

Reconsidering Classical Indian Thoughts

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Editor

Dr. Desh Raj Sirswal



CPPIS

Pehowa (Kurukshetra)

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**Centre for Positive Philosophy
and Interdisciplinary Studies
(CPPIS)**

**Milestone Education Society (Regd.)
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(Editor)

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I dedicated this book to

My Beloved Teacher

Late Prof. N. N. Gupta

"To action alone hast thou a right and never at all to its fruits;

Let not the fruits of action be thy motive;

Neither let there be in thee any attachment to inaction"

(The Bhagavad Gita, 2.47)

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Editor's Preface - Acknowledgement

The philosophy of a country is the essence of its culture and civilization. It springs from ideas that prevail in its atmosphere and bears its unconscious stamp. For over 8000 years there has been an uninterrupted culture in India. We have the great songs of the *Vedas*, the splendour of the *Upanishads*, the glory of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the vastness of the *Mahabharata*, the tenderness and heroism found in the *Ramayana*, the wisdom of the fables and stories in India, the scientific philosophy of *Sankhya*, the psychological philosophy of *Yoga*, the poetical philosophy of *Vedanta*, the *Dhamma* of Buddha, the *Triratnas* of Jains, the grammar of Panini, the core nationalism of Kautilya, the lyrical poetry and drama cultivated in the great works of Kalidasa. The writings, on which classical Indian thoughts are based mainly written in *Sanskrit* language except for those of modern period. Classical Indian thoughts are very pluralistic with diverse schools, systems, languages and religions that flourished on the Indian soil for millennia.

Recent years have seen the beginning of a radical reassessment of the philosophical literature of ancient and classical India. The analytical techniques of contemporary philosophy are being deployed towards a fresh and original interpretation of the texts. This rational rather than mystical approach towards Indian philosophical theories has resulted in a need to work which explains afresh its central methods, courses and devices. It is with this spirit of thought and background that I want to publish a book to discuss the relevance and need of classical Indian thoughts. The present collection is a significant step on this part because it recognizes the potentials of classical Indian tradition and its vast wisdom to contribute in all realms of life. Here we have collected 20 papers both in English and Hindi language written on Indian epistemology, metaphysics, logic, ethics and social philosophy. But in this volume only 9 papers were published and remaining papers will be published in second edition along with the same papers. To study the nature of philosophy in India and its implementation in all spheres of human life is one of the most important objectives of our Centre. In this regard we have published two online books entitled *Philosophy, Education and Indian Value System* and *Positive Philosophy for Contemporary Indian Society*, respectively.

This book entitled *Reconsidering Classical Indian Thoughts* neither claims, nor attempts to be a definitive study of all the characteristics as concept(s) of classical Indian thoughts. It is a modest

attempt of the editor to familiarise the common, but philosophy reader with the fundamental conceptions of ancient Indian culture. I hope, by studying this book the reader will understand the relevance of Indian classical thoughts. The preparation of this book was a great experience to the editor. This challenging and awesome responsibility was not taken lightly because this is the first print publication of Centre for Positive Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies (CPPIS) as we discussed above.

There are really no words to express my gratitude to the scholars, teachers, and to all the contributors of present book for making this publication possible. Citations can only hint at the nature and extent of help we received from different individuals. The list of such well wishers is extensive but for the sake of consistency I have restricted myself to include Prof. Dharmendra Goel (Professor Emeritus, Deptt. of Philosophy, Panjab University, Chandigarh), Prof.K.K.Sharma (Former-Pro-Vice-Chancellor, NEHU, Shillong), Prof.G.P.Das (Professor of Philosophy (Retd.), Department of Philosophy, Utkal University, Bhubneswa), Dr Sham Lata (Principal, P.G.Govt. College-46, Chandigarh), Dr R.K.Deswal (Chairman, Deptt. of Philosophy, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra), Dr Anamika Girdhar (Associate Professor, Deptt. of Philosophy, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra), a few from those who motivated and guided me from time to time. I extend my thanks to my associate friends like Lakhwinder Singh, Rajinder Kaur, Geetanjali Bora, Shafiqul Islam, Poonama Verma, Ishwar Singh, Dr Vijay Pal Bhatnagar and members of Milestone Education Society (Regd.) Pehowa for their valuable suggestions and positive assistance towards CPPIS works.

Last but not least, I like to express my deep gratitude and sincere thanks to Acharya Shilak Ram, Vipin Sangar and Vikaram Lohat for their selfless support in proof reading and content management of the present book. The patience of many might have been exhausted and many might have begun to wonder if it would ever come out at all. With all its deficiencies and incompleteness it is here, and let us hope it will be helpful in the building a community of positive philosophers which is the dream of the Centre.

October, 2011

Dr. Desh Raj Sirswal

1. Debate over Doubt between Gautama and Nāgārjuna

-Prof. Dilipkumar Mohanta

"Philosophers are both effects and causes: effects of their social circumstances and of the politics and institutions of their time; cause, if they are fortunate, of beliefs which mould the politics and institutions of later days."¹

Nāgārjuna is recognized as the chief architect of Mahāyāna Buddhism in general and Madhyamaka philosophy in particular. But historical evidences are insufficient to arrive at any conclusion about the time and place of his birth. However, the scholars of the history of Buddhism are unanimous in placing Nāgārjuna in the second half of the second century A.D. and according to them Nāgārjuna was born in a Brahmin family at a village named *Vedalya* located in the southern side of the river Kṣūḍā. The valley was known in those days as *Guḍādhara* and it was in the southern province of India named "*Andhaka*". According to the scholars of history, the ancient *Andhaka* is the present Andrapradesh state of India and ancient *Guḍādhara* is the Guntur district of to-days' Andrapradesh and the river mentioned in ancient texts is the same river Kṣūḍā. There is no change of the name of the river. *Mahādūndubhisūtra*, *Laikāvatarasūtra*, *Mahāmedhasūtra* and *Āryamañjusrī mūlakalpa* are some of the important texts where the said matter has been discussed. Nāgārjuna composed most of his philosophical treatises in *kārikā* (verse). But *Vaidalya* has been composed in the form of *aphorism (sūtra)*. However, he has written commentaries to his composed texts in prose called *vṛtti*-s. Let me cite here two aphorisms from *Lankāvatarasūtra* (1963:116) to support our contention.

Nivṛte sugate paścātkālo' tīto bhaviṣyati/

Mahāmate nibodhatvaṣ yo netrīm dhārayiṣyati

Dakṣiṇāpatha vedalyāṣ bhikṣuṣ śrīmān mahāyaśaḥ

Nāgāhvayaḥ sa nāmnā tu sadatpakṣadāraḥ.

It may be noted in the passing that the authors of philosophical literature in ancient India composed *mantra*-s, *sūtra*-s, *kārikā* and prose in order to express their views. Badrāyana's *Brahmasūtra* is such a treatise where we find a precise compilation of the main threads of Vedānta philosophy. Because of the practice of oral tradition, philosophical views were taught in a concise and in easily memorisable form. Some important titles in *sūtra* literature are

Mīmāṃsāsūtra of Jaimini, *Nyāyasūtra* of Gautama, *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* of Kaṇāda, *Brahmasūtra* of Badrāyana, *Sāṅkhyasūtra* of Kapila, *Vaidalyasūtra* of Nāgārjuna. A *sūtra* (*aphorism*) is supposed to exhibit the essence of the arguments on a topic without leaving any aspects of the question in concise and unambiguous form and at the same time it is not vitiated by repetition and any blemish. In *Padmapurāṇa* we come across the definition of *aphorism* and Mādhavācārya has quoted it in his commentary on *Brahmasūtra*. It runs as follows:

*alpāskaram asandigdhaṣ sāravatviśatomukham/
astobhamanavadyaṣ ca sūtraṣ sūtravido viduḥ//*

In *Treatise of Tearing* (*Vaidalyasūtra*) of Nāgārjuna, there are 72 (seventy two) *aphorisms*, of which *aphorisms* nos. 71 and 72 contain the conclusion of the treatise. In this *Treatise of Tearing* Nāgārjuna raised sixty six questions against the claim made in Gautama's *Nyāyasūtra* in favour of the existence of the sixteen class of knowables. Vācaspati Mīśra tells us that *Nyāya-sūtra* contains 5 chapters, 10 *āhōika* (portion done in a day) 64 sections (*prakaraḍa*), 526 *aphorisms* (*sūtra-s*), 1966 *terms* (*pada*) and 6364 letters (*akāra*). The first chapter of Gautama's *Nyāyasūtra* and *Vaidalyasūtra* of Nāgārjuna could be read side by side in 'thesis counter-thesis' pattern of philosophical debate. Gautama in *Nyāyasūtra* claims that the right cognition of the sixteen categories of existent knowables leads to the cessation of suffering which is the attainment of the highest good (*tattvajānān niḥśreyaśādhigamaḥ*) Nāgārjuna refutes this claim in *Vaidalyasūtra* with regard to each of the sixteen class of knowables one after another. In later days Vatsyāyana in his *commentary* on *Nyāyasūtra* (*Treatise on Logic*) of Gautama tries to defend the Nyāya position priorly refuting the charges levelled against Gautama's position by Nāgārjuna. However, neither Gautama nor Nāgārjuna did mention the name of each other. But Nāgārjuna in addition to his refutation of *pramāḍa* in *Vaidalyasūtra* devoted 20 verses in his *Vigrahavyāvartanī* from verse 31 to verse 51 in order to refute the existence of *pramāḍa*.

Gautama's claim and Nāgārjuna's refutation can be put as the thesis and the counter-thesis respectively in philosophical debate. In this connection an obvious question arises : If Nāgārjuna has devoted his *Vaidalyasūtra* in order to refute the *pramāḍavādins'* claim in general and Gautama's claim in particular, why does Nāgārjuna remain silent about the contents of other chapters onwards the second chapter of *Nyāyasūtra*? According to Sempa Dorjee, Nāgārjuna probably could not see other chapters of *Nyāyasūtra* during his life time. Otherwise, a

philosopher who has refuted point to point of the Nyāya claim, there is every reason to believe that he would examine the responses by Gautama to his criticism.

It is interesting to note in the passing that the philosophers who have criticized Nāgārjuna are not only Naiyāyikas and Vedāntins, but also other realistic philosophers, namely Sautrāntikas and Vaibhāṅgikas. As we have mentioned earlier that Nāgārjuna also makes the category of *Pramāṇa* one of the subjects of criticism in *Vigrahavyāvartanī (The Dialectical Method)*, it is interesting to see how Vatsyāyana in his *commentary* on *Nyāyasūtra*, 1.1.1 tries to refute Nāgārjuna's contention by saying, '*Pramāṇato arthānāṣ prasiddhiḥ*'. The mutual controversy and opposition between Nāgārjuna and Gautama are seemed to be important factors for the development of both the schools of philosophy. Some scholars are of opinion that there were different persons with the same name Nāgārjuna. But Āryadeva, Abhayankar Gupta and Candrakīrti are unanimous that the alchemist philosopher and tāntrika were the one and the same person named Nāgārjuna. Even the Tibetan scholar Coikhāpā also supported this contention.

However, without entering into the subtleties of this issue we may cite some of the interesting aspect regarding the beginning of *Nyāyasūtra* chapter 2. The second chapter of *Nyāyasūtra* begins with the examination of doubt (*saśśaya*). Five *aphorisms* from 2.1.1 to 2.1.5 have been devoted to state the *pūrvapakṣa*, the position of the opponent and two *aphorism*-s from 2.1.6 to 2.1.7 have been devoted by Gautama to refute opponent's position. In *Vaidalyasūtra* Nāgārjuna devoted three *aphorisms* from 20 to 22 in order to refute the existence of doubt. These three *aphorisms* are as follows :

Sūtra 20 : Upalabdhānupalabdhayorasaśśayaḥ, sattvādasattvācca.

Sūtra 21 : Astyeva saśśayaḥ, viśeṣānapekṣatvāt.

Sūtra 22 : Viśeṣāpekṣā nāstveva, praiṅ nirākṣatvāt.

Here Nāgārjuna raises questions about the locus of doubt and the details of Nāgārjuna's argument will be dealt in the elucidation of these *aphorisms*. Let us have a look at *Nyāyasūtra* chapter 2 now. Gautama begins the second chapter of *Nyāyasūtra* with the following *aphorism*:

Samānānekadharmādhyavasāyādnyataradharmmyā-dhyavasāyādvā na saśśayaḥ-
("Doubt is not due to the ascertainment of common characteristics or unique characteristic or the ascertainment of either"²)

In the 20th *aphorism* of *Vaidalyasūtra* Nāgārjuna apprehends the Nyāya position with a possible argument. This is that doubt cannot be arisen about an unreal object and therefore it exists. Nāgārjuna examines three possibilities □the object of doubt may be something perceived or non-perceived or something seemingly perceived. In none of the cases, it is logical to admit the existence of doubt as an independent category of knowable. The object of doubt is characterized by two mutually contrary attributes; here our mind vacillates between the two and unless this peculiar characteristics are attributed to the same object of knowledge, the doubt would not be established as existing. But before elaborating Nāgārjuna's arguments against doubt as an existing knowable it is important to discuss at least in short, the necessity of combating doubt, according to Nāgārjuna. Nāgārjuna makes it clear in his *commentary* just before the 20th *aphorism* that the Nyāya *pramāḍāvādin* might argue that the *pramāḍa-prameya* tradition is not refutable, because even the argument that 'what is called *pramāḍa* turns out to be a *prameya* and *vice-versa*' refers to the existence of doubt. And it enables the *pramāḍāvādin-s* to admit *pramāḍa* and *prameya* as existing because they are the objects to which doubt refers. Doubt is accepted as an existing knowable in the Nyāya set of knowable and for this an unreal or a non-existing object cannot be referred by doubt.

In Gautama's *Nyāyasūtra*, doubt is called a kind of wavering cognition (*vimarśa*) (*samāna- aneka-dharma-upapatteḥ vipratipatteḥ upalabdhi-anupalabdhi-avyavasthātāḥ ca viśeṣa-apekūḥ vimarśaḥ saṣṣayaḥ* □1.1.23). It is the contradictory 'apprehension about the same knowable which relies on the recollection of the specific distinguishing marks of each.' The five varieties of doubt are due to five different causal conditions. When we recollect the unique features of each objects and we are indecisive about the nature of the yonder object because of the apprehension of common features we have the contradictory cognition of the same object. This is the first form of doubt. There we find common features, -- like the length and the breadth, between the man and the tree-trunk. From a distant place an yonder object may be perceived having the common features of the tree-trunk and the man. Next because of the nearness we can see the specific features of the moving of hand and feet etc. which distinguish it from a tree-trunk and we have the cognition of a man. Nāgārjuna's point is that there cannot be any relation between the state of doubt and the unique feature's awareness. The confusing features assigned to the same object is the distinguishing mark of doubt. According to Nāgārjuna, this is not possible. In the 22nd *aphorism* Nāgārjuna argues that the confusing features of the yonder object which is

the distinguishing mark of doubt may either be known or unknown. If it is known, then there cannot be any scope for doubt. Even if it is not known then also there is no possibility of doubt. When we know that there is tree-trunk or this is a man, in either case, there is no doubt. In either case it is the right cognition. If, on the other hand, the exact features of the object are unknown, it is then cognized (i.e. known) as unknown. There is also no scope for uncertainty. The cognition of distinguishing unique feature's of existence and non-existence cannot be possible in the same time. This leads Nāgārjuna to conclude that the existence of doubt cannot logically be established.

These objections of Nāgārjuna have immense value in the philosophical debate between the Nyāya of Gautama and the Madhyamaka critique of Gautama's category of knowables. In the second chapter of the *Nyāyasūtra* while examining different objections against doubt Gautama in a very subtle way criticized the arguments of Nāgārjuna. Gautama in *Nyāyasūtra* 1-5 elaborates the objections against doubt and in 6-7 *sūtra-s* tries to defend the Nyāya position. The objections against Gautama's understanding of doubt as a separate category of existents have been elaborated by Vātsyāyana in his *commentary* and it is noticeable that the second and the fifth objections are directly the objections raised by Nāgārjuna in *Vaidalyasūtra* (i.e. 20-22 *sūtra-s*). Whether Gautama himself in the second part of *Nyāya-sūtra* (i.e. 2.1.1 – 2.1.7) could answer Nāgārjuna's charges or whether any later Nyāya philosopher is successful in meeting the charges raised by Nāgārjuna is a separate issue and this needs further research by the competent researchers who are well-versed in the development of both Nyāya and Madhyamaka traditions.

However, in the 23rd *aphorism* Nāgārjuna refutes the claim with regard to the existence of the purpose of action. As a matter of fact this is an attempt to strengthen his refutation of the existence of doubt. By refuting the existence of the purpose of action Nāgārjuna dismisses the counter-possibility that the purpose of action may be considered as an object of doubt. Doubt can arise about what we want to ascertain in the form of purpose of activity. To put it otherwise, unless we have doubt about something there cannot be any purpose of activity for ascertaining it. So for the cognition of something the existence of doubt about that thing is pre-supposed. According to Gautama thus, a person feels inclined to act because of the purpose. *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.24 defines *prayojana* or the purpose as "the object pursuing (*adhikṛtya*) which a person is led to action" Nāgārjuna refutes the claim made by Gautama in the 23rd *aphorism* of *Vaidalyasūtra*

in the forms of action as something existing as well as something non-existing. In the *commentary* (available in Tibetan) after mentioning *Nyāyasūtra's* (1.1.24) description of the purpose an example is mentioned to elaborate the Nyāya counter-thesis. Suppose a person's purpose of action is to produce a pot out of the clump of clay. Now against this Nāgārjuna argues that if we admit that an object, say a pot which is the purpose category, according to Nyāya, is already established as existing in the clay, then the role of the purpose of action becomes irrelevant. If, on the other hand, it is already established as something non-existing, that is to say, non-existing in sand or in oil-seed, then also the role of the purpose of action becomes irrelevant. Therefore, according to Nāgārjuna, we cannot judiciously relate action to purpose. If it exists *prior* to action, logically speaking there is no possibility of connecting it to action, because it cannot be the goal of that intended action. On the other hand, if it is something non-existing *prior to* action, then also there is no possibility of connecting it to action, because something existing cannot have a relating tie with something not existing. This leads to the conclusion that irrespective of existing or non-existing objects like a pot etc. cannot serve as the purpose of any action. And if there is no purpose to be fulfilled, there is no justification for admitting doubt as a category of knowable. Again, if there is no doubt in the beginning about the existence of something, there cannot be any necessity for investigation and where there is no necessity for investigation, there is no justification for admitting the existence of *pramāṇa* which is claimed to dispel doubt. The whole process of claiming the existence of certain set of knowable in the *Nyāyasūtra* is thus at a stake, according to Nāgārjuna.

A close reading of the first five *aphorisms* of the second chapter of Gautama's *Nyāyasūtra* makes it clear that the examinations of the objections raised by the counter-theorists are in fact, the objections advanced by Nāgārjuna in *Vaidalyasūtra (Treatise of Tearing)* and the 6th and the 7th *aphorism-s'* contents are the refutations of Nāgārjuna's objections. What is called examination (*parīkṣā*) consists mainly of showing inconsistency in opponent's view. Gautama named his discussion about doubt as 'Examination of Doubt' and the 7th *aphorism* clearly states that *whereof* the opponents raise objections, like the earlier one *thereof* the defender of Nyāya philosophy should response in accordance with the *Nyāyasūtra* as it has been done here. One and the same person named Nāgārjuna was an alchemist as well as a philosopher.

