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LIFE IN A SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY

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There is a complete difference between life in a spiritual community and life in today's materialistic and consumer-oriented one. A consumer-oriented community is focussed on profit in the material and sensual realms. The motto is: always faster, bigger, better, more often, etc., etc. Finally, this has led to a missing spiritual orientation in all levels of life. No wonder that in such a society there are hardly anymore taboos. The Christian religious communities which for centuries represented more-or-less the Christian religious conscience now fail almost completely. Even the admonishing words of the Pope of Rome who insists on abandonment in favour of human qualities do not reach people's ears because of their lack of understanding and their becoming addicted to materialism. It is of no use to count here all the mistakes, neglects and weaknesses of materialistic communities. Instead we want to show what a spiritual community is like. For this, first of all it is necessary to tell people what the purpose and aim of human life is in order to be able to understand why they are living at all.

The precondition for this is the acceptance of four facts which are absolutely true:

1. There is GOD, the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. 2. Man has the ability to recognize God's spirit, and to become one with it. 3. The law of karma works all the time without interruption. It is the law of balance, the law of cause and effect: "You reap as you sow." 4. Reincarnation.

1. THERE IS GOD, THE CREATOR , PRESERVER AND DESTROYER OF THE UNIVERSE

For understanding his environment, the materialistic-minded man is dependent first of all on his sensual organs. When he comes to know about things and phenomenons that were observed by others which he cannot understand with his sensual organs, then these phenomenons become already suspect for him. He not only has doubts about the apparent phenomenons, but also about the concerned person who believes them. He himself is not aware of the fact that he, the materialist, is the pitiable person, because he has no other sight of the appearance of the creation. To him/her we can only say that he/she has still a long way in front of him/her.

The entire universe, the visible and invisible, is crowded with entities. They are on different levels of evolution, spiritual, and also material. They all are dependent on God's creative power and spirit, which are above everything else. Whole creation lives according to God's spirit and is the expression of His creative power. God is spirit and those who want to know Him have to perceive Him spiritually. For this to be possible, there is religion. God creates worlds. They exist according to their destination, and are to vanish again. Everything has its time.

2. MAN HAS THE ABILITY TO KNOW GOD

Because of his constitution, a human being regardless of sex, has several centres of consciousness, which are commonly known as "chakras". In the course of his evolution, man has to strive to develop these "chakras" from bottom up to top. They are located from the coccyx at the base of the spine, up to the top of the head, and according to their character, they start from rough material at the bottom (coccyx) until they reach pure spirituality at the top (of the head). With the help of Kriya-Yoga exercises, man has the ability to activate these "chakras". This goes together with activating the "crown chakra" in order to proceed to realization of God, i.e. the spirit of God. A materialistic way of life, as practised in consumer-oriented communities, cannot go together with developing these "chakras". Practice of Kriya-Yoga is also defined as "the ability of man's union with the spirit of God". For this ability, the word religion is commonly used.

Religion and Religious Belief are not the same.

There is a fundamental difference between religion and religious belief. According to the circumstances of the time and the necessity, messengers of God like Buddha, Krishna, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed and others, taught religion to the people in those times according to their culture and understanding. It makes a difference to teach religion in an intellectual and educated society and in a primitive race of illiterates. Therefore, differences are seen in the teachings of the different messengers of God with respect to manner and contents. Yet intention and subject are the same, i.e. refining and cultivating the human mind, i.e. thinking, willing and acting. This means to aim at making the character perfect for knowing God's spirit. Let us remind ourselves of the "Sermon on the Mount" given by Jesus Christ, or the "Ten Commandments" given by Moses, or the "Koran" given by Mohammed, or the "Bhagavadgita" given by Krishna, only to mention some. The gist of them all is that they should not be discussed or interpreted by theologians who don't have their own knowledge of God. The gist of these above-mentioned revelations is meant for daily practice by everybody! Practice of religion, with respect to Kriva-Yoga, is based on very old practices so that people were able to unite their own spirit with God's spirit while exercising Kriya-Yoga with great seriousness and respect. Those entities, who are known as Avatars or Gods, are the true authorities who propagate the truth regarding the order of creation.

