



Amṛta Vāṇī 1     *The Dharma Codex*

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## THE WALLS OF THE DHARMA HOUSE: SVADHARMA – THE DHARMA QUEST

*Svadharmā* concerns our unique place or calling in life and the corresponding activities. Before we review how we can find our personal *svadharmā*, I would like to remind you: You can only find your *dharma* if you go about the search with the correct motivation and attitude. Often we are influenced by contemporary consumer society that teaches us “*Wealth and fame will make you happy.*”

The approach of *dharma* is totally different, that is, happiness comes from being who you are and acting accordingly. The problem with contemporary society is that everyone thinks about accumulating instead of doing what they are meant to do. So, to tune yourself into *dharma*, you need to adopt a new value system.

Now, given we want to honestly find our personal calling, we can consider how that can be done. In general, there are two ways of acquiring knowledge about something—one is called the *āroha-panthā*, the ascending path of searching for answers by one’s own efforts and the other is the *avaroha-panthā*, the descending path of receiving knowledge from a higher source (the Lord ultimately). As the *Dāmodara līlā* teaches, both are necessary to attain realizations—our own effort and Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.

### APPROACHING SVADHARMA BY THE ĀROHA-PANTHĀ

There are many ways of finding out more about your *svadharmā* by the *āroha-method*. In our seminar, we spoke about two: scouting your talents and considering your nature with the DISC personality system.

#### A) Scouting Your Talents

Talents are God’s investment in us. They come from above; gifts given to us at birth that indicate where our *svadharmā* could lie. A talent is something you are naturally good at doing without much effort and something you like doing. Also, with the talent comes the

desire to express it. A talent is something we cannot imagine not doing. In addition, *svadharmā* is always something that corresponds to your conscience—your inner moral compass. Thus, only a way of utilizing your talents that doesn’t alarm your conscience can be *svadharmā*. These three questions can help you approach your *svadharmā*:

- 1) What do I like to do?
- 2) What is relatively easy for me to do?
- 3) Does my conscience approve?

### EXERCISE

Remember the two intersecting circles we drew in the seminar to answer the first two questions? In the first circle you wrote down activities you like doing. In the second circle you wrote what is easy for you or what you are good at. What activities were in the intersecting area of the circles for you? Does your conscience approve? Have any more ideas come up after the seminar? Have you noticed other activities that lie in that intersecting area? Are you using your main talents in Kṛṣṇa’s service? If not, what could you do to utilize them more?

While generally *svadharmā* is something that we take pleasure in doing, not *all* aspects of putting it into practice will necessarily be pleasurable and easy. A mother, for example, may greatly enjoy raising her children, but not have a liking for changing nappies. It is important not to shy away from your *dharma* out of fear of the austerity and perseverance that pursuing a goal demands. If you find some laziness or fear of effort in your heart that is keeping you from acting according to your *dharma*, put it aside! The happiness of laziness can never compare to the happiness of following *dharma*.

## B) Considering Your Nature with the DISC personality system

It is so important to be engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service according to one's nature. If we try offering a service that goes against our nature, it will feel like swimming in a river upstream. The DISC system is a simple-to-use system whereby you can quickly understand the nature of an individual and their certain tendencies, which include natural strengths and character weaknesses, what motivates them, how to communicate with them, their responses to stress and what they will be naturally skilled at doing. You can use it to find out more about yourself and your mentees.

The Vedic teachings mention that everyone sees the world from their own perspective. We don't see the world how it is—we see it how we are. We tend to therefore be impersonal in assuming others are like we are. But, even in the conditioned state there is variety

and difference. "Personism" means to recognize and appreciate that variety and to ultimately engage our differences in the Lord's service. This tool called the DISC system is one way in which one can engage one's conditioned nature by understanding what that nature is and how it can be used as an instrument in service to Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission.

To understand a person's nature using this model we simply have to ask them if they are outgoing or reserved, take note of the answer, and then find out if they are task or people oriented. This puts them into one of four quadrants: D stands for dominant, I for Inspirational, S for Supportive and C for Cautious. Of course, this system is not meant to be an exact description of every person. However, it does give us a good place to start. Each personality type is explained in brief in the personality grid:

