

# ***Loka Samgraha :*** **Hindu Philosophical Foundation of Social Behaviors in Indonesia New Normal Era**

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## **A. Introduction**

World Health Organization on January 30, 2020 declared Covid-19 as a global pandemic. This virus infection is caused by acute coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) respiratory syndrome which started in Wuhan, China, and spread throughout the world. This virus has a high transmission rate. Transmission occurs through human contact or droplets. This virus infection has an incubation phase of about 6.4 days and a basic reproductive rate of 2.24 to 3.58 (Fernandes, 2020; Lai et al., 2020; Shereen et al., 2020). For someone who has been infected with covid-19 virus, clinical indicators of this virus are generally characterized by dry cough, fever, vomiting, and myalgia. Someone with a chronic congenital disease (comorbidities), has the potential for greater transmission (Sohrabi et al., 2020).

This epidemic not only causes serious problems in the health sector (Lai et al., 2020; Lippi et al., 2020; Rajkumar, 2020; Shereen et al., 2020; Sohrabi et al., 2020), but in various other sectors also seriously affected. Other sectors affected are: 1) the economic sector, related to the cost of the corona outbreak, Gross Domestic Product

(GDP) growth, and other economic problems (Chakraborty & Maity, 2020; Fernandes, 2020; Nicola et al., 2020a, 2020b). 2) the education sector, this sector is one that has experienced major changes, where the learning process was initially conventional in the classroom, but now the learning system is online or virtual based (Wang et al., 2020). 3) The tourism sector (Yu et al., 2020), and other vital sectors.

The most ironic of these outbreaks is the potential high mortality rate for the world's population. Based on WHO data on July 29, 2020, the covid-19 outbreak has spread to 216 countries, infected 16,523,815 people and killed 655,112 people in the world. as in other countries, Indonesia also experienced problems in various sectors, namely; health, economy, politics, education, tourism, poverty, unemployment, and other serious problems (Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2020; Muzakki, 2020; Sasmita et al., 2020; Suharyadi et al., 2020; Zaharah, Galia Ildusovna Kirilova, 2020).

In its struggle, the Indonesian government has taken many actions to overcome this problem, one of which is the health protocol regulation. At present, the Indonesian government has issued a new normal policy, which is a new order in social interaction related to the adaptation process during the covid-19 outbreak (Pragholapati, 2020). During this crisis, humans are forced to rethink the meaning of health, solidarity, cooperation, empathy, social awareness, and humanity. The most important thing at this time is recovery. This paper will discuss about Hindu philosophical foundation of social behaviors in Indonesia new normal era.

## B. Discussion

### 1. Epistemology of *Loka Samgraha*

*Loka Samgraha* is a philosophical concept of human behavior in a social context. This philosophy is contained in Bhagavad-gita in Chapter III verses 20 and 25, which specifically discusses the meaning of obligations. *Bhagavad-gita* is part of Itihasa, namely Mahabharata (Darmayasa, 2017). Etymologically, *loka samgraha* is derived from *loka* and *samgraha*. *Loka* shows human or the world, *samgraha* means to protect, preserve, regulate. Although this term is interpreted in several definitions, in general it means 'community welfare'. Radhakrishnan defines *loka samgraha* as 'stands for the unity of the world, the interconnectedness of society' (Agarwal, 1997; Chakraborty & Maity, 2020).

The Bhagavad-gita is part of the Mahabharata, so the understanding of the Bhagavad-gita cannot be separated from the plot of the Mahabharata story. Likewise, the understanding of *Loka Samgraha* must be understood in the narration of the Mahabharata. Incomplete understanding makes it possible to cause misunderstanding of the true meaning, As seen in some readers who do not have a bright spot on the ethical basis of Sri Krishna in interpreting the philosophy of *Loka Samgraha*. Does Sri Krishna base his ethical basis on the theory of Deontology or Consequentialism? clarity on this subject is very important because it is related to the understanding and conclusions of the ethical foundation of this philosophy. Improper understanding will lead to defects in this philosophical ethical foundation, while at the same time giving erroneous judgment to Sri Krishna as a pure deontologist (Belwalkar & Vohra, 2016; Dowd, 2011; Majithia, 2015; Sreekumar, 2012). Bhagavad-gita Chapter III, verses III.20 and III.25:

(III.20) *Karmanaiva hi samsiddhim astitha  
janakadayah*

*Loka-sangraham evapi sampasyan kartum arhasi*

Translation:

King such as Janaka attained perfection solely by performance of prescribed duties. Therefore, just for the sake of educating the people in general, you should perform your work.

