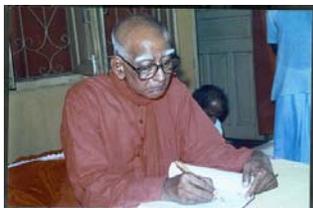


# Introduction to Harmony of All Religions

## Point of Departure©Santmat Society of North America 2006

By His Holiness Shri Santsevi Ji Maharaj



Today's scientific world is known for its swift material knowledge and progress. But with the same swiftness the great majority of people are moving away from non-material spiritual knowledge. Spiritual *knowledge* should not be confused with specific creeds and sects: we see all around us that the social fabric is being ripped apart by religious fundamentalism, religious intolerance, and narrow-mindedness. The acts of violence we see inspired by religious fanaticism could not have been committed by minds inspired with genuine spiritual knowledge. Those who cultivate the fire of hatred and prejudice in their hearts are imprisoned in the narrow cells of their religions, or what they have interpreted their religions to be. They look upon the followers of other religions with distrust and even malice. Such spite cannot be what the founders of the various great religions had intended as their gift to humanity: this hate and exclusivity is harmful not only to those they come into contact with, but it also—and to a greater degree—spoils their *own* spiritual state. Religion (*dharma*), which was given to humanity to provide a civilized path for the reformation of character in order that its adherents might reach the ultimate goal (God), has today seemingly lost track of its purpose. It is essential, in this environment of religious crisis, to underscore the similar—in the end, *identical*—underlying concepts of the various religions. By this means it is possible to bridge the ever-enlarging gulf between these different religious traditions and between their followers. This “gulf” is an imaginary difference: it is the result of sometimes superficial (exoteric) interpretations of a given religion which begin to dissolve when one investigates the tradition at a deeper (esoteric) level. When the various traditions begin to be seen as different statements or paths to the same goal, the image of religion as a provider of peace and everlasting freedom can be re-established. This book is a small effort in this direction.

### What is *dharma*?

What is religion (*dharma*)? In its broadest aspect, *dharma* means performing one's sacred duty and following the traditional ethical codes of the community in which one lives.

Far from being unnatural or contrived, *dharma* is a natural quality or trait of an individual, an inseparable part of the psyche. That deed or duty the result of which is described as the attainment of heaven is *dharma*. Noble deeds, good behavior, benevolent actions are all *dharmic*

in nature. *Dharma* is nature, an inherent good tendency, and a daily prescribed moral and social duty.

### ***Dharma as Virtue***

*The Laws of Manu*,<sup>ii</sup> has described the eightfold attributes of *dharma*: patience, forgiveness, self-control, non-stealing, purity, control of the senses, wisdom, knowledge, truth, and tranquility. In the course of time Jain<sup>iii</sup> *dharma* delineates this list of characteristics as follows: right forgiveness, right restraint, right purity, right truth, right self-control, right mortification, right renunciation, right humility, and right celibacy.

For the purpose of making *dharma* accessible to all people, Sage Manu has simplified and condensed the ten attributes of *dharma* into five ethical laws: non-violence, truth, non-stealing, purity of body and mind and control of the senses.<sup>iv</sup> These moral laws are found in all the major religions, East and West. Let us first consider the ethical laws of non-violence and truth.

### **Complexity of *Dharma* Ethics**

*The Mahabharata* (ch.11/13) says:

*Non-violence is the greatest of all laws (dharmas).*

This principle of non-violence is not only essential *dharma* for religions based on the *Vedas*, but is also considered of prime importance in other religions. Buddhism (*Dhammapada*, 17:3) and Christianity (*Bible*, Exodus 20:13; Matthew 5:5, 5:7; 5:21; 5:38-39) also require their adherents to practice non-violence just as Sage Manu did. Taking life, however, is not the only kind of violence. Also, included within this principle of non-violence is the importance of not hurting some one's mind or body. This means not doing harm to any living being. All people, in this world, agree that non violence is the greatest *dharma* principle to be followed.

But now imagine that someone is trying to take our life or rape our wife or daughter or start a fire in our house or steal our money. If we are unprotected and some evil person has a weapon, what

should we do? Should we simply ignore that evil person, or just tell him that non-violence is the most important *dharma*? And if he does not listen to us, or pay no heed to our plea, should we try to control him with whatever power we have?

