krishna, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramatma [Supersoul] in everyone’s heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted. As soon as irrevocable loving service is established in the heart, the effects of nature’s modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire and hankering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and becomes completely happy.”¹¹

“By regular attendance in classes on the Bhagavatam, and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact.”¹²

“As soon as irrevocable loving service to the Lord is established in the heart, the effects of nature’s modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire and han-

*kering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and becomes completely happy.”*¹³

The immune system for the spiritual being in the material world is worship of God. Worship of God is not simply a ritual, but a “metabolic requirement” the social body must receive frequently. Not only can worship of God protect us, but removes the contamination of *rajas* and *tamas*, and uplifts our consciousness.

The Head Provides Guidance

The head is arguably the most important part of the body. One can survive a lost limb, but a body without a head is dead. The social body without a head is misdirected, which is the state of today’s world. Because society now lacks the proper spiritual guidance that the head should provide, the social body is in terminal decline. The head is the intelligentsia, which, as mentioned, has been made into a servant of the moneyed class, the stomach, reducing their role to using its intelligence to help others earn more money.

The proper role of the intelligentsia however, is to guide society in both material and spiritual aspects of life, making decisions based on the long-term (read eternal) benefit for all sections of society. Without spiritual guidance the social body has fallen into an auto-immune condition wherein some parts of the body are consuming other parts, exploiting them, disregarding the consequences of their actions.

But what persons should now be accepted as the head of society today?

Traditionally in Vedic culture men trained in spiritual principles, *brahmanas*, were the head of society, and under their direction a spiritual culture was established and maintained for the benefit of all of the citizens. These are the necessary qualifications for persons who accept this post: “Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, knowledge, wisdom and religiousness—these are the natural qualities by which the *brahmanas* work.” ¹⁴

The symptoms of a brahmana are control of the mind, control of the senses, austerity and penance, cleanliness, satisfaction, forgiveness, simplicity, knowledge, mercy, truthfulness, and complete surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. ¹⁵

The reasons such men are required for this important role include:

1. This is the recommendation of Vedic scriptures, and the arrangement of the Lord
2. Being situated in *sattva-guna* they are able to distinguish truth from falsity
3. With the qualification of *sattva* they are able to
 - a. See everyone with equal vision
 - b. Be free from prejudice
 - c. Guide society to sattvic living, and against the pitfalls of *rajas* and *tamo-guna*
 - d. Act with the highest intention for everyone
4. They live simple, independent lives without luxury:
 - a. Being independent they are not beholden to anyone and are free to give their honest opinions regardless of the consequences.
 - b. Being satisfied in *sattva* they are free from avarice and greed and cannot be bribed.

5. Their duty is to study and know the injunctions of scripture:

a. Allowing them to evaluate a question from both the spiritual and material perspectives

b. Instructions for living, Dharma, are given in scripture, and the *brahmana* must know those instructions to guide society

Can such persons be found today? Yes, such men exist today, and they should be sought out for such a role as the leaders and guardians of society.

Once a proper head is established, and *sattva* becomes the norm, all parts of the social body will spontaneously contribute to the well-being of the other parts, and the whole.

One last point regarding spiritual belief, everyone has their free choice as to the spiritual leader they choose to follow. Because we are all at different stages of our spiritual evolution, we must have the freedom to find the spiritual teachings, and spiritual leader that resonates with our heart. Regardless of our choice, spiritual engagement is necessary for everyone to keep the social body fit and healthy.

Reestablishing the Arms

It is impossible for the political states of modern society to function properly as the arms of the social body. Their creation was enabled because of the increasingly degraded circumstances of the *Kali-yuga*, for purposes of exploitation of resources and people.

Proper arms of the social body are kings—not the type of kings of Western history, but great heroic men of

Dharma who use their strength to punish wrong-doers, and protect the innocent. The philosopher-kings spoken of by Plato, and whose exploits fill the pages of the great Indian classics Mahabharata and Ramayana, and whose history is traced out in the scripture Srimad Bhagavatam, which contains the essence of all Vedic scripture.

Although Lord Rsabhadeva knew everything about confidential Vedic knowledge, which includes information about all types of occupational duties, He still maintained Himself as a ksatriya and followed the instructions of the brahmanas as they related to mind control, sense control, tolerance and so forth. Thus He ruled the people according to the system of Varnashrama Dharma, which enjoins that the brahmanas instruct the ksatriyas and the ksatriyas administer to the state through the vaisyas and sudras. ¹⁶

Such men always exist, and with proper training will again be able to protect Dharma and the citizens.

Please recall that in Chapter Four that I presented the question to AI: applying the design principle that form follows function, what is the actual function of modern society as revealed by its form? I have again put this question to AI regarding the function that is revealed by the form of living described in this chapter. Here is the reply:

Based on the principle that form follows function, the specific societal form prescribed in Chapter 6—characterized by localized village life, a cooperative subsistence economy, varna-aligned work, and spiritually qualified leadership—reveals its ultimate function: the

systematic elevation of human consciousness from the lower modes of ignorance and passion into the mode of goodness (sattva). By intentionally removing the toxic, disease generating conditions of urban, money-driven exploitation, this structure functions initially to restore physical, psychological, and social health to the social body. At a deeper level, it functions to harmoniously integrate the community by aligning each individual with their natural, God-given occupational duties (Dharma) rather than artificial economic demands. Therefore, the overarching function prescribed by this chapter is to create a living environment where everyday survival and social interaction become mechanisms for collective healing, naturally facilitating the progressive spiritual development and God-realization of every member.

Chapter 7

Learning from Ladakh

If we want to see what the more human future predicted above might look like, we can still find its living echoes in the mountain kingdom of Ladakh, brought to us by Helena Norberg-Hodge. As an anthropologist she had the opportunity to witness the culture of Ladakh before it was open to tourists. Life there is arduous due to the average elevation of 11,500 ft., a cold climate, short growing seasons, and sparse vegetation. Nonetheless, and surprisingly to us, because of their sattvic lifestyle, the Ladakhis were secure, happy and satisfied. Practicing a subsistence economy, they produced all of their necessities locally from the earth, and life went on in the same manner decade after decade, as it had for hundreds of years.

Modern Westerners observing the hard struggle of the Ladakhi subsistence culture are likely to think that they are simply a backward people, living such difficult lives because they haven't yet caught up with the modern world. But that is a cultural projection onto a people that they haven't attempted to understand or appreciate as Norberg-Hodge has done. Nonetheless, and surprisingly to us, because of their sattvic lifestyle, the Ladakhis were secure, happy, and satisfied—qualities increasingly absent for millions in the modern Western world.

Norberg-Hodge documented her experiences in a book titled “Ancient Futures—Learning from Ladakh,” which she later adapted into a movie and website of the same title. This book is very significant for us as it documents the experiences of people living a sattvic life, and how the introduction of tourism brought with it the influence of *rajas* and *tamas* and its destructive effects. I will present quotes from the book to illustrate the results of a sattvic life, and offer comments before and after each.

The Joy of Living

Chapter Seven is titled “Joie De Vivre”, a French expression meaning “the joy of living” followed by the epigraph: “You mean, everyone isn’t as happy as we are?” indicating that the isolated Ladhakhi’s were shocked to learn that outside Ladakh people had a very different experience of life.

Inner happiness is one of the symptoms of people living a sattvic life, and this is happiness has no cause other than that way of life. It is a constant state of being, and is not derived from getting and having things, as people living a life of *rajas* (the entire Western world) think. First of all, they live in remote villages, a sattvic environment, growing their own food and produce their own everything from the land, the animals, and their labor.

I was becoming increasingly fascinated by the people, by their values and the way they saw the world. Why were they always smiling? And how did they support themselves in relative comfort in such a hostile environment?... The Ladakhis possess an irrepressible joie de vivre. Their sense of joy seems so firmly anchored within them that circumstances cannot shake it loose.

You cannot spend any time at all in Ladakh without being won over by the contagious laughter.

At first I couldn't believe that the Ladakhis could be as happy as they appeared. It took me a long time to accept that the smiles I saw were real. Then, in my second year there, while at a wedding, I sat back and observed the guests enjoying themselves. Suddenly I heard myself saying, "Aha, they really are that happy." Only then did I recognize that I had been walking around with cultural blinders on, convinced that the Ladakhis could not be as happy as they seemed. Hidden behind the jokes and laughter had to be the same frustration, jealousy, and inadequacy as in my own society. In fact, without knowing it, I had been assuming that there were no significant cultural differences in the human potential for happiness. It was a surprise for me to realize that I had been making such unconscious assumptions, and as a result I think I became more open to experiencing what was really there.

I have never met people who seem so healthy emotionally, so secure, as the Ladakhis. The reasons are, of course, complex and spring from a whole way of life and world view. But I am sure that the most important factor is the sense that you are a part of something much larger than yourself, that you are inextricably connected to others and to your surroundings.

Conditioned as we are to the influence of *rajas*, it is hard for us to believe that people living such an arduous and austere life, with few opportunities for sense gratification, can be happy. The *rajas* of our culture convinces us that happiness is derived from getting, having and experiencing. But that is the fleeting happiness of

rajo-guna. Sattvic happiness, on the other hand, results from living in *sattva* and has no other cause. Happiness is constantly experienced. Lord Krishna explains that this condition is so constant that people become conditioned to it: “*The mode of goodness, being purer than the others, is illuminating, and it frees one from all sinful reactions. Those situated in that mode develop knowledge, but they become conditioned by the concept of happiness.*”

Being, not Having

The Ladakhis sense of “having” also demonstrates the influence of *sattva-guna*. Instead of the concept of “mine” they have the sense of custodian responsibility:

. . . landholdings are kept intact. The guiding principle behind the system of land inheritance is that it remains undivided instead of being split into smaller and smaller pieces. Whatever happens, whatever the configuration of children may be, the land is passed on to just one individual. This is the case even when there are no children at all: then, someone is adopted as heir. It is usually the eldest son who formally inherits the family’s holdings. Since land is neither sold nor bought, and private ownership of land does not exist as in the West, he does not become the owner of the land, but rather a sort of guardian. If there are no sons at home, or if other circumstances make it desirable, the eldest daughter inherits everything and brings in a “magpa,” a husband who himself has no property rights.

