

## Living Life Intelligently

The great discovery of the ancient *ṛṣi*-s—which is still the fundamental truth behind all the scriptures—was that One alone is. They discovered that One alone in everything around them and expressed their awe in beautiful compositions. They developed mantras to harmonize with the divine forces they saw and felt around them. Later they asked even more profound questions, and so the Upaniṣads developed from which we get the great sentences: That thou art. This Self is Brahman. I am Brahman. Thus they found this oneness not only in the world around, but as their own fundamental Self.

However, these ancient ones weren't just mystics and dreamers. They were family people, practical people. So they said that you have a life to lead. If you want to lead it wisely, you will lead it in accordance with the truth and not selfishly in defiance of the truth. What is the truth? All is One. So live a life of dharma, which is living your life in the recognition that all nature, all animals, all human beings are part of that One.

Treat all nature, animals, and human beings with that *bhāva*. Treat other human being as you would like to be treated. Treat nature so that it is possible for it to perpetuate itself because everything living in this world wants to perpetuate itself.

They discovered a purpose in it all. The purpose is for you as a human being to recognize this oneness, not to go out of this life as blind as you came in, but rather, before you leave, to know your oneness, to know your immortality. And thus they laid out a practical way of living. The first part of your life—learn these things, build your health, build a strong body. And you were born into this world through parents, so you should produce children to carry on. Get married, earn wealth as you can't expect someone else to support you. You also have certain natural desires towards the opposite sex, towards learning more, towards artist expression. Express those things, but never forget that they should only be expressed within the context that all this is One. Your only real purpose here is not to indulge in making money and having sensual pleasures, but to realize the oneness of all things and that you are That. Thus they divided life into stages—student stage, householder stage, then concentration on the Truth, a gradual weaning away from the world and, finally, a total dedication to the Truth.

We are, therefore, tremendously indebted to the ancients of this land who have passed along to us the greatest wisdom. But the greatest wisdom is only that, if we don't take advantage of it. Thus we must absorb those teachings, and most important of all, having recognized their worth, we must obey their injunctions and live our life in that light.