(III.25) *Saktah karmany avidvamso yatha kurvanti  
bharta*

*Kuryad vidvams tathasaktas cikirsur loka-  
sangraham*

Translation:

As the ignorant perform their duties with attachment to results, the learned may similarly act, but without attachment, for the sake of leading people of the right path (Prabhupada, 1972).

This verse is the conversation of Sri Krishna and Arjuna shortly before the war of Bharata yudha, the legendary war of the kingdom of Hastina Pura, between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Bharata yuda is a series of dramatic stories and moral values (Dowd, 2011). The conception of *Loka Samgraha* arose from a moral dilemma, when *Arjuna* was on the battlefield seeing so many people he knew, even having emotional closeness with him. He saw friends, grandfathers, teachers, uncles, sons, daughters-in-law and family.

Great figures such as Rsi Bhisma, Dronacharya, Karna, Duryodhana, Dursasana, and Kaurava's family and friends from other kingdoms whom he had to face as enemies. Arjuna felt deep sadness. He bowed, his Gandiwa bow fell from his hand. Arjuna said that he did not want to fight. He would surrender and give Hastinapura to Kaurava.

More detail in this dilemma conversation is contained in Bhagavad-gita, chapters I through chapter III, "Observing the armies on the battlefield of Kuruksetra (*Arjuna Visada Yoga*), contents of the Bhagavad-gita Summarized (*Sankya Yoga*), and *Karma Yoga* (Prabhupada, 1972).

Arjuna's dilemma statement in the above verse has an interesting substance, *first*; Arjuna's view has the theoretical character of consequentialism, where the decision of his actions has consequential considerations for the act. Consequentialism considers the actual impact of a decision, and considers how people are affected by the decision of that action. At this level, the ethical assessment of an action is based on the consequences that have a beneficial value to society. In his argument, Arjuna does not think pragmatically. As a ksatria, he had a duty to fight and got benefit from war, but he did not. He does not use a deontological approach where the obligation is everything, and every Ksatria is bound by these norms. Arjuna disagrees that the ethical consideration of action is only based on the consideration of duties and obligations, without considering the consequences of the action.

*Second*, war is a crime. Arjuna holds that war is an event that creates suffering in the end. War will leave millions of wounds, losses, never ending trauma and sadness. Because of its bad effects, war is evil.

*Third*, the prize of war is pseudo. Arjuna considered that war will never cause happiness. The fame, luxury, empire and heaven which are considered as war gifts are just pseudo. How can happiness be obtained by killing people we should respect, care for and protect.

*Fourth*, war is illegal. Arjuna's rejection of war is based on two reasons; 1) war only results in the sin of sacrifice of the life of teachers, grandparents, uncles, fathers, in-laws, sons, grandchildren, in-laws, relatives and friends, 2) war

results in the destruction of families and family traditions that lead to the life of hell. Both of these are illegal.

Responding to Arjuna, Sri Krishna stated normative ethical arguments in the view of a complex syncretistic philosophy, in which he combined metaphysical, eschatological, and soteriological elements derived from Hindu philosophy (Sreekumar, 2012). Here are some of Sri Krishna's arguments:

*First, the Dharma Argument*

Krishna's view is illustrated in Bhagavad-gita II.2 - II.3, which states that Arjuna's attitude is mind impurities. It does not represent the identity of *Arjuna* as ksatria and character of an Arya. Prabhupada identifies Aryans as people who know the value of life and have a civilization based on spirituality, while a materialism does not have such views (Prabhupada, 1972). Arjuna's attitude is an inappropriate condition, and will not lead him to the attainment of heaven, but instead, humiliation.

(II.2) The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: My dear Arjuna, how have these impurities come upon you? They are not at all befitting a man who knows the value of life. They lead not to higher planets but to infamy.

