

# Global Vision through Sanatana Dharma

**M.G. Prasad**

## **Introduction:**

An answer to the question “What can provide global vision for future?” is Sanatana Dharma. “Sanatana” means perennial and “Dharma” means the principles or laws that hold and protect everything in the universe. Although there have been major global developments in science, technology, information etc, still they are unable to provide global vision. However Sanatana Dharma deals with existence and life sustaining the flow of time is able to comprehensively include all aspects of life. The Santana Dharma, which is at the roots of Hinduism, refers to the vision and way of life based on the Vedas (Shruti). Then there is infinitely large Vedic literature such as Smritis (codes and guidelines), Itihasas (historical master pieces namely Ramayana and Mahabharata) and many other scriptures. Thus the literature of Sanatana Dharma is an integrated literature that deals with all levels and aspects of life including science, arts, medicine, sociology, philosophy etc.

Sanatana Dharma shows based on the vast Vedic literature shows the way for knowledge, joy and peace. In the words of a yogi-seer, Sriranga Sadguru, “It is the view of the rishis of Bharata (India) that spiritual enlightenment is the ultimate goal of life. That is the attainment of ultimate joy (Ananda). That is liberation (Mukti). Spiritual knowledge (Jnana) is that by which one merges into the eternal source of perennial existence (Atman), as a river merges into an ocean. The rishis having attained this goal have brought forth the knowledge in science and arts (Vijnana and Kalaa) keeping in line with their roots in spiritual knowledge (Jnana). It is for this reason, that an in-depth sincere study of knowledge in science and arts, at any stage of manifestation, will lead the seeker into the attainment of the ultimate goal of spiritual knowledge”

## **Individual and Family Life**

The universe is a collection of individual beings, not only humans but also animals and plants. In addition to sentient beings, we have nature composed of five elements. It is our common experience that human life has most advanced ability to use the innate reflective intelligence. In the last several hundred years, we have seen the tremendous developments in scientific understanding of physical universe, global communication, mass production and consumerism etc. However the intrinsic characteristics such as love, anger, jealousy, hatred etc. of a human being has not changed. There has been an increasing difficulty to deal with critical issues of human society such as poverty, terrorism, hunger etc. In the contemporary world an individual has to deal with both local and global aspects of life. In order to achieve harmony in life, an individual has to carry out actions in

local domain in tune with the global perspective. Sanatana Dharma provides the global perspective by providing the vision of a global family emphasizing that inter-dependence is essential for global peace and harmony. On an individual basis, Sanatana Dharma provides the vision of four-fold goal (for every human being) namely dharma (value based education), artha (rightly earned wealth), kama (desirable desire) and moksha (unperturbed joy and peace). The literature such as Ramayana provides role model such as Rama. In the Ramayana written by Valmiki rishi, the lives of Rama and Sita, for example, illustrate the eternal principles in action. Sri Rama has shown the human ideals in several roles such as son, brother, disciple, friend, husband, father, warrior, king (administrator), statesman, etc. Sita has shown the complementary roles. The actions and decisions taken by Sri Rama and Sita resonate with the fundamental values of human life achieving harmony between local and global perspectives. Hence the saying is "Rama is the manifestation of Dharma". In Vedic literature there are several personalities that exemplify Sanatana Dharma. In the family environment at homes the children should be taught values by practice and the exposure to Vedic literature need to be given to ensure that children grow with strength.

### **Society and Institutions:**

It is the individuals who make up the society and institutions both public and private. As the society and institutions are the collective being of individuals, they play an important role in development of individuals as well as fostering the global vision. As any individual's action directly or indirectly affects the other individuals in the society, the vision and activities of the institutions is important in fostering the harmony in the global level. The four-fold goal of an individual can be seen for an institution also. The institution should have certain core value based guidelines. The institution should balance the profit objective with its responsibility to the society to provide a certain level of happiness to its members as well as the society. The public institutions such as temples, community organizations play a significant role in helping both the individuals and society. The various aspects of a temple such as religious, educational, cultural, humanitarian etc should collectively and harmoniously contribute to the society. Community organizations play role in the social and cultural aspects of the society to increase the social awareness and responsibility.