What is the difference between Kriya-Yoga as Religion and Religious Belief?

Not wishing to speak or write in a bad or cynical manner, the fact is: **"Believing means: Knowing nothing."** This refers also to religious belief. If one listens to official representatives of various creeds, they don't speak about religion but of religious belief. Finally, religious belief becomes a dogma by scientists, philosophers, scholars, who more-orless have read a lot and by those who simply think that they are such persons. They refer to so-called "popes of literature", they quote them, and make their personal "knowledge" finally into a dogma. When the dogma is not respected, punishment is very harsh. Many examples of this can be seen in occidental history when millions of people lost their lives. It's a very bad crime when, in the name of a power-hungry institution, other religious beliefs are persecuted and people are exterminated. Such examples can be seen in the history of many creeds. One who has real knowledge turns around when he hears hypocritical and foolish speeches by creed preachers. At many times these hypocritical preachers misused their powers to preach hatred, to make people feel stupid, and to mislead them from the real path to "**the Kingdom of Heaven**" which is within everybody, instead of showing them the path to it and to walk with them. Those who missed the right way and reached a deadlock, once again have to look

for it and go back. This can be a very painful, long and fateful journey. But there is no other way!

What is Religion and what is it good for ?

True and valid religion is oriented to the aim and purpose of human life. Man, regardless of colour, culture, or creed, is a creation of God within the whole creation. Different religious cults and practices were given by their authors according to people's corresponding spiritual development in the different cultures and times. What is good for "A" may not be good for "B". Therefore the differences. The human race is liable to the evolution of the spirit, and thus not all humans are on the same level of spiritual development. Yet the aim of this development for all people is the same: Knowledge of the Self, which means knowledge of God, that is, union of the individual spirit with that of God !

How is this possible ?

Each and every human being has a soul which is identical to the universal soul, i.e. God. It should not be mixed up with psyche or mind, which refer to behaviour and character of the individual. Now it is up to the people to acknowledge the oneness of the individual and the universal soul which culminates in the knowledge of God. All great messengers of the Almighty, yogis and mystics who experienced this, were and are still witnesses of this occurrence. This means that with oneness with God's spirit one can reach the purification of the mind and thus be free from its faults, passions and weaknesses, such as anger, greed, envy, attachment, jealousy, lust, pride, etc., etc.

To explain this very clearly:

Purification of the mind from its passions and weaknesses is the key to knowledge of the Self and knowledge of God. The FIVEFOLD PATH and the TEN COMMANDMENTS of Parama Sadguru Shree Gajanan Maharaj are the means and the pathways for reaching this goal.

3. THE LAW OF BALANCE OR THE LAW OF KARMA

The third everlasting truth and fact which has to be respected and practised in daily life in a spiritual community is that each act and activity is followed by another act or activity. It may be good or bad. A good action is followed by good results, a bad action is followed by bad results. Deciding this, is the attitude of the mind, i.e. motivation with which an action is planned and practised. In order to understand this in a deeper sense and with the aspect of effectivity, one has to understand that all activities of thinking are energetic processes which cause an imprint on the complete energetic field of man and are stored in it. All activities of thinking and acting are based on biochemical processes in the brain, in the nervous system, and also in a subtler system which is known as **"Nadi system"**, which remains even after one passes away, and where all activities are stored and come into action in another incarnation. This is also the reason why children from one set of parents can have different characters.

What are the Consequences of the Law of Karma?

The Law of Karma is the law of pay back of good or bad actions. It, so to say, praises and punishes as well. He or she who speaks, thinks and acts with good motivation, cannot earn bad results of their doings, because good energy impacting on their mind cannot react with bad outcomes and also cannot react with "outside" circumstances of life and neighbours. Sympathy, or "birds of a feather flock together", form peoples social life and Karma. This means that equal or at least similar energy fields of humans are pulled together. Those that are

different avoid each other. This is the magnetic principle. The Law of Karma basically acts according to the principle: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth". At first glimpse, this law looks very crude, but the outcomes of it can be moderated, if, to the concerned mind, good impressions, i.e. positive thoughts and feelings, are added. These kinds of thoughts and feelings can be intense repentance and different kinds of reparation. Then the principle of "an eye for an eye" is moderated or even neutralized.