The average family holding is about five acres; occasionally a household might have as many as ten. Optimum acreage is determined by the size of the family,

roughly one acre per working member of the household. Beyond that, land is not of much use. There is no point in possessing land you cannot work.

Accepting only that which is required is a demonstration of the “Isavasyam principle” in Vedic scriptures. The Isavasyam principle states that we are entitled to only that which is necessary for ourselves. By following this principle there will always be enough for everyone.

Nor was there any concept of ownership of the land to rent to others because the profit motive does not exist in a sattvic culture. Nor is there any need to purchase land, and no stress over purchases and payments, even though village houses were large structures two or three floors high, with a floor area of four thousand square feet or more. Constructed mostly of sun-dried clay the entire family would work together to create the mud bricks, and the community helps to build the house. Nobody asks for, nor is paid, anything for their help. Such help is expected and given as being part of the community.

When Norberg-Hodge was first being shown around the village she asked to see where the poor people lived. However, she had to explain in more detail what she meant, because, as it turned out, there weren’t any community members that would be considered poor. Ninety-five percent live at more or less the same standard. Poverty arrived only later when money arrived. Money is a vehicle for *rajas*, and with it comes separation and distinction, also characteristic of *rajas*.

Spiritual Sustenance

Every house also has a room set aside for worship:

The “chapel” is filled with religious texts and other treasures that have been passed on for generations: The strong smell of apricot oil pervades this dark and silent room. Worn thankas (religious paintings on cloth) cover the walls, and a large drum hangs from the ceiling. An intricately carved and painted altar is lined with silver bowls and butter lamps. On special days of the Buddhist calendar, monks gather here to perform religious ceremonies, and each morning and evening one of the family makes offerings, lighting the oil-filled lamps, filling the bowls with water, and chanting mantras and prayers.

Buddhist teachings are part of everyday Ladakhi life. These are not just beliefs but the guiding principle of their lives, touching everything they do, including building their houses:

A new house is never built without concern for the sadak, the spirits of the earth. First of all, a high lama comes to bless the land. He then uses a brass mirror to reflect all the surroundings, thus capturing the sadak in order to protect them from harm during construction. The mirror is carefully placed in a box, where it remains until the house is finished. At that time there is a final ceremony in which the lama opens the box and sets the spirits free.

Religious activities are not just for the monks

Ladakhi attitudes seem to be influenced by meditation. Although deep meditation is rarely practiced outside

the monastic community, people spend significant periods of time in what you might call a semi-meditative state. Older people in particular recite mantras as they walk and as they work. Often a conversation will be punctuated with snatches of prayer: a few words and then, in the same breath, the hallowed refrain “Om mani padme hum, om mani padme hum.” . . .

Throughout the year, especially at the time of sowing and harvest, important rituals are performed in the chapel of every house.

On a number of occasions throughout the year, the monasteries are home to important ceremonies and festivals involving several days, even weeks, of ritual and prayer.

The Culture of Group-Sufficiency

While competition characterizes *rajas*, cooperation is the characteristic of *sattva*, and is seen in all aspects of Ladakhi culture. Here are some examples;

Cooperation is formalized in a number of social institutions. Among the most important is the paspun. Every family in the village belongs to a group of households that helps each other out at the time of birth, marriage, and death. The group consists of between four and twelve households, sometimes from different villages. . . . The paspun is most active at the time of a funeral. After death, the body is kept in the family house until the day of cremation (usually a week or so later), but the family does not need to touch it. The paspun members have the responsibility to wash and prepare the body; from the moment of

death until the body has been totally consumed by fire, it is they who arrange most of the work so that the relatives are spared unnecessary distress.

In traditional Ladakhi society, people have special links not only with their own family and immediate neighbors, but with households scattered throughout the entire region as well, called chutso. Larger villages are divided up into chutsos, or groups of ten houses, each of which has at least one representative on the village council.

Rares (literally, “goat turn”) is the communal shepherding of animals. It is not necessary for someone from each household to go up to the mountains with the animals every single day; instead one or two people take all the sheep and goats from several households and leave everyone else free to do other work.

Living Their Philosophy of Life

Ladakhis experience the world through what they call their *semba*, best translated as a cross between “heart” and “mind.” This reflects the Buddhist insistence that Wisdom and Compassion are inseparable.

Ladakhi attitudes seem to be influenced by meditation. . . People spend significant periods of time in what you might call a semi-meditative state. Older people in particular recite mantras as they walk and as they work. Often a conversation will be punctuated with snatches of prayer: a few words and then, in the same breath, the hallowed refrain “Om mani padme hum, Om mani padme hum. This would play a role in shaping the Ladakhis’ holistic or contextual world view—a world view that is characteristic even of those

who have little knowledge of Buddhist teachings. It could be argued that even the Ladakhi language exhibits traces of Buddhism.

Even when people have personal experience, they are far more reluctant than we are to categorize and judge. Good and bad, fast and slow, here and there; these are not sharply different qualities. In the same way, Ladakhis will not think in terms of a fundamental opposition, for instance, between mind and body or reason and intuition.

A concern not to offend or upset one another is deeply rooted in Ladakhi society; people avoid situations that might lead to friction or conflict. When someone transgresses this unwritten law, extreme tolerance is the response.

Circumstances would arise between people in the village that would sometimes annoy Norberg-Hodge. For example, she became incensed when another person who had not ordered them, took the window frames ordered by another man. What seemed patently unjust in her mind did not at all disturb the party who was slighted. When asked why, she was told:

“Maybe he needed them more urgently than I did.” But, she retorted “Aren’t you going to ask for an explanation? He just smiled and shrugged his shoulders: “Oil choen? (“What’s the point?”) Anyway, we have to live together.”

To me, with my emphasis on individual rights, this seemed so unfair. But their reaction, “We have to live together,” made me think. It seemed that to the Ladakhis the overriding issue was coexistence. It was more

important to keep good relations with your neighbor.” And yet concern for community does not have the oppressive effect on the individual that one might have imagined. On the contrary, I am now convinced that being a part of a close-knit community provides a profound sense of security.

Tolerance and Cooperation

I highly recommend watching this documentary because it demonstrates how the sattvic Ladakhi culture was destroyed by the introduction of *rajas* and *tamas*. The path being laid out in this book is the opposite—to go from *rajas* and *tamas* to *sattva*. What they had is what we are aiming for, and this movie is a cinematic portrayal of that journey. By leaving *rajas* we are leaving stress, dissatisfaction, anxiety, insecurity, and uncertainty, to achieve the happiness, satisfaction, security and comradery of *sattva*.

The Degradation of Rajas and Tamas

Norberg-Hodge arrived in Ladakh before it was influenced by the Western world, and in “Learning from Ladakh” (both the book and video) she comments on the impact of the colliding cultures. What she describes is a sattvic culture being invaded by people conditioned by *rajas* and *tamo-guna*, jokingly referring to the well-heeled tourists as “people from Mars.” The difference in the cultures is the money that the tourists have, and the things it buys:

They (tourists) assume that money plays the same role in Ladakh as at home. If they meet a Ladakhi who

is earning only two dollars a day, they are horrified and show it. Implicitly or explicitly, they say to him, "Oh, you poor thing. I'd better give you a big tip." To Western eyes, Ladakhis look poor. Tourists can only see the material side of the culture—worn out woollen robes, the dzo pulling a plough, the barren land. They cannot see peace of mind or the quality of family and community relations. They cannot see the psychological, social, and spiritual wealth of the Ladakhis.

In other words, they cannot see, nor experience, the sattvic quality of the Ladakhi's life. Earlier she writes:

When I first arrived in Ladakh the absence of greed was striking. As the Development Commissioner observed, people were not particularly interested in sacrificing their leisure or pleasure simply for material gain. In those early years, tourists were perplexed when people refused to sell them things, no matter how much money they offered. Now, after several years of development, making money has become a major pre-occupation. New needs have been created.

Satisfaction is one of the important characteristics of *sattva* that is impossible to obtain in *rajas*, and this shift is what she writes about above. The satisfaction they experience, which means a lack of desire for gain and acquisition, stumps the people of *rajas*, the tourists. But *rajas* can be very seductive, and in time almost everyone succumbs—because new needs have been created.

As people find themselves dependent on a very different economic system for all their needs and vulnerable

to the vagaries of inflation, it is not strange that they should become preoccupied with money. "It's terrible," Ladakhi friends would say to me, "everyone is getting so greedy. Money was never important before, but now it's all people can think about."

For centuries, people worked as equals and friends—helping one another by turn. Now that there is paid labor during the harvest, the person paying the money wants to pay as little as possible, while the person receiving wants to have as much as possible. Relationships change. The money becomes a wedge between people, pushing them further and further apart.

Before money was introduced, the Ladakhis performed their labor as an offering, chanting hymns as they worked. The introduction of money changes their work to fruitive action. This increasing *rajas* decreases *sattva*, which is reflected in other aspects of life, such as increasing the lack of cooperation and caring for others.

The influence of modern culture also brought the influence of *tamas*, and the consequent degradation of Ladakh until becoming almost indistinguishable of other modern degraded places. This transformation reflects the degrading influence of *Kali-yuga*, which continues to take place around the world.

