

PREFACE

The thesis entitled : '*Dharma as a Moral Value*' is the result of an intensive and critical examination of the phenomenon *dharmā* as articulated in Indian classical texts. It gives an analysis of the phenomenon *dharmā*, which is followed by some philosophical problems.

The first chapter gives an overall idea of the phenomenon *dharmā* and also shows its impact to the society. In this connection, an effort has been made to understand the relation among *dharmā*, morality and values; and also to examine some issues regarding Indian ethics. The second chapter deals with the concept *dharmā* in accordance with *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* system. The prime focus of *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* system is to discuss about *dharmā*. This system begins with the *sūtra*: '*athāto dharmā jijñāsā*'. Third chapter deals with the concept *dharmā* as in Buddhism and Jainism. *Dharma* is, in fact, nothing other than performing moral activities. This view is equally substantiated, if not more, by Buddhism like other religions. According to the view of Buddha, the pious life (*dharmīya jīvan*) is nothing but moral life which is constituted with moral virtues. One can attain *nirvāṇa* through obtaining these moral virtues. It is clearly stated in '*Anguttar-nikāya*' that one who is engaged in performing immoral deeds is not entitled to obtain liberation or *nirvāṇa*. The *Śramaṇa* who is absolutely moral, can control his sense organs is entitled to obtain liberation. Buddhism is based on *sīla*. *Sīla* means the purity of character. Hence, this religion is called purity of character based religion which is founded on morality. In the like manner, Jainism has given importance to the perfection of conduct. According to them, any type of knowledge whatever it may be metaphysical or epistemological is necessary for right conduct as auxiliary factor. This right conduct is the fundamental thing for removal of all bondage as well as the attainment of liberation. According to Jainism, there are five kinds of *karma* which help for the attainment of liberation. These five are called *pañcavrata* (five vows). Nonviolence (*ahimsā*), the first

vow out of five vows in Jainism is more significant than any other vows. This should be obeyed by both monk and layman. Though the concept of *ahimsā* (nonviolence) is very old in India, but this concept has some uniqueness in Jainism. Fourth Chapter deals with the concept of *dharma* stated in *Mahābhārata*. According to *Mahābhārata* friendly attitude to all living beings and thinking of welfare of entire world is considered as eternal *dharma* of human being. To lead one's life in such a way so that no harm is taken place is considered as highest *dharma*. One who is concerned with the entire world, devoted in performing wellbeing of the world and engaged himself in wellbeing of the world by his deed, mind and speech knows the real nature of *dharma*. Nothing can be universal *dharma* than friendliness to all living beings and desiring well for entire world (*mānasam sarvvabhūtānam*). The purpose of the fifth chapter is to show the concept *dharma* as a moral value. In fact, this is the aim of this project. In this chapter, the term *dharma* has been evaluated and also examined how and why the phenomenon *dharma* stands for moral value, which is also evidenced by our traditional texts. And in this connection, an investigation has been made on moral values described in our tradition and an attempt has been done how these moral values are associated with our wellbeing. If we carefully go through our traditional texts in order to determine the actual meaning of the term *dharma*, we find that this term has basically been taken in these texts as moral value. This is the main focus of the term. The other meanings of the term *dharma* are centered around this. In sixth chapter, it has been shown that if the consideration that 'Dharma as a moral value' is accepted, some philosophical problems may be raised in this regard. First, we come across many definitions of *dharma* in deferent systems of Indian philosophy, but derivative meaning of the term is 'something upholding' (*dhāranāt dharmam ityahuḥ*). How can derivative general meaning of the term be extended to all the definitions? Secondly, how can the notion of *dharma* as a moral value be extended to other definitions given by the *Vaiśeṣikas* and *Pūrvamīmāṃsakas* in particular? Thirdly, a problem may be

raised if *dharma* is taken in the sense of moral value, it will contradict the *Bhagavadgītā*'s statement: '*sarvadharmān parityajya māmekam śaraṇam braja*' (i.e. take shelter upon me leaving all *dharmas*). It may be taken as the contradiction to *āgama*, which is not acceptable. Fourthly, it is stated in our scriptures that somebody is reluctant to do some work in spite of knowing that it is virtuous duty (*jānāmi dharmam na ca me pravṛtti*). On the other hand, someone hardly refrains from doing some action in spite of knowing that it is not virtuous (*jānāmi adharmam na ca me nivṛtīh*). How can these be explained? Lastly, is *dharma* as a moral value relevant today in a secular country like India? In this chapter all the philosophical problems stated above have been discussed with some critical remarks. And it has been shown that if *dharma* is based on morality and true humanity, one universal religion can be prescribed in the whole world for bringing global peace and harmony.

I have tried my best to complete my work as perfectly as possible. How far I have been successful will be judged by the scholars in the field.