

jñānāgri

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Simple, practical and experiential is the way of this gentle, unassuming sage from Annakara, Kerala. For Her Holiness, truth, dharma, ahimsa and purity have been the pillars of Her message.

In conversations, discourses and Upadesams, adherence to dharma has always been an important and essential teaching. With a soul dyed ochre this Jagathguru's constant refrain is – God is always on the side of dharma. To Her devotee, listener, followers and admirers, one thing is certain – dharma and its importance in day-to-day life is a timeless gurūpadeśam. *j*

Dharma, Her timeless gurūpadeśam





Never lose sight of Dharma

A noble-minded person never loses sight of Dharma whatever his position in life. Yudhistira in the forest could not go into the dirt that Duryodhana found so alluring. In good times and bad times one's principles should be the same, unchanging. A mean-minded person, even if he comes to a high position, behaves meanly. The noble, even when in dire straits, do not transgress the path of Dharma.

Her Holiness Sri Sathguru Swami Gnanananda Sarasvathi



Unique countenance, unique lessons

Some people, nay, souls have a unique countenance about them. They don't seem to have the ability to hurt anyone. It is in their way of living to be poised and patient. Enviably obedient to Guru, God and the laws of creation, they are an eternal example of *bhakti and saranagati*.

How does one describe the behavior and bhava of such souls? As *ahimsa*? *Vasudaiva Kutumbakam*? *Saucam*? *Satyam*, *gnanam* and *anantam*? A Jñani with a deep and transformative knowledge of our ancient scriptures?

One thing we know, that for Vishnu Mohan all this came naturally to him. Through knowledge, realization and practice. That was his life, dharma and way. *j*



Contents

Dharma: a quest for its definition 5

Dr. S. Sankaranarayanan

Ancient Indian thinkers seem to have been uniformly reluctant to offer a clear-cut definition of dharma, obviously due to certain difficulties. We shall attempt to study briefly what difficulties they might have had, how they overcame them by stages and how they finally succeeded and found a good definition of dharma.

Follow Dharma: let it protect thee 31

Dr. Goda Venkateswara Sastry

Dharma is a universal principle. It is the basic structure of this universe. There is nothing which can transgress this principle. It applies even though one is not aware of its presence and working. The article throws light on the common characteristics of dharma and the various types.

Dharma: one word with many meanings 51

Swahilya Shambhavi

Dharma means many things for many people and in many contexts. For a mother, a husband, a grahastha and more can find different meanings for dharma. It is not just human beings that have dharma. Dharma also means inherent nature. Dharma and its various meanings.

Concept of Dharma in the Tiruppāvai of Āṇḍāl 17

Prof. M. Narasimhachary

Nālayiradivya-prabandha is a collection of the hymns of Āzhvārs, approximately 4000 in number. The first Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācārya Śrī Nāthamuni was the compiler of Divyaprabha-nandam attributed to 12 Āzhvārs. The article examines the concept of Dharma as found in the Tiruppāvai of Āṇḍāl, the lady saint, consisting of just 30 stanzas which forms part of Divyaprabandha.

Rāmo vighrahavān

Dharmaḥ 38

T. R. Gopalakrishnan

Did Śrī Rāma conform to dharma? Before evaluating his actions, it is essential to understand the meaning of the word dharma. This word has been variously interpreted to mean, depending on the context - truth, duty, religion, compassion, righteousness, etc.

'Viśeṣa Dharma' or the concept of greater good 57

P. B. Sampath

The article examines the meaning and purport of the concept 'viśeṣa dharma'. Who is bound by 'viśeṣa dharma' or what are the circumstances in which the rule of 'viśeṣa dharma' will come into play, are interesting questions, perhaps more complex than the ones that the concept of 'sāmānya dharma' poses.

Glimpses of Dharma in the Yājñavalkya Smṛti 23

Dr. R. Thiagarajan

Dharma is really Truth. From ancient times the constitutional system depends on the foundation of Truth and social sympathy. Truth is the fundamental basis of the State; indeed the whole universe rests on Truth. The concept of 'Dharma' has therefore been with us since time immemorial.