Now thirty-five years after the book was published the Western world is witnessing their *rajasic* culture increasingly degraded by *tamas*, bringing with it total destruction. Large areas of the once-great American cities—Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago and New York—have become drug havens ruled by gangs of thieves, and the mayors of these cities, themselves bewildered by *tamo-guna*, are aiding and abetting the degradation.

Without a substantial quantity of *sattva* everything becomes degraded, be it a person, a family, a community or an entire culture.

There are only two paths forward for such fallen civilizations—total collapse generally involving war, after which, being chastened people again come to their senses, or, rebuilding society as if people matter with the strong support of *sattva*. The path being laid out in this book is just that—understanding and applying Spiritual Anthropology to create a culture with balanced *gunas* as a place from which a healthy society can sprout.

The lessons learned from reading “Ancient Futures—Learning from Ladakh,” or watching the documentary, teach us what a sattvic culture looks like, what is needed to maintain it, and how it can be destroyed by seemingly innocent things that we take for granted, like money, blue jeans, sunglasses and cameras.

Find the website here: <https://localfutures.org>, and the video here: <https://shorturl.at/IP67W>



Local Futures website



Ancient Futures video

Chapter 8

The Divine System of Social Organization

Vedic Social Culture Aims at Spiritual Perfection

Remembering the design principle that form follows function, before considering how human society should be organized we must first try to understand the highest and best function of human life.

What is special about human beings that make them different from animals? Eating, sleeping, mating and defending are activities that humans have in common with animals, and it is clear to everyone that humans have greater intelligence. But if that intelligence is only used for these same purposes, then are humans anything more than polished animals?

Of course humans have the capacity to reason, and ask questions, and the most significant questions asked are existential: “Who am I?”, “Where am I?”, “Why am I here?”, “Why must I suffer?”, “Where can I find the love that I long for?”, “What is death?”, “Why must I die?”, etc. These are the questions of self-discovery, which culminate eventually in the perfection of human life, self-realization. This goal is not only for the priests, or holy men, but for everyone, and the Vedic scriptures inform us how to arrange society for the maximum spiritual benefit of everyone.

Whereas modern life focuses exclusively on the pleasures of material life, Vedic culture recognizes both the spiritual and the material aspects of life. In the Introduction, we mention the four categories of human pursuit: dharma, artha, kama and moksa, or the principles of religion, economic development, sense pleasures, and liberation. Sense pleasure is not denied, but allowed within the guidelines of spiritual principles.

This system of social organization is called *Varnashrama Dharma*. *Varnashrama* is a compound word referring to the four occupational duties (*varna*) and the four stages of life (*ashrama*).

The word dharma has entered the Western lexicon, but like the word karma, few people understand it properly. Dharma comes from the Sanskrit root *dhṛ* (*dhri*), which means “to hold, maintain, sustain, or keep together.” Dharma refers to the inherent, inseparable nature or characteristic of a thing that makes it what it is. For example, the dharma of water is wetness, the dharma of fire is heat and light. Applied to human beings, dharma has two aspects:

The first refers to the eternal function of the soul, our eternal spiritual nature, sometimes referred to as *sanatana dharma*. Since we are all part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, our inherent, inseparable nature is rendering loving service to the Lord. Just as the hand’s natural function is to serve the body, the soul’s natural function is to serve God.

The other aspect of the dharma refers to the psychological and physical constitution of the body (*guna* and *karma*), called *svadharma*, and the specific duties, work, and responsibilities that align with it. A person acting ac-

cording to their natural, God-given inclinations is acting within their *svadharma*. When everyone performs their innate duties cooperatively, rather than competing for money in artificial jobs, society is cohesive and harmonious.

In material life, preoccupied with the needs of the body, we may forget our relationship with God, and the *varnashrama* culture is therefore organized in such a way as to remind us of this, and to assist us in developing our reestablishing that relationship. Ashrama is the part of this social system that provides spiritual guidance. *Varnashrama* Dharma therefore is the scientific social system that allows a person to comfortably engage their temporary, material nature, while at the same time awakening their spiritual nature. The overall aim is achieving the highest accomplishment of human life—attaining the spiritual world, never to be born in the material world again.

A Divine System Established by God

Varnashrama Dharma is not a creation of human beings, but is arranged for human society by the Lord Himself, and given in Vedic scriptures. In the Bhagavat Purana we find this instruction from Lord Brahma, the Creator of this universe:

All of us are bound by the Vedic injunctions to the divisions of *varnasrama* according to our qualities and work. These divisions are difficult to avoid because they are scientifically arranged. We must therefore carry out our duties of *varnasrama*-dharma, like bulls obliged to move according to the direction of a driver pulling on ropes knotted to their noses. SB 5.1.14

This system is so significant that the Supreme Lord not only gives this information in Scripture, but follows it Himself when He comes to this world, to set a proper example for all human society. Here is another example of reestablishing this divine system of *Varnashrama Dharma* by the Lord's incarnation as Lord Rishabhadeva:

In due course of time, the principles of varnasrama dharma had become neglected; therefore through His personal characteristics and behavior, Lord Rishabhadeva taught the public how to perform duties within the system of varnasrama dharma. In this way He regulated the general populace, enabling them to develop religion and economic well-being and to attain reputations, sons and daughters, material pleasure and finally eternal life. By His instructions, He showed how people could perform economic activity and at the same time become perfect by following the principles of varnasrama dharma. Being an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Rishabhadeva eternally had nothing to do with the four principles of material misery [birth, disease, old age and death]. He was always equipoised, and saw everyone on the same level, not distinguishing between people as higher and lower, more or less deserving. He was unhappy to see others unhappy, and He was the well-wisher of all living entities. Although He was a perfect personality, the Supreme Lord and controller of all, He nonetheless acted as if He were an ordinary conditioned soul. Therefore He strictly followed the principles of varnasrama dharma and acted accordingly. SB 5.4.14

Although Lord Rishabhadeva knew everything about confidential Vedic knowledge, which includes informa-

tion about all types of occupational duties, He still followed the principles of a Vedic king, and accepted the instructions of the brahmanas as they related to mind control, sense control, tolerance and so forth. Thus He ruled the people according to the system of varnasrama dharma, which enjoins that the brahmanas instruct the ksatriyas and the ksatriyas administer to the state through the vaisyas and sudras. SB 5.4.16

Commentary by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami:

Although Rishabhadeva knew all the Vedic instructions perfectly well, He nonetheless followed the instructions of the brahmanas in order to perfectly maintain the social order. The brahmanas would give advice according to the shastra, and all the other castes would follow. The word brahma means “perfect knowledge of all activities,” and this knowledge is very confidentially described in the Vedic literatures. Men trained perfectly as brahmanas should know all Vedic literature, and the benefit derived from this literature should be distributed to the general populace. The general populace should follow the perfect brahmana. In this way, one can learn how to control the mind and senses and thus gradually advance to spiritual perfection. SB 5.4.16

Dharma as the Basis of Government

Contrary to the modern idea that representative democracy is the best form of government, the system of government established by the Supreme Lord is that of a sole king. In the Vedic system, the king is the representative of the Supreme Lord and is trained in that way, and with that responsibility. Vedic monarchy is not ar-

bitrary personal rule. The king is guided and restrained by shastra, the *brahmanas*, public welfare, neighboring kings, and ultimately God. The historical accounts from the Puranas describe the kings as saintly characters, and Lord Krishna attests to this in the Bhagavad-gita: *“This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way.”* Bg 4.2

There are many kings who may be referred to for confirmation of this historical fact. When the king and his subjects followed dharma, the earth reciprocated with profusion. Here is the description of the kingdom of the saintly King Yudhistira:

During the reign of Maharaja Yudhistira, the clouds showered all the water that people needed, and the earth produced all the necessities of man in profusion. Due to its fatty milk bag and cheerful attitude, the cow used to moisten the grazing ground with milk. The rivers, oceans, hills, mountains, forests, creepers and active drugs, in every season, paid their tax quota to the King in profusion. Because of the King’s having no enemy, the living beings were not at any time disturbed by mental agonies, diseases, or excessive heat or cold. SB 1.10.4-6

And likewise in the kingdom of Lord Ramachandra: Lord Ramacandra became King during Treta-yuga, but because of His good government, the age was like the Golden Age of Satya-yuga. Everyone was religious and completely happy. During the reign of Lord Ramacandra the forests, the rivers, the hills and mountains, the states, the seven islands and the seven seas

were all favorable in supplying the necessities of life for all living beings. When Lord Ramacandra was the King of this world, all bodily and mental suffering, disease, old age, bereavement, lamentation, distress, fear and fatigue were completely absent. There was even no death for those who did not want it. Lord Ramacandra was a saintly king, and everything in His character was good, untinged by qualities like anger. He taught good behavior for everyone, especially for householders, in terms of Varnashrama Dharma. Thus He taught the general public by His personal activities. SB 9.10.51-54

The earth is not a lifeless rock floating in space, but is a sentient being who responds to the nature of the activities performed by the people. When the people followed the principles of religion during Ramachandra's reign, the earth produced all necessities for all living beings. This can happen again if the people will adopt the spiritual principles of *Varnashrama* culture.

We know from recent history that the kings of recent times are better described as tyrants rather than saints. The influence of *Kali-yuga* has degraded everyone, including the kings. But the fact that they were unqualified does not mean that the principle of kingly rule itself is bad. Based on experience with other despots, everyone has learned the adage that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Thus the question naturally arises: what will prevent tyrants from developing again? In Vedic times it was the neighboring kings who performed that function, banding together to challenge the errant kings in a fight to the death. And at times when things get out of control, the Supreme Lord Himself incarnates to cor-

rect the problem, as we learn from the Bhagavad-gita: “*Whenever and wherever there is a decline of religious practice, and a predominant rise of irreligion, at that time I descend Myself. In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium.*” Bg. 4.7–8 The exploits of the Supreme Lord Krishna doing so, some five millennia in the past, form a significant portion of the Bhagavat Purana.

