BOOK ONE

Chapter I

CONCEPT OF DHARMA AND ITS RELATION
TO RAJDHARMA
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The most fundamental principle in Indian thought and life, and yet the most overlooked and even misunderstood, perhaps, is dharma. Not many scholars seem to have realized some of the deeper implications of dharma; it may be pointed out in all fairness to some, that we find a few references here and there to the profounder nature of this concept. The significance of Plato's conception of justice has also been similarly underrated. To the naive translator dharma would appear to be as simple as 'law', 'religion', 'social relations', 'ritual', 'conduct' etc. The present writer intends to show that this concept would include all these meanings and yet imply something more profound than indicated by any of the above meanings.

A major part of this work is devoted to the nature of rājadharma with reference to the original sources of this idea in the ancient texts like the Manusmṛti, the Vaiśeṣika-sūtra, the Mahābhārata and the Kautilya's Arthashastra; here the subordination of rājadharma to the wider idea of 'dharma' is sought to be expounded. All dharmas owe their origin and inspiration to the central conception of dharma, rājadharma being the most important of these. In this chapter, it is intended to bring out in some detail the nature, significance and scope of the central doctrine, as a preliminary step, before
we go on to elaborate and critically study rājadharma. Dharma as stated earlier, is to be regarded as pivotal to all Indian thought and practice. It may be emphasised at the very outset that in our exposition of dharma and rājadharma, we shall try to bring out their ethical import much more than is done by the meanings generally given by a large number of modern writers to these vocables.

In these pages, the subject is basically studied from a theoretical angle. This means that our view is, in general, derived not from the actual working of political and social institutions in the past, but from an interpretation of the smṛti texts. The study of any ethical conception, theoretically, would involve a normative approach; and in our view, dharma and rājadharma and other dharmas are ethical conceptions as they deal largely with human conduct, and, hence, a normative approach in their case would be unavoidable. The positivists, like B.K. Sarkar,1 might not accept a normative view of Indian ethics, and hence might resort to a different approach. This, however, does not affect the ethical assumptions with which we start this study. In fact it is shown in the subsequent pages that dharma cannot be anything but a normative concept, dealing with the ideal rather than the actual. The interpreter of the ancient texts, as of necessity, should restrict himself to an exposition of what the authors wrote or meant, without superimposing his own views except when critically assessing
them. A reference in this connection to the actual social organisation may be useful and relevant, because the study of any values cannot be completely isolated from their actual manifestation in the social organisation. Thus, dharma in the following pages is interpreted as a normative concept, but at the same time as manifesting itself, in various degrees, in actual life. The influence of dharma has, therefore, to be studied on individual life under āśramadharma and on the fourfold order of social organisation under varṇadharma.

A study of the ancient Indian society reveals the operation of varṇadharma and āśramadharma as governing the relations between man and man. As for the influence of dharma on the life of the king, we have maintained in the succeeding pages that rājadharma is only an extension of varṇāśramadharma and an enlargement of Kṣatradharma. The ideals prescribed by the smṛti writers were intended to be of practical application. In other words, rājadharma was not only a precept and an ideal but an idea which was sought to be realised in actual life; whether it in fact was fully realized or not at any particular time is of little relevance. The real spirit of rājadharma consists not in trying to reach a remote ideal but in the king's being conscious of the dictates of the command from within - these dictates arising out of the station in which he is placed. Since rājadharma is described to be 'the highest of all dharmas', 2 the king has to be "the instrument to realise the goal of
dharma" not only in himself but also in his subjects - the subjects too being conscious of the norm as much as the ruler. The bond which unifies the members of a community cannot be superficial if the community is to have any cohesion and culture. It must be characterised by the enlightened consciousness of each member of the community, of a common goal or purpose. Thus rājadharmā cannot be isolated from the dharma of each one of the citizens.