The idea of Dharma: Religion 43

Dr. Braja Kishore Swain

The word 'religion' is very wide and has been variously defined. Its real significance is mystical and more inward, than outward. Generally the English word 'religion' is translated from the Sanskrit word 'dharma'. It is necessary to examine the corresponding meanings between these two words.

The presence of Dharma is the presence of God 62

Shrihariprasad

The light of dharma shines within but the light is obscured by the mind of the beings and the conditioning which that person has been exposed to. A person who has had the right influences and a proper approach to life will easily be able to take the right decisions in life because his mind is not obscured by thoughts of "I" and "mine".

<p>Dharma is the path of Hinduism 66</p> <p>Dr. Brahmashankar P. Vyas</p> <p>The term 'Dharma' can be said to mean the path of realization of the symbiosis between self and the universe. We are a part of the universe and we share a symbiotic reciprocal relationship with it. The universe sustains us and we in turn have to sustain the universe. This realization and its manifestation in action is dharma.</p>	<p>Dharma: the focal point of a changing universe 69</p> <p>Dr. Vidya Sayinath</p> <p>Dharma, though emerged from <i>Pūrvābhaga</i> of Veda or <i>Pūrvamīmāṃsa</i>, comes a long way, nourished and modified, reaches this present age which serves as a central chord on which this medley of existence is woven. Dharma can be equated with the all-powerful entity that controls this chaotic universe. Our scriptures are full of eulogy for dharma.</p>	<p>Dharma - the order of life Neela N. Desai 74</p> <p>We have to interact with each other, with the animals, with the trees and with the world. Relating is living, one cannot live in isolation. Therefore one has to always respond to what one relates to, one's responses can be right or wrong based upon common norms called as Order of dharma. In a given situation, what is proper and needs to be done is dharma.</p>
<p>Dharma is becoming what we really are 79</p> <p>Dr. C. A. Shinde</p> <p>The purpose of human life is to work to become what we really are. Will, Wisdom and Love is our real nature. This real nature needs to be expressed through our personality of thought, desire and action. Love should inspire Will and Will must direct the Wisdom and Wisdom then enables one to act according to his own Dharma.</p>	<p>Strike off thy fetters! Prof. P. K. Dayanand 84</p> <p>"Strike off thy fetters" is a clarion call to us from one of India's greatest <i>Sanyāsins</i>, Swami Vivekananda. "The Song of the Sanyasin" is a lyrical poem that flows with inspiration from the first line to the last and is sustained by immense power and grandeur. <i>Sanyāsa dharma</i> explained.</p>	<p>Dharma in the Darśanas Dr. K. Srinivasan 91</p> <p>All <i>Darśanas</i> adhere to the concept of dharma, though they differ in detail. The thousand names of the Lord contain five names for the Lord Viṣṇu with dharma. Moreover dharma is one of the or rather the first goal and objective of all human endeavours according to Hinduism. It is a <i>puruṣārtha</i>.</p>
<p>Sanga ilakkiyantalil dharmam 98</p> <p>Dr. R. Selvaganapathy</p> <p>A historical contextualization of Dharma in the Sangam literature. This article in Tamil with its well-researched and reasoned approach will have knowers of dharma reaching out to new windows in history.</p>	<p>The meaning of Dharma: Mīmāṃsaka's view 118</p> <p>Dr. S. Padmanabhan</p> <p>The expression dharma is well known to many of us and is being used in several senses. According to some it is used in the sense of one's own 'duty' - karma. Others equate dharma with '<i>ahimsā</i>' (non-cruelty) in accordance with the statement <i>ahimsā paramo dharmah</i>. Some others hold that truth, that is, satya is dharma. Thus each and every system or faith holds different views regarding dharma.</p>	<p>Dvaita Siddhanta Dharma 122</p> <p>Dr. Anuradha Sridhar</p> <p>Śrī Vedavyāsa composed the Brahmasūtras, the various purāṇas, Mahābhārata and simplified the Vedas and divided them into several branches. Unfortunately many philosophers and saints misinterpreted the Brahmasūtras in the subsequent period. Therefore, the very essence of the sūtras was lost and once again the deserving souls were deprived of the right knowledge.</p>