In the *aphorism* 2.1.19 of *Nyāyasūtra* Gautama refutes this charge levelled by Nāgārjuna by stating, "*Na pradīpa-prakāśasiddhivat-tatsiddhep*" (□ "No, since perception are cognized

exactly in the way the lamp-light is cognized"). A comparative study between *Nyāyasūtra* and *Vaidalyasūtra* by any competent scholar would be very interesting to see how in very many objections raised by Nāgārjuna have been examined by Gautama in other chapters of *Nyāyasūtra* from the second chapter onwards to the fifth chapter and how far the later Nyāya philosophers, say Vatsyāyana and others, were successful in their attempts like their mentor Gautama in giving replying the objections raised by Nāgārjuna in *Vaidalyasūtra*. Both the authors of *Nyāyasūtra* and *Vaidalyasūtra* were contemporary and were belonged to the 2nd century A.D. Historical analysis of philosophical problems of classical Indian philosophy will surely enlighten us about the development of great argumentative tradition of Indian culture.

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2. Re-Interpreting the Concept of Dharma in Classical Indian Ethical Perspective

-Dr Aditi Patra (Nee Ray)

In India, morality is never considered as separated from human existence and life. As a matter of fact, it is necessary to consider the basic factors of morality in relation to the study of human nature. Moral type of an individual depends on the basic intrinsic nature of the individuals. Each individual according to his own capacity is supposed to sustain a society, and that is value, that is his '*dharma*'. In my present thought provoking paper, my intention is to analyze and explicate the multidimensional interpretations of the concept of *dharma* from the classical Indian ethical perspective and more specifically from some of the thoughts of the Indian philosophical schools.

This paper is divided into four sections. The first section of this paper begins with the analysis of the etymological and other meanings of the word '*dharma*'. The term '*dharma*' may be explained in the sense of objective morality as well as subjective morality. In the second section, the concept of *dharma* has been analyzed in the sense of objective morality. In the third section, discussions have been made about *dharma* as character trait and its consequences, i.e. in the sense of subjective morality. How does an individual achieve *moksa* or liberation by performing *dharma* has been critically analyzed in the concluding section.

I

Dharma, in the Indian ethics, is a key term and it is a term with many senses. The multivocal character of the word '*dharma*' is evidenced by the fact that it has been used to denote such widely different things as nature, law, custom, religious rituals, rules, morality, duties, character-trait. This term, actually, covers the entire range of a man's life. However, behind all of these dimensions, there is a normative one which constitutes also the central core. *Dharma* as a human value or *purusartha*, can be said to be the value which consists in, or is constituted by, living a morally good life, a life which is in accordance with the requirements of morality appropriate to a man's just being a human being in his society or to his being a participant in interpersonal transactions. In this paper, the word '*dharma*' is understood in the sense of morality and the other sense of *dharma* as religious consciousness has been excluded.

Quite often, in the moral sense, *dharma* is said to be the sustainer of the human world, or the world, on the basis of an etymological elaboration or derivation of the term '*dharma*'. It is found that the word '*dharma*' is derived from the root '*dhri*' which means to uphold, to maintain.

In its philosophical sense, the word '*dharma*' may refer to the harmonious order of the cosmos, i.e. '*Rta*'. The concept of '*Rta*' may be introduced to understand the social harmony. This concept takes almost purely an ethical turn when it is put in conjunction with *dharma*. *Rta* is the principle of the cosmic order, which generates that there is no arbitrariness in the moral world. However, it hardly gives us any criterion to distinguish between right and wrong moral and immoral. It may be said that a life of righteousness is a life in accordance with the principle of *Rta*. In moral sense, this word may mean various sorts of things. It may mean the moral duties performed by an agent living in the same as well as in different socio-ethical status, or the word may refer to moral sacrifices such as *putresti yaga*, *jyotistama yaga*, etc to attain the heavenly pleasures, or the word may mean moral virtues or the character traits. *Dharma*, in its absolute sense, is trans-temporal, trans-spatial, and self-subsistent.

II

In this section, the concept of *dharma* or morality has been developed through the characterization of the concepts of general duties (*samanya dharma*), special duties (*varnasrama dharmas*) and one's own duties (*svadharmas*).

The term '*Dharma*' may be explained in the sense of objective morality as well as subjective morality. The objective morality of the duties is the groundwork of *Hindu* ethics. It may also be considered as the preparatory step to the higher morality of self-purification, which necessarily presupposes the meditation of an objective code of right and wrong actions. The moral life of the *Hindus* has been represented in a scheme of *Varnasrama dharmas* or special duties as well as of *sadharana dharmas* or common duties and these two constitutes the objective morality of the *Hindus*. However, objective morality is not sufficient by itself and it is necessary that the individual after a period of discipline in objective co-operation and self –restraint, should look inwards into himself and aim at subjective purity and inner excellence of the will.

The classical Indian thinkers have taken great interest regarding the classification of the duties into common or *sadharana dharmas* and specific or *visesa dharmas*. From the time of Manu, the five fundamental duties have been accepted in the classical Indian tradition and these duties are obligatory for man as man, irrespective of any particular social class.

These duties are: *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non-violence), *brahmacarya* (celibacy), *asteya* (non-stealing) and *aparigraha* (non-attachment). ‘*Satya*’ refers to being veracious in thought, speech and action-all the three. ‘*Ahimsa*’ refers not only to overt non-killing or non-injuring any creature in any way. It carries with it also the positive trait of love, kindness etc. ‘*Brahmacarya*’ generally refers to a control over all the sense organs, but more specifically, it refers to the control of sex-drive. ‘*Asteya*’, is non-stealing of the property of others. However, ‘*asteya*’ prohibits not only actual stealing; it also prohibits entertaining any thought of taking away what belongs to others. Sometimes ‘*asteya*’ provides such a wide connotation that it comes very near to *aparigraha*, which means non-attachment to worldly objects.

In the Yajnavalkya’s *Smṛti*, nine types of virtues have been mentioned and these are non-injury, truthfulness, and honesty, and cleanliness, control of the senses, charity, self-restraint, love, and forbearance. Further, Manu, in his *Smṛti*, has arranged in a string, ten common duties which he calls the ten components or constituents of *dharma*, which everyone has to honor and practice in his own life. The ten constituents of social morality, according to him, are, steadfastness (*dhṛti*), forgiveness(*ksama*), self-control i.e. control of mental propensities(*dama*), cleanliness(*sauca*), control over the senses(*indriyanigraha*), Avoidance of theft(*cauryabhava*), wisdom(*dhi*), scholarship or knowledge(*vidya*), truthfulness(*satya*) and restraint of anger(*akrodha*).

However, some generally accepted *samanya dharmas* of the orthodox philosophical schools, especially; of the *Nyaya-Vaisesika* schools would be explained in this section. In the *Vaisesikasutra*, Kanada has mentioned thirteen characteristics that will help to signify the word ‘*dharma*’ as a common duty. Further, Prasastapada, in his *Bhasya*, has also mentioned two types of duties and these are common duties, i.e. *sadharana dharmas* and special duties, i.e. *visesa dharma*. The *samanya* or *sadharana dharmas* are those, which are common to all *asramas* or stage of life and all *varnas* or social classes and community. On the contrary, the *visesa dharmas* or specific duties are those that are relative to one’s particular station in life as constituted by one’s *asrama* or particular stage of life. However, the general duties or *sadharana dharmas*¹ are:

1. Reverence to the *dharma*, (*dharme sraddha*)
2. Refraining from injury to living beings (*ahimsa*)
3. Seeking the good of all creatures (*bhutahitvatva*)
4. Telling the truth (*satyavacana*),
5. Refraining from theft (*asteya*),
6. Practising *brahmacarya* , i.e., leading a mode of life marked with devoted study of the *Vedas* and other scriptures and practicing complete abstinence from sexual and secular pleasures (*brahmacarya*),
7. sincerity, purity of motive (*anupadha*),
8. Abandonment of any kind of anger (*krodha-varjana*),
9. Personal cleanliness (Abhisecana, Snana),
10. The eating of linseeds and other specified substances on special occasions for the object of *suci* or purification of the body (*sucidravyasevana*)
11. To be devoted to his or her own God recognized by the *Vedas* (*visista-devata-bhakti*),
12. Fasting on special occasions (*Upavasa*)
13. Moral watchfulness (*apramada*), i.e. the unflinching performance of the *Nitya- naimittika karmas* according to the *sastras* (*nitya-naimittikanam karmanamavasyam bhavena karanam*)

However, by critically examining the different kind of common duties, it may be pointed out that some of them are of a religious or sacramental in nature and some are hygienic. They may, in a sense, be taken as elements of individual morality. The second kind of *dharmas* ,i.e., the ‘*visesa dharma*’ or the *varnasrama dharmas* are duties relative to the *varna* or class to which one belong to the society and to the *asrama* or stage of life through which one is passing at a particular time. From the Rig Vedic period to the period of different systems of Indian systems , there arises a normative dimension to *dharma* in which the term comes to mean the sum total of one’s obligation by which one ‘fits in’ with the natural and particularly the social world. The ‘*Purusa-sukta*’, in which the earliest reference to the division of Hindu society into the four classes is to be found , describes the classes as having come out of the different limbs of the body of the primeval being, and thus shows the organic relationship among the classes. This is especially pertinent concerning the duties determined by one’s social class (*varna*) and stage of life

(*asrama*). It is well known that from the ancient time the Hindu society divides into four classes and every individual's life span into four stages.

'*Varna*', which is the Sanskrit word for class or caste, means color. Originally, the term may have referred to the color of the skin. India has had to deal with the problems of race in its acutest form. The result was a composite *Hindu* society; and term *varna* assumed a new meaning-no longer the color of the skin, but the color of one's own character. As its verbal form suggests, *varnadharmas* suggests the *dharma* of a *varna*. A *varna* is a class of people, a sector of society, as per the Indian theory of social organization according to which society consists of four classes, or sectors of people, called *brahmana*, *ksatriya*, *vaisya* and *sudra*. However, the *varnadharma* of an individual is the set of obligations one is obligated to fulfill on account of his belonging to, or being a member of, the class or *varna* he is in fact a member of. According to the Indian theory of *varnadharma*, the individual is first a member of a particular *varna*, and simply on account of this membership of his he has to have a particular set of obligations, more specifically, the set of obligations which every member of that *varna*, by definition, has to have. Although the reference to the four classes is first found in the *Rigveda* itself, the different philosophical systems have also dealt with this matter respectively. In this section, mainly the thoughts of the *Nyaya-Vaisesikas* have been explained. Prasastapada² in his *Padarthadharmasamgraha* also deals with the qualities and duties relative to each *varna* and *asrama* in a detailed manner. However, mainly based on this bhasya, the following are the qualities or duties relative to each *varna* and *asrama*:

Varna Dharma:

Qualities and Duties of *brahmana*:

1.(a) Qualities- serenity(*sama*), self-control(*dama*), austerity(*tapas*), purity(*sauca*), forbearance(*ksanti*), uprightness(*arjava*), wisdom(*jnana*), knowledge(*vijnana*), faith in religion(*astikya*).in the *Bhagavat Gita*, it has been claimed that 'one becomes a *brahmana* by his deeds and not by his family or birth'. Thus, class is primarily a question of character. An interesting incident has been mentioned in the *Chandogya Upanisad*. Satyakama, a young lad, desired to lead the life of a student. Before he could approach a preceptor for this purpose, he had to know his lineage. He had only his mother to enlighten on this issue.

However, the mother could not throw any light on it. She told him, “I do not know to what lineage you belong, my son. In my youth, when I was moving about as a maidservant, I conceived you. Therefore, I do not know to what line you belong, my son. I am Jabala by name, and you are Satyakama. Therefore, you may call yourself Satyakama Jabala. Then the boy went to a preceptor, Gautama, and announced himself in the manner in which his mother had instructed him. The preceptor was pleased with the boy’s outspokenness and concluded that he must be a *brahmana* because he had spoken the truth. Thus, in Satyakama’s case, character and not birth determined his class.

(b) Duties of a *brahmana*: studying and teaching of the Vedas, performance of sacrifices (*yajna*), giving and accepting alms.

2. Qualities and duties of a *ksatriya*:

(a) Qualities: heroism (*saurya*), vigour (*teja*), steadiness (*dhrti*), resourcefulness (*daksya*), not fleeing from a battle, generosity and leadership(*isvarabhava*).

(b) Duties: Protecting people from external aggression and internal disturbances as well as governing them with a view to peace and prosperity, chastising the wicked (*asadhunigraha*), charity (*dana*).

3. Duties of a *vaisya*: agriculture, tending cattle and trade.

4. Duties of *sudra*: service to the other three classes.

However, it is sometimes found that the class system (*varna*) depends on the character of an individual and not on the society in which the individual belongs to. Every individual has to belong to a *varna* and to only one *varna*. Mainly the theistic school of thought in Indian ethical system is mostly concern about this *varna* system and they have considered this system as a necessary component However, it is sometimes found that the class system (*varna*) depends on the character of an individual and not on the society in which the individual belongs to. Every individual has to belong to a *varna* and to only one *varna*. Mainly the theistic school of thought in Indian ethical system is mostly concern about this *varna* system and they have considered this system as a necessary component of living a good moral life. This classification of the class system becomes sometimes necessary for it is a means to the individual’s realization of his ends.

The individual cannot realize his ends without the help of society. His pursuit of *moksa*, spiritual freedom, too, redounds to the benefit of society.

The Four Stages of Life (*Asrama Dharma*)

Turning to the society to the individual, it is noticed that, according to the teachings of Indian thinkers, each individual has to go through the four stages in his life's journey. These stages are called *asramas*, a term which mean rest places as well as training grounds. The four *asramas* are: *brahmacharya*(the period of studentship), *garhastha*(the stage of a householder), *vanaprastha*(the stage of a forest dweller), and *sannyasa*(the life of renunciation). It is also observed that there are certain specific characteristics that will lead someone to perform in a proper and absolute way in the four *asrama* life, i.e, *brahmacharya*, *graharstha*, *vanaprastha* and *sannyasa*. In the *Vaidika* tradition, being in the *gurukula*, the *brahmacarins* or the students reside for the purpose of studying the *Veda*, then after the twelve years of studying the person is prepared for leading the life of a householder (*grahasthya*), after that the stage of *Vanaprastha* comes where the person retires from his householder ship and sometimes go to the forest on the ripening of age. Lastly, the stage of *sannyasa* comes and this is the life of self-renunciation .Thus the *asrama dharma* are specific in the sense that these duties are to be performed by the aspirant after spiritual evolution within specific stages of his life. The ordinary aspirant has to pass through these different stages. Nevertheless, one possessing extra-ordinary psychic powers might be able to dispense with the intermediate stages. The scheme of *asrama dharma* considers human nature and prescribes the final stage of renunciation only after giving room for enjoying the good things of the world and for discharging one's social duties in a spirit of detachment during the preceding stages. Man's life becomes one of discipline, study, service, sacrifice, penance, and renunciation –all these leading to the perfection of human personality. These four *asramas* are intended to lead man to perfection by successive stages. In exceptional cases, some of the stages may be skipped. However, whether the progress is quick or low, by grades or by leaps, the goal that one should keep in view is the same, viz, spiritual perfection and freedom.

However, the important point must be noted that the scheme of *asrama dharma* is based on the ethical principle that man should discharge his duties fully before aspiring for his liberation from the bonds of the world. In this way, it might be argued that the person has all types of desire and aversion in his self as well as he has false knowledge about the object and he is obligated to

perform such characteristics to achieve *dharma*. Therefore, these are the *sadhanas* or the way to attain *dharma* and this is also noticed that by means of those duties, the person could not attain *moksa*. But in this stage of life; it does not mean that the person who performs those duties does not do any adharmic actions. Rather, they also do some actions that will lead them to attain *adharmas*, but the quality of those actions is very little. Actually, *varnasrama dharma* reflects a temporal dimension in orthodox *Hindu* normative thought. That is, just as a person gains rights and responsibilities while moving in this life from one *asrama* to another, he claims certain privileges and accepts specific obligations according to his present *varna*, which is determined by his actions in his previous life. Here again, a close ideological assumption connecting *dharma* and *adharmas* may be found.

In this connection, it may be observed that the karmic causality would relate an agent, an action and a result. Moral evaluation is involved in case of both the action and the result. In this context, a norm may be declared for man's action to be right either in the light of the intention behind it or its consequences or both. A norm may also have a restricted domain with respect to agents; it may be of the form that an action is right only when done by a certain kind of agent. In *Hindu* Philosophy, both kinds of restriction operating upon norms for right actions are being observed. Since the scheme of *varnasrama dharma* has been held to be valid. In so far as the worldly life is concerned, by almost all schools of Indian Philosophy, duties and rules of conduct may vary according to the caste (*varna*) and the stage of life (*asrama*) of the agent. Moreover, right conduct may be made to be conditional upon several other factors also, like the time of action, status or position of the agent, the era to which the agent belongs to. A cursory glance at diverse classifications of *dharma*, understood as duties and code of conduct, makes it amply clear that *Hindu* thought recognizes both kinds of rules of conduct, those valid for everyone and at all times, thus having unrestricted universality and those relative to an agent's caste and stage of life, the time in which the individual's lives and circumstances prevailing at the time of action. In this connection, this may also be noticed that the duties for a man in the householder's life are quite different from duties of a woman at that stage of life. However, the emphasis on following the code of conduct prescribed for oneself (*svadharma*) makes it clear that a person is always supposed to follow the *dharma* prescribed for him according to his caste, stage in life and any effort to switch to or to adopt a code of conduct valid for persons of different caste or stage in life is, in most cases, strongly disapproved of. The *Hindu* system of classifying the duties

presents a peculiar combination of flexibility and rigidity. While on one hand due importance has been attached to an agent's station in life, circumstances, the demands of his profession and time he is living in, on the other hand, within each different category, the code of conduct is often strictly and rigidly laid out. It appears to be quite logical to proceed from the recognition that duties vary according to the agent's circumstances to the further conclusion that even within each classification, e.g., code for a certain profession, certain flexibility or interchangeability has to be introduced to do justice to the particular nature and circumstances of an individual agent. It may also be observed that certain types of actions, namely those that violate the code of conduct valid for everyone, can be said to be wrong for everyone. However, as far as specific codes are concerned, what is right for one person may be wrong for another, so will happen in the case of wrong action, too. Nevertheless, these duties or rules of conduct, though obligatory, are yet liable to justified violations under demanding situations. For that reason, the act of killing is not a sinful act in certain situations.

In this context, it may be observed that the concept of *svadharmā* is not an independent concept different from that of *varnadharma* because, on analysis, it turns out to be non-different from the latter. This is so because ultimately it turns out to be nothing but *svavarnadharmā*, the *dharma*, or the set of obligations, which an individual has in virtue of his being a member of a *varna*. Thus, any *varnadharma* is an obligation of an individual as a member of the *varna* he belongs to. But its fulfillment is to be done by him, and not by the *varna* concerned, or by any *varna* whatsoever, because a *varna* is not an entity, a being. That is a *varna dharma*, is not a *dharma*, obligation, of any *varna*, but always of some individual. Therefore, it can as well be called his, the individual's own *dharma*, i.e. his *svadharmā*. This is what the term *svadharmā* means. This is also the sense in which the *Gita*, or Indian ethics, uses this term.

It does not mean by it a *dharma* different from *varnadharma*. It is the same as *varnadharma* spoken of from the point of view of its fulfillment by an individual since only he can be said or required to fulfill it.

But a large number of modern writers take it to stand for a *dharma* different from *varnadharma*, meaning by it the *dharma* of an individual as a unique person. Perhaps they are misled by the grammatical forms of the terms *varna dharma* and *svadharmā*. They seem to think that *varnadharma* means the *dharma* of a *varna*, or an individual as a member of a *varna*, and

svadharma an individual's own , personal, *dharma* not shared by, or obligatory for, any other individual. Treating *svadharma* as a *dharma* obligatory for one and only one individual is conceptually incorrect.