The state in ancient India was centred around monarchy. This means that the functions of the state were largely identical with the dharma of the king. With all its cumbersome machinery geared up for administration, the state was actually discharging its functions in fulfilment of the duties of the king arising spontaneously from within him. Just as the head of a family regards it as his duty to protect and bring up other members, so also has the king, if he follows the true precepts of rājadharmā, protect and nurture a similar affection towards his people. As Kane says, "The state was not an end in itself but only a means to an end". Such an ideal is wholly different from Louis XIV's dictum 'L'état c'est moi'. What Louis XIV meant was that his rights were absolute and that there was no need for a state other than the king. The king's functions were also identical with those of the state in ancient Indian thought, and the king was expected to assume all the functions of the state in order to safeguard the
interests of the people. Furthermore, the institution of kingship symbolises within itself the ideal that each individual strives to realise. Rājadharma, hence, is regarded as the highest of all dharmas. In other words the Indian ideal of a 'raja' is not that of a tyrant or even of an absolute king who makes laws at his will to suit his own convenience but that of a 'dharmanravartaka' - one who enforces and nourishes the supreme law, dharma.

DHARMA - ITS MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE

Monier-Williams' Sanskrit-English Dictionary has given a very elaborate list of the meanings of dharma. Some of these meanings are: (1) That which is established or firm, steadfast decree, statute, ordinance, law. (2) Usage, practice, customary observance or prescribed conduct, duty. (3) Right, justice (a synonym of danda or punishment). (4) Virtue, morality, religion, religious merit, good works. (5) The nature of anything. (6) Law or justice personified. (7) The ethical precepts of Buddhism. (8) Nature, character, peculiar condition or essential quality, property, mark, peculiarity. (9) A particular ceremony. (10) Sacrifice. (11) The ninth mansion (in astrology) etc. etc.

From these different meanings given by Monier-Williams it is quite clear that the word has a very wide
connotation. Indeed as Kane remarks at the very beginning of his monumental History of Dharmastra, "Dharma is one of those Sanskrit words that defy all attempts at an exact rendering in English or any other tongue." 7 Kane himself discusses the problem of definition of dharma elaborately. R.C. Zaehner 8 also remarks that there are two distinct general senses in which the word dharma is used in the great Hindu texts. The first sense corresponds approximately to what we call 'canon law', or law that is clearly defined and minutely explained in the legal treatises. But there is a second and more subtle sense which is of greater importance and which may be expressed as the eternal law that governs all human and non-human existence and operates in both nature and the moral order.

In this section it is proposed to analyse in detail the meaning of dharma and to relate it with rajadharma.

The word dharma comes from the root dhr - 'to hold, have, or maintain'. From the same or a cognate root are derived the Latin firmus, 'firm', and forma, 'form'. So the primary meaning of dharma is the 'form' of things as they are and the power that keeps them as they are and not otherwise. Dharma 'upholds the heavens' 9 and 'all things rest in dharma'. 10 The earth with the terra-firma is sustained by dharma. 11 As in the physical world dharma maintains the whole universe, so, in the moral sphere, it maintains the human race through the working of the eternal
moral laws or principles, which are often referred to as 'the ancient laws' or 'the ancient statutes' and 'the first principles' in the Rgveda. Dharma is also spoken of at many places in the Vedas as 'ancient' and 'eternal'. In the hymns of the Rgveda the word is used both as a noun and as an adjective. As a noun it is used both in the masculine gender and the neuter gender and as much in the singular number as in the plural number. The broad sense conveyed by the earlier Vedic texts is undoubtedly that of 'cosmic order', 'moral order', and 'moral law' or 'moral laws'. The term in the latter sense may also be rendered as 'statute' or 'ordinance', conveying moral and ethical sanction. A Rgvedic seer prays:

\[
\text{Acitti yat tava dharma yuyopima ma nas tasmad enaso deva \textit{ritishah}.} \]

"Whatever sins we committed, 0' Lord, by unknowingly violating your laws, that you may forgive us".