Dvaita Siddhantathil Dharmam 130 Nirmala Narasimhan Fresh perspectives and deeper explanations on Dvaita Siddhanta and the pervasive role of dharma.	Sources and Resources of Dharma 136 Dr. T. Narayanan Kutty Dharma through several vicissitudes leads to plurality of meaning, as 'ordinance, usage, duty, right, justice, morality, virtue, religion, good works, function or characteris- tic'. A humble and mere peep into the intricacies of the vast assets which have been named as Dharma.	Dharma: an intercultural perspective 146 Dr. L. Anthony Savari Raj In our contemporary cross- cultural human situation, cultures are invited, expected and even necessitated to renew themselves in facing fresh challenges. They have an opportunity to renew, affirm and assert their identities, not in splendid isolation, but in a new spirit of mutual fecundation.
Dharma: the Guiding Light 151 Dr. Priyadarshana Jain Modern man has left no stone unturned in pursuing the pursuits of <i>artha</i> and <i>kāma</i> . Spiritual ignorance, perverse-attitude, unlimited desires, greed, unrestraint, etc., engulf the modern minds, more than ever before. In this scenario it is dharma and dharma alone that is the saviour and guiding light...	The Dharmic life in Islam 159 Dr. P. Nisar Ahmed ' <i>Taqwa</i> ' is the equivalent term for Dharma in Islam, ' <i>Muttaqi</i> ' is the equivalent for 'Dharmic' personality. In the real sense of the term, <i>Muttaqi</i> is a person who is associated with God in all the matters of life, that is he lives under the shadow of direction and blessings of God.	Dharma in Jainism 163 Dr. R. Rajalakshmi The term dharma has become, in modern usage, the Indic equivalent of the western term religion, or Jaina dharma. It is commonly used in the expression ' <i>Ahimsā paramo dharmaḥ</i> '. Also used in the sense of duty. In Jainism, the term dharma is the nearest to what we understand by the word 'religion'.
Dharma from a Gandhian perspective 168 Dr. Lalitha Ramamurthy The word dharma has many dimensions. Some derive from it and some rest upon it depending on the needs and spiritual aspirations of people. So is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. There are many dimensions to M. K. Gandhi. Some derived from his personality and from the vast panorama of activities and some thrust upon him depending on the needs and motives of people.	Mahatma Gandhi and Yugadharma, 173 Svadharmā, Dharma V. R. Devika Mahatma Gandhi's life exemplifies the power and possibilities of practicing Dharma. Experiencing the injustice of racial prejudice, Gandhi saw that moral and political injustice were based on ignorance of the sacredness and unity of life. He believed it is a duty to practice the truth; that life is sacred. A duty to affirm the dignity of life and honor the sacred in all creation.	Buddhism: the science of the Mind 177 Ven. Dr. Bhikku Bodhipala According to Buddhism man is his own master. All his actions during his entire life from birth to death to rebirth cause variations, termed Karmic effects. At the same time a man and only the man can achieve the Buddhahood, by his own efforts rather than as an award bestowed on a man by a supernatural entity.

Returning to the Origin:
the peace of mind

182

Ven. Dr. Tenzin Namdak

Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings are still relevant for us today because the challenges he faced and overcome are ones we still face today. Specifically, Buddha showed a method for overcoming all the afflictive emotions such as anger, jealousy, and insatiable craving which disturb our peace of mind. Finally, Buddha showed how to overcome the universal sufferings of old age, sickness, and death.

Philosophy of Lord

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya

187

Dr. Tridandi Swami Srimad
Bhakti Hridaya Bon Maharaj

Śrī Caitanya rejected the empiric method of accepting material help for the realisation of the Transcendental Reality. People who are conscious follow the "Revealed Method", which inculcates that God reveals Himself in the shape of transcendental World, identical with His Form, Attributes, Entourage and Pastimes, through an unalloyed chain of preceptorial successions, to the submissive aural reception of sincere and willing listeners.