Manu says:

*One should not hesitate to dispatch that evil person and we should not care if he is a guru, an old person, a child, scholar or brahmin.<sup>v</sup>*

Under such circumstances, if you kill someone, you are not considered guilty of the sin of killing, because in fact the evil person was killed by his own lawlessness. The killing of a fetus is considered a most heinous act. But if a child becomes dangerously breached in the womb and the mother's life is in danger, it is a moral imperative to sacrifice the child for the sake of the mother's life.

Non-violence, forgiveness, compassion and placidity (*śanti*) are described and prescribed as virtues in the *shastras* and sacred texts. However, it is not advised to remain resigned all the time. For instance, one must protect children from evil.

Sage Prahlad told this to his grandson, Bali:

*It is not always good to forgive; neither is it good always to be angry. Even so the scholars spoke about exceptions in forgiveness.<sup>vi</sup>*

Having addressed non-violence we should now consider the virtue of truthfulness (*satya*). In various parts of the *Mahabharata* truth is said to be “the highest of all moral acts.”<sup>vii</sup>

The *Mahabharata* says:

*If we compare the power of truth with a thousand grand sacrifices, truth will be greater.*

In the *Tatittariya Upanishad* (1/11/1) truth is given the superior place and the other sacred duties (*dharma*) are described as secondary:

*Speak Truth. Follow your moral duty.*

In the *Mahabharata* there is a story where the Grandsire Bhishma was lying on a bed of arrows before his death. He taught the essence and importance of truth, and advised Yudhishtira, the oldest son of Pandu to act only in accordance with truth. Truth indeed is the essence of *dharma*. Similarly, a great emphasis is also placed on truth in other religions such as Buddhism and Christianity.

The literal and essential meaning of truth is ‘that which always is, is permanent, is eternal, and which never lacks.’

In the *Bhagavad- Gita* Lord Krishna tells Arjuna (2:16):

*The unreal [that which does not exist] never is. The Real [that which truly exists] never ceases to be. The conclusion concerning these two is truly perceived by the seers of Truth.*

Truth is always triumphant; non-truth is conquered.<sup>viii</sup> The *shastras* constantly and rightly praise truth. We should nevertheless carefully see whether there are any exceptions to speaking the truth. Let us consider the situation where a murderer with a weapon is chasing an innocent person with the intent of killing him. If the fleeing person hides near us, should we tell the truth if the villain asks us the whereabouts of the fleeing person? Should we speak truth and contribute to that innocent person being killed, or should we speak a lie and protect the life of that man? In such an instance, speaking truth incurs the sin of violence, and telling a lie incurs the good results associated with non-violence. So we see that there are exceptions—which are only apparent exceptions—to telling the truth. Again, let us consider that a certain child is sick and the doctor has advised that child to stay away from certain foods. The child, of course, does not understand and desires to continue eating the same foods. By eating the same foods, the child’s sickness will increase. The mother tells the child the particular food is not in the house, and that she will give it to him when she goes to the market. In this case, the mother’s false speech protects the life of the child. Here again we have a paradoxical example: a non-truth fulfills the law of non-violence (*ahimsa*, literally, non-harming).

Compare this to the following reference from the *Bible*:

*The letter [of the law or dharma] brings death; but the spirit [of dharma] gives life. (2 Corinthians 3:6).*

One must be careful not to commit a crime simply to obey an outward rule.

### **Non-Static Laws of *Dharma***

What is one’s *dharma* in reality? The laws of *dharma* are not static. They depend on the circumstances, culture, the time period and the upbringing of the person. In other words, culture specific values are involved. In the actual, experience of life, there are many occasions when untruth instead of truth is the appropriate behavior or *dharma*. It happens sometimes that violence instead of nonviolence will protect a life, and this will then be the appropriate behavior (*dharma*).

In the *Mahabharata* it is said that to protect a family, an individual family member may be sacrificed; to protect a village a family may be sacrificed; and to protect a country, an entire village may be sacrificed. But to protect one's own soul (*atman*), the whole world should be sacrificed (forsaken). [The same principle is stated in Christian scriptures. *The Bible*: Mark 8:36-37].

