

Epistle from the Editor-in-Chief

To edit a journal devoted to Sanātana Dharma is not merely to curate articles; it is to participate in a long, unfinished conversation that precedes us and will outlive us. With the publication of the second issue of the Journal of Sanātana Dharma, that awareness deepens. The first issue was an act of articulation. The second is an act of listening. Between articulation and listening lies the real labour of scholarship.

Sanātana Dharma does not offer itself easily to classification. It is neither a closed system nor a singular doctrine, neither purely speculative nor merely ritualistic. It is a civilizational continuum shaped by inquiry, restraint, dissent, discipline, and lived realization. Any attempt to engage it seriously must therefore resist the temptation of simplification. This journal was conceived not to resolve that complexity but to honour it.

The intellectual history of Bhārata reveals a persistent tension between reason and transcendence, between language and silence. This tension is not a flaw but a generative force. One of the most cited reminders of this comes from the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, where Yama instructs Naciketā:

नैषा तर्केण मतिरापनेया
प्रोक्तान्येनैव सुज्ञानाय प्रेष्ठ ॥
(*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.9)

[This understanding is not attained through reasoning alone.
Taught by another, it becomes truly known.]

This verse has often been misunderstood as a dismissal of reason. It is not. It is a warning against the arrogance of reason when it forgets its limits. *Tarka* is indispensable, but it is not sovereign. The traditions of *nyāya*, *mīmāṃsā*, and Vedānta did not abandon reasoning; they refined it, disciplined it, and situated it within larger epistemic horizons.

The same tradition that cautions us against overreliance on *tarka* also celebrates relentless questioning. The *R̥gveda* itself affirms this spirit when it declares: “आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः” (*R̥gveda* 1.89.1), meaning, “May noble thoughts come to us from all directions.” This is not a poetic ornament. It is an epistemic ethic. Knowledge is not guarded by geography, lineage, or institution. It flows where receptivity exists. The *Journal of Sanātana Dharma* seeks to embody this ethic by welcoming diverse voices while remaining anchored in *dhārmika* integrity.

The need for such anchoring is urgent. Contemporary academic discourse on Indic traditions is often caught between two extremes. On one side lies an extractive scholarship that approaches texts as artifacts divorced from living contexts. On the other lies an uncritical revivalism that resists questioning altogether. Both approaches ultimately impoverish understanding.

Sanātana Dharma survives neither by fossilization nor by sloganization. It survives through disciplined engagement.

One of the core challenges before this journal is to create a space where *śāstra* and lived tradition can converse without suspicion. Too often, academic study treats *paramparā* as an object rather than a participant. Conversely, traditional circles sometimes view academic inquiry as inherently corrosive. This false dichotomy has done lasting damage. Historically, many of Bhārata's greatest thinkers were both rigorous scholars and embedded practitioners. Śaṅkara, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, Abhinavagupta, and others were neither detached academics nor anti-intellectual mystics. They exemplified integration. This integration is reflected in the Upaniṣad's pedagogy itself. Consider the famous declaration: "सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म" (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1.1), meaning, "Brahman is truth, knowledge, and infinite". This is not a metaphysical slogan. It is a methodological challenge. If *brahma* is *satya*, inquiry must be honest. If *brahma* is *jñāna*, inquiry must be rigorous. If *brahma* is *ananta*, inquiry must remain open-ended. Any scholarship that claims finality betrays this insight.

The second issue of the Journal of Sanātana Dharma reflects a growing awareness of this openness. The articles assembled here do not march toward a single conclusion. They speak in different registers, employ different methods, and at times even disagree implicitly. This is not a weakness. It is a sign of intellectual health. Sanātana Dharma has never advanced through unanimity but through sustained *saṃvāda*.

Language plays a crucial role in sustaining this dialogue. Modern academia often privileges a narrow linguistic corridor, assuming neutrality where none exists. Yet every language carries its own metaphysical intuitions. Saṃskṛta, with its layered semantics and grammatical precision, enables modes of thought that cannot be seamlessly translated. At the same time, regional languages preserve experiential wisdom embedded in local practice. English, for all its limitations, offers global reach and cross-disciplinary exchange. A genuinely inclusive journal must allow these languages to coexist without hierarchy. The commitment to multilingual scholarship in this journal is therefore not ornamental. It is epistemic. When knowledge is confined to a single language, it becomes vulnerable to conceptual monoculture. Sanātana Dharma, by contrast, has always flourished through linguistic plurality.

