

The Philosophy of Dharma.

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या वै स धर्मः सत्यं वै । तस्मात् सत्यं वदन्तमाहुः धर्मं वदति इति ।
धर्मं वा वदन्तं सत्यं वदति इति । एतद्भयं वैतदुभयं भवति ।

(*Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 8, 4, 2, 26)

“That which is *Dharma*, is verily the Truth. Therefore, whosoever speaks the truth is said to speak *Dharma*. And whosoever speaks *Dharma* is said to speak the truth. One and the same thing becomes both.”

This is an age in which the whole of humanity is drifting with the current of scientific thought. The manifold scientific inventions, which, though marvellous and astounding, are fraught with grave dangers to society and are conducive to our comforts only in name, have captured the minds of the people and stirred their hearts to the very core. It is an age which has set up its own rule of conduct and its own standard of life, making the economic plight of the people a most baffling problem. The wonderful progress made by material science is rapidly carrying us away from spirituality and making us out and out materialists. The materialistic culture of the present age is deluding us by offering its material gains as the only answer to the query arising in the mind of every thoughtful man, as to what is, or should be, the goal of human life. It is an age in which “eat, drink and be merry” is becoming the guiding maxim of our life. To the materialistic vision of the present generation, the supersensuous phenomenon known as *Dharma* is only a figment. Will it not, therefore, be inviting ridicule to raise a question about *Dharma* in such an age ?

Yes, it will be so, undoubtedly. But why ? Is *Dharma* really a mere

pretence ? Are all the praises showered continually on it from the very dawn of civilization, the work of visionaries, directed to create a stronghold for their selfish interests ? No, that cannot be. What, then, could be the ground for ridicule ? Are you, my reader, prepared to hear that unpleasant truth ? If you are, let us proceed and see what it is. But before doing that, we have to see what *Dharma* is. *Dharma* is a soil for the growth of the human soul and an instrument through which the omnipresent Lord of the Universe maintains His supremacy over all His created beings. It is that energy which supports all animate and inanimate creation and enables man to obtain material welfare in this life and the highest bliss hereafter. In its sacred precincts there is no room for bigotry and fanaticism ; for it is the Law of the Divine, the sure guidance of which alone brings to man that divine peace which makes the collective life of human society a movement of purity, peace and love. The original source of *Dharma* is the vast ocean of the Vedas, the direct *voice and command of the Divine*. But the position today is that various known and unknown causes have veiled the true nature of *Dharma* and this has produced universal unrest. *Dharma* today has covered itself with the cloak of *Adharma*, the very thing which is its negation. Instead of developing the soul, it has become a means of winning bread and acquiring objects of worldly enjoyment. It is far better not to invoke the gods at all, than to invoke and insult and deceive them, which is nothing but a suicidal play with the divine powers. But this is exactly what is happening today in the name of *Dharma*. We are

deceiving *Dharma* by professing *Dharma* and doing exactly what is forbidden by *Dharma*. Today the reins of *Dharma* have passed into the hands of men who are utterly ignorant of Vedic literature, which is the repository of spiritual knowledge. The entire responsibility for the lack of faith in *Dharma* that we see growing among the classes and the masses lies on the shoulders of these teachers. This lack of faith in *Dharma* is a sure indication of an oncoming disaster. But the generality of men are not to be blamed for it; for they find the religious world in no enviable position. Instead of progress, retrogression is all that one meets with there; and naturally, therefore, they are inclined to think that the talk about *Dharma* is nothing but a hoax. When we look at this blindness of the present age to the real nature of *Dharma*, we are constrained to say that an attempt to deal with the fundamental principle of *Dharma* in an age like this is to court ridicule and nothing more.

