

SANATAN DHARMA (continued)

The following statement of the ten principles of Sanatan Dharma comes from a paper by Kate Brass and Richard Larcombe [12.2.07]:

We set out below HH's explanation of these ten principles. Alongside each of the principles, we have suggested in a commentary some broader meanings of the Sanskrit words. These have been derived from the Monier-Williams dictionary; and also from feedback from friends of the Study Society in India, following Nick Roles' paper on Sanatan Dharma in 1997.

His Holiness (<i>Good Company</i> pp. 124-127)	Commentary
The First (Dhrh) is concerned with having confidence and patience. If there is no confidence, there can't be patience. These two are united in this Sanskrit word. So, Sanatan Dharma wants individuals to develop Dhrh.	<u><i>Dhrh</i></u> From root <i>dhri</i> – To direct or fix the attention or mind. To hold fast/ bear firmly. c.f. <i>dhriti</i> – keeping constancy, resolution and will. <i>Dhrish</i> – to be confident, bold and courageous. N.B. <i>dharma</i> comes from the same root, so it seems significant that this should be the first principle. Feedback from India: “restrained forbearance”
The Second (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.	<u><i>kshama</i></u> From root <i>ksham</i> – to bear patiently, to pardon, to forgive. Also, this root means to submit to/ to ask pardon/ to put up with. The Rigveda uses the word <i>kshama</i> as a personification of the earth i.e. that which is all-enduring and submissive and which suffers patiently. Feedback from India: “forgiveness”
The Third (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 enflamed because of the beautiful things being seen in the world, so every individual needs to have some control over their sensory appetite and expressions.	<u><i>Dhama</i></u> ¹ From the root <i>dham</i> – to kindle by blowing in to/ to melt by blowing/ to consume by fire/ to reduce to cinders. Feedback from India: “complete self-control over inner and outer senses”
The Fourth (Asteya) states that 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.	<u><i>Asteya</i></u> From the root <i>stai</i> – to steal. <i>Steya</i> means robbery or theft and <i>A</i> is a negative so <i>Asteya</i> means ‘not stealing’. It also means to do anything clandestine. Feedback from India: “taking only what is needed in service”

¹ *Dhama*. Research suggests this should have been *Dama* which means control (maybe the root of English ‘dam’?)

<p>The Fifth (Shaucha) is about 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.</p>	<p><u>Shaucha</u> From the root <i>śuci</i> – to cleanse <i>Śaucā</i> means cleanliness/ purification/ self-purification (both internal and external)</p> <p>Feedback from India: “purity through the guidance of one’s higher self, a sacred book or a teacher”</p>
<p>The Sixth (Indriya Nigraha) is to do with the senses. There is a natural course of use of the senses and these can be regulated, and 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.</p>	<p><u>Indriya Nigraha</u> <i>Indriya</i> means ‘the sense organs’ and <i>Nigraha</i> means ‘restraint’ so restraint of the sense organs. According to Vedanta there are 14 sense organs made up as follows: <u>5 organs of perception</u> – eye,ear,nose,tongue,skin <u>5 organs of action</u> – larynx,hand,foot,arms,reproductive organs. Between these 10 and the Atman stand the <u>4 inner organs</u> that make up the Antakharana– <u>manas.buddhi.chitta.ahankara</u></p> <p>Feedback from India: “controlling the organs of action to regulate the organs of perception”</p>
<p>The Seventh (Dhee) refers to the use of intellect, Buddhi or reason, and one is expected to use one's intellect and find out the causes of things and use them as necessity may arise.</p>	<p><u>Dhee</u> From the root <i>dhi</i> – religious thought/ reflection/meditation/wisdom/intelligence/ understanding/knowledge</p> <p>Feedback from India: “discriminating intelligence leading to wisdom”</p>
<p>The Eighth (Vidya) is based on the need to acquire the knowledge, which is made manifest as far as Sanatan Dharma is concerned through the Vedas, which are supposed to be not manmade. Who made them nobody knows, so one has to acquire the knowledge of the scriptures.</p>	<p><u>Vidya</u> From the root <i>vidyu</i> – knowledge or philosophy</p> <p>Feedback from India: “spiritual knowledge gained from meditation or sacred sources”</p>
<p>The Ninth (Satya) is about 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 may be right or wrong, and then rationalization 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 ends through their own concept of truth.</p>	<p><u>Satya</u> From the root <i>sat</i> – being. <i>Satya</i> means whatever is true, real or honest.</p> <p>Feedback from India: “Absolute Truth revealed in the scriptures”</p>

The Tenth (Akrodha) states that one should never get agitated under any circumstances. There may be occasions when a hard line is very 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 or wrong agitation. If one is wrongly agitated one cannot take right action, so this has to be avoided.

Akrodha

From the root *krod* – anger

A is a negative so *akrodha* – not angry

Feedback from India: “freedom from anger (agitation), leading to right discrimination”

A number of attempts have been made to subdivide and classify the principles, even to the extent of arranging them around the enneagram—though caution is needed as we do not even know if the 10 principles are in some kind of sequence or if the order is arbitrary. But, for example principles 7, 8 and 9 are concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and some of the principles seem to be mainly concerned with inner work (1,5,6,7,8,9), others with external behaviour (2,3,4,10).

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A major question about Sanatan Dharma is whether it is intended to be a set of general moral precepts or a more specific set of guidelines for travellers on the spiritual path. The Shankaracharya noted that some effort is needed to acquire the principles but then “once one gets hold of all these laws, life becomes easier and without troubles.”

Next week we will look at the relation to System and Christian precepts. In preparation for this we need to become familiar with the ten principles and puzzle out how they apply to us as individuals.

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