The role of the *ksatriya* is so significant in the proper culture of human society that the entire Bhagavat Purana focuses on the history of the Vedic kings, reaching back more than five millennia, tracing out the challenges they met as they guided society.

Let’s now look at how the Vedic system functioned

The *Varnashrama* arrangement was that the government be composed of men of saintly character on two levels: a king and his advisors—the *brahmanas* and *ksatriyas*. The *brahmanas* would guide the king on what was to be done, and the king was the executive authority that carried it out. Both of them were trained in spiritual principles and dharma. Because the entire culture was oriented toward the spiritual values of life, the society easily functioned on the basis of voluntary cooperation following the principles of dharma.

Does that mean that everyone was perfect? Hardly. However, the majority desired to become perfect with the aim of achieving liberation. The *Varnashrama* culture was all-inclusive—on the condition that everyone agreed to follow the dharma. One of the duties of the king was to see that everyone was doing so. Those that were not were corrected, but if they proved to be incor-

rigibles they were removed from the kingdom. In this way the king protected dharma.

Varna

We have covered the subject of *varna* in some detail above, focusing on activities of each *varna*. One remaining important thing should be repeated, and that is that the arrangement of the culture is that everybody acts to support everybody else—all parts of the social body serving the whole. Of course this can only happen when and if all parts of the body become established in the quality of goodness. This point cannot be emphasized enough—this culture, with all of its benefits for everyone, is impossible when the leadership and populace are situated in *rajas* and *tamo-guna*.

The Organizing Principle

Aside from that, we need to know the organizing principle of the society. For example, the organizing principle in modern society is money, which everyone is forced to get, and forced coercion to follow the law. The organizing principle of *Varnashrama* Dharma is voluntary agreement to follow the principles of dharma.

That dharma also allows for the use of money, but a commodity currency that has universal value, and one that anyone can create. To dampen the fever of accumulation, typically a commodity was historically chosen that is difficult to use, and difficult to accumulate in great quantities. A kilo of wheat or rice was not uncommon. Therefore a money economy will continue to exist, but with sattvic money. A parallel economy will also exist for those who have become free from the conditioning of “I and mine.” Our Life 2.0 Para-Upakara

(Chapter 10) will provide a practical transition through sattvic commodity exchange and, for those ready, gift economy.

The Ashramas: The Four Stages of Spiritual Development

Just as the *varnas* organize society economically and socially by occupation, the ashramas are arranged according to the natural stages of life: student life, married life, retired life, and the last stage of renunciation of the material world, brahmachari, grihastha, vanaprastha, and sannyasa respectively. Ashrama means more than a stage of life. It means spiritual focus, and every stage of life in *Varnashrama* culture has a different spiritual focus adjusted to that stage of life.

Student Life

From the very beginning of life, children are raised with spiritual values and understanding. Every child is taught that we are subordinate to God, that everything we have is given by God, and therefore we are duty-bound to serve Him in reciprocation. All education reinforces and expands on this basic premise. In the brahmachari stage, students learn character development based on the foundational principles of austerity, sense control, devotion, and Vedic knowledge under the guidance of a guru, or spiritual teacher. They are also being prepared for the responsibilities of married life.

Training in *Varnashrama* culture is not the one-size-fits-all indoctrination of our modern education. It does not force conformity at the expense of personal inclination. Rather, education is given according to the nature of the children.

The children who demonstrate intellectual inclination are recognized as having a brahminical nature, and sent to the ashrama of the guru, where, besides academics, they are given character training in truthfulness, austerity and sense control. Their education continues up to 24 years of age, in all of the subjects necessary for their roles as *brahmanas*, including Sanskrit, extensive study of Vedic scriptures, astrology, medicine, psychology, etc. They are trained with the understanding and responsibility of guiding the entire society. Upon completion of their training, they would become advisors to not only the king, but would function as the doctors and counselors of the populace. And because they lived independently of the king, they could speak truth to power without fear.

The children who demonstrate inclination to leadership are trained in all of the skills necessary to be a king, as well as in martial arts. Although trained to be fearless, powerful warriors, they are also trained to be submissive to the *Brahmanas*. They understood that due to their passionate nature their vision could easily become clouded, and therefore they follow the advice of the *brahmanas*, who are of a sattvic nature. Their duty is to protect the kingdom and citizens in both material and spiritual aspects of life, even at the cost of their own lives. They are allowed to extract taxes to maintain the needs of the state and protect the vulnerable, not for personal luxury.

The children not inclined to scholastic studies were sent to work with their fathers, where they learned everything necessary for their craft through on-the-job training. They were also allowed to follow their inclinations, whether that was producing food and dairy prod-

ucts, or producing other things needed and desired in society. And those who showed none of the above inclinations are trained to provide labor and service to the others.

The Grihastha Ashrama

This stage is the most active and responsible stage of life, the time in which everything learned in childhood is put into practice. It is a time of creating a household, raising children and economic development. Everyone is trained to approach this stage of life keeping the balance in mind: dharma, artha, kama, and moksha. Dharma and sense control are learned first as a guide to life. With that foundation, economic development can be carried out following the principles of dharma. Artha, or generated wealth, is used for enjoying life according to dharmic principles.

The Last Stages of Life

As the body ages, the couples transition to the vanaprastha stage. Responsibilities are given to the adult children and the parents voluntarily retire from family concerns to refocus on spiritual realization and pilgrimage. Finally, the sannyasa ashrama is a time of complete renunciation of material life, and one dedicates oneself fully to God. While preparing to leave this world, the sannyasis, now freed from all material attachments, act as the guides to the rest of society, without any personal material interest. Unlike today's material paradigm, where the elderly are cast aside into retirement homes to wither away with only the past to occupy their thoughts, the elderly in the vanaprastha and sannyasa ashramas use the golden years to cultivate their relationship with the

Lord, and look forward to eternal service to Him in His transcendental abode. Thus the end of life becomes the most glorious and spiritually fulfilling phase.

Varnashrama Dharma is not India's Caste System

It is important to realize that the *Varnashrama* culture advocated here is not to be confused with the caste system of modern India. The proper understanding of *Varnashrama* Dharma has been lost long ago, or rather perverted by the qualities of *rajas* and *tamo-guna*, and has become distorted into the modern caste system. Like people everywhere in this age of *Kali*, the people of India want to use their position, whatever it may be, to exploit others. Many now claim that simply due to birth from a high caste *brahmana* father, they themselves must be accepted as *brahmanas*, regardless of their qualification. However, this has led to the disastrous condition found now in Indian society where very few are doing their duty. It must explicitly be stated that we are proposing a proper *Varnashrama* culture in which everyone is elevated to *sattva*, follows religious principles, and serves rather than exploits.

Based on the Form of Varnashrama Dharma, what is the Function?

Please recall that at the end of Chapter Four, "The General Diagnosis," I presented the question to AI: applying the design principle that form follows function, what is the actual function of modern society as revealed by its form? I have again put this question to AI regarding the function that is revealed by the form of living described in Chapter 6 – The Prescription and Cure,

which is based on these principles of *Varnashrama Dharma*. Here is the reply:

Based on the principle that form follows function, the specific societal form prescribed in Chapter 6—characterized by localized village life, a cooperative subsistence economy, varna-aligned work, and spiritually qualified leadership—reveals its ultimate function: the systematic elevation of human consciousness from the lower modes of ignorance and passion into the mode of goodness (sattva). By intentionally removing the toxic, disease-generating conditions of urban, money-driven exploitation, this structure functions initially to restore physical, psychological, and social health to the social body. At a deeper level, it functions to harmoniously integrate the community by aligning each individual with their natural, God-given occupational duties (Dharma) rather than artificial economic demands. Therefore, the overarching function prescribed by this chapter is to create a living environment where everyday survival and social interaction become mechanisms for collective healing, naturally facilitating the progressive spiritual development and God-realization of every member.

How do we get there from here?

At least some of my readers are now saying: “That’s all very wonderful, but how is this going to happen? We cannot simply snap our fingers and transform this world into utopia!” No, of course this transformation will take time to manifest. But everything begins with an idea, and the seed of the culture exists in the Vedic scriptures: the Bhagavad-gita, Bhagavat Purana, and the founda-

tional teachings of the Gaudiya sampradaya. Millions of people have these books, and as they read, seeds of the *Varnashrama* culture are being planted in their hearts. In time, those seeds will sprout and blossom.

At present there are very few properly trained *brahmanas* and *ksatriyas*. That is not a small difficulty, and it should not be ignored. Indeed, it is one of the central challenges before us. But it is also precisely the purpose of our planned communities of Life 2.0 Para-Upakara. These communities are not being presented as finished *Varnashrama* societies from the beginning. Rather, they are the seedbeds in which the head and arms of society—the *brahmanas* and *ksatriyas*—can gradually be discovered, trained, purified, and engaged. More will be said about this in the chapter on Life 2.0 Para-Upakara.

Chapter 9

The Time Has Come

The world we have known is ending.

As I write this in the early months of 2026, many things humanity has built their lives on are beginning to fracture.

Modern society is a house of cards, and if one too many cards are pulled out, the entire edifice collapses all at once. And recently it seems as if many cards are being pulled out simultaneously.

Europe is committing suicide by refusing energy from Russia and by opening its borders to unlimited numbers of people who openly refuse to adopt the host culture. By attacking Iran the United States is in the process of pulling out the card that is supporting everything—the world's oil supply. Beyond that analysts are warning that we are on the threshold of the mother of all economic catastrophes. But simply by understanding the *gunas* we can know where the world is headed without being psychic.