The concept of a *dharma* ,or obligation, like any other moral concept, is universalizable.If an individual with the ability to fight a righteous battle, if this sort of fighting by him is an obligation of his, then it is also the obligation of any other individual who is similar to him in morally relevant respects. Whenever an obligation is attributed to an individual, some respects or features of his personality, his status in his society, his relationship to the individual he is said to be obligated to, etc, constitute the ground or reason or attributing to him. This is true of all moral concepts and therefore of all *dharmas*.

It follows from what has been said above that when anything is said to be a *dharma* of an individual, he must be one who fulfills the *dharma*-making conditions which are required for the attribution of that particular *dharma* to him. It also follows then that the *dharma* can be attributed to any other individual who fulfills those conditions. For example, the *Gita* requires that Arjuna ought to fight the *Mahabharata* war because i) he is able to fight it, ii) it is a righteous war because it is to recover his rightful property from Duryodhana who has immorally grabbed it. iii) All other means of recovering the lost property have failed, iv) if he fights it as a duty with no desire or attachment for its consequences whatever they may be, he would incur no sin even if he kills in the war otherwise respectable, or innocent, people, etc. And, Krsna calls it Arjuna's *svadharma* to fight this war, obviously, on these grounds. It is clear that it would be then the *svadharma* not only of Arjuna alone, rather, it would be the *svadharma* of all those who satisfy the conditions i) to iv), and therefore, the same as *varnadharma* of all *ksatriyas*. Every *ksatriya* is said to have obligation to fight a righteous war on the grounds on which, or in the manner in which, Arjuna is required to fight. What the *Gita* calls a *svadharma* of Arjuna is, thus, his *dharma* as a *ksatriya*, and not as a person totally different from all others. But this is what his *varnadharma* , or any *ksatriya*'s *varnadharma*, is. All this is true of all *varnadharmas*.

The *varnadharma* of an individual belonging to any *varna*, is thus, his *svadharma* and vice versa. Therefore, *svadharma* really means *svavarnadharma*, the *dharma* or set of obligations, which any individual belonging to any *varna*, ought to fulfill by virtue of his belonging to that

varna. Thus it can be concluded that the concept of *svadharmā* is the same as that of *varnadharma*, and vice versa.

In this connection, it must be pointed out that in any moral theory that admits of more than one sort of virtues or obligations; the issue of priority becomes important. Moreover, in the Indian ethical theory, this issue is that of priority between a *varnadharma* and a *samānya dharmā*, for example, a caste –virtue or obligation and a general virtue or obligation. Most of modern works on Indian ethics interpret Indian ethical theory as holding that whenever there is any conflict between a *varnadharma* and a *samānya dharmā*, the *samānya dharmā* is to be preferred, i.e. to be given priority over the *varnadharma*. S.K.Maitra has pointed out that the universal duties formed the basis for performing special duties and that whenever there was an occasion for conflict between the two kinds of duties, the universal duties were given the priority over the caste duties. To say this is not false, for there were many instances of this position available in classical Indian works and in the Indian ethos. For example, both Mahavira and Gautama Buddha adjure doing their duties as householders as well as the duties they are required to do so because of their caste. Both of them devote their life to doing what may be called a *samānya dharmā*. Another example of the priority of *samānya dharmā* is found in the stories of *Ramayana*. In the *Rama* tradition, it is found that *samānya dharmā* is prior to *varnadharma*, on the contrary, in the *kṛṣṇa* tradition, as presented in the *Gita*, it is found that the priority has been made to the *varnadharma* over the *samānyadharmā*. And, the *Gita* ethos is not in any way less respected than the *Rama* tradition in Indian ethos.

It would be fair to say that Indian ethics considers neither *samānyadharmā* to have overall priority over *varnadharma* nor *varnadharma* to have this over *samānya dharmā*. Its attitude in this regard may be called either ambivalent or indecisive, leaving it to the individual to use his moral maturity to decide in which situation, which one of the two should be given priority over the other³

III

The word ‘*dharmā*’ may be used by the classical Indian thinkers, in the subjective sense, i.e. in the sense of subjective morality. In this sense, *dharmā* aims at the preservation or promotion of all being’s well being. From the classical Indian philosophical perspective, some of the

characteristics of *dharma* as well as *adharma* in their subjective sense, i.e. in the sense of moral virtues have been analyzed. These characteristics are:

Firstly, it is known to us that *dharma* and *adharma* are the two special qualities of the self and these two results from the purity and the impurity of the intention of the agent. In the case of *dharma*, the agent must be free from any kind of pride and in the case of *adharma* the agent may be influenced by the pride or vanity that inheres in the soul.

Secondly, *dharma* and *adharma* are that kind of qualities that inhere in the self in the relation of *samavaya* and the conjunction of the self with the mind is the *asamavayi karana* of *dharma* as well as *adharma* and the *nimitta karana* of these two is to achieve the result of the action.

Thirdly, these two appertain to the self in its phenomenal life ,i.e., as participating in experience and therefore, implying *purusantah karanasamyoga*,i.e, the contact of the self, *atman* or *purusa* and the *antahkarana* ,the internal organ or instrument of experience, i.e., the mind or *manas*. There is this contact of the self and the mind that there is experience and it is as far as there is experience that there is *dharma* or *adharma*.

Fourthly, these two qualities are super sensuous (*atindriya*).They are qualities or dispositions of the self, but not in the sense in which pleasure and pain are the qualities of the self. These two qualities are the objects of internal perception, as they can be perceived by means of the mind without the aid of the external senses. These are objects of *Yogika* intuition only, i.e., the intuition of the sages and of any ordinary person who can perceive only their effects, namely, happiness and unhappiness.

Fifthly, *dharma* and *adharma* are the effects of experience as they are born out of the self's participation in *samsara* or empirical life. They are thus contingent phenomena and thus cannot be eternal.

In this connection, it may be said that these virtues are generally those which we nowadays call moral virtues, like those of honesty, dutifulness, benevolence, truthfulness etc. In Manu's list of virtues, there occurs the name of virtues, which some would say, are not necessary for having a morally good character. For example, there is mentioned in the list, the virtue, *vidya*, which means scholarship or knowledge. Many would say that an individual may be a very good

scholar, yet his character may not be morally good. For example, *Ravana*, in the *Rama* tradition says, is a very good scholar, but his life style is not only morally not commendable, but, rather, highly condemnable. Perhaps, Manu's treating knowledge as a virtue relevant to morality is meant to suggest that one must have enough epistemic ability in the sense of rational maturity in order to lead a morally good life. Thus, every *samanya dharma* or virtue is a disposition, or attitude, or a certain kind of feeling and to be prone to act in a certain way as promoted by that feeling on that occasion.

Prof. Rajendra Prasad comments, "Normally, general virtues, in the Indian ethos, are such traits of character which are supposed to make a man's character good in an organismic sense. It is possible that the specific traits, which constitute what we call good moral character in a restrictive sense, form a subset of these traits. Rather, it is assumed in Indian ethics that this is always the case. This point will become clearer if the notion of a good character should be extended. From what has been said so far, it is obvious that the virtues of a man make his character good (and therefore their opposites, vices, make it bad.). However, simply the possession of some virtues as isolated, independent, traits does not do that. The virtues do that if they are organized in such a coherent manner that none of them is so greatly inflated that it hurts some other important virtue and leads to some obviously evil consequences."⁴ Further, Rajendra Prasad claims that the Indian theory of virtues is one of virtue coherentism. He says in his famous essay, that "virtue- coherent theory to be made practical, requires that some ordering or relative grading of virtues is provided, that is when a list of virtues is given, a principle is also given showing which virtue is higher than another so that an individual may prefer the higher to the lower if the two conflict in any situation"⁵ However, no classical philosophers seem to have provided a list fortified with such a principle.

IV

However, to wind up, it may be said that by performing various kinds of obligatory and occasional deeds, an ordinary person acquires the quality 'dharma', in his own self, which leads to self purification (*atma samskara*)⁶. This qualification is acquired through the ethical training. It enables the aspirant to enter upon the second stage of the discipline which is predominantly intellectual and which comprises three factors, i.e. *sravana* or formal study, *manana* or

reflection, and *nididhyasana* or meditation⁷. The virtuous person first learns from a proper preceptor that the true nature of the self is distinct from the body-mind- sense complex and also from the features like knowledge, happiness, misery etc. which are adventitious to it and with which it has falsely identified itself. This stage of training is called *sravana*. After the stage of *sravana*, the aspirant must argue himself based on reasoning and convince himself that what he has learnt through *sravana* is true. This stage of training is called *manana*. This secures intellectual conviction about the truth of this self. The knowledge of the self that is derived through *sravana* and *manana* is mediate in nature. Hence, what is needed is that this mediate knowledge must be transformed into direct experience. This can be done by the method of *dhyana* or *nididhyasana* which Gautama says *yoga* or *samadhi*.⁸ After maintaining these three, the knower of the truth would experience the real nature of the self by *tattvajnana*.

Overall, it can be said about the Indian concepts of virtues and duties that by going through them one can hardly miss being impressed by their subtlety and depth. The Indian thinkers are to be admired for their vision of human qualities of character. They count both virtues and vices in details and count them so minutely that hardly any quality worth considering is left out. The Indian distinction between the *sadharana dharma* and the *varnasrama dharma* has also its specialty and significance. Certain *dharma*s become obligatory for one by virtue of his being the member of a particular stage of life may be considered as the *pravartaka dharma*. The *dharma*s led by some kind of *pravrtti* either pure or impure are known as *pravartaka dharma*. Moreover, in accordance with *pravrtti*, an individual does the righteous or unrighteous action in the practical plane. The Indian ethical thinkers or specifically, the Vaisesika school of thought offer another explanation about *dharma* and *adharma* to show how these two qualities become '*pravrttilaksana*' and the '*nivrttilaksana*'. The term, '*pravrttilaksana*', implies *dharma* and *adharma*, in their subjective sense, helping an ordinary person to become a virtuous person. The term, '*nivrttilaksana*', on the other hand, explains how does a virtuous person, having the two qualities, *dharma* and *adharma*, in their own self, follows the path of *moksa*.

How does '*dharma*', as the *nivartaka dharma*, lead someone to attain *moksa* or *apavarga*? Here, '*nivartaka dharma*' means *nivrttilaksana dharma*. The person, who has acquired the *nivrttilaksana dharma*, has no desire, i.e., he is uninfluenced by any kind of worldly desires. That kind of person may be called a virtuous man. The *Vaisesika* have argued that the ordinary person

should perform the *pravartaka dharma*. For him, ‘the ordinary person’ signifies the person who has the false notion of ‘I’ in respect of the body-mind –sense complex and he performs the *sadharana dharma* as well as *varnasrama dharma*. In this stage, his tendency will be to do actions more of the nature of virtuous actions. But this does not preclude his absolute non-performance of vicious actions. At this stage, he engages himself in any activity with the sense of agency of the form, ‘I am the agent of this action’ and in this stage, though the moral training is complete, but the intellectual training remains to be completed. In this stage, an ordinary man may become a virtuous person but he is not liberated. After this stage, the seeker of liberation (*mumuksu*) will perform certain kind of action without any desire. This is same as the *Gita* discipline of ‘disinterested duty’. This would give rise to ‘merit’ which as Gautama and Sridhara describe, as self-purification (*atma-samskara*). However, while performing the *nivrttilaksana dharma*, the *atmajnana* must be present and it is coherent with the *dharma*. The person who is born in a higher family, and the person has the desire to remove all sorts of *duhkha*, as well as the person is free from the false notion of ‘I’ in respect of the body- mind –sense complex and over all, he has got the *atmajnana*, or *tattvajnana* about the difference of the self and the not-self, he becomes the person ‘*virakta*’⁹ in the sense that he has no desire or attraction and aversion towards anything. As soon as his desire and aversion disappear, no *dharma* and *adharma* are produced. As there is no *dharma* and *adharma*, no new *kriyamana karma* will produce. Now, the knower of the truth will continue to live until his *prarabdha karma* has fructified. Such a person who is free from *sancita karma* that has not yet fructified is called a *jivan-mukta* –one who is liberated and yet alive. However, in performing the *nivrtti laksana dharma*, the virtuous person feels a special kind of pleasure and that is total satisfaction (*santosa sukham*).¹⁰ This pleasure is present in allover his body and bodily movements. In this stage, the virtuous person is present in the verge of his liberation, still he is not liberated.

However, in the Indian moral context, it is found clearly that the obedience to *dharma* is not to enjoy freedom from action, but to enjoy freedom in action and that can reveal the true aspiration of human existence. Rabindranath Tagore, in his essay, entitled *Realisation in action* observes: ‘The true striving in the quest of truth of *dharma* consists not in the neglect of action but in the effort to attune it closer and closer to the eternal harmony.’¹¹

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3. Prasad, Rajendra, *A Conceptual –Analytic Study of Classical Indian Philosophy of Morals*, jointly published by Prof. Bhuvan Chandal and Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, Vol XII, Part I,2008, p.355
4. *ibid*, pp.301-304
5. *ibid*, p.304
6. *Nyaya Sutra of Gautama*, 4.2.46, *Nyaya Kandali* of Sridhara Bhatta, 1895 E.J.Lazarus and Co, p.278
7. *ibid*, p.282
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3. *Bhakti in Upaniṣads: A detailed Perspective on Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*¹

-Ms. V.Durgalakshmi & Dr Meera Baidur

Upanishads are some of the oldest texts in Indian intellectual traditions. A part of the *Vedic* literature, *Upaniṣads* are distinguished from the rest of the *Veda*-sections because of their emphasising the path of knowledge called *Jñana kānda* as opposed to the rest of the *Vedic* sections that focus on ritual or *karma kānda*.

The term *Upaniṣad* is formed from the root word *śad* which means ‘to sit’ and the two prefixes, *ni* that means ‘down’ and *upa* which means ‘near.’ The term therefore refers to the act of ‘sitting down near’ or in another sense it also means ‘to draw close to’. The word represents both the context and the content of the Upanishads. The context is that of a close conversation between the teacher and the taught and the content of teaching of these texts is the revelation of a secret knowledge that leads the student closer to a supreme spiritual state. The *Upaniṣad-s* are also called *Vedanta*, a culmination of *Vedic* enquiry into the nature of the truth (Dasgupta, 1922, p.30-31).

One can say that with the requisite physical, mental and intellectual temperaments, an entire generation of seekers exhausted enquiry into all possibilities of material sciences. Having done so, they turned inward and continued their seeking in the depths of their own personality. Having observed, analyzed and experienced “life”, they generously imparted their wisdom to deserving students, the next generation of sincere seekers. These experiences and teachings were crystallized into what is available to us as the *Upaniṣad-s*.

Devotion in the *Upaniṣad-s*

Scholars such as Oldenberg have indicated that the meaning of ‘*Upaniṣad*,’ is ‘reverence’ and the subject matter of the texts is an adoration of *Brahman* or *Ātman* (as quoted in Keith 1925, p

¹ This paper is a modified version of a Paper presented at the 45th Session of the All India Oriental Conference, by V.Durgalakshmi, Research Scholar, Dept of Sanskrit and Prakrit Languages, University of Pune, Pune.

492). Keith (1925) however rejects this view, claiming that an idea of devotion to the *Ātman* is opposed to the essential doctrine of the *Upaniṣad-s*. He writes:

“... *Ātman* or the *Brahman* is not properly the object of reverence at all, since reverence implies the very duality that the Upanishads deny, and if in reality the origin of the word lay in that sense, then it must be admitted that the Upanishads bear a name which their essential doctrine transcends” (p. 492) .

Literature, both spiritual and secular abounds with discourses and interpretation of the idea of devotion. The most popular word used to denote the concept of devotion is *Bhakti*. The word *Bhakti* comes from the root *Bhaj* literally meaning *seva* or service. It has to be rightly understood as service to some form of the Higher. This naturally implies a duality of the worshipper and the worship. The interpretation of *bhakti* in the *Upaniṣad-s* can be undertaken in two ways. One is to broaden the conceptualization of devotion beyond its narrow interpretation as a kind of emotional state exhibited by love towards the supreme. Rather devotion is seen as a process or practice that focuses on a seeking after ‘the hidden self.’ Saṅkara's definition of *Bhakti* in *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi* as “*Svasvarūpānusandhānam bhaktirityabhidhīyate*” (V. C. 31) implying ‘the repeated concentration on one’s real nature is called devotion’ seems to capture this broader perspective of *Bhakti* as a meditative practice. The second method to understand *Bhakti* would be to not see the *Upaniṣad-s* as only having a singular non-dual view but view them as early conceptualisations that were later developed into many dual and non-dual streams of thought.

According to these two ways of analysis definition of adoration of the self will expand to include both love for the Self and also a meditative engagement with one’s inner nature. The main terms used in these two senses in the *Upaniṣad-s* to denote an engagement of the aspirant with the divine self are *Jnaña*, *Vedana*, *Darśana*, *Dhyāna* and *Upāsana*.

Dualism or Non-Dualism: A Resolution

Upaniṣadic thought finds its strongest interpretation in the philosophy of Advaita, which brings together the diverse texts under one umbrella of interpretation. Is there one supreme, appearing as the world or are there two, the *Brahman*(the Supreme Self) and the *Jagat* (the world including the individual beings)? These questions are important to the discussion of the concept of *Bhakti*.

Balasubramaniam (2000) notes that a pre- Śāṅkara version of Advaita, spirit the (*Brahman*) and matter (*Jagat*) are related through identity in difference (*bhedābheda*) (p. 108). He says:

“Similarly, though spirit and matter are distinguished, they can never be separated such that we can speak of spirit in matter or spirit as matter governed by the relation of identity in difference. If so the entire physical universe being a manifestation or differentiation of the spiritual Brahman cannot be anything but spiritual.” (p.109)

He then clarifies how, in Śāṅkara’s *Advaita*, *Brahman* (supreme) is not modified into the world, but without undergoing modification, it forms the substratum or the ground or the support for the latter (p.109). In brief, the central idea of *Advaita* philosophy holds that the true reality is the *nirguna* (unqualified) *Brahman* (the supreme) and the *jagat* (phenomenal world) is but a mere appearance of *Brahman*.²

Though the Advaita philosophy of Śāṅkara seems to be a very good interpretation of the philosophical understanding of the *Upaniṣad-s*, some parts of these texts seem to emphasize a version of Panentheism, as put forward later by forms of non-Advaita *Vedānta* philosophies. Culp, (2009) citing Whittemore (1988, 33, pp.41–44), writes:

“Although there are texts referring to Brahman as contracted and identical to Brahman, other texts speak of Brahman as expanded. In these texts, the perfect includes and surpasses the total of imperfect things as an appropriation of the imperfect. Although not the dominant interpretation of the *Upanishads* [*Upaniṣad-s*], multiple intimations of panentheism are present in the *Upanishads* [*Upaniṣad-s*].³

The clear indications of sacred immanence are found in many statements like: “The universe is the supreme person alone.”⁴ On the other hand, the transcendence of the Brahman is also mentioned in declarations such as “He transcends the known and unknown.”⁵

²For the details of the absolute idealism of Śāṅkara see Jadunath Sinha, *Indian Philosophy Vol.II* (1952, pp. 444-455).

³ See Culp, John, "Panentheism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2009 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2009/entries/panentheism/>>.

⁴ “*Puruṣa evadamī viśvam*” Mund. Up., ii.1.10

Philosophically we are suggesting that it is likely that as *Upaniṣad-s*, being derived from *Vedic* thought would follow a similar trajectory of cosmic understanding. Duessen(1919) points out the movement towards such a unity was already present in hymns of the vedas such as Rgv I. 164 or X.129 (p.85). One can posit that the eulogies of devotion and admiration for various gods and deities developed into a form of devotion for some single substantive principles such as the *Prāna* - Vital force (B.UP. 6.2) *Brahman*- the supreme(B.Up.2.5.1) or *Ātman* – the inner self (C.Up. 6.9). Sinha (1978) suggests that “Monotheism in the *veda-s* led to monism” [non-dualism] (p.4). Therefore it is equally possible that the *Upaniṣad-s* propound diverse streams of thought that represent both dual and non-dual understandings.