(II.3) O son of Pr̥thā, do not yield to this degrading impotence. It does not become you. Give up such petty weakness of heart and arise, O chastiser of the enemy" (Prabhupada, 1972).

Sri Krishna continued his statement in the three verses of the Bhagavad-gita Chapter II, verses 33-35:

(II.33) If, however, you do not perform your religious duty of fighting, then you will certainly incur sins for neglecting your duties and thus lose your reputation as a fighter.

(II.34) People will always speak of your infamy, and for a respectable person, dishonor is worse than death.

(II.35) The great generals who have highly esteemed your name and fame will think that you have left the battlefield out of fear only, and thus they will consider you insignificant” (Prabhupada, 1972).

In this verse, *Sri Krishna* explains about obligation or *dharma*, that the denial of it will lead to sin. The logical consequence of this cowardice is a bad predicate, because it is considered afraid of fighting. For a ksatria, bad reputation is more than death. In this case, *Sri Krishna* is like a deontologist, because his argument emphasizes the side of Arjuna's obligations only. *Sri Krishna's* view is like without consideration of consequences. The statement of *Sri Krishna* in chapter II, verses II.2 - II.3, shows that the implementation of *dharma* is more on the attainment of heaven or the results of actions. Arjuna's ethical argument, which is based on consequentialism rejects it, because it is illogical. Arjuna believes that happiness, reputation, luxury cannot be done by hurting others, it is immoral.

The arguments presented by Arjuna are reasonable, and the deontological impression of the term *dharma* which is interpreted as a duty or obligation is reasonable. Now, will discuss about it. The term *dharma* actually has various definitions. *Dharma* as a duty or obligation is one of the meanings of the variety of definitions of *dharma*. The *Dharma* is rooted in Sanskrit *dhr* which literally means upholding, maintaining or supporting. It means not only whatever is needed to maintain the social order, but also cosmology, a combination originally found in the Vedic term *rta* which means the cosmic order or natural law.

*Dharma* is more than ritual, law and cosmology. It has moral considerations. At this level, *dharma* is really the essence of consequentialism. Therefore, the essence of it depends on the context. In a legal perspective, it contains values of virtue, duty or justice. The *Dharma* for human can be understood through *varnasramadharmas* or the four stages of human life, which are widely discussed in the Smṛti of the Dharmasāstra. In these texts, one's life path is carefully mapped, integrated into social life and becomes part of the cosmic law. *Dharma*, together with *artha*, *kama* and *moksa* is the culmination of human life. *Artha* is a concern in aspects of material life, such as wealth and power. *Kama* is related to bodily pleasure, and *moksa* is a concern for freedom from the three other human life (Dhand, 2002; Majithia, 2015).

#### *Second, the Karma Yoga Argument*

If previously *Sri Krishna's* argument was *dharma*, now he is strengthening with *karma yoga*. First, it is explained that humans are naturally designed to act. No one can escape from that obligation. Therefore, a wise choice is to take action based on four (4) things, as explained in Bhagavad-gita chapters III, verses III.5, III.8, III.9, and III.25, namely: 1) actions based on the scriptures, 2) actions without attachment, 3) actions oriented to the welfare of society, and 4) actions aimed at God.

(III.5) Everyone is forced to act helplessly according to the qualities he has acquired from the modes of material nature; therefore no one can refrain from doing something, not even for a moment.

(III.8) Perform your prescribed duty, for doing so is better than not working. One cannot even maintain one's physical body without work.

(III.9) Work done as a sacrifice for *Viṣṇu* has to be performed; otherwise work causes bondage in this



material world. Therefore, O son of *Kuntī*, perform your prescribed duties for His satisfaction, and in that way, you will always remain free from bondage.

(III.25) As the ignorant perform their duties with attachment to results, the learned may similarly act, but without attachment, for the sake of leading people on the right path” (Prabhupada, 1972).

In the *dharma* argument, deontology is seen, in *karma yoga* argumentation, *dharma* is seen consequentialism. This at the same time answers the erroneous view that the *dharma* presented by Sri Krishna is a pragmatic ethic, where the value of action rests solely on the exercise of responsibility, without consequentialist considerations. In fact, it is the essence of consequentialist considerations. According to Sreekumar, Sri Krishna's normative ethical argumentation has the characteristics of a complex syncretistic philosophy, which contains elements of metaphysics, eschatology, and soteriology (Sreekumar, 2012).