Even as things are, we have to take our stand on the effective commandments of the *Śruti*, such as 'सत्यान्न प्रमदितव्यम्' (Do not neglect Truth), 'धर्मान्न प्रमदितव्यम्' (Do not neglect *Dharma*), 'सत्यं वद' (Speak the truth), 'धर्मं चर' (Practise *Dharma*), and determine our *Dharma*, nay, the *Dharma* of the whole world in the light of the same. By unveiling the true nature of *Dharma*, we shall have to prove and proclaim that *Dharma* is the only way to our progress, the only means to happiness in this as well as the next world, the original source of the power and progress of a nation, the foundation of social life and uplift, the field for individual development, the great harbinger of world peace and the all-in-all of mankind. But before dealing with the subject, we shall have to define the word *Dharma*.

The promulgators of the various schools of Indian philosophy and the

great law-givers such as Manu and others have defined the word *Dharma* in various ways. We have neither space in this short article, nor is it imperative for its purpose, to discuss all those definitions. We shall take up only two or three and then lead our readers on to the scientific way of defining *Dharma*.

Mantra and *Brāhmaṇa* constitute the two features of the Vedas, the revealed Knowledge. The *Brāhmaṇa* portion of the Vedas is divided under three heads: *Vidhi*, *Āraṇyaka* and *Upaniṣad*. These three divisions treat in order of the three Yogas or disciplines of *Karma*, *Upāsana* and *Jñāna* (Action, Devotion and Knowledge). Knowledge, action and object (*artha*), these are the three pillars of the Self. According to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Mind, Life-force and Speech, these have been regarded as the three aspects (*Kalās*) of the Self.* Mind is the field for development of the power of knowledge, Life-force for the development of the power of action and Speech for the development of the power of objectivity (*artha-Śakti*). The One Self appears as three according to these three aspects or media of self-expression. These three independent forms or aspects (*Vivartas*) of the One Self, which are essentially the same, though appearing as different, are described in the Aryan literature as *Brahma*, *Īswara* and *Viśwa*. The principle known as *Brahma* is purely of the nature of Mind (*Mano-maya*) and is consciousness pure and simple (*Viśuddha Jñāna-Mūrti*). It is also called the *Nirguṇa Brahma*, *Brahma* beyond the qualities of Nature. It has no reference to any action or any act of devotion. It has only to be known through Knowledge (*Jñānagamyā*). Pure consciousness, free from all degrees or qualifications (*Upādhi*) is the same as the absolute *Brahma*. The words of Vidyāraṇya Swami are:—

* स वा एष आत्मा वाङ्मयः प्राणमयो मनोमयः ।

प्रत्यस्ताशेषभेदं यत् सत्तामात्रमगोचरम् ।
वचसामात्मसंबन्धं तज्ज्ञानं ब्रह्मसंज्ञितम् ॥

(Panchadasi)

“The Knowledge which is beyond all expressions and is of the nature of Absolute Existence, nay, which is devoid of all distinctions and is experienced by the self (refined intellect), is what we call *Brahma*.”

Of this all-conscious and all-luminous *Brahma*, which is all-pervading and subtle as ether (*Ākāśātmā*), the *Śruti* says:—

‘मनोमयोऽयं पुरुषो भाः सत्यः...स एष सर्वस्येशानः
सर्वस्याधिपतिः सर्वमिदं प्रशास्ति यदिदं किञ्च ।’

(*Bṛihadaranyaka* V. vi. 1.)

“This *Puruṣa* is of the nature of Mind, and is all Light and all Truth... It is He who is the Lord of all, the Controller of all; all this objective existence, whatever there is before us, is ruled by Him.”

This all-conscious *Brahma*, who is of the nature of Mind, when joined with *Prāṇa* (Life-force), which is of the nature of Vitality (*Virya*), becomes qualified (*Saguṇa*). And being endowed with qualities (the triple modes of Nature) He manifests His third aspect as well, viz., the aspect of Speech (*Vāk*). With this aspect He creates the whole universe and, entering into the same, ‘तत्सद्ब्रह्म तदेवानुप्राविशत्’, is called by various names such as *Viśvātmā* (the Universal Soul), *Viśveśwara* (Lord of the Universe), *Īswara* (God) and so on. Of this second manifestation of God, known by the name of *Īswara*, the *Gītā*, also known as the *Smārta Upaniṣad*, speaks thus:—

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥

(XVIII. 61)

“The Lord dwells in the heart of all beings, O Arjuna, and by His *Māyā*

causes them all to revolve as though mounted on a potter’s wheel.”