Introduction to the *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* :

Most *Upaniṣad-s* are often named after the branch of the *Veda śāka* or *Saṁhita* that they are present in or after the seers associated with the text (Keith, p.498). So the name *Śvetāśvatara* is a word which in itself intrigues the reader. This does not seem to be the original name of the seer associated with the *Upaniṣadic* text bearing this name in the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*. Consisting of 113 mantras, this *Upaniṣad* is divided into six chapters. The word *Śvetāśvatara* is analyzed as one who is pure (*Śveta*) and has controlled his senses (*aśva*). Also it can be taken to denote a pure mule or male calf (*Śveta + aśvatara*). As it was practice to add suffixes like *puṅgava* etc., to names those days, this word is considered to signify the eminence of the teacher.

What is noteworthy is that though *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* does not occupy a position of being a major *Upaniṣad*, its mantras are quoted by most commentators to support their respective doctrines. Sinha (1978) regards *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* as a blend of absolutism and dualism. He claims that as a later *Upaniṣad*, it clearly advocates theism (p.31). Many references to *Saṁkhya* concepts such as the *guṇa-s* are also interesting. This *Upaniṣad* also refers to *Rudra*, a form of Śiva.

Not with standing its comparatively later origin, it is held in a position of authority by the three main schools of *Advaita*, *Dvaita* and *Viṣiṣṭādvaita*. Like most other *Upaniṣad* texts, its language too is a mixture of *Vedic* and *Purānic* styles of narrative. In fact, it would seem to be an attempt

⁵ Kena Up. I.4

of a great synthetic mind to reconcile the various conflicting views, philosophical and religious, which were current at the time of its composition. Sinha (1978) acknowledges that this text advocates a clear form of theism, and it also has many ideas that are the germ of Śaiva philosophy (p.31). What is interesting is the fact that the last verse Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad actually mentions the word *Bhakti* (S.Up. VI.23) and this came to denote devotion in common parlance. This makes the study of this Upaniṣad significant. There are many verses and metaphors in this text that have found popular mention again and again by many philosophers. Noteworthy among them being – the Supreme self dwelling in the cave of one’s heart, the story of the two birds on the same tree, the very popular prayer chant “*sahānavathu...*” and the call to “the children of immortality.”

An over view of Śvetasvatara Upaniṣad⁶

In this Upaniṣad, a section of students are involved in a discussion about the ultimate problems of philosophy and cosmology, as is true with every Upaniṣadic content.

The first doubt deals with causation. If everything has a cause, what is the final cause of this universe? *Brahman*? The Upanishad argues that if this is Brahman that is absolute and unrelated, it can’t be the material or efficient cause of anything. All these thoughts are condensed in the first query. (S.Up.,) The next one is regards the mystery of creation. It seems that the imperfect and finite came out of the perfect and the infinite. If the human in his real nature is *Brahman*, the need for variety is confusing is the purport of the second doubt. The purpose of life and allied questions is the third and the fate of the individual after death is the fourth question. Happiness and misery are asked about in the fifth question. The second *mantra* indicates conceptualizations about Time (*Kāla*), Nature (*svabhāva*), destiny (*niyati*), Chance (*yadṛccha*), Matter , Energy and Intelligence, and that all these factors individually or in some combination cannot be causal or responsible for the control of everything. The two reasons are that they all originate from some other cause and the second being the existence of the Self. The Self as Jīva,

⁶ All translations of the text are provided by V.Durgalakshmi, included as a part of her doctoral research on the Upaniṣads. Or longer versions are from the Translated version by Swami Tyagisananda – Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai available online at <http://www.astrojyoti.com/svetasvataraupaniṣad.htm>

also is not a free agent, being under the sway of happiness and misery (S.Up.I.2). The verse in I.3 reads:

“The sages, devoted to meditation and concentration, have seen the power belonging to God himself, hidden in its own qualities (*guna*). He, being one, superintends all those causes, time, self, and the rest.”

Primarily this verse conveys the idea of God’s immanence. The mantra “*te dhyanayogenānugat*” etc. says that the sages practiced *dhyanayoga*, here simply referring to the practice of meditation and realized that being who was *Devātmaśakti*. The word *Devātmaśakti* is aphoristic and its interpretations vary. In simple terms we can understand it to mean the self-conscious power in all of us. This is incomprehensible due to the limitations of our intellect. To experience the Ultimate Truth, one has to plunge into the depths of *Samadhi* and only then the intellect will be of use to us. Meditation therefore, is the most important method for realization. This process and its results are the topic of the above mantra.

The mantra I.10 – “*kśaram pradhānam amrutākśaram*” etc is potent in the sense that it explains *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa* states of *samādhi*. In the first state there is yet difference between the person meditating and the object meditated on. In the second this distinction is obliterated. There is consciousness of identity. While the first can be interpreted as devotion to a personal god, the second can be seen as the state of non-dual *bhakti*.

The last mantra of the first chapter contains similes, four in number, which metaphorically indicate the panenthesistic idea that the world is pervaded by the one absolute. The pervasive self or the oneness is however not accessible to mere perception. The effort involved in getting oil out of seed or butter by churning curds or digging for water all are equated to the effort of the aspirant after giving through these examples the location, crystallization, result and the identity of hidden self (S.Up. I.15-16). What is needed by the aspirant or self-seeker here is truthfulness, self-control and concentration.

The first simile suggests that the atman is present everywhere just as oil pervades the whole of the sesame seed. The Aspirant therefore recognizes the pervasiveness of the supreme. Then is this Supreme inseparable from the world? No, the second metaphor implies that the Impersonal *Atman* though all-pervading assumes the form of Personal God like butter that floats up on

churning in curds. What is the experience of finding the self or in other words what is the purpose of seeking? The third example conveys the idea that the bliss of *Atman* relieves us of all suffering, even as a man digs and discovers water in underground springs. The fourth again refers to the presence of the hidden fire in the wood that is made visible by effort. (see also S.Up. I.13) These injunctions and metaphors occur in other contexts in the *Upaniṣad* whenever the teacher extolls the student to pursue the self through a method of focus. The self though available as our own inner nature, is yet hidden and has to be manifested by practice. The *Upaniṣad-s* abound in such indirect metaphors and similes to explain the contents. As Ganeri (2007), points out in his essay on the hidden self:

“There is something that it feels like, from within, to be thinking, and in focusing upon this one is participating in a non-objectual awareness of the self. This is something that cannot directly be ‘taught’, and it is the reason for the oblique literary form assumed by the *Upaniṣadic* narrative.” (p.35)

The all-pervading Self, being like butter in milk, or oil in the oil seed becomes available when the seeker is rooted in meditative effort. The seeker himself becomes the destroyer of ignorance when steeped in self-knowledge; the teaching merely points the way. This method of focus to bring forth the self – whether through the process of breathing (S.Up.II.8) or a sort of *pranic* churning (S.Up.I.14) – is the practice of devotion according to the nondual views.

The second chapter is a storehouse of information on various aspects the devotee or seeker needs to know. It starts out with a prayer to *Savitṛ*, the Sun. It implores the deity to join the devotee’s mind to the Cosmic Self and also give the sense-organs the requisite discriminating power to realize the luminous Self. In II.5 we find the famous call “*Śrunvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ*”⁷ that was so often quoted by Swami Vivekananda. Here the clarion call is to all seekers in this world. A spiritual seeker who has the grace of *Savitṛ*, the Sun will not be shackled by various welfare activities in the world. The section II.9 hints on how to practice our most popular yogic practice of today, *Pranāyama*. The next mantra even prescribes the details of the place to practice *Pranāyama* or any *Yoga* including suggestions of meditating in a cave. The yogi is

⁷ The quotation translates as “May the sons of Immortal Bliss hearken to me – even they who occupy celestial regions!”

expected to be slim, healthy, desire less, bright complexioned, have a sweet voice etc. As the Yogi sees himself as bright as a lamp, he also clearly sees that he is one with Brahman. The chapter concludes that the luminous Cosmic Self is in fire, water, plants etc., in short pervading the whole world.

Brahman is referred to as the *jālavān* (magician), *rudra* (one who makes us weep by destroying ignorance), *viśvatascaśuh* (all eyes are his) etc in Chapter III of this *Upaniṣad*. He, being all-pervasive, contains the all the diverse forms seen in the world. Verse 8 in the same chapter reflects the excited state of the Knower. The seeker has understood that the Great Being is beyond ignorance, is self-luminous as the Sun and the spiritual seeker has no other path than this to attain the goal. The *bhakta* is given direct guidance that there is no other way to liberation. In the next mantra a warning also is given that those who know that the Supreme Brahman fills the whole world, stands alone, is the cause of the personal Brahman *Hiranyagarbha*, is without form etc become immortal and those who do not, suffer (S.Up.III.10). The Self is described as inspirer of the mind, as the source of knowledge and as one that is expressed when the mind is pure. Verse 13 contains the phrase “*angūstamātrah puruṣah*” (the being who is the size of a thumb) which is much quoted by scholars. When the Cosmic Self is described as having a thousand heads, eyes and feet, as the past and the future, all-embracing, the master and controller of everyone, it leaves no doubt that the individual body’s involvement with the external world is determined by the “inner self”.

The next chapter opens with a request for discrimination, a prayer that our intellect may function the right way. *Brahman* is one, undifferentiated and also has no gender. The credit of making a kaleidoscope in creation goes entirely to the Supreme Being. Nature or *Prakṛti* is described as *ajam*, without birth or beginning. It is also described as producing three colours corresponding to the *triguna-s*. After this is the well known story of two birds on the same tree, one of them eating the ripe fruits and the other refraining from the act. The tree being the body, the Individual self, *Jīva* and Cosmic self, *Ātman* are the birds (S.Up.IV.6).⁸ The concept of detachment is taught to the *Bhakta* here in the story. In the following verses, it is said that everything in the world starting with the Vedas are derived from *Brahman* and *prakṛti* is now referred to as *Māya*. Peace

⁸ The verse states that two birds of beautiful plumage, who are inseparable friends, reside on the self-same tree.

Of these, one eats the fruits of the tree with relish while the other looks on without eating.

of mind is guaranteed when one has a direct, personal experience of the Self. Since it projects all that exists the Self is the both the cause and the effect. Ignorance is then equated to *mṛtyu* (death). *Mandam*, the fine film formed when butter boils, is used to denote the Supreme. Here, it is also worthy to note that Brahman in the absolute bliss form existed at a time when there was no ignorance and its effects. “*Amrutaste Bhavanti*” concludes verse 20 in this chapter. So, the *Bhakta* is guaranteed immortality if the heart is pure and he practices discrimination and renunciation. The last verse is in contrast to the entire chapter as the request is mundane compared to the previous prayers. This reinforces that we are on a relative plane always. Here in this plane worship and devotion are primary components.

The Supreme creates many forms and each form is like the net of bondage spread according to its work. The subject of the Self is very esoteric and sages who knew this became immortal. *Vāmadeva* is mentioned as one of the sages who did so. Again there is the mention of “*angūṣṭha matrah*” form here and further it’s neither male nor female, assuming different forms, it’s known by those forms. The individual self assumes various gross and fine forms according to its past work and mental qualities. Brahman here is called *Kalila i.e, gahana* – mysterious and *Anīda*-without a house.

The power of Brahman is understood by accepting his creation of earth, fire, water, air and space. With no form or gender hiding him it’s described that the Lord behaves similar to the spider inside its web. Wise people see this Lord within themselves and are eternally happy. Once we have this knowledge and later realization we are freed from ignorance and life becomes fun as a *Jīvanmukta*. The text describes the impossibility of attaining joy without without knowing *Brahman*. It is as impossible as rolling up the sky like deerskin.. The knowledge of the Self is most sought after by the sages and through renunciation, austerities and the grace of the Lord they attain it. Sage *Śvetāśvatara* had all the above and he gained self-knowledge. By the word “*devaprasādāccha*”, the concept of divine grace is introduced. Having attained this knowledge, the Sage taught it to *atyāsramin-s*, people who had the understanding of the goal.

The sacred text now warns that this knowledge should not be given to everyone. It should be dispensed to a person well-equipped to receive the same. People who are restless and their minds not purified cannot receive *Vedantic* knowledge. The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* concludes with this verse “*yasya deve parā bhaktih yathā deve tathā gurau/ tasyaite kathita hyarthah prakāśante*

mahātmanāh/ prakāśante mahātmanāh iti//” meaning “ He is truly a great soul who has steady love and devotion for the Lord and his Teacher. The Truths explained to such a person will reveal their meanings to him.” When we have love and faith, the Truth reveals itself automatically.

From a general study of the textual contents we can understand that *Bhakti* is an evident form of mysticism. The call of the Higher to the individual soul, *Jīva* or *Bhakta*, is propelled by its own yearning to escape from the woes of its current existence. The soul stirring verses present in the *Upaniṣadic* texts are candid proof that the devotional emotion was present there in as long ago. Man’s awakening to religion is pre-empted by his requirement of escape from human misery and suffering. The religion of love and devotion was ready to bloom in the *Upaniṣadic* period and *Bhakti* had come to connote the sense of attachment to a personal God. We are introduced to the concept of *Parā-Bhakti* in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*. The above pointers are to emphasize the idea of unity of *Brahman* and the *Atman*, mooted as the root-principle of *Bhakti* in the *Upaniṣadic* texts.

Primary Resources and Abbreviations:

B.Up: *Brihadarānyaka Upaniṣad*.

C. Up.: *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.

Kena Up.: *Kena Upaniṣad*

Mund. Up.: *Mundaka Upaniṣad*

S.Up.: *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*

(Translations courtesy, V Durgalakshmi and online translated version by Swami Tyagisananda – Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai available online at <http://www.astrojyoti.com/svetasvataraupanishad.htm>

V.C.: *Viveka-Cūḍāmaṇi*

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4. The Transformation of Women in Early North India: A Study in Historical Perspective

-Dr. Sheena Krishnan Ulamparambath

In recent decades, women's studies in India have raised important questions and issues about the invisibility, distortion and marginalization of gender as a category of analysis in the mainstream disciplines and their practices of canonization. Hence, an attempt is made in this paper to trace the transformation of women from Vedic period to the medieval period. There are certain hymns in *Atharva Veda*, which celebrate and glorify the power of Mother Earth like a woman. The hymns describing the goddess Ushas were apparently inspired and motivated by the glorious dawn of north India. Hence another attempt is made here to evaluate their transformation from an enviable and exalted position of the Vedic times, which is clearly indicated in their participatory scholarly and ritual status, to the medieval period of the decline of their status.

A close study of their diverse roles and meaning of their silence throws light on the status of women in the Vedic period which was far from being analogous to what it usually is in ancient uncivilized societies. Certain questions arise here when we go through the transformation of women in different phases: Why did the women in Vedic period enjoy an enviable status? How did they able to acquire such position? Was there any unique factor which was in favour to the women? How did they influence the men? Why did they loose their high status in the later years especially in the medieval period? How did the social evils responsible to deteriorate their status? How did the status of women in the Vedic period differ from the women of medieval period? I have tried to find out the answers of the above questions with the help of *Manusmriti*, *Upanishad*, *Mahabharata* and other medieval and modern works.

Gender is an important conceptual category along with class, race, ethnicity and caste, since present Indian woman figured centrally in the narrative of the nation. We can assume that women were revered and honoured from the time immemorial. We see that most of the Indian rivers are named after the name of woman.¹ There are certain hymns in *Atharva Veda*, which celebrate and glorify the power of Mother Earth like a woman:

May Earth pour out her milk for us
A mother unto me her son.
O Prithivi, auspicious be thy woodlands,
Auspicious are thy hills and snow- clad mountains.²

We assume that certain considerable changes took place in the sphere of the condition of women in different periods. The process of distinction, separation and idealization of the new woman put in place of a new patriarchy, which was distinct from the immediate social and cultural condition in which majority of the Indian women lived.³ When we trace the history of ancient India we learn that women were always embedded in the folds of family, kinship and community bonds, and their relationship with the society was construed largely in terms of their duties to the sustenance of family and home, which was construed as a microcosm of the nation. As women were viewed only as home-makers, economically dependent, recipients of state welfare and not participants in the development process, their need for employment and access to more productive resources was not recognized.⁴

At the same time it is interesting to note that from immemorial antiquity, India was the home of various form of women worship such as the worship of *Prakriti* and later Sakti, goddess Prithvi, and a host of Gramadevatas like Amba, Mata etc. “Goddesses are obviously gendered symbols”, says Kumkum Roy.⁵ The relationship of women with goddesses demonstrates the complex connections between religion and gender.⁶ The cult of Mother Worship found a fruitful soil in India, and out of it developed the worship of Sakti with all its elaborate forms and rites. The cult of the worship of Mother Goddess may not be exactly the same as the Sakti worship of the later years, but the fundamental and basic ideas appear to be the same i.e. the belief in the female energy as the source of all creation and power. Bhagvati was popular as well as the commonest Mother Goddess in the Hindu tradition of Kerala. The prevalence of a number of Bhagvati temples in Kerala testifies to this. Kali, with her nature being destructive, was considered as the symbol of Sakti. See how Kali was depicted in *Sudhadhara Kali Stotra*:

Roaring with the hyenas,
Carrying a skull, defeating the enemies of the devatas,
Exalting those at peace, dancing, jumping, moving, laughing...

The Indian cult of Sakti or cosmic energy personified as a female was far more primitive than the cult of Krishna-Vasudeva.⁷ The names of the Sakti or Sakta occur in the latest works of the Vedic literature. Ambika (*Taittiriya Aryanyaka*, X, 18), Durga Devi (*Taittiriya Aryanyaka*, X, 1, 7), Uma (*Kena Upanishad*, III, 25), Kali (*Mundaka Upanisad*, 1, 2, 4) and Bhadrakali (*Sankhyayana Grihyasutra* II, 14, 15) were obscure minor divinities. The Devi was first described in her true character in two hymns of the epic, *Mahabharata* (VI, 6, 23). It is believed that the worship of goddess gradually turned into worship of power, Gauri, Kali, Chandi and Durga.

The most prominent deity of the Indus valley civilization was Mother Goddess. Many figurines of Mother Goddess have come to light and hence, it is assumed that this cult was very popular and widely prevalent. A painting has been discovered from Harappa in which, a tree is shown grown in the stomach of goddess. In front of her a woman is seen standing with her hands up. The painting is perhaps indicating that the source of knowledge is the navel of a woman. It is from this we can realize the importance given to the women during this period. Yet, her main functions were to bring up the children and to perform other household works. In religious festivals both men and women participated. Even both of them were fond of different hair styles, ornaments and dresses in this period. It is astonishing that about five thousands years back both women and men were fond of makeup and ornaments like modern women and men. The women might have enjoyed equal status with that of men because of the prevailing social set up of that period.

Women enjoyed a high position in the society of Aryans in the Vedic period as they were given due consideration, respect, regard and great reverence by the society. On birth of a daughter parents were as much pleased as on birth of a son. There was perhaps no segregation of women or restrictions upon their movements. The Rigvedic Aryans had developed a healthy family life, in which the ties of wedlock were held sacred and indissoluble. Monogamy was the general rule

of their society, but among the princes polygamy was not unknown. There were no traces of polyandry, purdah(veil) system, sati system, divorce, and child marriage. Women enjoyed a certain amount of freedom in choosing their husbands, under whose protection and care they lived after marriage. In Rigvedic period, married life was assumed a special significance in the society. Dowry was given in such a condition when the girl had any defect. They controlled the household affairs and participated in the sacrifices and other ceremonies, fairs, festivals and feasts, gaily wearing their bright apparel and ornaments. In each religious ceremony woman was the partner of her husband, who joined their husbands with great enthusiasm. From religious aspect, women and men were treated equally. Yaga was incomplete without a woman. There were full arrangements for their education and there was no hindrance in the way of their progress. They were educated and some of them like Appala, Vishvavara, Lopamudra, Shardha, Nivavri, Ghosha and Mudgalini even composed the spells (mantras) of Rigveda after the fashion of Rishis. "Their position was of greater honour and authority at that time than is perhaps the case now," says Tripathy.⁸ In short the standard of morality was comparatively high, though occasionally we hear of cases of lapse.

