

# **DHARMA SHASTRI**



**Foundational Principles for Social Reform and Curriculum Design**

**SESSION 2 - INTRODUCTION**

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# INVOCATION

- + dharma-mulam hi bhagavan
- + sarva-vedamayo harih
- + smrtam ca tad-vidam rajan
- + yena catma prasidati

**The Supreme Being, the Personality of Godhead, is the essence of all Vedic knowledge, the root of all religious principles, and the memory of great authorities. O King Yudhisthira, this principle of religion is to be understood as evidence. On the basis of this religious principle, everything is satisfied, including one's mind, soul and even one's body. (SB 7.11.7)**

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2. Sanatana Dharma in Two Features
3. Sambandha Jnana, Abhidheya Jnana & Prayojana Jnana
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# 1- TERMINOLOGY

- A. Dharma
- B. Shastri
- C. Varnasrama Dharma
- D. Bhagavat Dharma
- E. Varnas
- F. Asramas

# A- DHARMA

## Definition

- 1) ‘Religion’, **natural** and **eternal** function of the living entity, i.e. to follow the established laws of God and to serve Him with love and devotion.
- 2) Another name for different **duties** of mankind, such as religious, social, family,, etc.
- 3) **Inherent quality** of an object

“The Sanskrit term dharma is variously translated as duty, virtue, morality, righteousness, or religion, but no single English word conveys the whole meaning of dharma.” **(From Folio)**

# B- SHASTRI

## Definition

A **scholar**, an educated person, someone well-read in the shastras (sacred texts such as Vedic knowledge).

Connected with the word “shastra”. The word “shastra” refers to the revealed scriptures connected with the Vedic wisdom.

The word “shas” means to “regulate”, to “direct” and the word “tra” means “instrument”.

**‘Dharma Shastri’** therefore means one **who has realized the principles of Dharma** and lives by those principles.

# C. VARNASRAMA DHARMA

## DEFINITION

- + The institution which gives such training (preparation for the next life) is called **varnasrama dharma, or the system of sanatana dharma**, the best procedure for making the human life perfect.” (SB 2.1.15)

# Four Social and Four Spiritual Orders

**Four social divisions** (varnas) & **four spiritual divisions** (asramas), the social system that we find in the Vedic scriptures as taught by Lord Krishna (Bg 4.13).

Characteristics of the varnasrama system

- Connected with the 3 modes of nature (gunas).
- The gunas are connected with prakriti, an eternal principle.
- The four divisions of varna and asrama are thus eternal, sanatana dharma.
- The system of varnasrama is thus fully scientific.
- **DAIVA VARNASRAMA** transforms the system from material to spiritual. Daiva here refers to the “bhakti” element, “devotional service to Krishna”.



# D. BHAGAVAT-DHARMA

## DEFINITION

“This is called **bhagavata-dharma**, to understand this philosophy, that ‘God is the supreme master, and I am His eternal servant. My duty is to serve God. That’s all.’” (Audio Transcripts, SB 7.6.1 – June 17, 1976)

# Two Levels of Bhakti

## MIXED BHAKTI

Connected with the modes of nature in the stage of **Sadhana Bhakti** or mixed devotional service.

## PURE BHAKTI

Above the modes of material nature in advanced level of raganuga bhakti or pure devotional service, **Bhava Bhakti** and then **Prema Bhakti**.

\*\*\* Both of these can be practiced in the material world.

# E. VARNAS

<b>Social Body</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Quality</b>	<b>Material Body</b>
Brahmanas	Intellectual	Goodness	Head
Ksatriyas	Administrative	Passion	Arms
Vaisyas	Productive	Passion/Ignorance	Stomach
Sudras	Labourer	Ignorance	Legs

# F. ASRAMAS

Brahmacary	Student Life	Age 5 to 25
Grhastha	Householder Life	Age 25 to 50
Vanaprastha	Retired Life	Age 50+
Sannyasi	Renounced Life	Any age

# 2- SANATANA DHARMA IN TWO ETERNAL FEATURES

## VARNASRAMA DHARMA

Material Level

(Within material world)

**Body** \* (material nature)

Sattva Guna

(Material Goodness)

Material sva-dharma

(Science of Varnas and Asramas)

## BHAGAVAT DHARMA

Spiritual Level

(Within spiritual world)

**Soul** \* (spiritual nature)

Suddha Sattva

(Pure Goodness)

Spiritual sva-dharma

(Science of Rasas/Relationships)

# 3- Sambandha, Abhidheya and Prayojana

- 1. SAMBANDHA-JNANA** Knowledge of **RELATIONSHIPS**
  - \* The **spiritual identity** of the self (jivera swarupa haya, Krsna nitya-dasa)
- 2. ABHIDHEYA-JNANA** Knowledge of **ACTIVITIES**
  - \* The spiritual process to attain perfection is **sadhana-bhakti**
- 3. PRAYOJANA-JNANA** Knowledge of **GOAL**
  - \* The ultimate goal or perfection is **Pure Love of God**, (Prema Bhakti)

# Varnasrama Dharma & Bhagavat Dharma

## Varnasrama Dharma (Body)

## Bhagavat Dharma (Soul)

**Sambandha-jnana**

Guna & Karma

Eternal Servant

**Abhidheya-jnana**

Varna & Asrama

Sadhana Bhakti

**Prayojana-jnana**

Material Goodness

Pure Goodness

+ All things pertaining to the body, the mind and the soul become satisfied.

+ SB 1.2.6 “**yayatma suprasidati**”

SB 7.11.7 “**yena catma prasidati**”

# 4- KEY PRINCIPLES

## VARNASRAMA DHARMA

First is Food (self-sufficiency)

Gokula - Agrarian Lifestyle

Agriculture as best economy

Produce only what you need

Use only what you produce

Land & Cows – Localized living

Self-realization

## BHAGAVAT DHARMA

First is Character (spiritual)

Goloka – Planet of Cows

**Comfort of Cows more important**

**than that of Brahmanas (SB 10.8.16)**

Minimize the Necessities of Life

Land & Cows – Localized Living

Self-realization



# 5. BOOKS OF REFERENCE

- 1. *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Canto 7, Chapters 11 to 15
- 2. *Gita Nagari Essay* [1956] (available in VedaBase/Folio) by Srila Prabhupada
- 3. *The Light of the Bhagavat* [1961] by Srila Prabhupada
- 4. *Speaking About Varnasrama* [1999] (VedaBase/Folio) by Hare Krishna Dasi
- 5. *Make Vrindavan Villages* [2007] by Bhakti Raghava Swami
- 6. *Modernity is Killing Civilization* [2018] by Bhakti Raghava Swami
- 7. *Vedic Vaisnava View of Sociology – Its Application in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* [2023]  
Doctoral Thesis by Bhakti Raghava Swami

# 6. WEBSITES

1. BRS Védique [www.brsvedique.org](http://www.brsvedique.org)
2. Vedic Eco Village [www.vedicecovillage.ca](http://www.vedicecovillage.ca)
3. Sri Surabhi Campaign [www.srisurabhi.org](http://www.srisurabhi.org)
4. International Society for Cow Protection [www.iscowp.org](http://www.iscowp.org)
5. Varnasrama College ONLINE (VCO) [www.varnasramacollege.com](http://www.varnasramacollege.com)
6. Varnasrama College Foundation (VCF) [www.vc-foundation.com](http://www.vc-foundation.com)
7. VCF/Varnasrama – The Last Wave [www.varnashramthelastwave.com](http://www.varnashramthelastwave.com)