The Clinical Symptoms of Collapse

Acting as honest clinicians and observing the overwhelming influence of *tamas*, our present trajectory is very clear—we are headed for total destruction.

Degraded Leadership and Morality: The realities exposed by the Epstein files are not mere scandals, they inform us that our ruling classes enthusiastically embrace the deepest, darkest actions of exploitation and perversion. When the head and arms of the social body normalize the abuse of the most vulnerable, the common man is emboldened to perform the same disgusting acts. Together they form the demand side of human trafficking.

The Pandemic of Vice: Look at the digital nervous system of our society. The staggering volume of internet searches for the exploitation of minors reveals a collective consciousness crippled by dark addiction. Nearly 340,000 unique IP addresses in the U.S. have accessed child sexual abuse material in just the last 6 months. And this is aggravated, even encouraged, by the fact that such material made freely available. Why?

Industrialized Death Begets Battlefield Death: A society cannot brutalize life and expect to remain healthy. Modern society has industrialized the slaughter of billions of animals for food, ingesting the energy of terror and death daily, creating a consciousness that views killing as an acceptable solution to most problems. This is coupled with the tragic normalization of human abortions, generates a karmic weight so heavy that periodic wars are guaranteed in order to balance the karmic debt.

Systemic Fraud and Geopolitical Fever: DOGE revealed immense fraud at every level of government corruption so vast and deeply rooted that audits revealing grand larceny are found in every dependent of government. The U.S. government has become a hopelessly bloated bureaucracy where malfeasance is easily hidden.

This doesn't end with the government. It exists there because it exists everywhere: exploitation is the name of the game under *tamo-guna*.

When *tamasic* activities become universal, mass destruction can be the only result, bringing an end to the madness, and resetting the karmic balance. Chastened and sobered by vast destruction and war, people come to their senses, and return to sober lives. But at this specific junction of history, the destruction of war is only one side of the story. This destruction is actually a cleansing that is clearing the way for something new.

Jyotish, the Astrological Science

Jyotish, the “science of light,” is the branch of the Vedas covering the science of astrology, and is one of the branches of the Vedas. It deals with both astronomy and astrology.

Jyotish considers the cosmos as a living, ordered whole, and human beings as a microcosm within it. It continues as a living tradition sitting at the intersection of astronomy, philosophy, ritual, and psychology that defines Vedic civilization. Because rituals and sacred offerings were required to be performed at astronomically precise moments—specific lunar phases, solar positions, and lunar alignments—a method was needed to determine timing, and this method is *Jyotish*.

A Time of Great Change

The wars now being experienced have been foretold by seers, and explained by astrologers. They tell us that war is a way of clearing the slate for a new spiritual world order that is now being born. They predict that

the human-centered way of living offered above as our prescription will become the dominant way of living, while the ways we have known up until 2026, will gradually be forgotten.

The movements of the planets are the precise clockwork of cosmic karma, and their influence affects all of us. Pisces is the twelfth and final sign of the zodiac, whose unmistakable signature is dissolution and endings. Saturn is the great lord of karma, structure, and consequence. Saturn is now completing his transit through Pisces, bringing about the settling of all debts both personal and collective. This is the universe clearing its accounts, bringing upheaval, and what appears to be collapse, but it is only the collapse of what can no longer stand—which is precisely Saturn’s function: to remove what is finished so that what is next may be born.

A significant alignment for our era arrives when Saturn enters Aries. In the *Jyotish* framework, Aries is the first sign and indicates beginnings, the moment of cosmic ignition. Saturn entering Aries brings his gifts of structure, discipline, and the laying of foundations—the architect of the new paradigm arriving at the empty plot of land.

The astrologers tell us that by the close of 2026, the world that had been, begins to fade, and a new one, still raw and unformed, but charged with extraordinary potential, will be taking its first breath.

Predictions of the Hopi Indians

Long ago the Hopis indicated that a decisive moment called “the Great Crossing” would occur. This is not a prediction of an apocalypse, but a reckoning requiring

everyone alive at the time to choose between two paths: the old way and the new way.

A wide path—the “old way”—of fear, control, domination, and division, which leads to imbalance and collapse. This path of technology and mind, disconnected from earth, will dissolve into nothingness, or a “great void,” and those who choose to remain with this path will experience destructive cleansing.

The “new way” is a narrow path of humility, stewardship, balance, and remembrance—leading to transformation and renewal. Those choosing this path of heart/nature, and the “eternal cycle of life,” will experience healing.

They further explain that a great cycle is ending as a new one begins. The systems that “enslaved minds” will disintegrate, as each person’s “shadow self” is brought to light as a result of a “great purge” or “day of purification.”

Other Native American tribes have predictions similar to the Hopi. The Lakota, Ojibwe, and Cherokee, share a vision of a future long-standing peace where everyone would honor the earth and live in harmony.

Is the Long-Predicted Spiritual Age Here?

Many religious traditions have prophesied that a wonderful spiritual age would manifest at some time in the future, although precise dates are not given. Likely the one that is most widely known is the long-awaited “Thousand year reign of Christ” from Revelation 20:1-3: “And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thou-

sand years. 3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended.” This indicates that during that time there will be a period of universal peace: “He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.” (Isaiah 2:4). This 1,000 years, refers not to heaven, but a restored, perfect earthly kingdom.

Zoroastrianism, Islam, Judaism, and Baha’i Faith all have a concept of a time when people of the earth will be guided by spiritual principles rather than materialism.

The Vaishnavas, whose the philosophy has provided the basis for the analysis in this book, foresee that a mini Golden Age will arise, and earthly life will be focused on spiritual pursuit for a period of 10,000 years, a reprieve from the influence of *Kali* due to the mercy of the *Yuga-avatar* Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

People Are Ready

Increasing thousands have had it with this purposeless way of life and are expressing themselves on social media. One after another they rail against modern life, the government, the hypocrisy, the theft and greed. They want out. There’s video after video on YouTube of people ranting about how it’s impossible to live a decent life even with a decent wage. And their disgust will provide all of the initiative needed to create that wonderful world for which they long. Are these the people the Hopis predicted who are looking for “the New Way”?

This is the time. Many events are lining up at this point in history to indicate the conclusion of the old way, and heralding the beginning of a new wonderful era. And the time to move toward that future is now.

Chapter 10

The Lifeboat— Life 2.0 Para-Upakara

The Great Crossing

There is no doubt that the Western world is a great civilization, and it could become much greater if it would only encourage a greater emphasis on sattvic living. But it cannot, and will not. That is the way of materialistic civilizations. Chasing unlimited and unrestricted pleasure, they always descend into *tamo-guna* and their ultimate demise. On the way down, *tamas* creates cracks in the system. The majority, already too conditioned by *tamo-guna*, cannot notice, and continue pursuing the only life they have known. But those who are more sober look for the exits. This is the Great Crossing the Hopis predicted. That time is now.

This collapse is a great tragedy, but only from a material perspective. It's the eternal spiritual living beings that are important. From a spiritual perspective, the dissolution of materialistic civilization can be liberating because the non-essential is removed, and focus on spiritual evolution then becomes easier. Inspired by the Hopis and the Jyotishis, what would normally be seen as catastrophe can be re-visioned as a cleaning of the slate to offer

freedom to create a way of life that actually serves people—a way of living as if people actually matter.

Time in the Vedic worldview is not linear, but cyclical, and as Ecclesiastes so poetically expresses, there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens. The materialistic way of life has had its season, and will be making an exit, although perhaps kicking and screaming on its way out. The question before us is, what kind of world will we create to take its place? We have the unprecedented opportunity to re-fashion our way of life, and recover time for everything that truly matters: our own personal edification, time with our families and friends, and, most importantly, developing our loving relationship with God.

This book is offered as a prescription for how to achieve those ends, and beyond mere theory, we are developing a practical plan to make it happen. We call this wonderful way of life “Life 2.0 Para-Upakara.”

Para-Upakara is a Sanskrit term meaning “do good to others.” Its focus follows the two greatest commandments: Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.

Life 2.0 Para-Upakara is a community development organization that establishes villages of natural living, and assists people in getting settled in them. Life 2.0 is designed specifically for two groups of people: first, those who are convinced that modern life does not serve them, and will never serve them, and therefore want to help create and develop a positive alternative; and second, those who, for any number of reasons, have already been spit out of the system and (perhaps literally) kicked to the curb.

Life 2.0 Para-Upakara will help them get settled in a village environment where they can live a life of true dignity. Here, they will cooperate with others to grow their own food, do work that they actually love, and care for one another, rather than exploiting each other to survive.

The Sattvic Boot-Camp and Spiritual Economics

At its core, Life 2.0 recognizes a fundamental truth: today's profound social and economic crises are not merely political or financial problems—they arise due to the corrupted consciousness of the people and their leaders. They are the bitter fruits of *tamo-guna*: envy, greed, dishonesty, exploitation, and a tragic disconnection from Dharma.

This world cannot be fixed by patching a collapsing system built on poisoned foundations. Therefore, rather than trying to fix it, Life 2.0 introduces Spiritual Economics—a subsistence and gift economy rooted deeply in Vedic Dharma, simplicity, and mutual care. In Spiritual Economics, people are not forced to get in order to survive. Instead, freed from having to get, they are free to give. Life's true pleasure lies in giving not getting, and true security is developed through mutual support, not hoarding. Because we have all been heavily conditioned by a modern life of intense isolation, competition, and selfishness, Life 2.0 will provide a necessary sattvic environment for these higher qualities to develop. It is the vital transitional space required to detoxify from the old world of competition and scarcity, and to learn the skills of cooperation and the joy of abundance.