The *Bhagavad-Gita* underscores the need for doing one's own duty:

*Better is one's own duty (dharma) performed imperfectly than the duty (dharma) of another performed perfectly. It is better to die performing one's own duty (dharma), for it is dangerous to follow the duty (dharma) of another (3:35)*

Paradoxically, in the *Gita* it is also said:

*Abandon all dharmas; come to Me alone for refuge. Do not grieve, for I will release you from all evils. (18:66).*

When compared, these two quotes from Krishna seem contradictory in nature to most people. They are forced to think: "Is it good to sacrifice our own self for our *dharma* or should we abandon our *dharma* and take refuge only in God?" In such a difficult situation, man becomes frozen into inaction. [We have seen an example of this in the story at the beginning of the *Gita* where Arjuna becomes immobilized by his dilemma.]

When confronted with these seeming contradictions, we begin to experience ourselves, that the path of "*dharma is subtle,*"<sup>ix</sup> and that "*it is unfathomable and too difficult*"<sup>x</sup> for us to comprehend. Therefore, to understand the subtle secrets of *dharma*, we need a Sat Guru (genuine, true, and authentic spiritual teacher) to guide us in the difficult moments [as Lord Krishna guided Arjuna in the time of his dilemma.].

Lord Krishna guides Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

*Learn that by humble reverence, by inquiry and by service, the wise who have seen the truth will instruct you in knowledge ( 4: 34).*

### **Various Definitions of *Dharma*: *Dharma* as Inherent Nature**

Another meaning of *dharma* in addition to 'virtue' and 'law' is 'quality,' 'inner essence,' or 'nature.' We cannot separate the inherent quality from the possessor of that quality. If we were to separate the quality from its possessor, the one who possessed it would no longer live. For example, the nature of fire is heat or burning and the nature of ice is cold. Each sense organ also possesses one particular quality. The nature of the eye is to help one see. The nature or quality of

the ear is to help one hear. The quality of the skin is the sense of touch; the quality of the tongue is taste; and the quality of the nose is smell. *Atman* (the very nature of the inner self) also has its particular quality: spiritually ascending movement.

### ***Dharma as Religion***

Another translation of the Sanskrit word *dharma* is religion. In Arabic this is called *majhab*, and in English it is called religion; in Sanskrit it is called *dharma*. The English word “religion” is derived from the Latin language: the prefix *re-* means “back” or “again” and the root *lig* means “to bind.” Religion, binds us back to our source, to unite us with God and other human beings (Similarly, we find that the Sanskrit word *yoga*, meaning path or method of union, is related to the English word “yoke”). Santmat (the path and teachings as taught and practiced by saints) delineates the path of union of soul with the Divine. The teachings of the saints explain the reuniting in the following ways:

#### **Returning to the Source through Inner Journey is Our *Dharma* (Natural Tendency)**

The individual soul has descended from the higher worlds [the Realm of the Divine] to this city of illusion, bodily existence. It has descended from the Soundless state to the essence of Sound, from that Sound to Light, and finally from the realm of Light to the realm of Darkness. The qualities (*dharmas, natural tendencies*) of the sense organs draw us downward and away from our true nature. The nature of the soul (*atman*) draws us upwards and inwards and establishes us in our own true nature.

To go back to our origins means returning: withdrawal from the sense organs in order to go upward (by withdrawing consciousness) from the darkness to the realms of light and sound, in other words, to go inward from the external sense organs to the depth of the inner self. (Both of these expressions are exact special metaphors that signify the same movement). The natural tendencies of the soul (*atman*) are to move from outward to inward. The current of consciousness which is dispersed in the nine gates of the body and the nine senses, must be collected at the tenth gate. The tenth gate is the gathering point of consciousness therein lies the path for our return. It is also known as the sixth *charka*, the third eye, *bindu*, the center located between the two eyebrows. This is the act by which we leave the gates of the sense organs and become established in the soul. We travel back from the Realm of Darkness to the Realm of Light, from

the Light to the Divine Sound, and from the Realm of Sound to the Soundless state. This is called turning *back* to the Source.<sup>xi</sup> This is what *dharma* or religion really intends to teach us. This is the essence of *dharma*.

