

# ***DHARMA AS A MORAL VALUE***

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**BY**

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**OCTOBER - 2017**

*Dedicated*

*To*

*My Father*

*Late Kanak Chandra Barman*

## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled: "*Dharma as a Moral Value*" has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Nirmal Kumar Roy, Head of Department of Philosophy, University of North Bengal. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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## CERTIFICATE

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this project is to determine the actual meaning of the term *dharma* and to critically evaluate the meaning of the phenomenon *dharma*, which is highly relevant for the secular country like India. Generally, the term *dharma* refers to some activities which are somehow connected with God, more categorically to say it suggests us to obey the different principles to offer the devotion to the God, to follow the different style of the prayer and different manners to worship the God, to observe different ceremonies and activities which are offered to create the gratification of God or gods. All these activities are rituals. But in Sanskrit, the meaning of the term *dharma* is different from what we normally understand by it. The term '*dharma*' is constituted with the Sanskrit root word '*dhṛ*' adding with the suffix '*mana*'. The word *dhṛ* means upholding. Hence, the derivative meaning of the term *dharma* is something upholding, something sustaining. In the case of an object the essential property upholds it. Hence, the essential property of an object is its *dharma*. For, this property bears the identity of it. *Dharma* is one without which nothing remains the same. In the like manner, the essential property of man which upholds him and distinguishes him from others is the *dharma* of man, i.e., something without which man is not recognized as man in true sense of the term. Generally the term *dharma* is translated in English as religion though the term '*dharma*' is completely different from the term 'religion'. The meaning which is conveyed by the Sanskrit word '*dharma*' is not transmitted by the meaning of the English word 'religion'. In English, usually the word religion is meant for the custom of a group of people. But the term *dharma* does not designate any meaning like custom. We see that the proper meaning of the term *dharma* is misunderstood by most of the people which give birth to so many problems. Keeping this view in mind the principal focus has been given in my work to

critically explain the real meaning of the term *dharma*. I do believe that this work will help a lot to remove religious problems in our society.

There is no necessity to judge the famous phenomenon like *dharma*. It is true that intelligent persons do not have enquiry about the phenomenon which is established already in all aspects. Though the phenomenon *dharma* is established but problem arises regarding the nature of *dharma*. *Dharma* is recognized by most of the persons. But divergence of opinion is found regarding what exactly the term *dharma* means. Someone thinks that to worship a particular tree of cremation ground is *dharma*; on the other hand, someone considers that to perform the sacrificial rites is *dharma*. Someone considers that to convert people of one religion to another is their *dharma* and even fighting for this is also considered as *dharma*. The role of religion, in the history of the evolution of human thought is very important. From the very beginning of our society religion has occupied the central position in the life of man. It would not be exaggeration, if we say following Max Muller, that the true history of man is the history of religion. No other thing played greater role in the life of man than that of religion. We may discuss what sort of wellbeing religion has ensured for the human society; but a historical account shows that many conflicts have been occurred in the earth, of which one of the major causes is religious sentiment. Religious conflicts lead to different awful depiction of violence of the riot and even of the war including murder, bloodshed, women-torture, hampering the chastity of women, burning of the house, destruction of the temple, mosque and the church etc. *Lajja*, a novel, written by Taslima Nasrin, is the mirror of such kinds of religious conflicts. In the novel Taslima has shown, just after the destruction of the Bavri mosque in India, how the naked violence was spread upon the Hindus in Bangladesh. This novel, I think, is the vivid picture of the violence taken place in our society due to religious blind faith.

Due to the misconception of *dharma* the division and mistrust among human beings have been spread throughout the country. Religion or *dharma* makes us blind. It is overall noticed that a man belonging to a particular sect or religion does not tolerate people belonging to another sect or religion. It is not that this situation is found in present day. If we go through the history, we come to know about the crusade war which is declared by the Christian to recover Palestine, the holy land of Christian being related to Jesus Christ's life, from Mahomedans. The Brahmins did not accept the emergence of Buddhists and Jainas in India. In eleventh century the Hindu king Harse of Kashmir destroyed the Buddhist temples and killed thousands of Buddhists. Jainas was attacked and their books were burnt. All this happened due to religious conflict. Division of the country on the basis of religion is a crude reality.

But if we carefully go through our traditional texts in order to determine the actual meaning of the term '*dharma*', we find that this term has basically been taken, in these texts, in the sense of moral value. If we first review the *Bhagavadgītā*, we can see that the term *dharma* has been used in mainly two senses i.e.: i) in the sense of duty ii) in the sense of moral value. The first one is substantiated when Arjuna told Krishna 'I am confused, please tell about my *dharma* i.e. my duty' ( *pr̥cchāmi tvām dharmasammūḍhacetāḥ*). And the second one is substantiated in the last verse of twelfth chapter of *Bhagavadgītā*. In this chapter Krishna has mentioned some moral values as the marks of true devotee and in the last verse He told that those who follow these immortal path of *dharma* are exceedingly dear to Him (*ye tu dharmyāmṛtam idaṁ yathoktaṁ paryupāsate*). Here, Krishna has told that these moral values are immortal *dharma* (*dharmyāmṛtam idaṁ*). In the like manner, in the second chapter, as the marks of *sthitaprajña*, in the thirteenth chapter as the marks of true knowledge, in the fourteenth chapter, as the marks of *trīgunātītaḥ*, in the sixteenth chapter as

the marks of divine nature (*daivi sampada*), Krishna describes some moral values. In the like manner, as the marks of *karma yagī, sāttvika kartā, brahmabhūtaḥ* some moral values have been described. In the like manner, we see in *Śrī Candī*, the goddess *Candī* has been described in the form of moral values such as *tuṣṭi, śānti, lajjā* etc. (*‘yā devi sarvabhūteṣu ‘---’ rūpeṇa samthitā / namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai nama namaḥ’* i.e. I adore the goddess who is present in the form of *tuṣṭi, śānti* etc.). Not only in *Bhagavadgītā* or *Śrī Candī*, the importance of these moral values have been emphasized in other religious texts such as Buddha, Islam, Christian as well. *Dharma* in the sense of moral value is the basic significance of the term. The other meanings of the term are centered around this. We are so much concerned about whether God exists or not; but not concerned about obtaining these values in life which are very much associated with our wellbeing in our practical life such as physical, family relational, societal, national, international and so on. I consider that this sense of *dharma* is relevant for present situation of the society in order to remove the religious violence.

If we take the notion *dharma* in aforesaid meaning, i.e. in the sense of moral value, then conflict among different religions could be removed. No one can demand that his religion is superior to any other religion in the world. There is no scope of differentiating among different religions if the purpose of all religions is to generate moral sense, though there may have different rituals among different religions. An action which violates the moral principles and which goes against wellbeing of the human society is not accepted by any religion. All religions seek the wellbeing and prosperity of the human society. And wellbeing and prosperity comes only when each one of the society becomes devoted to moral principle. Accordingly, it is morality which is to be considered as *dharma*, since wellbeing comes from morality in true sense of the term. If the aim of all religions becomes the attainment of morality, rituals and religious performances become secondary matter. Consequently, the

clash among men will not be taken place on the basis of religion at least. At present, the clash among the religions, in fact, is taken place due to the difference of rituals and also due to the difference of religious institution i.e. masque and temple etc, which is to be considered as secondary matter in religion. Misinterpretation of the religion is the root cause of these differences, which make it to be considered as primary one. Man should understand this misinterpretation and be virtuous, which is based on morality. In fact, the religion should be devoted to the welfare of the humanity. It is stated in *Kenopaniṣad* that the persons who are wise see the God among all living entities in the world and transcend this world by rendering the service to them (*bhūteṣu bhūteṣu vicitya dhīrāḥ pretyāsmālokādamṛtā bhabanti*). Hence, from the age of *Upaniṣad* this Ultimate Truth (God) has been searched within the man and other living beings. If one spends his day by worshiping the God and keeps him confined within the temple, but hates man, then God is never present there.

If religion is based on morality and if we can discover oneness, a concord among different religions, then there is no question of any clash or violence. When a man is in danger, say for example, if a man is sinking in the water, can we ask his religion in order to save him? Shall I decide my duty by considering the fact that to what religion he belongs? What will my humanity / my heart say? In this context, we will certainly not consider the religion. If we consider my duty on the basis of religion, it will go against humanity. Humanity prompts us to help the endangered person. If we think of the urge which lies in the heart of every man, the problem is automatically resolved. In this context, Kazi Nazrul Islam beautifully says. When man is in danger, we should not ask whether he or she is Hindu or Muslim (“*hindu nā orā muslim*”? *oi jijñāse kon jan?*). In that situation, we should consider that a man is sinking into the water, who is the son of my mother (*dubiche mānuṣ, santān mor mār!*). Certainly, all the religions are in the favour of these teaching. We have to discover the unity among the religions. The words of humanity i.e. service to the mankind, devotion to the

duty, love to creature or creation etc. have been considered as the basic principles in all the religions.

Hence, if *dharma* is based on morality i.e. moral values like endurance, forgiveness, friendliness, compassion, non-violence, truthfulness, softness, simplicity, egolessness etc. along with performing one's own duties, as well as true humanity, then one universal religion can be prescribed in the whole world for bringing global peace and harmony. *Dharma* as a moral value is the real meaning of the phenomenon *dharma*, which is the principal teaching of all religions. And this teaching, I think, is highly essential for resolving religious tension and violence in the whole globe.

## PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

## ***Acknowledgements***

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*I have been benefited by Central and Departmental Library, University of North Bengal, and also the Library of my College. I convey my hearty thanks and gratefulness to the Governing Body of Sukanta Mahavidyalaya for sanctioning the study leave for eight weeks, which really helps me a lot to finish my work within scheduled time. Thanks are also due to all the colleagues of my College for encouraging me always. My all the teachers of the Department of Philosophy, University of North Bengal are always with me with their encouragement and inspiration. And hence, I am grateful to them.*

*I remember my late father whose blessing is always with me. I owe a deep sense of gratitude to my mother, my wife, my little daughter Rudrani, for happily sharing the troubles while I was busy with my work. I would like to thank all of my family members. And above all I would like to offer my sincere devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme personality of the Godhead, for giving me patience and energy to finish my work.*

*Ranjit Kumar Barman*

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## APPENDIX

### List of Publications

1. “*Dharma* in the Sense of Morality: An Analysis” Ranjit Kumar Barman, *Philosophical Papers: Journal of the Department of Philosophy*, Department of Philosophy, University of North Bengal, W. B. India, Vol. – X, March-2014, pp. 200-210.
2. “An Indian Outlook to the Concept of Dharma: In the Need of Present Day” Ranjit Kumar Barman , *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, IASET, USA, India, Australia, Vol. -4, Issue-5, Aug. -Sep.- 2015, pp. 59-70.
3. “ An Examination of the Concept of Dharma” Ranjit Kumar Barman, *Prabuddha Bharata or Awakened India: A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896*, Advaita Ashrama, Delhi, Kolkata, Vol.-121, No-3, March-2016, pp. 351-353.

## CHAPTER-I

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, my intention is to give an overall idea of the notion of *dharma* and to show its impact to the society. In this connection, an effort has been made to understand the relation among *dharma*, morality and values; and also to examine some issues regarding Indian ethics. Generally, the term *dharma* refers to some activities which are somehow connected with God, more categorically to say it suggests us to obey the different principles to offer the devotion to the God, to follow the different style of the prayer and different manners to worship the God, to observe different ceremonies and activities which are offered to create the gratification of God or Gods. All these activities are rituals. But in Sanskrit, the meaning of the term *dharma* is different from what we normally understand by it. The term '*dharma*' is constituted with the Sanskrit root word '*dhr*' adding with the suffix '*mana*'. The word *dhr* means upholding. Hence, the derivative meaning of the term *dharma* is something upholding, something sustaining. In the case of an object the essential property upholds it. Hence, the essential property of an object is its *dharma*. For, this property bears the identity of it. *Dharma* is one without which nothing remains the same. In the like manner, the essential property of man which upholds him and distinguishes him from others is the *dharma* of man, i.e., something without which man is not recognized as man in true sense of the term. Usually, the word *dharma* is translated in English as religion. But it is not correct. The meaning which is conveyed by the Sanskrit word '*dharma*' is not transmitted by the meaning of the English word 'religion'. In English, usually the word religion is meant for the custom of a group of people.

'Religion is a set of common beliefs and held by the group of people often codified as prayer

and religious law. There are as many different types of religion as there are many different types of people in the world.’<sup>1</sup>

‘The English word "religion" is derived from the Middle English "religioun" which came from the Old French "religion." It may have been originally derived from the Latin word "religo" which means "good faith," "ritual," and other similar meanings. Or it may have come from the Latin "religāre" which means "to tie fast."’<sup>2</sup>

The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* expresses the meaning of the word religion as ‘the belief in the existence of God or Gods, and the activities that are connected with the worship of them, or in the teachings of a spiritual leaders; one of the systems of faith that are based on the belief in the existence of a particular God or Gods, or in the teachings of a spiritual leader.’<sup>3</sup> The *Collins English Dictionary* defines religion as ‘belief in, worship of, or obedience to a supernatural power or powers considered to be divine or to have control of human destiny; any formal or institutionalized expression of such belief.’<sup>4</sup> In Bengali we arbitrarily say that *jaler dharma tr̥snā nivāran karā i.e.*, the *dharma* of water is to quench thirst and *āguner dharma dahan karā i.e.*, the *dharma* of fire is to burn. Now rendering the word *dharma* with the word religion, if we translate the above two sentences that the religion of water is to quench thirst and the religion of fire is to burn, would it be right translations of these two sentences?

Though actually the meaning of the term *dharma* is something upholding, i.e., something that sustains an object, an individual, a society and the whole universe harmoniously, but unfortunately the real practice of the phenomenon of *dharma* is not so. Now-a-days, we see many things are being practiced by the name of *dharma*. Someone thinks that worshipping the Goddess *Dūrga* in a gorgeous way taking high subscription from people

against their will is their *dharma*. Someone considers that to convert people of one religion to another is their *dharma* and even fighting for this is also considered as *dharma*. Someone thinks that *dharma* is meant for chanting and dancing besides a tree after smearing it with oil and vermilion. Someone feels that to paint the body with ashes or to wear a particular dress is *dharma*. Indeed at present the picture which comes to our mind, at first, for representing the phenomenon of *dharma* is what is just said above.

Here one thing is very clear although *dharma* and the religion are not the same, but today the *dharma* has taken the place of the religion. The role of religion, (If *dharma* is taken in the sense of religion mentioned above) in the history of the evolution of human thought is very important. From the very beginning of our society religion has occupied the central position in the life of man. It would not be exaggeration, if we say following Max Muller, that the true history of man is the history of religion.<sup>5</sup> No other thing played greater role in the life of man than that of religion. We may discuss what sort of wellbeing religion has ensured for the human society; but a historical account shows that many conflicts have been occurred in the earth, of which one of the major causes is religious sentiment. Religious conflicts lead to different awful depiction of violence of the riot and even of the war including murder, bloodshed, women-torture, hampering the chastity of women, burning of the house, destruction of the temple, mosque and the church etc. *Lajja*, a novel, written by Taslima Nasrin, is the mirror of such kinds of religious conflicts. In the novel Taslima has shown, just after the destruction of the Bavri mosque in India, how the naked violence was spread upon the Hindus in Bangladesh. This novel, I think, is the vivid picture of the violence taken place in our society due to religious blind faith. Taslima writes:

The passionate and insane Hindus have destroyed the Babri mosque. Now the Hindus of the Bangladesh will have to expiate of their (the Indian Hindus) sin. The man belonging to the minority community

like Sudhamay was not left from the torture of fanatic Muslims in the year 1990, so why would they be released in the year 1992? In this year, also, the person like Sudhamay was forced to hide themselves in the cavity of mouse. Is it due to the fact that he belongs to the Hindu community or the Hindus have destroyed the mosque in India? <sup>6</sup>

Due to the misconception of *dharma* the division and mistrust among human beings have been spread throughout the country. Religion or *dharma* makes us blind. It is overall noticed that a man belonging to a particular sect or religion does not tolerate people belonging to another sect or religion. It is not that this situation is found in present day. If we go through the history, we come to know about the crusade war which is declared by the Christian to recover Palestine, the holy land of Christian being related to Jesus Christ's life, from Mahomedans. The Brahmins did not accept the emergence of Buddhists and Jainas in India. In eleventh century the Hindu king Harse of Kashmir destroyed the Buddhist temples and killed thousands of Buddhists. Jainas was attacked and their books were burnt. All this happened due to religious conflict. Division of the country on the basis of religion is a crude reality.<sup>7</sup>

Now let us deal with the relation between religion and morality. Generally, there is a moral aspect in religion, but the theologians think that religion is not merely morality; it is something beyond morality. They consider that there is a transcendental aspect in religion which is the direct apprehension of God. According to them, this transcendental aspect is seen to play a vital role in religion and this is not found in morality. In our everyday life, sometimes we come across some men lacking the faith in religion in the sense that they do not believe in God but they are highly conscious about morality. Again sometimes we notice that a man, despite dedicating his life to perform the different types of religious activities is seen to engage in serious evil deeds. Hence, it may be concluded that the religion which fails

to make a man honest, ethical, should not be accepted. In this connection, a question is raised whether morality is originated from religion or religion is originated from morality. Descartes, Locke, Paley hold that religion gives birth to morality. They think that the sense of morality comes from the concept of God. Kant and Martinue, on the other hand, observe that morality gives birth to religion. They think that we obtain the sense of religion from morality.<sup>8</sup> We should not be concerned which one has come first in man's life; rather we should be concerned which one is more related to good. The difference which we find especially between religion and morality is as follows i) Religion is God centric; on the other hand, morality is human centric. ii) Religion is an emotional experience; but morality is free from emotion. iii) Freedom of the will must be admitted in the sphere of morality; on the other hand the sphere of religion is the sphere of necessity. In spite of these differences religion and morality have something in common at least on following two issues i) both admit the immortality of the soul and ii) both are connected to absolute good. Whatever the difference and harmony are there in them, we may say that this two are the different stages of perfection of human life. In fact, morality and religion are the two stages of human experience of higher and lower respectively. Through different injunctions, one in course of time, becomes ethical.<sup>9</sup> The successfulness of religion is in this point.

Since the aim of this project is that *dharma* as a moral value i.e., *dharma* actually is nothing but moral value, Hence I am tempted to deal with the notion of value and moral value which is also connected to morality. The word 'Value' is derived from the Latin root, 'Valerie' meaning to be strong and vigorous. 'To be of value' is to have a certain worth or worthiness. Values in their stages appear as needs, emotions and interests varying in specificity, intensity and depth. For example, when a boy needs to leave his parents and go to a boarding home to pursue education, it is taught for him. But as the boy grows and knows the world around him and the realities of life, his needs, emotions and interests acquire

certain definiteness, intensity and stability in the affective live (emotions, feelings) of the individual. Thus the value formation takes place.

A widely accepted definition considers values to be conceptions of the desirable, influencing selective behavior. Thus we must know that all values contain some cognitive elements and they have a selective or directional quality. They serve as criteria for selection in action. In their most explicit form they become the criteria for judgment, preference and choice. In their implicit form they constitute grounds of decisions in behavior.

A value as Klackhohn defines is a conception of the desirable, 'and not something that is merely desired. Charles Morris talks of 'the preferential behavior in values which in other words means a choice between the good and bad.' Cattell defines values thus; 'By values we mean the social, moral and standards which the individual would like others and himself to follow.'<sup>10</sup>

Kuppaswarny B states that 'a value is a conception characteristic of a group to satisfy needs. Values constitute the base of action and can be tested in terms of behavior.' Hiriyanna states, 'one of the distinguishing features of Indian philosophy is that it has consistently given the foremost place to values'. The Sanskrit word that stands for value is '*iṣṭa*' the object of desire, since man seeks his desires consciously the Indian philosophers term 'value' as *pūruṣārtha* or human value, meaning thereby, ends consciously pursued by human beings.<sup>11</sup>

Summarizing the above views we may state, 'A value is a principal, standard or quality that is considered worthwhile or desirable. It is a consciously preferred choice of the concept of desirable behavior, satisfying the needs of interests, having an element of stability and is validated by social approval. Such behavior is standardized as norms and constitutes standards by which choices are evaluated.'<sup>12</sup>

There are so many values, such as moral value, spiritual value, aesthetic value, societal value, historical value, material value etc. Moral value is that which is associated with moral consciousness or morality. Morality is the manner of conduct or behavior. And since value regulates man's conduct; hence it must be admitted that there is a relation between value and morality. There are so many literatures from which we get the learning of the values. It was told about of four values for human life in our ancient India, viz. *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* which are known as *pūruṣārthas*, the ends of life, the achievement of life. *Pūruṣārtha* is that which man wants to have or which should be wanted. We all know that man is always active. That which works behind this kind of activeness of man as reason is called *pūruṣārthas*, i.e., human aspirations. *Satyam* (Truth), *Śivam* (Goodness), *Sundaram* (Beauty) which are called in *Cāndogya Upaniṣad* respectively *bhāti*, *priyam* and *asti*.<sup>13</sup> *Ahimsā*, *Prema*, *Karuṇā* –these all are called values as described in our ancient texts. Democracy, Socialism, Secularism, Freedom, Discipline, Responsibility, and Human Rights - these are also considered as values which we may call contemporary values.

There is another type of literature in Sanskrit called *Dharmaśāstras* which are originally concerned with the nature and exposition of moral values (*dharma*) in the form of i) virtue, ii) duty, iii) moral standard, iv) social norm, v) law. The entire sphere of moral values becomes the theme of these moral treatises (*Dharmaśāstras*).<sup>14</sup>

The *mantra* - '*Ahimsā satyamasteyam śauca saṁyamevaca; atad samāsikam proktam dharmasya pañcalakṣaṇam*' as defined by Manu states that *ahimsā* (nonviolence), *satyam* (truth), *asteyam* (not stealing), *śauca* (purity in both mind and body), *saṁyama* (controlling of the sense organs), these are features of *dharma*.<sup>15</sup> And we all know that these all are virtue. Besides these, we frequently say – '*Ahimsā parama dharma*', '*sevā dharma*', '*prema dharma*' etc. In all these statements, we find that the term *dharma* indicates virtue. That *dharma* is duty is substantiated by the term '*viśeṣa dharma*'. *Viśeṣa dharma* is that which is

assigned duty for an individual on the basis of his mental trend and capacity, which is called *svadharmā*. Krishna says that it is better to be ruined performing one's own duty than that of others, (*svadharme nidhanam śreyo paradharma bhayābhayo*).<sup>16</sup> Sometimes, *dharma* is directly considered as moral standard. '*dharmaḥ tomāke path dekhaḥbe*'. Here, the word '*dharma*' refers to moral standard, i.e., *dharma* is that which you will follow in your life as standard. Or when we assert - is such type of conduct *dharma*? (*ebhaḥbe ācaraṇ ki dharma?*), we simply indicates *dharma* as moral standard. *Dharma* sometimes is taken to be social norm and law. The injunction (*vidhi & niṣedha* of the *dharma*) which is established for the sake of the wellbeing of the society is taken into account, later on, as social norm and law.

Here, a question may be raised that if *dharma* becomes moral standard then what type of moral standard is it? There are so many moral standards as found in western ethics. Is it moral standard of egoistic hedonism or altruistic hedonism i.e. utilitarianism, or rationalism or perfectionism or eudemonism? These are all teleological aspects of morality. However, in response to this question we can say that Indian philosophy or ethics does not consider all these separately. We need as physical happiness, mental happiness and perfection of the self as for giving the happiness to others as well. That is, nothing is observed disconnectedly by the Vedic sears in Indian philosophy. It is stated in Vedanta philosophy that one who wants to be liberated should have *śama, dama, uparati, titikṣyā śraddhā (Śamdamādi-Śādhanā-Sampada)*,<sup>17</sup> These are all moral virtue. Hence, for the attainment of liberation one should practice *dharma*. And to achieve *dharma*, there is necessary to obtain physical wellness. The *Ayurveda* declares: '*śariramāddam khalu dharma sādhanam*', i.e., *dharma* is attained if and only if sound health is achieved.<sup>18</sup>

Let us examine another question with regard to Indian ethics. Purusattam Bilimoria begins to write an article<sup>19</sup> with the question that - is morality possible in Indian philosophy? Because, Hindu philosophy admits that God acts everything. He is the supreme doer. It is

stated in *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*: ‘*īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānām hṛddeśe’ rjuna tiṣṭhati; bhrāmayn sarvabhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā.*<sup>20</sup> The echo of same word is also found in *śākta* song (The song of those who worship the Goddess *Kālī*). The song runs as follows: ‘*tomār karma tumi kara mā loke bale kari āmi*’, i.e., Oh! Mother, you do all things; but it is to be seemed that I do. Moreover, the doctrine of *karmavāda* (except *Cārvaka*) is admitted in Indian philosophy. Some scholars think that ‘the doctrine of *karma*’ and ‘free-will’ is contradictory. They think that *karmavāda* and determinism are the same. According to them, as all the activities of one is determinate by one’s previous act, one does not have any free-will to activities. Hence, to them there is no room for free-will in Indian philosophy. In addition to this, the world is considered as the result of *māyā* in Vedānta philosophy. If it is so, morality comes under the purview of the result of *māyā*. Hence, there is no question of morality.<sup>21</sup>

To quest the answer of these questions we may point out that the doctrine of *karma* is not completely determinate. The ultimate message of this theory (*karmavāda*) is –‘as you sow, so will you reap’ (*yaman karma tamon fal*). It is maintained by the cosmic law which is called *Ṛta*. Since, ‘*kṛtanāś*’ and ‘*akṛtābhyāgama*’ (two types of corollary of the theory of *karma*) never occur. *Kṛtanāś* means the state of not achievement of the fruit, despite performing the acts. On the other hand, *akṛtābhyāgama* means the state of achievement of the fruit, not performing the acts; i.e., such a thinking that one attains good advantages, good environment, talent, wealth and happiness from the very birth, without performing good act, or that one becomes handicapped, poor, less talented, bad attributed, without doing evil act (i.e., that he attains these by chance) is considered as *akṛtābhyāgama*. If it is seen that one lives very happy after doing evil deed and we think that he will never get the punishment of his evil deed. This type of thinking is called *kṛtanāś*. In fact, it does not occur in such a way and also we do not think in such a way; rather we think that one who commits something evil must have to receive bad fruit; although it may be in his afterlife. And for this reason, i.e., in

order to avoid the objection of *akṛtābhyāgama* and *kṛtanāś* the transition of life is admitted in Hindu philosophy.

The implication of the theory of *karma* is not such that every act of us is determinate by the result of previous act. It is told, due to admitting the theory of *akṛtābhyāgama*, that if there is determinism then this determinism is nothing but self determinism. The result obtained from one's previous act, in fact, determines the present act of an individual. Even, God is kept out from this. Many schools of Indian philosophy distinguish between voluntary action and non voluntary action. If it is admitted fully determinism, this differentiation is not possible. Moreover, *pravartakatva* and *nivartakatva* of *vidhi* and *niṣeda* becomes meaningless, if complete determinism is accepted. But we observe that all schools of *Veda* admit *pravartakatva* and *nivartakatva*. And that is why, we perceive a harmonies effort to combine these two, viz, *karmavāda* and *jīvakarṭṛtva*. Further, it is stated in *Brahmasūtra* that an individual as a doer is taken into account for the meaningfulness of the scriptures (*vidhi & niṣedha* of *Śāstras*). One thing is worthy to note here that the freedom of the will is the postulation of morality, but how much we have the freedom of the will. For instance, I can say that if I will, I can move my hand but, despite having desire, is it possible to me to fly in the sky. Hence, that the theory of *karma* is an obstacle to build up the ethics is not accepted. Besides this, this freedom of the will is subject to some conditions, such as I cannot eat, although I do will, unless I become well in health, feel appetite. The freedom of the will that we avail is beautifully stated with an example by Ramakrishnadeva, an unmeasured man, that if a cow is fixed in a post with a piece of twenty centimeters' rope, it can only move within its twenty centimeter's surrounding. We must have freedom, but it is confined.<sup>22</sup> Besides this we may take another example such as the playing football. In the case of playing football there are some rules. A player is bound to obey the rules but he has freedom to pass the ball to anyone. Hence, we have freedom but this one is cramped.

It is true that the world is the result of *māyā*, as conceived in *Advaita Vedānta*. In the like manner, it is also true that the sense of morality is admitted in *Advaita Vedānta* for worldly life. This material world is false if and only if this world is perceived in the view point of ultimate reality (*pāramārthika dr̥ṣṭibhangi*), but in our day to day mundane life the moral obligation of an individual is not considered as false. One becomes pure in heart through the performance of his moral duty. And one is regarded to be competent of achieving the knowledge of Brahman or the knowledge of self only after the attainment of the cleanliness of the heart. It is stated in *Vedānta* Philosophy that one who seeks to attain the knowledge of Brahman should sincerely follow the *Sādhanacatuṣṭay* i.e. *śama, dama, uparati, titikṣā* and *śraddhā*'. Hence, it may be said that the objection against Indian ethics is not tenable also from the standpoint of *Advaita Vedānta*.<sup>23</sup>

Let us consider another issue of Indian ethics, Is Indian ethics act-deontological or rule-deontological? In search of this question, we can see that Indian ethics in most of the time is in favour of act-deontological. Situation concern is the main feature of Indian ethics. Generally we notice that violence is always restricted in our scriptures, but in order to defense own life the practice of violence has not been hatred, rather it is to be advised to kill assailant just after seeing him. Side by side, despite encompassing the instruction that truth should be obeyed by everyone with his act, mind and words (*kāya mana vākya*), we perceive that to defense one's life false word and false behave is to be supported in *Mahābhārata*.<sup>24</sup> In this case Indian ethical standpoint is act-deontological. On the other hand, we can see the Prābhākara standpoint in this regard is rule-deontological since they say duty should be performed for the sake of duty. In the like manner we see in the *Bhagavadgītā* also that Lord Krishna puts fourth his arguments owing to stimulate Arjuna to fight in the battlefield of *Kurukṣetra* for sustaining his *svadharma* (the duty of the position in the society). Here, Krishna has advised Arjuna to fight for the sake of fight in keeping a universal ethical rule in

mind. In this case *Bhagavadgītā*'s standpoint is rule-deontological. Hence, it will be difficult to say in one sentence how far such question of western ethics is logical in Indian ethics.

In concern to the subject matter of moral judgment, we see that if the motive, the means and the result are all, good, i.e., the intention (the intention means the combination of these three) is good only than we may call an action (voluntary action) good; otherwise bad. Hence, intention is the subject matter of moral judgment so far as Western ethics is concerned. Mackenzie confesses the importance of the intention in moral judgment, but he regards that the character of an individual, not intention, is the subject matter of moral judgment in true sense of the term.<sup>25</sup> Mackenzie has put forward his arguments as follows: 'when we are passing a strictly moral judgment, we think of the action, not as an isolated event, but as part of a system of life. ....it is never simply on a think done, but always on a person doing, that we pass moral judgement.'<sup>26</sup> Intention is not something isolated. There lies an inseparable relationship between intention and the character of an individual. In fact, individual's character is reflected through intention. Character is a disposition of man that he acquires in course of time by performing voluntary action. In moral judgment intention is not taken into account isolated from man. Mackenzie says: 'we judge its significance not in the abstract, but for the person who does it.'<sup>27</sup> We, generally observe that an honest person do not have evil intention. Since, morality has no holiday. Almost the same view we find in the thinking line of virtue ethics. And we see, Indian ethics is very much concerned with person, person's character, and values those he posses, in perspective of moral judgment. That is why, perhaps, Indian ethics is compared with virtue ethics by Jitendranath Mohanti.<sup>28</sup> Morality cannot be determined setting aside the character of an individual. The question with regard to morality becomes successful in connection with an individual's character or the character which one take as an ideal.