Dharma also came to acquire a ritualistic sense and was equated with rites as also their performance in accordance with vedic injunctions. "The gods performed a vai\textipa (sacrificial rite) with (no other means but) the vai\textipa (itself). These were the first rituals." The word was also used in the sense of 'merit acquired by the performance of religious rites'. In the Ait\textit{r}eya-br\textit{\ddot{a}hmana}, the word dharma seems to be used in an abstract sense, viz 'the whole body of religious duties'. In later texts it also stands for the peculiar duties of each var\textit{\textipa} and each \textit{\ddot{a}grama}. 


According to Kane, dharma in the famous exhortation by the Kulapati to the snātakas (graduates who had completed their education) viz. 'Satyam vada; dharmam cara etc.' is used in this very sense. The dharma śāstras and the Bhagavad Gītā use the term svadharma in this sense as opposed to dharma which has a far wider connotation and covers all dharms, like svadharma, varṇāśramadharma, naiṣṭīlīk-dharma, gṛha-dharma etc. Rajadharma comes under gṛha-dharma, which denotes duties of a person because of his special station in life like that of the king. Kane explains gṛha-dharma as 'the duty of the crowned king'. The Vaiśeṣika-sūtra defines dharma as 'that from which results happiness (in this world) and final beatitude' (yat bhūvadānyāṃ niḥśreyasa-siddhiḥ sa dharmaḥ 1.1.2). There are also other more or less one-sided definitions of dharma, such as -

ahimsā paramo dharmaḥ. (Aṁuśāsanaparva 115.1)

'Non-injury is the highest dharma'.

āṇrasamsyam param dharmaḥ. (Vanaparva 373.76)

'Non-cruelty is the foremost dharma'.

Acharah paramo dharmaḥ. (Manu 1.108)

'Good conduct is the highest dharma'.

There is no need to quote further from the ancient texts, for the references given above are sufficient to highlight the general import of the conception of dharma. Summing up we may say that, in respect of the physical world, dharma denotes the natural or the cosmic law. In respect
of the social and the ethic spheres dharma stands for the moral law which holds together all the people. The Indian life throughout the ages has been deeply influenced by the great ethical and moral ideals which the concept of dharma has placed before its people. Followers of different beliefs and mutually opposed philosophies, all combined to accept the supremacy of dharma and pay homage to it as the supreme end to be realized in this world and as 'the only friend who accompanies man to the next world'. The different facets of the concept of dharma have been very lucidly brought out in his definition of the term by Edgerton: "Dharma is propriety, socially approved conduct, in relation to one's fellowmen or to other living beings (animals or superhuman powers). Law, social usage, morality, and most of what we ordinarily mean by religion, all fall under this head." 

According to Ramachandra, the term dharma denotes the following primary meanings in the various schools of ancient Indian philosophy:

1) The Sāṅkhya School makes dharma a specific function of the mind.

2) The Buddhists regard it as a disposition of the mind.

3) The Jaina atomists make dharma a force within the material particles (pudgala); these forces are responsible for creating particular effects.

4) The Vaiśeṣikas regard dharma as qualities of the self (ātman).

5) For the Prabhākaras, it is the transcendental element, which creates specific results from specific acts.
vi) For the Dëśastas, it signifies the rituals.

In the six systems of Indian Philosophy the ethical import of dharma is not as prominent as it is in the smritis. Although the Maimûnsitas start their enquiry with an investigation into the nature of dharma, yet their approach to dharma is ritualistic i.e. concerned mainly with religious ceremonies. This leads them to define dharma in a somewhat mechanical way as an aggregate product, accruing from the performance of rituals in accordance with vedic injunctions and prohibitions. The other classical schools of Indian philosophy (the Sûthrya, the Nyâya, the Vaiûsika, the Yoga and the Vedânta) are concerned with topics that have little to do with the ethical; and hence we do not find dharma figuring with any prominence in these systems. A number of Vedântins wrote commentaries on the Brahma Sûtra, the ethical import of which is as significant as the metaphysical. But as the Vedântins are interested only in the metaphysical their treatment of the ethical aspect of dharma has been only secondary.

