

Curtain raiser to Special Issue April-June 2011 "Good Governance to rebuild India of Gandhiji's Dream – 4"

## Return of Dharma – A Necessary Antidote to Corruption

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All the aspects which trouble India's Body Politic are symptoms of one disease. Its cause is the miscarriage of Dharma. When individuals act in violation of Dharma, it harms the moral order of the world and it rebounds on them. It is Adharma that is the root cause of all troubles of a person's mind or body. So also is the case with the Body Politic.

For example, when caste was made hereditary and exclusive, it weakened the country's strength. We are still suffering from its ill-effects.

When rituals are mistaken for the essentials, Religion goes berserk. Whenever truth is twisted for the sake of expediency, it becomes a glaring Adharma! Ever so many examples can be given, for Dharma is a dynamic concept. Such practices have no religious sanction. Dharma is not a matter of religion alone. Nor is it confined to the East. When respected western banks passed off 'toxic debts' to other investors as attractive investments, they were indulging in Adharma – leading to eventual downfall!

No wonder it is said that 'if you uphold Dharma, it will save you'. This is why Rajaji suggested a Dharmic World Order where

international trade is based not on 'beggar my neighbour', but mutual enrichment. In fact the basic impulse of Adam Smith in writing *Wealth of Nations*, was 'ethical and moral'. The Corn Laws in the England of his day was unethical because it made rich land owners prosper at the cost of the poor people. Adam Smith wanted it to be repealed. Eventually it was done. His book helped to change public opinion. We can hope that in future, some such work can alter public opinion in such a way that reforms will be made to rid us of the plagues of corruption that afflict our Polity.

In the western world, there is a thirst for spirituality and ethics. They look to the East for information. Our ancient culture and civilization has many things to teach. But first of all we in India should learn and attract some of these to our own society. The existing cancer of corruption that pervades every part of the social body, can be eradicated by a spirit of Dharma. Our commercial civilization can provide a better life to large numbers of people. But this requires a dharmic economic order. In the new century, India can be the leader if Dharma becomes part of the social system.—●

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