

Mapping civilizational responsibility through Hindutva

The civilizational ethos of this land which is rooted in Hindutva is the only reason Indic culture has survived.

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Over the past century or so, Hindutva has come to be a civilizationaly-loaded term that has been defined time and again by various socio-cultural and political actors and has assumed paraphernalia of layer upon layers of meanings over time. Academically, it has been explained as the “ethical concatenation of *dharma*, *dharâ* and *râjya* rooted in the Indic civilizational ethos and representative of a cultural landscape, or life world”^[1]. Pushing this idea further from a lay person’s perspective, this article chalks out its contemporary significance, specifically regarding the self-imposed duties that it translates into for us Hindus as a part of this ‘lifeworld’.

Dharma is often wrongly translated as religion or is narrowly interpreted to mean one’s ideal conduct, ethics and morality. However, those familiar with the Indic worldview are well aware that it can’t be restricted to such a narrow interpretation and in fact, it could be stretched to represent the Indic ‘lifeworld’ itself. *Dharma* is an all-encapsulating whole, which embraces within itself all the cultural and civilizational tropes of the Indic people. Not only has it been the carrier of our history, but it also defines who we are, and constitutes our very identity. It is the identity of an individual as a part of a society that gives meaning and a sense of purpose to the individual’s existence and helps the individual lead a dignified life. It is the subtle assertion of our identity in everyday life that gives content to our dignity. Cultural and civilizational values have, for ages, been at the core of human identities. Being a part of the Indic *lebenswelt*, living our lives under the rubric of Hindu identity, qualifies our otherwise mundane everyday life as dignified.

Bhāratavarsha is a 'sacred landscape'. It's the cradle of Indic civilization and has been the performative sphere of *sanātana dharma* since time immemorial. Hindutva refers to this sacred landscape as *dharâ*, which almost spontaneously and involuntarily triggers in our imagination a well-defined landscape revered by the people of the Indic civilization. *Dharâ* is the theatre where we practice *dharma*. The Indic civilizational ethos is culturally anchored and imprinted on the *dharâ* of Bhāratavarsha. But there is a need to understand the driving force behind the deep emotional and psychological attachment of the Indic people to their *dharâ*. *Dharma* may be identified as the force which makes Bhāratavarsha a sacred landscape. It suffuses a sense of reverence towards the geographical landscape, in the people inhabiting it. *Dharma* being both the carrier of our history and our identity, forms the linkage between us and our sacred landscape, by attaching us to our historical antecedents for which this land has served as the theatre, and also by providing us with a sense of identification with this land which we perceive as both sacred and our own. Thus, a mere geographically demarcated chunk of land soon metamorphoses into a civilizational matrix, infusing life into the natural bounties that the land has to offer to its inhabitants. The imagery of Bhārata Mātā is a culmination of this process. *Dharma* serves as a beacon of light and guidance for us, and it is through *dharma* only that we are able to spiritually connect with our *dharâ*. In a way, *dharma* serves as the ethical base while *dharâ* forms the physical landscape in which the Indic civilization is rooted. But for the supreme revered place of *dharma*, *dharâ* would lose all its essence and will be reduced to a mere chunk of land.

Rājya, or state (not to be confused with the modern, Western state), is the socio-political dispensation which provides the structure, means and mechanisms for the survival and flourishing of our civilization. It is our *dharma* that teaches us to create, flourish, prosper and sustain our life on this *dharâ* for which we need a *rājya*. If *dharma* may be perceived as the rich history of ourselves which tells us to take pride in our *dharâ*, then *rājya* may be referred to as the means through which our *dharâ* is sustained and the rich heritage of our *dharma* be preserved and furthered. *Rājya* acts as a balancing force, ensuring that the linkage between *dharma* and *dharâ* remains intact, and establishes peace in the society. Any upheaval in the Indic polity would mean that the Indic state gets distorted, resulting in the snapping of the bond between our *dharma* and the sacred landscape, rendering it a mere geographical landscape. Eventually, it would lead to a death blow to our civilization itself, and to the people who inhabit it. The lived concepts of *dharma*, *dharâ* and *rājya* together spark a nationalistic aptitude in us individuals and develop a strong communal feeling in the entire society, which later features prominently in the cause of preservation of our civilization.

The Indic civilization has been at the receiving end of the onslaught of various barbarians and hence going through existential threats for more than a millennium now. It has been able to survive the wrath of these barbarian cultures to date precisely due to its being embedded in Hindutva. However, colonization, especially by the British, has caused a widespread colonial mindset among the Indian natives resulting in a deep rot from within. This has amounted to an imminent threat to our civilization like never before. With the advent of Western modernity, the continuous maligning of anything Indic has pushed us into moral turpitude which is slowly evaporating our cultural base and converting us into soulless dummies of the Western 'man'. The use of political discourses imported directly from the West and their excessive dominance in academia has set up a well-entrenched hegemonic education system which is very efficiently destroying the civilizational awareness of generations of students. A dastardly

vicious, well-thought-out act has been playing for decades now by the left-liberals through the annals of every means of propagation and dissemination of misinformation in order to obfuscate Indic history and degrade Indic culture.

Hindutva has been, is, and will continue to be the resistance for, of, and by Hinduism. In the midst of the menace that we face today, the Indic populace needs to shed all of its inferiority complexes and wear Hindutva on its sleeves. We ought to take up the mantle of protecting our civilizational identity and our own dignity by nurturing our civilizational matrix. *Sanātan dharma* has always produced ‘*Intellectual Kshatriyas*’, and I sincerely hope that we will live up to this tradition.

[Note: This article has emerged as a result of intense discussions between the author and his father, and the author dedicates the article to his father.]

References:

[1] Saumya Dey, *The Cultural Landscape of Hindutva & Other Essays: Historical Legitimacy of an Idea*, 1st edn., Gurugram, Shubhi Publications, 2019, p. xiv. The author arrives at the definition through a combined reading of Veer Savarkar, Guru Golwalkar and Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay’s treatises on the subject. Id, at 4.

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