

LIVING VALUES

A GUIDEBOOK



*"To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights,
in the dignity and worth of the human person . . ."*

Preamble, Charter of the United Nations



A publication of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University
in Honor of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations

LIVING VALUES

A Guidebook

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PREFACE

Dadi Janki,
Co-Administrative Head,
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At a time of crisis, we are again at a point of recognizing the need for values. An orphaned child feels insecure, unloved, and unwanted; one without a life of values feels the same. Values are our “parents” — the human soul is nurtured by the values it holds. A sense of security and comfort comes through values in one’s life.

Values are the treasure of life, making humans wealthy and rich. Values are friends, bringing happiness in life. A life filled with values is a life of self-respect and dignity. The soul is able to come closer to God, and life becomes real and meaningful. Values bring independence and freedom, expand the capacity to be self-sufficient, and liberate one from external influences. The soul develops the ability to discern truth and to follow the path of truth.

Values offer protection, and one who experiences this is able to share this protection with others. Values bring empowerment, and it becomes possible to remove weaknesses and defects. As the innate goodness of the individual is concentrated on values, the link with God becomes strong and clear. Service is then rendered to others through thoughts, words, and actions. A soul with values is not trapped by any limited desires or attractions, but remains stable in the unlimited.

Values open the heart and transform human nature so that life is filled with compassion and humility.

As we develop values within the self, we share the fragrance of those values with the world around us, and in this way move forward to a better world.

FOREWORD

Historical Perspective

The Right Honorable Lord Ennals,
House of Lords, London, England,
Co-Chairperson of Global Cooperation for a Better World, and
Member of the Secretary-General's Advisory Committee on the UN50

This year, throughout the world, we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations (UN50). The UN Charter — drafted while World War II was still being waged on land, sea, and air in Europe and the Far East — was signed on June 26, 1945, in San Francisco. That was the first birthday. The second was on October 24, 1945, when enough states had ratified the Charter for it to be a legally binding treaty. On that day, 30 nations had ratified.

The third birthday was on January 10, 1946, when the first meeting of the UN General Assembly met in the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, London. I was proud to have been present as an “observer,” representing the newly formed United Nations Association. There were then 50 Member States representing quite a small proportion of the world's population. The plaque which commemorates that historic event in London bears these words: *“To the glory of God and in prayer for peace on earth”* Over the 50 years, as nations have gained their freedom and colonialism has all but ended, there are now 185 Member States, the last few resulting from the breakup of the Soviet Union.

The Charter on which the UN is based has a Preamble which will be read by representatives of Member States in meetings, services, conferences, and events throughout the world during the 50th Anniversary. It begins with the words, *“We, the peoples”* But the United Nations is an inter-governmental organisation. It is the non-governmental organisations — of all faiths and many different convictions — which seek to add the flesh and blood to the rather dry bones of an inter-governmental organisation. The Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, expressed the hope that all non-governmental organisations would contribute in some positive way to strengthening the United Nations.

The **Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU)**, as a non-governmental organisation, is dedicated to the United Nations. For 10 years, I have been privileged to work with the Brahma Kumaris in support of the principles for which the UN stands.

- * In 1985-86, there was the **Million Minutes of Peace** campaign as part of the UN International Year of Peace.
- * In 1988-92, there was **Global Co-operation for a Better World (GCBW)**, in which individuals and groups of every description were challenged to create their visions of a better world. Hundreds of thousands of people in more than 120 countries took up the challenge, and ideas came pouring in.
- * In 1993, there was the publication of a book entitled ***Visions of a Better World***, which reflects a sampling of the most imaginative contributions of the GCBW project, including essays, poems, paintings, and songs. *Visions of a Better World* has provided the basis for conferences and seminars worldwide.

As the Brahma Kumaris thought how best to contribute to the UN50, the organisation concluded that it was best to draw upon experiences of the past decade and to bring together thoughts on the values on which a better world and a better United Nations must be based.

The UN's 50th Anniversary celebrates the achievement of having played an increasingly important role in building a better world. The achievement is immense. Tens of millions of lives have been saved by **UNICEF**, the **UN High Commission for Refugees**, and UN agencies such as the **World Health Organisation**, the **World Food Programme**, and the **World Bank**. From 1948 to 1994, more than 600,000 soldiers and civilians have served under the UN flag in

28 countries. Indeed, 1,000 peacekeepers have lost their lives monitoring cease-fire efforts, patrolling demilitarized areas, serving in buffer zones, observing elections, and defusing conflicts. The achievement had its cost in those and other lives.

