

Dharma centered living

Session VI

Aarsha Vidya Foundation



About Vedic Wisdom for a fulfilling life



Programme of 6 sessions based on Vedic wisdom for anyone who wants more from life.



Even if one is not interested in Vedic wisdom, **the principles if understood and applied** will offer windows of insight and mirrors of reflection, **paving the way for a fulfilling life**. Why would I seek to apply these principles?



Firstly, it will help me to enhance **the fulfillment that I wish to derive** through family, work or any other pursuits.



Secondly, as I am engaged in my many pursuits, being a student of Vedanta, **my self growth is a necessary and non-negotiable step to Self discovery**

PROGRAMME: VEDIC WISDOM FOR A FULFILLING LIFE

| Session | Topic | Attachment |
|---------|---|---|
| I | Who am I? Where do I come from? How does my past flow into my present?-Freeing oneself from the conditionings of past | Session I_Who am I |
| II | My life in my hands – Moving into a deeper self acceptance and creating your own destiny.Accepting who you are, what you are and starting to master your life | Session II_My life in my hands |
| III | Think clearly and feel deeply- Discovering emotional balance | Session III_Think clearly.Feel deeply. Act decisively |
| IV | Where are you headed in life? Finding deepest priorities and learning to live in harmony with these. | Session IV_Discovering priorities |
| V | Building understanding and connectedness with people by learning to communicate | Session V_Building understanding and connectedness |
| VI | What is Dharma? What is Dharma centered living? | Session VI_Dharma centered living |

Dharma/Principles centered living: Concluding Session

Justice **Health** **Honour** **Nurturing** **Supporting** **Caring** **Self Growth** **Creativity** **Peace**

Honesty **Integrity** **Mercy** **Courage** **Win-win thinking** **Duty** **Independence** **Liberty** **Freedom**

Ahimsa– no harm **Mutual benefit** **Productivity** **Gravity (Not human forces)** **Equality** **Compassion**

Dharma/Principle centered living: Concluding Session

Yogah karmasu kausalam (Bhagavad Gita 2.50)

Effectiveness or competence in action (based on dharma) is Yoga.

Samatvam yogah uchyate (Bhagavad Gita 2.48)

Remaining the same to success and failure this evenness of mind is Yoga.

To make these verses clearer and more integral to our lives, sessions on:

- Self awareness, Self acceptance and Self responsibility, Communication for connectedness were done
- Also, sessions on 'Thinking clearly and feeling deeply', Discovery of purpose and priorities in life, were done.

To round off all the sessions, we turn our attention to: **What is dharma? What is dharma centered living?**

What is Dharma? What is Dharma centered living?



- “Dharma is that which upholds” or “that without which nothing can stand” or “that which maintains the stability and harmony of the universe.”
- Dharma can mean any one or more or all of these, depending upon the context - **the natural innate behaviour of things, religious laws, code of conduct, duty, law, ethics, virtue, etc.**
- Etymologically Dharma means principles that supports and sustains (*“Dharayate iti dharma”*) that order which protects us if we protect it. (*“Dharmo rakshati rakshitah”*).
- Dharma has been used **interchangeably here with the word, Principles**
- **Despite Dharma being common sense** – (I don’t want to be hurt, others don’t want to be hurt) We still find it difficult to live by principles because we are centered on other things such as work, money, partner, children, family, self, possessions, spirituality etc.
- ‘Centered on’ means it is the **core of my life or what is most important to me**, to the exclusion of other things

Dharma/ Principle centered living

- All these aspects of life are important - work, money, partner, children, family, self, possessions, spirituality etc
- However, if my life revolves around one or more of these **centers instead of dharma/principles** then these aspects get affected.
- Depending on my center or what is most important to me, **my sense of security, guidance, wisdom and power are affected.**

Examples:

1. **Partner centeredness** – your life perspective is influenced by what may positively or or negatively influence your spouse or relationship,
2. **Family centeredness** – your decision-making criteria are : what is good for the family or what family members want primarily,
3. **Money centeredness** – is the lens through which life is seen and understood, creating imbalanced judgment
4. **Work centeredness** – you see your work as your life
5. **Possession centeredness** – you make decisions based on what will protect, increase or better display your possessions
6. **Pleasure centeredness** – you see the world in terms of what is in it for you – source of consumption
7. **Self centeredness** – you view the world by how decisions, events or circumstances affect you.

