

The Concept of Dharma under Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh Religions: A Comparative Analysis

Authors : Venkateswarlu Kappara

Abstract : The term 'Dharma' is complex and ubiquitous. It has no equivalent word in English Initially applied to Aryans. In Rig Veda, it appears in a number of places with different meanings. The word Dharma comes from the roots word 'dhr' (Dhri-Dharayatetiiti Dharmaha). Principles of Dharma are all pervading. The closest synonyms for Dharma in English is 'Righteousness.' In a holy book Mahabharata, it is mentioned that Dharma destroys those who destroy it, Dharma Protects those who protect it. Also, Dharma might be shadowed, now and then by evil forces, but at the end, Dharma always triumphs. This line embodies the eternal victory of good over evil. In Mahabharata, Lord Krishna says Dharma upholds both, this worldly and other worldly affairs. Rig Veda says, 'O Indra! Lead us on the path of Rta, on the right path over all evils.' For Buddhists, Dharma most often means the body of teachings expounded by the Buddha. The Dharma is one of the three Jewels (Tri Ratnas) of Buddhism under which the followers take refuge. They are: the 'Buddha' meaning the minds perfection or enlightenment, the Dharma, meaning the teachings and the methods of the Buddha, and the Sangha meaning those awakened people who provide guidance and support followers. Buddha denies a separate permanent 'I.' Buddha Accepts Suffering (Dukka). Change / impermanence (Anicca) and not- self (Annatta) Dharma in the Buddhist scriptures has a variety of meanings including 'phenomenon' and 'nature' or 'characteristic.' For Sikhs, the word 'Dharma' means the 'path' of righteousness' The Sikh scriptures attempt to answer the exposition of Dharma. The main Holy Scripture of the Sikh religion is called the Guru Granth Sahib. The faithful people are fully bound to do whatever the Dharma wants them to do. Such is the name of the Immaculate Lord. Only one who has faith comes to know such a state of mind. The righteous judge of Dharma, by the Hukam of God's Command, sits and Administers true justice. From Dharma flow wealth and pleasure. The study indicates that in Sikh religion, the Dharma is the path of righteousness; In Buddhism, the mind's perfection of enlightenment, and in Hinduism, it is non-violence, purity, truth, control of senses, not coveting the property of others. The comparative study implies that all religions dealt with Dharma for welfare of the mankind. The methodology adapted is theoretical, analytical and comparative. The present study indicates how far Indian philosophical systems influenced the present circumstances and how far the present system is not compatible with Ancient philosophical systems. A tentative generalization would be that the present system which is mostly influenced by the British Governance may not totally reflect the ancient norms. However, the mental make-up continues to be influenced by Ancient philosophical systems.

Keywords : Dharma, Dukka (suffering), Rakshati, righteous

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