All devotional worship is offered to this aspect of the Self, the Personal God. God has no place in the discipline of pure Knowledge nor in the discipline of pure Action, which is rooted in the world or creation. He manifests in Him, though partially, the knowledge aspect or Mind as well as the active aspect known as Vitality (*Prāṇa*). A part is called *Bhāga* in Sanskrit and *Bhakti* is etymologically the same as *Bhāga*. It is because God represents a partial manifestation of the aspects of Knowledge and Action that His worship is called *Bhaktiyoga* (union with a part). This *Bhaktiyoga* consists in joining one’s self in single-minded union with the Personal God.

The third Manifestation of the Self is *Viśva* (the material Universe), the special feature of which is Speech, —the other two aspects, viz., Mind and Vitality remaining in the background. Due to the predominance of *Tamoguṇa*, the principle of sloth or inertia, the Personal God evolves the Universe out of His mutable or material aspect consisting of Speech. This material universe is a concrete form of the Self. It manifests the aspect of Action (*Karma*) alone. Thus, this one unitary principle of Self manifests Itself as *Brahma* by projecting Its eternal mental aspect; It manifests Itself as God by projecting Its immutable vital aspect; and again It manifests Itself as the Universe by projecting Its mutable vocal aspect; and thus assumes the role of presiding over the domains of Knowledge, Devotion and Action respectively. From the point of view of Cosmology, the one unitary Self has resolved Itself into these three forms or aspects; whereas from the metaphysical or spiritual point of view, these three aspects are dissolved or merged into

one substance, viz., the Self. It is with reference to these three aspects of the Self that the *Vājasaneyā Śruti* says:—

‘अतो हि सर्वाणि कर्माण्युत्तिष्ठन्ति, एतद्धि सर्वैः कर्मभिः समं, एतद्धि सर्वाणि कर्माणि विभर्ति । तदेतत्—त्रयं सत्—एकमयमात्मा । आत्मा उ एकः सन्नैतत् त्रयम् ।’

(*Satapatha Brahmana* XIV. 5. 1)

“From this (one Self) spring up all actions; nay, it co-exists with them all and supports them. These three aspects (viz., the source, the correlate and the substratum of all actions), taken together, constitute the one Self. The Self, though essentially one, is resolved into these three.”

It is these three Manifestations of the Self and the three corresponding Yogas (of Knowledge, Devotion and Action) that have been discussed in the three sections of the Vedas, viz., the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads respectively. The portion known as the Brāhmaṇas unfolds the secret of creation of the world, having *Yajña* (Sacrifice) for its basis and discusses the philosophy of Action (*Karma*) with reference to the world. The section known by the name of *Āraṇyaka* describes the various forms of God, such as *Udgītha*, *Praṇava*, *Anirukta Prajāpati* and so on, and discusses the philosophy of Devotion (*Upāsana*); whereas the Upaniṣads, the last of the three divisions of the *Veda*, and therefore called the *Vedānta*, describes the non-essential characteristics (*taṣasṭha lakṣaṇa*) of *Brahma* and reveals the secrets of the Knowledge of *Brahma* (*Jñāna-Kāṇḍa*). According to the three aspects of the Self, the essential characteristics (*Dharma*) of the Self are also classified under three heads. The aggregate of eternal laws governing the very nature of things is known by the name of *Dharma*, as will be made clear later on. *Brahma*, God and Universe have their own separate laws. Though identical from the