Dharma/ Principle centered living

For us to truly appreciate what it means to be dharma/ principle centered, the charts following highlight how we tend to perceive other areas of life *if we have a center other than dharma/ principles.*

- It guides us to identify our center and the underlying needs

Partner centered living:

| CENTER/ LIFE APPROACH | SECURITY | GUIDANCE | WISDOM | POWER |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| PARTNER CENTERED | Your feelings of security are based on the way your partner treats you. | Your direction comes from your own needs and wants and from your partner. | Your life perspective includes things which may positively or negatively influence your partner or your relationship. | Your power to act is limited by weaknesses in your partner and in yourself. |
| | You are highly vulnerable to the moods and feelings of your partners. | Your decision making is limited to what you think is best for your marriage or your partner or to the preferences and opinions of your partner. | | |
| | There is deep disappointment resulting in withdrawal or conflict when your partner disagrees with you or does not meet your expectations. | | | |
| | Anything that may impinge on the relationship is a threat. | | | |

Family centered living:

| CENTER/ LIFE APPROACH | SECURITY | GUIDANCE | WISDOM | POWER |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|--|
| FAMILY CENTERED | Your security is based on family acceptance and fulfilling family expectations | Family scripting – ‘what everyone should do’ is your source of correct attitudes or behaviours. | Your interpret all of life situations in terms of your family creating a partial understanding and family narcissism. | Your actions are limited by family models and traditions |
| | Your sense of personal security is as volatile as the family reputation | Your decision making is based on ‘what is good for the family or what family members want. | | |
| | Your feelings of self worth are based on the family reputation | | | |

Money/Work/Possessions centered living:

| CENTER/ LIFE APPROACH | SECURITY | GUIDANCE | WISDOM | POWER |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| MONEY CENTERED | Your personal worth is determined by your network. You are vulnerable to anything that threatens your economic security. | Profit is your decision making criterion. | Money making is the lens through which life is seen and understood creating imbalanced judgement. | You are restricted to what you can accomplish with your money and your limited vision. |
| WORK CENTERED | You tend to define yourself by your work role. You are only comfortable when you are working. | You make your decisions based on the needs and expectations of your work | You tend to be limited to your work role. You see your work as your life. | Your actions are limited by work role models,work opportunities,your boss's perceptions and yourabilities to do/not do that work. |
| POSSESSIONS CENTERED | Your security is based on your reputation, social status, or the things you possess. | You make your decisions based on what will protect, increase or better display your possessions | You see the world in terms of comparative economic and social relationships. | You function within the limits of what you can buy or the social prominence you can achieve. |

Pleasure/ Self centered living:

| CENTER/ LIFE APPROACH | SECURITY | GUIDANCE | WISDOM | POWER |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|---|
| PLEASURE CENTERED | You feel secure only when you are on a 'pleasure high'. Your security is short lived, like anesthesia and dependent on your environment. | You make your decisions on the basis of what will give you most pleasure. | You see the world in terms of 'what's in it for me' | Your power is almost negligible. |
| SELF CENTERED | Your security is constantly changing and shifting. | Your judgment criteria –'what feels good'? 'What I need' & 'What I want' | You view the world by how decisions, events or circumstances will affect you. | Your ability to act is limited to your own resources without the benefit of inter dependency. |

Based on our center we process other areas of life.....

The next two charts depicts possible ways we may tend to perceive other areas of our life depending on our center.