The Law of Karma also works over several incarnations. This is the reason why different people have to face different situations in their lives. In this context, one has to acknowledge that certain troubles and diseases are the consequences of bad actions or ways of living in present life or in previous incarnations, and for this one has to pay. Those who wish to live a good and healthy life, now and in the future, have to avoid everything in the present life that causes bad effects in this and in the next incarnation. This is especially important for parents and their responsibility for children. Biotechnology and research on genes in order to heal diseases are useless trials that interfere with the laws of nature and the law of Karma without knowledge of the results of these trials. Here the same rule applies: **"You reap as you sow."**

Jurisdiction and education also have to correspond with the Law of Karma. Let's take the case of a murder. According to the principle of "an eye for an eye", the murderer has to be killed also, because he attracts a corresponding situation of life to balance out his crime. Normally, this happens in a further incarnation, unless his crime was expiated by penalty of death or a corresponding situation in life. He, himself, could have tempered the Law of Karma by intense repentance, change for the better, and reparation.

How about the situation regarding education, which consists of a powerful relation between educator and child? In this case, we have to relate to the child with only the well-being of the child in mind. There are children who don't react to words or corrections. The principle is: Education with heart and hand. Concerning education, there must be no feelings of revenge or any damage to the body of the child. Otherwise, the Law of Karma goes against the educator. As soon as the situation has been cleared up, it has to be forgotten. Following this, love helps to neutralize the situation. What has happened in such a case? Egotism and frustration are the main reasons for problems between parents, educators and children. A lot of energy has accumulated on both sides, which has to be neutralized. If the child is not retarded, his energy bursts out without any control because his emotions and activities are not under reasonable control. If the educator cannot work out his frustrations, sooner or later psychic illnesses will be the consequences, which finally will have negative consequences on the child, because the educator somehow wants to sustain his instinct for self-preservation. If this happens, the personality of the educator is damaged. Because of stress, crossness, and lack of motivation, the proof of these facts nowadays is very much apparent in teachers and parents. Today's societies show that children continually suffer more, educators are more burned out, and parents are more and more upset and stressed. These materialistic communities of consumers have lost all sense of proportion in favour of a sentimental humanitarianism which wants more experiences of lust, more money and power, untill finally they are unable to bear the burdens of always more, bigger, more expensive, nicer, more often, etc., etc. Children and teenagers have to be educated in the direction of respect for parents and adults, so that later on they will have an easier life. For: "With hat in hand, you will get better through the land." Parents, educators and adults also should have respect for the reincarnated former adult. Therefore, a spiritual community (society) is, in the truest sense of the word, a human one with charity and respect for its fellow-man in all cases, and is able to live comfortably.

4. REBIRTH – REINCARNATION

Reincarnation in a human body is a fact. It is necessary for a person to complete one's spiritual evolution. The aim is perfection, and oneness of man's individual spirit with God's spirit. It is easy to understand that this cannot be reached in one incarnation. According to their spiritual development from previous incarnations, people have progressed differently. Their horizon of understanding therefore develops differently. A higher or highly developed spiritual person knows from within that reincarnation is a matter of fact, and he has no doubt about this at all. With a young person in a materialistic and intellectually oriented society, it is different. If this person has reached only a relatively low stage of development, then reincarnation is not a subject at all. This person has problems with believing in reincarnation, or rejects it completely. In Christian occidental societies reincarnation is not a commonly accepted fact because it is not taught by official clergymen. It then is only a personal matter. But what immense harm has been done during the last centuries by ignoring reincarnation! It is immeasurable. If people of a society were aware of the fact that there is reincarnation in connection with transmigration of souls, how much harm and violence would have been avoided if reincarnation, in context with the Law of Karma, had been engraved in their minds? In this context, the responsible persons have burdened themselves with heavy guilt. Each injustice, be it big or small, has to be paid for. For this, often many incarnations are necessary. Worldly jurisdiction can shorten the duration or neutralize the guilt. In the past, many, many people have gone backwards in their spiritual development on account of their materialistic way of living, instead of going forward, and they have to take up the ascent again, often under great efforts. The person is like a mountaineer who, by falling down or by bad weather conditions, had to go back. Commonly, people then speak of fate, which has been caused only by the person himself and nobody else.