The Transition: Growing the Head and the Arms

How do we practically make this transition? First of all, leadership is required. This means developing the head and arms of society. Individuals of brahmanical quality—teachers and guides—are necessary to keep the community firmly rooted in *sattva* and dharma, and prevent it from devolving into just another secular commune or ideological enclave. Growing the head means recruiting suitable men, training them in spiritual principles and dharma, and bringing them up to the mode of goodness. Although such men exist, there is no ready supply of trained individuals. They will need to be found and trained. Training the leadership is the first step.

Growing the arms likewise means finding and recruiting suitable men, and training them in *ksatriya* dharma. These men bring the kshatriya-like energy of protectors: they will acquire the land, clear the space, and build the infrastructure, in the midst of a dying industrial system, to ensure a safe, peaceful environment. Together, the organic leadership structure of the *brahmanas* and *ksatriyas* creates the environment in which the rest of the community can thrive and blossom.

A Hub-and-Spoke Network of Farmhoods

Each farmhood is built on the principle of group-sufficiency. Instead of the anxiety of rugged, individualistic survivalism, members will work together to produce their necessities of life: food, shelter, clothing, natural medicine, and community protection. Through personal responsibility, local competence, and shared effort, members will find freedom from outer-directed, corpo-

rate-dependent lives.

Everyone has talents and skills, and the focus is on allowing everyone to contribute according to their ability. Some have wisdom and understanding, others have ability, and since we must buy our way out of the present system, we also need the help of those who want to use the money they have accumulated to build a better world.

Life 2.0 is not aimed at the creation of an isolated commune, but is contemplated as a network of villages, or “farmhoods.” This network of villages will function as a hub-and-spoke network. Multiple farmhoods will cooperate, trade, and share labor and resources without heavy centralized control. They will be guided by the universal principles of Dharma rather than ego-driven hierarchy and coercion. Here, people will finally learn to cooperate without force and to give without the paralyzing fear of scarcity.

Cultural Re-education and Inner Healing

Yet, Life 2.0 is about far more than mere physical survival; it is about personal spiritual growth, cultural re-education, and deep inner healing. We are bringing spirituality down into the soil, the kitchen, the workshop, the barn, and the heart.

People will be gradually introduced to Dharma through their daily activities. They will be able to do work that is natural to them according to their inherent psychophysical nature, work that they enjoy. Thereby the concept of work is renovated from a burden into a joy. Simple village living will infuse members with the qualities of *sattva-guna*, and the qualities of *rajas* and *ta-*

mo-guna will gradually fade away. The program emphasizes social cohesion and attention to spiritual activities as much as external preparedness. People are restored through clean living, grounded work, supportive relationships, and shared spiritual practices—devotion to God, song, and dance. In this way, Life 2.0 provides a lived, breathing alternative to the modern pattern of alienation that isolates everyone.

It is important to note that we want to build something wonderful, and to do that we all will need be better people, or be the best people that we can be. In other words we're striving to be better and to support each other in being better. In this way the community has a common goal of lifting each other up. Participants are not asked to change before they can join. Life 2.0 provides the sattvic environment that will help everyone to improve. In other words Life 2.0 is not selecting saints — it is building a saint-making environment.

Yes, to be sure, Life 2.0 Para-Upakara is an extremely idealistic endeavor, but it is grounded in the Spiritual Technology of the *gunas*. Just as the tourists to Ladakh, conditioned by passion and ignorance, could not understand the Ladakhis, those similarly conditioned by passion and ignorance will think that Life 2.0 Para-Upakara is too idyllic to work. But understanding the *gunas*, it is indeed possible to achieve this ideal, and it is our purpose to strive for this ideal, hoping to one day achieve it.

The Greater Reset

Life 2.0 Para-Upakara is ultimately about freedom. While the architects of the dying material order scheme to implement their technocratic “Great Reset” we are enacting a Greater Reset. Ours is a reset that does not

serve political agendas, electronic prisons, tracking, or control, but provides the spiritual and physical freedom that allows everyone to serve each other, and God. It aims to establish the foundations of *Varnashrama Dharma* and rebuild civilization from the ground up and the inside out.

We know how to design living as if people matter. We have the philosophical foundation, the organizational concept, and we are planning our work and will be working our plan. This is not about recreating living for just a handful of people. It is about improving the lives of millions, to help them live their lives as they were always meant to live: in freedom, in happiness, deeply connected to their divine nature, doing work that is a profound joy. Life 2.0 Para-Upakara is a franchise that can be implemented in any part of the world by local people inspired by dharma and the desire to create a wonderful future for themselves and others.

Does this sound like the world you want to live in and be a part of? If so, we happily invite you to join us in bringing this vision to life. We want to welcome tens-of-thousands of people to our Life 2.0 Para-Upakara communities.

Find out more on our website, where you can also apply to join one of our farmhoods:

www.FreeTo.Live

About the Author

Dhanesvara Das Goswami is a Social Healer, spiritual teacher, international speaker, and author.

More than 50 years ago he was initiated into a succession of spiritual masters reaching back in antiquity. Having studied the spiritual sciences and conclusions of the Vedas for decades, he brings the wisdom of the ancients to bear on the problems of modern society. He accepted the renounced order of sannyasa and the title of Goswami, at the age of 75.

For more than ten years he traveled throughout India, Russia, Europe, and Africa teaching the Spiritual Science of Krishna Consciousness, also encouraging simple village living, and the culture of *Varnashrama* Dharma. Currently he resides in the United States, is writing and working toward establishing Life 2.0 Para-Upakara.

He is the author of “Lessons in Spiritual Economics from the Bhagavad-gita—Part 1 Understanding and Solving the Economic Problem,” “Change the Karma!” and “Divine Or Demonic? Spiritual Movements and the Enemies Within,” all available on Amazon.

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Appendix A

Social Evolution in America

Here we are taking a look at the *gunas* in action, using the history of music and dance in 20th Century America to illustrate how the *gunas* influence people both individually and collectively. Much of this history is beyond my experience, therefore I have taken the help of AI. I inquired from Chat GPT, Claude and Gemini. All three responses were very good, with unique remarks, making it difficult to choose which response to present here. The decision was made by length: Claude's answer was six pages, Gemini's was 13, and GPT's was 20.

The prompt was this: *I want to use the evolution of music to demonstrate and reflect the evolution of the prevailing modes of nature (gunas) in America. Let's try to find a time when the music was more or less sattvic. Perhaps that would have been church music and choirs. Was the music of the 30s and 40s with big bands more or less sattvic? Of course music has always been used to express romantic feelings, and as a means for men and women to get close and personal in dance. Dance is also a good reflection of the gunas, and in fact may be even better than music. Let's look at the evolution of*

dance that paralleled the evolution of music. In the early 20th C dance was waltz where partners' did not closely embrace, going to 60s where line dances were popular in large groups. When did close embrace develop in dance? Then when we get into the nineties and noughties, there is rap and grunge music, mosh pits, and very sexually suggesting moves. I'm sure I don't have all of this right so take me through an evolution of song and dance and how it has reflected the changing gunas over the decades.

With the exception of this introductory paragraph from Gemini, the balance of this Appendix was generated by Claude. Note please that I did not edit anything in this Appendix, nor, interestingly, have I had any interaction with Claude as the editor of this book. That role was fulfilled by GPT.

Gemini:

To understand the health of the social body, one must look to its cultural expressions. In Vedic philosophy, the three *gunas*—*Sattva* (goodness, purity, balance), *Rajas* (passion, intense activity, desire), and *Tamas* (ignorance, darkness, inertia)—are the invisible forces shaping human consciousness. Because music and dance bypass the logical mind and act directly on the subtle body, they serve as a flawless historical barometer for the shifting energies of a society. Over the course of the twentieth century, American popular culture underwent a calculated descent, migrating from remnants of sattvic structure into hyper-stimulating *rajasic* passions, ultimately settling into a deeply *tamasic* state of fragmentation.

Claude:

A Mirror of America's Shifting Consciousness

Introduction

Music and dance are perhaps the most sensitive barometers of a culture's inner life. Unlike politics or economics, which respond to events, music and dance arise spontaneously from the collective soul of a people. They cannot be legislated or manufactured — they simply emerge from wherever consciousness actually dwells.

The three *gunas* — *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* — described in Vedic philosophy offer a precise and illuminating framework for tracing this evolution. As a brief reminder:

Sattva — clarity, harmony, uplift, order, refinement, and the aspiration toward the transcendent.

Rajas — passion, excitement, restlessness, desire, ambition, and the assertion of individual will.

Tamas — darkness, confusion, inertia, degradation, and unconscious immersion in matter.

All three *gunas* are always present in human culture. What changes is which quality predominates — and the trajectory of American popular music and dance over the past century tells a remarkably clear story of *sattva* giving way to *rajas*, and *rajas* descending into *tamas*. This is, from the Vedic perspective, the story of *Kali Yuga* deepening.

I. The Sacred Origins: When Music Was Truly Sattvic Gregorian Chant and Medieval Sacred Music (Pre-1600)

Before the modern era, the highest musical expression in the West was explicitly devotional. Gregorian chant — unaccompanied, modal, without the driving pulse of modern rhythm — was designed for a single purpose: to carry the soul toward God. It has no ego in it. The absence of strong rhythm is itself significant; rhythm binds consciousness to the body, while chant releases it upward. Sacred polyphony of the Renaissance (Palestrina, Victoria) continued this tradition — voices interweaving in structures of mathematical and spiritual beauty.

Dance in this era, where it existed in sacred contexts, was communal and ceremonial — circle dances, processional forms — expressing the community's relationship to the divine and to the cycles of nature. The individual ego was subordinated to the whole.

Baroque and Classical Periods (1600s–1700s)

The great composers of the Baroque and Classical periods — Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, Mozart, Haydn — produced music of extraordinary structural order and beauty. Bach in particular worked at the intersection of mathematical precision and spiritual ecstasy. His music is sattvic in the deepest sense: it reveals the divine order underlying creation. It elevates without agitating.