From the discourse of morality in India, it is cleared that moral judgment of an action has been taken on the basis of the competency of the up gradation of character irrespective of Vedic and non-Vedic school. At the ancient time of Hinduism in India, we have come across that the person was considered to be a great person, who was *kṣānta*, *dānta*, *jitendrio* or *ātmajñānī* in true sense of the term. Likewise, in Buddhism a person was treated to be an ideal, who was recognized as *upaśānta* or *supravudha* Brahmin.<sup>29</sup> In also Jainism the persons who have self control and also being capable of giving compassion, forgiveness were glorified to be a great person. That is why, Rabindranath said that the ultimate destination of ancient India was to reach in perfection (*brahmaṇyatā*) i.e., attainment of moral values in life, which is known as *dharma* was the aim of ancient India.<sup>30</sup>

Now I intend to give an exposition of the phenomenon *dharma* in accordance with what we actually find in our tradition. In our scriptures, four human ends are described, which is called *pūruṣārtha*. *Dharma* is the most important one of them and it has been given the first position. Both *artha* and *kāma* are essential for the maintenance of life, especially in the material world. That is why; these two are considered as human pursuit. *Artha* (wealth) is the means of the attainment of happiness. It is only means, but cannot be end. *Artha* (wealth) becomes *anartha* (destructive for the life) if it is not earned by the guidance of *dharma*. In the same manner, *kama* without *dharma* can destroy anyone's life. But *kāma* under the control of the instruction of *dharma*, can bring the welfare in individual and social life. Without *dharma* these two can fall the human beings into danger. And for this, welfare and peace of the society is to be hindered. In short, it is told that if *artha* and *kāma*-these two *pūruṣārthas* is attained by the instruction of *dharma* only then man can have social life in true sense of the term. These three human pursuits are to be understood in perspective of the welfare of the society. In all scriptures, *dharma* is accepted as restricting principle. 'dharmā-

*viradho...kāma' smi'* i.e. I am *kama* which does not contradict to *dharma*. It has got the support in the words of Sri krishna in the *Bhagavadgītā*.<sup>31</sup>

It is true that though the term *dharma* bears various meanings, but in the context of *pūruṣārtha*, *dharma* refers to the principle of conduct (*vyavohāra*) which indicates the duty of an individual in the society. In this consideration, *dharma* is pointed out with the term '*kartavatā*' by Medhatithi.<sup>32</sup> It is stated also in *Mahābhārata* that the virtuous conduct (*sadācāra*) is the source of *dharma*. *Dharma* is a moral principle that regulates man's conduct and also inspires an individual to act upon welfare of the society. Through performing of the wellbeing of the society one purifies himself. *Dharma* acts as a regulatory principle of behavior of an individual. If we analysis the term *dharma*, we observe that *dharma* is to be taken as an instrument to control the activities of man in order to harmonies the wellbeing between individual and society. There is a social aspect of *dharma*. The performance of *dharma* becomes meaningful in the context of the society. *Dharma* is admitted to bring harmony and peace among different sects of the society. *Dharma* can be substantiated with the term 'justice', frequently said in modern society. In metaphysical aspect *dharma* is described as a cosmic law which is called *Ṛta*. *Ṛta* is a threat which binds different parts of the universe systematically.<sup>33</sup>

Actually, in Indian classical texts we do not come across any ritualistic approach in the concept of *dharma* in literal sense. That is, the term *dharma* does not have any ritualistic relation; rather it is a moral principle, i.e., moral value.<sup>34</sup> Religious life (*dharmō jīvan*) is nothing but moral life. Manu's consideration with regard to *dharma* is that there is no action which is not come out by the desire (*kāma*). But the action which is governed by *kāma* cannot be praise worthy. Because, *kāma* is the result of the state of ignorant mind of an individual.<sup>35</sup> Hence, *dharma* is to be presented to restrict the limitless desire (*yathecha kāma*). *Dharma* regulates the action of man as a moral principle. For the wellbeing of an individual and also

the society *dharma* is essential. It is stated that all are ruined if we do not have *dharma*, but if *dharma* is protected, we become protected (*dharma avo hato hanta dharma rakṣiti rakṣita*).<sup>36</sup> The religion of man (*mānuṣer dharma*) is to perform duty for the wellbeing of man, society and the world. And this is the aim of Indian ethics. Indeed, in Indian concept, *dharma* and ethics is not separated with each other. In accordance with Indian ethics one should not take care of his own narrow interest, rather take care of the realization of the self through which a man becomes man in the true sense of the term and desire for the happiness of all leaving as his own. In the context of Indian ethics, we see that there are three dimensions of the phenomenon of *dharma*. These are: i) objective aspect of *dharma*, which is associated with the welfare of the society, ii) subjective aspect of *dharma*, which is related to the purification of the self, and iii) absolute aspect of *dharma*, which is linked with the extension of the self.<sup>37</sup> Hence, we can see these three elements in Hindu Ethics. S.K. Maitra observes:

‘Hindu Ethics is the social ethics and psychological ethics and culminates in the philosophy of the Absolute which is the consummation of the Spiritual life.’<sup>38</sup>

The objective or social aspect of *dharma* is exposed specially by *Varṇāśramadharmas*. The purpose of this facet of *dharma* is to serve the society. Here *dharma* means *karma* / *kartavyakarma* (the assigned duty). Through the performance of *sādhāraṇadharmas* and *Varṇāśramadharmas* an individual carries out his moral duty to the society. This duty is called the result of his objective or social morality; which is followed by S.K. Maitra as follows: ‘The *sādhāraṇadharmas* and *varṇāśramadharmas* together constitute the objective morality of the Hindus. i.e., morality as represented in the code of external acts and requiring outward conformity.’<sup>39</sup> But the accomplishment of moral duty to the society is not mere the destination of an individual, but also to achieve the purification of

the mind, body and words collectively (*kāya mana vākya*). Through the performance of *sādhāraṇadharmas* we practice the control of the self and act social duty by way of accomplishing *varṇāśramadharmas*. This aspect is called subjective morality in Indian ethics. According to Indian ethics, the purification of the mind/self is not also the end. The end is the extension of the self, i.e., the realization of the self in everything of the world. And this is called absolute morality.<sup>40</sup> To perceive all things like own self is, indeed, the criterion of moral judgment, which uttered by Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavadgītā*: '*ātmaupamyena sarvatra samam paśyati yo 'rjuna*',<sup>41</sup> that is frequently said in English - 'do unto others as you wish to be done.' We generally see that we love ourselves, though we do not have the same to others. If we extend ourselves to others, we would be able to love others. And without love to others, wellbeing of the society is not possible in true sense of the term. Feeling of love, I think, is the metaphysical part of wellbeing.

The duty which is determined by the social status, dignity and efficiency, especially mental trend and temperament of a person is called *Varṇa dharma*. The literal meaning of the term '*varṇa*' is colour, but in the context of philosophy, this term stands for the psychological trend of an individual. One's character depends on one's tendency and for this reason; different men obtain different efficiency in different action. And this is the cause of the division of four *varṇas*. This division is determined by *guṇa* (attribute) and *karma* (efficiency in action), not by birth which is running at present. Actually, birth based division was begun when the Brahmanism is emerged in India. It is clearly stated in the *Bhagavadgita*: '*cāturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇakarmavibhāgaśah*', i.e.; Krishna creates this division by the attribute and efficiency of an individual.<sup>42</sup> On the basis of this principle the people of the society are divided into four classes which are *Brahmins*, *Kṣatriyas*, *Vaiśyas* and *Śūdras*. As per this division, their duties are of four types. And these duties are very essential to build up the society. If we observe the need of the society, we see that there are four types of needs

which are essential for the society just like four *varṇas* are described in our scriptures. For beautiful construction of the society, we need to give the protection of the society, to give the financial support of the society, to give the service to the society and above all to give the proper guidance of the society. The duties, assigned for different classes, are competent to the fulfillment of the said needs of the society. The *śūdras* (the people of small intelligent) will serve the society through their physical labor; the *vaiśyas* (the people efficient in business and cultivation) will give the financial support of the society, The *kṣatriyas* (the people who have valor, i.e.; the military man) will protect the society with their courage and vigor and the Brahmins will give the proper guidance of the society in the light of their wisdom and intelligence. All *varṇas* are indispensable in order to run the society smoothly. Hence, no *varṇa* can be ignored, or is to be considered as inferior.

“Each individual has to do what he can do. Social waste is prevented since the different functions in society are carried out only by the individuals who are best fitted for them. Since the individuals find that occupation which is in accord with their respective natures and nearest and dearest to their hearts, there is no room for listlessness, dissatisfaction and the consequent frustration. The satisfaction of the individuals arising from the performance of the duties of their station furthers the efficient use of their talents. Social progress is ensured, or becomes possible since each individual is eminently suited to the performance of the duty that he is allotted, spontaneously gives out his best. The naturalness with which he discharges his duty adds to the ease and grace of the performance”.<sup>43</sup>

These four classes as to four *varṇas* are necessary in a society. Hence, it may be concluded that four *varṇas* are made in order to serve diverse social requirements. The

above-mentioned view has been accepted by Swami Vivekananda also. He observes: “According to the prevalence, in greater or lesser degree of the three qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, in man, the four castes, the *brahmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra* are everywhere present at all times, and in all civilized societies”.<sup>44</sup> The four-fold division can bring a social harmony. Because, there should have as the necessity of good scholars, protectors, tradesmen and workers in a society. If people are not given different duties, there would have been chaos which leads to a non-harmonious society.

The above mentioned duties are the duties of different *varṇas*, which are called *varṇadharmas*. Besides these, there is another one *dharma*, which is called *sādhāraṇa dharma*. *Sādhāraṇa dharma* is that which is to be carried out by all, i.e.; these duties are obligatory to all irrespective of *varṇa* and *āśrama*. Forbearance (*dhṛti*), forgiveness (*kṣamā*), steadiness (*dama*), keeping the desire, absent in the practice of stealing (*cauryabhāva*), cleanliness (*śucitā*), keeping the sense organ, non-attachment to its object (*indriya nigriha*), wisdom (*dhee*), taking the information about the world (*vidyā*), truthfulness (*satya*), keeping the mentality, out of anger (*akrodha*) etc are the duties of all man (*sādhāraṇa dharma*).<sup>43</sup> These duties are unconditional. But *varṇa dharma* is not unconditional duty; it is conditional as to the position of a person, i.e.; the person having good attributes and wisdom will guide, the person who has valor and strength will protect, the person, efficient for business and cultivation, will provide the essential commodities and food and the person having less intelligent will give the physical labour. In the like manner, *āśramadharmas* are conditional as these are to be carried out according to different stage of life, like the duty of the student is to learn his lesson, the person who belongs to house holder life will perform the duty of this particular stage. Though *vārṇasaramadharmas* are not unconditional like *sādhāraṇadharmas*, but these are to be practiced unconditionally by the entire persons belonging to the particular class, i.e.; one side it is conditional, another side it is unconditional. The imperative of the

duty, here, lies in the form of a ‘if-then’ statement (hypothetical statement). That is - ‘if you belong to a particular class, you have to perform particular duties, but if you do not belong to a particular class, you need not to perform the duty assigned for this particular class.

The purpose of these two *dharmas*, viz, *sādhāraṇadharmā* and *varṇadharmā* are to do the wellbeing of the society. Without forgiveness (*kṣamā*), forbearance (*dhṛti*), steadiness (*dama*), keeping the desire, absent in the practice of stealing (*cauryabhāva*), cleanliness (*śucitā*), wisdom (*dhee*), taking the information about the world (*vidyā*), truthfulness (*satya*), keeping the mentality, out of anger (*akradha*), etc (*sādhāraṇadharmā*), the good of the society cannot be ensured. Besides these, good of the society comes, when one performs his own assigned duty.

One thing is important to mention, here, that we find the concept of *svadharma* in the *Bhagavadgītā*, which is nothing but *varṇadharmā*. *Svadharma* means the duty that one can do. This duty is also called *viśeṣa dharmā* as it is the duty of a particular class. Hence, *svadharma* is no more but *varṇa dharmā*. The duty (*svadharma*) of a *kṣatriya* is to fight and to give the protection of the country. In the like manner, the duty of a person, belonging to a particular class, is his *svadharma*. Sri Krishna advised Arjuna to fight in the battle field of Kurukṣetra as he belongs to the class of *kṣatriya*. Everyone is hypothecated to perform his own duties. Hence, Arjuna cannot ignore his own duty. In fact, through the concept of *varṇadharmā* the professional duty is indicated here. For being efficient in a particular profession, one is taken as belonging to a particular class. A person having the temperament of fighting belongs to the class of *kṣatriya*. And hence, to be engaged in fighting is his *svadharma*. It has a great social importance when Krishna advised Arjuna in saying that it is better to be ruined in performing his own duty (*svadharme nidhananṁ śreya*). If a less-intelligent person, who can give only physical labour, engages himself to lead the country, or

a person having courage and strength, not being engaged in the protection of the country, engages him in business, the society will not be benefitted.<sup>45</sup>

*Āśramadharmā* is the duty of different stages of life. The term ‘*āśrama*’ denotes the different stages of life. In ancient India the entire human life is divided into four stages, which are – *brahmacharya* (the student life), *gārhastya* (the house-holder life), *vānaprastha* (the stage of purification of life) and *sannyasa* (the renounced order life). A man has to pass out different stages of life and thereby he has to render different duties. One is to be prepared to enter into later stage of life, after performing the duties of previous stage. Actually the liberation is the ultimate destination of human life so far as our scriptures is concerned. And these duties of different stages of life are taken to serve this purpose. But for this, different needs of life are not to be ignored. It is true that man will be liberated, after obtaining the knowledge of *Brahman*; likewise it is also true that he has a physical existence. Human life, in fact, is a history of ascending from his material existence to divine existence. Through the performance of the duties for different stages of life, this ascending of man is possible.<sup>46</sup>

*Āśramadharmā* means the duty of different stages of life. Every man remains in certain *āśrama* in certain stage of life. His duty depends on the basis of his different stage. Through the accomplishment of the duty of a stage one becomes capable of entering into the next stage. After performing all the duties as prescribed in different stages of life an individual can generally be liberated.

*Brahmacarya*: - This stage is the first stage of human life where one learns his education. This stage of life builds the foundation of one’s whole life. Character has to be built in this stage of life through the restriction of sense organs to its objects. Character building is the ultimate aim of education. Character is never built without the education as well as training of the restriction of sense organs. The power of vitality is emerged from

restricted life, which is the source of the development of life. Accordingly, this stage of life is very important to human life. In this stage, a person prepares himself for house-hold life by practicing purity, simplicity, eagerness to the duties, restraint and endurance.

*Gārhasṭha*: - This stage is the second stage of human life. After the completion of *Brahmacarya* one is allowed to enter into the *gārhasṭha āśrama*. *Gārhasṭha āśrama* means the house-hold life. In this stage of life, a person takes all the responsibility of practical life. To keep the continuity of human race through the production of the child is the duty of this stage. This stage is not mere just for merriment of physical desire. In addition to the production of the child in this stage one has to perform social duties. These are like service to the parents, neighbours and guests etc. It is advised to perform *pancha yajña* (five sacrifices) in this stage. These *yajñas* are performed to repay the debt to them i.e. these are the concept of debt like the debt to the nature (*deva ṛṇa*), debt to the sage or wise man (*ṛṣi ṛṇa*), debt to the ancestors (*pitṛ ṛṇa*) and debt to the people or government (*nṛ ṛṇa / manuṣya ṛṇa*). These four types of *ṛṇas* have been described in scriptures. And I think there is also another *ṛṇa* i.e. debt to the nonhuman beings (*bhuta ṛṇa*) since we are indebted to them in various ways. Here one thing is worthy to mention that in western culture a man is born with some rights, but in Indian culture a man is born with some debts. *Ṛṣi yajña* means to repay the debt to those who have given knowledge and research for the welfare of the mankind. *Deva yajña* means to serve *deva*. Here the term ‘*deva*’ means *prakṛiti* (nature). The ultimate aim of this *yajña* is protect the nature, natural balance and its environment. *Bhuta yajña* means to give the food to nonhuman beings and to protect them. *Nṛ yajña* means to give the tax as well as service to the government. And *Pitṛ yajña* means to respect to our ancestors, production of the child to keep the continuity of the human race as they are the root cause of our welfare. We are indebted to them on account of the fact that there are many contributions of them in our life.

*Vānaprastha*: - This is the third stage of life. After the successful completion of house-hold life man enters into this stage. In this stage man takes shelter in the forest and practices austerity. Purification of the Self comes through the practice of penances. In fact, the aim of this stage is Self purification. After achieving of the purification of the Self, one is prepared to enter into the *Sanyasa āśrama*, the highest stage of austerity.

*Sannyāsa*: - *Vānaprastha* is fulfilled by taking of this *āśrama*. One who takes *sannyasa* does not live in a certain place or house. Always traveling is the duty of a renounced person (*sannyasin*). His vow is to do the welfare of the humanity. Renunciation to the material objects is the criterion of entering into this *āśrama*. Compassion to all leaving beings, completely free from sensual desire, equal mindedness to happiness and pain, gain and lose, same mentality to friend and foe etc are characteristics of the person who belong to this *āśrama*. A *sannyasin* has to abandon violence not only by physically but also by mentally and the statement.

A thing is important to mention here that if conflict comes between *sādhāraṇa dharma* and *viśeṣa dharma*, in such a situation what will one do? In this context, we find that when Kaikeyee send Rama to the forest and arranged to obtain the kingdom for *Bhārata*, Lakṣmaṇa became angry and told that he will kill Kaikeyee. In this situation, Rama prohibited Lakṣmaṇa to obey the duty of *kṣatriya* like braveness. He instructed Lakṣmaṇa to obey the *sādhāraṇa dharma* like *kṣamā*, or truthfulness to his father. We find here that Rama considered *sādhāraṇa dharma* as more superior to *varṇāśrama dharma*. We on the other hand come across in the *Bhagavadgīta* that Krishna encouraged Arjuna to fight in the battle field of Kurukṣetra because of the fact that fighting is the duty of *kṣatriya* which is his *varṇadharmā* or *svadharmā*. But Arjuna argued that if he fights, he will break some *sādhāraṇa dharma*. Here, we see Krishna considered *varṇadharmā* more superior to *sādhāraṇa dharma*.

From the aforesaid discussion, it may be concluded that in the case of the conflict between *sādhārana dharma* and *varṇadharmā* i.e. *viśeṣa dharma*, the duty (*dharma*) of one will have to be determined on subject to situation context.

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## CHAPTER-II

### THE CONCEPT OF *DHARMA* IN *PŪRVAMĪMĀNSĀ*

In previous chapter we have discussed about *dharma* in general. The present chapter will deal with the concept *dharma* in accordance with *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* system. The prime focus of *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* system is to discuss about *dharma*. This system begins with the *sutra*: ‘*athāto dharma jijñāsā*’.<sup>1</sup> The term ‘*atha*’ means *ānantarya* i.e. afterward the study of *Veda*. The verb ‘*jñā*’ in the term ‘*jijñāsā*’ means ‘*jñāna*’. And the suffix ‘*san*’ means will. *Jñāna* is not such that is achieved by desire i.e. *jñāna* is not achieved one’s desire. Hence, the implicative meaning of the term ‘*jijñāsā*’ residing in the term ‘*dharma jijñāsā*’ is to judge. The meaning of the term ‘*dharma*’ is the meaning of the statement of the *Veda* which is the subject of inquiry in this system. Now the question: why – afterward i.e. afterward the study of the *Veda*? In this *sutra* the great sage Jaimini has told that after the study of the *Veda* we must judge the meaning of the statements of *Veda*. Otherwise, the study of the *Veda* becomes meaningless.<sup>2</sup>

Here a question arises: There is no necessity to judge the famous phenomenon like *dharma*. It is true that intelligent persons do not have enquiry about the phenomenon which is established already in all aspects. Though the phenomenon *dharma* is established but problem arises regarding the nature of *dharma*. *Dharma* is recognized by most of the persons. But divergence of opinion is found regarding what exactly the term *dharma* means. Someone thinks that to worship a particular tree of cremation ground is *dharma*, on the other hand someone considers that to perform the sacrificial rites is *dharma*. *Dharma* is needed as it is the tool of achieving human pursuit. Hence, it is necessary to judge *dharma* due to its doubtful nature. Something is proved by its definition (here definition stands for *lakṣṇa* or

sign) and proof. The existence of knowable object depends on its proof or verification. On the other hand, proof or verification depends on the definition of knowable object. The *ācāryas* say: ‘*mānādhīnā meyasidhirmānasidhiśca lakṣaṇāt*’ i.e. in the case of knowing the nature of unknown object it has to be known the definition of that object first. After knowing the nature of an object, verification may be applied for that object.<sup>3</sup> Hence, it has been stated first the existence of knowable object is proved by its verification. And by definition the verifiability / authenticity of an object is proved.

The definition always becomes free from the fallacy of impossibility, wideness, and narrowness. *Dharma* cannot be defined like an ordinary worldly thing so far as *Mīmāṃsā* system is concerned. *Dharma* cannot be known by perception as it is not endowed with colour, etc. That which is not, at all object of perception either fully or partly cannot be the object of inference, etc., as in each *pramāṇa* perception serves as a promoter by virtue of its *pramāṇajyeṣṭhatva* (being eldest among the *pramāṇas*). It cannot be argued that verbal testimony is the proof for it. For, if a super-sensuous object is expressed through words, it cannot make sense to others or it cannot be the object of awareness of others. If an animal indicated by the term ‘go’ (cow) were not at all familiar, the ‘cow’ would not have been object of inference or testimonial knowledge. It may be argued that the object which is beyond any proof cannot be discussed. For removing of all these objections the great sage Jaimini has given the *sūtra* about *dharma* in the following way: ‘*Codanālakṣaṇo’rthah dharmah*’ i.e. *codanā* is the proof for *dharma*.<sup>4</sup> The Vedic injunction which makes us inclined or declined doing any work is called *codanā*. That whose proof is *codanā* is called *dharma*. If this meaning is taken into account, the *codanā* alone can become the proof. If it is said that *codanā* is the only *pramāṇa* of *dharma* (*codanā lakṣaṇam pramāṇam pramāṇameva yasya*), it indicates that the *codanā* itself is *pramāṇa*, but not *apramāṇa*.<sup>5</sup>

By the term ‘*artha*’ in the *sūtra* there have been denied the cause of non-desired situation. Any type of action sanctioned by Vedic injunction is not regarded as *dharma*, which is indicated through the incorporation of the term ‘*artha*’. If an action, though sanctioned by the *Vedas*, leads to the non-desired situation is not at all *dharma*. Hence, *dharma* is always associated with the good.<sup>6</sup> The instruction of harmful action like *śyenjāg* etc for the purpose of killing the enemy available in the Veda is not considered as *dharma*. To kill the enemy is malicious act. There is a *Śruti*: ‘*mā himsyāt sarvva bhūtāni*’<sup>7</sup>

In the first *sūtra*, it has been stated the justification of *adharmā* along with that of *dharma*. ‘*athātaḥ + dharmajijñasā = athātadharmajijñasā*’, ‘*athātaḥ + adharmajijñasā = athātadharmajijñasā*’. If we add a hidden ‘*a-kār*’ in joining between the two words, we get the justification of *adharmā* along with that of *dharma* in the same *sūtra*. And that is why; Jaimini did not give the definition of *adharmā* separately.<sup>8</sup>

The action sanctioned by the *Veda* leads to good is called *dharma* i.e. the action prescribed by the *Veda* for the wellbeing of the humanity is *dharma*. Hence, *yāg*, *dān*, *hom* etc. sanctioned by the statement of the *Veda* is called *dharma* since by the performance of such action the desire of men is fulfilled. In the following of Jaimini’s *sūtra* Laugākṣi Bhāṣkar in his book ‘*Arthasaṁgraha*’ has given the definition of *dharma* which is as follows: ‘*vedapratipādyah prayajanavadartha dharmah*’ i.e. that which is sanctioned by the *Veda* and brings the good is *dharma*.<sup>9</sup> That which is prescribed by the *Veda* and by which the need of men is fulfilled is *dharma*. If this definition of *dharma* is taken into account, it becomes too wide. In this case, then, the attainment of heaven also considered as *dharma*. But attainment of heaven is not *dharma*. Hence, in the definition of *dharma* the term ‘*prayajanvat*’ is added. The fruit of *yajña* like *jyotiṣtam* etc. is attainment of heaven. Hence, *yajña jyotiṣtam* is that which is needed. Attainment of heaven is needed for the *yajña jyotiṣtam*, but it itself is not something needed. Heaven does not have any need as it itself is something happiness.

There is a significance of adding the term ‘*vedapratipādyā*’ in the definition of *dharma* given by Bhāṣkar. If it is not added, any type of necessity of men is considered as *dharma*. Accordingly, taking food etc. would have been included as *dharma*. And hence, the definition of *dharma* falls in too wide. Man feels inclination to food for having attraction to food. For this, there is no necessity of the instruction of the Veda. Hence, the term ‘*vedapratipādyā*’ is added. In the definition of *dharma*, there is an intention of adding the term ‘*artha*’ also. If the term ‘*artha*’ is not added, all things prescribed by the Veda as necessity would have been considered as *dharma*. For this, *śyanyajña* etc would have been treated as *dharma*.

One thing is important here that anything is not considered as *dharma* though it is mentioned in the Veda. Mentioned in the Veda is not the same with sanctioned in the Veda. *Vedapratipādyā* means that which is sanctioned in the Veda so far as the author of *Arthasaṃgraha* is concerned. *Śyenyajña* etc is mentioned in the Veda, but not sanctioned in the Veda. The *Yajña* sanctioned by the Veda make the man related to the heaven by the injunction (*vidhivākya*) ‘*yajata svargakāmaḥ*’ etc. *Yajña* etc is called *dharma*, in the like manner the injunction (*vidhivākya*) for that *yajña* is also called *dharma*. *Śyenyajña* etc is malicious action, not *dharma*. Such actions are mentioned in *Atharva Veda*. These are not mentioned in the *trayīvidyā* (the first three Vedas). Śabara swami etc. commentators call such actions as ‘mentioned in the Veda’ (*Vedakta*) but not ‘sanctioned in the Veda’ (*Vedavihita*).

A question may be arisen here that the definition of *dharma* by Laugākṣi contradicts the definition of *dharma* by Jaimini. The term ‘*codanā*’ is mentioned in ‘*Mīmāṃsāsūtra*’, but the author of *Arthasaṃgraha* has given the term ‘*veda*’ instead of the term ‘*codanā*’. The term ‘*codanā*’ indicates the injunction (*vidhivākya*) only. Śabara swami has understood *codanā* as the sentence which make impulsion to perform *yajña*. But Laugākṣi think that *codanā* means all the sentences of the Veda. He thinks that all the

sentences of the Veda make impulsion to perform *yajña* directly or indirectly. Hence, there is no inconstancy between the term ‘*codanā*’ and the term ‘*veda*’.

The *Mīmāṃsakas* has told that the Vedic sentence is the proof for *dharma*. Śabara swami has shown that the Vedic sentence alone the proof for *dharma* accepting the term ‘*lakṣaṇa*’ as the meaning of both definition and proof in the *sūtra* ‘*Codanālakṣano’rthah dharmah*’. According to him we can get both the definition and proof for *dharma* in this *sūtra*. Here, an objection may be arisen that it falls in ‘*vākyabheda*’ if both definition and proof are accepted by one *sūtra*. In response to this question, *Kumārila* told in ‘*Ślakavartika*’ that there is no question of *vākyabheda* because the definition of *dharma* is the literal sense of the *sūtra* and the proof for *dharma* is meaning sense of the *sūtra*.

Generally, the *Veda* is divided into two parts which are *mantra* and *brahmaṇa*. We come across these two parts in each *Veda* – *Ṛk*, *Sām*, *Yaju* and *Atharva*. Someone considers *Atharva Veda* is the part of *Ṛk Veda*. And hence, *Veda* is called *trayīvidyā*. Generally, the *mantra* part is called *samhitā* and the *vidhi* part is called *brahmaṇa*. One part of the *brahmaṇa* is called *āraṇyaka*. The study of this part of the *Veda*, as if, was often held on forest (*aranya*). And all the *Upaniṣads* are taken from the two parts: *samhitā* and *brahmaṇa*.<sup>10</sup>

In the *brahmaṇa* part of the *Veda* there are four *śruties* such as: *vidhi*, *nāmdheya*, *niṣedha* and *arthavāda*. Hence, there are five sentences available in the *Veda* including *mantra*. The *śruties* which are executed for ceremonial purpose is called *mantra* (*taccedakeṣu mantrakṣa*). According to *Kumārila* the sentences in which there are invitation (*āmantran*), salutation (*stuti*), number (*samkhyā*) etc are called generally *mantra*. The sentences of the *Veda* which make sense that which is unknown are called *vidhi* (*aprāpte śāstramarthavad*). *Vidhi* is that which makes the sense about unknown object by other *pramānas* (*pramāṇāntarānadhigathārtha viṣyatvaṃ vidhitvam*).<sup>11</sup> The *śrutis* that point out the name of

different *yajña* is called *nāmdheya*. *Niṣedha* is the prohibitive sentences of the Veda which make a sense of refutation to action that leads a man to undesired situation. ‘*na kalañajam bhakṣayet*’ i.e. ‘do not eat *kalañaja*’. ‘*Kalañaja*’ means ‘the flesh of animal or bird’, or the red garlic (*lašun*). If one eats *kalañaja*, one must fall in worried situation. Hence, the prohibitive sentences of the Veda stand as the maker for removing the worry of man. Hence, there is necessity for *niṣedha vākya* just like that for *vidhi vākya*. The sentences of the Veda which produce eager to perform *yajña* are called *arthavāda*. In these sentences eagerness of the result of *yajña* has been expressed. After hearing the praise of the result of *yajña* even an idle person feels inclination to perform *yajña*.<sup>12</sup>

Of these varieties of sentences of the *Veda* (mentioned before) *vidhi* sentences occupy a central position on account of the fact that *vidhi* sentences are the direct justifiers (*pratipādaka*) of *dharma* while the others are auxiliary to *vidhi*. *Vidhi*, *codanā*, *preranā* and *upadeś* – these all are equivalent in meaning. The sentence which makes impulsion to perform action is called *vidhi*. ‘*codanālakṣaṇo rthah dharmah*’. Here *codanā* means the Vedic injunction which inspires us in action. Śabara Swami has said ‘*kriyāyāḥ prabartakam vacanam codanā*’ i.e. *codanā* is the sentence which make impulsion to perform action. The Vedic sentences which inspires to perform action, or not to perform action is called *codanā*.<sup>13</sup> We have discussed earlier that *vidhi* is that which make the sense about unknown object. ‘*Agnihotraṁ juhuyāt svargakāmaḥ*’.<sup>14</sup> It is known by this *śruti* (*vedavākya*) that the person who desires to attain heaven, he will perform the *yajña* named *agnihotra*.

*Vidhi* is the instruction of action leading to wellbeing of the person and it inspires him to perform the action. Hence, in the discussion of *dharma* it is necessary to determine the nature of *vidhi*. Now understanding *vidhivākya*s requires first understanding the meaning of the *vidhivākya*s. We have mentioned earlier that the sentence which makes the sense about unknown object is called *vidhi*. And the meaning of *vidhi* is called *bhāvanā*. *Bhāvanā* is a

technical term in *Mīmāṃsā* system. The term *bhāvanā* means *niyaga*, *preranā*, *prayajana* i.e. persuasion. The verb is considered as principal than any other parts of speech in the sentence. The verb consists of two parts: i) the *dhātu* and ii) the *pratyaya*. Of these two the *pratyaya* is regarded as principal. The *pratyaya* can again be divided into two parts: a) *ākhyātatava* and *liṅtva*. Of these two *liṅtva* is treated as principal. The ancient grammarians like Yusk consider *ākhyātata* as *dhātu*. But the later grammarians consider that *ākhyātatava* is present in ten *lakāras*. These *lakāras* are – *lat*, *lit*, *lut*, *lṛt*, *lañ*, *let*, *lot*, *liṅ* etc. These are called *lakār* in the sense that ‘la’ is present before each *pratyaya*. The *pratyaya* part stands for number and modifier of the verb. *liṅtva* is present only in *liṅ lakār*. Both the *ākhyāta* and *liṅ* produce the understanding of *bhāvanā* so far as Laugākṣi is concerned. And that is why, a person feels inclination towards performing the *yajña* (sacrifice) which is the cause of attainment of *svarga*. *Ākhyātatva* is the *vyāpaka dharma* and *liṅtva* is the *vyāpya dharma*.<sup>15</sup>

*Bhāvanā* has been defined in *Arthasaṁgraha* as the *vyāpāra* of the producer (agent) which is conducive to the production of that is being produced (*bhāvanā nāma bhaviturbhavanānukūlo bhāvayiturvyapāraviśeṣaḥ*).<sup>16</sup> The word ‘*bhāvanā*’ suggests that which is conducive to production (*utpatti anukūla*). That which generates the inspiration to produce is called *bhāvanā*. Let us take the ordinary example. Yajñadatta says Devadatta – ‘*gāmānaya*’ i.e. bring the cow. Devadatta hears the sentence uttered by Yajñadatta and thinks that Yajñadatta wants to produce the inclination (*pravṛtti*) to bring the cow in him and that which will inspire (*preranā*) him to bring the cow. Consequently, Devadatta grows the inclination towards the *vyāpāra* which is conducive to bringing the cow (*gavānayanānukūla*). Here, we see that Yajñadatta’s specific intention helps in producing Devadatta’s inclination centering round bringing the cow. In other words, a specific *vyāpāra* is *bhāvanā*. ‘*Bhāvanā*’ means to be produced, or the effort of agent. This *bhāvanā* can be of two kinds: i) *Śābdibhāvanā* and ii) *Ārthibhāvanā*. *Śābdibhāvanā* has been defined as the *vyāpāra* of the

*prayojaka* sentence that which is conducive to the inclination of the person concerned.<sup>17</sup> There are three elements in *śābdībhāvanā* viz. i) *sādhyā* i.e. thing to be established, ii) *sādhana* i.e. means for doing it and iii) *itikartavyatā* i.e. duties to be performed for it or how to do it. *Liñ* contains two properties viz. *liñtva* and *ākhyātatvā*. *Ākhyātatva* resides in the ten *lakāras*, but *liñtva* resides only in *liñ*. The meaning of *ākhyāta* is the *ārthībhāvanā* and the meaning of *liñ* is *śābdībhāvanā*. The term ‘*artha*’ refers to the person possessing the desire concerning the result (*phalakāmānāyuta*). *Bhāvanā* of such a person is called *ārthībhāvanā*. Accordingly, the intention (*yatna*) residing in the agent who is the producer of the action is *ārthībhāvanā* and this produces the desire towards the result (*phalabhāvanā*).<sup>18</sup> *Ārthībhāvanā* also consists of three parts viz. i) *sādhyā*, ii) *sādhana* and iii) *itikartavyatā*. The desire concerning *sādhyā* gets fulfilled in *svarga*, *sādhana* gets fulfilled in the sacrifice and the desire concerning *itikartavyatā* gets fulfilled in the secondary acts. One can elucidate these parts as follows. Proclivity grows in the person out of *ārthībhāvanā* and then the person gets the result in the form of *svarga* and this is the *sādhyā*. It is worthy to mention here that *svarga* itself does not arise out of sacrifice. *Svarga* exists even before the sacrifice is performed. It is rather by performing the sacrifice the agent attains his desired object i.e. *svarga*.

The way to attain *svarga* is performing the sacrifice. From the sentence ‘*yajeta svargakāmaḥ*’ we come to know that attainment of *svarga* is possible from performance of sacrifice and accordingly *sādhana* of the *sādhyā* is sacrifice. A question arises here. Does the agent attain *svarga* immediately after the performance of the sacrifice? Certainly, there is a gaping of time between performing the sacrifice and attainment of *svarga*. But then we accept the principle that *sādhana* must immediately precede the result. Here, *Mīmāṃsakas* introduce the concept of *apūrva*. After performing the sacrifice there arises a special property called *apūrva* in the agent and agent attains *svarga* after his death on the basis of this *apūrva*. Hence, *sādhana* refers to the sacrifice. After the knowledge of *sādhyā* *sādhana* the desire

arises as to how the *sādhya* can be attained. *Itikartavyatā* is an answer to this question. The form of *itikartavyatā* is that by performing the secondary acts like *prayajā* etc. one can attain *svarga*.

