

AN INDIAN OUTLOOK TO THE CONCEPT OF DHARMA: IN THE NEED OF PRESENT DAY

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ABSTRACT

Generally we use the term 'Religion' and the term 'Dharma' as the same meaning though the term 'Dharma' is completely different from the term 'Religion'. But it is true that the notion Dharma is being practiced as different from what actually the meaning of Dharma is. The Sanskrit term 'Dharma' bears various meanings. Sometimes it means rituals i.e. some activities which are offered to God or goddess. Sometimes it means some customs. Sometimes it refers to the essential character of an object. Bankim Chandra in his article 'Dharmatattva' has mentioned six meanings of the term.¹ In this paper an endeavor has been made to critically evaluate the term 'Dharma' and to show its relevant meaning in the need of present day. If we carefully go through traditional texts of India in order to determine the actual meaning of the term 'Dharma', we find that this term has basically been taken, in these texts, in the sense of moral value. Dharma in the sense of moral value is the basic significance of the term. The other meanings of the term are centered around this. I consider that this sense of Dharma is relevant for present situation of the society in order to remove the religions violence.

KEYWORDS: Religion Dharma, Values, Morality, Extension of the Self