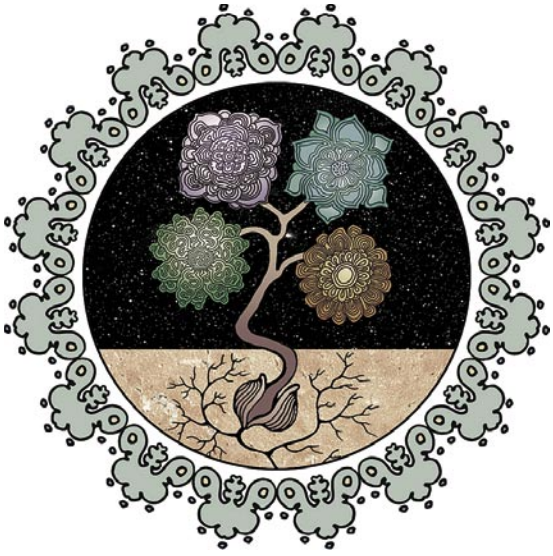
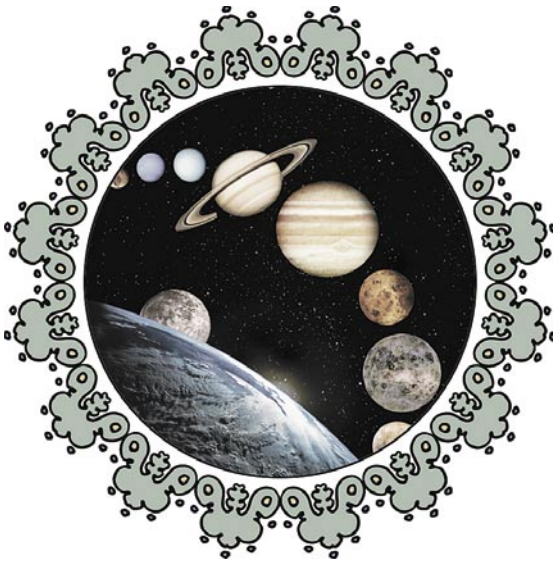


Four Dharmas



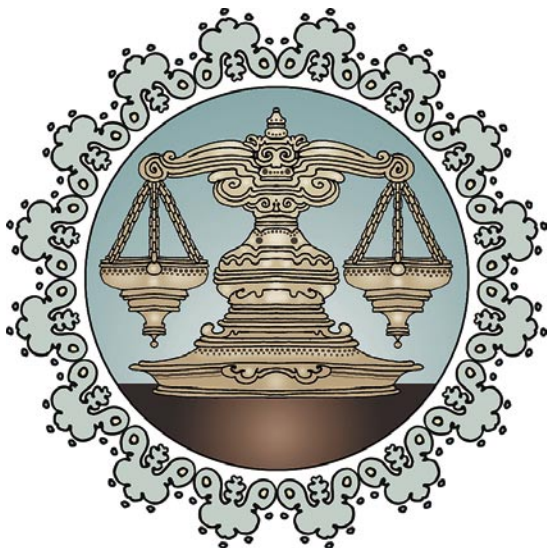
What Is Dharma? What Are Its Forms?

Sloka 56: *Dharma* is the natural order of things, the divine law of life. It is the fulfillment of our highest nature and destiny. *Dharma* has four main divisions: universal, human, social and personal.



What Is the Nature of Universal Dharma?

Sloka 57: Universal law is known in the *Vedas* as *rita*. It is God's power at work in the physical world. It is the infinite intelligence or consciousness in nature, in atoms, in galaxies. It is the sustaining cosmic design and organizing force.



What Is the Nature Of Social Dharma?

Sloka 58: Social law is known as *varna dharma*. It consists of the occupation, duties and responsibilities we must fulfill as a member of our nation, community and family. Social law includes religious observances and the rules of good conduct.



What Is the Nature Of Human Dharma?

Sloka 59: Human law is called *ashrama dharma*. It is the growth and expression of the body, mind and emotions through four progressive stages of life: student, householder, elder advisor and religious hermit.



What Is the Nature Of Personal Dharma?

Sloka 60: Personal law is called *svadharma*. It is our own perfect path in life. It is determined by two things: the *karmas*, good and bad, from our past lives, and our three *dharmas* of this life—universal, human and social.

Good Conduct



What Is the Meaning Of Good Conduct?

Sloka 61: Good conduct is right thought, right speech and right action. It is good deeds in harmony with divine law. Just as a staff is used to more easily climb a mountain, so must virtue be used to support us in life.



What Are Good Conduct's Four Keys?

Sloka 62: Purity, devotion, humility and charity are the four keys to good conduct. Of these, purity is the most important. We cultivate purity by thinking, speaking and doing what is good for all.



From Whom Do We Learn Good Conduct?

Sloka 63: The first teacher of good conduct is our conscience. To know what is right and what is wrong we can also turn to God, to our *satguru* and *swamis*, to scriptures and to our elders, family and trusted friends.