What are the conclusions regarding the above sayings ?

- 1. Not unbridled consumtion but a simple and modest way of life, which makes reasonable use of the environment and natural energy resources, determine the best way of life.
- 2. A person cannot be killed in the sense of being wiped out. Only his present incarnation can be finished. According to his Karma, the person will be reborn at a suitable time.
- 3. Present living conditions are determined by previous lives.
- 4. People are not allowed to manipulate the natural order. Abortion and the manipulation of genes cause very bad consequences. Diseases have to be cured by natural ways which go together with God's will so that they do not appear in a later incarnation.
- 5. Nobody can do evil to someone else because the motivation of any action is the manifestation of the mind, i.e. the character, and is therefore stored. At a suitable time, the Law of Karma comes into action. Nobody can flee his own character and his self-created fate.
- 6. To be able to survive, a society needs children, who later on have to take care of their parents' livelihood. To have children is a natural obligation of human beings. Children legitimatize the living together of man and woman in a married state of life. It is the best way of living suitable for the human race. It also creates the best preconditions for spiritual development and for living in easy circumstances because the character features can be improved better and quicker in daily life. Respect, responsibility and mutual love for the partner and the children help to reduce egotism. If parents don't have children, they still have the possibility to engage themselves in social work or to adopt children.

- 7. The person who decides to live without a family runs the risk of strengthening his egotism. The spiritual path runs from egotism to altruism.
- 8. Human sexuality is not suitable for exhibition in public. In these cases, extreme discretion is required!
- 9. With the cosmic order and human nature, God has created all preconditions for the possibility of man's spiritual development. For this, it is a must to live in, and with, nature. Happiness exists not outside but inside of man.

"Kingdom of Heaven is within the human personality"

10. Life of each and every society has to be determined by religion and not by lawyers or pressure groups. As man by nature is a religious being, he has to be able to live and to preordain his life according to his disposition.

Persons who live in a materialistic and consumer-oriented society and who are of less spiritual development will have problems understanding the above conclusions. Yet this is exactly the difference between a spiritual and a less or non-spiritual man. The spiritual man tries to strive with his best knowledge and conscience to understand his life, which is knowledge of the Self, i.e. knowledge of God.

THE PATHWAY TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

All messengers of God, who were the originators of the large world religions, have shown to their contemporaries the pathway to the Kingdom of Heaven according to the prevailing circumstances of the times and their ability of understanding. Be it the Ten Commandments given by Moses, the teachings of Lord Buddha, the Bhagavadgita given by Lord Krishna, the teachings of Jesus Christ, and the Koran, etc., etc., only to mention some. They all addressed their teachings for the human mind to overcome its passions, such as anger, envy, greed, hatred, attachment, etc., etc., and finally to find its expression in love thy neighbour and love for God. The problem in realizing this lies with the person himself, if, in addition to these passions, the mind is possessed by greed for money and power. Moreover, there are always negatively possessed people, who, at the cost of their fellow-man, utilize their craving for power. With this, they want to have a comfortable life without having in mind the consequences of their own fate, which will be worked out by the Law of Karma.

The Pathway to the Kingdom of Heaven is only possible by purifying the mind from its passions, as expressed by the Five-Points-Program of the FIVEFOLD PATH of the Vedas.

The Fivefold Path is not the way outwards to sensual desires and passions. It is also not the way to the pretended happiness which people thrive on in order tpo get their worldly desires fulfilled. Each fulfilled desire creates two more desires which bring a person into mental duress, similar to an addiction. Not being able to fulfill his material wishes and desires on account of his situation in life, the person feels unhappy. Happiness, based on material things, is unsteady and short-lived. Everlasting happiness of the mind is gained by the ability of renunciation, which is not dependent on outside circumstances. He, in addition to that, cleanses and neutralizes the negative consequences of his past and present Karma, will have no obstacles for everlasting happiness which finally leads to knowledge of the Self and will be reached with the help of God.