In later Vedic period the position of women was not high in all respects as compared to the early Vedic period. It worsened bitterly due to various factors. For example, royal families and rich had started polygamy widely. They started to consider the birth of a daughter as a source of misery. Harsh rules regarding marriage were formed. It was considered better to marry in different descents than in endogen. Inter caste marriage was strictly prohibited as it was much hated by the society. The women in their house had not much freedom as they had earlier. But women education was not neglected. They were allowed to participate in religious functions, discussions and talks but not in public meetings. Instances of Maitreyi, Gargi and Vacaknavi, of course, indicate that education was imparted to women, and some of them attained to rare intellectual heights. However, women could not inherit or own any property and their earnings, if any, accrued to their fathers or husbands. Child marriage and dowry system also had become common in this period. In short we understand that condition of woman began to be deteriorated in this period may be due to the changes in the attitude of men.

Dharmasastras give us details of the position of women. Some scholars believe that though in ancient India women have enjoyed equal status with men, it began to decline with *Manusmriti* and other religious texts, curtailing women's freedom and rights. "One of the principal precepts taught in Hindu books, and one that was everywhere recognized as true, was that women should be kept in a state of dependence and subjection all their lives, and under no circumstances should they be allowed to become their own mistresses. A woman must obey her parents as long as she was unmarried, and her husband and mother-in-law afterwards. Even when she becomes a widow she is not free, for her own sons become her masters and have the right to order her about," says Dubois.⁹ A number of retrograde social customs connected with women also came into vogue which also deteriorated their position.

According to Manu, a woman was to be under the tutelage or protection of her father in her childhood, of her husband in youth, and of her sons in old age.¹⁰ Many historians opined that Manu did not contemplate a woman an independent one throughout her life. In this passage, he meant that she is to be protected as she is biologically weak as compared to man. When he wrote women need protection, some misunderstood that Manu placed women always under men, neither independent nor freed from the clutches of men. What he meant is true; she needs protection only due to the biological factor. Manu's regard of women is clear in the following words: "Where women are honoured, the gods shower their blessings; but where they are not worshipped (honoured) all acts are fruitless."¹¹

On the contrary, in another verse, he considered them as the source of evil and miseries leading men astray.¹² From his contradictory statements it is understood that he preferred to give respect to all women though, some of them were of evil and bad characters. Other characteristic of women revealed in the passage of Manu was her unstable temperaments, and therefore, according to him, they could not be called as witnesses.¹³ He drew our attention towards the marriages of maidens when they were only eight or twelve years old¹⁴, and also the sale of daughters.¹⁵ According to the Purana, the ideal age for one's daughter's marriage was when she was in the gauri stage (A girl's epithet up to seven years of her age). According to it, a menstruating daughter makes the father a sinner. Hence marriage before puberty was strongly recommended for the girls. After menstruation a girl was given the liberty to choose her groom

and perhaps this gave rise to the custom of Swayamvara. Once a daughter attains puberty her father couldn't force her to marry any man or boy of his choice. But such a father was deemed as a culprit, yet, he was supposed to bear the cost of the marriage ceremony.¹⁶

Even he mentioned that a woman could be divorced or abandoned if she was barren or bore only daughters¹⁷, as also on the ground of unfaithfulness. Curiously enough, the *Bhavishya Purana* admits that a divorce was possible only if either the husband or the wife was not satisfied or if there were continuous frictions between them. If the wife may be a barren or infertile and incapable of giving her husband a male issue, the husband must wait for eight years before going for the divorce. Also, when the divorce was granted because of marital unhappiness and problems, the Sree-Dhana (the jewellery or personal property of the women or any kind of dowry) must be duly returned to her. A part from this, she was also entitled to have the subsistence allowance from her husband. Prevalence of such rules indicates the importance given to the women and their rights. It is from this we can realize that the root and basis of the laws and acts of the present day lays in the ancient period only. Though Manu deprecated widow re-marriage¹⁸, yet he did not explicit whether or not a widow was entitled to inherit her husband's property¹⁹. Though Narada supported widow re-marriage, yet he denied this right to her. Yajnavalkya, on the other hand recognized a widow as her husband's heir. We hear that the widows were debarred from participating in auspicious ceremonies. There was mention of *purdah*, and Manu himself admitted that nobody could guard a woman by force.²⁰

If the position of women deteriorated in the period of *Manusmriti* it would be better to assume that both men and women were responsible for the same. There are many instances to quote and to prove how women were degraded by the society especially by the men. Their intellect is thought to be of such a very low order, that when a man has done anything particularly foolish or thoughtless, his friends used to say that he has no more sense than a woman. And the women themselves, when they are reprovved for any serious fault and find it difficult to make good excuse, always end by saying, "After all, I am only a woman!." This is always their last word, and one to which there is no possible resort.²¹ Such attitude of both men and women might be responsible to degrade the position of women in this period.

Maharshi Vedavyas, the son of sage Parashar and the maiden Satyavathi have composed many Puranas. In the period of Puranas, it is learnt that the women were more obliged to their counter part. *Padmapurana* deals with the rules of conduct which recommend the duties of faithful wives and the behaviour of husbands towards their wives. The following passage indicates the duties and responsibilities of the women being loyal to their husbands: Give ear to me attentively, great King of Dilipa! I will expound to thee how a wife attached to her husband and devoted to her duties ought to behave.²² There is no other god on earth for a woman than her husband. The most excellent of all the good works that she can do is to seek to please him by manifesting perfect obedience to him. Therein should lay her sole rule of life.²³ Although the Purana asserts that a wife forms half of her husband's body and hence she is Ardhangini, it, nevertheless, categorically says that women should remain subservient to her husband. But since she is half of what her husband is her neglect, means destruction of the half of the house immediately. After marriage the women must act like the women of the house to make it run on the lines suggested by her husband's family. She must owe her loyalty to this family only. She must regard her husband as a god and hence must follow his every order. Be her husband deformed, aged, infirm, offensive in his manners; let him also be choleric, debauched, immoral, a drunkard, a gambler; let him frequent places of ill repute, live in open sin with other women, have no affection whatever for his home; let him rave like a lunatic, let him live without honour; let him be a blind, deaf, dumb or crippled; let his wickedness be what it may, a wife should always look upon him as her god, should lavish on him all her attention and care, paying no heed whatsoever to his character and giving him no cause whatsoever for displeasure.²⁴

Describing the symptoms and the role of an ideal housewife, the Purana says that she must be awake before the stroke of the dawn. Then she must tell the servants their jobs for the day. She must also supervise the work of the servants. In case the servant was not there, she must sort out the work that she must accomplish herself and assign the remaining work to various members of the house. Her primary duty was to keep her husband and other member of the house well- fed. Washing of utensils, preparing and sweeping the floor of the kitchen with fresh cow dung and keeping it thoroughly clean are some of her duties. Additionally, if she has spare time she must assist her husband in doing outside jobs. When her husband was not at home, she shouldn't beautify herself or wear ornaments. She should venture out only when it is rather unavoidable.

She must not pass her time in the idle pursuits at all and should rush back as soon as the work is over.²⁵ There are references to the duties, precautions and observances to be observed by the pregnant women during their pregnancy time.

A woman devoted to the service of her husband is called a sati. If such a lady keeps fast on the third lunar day (bright) and ends it with a salt less diet, after her death, by virtue of the blessings from Bhagvati Gauri, enjoys beatitude for a long period in heaven. Quoting Bhagvati Uma, the Purana says that if a man also keeps this fast (on the third lunar day of every month during the bright fortnight) he gets a woman of his choice. Such a pair it was believed that would enjoy eternal bliss.²⁶ Ancient society attributed chastity to women as mother²⁷, and a chaste woman's son was called the light of his clan.²⁸ Kuruntokai spoke of a woman's chastity which shone in her house.²⁹ Chastity was conceived of as an almost tangible quality in the woman who possessed it, and it was also seen as the basis of domestic peace. Yet there were women who attached no importance to such virtues. "Chastity, which has been seen to have been a strong value in south India two thousand years ago, has retained its importance until today,"³⁰ states Hart.

The Purana also prescribes some 'dons' for a good house wife. She should not sit alone, laugh in the company of strangers, stand at the gate, look in the direction of the main road, talk loudly, walk ahead of people, laugh rather unnecessarily and excessively and exchange household things with her neighbours. The *Bhavishya Purana* also makes provision for a person having more than one wife. If there happens to be a co-wife, the younger wife should treat the elder one as a mother and must take care to treat her (co-wife's) children as well. Not only this, whatever she gets from her own home must be offered first to the elder wife. And from her side, the elder wife must accept the younger one as a daughter.³¹ The husband must not practice discrimination in such a way as to cause friction and dissension between his two wives. In the *Holy Quran* also the passage regarding the need for the equal treatment of the wives by the husband is found.

In the sixth century B.C. (age of the formation of Buddhism and Jainism) the position of women degraded more widely than in the later Vedic period, though they were honoured and respected. There were no indications of child marriage and purdah system. But sathi system had started in

some parts of North West India. Marriage was not considered sacred as earlier especially by the high class people. The system of inter caste marriage and prostitution also had begun. Amarpali was a famous prostitute of this period. Polygamy was common among rich and royal families. In Mauryan period, considerable freedom seems to have been permitted to the women of all classes.³² They participated in social and religious functions. They were employed as bodyguards and spies. Sati was practiced in a few places. Though monogamy was the common rule, rich and royal men kept many wives. Widow re-marriages and divorce were discouraged. It was during this period, Buddhism offered a better status to the women as compared to Hinduism and Jainism. Kautilya refers to a prostitute, who was appointed as a government servant. However it seems that privileges were restricted only to the upper class of the society. On the whole, in this age the condition of women had lost its dignity as compared to the Vedic age.

In Gupta period also, women's condition was not as good as in the Vedic period, though they occupied a prominent place in the family and society. To serve the husbands was considered the sacred and religious duty of women. There were sati system, child marriage and widow remarriage. There was no veil system. There were educated women like Sheela and Batarica. A statement of a young lady regarding seclusion of women is quoted here: "I consider," says the heroine Ratnaprabha, "the strict seclusion of women is a mere social custom or rather folly produced by jealousy. It is of no use of whatever." 33

Their position further deteriorated during the medieval period with the appearance of many social evils. In medieval period veiling of women was strictly observed. Birth of a girl was a curse whereas birth of son was deemed a blessing by both Hindus and Muslims. There were female infanticide, child marriage, sati system, divorce and dowry system. Many Muslims with several daughters were full praise of sati. Akbar's ordinance of forbidding forcible burning of Hindu widows was not strictly followed.³⁴ The position of women in Punjab in the sixteenth century was very wretched. The works of contemporaneous writers, such as Guru Nanak and Malik Mohammad Jaisi often talked of the prevalence of purdah system both among the Muslim and Hindu women. The upper class women generally moved in closed litters, accompanied by male and female attendants. On the other hand, the lower caste and poor women went about wrapped up in the long garments of burqa.³⁵ In the *Adi Granth*, the holy book of Sikhs, there is

scattered references to sati system, which show that it was a common evil among the Hindus of Punjab in those days. The Hindus at that time believed that a widow's faithfulness, trustworthiness and chastity to her husband lay in burning herself on his pyre.

The position and influence of women can be fairly discerned in the nature of marriage also.³⁶ A close study of their diverse roles and meaning of their silence throws light on their status that women were not held in respect on par with men. Undoubtedly women of the ruling elite exercised certain rights of education and worship, besides several privileges. Ordinary women did not have such rights and they were not considered equal to men. Generally it was thought that women were created to serve men in the homes. Yet, many works indirectly portrayed women as strong and sublime. They were regarded as the symbol of production, protection, inspiration, strength, knowledge, education, wealth and health.

The position of women in the Vedic period was far from being analogous to what it usually is in early uncivilized societies. It was far better than what we ordinarily expect to have been.³⁷ Their position deteriorated considerably in the period of Sutras, epics and early Smritis. The position of women improved only in the sphere of proprietary rights. Sathi system began to be practiced on larger scale; on the other hand widow remarriages were totally discouraged. At present the situation is changed. Due to the spread of female education considerable changes took place in the society. They were able to achieve political rights and privileges more or less coextensive with those of men. They have started to appear more prominently in public life. Let us recall Somadeva, who believed that a woman was like an ocean of milk (kshirasamudram or palkkatal) which brought out nectar (amrit) and poison (visham). According to him, they were an admixture of both the desirable and undesirable qualities like a river, which became inseparable from the ocean after the merger.³⁸

From this study, it is understood that women once enjoyed considerable liberty and privileges in the spheres of family, religion and public life; but centuries rolled on, the situation went on changing adversely. Certain considerable changes took place in the sphere of the position and status of women in the modern age may be due to the changes in their attitude and wide spread of education. The women in later years were able to develop an intense social sense, civic and

national consciousness. Presently she uses her freedom judiciously and in the spirit of being an equal partner with man. Education has only sharpened her intellect, widened her outlook and tuned her social and civic senses. The growth and development of women have direct impact on the general well-being of a society. An overview of the situation of women in India presents a paradoxical picture. Researchers are unanimous in their view that women's education, access to resources, health care and food, high age at marriage, and low fertility levels are requisites for high status of women. Laudable achievements in the socio-demographic realms notwithstanding, such as high levels of literacy, unseen in other developing nations, issues of economic impoverishment, participation in political activity, malnourishment and low labour force participation rates are rampant among women in India.

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5.Indian Value System: Puruṣārtha and its relevance

-Ms Sanchita Bora

Puruṣārtha basically indicates those values which are to be realized in human life through human efforts. They are *Dharma* (virtue), *Artha* (wealth), *Kāma* (pleasure) and *Mokṣa* (liberation). *Puruṣārtha* brings meaning to our lives. This paper attempts to examine how relevant these values are even in the age of science and technology. The conclusion is that *Puruṣārtha* can still add tranquility to our lives.

I

Max Muller has nobly said, “If I were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow- in some parts a very paradise on earth I should point to India.....” Yes, India was the heart of the East. In her influential tradition there was a close relationship between theory and practice, more precisely between theory and life. The main incentive of Indian philosophy is to experience and realize. It is a way of life. Therefore, Indian tradition is value centered. “Indian philosophy is essentially a philosophy of values.” (Mahadevan, 1967: 152)

Man, as distinguished from a brute, should live a life worthy of a man; this was the main approach of deep spiritual thought of India right from the *Vedic* age. “The value problem is so vital and engaging to the Indian mind, that instead of forming an appendix or after-thought as in the philosophy of the West in general, it has exercised and marshaled all its thought energies so as to make them coverage to its development into being the central problem of Life and Philosophy” (Bhattacharyya, 1959:376) The theoretical and the practical both functions of knowledge are clearly pointed out in Indian Philosophy. The theoretical reveals the existence of some object which is known as *Arthaparicchitti*. The practical helps in the attainment of some purpose in life and it is described as *phala-prāpti* (*Vātsāyana, Nyāya Sūtra, I.1.1, 3*)

In India no sharp distinction can be made among philosophy, ethics and religion. The notion of value is the central thesis of these three. Therefore, Indian philosophy of value is unique. It is more perceptive and far deeper than the Western. It is not ready to separate theoretical thinking from the practical consequences.

II

Three doctrines have often been identified in the context of Hindu civilization as its distinctive indicators: the doctrine of *Varṇas* (doctrine of four classes), the doctrine of *āśramas* (doctrine of four stages of life), and the doctrine of *puruṣārthas* (doctrine of four goals of life). The concept of *puruṣārtha* is an integrated approach to the value system. *Puruṣārtha* is the word in Indian philosophy for that which is value for the *Puruṣa* or finite individual (*puruṣiḥarthyate iti*). It is often used as a synonym of *Puruṣakāra* (Hiriyanna, 1952:33) *Puruṣārtha* is “what is sought by man.” (Hiriyanna, 1952:65) In its general expression it may be taken to signify human ends or objects of human pursuit. “We know that man, like the other living beings, acts instinctively; but he can also do so deliberately. That is he can consciously set before himself ends and work for them. It is this conscious pursuit that transforms them into *puruṣārtha*. Thus even the ends which man shares with other animals, like food and rest, may become *puruṣārtha*, provided they are sought knowingly” (Hiriyanna, 1952:65) The term *puruṣārtha* “means and connotes the aims and purposes of life or the fundamental aspirations of man” (Iyer, 1969:6).

Puruṣārtha literally combined of two words-*Puruṣa* and *artha*, which is understood in two ways-

- i. *Puruṣanam artha puruṣārtha* means ‘what is the meaning of *Puruṣa* that is *puruṣārtha*’ or that after getting which *Puruṣa* achieves its real meaning.
- ii. ‘*Puruṣaiḥ arthyate iti puruṣārtha*’ means ‘desired by *Puruṣa*

Variety of meanings gets associated with the *puruṣārtha* found in religio-philosophical texts. These range from ‘motivations of human activities, human ends, individual urges, human needs, human pursuit etc. *Purvamimamsasutra* (4.1.2) defines *puruṣārtha* in a ritual context, as referring to a *vidhi* “for the man” (*puruṣārtha*) as distinguished from “for the rite” (*kratvartha*). “...the first element in the compound ‘*puruṣārtha*’ signifies is not what end or object is sought and attained, but rather how it is sought and attained. It is in fact the element of self reference (*puruṣa-Visheshana*) that is the pre requisite for an end to become really a *puruṣārtha*. The other element in the compound, viz. *artha*, signifies that the end or object desired is valued most by the individual, who, consequently, puts forth the best of his efforts to attain it.....A *puruṣārtha* or human value may, then he defined as anything that is sought by men either as good in itself or as

good for the attainment of some other end which is believed to be ultimately good” (Shing, 1981:116-117)

The Indian tradition recognizes four ends and *puruṣārthas* to be pursued. They are *Kāma* or pleasure, *Artha* or wealth, *Dharma* or righteousness and *Mokṣa* or liberation. *Artha* and *Kāma* are secular or empirical values while *Dharma* and *Mokṣa* are spiritual. The concept of *puruṣārtha* has undoubtedly been quite conspicuous by its presence in almost the entire history of Indian thought. Various Indian thinkers have been agreed that there are certain ends or objects that are universally desired and sought. But sometimes they differ among themselves as to which of these is to be accorded the highest status in life. The word *puruṣārtha* is employed in dual sense; one may, “define a *puruṣārtha* as an end which is consciously sought to be accomplished either for its own sake or for the sake of utilizing it as a means to the accomplishment of a further end” (Hiriyanna, 1952:66)

The goal of life is two-fold: *abhyudaya* (prosperity) and *niḥśreyasa* (highest bliss). *Abhyudaya* consists of *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kāma*. These three are called *tri-varga*. They are to be pursued in the first two *āśramas*, *brahmacharya* and *gṛhastha*. The next two *āśramas*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa* are to be devoted to the achievement of *niḥśreyasa* (summum bonum) and they consist in attaining *mokṣa* (salvation).

Indian philosophy does not illustrate value as *siddha* (fact), but as *siddhi* (end) which is possible only by adopting *sādhanas* (means). *Kāma* stands for psychological value. It is recognized as a psycho-biological force lying at the heart of creation. It is mentioned and accepted as a principle of enjoyment in various contexts in Indian literature. It inspires all human activities. For one’s basic material well-being *kāma* is the steering force. *Kāmyate iti Kāma*- this lies in the root of any activity. “*Kāma* is a comprehensive term which stands for desires-desires ranging from the cravings of the flesh to the longing for the spirit.” (Crawford, 1982:2) Natural desires and inclinations are the spring board of all human actions. Therefore *kāma* is an important human value.

