



IN SEARCH OF INDIA'S SOUL

After years of invasions, agonizing suppressions and the massacre of millions in the shuddering experience of the 1947 partition of India that led to the division of India into three segments two Islamic i.e. Pakistan (2 segments) and one Hindu -with a secular constitution, the Hindus of India are now gradually emerging from the embers of historical bruises, and cultural damage, to resurrect and revive the most ancient, one of the most enriched traditions and culture in world history.

The so called Hindu, originally a geo ethnic term (given by Persians) now infused with the aspect of religious identity was derived from the river 'Sindhu.

The Hindus of today are experiencing a resurgence of interest in the legacy of Hinduism in sync with a national spirit intermingled with patriotic sentiments, for their mother land "Bharat Mata" (India)

India today is in a state of catharsis, yearning to seek a renewed definition for itself, means to augment its wisdom by knowing its roots. India and its youth are searching for its soul so as to live by its enlightened vibrations and thereby revive its dwindling culture to purer and aesthetic dimensions.

Soul as we know is the substrata, the underlying consciousness of all human life and an un-separated segment of the Universal soul.- God

In a similar way the soul of India is "Sanatana Dharma" its universal, eternal teachings with self embracing values of altruism and spirituality.

So then does Sanatana Dharma mean?

Sanatana means eternal and the word "Dharma" is sacrosanct to all Hindus but regrettably does not equate to religion as generally thought.

The word "Dharma" has been coined from the Sanskrit root "Dhr" which literally means to sustain, support, or hold together, which on a collective scale leads to an integrated, harmonious, materially and spiritually prosperous and stable society.

Therefore adhering to the principle of dharma the aspirant becomes a seeker of truth, a scientific seeker of universal laws, so as to abide by such laws, to attune and apply such knowledge in daily life to live a life of orderly behavior and conduct and acquire a progressive mastery of life.

Sanatana Dharma started off as a "seeking approach" by the ancient seers to sort out the enigma of human existence and to arrive scientifically and experientially at the emancipation from all the limitations and bondages of earthly life.

The seers referred to as "Rishis" were spiritual scientists who through their research and intuitive promptings concluded that life has four goals:

- a) To acquire and practice *Dharma* to live a life of harmony and overall progress.
- b) *Artha* (Acquisition of Wealth and resources to live an economically secure and stable life by way of *Dharma*).
- c) *Kaama* (Fulfilment of one's desires and material pursuits)
- d) *Mokhsa* (Freedom from delusion and or Liberation of the soul personality from all ignorance and bondages that is finite and transitory). In other words it is to live life as a master rather than a slave.

The Rishis realized the infinite truth is the principle of Brahman (Universal Soul) that constitutes as the soul (Atman) in each individual. The realization of Atman is considered as 'Moksha'.

They realized that life is a progressive evolution from the smallest organism to the epitome of creation the human life that enables one to reach the highest state of perfection. To this effect it was necessary to live life after life evolving for the better and higher. This realization paved the way for the theory of karma and reincarnation.

However in the course of time it was found that absorption of such abstract truths like Brahman and Atman and other related ideas and principles was difficult for the ordinary to understand and emulate.

In order to facilitate a better understanding of the "Ultimate Truth" the principles were personalized by the advent of various symbols and Gods, Goddesses of Indian ethnicity.

So at this stage the abstract ideas of Sanatana dharma was synthesized by the infusion of visual and tangible forms of divine personalities, so that the aspirant could relate with the divine with ease and emotion to decipher the true nature of reality.

"Finite tools to relate to the deeper vision of existence" - Sri Jay lakhani

At this point of time in history the seeking "way life" as extolled by the Rishis or Sages blended with ethnic divine personalities to become a Pluralistic approach for spiritual attainment. This multiplicity of Gods led to what we call spiritual democracy.