This is the FIVEFOLD PATH to the Kingdom of Heaven: 1. AGNIHOTRA for purification of the atmosphere and therefore the mind. 2. DAAN means sharing assets in the spirit of humility which leads to nonattachment to worldly possessions.

3. TAPA means self-discipline and purification of the mind from its passions.

4. KARMA means righteous actions without attachment to the fruits thereof.

5. SWADHYAYA means knowledge of the Self: Who am I ?

These five words are the key to the Kingdom of Heaven, which is within man. In this context, **some more remarks about Agnihotra.** Since ancient times Agnihotra is a fire ceremony which is to be practised every day at sunrise and sunset. It purifies the atmosphere from negative energy vibrations and is therefore of infinitesimal help. Atmosphere and mind are like the two sides of one and the same coin, for they interact with each other. In addition, sunrise and sunset are very intense times of the day which have a strong influence on the whole of nature and on man as well. Sunset is worst time for pathogenic bacteria in the atmosphere. Thus, Agnihotra kills this pathogenic bacteria and purifies the atmosphere. Therefore Agnihotra should be practised daily at sunrise **and** sunset.

HOW THE PATHWAY TO KINGDOM OF HEAVEN HAS TO BE WALKED ON

The pathway to the Kindom of Heaven is known to us as the Fivefold Path of the Vedas. How to walk on this pathway is told to us in the **TEN COMMANDMENTS** of Parama Sadguru Shree Gajanan Maharaj from Akkalkot/India. Like a mountain climber, who carefully takes care of his powers when climbing up to the top in order not to be forced to go back because of weakness, similarly the Fivefold Path has to be practised in a relaxed manner but with the necessary earnestness. **Therefore the TEN COMMANDMENTS**.

Commandment One: TRUTH

All activities of the mind (thinking, feeling, willing, acting) are energetic processes which are dependent on the motivation (intention) of the person. A person can do good work but, in his mind he has bad intentions which cannot be seen by others, he then is not practising truthfullness. What a person cannot do is to deceive the inner structure of the mind. For all activities, a pure mind is an essential pre-condition on the pathway to the Kingdom of Heaven. **Truth is the foremost pre-condition** on this pathway. Nobody, except oneself, is responsible for all the activities of the mind and the nature of these may be rough or subtle. Happy are they who have a pure mind, for they have reached knowledge of God.

Commandment Two: NON-VIOLENCE TO THE INNOCENT

The Law of Karma: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth", forbids causing pain unnecessary to any being. For this, two sayings are well-known: "You reap as you sow", and "What you don't wish to be done to you, don't do to your neighbour". The Law of Karma is pitiless. Nobody can escape it. Even if a person escapes worldly justice, the consequences of that law are stored in the "energy costume" of his mind. These consequences have to be balanced and neutralized at some later time. Only after this can purification of the mind be gained. If not in this life, then in another.

Commandment Three: THOU SHALT FORGIVE

The third commandment: "Thou shalt forgive" is a very essential pre-condition for overcoming karmic entanglements and guilt. By practising forgiveness, the circle of return is interrupted and peace of mind is reached. Forgiveness equally helps the one to be forgiven and the one who forgives.

Commandment Four: MAY MY MIND ALWAYS AFFIRM THE HOLY

The aim of human life is knowledge of the Self and of God. It stands to reason that in order to reach this goal everything which is concerned with the holy has to be highly respected and honoured, and that which is not, has to be avoided. To abuse or to make fun of the holy is like throwing mud on one's own mind. Therefore, one should not talk about holy things in the presence of foolish people, for the foolish will drag everything through the mud, which harms everyone! To affirm the holy is protection for oneself and for others from pollution of the mind which would be like going backwards on the pathway to the Kingdom of Heaven. The negative nature of the mind finally has to be wiped out. Therefore the fourth commandment!

Commandment Five: INCULCATE THE HABIT OF SHARING YOUR ASSETS

Attachment to material possessions is a passion of the mind which causes much grief and pain beyond words to people when their material possessions are damaged or lost by adverse circumstances. These days a lot of grief can be seen from natural disasters when people suffer so much and have lost all their belongings and their relatives. They become traumatic for the rest of their lives and are not able to live with this situation. How much easier it is for a person to live who is not attached to material belongings and is able to live with ease in another situation in life? Such a fundamental pattern of behaviour can be exercised by inculcating the habit of sharing one's assets with others.