### *Third, Divine Agent Arguments*

The next Sri Krishna argument is an agent of divinity. *Sri Krishna* who supported Arjuna had a consideration. This cannot be separated by Sri Krishna as *Avatara* and his role in the world, namely upholding the principle of *dharma* or the principle of truth. where there is a violation of the *dharma* principle, then Sri Krishna will be present. To protect good people and punish bad people, Krishna is present. Thus, it is stated in Bhagavad-gita chapter IV verses IV.7 - IV. 8:

(IV.7) Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion – at that time I descend Myself.

(IV.8) To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to re-establish the principles of religion, I Myself appear, millennium after millennium” (Prabhupada, 1972).

The Sri Krishna figure is related to the truth enforcement mission. Arjuna and the Pandavas were the agents of change chosen by Sri Krishna. Kaurava as a symbol of *adharma* or bad character, his destiny has been determined. Therefore, the moral dilemma presented by Arjuna does not have an effect, because it has been considered by Sri Krishna before (Majithia, 2015; Sargeant, 2009; Sreekumar, 2012). This is stated in the Bhagavad-gita chapter XI, verses XI.32 and XI.33:

(XI.32) The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Time I am, the great destroyer of the worlds, and I have come here to destroy all people. With the exception of you [the Pāṇḍavas], all the soldiers here on both sides will be slain.

(XI.33) Therefore get up. Prepare to fight and win glory. Conquer your enemies and enjoy a flourishing kingdom. They are already put to death by My arrangement, and you, O *Savyasācī*, can be but an instrument in the fight (Prabhupada, 1972).

Bharata yudha is not merely a battle for fighting, luxury, fame or Hastinapur. The war has a different definition. Bhagavad-gita called it the field of *dharma*. This is a battle of morality, a battle to restore the principle of it. Peace efforts have been taken by the Pandavas and Krishna to avoid war, but it is always deadlocked. Kaurava forced the war to fulfil his desire to seize and conquer Hastinapur. Kaurava is representation of bad character. The spirit of *loka samgraha* in the context of bharata yuda is an action with the orientation of community welfare. This is the

basis of the ethical philosophy of Hinduism in the context of social behavior (Ganguli, 1884; Subramaniam, 2007).

## **2. Actualization of Loka Samgraha in Indonesia New Normal Era**

The covid-19 epidemic has changed many aspects of life. This crisis has forced everyone to be adaptive to the new order and behavior of life. Violation of new norms has tragic consequences for human life. The threat is very serious, the transmission is mysterious and massive. A study shows that there is a positive relationship between psychological flexibility with mental health and life satisfaction. There are six important processes from the research, namely: 1) acceptance based on experience, 2) cognitive defuse or deliteralisation is a technique used in acceptance therapy and commitment to help people deal with uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. Cognitive defuse involves creating a space between ourselves, our thoughts and feelings so that they lack control over us, 3) self as context, 4) contact with the present, 5) values, and 6) actions taken to achieve something. The results of the study indicate that psychological flexibility is important for one's mental health and both are an integral part of life satisfaction (Lucas & Moore, 2020).

The research concluded that the ability to adapt to situations, awareness, openness, focus and accompanied by effective action is very significant. Based on this fact, the Covid-19 epidemic needs to be addressed wisely and carefully. This pandemic must be addressed wisely, cautiously, and should not be underestimated. The next important question, what is our attitude and what should we do?

*First*, building 'self-awareness', that we are part of the problem, but we are also part of the solution. 'We are part

of the problem' means that we have the potential to be infected with covid-19, and transmission media. Ignorance of this problem, not only bad for yourself but others. Whereas, 'we are part of the solution', we can become a media for prevention and solution to this problem.

*Second*, concrete actions based on solutions. In line with the spirit of *loka samgraha*, we must become agents of problem solving, such as Arjuna who is an agent of change in upholding dharma principles or virtues. Therefore, concrete actions that must be taken are:

a. Building Personal Health

Several studies have shown a relationship between infection and the epidemiology of covid-19 with the immune system and a person's level of health. As research by Saghazadeh and Rezaei "Immune-epidemiological parameters of the novel coronavirus - a perspective" results in the finding that age, comorbidity, and the immune system are vulnerable to covid-19 infections (Li et al., 2020; Saghazadeh & Rezaei, 2020; Sohrabi et al., 2020). Based on these facts, building personal health is important in this case. With good health, the potential for covid-19 infection is smaller or even not contracting. Thus, we do not become a medium for spreading this virus to others, and become a breaker of the chain of distribution of this virus.