### **Society and Harmony**

In order a society or an institution to work in harmony and peace, people have to work in harmony. The various roles people play in a society contribute to the success of the common goal namely joy and peace. If all the limbs are healthy, then we say that the person is healthy. When it is said of Rama Rajya (kingdom of Rama's rule) it means the society was functioning in harmony. Even in the recent historic times (320 BC ) of Chanakya and Chandragupta, Such a harmony and grandeur of that society has been recorded by even foreign travelers such as Megasthenes. The concept and practice of social justices is

very much important part of Sanatana Dharma. Chanakya or Kautilya in his arthashastra deals with social justice. Ancient Smriti texts of great rishis such as Narada, Yajñvalkyā, Parashara, etc provide the structure based on the Vedas. In the view of yogi-seer Swami Ranga Priya, “Kautilya’s arthashastra can be used as a manual in showing how to balance between mundane (materialistic) and the transcendental (spiritual)”. Another historic example is Vijayanagar empire, that was in grandeur for about 330 years during 1336 AD to 1666 AD. The grandeur of the empire has been documented by several foreign travelers such as Domingo Paes.

The Vedic basis of the society is to bring harmony at all levels namely individual, family and society. The knowledge of the person was given the highest respect. Spiritual knowledge (realization of God) is the highest level of knowledge and everyone is equally eligible for it. Every profession is equally respected in the Vedic view of Sanatana Dharma. The very basis of classification of work in a society is to maintain the harmony in society. Spiritual equality of all human beings is emphasized in the Vedic literature. The Vedic prayers are of collective nature. We can see that in mantras such as Gayatri mantra, shanti mantras, etc. The very idea of “Vasudhaiva kutumbakam” is that the whole world is one family based on harmony.

Thus we can see that the basic features of Sanatana Dharma encompasses from individual perspective to global perspective. The rishis said “svadesho bhuvanatrāyam” which means “my land includes not only this earth but also higher spaces such as bhuvaha and suvhaha” However, the emphasis of Santana Dharma is the achievement of unperturbed spiritual state of peace and joy at individual level as the goal. When every individual tries to achieve this spiritual state, then the society and world of such individuals will result in harmony and peace. In the view of yogi-seer Sriranga Sadguru, “The Bharata (India) is the land where massive effort was carried out to discover Dharma. Hence, Bharata is the land and abode of Dharma”. However, Dharma can be recognized anywhere in the universe as it is the universal principle. The various literature of Bharata has brought out the basis of dharma in describing the life and living. Hence the in the long history of Bharata, unity in diversity, tolerance and peace have remained as the core characteristics of the society. The word “Bharata” itself means “Bha – Spiritual Light” and “Rata – engaged in the search of that spiritual light”. A Veda mantra gives a clarion call as

“Uttishtata ! Maa Svapta ! Agnicchadvam Bhaarataha”

which means “Oh ! people engaged in the search of Spiritual Light, Arise, Do not sleep, Aspire and seek the Paramatman (Spiritual fire)”

The Sanatana Dharma through its Veda and Vedic literature empower us to aspire, seek and achieve the highest level of knowledge. It provides not only the vision and mission but also the structured approach through its various paths.

The knowledge and practice of Vaidika samskaras and karmas play an important role in the development of Atma gunas (namely compassion; forgiveness; absence of envy; purity in mind; speech and body; absence of exertion, auspiciousness, absence of wretchedness and non-convictedness). It is through these atma gunas one achieves God realization. These atma gunas could also be developed by various other means such as through arts, science, social service, etc. These atma gunas are global in nature and forms the foundation of Sanatana Dharma. Thus one can see the Sanatana Dharma provides the global vision and a structured approach that is universally applicable. Thus the followers of Sanatana Dharma need to work together for the common cause of bringing peace and harmony at all levels.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

It is seen that Sanatana Dharma based on its vast resource of literature can provide a global vision. It emphasizes the knowledge and harmony at an individual level because it is the individuals who make families, societies, nations and the world. Yoga is a contribution of Sanatana Dharma that can be used by any individual towards his or her spiritual development. In this age of technology, any misguided decision could be a disaster at the mass scale. It is everyone's responsibility to acquire global vision and Sanatana Dharma can provide that vision.

---

The author is a spiritual disciple of yogi-seer Sriranga Sadguru, Karnataka, India. He is chairperson of the education committee, Hindu Temple and Cultural Society, Bridgewater, New Jersey, USA. He is a member of the board of Society of Indian Academics in America. He has authored four books related to Hinduism. He lectures on Hinduism at schools, universities, temples and churches. He represents Hinduism at many inter-faith symposia. He is a professor of mechanical engineering at Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken, New Jersey. Further details of his activities can be found at the website: [www.taranga.us](http://www.taranga.us)