Many thousand years ago when Krishna was teaching Arjuna, there existed only the *Vedic dharma*<sup>xii</sup>. Christianity, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism and the other religious paradigms did not yet exist in any culture. There was only one *dharma* (religion) for all. There was not a question of “my *dharma*” as opposed to “your *dharma*” [here the word *dharma* is used in the sense of religion]. Yet Krishna teaches to follow one’s “own *dharma*.” Here the word *dharma* does not imply the term religion, but rather, is referring to one’s own inherent tendencies, the inner nature. In reality, the *dharma* of our senses is not really our own *dharma* because following the cravings of the senses only satisfies the nature of the sensory organs. Our optimal *dharma* is to follow the *dharma* of the soul (*atman*) by turning inward and returning to the source. Krishna advises Arjuna to leave the sense- *dharma* and seek instead the *dharma* of *atman*, which truly concerns our spiritual progress. Thereby, one becomes established in one’s own nature.

The ideas concerning turning back to our own source are not the invention of the author of this book, but are to be found in the teachings of the saints and sages. Here are some quotes from the various saints and sages who refer to the idea of turning back:

Sant Kabir says:

*By withdrawing (from the sense organs) and becoming absorbed in one’s own self the infinite light dawns and manifests...*

*Turn inward and move forward by gathering your dispersed mind...*

*When the water of a vessel (individual soul) merges back into the river (God) then we call this the state of supreme wisdom....*

Guru Nanak Dev says:

*[Beholding] the inverted lotus which is full of nectar [indicating the joyous experiences within], now my mind goes not elsewhere.*

Sant Gulal Sahab says:

*Go inward and see the light permeating within...*

Sant Tulsi Sahab says:

*Looking inward go inward and see the light permeating within...Lo- by closing the eyes, and behold the burst of light....*

Saint Dadudyal Ji says:

*O benevolent one! Enter in your inner self, and search. He [God] is very near to you. Abandon all your worldly desires and distractions. By inverting your immature consciousness current (which tends to get distracted by senses) get established, in the self [within]...*

Sant Paltu Sahib says:

*There is an upside down well within and there one finds the burning flame of life.....*

Goswami Tulsi Das Ji says:

*While the world thought that Valmiki<sup>xiii</sup> was reciting the name of Lord Ram backwards, he became like Brahman. Understand the power of Name. The great poet Valmiki became purified even by reciting Ram's name backward.*

### **The Inner Journey Involves Reversing the Consciousness Current**

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the great Sage Maharishi Mehi compared the ascending of consciousness to a fish swimming upstream. The mind must go inward, which is the reverse of its usual and easy outward path. Just as the fish struggles against the current, so an equal effort must be made to go against the current of the mind. By going inward against the current of the mind, one will experience the divine joy.

In the words of Shri Maharishi Mehi:

*The stream of celestial nectar is flowing from the subtle canal of the sushumna nerve. Like a fish the consciousness current is moving upstream".<sup>xiv</sup> Like a fish making its way upstream, the mind with consciousness must be recollected in concentration. (This will seem to the mind a difficult and "unnatural" course!)*

But how exactly is this concentration accomplished? [It is accomplished by going within with intense focus.] To understand this, we must illustrate examples from the physical substances. Whenever a physical substance is gathered in one place, as it becomes concentrated, [as it is gathered in a pile] it moves upward, whether the substance is a solid, a liquid, or a gas. The more subtle substance is more pervasive, its movement is faster, and it is capable of moving higher: water is more subtle than ice, steam than water, and electric current or lightning is even subtler than steam.

The mind is inconceivably more subtle and faster than even the speed of light. Physicists have told us that the speed of light is 186,000 miles per second. We can see light, but one does not see

the mind. This is something to ponder: How fast can the mind travel when it is collected and concentrated instead of being spread and dispersed in the external world? Now consider that consciousness is even more subtle than the mind and permeates it just as radio waves travel through physical objects. When collected, consciousness is of unimaginable speed. This is the force of the soul which is capable of reaching God.