The positive side of this pandemic is the growing awareness of the importance of health, both mentally and physically. Positive action that can be taken to maintain health is to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Various studies show that a healthy lifestyle has a positive impact on human health, including healthy and regular eating patterns, adequate rest, regular

exercise, managing stress, meditation, and yoga (Cartwright et al., 2020; Hegberg & Tone, 2015; Lucas & Moore, 2020; Oja et al., 2015; Sampa et al., 2020; Saunders et al., 2016; Upchurch & Johnson, 2019). At present, personal health is part of public health. Therefore, awareness to build personal health becomes an individual contribution to public health.

b. Maintaining Environmental Health

Humans and nature have an inseparable relationship. As part of nature, humans have a significant dependence on the surrounding nature. Natural conditions have an impact on human life, human behavior has implications for nature. This situation can be better understood when environmental problems occur, such as natural disasters. The Indonesian people still remember how the Aceh Tsunami, which occurred on December 26, 2004, killed more than 220,000 people. Yogyakarta earthquake on May 27, 2006 which killed more than 6,200 people. The Palu Tsunami on September 28, 2018 which killed 1,400 people. Likewise, due to human behavior with illegal logging activities that damage natural ecosystems, then lead to disasters such as landslides and floods.

Human health is influenced by the surrounding natural conditions. The study of the relationship of the two has been widely expressed, and shows the interplay of mutual relations. A healthy environment will have a positive impact on human health, and vice versa (Finn & O'Fallon, 2017; Frumkin & Howard, 2010; Morris, 2013; S.Reis, G.Morris, L.E.Fleming, S.Beck, T.Taylor, M.White, M.H.Depledge, S.Steinle, C.E.Sabel, H.Cowie, F.Hurley, J.McP. Dick, R.I.Smith, 2015).

In the new normal phase, real action as an actualization of the values of the *lokal samgraha* can be done by maintaining the cleanliness, health and balance of our environment. For the Example: 1) "gotong royong", cleans the residential environment. this activity is one of local wisdoms that needs to be revitalized, 2) spraying disinfectant liquid in the housing environment, 3) localization of landfills, 4) planting trees, 5) normalizing waterways and 6) cleaning each house.

Clean living behavior through concrete actions is important to put back the collective awareness of the environment. As part of nature, every human being has a responsibility to maintain the health and harmony of nature. Hindus in Indonesia, in their vision of harmony, implement the values in the *Vedas* (Rig-Veda and Bhagavad-gita) into the conception of *Tri Hita Karana*. "Tri Hita Karana signifies three causes of prosperity produced by balanced and harmonious relations in one whole unit between human and god, human and society, human and nature," Peters and Wardana interpreted.

Thus, human responsibility in maintaining the health and harmony of the natural environment has a religious dimension, because it becomes part of the *dharma* (obligation) in his life. The denial of this obligation is *adharma*, and has a negative impact on humans and nature. This concrete action is evidence of our contribution to efforts to prevent and break the distribution of covid-19, and to have a positive impact on the wider community (Belwalkar & Vohra, 2016; Dhand, 2002; Peters & Wardana, 2013; Prabhupada, 1972).

c. Implementing the Health Protocol

The next action is to carry out health protocol delivered by the government and WHO. Discipline and community participation in implementing this health protocol are not only important for preventing personal infection, but also for preventing transmission to others. On the other hand, this behavior becomes a role model in providing education to other people who do not yet have the awareness and discipline in responding to the new normal situation of the covid-19 pandemic. The population is an agent of change towards the right order of life, as Arjuna did. The concrete actions of the discipline to run health protocol in the new normal phase, as stated by the government and WHO, namely:

- 1) Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, or clean them with alcohol-based hand rub.
- 2) Maintain at least 1 metre distance between you and people coughing or sneezing.
- 3) Avoid touching your face.
- 4) Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- 5) Stay home if you feel unwell.
- 6) Refrain from smoking and other activities that weaken the lungs.
- 7) Practice physical distancing by avoiding unnecessary travel and staying away from large groups of people (WHO, 2020).

d. Revitalization of the Community Care Movement

The covid-19 outbreak in Indonesia has damaged various vital sectors, which have led to the

fundamental problems of human life, namely: unemployment, poverty, hunger, health, education, and other problems (Muzakki, 2020; Naryono, 2020; Sasmita et al., n.d.; Suharyadi et al., 2020; Zaharah, Galia Ildusovna Kirilova, 2020).

This problem makes a big change in people's lives in Indonesia, especially in economic aspects. Factory and company employees are one example of a community directly affected by the covid-19 outbreak. we can imagine how difficult it is to support their families and other needs such as health, education, electricity, water, all of which require costs, but on the other hand they have no source of income. This is a tragedy like the *bharata yuda*.

During this crisis, all wisdom, empathy and religious noble values are being billed by circumstances. the sadness really seems so real and close to us. For Arjuna, this is a *dharma* (obligation) call. Therefore, the spirit of *loka samgraha* is relevant in this case. That spirit must be manifested through the 'community care movement' for those affected by this epidemic according to our abilities. The examples of real actions are: 1) providing food assistance, 2) medicines, 3) providing masks and hand sanitizers, 4) residential facilities, 5) health facilities, 6) cash for education, 7) volunteering in humanitarian organizations for handling covid-19, 8) educating the public about health protocols, 9) educating about *meditation*, 10) educating about *yoga*, other matters related to covid-19 issues in this new normal era.

e. Build a Relationship with God

The covid-19 pandemic reignited human existential questions about his existence, the purpose of his existence and the meaning of life. The reality of life



that goes beyond logic is being exhibited. Covid-19 has killed anyone without regard to his identity. Wealth, reputation, prestigious work, beautiful plans that have been prepared, even romanticism suddenly disappears just taken away by this virus. So many souls have been shaken by this corona outbreak.

Building a relationship with God is one of the most argumentative choices. this can be considered a symptom of neurosis, but on the other hand, the presence of God in humans has had a positive impact that is very beneficial in human life, especially to respond to the outbreak in this new normal era.

The presence of god gives feeling calm, peaceful, happy, patient, hopeful, optimistic, not easily discouraged, humble, compassionate, and other positive qualities. This situation is very important for human mental health (Bradshaw & Kent, 2018, 2018; Dhand, 2002; Fernandes, 2020; González-González, 2018; Kent et al., 2018; Prabhupada, 1972).

*Loka samgraha* in the perspective of *karma yoga* (philosophy of action) is a manifestation of the actualization of godly values in action. The tip of the *Loka samgraha* spirit is the loss of personal desire for action. Actions taken only for the benefit of *dharma* or sacred obligation intended to benefit others. The essence of *dharma* (virtue) in the spirit of this action is the essence of Godliness itself. *Loka samgraha* is a human relationship with God through action. Actual actions in the spirit of *loka samgraha*, which are carried out in the context of the pandemic covid-19 in this new normal era, are synonymous with building a relationship with God. Thus, Sri Krishna stated in *Bhagavad-gita* Chapter III, verses III.9 and III.19:

(III.9) Work done as a sacrifice for Viṣṇu has to be performed; otherwise work causes bondage in this material world. Therefore, O son of Kuntī, perform your prescribed duties for His satisfaction, and in that way, you will always remain free from bondage.

(III.19) Therefore, without being attached to the fruits of activities, one should act as a matter of duty, for by working without attachment one attains the Supreme (Prabhupada, 1972).

### C. Conclusion

1. *Loka samgraha* is a philosophy of action in Hinduism that emphasizes selfless action. All actions in this spirit are intended for the good and harmony of the community. Based on normative ethical theory, *loka samgraha* actually has a consequentialist essence, rather than deontological.
2. Actualization of the spirit of *loka samgraha* in the new normal era can be realized in a variety of concrete actions, including: 1) Building Personal Health, 2) maintaining environmental health, 3) implementing health protocols, 4) making public awareness movements, and 5) building relationships with God intensely.

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