Yet, the values we seek to promote must be a basis for the work still to be achieved by the UN. We are working for peace, freedom, and democracy through tolerance, integrity, respect for each other, and responsibility for one another. We want a world where there is happiness, honesty, love, and humility. We seek co-operation between the races and the faiths so that we can build a sense of unity. As the plaque says, *"To the glory of God and in prayer for peace on earth"*

"As the United Nations celebrates a half century of its existence, we have much to reflect on, many accomplishments, and yet a lot more still to achieve. It is in this context that the comity of nations needs to join hands with like-minded organizations and peoples to achieve the Organization's humanitarian goals. Poised as we are at the threshold of the 21st century, fraught with uncertainty as well as daunting challenges, it is indeed befitting that we reaffirm our faith in the higher moral and spiritual values which guide human conduct – those nobler ideals which provide both a guide and an anchor to our lives. *"*

The message of *Living Values* is both relevant and appropriate to our times. *"*

Dr. Wally N'Dow,
Secretary-General, Second UN Conference on Human Settlements: HABITAT II,
June, 1995

MESSAGE

Mrs. Gillian Martin Sorensen,

Under-Secretary-General for the UN50, and Special Adviser to the
Secretary-General for Information and Public Policy

When the Charter of the United Nations came into force on October 24, 1945, it heralded the birth of the United Nations as a universal international organization created to maintain world peace and security and to work for social progress. Although its failures and frustrations have received widespread attention, its successes in economic and social development, decolonization, human rights, disarmament and peace-keeping have clearly made a difference in the second half of the century. A forum for all nations, the United Nations represents the highest aspirations of the world's peoples for a world free of war, poverty, repression and suffering. It remains a priceless inheritance.

To carry out its mandate, the United Nations requires more than simply the political and financial backing of Member States. It also relies on the support of the non-governmental community and the vital link which it provides between the Organization and its constituencies worldwide. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an essential role in the life of the United Nations, creating a multiplier effect, amplifying and broadening its message. Perhaps more importantly, NGOs also ensure that issues of concern make their way onto the international agenda, sharpening the focus of the United Nations and serving as our global conscience.

Coinciding with a turning point in international relations, 1995, the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, is a time to rekindle the universal principles and aspirations of the Charter -- faith in fundamental human rights, social progress, peace and development -- values and concepts that remain as valid today as when they were enshrined in the Charter fifty years ago. This year offers all of us an historic opportunity to inform and inspire a larger public about this unique international instrument -- the United Nations -- and, in so doing, to spread the spirit of cooperation among the peoples of the world.

The dedication of the Values Guidebook to the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations is deeply appreciated. If the thoughts, words, actions and values you describe would govern our lives, the United Nations' success would be assured. Sincere thanks for the continuing interest and support of the Brahma Kumaris.

PREAMBLE, CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and

to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and

to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

AND FOR THESE ENDS

to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and

to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and

to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THESE AIMS

Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.

Signed on June 26, 1945, in San Francisco, at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization.

INTRODUCTION

This publication — entitled *Living Values: A Guidebook* — takes the reader on an exploration of those innermost values that influence personal attitude, outlook, and activity. The reader can journey inside as deeply and honestly as he or she wishes, using each value as a searchlight to discover what lies within the self. That effort promises a more meaningful definition of one's higher purpose in life.

Living Values — in adopting the tenet in the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations — focuses on *reaffirming faith in the dignity and worth of the human person*. Within that active growth process, the individual can uncover a capacity to stretch beyond the limits of current reality and recognize his or her full potential, not only in relation to the self but also to the wider world.

Human dignity is the external expression of an internal state of *self-worth*. A person who really understands his or her own inherent worth and respects that of others will come to know that worth is not something assigned by external sources, but rather, comes from a source that is universal and eternal. *Living Values* helps touch that source, guiding the reader toward a more profound understanding of the *true nature of the self*. That notion, of course, has been the object of much contemplation and discussion, but at its essence is the *dignity and worth of the individual and the sacredness or divine nature of human life*. With such at the core of *Living Values*, the message throughout is for the individual and the collective to find the way back to original divine roots through a process of learning and the conscious exercise of choice. Such a process embraces the real meaning and purpose of spiritual and moral education: not to impose an ideology or particular set of values, but rather, to draw out or to educe the best from within the individual. At the same time, a complementary structure would need to be created to allow for ample expression of such living values.

In choosing or becoming aware of values we adopt as the motivations for our behavior, we assign worth or importance to an aspect of life, which, in turn, influences how we approach life. Today, the majority of people are largely

influenced and define their true worth by material values such as social position, monetary worth, external appearance, or personal possessions. That misrepresentation of the source of true worth creates cultures of accumulation, possessiveness, selfishness, and greed and is the root cause of conflict, exploitation, poverty, and tension in the world.