| CENTER/ OTHER LIFE AREAS | PARTNER | CHILDREN | FAMILY | MONEY | WORK | POSSESSIONS |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| PARTNER | The main source of need satisfaction. | Reflection of partner. Keeps the partners together. | Good in its place,less important. A common project. | Necessary to properly take care of partner. | Necessary to earn money to take care of partner. | Means to share,impress or manipulate. |
| CHILDREN | Provides for the children. | Greatest source of fulfilment whether they are 3 or 35yrs | Has to serve the interests of the children. Anything else is | Necessary to take care of children. | Necessary for childrens education, marriage. One's | Comfort and happiness of children. |
| FAMILY | Part of the family. | Integral to the togetherness of the family. | Highest priority. | Economic support for family | A means to an end. | Family comfort and opportunities. |
| MONEY | Asset or liability in acquiring money | Discomfort with growing expenses. | Economic drain | Source of security and fulfillment | Necessary to the acquisition of money. | Evidence of success in life. |
| WORK | Help or hindrance in work. | Help or interruption to work. | Help or interruption to work. Instructs family in work ethics. | Of secondary importance. Evidence of hardwork. | Main source of fulfilment and satisfaction. Highest ethic,others ethics are sub standard and a source of frustration. | Tools to increase work effectiveness. Perks as a result of promotions. |
| POSSESSIONS | Main possession. Assistant in acquiring other possessions. | | Possession to use, exploit, dominate, control & showcase. | Key to increasing possessions. Another possession to control. | Opportunity to possess status, authority,recognition. | |
| PLEASURE | Partner is fun and pleasure or obstacle to it. | Children can be an obstacle to ones pleasure. | Family can be the means or an interference. | Means to increase opportunities for pleasure. | Means to an end, boring and routine. 'Fun'work is ok. | Objects of fun, means to more fun. |
| FRIEND/FRIENDS | Possible friend or possible competitor. Social status symbol. | Treated as friends in childhood or obstacle in developing and maintaining friendships. | Treated as friends or obstacle in developing and maintaining friendships. Friends a part of family. | Source of economic and social good. | Opportunity to socialise and increase one's network and network. | Means of buying friendship. Means of entertaining or providing social pleasure |
| SELF | Possessiveness. Satisfier and pleaser. | Possession, need satisfier. Makes me look good. | Possession, need satisfier. Makes me look good. | Source of need satisfaction. | Opportunity to 'do my own thing' | Source of self definition, protection, enhancement. |
| DHARMA/ PRINCIPLES | Equal partner in a mutually beneficial and interdependent relationship. | Opportunity for caring, contribution and fulfilment.Opportunity for inter generational rescripting and change. | Necessary for healthy functioning of society. Opportunity for caring,contribution and fulfilment. | Enabling resource in the accomplishment of important priorities and goals. | Opportunity to use talents and abilities in a meaningful way.Means to provide economic resource. Time investment to be kept in balance with other time investments and in harmony with priorities and values in life. | Enabling resources, Responsibilities to be properly cared for. Secondary to people in importance. |

| CENTER/ OTHER AREAS | PLEASURE | FRIEND/ FRIENDS | ENEMY/ ENEMIES | SPIRITUALITY | SELF | DHARMA/ PRINCIPLES |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| PARTNER | Mutual, unifying activity or pleasure is unimportant | Partner is best or only friend. Only friends are 'our' friends. | Partner is my defender or common enemy. Provides source of marriage definition. | Activities to enjoy together. Focus only on those aspects to bring partner closer to oneself. | Selfworth is partner based. Highly vulnerable to partner attitudes, behaviours. | Principles which create and maintain relationship with partner. |
| FAMILY | Family activities or relatively unimportant. | Friends of the family or competition. Threat to strong family life. | Defined by family. Source of family strength and unity. | Source of help to keep family together. | Important part but subordinate to how family values the person. | Principles which keep family together. Subordinate to family. |
| MONEY | Economic drain or evidence of economic stress. | Chosen because of economic status. | Economic competitors or threat to economic security. | Giving to temple or religious causes will get me tax exemption. | Selfworth is determined by net worth. | Ways that work in making and managing money. |
| WORK | Waste of time. Interferes with work. | Primarily from friends at work or shared interest. Basically unnecessary. | Obstacles to work productivity. | Important for corporate image or imposition on your time. Opportunity to network in profession. | Defined by job role. Selfworth linked to satisfaction in job. | Ideas that contribute to success at work. Need to adapt to work conditions. |
| POSSESSIONS | Buying, shopping, joining clubs. | Personal objects. Usable and jealousy w.r.t other friends of friends. | Takers, thieves. Others with more possessions or recognition. | Important to get me the things I want – artha, kaama | Defined by the things I own. Defined by social status, recognition. | Ideas that enable you to acquire, enhance and retain possessions – yogakshema |
| PLEASURE | Supreme end in life. Main source of satisfaction. | Companions in pleasure and fun. | Take life too seriously. Guilt trippers, destroyers. | Inconvenient obstacle to recreation and fun activities. Guilt trip tendency to avoid self reflection. | Instrument for pleasure | Natural drives and instincts to be satisfied. |
| FRIEND/ FRIENDS | Always enjoyed with friends. Primarily social events. | Critical to personal happiness, belonging, acceptance, popularity on social media is crucial. | Outside the social circle, common enemies provide unity or definition for friendship. | Place for social gathering. | Socially defined, petrified of embarrassment or social rejection | Basic principles which help you get along with others. |
| SPIRITUALITY | Meeting with other people. Pleasure to be denied. | Other members of satsanga. | Whose lives are opposed to spirituality. | Highest source of guidance. | Self worth determined by progress on one's path, participation in religious/ spiritual activities. | Taught by spirituality/ religion |
| SELF | Deserved satisfaction. 'My rights'. 'My needs'. | Supporter. Provider for 'me' | Source of self justification for anger and righteousness. | Vehicle to serve self interests. | Better, smarter, more right. Justified in focusing all resources on personal gratification. | Source of justification. Only those ideas that serve my best interests can be adapted to need. |
| DHARMA/ PRINCIPLES | Joy that comes from any activity in a focused and purposeful life of priorities. True re-creation as an important part of a balanced and integrated lifestyle. | Companions in interdependent living. Confidants – those to share with, the help and support. | No real or perceived enemies, just people with different paradigms and agendas to be understood and cared about. | Vehicle for true principles and discovering the basis of dharma going all the way to understanding of moksha. Not satisfied with 'feelgood' measures in spirituality. Opportunity for service and contribution. | One unique, talented, blessed, creative individual in the midst of many who working independently and interdependently can accomplish many great things. | Immutable, natural principles which cannot be violated with carelessness. When honoured, preserve integrity and lead to true growth and happiness. |