### **The Methods for Returning to the Divine Source**

As butter permeates milk, so consciousness permeates the mind. When the mind becomes concentrated so does the current of consciousness which permeates one's body and mind. Therefore, the Saints have taught us ways to withdraw and concentrate the mind within. Maharishi Mehi elaborates on this in the *Philosophy of Liberation*. The following references are particularly worth studying:

In whatever realm of this universe one lives, it is natural to get the support from the predominate element of that realm.<sup>xv</sup> Therefore, one who is dwelling in the physical realm will naturally take support from material elements (methods utilizing sensory elements).<sup>xvi</sup> To begin to concentrate the mind, one should make use of *Mānas japa* (mental repetition of the spoken name of God), and *Mānas dhyāna* (focusing on a physical manifested form of God). God permeates all realms of nature and the entire universe. The saints, prophets, sages, all radiant and all benevolent beings are myriad physical manifestations of the Divine Powers on earth. Fixing their image in the mind (*Mānas dhyāna*; focus on a divine form) facilitates concentration of the mind and prepares it to enter into the inner subtle realms. In order to enter into the subtle realms, one must take support of the subtle element. One should therefore, practice taking support of the subtle (non-material) element. Subtle support is “the infinitesimal point”. This point is visualized in the middle of two eye-brows. The infinitesimal point is also known as the subtlest of the subtle forms of God. *Bindu* (point) is defined as an indivisible point. It is too minute to be drawn or indicated in any physical way. *Driṣṭi yoga*, the yoga of vision is concentration on (literally “seeing”) this infinitesimal point. *Driṣṭi* is the power of seeing. By uniting the beams of vision of both eyes, and focusing on a single point in the center and concentrating the mind on that point single pointedness is attained. This is known as *Driṣṭi Yoga*. In this practice it is advised neither to focus forcefully nor manipulate the eyeballs in any manner. The saints teach specifics of this *yogic technique*. By this practice the inner divine vision is opened. This is beyond the sensory dimension of seeing. When the state of one-pointedness (complete focus) of mind is attained, it is possible to listen to the divine inner sounds which arise from the juncture of the material and

subtle realms. These celestial sounds are not audible to the sensory ears. When the subtle state is reached, it becomes possible to perceive the divine sounds of the subtle realm. Now this sound has the inherent quality of attracting the consciousness to its point of origin. Once that sound is perceived, consciousness is drawn to the sounds of each successive and ascending realm until consciousness reaches the soundless realm. This is the realm of God (*shbadatita*). To achieve this, service to and association with a Sat Guru, as well as his grace and blessings, are essential. The practitioner must also be diligent in practice. The path described above can be summarized in the following manner. The four practices are gross to subtle in an ascending order: *Mānas japa*, *Mānas dhyāna*, *Dirśti yoga*, *Nadanusandhana* (Sound *yoga*), and the Soundless *yoga*. The practice of *Mānas japa* (*mantra*) and *Mānas dhyāna* is the worship of the physical, qualified (personal) form of God (God perceived in various manifestations of name and form in the gross realm); the practice of the meditation on the infinitesimally small point is the worship of the subtle qualified form of God (God perceived as the infinitesimal point); concentration on divine sounds (other than *Sār Śabad*, the Divine Sound of the beginning, Word, Logos) is the worship of the qualified formless Divine. And, finally, meditation on the *Sār Śabad* (the Original Divine Sound) is worship of the Unqualified-Formless (the transcendent Godhead). This is the culmination of all forms of worship. But without completely mastering all these practices and treading the inward journey, it will be impossible to reach the Soundless state (the realization of the Impersonal form of the Divine). This is the Realm of God and the attainment of *mokśa*. This is the state of liberation, a state of absolute peace.

### **Understanding the Twofold Nature of the Divine and the Material Substance**

What do *qualified* and *unqualified* mean when applied to God? The *Prashna Upanishad* states that in the beginning God created *prana*, that is, *Hiranyagarba*. This is known as the world egg or primal matter [germ from which the perishable beings take place]<sup>xvii</sup>. That Divine Essence is beyond any distinctions and is without qualities (*gunas*).<sup>xviii</sup>

The *gunas* exist only in the *manifested* universe. The essential being of God is beyond these three qualities.<sup>xix</sup> God (*Brahman*), the Primal Being, is Unqualified (*Nirguna Brahman*); the secondary (personal) Being (*Saguna Brahman*) is qualified.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* says:

*There are two beings (purushas) in this world, the perishable and the imperishable. The perishable is all these existences (comprises all creatures), and the unchanging (jivātman) is the imperishable. But other than these, the Highest Spirit is known as the*

*Supreme Self (paramatman) who, as the Undying Lord, enters the three worlds and sustains them (15:16-17).*

The Highest Spirit is the most distinct from the two beings (*purushas*). *Prakriti* (Nature, Material substance) in its primal state is congruous. In this primal state, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* stay in perfect balance. They represent three distinct actions: Creation, sustenance, and destruction. These three, the cosmic attributes or the *gunas* are represented by three manifestation of the Personal God (manifested God): Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Sustainer, and Shiva the Destroyer.