In the Upanisads too, the idea of dharma appears very prominently in its full ethical significance, but since the three topics in which the Vedântins are overwhelmingly interested are the brahman or the absolute reality, the atman or the self and the nature of the external world, they almost totally ignore the ethics of the Upanisads, and all their interpretation is aimed at
explaining the metaphysics of these three topics. These commentators, therefore, have failed to bring out the ethical meaning of dharma for which we have to turn to the writers of the smrtis.

The Buddhists, however, are deeply interested in the ethical concept of dharma, and Stcherbatsky thinks that dharma is the central conception of Buddhism. The foundations of Buddhism being ethical, the Buddhist philosophers devote so much attention to the idea of dharma.

The Buddhist conception of dharma which is more or less a re-statement of its import as given in the Vedas and the dharma-sastras, may be stated in brief as follows. Dharma is the moral law as also the universal law or the principle which imposes order on the universe. In its moral form, dharma is not external but arises from within. Dharma as the universal law includes within it all things in so far as 'ordering' exists in every particular existence if it is to have any meaning at all. What is important in the variety of existent things is not that they are mere things - but that they are ordered things - things within a system, particulars in a logically consistent whole. The moral universe as well as the cosmic universe are systems with dharma inherent in them. It is a fusion of both form and matter, of the universal and the particular, the law and the thing and the order and the ordered. When we refer to the particular dharman we fail to notice the all-pervasive and
The actual conditions of the existent things make us overlook the universal order of which they are but a part. It is the latter that the Buddhists sought to realise. As in the idea of Platonic justice, dharma represents but a system of laws linked together by reason. The dharmadhūtu is the highest reality of the Buddhists—the transcendent, indeterminate and inconceivable principle behind all things. According to the Buddhists, "The structure of the universe is ethical. It is dharmabhūta." The universe manifests within it a principle of ordering. This ordering is that which characterises existence itself in all its forms. This principle is dharma. Such a view of dharma is a kind of rationalism reminding one of the Hegelian doctrine. Although it represents an advance over the orthodox interpretation of dharma, it might suffer from the same serious defect as the Hegelian rationalism suffers from. The universal is over-emphasised at the cost of the particular. Further it might give rise to a mechanical conception of the moral universe, where scant regard is paid to freedom; and the way in which the Buddhist thinkers take seriously the law of karma, makes one suspect the mechanist implications inherent in their doctrine. All these issues arise not from a consideration merely of the Buddhist doctrine of dharma, but are general issues unavoidable in any serious discussion of that doctrine. In this work, it is proposed to examine the full implications of these
issues, in their particular reference to the social order envisaged by the ancient Indian thinkers.

II

An analysis of the views of the various scholars regarding the meaning and significance of dharma shows that some of these interpretations are narrow in so far as they treat dharma only in some of its aspects, and not in its entirety. But it would be worthwhile to take up a few of the more adequate interpretations for a detailed and critical examination so as to enable us to come to a satisfactory conclusion regarding the nature and significance of the concept. The views of S. Radhakrishnan and P.T. Raju will be considered in the following pages, as they appear to do more justice to the significance of the notion.

On the concept of dharma, the views of Radhakrishnan are expressed precisely in his Hindu View of Life, Heart of Hindustan and Religion and Society, though we find a mention of dharma in almost all his works. Radhakrishnan says that "dharma is not a religious creed or cult imposing an ethical or social rule. It is the complete rule of life, the harmony of the whole man who finds a right and just law of his living." 31 He reinforces this view by the statement that "It is a living spirit which grows and moves in response to the development of society." 32 What Radhakrishnan means
is simply that dharma has an ethical touch about it; it cannot be associated merely with religion or with law or the social order. It is a principle that underlies all things—animate and inanimate; it is a basic principle of ordering in all things. Dharma is not a fixed rule but a dynamic force. As an ethical ideal, dharma "is the law of right living, the observance of which secures the double object of happiness on earth and salvation". Religion has no meaning apart from dharma—the supreme principle which explains order in nature as well as in man. The commonplace translation of dharma as religion is, therefore, inadequate. Acceptance of dharma involves only the acceptance of that principle which shapes our individual life as well as the events of the world. Radhakrishnan proclaims that 'Hinduism is more a culture than a creed'. The essential basis for Hindu Society is the supreme principle of dharma and this is the very reason why in every walk of human activity we find it predominant. In the individual and social spheres we have the varnāsrama-dharma, in law we have the vyavahāradharma, as expounded in the various dharmasāstras and in the field of politics we have rājādharma. In fact there is no walk of life in which dharma does not have a say.