The *codanā* existing in *vidhivākya* has got a magnificent power is indicated by the *bhāṣyakāra* which has been discussed in earlier. *Codanā* is capable of indicating that which is past, present, or future, and also which subtle, hidden or remote, etc. The object which cannot be revealed by sense-organs is capable of being revealed through *codanā*.<sup>19</sup> It cannot be said that what is indicated by *codanā* may be true or false, just as the ordinary sentences like ‘there are fruits on the bank of the river’ may be true or false. For, it is self-contradictory to give the statement that ‘*codanā* asserts and asserts what is false’. If it is said that the Vedas assert something, it means that they become the media or means of knowing something. If the means of knowing something gives rise to knowledge of something, the means makes the object known. If there is injunction that ‘heaven can be attained through the performance of *agnihotra* sacrifice, there is no point in saying that it may be false. Here, Śabara has raised a logical defect of contradiction. If it is known to us that heaven follows from the performance of *agnihotra*, it is contradictory to say that heaven may not follow from it. If there is doubt, how can it be regarded as ‘knowledge’? Moreover, it is also contradictory to say that something is not at all present, yet known to us. The very form of the sentence ‘*sargakāmo yajet*’ indicates that there is no uncertainty in it. If there were uncertainty, the form of the sentence would be of different types like ‘Heaven may or may not follow from the performance of sacrifice’. As in the injunction there is no such linguistic expression which may convey us the sense of probability, it can be taken as certain.<sup>20</sup> If a cognition, just after its origination, becomes sublated by the consequent cognition, it is called false. What is expressed through the injunction is not at all sublated by the knowledge of any person in different situation or time. Hence, *codanā* or idea conveyed through it can never be false.

Such is not the case in the case of ordinary sentences that may be sublated by others in different time or circumstances.<sup>21</sup>

From the above discussion it can be said that the term *codanā* indicates the word-in-general, but not the sentence giving injunction due to its not having power to reveal the object of past, present and future. Śabara at first has shown that perception etc. fail to prove dharma and then he has tried to show that the word-in-general or sound-in-general (*śabdasāmānya*) has got capacity to reveal the object of past, present or future. After providing the validity of *śabdasāmānya* he has shown the *prāmānya* of *śabdaviśeṣa* which also exist in *codanā*.<sup>22</sup> It is also accepted in the *Ślokavārtika*.<sup>23</sup> According to *Nyāyaratnākara*, sound can give rise to the idea of objects like hare's horn, etc., though they are absolutely non-existent.<sup>9</sup> As *śabdasāmānya* has power to reveal the object of past, present or future, the *śabdaviśeṣa* will also have such power. Hence, *codanā* can reveal them both as the capacity of *śabdasāmānya* and *śabdaviśeṣa*.<sup>24</sup>

The function of *sāstric* injunction is to produce action in an individual. An individual may feel inclined to an action without depending on the *codanā*. Sometimes the end-in-view (*prayojana*) serves as a promoter for involving a man in action. In such cases there is no necessity of *codanā* and hence *codanā* is not always cause of an individual's inclination to action. In reply, the *Mīmāṃsakas* argue that the results like heaven, etc., are to be understood by the term *prīti* i.e. satisfaction as per principal. *Prīti* is that in which an individual becomes satisfied. The result in the form of heaven etc. which becomes the cause of satisfaction of an individual cannot be injuncted (*coditāh*) on account of the fact that he inclines to it automatically out of attraction towards them. (*tasya lipsā arthalakṣaṇā*).<sup>25</sup> The *codanā* is not essential for this actions, which is indicated in the *Nyāyamālākara* commentary: 'na bhavyāṃso vidheyah syādrāgāttatra pravarttanāt.' The *codanā* is essential in respect of *kāraṇa* and *itikartavyatā*, for, these, being complicated, are not desired

automatically by an individual. But the knowledge of *sādhyā*, the cause of satisfaction, leads a man to action and hence, there is no necessity of *vidhi*.<sup>26</sup> The means of attaining result and performance of duties regarding it may be seem to be troublesome for a person. In these cases the inspiration or direction from Vedic injunction may become the cause of making a man inclined to action. In other words, the *śruti* has given injunction to an individual being so that he may feel inclination to perform actions which, though not at all trouble-free, can conjoin him with his well-being. This type of injunction is called *codanā*,<sup>27</sup> which is *dharma*.

As performance of sacrifice etc. being full of trouble, cannot be most desired thing to an individual, one does not want to do it automatically. If it is asked in which method an individual may think of having heaven, it may be said through *codanā* that he will do so with the help of sacrifice. The suffix '*liñ*' in *yajeta* indicates the means of *persuasion* (*preraṇā*). That which makes a man involved in action is called *preranā* or *codanā*. This knowledge of *preraṇā* is caused by the utterance of the suffix *liñ* etc. In other words the potency of the suffix '*liñ*' is known from the fact of generating *preraṇā* in an individual. When an individual feels *preraṇā* in performing action, it indicates the existence of some power in the suffix '*liñ*' etc. and in the Vedic sentences or injunction also.

From the forgoing discussion it can no longer be said that *dharma*, not capable of being proved, cannot be taken into consideration. For, it is already proved that *dharma* capable of being proved can easily be taken into consideration. It can never be said that *dharma* being super-sensuous in character cannot be revealed through verbal testimony. Sometimes a non-familiar word is understood if it is uttered with the familiar words and if there is expectancy (*ākāṃkṣā*), compatibility (*yogyatā*) and contiguity (*sannidhi*) among the words. In the sentence in the form: "*iha sahakārataru madhuni madhukaraḥ pivati*" i.e., in this mango tree the bee drinks honey, there are many words. If someone does not understand the meaning of the word '*madhukaraḥ*' and can understand the meaning of the rest, he can

easily assume the meaning of the word ‘*madhukaraḥ*’ as ‘bee’ as it is associated with other familiar words. In the like manner, one can understand the meaning of the terms ‘*agnihotra*’ and ‘*soma*’, as specific type of sacrifice in the injunctions ‘*agnihotram*’ ‘*juhuyāt*’ and ‘*somena yajeta*’ etc. If the meaning of the terms like soma etc. is understood properly, it leads us to the understanding of the term ‘*dharma*’. In this way, the meaning of the *codanā* comes to the awareness of an individual.<sup>28</sup>

It has been stated that the means that leads us to the wellbeing like attainment of heaven, etc., is called *dharma*. That sacrifice can conjoin us to the heaven etc. is known only through *codanā*. If an individual performs an action as per direction of the *śāstra*, and if the action leads him to his wellbeing, it would be treated as *dharma*. As the *śāstra* is only guideline through which one can know which is *dharma* or which is not, the *codanā* has got a prominent role in the whole *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* system of Philosophy.

It is almost clear to us how *codanā* makes an individual inclined to action. It is very much significant that the Mīmāṃsakās sometimes used the term ‘*preraṇā*’ instead of *codānā* in the same sense. So, the English rendering of the term ‘*codanā*’ would be both ‘*persuasion*’ and ‘*inspiration*’, which I think, are equally relevant in the *Mīmāṃsā* system. Sometimes one may feel inclined to action out of persuasion received from the Vedic injunctions. It has already been stated earlier that an individual cannot feel to do hard action, as it involves some troubles. Hence, it is the sacred duty of the *śāstra* to persuade a person through the injunction. Just as fire loses its burning property if there is moon-stone, an individual does not feel to do action as misery in performing action becomes an obstacle to him. In order to defunct the effect of moonstone in the previous case some stimulant in the form of sunstone is essential. In the like manner, the *śāstric* injunction may serve the function of a stimulant of mild character after persuading him in action. In another way, an individual may also feel inspiration (*preraṇā*) when he hears the injunction. The miseries or troubles in performing

action may be overcome if someone received inspiration from the *śāstra*. Moreover inspiration is the primary thing in performing actions. If someone is convinced through persuasion, he feels inspiration to do action. Hence, persuasion may make an individual inclined to action through inspiration. The persuasion without inspiration and inspiration without persuasion (in doing troublesome actions) cannot lead him to action. Hence, by the word '*codanā*' both the sense should be taken into account.

Moreover, the inspiration received through persuasion is the cause of action, which will connect us with our well-being. In ancient time *śrutis* were only the sources of inspiration and persuasion. I think this source of inspiration and persuasion may be extended to non-Vedic statements also. One may feel inspiration to do troublesome action with the words or advices received from superiors. Can it be treated as '*codanā*'? It is also a kind of *codanā*, because it can inspire us to perform action which may create '*priti*' or satisfaction in us and which is related to our well-being. The immoral action cannot be prescribed as they are not connected with the well-being of all of us. In ancient time the Vedic injunctions were the only source through which the moral and immoral actions were determined. Hence, the Vedic injunctions were taken as sources of inspiration. Afterwards, one may feel inspiration from the prescriptions given by Manu or others to do any action connected with his well-being. That *yajña* is not merely something ritual is substantiated by term *ādi* attached to the word '*yāgādikarma*'. Hence, *yajña* as well as various types of actions connected with our wellbeing may be treated as dharma. Accordingly, it is unwise to think that action means only *yajña* i.e., sacrifice (something ritual). Now-a-days one may not feel inspiration to perform sacrifice for having some desired object. In order to get desired object one may feel inspired to do any action which is the cause of his well-being and satisfaction. Hence, we may take liberty of interpreting *karma* as 'any action' and of treating both Vedic and non-Vedic statements as the cause of *codanā* provided the action is connected with our well-being.

Besides this, we have to understand the inner meaning of *yajña*. Normally one may think that *yajña* is the offering of *ghee* into the fire, or killing of animal for Gods, or ritualistic part of religion. In any religion, there are some external practices and rituals. Most of them are symbolic. Unfortunately, with the passage of time, customs and rituals are mechanically observed without understanding their meanings as well as the spirit underlying them. In this connection, we will discuss briefly the view of Aurobindo who understands *yajña* symbolically. He things of *yajña* as one of the cardinal Vedic values. It is the inner sacrifice and offering of what one has and is by the mortal to the immortal as a means of divine consummation.<sup>29</sup> *Yajña* is also a battle. Aurobindo says:

“*Yajña* is the giving of man of what he possesses in his being to the higher and divine nature and its fruit is the further enrichment of his manhood by the lavish bounty of the gods. The wealth thus, gained constitutes a state of spiritual riches, prosperity, felicity which is itself a power for the journey and a force for the battle”.<sup>30</sup>

There are varies kinds of sacrifices. It was also used later on, as political weapon, for instances, *Aśvamedha* and *Rājsuya* sacrifices. These extensions of the use of *yajña* show that *Yajña* was not an ordinary ritual among other rituals. It was a public institution. In the *Bhagavadgītā* the concept of *yajña* has been elaborated in such a way that we come across several *yajñas* i.e. sacrifices which have moral social and spiritual significances. *Yajña* or sacrifice is taken as the essence of ethical life. In a society, there cannot be harmony if each and every social being cannot sacrifice for each other. This view has been beautifully elaborated by P. N. Srinivasachari. He says:

“*Yajña* or sacrifice is the essence of ethical life. The human body is moulded out of the cosmic stuff and is, therefore, a microcosm or

miniature cosmos. The constituents of the physical organism of the *Jīva* are taken from the physical universe. The cell is reproduced from the parental life. Its food is gathered from the vegetables and the animal kingdom. Its mind stuff is derived from the cosmic source...The self is a social being and cannot sustain itself without social help...In this way, the cosmos is one single organism or systematic unity in which there is no gap between atom, cell, sense, self and society. All these are inner-connected and form a single universe as opposed to the multiverse of the pluralist... *Yajña* is only a grateful offering made by the *Jīva* as the moral self to the universe for what it has received from it in its psycho-physical make up.<sup>31</sup>

Various Vedic references to *yajña* give us the proper meaning of it. *Yajña* was allegorically and symbolically understood in the Vedas themselves. The so called killing in sacrifices is to be understood symbolically. The killing of *paśu* in *yajña* clearly means the killing of the animal in man. After killing the beasts in man, one has to dedicate and devote oneself to the divine task of spiritual and moral upliftment of society. Thus, *yajña* was not only a way of worship, but it was also a way of life.

Let us turn to the etymology of the word '*yajña*'. It is derived from *yaj* meaning *devapūjā-sangatikaraṇa dānesu*. The first meaning of *yajña* is *devapūjā* i.e., reverence for the divine and the learned. It is stated in *Śtapatha Brāhmaṇa*: '*satya samhitā vai devaḥ satyamayā u deva vidvānso hi devaḥ*'.<sup>32</sup> Hence, *devapūjā* connects respect for the learned and the wise. Secondly, *yajña* stands for *sangatikaraṇa*. It means to make a friendly union of human beings. This connection of *yajña* emphasizes the concept of 'get together'. In this context, Kunhan Raja's view on *Soma Yajña* is worthy to mention. He says:

“*Soma Yajña* was one of the national institutions. It was the occasion for the poets and thinkers to come together and to discuss the profound problems relating to the nature of the universe and the relations of the man to the nature, etc.”<sup>33</sup>

Thirdly, *yajña* also involves the value of *dāna* i.e., giving. It is the value of sharing wealth with our fellow-beings. In every society, there are the disabled and debilitated persons. They must not be allowed to starve. It is the duty of the healthy and able-bodied persons in society to uplift them.

According to Yaska *yajña* is also called *adhvara*. *Dhvara* means violence. *Adhvara* is the negation of *dhvara*.<sup>34</sup> One *Ṛgvedic* verse contains the following import. It states, ‘O God, you pervade those sacrifices (deeds) which do not involve killing.’<sup>35</sup> Another synonym of *yajña* is *medhā*. The term ‘*medhā*’ has been used at least in three different senses – in the sense of pure intellect, in the sense of bond of love or unity among the people and in the sense of killing. But unfortunately, the term is used by most of the people today in the third sense. *Yajña* also means *ātmajajña*. In this connection, Yama is the ideal figure or model of a self-sacrificing person who refused immortality for the sake of humanity He voluntarily sacrificed his life for the good of humanity.<sup>36</sup> Viśvakarman also sacrificed himself for the welfare of the mankind.<sup>37</sup> We know ‘five-fold-*yajña*’ i.e., *Brahmayajña*, *Pitṛyajña*, *Devayajña*, *Bhūtajajña* and *Nṛyajña* as described in *Mahābhārata* are obligatory for all the householders.<sup>38</sup> Hence, *yajña* is a *dharmic* value par excellence. It harmonizes the individual with the society and joined the mortal with the immortal.<sup>39</sup>

Though, in fact, *vidhi* is understood only Vedic *vidhi* (Vedic sentences) but *laukika vidhi* (moral sentences) was not ignored. One is capable of performing Vedic action after performing moral action at first. Dishonest person becomes failed to obtain the result

even though he performs Vedic action. The aim of *laukika vidhi* is to control all types of conduct and action in order to attain happiness in this mundane world. The commentator Śabara Swami of *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* tells that the deeds performed in this world for welfare such as to make house for taking the rest of the passengers, to dig the well, to dig the ponds, to make the street, plantation in the street for getting shadow etc. are regarded as pious action sanctioned by the *laukik vidhi*. Practical utility is the criterion of *laukika vidhi*. From the aforesaid instances of the deeds sanctioned by *laukika vidhi*, it is clear that the Mīmāṃsākas does not accept personal sensual happiness as a standard. In according to *Mīmāṃsā* system in case of *laukika vidhi* there is much value of the societal existence of the person.<sup>40</sup>

Some of these rituals, it is true, are to be performed in order to enjoy Heaven hereafter or to obtain worldly benefits such as rainfall. Here, the *Mīmāṃsā* ethics reaches, through ritualism, the highest point of its glory, namely the conception of duty for duty's sake. Like Kant, the *Mīmāṃsā* system believes that an obligatory action is to be performed not because it will benefit the performer but because we ought to perform it. Like him again the *Mīmāṃsā* system believes that though an obligatory duty is not to be done with any interested motive, yet the Universe is so constituted that a person who performs his duty does not ultimately go unrewarded. The difference is that while for this purpose the *Mīmāṃsā* system postulates in the universe the impersonal moral law of *karma*, Kant postulates God.<sup>41</sup>

All activities for welfare of the humanity are considered as *naimittika karma* (action performed for the purpose of specific cause). The *Mīmāṃsākas* has emphasized on the maxim 'duty for duty sake'. All *Mīmāṃsākas* agree the same view regarding *nitya* and *naimittika karma*, but they do not agree the same view regarding *kāmya karma*. In according to Bhāṭṭa *kāmya karma* is performed for the attainment of result. On the other hand, according to Prāvākara, *kāmya karma* also will have to be performed for the sake of duty. The purpose of *kāmya karma* is not the desire of fruit, but the knowledge that it must be

obeyed by the instruction of the *Veda*. Here, Vedic *vidhi* is a categorical imperative, but not the commandment of attaining heaven.<sup>42</sup>

According to *Mīmāṃsāka*, *svarga* is not a place beyond this world, rather it is nothing but the state of happiness. *Svarga* and *Naraka* are obtained in this world. Continuation of happiness is *svarga* and all types of suffering of sorrow are *naraka*. The *vidhi* sentence ‘*svargakāma yajet*’ means ‘*sukhakāma yajet*’ so far as *Mīmāṃsākas* are concerned. *Yajña* is the means of the attainment of happiness. Man feels inspiration to perform *yajña* as it is cause of fulfilling the desire of man (*iṣṭa*). The desire of man is happiness.<sup>43</sup> All men generally seek for happiness. Hence, Jaimini has attracted men to the happiness of *svarga* which is more lasting and attractive than general happiness. Though the attainment of heaven i.e. the attainment of happiness is *svkāma karma* (the action which is desired for having fruits), it is desired. Men at first become engaged to perform the action which brings fruits. Later on, men become capable of performing action which is not desired for fruits. And in this state man is liberated. Early *Mīmāṃsākas* admit three pursuits of man i.e. *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*. They do not admit *moksa*. But later *Mīmāṃsākas* admit *mokṣa*. They have told that the performance of action desire for the fruits make leads a man in the state of performing an without the desire for fruits.<sup>44</sup>

Here, a question arises: what is the proof of that the sentences prescribed by the *Veda* are connected with wellbeing? In response to this question, it is stated that *Veda* is nothing but the knowledge of the eternal truth. In this context, Vivekananda says that *Veda* is a spiritual truth discovered by *Ṛṣis*. That which is prescribed in the *Veda* is attained by the Vedic seers through their spiritual striving. Accordingly, it is not possible that the statement prescribed by the *Veda* is not connected with wellbeing. Here one may ask that the sentences prescribed by the *Veda* do not have ethical value since those are not generated by the will of moral agent; rather those are predetermined by the *Veda*. In response to this question the

same view can be stated that though those are pre determined by the Veda, those are connected with spiritual wisdom. Moreover, it is also stated that though those are not generated by the conscience of moral agent, stipulated by the Veda, become promoter to determine the duty of the people in-general. In the case of determining the duty it is right that an educated moral conscious person will be guided by his conscience, but in the case in-general people it is good if there is a predetermined universal injunction.

#### Notes and References:

1. *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, 1/1/1.
2. Sukhamaya Bhattacharyya: *Purbamimansa Darshan* (in Beng), Paschimbanga Rajya Pustak Parsad, Kolkata, 1983, p. 20.
3. *Ibid*, p. 21.
4. *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, 1/1/2.
5. Cf. Prabhā on Śabarabhāṣya: *sūtra*, 1/1/2, p. 15. and Ānandāśramagranthavali series no. 17.
6. *Codanājanyapramāviṣayaḥ puruṣaniḥ-sreyasahetubūtaścayaḥ sa dharma iti prati jñāyata iti bhāvaḥ. Prabhā, Ibid.*
7. Sukhamaya Bhattacharyya: *Purbamimansa Darshan* (in Beng.), Paschimbanga Rajya Pustak Parsad, Kolkata, 1983, p. 22.
8. *Ibid*, 23.
9. Laugaskibhaskar: *Arthasaṃgraha* (in Beng), translated by Swami Bhargananda, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, Kolkata, 1411 (B.S.), See *Prāk Kathan*.

10. Sukhamaya Bhattacharyya: *Purbamimansa Darshan* (in Beng), Paschimbanga Rajya Pustak Parsad, Kolkata, 1983, p. 39.
11. *Ibid*, 47.
12. *Ibid*, 114, 120, 121, 127, 128.
13. Laugaskibhaskar: *Arthasaṃgraha* (in Beng), translated by Swami Bhargananda, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, Kolkata, 1411 (B.S.), See *Prāk Kathan*.
14. Sukhamaya Bhattacharyya: *Purbamimansa Darshan* (in Beng), Paschimbanga Rajya Pustak Parsad, Kolkata, 1983, p. 47.
15. Debika Saha & Laxmikanta Padhi (Ed.): *Moral Language*, Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2010, p. 2.
16. Sukhamaya Bhattacharyya: *Purbamimansa Darshan* (in Beng), Paschimbanga Rajya Pustak Parsad, Kolkata, 1983, p. 48.
17. Debika Saha & Laxmikanta Padhi (Ed.): *Moral Language*, Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2010, p. 3.
18. *Ibid*, p. 7.
19. Cf. *Śabarabhāṣya sūtra*, 1/1/2.
20. *Ibid*.
21. *Ibid*.
22. See *Prabhā*, *Ibid*.
23. *Atyantāsatyapi jñānamarthe śabdaḥ karoti hi / Ślokavārtika*, 1/1/2/6.
24. *Śabdasāmānyasya jñānanakatvena prāmānyasambhavāccodanāyāśca śabdatvādataḥ sambhavatyevatindriye dharma codanayaḥ pramanyamiti / Prabhā*, *Nyāyaratnākara on Vārtika*, 1/1/2/1.
25. *Yasmin priti puruṣasya tasya lipsārthalakṣaṇa avibhaktatvāt / Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, 4/1/2.
26. *Phalanse bhavanayasca pratyayo na vidhayakaḥ / Ślokavārtika*, 2/222.

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## CHAPTER – III

### **DHARMA AS IN BUDDHISM AND JAINISM**

This chapter deals with the concept *dharma* as in Buddhism and Jainism. *Dharma* is, in fact, nothing other than performing moral activities. This view is equally substantiated, if not more, by Buddhism like other religions. According to the view of Buddha, the pious life (*dharmīya jīvan*) is nothing but moral life which is constituted with moral virtues. One can attain *nirvāṇa* through obtaining these moral virtues. It is clearly stated in ‘*Anguttar-nikāya*’ that one who is engaged in performing immoral deeds is not entitled to obtain liberation or *nirvāṇa*. The *Śramaṇa* who is absolutely moral, can control his sense organs is entitled to obtain liberation.<sup>1</sup> In Buddhism *śīla*, *samādhi* and *prajñā* are taken as the three stages of spiritual advancement. If we analyze the principle of Buddhism, we can come across that the same importance has been given to the first one like the others two. *Śīla* means the purity of character. *Smādhi* means the fixation of mind. *Prajña* means the right knowledge. The spiritual life starts its journey with the purity of character and it after passing on the stage of fixation of mind ends in right knowledge. As the purity of character is considered as beginning stage of spiritual advancement, Buddhism is called the purity of character based religion. Here, purity of character does not mean external purity alone; rather it means the purity of will of the mind as well. The will of the mind is the source of all external activities. First we will, after that we perform accordingly. Hence, in Buddhism it has been given importance to morality for the purification of our will.

In Buddhism, stress has been given on obtaining moral values like *karuṇā*, *ahiṃsā*, *śānti* etc. The external ceremonial activities of *dharma* i.e. rituals have been ignored in Buddhism on account of the fact that these make man confined to perform rituals only

ignoring the other part of religion i.e. the moral part which is the essence of *dharma*. In fact, the ultimate aim of *dharma* is to purify the character through the achievement of moral virtues. *Dharma* is neither a metaphysical discussion, nor to perform rituals, nor to offer the devotion to the deities. Liberation is not dependent on these. Liberation is attained only through right knowledge. And right knowledge comes from meditation and purification of the character. Each and every man is the architect of his own fortune. For liberation he has to depend on his own, not on any divine power. The own endeavour of man has been given importance for liberation. To some extent it is the uniqueness of Buddhism. Satyandranath Tagore in his book '*Buddhadharma*' has told that a person is entitled to obtain liberation i.e. *nirvāṇa* in virtue of his own activities, own moral deeds, own spirit, truth, love, empathy, he has to follow the eight-fold path of Buddhism, his ultimate goal is to obtain liberation i.e. *nirvāṇa*, his guide is his own spirit.<sup>2</sup>

Buddha does not like metaphysical discussion. It is not that he was ignorant about metaphysics. According to him, it is our first duty to make the man free from all sufferings. To him, one who engages himself with discussion about the metaphysical entities like *ātman*, world etc. is compared with that stupid who is searching for the feature of the poisonous arrow, without pulling out the same which has penetrated the body.<sup>3</sup> He has said that this human life which is full of sufferings. This suffering, to him, is nothing but one type of diseases. And as a physician he has prescribed the path to get rid of all sorrows. Here, it is mentioned that Buddha is not a deliverer; he is simply a guide who has shown the path by which one can remove sorrows. He has simply wanted to convey the message of this path to all general people. His motive was completely practical. One has to keep in mind that *nīrvāṇa* can be achieved through one's own effort. The person desiring liberation or *nīrvāṇa*, will make himself worthy for this. Buddha has only shown the path by which one can attain the state devoid of sorrows and sufferings.<sup>4</sup>

Buddha used to advise man always about the truth known as four noble truths which he attained as the result of his austerity. These four noble truths are as follows: i) *Duḥksa* i.e suffering ii) *Duḥksa samudaya* i.e the origin of suffering iii) *Duḥksa niradha* i.e the removal of suffering iv) *Duḥksa niradhmārga* i.e the way to remove suffering. Out of these four noble truths the first three are the sign of the theoretical teaching of Buddha and the last one is the sign of practical teaching of Buddha. One point is worthy to mention here that all schools of Indian Philosophy have admitted the fact that the life is full of distress or sorrows. But the way Buddha taught in his four noble truths is really unique. Here he clearly dealt with the nature of our sorrowful life, the source of this suffering, the possibility of removal of sorrows and the means of removal of sorrows.<sup>5</sup>

According to Buddha, the world and life are full of sorrows. If we take our birth then we must have go through old age, diseases and death. These all are agony. Our life is governed by desire of innumerable type. Thirst for something is the root of all desiring. Though fulfillment of desiring gives rise to happiness apparently, but it, ultimately, turns into distress. The attraction to happiness is destroyed by the thinking of impermanence of happiness, the fear of losing of happiness, the thinking that the happiness may go away. Accordingly, it becomes the cause of fear and anxiety. Hence, Buddha has told that everything is suffering (*sarvaṃ duḥkham*). It is the first one of four noble truths.

Why do we suffering? In response to this question Buddha states that there is cause of sufferings. Sufferings cannot come if it has no any cause. Any effect is necessarily produced from its cause. Accidentally, no effect is produced. If there is cause, there is an effect. The absence of cause leads to the absence of effect. As suffering is an effect, it must have some cause. Sometimes a cause, in turn, has another cause. Say for example, here, the

cause of sufferings which is called *jarāmaran* i.e old age, death etc. is *jāti* i.e birth. If anyone is not born, there is no question of sufferings. Hence, birth is the cause of sufferings. This birth is not also unconditional. Its cause is the desire of birth which is called *bhavo*. Here, the term '*bhavo*' means longing for rebirth. The cause of this desire is *upādāna* i.e attachment to worldly thing. The cause of this attachment is *trṣṇā* i.e desire for enjoyment. And the cause of such desire for enjoyment is *bedanā* i.e previous sense experience which is added with the sense of happiness. The cause of this *bedanā* is *sparśa* i.e the connection of sense organs with their object. *Sparśa* is not possible unless *īndriyas* i.e sense organs are not present. These sense organs are six in number which is called *ṣaḍāyatan*. *Ṣaḍāyatan* means five external organs i.e. eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin and one internal organ i.e mind. Hence, *ṣaḍāyatan* is the cause of *sparśa*. These six organs do not work provided that *nām-rūpa* i.e the union of mind and body is not present. *Nām-rūpa* cannot work unless *viññāna* i.e consciousness is present. The fetus is increased in the womb of the mother due to having consciousness. This consciousness also is not causeless. The cause of this consciousness is the *saṃskāra* i. e the tendency of activities towards good and bad of previous life. The activities which are performed in previous life generate an energy which is called *saṃskāra*. This *saṃskāra* is the impression of past life. This *saṃskāra* gives birth to consciousness to fetus in the womb of mother. What is the cause of this *saṃskāra*? The cause of this *saṃskāra* by which rebirth is taken place is *avidyā*. *Avidyā* means the absence of proper knowledge concerning four noble truths. Hence, *avidyā* is the root cause of sufferings of the world. Three kinds of *avidyā* are there. First one is regarding the nonexistence of eternal soul which is the cause of our ego sense. Second one is regarding the impermanence of worldly things. And third one is regarding the fact that everything of the world gives birth to suffering. Had we understood that there is nothing as eternal soul, had we realized that worldly objects are impermanent and distressful; we would not have performed such works, which is the cause of our rebirth.

However, there are twelve links of this causal chain which is called '*dvādaś nidāna*'. This twelve links leads to our rebirth again and again just like a wheel. Accordingly, this causal chain is called '*bhavacakra*' i. e. wheel of existence. In this causal chain, out of twelve causes some are merely the causes, some are merely the effects and some are both cause and effect. In Buddhism, this theory of caution is called '*pratītya samutpādtattva*'. This twelve links of causal chain states that past, present and future life of human being is tied with this causal chain. The present life of a man is the result of his past life and future life is the result of present life. This twelve links of causal chain is the key of Buddhism. Buddha himself said that one who knows the theory of *pratītya samutpāda* knows the meaning of *dharma*.<sup>6</sup> That there is cause of sufferings is the second one of four noble truths.

It is understood from third noble truth that the removal of sufferings is possible. Buddha said that removal of sufferings is possible if *avidyā*, the root cause of sufferings, is removed i. e. the effect will be removed if the cause is removed. Removal of sufferings is called *nirvāṇa* in Buddhism. There are differences of opinion concerning the nature of *nirvāṇa*. According to Buddha, *nirvāṇa* means *jīvanmukti* i.e. to obtain liberation in this mundane life. If one conquers desire completely and practices truth continuously, he would not be tied with the bondage of worldly attachment any more. Accordingly, he remains in the upper level of the state which is the cause of all bondages in the world. He is completely free and he is called *arhant*. This state of such kind of liberated persons is called *nirvāṇa*.

The literal meaning of the term '*nirvāṇa*' is extinction. In this sense someone has stated that *nirvāṇa* is complete abolishment of existence. But Buddha's own life shows contradiction to this view. If this view is considered as true then how did Buddha continue to live and impart moral teaching even after attaining *nirvāṇa*? In order to resolve this problem Pramathnatha Tarkabhusan has shown four meanings of the term '*nirvāṇa*'. i) The meaning of the word *vāṇa* means the way. Here way means the way of rebirth. The term *nīḥ* means

abandon. The integrated meaning then is the abandonment of the way of rebirth. ii) *Vāṇa* means bad desiring, *niḥ* means abandonment. The whole meaning is the the abandonment of bad desire. iii) *Vāṇa* means impenetrable forest, *niḥ* means coming out. The integrated meaning is coming out from attachment just like coming out from impenetrable forest. iv) *Vāṇa* means net, *niḥ* means cutting. The integrated meaning is cutting the net of birth and death.<sup>7</sup>

If it is asked what we gain from *nirvāṇa*, in responding, in reply it is said that two types of profit we obtain by *nirvāṇa*: i) negative and ii) positive. There is no possibility of rebirth after obtaining *nirvāṇa*. This is the negative aspect of *nirvāṇa*. On the other hand, the ultimate peace is obtained in this present life through *nirvāṇa*. This peace is not like happiness which is attained by the gratification of sense organs. This is the positive aspect of *nirvāṇa*. Bauddhaviksu Nagsen in the book ‘*Milind-panhā*’ has described *nirvāṇa* as the state of delight. But according to Nagsen the nature of *nirvāṇa* cannot be understood by imperfect persons just like it is not possible for a blind man to know what colour is. In fact, the real nature of *nirvāṇa* is something which is known only through realization. It cannot be known through any alternative means.<sup>8</sup>

The fourth noble truth is that there is way to cessation of suffering. This way is known as *aṣṭāṅgika-mārga* i.e eightfold path in Buddhism. In fact, this eightfold path gives in short the essentials of the ethics and *dharma* of Buddha. This path is open to all, irrespective of monks and layman. These eightfold path is as follows: i) right knowledge, ii) right resolve, iii) right speech, iv) right conduct, v) right living, vi) right effort, vii) right thought and viii) right concentration. Right knowledge (*sammādiṭṭhi*) means the knowledge of truth. Wrong knowledge about the self and world is the root cause of our sufferings. The proper knowledge concerning the four noble truths is the basis of these eightfold path, which, according to Buddha helps moral reformation, and leads us towards the goal-*nirvāṇa*. That which is stated

in right resolve (*sammāsaṅkappa*) is that it is not enough to acquire right knowledge to obtain *nirvāṇa*. Right knowledge becomes meaningless, if the life is not maintained in accordance with right knowledge. Hence, it is necessary to take resolve for maintaining life according to right knowledge. It is necessary to take resolve to abandon the attachment to worldly object, non injury to others etc. Right speech (*sammāvācā*) states that we should control our speech. We should speak the truth and pleasant word only. To speak false and harsh word is the impediment to moral and spiritual life. It is stated in right action (*sammākammanta*) that right resolve should end in right action or good conduct and not stop merely with right speech. Right living (*sammā-ājīva*) means to lead one's life in such a way so that one should earn his living by honest means. The necessity of this path lies in showing that even for the sake of maintaining one's life; one should not resort to forbidden means but work in consistency with good resolve. Right effort (*sammāvāyāma*) means mental exercise. Mental exercise is that effort by which our mind remains completely free from bad thinking and fulfilled with honest thinking. Right thought (*sammāsaṅkappa*) means to remember the transitoriness of self and world. Right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*) means continuous contemplation on truth leaving all evil desire which rooted in our mind. There are four stages of *samādhi* such as: *vicār*, *vitarka*, *prīti*, *sparśa*. In first stage of *samādhi* a person engages his purified mind to examine of what truth is. In this stage, mind is fixed upon four noble truths and a joy having no attachment is felt. In the second stage of *samādhi*, all doubt is removed and after that there is no room for examination. In this stage, a consciousness remains in respect of joy and tranquility. In the third stage of *samādhi*, a detachment comes upon joy and tranquility. But in this stage, a mild feeling of physical happiness is present. In the fourth i.e last stage of *samādhi*, this mild feeling of happiness is also gone. In this stage of *samādhi* an attitude of indifference comes and then one becomes free from self-centeredness and expands himself to all living beings. The proper exercise of *śīla* brings one in the state of two stages namely *sratāpannabhava*

(one who is in right path of life) and *sakṛtagāmībhava* (one who will take birth just the once). *Samādhi* is higher effort by which the root of all suffering is destroyed. And after that *prajñā* comes, *nirvāṇa* is attained and then one is considered as arhant.<sup>9</sup>

This *astāṅgika-mārgas* are, in brief, described as *sīla* i.e conduct, *samādhi* i.e concentration and *prajñā* i.e knowledge. These are like three steps of spiritual advancement. Out of these eightfold paths right speech, right conduct and right living belong to *sīla* which control and purify our external sense organs. *Sīla* is physical exercise for removal of sufferings. Right effort, right thought and right concentration-these three of eightfold path are called *samādhi* which control and purify our mind (internal sense organs). *Samādhi* is mental exercise for removal of sufferings. The first two i.e right knowledge and right resolve belong to *prajñā* which purify our intellect.<sup>10</sup>

Though three *sīlas* are mentioned in *astāṅgika-mārgas*, but we come to know more *sīlas* in Buddhism. We generally speak of *pañca-sīla* in Buddhism, which belong to right conduct (s). These *pañca-sīlas* (five vows) are desisting from killing, stealing, sensuality, lying and intoxication.<sup>11</sup> Buddha proposed for ten *sīlas* for *śramanas* (monk) but all these are not for the layman. It is duty of layman to obey the *pañca-sīlas* everyday. The first instruction is that the followers of this *dharma* will have to obey some moral principles. According to Buddhism, self-discipline is essential for removal of suffering. We see that some moral principles are emphasized in *sīla*, which govern our conduct. These *sīlas* as described by Buddha is nothing but some moral virtues which purify our conduct and lead our life on moral path.