The ethical dimension of scholarship must also be addressed. Knowledge in the *dhārmika* framework is inseparable from responsibility. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* reminds us:

सत्येन लभ्यस्तपसा ह्येष आत्मा
सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् ॥
(*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.5)

[This self is attained by truthfulness, by austerity, by right knowledge, and by constant discipline.]

Scholarship divorced from *satya* and discipline becomes performative. Research motivated solely by career incentives or ideological positioning loses

its grounding. This journal does not claim moral superiority, but it does assert that intellectual labor must be accompanied by intellectual honesty. The modern academy is often structured around scarcity. Limited recognition, limited funding, limited platforms. This scarcity breeds exclusion. One of the founding impulses of the Journal of Sanātana Dharma was to resist this economy of restriction. By eliminating article processing charges and minimizing institutional gatekeeping, the journal seeks to foreground merit rather than affiliation. This is not charity; it is justice. The *Bhagavad Gītā* offers a profound insight into the ethic of work that informs this approach:

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥
(*Bhagavad Gītā* 2.47)

[You have the right to action alone, never to its fruits. Let not the fruits of action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction.]

Applied to scholarship, this verse cautions against both opportunism and apathy. One must work with sincerity, without obsession with recognition, and without withdrawal from effort. The editorial labour behind this journal has been guided by this ethic. Editing, reviewing, and curating scholarship across disciplines and languages is not a mechanical task. It requires patience and interpretive generosity. Reviewers must critique without condescension. Editors must decide without arbitrariness. Authors must revise without resentment. These virtues are rarely taught, yet they are essential to any meaningful academic community. The peer review process adopted by this journal is double-blind not merely as a procedural norm but as an ethical stance. It seeks to neutralize hierarchy, allowing arguments to stand on their own merit. While no system is flawless, the commitment to fairness remains central.

Another concern that merits reflection is the relationship between tradition and innovation. Sanātana Dharma is often mischaracterized as static. History tells a different story. New *darśanas* emerged through critique of older ones. Ritual practices evolved. Interpretations shifted. Continuity was maintained not by repetition but by reinterpretation. A journal devoted to this tradition must therefore remain open to new questions without severing roots. At the same time, novelty alone cannot be a criterion of value. Innovation divorced from depth risks superficiality. The challenge lies in cultivating work that is both rooted and responsive. This second issue represents an ongoing attempt to strike that balance.

Ultimately, the *Journal of Sanātana Dharma* does not aspire to define Sanātana Dharma. Such an aspiration would be misguided. At best, it can serve as a mirror, reflecting fragments of a vast and luminous tradition. It can offer a meeting ground where scholars, practitioners, and seekers encounter one another without coercion. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.3.6) offers a poignant reminder of the humility required in such endeavours: “नेति नेति” (Not this, nor that). This is not a negation of meaning but a refusal of premature closure. It reminds us that every formulation is provisional, every conclusion partial. Scholarship that remembers this remains alive.

As Editor-in-Chief, I do not present this issue as a culmination but as a continuation. It is an invitation to participate, to question, to refine, and to disagree with care. The journal will succeed not by avoiding criticism but by engaging it thoughtfully. I extend my gratitude to the contributors who entrusted us with their work, to the reviewers who offered their insight with diligence, and to the editorial team whose labour often remains invisible. Above all, I thank the readers, for without attentive readers, scholarship remains inert. May this journal continue to grow not merely in size or recognition, but in depth, integrity, and intellectual courage. May it remain faithful to the spirit of inquiry that has sustained Sanātana Dharma across centuries.

ॐ सह नावतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहे ।
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु । मा विद्विषावहे । ।

(*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.2.2; Śikṣāvallī, Śānti Mantra)

[May the almighty protect us both. May it nourish us both. May we work together with vigour. May our study be luminous. May we not oppose one another.]

In that spirit, this second issue is offered.

तीर्थ

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