

Dharma is Simply Good Manners

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Ray: Hey Daniel, my name is Ray i am 24 years old and i live in Sweden.

I've been following James and his uploaded videos on youtube for about a year now, and i have reached understanding of many things, and ive come to great realizations on many levels. I've been suffering most part of my life, tragic childhood traumas, that has rendered this individual scared and emotional scarred.

I listened to a *Guru* talking about PTSD, which is one of my diagnosis and he said that, the emotional scars may reside, but enlightenment can happen anyways, and that understanding of them can heal some of it, but that some might never be washed away for good. and that maybe i ought to put focus on just alleviate or ease or relieve my emotional pain which can be triggered by several factors. But i am digging into my deep *samskaras* or trenches, determined to one day be able to see clearly.

But enough of that cause it doesn't involve what i am interested in knowing. i am looking for a clear, simple, direct and yet comprehensive description of what DHARMA is. What is Dharma? ive found many satsangs on shiningworld, but yet no one that describes it. what is the nature of dharma? how can one live a dharmic life without knowing what it essentially is? so id love to hear, what is dharma ?

i am reading james book the essence of enlightenment for the second time now, the reason is to refreshen my mind and to grasp somethings i wasn't ready to grasp the first time i read it in january earlier this year.

But i still feel unable to reach a clear understanding on the subject of dharma, so please rub your hands and give me the explanation of a life time.

Best wishes and kind regards Ray.

Daniel: Hey Ray

What a great *prasad* to have been bitten by the Vedanta bug at such a tender age! =)

I like how you rightfully say "this individual" as apposed to "me". This shows great discrimination.

More often than not, enlightenment does require that the *jiva* go through some sort of intense suffering in order to develop the necessary qualifications and force the mind inward. But I see you've already acknowledged this golden key by facing those deep *samskaras* with a soldier-like attitude! Good for you!

For what it's worth, acknowledge the diagnosis but try not to take it too seriously. In other words, accept it but don't claim it as your identity or give it so much power that it consumes all your attention.

Try discriminate/objectify each unpleasant sensation/thought as they arise in/to you, awareness.

Come back to the truth that you are the knower of all objects and that you remain totally free from what you know.

An object includes the guy called "Ray".

And it's in this firm understanding that "I am not the dude with the scars but the awareness of the person" that we call enlightenment. *Moksha* is the appreciation of the fact that no matter what this dude goes through, I am always free from him.

What is *dharma*? The word *dharma* has a few meanings. But if we were to boil it down to two words it would be "good manners".

In other words, it's simply appreciating the needs of the Total/field (*Ishvara*) and directing the *jiva*'s actions so that its' in harmony with whatever situation arises.

Acting in accordance with your inborn nature (*svadharma*) and in accordance with *Isvara*'s universal *dharma* is the essence of *dharma*. This of course includes *karma yoga*, an attitude of gratitude, a loving consecration of one's actions based on the understanding that life is a great gift that requires reciprocation.

Taking the result as it is, responding appropriately, maintaining equanimity of mind and soldiering forward with a glad heart is following *dharma*.

Below is something that Sundari wrote that further fleshes out the topic of *Dharma* a little more.

Hope this clarifies your inquiry.

You're welcome to write to me anytime.

Much love,
Dan

Three Types of Dharma~ By Sundari

There are three types of *dharma*. Everything in the *mithya* world is always changing, therefore *dharma* is always changing. *Dharma* is a very difficult topic, and it is impossible for one person to tell another what their personal *dharma* is or what is right for them in any situation. What is right for you will not be right for me. Generally, when you feel happy and at peace with what you are doing, you are following your *svadharma*. When there is a nagging, unhappy or guilty voice in your head, you are most likely contravening *dharma*, either by what you are doing or not doing. Ultimately, the highest *dharma* is to commit to self-inquiry into your true nature using the scripture as your means of knowledge, which you apply to everything in your life. What is the use of self-knowledge if it does not translate into the life of the person? Vedanta is a valid means of knowledge which dispels ignorance in every situation, if it is properly taught, assimilated and applied. It is never fails – and if it does, it is not the fault of the scripture but our failure to grasp its true meaning for us.

The universal laws, or *dharmas*, are built into the nature of the Field of Existence and cannot be avoided or contravened without consequence. Although *dharma* is one because reality is non-dual, it can be understood in three ways.

1: *Samanya dharma*, or universal values, are twofold: (a) the moral laws governing the Field of Existence that apply to everyone personally, like non-injury, honesty, fairness, etc., (b) the macrocosmic laws of physics, like gravity, electricity and thermodynamics, etc. These laws behave the way they behave whether you are aware of them or not and cannot be changed, only understood. Universal laws work the same way for everybody and cannot be contravened without consequence.

2. *Visesa dharma* is how the individual interprets universal laws and applies them to their lives in the apparent reality with regards to everything: lifestyle, diet, money, work, family, sex, marriage, how one relates to people and the environment one lives in, technology, etc. *Visesa dharma* will vary for everyone depending on their life circumstances and *svadharma*.

3. *Svadharma* with a small “s” is an individual’s conditioning. This is the nature and the predisposition with which each person is born. To be happy the individual needs to act in accordance with his or her inborn nature or he or she will not be following *dharma*. For instance, if it is an individual’s nature to be a businessperson, it will not serve them to be in the healing professions or vice versa. *Svadharma* is different for everyone.

All *dharmas* are based on common sense and logic. Our personal *svadharma* includes our conditioning, or *vasana* load, which will be governing how we see and act on all levels. The binding *vasanas* must be seen and dissolved for peace of mind to be experienced. We all have a given nature that we need to be in harmony with, and unless one understands what it is, we can make decisions that cause great agitation, suffering and discomfort to the mind and body.

It is possible that on the personal level, to be true to our *svadharma*, we must sometimes take actions that cause agitation and distress to ourselves or “others.” For instance, because I am afraid to hurt my parents and feel duty-bound to them, I could decide to do what they want for me knowing it does not support who I am. Or conversely, I decide that my need to be true to myself trumps making my parents happy. Another example is people who decide to leave unhappy marriages even though they pay a high price emotionally to do so. There is no fixed rule when it comes to “right and wrong” actions. There is just the law of *karma* – cause and effect – appropriate action, and that we are never in control of the outcome of any action. If we do decide to go against our nature for good reason, then we do so with a clear mind and heart, without complaint and with the *karma yoga* attitude.

Sometimes doing the right thing for us involves tough decisions. But if we do not live in accordance with the rules of life and the nature *Isvara* gives us, we will not be happy or have peace of mind. Our lives must conform to the truth, not the other way around. When it does, following the truth will always work out for the best even though it may turn our life upside down. In the long run, it is far more damaging to all concerned to make choices that contradict *dharma* because we are afraid to face the consequences of making the choices that are right for us.

If on the other hand, if we are duty-bound and cannot change our circumstance, then we must accept that this is *prarabdha karma* playing out and we attend to it as best we can, as always, with the *karma yoga* attitude. You know the beautiful prayer: “Lord give me the courage to change what needs to be changed, the strength to accept what cannot be changed and the wisdom to know the difference between the two.”

It never matters what you do from the self’s point of view, because for the self, nothing ever happens or changes. But for the *jiva* who lives in the apparent reality, it matters what you do,

assuming you want peace of mind and freedom from limitation. *Moksa* is only for the *jiva* because the self is ever-free.

There are three main types of doer renunciation: (1) *karma yoga* – surrendering the results of action to *Isvara*, (2) *karma sannyas* – renouncing GRATUITOUS actions and (3) *karma jnana sannyas*, the knowledge that you may act but you are not the doer.