If we scrutinize the theory of eightfold path sincerely, we come across that though *sīla*, *samādhi* and *prajñā* are considered as way of the attainment of *nirvāṇa* but the role of *sīla* is more important in the ethics of Buddha. The word '*sīla*' means conduct in Pali.

But in Buddhism, when we speak of *śīla* in the context of advancement of spirituality, *śīla* means a particular type of conduct i.e honest conduct, which is called moral conduct. Moral conduct means that type of behavioral habit which is governed by moral principle and endowed with moral virtues. *Śīla* is moral discipline in thought, speech and deed. *Śīla* is not some external activities; it means internal purification of conduct, which is attained as a result of governing the life by moral principle. This *śīla* emphasizes on the motivation of moral agent. At this stage, any action is evaluated centering the motive of agent, from which action is accomplished.

We come across two aspects of *śīla*: one is external which aims at purification of conduct and the second one which aims at purification of motivation, is the cause of conduct. But these two aspects are not something separated. These two are like the two sides of the same coin. They are complementary. The mental state is the root source of these two aspects. It is mental state which is generated from the flow of consciousness and passing out through thought, speech and body and ultimately turns into the deed of external world. Hence, the purification of consciousness is more important in Buddhist' ethics.

We know that a person bearing hatred and greed engages himself in violence. On the other hand we see that when a man becomes free from violent activities, pity, honesty, truthfulness, satisfaction etc. human values are emerged in the conduct of an agent. Hence, the aim of *śīla* in Buddhist ethics is nothing but obtaining moral values.

The first one of *pañca-śīla* as described by Buddha is nonviolence. Here, nonviolence is not mere a negative idea, it has also a positive aspect. The positive aspect of nonviolence stands for thinking of promoting welfare for the society. Out of four phenomenon i.e. *maitrī*, *karuṇā*, *muditā* and *upekṣā*, which is called *brahmavihāra* as described by Buddha especially in the phenomenon *maitrī* and *karuṇā* the real significance of nonviolence has been

expressed. The phenomenon *maitrī* is to show lovable behaviour to all beings of the world. And the phenomenon *karuṇā* is feeling of empathy for all beings and feeling of deep thrust for removal of suffering of all beings. By *muditā* the sense of enmity to others is abolished and by *upekṣā* vindictive attitude is eliminated. Buddha once says that everyone, always and everywhere, should crave for wellbeing of all just like a mother craves for wellbeing of her child. Such kind of feeling of mental state is called *brahmavihāra*. Hence, we may observe that the *dharma* in Buddhism is based on moral values which can give rise to *nirvāṇa*.

Like Buddhism, Jainism has given importance to the perfection of conduct. According to them, any type of knowledge whatever it may be metaphysical or epistemological is necessary for right conduct as auxiliary factor. This right conduct is the fundamental thing for removal of all bondage as well as the attainment of liberation.

‘Metaphysics or epistemology – in fact, knowledge of any kind- is useful for the Jaina in so far as it helps him to right conduct. The goal right conduct again is salvation (*mokṣa*), which means negatively removal of all bondage of the soul and positively the attainment of perfection.’<sup>12</sup>

Jaina school observes that liberation is the ultimate aim of human life. According to this school each and every human being will have to attain liberation by his own effort, not by any grace of super natural power. In fact, God is not admitted in this system. A liberated person acts only as a guide. He just shows the path of liberation. Jaina religion teaches one to be self-dependent. In Jainism liberated person is called ‘*Jina*’ i.e. one who conquers. Accordingly, in this religion extreme emphasis has been given upon self-control and self-sacrifice. And all types of attachment have vehemently been hated. According to Jaina Philosophers, spiritual advancement is possible only through the accomplishment of moral deeds. We often think that morality is not possible without believing in God, but this view

has been proved as false by Buddhism and Jainism. Both Buddhism and Jainism propose for a number of principles though they do not believe in God.<sup>13</sup> An individual himself is treated as God if he is able to reveal the immanent power within him. The Jainas abandon the theory that liberation is attained by the grace of God. According to Jainism, the doctrine of *karma* alone is sufficient for explaining all things of life. Hence, an individual himself is liable for whatever he does in life.

There are two categories admitted in Jaina Philosophy i) *jīva* and ii) *ajīva*. All the things of the world belong to either *jīva* or to *ajīva*. *Jīva* is conscious. On the other hand, *ajīva* is unconscious. *Jīvas* are of two kinds: *baddha* and *mukta*. *Ajīvas* are of five kinds: *pudgal*, *dharma*, *adharmā*, *ākāś* and *kāla*. *Pudgal* means matter. The literal meaning of the word ‘*pudgal*’ is that which can attach and detach. With regard to the bondage of the self the Jainas think that when *jīvas* come in contact to *pudgal*, *jīvas* become embodied. And due to this embodiment, *jīvas* fall into bondage. But like the Buddhist the Jainas also think that liberation can be attained. Liberation can be attained through detachment from *pudgal*. And this is possible in two ways: by stopping the attachment of *jīvas* with *pudgal*, which is called *saṁvara* and by detaching the *pudgal* which is already attached with *jīvas*, which is called *nirjarā*. And that attachment of *jīvas* with *pudgal* is called *āsrava*. Accordingly, in Jainism, there are seven categories. These are: *jīva*, *ajīva*, *āsrava*, *bandha*, *saṁvara*, *nirjarā* and *mokṣa*. It is stated in Jaina Philosophy that *āsrava* is the cause of bondage and *saṁvara* is the cause of liberation (*āsravo bhavahetuḥ syāt saṁvarō mokṣa kāraṇam*).<sup>14</sup> According to Jainism, like the flow of water the flow of karma is attached with the self or *jīvas*. The *jīvas* wetted with the water of *kaṣāya* accept *karma* brought out of *āsrava* just like dresses added with water easily catch the dust. The term *kaṣāya* means that which attracts *jīvas* in sinful action and pushes into bondage. Anger, the sense of ego, infatuation and greed (*krodha*, *māna*, *māyā*, *lobha*) are called *kaṣāya*.<sup>15</sup> *Avivek* (false vision), *avirati* (tendency in immoral

acts), *pramād* (illusion), *kaṣāya* and *āsrava* are the cause of bondage. The relation between *kaṣāya* and *karma* is eternal. *Kaṣāya* is produced for *karma* and *karma* is taken for *kaṣāya*. But normally in Jainism *kaṣāya* is taken as the root cause of all bondage. Since, *pudgal* is connected due to having *kaṣāya* and the *pudgal*, in turn, gives birth to embodiment. And due to embodiment *jīvas* are tied with bondage.<sup>16</sup>

Liberation is attained only when *pudgal* is detached from *jīvas*. *Jīvas* or Self is connected with *karma* i.e. *karmapudgal* just like temperature is connected with metal, or water is mixed up with milk.<sup>17</sup> *Karma* plays a role as a thread of connection between *jīvas* and his body. *Karma* means *pudgal* which is very minute and transcendental. The connection of self and *pudgal* depends on the *karma* of *jīvas*. Hence, *pudgal* is regarded as *karmapudgal*.

In Jainism importance has been given on the path to the cessation of sufferings or the attainment of liberation. Umaswati, a Jaina Philosopher has told in *Tattvāryhigamasūtra*: ‘*samyak darśan jajña cāritrani mokṣamārgā*’ i.e. right faith; right knowledge and right conduct are the means of liberation. These three are called ‘*Triratna*’ i.e. the three jewels. According to them, this three jointly is the means of the attainment of liberation. Each one is not the means of liberation separately. In this connection, the Jainas have given the example of the treatment of diseases in order to show the importance of mutual combination of these three *mārgas* (path) i.e. right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. A person desiring to attain liberation sincerely believes in the advice given by a liberated person, attains the proper or right knowledge and above all leads his life with right conduct in the light of the truth just like a patient desiring to cure from disease keeps his trust on doctor, knows the nature of medicine prescribed to him and after all takes the prescribed medicine. If any one of these three is not exercised, other two do not act though each one does have value separately.<sup>18</sup>

To be respectful to the truth attained by *Tīrthankaras* and to abandon faith to the doctrine which is not admitted by the *Tīrthankaras* is called right faith (*samyak darśan*). Satisfaction and reverence attitude to the principle of Jainas is called right faith. Here, it is mentioned that in Jainism reverence does not mean the devotion which is blind. Reverence free from dogma is the ideal of Jainism. Their reverence is completely based on rationality.<sup>19</sup> In Jaina Philosophy, right knowledge means the knowledge of seven categories like *jīva*, *ajīva* etc. immune from doubt, illusion and uncertainty. Some actions are impediment to right knowledge. Accordingly, the person desiring to attain liberation will remain himself free from the association of that action which may bind him with *pudgal*. Right conduct is that action which is done by honest and sincere person. The conduct which leads to liberation is called right conduct.<sup>20</sup> To exercise the truth which is attained by him in his day to day life is called right conduct. In fact, it is right conduct which is very much significant for the attainment of liberation. *Jīvas* are able to reach towards liberated life by right conduct being completely free from the influence of *karma*. According to Jainism, there are five kinds of *karma* which help for the attainment of liberation. These are as follows: i) not to harm to any living beings i.e. *ahimsā* or nonviolence, ii) to speak the truth i.e. *sunṛta*, iii) not to steal i.e. *asteya*, iv) not to lead life in the way of illicit sex i.e. *brahmacarya*, and v) to abandon all types of excessive attachment to wealth i.e. *aparigraha*. In Jaina Philosophy, These five are called vows. Both house holder and monk should obey these five vows. The monks have to obey these strictly. But the house holders have been exempted to sustain these rules in some cases. Hence, these five vows for house holder are called ‘*anuvrata*’ i.e. lesser or minor vows. And, on the other hand, these five vows for monks are called ‘*mahāvratā*’ i.e. more rigid or major vows.<sup>21</sup>

Nonviolence (*ahimsā*), the first vow out of five vows in Jainism is more significant than any other vows. This should be obeyed by both monk and layman. Though the concept

of *ahimsā* (nonviolence) is very old in India, but this concept has some uniqueness in Jainism. Only in Jainism *ahimsā* has been taken as the foundation of all kinds of ethical conduct. The meaning of nonviolence is to abstain from all kinds of injury. The Jainas do not mean that violence is only to hurt anyone physically. According to them, to desire to harm anyone, or to hurt anyone by speech is also considered as violence. Hence, the word non-violence means abstaining from violence to anyone physically, mentally and verbally. In moral philosophy of the Jainas, nonviolence is taken as the ultimate dharma on account of the fact that other four vows sustain nonviolence indirectly. Truth, the second vow, ultimately teaches one to obey nonviolence. Since, false statement against anyone becomes the cause of one's contrariety. False statement against anyone is no more but the violence of speech. Stealing is one kind of violence. Stealing of other's property causes the worry of one who actually the owner of that property. Hence, non-stealing i.e. *asteya* keeps one refraining from violence. Abstaining from *brahmacarya* i.e. to lead life in the way of illicit sex becomes harmful to the society. So it is one kind of violence. The fifth vow is to abandon all types of excessive attachment to wealth i.e. *aparighaha*. *Aparighaha* means refraining from being owner of excessive wealth. One who stocks excessive wealth makes scarcity of wealth in the society. To deprive one is one kind of violence. Hence, *aparighaha* is one kind of nonviolence. In Jaina philosophy nonviolence is understood not in the negative sense, it is understood in the positive sense also. To render active service to anyone is considered as nonviolence as well. If one, in spite of being capable of giving service to others keep oneself abstained from helping others, then it is considered as violence. Hence, it is clear that social or objective aspect of morality is not ignored in Jainism. The following Jaina prayer clearly introduces the social and tolerant aspect of moral teaching of Jainism.

‘Let the King be victorious and righteous. Let there be rain in every proper season. Let diseases die and famine and theft be nowhere. Let the Law of the Jaina give all happiness to all the living beings of the world’.<sup>22</sup>

The jainas have given much importance to the attitude of equality. It has been stated in ‘*Ācārāṅga-Sūtra*’ that a monk or a layman utters ‘I will lead my life by the attitude of equality’ when he is bound to promise to obey the conduct of religion.<sup>23</sup> The attitude of equality has been emphasized in the theory of nonviolence accepted by the Jainas in the conduct of religion or in philosophical thought of them. The Jainas do not accept any religious activity which is not consistent with the theory of nonviolence. All the religious ceremonies of Jainism either external or internal, or physical or subtle have been brought out centering the theory of nonviolence of them.<sup>24</sup>

It is almost impossible for a layman to avoid all types of violence in his day to day life. Hence, it has been advised for layman to carry on their activities in performing violence as minimum as possible. The flexible attitude regarding non-violence of Jainism implies that the Jainas are quite conscious about the practical problem of our life. The Jainas have made the distinction of violence into four kinds: i) accidental violence i.e. violence to little beings at the time of performing every day activities such as at the time of making house, or at the time of cooking, or at the time of walking etc. ii) violence to enemy in the war iii) violence for self protection iv) voluntary violence. According to Jainism, a layman should abandon the fourth one i.e. the voluntary violence. The laymen have been exempted in some cases in other four like nonviolence. Hence, these vows for layman are called ‘*aṇu-vrata*’ i.e. ‘lesser vows’.<sup>25</sup>

These five ‘*aṇu-vratas*’ for layman, in fact, are nothing but the exercise of self-sacrifice, restraint and self-dedication for the wellbeing of the society towards spiritual

advancement. These five 'aṇu-vrata' is the preliminary stage of five 'mahā-vrata'. According to Jainism, one who becomes free from all types of attachment and the bondage of karma is able to attainment of liberation i.e. *mokṣa*. According to Jainism, a liberated person can lead active life in the society.

'An enlightened person may lead an active life, but his activity does not taint him as even unselfish activity, according to Jainism, does in the case of others. During this interval the devotee, as in Buddhism, is termed an arhant, and he becomes a siddha or 'the perfected' at actual liberation. It will be seen from this that the stage of arhant-ship corresponds to the Hindu ideal of jīvan-mukti and the Buddhistic one nirvāṇa as explained above.'<sup>26</sup>

From the forgoing discussion of both Buddhism and Jainism, It is seen that in both religion emphasis has been given upon some moral codes of conduct which are nothing but moral values. Hence, it may be said that 'dharmīo jīvan' (religious life) in both Buddhism and Jainism is moral life. This moral life is the tool of achievement of spiritual life which leads one ultimately to liberation or *nirvāṇa*.

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4. Charuchandra Basu (Ed.): *Dhammapada* (in Beng.), Karuna Prakashani, Kolkata, 1999, p. 114. [ *tumhehi kiccaṃ ātappaṃ akkhātāro tthāgatā / paṭipannā pamokkhanti jhāyino māvandhanā* ]

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## CHAPTER-IV

### *DHARMA AS IN MAHĀBHĀRATA*

Now I am going to deal with the concept of *dharma* stated in *Mahābhārata*. In respect with the *dharma* of *Mahābhārata* it may, from the outset, be stated that the *dharma* of *Mahābhārata* is based on the concept of *varṇāśrama* system. There are four varnas: brahmana, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*. And there are four *āśramas*: *brahmacarya*, *gārhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa*. The nature of *varṇāśrama* system has been discussed earlier. Accordingly, to avoid repetition we shall not discuss the same here. In this context I just mention that in the society of *Mahābhārata*, we come across that the classification of *varṇa* was determined on both the basis of birth and, also on the basis of quality and professional efficiency. That actually *varṇa* should be determined on the basis of quality and professional efficiency is the intention of *Mahābhārata*. It is generally seen at that time that a person who was Brahmin by birth was endowed with good qualities. And accordingly, we come across that a child born in a Brahmin family was endowed with good qualities. Perhaps for this reason, *varṇas* were determined on the basis of birth also. But it is worthy to mention here that there is no absence of instances that one who is Brahmin in birth is endowed with the attributes of *śūdra* in *Mahābharata*. The aim of *varṇadharmā* is that a person should perform his duty as per his natural aptitude and worth. In true sense of the term the classification of *varṇa* is nothing but another name of division of labour. The aim of *āśramadharmā* is to proceed on man towards liberation.

If it is admitted that classification of *varṇa* is determined by birth i.e. the son of Brahmin is Brahmin, the son of *Kṣatriya* is *Kṣatriya*, then a question comes: on what ground were

Brahmin, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra* determined first? In response to this question, there is no other alternative without mentioning the statement of Lord Kṛṣṇa ‘*cāturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇakarmavibhāgaśaḥ / tasya kartārm api mām vidy akartām avyayam*’ i.e. the fourfold order of *varṇas* was created by Me according to the divisions of quality and professional efficiency available in *bhīṣmaparva* of *Mahābhārata*.<sup>1</sup> If we think that God Himself determined someone as Brahmin, someone as *Kṣatriya*, someone as *Vaiśya* from the very beginning of creation at His own will, God becomes partial. Hence, if it is thought that division of *varṇa* is made on the basis of variation of quality and professional efficiency then it is more rational and acceptable. Moreover, it is more substantiated with the last stanza of the verse mentioned i.e. ‘though I am the creator of this system; you should know that I am yet the non-doer, being unchangeable’.<sup>2</sup>

Draṇācārya, Aśvthāmā, Kṛpācārya were born in Brahmin family but they took the profession of *Kṣatriya*. Duryadhana, Duḥśāana were born in *Kṣatriya* family but they were *Vaiśya* or *Śūdra* as per their qualities. On the other hand, Vidhura, Dharmavyadha, Tulādhāra were *Śūdra* by birth but as far as their qualities are concerned they were great Brahmin. More clear to say they were the Brahmin in nature. In this context the qualities of a Brahmin stated in *Mahābhārata* may be mentioned. Brahmin is in true sense one who is competent to be free from attachment and anger, speaks truth and must be simple.<sup>3</sup> Brahmin is one who considers all leaving beings as friend.<sup>4</sup> Brahmin is one who is not envious to others; whose attitude is always calm, his treatment towards all being is equal.<sup>5</sup> Brahmin is one who is satisfied in all circumstances.<sup>6</sup> All these statements with respect to Brahmin implies that the Brahmin in true sense of the term were really worthy of being praised and honoured by the society. If one is Brahmin by birth does not possess the qualities mentioned above he is not worthy of being Brahmin. But one on the other hand, may be *śūdra* by birth but if he possesses those qualities then he may be very much worthy of being a Brahmin. So

called Brahmins were never honoured. Vidura, Dharavyādha, Tulādhara etc became honoured due to the fact that they were endowed with good qualities, though they were born in lower class. Draṇācārya, Kṛpa were not honoured, though they were born in Brahmin family.<sup>7</sup>

The establishment of the sound and healthy society depends on the four fold division of *varṇa dharma*. In the like manner, the establishment of personal life depends on the four stages of *āśrama dharma*.<sup>8</sup> Out of these four stages of life; the household life (*gārhasthadharma*) has been glorified in the *Mahābhārata*. All the duties of household life are regarded as vow. These vows are very great. A householder should not collect foods for his own. The duty of householder is to welcome and serve the guests or visitors. eating after end of the eating of father, mother, wife, son, servant and the guest, to lead his life with pleasure among the family members are glorified as the duty of a householder.<sup>9</sup> To serve gods, guests and dependants by the honest means of earning and not to be greedy to others' property – these two principles should necessarily be obeyed by the householders.<sup>10</sup>

It has been suggested to householder to perform five sacrifices in everyday. These five sacrifices are: i) sacrifice for the seers (*brahmayajña*) ii) sacrifice for ancestor (*pitryajña*) iii) sacrifice for gods (*daivayajña*) iv) sacrifice for living beings (*bhutayajña*) v) sacrifice for the guests or people (*nṛyajña*). Learning and teaching is *brahmayajña*. The ceremony of offering our respect to ancestor is called *pitryajña*. In this ceremony, the respect is offered to *Brāhmaṇa*, to grasses and to ancestor. Burnt offering is called *daivayajña*. A householder will have to keep relationship with even an insect. He will have to feed them according to his capacity. Offering food to them with great honour before his eating is called *bhutayajña* i.e. offering food to all living beings is *bhutayajña*. To serve the guests or people is called *nṛyajña*.<sup>11</sup>

Some values as worthy to follow on the part of a householder for achieving wealth are mentioned in the story of *Śree-vāsava*. These are as follows: to perform duty as per one's efficiency, endurance, charity, sacrificial ceremony, honouring Gods and ancestors, hospitality, non-enviousness, simplicity, cheerfulness, controlling of sense organs, maintenance of wife, son, servants and dependence, cleanliness, fasting, austerity, leaving bed early in the morning, avoiding day-sleeping, nonviolence, abstaining from illicit sex life, enthusiasm, egolessness, compassion, speaking of loveable word, avoiding forbidden food, to give service to old man.<sup>12</sup> Apart from these, some good conducts for householders have been suggested by Vīsmadeva in responding to the asking of Yudhiṣṭhira.<sup>13</sup> And in the story of 'Umāmheśvara', nonviolence (*ahimsā*), truth (*satyatā*), kindness to all living beings (*sarvabhūte dayā*), non-acceptance of the things which are not given (*adattavastu grahaṇ nā karā*), not taking alcohol and meat are considered as *dharma* of a good householder.<sup>14</sup>

All the duties of human life as mentioned above are to be performed in the stage of householder for the betterment of society and world. The stage of *brahmacarya* is the preparatory stage for household life. In the stage of *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa* one, in fact, has to think about spiritual attainment. The welfare of the humanity is secondary in these two stages. A *Brahmacāri*, or *Sannyāsin* depends on householder for their livelyhood. All living in a word are dependent on householder. Hence, the responsibility of householder is much more.<sup>15</sup> Householders are entitled with obtaining salvation as ultimate value by performing the duties. Householder life becomes the means of obtaining all things which they desire. There is no necessity to take *Vānaprastha* and *Sannyāsa* for salvation. In this aspect *Rajarsi Janaka* is the great example of *Mahābhārata*. It has been stated that if one sincerely performs his own duties of any stage of life are entitled with liberation, the ultimate value of life.<sup>16</sup> That to inspire to *brahmacarya* or *sannyāsa* is not the intention of *Mahābhārata* is

substantiated by the repeated praise of the stage of householder. The utility of this stage is more than any other stages of life in the society.<sup>17</sup>

Service to the guests was considered as the daily activities of a householder. Householders should give a cordial reception to visitor even if he is enemy.<sup>18</sup> Service to the guests was highly glorified in the society of *Mahābhārata*. It is stated in the *Mahābhārata* that there was no pure than the rest of food after feeding the guests.<sup>19</sup> Householders are repeatedly advised to give shelter to refuge even if it is an animal. In the journey to heaven a dog was a companion of Yudhiṣṭhira. Yudhiṣṭhira did not throw out it in spite of repeated advice of Indra for leaving this dog. Yudhiṣṭhira told in response to the request of Indra that no refuge should be abandoned. To do so, is to kill a Brahmin.<sup>20</sup>

If we look at the principal characters of *Mahābhārata*, we come across the attribute of forgiveness in the character of Yudhiṣṭhira in more prominent form than any other person. Yayāti, just before starting his journey into the heaven advised Puru that the forbearance of compassionate person burns the anger of opponent. Friendliness, compassion and charity can conquer all.<sup>21</sup> Vidura told that softness in temperament, non-jealousness to all living beings, forgiveness, patience and friendliness enhance the span of life.<sup>22</sup> Yudhiṣṭhira described about the glorification of the attribute like forgiveness which is stated by Kaśyapa to Draupadi who was sensitive for excessive forgiveness of him: the practice of *dharma* becomes meaningless if one is not endowed with the attribute called forgiveness. Forgiveness is *dharma* (ultimate values), forgiveness is *yajña* (sacrifice) and forgiveness is *tapasyā* (austerity).<sup>23</sup> *Śama* and *dama* have also been glorified in many places of *Mahābhārata*. Especially in *śāntiparva* there are so many descriptions in respect to these two attributes. Forgiveness is talked about through chanting the glorification of these two attributes i.e. *śama* and *dama*. It is stated that forgiveness is *śama* (control/restrain). *Śāntiparva* is filled up by the advices of good attributes which are necessary for practicing in favour of manifestation of highest humanity. It is stated

that *dharma* in the form of *dama* is superior to any other *dharma* in the world. *Dama* is the highest vow in the fourfold stage (*āśramacatuṣṭaya*) of life. When forgiveness, endurance, nonviolence, equality, truthfulness, simplicity, controlling of sense organs, efficiency, softness in temperament, shame of the eye, fixation of mind, miserlinessless, non-anger, satisfaction, speaking of lovable word, maliceless, and non-enviousness come together then it is called *dama*.<sup>24</sup> Though forgiveness has been glorified but it has a fault. Inconsiderate persons misbehave to compassionate person repeatedly.<sup>25</sup> Which one is more preferable between forgiveness and fierceness? When Prahlad was asked by his grandson Bali in responding the above question, Prahlad answered that excessive none of these two i.e. to show forgiveness always or to show fierceness always is right.<sup>26</sup>

It has been stated that nothing is accomplished truly without reverence. Reverence is nothing but cordial persistence. Whatever is done with reverence is capable of giving fruit in extreme point.<sup>27</sup> In *Mahābhārata* it has repeatedly been advised to abandon egotism. The terrible consequence of excessive egotism has been depicted in *Mahābhārata*. The last consequence of conceited Duryadhana was very pathetic. The root cause of his ill-luck is egotism. There are so many advices to abandon egotism in *Mahābhārata*. It has been stated that egotism is the root cause of destruction.<sup>28</sup> It has been advised not to elevate admire of own. Elevating admire of own is equivalent to killing of own self.<sup>29</sup> Gratefulness has been highly glorified. It has been stated that one should be grateful to beneficent forever. To be ingratitude to beneficent is considered as hatred act.<sup>30</sup> It has been advised to each and every one to perform charitable act with his best level for the mankind. In responding to the question that which one is more painful between charity and austerity by Yudhiṣṭhira to Vyāsa, Vyāsa told that nothing is more painful than charity. Man takes a great pain for earning wealth. Hence, to give wealth which has been earned by excessive pain to others is the indication of great heart.<sup>31</sup> But it has been stated that this charity should be done to

worthy person always and excessive charity was not approved by *Mahābharata* considering the maintenance of his own family.<sup>32</sup> The glorification of charity has been described in various ways in *anuśāsanparva* of *Mahābhārata*. Hence, *anuśāsanparva* is also called *dānadharma*.<sup>33</sup>

In *Mahābhārata*, truth as receptacle of all good attributes has also been considered as *dharma*. What is truth? And how can it be obtained? This was asked by Yudhishthara to Bhīsmadeva. Bhīshma in reply told that truth is *dharma*, truth is *yoga* and truth is Brahman. There are thirteen good attributes in truth, which are nothing but some moral values. These are as follows: i) Truth is something unchanged and eternal. Truth is such phenomenon which cannot stand in the way of any religion. It is not limited by time and space. Hence, where there is *dharma* there is truth.<sup>34</sup> ii) Equality – to show the same treatment to desired, undesired, friend and foe. It is one kind of truth as well. iii) Controlling of sense organ – the state where there is no attachment and enviousness– this is one kind of truth as well. This truth is called *dama*. iv) Non-jealousy – controlling over the charitable activities and softness is called non-jealousy (*amātsarya*). It is one kind of truth also. v) Forgiveness – one who adopts the attributes like forgiveness is fixed on truth. Hence, forgiveness is one kind of truth. vi) Shame – shame is something from which sense of obligation comes. One who is devoted to shame worships truth. Hence, it is one kind of truth. vii) Forbearance – the equal state to happiness and sorrow. One having such state is worthy of establishing in the society. It is one kind of truth. viii) Non-enviousness – it means to think welfare for all living beings. It is one kind of truth also ix) Devoted to sacrifice – it is an effort to discard the attachment from sensual objects. It is one kind of truth. x) Desiring wellbeing and performing honest ceremonial activities – this state is called *āryatā*. It is also one kind of truth. xi) Endurance – Endurance is something because of which one is situated in calm and quiet both happiness and sorrow. It is one kind of truth. xii) Compassion – it is one kind of truth also. xiii) Non-

violence – to show non-anger treatment to others and thinking of wellbeing of the whole world is called non-violence. It is also one kind of truth. These thirteen types of truth fulfill a great prototype.<sup>35</sup> Generally, the proposition which corresponds to the fact is called true. But in *Mahābhārata* the meaning of truth is not that which corresponds to the fact. In *Mahābhārata*, truth is one which brings welfare for the whole world. In a certain case the false sentence which causes welfare of the humanity may be treated as true sentence.<sup>36</sup> To say something which is harmful to someone, though it correspond to its fact is not permitted in the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>37</sup> In this context, Kṛṣṇa described a story to Arjuna which runs as follows: A Brahmin named Kauśika was living in the bank of the river adjacent to a village. He used to speak truth always. One day some travelers being feared by a gang of robbers hide themselves for protecting their lives in a forest nearby the *āśrama* of this Brahmin. That gang of robbers following the travelers came to *āśrama* and wanted to know from that Brahmin about the travelers. The Brahmin, Kauśika showed the place where the travelers took shelter for protection from robbers. The robbers then killed the travelers and took all things from them. For this, Kauśika was sent to hell instead of heaven though he had told the actual fact to the robbers. Hence, the correct statement is not true; that which is stated for the sake of wellbeing of the all living entities is called true so far as *Mahābhārata* is concerned.<sup>38</sup> *Dharma* is the means by which all sorts of wellbeing either in this world or beyond this world is attained. And truth is that in which wellbeing of all living beings is embedded. And the conduct having embedded with truth is called *dharma*.<sup>39</sup> These two are interrelated. There is no any scope of treating these two separately.

According to *Mahābhārata*, the conduct leading to the stability in this world and after world is *dharma*.<sup>40</sup> The aim of practicing *dharma* is self-satisfaction, purification of the heart, stability of mankind and salvation.<sup>41</sup> We come across two literal meaning of the term *dharma* in the *Mahābhārata*. As per one meaning *dharma* is constituted with the verb ‘ṛ’ in the

meaning *dhana* and suffix ‘*mak*’ i.e. *dharma* is that from which *dhana* is obtained. Here, the word ‘*dhana*’ means wellbeing of both this world and beyond this world. And as per second meaning *dharma* is constituted with the verb ‘*dhr*’ in the meaning of sustaining and suffix ‘*man*’ i.e. *dharma* is that which sustains all things i.e. the stability of mankind.<sup>42</sup>

The *dharma* we come across in *Mahābhārata* is dynamic. In a particular situation that which is *adharma* is considered as *dharma* in another situation. In *āpaddharma* of *śāntiparva* in *Mahābhārata* it has been advised to change *dharma* in particular situation. Nonviolence, truth, non-enviousness etc. are great *dharma* but the same are considered as *adharma* in a particular situation.<sup>43</sup> So it is really very difficult to determine which one is *dharma* which one is not. But it can undoubtedly be said that *dharma* brings wellbeing in this world and beyond this world. *Dharma* is advised for stability of mankind and for the purification of the heart.<sup>44</sup> The ritualistic part of *dharma* is for purification of the heart. When one’s heart becomes purified, he cannot be satisfied in performing ceremonial part of *dharma* alone. And as purified heart is in favour of obtaining ultimate value of life, *dharma* is means of the attainment of salvation.<sup>45</sup>

In reply to the question of ‘*ka panthā*’ raised by Yakṣha Yudhisthira said: logical arguments are inconclusive. It seems that Vedas are apparently contradictory and inconsistent. There is no sage whose doctrines can be taken as authoritative due to different opinions of them. The truth of *dharma* lies concealed in the dark cave of the human heart. Hence, the way to *dharma* is the one that is taken by *mahājana* (virtuous person) i.e. only the great men are capable of understanding what *dharma* is in real sense. At least the common people like us should follow the path of virtuous person.<sup>46</sup>

Sacrificial activities, study of the Veda, charity, austerity, truth, forgiveness, compassion and indifferent mentality to sensual objects – these eight are described as the path

of *dharma*. Though someone may perform the first four for fame but the last four i.e. truth, forgiveness, compassion and indifferent mentality to sensual objects are *dharma* of great person. These are universal. The ceremonial part of the *dharma* may be different as per *varṇas*. But inner nature and aim of *dharma* are the same to all. Satisfaction of the heart, stability of the mankind and wellbeing of both this world and beyond this world are the aim of *dharma*. To consider distress and happiness of others as one's own is the ultimate *dharma* of man so far as *Mahābhārata* is concerned. *Dharma* is mental phenomenon, it is not something external. Whatever is external part of *dharma* is just only a promoter, not an end. Hence, thinking of wellbeing for all beings is considered as highest *dharma* of one. Thinking of wellbeing of all living beings and to keep the sense of non-anger to all beings is the essence of *dharma*. Non-anger, truth, compassion, controlling of the sense organs etc are considered as ultimate *dharma* by Manu as well.<sup>47</sup>

In the story of 'Tulādhara and Jājali', Tulādhara told Jājali that he is very much conscious about the eternal *dharma*. He told that this eternal *dharma* is friendliness and to think about wellbeing for all living beings. To lead one's life in such a way so that no harm is taken place is considered as highest *dharma*. One who is concerned with the entire world, devoted in performing wellbeing of the world and engaged himself in wellbeing of the world by his deed, mind and speech knows the real nature of *dharma*.<sup>48</sup> Nothing can be universal *dharma* than friendliness to all living beings and desiring well for entire world. We can come across in the story of Yakṣa and Yudhiṣṭhira of *vanaparva* that *dharma* in the form of Yakṣa introduced himself to Yudhiṣṭhira and told that fame, truth, controlling of sense organs, cleanliness, simplicity, sense of obligation, steadiness, charity, austerity and sexual abstinence – these are elements of his body. And he also told that non-violence, equality, tranquility, austerity, cleanliness and non-jealousy are the tools of achieving him.<sup>49</sup> Sexual abstinence, truth, compassion, endurance and forgiveness – these are the eternal roots of

eternal *dharma*.<sup>50</sup> Here, we see that *dharma* is called eternal and its root which is nothing but some moral value is eternal as well.