Thus, this blend came to be called a pluralistic religion which simply conveys that God or Brahman is one and only one, but God can be realized through many ways and by forms of divine personalities. (It has to be mentioned that worship of divine statues are symbolic and not to be considered as idol worship which only serves as a simple facilitation for a devotional expression)

The analogy to understand the initial concept of Brahman here is that just as electricity can manifest in any number of forms so also the principle of Brahman occurs in the myriad forms in nature.

Some humans have ultra higher frequency and the rest are in the bracket of (low to highs) and just as the ultra high rich become the icons for the rest of the world so also in the spiritual world.

The great Avatars like Shiva, Krishna, Buddha, Mahavir, Guru Nanak, Kabir Saheb and many others are such ultra high frequencies of divinity.

In conclusion "Sanatana Dharma" much later came to be called Hinduism during the time of British rule of India and the adherents of this religion were identified as Hindus.

The quintessence of Hinduism is enshrined in the abbreviation 'She'" which stands for Spirituality, humanism and ecology." And so Sanatana dharma or Hinduism is all about spiritual humanism.

It provides the intuitive and experiential conclusions of great Rishis whose accounts are recorded in writing in several holy books referred to as scriptures. Hinduism envelopes several dimensions like "Experiential (the super conscious revelations & experiences of Rishis recorded in several scriptures) Narrative (stories and allegories), Liturgy (Rituals - Mantras & Worship), Philosophies, Moral Codes and Social codes for righteous behaviour.

The present day the rich Indian culture (Sanskriti) that emanates from the realms of Sanatana dharma is full of variety, diversity, transcendental colours, music & dance, arts & science, yoga & Ayurveda, technology and digitalization is matter of great pride for India.

Given the mix and richness of Non Hindu culture in the midstream of the Hindu Indian culture irrespective of caste, colour and creed together and in unison, have a great obligation to attune with permeating component of the evolving "Sanskriti" and the soul of India.

From the echoes of the most ancient spiritual tradition of Sanatana Dharma evolved the largesse of secularism at its apex. This benevolent attitude flowered amongst the people of India which gave its humanistic expression by welcoming people and giving shelter to communities of all denominations who were persecuted down the ages.

In the bosom of this open-minded and unbiased culture were welcomed the first Jewish settlers since 562 BC and the persecuted Jews in 70 AD and onwards.

According to Indian Christian traditions, the Apostle Thomas arrived in Malabar Coast presently in the Indian state of Kerala, established the Seven Churches and evangelized in present-day Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

The Parsis who were persecuted by the Muslim conquest of Persia CE 636-651 found a safe haven in Gujarat -India in the 8th century onwards with the courtesy of Maharaja Jadi Rana.

The first Mosques were built 623 CE in Gujarat and 629 CE in Kerala.

The persecuted families of Prophet Mohammed were given solace and shelter by the Hindu King -Raja Dahir of Sind around 711 AD.

In 1942-48 about 5000 persecuted Polish refugees found refuge in Gujarat by the kindness of Maharaja of Jamnagar.

In 1959 about 80,000 Tibetans followed their leader Dalai Lama and were welcomed in India as privileged refugees.

Then came the Sri Lankan Tamils sheltered in South India and Tibetan Muslims found their homes in Kashmir.

In ending with apprehensions is the sad and ironic part, that when the religiously persecuted geo ethnic or religious Hindus from neighboring countries who recently returned to their natural habitat and bastion (being their inheritance and legacy of Sanatana Dharma), some segments in India and abroad along with certain western media are spewing lava of aspersions with judgmental overtones.

India today stands at the threshold of a renewed India given the youth on whose shoulder rests the responsibility to do away with all the shortcomings and ills that plague mostly all countries and live the ideal with a broader and positive outlook.

In every society and or every religion there are the Good, the Bad and the Ugly. Therefore a true and conscientious Hindu or a true adept of Humanism, defends and protects the good, resists and transforms the bad, and penalises the ugly (destructive minded people prone to violence)

It is incumbent for Hindus along with all other communities to serve India with a loving and a universal approach to move forward as an organic whole with a better sense of connectivity and solidarity. ©

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