Sant Kabir says,

*The infinite impersonal supreme God is a tree. The three Lords (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva) are the branches of that tree, and the leaves sprouting from the branches are the world*

Just as the three *gunas* arose from the Creator; and just as the world arose from the *gunas*; so from one absolute *Dharma* (the Absolute Truth; the Way), a kind of proto-religion which exists at the very basis of creation, there arose three separate *dharmas*, Sanatana Dharma (Vedic)<sup>xx</sup>, Judeo-Christian, and Islam, the three most prevalent religions in the world. These three *dharmas*, though they may seem divergent in various external ways, are related in the same way as the leaves of a tree which arise from and are nourished by the same source.

The Holy *Koran* sheds light on the ultimate unity of the Truth:

*In the beginning all people were of one community. Later people created different convictions and paths” (Koran 11.10). And “in the beginning people were on one Path (Koran 2.2).*

*Sanatana Dharma* is oldest of the major *dharmas*, followed by the Judeo-Christian, and finally Islamic *dharmas*. Due to differences of geography, culture, and language, these three religions appear different, but in fact, they are leaves on one tree. The belief in the unity of God is the great theme of the major religions.

As the *Rig Veda* says:

*Truth is one; sages speak of it in different ways.*

The teachings of all *dharmas*, Vedic, Judeo-Christian, Islamic, as well as of the texts of the saints, great religious scholars and poets, emphasize this fundamental oneness of Truth.

In the *Katha Upanishad* Yama explains this mystery to Nachiketas:

*As the one air has entered the world and becomes varied in form corresponding to the shape of the form of every object, so the one Inner Soul of all things becomes varied according to whatever form, and also exists outside (5/13).*

The Divine Essence permeates all beings yet transcends them.

Shri Ram teaches this to Hanumanji:

*Oh, son of the Wind! Without sound, without touch, without form, without taste, without smell, and without name or caste, as the destroyer of all misery—this form of mine you should meditate on always (Muktikopanishad, 72).*

Lord Krishna, in the *Bhagavad -Gita*, advises Arjuna to meditate upon his form beyond the perishable and imperishable, which is Absolute and One. The Koran is also filled with references to the unity of God. And the Lord's prayer, the most common prayer of Christianity, addresses God as *our* Father, the Father common to us all.<sup>xxi</sup> The following are the quotes from different saints which only reaffirm the oneness of God:

Sant Kabir Sahib says:

*My great Lord is one; I dare not say two. If I say two, this pleases not my Lord.*

Guru Nanak Dev says:

*There is only one Lord, the great Lord. By seeing His unity one is blessed with all treasures.*

Sant Dadudyal says:

*I found the beginning and the end within [my heart] and now this mind does not go elsewhere. Now Dadu is colored in the color of the One and is absorbed in that One.*

Sant Sundar Das says:

*One God resides in the heart of each and every person. Why don't you meditate on that one God? That God helps you overcome misery. Why do you forget that Lord? Four kinds of wealth are with him, eight kinds of siddhis (attainments), and nine kinds of treasure can be obtained from Him. People who pray to any other than this great God have mouths full of dust [wasting away lives], warns Sundar.*

Goswami Tulsidas says:

*The One [Supreme Being] is unspoken, without form, without name, without birth, the abode of knowledge and bliss.*

Sant Surdas says:

*If the mind wants to find God, it should leave the outward trappings of texts and external worship. Abandon texts and ceremonies; and be truthful in thoughts, words, and deeds! Then one will see the true Lord within one's own self.*

### **Unifying Principles in the Spiritual Path**

*Vedic dharma* has its temples, Christianity its churches, and Islam its mosques. But the real temple is the heart. God is attained within: the path to God lies within one's own self, as all the

saints have taught this with unanimity. The inner path begins in *Sushumana, ajana chakra* (a place between two eyebrows).