Advaitic or monistic point of view, they are distinct and separate from the dualistic standpoint or the point of view of the universe. It is on the basis of this threefold division of *Dharma* that the three Āśramas or stages of life, viz., *Sannyāsa*, *Vānaprastha* and *Grhastha*, were evolved. The fourth Āśrama, viz., the *Brahmacharya* Āśrama, is the foundation of the other three. It is in this Āśrama that the duties of the other three Āśramas are taught to the initiated, who have to conserve the sex-energy during the whole period of their training. That is the reason why this Āśrama has been extolled above all others. The Devas, it is said, conquered death through *Brahmacharya* or control of the sex-force, ‘ब्रह्मचर्येण तपसा देवा मृत्युमपावत’. Due observance of the rules of *Brahmacharya* is indispensable for success in the other three Āśramas. Knowledge is the foundation on which the edifice of the other three Āśramas is raised and the Āśrama whose main feature is imparting of Knowledge (*Brahma*) is rightly called *Brahmacharya*. It is known to all that the laws governing the three Āśramas of *Grhastha*, *Vānaprastha* and *Sannyāsa* are altogether different. And this is as it should be; for the bases of the three, viz., *Brahma*, God and the Universe, have different laws pertaining to each.

For a rational interpretation of the three divisions of the *Veda*, we have three systems of philosophy. The philosophy of the Brāhmaṇas has been discussed by Maharṣi Jaimini, whose system is known by the name of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā. The philosophy of the Āraṇyakas has been interpreted by Maharṣi Śāṇḍilya and his system is known as Śāṇḍilya-Darśana or Bhakti-Darśana. And the philosophy of the Upaniṣads has been discussed by the great sage Vyāsa and his system is called Uttara-Mīmāṃsā. The philosophy of Vyāsa discusses

the nature of *Brahma*, that of *Śāṅḍilya* treats of God, while the school of Jaimini deals with the Universe, or Sacrifice (*Yajña*) in the form of this Universe. According to what has been stated above, the subject-matter of all the three systems may be designated as *Dharma*. But, of the three aspects of the Self, the objective world (*Viśva*) being the most tangible, the application of the term has been restricted to the department of *Karma* (Action) in relation to the universe, —the other two being respectively termed as *Parānurakti*, supreme Love, and *Brahma*, the supreme Consciousness. *Dharma* signifies action in its upward evolving tendency. And so in ordinary parlance we say "we have fallen from *Dharma*" to denote a downward

tendency or wrong direction of action. In order to bring this significance into bold relief, Jaimini has given prominence to the word 'Dharma' by mentioning it in the very opening aphorism of his philosophy, which deals mainly with *Karma*. So have *Śāṅḍilya* and *Vyāsa* given the same and prominence to the terms *Parānurakti* *Brahma* respectively by mentioning them in the very first aphorisms of their works, treating, as they do, mainly of Devotion and Knowledge. According to Jaimini, injunctions like "Do this", "Do it in this way," constitute the *Dharma*. *Dharma* is nothing more than the commandments enjoining action. In further elucidation of this point, we give below a table showing the distinct characters of the three divisions:—

I.	1. अथाता धर्मजिज्ञासा । (Now begins an enquiry into	<i>Dharma.</i>)	} Aphorisms of Jaimini (<i>Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā</i>)
	2. चोदनालक्षणोऽर्थो धर्मः । (Ordaining of right action is	<i>Dharma.</i>)	
I.	1. सा परानुरक्तिरीश्वरे । (Devotion consists in supreme love for God.)		Aphorisms of <i>Śāṅḍilya</i> (<i>Madhya-Mīmāṃsā</i>)
	1. अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा । (Now begins an enquiry into the	<i>Brahma.</i>)	} Aphorisms of <i>Vyāsa</i> (<i>Uttara-Mīmāṃsā</i>)
2. जन्माद्यस्य यतः । (From whom the creation, etc. of this world proceed.)			
II.	1. अव्ययप्रधानं* मनः (Dominated by the Indestructible is the Mind.)	ततो ज्ञानशक्तेर्विकासः (Thence the develop- ment of the power of Knowledge.)	ज्ञानात्मा मनोमयः (Consciousness is of the nature of Mind.)
	2. अक्षरप्रधानः प्राणः (Dominated by the Immutable is the Life-force.)	ततः क्रियाशक्तेर्विकासः (Thence the develop- ment of the power of Action.)	कामात्मा प्राणमयः (The desire- soul is the vital being.)
	3. क्षरप्रधाना वाक् (Dominated by the Mutable is the Speech.)	ततोऽर्थशक्तेर्विकासः (Thence the develop- ment of the power of Objectivity.)	कर्मात्मा वाङ्मयः (The active soul is the vocal being.)