Centered living:

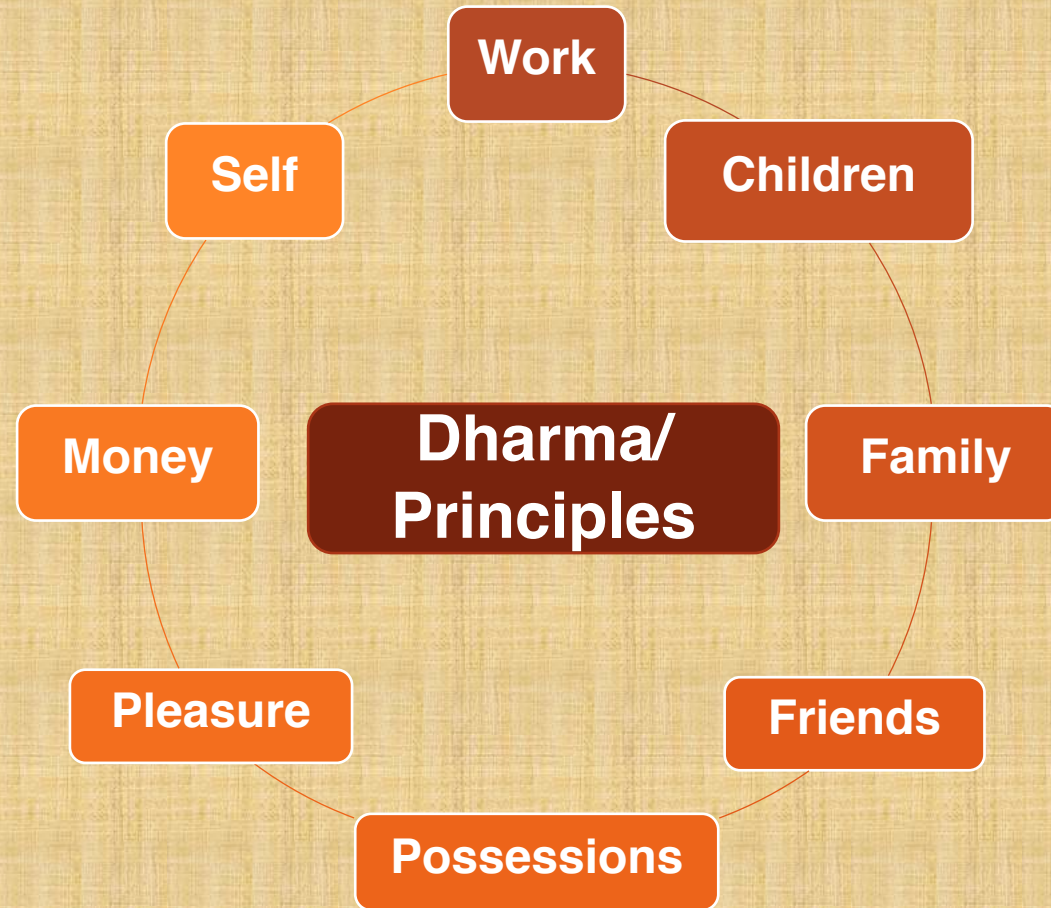
- Usually, a person's center is some combination of these and /or other centers.
- Depending on external or internal conditions one particular **center** may be **activated** until the underlying needs are satisfied. Then another center becomes the compelling force.
- As a person fluctuates from one center to another the **resulting relativism is like roller coasting** through life.
- One moment you are high, the next moment you are low, making efforts to compensate for one weakness by borrowing strength from another weakness.
- There is **no consistent sense of direction, no persistent wisdom**, no steady power supply or sense of personal worth
- The ideal is to create one clear center from which we consistently derive a high degree of **security, guidance, wisdom and power**, becoming **more proactive** and being more **in harmony** with every part of your life.