One Faqir has said:

*O aspirant! Why are you wandering aimlessly outward (in the mosques, churches, and temples)? The path lies within, begins in sushumna, for meeting with the beloved (Lord.)*

Furthermore,

*The deluded one does not understand that, although Mohammed is manifested and seen, Allah is unseen.*

Sant Maharishi Mehi says:

*Look for and search for God within yourself, within your own body. God resides in your heart—look for Him there. The white point shines straight ahead and twinkles. You must concentrate in sushumna by leaving the restlessness of the mind behind. Where the subtle sounds vibrate in the ajna chakra, stay and make your dwelling. The door is subtle and sushumna is the point or window. With great effort, you can go through.*

### **In Reference to the Inner Spiritual Practice**

The inner spiritual practices of the major *dharmas* or religions, though seemingly diverse, have the same purpose and goal. *Japa* and *dhyāna* exist in Christianity and Islam as well as Santmat founded in the Vedic *dharma*. In Islam they are known as *zikar* and *fikar*; in Christianity they are known as chanting and meditating. The beginning of *dhyāna* pertains to the physical form of the object of worship. The Sufis meditate on the form of their spiritual teacher (*murshid*) and forget their bodies, just as Sutikshna Muni became unaware of his body while meditating on Shri Ram as told in a story of Ramayana. By meditating, both become absorbed in their guru.

The practices similar to *Driṣṭi yoga* and the *yoga* of Sound are described in the Sufi tradition, where they are known as *saglenasira* and *sultanulajakar*. Through these practices the sufi attains the divine states and ultimately merges in Allaha. Christian and Jewish mystics speak of experience the References to experiencing the divine glory and divine sound as well.

The experience of Divine Light and Divine Sound are the arms of God which embrace the aspirant who practices them, as a child is embraced by the two arms of his father.

Lighting oil lamps in the temples, churches, and mosques, ringing bells, singing, praying out loud to extend our voice to God—these are all symbols of the inner experiences of divine light and sound.

Throughout this book, references to *Mānas japa*, *Mana*, *dhyāna* and *Driṣṭi sadhana* and *Nadanusandhan* (Sound *yoga*) are given. In general, all sacred traditions have these four practices, differently named, differently emphasized, perhaps, but still present. This progression of practices is a clearly marked path to God and is open to all—it does not discriminate among people of different races, religions, or sex (male or female).

The water of the ocean rises up in mist to form clouds. Then the clouds rain on the tops of the mountains, but it cannot stand still there. It rolls down into small rivers, which merge with large rivers, and finally makes its way back to the ocean. Then the water is no longer known as “river” it becomes the ocean. In the same way, the individual soul, having separated from God, wanders through 8,400,000 forms of life<sup>xxii</sup>. Once the soul has received true instruction from a genuine teacher, and practices the four forms of meditation diligently, it finally realizes God and becomes one with Him. The cycle of birth and death then comes to an end.

Goswami Tulsidas says:

*As the water of a river merges with the ocean and becomes one with it, so the individual [in God] leaves the cycle of birth and death.*

Santmat teaches and spreads this knowledge of how one can find and merge with God. This tradition is not based on any one particular saint. Santmat is an ocean, a universal tradition. In the ocean many different rivers are merged. In the same way, the voices of all the saints become one voice.

Goswami Tulsidas says,

*Santmat is the unified way of all saints. It is devoid of discrimination and supported by the Vedas, Puranas, and sacred texts.*

Caste and class do not exist in Santmat. In it Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Bahai’s are all brothers and sisters. Santmat understands the world to be one family and therefore, Santmat unifies and harmonizes all spiritual traditions. It is hoped that by reading this book, the reader will reach the conclusion: Within the various religious traditions of the world there exists the one essential Truth and similar essential practices. The

various *dharmas* are in essence one *Dharma*, and the path for anyone who wishes to reach God is one.

---

<sup>i</sup> The Sanskrit word *dharma* means “sustaining principle.” The word *dharma*, often translated as *religion* in this book, is used by Santsevi Ji throughout this work. *Dharma* has no one meaning in English. It means “sacred duty,” “the principle or law that orders the universe,” “Truth,” *dharma* is both the path and the Goal. Religion, considered as *dharma*, is the path (conduct and teachings) which puts one in conformity with the true—and usually unseen—reality. *Dharma* is what makes one fit to have a vision of the Ultimate Reality.