* For a detailed exposition of the subject the reader should refer to my *Vijnana-Bhashya* in Hindi on the *Isa Upanishad*, Vol. I (Price Rs. 4/- excluding postage; publishers: Balchandra E, Press, Jaipur City.)

III.	1. विशुद्धज्ञानात्मा (The Pure Knowledge-Soul)	ब्रह्म (Brahma)	निर्गुण आत्मा विश्वातीतः (The transcendent unqualified <i>Brahma</i> .)	
	2. ज्ञानकर्ममयात्मा (The Conscious Active Soul)	ईश्वरः (God)	सगुणत्रजापतिर्विश्वात्मा (The Creator with qualities, the Self of the world.)	
	3. विशुद्धकर्मात्मा (The Pure Action-Soul)	विश्वम् (The universe)	वैकारिक आत्मा विश्वमूर्तिः (The Mutable self, in the form of the Universe.)	
IV.	1. ब्राह्मणभागः (The <i>Brāhmaṇa</i> portion of the Vedas)	विश्वनिरूपकः (Treats of the Universe.)	कर्मकाण्डम् (The portion relating to sacrificial rites.)	संसारः (The World.)
	2. अरण्यकभागः (The <i>Āraṇyaka</i> portion)	ईश्वरनिरूपकः (Treats of God.)	उपासनाकाण्डम् (The portion relating to Worship.)	सायुज्यभावः (Union with God.)
	3. उपनिषद्भागः (The <i>Upaniṣad</i> portion)	ब्रह्मनिरूपकः (Treats of the <i>Brahma</i> .)	ज्ञानकाण्डम् (The portion relating to Knowledge.)	मुक्तिः (Salvation.)
V.	1. कर्ममीमांसा (The Philosophy of Action)	धर्मप्रधाना (Has its centre in <i>Dharma</i> .)	जैमिनीयदर्शनम् (The Philosophy of Jaimini.)	
	2. भक्तिमीमांसा (The Philosophy of Devotion)	परानुरक्तिप्रधाना (Has its centre in Supreme Love.)	शाण्डिल्यदर्शनम् (The Philosophy of Śāṅḍilya.)	
	3. ज्ञानमीमांसा (The Philosophy of Knowledge)	ब्रह्मप्रधाना (Has its centre in <i>Brahma</i> .)	व्यासदर्शनम् (The Philosophy of Vyāsa.)	

Thus, according to Jaimini, the whole collection of injunctions urging men born in this world of action to their respective duties according to their stage of evolution (as determined by their caste) is *Dharma*. In other words, *Dharma* may be defined as the collection of authoritative utterances laying down our duties. Our highest good lies in performing actions in conformity with *Dharma*. The only road leading to the wish-yielding tree of "Bliss" (*Kalyana-Kalpataru*) is the path of *Dharma*.