At another place, Radhakrishnan remarks: "Dharma is right action. In the Rgveda, rta is the right order of the universe. It stands for both the satva or the truth of things as well as the dharma or the law of evolution. Dharma
formed from the root $dhr$, to hold, means that which holds a thing and maintains it in being. *Dharma* or virtue is conformity with the truth of things; *adharma* or vice is opposition to it. Moral evil is disharmony with the truth which encompasses and controls the world". 35

It will thus be seen that Radhakrishnan gives a very wide connotation to the meaning of *dharma* and makes a significant departure from many other contemporary interpreters of Indian thought, 36 who define dharma only in terms of 'law', 'religion', 'duty', 'action', 'morality' etc. Yet unlike the original Buddhist doctrine which would regard *dharma* as basic both to the physical and the moral universe, Radhakrishnan seems in his interpretation of Hinduism to narrow it down to the moral universe alone and interpret it vis-a-vis human action. In other words, the Buddhist doctrine makes *dharma* a moral as well as a metaphysical reality, unlike Radhakrishnan's interpretation of the orthodox Hindu doctrine which stresses only its ethical import.

In recent years there has been some rethinking on *dharma* by such eminent writers as P.T. Raju, K.V.R.Aiyangar, Aldous Huxley and R.C. Zaehner. They all stress that the cardinal principle of Hindu thought and life is *dharma*. Hinduism has no organised set of beliefs and it is unlike other religions in so far as it has no prophet and no single holy book. There is no counterpart of Christ or Mohammed
in Hinduism. Hinduism is evolved as a way of life rather than as a religious creed. It is capable of accommodating many religious beliefs within its fold. But it does not lose its integrity despite its not fulfilling the qualifications of a religious dogma. What unites the people of India is a belief in the spirit of dharma. As K.V.R. Aiyangar puts it, "What has not been stressed by most observers, but is the real test, is the acceptance of dharma as the normative feature of life and the duty to act according to it, as the universal norm of life and conduct by all who claim to be Hindus. The exposition of dharma in relation to life thus becomes an imperative need of society and of the individuals who compose it". The universal law is binding on all, whatever denominations they belong to or whatever social position they are in. This is the reason why there are various dharmas like varpadharma, āśramadharma, strīdharma, rājadharma etc. Aiyangar gives comprehensive account of Hindu society as based on the principle of dharma. He has then extended his conclusions to the study of rājadharma. Aiyangar has in fact only confirmed Radhakrishnan's views about Hinduism being more a culture than a creed. And his conclusions are based on an extensive study of dharmaśāstras and dharmaśūtras.

The two scholars who have done monumental work in connection with the dharmaśāstras are P.V. Kane and K.V.R. Aiyangar. These writers do not appear to have been prejudiced
by the purely metaphysic approach of the Vedāntins, and we find in their writings little traces of the Vedāntic outlook which characterises Radhakrishnan's thought. Aiyangar's definition of the dharmaśāstras is a pointer to this: "Dharmaśāstra is a comprehensive code to regulate human conduct in accordance with the unalterable scheme of Creation, and to enable every one to fulfil the purpose of his birth. The whole life of Man, considered both as an individual and as a member of groups (small and large) as well as man's relation to his fellowmen, to the rest of animated creation, to super-human beings, to cosmos, generally and ultimately to God come within the purview of dharmaśāstra". 39