What Are the Ten Classical Restraints?

Sloka 64: Hinduism's restraints of conduct are contained in ten simple rules called *yamas*. When we follow them, we control our instinctive forces and reveal the beautiful qualities of our soul.



What Are the Ten Classical Observances

Sloka 65: Hinduism's religious guidelines are contained in ten short rules called *niyamas*. These are the key spiritual practices and soul qualities that we strive to perfect every day of our lives.

Noninjury



What Is the Great Virtue Called Ahimsa?

Sloka 66: *Ahimsa* means noninjury. It is the most important virtue in Hinduism. It is gentleness and nonviolence, whether physical, mental or emotional. It is not causing hurt or harm to all beings.



What Is the Inner Source of Noninjury?

Sloka 67: Two beliefs give us reasons to practice noninjury. The first is the law of *karma*. Any harm that we cause will always come back to us. The second is that God exists in all people and things.



What Is the Inner Source of Violence?

Sloka 68: Violence is an expression of the lower, instinctive nature, of fear, anger, greed, jealousy and hate. This is the world of separateness and opposites, like good and bad, winners and losers, mine and yours.



Is Vegetarianism Part of Noninjury?

Sloka 69: Hindus teach vegetarianism as a way to live so that we don't hurt other beings. When we consume meat, fish, fowl or eggs, we are participating indirectly in acts of cruelty and violence against the animal kingdom.



How Can Peace on Earth Be Achieved?

Sloka 70: Peace is an expression of spiritual consciousness. It begins within each person and extends to the home, neighborhood, nation and beyond. It comes when the higher nature takes charge of the lower nature.

Husband and Wife



What Is the Central Purpose of Marriage?

Sloka 71: The two purposes of marriage are: the mutual support, both spiritual and material, of man and wife; and bringing children into the world. Marriage is a religious union, a human contract and a social, lawful custom.



What Are the Duties Of the Husband?

Sloka 72: It is the husband's duty to protect and provide for his wife and children. He, as head of the family, *grihesvara*, is responsible for its spiritual, economic, physical, mental and emotional security, his *purusha dharma*.



What Are the Duties Of the Wife?

Sloka 73: It is the wife's duty to give birth to the children and raise them. She is the homemaker, standing beside her husband as the mother and educator of their children. She is the home's silent leader, *grihini*. This is called *stri dharma*.



What Is the Hindu View of Sexuality?

Sloka 74: The purpose of sexual union is to express love and to draw husband and wife together to conceive children. Hinduism does not make firm rules about sexual matters, but it does give general guidelines.



What Is the Relation Of Sex to Marriage ?

Sloka 75: It is not wise to have sexual intercourse outside marriage. Marriages that are free of prior relationships are the truest and strongest. They seldom end in separation or divorce.

Marriage



What Is the Basis for a Happy Marriage?

Sloka 76: A happy marriage is based on a mature love, not a romantic ideal of love. It requires selflessness and constant attention. A successful marriage is one which both partners work at making successful.



Must We Marry Within Our Religion?

Sloka 77: Tradition requires that the wife adopt the religion and lifestyle of her husband. Thus, Hindu women who want to continue their family culture and religion will marry a spouse of the same sect and lineage.



How Are Hindu Marriages Arranged?

Sloka 78: Marriage is not only a union between a boy and a girl. It is also a union between their families. Not leaving this important matter to chance, all family members participate in finding the best spouse for sons and daughters.



What Is the Hindu Family Structure?

Sloka 79: The main Hindu social unit is the joint family. This usually consists of several generations living together under the guidance of the father and mother. Each joint family is part of a greater body called the extended family.



How are Marital Problems Solved?

Sloka 80: When problems arise in marriage, Hindus study the scriptures and seek advice of family, elders and spiritual leaders. A good marriage requires that the husband be masculine and the wife be feminine.

Children



What Is the Fulfillment of a Marriage?

Sloka 81: Children are the greatest source of happiness in marriage. Householder life is rich and complete when sons and daughters are born. At this time, a marriage becomes a family, and a new generation begins.



What Are the Main Duties of Parents?

Sloka 82: The first duty of parents is to provide food, shelter and clothing and to keep their children safe and healthy. Next they must give education. This includes instruction in morality and religious life.



How Strictly Must Children Be Guided?

Sloka 83: Parents must be careful to guide their children toward virtue and protect them from bad company and influences. Parents should be strict, but never harsh or mean. They should allow their children sensible freedom in which to grow.



Should All Youths Be Urged to Marry?

Sloka 84: Most children should be encouraged to marry and be taught the skills they will need to fulfill *dharma*. Young boys destined to be monastics should be raised as their *satguru's* sons.



How Is Family Harmony Maintained?

Sloka 85: Mutual respect, love and understanding are the foundation of harmony in the Hindu family. By not fighting, arguing or criticizing, members create a spiritual environment in which all may progress.