To fulfill or actualize our desire we need instrumentality of *Artha*. Most commonly, *Artha* signifies ‘that which can be perceived, an object of the senses’. All objects of senses, desires, volitions, aspirations and actions are implied by the word *Artha*. ‘*Arthyate pratheyate iti artha*’

literally means through which result is desired. In the value system instrumentality is closely attached with the meaning of *Artha*. But this wealth (*Artha*) becomes evil only when it is misused on account of lack of wisdom. Sometimes desire for physical pleasure and aesthetic satisfaction (*kāma*) and wealth (*artha*) are looked down upon as low-grade value, because there is often a conflict between the sensual pleasure or acquisitions of wealth and duty. But the noticeable inferiority is actually ungrounded. Because all action is motivated by a desire and without some means of subsistence nobody can perform one's duties towards himself and society.

Dharma means 'that which supports', right activity or duty, i.e. activity which is the result of a good will. It is usually understood as the principle or law which sustains, supports or maintains (*dhārayati*) the individual as well as the social order. To obviate and adjudicate the conflict among desires *dharma* is needed as higher guiding principle. *Dharmasāstras* and *Smṛtis* equivocally stated that *dharma* is the regulating authority and only by pursuing *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* become real values. *Dharma* makes the cosmos and the harmonious complexity of the natural world possible. In its most frequent usages *dharma*, in the sphere of morality and ethics means 'right way of living', 'proper conduct', 'duty' or 'righteousness'. "The word *Dharma* has a much broader meaning and can be applied to cosmological regularity as well as human" (Basham, 2004:236)

The first three *puruṣārthas* (*dharma artha* and *kāma*) are considered sufficient to lead a balanced social life for an individual. But the Indian seers did not stop here. They searched for the highest goal- *Mokṣa*. "The notion of *Mokṣa* is a much later one in the in the history of Indian thought than the notion of *dharma*." (Griffith, 1926:425) The Indian thinkers wanted to analyze and find out the origin, cause and means of annihilating suffering (*duḥkha*). All philosophical inquiry stared at the removal of this *duḥkha* and the very basis of *Mokṣa* lies in the concept of *duḥkha*. Different philosophical systems of India have defined *Mokṣa* differently. Their views vary about the nature of *Mokṣa* and regarding ways to it. But all the Indian philosophical systems (both theistic and non-theistic) are approximately unanimous about the suffering in life and its complete cessation. "...*Mokṣa* was not thought to be gained by any radically different means or technique from that by which one gained *dharma*. By self-discipline one attains *dharma*: a just,

firm, unwavering position with regard to the world and society. By *Mokṣa* one becomes even more firm.” (Cromwell, 1982:36) *Mokṣa* as *parampuruṣārtha* tries to free life from all miseries.

III

To sum up, we may say that *Artha*, *Kāma*, *Dharma* and *Mokṣa* are at the same time equally essential for leading a meaningful life. “Ideally, every person should live a life filled with the joy and pleasure that attend the activities involved in satisfying one’s needs and desires, which satisfaction presupposes a sufficiency of means for these activities. But these activities are to be performed according to *dharma*, the moral rules governing man and the universe. By living such a life *Mokṣa* can be attained.” (Cromwell, 1982:23) In Indian philosophy human life is inherently a spiritual process. Social and metaphysical aspects of human life are best framed in *puruṣārtha* scheme.

The Indian concept of *puruṣārtha* is a unique concept. It successfully performs the quite difficult task of classifying the total conceivable aspirations and objectives of the entire humanity into four distinct categories. In the scheme of *puruṣārtha* it is specifically proclaimed that in this set of four no one is either superfluous or exclusively cherishable. Accordingly it puts an endeavour to secure a wonderful balance in an individual’s life. The design of human pursuit in *puruṣārtha* tries to bring a notable synthesis between the real and the ideal, between secular and spiritual life; recognizing *Artha* and *Kāma* as ends of human life together with *Dharma* and *Mokṣa*. There is another implication that the eligibility for the pursuit of *Mokṣa* arises only after one has passed through the *trivarga* and realized the futility of worldly and other-worldly pleasures. The Indian philosophy of value proclaims two ways to attain integrated development of personality- the path of activity (*pravṛtti mārga*) and the path of renunciation (*nivṛtti mārga*). The main objective of *nivṛtti mārga* is seeking individual’s spiritual perfection. The aspirant of this path requires giving up all his egotistic activities. According to *pravṛtti mārga* it is quite possible to attain perfection for an individual by discharging all his duties, both social and individual. These duties necessarily include all duties arising from one’s station (*varṇa*) and stage (*āśrama*) as laid down by scriptures. *Pravṛtti mārga* indicates an action oriented philosophy of life as it asserts a world affirmative attitude. In due course Indian thought and scriptures (particularly, *Upaniṣads* and *Gītā*) synthesize the two paths. It introduced activity with philosophic detachment. In this way both *mārgas* no longer remain mutually exclusive. Through this synthesis the positive character

of *pravṛtti* became transformed intensely. It sheds all the elements of self interest. *Gītā*'s disinterested performance of duties (*Niskāma Karma*) highlighted the new spirit of action- a finer synthesis of action and renunciation.

In the scheme of human ends, *Kāma* and *Artha* are usually considered as minor ends. They are not intrinsic values; they become ends of man only in so far as they promote virtue or *dharma*. Franklin Edgerton has accepted a distinction between the ordinary norms (*Kāma*, *Artha* and *Dharma*) and the extraordinary norm (*Mokṣa*). Grouping all four as worldly and spiritual, means and ends (*sādhana* and *sādhya*) or instrumental value and intrinsic value also give a clear representation of their relation. *Kāma* and *Artha* are ranked as lower value while *Dharma* and *Mokṣa* are ranked as higher values. The struggle between reason and passion has become conspicuous when the reference of lower value and higher value comes (as described in the *Kaṭha Upanishad* - the struggle between *śreyas* or morally excellent and *preyas* or pleasant). But “When they (lower) are made subserve the latter (higher) they are totally transformed. There is a world of difference, for instance, between wealth sought as means to self indulgence and as a means to some beneficent purpose” (Hiriyanna, 1952:67)

The practice of *puruṣārthas* reflects on their reciprocal relation. For example if *Dharma* is likely to be in risk or endangered, then both *Artha* and *Kāma* should be abandoned. Again *Dharma* is treated as means to *Mokṣa*. Some thinkers consider *trivarga* as social and *Mokṣa* as individualistic value. In the group of means and ends we get the pair of *Artha* and *Dharma* as *sādhanas* and *Kāma* and *Mokṣa* as *sādhya*s. *Artha* is the instrument through which one enjoys *Kāma* and through *Dharma* one reaches *Mokṣa*.

IV

Puruṣārthas are organically related to human nature. But “the study of the doctrine of *puruṣārtha* has been comparatively neglected and the doctrine has even been dubbed a myth” (Krishna, 1996:189) *Puruṣārtha* -scheme faces some significant criticism regarding its content and validity. It is argued that *puruṣārthas* are not rich in content being general goals of man. On the other hand, no specific original sources are available to get comprehensive account of *puruṣārthas*. “... difficulties start creeping in as soon as an attempt is made to give concrete content to these values, i.e. to state which specific things are to be sought or preferred to which

other, and in what circumstances.” (Prasad, 1981:50) According to R N Dandekar, “The whole theory of *Puruṣārthas* suffers from the lack of a logically argued and analytically defended treatment.” (Dandekar, 1987: 667-68)

But these criticisms are not justified. There are enough textual evidences to get a detailed treatment of *Puruṣārthas*. For Example, *Mahābhārata* is exemplary evidence which effectively justified *trivarga*. *Dharmashāstras*, *Kāmasūtra* and *Arthashāstra* do justice to the respective values. And entire philosophical enterprise of Indian soil would be considered as *Mokṣashāstra*, because *Mokṣa* denotes a state self- realization which is free from all miseries. *Mokṣa* is not withered asceticism. It has an intense altruistic appeal. All the criticisms are due to the mistaken outlook of *puruṣārthas*.

V

We can not deny that every human being tends for some type of liberation (*Mokṣa*) and follows some natural laws (*Dharma*), uses certain economic means (*Artha*), and has certain instincts (*Kāma*). Till man lives, *Puruṣārthas* are going to add meaning. They are positive and life affirming significant elements in Indian philosophical legacy. Indian value system is the combination of different natural, moral and spiritual values which provides norms to our behavior. How a person behaves, feels and thinks and how he conducts himself in a given set of circumstances is largely determined by the prevalent value system. Indian philosophy of values is in a state of ceaseless flow through the ages constantly changing its course and current. It holds that values live in and through man and his life. Above all, Indian value system is out and out humanistic. It brings about a synthesis of the social and economic, the emotional and spiritual life.

All four values are set in an integrated fashion that each has its specific role and place in the ordering of human personality. Rounded personality and efficient society both are attempted through out the scheme. To view man-in-society completely *puruṣārtha* pattern is exceptional contribution of Indian tradition. The tradition has a strong hold in India, so as traditional values. The four *puruṣārthas* need to be held together in a balanced interdependent way to maintain harmony in both individual and social life. They are fully anthropocentric.

The social philosophy of India has been an attempt to help in blending the metaphysical and social aspects of human personality. After a sincere study of the *puruṣārtha* scheme, it is quite clear that there is an under current of ancient universal values with the changes and adoption through ages in our social order. Present scenario is that we understand almost every thing except who we fundamentally are. So, theory of *puruṣārtha* is relevant to today's man who wants to live a good life. Though *puruṣārtha* is set long ago by Indian sages and seers, yet it has been playing its distinctive role in moulding the spiritual development of individual personality and social growth. Right from the *Vedic* age *puruṣārtha* is found in every society irrespective of religion and creed. It triggers the daily conduct and attitude of life. Though these values are interpreted in several ways due to the change of time and social environment, their features do not change.

The attitude of Indian writer in regard to the pleasures and values of earthly life is quite realistic. The ancient Indian theory of *Kāma* is still relevant for our modern life style. Sexuality is closely related to the formation of love bonds and to procreation. Sex is a responsibility. It is a positive pursuit. So, every society has a stake in procreation, for without adequate numbers of people a society may crumble and with too many people a society can be overwhelmed. Society is nothing but an enlarged family. "A nation is made up of families bound together by steady marriage and happy homes. The sanctity of the marriage and homes determines the greatness of a nation." (Devadoss, 1979: 82) Today's sex life becomes cheap and trifling. But sex should be experienced. Then only one can touch the spirit. Still marriage and sex life are not ready to abandon religious customs. These customs have been accepted as sacred. As *Kāma* embodies sexual and non-sexual pleasure, literature such as poetry, drama, novel etc., music, art form, dance all these mesmerize us, touch our heart, take us to a different world and inspire us to keep aside our worldly agonies. At the present time film, dance theatres all these entertaining means are experimented and revolutionized in such a way that they are able to keep aside our worldly agonies. Modern man as he is busy in the competitive world definitely will get a rare kind of satisfaction to relieve his stress and anxiety if he spends few hours a week amidst such creative work. Today's fashion world can be linked with man's pleasure seeking pursuit. *Kāma* can be either a means to liberation and happiness in life or a great cause of suffering depending upon how we approach the same.

By recognizing *artha* as a value the Indian traditional value perspective wants to draw attention to the view that every person has a right to earn his livelihood, to accumulate wealth and property. Material prosperity helps in the advancement of knowledge. Wealth played a great part in the building up of civilization. In a prosperous country where people are content, there only the science, art and knowledge will flourish. Wealth is not only for one's own sake. *Dāna* or almsgiving is an imperative virtue of Indian tradition. But it is warned that *Mahābhārata* says, “*Dana* of wealth acquired unjustly (*anyāya śamupāttena*) does not free the donors from future dangers.” (3.245.32)

Kautilya says, “Wealth and wealth alone is important in as much as charity and desire depend on wealth for their realization.” It is also mentioned that wealth should be taken as *a good* not as *the good*. Indian conception of value not only regards wealth and property as essential element to lead human life but indispensable building block of good life. Fame, praise, honour, recognition, happiness all follow wealth. “Money is sought as a means to all kinds of ends, high as well as low, spiritual as well as material.” (Marshall, 1920:18) Wealth is a means to achieve something; it is a means for acquiring many objects for fulfilling desires. Individual's life has to be economically secured, and then only one can think about the higher spiritual life. For progress in life all the economical values and psychological values play a vital role. In poverty stiffen life one can not think about liberation but he will think only of satisfying his hunger. *Kāma* and *Artha* have acquired the place in the Indian value system because of social aspect attached to it. If *Kāma* is not treated as a *puruṣārtha* society will lose all its moorings and humanity will become a butt of all the jokes. Apparently though traditional value ‘*Artha*’ does not conform to modern economic theory, still both aim at the same. The goal is social progress and perfection. Though profit making is the target of business, curriculum of business management study is including Indian values to deal human nature and relation.

Modern economic environment aims at material first than spiritual, but the ancient aimed at spiritual first. Due to this converse situation all unrest occupied our life and society miserably. So *Artha* should be guided by *Dharma*. Property should be earned by rightful way then only it can justify itself as value. If it is used for self-indulgence, it will not for spiritual progress. Again if it is concentrated in the hands of few, corruption, poverty and discrimination will swallow the whole human race. In modern state criminal laws are there to forbid increasing of property by

anti-social activities. There are other preventive measures to spot illegal possessions and wealth. In ancient Indian value system what *dharmic* prescriptions did, were adequate to regulate property and power. One's wealth and wealth acquiring method should not obstruct the progress of his fellow men- this is relevant irrespective of time and space. In acquisition of wealth social fabric should not be perturbed. If one does so he in return will have to suffer inevitably. Today we live in an age of free markets and a world economy. More people and nations are working together to spread freedom and democratic principles; to nurture free markets and to protect individual property right. Though the profit motive of business is understood and accepted, people should not accept it as an excuse for ignoring the basic norms, values and standards of being a good citizen.

“There is more in life than economic values.” (Radhakrishnan,1947:61). With money one can buy various objects of pleasure but not the happiness, with money one can buy various objects of comforts but not the virtuous life. *Dharma* was explicitly defined in terms of certain duties and obligations which were codified in the great law books to maintain the social order. Individual, society and nation can prosper following the path of *dharma* (in the sense of moral virtue, duties and code of conduct). In all stages of human life either as a student or as a householder, as a forest dweller or an ascetic *Dharma* has to be accepted as paramount. We observe *Dharma* in the sense of duty even today. Social stability, justice, welfare, harmony, integration, well-being etc are just other names for *Dharma*.

Though *Varṇa dharma* can not keep correspondence with the secular form of society, but it sheds light on a new direction towards social responsibility and stability. If we consider *Varṇa* as class, no class is less essential. On the basis of this system the faculties, the talents, aptitudes and skills were perpetually promoted. But in due course of time the real purpose of the class system was hampered mainly due to economic exploitation of one class on other. Moreover, when foreign invaders and rulers came to India they wanted to serve their purpose by causing conflicts among different classes. And unfortunately this system degraded into caste system giving birth to social evil like untouchables. On the other hand, spirit of *āshrama* scheme is still adhered to.

At present corruptions, material prosperity by dishonest means, lying, stealing, exploitation, crimes of all kind are increasing rapidly. People are divided in the name of caste, community and

religion and it is causing serious threat to national integration. All these are result of abandoning the right path, i.e. the path of *dharma*. Practice of non-violence and self-control never be faded. Hatred is never died away by hatred. Love for all is the ancient law. Social welfare and social well-being are possible only by introduction of righteousness and non-violence. Non-violence is cherished as a priceless goal. It becomes an evolution that to resolve conflicts by negotiation and nonviolent techniques will build a spiritually strong nation. That's why the 2nd October, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday is celebrated as Non-violence Day. Ruler ought to rule his country following the principle of righteousness. Earnest and careful performance of stately duties obviously develops parent-children relations between rulers and subjects. *Kautilya's Arthashastra* declares that ideal king regards the happiness of his subjects as his own happiness which can be realized only through the practice of *dharma*. In modern time justice, equality, human rights etc are new terms and looks on the face of righteousness. Instead of ancient king new term 'government' comes to the scene. All the duties and responsibilities of ancient king are in this or that form existing in terms of acts and policies of government. Leaders of political parties, executive head of the state, administrative and judicial officers are bound to do their duties or follow right ways to discharge their responsibilities for smooth progress of the country. This situation cannot be termed as ancient or modern.

To live a good life is everyone's concern. Science and technology also aims at the enhancement of quality of life. But in recent times man's primary desire is the full enjoyment of the present. 'Good earth' cannot be defined in terms of material possessions. Scientific achievements indirectly prop up lust, jealousy, hatred and unhealthy competition. No doubt, achievements of science with perceptible effects have changed our living style. But in this modern technological world something is felt missing and that missing something can be named 'peace of mind'. The virtues categorized as *Sadharana dharma* are still relevant to the modern society. They are virtues like *Dhṛti* or fortitude, *Kṣamā* or forbearance, *Dama* or control over mind, *Asteya* or earning money by rightful means or strict adherence to one's own possessions without desire to take another's, *Śauca* or purity in thought, word and deed, *Indriyanigraha* or control over sense organs, *Dhī* or clarified understanding or intellect, *Vidyā* or knowledge of truth or education, *Satya* or truthfulness, *Akrodha* or freedom from anger etc. and these should be practiced by all,

irrespective of their age, sex, social status etc. Social values like charity, honesty, truthfulness, sympathy for animal etc are contributions of Indian value philosophy.

Dharma is truth. It opens the door to infinite progress in all aspects. “In the depth of the human soul lies something which we rationalize as the search for truth, a demand for justice, a passion for righteousness. This striving for truth and justice is an essential part of our life.” (Radhakrishnan, 1932:38) Recently higher is the quantity of consumption, better is the quality of life. The value crisis in society is mainly due to excessive overplaying of the importance of material value of life and consequent down playing of moral and spiritual values. People become right conscious, not duty conscious. Corruption, conflict and stress of present day society in the field of business, agricultural policies, politics, economics, education and other human activities can be played down by following the virtues of righteousness. In yester century Gandhi boldly declared that politics without morality is an offense. *Dharma* is still a vital concept in Indian civilization. Even the symbol of *Dharma* (the wheel) takes central place in the national flag of India or rejected completely. “... *dharma* signified on the one hand morality of the highest order and on the other an infinite variety of duties covering each and every aspect of man’s life” (Sharma, 1988:8) It can not be identified with religion.

At present people are crazy for new machines, new equipments, new gadgets, new buildings, new cars, new dresses and even new drugs. Everyone is suffering from a new disease, i.e. mental unrest. “Even if the world becomes an earthly paradise dripping with milk and honey even if cheap automobiles and radios are made accessible to all we will not have peace of mind or true happiness.” (Radhakrishnan, 1947:61) Now we have revolution in our pockets (mobile, palmtop etc.), world web on our lap, all information displayed on inch-thin screen hanging on the wall. In spite of all these we are restless. Why? The only remedy is that if we can be able to practise self-control and extend this virtue to the greater sphere of society, which may be called social control, then it will be of great help to the entire human race.