There are many verses, we find in *Mahābhārata*, which advise us to follow the path of *dharma*. There is no greater attainment in the world than *dharma*. All desire of human being can be fulfilled by *dharma*.<sup>51</sup> If *dharma* is sustained, it protects man. And if it is not sustained, man and society will be ruined. Hence, one who wants to have wellbeing engages himself to obey the principle of *dharma*.<sup>52</sup> It is the fact that *dharma* brings wellbeing not only in this world; but it brings the same beyond this world.<sup>53</sup> In the conclusive part of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhāratasāvitrī* is full of glorifying *dharma*. It has been stated in one of the four verses which are composed by Vyāsa for reading out to Śukadeva that he (Vyāsa) is announcing raising his two hands that *artha* and *kāma* can be fulfilled by *dharma*, but no one listens to him. The feeling of happiness and sadness are impermanent. But *dharma* is eternal. Hence, to leave a good act like *dharma* for something impermanent is not the act of an intelligent and wise person.<sup>54</sup>

From the aforesaid discussions, it can be concluded that and to lead our life in accordance with the guideline of these values is considered as *dharma*. Hospitality, the attributes like to protect one seeking for shelter, forgiveness, gratefulness, reverence, egolessness, charity, truth all these good attributes are glorified in *Mahābhārata*. Or in brief all values or conduct which is not censured, are regarded as *dharma*.<sup>55</sup> The ritualistic part of the *dharma*, in fact, is for the purification of the heart.<sup>56</sup> The authority of the conduct of honest person has been accepted in the *Mahābhārata* to determine *dharma*.<sup>57</sup> In *Mahābhārata* it is stated that the way in which the honest person leads his life is *dharma* in true sense (*mahājana yena gataḥ sa panthā*). Nonviolence and friendliness are mentioned as universal *dharma*. It has been described that the path of *dharma* is true and simple. There is no room for artificiality in *dharma*. Hence, simplicity i.e. non-artificial nature of human

being has been considered as one of the highest *dharma* always. *Dharma* is never relinquished.<sup>58</sup> *Dharma* is such a phenomenon which protects us. It ensures peace.<sup>59</sup> There are so many advices to exercise the path of *dharma*. It has been stated that victory is there where there is *dharma* (*yata dharmastata jaya*).<sup>60</sup> This sentence is the fundamental principle of *Mahābhārata*. The entire *Mahābhārata* is seen to be centered on this principle. The aim of *Mahābhārata* is to glorify the victory of *dharma*. According to *Mahābhārata*, not only welfare of the humanity but even the thinking of welfare also is considered as *dharma*.

#### Notes and References:

1. *Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma Parva, 28 / 13.*
2. *Tasya karttāramapi mām vidhyakarttramavyayam / ---Ibid, 28 / 13.*
3. *Kradhaḥ śatruḥ parīrastha manuṣāṅām dvijattam /  
yaḥ kradhamohou tyāti tam devā brāmmhaṅam viduḥ // etc. ---Ibid, Vanaparva, 205  
/ 32-39.*
4. *Sarvvabhūteṣu dharmajña maitro brāhmaṇa ucyate / ---- Ibid, Ādiparva, 217 / 5.*
5. *Tasmāt prāṇabhūtaḥ sarvvānna hiṁsyād brahmaṇa kkcit /  
brahmaṇaḥ soumya eveha bhvatīti parā śrūtiḥ // -----Ibid, 11 / 14.*
6. *Yena kenacidācchno yena kenacidāśitaḥ / etc. -----Ibid, Śāntiparva, 244 / 12-14.*
7. *Vībhatso viprakarmāṇi viditāni manīṣinām / etc. -----Ibid, Draṇaparva, 196 /  
24,25.*
8. Sukhamay Bhattacarya: *Mahābhārater Samāj*, Viśvabhāratī Gaveṣaṇā Prakāśan  
Samiti, Śāntiniketan, 1983, p. 101.
9. *Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva, Chater No. 61, 191, 221.*
10. *Dharmmāgatam prāpya dhanam yajeta dadyāt sadaivātithīn bhojayecca /*

- anādadānaśca prairadattm̐ saiṣā gṛhasthopaniṣat purāṇī // ----- Mahābhārata, Ādiparva, 91 / 3.*
11. *Pañcayajñāmstu yo mohānna karoti gṛhāśramī /  
tasya nāyaṁ na paro loko bhavati dharmmataḥ // -----Ibid, Śāntiparva, 146 / 7.*
12. *Svadharmmanutiṣṭhatsu dhaiyyādacaliteṣu ca /  
svargamārgābhirāmeṣu sattveṣu niratā hyham // etc. ----- Ibid, 228 / 29-40.*
13. *Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva, Ch. No. 193.*
14. *Ahimsā satyavacanaṁ sarvvabhūtānukampanam /  
śamo dānaṁ yathāśakti gārhastya dharmā uttamaḥ // etc. ----- Ibid, Anuśāṣṇparva, 141 / 25-27*
15. *Tadhi sarvvāśramāṇām mūlamudāharanti /  
tasmād gārhasthyamudvoḍhūmduskaram̐ prabravīmi vaḥ // ----- Ibid, Śāntiparva, 191 / 10.*
16. *Brahmacārī gṛhasthaśca vānaprasthahtha vikṣukaḥ /  
yathaktacāriṇaḥ sarvve gacchanti paramām gatim // -----Ibid, 242 /13.*
17. Sukhamay Bhattacarya: *Mahābhārater Samāj, Viśvabhāratī Gaveṣaṇā Prakāśan Samiti, Śāntiniketan, 1983, p. 115.*
18. *Śatruto nārhaṇām vayaṁ pratigṛhñīm / ----- Mahābhārata, Sabhāparva, 21 / 54.*
19. *Ato mṛṣṭataram̐ nānyat pūtam̐ kiñcicchatakrato /  
dattvā yastvatithibhyahannaṁ bhūnakte tenaiva nityaśaḥ / -----Ibid, Vanaparva, 193 / 32.*
20. *Bhaktatyāgam̐ prāhuratyantapāpn / etc. -----Ibid, Āśramvāsikparva, 3 / 11-16.  
Bhaktaṅca bhajamānaṅca tavāsmi ca vādinam /  
trīṇetāṅcaraṇaprāptān viśmehapi na samtyajet // ----Ibid, Udyogparva, 33 / 72.*
21. *Mahābhārata, Ādiparva, Ch. No. 87.*

22. *Mārdhavaṃ sarvabhūtānāmanasūyā kṣamā dr̥tiḥ /*  
*āyusyāṇi vudhāḥ prāhurmitrāṇāñcāpi mānanā // -----Ibid, Udyogaparva, 39 /*  
 53.
23. *Yadi na syurmānuṣeṣu kṣamiṇaḥ pṛthivisaṃāḥ /*  
*na syāt sandhirmnuṣyāṇām krodhamūlo hi vighraḥ // -----Ibid, Vanaparva, 29 / 25.*
24. Sukhamay Bhattacarya: *Mahābhārater Samāj*, Viśvabhāratī Gaveṣaṇā Prakāśan  
 Samiti, Śāntiniketan, 1983, p. 263.
25. *Eko evo dame doṣo dvitīyo nopapadyate /*  
*yadenam kṣamayā yuktamaśaktaṃ manyate janaḥ // ----- Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva,*  
 160 / 34.  
*Kṣamāvantaṃ hi pāpātmā jītohayamiti manyate / -----Ibid, Draṇparva, 196 / 26.*
26. *Na śreyah satataṃ tejoḥ na nityaṃ śreyasī kṣamā / etc. -----Ibid, Vanaparva, 28 / 6-*  
 15.
27. *Aśradhā paramaṃ pāpaṃ śradhā pāpaprāmocini /*  
*jahāti pāpaṃ śradhāvān sarpo jīrṇāmiva tvacam // etc. -----Ibid, Śāntiparva, 163 /*  
 15-19.
28. *Mahābhārata, Mahāprasthānikaparva, Ch. No. 2.*
29. *Bravīhi vācādyā guṇānihātmanastartha hatātmā bhavitāsi pārtha / -----Ibid,*  
*Karṇaparva, 70 / 29.*  
*Kāmaṃ naitat praśamsanti santaḥ svavalasaṃstavam / ----- Ibid, Ādiparva, 34 / 2.*
30. *Brahmaghne ca surāpe ca caure bhagnavrate tathā /*  
*niṣkṛtirvihitā rājan kṛtaghne nāsti niṣkṛti // etc. ----- Ibid, Śāntiparva, 102 / 25,26*  
 & 173 / 17.
31. *Mahābhārata, Vanaparva, Ch. No. 258.*
32. *Atyāryyamtidātāraṃ - - - -śrīrbhayannopasarpati / ----- Ibid, Udyogparva, 39 / 64.*

33. *Dānaṃ dadat pavitrī syāt / ----- Ibid, Anuśāṣṇaparva, 93 / 12 & 163 / 12.*
34. *Yato dharmmastataḥ satyaṃ sarvvaṃ satyena vardhate / ----- Ibid, Śāntiparva, 199 / 70.*
35. *Satyaṃ trayodaśavidhaṃ sarvvalokeṣu bhārata / -----Ibid, 162 / 7-23.*
36. *Satyājyāyohanṛtaṃ vacaḥ / etc. ----- Ibid, Draṇparva, 189 / 47.*
37. *Satysya vacanaṃ sādhu na satyādvidyate param /  
tattvenaiva sudurjñeyaṃ paśya satyamamuṣṭhitam // etc. -----Ibid, Karṇaparva, 69 /  
31-36.*
38. *Mahābhārata, Karṇaparva, Ch. No. 69.*
39. *Nāsau dharmmo yatra na satyamasti / -----Ibid, Udyogparva, 35 / 58.  
Prabhavārthāya bhūtānām dharmmapravacanaṃ kṛtam / -----Ibid, Śāntiparva, 109 / 10.*
40. *Lokayātrāmihaike tu dharmmaṃ prāhuraṣmanīṣiṇaḥ / etc. -----Ibid, 142 / 19.*
41. Sukhamay Bhattacarya: *Mahābhārater Samāj, Viśvabhāratī Gaveṣaṇā Prakāśan Samiti, Śāntiniketan, 1983, p. 275.*
42. *Dhanāt sravati dharmmo hi dhāraṇādveti niścayaḥ / ----- Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva, 90 / 17.  
Dhāradharmmamityāhudharmmo dhārayate prajāḥ /  
yat syādhāraṇasaṃyuktaṃ sa dharmma eti niścayaḥ // etc. -----Ibid, Karṇaparva, 69 / 59.*
43. *Dharmmo hyāvasthikaḥ smṛtaḥ / -----Ibid, Śāntiparva, 36 / 11.*
44. *Api huyaktāni dharmmaṇi vyavasyanttyattarāvare /  
lokayātrārthameveha dharmmasya niyamaḥ kṛta // etc. -----Ibid, Śāntiparva, 258 / 4-6.*

45. *Durjñeyaḥ śāśvato dharmmaḥ sa ca satye pratiṣṭhitaḥ / -----Ibid, Vanaparva, 205 / 41.*
- Satām dharmmeṇa varrttet kryām śiṣṭavadācaret / etc. -----Ibid, 208 / 44-53.*
46. *Tarkohapraṭiṣṭhaḥ śrutayo vibhinnā naiko ṛṣiryasya mataṁ pramāṇm / dharmmasya tattvaṁ nihitaṁ guhāyām mahājano yena gataḥ saḥ panthāḥ // -----Ibid, 312 / 117.*
47. *Mānasaṁ sarvvabhūtānaṁ dharmmamāhurmanīṣiṇaḥ / tasmāt sarvveṣu bhūteṣu manasā śivamācaret // -----Ibid, Śāntiparva, 193 / 31.*
- Adroheṇaiva bhūtānām yaḥ sa dharmmaḥ satām mataḥ / etc. -----Ibid, 21 / 11,12.*
48. *Vedāham jājale dharmmaṁ sarahasyaṁ sanātanam / sarvvabhūtaḥitaṁ maitraṁ purāṇaṁ ya janā viduḥ // etc. -----Ibid, 161 / 5-9.*
49. *Ahimā paramo dharmmaḥ sa ca satye pratiṣṭhitaḥ / etc. -----Ibid, Vanaparva, 206 / 74.*
- Na bhūtanāmahimsāyā jyāyān dharmmohasti kaścana / etc. -----Ibid, Śāntiparva, 261 / 30 & Aśvamedhparva, 43 / 21.*
- Yaśaḥ satyaṁ damaḥ śaucamārjjavaṁ hrīrcāpalam / etc. -----Ibid, Vanaparva, 313 / 7-8.*
50. *Brahmacaryyaṁ tathā satyamanukrośo dṛtiḥ kṣamā / sanātanasya dharmmasya mūlametat sanātanam // etc. -----Ibid, Aśvamedhparva, 91 / 33 & Anuśāṣṇparva, 22 / 19.*
51. *Na dharmmāt paramo lābhaḥ / -----Ibid, Anuśāṣṇparva, 106 / 65.*
52. *Dharma eva hato hanta dharmmo rakṣati rakṣitaḥ / -----Ibid, Vanaparva, 312 / 128.*
53. *Dharma eko manuṣyāṇām sahāyaḥ pāralaukikaḥ / etc. -----Ibid, 111 / 16 & Śāntiparva, 272 / 24.*

54. *Urdhavāhurviraumyeṣa na ca kaścicachṛṇoti me / dharmmādarthaśca kāmāśca sa kimarthaṁ na sevyate // -----Ibid, Svargārohaṇparva, 5 / 63.*
55. Sukhamay Bhattacharya: *Mahābhārater Samāj, Viśvabhāratī Gaveṣaṇā Prakāśan Samiti, Śāntiniketan, 1983, p. 276.*
56. *Ibid, p. 277.*
57. *Śiṣṭācāraśca śiṣṭānām trividhaṁ dharmmalakṣaṇam / etc. -----Ibid, Vanaparva, 206 / 75, 83.*
- Sadācāraḥ smṛtirvedāstrividhaṁ dharmmalakṣaṇam / etc. -----Ibid, Śāntiparva, 258 / 3 & 259 / 5.*
58. *Na jātu kāmānna bhayānna lobhādharmaṁ jhyājīrvitasyāpi hetoḥ / etc. -----Ibid, Udyogparva, 40 / 12 & Svargārohaṇparva, 5 / 64.*
- Dharmaṁ vai śāśvataṁ loke na jhyādhanakāṅksyā / -----Ibid, Śāntiparva, 292 / 19.*
59. *Dharmmeṇa pāpaṁ praṇudatīha vidvān dharmmo valīyāniti tasya siddhiḥ / -----Ibid, Udyogparva, 42 / 25.*
60. *Ibid, Bhīṣmaparva, 21 / 11, Udyogparva, 39 / 9 & Strīparva, 14 / 9.*

## CHAPTER-V

### *DHARMA AS A MORAL VALUE*

The purpose of this chapter is to show the concept *dharma* as a moral value. In fact, this is the aim of this project. In the first chapter, we have dealt with the term *dharma* in general. In the second chapter, we have discussed the concept *dharma* as per *Purvamīmāṃsā*. The third chapter contains the notion of *dharma* as described in Buddhism and Jainism. In the fourth chapter, *dharma* of *Mahābhārata* has been elucidated. Now, in this chapter I shall critically evaluate the term *dharma* and also examine how and why the phenomenon *dharma* stands for moral value, which is also evidenced by our traditional texts. And in this connection, I shall investigate the moral values as described in our tradition and show how these moral values are associated with our wellbeing. This concept of *dharma*, I think, is most essential to resolve the conflicts among different sects and religions.

Generally the term '*dharma*' bears various meanings. Bankim Chandra in his article '*Dharmatattva*' has given six meanings of the term.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter an investigation has been done to determine the real meaning of *dharma* as described in our scriptures and to examine in what sense *dharma* is relevant in present day society, especially in a secular country like India. If we carefully go through our traditional texts in order to determine the actual meaning of the term *dharma*, we find that this term has basically been taken in these texts as moral value. This is the main focus of the term. The other meanings of the term *dharma* are centered around this.

If it is asked that in what aspect human beings are different from animals, answer will, of course, come from different perspectives. Our scriptures have a view to this question. Our scriptures observe that this difference is implicated by '*dharma*' i.e. human beings are different from animals due to *dharma*. *Dharma* is a distinguishing property of human being.

It is stated that a man without *Dharma* is a beast (*dharmena hīnā paśubhiḥ samānāḥ*). But why are human beings, in spite of being more intelligent and more advanced, considered as animal? The answer from the stand point of the scriptures is that there are four instincts in both men and animals. These are eating, sleeping, fearing and enjoying of the sex life. A dog eats; a man also eats. It may be in the case of man that it is well cooked foods. A dog sleeps, gets fear and takes the enjoyment of sex; a man also adopts these, but in complicated way. It may be the case that he or she sleeps in a well decorated room and takes the enjoyment of sex in association with a beautiful lady. He saves himself in making the weapons. The above said differences do not mean that human beings are different from animals as the purpose remains the same in both cases. The following verse tells us that one is taken to be distinguished from an animal if one resorts to *dharma* in one's day to day life (*āhāra nidrā bhaya maithunañca sāmānyametat paśubhir narāṇām; dharma hi teṣāmadhika viśeṣa dharmeṇa hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ*).<sup>2</sup> Now the question is what, in fact, *dharma* is. Is *dharma* only some activities? Generally, we can observe that all the religions (accept Buddhism) start with some activities which are offered to God or goddess. Here, activities stand for rituals. It is important to note that all rituals are observed for God. These are performed to satisfy God or to have His grace. There are different rituals in different religions; but the purpose of the rituals is one and the same i.e. to make God pleased. In Hinduism it is stated primarily that rituals are the means of the attainment of Knowledge. We find the instruction for performing *yajña* in *Mīmāṃsā* school (*svargakāmo yajet; arthakāmo yajet*, etc). Though such types of activities are purpose oriented, the significance behind these rituals is to tell the need of man; because without necessity no man generally feels inclination to work. Any theory is accepted if and only if its necessity is expressed. Accordingly, man performs some rituals in the purpose of the fulfillment of his need. And through the performance of these rituals man attains the devotion to God. Hence, though different rituals are prescribed in different religions, but the purpose is

the same, i.e. to make people devoted to the God. All the rituals prescribed in different religions help to purify our heart. We have to understand the purport of these rituals that these help to purify the heart and to proceed to moral life. The performances of such activities become meaningless if we fail to attain moral and spiritual life. These activities (rituals) are called *aparā vidyā* and these are to be needed as promoter to attain moral and immortal life. It is stated in *Isopaniṣad* : ‘*avidyā mṛtuym tīrtvā vidyayāmṛtamaśnate.*’<sup>3</sup> All the religions prescribe some rituals and admit the fact that the rituals purify our heart. And if it is so, we can bring a harmony among different religions. At present, we come across that rituals are the root from which religious violence is taken place. Accordingly, if the spirit of necessity of rituals is understood properly then the controversy among different religions will easily be resolved.

If God is one and our ultimate goal is to arrive at Him, then it does not matter what path we follow. I shall pray to God for my need; it may be in *Sanskritmantra*, or by performing *yajña* or in the language of Urdu. It does not matter. In fact, there is no reason of conflict among different religions on account of the fact that the prayer by different language, different manner of worshiping, different places of worshiping such as temple, mosque, or church- these all are offered to God. If one fails to discover the unity among different religions and thinks that alone his path is true then it is understood that he is in preliminary stage of religion, his heart is yet to be expanded, he is not in a position to realize the ultimate truth. There is a maxim in Sanskrit: ‘*trṇārāṇi-maṇi-nyāya*’, i.e. fire has burning power which can fulfill my daily-need. This fire may come from grass, from wood, or from jewel. If I need fire, I should want fire. It is useless to know the source of the fire. In the like manner, our concern is for God, neither for language nor for place. We need to expand of our heart. If one does not expand his heart, he thinks that his religion, his rituals, his temple, mosque or church is the only path to realize the God. In such a situation he ignores others’ religion, he

becomes very much intolerant. It is the situation which we may call fundamentalism. The path of *dharma* will be followed by reasoning, not by dogma. *Manusāṃhitā* tells that one who tries to know *dharma* by his reasoning knows *dharma* in true sense of the term (*sastarkeṇānusāṃdhatta sa dharmam veda netrḥ*).<sup>4</sup>

In the first chapter, we have articulated that the actual meaning of the phenomenon ‘*dharma*’ is not what we normally understand, or not what we generally practice at present. *Dharma* is some moral values or we may say that *dharma* is the common name of moral values. And moral values means: i) virtue, ii) duty, iii) moral standard, iv) social norm and v) law. These all terms are used in the meaning of moral values as these all are associated with our wellbeing. Hence, the term *dharma* refers to the aforesaid moral values, which is associated with wellbeing and connected with the derivative meaning of the term *dharma*. But the term *dharma* denotes rituals and something related to God apart from moral value. Rituals and something related to God may become *dharma* in secondary sense if these lead one to morally advance. Now, I shall show *dharma* is nothing but moral value, which is substantiated by our traditional texts.

If we first review the *Bhagavadgītā*, we observe that here the term ‘*dharma*’ has directly been indicated in two senses i.e. i) in the sense of duty and ii) in the sense of moral virtue. We come across the first one when we see Arjuna to ask Krishna in the following way:

‘ *kārpaṇyadoṣopahatasvabhāvaḥ pṛcchāmi tvām dharmasāṃmūdhacetāḥ  
yac chreyaḥ syān niścitam brūhi tan me śiṣyas te ’ haṃ śādhi mām tvām prapannam*’<sup>5</sup>

i.e. now I am confused about my *dharma* (duty) and have lost all composure because of misery weakness. In this situation, I am asking you to advise me what is best for me. Now, I am your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto you. Please instruct me. In the battle field, bewildered Arjuna, by the term ‘*dharma*’ (--*pṛcchāmi tvām dharma*--) in the aforesaid verse,

has certainly indicated the duty of him. And on the other hand, ‘that *dharma* is some moral values’ is substantiated when Krishna says:

‘*ye tu dharmyāmṛtam idaṁ yathoktaṁ paryupāsate*  
*śraddhadhānā matparamā bhaktās te’ tīva me priyāḥ*’<sup>6</sup>

i.e. those who follow this immortal path of wisdom (*dharmyāmṛtam idaṁ*) with faith holding Me as their supreme aim are exceedingly dear to Me. This is last verse of 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Bhagavadgītā*. Now the question is: what is this path of wisdom which is called *dharmyāmṛtam* by Krishna. We see that from the verse 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> of this chapter some moral values are mentioned by Krishna. And these are called *dharmyāmṛtam*. These are as follows: having no ill will to any being (*adveṣṭā sarvabhūtānām*), friendliness (*maitraḥ*), sympathy (*karuṇa*), nonattachment (*nirmamo*), egolessness (*nirahamkāraḥ*), even-mindedness in pain and pleasure (*samaduḥkhasukhaḥ*), Forgiveness (*kṣamī*) etc. Hence, we see that here the word *dharma* indicates moral value. Now we may ask what the function of these values is. The function of these values is to act according to the instruction of the values. Hence, moral values ultimately indicate to act something i.e. to perform the duty. As for example we may take ‘*Ahimsā*’. This is a moral value and its meaning in practical life is that one will keep him away from violence action. He will rather help others. He will act in such a way so that society attains wellbeing. These are all duties. Hence, we may say that the value word ‘*Ahimsā*’ indicates the duties indirectly. These two meanings are associated with the wellbeing of an individual and the society as well. Accordingly, these two meanings of *dharma* indicate morality.

We have already told in the first chapter that the term *dharma* in the sense of moral value primarily indicates duty and moral virtue. The ethics of the *Bhagavadgītā* is to attain the technique by which one can perform one’s duties without the hope for the fruits, which is called *Karmayaga* i.e. *Niṣkāma Karmayaga*, which is associated with the wellbeing of the

individual and as well as the society. Krishna says that this technique of rendering duties to the society will save a man from the material danger. (*svalpam apy asya dharmasya; trāyate mahato bhayāt*).<sup>7</sup>

Despite Arjuna came to fight in the battle field of Kurukṣetra; but he decided not to fight to the opposite on account of the fact that they all are relatives of him. Not only that, he put forward arguments against of fighting. At that time he became ill physically (*sīdanti mama gātrāṇi*) and weak mentally. His mind was reeling. After all, he was in despondency. In this circumstance *Gītā* starts. The advice of *Gītā* is given to Arjuna by Krishna. We notice that after hearing the advice of *Gītā* Arjuna fights i.e. he performs his duty. Here, Arjuna, fighting- these are all representative one. To favour of fighting is not the actual aim of *Bhagavadgītā*. In the *Gītā*, it is advised to all human beings to be steady in performing of their duties in taking favour of the fight as a representative one. Because, to be firm to the duties, is the real *dharma* of human beings.

Now the question is: what is one's duty? Duty is nothing but *svadharma* of every one i.e. the activities of one in accordance with ones capability and mental trend, the activities which is assigned to a person by the society. If one becomes a police officer, it is not because of a badge and an ID but because of protecting people along with other responsibilities. In the like manner, if one becomes a teacher, it is not because of just getting a job but by one's commitment to teaching. *Svadharma* means what one professes to do. If one is a teacher, then teaching is his *svadharma*. If one is a medical officer, then treating patient is his *svadharma*. In the context of this word, *sva* means one's own and *dharma* means the duty which one professes, or is assigned by the society. If every man becomes indifferent to his duty, the progress of society is stopped. The society is destroyed. And in such a position the wellbeing is not achieved. Moreover, one does not spend a single moment without doing something due to his very nature (*na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarmakṛt / kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma*

*sarvaḥ prakṛtijair guṇaiḥ*).<sup>8</sup> Besides this, without action one cannot sustain his physical existence (*niyataṁ kuru karma tvaṁ karma jyāyo hy akarmanāḥ / śarīrayātrā ' pi ca te naprasidhyed akarmanāḥ*).<sup>9</sup> Now, this action should be performed without the expectation of fruits as wellbeing of the society depends on the performance of action without the desire of its fruits. *Niškāma Karma* i.e. the action which is free from desire of fruits, which is free from false-ego, and which is offered to God is *dharma* or ethics of the *Bhagavadgītā*. Hence, the ethics or *dharma* of *Gītā* may be treated as universal religion of man.<sup>10</sup>

The message of this universal religion as described in *Bhagavadgītā* is to perform duty, but not to expect its fruits. In the *Gītā*, Krishna advises not to keep away from duty but not to keep away from the fruit i.e. renunciation will be applied to the fruit, but not to the duty. The main message is to be indifferent to the fruits of action, but not to the action. Simply to say, the ultimate *dharma* or duty of everyone is to engage himself to wellbeing of the humanity without expecting the fruits of action. And liberation is attained from the performance of such kind of duty. *Dharma* of man is to perform his duty. Duty has no its aim without duty i.e. duty has no its aim surpassing it. To perform the duty is the aim of duty. Hence, considering this view Bankim Chandra has told that the *dharma* which is advised in *Bhagavadgītā* is for all men. This *dharma* is for all either one believes in the doctrine of transmigration of souls, or does not believe in it. This *dharma* is for those who devote Sri Krishna, or who do not that. This *dharma* is also for those who believe in God, who do not believe in that-----Such a religion is not propagated in this world.<sup>11</sup> This religion has inspired men to perform his duty that is assigned for him being forceful by the knowledge of soul through the purification of mind and controlling sense organs. It is relevantly mentioned here that today the Indian are away for performing his duty, fatalist, in lack of virility and wordy. On the other hand, Christians now consider the duty as a full. In the *Gītā* Sri Krishna has prescribed performing of the duty (*Karmayagamārga*) as a following one; on the other hand, Jesus Christ has

prescribed renunciation (*Sannasmārga*). The Christians has kept Bible in folding. And we have forgotten the teaching of the *Gītā*.<sup>12</sup> But the aim of *karma* (duty) in west is not the same with that of India. There is the aim of ego and dominant sentiment behind the duty in the west; on the other hand, the aim of the duty of *Gītā* is egolessness.<sup>13</sup> Hence, the duty prescribed by *Gītā* is called '*karmayaga*' as this duty is free from attachment of fruits and egolessness. The action is not the cause of binding if it is performed leaving the expectation of fruits and ego also achieving the knowledge of *ātman*. This type of duty is called '*karmayaga*' as in this case the knowledge of *ātman* is combined with performing the duty. This is also called '*jñānakarmasamuchay mārga*'. '*Karmayaga*' is the main theme of *Bhagavadgītā* though many things have been discussed in eighteen chapters of *Bhagavadgītā*. *Gītā* is that which belongs to *karmayagamārga* of *Vedānta*. It is divided into eighteen chapters; for that reason each chapter has been called a '*yaga*', such as '*Arjunavisādayaga*'. As *Gītā* is nothing but an ethical path through performing the duty being free from self-interest, it can be considered as *dharma* of everyone irrespective of caste, creed and religion.

<sup>14</sup> Here we may conclude some features of *Bhagavadgītā*:

- I) The duty is the Religion (*Karmai Dharma*): *Dharma* is not possible without performing the duty. *Dharma* of everyone to perform the duty.
- II) Nonattachment of fruits (*Niṣkāmatā*): According to *Gītā* the duty (*Karma*) will have to be performed being free from attachment of its fruits. 'Perform the duty; but it will be without attachment'-this message is the essence of *Bhagavadgītā*. In such an action there is no interest of self. All human beings are progressed in inner and outside, knowledge and science, civility and culture, dance and song, art and literature. The ultimate purpose of *Bhagavadgita* is to progress all human beings of the society in all aspects.

- III) Religion is nothing but obtaining some moral values (*Naitic gunai Dharma*): The purpose of Religion is to obtain some moral values such as *Kṣama*, *Dayā*, *Titikṣā*, etc. so that harmony is established in the society.
- IV) To perceive ourselves in all things (*Ātmavad Darshan*): ‘To perceive ourselves in all things’ is the teaching of *Bhagavadgītā* regarding how one will behave to others (*Atmaupamen sarbatra samang pasyati yoharyuna/--- Gītā 6/32*). You will behave to others in such a way what you expect from others. We come across the same type of teaching in the Bible.
- V) To perceive God in all things (*Sarvabhūte Bhagavad Darshan*): The Religion of the *Gītā* is to perceive God in all things. If someone perceives God in all things then he / she cannot do anything wrong for them. In this stage, one becomes engaged in performing welfare of the society due to achieving the consciousness of Brahman.
- VI) Nobility/ Generosity (*Udāratā*): The key message of the Religion of *Bhagavadgītā* is that no one will be deprived from the endless grace of God whatever the path one adopts for worshiping the God (*ye yathā mam prapadante-- -Gītā: 4/11*). There are different men of different nature in this world. For that reason it is natural that there are many paths for worshiping the God. Hence, the Religion of *Gītā* does not consider any Religion inferior to other Religion. In the eye of *Gītā*, the dignity of all Religion is equal. The ultimate aim of the Religion of *Bhagavadgītā* is to perform wellbeing of all living entities and surrender to the lotus feet of God.

This view is also found in *Śrīmadbhāgavatam*. It is stated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> verse of the first canto that one should abandon the so called *dharma* which is not associated with good and one’s mind must be purified for performing *dharma* (*dharmah prajjhita kaitavoḥ’atra*

*paramah nirmatsarāṇām satām*). Here, the word ‘*nirmatsarāṇām*’ (mentioned in the *sloka*) is very important with a view to performing *dharma*. ‘*Nirmatsarāṇām*’ means one whose heart is completely purified.<sup>15</sup> It is one of the moral virtues. This verse also suggests that *dharma* means to become advanced in moral status.

Now let us consider the term ‘*dharma*’ with special reference to *Mahābhārata*. According to *Mahābhārata*, thinking of the welfare of all living beings is considered as *dharma* as well. This feeling is taken not only for the welfare of human beings, but also for that of all living entities in the world. Friendly attitude to others is also considered as *dharma* in the eye of this scripture.<sup>16</sup> Here, we can listen to the echo of *maitrī* and *karunā* of Buddhism. In this epic, justice to human beings is taken so seriously that for the sake of the good of the human beings it is permissible to say false words (*satyājjyāyonṛtamvācah*).<sup>17</sup> This is the uniqueness of this scripture that to speak false is accepted here to ensure the good. In Hinduism and Buddhism, there is a common dictum: ‘*bahujanahitāy bahujanasukhāy*. That which is sacrificed for the sake of greatest happiness for greatest number is called *dharma*. We shall not accept anything as *dharma* which is not associated with good or wellbeing i.e. no activity will be considered as *dharma*, if it does not promote to any wellbeing to the society. As per *Mahābhārata* those who are adorned with good virtue are considered to be pious. Forgiveness, steadiness, shame of the eye etc are worthy to mention as good virtues (*Birātparva* 6/20). Miserliness-less (*Akārpanya*) is a good virtue, as mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*. A person who is miser becomes narrow minded. Miserliness is a state where sacrificing attitude is absent, which is never considered as good virtue. Hence, we see that broad minded persons are generally adorned with miserliness-less, which brings religious tolerance. Those who do not have forbearance or tolerance to others’ religion are miser or self-centric, which is the source of fundamentalism.

