

Notion of Dharma

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Meaning & Definition

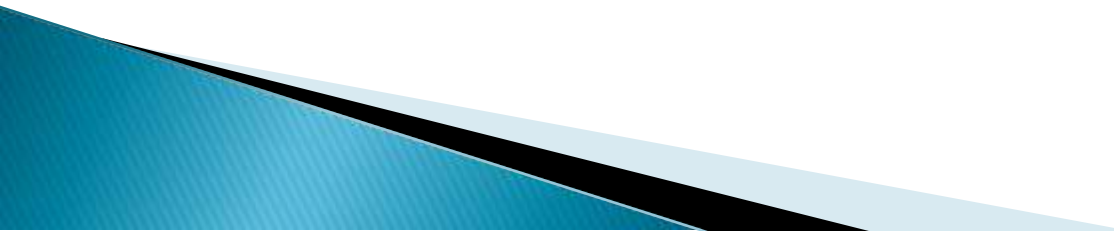
Dharma is an important term which normally connotes the very purpose of life. In Hinduism, it means duty, virtue, morality, even religion and it refers to the power which upholds the universe and society.

Ancient yoga texts describe dharma as an inner wisdom, or a cosmic guidance that governs not only individuals, but the entire Universe as a whole.

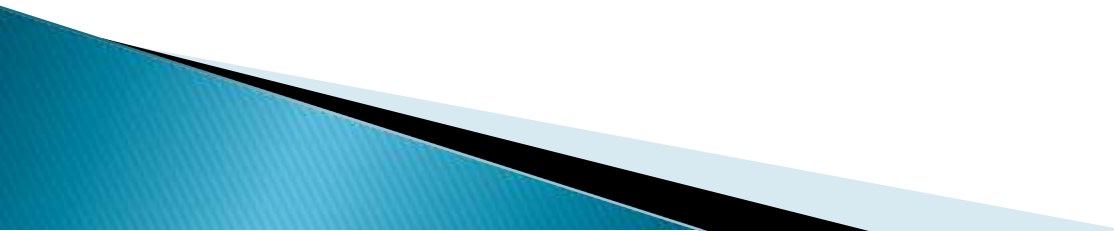
Characteristics of Dharma

- ▶ dhṛti (patience),
- ▶ kṣāma (forgiveness),
- ▶ dhamaḥ (self control),
- ▶ aśteya (non stealing),
- ▶ śauca (cleanliness),
- ▶ indriyanigraha (control of organs),
- ▶ dhī (benevolent intellect),
- ▶ vidyā (spiritual knowledge),
- ▶ satyaṁ (love of truth)
- ▶ akrodha (non-anger).

Principles of Dharma

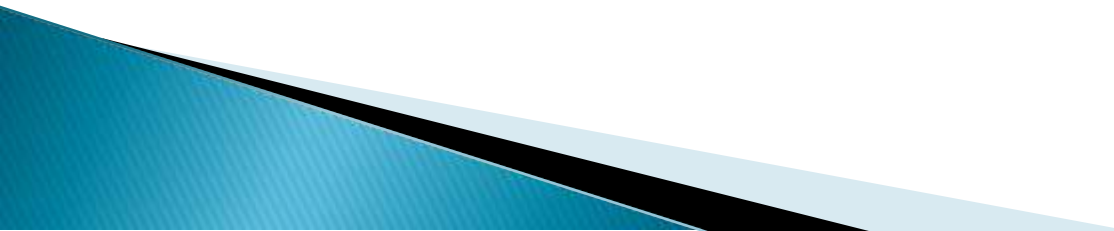
- ▶ Knowledge
 - ▶ Patience
 - ▶ Justice
 - ▶ Love
 - ▶ Dedication
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Sources of Dharma

- ▶ śruti (Vedas);
 - ▶ smṛti (that which is remembered)
 - ▶ tradition: Dharmaśāstra, Puranas, Epics
 - ▶ ācāra, good custom; and ātmatuṣṭi.
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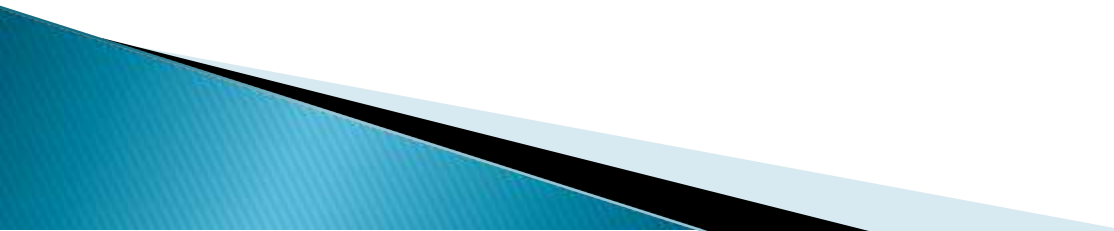
Dharma in Literature

Dharma and related words are found in the oldest Vedic literature of Hinduism, in later Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, and the Epics; the word dharma also plays a central role in the literature of other Indian religions founded later, such as Buddhism and Jainism.



Dharma in Indian Literature

In the earliest texts and ancient myths of Hinduism, dharma meant cosmic law, the rules that created the universe from chaos, as well as rituals; in later Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas and the Epics, the meaning became refined, richer, and more complex, and the word was applied to diverse contexts.



THANK YOU