Philosophy arose in India as a result of an enquiry into the mystery of life and existence. The life-centre of Indian culture is its spirituality. *Mokṣa* is the waking up of human consciousness at the highest level of reality-*Paramārthika satta*. It is total destruction of egoism. In the *jivanmukti* or the embodied release the liberated work for the good of the humanity without moral

obligation. *Jivanmukta* looks for the goal of universal welfare without attachment to finite fruit. The ultimate motive following the consideration of anything to be valuable is the idea of perfection. In other words the concept of value in every sphere grows out of the idea of self realization. Traditional *Mokṣa* is identified in modern days with social, political and economic freedom and more precisely with peace. But “Freedom can not be ancient or modern.” (Ramakrishna Rao,1980:2) Modern society and individual are quite familiar with physical freedom. For them, freedom means political, economical, social, constitutional etc. They are totally ignorant of spiritual freedom. Political, economical, social, constitutional freedoms are fragmentary aspects of real freedom. Spiritual freedom is freedom from hatred, greed, ignorance, violence, fear and so on. Individuals are putting importance only on physical freedom. But these are only means, not the ultimate freedom. Ultimate end is spiritual freedom. Pure happiness comes only through this freedom and it will lead to eternal peace. Our self more exactly our spirit never put off the divine dress. So, we in 21st century speak of business ethics, medical ethics, environmental ethics, geo ethics, human rights, sustainable development, ecological consciousness and invite traditional values to regulate all these. *Mokṣa* has been influencing individuals even today, but not with ancient features.

All values adopted by men create exclusivity in human beings as these values are different for every society and indeed for every man. The values are thus the source of conflicts in the world as every person or nation believes strongly in their values as right. Such values are non-permanent and transient which changes with time and space. The values of the present generation are not same as the value of the previous generation. Yet there is some ingredient in all values that never changes. It has remained same in long years of human evolution. These values are eternal as they never change. Therefore, often people call such values as spiritual or divine as it never dies; like love, compassion, justice, truth etc. It is the nature of the man to imbibe these values irrespective of his religion, race, culture or nationality. These values are so universal that all human beings seem to understand it without being taught. To build a future without tradition is anti-historical; we usually pursue those values which have been handed down to us by our culture.

The growth of science and technology results in extreme materialism which leads to the imbalance between human and nature increasing evils like global warming, ozone hole,

deforestation, pollution, toxification etc. At the age of globalization living in a global village people still have to learn how to become neighbourly. The modern world has been moving more and more towards individualistic values where the interest of the individual is considered to be the most 'right' and needs to be protected over everything else. But, "If we can discover some means of giving full expression to deep human instincts and interests, and sublimate and redirect those which are harmful; if we can discover a social order based on human needs and human nature and not merely on commercial industrial and economic motives, a social order in which there shall be higher values than work and wages, comforts and luxuries.....then progress rather than decay may lie ahead of us in this century" (Patrick, 1920:25).The truthful interplay of traditional and modern values or proper assimilation of these noble ideals and values by preserving, reformulating and extending will definitely make India wealthier both materially and spiritually.

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6. Vedanta Philosophy and its Social Aspects in Modern Time

-Ms Gitanjalee Bora

Vedanta Philosophy is the most prominent school of Indian idealism. Literally “Vedanta” means “the concluding portion of the *Vedas* which comprised of the *Upanishads*”. Vedanta gives due significance to reason, intuition and experience; and being a comprehensive system, it steers clear of all the shortcomings of political views. The key texts from which all Vedanta texts draw are the *Upanishads* (especially twelve or thirteen in particular), which are commentaries on the *Vedas*, and the *Brahma Sutras* (also known as *Vedanta Sutras*), which is in turn a work discussing the essence of the *Upanishads*. Advaita Vedanta is probably the best known of all Vedanta schools of Hinduism, the others being *Dvaita* and *Vishishtadvaita*. Advaita literally means "not two", and is often called a monistic or non-dualistic system which essentially refers to the indivisibility of the Self (Atman) from the Whole (Brahman). The most notable scholar who is usually seen as the originator and systemizer of Advaita is Sankara (788 -820 C.E.). The school of Advaita is described by some as theology and by others as a philosophy. It seems to have elements of both. There are some commentators who see Advaita as the culmination not only of Hindu thought, but also of all religious thought. For example Satprakashanda, a follower of Vivekananda (1863-1902), says, “Strictly speaking, Vedanta is not a particular religion but the common basis of all religions.” In the modern times Swami Vivekananda is one of the great exponents of Vedanta Philosophy.

The Vedanta philosophy appears to us as a highly complex and metaphysical principle. Vivekananda tries to interpret Vedanta in a simple way so that everybody can easily understand it. He wants to free Vedanta from metaphysical and theological dogma so that it may be acceptable to all. For Vivekananda Vedanta philosophy is the most practical philosophy and this philosophy enters in all our thought and finds expression in all our actions. It is the Vedantic philosophy which teaches us that each man stands for the Divine and every teacher should be helpful, not by condemning, but by himself, him to call forth the Divinity that is within---- that is the clarion call of Vivekananda for every human being.

For Vivekananda there is no need for any dispute between the transcendental state of spiritual awareness and the knowledge of material reality. This material reality is described in Vedantic

thought as *avidya* (ignorance) this is the real and practical side of Vedanta which stirred Vivekananda to interpret Vedanta philosophy in his own light. According to him, the material reality or *avidya* as described in the Vedanta never destroys the world but explains it. It explains but not destroys the person because it shows the real individuality. It does not show that this world is vain and does not exist, but it says, understand what this world is, so that it may not hurt you. This paper is basically to highlight the social aspect or to bring out the social relevance of Vedanta from a new and modern perspective.

Swami Vivekananda dedicated his whole life to the great upward swing of humanity. He was indeed a social reformer. In his dynamism of thought human excellence should assert his birth right to be a man. The central theme of his inspiring speeches for the whole world was man--- his growth, development and the fulfillment. He found that in spite of India's rich heritage and strong cultured history, various problems like poverty, weakness and social evils existed in our country. Vivekananda, keeping in mind the principles of Vedanta uttered that there is only one basis of social, political and spiritual well being, i.e. to know that I and my brother are one. This is true for all countries and all people.

Vivekananda has interpreted the Vedanta philosophy in such a way that it inspires and stimulates our thought. He applied into the framework of human society even in this age of science and the age of multiple problems. First, he observes that the caste system prevalent in our society is good because it is in the nature of society to form itself into groups. Caste is a nature's order, as some group will have more power than others, some will have natural capacities, others not, some will have perfect bodies, others not, etc. One can govern a country whereas other one can mend a pair of old shoes. So caste is natural, we cannot deny it. But at the same Vivekananda argues that though caste system is natural, our fight should be against privilege. Privilege means the enjoyment of advantage over another. For example, if one is physically stronger than other, then it is a self-evident fact that he is able to defeat the weak, that because of his strength he should gather all the attainable happiness of this life is not according to law and this is one privilege in Vivekananda's view and we should fight and destroy that privilege.

What Vivekananda tries to say that the difficulty is not that one body of man is naturally more intelligent than another but whether this body of man because it has advantage of intelligence should take away even physical enjoyment from those who do not possess that advantage. The

fight is to eliminate that privilege. In Vivekananda's view this is the work which tends towards sameness, towards unity, without destroying variety.

Vivekananda holds that we can bring a change in the society and the initial step to bring it is to provide education for the nation. In his own words, "Educate our people; so that they may be able to solve their own problem. Until that is done all the ideal reforms will remain ideals only" (CWSV, Vol., V, pp.215). Therefore for social reforms, the first duty is to educate the people.

Vivekananda provides a dynamic educational vision and an intensely efficacious educational philosophy of life value. Vivekananda speaks of natural and harmonious development of the latent powers in man. "The ideal of all education, all training should be this man-making... The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow" (CWSV, Vol., II, pp.15). He has all appreciation for the industrial progress of the West, yet there is something more in his philosophy. "Behind everything the same divinity is existing" (CWSV, Vol., I, pp.364).

In the view of Vivekananda, true education consists in blending of Vedanta with modern science. As the herald of resurgent India he even has no hesitation to borrow science and technology from the West. Here, his universal as well as synthetic trend of mind has been revealed.

In fact, according to him, education should provide three things for the development of patriotism and freedom. They are---

1. Love for the mother country.
2. A strong will to resist evil.
3. Steadfastness in achieving the desired goal.

Education should not be stuffing some facts into the brain; it should aim at reforming the human mind. Education to Vivekananda is a misnomer, unless it trains the will of man. All knowledge the world has ever received comes from the will of man and all discoveries are the result of the activity of the will. Education alone brings to light the wonderful capacities of the human mind. Vivekananda is also in favor of women education. In Vedic period also women enjoyed independent rights in all view, no external reform is at all possible unless women are given freedom in their thought and action. He points out that grown up girls should properly educated

so that the evil consequences of adult marriages as apprehended by orthodox section might never follow.

Next, regarding the family life Vivekananda mentions that in the Vedantic view, the life of every individual has its peculiarities apart from those which are common to humanity. Man begins his life as a student; lastly he gives up the world and becomes a sannyasin. According to Vedanta, the life of a married man is quite as great as of a celibate who has devoted himself to religious work. It is useless to say that the man who lives outside the world is a great man than he who lives in the world. According to Vivekananda, it is much more difficult to live in the world and worship God than to give it up and live a free and an easy life.

From the above discussion of Vivekananda's views we can say that he was really a social reformer who tried to reform the society from every point of view. We can appreciate his thinking regarding the solution of different social problems. In other words, he tried his best to interpret Sankara's Advaita Vedanta from a modern point of view. Vivekananda advocates the concept of Universal Religion which will be universally accepted religion. According to him, in essence all religions are the same because all are moving towards the same goal. By advocating Universal Religion he doesnot deny various institutional religions. But he says that there must be variety as we cannot wish that all of us should think alike. Still we have to find out unity among various religions----- this "Oneness" he tries to focalize through the Vedanta because it is the "Oneness" that is the basic fact of life, the world has shaded enough blood and tears and this human sickness can be overcome only by realizing the "oneness" which is present in every religion, in every basic fact of nature.

To conclude, we can well appreciate Vivekananda for being such a philosopher who tried to interpret Vedanta practically in order to show its relevance. Many people, in their zeal for natural sciences deny the utility of Indian philosophy in modern times. Their main contention is that as the approach of Indian philosophy does not fit with the scientific approach of observation and experimentation and it has little significance in modern age. But their outlook is biased. They fail to realixse that the natural sciences do not exhaust the whole of human knowledge and that the sensuous observtio and experimentation are not the only ways of knowing things. In this regard, Vivekandnada had a future vision because of which he gave us such a philosophy which is relevant even today in the 21st century. All his ideals are more

necessary to follow for the present society which will give us peace, prosperity and Universal harmony.

Note: This paper is revised version of paper presented, “Vedanta and its Social Aspects with special reference to Vivekananda” in the 7th *Conference of International Congress of Social Philosophy* on dated 22-24 November, 2008 at VISVA-BHARTI, Santiniketan (West Bengal).

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7. Relevance of Indian Philosophy in 21st Century⁹

-Ms Manjulata Jeina

The term Indian philosophy may refer to any of several traditions of philosophical thought that originated in the Indian subcontinent, including Hindu philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, and Jain philosophy. India has a rich philosophical heritage right from the Vedic-Upanishadic to the Scholastic period. Commentaries over commentaries were written. Schools and sub-schools of philosophical thought were formed. Sects and subsects took birth as per the need and demands of the time, and the amount of freedom the scholars exercised. In this paper it is an attempt to highlights the relevance of Indian philosophy in the 21st century as a dominant school of Asian philosophy.

Indian philosophical thought reached its pinnacle during that phase when the scholars from all over the world came to India to learn, understand and take back these scholarly ideas. But, at the same time, there was a need to simplify and re-write Indian philosophy as per the demand of the circumstances, mainly socio- political. For example, Jnaneshwar wrote *Jnaneshwari* and brought *Bhagvadgita* to the common man. Tulsidas wrote *Ramacharitamanas* to simplify Valmiki's *Ramayana* for simple minds. Swami Vivekananda gave the concept of *Practical Vedanta* for depressed, ignored and illiterate people of India during pre-independence.

If we separate out the stray mythological components and verses pertaining to some social customs of the time, we find in these writings, the true spirit of philosophy, an intense zeal of understand and to gain knowledge. Philosophy consists of reflection on man's experience in relation to himself. But a reflection on one's experience is based on what type of philosophy one is subscribing to. By "type of philosophy", we mean whether one is rooted in one's own tradition or rooted in "borrowed tradition" of the west. If a person develops his reflection on a borrowed tradition, then one must also see how far this will help.

⁹ This paper is enlarged and revised version of paper presented "Relevance of Indian Philosophy in 21st Century "in the *First Asian Philosophy Congress* held on March 06-09, 2010 at J.N.U., New Delhi organised by I.C.P.R., New Delhi.

K. Satchidananda Murty in his book, *Philosophy in India*, argues that there were three different conceptions of philosophy prevailed in India at different periods. (i) Philosophy as the rational, critical and illuminating review of the contents of theology, economics and political science and also as the right instrument and foundation of all action and duty, which helps one to achieve intellectual balance, (*anvikāśiki*), (ii) Philosophy as a system of ideas comprising epistemology, metaphysics and ethics, (*darsana*) and (iii) Philosophy as the intuitive network of views regarding man, his nature and destiny, nature and the Ultimate Reality or God (popular philosophy). Of these, the second conception is found in Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit sources and the third is expressed in other Indian languages.¹ Philosophers in India are concerned with all the three conceptions of philosophy though philosophers choose their conceptions based on their interest. But a total understanding of Indian philosophy becomes complete only through the understanding of all three conceptions of philosophy taken together.²

Indian philosophy has the potentiality of being a source of new ideas in this century according to J.N. Mohanty. He says, “Indian thought can boldly encounter the challenge of the Western linguistic (syntactical and semantic) philosophies as also the invitation of transcendental phenomenology to exhibit how mundane entities and the world are constituted in pure consciousness. At the same time, Indian thinking about consciousness has to appropriate from the West lessons about the temporality of consciousness (as reflected in the thoughts of Bergson, James, and Husserl) and the historicity of existence (Hegel and Heidegger).”³

The question, “What is living and what is dead in Indian Philosophy?” is a matter of controversy among scholars. Some are of the opinion that the traditional Indian Philosophy, in its spirit, is world and life-negating. Such a philosophy is of little use today when scientific means have seemingly mitigated the miseries of human life to a great extent and have made it worth living. Some others maintain that Indian philosophy is a repository of eternal truth “the latest scientific discoveries of modern science, including those of Einstein made in the early 20th century, were already present in the Vedanta teachings... the Vedanta teaching represented the highest possible peak of human thinking in the past, present and future.”⁴

There is need to evaluate Indian philosophy in the present times. In this regards, we should follow the given criterion:

1. (a) Whether Indian philosophy accorded or accords with the state of organized knowledge, i.e. with science in the past and at present.

(b) Whether it inspired or furthered the advance of science, or retarded or obstructed it.
2. Whether it contributed and can still contribute to political, social and economic progress, and if so, in what ways, and if not how.
3. Whether and to what extent, if at all, it promoted or can promote individual freedom and development.
4. In What ways did it interact with socio-economic realities down the ages?
5. The last criterion will be to determine what contribution, if any; Indian philosophy has made or can make to the world civilization.⁵

If honestly evaluate Indian philosophy according to abovesaid criteria then we can easily find the answers to its relevance in the present era of science and technology.

Philosophy is born out of experiences and circumstances with which it is closely related. Science deals with realities of nature and life, animal or human. Those realities are integrated parts of the life of a child. These serve as raw material for the structuring of experiences for human beings. This interaction and experiences go to form philosophy. "During the last fifty years, the field of philosophy of science has been steady expansion of the aspects of scientific inquiry deemed to be of philosophical interest. Questions about the logical structure of theories confirmation and meaning were supplemented with problems about concept formation, the nature of scientific discovery and the roles of metaphysics and heuristics. The historical turn is philosophy of science was quickly followed by the cognitive turn and an increased interest in natural epistemology."⁶ In short, realities of life as essential as thoughts. Both co-operate give rise to philosophy. A child must study both science and philosophy to know and understand truth and reality of natural and human phenomena.⁷

In spite of all the efforts of modern science, the real world of things is still around us. Colours and sounds are undeniable common experiences, giving rise to the arts without which life would be so much the poorer. Life is as surprising, exhilarations, tragic and mystifying as ever. The soul refuses to quit. What we need, obviously, is not a world that confirms to modern scientific

rationality, but a rationality that is more adequate to comprehend reality as it is. Science tells us how to heal and how to kill; it reduces the death rate in retail and then kills us wholesale in war. But only wisdom can coordinate all experiences quite intelligibly, critically and enlighten us when to heal and when to kill. In this age of science and technology this wisdom (whether achieved by virtues, or by spirituality or by comprehensive understanding which the realm of philosophy) is the most emergent need of the day. Indian philosophy tells us how to live not only in the material sense but also in the spiritual sense.

In India we can see, in the remote past, the deep and vast spirituality of the Vedanta and early Upanishads. Indian philosophy contributed to the heritage of world philosophy. The core of this contribution must be its deep spiritual knowledge, and more specifically, its ability to let this spirituality penetrate all aspects of life. For no other culture has such a treasure house of practical psychological and spiritual knowledge as its heritage.⁸ The core of Indian philosophy is, “its spiritual understanding the rigorous methods that it has developed to make self-observation reliable, powerful, and capable of covering the entire range of consciousness open to our being. Its real value will show itself when this spiritual knowledge is used not only for individual liberation, as it has done in the past, but also for a comprehensive, collective transformation of life, which is promise of the future.”⁹

Human beings are a part of this universe; hence life should be such that the whole universe grows along with the development of human being. Hence the members of the society must continuously work for the welfare of country by taking some training. Society should be established on the basis of moral foundation should not be influenced by power and money. It is very essential to make people aware of their potentialities in all the aspects of life. Similarly, the confused Indian of the 21st century has so called education, money and status. He is also science and technology friendly. He is not like the pre-independence Indian, or one during the independence struggle. Today, he may not have knowledge or wisdom as such, but he does have a lot of information. He has degree, money, status and freedom □ at least political, economic and social. But he is totally confused, stressed, depressed, and bombarded by an alien culture. He is alone. He is breaking down and losing faith in the importance of institutions like marriage, family, and religion. Today he has everything but he is empty. He is in the midst of a crowd but

lonely. He has learnt the means to achieve many things but is confused and therefore misuses those means.

Our culture has given rise to a variety of practices that have relevance all the way from stress-reduction to self-realization. Rich in content, sophisticated in its methods and valuable in its applied aspects, Indian philosophy is pregnant not only to India but also philosophy in general. Indian philosophy would have enormous implications for health psychology, education, organizational management and human and social development. Emphases on Indian philosophy would provide a comprehensive foundation for philosophical thoughts in India and it is relevant in all aspects of human life.

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8.Indian Value System with Special Reference to the Holy Quran¹⁰

-Mohammed Abdullah

*FARISHTUN SE BEHTAR HAI INSAN BANNA
MAGAR IS ME LAGTI HAI MEHNAT ZIYADA
Its is better to become human rather than Angle
But the efforts are much more in this*

*BASKAY DISHWAR HAI HAR KAM KA INSAN HONA
ADMI KO BI MAYSAR NAHI INSAN HONA*

*Just as it is difficult for things to be easy
It is not easy for man to become human.*

Philosophy starts with the question ‘Who am I’, and since the beginning thinkers have been trying to answer this question. If we limit this question to a person then the question would be ‘Who is a person’. If we try to answer in precise words then we would say that our values make us human and which is very difficult.

We know that need good road to travel, clean water to drink and clean environment to live in, but we don’t know what is needed to become a good human being? In Today’s time, if you ask this question the answer would be in terms of money. It is interesting that our classical thinkers never negate money; in fact they have included it as one of the values of *Purusharthas* namely *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksha*. Now, we can say that for a person all these are equally important, only then we can say that today we are developed. The progress should be in the all fields of life. It should advance both the culture of man and the civilization. Hence, progress is not one sided it includes both internal and outer progress of man.