Dharma conversations

raj mohan tella

From our first issue in 2010 to the second one now, it has been a journey of learning and a continuing process of rediscovery. If our first steps were inspirational and instinctive, our current issue is triggered by our conviction, that *dharma* in all its facets and perspectives would help in creating new and fresh '*dharma conversations*'. This quest then led us to reaching out to learned writers, knowledgeable and fastidious academicians, practical discoverers of a way of living, insightful journalists and venerable gurus. They have made this issue rich, diverse, well researched and memorably readable.

What does our issue bring to the reader? Very simply put, articles in four broad sections – 1) essays on dharma, 2) reflections on dharma in a historical context, 3) perspectives on dharma from Jainism, Islam and more, with the last one being 4) *Gurubodhanas*. This, one could say is a mere functional description with the nectar hidden deep within. You as a reader have to decide the size and kind of vessel. Like Her Holiness Sri Sathguru Swami Gnanananda Sarasvathi says:

If there is a big vessel the guru can pour plenty of water or nectar into it. But if the vessel is small, what can the Guru do? The Guru can pour only that much into it which it can hold. Your heart is the vessel. If you fill it with worldly things and worldly thoughts, there will be little place for God. Instead fill your heart with humble trust, faith and devotion to Him and then your surrender will become perfect. Divine experiences will follow.

Discourse at Chinmaya Vidyalaya, 14th July, 2000

This issue begins with the venerable and learned Dr. S. Sankaranarayanan's solemn discussion on the quest for a definition of dharma. His literary exploration takes us on a journey unraveling some pearls from the Upanishads, Rigveda, Mahabharata and Ramayana, Dhammapada, Apastamba Dharmasutra and Vaisesikasutra. Prof. M. Narasimhachary's exposition of dharma in the Tiruppavai of Andal is bound to be a discovery of dharma, blissfully blended with devotion. The author says, "*When Bhakti is not there, no act of Dharma becomes meaningful.*" From Andal to Yajnavalkya Smriti is Dr. R. Thiagarajan's simple and insightful essay. Explaining to us the practical divisions of Dharma with Vyavahara Kanda (social laws) in pithy detail. Sraddha Dharma, Stri Dharma and Moksha Dharma are also his topics.

A practical, yet powerful understanding of the very purpose of enunciating dharma in vedic literature is what you can get from Dr. Goda Venkateswara Sastry's article.

To quote, *“When practised well, dharma will make the life of both the individual and the society blissful.”* Ramabhaktas will find T. R. Gopalakrishnan’s Ramo Vighrahan Dharma soul – stirring. Dr. Swain’s characteristic explanation of interrelationships between dharma and religion, mankind’s desires and efforts leads us to be convinced that there are a number of ‘religions’ in the world and they are classified by a number of persons in a number of ways. Two rhetorical statements from Swahilya Shambavi’s article will give you enough reason to discover the various meanings of dharma, *“How is man able to think, despite his minute proportion in the cosmic presence? That is because it is his dharma to be able to reflect on his own self, the origins from which he came and the point where he goes.”* *“Forget the non-vegetarians, even people who live on vegetarian food hurt plants and trees, cows-by taking the milk that is meant for their calves! The answer is not on what we eat, but how we eat...”*

Visesa Dharma – what is it, who is bound by it and all the related complexities is the capture of P.B. Sampath. The issue then seamlessly moves on to today’s times and the fact that, *“the light of dharma shines within all beings but the light is obscured by the mind of the beings and the conditioning which that person has been exposed to,”* is Shrihariprasad’s reiteration of Dharma’s presence being God’s presence. Citing instances from the Mahabharata and life of Buddha, he signs off with a ‘dharma reminder’ of his Guru.

This is followed by four articles – Dr. Vyas on Dharma being the avowed path of Hinduism, Vidya Sayinath on Dharma as a focal point, and Neela Desai emphasizing it is the order of life. Shinde exhorts us to become what we really are with adherence to dharma. The essay section ends with Prof. Dayanand’s involved and action seeking exhortation to strike off thy fetters! Swami Vivekananda and Sanyasa Dharma are his focus.