P.T. Raju's interpretation in many respects is a more advanced view than Aiyangar's, as he takes into consideration not only the ethical and social aspects of dharma but has given it a firm philosophical basis. In his two books The Idealistic Thought of India and India's Culture and Her Problems he has stressed the need for reorientation of philosophical thinking in India. Indeed dharma is one of the fundamental concepts of Indian philosophy common to most schools of thought but has not been treated as such by most of our writers. This is probably due to the influence of the Vedāntins who in their enthusiasm to discover the Brahman have been biased by their logical and metaphysical outlook and are indifferent to ethical and social thought.
It is probably this trend that has led to the criticism advanced in some quarters that Indian thought is unethical and that it emphasises asceticism at the cost of social service. The Buddhist thought is an exception to this. It has ethical foundations and is based on life as it is lived and the sufferings involved by ignorance of dharma. Raju gives special attention to the Buddhist interpretation of dharma in his *Idealistic Thought of India*. In this interpretation he is guided by such well known pioneers in the study of Buddhism as Oldenberg and Stcherbatsky. Raju has not only viewed this concept of dharma as central to Buddhism but has stressed that it underlies the whole of Indian thought. This provides a welcome change in the general pattern of Indian thinking which during the last fifty years had become more or less unprogressive and even dogmatic by its adherence to the Vedic tradition. The emphasis of Raju is that 'Dharma is the central conception of Indian idealism', and since Indian thought is overwhelmingly idealistic, one would have to examine the implications of this view. It is as an ethical concept of value that dharma derives its full significance. The Jñānavogins in their efforts to discover a rational and transcendental absolute have tended to ignore the values of empirical life. "Values" said Hoffding, "must always be discovered and produced in the world of experience before they can be conceived or assumed to exist in a higher world". The philosophical possibility of a realm of transcendental
values is not disputed by Raju and is in fact relevant when we consider our empirical life. Raju's approach is not to seek the foundation for values from the transcendental but from the realm of the human, the empirical.43

The real synthesis between the transcendental and the empirical can come about only when we effect a harmony between Jñāna and Karma (knowledge and action). The Vedāntins have certainly emphasised Karma as a pre-condition to Jñāna but do not go beyond a verbal emphasis. A study of the dharmasāstras and arthasāstras alone can enable us to understand and appreciate the values that the ancient Indians attached to an ethical, clean and orderly living.

The study we are undertaking in the succeeding pages is an attempt to explore into the empirical values involved in rājadharmā. In this task, the present writer seeks to carry forward the conclusions of P.T. Raju to an elaborate study of rājadharmā, keeping in view the general nature of dharma as 'the innermost nature, the essence and the implicit truth of all things'.44 As we proceed further, an attempt will be made to analyse and examine in detail the various aspects of political and social life as outlined in the ancient texts. We shall also critically examine some of the theories on ancient Indian polity which stress rather the naive aspects of rājadharmā, not emphasising the deeper and the fuller significance of dharma as underlying the concept. With this aim in view we propose to undertake
later in this work a study of rājadharma as enunciated in the dharmaśāstras and Kautilya's arthaśāstra.

The justification for this modest attempt can be provided by illustrating the two possible approaches to the study of Plato. One of these would give greater importance to Plato's metaphysical ideas rather than to his ethical and social theory. The second approach would deal with Plato's ethical and social thought with greater emphasis. The synthesis would, of course, be based on seeing Plato's works as a composite whole; but this does not seem to have been the trend with some of Plato's interpreters. Students of political thought study Plato from an angle different from that of the students of philosophy. Our approach to dharma and rājadharma is based neither on the one-sided metaphysical view of the metaphysicians nor on the descriptive formulations of the students of ancient Indian political and social thought, but on a synthesis of the two.