The same view is again substantiated in the *Manusāṃhitā*. According to Manu, *dharma* is a way by which one can attain the highest good. He says that *dharma* can be performed by honest and intellectual persons who do not have malice. This feeling of *dharma*, after Manu, comes from our conscience (*hṛdayenābhyanujñāta*).<sup>18</sup>

It is also stated in *Manusāṃhitā* that a person who is *dhārmika* in true sense of the term must have thirteen qualities, which are as follows: service to others (*aparopatāpitā*), non-jealous to others (*anasūyatā*), softness in temperament (*mṛdutā*), non-harassment to others (*apāruṣyam*), friendliness (*mitratā*), capability of speaking lovable words (*priyamvāditā*), sense of gratitude (*kṛtajñatā*), pity to others (*kārunyam*), etc.<sup>19</sup> These are all moral virtues which constitute *Dharma* and hence these are to be developed for establishing the welfare of human beings as well as that of the society in a whole. Ten qualities are also pointed out, which are called *sādhāraṇa dharma*,<sup>20</sup> and these are to be followed by all irrespective of *varṇa*.

Apart from these, mentioned above, Manu has given a very short definition of *dharma*, which is as follows: ‘*ahimsā satyamasteyam śauca samyamevaca; atad samāsikam proktam dharmasya pañcalakṣaṇam*’.<sup>21</sup> Non-violence, truth, non-stealing, cleanliness and controlling of sense organs - all these moral virtues are the marks of a *dhārmika* person. Mahanambhrata Brahmachari calls these qualities as ‘religion of a gentle man’.<sup>22</sup> The ultimate objective is to be gentle. There is a prayer in *R̥gveda* which runs as follows ‘*bhadram no api vatyayah manah*’ i.e. make our mind gentle, satisfied and purified.<sup>23</sup> Without purity no true worship is possible. Unless an individual is pure in body and mind, his coming into a temple and worshipping the Deity are meaningless.<sup>24</sup> Enhancement, development and up-lift of these qualities in life are *dharma*. Hence, it may be taken into account that *dharma* is nothing but obtaining moral values. Here, we can remember the statement of Taslima Nasrin. In her novel (*LAJJĀ*) she

comments: ‘*dharmer apar nām āaj theke manuṣyatva hok*’.<sup>25</sup> Let *manuṣyatva* or humanity be another name of *dharma* from today.

According to *Manusāṃhitā*, *dharma* is not something static, rather it is dynamic in nature since when something is associated with the welfare of the humanity, it is considered as *dharma*. The authors of our scriptures have framed law in such a way that the people of different sects, the weaker sections, specially the women are protected. As per Manu, though the Brahmins are not generally allowed to take weapons, but they are permitted to take the same for self-protection or for social justice or to protect women. What is *adharmā* in general is considered as *dharma* in a particular context.<sup>26</sup> According to *Manusāṃhitā*, *dharma* is not only the injunction of *Veda* or the instruction of *Smṛiti* but also good conduct as imperative of our conscience. Manu has told: ‘*vidvadbhiḥ sevitaḥ sadbhirnityamadveṣrāgibhiḥ; hṛdyenābhyanuññato yo dharmah*’, i.e. the action which is approved by conscience of the persons who are learned, honest, and free from anger and greed is considered to be *dharma*.<sup>27</sup> . It is stated in *Manusāṃhitā* that when we are in confusion to determine which one is our duty between the two alternatives, in such a situation, duty should be determined by the instruction of conscience of the person who is free from attachment and aversion.

Keeping this view in mind, *Mīmāṃsakas* recognize *dharma* as *vidhi*, i.e. injunction of the *Veda*. These injunctions bind the man with good and generate satisfaction. The injunctions sanctioned by the *Veda* leading to wellbeing are considered to be *dharma*.<sup>28</sup> These injunctions generate a persuasion which is called *ātmakuta*. This *ātmakuta*, i.e. ethical persuasion which lies in our heart helps us to lead a moral life. The injunctions are so significant in our life that the injunctions are described as equivalent to God. Madhusudan Dutta in his epic ‘*Meghnāth Vadh*’ said: ‘*sthāpilā vidhure vidhi*’, i.e. *vidhi* or God placed the moon in the head of *Śiva*.<sup>29</sup> In ‘*Hitopadeś*’ also the term ‘*vidhi*’ is used in understanding God

(*vidhurapi vidhiyogād grosyat rāhunāsou*), i.e. the moon, with the help of God, has swallowed Rahu. Gandhiji also said: ‘law and the law-giver is one’.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that *dharma* must be practiced by malice less person on the one hand and it must lead to social wellbeing on the other hand. The same view is substantiated in *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, *dharma* is beautifully defined as something which is associated with prosperity and highest good. (*yato ’bhyudaya niḥśreyasa siddhiḥ saḥ dharmah*).<sup>30</sup> *Dharma* is a means by which we attain knowledge and, establish good. Here ‘good’ denotes both mundane and non-mundane one. Following *dharma* one ensures wellbeing for the whole society in this life and attains liberation in the life thereafter.

Thus, we see that all our scriptures encourage us to be morally advanced in our life. Without morality, spiritualism cannot be attained. To reach the highest level of spirituality one should lead moral life.

Besides these, we may cite the position of Jainism and Buddhism in this regard. We know *Pañcamahāvratā* of Jainism and *Pañcaśīla* of Buddhism, which are nothing but moral values.

In our tradition, the term ‘*dharma*’ indicates moral value. And this view is more substantiated in the last verse of 12<sup>th</sup> Chapter of *Bhagavadgītā* which is mentioned earlier i.e. ‘*ye tu dharmāmṛtamidaṁ yathoktoṁ paryupāsate / śraddādhānā matparamā bhaktāste ’tība me priāḥ*’. In 12<sup>th</sup> Chapter of *Bhagavadgītā* some moral values are stated by Lord Krishna as the marks of *Bhagavadbhakta*, which Krishna has called *dharma*. These are not only *dharma*, but also immortal *dharma* (*dharmāmṛtam*). Hence, it may be concluded that the term ‘*dharma*’ has been taken as moral value in our tradition.

The same is seen to be reflected in the philosophy of Vivekananda and Ramakrishnadeva. Ramakrishnadeva has beautifully shown that all the religions are the different paths of the realization of God. According to him, the attainment of God is the

ultimate aim of human life. We should not concern about the fact whether God is called by the name of Allah or Krishna. Ramakrishnadeva did not mere practice the path of Hinduism but also practice Islamism and Christianity and realize that the aim of religious life is to realize the ultimate truth. Vivekananda advises man to manifest the divinity within. He thinks that the manifestation of divinity which lies in an individual is the duty of every man. And this duty is considered as *dharma* of an individual. Swamiji says:

‘Do not care for the doctrines; do not care for dogmas or sects or Churches or Temples. They cannot for little compared with the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality and the more this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for good. Earn that first, acquire that and criticize no one; for all doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Show by your lives that religion does not mean words, or names or sects but that it means spiritual realization.’<sup>31</sup>

In fact, the religion which Vivekananda proposed as ‘Universal religion’ is open to all individuals irrespective of his caste, creed, nationality, gender etc. An individual has the right to follow the religion in accordance with his inner nature and his choice. Such a religion seeks to grow our attention and respect to the positive aspects of all religions and not to the external forms of religions, such as rituals, books, codes and so on. To him the direct transcendental experience of the ultimate reality is the basis of true religion. This idea of realization is common to all religions. The ultimate aim of all religions is the realization of God within the soul. He says:

‘I believe that they are not contradictory; they are supplementary. Each religion, as it were, takes up one part of the great universal truth, and spends its whole force in embodying and typifying that part of the great truth. It is, therefore, addition, not exclusion. That is the idea’.<sup>32</sup>

Vivekananda thinks, contradiction among different religions would be vanished, if we realize the ultimate truth and understand what our duty is. He continues: ‘my idea, therefore, is that all these religions are different forces in the economy of God, working for the good of mankind’.<sup>33</sup> ‘Good of the mankind’ is the ultimate aim of all religions, Hence, the duty of man is to serve the humanity through the realization of the fact that all living beings are the expansion of that truth.

*Dharma* is defined by Rabindranath as the extension of the self, i.e. to realize that ‘I’ am among the all things of the world and all things are within ‘me’. It is this which is the journey of human life in the eye of Rabindranath. And this is called *dharma*. This picture has beautifully been depicted in his different poems and songs. In the poem ‘*Prabhāt Utsab*’ he tells:

“*hr̥day āji mor kemone gelo khuli*  
*jagat āsi sethā kariche kolākuli*”<sup>34</sup>

(i.e. I do not know how the door of my heart is opened today. And I see that the whole world is embracing me)

In the philosophy of Rabindranath, we find a consciousness which unites an individual with the universe. In fact, to realize this consciousness and to be governed by this consciousness is the aim of an individual, which is his *dharma*. To him *dharma* is not to follow the instruction of institutionalized religion, which goes against humanity. He has raised his voice in the following words: ‘*dharmakārār prācīre bajra hāno*’, i.e. break the wall of such kind of religion, which confines us within ourselves (‘*Dharma Moho*’ *Pariśeṣ*). According to him, the religion of man is to embrace the whole universe, to feel the unity with the universe (*ākāś bharā surya tārā biśva bharā prān...*). To embrace the whole universe is not called humanism by Rabindranath, but the religion of man. It is religion of man in the

sense that man is the only creature to whom the universe is revealed in this manner. He calls it the surplus in man.<sup>35</sup> The same thing is echoed in the song of Boul sect of Bengal. We know the song ‘*āmi kothāy pābo tāre āmār maner mānus yere*’ composed by Gagan Harkara or ‘*milon habe kato dine āmār maner mānuseri sane*’ composed by Lalon Fakir. Rabindranath says that the concept ‘*maner mānus*’ of Boul is nothing but the surplus essence in man, i.e. to realize perfection which already lies in the man. The religion which he proposes may be called as poetic humanism, not mere humanism.<sup>36</sup> Rabindranath did not like to confine religion within the four walls of the custom of institutionalized religion. He thinks that devotion to custom is one kind of fascination to religion. The persons who are free from this fascination, engaged in doing welfare of the humanity are very much liked by Rabindranath. To him, atheism having free mind is better than fascination to religion. We hear in his poem: ‘*Dharmer beśe moho yāre ese dhare; andha se jan māre ār śudhu mare. Nāstik seo pāy bidhātār bar, dhārmikater kare nā āramber; śraddhā kariā jvāle buddhir ālo, śāstre māne nā, māne mānuṣer bhālo*’ (“Dharma Moho”, *Parīśeṣ*). He was very much concerned with the welfare of the humanity (*mānuṣer bhālo*); not with rituals. Thus, we see that neither Rabindranath nor Vivekananda was interested to accept the instruction of institutionalized religion; rather they were concerned about the welfare of the humanity through the emergence of divine power.

We come across the stand point of Rabindranath about the religion that he does not like the religion which is merely ritual centric, or confines man by customs. Rabindranath has beautifully shown the adverse consequences of customs and rituals in some of his writings such as drama, novel etc. To him such kind of religion is nothing but one kind of captivation to the customs. In this case, man becomes very much addicted to follow the rules and customs, than to realize the true meaning of *dharma*. Man due to follow the customs in every time loses his reasoning power and the instruction of his heart. This picture of lost reasoning

has been portrayed in the *drama* ‘*Acalāyatan*’. In this drama, Rabindranath has shown how the consciousness of man reaches at the last stage of wickedness. The boy Kushalshil is about to die owing to his thirst, and he asks for water, but water was not given to him simply because it was not permitted by the customs.<sup>37</sup> Rabindranath has witnessed such heinous effect of customs repeated times in his own country. He feels that all the society, as it were, has become engaged to perform some meaningless rituals ignoring the aspect of wisdom in ancient India. In the novel ‘*Gorā*’ we hear Gora in saying to Sucarita that he does not devote to the idols, but devotes to the devotion to the idols for a long time of enormous people in India. Gora also recognizes the dreadful pain of customs when he was with people of Carghoshpur.<sup>38</sup> In the novel ‘*Yogāyog*’ we see that Bipradas goes against rituals. He does not consider himself atheist, but does not believe in idols and customs. We hear Bipradas in saying that his *dharma* is so big that it is not grasped by the language.<sup>39</sup> In many times, we see that Rabindranath prefers atheists who engage for the welfare of the humanity and depends on self power instead of depending upon the supernatural power. We may take the two characters Jagmohan of the novel ‘*Caturanga*’ and Abhik of the story ‘*Rabibār*’ as representative symbol of such type of atheism. Jagmohan considers that his duty is to ensure the greatest good for greatest number of people. He selects the poor people of his locality, who belong to Muslim community or, who are cobbler in caste as an object of wellbeing. He embraced that people who were poor and troubled by social ignorance and humiliation. These poor and deprived people are god to him. He says that his god is so powerful that, if one offers the plate of food, he takes it extending his hand. As he likes to enjoy this wonderful act, he feeds them by offering the earnest invitation to them. He announces forcefully: ‘*Brāhmarā nirākār māne, tāhāke chokhe dekhā yāy nā. tomerā sākārke māno, tāhāke kāne shonā yāy na. āmarā sajjibke māni, tāhāke chokhe dekhā yāy kāne shonā yāy, tāhāke biswās nā kariā thākā yāy nā*’. i.e. the people belonging to *Brāhma* believe in incorporeal God. Such

God cannot be perceived. You believe in corporeal God who is not audible. We believe in living god who perceivable and audible both. We cannot live without believing him.<sup>40</sup> The atheists made by Rabindranath are the persons who do not have *dharma*, but devoted to morality. Jagmohan tells Shachish that they are atheist, for that reason, they have to be dirty less in all aspects. They have firm-faith upon themselves simply because they do not believe in God. The atheism that Jagmahan believes in imparts the teaching of coming out breaking the four walls of customs. He died of pelage while nursing the poor patients who were affected by pelage. When he is about to die, he tells Shachish that he takes the last award of what religion he follows in his life.<sup>41</sup> One day Abhik engaged with other boys in arrangement of worshiping the goddess *Durgā*. Perhaps his engagement was not for worshiping but for taking the pleasure of united endeavor with the association of many others. But when he came to know that this worshiping is nothing but the arrangement of cheating the men, he gave all the money collected for worshiping the goddess *Durgā* to the scientist Amar Babu as the expenditure of his travelling Billet.<sup>42</sup> Just after the completion of the revolution in Russia, Russia was bitterly criticized on account of the fact that there is no any room for religion in Russia. But Rabindranath did not criticize Russia. Rabindranath travelled Russia in 1930. We come across his observation in his writings '*Rāśiyār ciṭhi*' about the situation that he perceived. He says: Whatever the comment may be made by the people devoted to religion of other country with respect to the Russian people, but I cannot comment the people of Russia. Atheism is better than the captivation to religion. Russia was under the pressure of a stone that was given by the king of Russia and also by the religion. If you go Russia, you can see what a freedom Russia avail, after removal the stone of religion.<sup>43</sup> He also says from the standpoint of Marx that religion is the opium of the people that the king who wants to make the people slave considers the religion as a great tool, which can make the people blind.<sup>44</sup> In the same way, we can remember how Gosai of '*Raktakarabi*' controls the revolutionary

emotion of man with Godly sentiment.<sup>45</sup> The writings of Rabindranath have shown that such kind of religion, in fact, is nothing but the instrument of suppression. Here, a question may be raised that these (mentioned above) are the fact of drama, or novel, or story. In response to this question, we may say that drama, novel, etc. are the replica of our society. So, what has been depicted in drama, or novel is nothing but the real picture of our society.

As *dharma* is moral values, now I shall show the values which are described in scriptures and traditional texts, and how these values are connected with our wellbeing. The values which a man cherishes in his life work as the guiding principle how he will conjoin with wellbeing and deal with others. Accordingly, the role of moral values in promoting to wellbeing and in conducting with others is worthy to mention here. These moral teachings are imparted to us from the very childhood by our parents and teachers. It is important to point out that mere objects and its knowledge are not quite enough for wellbeing of the society. In order to wellbeing of the society we need the knowledge of values. And these values should be implemented in our life. Most of the religious texts are pregnant with the teachings of moral value. The truth-seers of India perhaps keeping the importance of these teachings in mind both in social and individual life, have emphasized to this thing. Now let us examine the lessons of values with special reference to *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* and *Śrī Candī*, which have a great impact on establishing wellbeing in our society.

It is generally told that human mind is constituted of three faculties viz. thinking, feeling and willing. A man is considered to be progressed when these faculties are developed in a balanced way. If we are rich in thinking i.e. gain high intelligence but have no feeling to others or, we have no willing for doing the wellbeing for the society then we are not worthy of being a progressed person. Just like, a man is called physically healthy and fit when all the limbs of his body are developed in a proportionate way. The syllabus of our present education is formed in such a way that only our faculty of intelligence is getting developed but the rest

two faculties are ignored. Only the development of intelligence does not make a man perfect and balanced unless two other faculties i.e. emotion and will are not properly developed. Rather, the contribution of science which is the result of advanced intelligence of human being may be the cause of loss. As for example, previously a thief used to commit the work of stealing after covering four miles on foot, now he can cover forty miles for the same by applying the contribution of science. Hence, there is no benefit to make sure of increasing the speed if good will is not incorporated to it. So long as the moral life of the people is not cleansed and purified, higher speed in life will cause evil in the society.

It is a well accepted fact that a lot of progress has been made in the field of science and technology, but we have failed to do the same in the sphere of humanity. This machine-age has pushed us to the state of the degradation of values to a great extent. Science and technology helps a lot to reduce the physical space of us but it increases mental space leading to dangerous and ill consequences. Vidyapati, a national poet, says: '*kata vidagdha jana....anubhava kāhuka nā pekha*' i.e. we are more advanced in learning, but not in feeling.<sup>46</sup> Now the question is: how is feeling sensitive, how is will good, or how can this mental gap be reduced? This can be done only through proper implementation of value education in our society. Therefore, positive initiative should be taken for the same as early as possible.

Emotion has a great role in our life. It gives the motion of our life. Sometimes we cannot serve our duty though we are quite aware of it. We know, for example, very well that we should stand by one in his ill-days; we also know that we should help the poor but we are doing nothing. The cause behind these is the lack of proper emotion. Hence, our emotion should be properly developed and exercised. The same decision can be applied to will. Aristotle defines a man as a rational animal. Our scriptures also consider that human beings are not distinguished from the beast unless he bears the sense of *dharma*. *Dharma* is

distinguishing property of human being. A man has the sense of dharma but a beast does not have this sense. Here, the term ‘*dharma*’ stands for both morality as well as the sense of duty, which is associated with the welfare of the humanity. Man is animal, but rational animal. Rationality, conscience, etc. is the unique property of human being. The same view is found in *Taittiriya Upanisad*. One of the verses goes as follows: ‘*taravo’api hi jīvanti jīvanti mṛgapakṣiṇaḥ / sa jīvati manayasya mananena hi jīvati*’<sup>47</sup> i.e. trees and creeper live, birds and animal live; but the life which is endowed with *manana* (rationality) is considered as life in true sense of the term. Here ‘rationality’ or ‘*manana*’ denotes such kind of mental exercise which is associated with wellbeing, otherwise, what is the use of rationality or *manana*?

Thus, it is seen that the two faculties i.e. feeling (emotion) and willing are very important for wellbeing as well as right treatment to others. These two faculties of human being can properly be nourished and developed through value oriented education which is available in Indian tradition. We come across some eternal values in *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* such as *Ṛta* (motion or movement in a fixed way, leading to order), *Satyam* (Truth), *Yajña* (sacrifice), *Sivasamkalpa* (good will), *Satantra* and *Teja* (freedom and self dignity), *Ātithyam* (hospitality), *Akārpaṇyam* (deprecation of miserliness), *Sam gacchadhvam* (hermony and co-operation), *Bhadram* (control and development of mental faculties) etc.<sup>48</sup> In *Taittiriya Upaniṣad*, we find a wholesome message on moral values. The daily duties as described in this Upanisad are as follows: ‘speak the truth’, ‘follow your religion’, ‘do not ignore studies’, and ‘never vitiate your progeny’. ‘Never encourage falsehood’. ‘Never practice anything irreligious’. ‘Make offerings with nobility of purpose’. ‘May your mother be your God. ‘May your father be your God’. ‘Follow any religious doctrine free from blemish’. ‘Always respect the elders in society’. ‘Avoid misplaced charity’. ‘Give everything with love and respect while making any offering in all humanity’.<sup>49</sup>

*Śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā*, the wellknown text containing the essence of the teaching of the *Vedas*, and *Śrī Candī* may be considered as good text for learning moral values. Both of them teach some moral principles which are highly essential in our life. Arjuna, in the second chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, asked his friend Krishna what the signs of *Sthitaprajña* (one whose being is steadfast in spirit) are. In reply, Krishna told Arjuna that one who is satisfied in ones spirit (*ātmany evā'tmanā tuṣṭaḥ*) is considered to be *Sthitaprajña*. It is worthy to note that here Krishna says of a moral value which is self-satisfaction (2/55). The role of this value in human life is very important. All evil deeds generally come from dissatisfaction. Hence, satisfaction is essential for wellbeing. When a man is dissatisfied, he cannot behave with others in a proper way. In the later verses (2/56 to 2/71), we come across more than ten moral values, which may be called the extension of the value of self-satisfaction (*tuṣṭi*) described in the verse no 2/55. These are as follows: steadiness in the midst of sorrows (*duḥkheṣu anudvignamanāḥ*), indifference in pleasures and happiness (*sukheṣu vigatasprḥaḥ*), devoid of attachment, fear and anger, (*vītarāgabhayakrodhaḥ*), free from affection/excessive *mineness* (*anabhisnehaḥ*), drawing away the sense from the objects of sense (*indriyāṇī sarvaśaḥ samharate indriyārthebhyaḥ*), calmness of mind (*vidheyātmā*), abandonment of desires from sense gratification (*vihāya kāmān*), abandonment of acts from longing (*niḥsprḥaḥ*), nonattachment (*nirmamo*) egolessness (*nirahamkāraḥ*). If we think of the values mentioned above, we shall find that all of them necessarily lead to the wellbeing of both individual and society. A person having the sense of these values cannot do anything harmful for the society. Such a person cannot even misbehave with anybody else.

In the twelfth chapter (12/13—12/19), we also find a cluster of moral values which have been described by Krishna as the marks of a true devotee who is very much dear to Him. These are as follows: having no ill will to any being (*adveṣṭā sarvabhūtānām*), friendliness (*maitraḥ*), sympathy (*karuṇa*), nonattachment (*nirmamo*), egolessness

(*nirahamkārah*), even-mindedness in pain and pleasure (*samaduḥkhasukhaḥ*), forgiveness (*kṣamī*), satisfaction in all times (*saṁtuṣṭaḥ satatam*), the state of contemplation of mind (*yogī*), self-control (*yatātmā*), firmness in determination (*dṛḍhaniścayaḥ*), attainment of such state which is not the cause of one's anxiety (*yasmān no 'dvijate loko*), attainment of such state which does not bring anxiety from others (*lokān no 'dvijate*), having free from joy and anger, fear and agitation (*harṣāmarṣabhayodvegairmukto*), neutrality (*anapekṣah*), purity (*śuchiḥ*), skillfulness (*dakṣa*), indifference (*udāsīno*), having free from disturbance (*gatavyathaḥ*), carelessness to the result of action (*sarvārambhaparityāgī*), equal treatment to foe and friend (*samaḥ śatrau ca mitre*), even-mindedness to good and evil repute (*samaḥ mānāpamānayoḥ*), alike in cold and heat (*samaḥ śītoṣṇa*), equal feeling to blame and praise (*tulyanindāstutiḥ*), having control over speech (*mauni*), firmness in mind (*sthiramatiḥ*). These twenty six values described within the verse no from 12/13 to 12/19 are directly or indirectly connected in promoting the wellbeing of an individual and society both. Though Krishna teaches this lesson to Arjuna but the main purpose of Krishna is to convey this message of moral teaching to whole society through the representative Arjuna. Krishna teaches that each and every individual should strictly follow these moral values in his / her life, which bring harmony and peace, progress and discipline by removing all types of social problems. According to Him one who attains these values is considered to be a devotee in true sense of the term. A true devotee is not just one who chants His name and performs some rituals. In thirteenth chapter of the *Gītā*, we also come across some moral values. In this chapter, Arjuna asked Krishna what knowledge is. Arjuna wanted to know from Krishna about the marks of a person having true knowledge. In reply, what Krishna said to Arjuna is nothing but some moral values (13/7 to 13/11). These run as follows: humility i.e. indifference to the passion for honour (*amānitvam*), pridelessness (*adambhitvam*), nonviolence (*ahimsā*), tolerance (*kṣāntiḥ*), simplicity (*ārjavam*), cleanliness (*śaucam*), steadfastness (*sthairyam*), self-control

(*ātmavinigrahaḥ*), indifference to the object of sense (*indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam*), egolessness (*anahamkāra*), non-attachment (*āsaktiḥ*), constant equal mindedness to all desirable and undesirable happiness (*iṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu nityam samacittatvam*), constant attention towards the knowledge of the Spirit (*adhyātmajñānityatvam*), realization of the knowledge of truth (*tattvajñānārthadarśanam*). Here, out of twenty values mentioned in 13/7 to 13/11, the above fourteen are moral values as these are directly morally related. Radhakrishnan states: “it is clear from this list of qualities that *jñāna* or knowledge includes the practice of the moral virtues”.<sup>50</sup>

We also find some moral values in fourteenth chapter of the *Gītā*. Here, Arjuna asks Krishna what the marks of the person who has risen above the three modes (*trīgunātītaḥ*) are. We all know that Krishna advises to transcend three modes of the nature. Here, we find that to surpass these modes means to cherish some moral values which are as follows (stated by Krishna, 14/22 to 14/25): non-jealousness (*na dveṣṭi*), having no desire for own happiness (*na kāṅkṣati*), situated as if neutral (*udāsīnavad āsīnaḥ*), never agitated by the modes of nature, (*guṇaiḥ na vicālyate*), having in an unwavering state (*na ṅgate*), equal mindedness in distress and happiness (*samaduḥkhasukhaḥ*), being situated in his own self (*svasthaḥ*), looking upon a lump of earth, a stone, a piece of gold as of equal worth (*samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ*), having equal feeling towards desirable and undesirable (*tulyapriyāpriyo*), steadiness (*dhīraḥ*), considering praise and blame as same (*tulyanindātmasaṁstutiḥ*), having the same in honour and dishonour (*mānāpamānayaḥ tulyaḥ*), seeing no difference between friends and foes (*mitrārīpakṣayoḥ tulyaḥ*), abandonment of the result of action (*sarvārambhaparitāgī*).

In sixteenth chapter, Krishna deals with the divine and demonic natures. Twenty six qualities are mentioned here (16/1-16/3) as divine nature (*daivīm sampadam*), which are actually some highly essential moral values. These are as follows: fearlessness (*abhayaṁ*),

purification of one's existence (*sattvasamśudhiḥ*), cultivation of spiritual knowledge (*jñānayogavyavasthitiḥ*), charity (*dānam*), self-control (*damah*), performance of sacrifice (*yajñah*), study of the scriptures (*svādhyāyah*), austerity (*tapah*), simplicity (*ārjavam*), non-violence (*ahiṃsā*), truth (*satyam*), devoid of anger (*akrodhah*), renunciation (*tyāgah*), tranquility (*śāntiḥ*), aversion to fault finding (*apaiśunam*), compassion for all living beings (*bhūteṣu dayā*), freedom from covetousness (*aloluptvam*), softness in temperament (*mārdavam*), sense of shame (*hrīh*), steadiness (*acāpalam*), vigour (*tejah*), forgiveness (*kṣamā*), fortitude (*dhr̥tiḥ*), cleanliness (*śaucam*), keeping away from malice (*adroha*), getting rid of the passion for excessive honour (*na'timānitā*). These are called *daivī sampada* (*daivīm sampadam*) i.e., divine or transcendental qualities (natures). Not only mentioned above are *daivī sampada* but also, all the qualities what are articulated earlier as a marks of *sthitaprajña*, or as a marks of *bhakta*, or as a marks of *jñāna* or as a marks of *trigunātīta*, are *daivī sampada*. That which we say moral values today are called *daivī sampada* (*daivīm sampadam*) in our tradition. These are also called *dharma*. Some moral values, in addition to earlier ones are traced in different places of *Bhagavad-gītā*. We find some values as a marks of karma *yagī* in verses no: 3/30, 4/20,21,22,23, 5/7; as a marks of *pandita* in verse no: 4/19; as a marks of *sāttvika kartā* in verse no: 18/26; as a marks of *brahmabhūtaḥ* (the person elevated to the position of self-realization) in verses no: 18/51,52,53. In these cases, we notice that some of the values are overlapped.

In *Śrī Candī*, it has been said that the goddess *Candī* or *Durgā* is omnipresent, so she dwells not only beyond this world; but also in all human beings or in all living beings in the form of divine natures (*daivīm sampadam*). In the fifth chapter (*Deviduta Samvāda*) of *Śrī Candī*, all *devas* have offered their obeisance to goddess *Candī* in the form of *daivīm sampadam*, not to transcendental one (14-77). The verses are as follows: 'yā devi sarvabhūteṣu '---' rūpeṇa samthitā / namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai nama namaḥ'.

Here *Devi*, in fact, stands for values (*daivīm sampadam*), which are as follows: Cognition or intelligence (*buddhirūpeṇa*), sleeping (*nidrārūpeṇa*), appetite (*kṣudhārūpeṇa*), inner strength (*śaktirūpeṇa*), eagerness (*triṣṇārūpeṇa*), tolerance (*kṣāntirūpeṇa*), shame i.e. sense of obligation (*lajjārūpeṇa*), tranquility (*śāntirūpeṇa*), respect (*śraddhārūpeṇa*), beauty (*kāntirūpeṇa*), wealth (*lakṣmirūpeṇa*), profession (*vṛttirūpeṇa*), recollection (*smṛtirūpeṇa*), compassion (*dayārūpeṇa*), satisfaction (*tuṣṭirūpeṇa*), motherliness (*māṭṛrūpeṇa*), error, or forgetfulness (*bhrāntirūpeṇa*), etc.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, we find *Canḍī* to be adorned with in the form of nutrition (*puṣṭi*) also. (First Chapter, *Canḍī* / verse no-79).<sup>52</sup> Through offering curtsy to goddess *Canḍī* in such a form of moral values one, in fact, desires to obtain such type of values.

If we carefully notice all the values as the form of goddess *Canḍī* stated above, we shall come across that these all have directly or indirectly moral significance as these are associated with wellbeing. The same claim can be made in respect to the values as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The importance of these values in individual as well as social lives is worth mentioning. The wellbeing of the society is grounded on these values. It is true that everyone wants to have tranquility (*śānti*). In order to have tranquility (*śānti*) we should be satisfied i.e. the value satisfaction (*tuṣṭi*) is necessary. It is one of the important values and has repeatedly been said in *Gītā* (in the name of ‘*tuṣṭi*’, ‘*saṁtuṣṭaḥ satatam*’, ‘*yena kenacita saṁtuṣṭaḥ*’) and *Canḍī*. Generally, we see all the problems come from dissatisfaction. In other words, dissatisfaction is the mother of all problems. If satisfaction prevails in man’s life, Tranquility (*śānti*) automatically comes due to the fact that satisfaction is the cause of tranquility. We should be satisfied with what is available in our life. For, there is no limit of our demand, our greed. Actually need is one thing and greed is another. Need knows its limit but greed does not. Problem comes when we confuse need with greed. Greed is another name of *kāmanā* (desire). Desire or greed can never be satisfied. The more we gain the more we

desire for. Hence, it is our duty to find satisfaction within what we have. Enjoyment never gets satisfaction by the process of enjoyment (*na jātu kāma kāmanāmupabhagena śāmyati*). This is the nature of enjoyment. Hence, one should find satisfaction within what one has. Otherwise, tranquility (*śānti*) cannot be attained. We can get satisfaction (*tuṣṭi*) if our sense organ is under control of us. Our sense organs will be under our control if we are disinterested about the result of action. Accordingly, *Gītā* has emphasized on the control of sense organ. Hence, we get the value ‘*indriyāṇī sarvaśaḥ samharate indriyārthebasy*’ as a mark of *Sthithaprajña*, ‘*jitendriyaḥ*’ as a mark of *Karma jogī*, ‘*yatātmā*’ as a mark of *Bhakta*, ‘*ātmavinigrahaḥ*’ as a mark of Knowledge, ‘*damaḥ*’ as a mark of *Daivi Sampada*. On the other hand, one cannot have any satisfaction or *tuṣṭi* if one desires for sense gratification, engages in excessive effort, and has attachment and excessive *mineness*. Hence, *Gītā* draws our attention to the following values ‘*vihāya kāmān*’, ‘*niḥspṛhaḥ*’, ‘*nirmamo*’ ‘*nirahamkāraḥ*’. For, these are the precondition of satisfaction (*tuṣṭi*) as well as tranquility (*śānti*): ‘*vihāya kāmān yaḥ sarvān pumāṃś carati niḥspṛhaḥ / nirmamo nirahamkāraḥ sa śāntim adhigacchati*’. And happiness (*sukha*) follows from tranquility (*śānti*). Hence, it is stated in *Gītā* ‘*aśāntasya kutaḥ sukham*’ i.e. one who does not have calmness cannot be happy. In our practical life also we see that attachment, excessive ego bring complexity and unhappiness in life. These are not associated with wellbeing either of an individual or of the society. Hence, these are to be abandoned. Perhaps, keeping the importance of *Tuṣṭi* as value in mind, the goddess *Devi* is saluted in this form (*yā devi sarvabhūteṣu tuṣṭirūpeṇa samsthitā*).