¹⁰ This paper is revised version of paper presented “Indian Value System with Special Reference to the Holy Quran” in ICPR Sponsored One-Day Regional Seminar at P.G.Govt College for Girls, Sector-11, Chandigarh on 27th November,2011..

In Islam too it is stressed that man should realise his potential. All individuals who have become something should become human beings. Doctors should become human, engineers should become human, and scientists should become human. There is a proverb in Persian:

MALA SHUDAN CAHE ASSAN ADAM SHUDAN CHAE MUSHKIL

Which means becoming a Scholar is very easy but becoming human is very difficult. The easy task was imposed by Allah on every individual. You can yourself make aircrafts, computers etc. because these are quite easy to make hence you should make yourself. There are some mothers who pamper their children so much that child should be taught to do certain things himself; like eat food, drink water, put on shoes etc. The human being is like an empty frame and unless we fill it with something, it is of little use. If a frame lies vacant for years, it will be eaten up by ants and turn to dust.

So Allah has sent human beings to this world to turn ourselves into human beings. He has just sent a human frame, we have to complete it; we are our own artist and maker. Our body is the frame gifted to us by Allah. But we cannot make anything with the frame unless we have the material, which makes human beings. That material is material, which makes human beings. That material is religion. Usually, we cheat others and get cheated by others and get cheated by others as well. These politicians cheat us, the government cheats us, they take our votes and forget us. Religion says don't cheat anybody and don't get cheated by others, don't be a tyrant or be oppressed, to be tyrant is a crime and to be oppressed is also a crime.

Many people think religion divides people. This is not true. Religion spreads love for all human beings and helps them become complete men.

How can man become complete?

The Quran illustrates that man is created inquisitive from his very origin and he was bound and he was bound to explore various phenomena of nature. The reference of "all things" points out that there is no limit to human explorations. All things that exist in the universe come under the

purview of human investigation. Since angels lack this basic faculty, they must be treated as inferior to man. In most of the religious persuasions, angels are considered superior to mankind because of their innocence and immunity to commit sin. But, the *Holy Quran* explains that human beings enjoy a higher status than the angels because of their abilities to explore the universe in spite of their various inbuilt weaknesses and shortcomings and inclination to commit wrong.

Man is the center of study of *Holy Quran*. It explains both mundane and spiritual domains of man. The Islamic way of sustainable development its theoretical arguments precede as follow: Islam's mean peace and harmony and, therefore, the Islamic way of life entail living in peace and harmony. An active promotion of the harmonization of individual, social, and ecological interest would ensure sustainable development. The discussion is then framed in the context of the ordained role of human beings as God's trustees. Under these arrangements, God is the real owner of all recourse, and humanity is allowed to use them to trust is not violated.

The concept of development can perhaps best be expressed as the 'human ascent' - the ascent of all men in their integral humanity, including the economic, biological, psychological, spiritual, etc. For the sake of brevity, however we limit our discussion to three main dimensions: economic, social, and ecological. Of course, the core requirement for any improvement in the economic conditions of individuals in a given society. In this sense, the positive approach to development forms an integral part of the dimension is that of social justice. Since we all prefer to live in a society, our sense of well-being is influenced by the way others live in that same society. Similarly, other people well-being is a type of externality that cannot be ignored if a society is to achieve meaningful development.

The development from an Islamic perspective, it is important to point out several things. First the ultimate objective and meaning of life for a true Muslim is his /her salvation. Further more, every action of life for a true confers benefits upon and in the hereafter. Second Islam does not provide a specific theory or subscribe to a specific system, in the sense of a bounded class of models and paradigms in either and economic of political sense. Although one does not find a formal Islamic theory of sustainable development, its absence in current literature on Islamic economics does

not mean that such a theory cannot be built the Quran principle of sustainable development provide us with the premise for constructing such a theory.

Islam recognize the possibility that wealth may be distributed unequally within a society, for all individuals are not created alike in terms of mental and physical capabilities: some are more gifted than others, and individuals suffer misfortunes that deprive them of their due share of material possession. For these reasons, some individuals need help and assistance. The principle of mutual interest is used in such cases to establish social optimality in the distribution of resources and wealth. *Zakat* and *sadaqh* (voluntary charity) are part of effective social apparatus to ensure distributive equity and social justice. The act of giving is so important that generosity and charity have been declared a trade without a loss. That Islam view social justice as vital is evident from the fact that it repeatedly urges Muslims not to seek salvation through self-alienation or monastic life, as this would entail one's withdrawal from the active promotion of society's well-beings.

Islam also recognizes the interdependent nature of individual welfare. Such feelings as avarice envy jealousy influence our sense of well-being in important ways. Human as portions now no bounds, and so eventually a source of dissatisfaction, Islam urges moderation.

The Islam does not offer a formal model for the enhancement of personal well-being and promotion distributive equity and does not in the ecological sense. Instead, it presents principles that can be used for the development of appropriate models. Thus, sustainable development, in the sense of maintaining ecological balance, also needs to be understood with this implicit but potentially formal framework. In Islam, the true ownership of all Islam a monotheistic religion that has a holistic view of the world. Sharing this ownership with anybody would be sharing God, which would amount to associating with God (*Shirk*). Humanity is God's supreme creation, and it role is to serve a God's vicegerent (*Khalifah*). While superior human intelligence mean power and control violate the basic premise of this trusteeship while using it to our advantage. Since the environment and ecology are part of God's creation, their misuse may be interpreted in two ways: as a transgression of the absolute authority of God and as transgression of the absolute

authority of God and as harming both the violator and the person who is injured. Thus, any misuse of the environment that involves waste and destructions is a sinful act in both senses.

The Islam aims to build two-fold activity in man at the same time, internal activity as well as external activity. As a result of this twin activity, on the one hand his spiritual development continues and on the other his intellectual development goes on unhampered. On the one side it is a consolidation of his personality and on the other its expansion.

How Islamic way of life sets off inner activities in man ? The greatest reason of it is the concept of accountability. That is the feeling that for all one's word and deed, even intentions, one is accountable before God Almighty. And after death he will have to face the divine court of justice. His whole record of life will be examined. And then according to its verdict he will be sent either to eternal hell or Heaven. This feeling surging within him is so strong and so powerful that it shakes the entire human personality. Afterward, he becomes the picture of one described in the Hdith in these words:

“Reckon yourself before being reckoned with.

Weigh yourself before being weighed.

And prepare yourself before yourself for the Great Appearance on Doomsday.”

Islam brings man to the realization that God is omnipresent and omniscient. The consciousness of the presence of God activates all the brain cells of a person. A hunter once made this observation: if you are walking alone a jungle, and all of sudden you notice that in a near by fence a live tiger is standing, your blood circulation will transform into a blood storm. This is the case of feeling the presence of a tiger. Islam brings man to realization every moment not only of the lion but also of the creator of the entire universe. One can judge that when the thought of the presence of a tiger turns man's blood circulation into a blood storm, then how great a storm the thought of the presence of the creator of the lion, that is God Almighty, will be produced within a believer.

Therefore, by his own inner compulsion, he becomes a man of character and a good believer. For him it becomes impossible to be immoral or unjust or dishonest in his conduct to his fellow

men. This concept of the presence of God is no negative concept. This is wholly a positive concept. Because God is not simply a source of power, He is also mercy. In this way the storm brought about by the awareness of the presence of God awakens not only the feeling of fear, but a strong feeling of hope as well. Similarly, the feeling of the presence of God becomes a perpetual incentive for the positive development of human personality. This is called spiritual revolution in Islamic terms. In short, the belief in Islam makes accountability to God the greatest perpetual concern. This psychology brings about within man such spiritual revolution as positively influences the whole human personality. Therefore this is the only course of the spiritual revolution Islam seeks to produce within man.

The paper concludes with this idea that in a truly Islamic society, sustainable development is a logical outcome of a normal life and that there is thus no need for separate strategy of sustainable development. The experience shows that this provides so powerful incentive that man undergoes a perpetual spiritual storm. The potential of spirituality latent with man are activated to the ultimate extent and turns man into a spiritual superman. The feeling of the prescience of God Almighty makes man cut to size. ‘And man cut to size’ is the ultimate word in the spiritual dictionary. He succeeds in finding all those things, in the full sense of the word, what he ought to find at the spiritual level. He becomes a spiritual person through and through.

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9. Contradictions in Indian Values

Dr Manoj Kumar¹¹

The concept of cultural relativism is becoming an important in sociology these days. The cultural relativism means that every culture is good in itself and we should not feel superior or inferior on the basis of pseudo comparisons. Every culture is product of the requirements and responses of that particular society. To understand the concept of culture better we go back to the definition of culture given by Edward B. Tylor (1871). According to him culture is “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”

Social structure of any society is understood in terms of the values and norms followed by the majority of the population of the society. The norms are said to be the operative part of the values. The norms of any society are guided by the values prevalent in the society. Therefore, Values are the important part of the culture and thereby the social structure. Values are defined as the desirabilities in any society. They are important component of any culture. They are transferred from one generation to the next through the agencies of socialization. The values, norms and thus culture of any society will be able to maintain its continuity, if the institutions controlling the life of individual continue to perform their duties in the desired fashion in the society.

Mc Marriott (1990) has classified the cultural text in terms of the values of the texts written by the elite sections of the society (Great traditions) and the values understood and accepted by the masses (little traditions). It was argued that the values in the great tradition found in the texts are sometimes different from the little traditions. The general public follows the values in their practical aspects. The contradiction in the values at the level of little or great traditions has always existed but their existence has not bothered much the presence or absence of some of the values at any of the two levels.

¹¹ This paper is revised version of paper presented “Contradictions in Indian Values” in ICPR Sponsored One-Day Regional Seminar at P.G.Govt College for Girls, Sector-11, Chandigarh on 27th November,2011..

This paper is an attempt to revisit the values in the literature of classical Indian traditions to see whether the contradictions have changed in form or intensity at any level in the present society of India. However, in order to understand the social structure of India, we should know the core values of Indian society. To my mind, the hierarchy, religiosity, casteism and familism are the most important constituent values of the Indian social structure. The philosophies based on theories of karma, theories of rebirth have penetrated the value system of the masses. Let me explain the core Indian values which have been part of Indian culture as described in the classical Indian thought and literature.

The principle of hierarchy found in India is ancient. Dumont (1966) considers that the Indian society is based upon the concept of pure and impure. The life of a Brahmin is considered pure and that of the Shudra is considered impure. The impurities have been classified as 'permanent' and 'temporary' according to the brahminic concepts of purity and impurity. Dumont was clear in stating that the ancient Indian society is different from the modern societies whose fundamental principle is equality. The values of hierarchy and equality are now coexisting in India and causing confusion and signifying the existence of conservatism and change in Indian society.

The other characteristic feature of Indian society is its religiosity. In India makes every man feel that his life has to be guided by the principles described in Indian texts. His aims in life are to be defined by the texts. The texts however, inspire him to aim for Moksha, as the ultimate goal of life. It appears to an ordinary Hindu that if one does not follow this aim, he or she will continue to suffer and be entrapped in the cycle of birth and death. The person has to perform the duties in such a manner that one is able to please God and thereby achieve *Nirvana* or *Mukti*. The Indian society of today largely derives its attitude to life and the world at large, from the broad cultural framework suggested in the old texts. The guidance provided by the *Rig Veda* and the texts that followed it, including the Buddhist and Jain texts, was never rigid. The framework was suggestive and flexible.

The framework was woven around three concepts viz. *rta*, *rina* and *purusharthas*. *Rta* recognizes our oneness with our environment and our unity with all life on earth; while *rina* underlines the responsibility of man to his family, his community, his environment and to himself as a human being. An outflow from the above two is the notion that aims to set values in a normal day-to-

day life. These related to the acquisition of wealth (*artha*), pursuit of pleasure (*kama*) guided and governed by Dharma. They form a group of three (*tri-varga*), as called by Gautama and Manu (2,224). This is common to all segments of the society. The fourth one, is seeking liberation from phenomenal ills (*moksha*). Upanishads or its earlier texts did not at any time lay claim for discovering the ultimate truth nor did they prevent anyone from questioning their opinions. On the other hand, they encouraged the seekers to think, contemplate, question and find their own solutions.

The religiosity in India is under threat from the growing value of secularism. To a common man, the secular needs are becoming more important than the lofty aims of *Moksha* and *Nirvana*. The ordinary Indian is now trying to maintain a balance between the values of religiosity and secularism in everyday life.

The familism seems to be another unique value in Indian society. So much of the importance is given to the family that one surrenders one's right to occupation, right to choose the mate, right to speech and many other rights for the family. A true Hindu is supposed to suffer for the sake of family. The joint family system found in India is a much admired institution in India. The institution of family which has been responsible for the transfer of values like patriarchy, hierarchy and casteism is now weakening. The rising individualism is posing a challenge to the values of collectivity as portrayed by the family.

The casteism is a value where one believes to be different from others born in other castes. This value is a pan Indian value where ascription is preferred over achievements. Ghurye (1932) highlighted caste as the most important institution in the Indian society. The features of caste as described by Ghurye were the segmental division of society, the endogamy, the restrictions on occupation and feeding, and the restrictions on the lower castes and the privileges on the higher castes. Some of the attributes of the caste system are changing. The attempts to uphold endogamy and segmental division of society are being made among the changes in the restrictions on occupation and feeding habits of the people belonging to certain castes.

There has never been a central agency or an organization in India to monitor or diffuse cultural values among its people. The spread of cultural values has always been, at the grass root level, by countless itinerant, unassuming bards, fakirs, saints many of them outlandish and exotic. They

came from all segments, all divisions of the society. They came from different regions, different religions, different sects and sub sects. They roamed about the countryside without any expectation or reward .They preached and lived what they believed. Those nameless, non-conforming selfless savants have been the guardians of Indian culture. If India's culture tended to become tolerant, accommodating, open minded, opposed to organized regimentation, spiritual but not fanatic; it is largely due to the pervasive but unobtrusive influence of the seers, thinkers, and ordinary people of this country, down the ages.

Over the centuries, India has absorbed the various influxes that flowed into the country. It has tempered the cross currents that blew across it . These have collectively rendered the Indian culture not only colorful but also complex. Yet, the country and its people have retained the essential Indian ethos and plurality of its values. Gandhi summed it up for all of us when he said, "I want all the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."

However, the Indian society is now studded with contradictory values. The values of equality, secularism, class system, and individuality are being presented as options to the masses. The result is in the multiplicity of values. The scholars of the classical Indian thought are worried about the fate and future of value system in Indian society. The forces of modernity are presenting new alternatives to the Indians, the later; particularly the youth are thus sometimes baffled by the choices available to them. This paper thus tried to highlight some of the contradictions existing in the contemporary Indian society.

It is in this context a look at the evolution of values in the Indian society becomes relevant. India has survived several strifes and torments that threatened to disrupt its social fabric. It has survived those challenges and managed to retain something of its own. This was mainly because India always appreciated the plurality of the identity of its people and their affiliations. This was an out flow from the ancient framework. There are a number of other contentious issues that have their roots in the social and economic disparities among sections of its society. These have direct impact on the opportunities available to young persons for their growth and development.

The existence of the contradictory values poses certain serious issues which have the potential to harm the social harmony, if not handled carefully. A sane, suggestive and a flexible approach

that appeal to the reasoning of the sections of the society may alone show the way. We have to learn to live and envision the Indian society as the one having multiplicity of values and plurality of norms. The society should not fear the contradictions in values in the present society, but understand the historicity of the existence of contradictions..

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Appendix: Brief Introduction of the Centre

Centre for Positive Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies (CPPIS), Pehowa (Kurukshetra)



THE CONTEXT

Centre for Positive Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies (CPPIS) Pehowa is a joint academic venture of Milestone Education Society (Regd.) Pehowa and **Society for Positive Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies (SPPIS), Haryana (online)** to do fundamental research in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences. **Milestone Education Society (Regd.) Pehowa (Kurukshetra)** is a non-profit organization and completely an educational and secular institution in nature about all matters. Its main objective is to do organizational and structural work for the educational development and carries out various initiatives that enhance education among all sections of society. It continuously working from 2005 and registered in April 2006.

It is founded by some educational professionals to provide the best environment for study to students and give those appropriate guidelines and feedback for study. Milestones are constructed to reassure travelers that the proper path is being followed, and to indicate either distance traveled or the remaining distance to a destination. For us, Education refers to any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character, or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense education is the process by which society, through schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions, deliberately transmits its cultural heritage--its accumulated knowledge, values, and skills--from one generation to another. We are inspired by the great educationists and trying to become a milestone for the creative and quality education.

Vision

“Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.” - James Madison

Mission

“If you have knowledge, let others light their candles in it.” - Margaret Fuller

OBJECTIVES OF THE CENTRE

- To study the nature of philosophy, its growing area in India and carry out evaluative research in Interdisciplinary approach to societal problems.

- To provide philosophical and academic initiatives and counseling to the students and teachers of various academic levels.
- To study applied aspects of Ancient Indian wisdom and Indian Cultural Values.
- To study the problems of students, researchers and teachers of philosophy in their academic and professional life.
- To disseminate updated information regarding seminars, workshops, conferences in India related to philosophy and other humanities subjects on a regular basis through a newsletter.
- To organise seminars, lecture-series, workshops on specific topics on emerging and applied areas of philosophy and interdisciplinary studies.
- • To study normative questions related to human and environment, social and political philosophy, philosophy of law, medical ethics etc.
- To do critical and comparative studies of philosophical systems or movements, religions and philosophy of education.
- To develop and start short –term courses like Research Methodology in Philosophy and Applied Logical Reasoning etc for students and professionals.
- To carry out evaluative studies on the various ongoing projects/schemes and other welfare programmes of the Government.
- To develop a Resource centre for the application of philosophy in India and interdisciplinary studies.
- To provide a platform for interaction between students, researchers and subject experts of different subjects through meetings and interaction programmes.

FOCUS AREAS

The Centre's main areas of research are given below:

- ✓ Meta-philosophy or Philosophical Research Methodology
- ✓ Applied Philosophy and Applied Ethics
- ✓ Indian Social & Political Philosophy
- ✓ Indian Psychology and Consciousness Studies
- ✓ Indian Logic & Science

- ✓ Philosophy of Social Change and Social Progress
- ✓ History of Development of Philosophy in India
- ✓ Philosophy of Science and Technology
- ✓ Indian Philosophy of Art & Literature
- ✓ Indian Value System & Philosophy of Education
- ✓ Philosophy of Cognitive Science & Philosophical Psychology
- ✓ Indian Spirituality & Philosophy of Religion
- ✓ Philosophy for Children
- ✓ Philosophy of Social Sciences & Humanities
- ✓ History of World Philosophies

Activities

- Research & Publication
- Interactive-Meetings, Seminars and Workshops
- Competitions for Students
- Philosophy News in India (online)
- Online Courses
- Online Research Journal

For detail visit this website : <http://positivephilosophy.webs.com/>

Lokāyata: Journal of Positive Philosophy (ISSN 2249-8389)

Lokāyata: Journal of Positive Philosophy (ISSN 2249-8389) is a bi-annual interdisciplinary journal of the *Center for Positive Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies (CPPIS)*. The name Lokāyata can be traced to Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, which refers to three *ānvīksikīs* (logical philosophies), Yoga, Samkhya and Lokāyata. Lokāyata here still refers to logical debate (*disputatio*, "criticism") in general and not to a materialist doctrine in particular. The objectives of the journal are to encourage new thinking on concepts and theoretical frameworks in the disciplines of humanities and social sciences to disseminate such new ideas and research papers (with strong emphasis on modern implications of philosophy) which have broad relevance in society in general and man's life in particular. The Centre will publish two issues of the journal every year. Each regular issue of the journal will contain full-length papers, discussions and comments, book reviews, information on new books and other relevant academic information. Each issue will contain about 100 pages.

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