<sup>ii</sup> “The *Laws of Manu*” is the English designation commonly applied to the *Manava Dharma-sastra*, a Sanskrit compendium of ancient sacred laws and customs held in the highest reverence by the orthodox adherents of the Vedic *Dharma*.

<sup>iii</sup> Jainism was originated in India. The main doctrine of Jainism is non-violence.

<sup>iv</sup> “*Ahimsa satyamsteyam śouchamindriya nigraha.*” From the *Laws of Manu* (10/63)

<sup>v</sup> *Laws of Manu*, 8/350 [Generally speaking, it is a heinous act to harm a guru and a brahmin, but in confronting evil Manu does not make any exceptions.]

<sup>vi</sup> *Mahabharata, Vana Parva*, 28.6.7

<sup>vii</sup> *Mahabharata, śhanti Parva*, 162/164

<sup>viii</sup> “*satyameva jayate nānratama.*”

<sup>ix</sup> “*sukshmāgatirīhi dharmasya*”

<sup>x</sup> “Truth of *dharma* lies hidden in cave [of the heart]”

<sup>xi</sup> It is interesting to note that the mystical traditions of medieval Judaism, *Kabbalah*, are based on the metaphor of *Teshuvah*, the return.

<sup>xii</sup> *Vedic Dharma or Santana Dharma*, generally referred to as Hinduism is considered to be the most ancient of all religions. By definition it is timeless and has no beginning in history.

<sup>xiii</sup> Sage Valmiki had been a criminal when he was approached by the great sage Vyasa. Vyasa asked Valmiki to repeat the name of *Ram* (a name of God). However, Valmiki was of a criminal mind and refused to speak God’s name. Vyasa therefore told him to repeat it backwards (MRA), which Valmiki agreed to do. *Ram* when recited backward becomes *Ram* again. Valmiki continued this repetition until he became radiant with spiritual power. He then wrote the great epic *Ramayana*.

<sup>xiv</sup> The *sushmna* nectar spoken of here is the divine nectar which is experienced by going inward. The experience is one of intense bliss and happiness.

<sup>xv</sup> Shri Santsevi Ji uses the word “realm” to describe the various planes of existence. The gross realm is the everyday world that we live in while a subtler realm would be what is called an astral world by the west. The heavenly regions would be yet another realm. These realms are experienced within in the states of deep meditation.

<sup>xvi</sup> Gross element here refers to elements of the mind and its relation to the senses.

<sup>xvii</sup> The *Bhagavad-Gita* with the Commentary of Sri Shankaracharya, p. 410.

<sup>xviii</sup> From the inchoate state (*Hiranyagarbha*; golden egg; the womb of all manifested creation) emerged the three *gunas*, or qualities. [In traditional Hindu cosmology, there are three *gunas*: *sattva* (lucidity), *rajas* (active), and *tamas* (passive or dark inertia). On one hand, these *gunas* represent the principles of physics, in that every material object, however fine, is the result of a certain combination and “crystallization” of these three qualities. On the other hand, the *gunas* are the language of metaphysics in that these qualities are also principles of “activity,” that is, human states and principles of world creation can also be articulated by means of the *gunas*. Everything that results from the combination of these *gunas* is what is meant by the term “qualified.” That which is beyond the *gunas* is unqualified. This is comprised of that which exists before the *gunas*, both in time in priority.

<sup>xix</sup> “The sun does not illuminate that (the eternal state of the Supreme Spirit), nor the moon nor fire. That is My supreme abode from which those who reach it never return” (The *Bhagavad-Gita* 15:6).

<sup>xx</sup> The essential Truth, Santana Dharma is the foundations of the religions born in India: Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism

<sup>xxi</sup> The prayer Jesus spoke was modeled after the central prayer of ancient Judaism (the *Shema*): Hear! O Israel. The Lord Our God, the Lord is One. “*Adonai Eloheynu*” is Our God in Hebrew.

<sup>xxii</sup> According to the texts of Hinduism the soul wanders through the cycle of 840,000 life forms before attaining a human birth.