Vātsyāyana, the great expositor of the aphorisms of Gotama, known as

the Philosophy of Nyāya, while commenting on the aphorism 'पात्रचयानुपपत्तेश्च फलभावः' (IV. i. 62) interprets *Dharma* as the collection of injunctions for proper regulation of worldly activities. In other words, the collection of commandments which when followed by men in all their dealings bring safety, peace and order in the world, constitutes the *Dharmaśāstra* or the code of divine laws. The main object of the *Dharmaśāstra* is the regulation of worldly conduct and relationships along right lines, as is made clear in the following passage:—

"If the authority of the *Dharmaśāstra* is not recognized, the harmony of

relations among human beings will be disturbed and the integrity of the social order threatened. The compilers of the epics (Itihāsas) and the Purāṇas and the promulgators of *Dharmaśāstra* are the same as the seers of the Vedic Mantras and the Brāhmaṇas and their expositors. Of course, their provinces being different, their authority also is restricted to their own spheres. Sacrifice (*Yajña*) is the province of the *Mantra* and *Brāhmaṇa* portions of the Vedas, the occurrences of the world form the subject-matter of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas and the regulation of worldly dealings is the object of the *Dharmaśāstra*. Their authority holds good in their own province, as is the case with the various senses. Thus the *Dharmaśāstra* alone regulates the whole social order."*

Kaṇāda, the promulgator of the Atomic theory, defines *Dharma* as the conduct, the law, the regulation which brings to man prosperity here and highest bliss hereafter; and the contrary of it is *Adharma*—as is made clear by his two aphorisms given below:—

‘अथातो धर्मं व्याख्यास्यामः ।’

“Now we proceed to define *Dharma*.”

‘यतोऽभ्युदयनिःश्रेयससिद्धिः स धर्मः ।’

“That which brings prosperity here and liberation hereafter is *Dharma*.”

(*Vaiśeṣika-Sūtras* I. i. 1-2)

This is a philosophical definition of *Dharma*. Now let us look at it from the point of view of the Smṛtis.

* अप्रामाण्ये च धर्मशास्त्रस्य प्राणमृतां व्यवहारलोपात् लोकच्छेदप्रसंगः । य एव मन्त्रब्राह्मणस्य द्रष्टारः प्रवक्तारश्च, ते खल्वितिहासपुराणस्य धर्मशास्त्रस्य चेति । विषयव्यवस्थानाच्च यथाविषयं प्रामाण्यम् । यज्ञो मन्त्रब्राह्मणस्य, लोकवृत्तमितिहासपुराणस्य, लोकव्यवहारव्यवस्थानं धर्मशास्त्रस्य विषयः । तत्रैकेन सर्वं व्यवस्थाप्यते इति यथाविषयमेतानि प्रमाणानि, इन्द्रियादिवत् इति ।

5—D. T. N.

The authors of Smṛtis have given the following definitions of *Dharma*:—

1. *Dharma* is the way which has been followed and lived, with perfect purity of heart, by the wise and the learned, who have neither likes nor dislikes, who wish well of all creatures, who are knowers of Vedas and whose conduct conforms to the standard of *Dharma*. That *Dharma*, when followed, brings to man the highest good. (Manu, Chapter II, verse 1).

2. *Dharmaśāstra* is the collection of teachings based on the highest truths of the Vedas and given out in plain and simple language by such great souls as Manu, Atri, Viṣṇu, Hārīta, Yājñavalkya, Uśanā, Angirā, Yama, Āpastamba, Saṃvarta, Kātyāyana, Bṛhaspati, Parāśara, Vyāsa, Śaṅkha, Likhita, Gotama, Śātātapa, Vasiṣṭha and others. The teachings embodied therein constitute the *Dharma* (Yājñavalkya, *Āchārādhyāya* 4-5).