If we observe the nature of values, we can see that some may be considered to be the value as end. *Śānti* and *Tuṣṭi* are the value as end. Some are to be treated as the value as means. The values as means assist one to realise one’s *svarūpa* which brings wellbeing to individual (*sukha*, *Śānti* and *Tuṣṭi*). Excessive ego, passion for excessive honour, and pride

make one's life and society complex. In such a situation, one does not have peace due to the lack of harmony of life. Keeping this in view our religious texts encourages to abandon the excessive ego, passion for excessive honour and pride. The state where we feel that I am superior, others are inferior is called *mānitva*. The absence of this state is *amānitva*. In the like manner, the state by which one propagates one's fame i.e. 'I have done this', 'I have done that', 'this is mine', etc. is called *dambha*. The state where such a situation is absent is *adambha*.<sup>53</sup> No one likes such a man. Indeed, such type of mentality creates problem to be united with others. That is why, *Gītā* has emphasized on the values '*nirahamkāra*', '*anahamkāra*', '*nātimānitā*', '*amānitvam*', and '*adambhitvam*'. Perhaps realizing the significance of the value called '*nirahamkāra*' Rabindranath offers his prayer to God in the following way: '*..sakal ahamkār he āmār duvao chakher jale... āmāre nā yena kari pracher āmār āpan kāje..*'<sup>54</sup>

Non-jealousness (*adveṣṭā*) is one important value. If we are jealous with each other, the peace of the society cannot be established. Hence, we should be non-jealous with each other. Non-jealousness means having no ill will to any beings. Likewise, friendliness (*maitraḥ*) is another important value. For healthy society friendliness attitude is very necessary. Friendship is rare today. Sympathy (*karuṇā*) is another one. This is also rare today. To be sympathetic means to show the compassion for all beings. We shall show compassion for others on account of the fact that we do not belong to the same position. Just for example, a young man should show sympathy or compassion to an old man by offering his seat. Owing to the reason that a young man he is not in the position of an old man i.e. a young man is stronger than an old man. In this way, through the proper implementation of these values a healthy and ideal society can be constructed.

Forgiveness (*kṣamā*) is a great virtue. We become intolerant as we do not have the sense of forgiveness. Accordingly, various type of complexity comes. In order to show

forgiveness to anyone one has to be tolerant. If we cherish this value, a lot of problems of the society can be solved. One may raise the question that forgiveness can increase the offensive tendency. In reply, we can say that to show excessive forgiveness is not desirable. But it is true that one cannot be changed, in real sense, through punishment. Even an offender can be transformed into an honest person only through the change of his heart. And it is only forgiveness through which one's heart can be fully changed. Moreover, we should amnesty to others on account of the fact that 'to err' is human nature. For small error, we have to tolerate others. If we are restricted in tolerance then complexity arises. What shall I do if others are restricted in tolerance in my fault of inadvertence?

Simplicity (*āṛjavam*) is one important value. Simplicity means that which is natural i.e. the attitude of one, that actually he bears. In such a situation, one becomes free from complexity and artificiality. It gives birth to calmness in mind. It is said, happiness lives in simplicity. Consequently, one attains tranquility and can show right conduct to others. The opposite of the said state is that which is not natural. And something which is not natural is called artificial. No one likes an artificial person. Everyone disbelieves him. In such a situation, mistrust and disharmony automatically comes in our society. Likewise, softness in temperament (*mārdavam*) is another value which is very much rare in today. Lack of softness in temperament is main cause of all types of dispute. On the other hand, softness in temperament can be the cause of mutual good relationship.

Aversion to fault finding (*apaiśunam*) is one important value. Vivekananda says that fault finding attitude is not at all good. A man is endowed with both good and bad qualities. If we always see the bad qualities of one, it gives birth to unhealthy situation in the society. Likewise, *Aloluptvam* (freedom from covetousness) is another value. This situation is considered as the get way of hell in our tradition. It reminds the word of Gandhiji that nature is insufficient to fulfill our greed; it is sufficient to fulfill our need only.

Fortitude (*dhṛtiḥ*) is another great virtue. Fortitude means firm constant attention and engagement in a particular action. To be successful in life this is very important. The opposite of this state is called fickleness. A fickle minded person fails to keep attention to any action for a long time; consequently he cannot be successful in life. Likewise, it is advised in *Bhagavad-gītā* to be free from excessive joy and anger, fear and agitation (*harṣāmarṣabhayodvegairmukto*) and also be indifferent towards pleasure and pain, foe and friends, honour and dishonour etc. This is because; in such a situation one cannot be an ideal moral agent. Excessive pleasure (*harṣa*) is not desirable since it makes a man excited. An excited person is dangerous to our society. In present day, man commits so many crimes due to his anger (*marṣa / kradha*). Anger is blind which influences man to do so many unwanted activities. It annihilates the strength of us. Where there is anger there is no calmness which is very necessary in everyone's life. In the like manner, fearfulness weakens our heart. In our practical experience, we generally notice that no work is to be successfully accomplished by a fearful person. Hence, fearlessness (*bhayodvegairmukto / abhayaṁ*) is highly solicited.

Shame (*hri / lajjā*) is another important value. We generally call it shame of the eye (*caḥṣuḥlajjā*). From this value, sense of obligation comes. Professor Raghunath Ghosh has given a beautiful example which runs as follows:

“Let us see how *lajjā* makes us active. We generally do some work being prompted by *caḥṣuḥlajjā* or ‘shame of the eye’. If all the members of my family are engaged in performing different duties, it is not possible for me to sit in idleness as it does not ‘look good’. We shall be bound to perform duty so that others do not criticize us. The idea which prompts us to action is called *caḥṣuḥlajjā*. In other words, when other family members or members of our society are engaged in duty, our activity becomes the cause of our shame. In order to hide it, we become

active. It is a fact that, if a man does not engage himself in the service to ensure the welfare of society, then other social members call him 'self-centred' etc. Nobody wants to be designated as self-centred etc, as these attributes become the cause of shame to him. In order to make himself free from this shame, he comes forward to the service of the society and in this way he becomes active".<sup>55</sup>

It may be argued that excessive shame is not good since it brings inertia. In reply to this it can be said that excessive shamelessness is not desirable. Hence, the harmonization of excessive shame and excessive shamelessness is to be understood by the term '*lajjā*'.

Non-violence (*ahimsā*) is one of the great values. Gandhiji has experimented on this issue throughout his life. Everyone can feel the significance of this value for wellbeing of the society. Truth (*satya*) is another important value. The opposite of this value is falsehood. And falsehood is the fundamental reason behind all sorts of misunderstanding, mistrust and conflict. Misunderstanding and mistrust come when one does not maintain the honesty in one's three states i.e. *Kāyaḥ* (action), *Manah* (mind) and *Vākyaḥ* (word). To maintain the same states in mind and word is to maintain *dharma*.<sup>56</sup> Today whatever one says is not done or what he says is not kept in mind. Accordingly, we cannot trust other. In such a situation, a society cannot be an ideal one.

*Yajñah* in *Bhagavad-gītā* as well as in the *Veda* is nothing but sacrifice which we frequently say '*tyāga*' in Bengali. The glorification of sacrifice is always praiseworthy in our social life. We treat something as sacrifice only when it is dedicated for wellbeing of others. In broader perspective, one's self interest may be protected through the preservation of public interest. One's tranquility depends on another's tranquility. Through sacrifice we can enjoy much, since then our mind is filled up with transcendental bliss. And it is this which is called true enjoyment. To show sympathy to our neighbours, fellow feeling, any kind of social

service etc are considered to be sacrifice (*yajñah*) since these all are dedicated for others. The significance of this value gets its support when we come across that no one likes to be endowed with as selfish. This is because; it hints one's absence of sacrifice mentality. If someone is said: 'you are very modern' or 'you do not believe in God', it does not matter to him; but 'you are selfish', he does not become pleased. The reason behind this is it makes one ashamed. This fact implies that man in essence cannot be selfish. Hence the value 'sacrificing attitude' is very essential not only for the society but also for the family.<sup>57</sup> The lack of this value results in so many problems like misunderstanding, intolerance, conflict, etc. in both our family and social life. Likewise, charity (*dānam*) is another important value which is also considered necessary for our society.

Purity (*śuchiḥ, śaucam, sattvasamśudhiḥ*) is one fundamental value. Purity means cleanliness in both mind and body. In fact, purity is the real source of our force.<sup>58</sup> A man with non-purified body and mind creates so many evils in our society. But a man with pure heart turns our society into virtuous one removing all evils. It is value as an end. Purification of the heart is our aim. A person having purified heart can be moral agent in true sense of the term.

If we carefully observe all the values as stated in *Śrī Candī*, we shall find that these are superior to the values stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. This view may be explained. Some of the values like '*Kṣamā*', '*Dayā*', '*Śradhā*', '*Lajjā*', '*Tuṣṭi*', '*Śānti*' etc. are found both in *Śrī Candī* and *Bhagavad-gītā*. And these have already been discussed. Cognition (*Buddhi*) is said by *Nyāya* School as the ground of all linguistic usage (*sarvavyavahārahetuḥ guṇaḥ buddhiḥ jñānam*).<sup>59</sup> Hence, this value is treated as a form of mother *Durgā*. Strength (Both physical and mental) (*śakti*) is also necessary. No creation is possible without energy or *śākti*. Hence, mother goddess is saluted in this form. Wealth (*lakṣmi*) is also necessary in our life. We cannot ignore it for being material. In *Candī*, material property is considered as most essential. Material property is essential in our life. Keeping the importance of material

property in view *artha* has been considered as one of the four *puruṣāthas* in our scriptures. Hence, she has been saluted as a form of wealth. Beauty (*kānti*) is another form of goddess. We all are attracted to this value. It may be physical or inner beauty. Bankim Chandra says that the victory of beautiful face is everywhere.<sup>60</sup> But it must imply inner beauty which is the real beauty of one. We all are engaged in our own profession (*vṛtti*). For, it provides the requirement of our life. If we are careless to our profession i.e. to our own duty, it brings an unhealthy situation in our society. So, goddess *Durgā* is saluted in this form. Eagerness (*tr̥ṣṇā*) is very essential for life. Without eagerness no one can success in life. So she exists in this form. She is also described as recollection (*smṛti*) on account of the fact that if we do not remember anything, life is stopped. Memory is the thread connecting our past, present and future. Without memory no knowledge, no recognition will be possible. In the like manner, she is also described as error or forgetfulness (*bhrānti*). Men learn through error. Hence, error has some positive value. On the other hand, in order to preserve something important in our life, we have to forget something unimportant. If we do not forget anything, we cannot remember. We have a limitation of our brain, so if we do not forget, we cannot learn new things. We sometimes have to forget some incidents of our life; otherwise stocking of such incidents may make one misbalanced. Moreover, if we do not forget small misbehavior received from others, it becomes hindrance to keep good relationship with others. Hence, *Durga* is saluted in this form. She is also described as sleeping (*nidrā*), appetite (*kṣudhā*) and nutrition (*pusti*). It hints us that we cannot ignore our corporal body. For good health these three are necessary. Above all she is described as one who has motherliness attitude (*mātrirūpeṇa samsthita*). It is not the fact that only a woman bears motherliness attitude. Here, motherliness is representative one. It means softness, love, affection etc. A man also can bear these qualities. In fact, this value is almost rare today. We are not soft in our

temperament. That is why; we fall into clash with others. Those values described in *Candī* are more superior to that stated in the *Gītā*.

In *Candī*, an appeal has been made to goddess *Durgā* to give back our *svarūpa* (real nature) in the mantra '*rūpaṁ dehi*'.<sup>61</sup> In *Bhagavadgītā* also there is a value term '*svasthaḥ*' (14/24) which stands for being situated in one's own self, which is one's real nature. This is also called one's *amāyika rūpa* (non-artificial nature). We have two natures: one is real and another is unreal i.e. artificial. The demonic nature (*adaivī prakṛti*) like lack of confidence, ostentation, arrogance, excessive pride, anger, harshness, ignorance, enviousness etc. are not real nature of human being. These all are *māyikarūpa* or *kurūpa*, which is not his real nature of human being. Hence, attainment of *svarūpa* which is nothing but *daivī prakṛti* or *daivī sampada* like steadfastness, egolessness, simplicity, non-enviousness etc. is the aim of human life. Accordingly, through the value '*svasthaḥ*' as described in *Gītā* or through the mantra '*rūpaṁ dehi* in *Candī* ', we pray to God for regaining our real nature. In order to being situated in own real nature (*svasthaḥ* / *rūpaṁ*) we have to gain divine or transcendental qualities (*daivī sampada*). And this can be done through fighting with *āsūrika* or *māyika prakṛti*. Hence, victory is craved (*jayaṁ dehi*). Fame is craved (*jaśa dehi*). Fame comes when we win or gain something. And all these come when we defeat our enemies (*dviṣa*), *adaivī sampada*, which is not our real nature. Hence, it is craved ('*dviṣa jahī*').<sup>62</sup>

One may raise the question that what is the use of acquiring the knowledge about values, or hearing about it unless these are practiced in our life. In response to this, we may say that it is right. But before putting something into practice one has to know about it. In this perspective, we may say that knowing of something is the first stage of practicing of the same thing. Hence, we should know or hear about values first. If one hears something repeatedly, he feels inclination to do it i.e. the word has a power. Keeping this in view our *śāstra* says of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. If we analyze the nature of said values, we notice that it

is in the form of injunction (*vidhi*) i.e. either it is affirmative injunction or it is negative injunction. Nonviolence means ‘do not practice violence’. In the like manner, Truth means ‘follow truth or speak the truth’. *Mīmāṃsā* School of Indian Philosophy tells that all the injunctions have a persuasive power (*preraṇā*) which they have called ‘*ātmākūta-viśeṣa*’.<sup>63</sup> Such type of persuasion we can find in invitation. We generally say that he invited me in such a way that I could not ignore him.

It has been stated earlier that if our emotion is not properly developed and our will is not good, we can do nothing positive for our society. Objects and knowledge alone cannot save the society. Hence, for wellbeing of the society emotional and willing aspect along with thinking aspect of mind should properly be developed. And this can be done only by the teaching of values. Hence, introduction of value education in our society is highly essential. *Gītā*, *Candī*, etc. are the documents of traditional values just like our constitution is the document of contemporary values such as: democracy, liberty, equality, amity fraternity etc. Not only *Gītā* and *Candī*, but also Islamism, Christianity, all the religions may be the good text of moral values.

One point is very important to note here that in the question of religion we are separated into two sects. One sect states that God exists. On the other hand, the rest one as if is engaged to decline God. But each and every religion has got another issue apart from God, which states what treatment one will do to another. This part deals with the principle of conduct, moral values or morality etc. We are not so much concerned with this important thing which we are more connected in our practical life. We cannot prove that God exists since God is unlimited. *Samkhya* School says: ‘*īśvarāsiddheḥ pramābhāvāt*’ (*Samkhya pravacansūtra*-1/92)<sup>64</sup> i.e. God is not proved. *Śruti* also says that *Ātman* or Brahman can be achieved neither by the study of the Veda nor by intellect nor by listening many *Śāstras*. He (Brahman) is achieved only by His compassion. God is revealed Himself to the true devotee i.e. He can be

attained only by *bhakti*. (*nāyamātmā prvacanena labhyo na medhyā na vahunā śrutena / yamevaiṣa vṛṇūte tena labhyaṣṭasaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇūte tanūm svām...*).<sup>65</sup> In the like manner, the non-existence of God also cannot be established. It is so easy to say that ‘X’ exists, but difficult to say that ‘X’ does not exist. If one sees X in the meeting, he can easily say that X exists in the meeting. But in the case of the claim that X does not exist in the meeting, we have to see all the places of the meeting very carefully that X does not exist in the meeting.

Kant, in the first preface of his book ‘Critique of Pure Reason’, said that some metaphysical questions like soul, God etc automatically comes in human mind due to its very nature. But human mind (reason) does not have capability to know those.<sup>66</sup> Hence, we should give more attention to this moral part of religion than the first one, which is associated with our wellbeing.

#### Notes and References:

1. These six meanings are : i) Religions like Buddhism, Hinduism, Islamism etc; ii) Morality; iii) Piety; iv) Rituals; v) Essential characteristics of a thing; vi) Social customs. See Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, ‘Dharmatattva’ in Bankim Rachanavali, 3 vols (Sahitya Sasad, 1361 (B.S.), p. 672.
2. *Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva, 294/29* . (*Śrīmadbhagavadgīta Rahasya* by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Jyotindra Nath Tagore [Tr.], edited by Dr. Dhanesh Narayan Chakrabarti), Progressive Book Forum, Calcutta, 1981, p. 63.)
3. *Īsopaniṣd*, 11
4. Pabitra Kumar Roy, *et al: Darshan O Tar Prayag* (in Beng), Nalini Prakashani, Kolkata, 2000, p. 78.

5. *Bhagavadgītā*, 2 / 7. ( *Sri Gitā* [in Beng], edited by Jagadis Chandra Ghosh, Presidency Library, Kolkata,1331 [B.S.], p.539.)
6. *Ibid*, 12 / 20. ( *Sri Gitā* [in Beng], edited by Jagadis Chandra Ghosh, Presidency Library, Kolkata,1331 [B.S.], pp. 403, 404.)
7. *Ibid*, 2/40. ( *Sri Gitā* [in Beng], edited by Jagadis Chandra Ghosh, Presidency Library, Kolkata,1331 [B.S.], p.49.)
8. *Ibid*, 3/5.
9. *Ibid*, 3/8.
10. Samerendra Bhattacharya: *Bhagavadgita* (in Beng.), Book Syndicate Private Limited, Kolkata, 2009, p. 4.
11. Bankim Chandra Chattyapadhya: *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* (in Beng), Bankim Rachana Sangraha, Pashimbanga Niraksar Durikaran Samitee, [Year was not found], p.969.
12. Jagadish Chandra Ghosh: *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* (in Beng), Presidency Library, Kolkata, 2012, p. 30.
13. *Ibid*, p. 30.
14. Samerendra Bhattacharya: *Bhagavadgita* (in Beng), Book Syndicate Private Limited, Kolkata, 2009, pp. 28, 47.
15. *Śrimad Bhagavatam*, 1/1/2. ( *Śrimad Bhagavatam*, edited by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, Bhakticharu Swami [Tr.], Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Srimayapur, 1985, p. 55.)
16. *Sarvabhūtahitam maitram purāṇam yaṁ janā viduḥ.*  
*Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva, 261/59*

17. *Ibid*, *Dronaparva*, 89/47.
18. *Manusamhita*, 2/1. (*Manusamhita* [in Beng] edited by Manabendu Bandopadhyay, Sadesh, Kolkata, 2004, p. 21.)
19. *Kulluka on M. S.* 2/6. (These accurate English expressions of the Sanskrit terms have been taken from the book entitled ‘*Sura, Man and Society: Philosophy of Harmony in Indian Tradition*, Academic Enterprise, Culcutta, 1994, written by Prof. Raghunath Ghosh, pp. 41-42).
20. *Dhṛtiḥ kṣamā damaḥasteyaḥ śaucamindriyanigraḥ/  
Dhirvidyā satyam ’akrodha daṣakṃ dharma lakṣanaṃ.*  
*Manusamhitā*, 6/92. (*Manusamhita* [in Beng] edited by Manabendu Bandopadhyay, Sadesh, Kolkata, 2004, p. 221)
21. *Ibid*, 10/63. (*Manusamhita* [in Beng] edited by Manabendu Bandopadhyay, Sadesh, Kolkata, 2004, p. 470)
22. Mahānāmbrata Brahmācāri: *Mānab Dharma*, (in Beng) Shri Mahānāmabrata cultural & Welfare Trust, Raghunathpur, 1399 (B.S.), p.29.
23. *Rikveda Samhita* 10/20/1. (*Rikveda Samhita*, Vol-II [in Beng], edited by Abdul Aziz Al Aman, Haraf prakashani, Kolkata, 2010, p. 465.).
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25. Taslima Nasrin: *Lajjā* (in Beng), Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 1993, p. 7.

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27. *Ibid*, 10/ 81,95. (*Manusamhitā* [in Beng] edited by Manabendu Bandopadhyay, Sadesh, Kolkata, 2004, p. 474, 477.).

28. *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, 1.1.2. (Available at: <https://archive.org/stream/mimamsasutra00jaimuoft#page/n5/mode/2up> on 12th September, 2014).

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30. *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*, 1.1.2. (Available at: [http://www.vedicbook.net/vaisesikasutra\\_kanada\\_p\\_11365html](http://www.vedicbook.net/vaisesikasutra_kanada_p_11365html) on 12th September, 2014).

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33. *Ibid*, p. 366.

34. Rabindranath Tagore: *Sancayitā* [in Beng.],(The Poem-Prabhat Utsav), Kamini Prakashalaya, kolkata, 2002, p.32.

35. Rabindranath Tagore: *Manuṣer Dharma* (in Beng.),Viśvabhāratī, 1933, p. 38.

36. Amlan Dutta: *Ye Kathā Balite Cāi* (in Beng.), Ananda Publishers Private Limited, Kolkata, 2009, p. 15.
37. See the drama '*Acalāyatan*' of Rabindranath Tagore.
38. See the novel '*Gorā*' of Rabindranath Tagore.
39. See the novel '*Yogāyag*' of Rabindranath Tagore.
40. See the novel '*Caturanga*' and the small story '*Rabibār*' of Rabindranath Tagore.
41. *Ibid*, (the novel *Caturanga*).
42. See the small story *Rabibār*.
43. See '*Raśiyār Ciṭhi*' by Rabindranath Tagore.
44. *Ibid*,
45. See the symbolic drama '*Raktakarabi*' i.e. Red Oleanders of Rabindranath Tagore.
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47. Jagadish Chandra Ghosh: *Śrī Gitā* (in Beng), Presidency Library, Kolkata, 1331 (B.S.), p. 264.
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53. Jagadish Chandra Ghosh: *Śrī Gitā* (in Beng), Presidency Library, Kolkata, 1331 (BS), p. 413.
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61. Mahanambhrata Brahmachari: *Candī Cintā* (in Beng), Srimahanambhrata Cultural and Welfare Trust, Raghunathpur, 1370 (B.S.), p. 70. [Atha Argalastotram, verse no-3],

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64. *Sāṃkhya Pravacansūtra*, 1/92.

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## CHAPTER – VI

### SOME PROBLEMS ALONG WITH CRITICAL REMARKS

In previous chapter we have shown that in our tradition the notion of *dharma* has been understood principally as moral values. Keeping this spirit in mind throughout my work I have tried my best to establish that ‘*Dharma* as a moral value’ is the real meaning of the term ‘*dharma*’. Now, if this above consideration is accepted, some philosophical problems may be raised in this regard.

First, we come across many definitions of *dharma* in deferent systems of Indian philosophy, but derivative meaning of the term is ‘something upholding’ (*dhāraṇāt dharmam ityāhuḥ*).<sup>1</sup> How can derivative general meaning of the term be extended to all the definitions? To answer this question we can say that, if we carefully go through the definitions of *dharma* in different texts, we shall notice that there is a common message in all the definitions. This message is to sustain the human beings, society and even the world by providing their wellbeing. Now the question is: what is the thing that sustains the world? It is an order which sustains the world. Likewise, moral principle/morality is that which sustains human beings as well as the society. All the definitions of *dharma* show that it is moral value which ultimately upholds an individual, the society and the world. The objective of moral principle is to bring the harmonious wellbeing to the society. It should not be expected that one’s comfort causes the discomfort of another.

We do not find any definition of *dharma* where there is no moral implication. Caitanya Mahāprabhu told that the *dharma* of present age is to chant the holy name of God (*kali-yuge dharma hay nāma sankīrtana; cāri yuge cāri dharma jīvera kāraṇa ---ataev gr̥he tumi kṛṣṇa bhaja giyā kuṭināṭi parihari’ ekānta haiyā- / Caitanya Bhāgavad*).<sup>2</sup> Apparently, it seems to us

that the purport of the said definition is to put forward the devotion to the God, it has nothing to do with promoting the welfare in the society. But He says '*kuṭināṭi parihari*' *ekānta haiyā*' i.e. you worship Krishna leaving all immoral deeds (*kuṭināṭi*). Besides this, Caitanya Mahāprabhu once told Sanātana Goswami that there is no greater *dharma* than to show pity or sympathy to others, to be devoted to chanting the holy name of God and to give the service to the *vaisnavas* (*jīve dayā nāme ruchi vaiṣṇava sevā, ihā haite dharma ān nāhi Sanātana / 'Caitanya Caritāmṛta'*).<sup>3</sup> The word '*dayā*' (sympathy) is a moral virtue. All good concepts, generally, are stipulated in the holy name of God. Hence, chanting of the name of God, I think, must have, at least, psychological value, and it keeps us balanced. Moreover, I think there is also another social implication of chanting the name of God. Our mind cannot remain without thinking even for a moment. It is also important to note that we cannot fix up mind to more than one issue simultaneously. Most of the times our mind remains engaged in ill thinking. So if we can engage our mind in chanting the holy name of God then there is no scope of our mind to be engaged in ill thinking. Our thinking leads us to our activity. The act of killing necessarily presupposes the thinking of killing. Likewise, the act of raping positively presupposes the thinking of raping. If one's mind is always engaged in thinking of chanting the holy name of God then his mind cannot think of doing anything wrong. Thus chanting the name of God also indirectly leads to promoting the wellbeing in society. The word '*vaiṣṇava*' does not mean the devotees of Lord *Viṣṇu* only, but all the living entities also on account of the fact that the word '*vaiṣṇava*' is constituted with the Sanskrit root word '*viṣṇu*' and its suffix '*sna*'. The suffix *sna* means son. Naturally, we all are *vaiṣṇavas* for being the son of God. Hence, *vaiṣṇava sevāna* means to bestow the service to all living entities. Accordingly, it can be shown that the basic meaning of *dharma* can be extended to all definitions.

Secondly, how can the notion of *dharma* as a moral value be extended to other definitions given by the *Vaiśeṣikas* and *Pūrvamīmāṃsakas* in particular? According to *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, *dharma* is something which brings prosperity in mundane life and spiritual bliss (*yato 'bhyudaya niḥśreyasa siddhiḥ saḥ dharmah*).<sup>4</sup> In response to this question it is said that values regulate a man's conduct which ultimately brings worldly prosperity and spiritual bliss. In the previous chapters we have shown that how values regulate the conduct of a man. We have already discussed how *lajjā* makes us active. We generally do some work being prompted by *caḥṣuhlajjā* or 'shame of the eye'.

Likewise, in response to the definition of *dharma*, given by *Pūrva-mīmāṃsakas* (*codanālakṣaṇo 'rthah dharma*),<sup>5</sup> we can say that this definition contains the moral aspect. Since, as per their observation *dharma* is that which is associated with good. And without morality nothing good is possible to promote. Thus we see that *dharma* as a moral value can easily be extended to the definition of *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsakas*.

We have already mentioned that *yajña* is considered as *dharma* in *Mīmāṃsa* School, because *yajña* helps to lead one to moral life removing excessive desire and anger. Accordingly, *yajña* has been considered as *dharma* in wider sense. The etymological meaning of the term *dharma* is: '*dhryate anena iti dharmah*',<sup>6</sup> i.e. that which sustains is *dharma*. That which upholds wellbeing and prosperity is considered as *dharma*. The term '*dharma*' is constituted with the Sanskrit verb '*dhṛ*' and its suffix '*man*'. The Sanskrit verb '*dhṛ*' means to sustain. Hence, a question arises: what is the thing which *dharma* sustains? According to Indian Philosophy *dharma* sustains / upholds individual, society, and even the whole cosmic world.<sup>7</sup> *Dharma* is one which sustains the whole world, which upholds the law of the cosmic, is *dharma* ('*dharmo viśvasya jagataḥ pratiṣṭhā*').<sup>8</sup> Apart from this, it is stated also in Hinduism: '*yena ātmanah tathā anyeṣāṃ jīvanam vardhanāñcāpi dhryate sa dharmah*' i.e. *dharma* is that from which one's own and others' life and prosperity is

increased.<sup>9</sup> If performance of rituals (*yajña*) helps to bring moral sense to human beings, it may be considered as *dharma* indirectly. Those who attain moral sense without performing the rituals may be recognized as *dhārmika* person. If it is seen that a person who performs so called religious duties (rituals), but does not maintain moral life is never considered as virtuous or *dhārmika*.

Thirdly, a problem may be raised if *dharma* is taken in the sense of moral value, it will contradict the *Bhagavadgītā*'s statement: '*sarvadharmān parityajya māmekam śaraṇam braja*' (i.e. take shelter upon me leaving all *dharmas*).<sup>10</sup> It may be taken as the contradiction to *āgama*, which is not acceptable. The problems may be solved when we consider the principles of teaching in the *Vedas*. In Vedic system, we find that a person comes to a bona fide *guru* and he must surrender to the lotus feet of him, which ultimately leads him to follow a moral life. In the like manner, when one takes shelter upon God in true sense of the term, he cannot even think of doing any immoral deeds. The concept of God is such an idea in which all good is stipulated. In the *Bhagavadgītā*, Krishna has advised Arjuna to follow many things such as to follow disinterested action i.e. *nīṣkāma karma-yaga* or to follow the way of knowledge i.e. *jñāna-yaga* etc. But if Arjuna fails to follow these paths, then he can surrender to Krishna with devotion. Such surrender (taking shelter upon God Krishna) of Arjuna gradually leads him to the perfect or moral life. Moreover, taking shelter upon God or surrendering to Him does not mean to give up everything. In fact, taking shelter upon someone means to follow up one's word. Thus, taking shelter upon Krishna implies to follow the word of Krishna. And Krishna's word to Arjuna is : '*mām anusmara yudha ca*' – (*Gītā*, 8/7) i.e. remember Me and fight. Krishna advised Arjuna to follow his *svadharma*. Krishna never told Arjuna to leave his *svadharma*. And we come across that after hearing all the advices from Krishna Arjuna says : '*karisyē vacanaṁ tava*' – (*Gītā*, 18/73) i.e. I shall act

according to Thy word. Hence, we may conclude that taking shelter to God or surrendering God does not contradict to moral life.

Fourthly, it is stated in our scriptures that somebody is reluctant to do some work in spite of knowing that it is virtuous duty (*jānāmi dharmam na ca me pravṛtti*). On the other hand, someone hardly refrains from doing some action in spite of knowing that it is not virtuous (*jānāmi adharmaṁ na ca me nivṛtīḥ*). How can these be explained? What are the causes of the same? The causes are that we are in lack of the obligatory sense of the duty. In fact, this is *dharma*. Here, *dharma* means something which stimulates a man in both consciousness and action. Man spoils his energy to render some activities that are rituals. These are the causes behind this problem. When we know that to perform our duty is our real *dharma*, i.e., our *dharma* is to become moral, to acquire divine qualities and to do something which is assigned to us, the society will run smoothly and turn into heaven. Thus, we regain our *Karmasamskṛti* (work-culture) in true sense of the term. Actually, we need a state where common people can act according to their morality, without being biased by any rituals. We see that *Bhagavadgītā* is full of spiritual discussion but Krishna does not allow Arjuna to abandon his *svadharma* i.e. his duty at any cost. In the battle field of Kurukṣetra, fighting was the duty of Arjuna. He has listened weightful spiritual discussion to his friend Krishna. He has attained much knowledge from Krishna but not left fighting i.e. his duty. Only chanting the name of God ignoring one's duty cannot be one's *dharma*. In this context, Bal Gangadhara Tilak has quoted a *sloka* of *Pūrāṇa* in his book '*Karmarahasya*' on *Gītā* which runs as follows: '*apāhāya nijam karma kṛṣṇakṛṣṇetivādinaḥ / te harerdveṣinaḥ pāpā dharmārtham janma yadhareḥa*' i.e. those who say in mouth Krishna Krishna ignoring the duty of own are the foe of Hari who appeared on this earth for the sake of *dharma*. What does 'for the sake of *dharma*' mean? The first and foremost meaning of the term '*dharma*' is to perform proper

duty.<sup>11</sup> Hence, if one thinks of one's duty as one's *dharma*, one cannot keep oneself away from performing one's duty.

Lastly, is *dharma* as a moral value relevant today in a secular country like India? In fact, at present we need a religion which is not ritual-centric, around which all problems of social harmony and conflict start. In Buddhism and Jainism, we come across the concept of *dharma* which is, in fact, founded on morality. Moreover, Buddhism and *Sāṃkhya* are not God-centric also. Other meanings of *dharma* are not meaningful especially secular country like India unless it makes one moral or gives at least humanity. An individual, if so called religious, but not moral, cannot build a maliceless and peaceful society. Such persons are harmful to the society. Prof. Raghunath Ghosh cites an example of the deed of such a person in his book '*Facets of Feminism: Studies on the Concept of Woman in Indian Tradition*', which goes as follows:

“Such a picture of ignorance is beautifully painted in a Hindi film recently released called *bhavandar*. It is shown there that some of the persons ignorant about real status of woman have raped a village girl who has raised her voice against their evil deeds. Among the rapists there is a priest of a temple who is found to utter mantra – ‘*yā devī sarvabhūteṣu mātṛrūpeṇa samsthitā*’ in front of the goddess while worshipping just after the rape is performed by him. The priest who is one of the rapists has no right to utter this mantra giving great honour to women. In this context the Director of the film has shown the level of ignorance of ordinary man about great position of women as depicted in our scriptures and maintained by our ancestors. Had he realized the inner significance of such *mantra*, he would have refrained from such action of rape etc. Instead of torturing her he would have treated her as respectable as his

own mother. This is one instance of thousand types of woman-torture (pointed out by the director), which are going on every day in our society”.<sup>12</sup>

There are many persons in our society, who commit offence due to the ignorance of inner significance of their deeds. There are many persons also, on the other hand, who rather takes an artificial form (a pretended form) in their nature for doing the evil deeds, which is commonly known as *māyīkarūpa*. We know that Rāvana takes the garment of a *sage* for abducting Sita, which is nothing but his *māyīkarūpa*. The term *Māyā* as found in *māyīkarūpa* is taken in the sense of artificiality (*kṛitrimatā*). Any type of artificial form is called *Māyā*. True humanity or *dharma* remains in one’s non-artificial form. The picture of such non-artificiality (*amāyikatā*) is found in the following poem of Rabindranath:

*‘Ye sure bharile bhāṣabholā gīte,  
śīśur navīn jīvan vanśite,  
jananīr mukh tākāno hāsite  
se sure more bājāo’*<sup>13</sup>

(i.e. amuse me with the melody which is presented in the languageless song, in the flute of the new life of a baby and in the smiling glance of him towards mother’s face)

This non-artificial form of an individual is his real nature, pure identification. Caste, creed, religious identification; these all are something imposed on human beings. Actually we are beyond of all this. The same echo is found in a song, in a form of a simple question, of a village singer of Bengal:

*‘Jāt gela jāt gela vale  
-----  
āsvār kāle ki jāt chile  
ese tumi ki jāt nile  
ki jāt havā jāvār kāle  
sei kathā bheve balo nā’*<sup>14</sup>

(i.e. ...had you any caste at the time of your birth? And what caste will you take when you will die? Please tell thinking about this.)