It may be noted in this connection that Plato's conception of justice has a very striking similarity with the Indian ideal of dharma. Urwick in his work on Plato points out that Plato's idea of justice (δικαιοσύνη) bears a close resemblance to dharma as expressed in Indian texts. Like dharma Plato's justice aims at attaining an equilibrium in an otherwise diverse society. Plato's division of society into three groups based on the predominant virtues of
each of them reminds one of the varnadharma. He gave the highest place to wisdom as the characteristic virtue of a philosopher. In the Hindu scheme of life the Brāhmaṇa was the man of wisdom and of learning who occupied the highest place in the community. According to Plato, next came the warrior, who had courage as his predominant virtue; the counterpart of this is the Kṣatriya. Those who had temperance were classed as the lowest in society, the counterpart of which in the Indian scheme of life is to be found in the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras. Both in Plato and in the Indian scheme of life justice or dharma is the moving spirit behind the social order. Just as the ideal of justice has to be attained in the social sphere, it has also to be attained in man's inner nature. Plato says: "In reality justice was such as we were describing, being concerned, however, not with the outward man but with the inward, which is the true self and concernment of man: for the just man does not permit the several elements within him to interfere with one another, or any of them to do the work of others, - he sets in order his own inner life, and is his own master and his own law, and at peace with himself; and when he has bound together the three principles within him, which may be compared to the higher, lower, and middle notes of the scale, and the intermediate intervals - when he has bound all these together, and is no longer many, but has become one entirely temperate and perfectly adjusted nature, then he proceeds to
act, if he has to act, whether in a matter of property, or in the treatment of the body, or in some affair of politics or private business; always thinking and calling that which preserves and co-operates with this harmonious condition, just and good action, and the knowledge which presides over it, wisdom, and that which at any time impairs this condition, he will call unjust action, and the opinion which presides over it ignorance."^47

Pharma, too, is not a special virtue but the fundamental principle of all virtues, the common spirit which unites all virtues into an ordered system conferring an equilibrium to all classes, making them a harmonious whole. As Plato himself views it, justice represents the 'natural order' - identical with the health of the body and the society. In both the individual and the social spheres the attainment of common end is the impelling motive; this end relates to the realisation of a state of harmony and perfect form. Pharma, similarly, has a social and an individual side. It is the guiding spirit of all individual actions, while it is not itself a special virtue; and on the social side it is the spirit behind the order and the equilibrium in the community. Plato's principle of justice covers the provinces of both ethics and politics. Justice is the most comprehensive name for virtue, and every virtue is a form of justice; similarly all dharmas are just forms of the natural order called dharma. The relation between
the individual and the state, the duties of the king, and
the enforcement of legal justice are the ways in which dharma
gets reflected in the individual, the social and the
political life. Law then is just the means through
which this highest principle is sought to be attained.

It would be helpful to consider in this context
the theme of the Bhagavad Gita and its allegorical meaning.
The chariot illustration appears conspicuously in both
Plato's Dialogues and the Upanishads. It is the main
theme of the Bhagavad Gita too. The horses of the chariot
represent the senses, and the chariot as a whole represents
the human body. Arjuna and Krishna symbolise the lower
and the higher selves. The lower self wants to obey the
dictates of sentiment, reason and conscience. But the
higher self over-rules all this in favour of dharma or
the natural order. Kuruksetra is symbolised as dharma-
Ksetra where the battle between the order and the disorder
(dharma and adharma) is being fought. And with the backing
of the divine, dharma always triumphs. The legend also
illustrates the principle which should guide the king of
the stature of Dharmaraja. The Dharmaraja of the Gita
and the Mahabhara may be regarded as the true embodiment
of Plato's ideal of a philosopher king - a ruler who always
upholds dharma or the natural order against adharma or
disorder.
1. This seems to be the view B. H. Sarkar maintains in his book *Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*.

2. *Mahabharata* - *Santiparva* - 63.29:

   Sarve tvaya rajadharmasya drsti
   Sarve aksha rajadharme vietah,
   Sarvaya vidya rajadharmasya cikham,
   Sarve loka rajadharme pravistah.


4. Compare, in this connection, the last hymn of the *Rg-Veda* (X-191) where we have: "A common purpose do I lay before you. One and the same be your resolve, and be your minds of one accord. United be the thoughts of all that all may happily agree".


