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Concept of Dharma in Classical Hindu Law

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The word *Dharma* has derived from the Sanskrit root “*dhr*”, which stands for the sustainability and preservation. *Dharma* plays a vital role in the center of Hinduism. The Aryan invasion the applicability of the term Dharma was visible in the earliest Vedic text “*Rig Veda*”. In this very text of Vedic literature has left an apparent analysis on how *Dharma* becomes a cardinal principle in whole Hindu doctrine. A passage in “*Puruṣa sūkta*” refers to this commentary. In the beginning there was Dharma. Here it stood for the Natural or Cosmic Law. In fact, this paper mainly focuses on how this universal norm called “*Dharma*” was placed as cardinal virtue in Classical Hindu Law. In studying the vast literature relating to Hindu legal philosophy from *Manusmruthi* to the entire Dharmashastra literature, it becomes an obvious fact to understand that concept was *Dharma* had given a central position in Hindu jurisprudence. Many of the classical Hindu jurists had relied on their judicial interpretation mainly based on the concept of “*Dharma*”. Furthermore this paper will trace the discovery of “*Manusmruthi*” and how it influenced the the Western notion of understanding natural law in accordance with Dharma.

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