The section – reflections on dharma opens with the accomplished Dr. K. Srinivasan delving deep into the Darsanas. With the stamp of academic authority, the article is a short and forceful reflection on how all Darsanas adhere to the concept of dharma, though they differ in detail. This is followed by the historical contextualization of dharma in the Sangam literature by Dr. Selvaganapathy. This article in Tamil with its well-researched and reasoned approach will have knowers of dharma reaching out to new windows in history. A Mimamsaka’s view is Dr. Padmanabhan’s article. *“The Mimamsakas who directly commented on the Vedas, are of the view that the action or ritual itself is dharma. In this light, it is worth noting the view of the Mimamsakas about this term, as they have commented on the Mimamsa - sutras of Jainism which is an exposition on the karma kanda (the ritualistic section) of the vedas.”*

Next is Dvaita Siddhanta Dharma by Dr. Anuradha Sridhar. Drawing upon Madhva's philosophy, she makes a plea that philosophy is not for any intellectual speculation, but is a religion of practice. Further on the subject of Dvaita Siddhanta is Nirmala Narasimhan's article. This section signs off with Dr. Narayanan Kutty's detailed and comprehensive exposition of sources and resources of dharma. Beginning with Kalpasutras his exposition leads the reader into the origins and development of Dharmasastra and the various Dharmasutras. If you would like a quick peek into the ancient treasure-trove of dharma and its bearing on mankind, this article is a fine read.

Intercultural perspectives – beginning with Dr. Anthony Savari Raj's erudite observations of the *how and why* cultures are necessitated to renew themselves in facing fresh challenges is the focus. Suggesting that it would imply a renewal of metaphors ("Metamorphosis"), Dr. Anthony Raj brings out the relevance on how and why non-western cultures need to deepen their visions. *Jainadharma* both for the beginners and knowledgeable is Dr. Priyadarshana Jain's article. Simple definitions, diagrams and scholarly insights rest harmoniously in this perspective. *"Violence, insecurity, fear, pleasure-driven life, addictions, child abuse, racial discrimination, corruption, poverty, etc., are some of the social evils that prevail in our society and on the other hand spiritual ignorance, perverse-attitude, unlimited desires, greed, unrestraint, etc., engulf the modern minds than ever before. In this scenario it is dharma and dharma alone that is the saviour and guiding light, it is dharma sans the dogma and dogmatic beliefs and practices that can enlighten, elevate and liberate mankind."* Dr. Jain's point of view is for all of us, earnestly speaking. Dharmic life in Islam by Dr. Nisar Ahmed helps us to understand, *"What is Taqwa or Dharmic life, that is how men shall live in the shadow of God's dictates, and thus entering in an everlasting spiritual bliss."* Dr. Rajalakshmi says *"Jainadharma regards every living soul as potentially divine."* Simple statements of Jaina dharma with simpler explanations are highlights of this article. If Dharma without Gandhi makes the perspective section incomplete, we have two articles – by Dr. Lalitha Ramamurthy and V. R. Devika on Gandhian perspectives of dharma. A nice and valuable way to remember Gandhi and his impacting ways.

The last section of *Gurubodhanas* has as its *naandi* the knowledgeable and humble Ven. Dr. Bhikku Bodhipala on Buddhism, the Science of the Mind. *"Man is not inherently endowed with sin. Rather, his original position is supreme."* Hence like Buddha says, *"One should do his own work, the Buddhas only show the way."* That is just one nugget. Read it and you will discover "What the Mind" really is and how one can tame it and lead to attaining Enlightenment the '*Nibbana*'. In Ven. Dr. Tenzin Namdak's article you can revisit the Enlightened one, The Buddha. Always relevant and fresh, to say that loving kindness and compassion for others is the wisdom from under the Bodhi tree is not only apt, but timely. Our

issue ends with the philosophy of Sri Krsna Chaitanya who discussed the nature of the individual soul and the Godhead and their inter-relationship. Dr. Tridandi Maharaj's scholarly approach not only helps us understand the various relationships between creation and creator, it allows us to ponder on the aspects of Absolute Reality.

We place this issue, like always at the lotus feet of our Guru , the revered Sri Sathguru Swami Gnanananda Sarasvathi and rededicate ourselves to the spirit of enquiry and knowledge with humility and hope. *j*

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