

Start with Meditation

Sanatan Dharma is connected with the preparation of a devotee like a seed bed for the planting of wisdom by Param-Atman. Seeds of wisdom cannot be planted in ground that is a bed of weeds. The only person that can prepare this ground is the devotee. He or she can be told how to prepare it and that is what the principles of Sanatan Dharma do, but the spade work is up to the individual.

The Shankaracharya Santanand Saraswati tells us that Sanatan Dharma means 'the Body of Eternal Religion'. It is the religion of the Atman – the natural laws of the Atman. It is contained in all religions, is the basis of all religions, and their centre.

The basic concept of Sanatan Dharma has been summed up in ten principles: They are as follows:

One: **Dhrh** is having confidence and patience. If there is no confidence, there can't be patience. These two are united in the word 'Dhrh'. So, Sanatan Dharma wants individuals to develop Dhrh.

Two: **Kshama** means having consideration, and giving pardon and being tolerant of all the difficulties and awkwardness and faults of others, so that you provide them with space, and in due course when they see there is no reaction they may learn something better which you hold very dear to yourself.

Three: **Dhama** means the senses are very fast, and if the mind is turbulent, receiving impressions from different sources, it is quite probable that sensual hunger and thirst may be inflamed because of the beautiful things being seen in the world. So every individual needs to have some control over the sensory appetite and expressions.

Four: **Asteva** means you should take only what you deserve and consider everyone else equally deserving. So, do not take anything extra – all that you accumulate extra is theft. You steal from the universe and you deprive other people. So do not keep anything more than what should be equally available to everybody else.

Five: **Shaucha** is the cleanliness of body and mind. One has to learn to clean one's body, one's mind and one's heart, and for that one has to find a System through a Teacher.

Six: **Indriya Nigraha**. There is a natural course of use of the senses, and those can be regulated. The rules are prescribed in every tradition, and from these one has to learn how to use one's senses within those limitations. One does not curb the use of the senses but regulates them. The curbing of excessive use will then take place naturally.

Seven: **Dhee** means intellect or Buddhi, reason, and one is expected to use one's intellect and find out the causes of things and use them as necessity may arise.

Eight: **Vidya**. One has to acquire the knowledge which is made manifest as far as Sanatam Dharma is concerned through the Vedas, which are supposed to be not man made. Who made them nobody knows, so one has to acquire the knowledge of the scriptures.

Nine: **Satya** is the Truth. There is only one truth about an aspect, there can't be two different truths about the same subject. Everybody in the world is hankering for truth, but it happens that

people want their particular brand of truth. They are not eager or ready to accept that there can be something different. One might be right or wrong, and then rationalisation is very necessary. Even thieves, robbers and evil men, they also wish that the people with whom they co-operate should speak the truth so that they do not get caught by the police. So truth is important not only for people in highly developed and cultured society, but the need is everywhere, but somehow people like to serve their own concept of truth.

Ten: **Akrodha** which means one should never get agitated under any circumstances. There may be occasions when a hard line is necessary, usually for the sake of education, but taking a hard line is not necessarily getting agitated. One can tell the difference between righteous agitation and wrong agitation. If one is wrongly agitated one cannot take right action, so this has to be avoided.

We can start this week by looking at the first principle 'Dhrh', which is having confidence and patience. If there is no confidence, there can be no patience.

The wisdom behind this principle is beautifully relayed in the following story told by the Shankaracharya in 1975:

*There was a Mahatma living in a secluded place under a tamarind tree. He did his devotional act of meditation every day. There is a deity known as Narada and he is supposed to be the messenger of the Absolute who keeps on descending to earth and gathering information, so that the Absolute is fully and well informed. He happened to be making his rounds, and he came near this Mahatma and engaged in conversation with him, wanting to know what he was doing.*

*The Mahatma said, "Well, this is all a drama, and at the moment I am engaged in the drama of meditation, and who are you?" Narada replied that he was the messenger of the Absolute and came to collect information about all the devotees of God so that he could inform Him about their well being. This Mahatma said this was excellent as he could take a message, and Narada said, "Yes, why not?" The Mahatma said, "Ask Him when there will be a meeting?"*

*Narada went away, and came back after some time to this Mahatma, who asked him if there was any reply. Narada said that there was a reply, but it was rather a bitter one and he would rather not give it as the Mahatma's heart would sink. The Mahatma said, "But if there is any reply from the Absolute my heart would never sink, so don't worry about it, just let me know the answer."*

*Narada said, "You look at this tree, the tamarind tree. It has very small leaves, and millions of them; as many leaves as there are on this tree you will have to wait the same number of years, after which God will come to meet you; this is the message."*

*At this the Mahatma burst into ecstasy and started dancing with bliss, completely forgetting himself. Narada was quite baffled by this man, who when told he had to wait millions of years before the union could take place, yet was dancing with joy. He said, "Wait – have you really understood what I have said? What does my answer imply to you?" The Mahatma said, "Yes, I heard," and Narada said, "What did you hear?" and the Mahatma said, "As many leaves as there are on the tamarind tree, so many years will I have to wait and then He will come." Narada said, "Well, why are you dancing?" The Mahatma said, "I am not going to count the number of years and the leaves, all that matters is that I have had a message from the Absolute, and He is going to*

*meet me; He will never let me down, and that is really what matters”, and once again he started dancing.*

*Narada wondered whatever was happening, and at that moment the Absolute himself descended and embraced this Mahatma and appeared before him. Narada was very disturbed. He said, “My lord, I am your messenger, but don't let me be proved a liar because you said it would be so many years, and that is what I told the Mahatma, and you have broken your word and descended immediately! You didn't even wait an hour and you've fulfilled the promise which was supposed to wait years.”*

*Then the Absolute said: “These things are for ordinary men; if there is somebody special, then the question of time and space and gunas have to be satisfied and the meeting must be instantaneous.”*

### Pause

HH: *The same applies to all these details about people of devotion or people of knowledge, if there is a rare case where there is nothing else – only devotion, where there is nothing but a longing for Truth, then the union could take place without delay.*

Mankind is always looking for results from his efforts and doubts often arise when results don't materialise exactly as he wishes or expects. When this occurs it is necessary to ask oneself: 'Who is it that is looking for results?'

Mr Ouspensky would tell his pupils – first put your house in order and then leave it to the great laws of the Universe to determine when the results take place. In other words, man waters and weeds the garden and Param Atman decides when the roses will flower. Such is the way of enlightenment.

In 1964 Dr Roles made the following comment to the Shankaracharya: 'I felt a wave of confidence at the end of meditation. After all, what are we worrying for? In truth we are not separate from one another, from the Realised Man, and therefore from the Atman. The clouds seem to melt away when one remembers that.'

The Shankaracharya replied:

*He is blessed who has that confidence. It is a grace. It is the outcome of all our efforts on the way and the mercy of God.*