11. 'dhruvam bhūnim prthivyā dharmā purā' - *Atharva-Veda* XII, 17. and also *Rg-Veda* X.90.16.

12. 'tāṃ dharmanā prathamānyāsan' - *Rg-Veda* I.64.43; 'pratihā prātihā' - *Rg-Veda* III.17.1.

13. *e.g.* 'dharmam purānam arunālayanti' - *Atharva-Veda* : 13.3.1.
14. e.g. 'dharma-nil samata na dudusat' - Rg-Veda III.3.1.

15. Rg-Veda - I.187.1, I.22.19, V.26.6, VIII.43.24, and IX.34.1.

16. Rg-Veda - IV.53.3, V.56.3, V.63.7, VI.70.1, I.34.43, 1.64.50, and X.90.16.

17. Rg-Veda - VII.39.5.

18. Rg-Veda - I.164.50


23. e.g. the famous line of the Bhagavat Gītā: 'āyāt描写


26. 'Ek eva suhṛd dharma nighane' avanvāti vah': Karna VIII-17.

23. J.K. Nair in his book *Ethics of the Hindus*, p-65 quoting Ramchandra summarises the various meanings of dharma in the Schools of Indian Philosophy in the above manner.

29. Cf. The very first Sutra in Jaimini - 'atthato dharma-jijnasa'.


33. Ibid., p-27.

34. Ibid., p-14.


37. Cf. R.G. Zaehner - "Hinduism is quite free from any dogmatic affirmations concerning the nature of God; and the core of religion is never felt to depend on the existence or non-existence of God, or on whether there is one God or many; for it is perfectly possible to be a good Hindu whether one's personal views incline towards monism, monotheism, polytheism or even atheism". - Hinduism, pp - 1-2.

Cf. Aldous Huxley - *The Perennial Philosophy*, p-176.: "The Sanskrit dharma - one of the key words in Indian formulations of the Perennial Philosophy - has two principal meanings. The dharma of an individual is, first of all, his essential nature, the intrinsic law of his being and development. But dharma also signifies the law of righteousness and piety. The implications of this double meaning are clear: a man's duty, how he ought to live, what he ought to believe and what he ought to do about his beliefs - these things are conditioned by his essential nature, his constitution and temperament.
Going a good deal further than do the Catholics, with their doctrine of vocations, the Indians admit the right of individuals with different dharmas to worship different aspects or conceptions of the divine. Hence the almost total absence, among Hindus and Buddhists, of bloody persecutions, religious wars and proselytizing imperialism.


41. Raju P.T. - *Idealistic Thought of India*, p-29. (Raju himself wrote a book on Advaita entitled *Thought and Reality*).

42. Hoffding - *Philosophy of Religion*, p-323.

43. Ref. His recent works *Indian Idealism and Its Modern Challenges and Concept of Man* (The latter in collaboration with Radhakrishnan).

44. Tagore Rabindranath - *Sadhana*, p.74.

45. Urwick - *Massacre of Plato*, p-74. Urwick maintains that justice is a wrong translation of the Greek Dikaiosune. He says, "This extraordinary and entirely un-Greek definition of Dikaiosune is explained by the meaning of Dharma."

46. Cf. Irwin Edward interpreting Plato's idea of Justice remarks: "... Justice is Plato's name for that kind of individual life where every "part of the soul" does its own business", and life of the state where each individual and each class performs its appropriate function. Justice in the individual and justice in the state are a realm of order, an earthly anagram of that unearthly eternal order which is the world of Ideas. "Time," says Plato in the *Timaeus*, "is a moving picture of eternity". The perfectly ordered soul, the perfectly ordered state, are temporal incarnation of eternal reason*. - *Introduction to the Works of Plato*, pp - XXI-XXII. *(The Modern Library, New York, 1956).*

Cf. also Plato's Cratylus, 412 c, on etymology of the word 'justice' or Dialogues of Plato (B. Jowett's translation), Vol. I, pp. 201-202.


49. Kathopanisad: I.iii.3-6.