Commandment Six: PURITY IN ACTION (SAT KARMA)

The motivation and the intention with which persons are acting are very important for purification of the mind from its passions. He who does a charitable action with a cunning intention will do nothing beneficial for himself. On the contrary! Instead of purifying the mind from negative qualities, the mind becomes soiled and is entangled more and more with negative behaviour which burdens the karmic account and makes the fate worse. The intentions of one's actions should be pure and without attachment to the fruits thereof. **The aim of one's actions is to become free from karmic bonds.** By performing good actions one is putting on golden bonds, but they are also binding.

Commandment Seven: PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR FOR THE UNFOLDMENT OF THE DIVINE

It is often quoted: "Man is a creature of habit". It is a great help for mastering one's life if habits have become a ritual. How much more difficult would life be in daily practice if one had to think about and consider each and every pattern of behavior? Remember how difficult it is for a child to learn all of the arts in life. Purification of the mind from its passions and reaching knowledge of the Self being the purpose of life, man should get used to rituals which go together with purification of the mind. For example: daily Agnihotra at sunrise and sunset, Daan, Tapa and Karma. It goes without saying that one should not get addicted to drugs. Passions which have become a habit over and over again should be checked, in order for consciousness to remain intact.

Commandment Eight: TAPA

Tapa means self-discipline, purifying of the mind from its passions, and practicing austerities. Tapa is the third point of the Fivefold Path of Vedas and is extremely important. All the problems of human life are connected with the mind's passions, such as anger, envy, greed, attachment, pride, jealousy, lust, rage, etc., etc., because these passions are responsible for the way in which a person lives in his environment. Personal problems, circumstances of life,

happiness and fate are dependent on the above mentioned passions. Therefore it is important that the person control, check and cultivate his/her mind. For this, Agnihotra is a tremendous help.

Commandment Nine: SWADHYAYA (Study of the Self: Who am I ?)

Swadhyaya is the ultimate aim and purpose of human life. Seriously and purposefully, a person has to strive for knowledge of the Self, whereby the study of the scriptures and teachings of holy and realized persons are helpful. If the aspirant is ready for knowledge of the Self, then he/she will meet a master who will help him/her on the last part of the pathway to reaching knowledge of the Self. From ancient times this is the traditional way to knowledge of the Self. It is said: "If the disciple is ripe, the master appears."

Commandment Ten: SURRENDER TO HIS WILL (KRIYA-YOGA)

The traditional definition of the **Ten Commandments** is known by Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms 2-1: "Tapa, Swadhyaya, Ishwar Pranidhani Kriya yogah". This means: "Selfdiscipline, austerities, purification, study of Self, surrender to His Will, and offering the fruits of actions to God". Kriya-Yoga is a very ancient science. Krishna refers to it in Bhagavadgita. It has been practiced throughout milleniums. Kriya means action, doing. **Therefore Kriya-Yoga is the Yoga of action. THE FIVEFOLD PATH IS KRIYA-YOGA AND, AT THE SAME TIME, PARAMA SADGURU SHREE GAJANAN MAHARAJ'S TEN COMMANDMENTS.**

The Spiritual Society is the alternative to a materialistic community of consumers In contrast to a materialistic community of consumers, a spiritual community takes care of the planet's natural energy resources and leads people to a healthy life according to God's foreseen plan of creation. In the above writings, we have given a broad outline describing not only the shape of a spiritual community, but also showing the way to reach the purpose of human life. Nobody else is responsible for one's own fate but the person himself. "Everyone is the architect of his own future" is a well-known saying. In order for people in a society to be able to strive for that happiness, each and every member of the community is also responsible. The conclusion of this is that people who are working for institutions have more responsibility to know what they have to be aware of. They are especially liable to the Law of Karma because with their activities they can interfere in the Karma of others as well as being responsible for their own Karma. God helps people in a spiritual community so that lives of all members become blissful. HE takes care of their welfare, but HE is not responsible for any guilt which people have caused by their own way of living.

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