Dharma/ Principle centered living:

- By centering your life on universal principles – you create a **solid foundation for life**.
- Security comes from knowing that unlike other centers based on people or things subject to change, universal **principles do not change**. We can depend on them
- Principles **don't react** to anything. They don't get angry and treat us differently. They are not out to get us. They cannot pave our way for shortcuts or quick fixes.
- Principles **do not die**. They are not here one day and gone the next, cannot be destroyed by earthquakes or theft.
- Even in the midst of people or circumstances that seem to ignore the principles, we can be secure in the knowledge that **principles are bigger than people or circumstances** and that thousands of years of history have seen them triumph, time and time again.
- Principles always have **natural consequences** attached to them. There are positive consequences when we live in harmony with them. There are negative consequences when we ignore them. Because these principles apply to everyone, whether or not they are aware, this limitation is universal.
- By centering our lives on timeless, unchanging principles, we create the **basis for effective living**.
- Principle centered living is the center that **puts all other centers in perspective**.



Dharma/Principle centered living is the center that puts all other centers in perspective



By centering our lives on the timeless, unchanging principles, we create a basis for an effective life

DHARMA/ PRINCIPLE CENTERED LIVING:

| CENTER/ LIFE APPROACH | SECURITY | GUIDANCE | WISDOM | POWER |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| DHARMA/ PRINCIPLES CENTERED | Your security is based on correct principles that do not change,regard less of external conditions. | You are guided by a compass which enables you to see where you want to go and how you will get there. | Your judgment encompasses a broad range of long term consequences and reflects a wise balance and quiet assurance. | Your power is limited only by your understanding and observance of natural laws, principles and consequences of following the principles themselves. |
| | You know that true principles can be validated in your own life through your own experiences. | You use accurate data which makes your decisions both do-able and meaningful. | You see things differently and thus you think and act differently from the largely reactive world. | You become a self aware, knowledgeable, proactive individual largely unrestricted by the attitudes, behaviours and actions of others. |
| | Correct principles help you understand your own development, endowing you with the confidence to learn more, increasing your knowledge and understanding. | You can be objective about life situations and emotions,and look at the balanced whole. | You see the world as a field of effective action and what you can do for the world and its people. | Your ability to act reaches far beyond your own resources and is based on interdependency. |
| | Your source of security provides you with an immovable, unchanging, failing core enabling you to see change as an exciting adventure and opportunity to make significant contributions. | Your decisions and actions reflect both short term and long term considerations and implications. | You adopt a proactive lifestyle. | Your decisions and actions are not driven by current financial or circumstantial limitations. |
| | | In every situation, you consciously, proactively determine the best alternative, basing decisions on principles. | You interpret all of life's experiences in terms of opportunities for learning and contribution. | |

Thank you

Om Tat Sat