There is universal recognition of a hierarchy of values which ascends from the lower material values to those higher spiritual values such as peace, love, care, selflessness, and generosity. Such higher order values transcend the uniqueness of humanity's richly diverse cultural, philosophical, and social heritage, forming a common bedrock on which to build not only friendly international relations but also mutual benefit in one-on-one interactions.

The 12 higher values described — **Cooperation, Freedom, Happiness, Honesty, Humility, Love, Peace, Respect, Responsibility, Simplicity, Tolerance, and Unity** — are core values fundamental to the well being of humanity as a whole. They will touch the core of the individual, perhaps inspiring positive change which can contribute to world transformation. The world will automatically become a better place when each individual becomes a better person.

USING THIS GUIDEBOOK

Living Values contains three main sections:

Section 1: Value Statements — Each of the 12 values are discussed in both conceptual and practical terms, with strong use of metaphor to satisfy the poet in all of us. Readers may want to enjoy a sampling of all Value Statements in one sitting, then savor each one later as inspirational reading. The Value Statements are deep. Reflecting on one point, sentence, or paragraph — and realizing and absorbing its significance — takes time and thought.

Section 2: Individual Perspective — Focusing on the individual, this section explains in a lighter tone some of the premises and concepts in the Value Statements and offers tools and methods to help sustain positive change. Content includes:

- * How to align thoughts, words, and actions with universal principles of human conduct.
- * How the consequences of actions are inescapable.
- * How individuals can maintain “cleanliness” in thoughts, words, and deeds.
- * How to gain mastery over thoughts and change wasteful thought patterns.
- * How to have good wishes and pure feelings for another.

Section 3: Workshops and Activities — This section offers facilitated group sessions designed to help participants identify ways to “live” their values — at home, at work, at school, in the community, and in the global neighborhood. Activities include dialogues, seminars, creative group sessions, and other innovative initiatives to encourage active participation.

Excerpts from the United Nations’ archives are interspersed throughout, adding historic dimension and international application of values. The quotations come from a variety of people within the UN system, including Secretary-Generals, Presidents of the General Assembly, Ambassadors, and Directors of UN Agencies.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Living Values is the guidebook of an international initiative dedicated to the United Nations on its 50th Anniversary (UN50). Called **Sharing Our Values for a Better World**, the initiative has been created and coordinated by the **Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University**, a non-governmental organization of the United Nations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and UNICEF.

The Sharing Our Values for a Better World (SVBW) project not only focuses on the tenet in the Preamble of the UN Charter — *To reaffirm faith in the dignity and worth of the human person* — it also reflects the UN50 theme — *“We the Peoples of the United Nations — United for a Better World.”*

The year-long SVBW project started September, 1994, and will continue through September-October, 1995, culminating in a month-long celebration to honor the UN50, at which time all the values will receive worldwide focus. In preparation for the program, the Brahma Kumaris (BKs) assigned to each month of the year one of the 12 specific values discussed in *Living Values*. Throughout the year, more than 3,500 BK Centers in 65 countries have been organizing and focusing activities around that value. Activities include dialogues, seminars, workshops, lectures, and community projects, some of which have been detailed in Section 3 of *Living Values*. The object is to focus on achieving a deeper understanding and the practical application of that value for the month in the context of the local environment.

The clear-cut aims of the SVBW project are:

- 1) To raise awareness of the existence of higher order values as spiritual qualities inherent within the individual regardless of political, economic, cultural, professional, or ethnic background.
- 2) To create a safe and enabling environment for individuals to explore and express these spiritual values individually and collectively.
- 3) To offer specific self-development and self-management methods, techniques, and group dynamics which can be used to revive and strengthen spiritual values within the individual.
- 4) To increase awareness of the value of self-development undertaken by each person individually and people collectively, as a contribution to a better quality of life.

Living Values can become a useful resource for individuals and for the collective in helping to facilitate the above. The aims are high. Yet, there is every reason why — to “build” on the UN50 theme — “*the individuals of the world can and should be united for a better world.*”

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Section 1

Value Statements

SECTION 1

VALUE STATEMENTS

The concepts contained in the following Value Statements have been taken from a body of knowledge which has been researched by the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University since 1937. The principles and philosophy address the universal aspects of spiritual and moral values as a basis for living one's life. The statements are designed to encourage the reader to think about, reflect on, understand, realize, assimilate, and practice the 12 core values.

Since values are interconnected, to recognize and explore the significance of one value is to experience the unlimited treasure store of underlying and supporting values.