Court dances of this era — the minuet, the gavotte, the pavane — were geometrically precise and highly formal. Partners barely touched; the emphasis was on elegance, proportion, and grace. The body was disciplined and dignified rather than expressive of personal emotion. This is a distinctly sattvic relationship to the body.

Early American Sacred Music and the Negro Spirituals

Among the most purely sattvic music ever produced on American soil is the tradition of Negro Spirituals — hymns born in the crucible of slavery that reached toward God and freedom with extraordinary purity of longing. Songs such as *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* and *Go Down Moses* carry a depth of devotional sincerity that transcends their circumstances. They are cries of the soul, not the body.

Early American hymn traditions and Appalachian folk music similarly carried a simplicity and communal spirit — music rooted in shared devotion and the rhythms of agricultural life — that has since been almost entirely displaced.

A Note from the Vedic Perspective

It should be acknowledged that, from the standpoint of Vedic philosophy, even the most refined Western music has operated within a framework that is fundamentally materialist — equal temperament, major and minor tonal systems — quite different from the raga tradition of Indian classical music, which was explicitly constructed to elevate consciousness, align with the time of day and season, and evoke specific spiritual-emotional states (*rasas*). Kirtan — the congregational chanting of the Holy Names — is described by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as the most powerful spiritual practice of this age precisely because transcendental sound vibration acts directly upon consciousness, bypassing the mind's resistance. Nevertheless, within the Western tradition, the gradations between more and less sattvic expression are real and instructive.

II. The American Arc: From Sattva Toward Tamas

The 1920s — The First Rajasic Shock

The trauma of the First World War cracked the Victorian social order, and what rushed through the breach was jazz and the Charleston — frenetic, individualistic, syncopated. Partners still danced together, but with wild, disconnected movements quite unlike the measured formality of what preceded them. Older Americans were genuinely scandalized. The Roaring Twenties represent the first major eruption of *rajas* in American popular culture: the assertion of individual pleasure, bodily freedom, and social transgression. It is not coincidental that this decade also brought Prohibition, organized crime, and a speculative financial bubble — all expressions of *rajasic* excess.

The 1930s — Rajas Structured by Sattva

The Great Depression imposed a kind of enforced humility on American culture, and paradoxically the music of the 1930s has a quality of dignified beauty that is rare in later decades. Big Band and Swing dominated — large orchestras playing complex, carefully arranged music that required extraordinary musical skill and coordination. The Foxtrot and Lindy Hop were the characteristic dances: partners held each other at a respectful ballroom distance, moving in harmony according to shared, agreed-upon forms. Individual expression was present but contained within a larger structure.

The great vocalists — Bing Crosby, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong — brought genuine emotional depth and craft. The music was still capable of expressing genuine sorrow and longing without de-

scending into degradation. This is the *sattvic-rajasic* balance at its most productive: passion held within form, energy serving beauty.

The 1940s — Sattva Deepened by Suffering

The Second World War gave American culture a seriousness and depth that is palpable in its music. Songs of longing, separation, homecoming, and patriotic resolve carried genuine emotional weight. The slow dance acquired new significance — holding someone close on a dance floor when tomorrow was uncertain was an act of tenderness rather than a sexual display. Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, and Perry Como brought warmth and sophistication to the radio. The musical forms remained refined and skillful.

It is notable that the close embrace in social dance — which became culturally significant in this decade — began as an expression of love and longing rather than sexuality. The same physical form can carry very different consciousness depending on the *guna* that animates it.

The 1950s — The Rajasic Earthquake

Rock and roll did not merely change the music; it changed the body's relationship to music. Elvis Presley's famous hip movements were so provocative that television cameras filmed him only from the waist up. The body below the waist — previously subordinated to grace, elegance, and partnership — became the center of attention. This is a precise symbolic marker of the shift from *sattvic* to *rajasic* consciousness: the movement of attention downward, from head and heart to the lower centers.

Perhaps more significant than any particular dance move was the emergence of The Twist and its successors — dances in which partners stopped touching each other. Two people now danced beside each other rather than with each other. The dyadic bond of the couple — the most basic unit of social harmony — began to dissolve. Henceforth, the crowd of individuals moving independently would increasingly replace the partnered pair.

The 1960s — Liberation Becoming License

The 1960s extended and accelerated these tendencies under the banner of liberation. Individual expressive dancing — Watusi, Frug, Mashed Potato — required no partner at all. By the later 60s, at rock concerts and gatherings such as Woodstock, dancing had become almost trance-like: individuals moving alone in crowds, eyes closed, expressing private inner states. What had been a social art requiring responsiveness to another person had become a form of solitary self-expression.

The sexual revolution, the widespread use of psychedelic drugs, and the collapse of established social codes all contributed to a cultural atmosphere in which *rajas* was rapidly becoming *tamas* — not through deliberate intention but through the loss of the sattvic containers that had previously given energy its form and direction.

III. The 1970s and 1980s — The Body as the Whole

Disco brought a kind of return to partnered dancing (the Hustle had structured steps) but the context had entirely changed: strobe lights, chemical intoxication, the nightclub as a temple of sensation. The body was now not a vehicle for relationship or beauty but an object of

display and pleasure. MTV in the 1980s added the visual dimension — the dancing body was now on constant screen display, and figures like Madonna and Prince pushed bodily provocation into the mainstream relentlessly.

Freak dancing and grinding — partners moving with bodies pressed together in explicit sexual mimicry — became common at school dances. What the 1940s slow dance had expressed as tenderness, the 1980s version expressed as appetite. The form was similar; the consciousness animating it had entirely changed.

The 1990s and 2000s — *Tamas* Dominant

Grunge music — arising from Seattle in the early 1990s — gave deliberate, principled expression to alienation, despair, and meaninglessness. Where earlier popular music had celebrated pleasure or romantic love, grunge celebrated darkness. The characteristic physical expression was the mosh pit: bodies slamming into each other in deliberate aggression and chaos. No grace, no partner, no beauty, no transcendence — just matter impacting matter. This is *tamas* expressed physically with unusual clarity.

Hip-hop in its early forms carried genuine creative energy and social commentary. But as it was absorbed and commercialized by the entertainment industry, the dominant imagery became hypersexuality, violence, material excess, and the systematic degradation of women. Twerking — which moved from regional subculture to mainstream visibility in this period — reduced dance to a single gesture of sexual provocation, entirely stripped of relationship, grace, or meaning.

It is worth noting that these developments did not arise in isolation. They paralleled and reflected broader cultural changes: the collapse of the family as a stable institution, the triumph of consumerism as a life philosophy, the normalization of pornography, and the increasing medicalization of despair. Music and dance did not cause these changes, but they faithfully reflected and reinforced them.

IV. Conclusion: What the Music Tells Us

The trajectory traced above is not merely a story about aesthetic preferences or generational change. From the perspective of the *gunas*, it is a map of collective consciousness descending — from the aspiration toward transcendence, through the assertion of individual desire, to the glorification of unconscious bodily drives.

This descent has not been accidental. The music and entertainment industries have served as powerful engines of *tamasic* influence, systematically displacing *sattvic* and even *rajasic* forms with content that keeps consciousness bound to the lower centers. As Sri Prabhupada and other Vaishnava teachers have observed, in *Kali Yuga* the predominant influence is *tamasic*, and it operates most powerfully through the senses — which is precisely why music and dance are such effective vectors.

The healing of the social body therefore requires, among other things, the restoration of *sattvic* culture — music, art, and communal practice that elevates rather than degrades, that connects rather than isolates, that points toward the transcendent rather than celebrating the material. This is not nostalgia for a simpler past; it is the recognition that the soul requires nourishment ap-

propriate to its nature, and that what we call culture is either medicine or poison for the collective consciousness.

Harer nama harer nama harer namaiva kevalam — in this age, the chanting of the Holy Names is the supreme sat-tvic medicine. But all expressions of beauty, harmony, and devotion in human culture — however partial — serve the same direction, and their systematic destruction is a wound to the social body that calls for healing.

Appendix B

Further Qualities of the Gunas

Elevation to Higher Gunas

In the endeavor to heal the social body it is necessary to lift people from the lower modes to acquire a proper balance of *sattva*, as observed in the photos of the heroin addicts that kicked their habit. A sattvic environment, grounding by working with the soil, and caring for cows and other animals can have an amazing transformative effect.

There is a farm in Russia that accepts recidivist felons and engages them in agriculture and caring for cows. The cow is a sattvic animal and simply being with this animal, by grooming them for example, is a healing experience. The recidivism rate of felons that spend six months to one year on that farm is dramatically reduced.

Another consideration is personal association, due to the fact that we become like the people with whom we associate. It is therefore necessary to arrange people in groups in such a way that *tamasic* characters are only a small minority. Conditioning by the *gunas* is a matter of association and conditioning.

Below is more detailed information on the *gunas*, information that will be useful for anyone involved with human endeavors.

The General Influences

Mind and sense control, tolerance, discrimination, sticking to one's prescribed duty, truthfulness, mercy, careful study of the past and future, satisfaction in any condition, generosity, renunciation of sense gratification, faith in the spiritual master, being embarrassed at improper action, charity, simplicity, humility and satisfaction within oneself. Detachment from the material mind and of the senses from matter. All these are qualities of *sattva*.

Material desire, great endeavor, audacity, dissatisfaction even in gain, false pride, praying for material advancement, the distortion of the intelligence due to too much activity, the inability to disentangle the perceiving senses from material objects, an unsteady perplexity of the mind, considering oneself different and better than others, sense gratification, rash eagerness to fight, a fondness for hearing oneself praised, the tendency to ridicule others, advertising one's own prowess and justifying one's actions by one's strength are qualities of *rajas*.

Intolerant anger, stinginess, speaking on the basis of one's false pride and without scriptural authority, violent hatred, living as a parasite, hypocrisy, chronic lethargy, quarrel, lamentation, delusion, unhappiness, depression, false expectations, fear, laziness and sleeping too much, the failure to attain or disappearance of an awareness of one's higher (spiritual) self, and the inability to concentrate one's attention, constitute the major qualities of *tamas*.

All facets of both the material energy as well as human action are influenced by some combinations of the *gunas*. Every person, place and action within the material world is influenced by the *gunas*, including one's faith, worship, penances, sacrifices, charity, austerities, food-stuffs, time of day and night, knowledge, action, understanding, determination, happiness, work or the performance of action, and the worker.

The Performer of Work

The worker who is free from all material attachments and false ego, who is enthusiastic and resolute and who works steadfastly, indifferent to success or failure, is a worker in *sattva*. But that worker who is attached to the fruits of his labor and who passionately wants to enjoy them, who is greedy, envious and impure and moved by happiness and distress, is a worker in *rajas*. The worker who is always engaged in work against the injunction of scripture, who is materialistic, obstinate, cheating and expert in insulting others, who is lazy, always morose and procrastinating, is a worker in *tamas*.

Action

Action in accordance with duty, which is performed without attachment, without love or hate, by one who has renounced fruitive results, is called action in *sattva*. Action performed with great effort by one seeking to gratify his desires, and which is enacted from a sense of false ego, is action in *rajas*. And that action performed in ignorance and delusion without consideration of future bondage or consequences, which inflicts injury and is impractical, is said to be action in *tamas*.

Again we see a variety of influences according to the various *gunas*. When people work, and perform action in the quality of goodness, their understanding will increase, and they will likely perform their work in the best manner possible, in accordance with duty and without personal attachment. They will also be happy and fulfilled by their work.

When people work and perform action with the quality of passion, great effort may be expended and they may actually do a lot of work. However, they may also have great attachment for recognition and ego-driven ladder-climbing, which invariably leads to conflict with co-workers, duplicitousness, covetousness of others' work, backstabbing, and so on. Some will undoubtedly achieve their aim of superiority and recognition but may create a lot of grief in the process. However, in a sattvic environment, all such motivations disappear because there is no ladder to climb.

Those in ignorance want to avoid work, or take credit for work done by others, or perhaps make a show of work only when the boss is nearby, and then slack off after he leaves. They will often falsify the results of their work if possible, to make things look better than they are, or else push the costs of their work onto others who do not share in the results. When work is done in ignorance accidents, waste, shoddy results, rework and losses are likely to be the result.

Knowledge

By knowledge in *sattva-guna* one can also realize the equality of all living beings based on their spiritual nature. Knowledge in goodness allows one to see and value all life equally, regardless of the type of body, be it a frog,

a cow, a tree, an insect, or a person from Europe, Africa, or China. The influence of *sattva* provides knowledge of the spiritual basis of life, and the equality of all spirit. These people may be those who are concerned about maintaining the ecological balance, humanitarians, human rights activists, vegetarians, and women who refuse birth control and abortion.

Those in *sattva-guna* also accept an absolute standard of knowledge, as was formerly the case for philosophers and people alike. That concept has fallen into disfavor in our modern world. Suggestions of an absolute truth are today met with derision, but that reaction is itself a demonstration of the lack of *sattva* under the influence of *tamas*. That which passes for knowledge today is heavily influenced by passion and ignorance.

Knowledge in *rajo-guna* is based on duality by which everything is understood to be relatively good or bad, desirable or undesirable based on a bodily conception of life. Under its influence people see a different type of living entity in each different body. They are likely to think that a human has a soul whereas a cow, a flower, or a bug does not. They see different bodies relative to themselves and their own needs and desires. They see this world in terms of their enjoyment, in relationship to their personal satisfaction—or in other words, in terms of “I and mine.” According to them a cow is an animal for “my milk and food,” a tree only as so many boardfeet of lumber for “my dwellings,” and every insect as a pest to be destroyed before it eats “my crops.” Plants, animals, insects, birds have only the value that I assign to them according to my need, and if I do not find value in them alive there may be some value derived from killing them.

Under the influence of knowledge in *rajo-guna* people think for example, that capital punishment is bad, while abortion and birth control are good; capitalism is bad and communism is good; war is bad but euthanasia is good; heroin and crack cocaine are bad, but marijuana and alcohol are good; white skin is good and brown skin is “bad,” Mexicans are good but Americans are bad, or Indians are good but Pakistanis are bad, or Palestinians are good but Israelis are bad, and so on. Any of these dualities can be reversed because what is good or bad depends on who is doing the thinking. As such, knowledge in *rajo-guna* is based on relative standards that lead to division and quarrel.

Knowledge in ignorance is based on faith in matter alone. It is materialistic knowledge, by which work is accepted as the basis of everything. Such knowledge in the mode of darkness gives rise to concepts such as: the “Big Bang” theory; the theory of Darwinian evolution; other theories such as sociobiology which declares that genes alone determine a person’s every action; the idea that machines can be more intelligent or even more moral than humans, etc. In all of these, matter alone is paramount and plays the most important, indeed, the only role. Such knowledge is of the quality of *tamo-guna*.

Understanding

Reasoning and understanding are fundamental to the rational behavior that economists assume people have. But what is rational behavior? It may seem that reasoning and understanding are universal traits, but actually there are different ways in which people perceive the world, each perception having its own set of implica-

tions for society. Every person's understanding is affected by the particular *gunas* by which they have become conditioned. One kind of understanding impels one to strive always in the wrong direction. They consider wrong to be right and right to be wrong. This understanding is brought about by association with the quality of *tamo-guna*, *tamas*. People with such backward understanding are their own worst enemy—and a problem for society as well. They haven't even the ability for proper understanding. These persons consider irreligion to be religion, and actual religion to be irreligion. They take a saintly person as a common man, and deify a common person as a saint. They take truth to be untruth and accept falsity as truth. Needless to say, persons whose understanding is of *tamas* are very easy to manipulate for either political or economic gain.

Persons influenced predominantly by passion cannot discriminate between action that should be done and action that should not be done. Action that should be done or not done has nothing to do with an understanding of how to do things. Certainly many people are engaged in doing things that must proceed in a logical order, and therefore know what to do first, second, third, etc. This is not what is referred to here. The perspective of Vedic wisdom is one of transcendence, and everything is viewed in this light. In this respect, how does one decide what to do and not to do? There must be some reference point. In Vedic culture the reference point is one's eternal spiritual welfare. But that reference point is lost to those in passion whose understanding is bewildered by the bodily concept of life. It is in this sense that they do not know what to do or what not to do for their

longterm spiritual well-being, and the overall well-being of society. This also applies to their perception of other living beings. By the influence of *rajas* other living things are also understood to be simply the body, and are seen as an object of sense gratification.

Conversely, that understanding by which one knows what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, what is to be feared and what is not to be feared, what is binding and what is liberating, is understanding in *sattva*. Such understanding is referenced to spiritual welfare. Srila Prabhupada explains further that: “Performing actions in terms of the directions of the scriptures is called *pravritti*, or executing actions that deserve to be performed. Actions which are not so directed are not to be performed. One who does not know the scriptural directions becomes entangled in the actions and reactions of work (*karma*). Understanding gained by the use of discriminating intelligence is considered to be in *sattva*.”

Determination

That determination by which one holds fast to fruitive results in religion, economic development and sense gratification is of the nature of passion.” In other words, those in passion are motivated in all activities by the desire for fruitive results—be they in religion, economic development, or sense gratification. Without this element, those in passion lose their determination (motivation) for any endeavor. The ever-present question in considering anything they do is “What’s in it for me—*personally*?” They are not interested so much in the welfare of others (a product of *sattva-guna*). Projecting their own mindset onto the world, they think that others should be similarly

motivated, and if they fail to perform it is only due to incompetence or laziness. Attached to fruitive results they are reluctant to support others through welfare based on taxes from their hard work. Moreover they believe that there is no other possibility for motivation than fruitive work, and they tout capitalism, private enterprise, and private ownership as the only practical means of achieving such motivation. To establish the truth of this idea they point to the shallow results obtained by Russian communism, which they say led to its eventual downfall. Indeed, Russian communism was unable to achieve the same results that private enterprise did, because most of the Russian people, who were also steeped in passion and ignorance, required fruitive results or even threat of loss, for motivation and determination. But these motivations were absent from Soviet society. This not to say that there are no other types of motivation.

Those under the spell of *rajo-guna* are bewildered by the determination of those in goodness who are not similarly motivated. They think of them as lazy, incompetent, n'er-do-wells, or unachievers. In fact though, those in *sattva-guna* have a different determination. Experiencing personal satisfaction they are not motivated by acquisition. Instead, their motivations are the welfare of others, caring for nature, and seeing that everyone is happy, well cared for, and progressing spiritually. They typically work to make the world a better place for all.

The determination of those under the influence of *tamas* does not go beyond dreaming, or illusion, it is challenging for them to take any action to fulfill their desires. Such people are morose. They are motivated only by threat of loss, pain, fearfulness and lamentation.

They don't have the ability to understand what they can or will gain; that is not as important to them as what they will lose. People too influenced by ignorance thus have no ambition, resourcefulness, or determination for material activities, what to speak of spiritual activities. In order to be productive, people influenced predominantly by ignorance must have the help of those in passion or goodness to direct them in productive work. They haven't the motivation, ability or understanding to know what to do or how to do it

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Endnotes

1. Introduction to Vaishnava philosophy and practices:
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See also www.Krishna.com
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