3. The Śruti and Smṛti literatures, the way of living of the wise, the voice of the inner self and the truthful motive of a Sattvic mind,—all these are the bases of *Dharma*. The term *Dharma* is applied to all these and whatever goes against these is *Adharma*. (Yājñavalkya, *Āchārādhyāya* 7)

4. The Purāṇas, the philosophy of Nyāya, the philosophy of Mimāṃsā, the sacred codes of Manu and others, the six Angas (branches of knowledge helpful to the study of the Vedas such as Grammar, Astronomy, Prosody, etc.) and the four Vedas,—whatever has been taught in these fourteen Śāstras or branches of knowledge is our *Dharma*. (Yājñavalkya, *Āchārādhyāya* 3,5)

5. Whatever a committee of four learned men, who know the secret of the Vedas, or an assembly of the knowers of the three Vedas, the Traividya, or even a single man who has realized the spiritual truth, decides for us is our *Dharma*. (Yājñavalkya, *Āchārādhyāya* 9)

A study of these definitions of *Dharma* leads us to the conclusion that the Vedas as revealed to the divine vision of the great sages and seers of this holy land of ours; the codes of law compiled by Manu and other teachers of *Dharma*; the six systems of philosophy propounded by Jaimini and others; the six *Angas* of the Vedas as systematized by Pāṇini and other great sages; the *Purāṇas* and the historical narratives (such as the *Mahābhārata*); the *Śrauta* and *Smārta Sūtra*-texts (aphoristic teachings) of Gobhila, Lāṭyāyana, Āpastamba, Pāraskara, Manu and others, and all later compilations such as *Dharma-Sindhu*, *Nirṇaya-Sindhu*, *Śuddhi-Kalpa*, *Śrāddha-Viveka*, *Smārta-Dharma-Prakāśa*, and such other works of those learned scholars who had a deep insight into the essential truths of the *Śāstras* lay down for us rules and regulations conducive to our happiness and enjoin duties and conduct of life for every caste, sub-caste and *Āśrama*, according to the individual capacity of every member of society. These laws and duties constitute our *Dharma*, which is known to the world as Sanātana *Dharma*. To it we may also give the name of Hindu *Dharma*. It is the very life of the Hindu race. The Hindu race will continue to exist in the world only so long as it clings to this *Dharma*. There are many faiths, many religions, claiming their adherents in the different parts of the world; but among all these, Sanātana *Dharma* possesses a glory all its own, because it embodies principles which are eternal.

We find today Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Christianity and many other religions vying with Sanātana *Dharma*. Each of them seems to follow its own way. All of them appear to be engaged in extolling their own tenets as against the tenets of others. They all agree in disagreeing with each other on the very basic point, viz., what is *Dharma*. Thus they become a fruitful source

of creating doubts in the mind of an impartial seeker, with regard to the nature of *Dharma*. For the principle of *Dharma* is one and not many; the ill-conceived knowledge that takes shelter under many mutually opposing conceptions is the source of doubt 'एकस्मिन् धर्मणि विरुद्धानाकोट्यवगाहि ज्ञानं संशयः'. This doubt has raised a storm of discontent in India today. *Dharma*, which is calculated to bring peace to the world, is being made an instrument for exciting hatred and jealousy and spreading discontent and dissension everywhere. We cannot, however, doubt the great ability of the ancient sages of this land who promulgated Sanātana *Dharma*. Swami Dayananda, the illustrious founder of the society known as Aryasamaj, who was moved by the sight of the downfall of the great Hindu race, was indeed a great man. Lord Buddha, who abandoned a kingdom and all the enjoyments and comforts of a princely life for the good of humanity, holds a very high place in our estimation. None can doubt the greatness of Lord Mahāvira, who was a perfect ascetic and had conquered his passions. Zoroaster, the promulgator of *Zendavesta* and the maternal grandson of the seer Rjraśwa, was also a great sage. The prophet Mohammed, who proclaimed the existence of one God and none other, was a veritable gift to the human race from the Divine. Jesus Christ, who conquered death and attained immortality, was a sage of no mean order. But to find these religions, promulgated by such divine personalities, becoming a source of unrest instead of peace, naturally confounds human understanding. It is the duty of all leaders of thought to find a way out of this confusion. For the moment let us put aside the various branches of religion. Instead of offering criticisms for or against any particular religion, let us, in the first instance, define *Dharma* in an impartial spirit and by a strictly scientific method. A scientific definition of *Dharma* alone will dispel all our doubts about it.

(To be continued)