We shall have to be free from all these imposed identification. Unless we decline these forms of identification, imposed upon us, it is impossible to become pure in true sense of the term. Sri Rupa Goswami, one of the six Goswamis of Vrindavana, a Vaisnava philosopher, holds the same, quoting a beautiful verse from *Nārada Pañcarātra*, in his '*Bhaktirasāmṛta-sindhu*', which runs as follows- '*sarvopādhivinirmuktam tat paratvena nirmalam*'.<sup>15</sup>

Real *dharma* always is based on moral values i.e. *dharma* is no more but obtaining moral values and to act accordingly. This truth is substantiated by the teaching of *Mahābhārata*. When Yaksa questioned Yudhiṣṭhira: 'What is the real path (*kṣa panthāḥ*) i.e. what path will an individual follow in his life'? In response Yudhiṣṭhira told: 'The real path is that in which *mahājanas* (great men) proceed (*mahājana yena gataḥ saḥ panthā*)' i.e. the path should be followed which has been guided by the great persons.<sup>16</sup> Now the question is who are the great persons. In *Śrīmadbhāgavatam* the great sage Vasadeva has mentioned about the great persons (*mahājanas*). It is stated there that twelve persons who knows about *Dharma* in true sense of the term are called great persons (*Svayambhūrṅnāradaḥ śambhu kumāraḥ kapila manuḥ / prahlāda janaka bhīṣma balirbaiyaskirvyam*)<sup>17</sup> i.e. Brahmā, Nārada; the sage of *Deva*, Śiva, Sanatkumār, Kapila; the sun of Devahuti, Manu, Prahlād Mahārāj, the king Janaka, Bhīṣmadeva; the son of Gangā, Vali Mahārāj, Śukadeva; the son of Vyasa, and I i.e. Yama. This was told by Yama (the Lord of Death) to his servants. And he also says that these twelve persons are those who actually know about *dharma* (*dvādaśaite vijānīma dharmam*).<sup>18</sup>

Now the question is: who are called great person (*mahātmā*)? What are the prime duties of them? In this context, we get the definition of great person in sixteen chapter of

*Bhagavadgītā*. Here, Krishna tells Arjuna that the persons who are endowed with divine qualities are called great person i.e. *mahātmāna* (*mahātmānastu mām pārtha daivīm prakṛtimāśritāḥ*).<sup>19</sup> In previous chapter, we have discussed that *daivī prakṛti* i.e. divine qualities are nothing but moral values. Accordingly the above mentioned twelve great persons are endowed with moral values. And the advices they have given to human beings are to instruct for obtaining moral values which are very much essential for wellbeing of the society. Let us discuss about the advices of them.

We come to know from *Śrimadbhagavatam* that Brahmā considers himself as creator of this universe. Accordingly, he has much ego. But later on he could understand that he is very small. Hence, then he offers his prayer to Lord to discard his excessive ego i.e. he wishes to be an egolessness person.<sup>20</sup> Egolessness is a great moral virtue. Here, Brahmā hints to adopt this moral virtue for wellbeing.

In the like manner, we observe that Śiva, one of the great persons (*mahātmāna*), advises that *buddhi* (intelligence) produces both divine and demon qualities such as *nidrā* (sleep), *tandrā* (idealness), *dayā* (compassion), *śraddhā* (respect), *tuṣṭi* (satisfaction), *kṣamā* (forgiveness), *lajjā* (sense of obligation), *śānti* (tranquility) etc. The person who seeks for wellbeing of the society will be careful to obtain divine qualities such as *dayā*, *śraddhā*, *tuṣṭi*, *kṣamā*, *lajjā*, *śānti* etc.<sup>21</sup>

In the same way, we also observe that Śukadeva asks for the advice from Nārada on the subject which brings the wellbeing of this world. In reply, Nārada told that it should not show enmity to others and be free from material attachment by quoting a conversation between the sages and Sanatkumar, the son of Brahmā, held in many years before. Non-enmity and non-attachment are both great moral virtue.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, he has emphasized on the true statement that bring wellbeing of the society.<sup>23</sup>

Sanatkumār, one of twelve *mahātmans*, advises that those who seek to be advanced in spiritual life or to return to the abode of Godhead have to exercise first: i) exercise of non-violence, ii) control over his sense organ, iii) keeping himself away from criticism of others. iv) leading his life with very simple. v) keeping patience.<sup>24</sup>

Manu tells to his grandson, Dhruva, that God becomes satisfied to those: i) who has the power of endurance, ii) who has compassion, iii) who has friendliness attitude to others and iv) who see all the living entities as different parts of the absolute (*titikṣayā karuṇayā maitryā cākḥilajantuṣu / samatvena ca sarvātmā bhagavān samprasīdati*). Moreover, he advises to Dhruva to be free from anger.<sup>25</sup>

Mother Devahūti wanted to know to his son Kapiladeva about devotion to God (*bhagavadbhakti*). In response, Kapiladeva told that one who seeks to attain devotion to God or love for God has to follow the following instruction:

- i) He has to be equal-minded to all living entities.
- ii) He has to be non-jealous to others.
- iii) He has to control his sexual life.
- iv) He has to avoid excessive word i.e. he will speak limitedly.
- v) He will perform his own duty leaving the fruit of his performance.
- vi) He has to be satisfied with what he has.
- vii) He has to take food what is needed for his health, not excessively.
- viii) He has to show friendly attitude to others.
- ix) He has to show compassion to others.
- x) He has to realize his own Self.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to above these, Kapiladeva told that one who exercises devotional service but considers himself as proud, envious to others, and angry is not situated in real path of devotional life.<sup>27</sup>

We see that Balī, the grandson of Prahlāda, has shown the glorification of charity (*dāna*). Despite prohibition of Śukrācārya, his master, he donated his all to Bamanadeva, the incarnation of Visnu. He has shown his much patience for this. It proves his obedience to moral value.<sup>28</sup>

The king Janaka has shown his obedience to his duty and advised to people for being non-envious and non-violence to others.<sup>29</sup>

Yudhiṣṭhira requested Bhīṣmadeva to tell about the duty by which human being can attain his good. In reply, Bhīṣmadeva told that one who abandons all types of sinful work (unethical work) by his deed, mind and speech can attain good in this life and even after life also. Yudhiṣṭhira asked what is understood by sinful work which can be performed by deed, mind and speech. Then Bhīṣmadeva explained these which are as follows:

1. Sinful work held by corporal deed
  - a) Violence
  - b) Stealing
  - c) Illicit sex life
2. Sinful work held by mental act
  - a) Desire for others' property
  - b) Ill-willing for others
  - c) Disrespect to the statement of Veda
3. Sinful work held by statement
  - a) Unnecessary dishonest speaking

- b) Speaking of the statement which gives the pain to others
- c) To speak the fault of others
- d) Speaking the false statement<sup>30</sup>

In addition to these above Bhīṣmadeva told that non-violence is the prime duty (*dharma*) of human beings.<sup>31</sup>

The term '*dharma*' in root sense refers to moral value; but in wider sense there are two aspects of *dharma* (Religion): i) Moral values or morality: This part deals with the instruction about what ought to do, or not do ii) Spiritualism: This part discusses about soul, God, devotion to God etc. We perceive all the scriptures that the second aspect cannot be successful if we reject the first one i.e. moral values or morality. Even it (instruction of moral obligation) is seen in the devotional scriptures where there have been emphasized on God and the devotion to God. If we find a verse in the scriptures of which in a line it has been said that God exists, the another line contains the instruction of moral obligation. Hence, the ultimate meaning of the term '*dharma*' is morality i.e. *dharma* as a moral value. We are not so concerned about this meaning of *dharma* i.e. moral value which is needed in our practical life or associated with our wellbeing. Rather we are much concerned about God. We are concerned about the procedure of worshiping. We quarrel with each other. We fight with each other. We are not concerned about morality. And even it is seen many times that those who are *dhārmikas* (pious) are not concerned about morality. But this part of *dharma* (religion) is available in all religions (*dharmas*): Hindu, Islam, Bauddha, Christian, Jaina etc. In all religions there are the instructions of performing the duty, achieving moral values, behaving with neighbour what we expect from others. We generally perceive to discuss scriptures about God, manner of worshiping, but not to discuss about moral values which are directly associated with our wellbeing.

We come across moral values in the songs of the *Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*. It is generally stated that the *vaiṣṇavs* emphasize much on God and devotion to Him. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his book ‘*Śaranāgati*’ offers a prayer to *Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura*, which runs as follows: ‘—*diyā pada-chāya, śodho he āmāya, tomāra caraṇa dhori / chaya bega domi, chaya doṣa śodhi, chaya guṇa deho dāse---*<sup>32</sup> i.e. purify me by the shade of your lotus feet. Your feet, I humbly hold. Controlling my six urges<sup>33</sup> and purifying me of the six faults,<sup>34</sup> please give me six good qualities making servant of you .<sup>35</sup> Here, he asks for some moral values after removing all types of faults. There is another song of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura from his ‘*Gītāvalī*’ which goes as follows: ‘—*nāmāśraya kori’ jatane tumi, thākaha āpana kāje / jīver kalyāṇa-sādhana-kām, jagate āsi’ e madhura nām --.*<sup>36</sup> Here, it is stated to perform the duties carefully by taking shelter in the holy name of God and also perform the wellbeing of the humanity (*jīver kalyāṇa*). There is also another song: ‘---*pratiṣṭhāsā - kuṭināṭi – Śaṭhatādi – piṣṭa, saral to hale nā he / ghireche tomāre bhai esava ariṣṭa, esav to śatru he / esava nā chere kise pābe rādhākṛṣṇa, yatane chāro chāro he.*<sup>37</sup> i.e. you have become crushed by the desire for fame, hypocrisy and crooked dealings! Oh, you are not very simple and straightforward! You are completely surrounded, dear brother, by all these inauspicious signs of death! Oh, these are indeed your deadly enemies! Here, we hear to become simple removing from fame and faults. The sentence is very important ‘*esava nā chere kise pabe rādhākṛṣṇa*’ i.e. you will not get association of Radhakrishna if you do not leave all these fault. There is a song by Bhaktivinada Ṭhākura: ‘--*bhoga-mokṣa-vāñcāchādi harinām gāire, suddha-sattva hoyere--*<sup>38</sup> i.e. giving up all desire for mundane enjoyment and liberation. I chant the holy names of the Supreme Lord! (Having become pure and situated in transcendence!). ‘--*patita-pāvana-hetu tava avatara / mo sama patita prabhu nā pāibe ār--*<sup>39</sup> This is a song composed by Narottama dasa Ṭhākura. He says ‘Your incarnation is just to reclaim the conditioned, fallen souls, but I assure You that You will not find a greater fallen

soul than me. He has shown his poverty here. It is a great moral virtue. There is a song from ‘*Śaraṇāgati*’ composed by Bhaktivinada Ṭhākura, which goes as follows: ‘—*sakala sahanē, bal diyā karo / nija-māne sprhā-hīna / sakale sammān korite śakati, deho nātha jathājatha / tabe to*’ *gāibo hari-nāma-sukhe, aparādha ha’be hata*—<sup>40</sup> i.e. give me strength to bear all trials and troubles, and free from all desires for personal honour. O lord and master! Invest me with the power to properly honour all living beings. Only then will I sing the holy name in great ecstasy and will all my offences cease. He has asked for endurance giving the honour to all leaving beings here. Endurance (*sahane*) and showing the honour are both great moral values. The same echo is found in another song by Bhaktivinada Ṭhākura: ‘—*citta sthira habe sakala sohibo, ekānte bhajibo hari*’<sup>41</sup> i.e. when will my mind become tranquil and fixed? When will I endure all hardships and serve Lord Hari without distraction? There is another song: ‘—*kanaka-kāminī-labha-pujā-āsā, cāhe mora citta āṛ pratiṣṭāsā / kirūpe śodhita habe mor citta. ai cintā sadā hay ---sādhu saṁge thāki, chaya vega dami*’ *śrikrṣṇa charaṇ sebi yena āmi---*<sup>42</sup> i.e. my mind always seeks money, woman, profit, fame etc, but how will my mind be purified from these; I want to serve the lotus feet of Sri Krishna by achieving the association of good person through controlling my sense organs. Devakinandana Dasa Ṭhākura has sung a song of which a line is: ‘*doṣa kṣami*’ *mo-adhame kara nija dās*’<sup>43</sup> i.e. make me your servant forgiving the faults of mine. He doesn’t want to become servant with his faults, but has wanted to become servant removing all faults, i.e. all immoral activities. There is a song which goes as follows: ‘--*gurumantra sār kara aivār, vrajete haibe vās / tama guṇa yāve sattvagūṇa pābe, haibe Kṛṣṇera dās--*’<sup>44</sup> i.e one can be servant of Krishna after initiation from spiritual master if and only if he removes darkness i.e. *tama guṇa* (all sinful works) obtaining goodness i.e. *sattvagūṇa* from which moral values are obtained. There is another song of which one line is: ‘--*kave viṣṇujane āmi kariba sammān--*’<sup>45</sup> i.e. when will I show my honour to the son of *Viṣṇu* i.e. all leaving entities. To show the

honour to others is a great moral virtue. There is another song which tells: ‘--dayāl nitāi caitanya bale nācre āmār man / aparādha dure jabe pābe premadhan--’<sup>46</sup> i.e. dance my mind by taking the holy name of Nitai Caitanya and you will obtain the love for Krishna (premadhan) only if you remove all your faults (aparādha). ‘--viṣya chāriyā kabe śuddha ha’be mana / kabe hām herabo śri brindābana--’<sup>47</sup> i.e. when my mind is completely purified, being free from material anxieties and desires, then I shall be able to understand Vrindāvana and the conjugal love of Radha and Krishna. This song was composed by Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura in his book ‘Prārthanā. Here purification of mind has been emphasized. Purity is a great moral virtue. There is a song by Locana dāsa Ṭhākura from his ‘Dhāmāli’ ‘--viṣaya chāḍiyā se rase majiyā mukhe bolo hari hari--’<sup>48</sup> i.e. if one wants to be Krishna conscious, one has to give up his engagement in sense gratification. One simply has to chant, Hari Hari. There is another song which runs as follows: ‘--hari nām diye hṛdaya śodhila / yāci giyā ghare ghare--’<sup>49</sup> i.e. the purpose of Hari nām is to purify heart. Vasudeva Ghosh has sung a song which is: ‘--gāo gāo punah, gaurāṅger guṇa, sarala koriyā man--’<sup>50</sup> i.e. sing again and again of the glorious qualities of Lord Gauranga! Just try to keep your heart simple. Simplicity is a great moral value. There is a song by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura from his book ‘Śaraṇāgati’, which runs as follows: ‘--kabe ha’be bolo se-dina āmār / aparādha ghuci’, śuddha nāme ruci / kṛpā-bale ha’be hṛdoye sañcār; tṛṇādhika hīna, kabe nije māni’, sahiṣṇutā-guṇa hṛdoyeta āni’ / sakale mānada, āpani amānī, ho’ye āswādiba nāma-rasa-sār--kabe navadwipe, suradhanī-tate, / gaura-nityānanda boli’ niṣkapate --kabe jīve dayā, hoibe udoya---’<sup>51</sup> i.e. please tell me, When will that day be mine-when my offenses will end and a taste for the pure holy name will be infused within my heart by the power of divine grace, Considering myself lower than a blade of grass, bringing the myself being freed from all false pride-when will I taste the essence of the liquid nectar of holy name. When, in the land of Navadvīpa, on the banks of the Ganges, will I call “O Gaura! O Nityānanda!” with simplicity

(*niṣkapate*). When will there be an awakening of compassion (*dayā*) for all leaving beings. To show compassion is a great moral virtue. There is another song by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura from his book ‘*Śaraṇāgati*’ ‘---āmāra jīvana, sadā pāpe rata, nāhiko punyera leśa / parere udvega, diyachi ye koto, diyāchi jīvera kleśa ---mada-matta sadā, viṣaye mohita, himsā-garva vibhuṣaṇa ---nidrālasya hata, sukārye virata, akārye udyogi āmi---.’<sup>52</sup> i.e. I am impious sinner and have caused others great anxiety and trouble. I am intoxicated by vanity, and bewildered by worldly affairs, envy egotism are the ornaments I wear. I am ruined by laziness and sleep, I resist all moral deeds; yet I am very active and enthusiastic to perform immoral acts. There is another song by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in the name of Caṅd-Baul Das: ‘---dharma pathe thāki kara jīvan yāpan bhai / harinām kara sadā hari vinā bandhu nāi---’<sup>53</sup> i.e. you chant the holy name of God, without God you have no friend, but you have to lead your life performing your own duty (*Dharma*). We come across a song of *Vaiṣṇava Ācharya* which runs as follows: ‘---aparādha chāḍi kṛṣṇa nāma layo / anale paḍaye jal---’<sup>54</sup> i.e. if one chants the name of Krishna giving up his all immoral acts, then the name of Krishna works just like the water is poured in the fair. We find another song: ‘---jāvata janama mor, aparādhe hainu bhor / niṣkapate nā bhajinu tomā---’<sup>55</sup> i.e. I have committed offence forever, I did not worship you with non-artificiality. Be non-artificial is a great moral value. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda tells a song in his book ‘*Kalyāṇa-Kalpataru*’: ‘*gopīnāth, kemone śodhibe more*’<sup>56</sup> i.e. how will you purify me? Here, purification has been emphasized. There is another song by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura: ‘---aparādha-śūnya ho ’ye loha kṛṣṇa-nām, kṛṣṇa mātā kṛṣṇa pitā kṛṣṇa dhana prāṇa / kṛṣṇera saṁsāra karo chāḍi anācāra, jīve dayā kṛṣṇa-nām sarba-dharma-sāra--’<sup>57</sup> i.e. chant Krishna’s name without offence. Accept Krishna as your mother. Accept Krishna as your father. Accept Krishna as your wealth and life. Give up all sins, immoral deeds (*anācāra*) Make Krishna your whole world. Be merciful (*dayā*) to all living beings. Chant Krishna’s-names. That is the essence of all religion.

It may be concluded that the glorification of obtaining moral values are available in the songs of *Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas* also. Generally, they are devoted to God Krishna. They discuss about the glorification of ‘*Bhakti*’ (Devotion), surrender to God etc. But now-a-days we rarely perceive the *vaiṣṇavas* to propagate the glorification of moral values which are very much available in the songs and in the instructions of their previous *Ācāryas*. These songs are chanted as if for chanting, but not for implementation in practical life. We have already discussed about moral values as prescribed in *Bhagavadgītā*, *Śrī Chandī*, scriptures etc. also. Here some important *ślokas* (Verses) are mentioned from *Gītā*, where there is the instruction of moral obligation along with devotion to God. We find in the last verse of The Lord’s Transfiguration (*Viśvarūpadarśanayogo*) of *Bhagavadgītā*: ‘*matkarmaḥṇ mattparama madbhaktaḥ saṅgavarjitaḥ / nirvairaḥ sarvabhūteṣu yaḥ sa mām eti pāṇḍava*’<sup>58</sup> i.e. he who does work for Me, he who looks upon Me as his goal, he who worships Me, free from attachment, who is free from enmity to every leaving being, he goes to Me, O *Pāṇḍava* (Arjuna). Here an important thing is that there only would have been that one who does work for Him, looks upon Him as goal as his life, worships Him, he goes to Him. But we notice that the Lord Krishna has told that one can go to Him if one is free from attachment, enmity to every leaving being i.e. friendly to all creatures. In the purport of this verse S. Radhakrishnan says:

“This is the essence of Bhakti. See XII,13. This verse is the substance of the whole teaching of the *Gītā*. We must carry out our duties, directing spirit to God and with detachment from all interest in the thing of the world and free from enmity towards any living being”.<sup>59</sup>

We come across in everywhere of scriptures that where there is stated about the glorification of God, devotion to God, there is also stated about some moral obligation as worthy to follow. We do not find a single verse in our scriptures where there is no moral

obligation along with to say something about God generally. The last verse of 12<sup>th</sup> Chapter of *Bhagavadgita* indicates that these moral values are immortal *dharma* (*dharmyāmṛtam*) of every one, which is mentioned earlier in details. The same thing we perceive in 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter in the case of the definition of wisdom, where it has been stated some moral values i.e. humility, pridelessness, tolerance, simplicity etc with the devotion without any break to God (*bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī*).<sup>60</sup> In this case also the same word we can state that there might have been the devotion without any break to God alone not mentioning the moral values stated above. Why are moral values stated? Where there is stated about God, there is stated about moral obligation. It means that without morality Religion (*dharma*) is not possible. In this context we may cite another verse of *Bhagavadgītā*: ‘*nirmānamohā jītasāṅgadosā adhyātmanityā vinivṛttakāmāḥ / dvandvair vimuktāḥ sukhaduḥkhasamjñair gacchanty amūḍhāḥ padam avyayam tat*’<sup>61</sup> i.e. those who are free from false prestige, illusion and false association, who understand the eternal, who are done with material lust, who are free from the dualities of happiness and distress, and who unbewildered, know how to surrender unto the Supreme Person attain to that eternal kingdom. Here also, we come across that it has been stated to surrender unto the Supreme Personality of the Goadhead along with some moral values. It has been stated in the 54<sup>th</sup> verse of 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Bhagavadgītā* that one can attain the supreme devotion to God only when one becomes satisfied (tranquil in spirit) and equal-minded to all living beings being free from sorrows and desire (*brahmabhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣti / samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu madbhaktim labhate param*). This verse also hints to be moral along with the attainment of devotion to God.

To obtain moral values, to act accordingly, and to perform the duty i. e. professional duty (*svadharmo*) is the ultimate aim of *Bhagavadgītā*. We have discussed about moral values earlier. In the performance of professional duty we may cite an important verse from *Bhagavadgītā*: ‘*yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānām yena sarvam idaṁ tatam / svakarmanā tam*

*abhyarcya siddhim vindati mānavah*’ i.e. He who is the source of all living beings; from whom all efforts of beings come and who is all-pervading – by worshipping Him through the performance of his own duty does man attain perfection. The purport of this verse is to perform the duty i.e. to perform of one’s duty is worship of the Supreme. Worship is not merely to offer flower and leaf to Him i.e. God was not worshiped by flower and leaf (*patrapuṣpa*) only.<sup>62</sup> The next verse of it is: ‘*śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt / svabhāvaniyataṁ karma kurvan nā’pnoti kilviṣam*’<sup>63</sup> i.e. it is better to engage in one’s own occupation, even though one may perform it imperfectly, than to accept another’s occupation and perform it perfectly. Duties prescribed according to one’s own nature (*varṇa*) are never affected by sinful reaction. To perform own occupation imperfectly may generally be treated as fault. But normally it is seen that there are some faults in every action. We hear the echo of the same in a verse of the *Bhagavadgītā*: ‘*sahajam karma kaunteya sadoṣam api na tyajet / sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa dhūmenā’gnir ivā’vṛtāḥ*’<sup>64</sup> i.e. every endeavour is covered by some fault, just as fire is covered by smoke. Therefore, one should not give up the work born of his nature, O son of Kuntī, even if such work is full of fault. Hence, we come across that the advice of Lord Krishna is: perform one’s own duty. Duty should never be abandoned.

If we take the notion *dharma* in aforesaid meaning, i.e. in the sense of moral value, then conflict among different religions could be removed. No one can demand that his religion is superior to any other religion in the world. There is no scope of differentiating among different religions if the purpose of all religions is to generate moral sense, though there may have different rituals among different religions. An action which violates moral principles and which goes against wellbeing of the human society is not accepted by any religion. All religions seek the wellbeing and prosperity of the human society. And wellbeing and prosperity comes only when each one of the society becomes devoted to moral principle. Accordingly, it is morality which is to be considered as *dharma*, since wellbeing comes from

morality in true sense of the term. If the aim of all religions becomes the attainment of morality, rituals and religious performances become secondary matter. Consequently, the clash among men will not be taken place on the basis of religion at least. At present, the clash among the religions, in fact, is taken place due to the difference of rituals and also due to the difference of religious institution i.e. masque and temple etc, which is to be considered as secondary matter in religion. Misinterpretation of the religion is the root cause of these differences, which make it to be considered as primary one. Man should understand this misinterpretation and be virtuous, which is based on morality. In fact, the religion should be devoted to the welfare of the humanity. It is stated in *Kenopaniṣad* that the persons who are wise see the God among all living entities in the world and transcend this world by rendering the service to them (*bhūteṣu bhūteṣu vicinity dhīrāḥ pretyāsmāllōkādāmṛtā bhabanti*).<sup>65</sup> Hence, from the age of *Upaniṣad* this Ultimate Truth (God) has been searched within the man and other living beings. If one spends his day by worshiping the God and keeps him confined within the temple, but hates man, then God is never present there. We hear the same echo in the statement frequently quoted of Swami Vivekananda: ‘*bahurūpe sammukhe chāri kothā khunjecha īśvar / jīve prem kare yei jan sai jan seveche īśvar*’, i.e. searching for God in elsewhere becomes meaningless without leaving the God in the form of different living beings in front of us, or ‘*ore mūrkhadal ! jīvanta devatā theli, abahelā kari*’ *ananta prakāś tānr ea bhūbanmay, calechis chute mithiyā māyer pichane brithā dvandva kaloher pāne— karo tār upāsanā, ekmātra pratyakṣa devatā, bhenge phelo ār sav putul pratimā*’<sup>66</sup> i.e. ignoring the living gods you worship the idols, the living beings are the expression of Brahman, breaking all the idols you worship the living gods. For, it is one who loves living beings loves God in true sense of the term. Attainment of God is not possible without ignoring the service to the man. A poet of Bengal announced that no truth is greater than man (*savār upare mānuṣ satya tāhār upare nāi*).<sup>67</sup> God exists in the heart of the grass-root people,

who are the smallest of all (*yethāy thāke savār adham dīner hate dīn saikhāne ye caran tomār rāye ...*).<sup>68</sup> Hence, God is absent in the temple which was made by the king with twenty hundred thousand gold coins (*binmśa lakṣa svarāṇa mudrā diyā*)<sup>69</sup> depriving with the shelter to twenty thousand people who were houseless due to the burning of the fire (*ye batsar banhidāhe dīna bimśati sahasra prajā gṛhahīn...*).<sup>70</sup> Rabindranath thinks that man's heart is the house of God. We can give service to the God with providing the service to the man. When we hate man, we hate God (*mānuṣer paraśere pratidin thekāiā dūre; gṛhṇā kariāco tumi mānuṣer prāner thākure*).<sup>71</sup> Because, truth, peacefulness, sympathy, love etc. are the pillar of the house of the supreme personality of the Godhead (*mor ghare bhitti cirantan satya, śānti, dayā, prem*).<sup>72</sup>

It is true that there are many religions in our society. Religious diversity sometimes prompts us to violence. But if religion is based on morality and if we can discover oneness, a concord among different religions, then there is no question of any clash or violence. When a man is in danger, say for example, if a man is sinking into the water, can we ask his religion in order to save him? Shall I decide my duty by considering the fact that to what religion he belongs? What will my humanity / my heart say? In this context, we will certainly not consider the religion. If we consider my duty on the basis of religion, it will go against humanity. Humanity prompts us to help the endangered person. If we think of the promptness which lies in the heart of every man, the problem is automatically resolved. In this context, Kazi Nazrul Islam beautifully says. When man is in danger, we should not ask whether he or she is Hindu or Muslims ("*hindu nā orā muslim*"? *oi jijnāse kon jan?*). In that situation, we should consider that a man is sinking into the water, who is the son of my mother (*dubiche mānuṣ, santān mor mār!*).<sup>73</sup> Certainly, all the religions are in the favour of these teaching. We have to discover the unity among the religions. The words of humanity i.e. service to the mankind, devotion to the duty, love to creature or creation etc. have been said in all the

religions. Moreover, the apparent contradiction which we feel among different religions, are super imposed to human beings. For instance, I may think that, would that I was born in India, I would probably become Hindu, or would that I was born in Arab, we would become Muslim. In the like manner I would become Buddhist for taking birth in Sri Lanka and would become Christian for the same cause in England. Different situation would make me different 'I'. Hence, it can be concluded that 'I am Hindu' or 'I am Muslim' are imposed to man which are not real identification of him. When we discover such an apprehension to religions, the contradiction among different religions can easily be removed. Besides this different religions are the different way of understanding the Ultimate Truth. We cannot confine the truth by specific religion. The ultimate aim of all religions is to realize this Ultimate Truth. Accordingly, we should give attention to realize this truth and perform moral duty to others, which are the common teaching of all religions, ignoring the apparent contradiction among different religions, i.e. ignoring different types of worshipping, different manner of the prayer and different rituals. *Pratimā* (Icon), *Kruś* (Cross), *Candrakalā* (Phase or digit of the moon) are the representative symbol of becoming advanced in spiritual life. The ultimate aim is to expand the self. Hence, we have to discover the unity among the diversity of religions. We have to be concerned about the main teaching of the religions, which is nothing, but to love all leaving beings and to perform moral duties to them.

Hence, if *dharma* is based on morality i.e. moral values like endurance, forgiveness, friendliness, compassion, non-violence, truthfulness, softness, simplicity, egolessness etc. described earlier along with performing of one's own duties, as well as non-artificial behavior of man i.e. true humanity, then one universal religion can be prescribed in the whole world for bringing global peace and harmony. Morality and humanity are the two milestones of real recognition of man, from which wellbeing of the society comes. The basic task of religion is to give service to leaving beings that are actually the expansion of God. *Dharma* as a moral

value is the real meaning of the phenomenon *dharma*, which is the principal teaching of all religions and, need of the present hour for world peace.

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32. A.C. Bhiktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (Tr.): *Songs of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Mumbai, 1991, p. 61.
33. The six urges are those of speech, the mind, anger, the tongue, the belly, and the genitals.
34. The six faults are over eating more monetary funds than required, overendeavoring for material objectives, unnecessary talking about mundane affairs, being too attached to or too neglectful of scriptural rules and regulations, associating with worldly-minded persons, and lusting after mundane achievements.
35. The six good qualities are enthusiasm, patience, confidence, the determination to perform activities favourable to devotional service, the resolution to abandon the association of nondevotees, and the discipline required to always follow in the footsteps of predecessor ācāryas.
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37. Garangaprem Swami (Ed.): *Namhattya Parichya* (in Beng.), Porama Printing Workers, Svarupganj, Nadia, 2009, p. 46.
38. *Ibid*, p. 47.
39. *Ibid*, p. 52.
40. A.C. Bhiktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (Tr.): *Songs of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Mumbai, 1991, p. 43.

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53. *Ibid*, p. 89.
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56. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (Tr.): *Songs of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Mumbai, 1991, p. 38.

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## ***DHARMA IN THE SENSE OF MORALITY: AN ANALYSIS***

RANJIT KUMAR BARMAN

It is a well known fact that the human beings are different from animals. This difference is implicated by '*Dharma*'. But what is *Dharma*? Is *Dharma* something ritual which is offered for the satisfaction of God or to have the grace of Him, or something others?

Generally the term *Dharma* bears various meanings. Bankim Chandra in his article *Dharmatattva* has given six meanings of the term.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes it means some religious activities. Sometimes it refers to the essential character of an object. In this paper an effort has been made to investigate the original meaning of *Dharma*, which makes a man actually distinguished from an animal, and also to examine in what sense *Dharma* is relevant in present day society, especially in a secular country like India. If we carefully go through our traditional texts in order to determine the actual meaning of the term *Dharma*, we find that this term has basically been taken, in these texts, in the sense of morality, which is its real meaning, I think. *Dharma* in the sense of morality is the basic significance of the term. The other meanings of the term are centered on this. I consider that this sense of *Dharma* is relevant for present situation of the society in order to remove the religions violence.

The role of religion, in the history of the evolution of human thought, is very important. From the very beginning of time religion has occupied the central position in human life. It would not be exaggerated, if we say after following Max Muller, that the true history of man is the history of his religion'.<sup>2</sup> We may ponder over the wellbeing which is achieved through religion in society. A historical account says that many conflicts have been occurred in the earth, the major cause of which is religious sentiment. As a result, we have witnessed the different awful violence of the riot and even of the war including murder, bloodshed, women-torture, hampering the chastity of women, burning the house, destruction of the temple, mosque and the church etc. *Lajjā*, a novel, by Taslima Nasrin, is the testimony of such kinds of religious conflicts. In the novel, Taslima has shown, just after the destruction of the Bavri mosque in India, how the naked violence is spread over the Hindus in Bangladesh. This novel, I think, is the vivid picture of violence arising from religious intolerance. Taslima says:

The passionate and insane Hindus have destroyed the Babri mosque. Now the Hindus of the Bangladesh will have to expiate of their (the Indian Hindus) sin. The man belonging to the minority community like Sudhamay was not released from the torture of fanatic Muslims in the year 1990, so why would they be released in the year 1992? In this year, also, Sudhamay(s) will hide them in the cavity of mouse. Is it due to the fact that he belongs to the Hindu community, or as the Hindus have destroyed the mosque in India? <sup>3</sup>

Due to the misconception of *Dharma* the division and mistrust among human beings has been spread throughout the country. Religion or *Dharma* makes us blind. It is overall noticed that a man belonging to a particular sect or religion does not tolerate others belonging to another sect or religion. This situation is not found in present day due to understanding the wider notion of *Dharma*. If we go through the history, we come to know about the crusade war which is declared by the Christian to recover Palestine, the holy land of Christian being related to Jesus Christ's life, from Mahommedans. The Brahmins did not accept the emergence of Buddhists and Jainas in India. In eleventh century the Hindu king Harse of Kashmir destroyed the Buddhist temples and killed thousand number of Buddhist. Jainism was attacked and their books were burnt. After all, the reason behind this is that there is contradiction among different religious sects. Division of the country on the basis of religion is crude reality. <sup>4</sup>

One thing is worthy to mention here that although the term *Dharma* is translated into 'religion' in modern time, yet these two do not convey the same meaning, i.e. the meaning conveyed by the Sanskrit word *Dharma* is not the same with that of the word 'religion'. In English, usually the word 'religion' means the custom of a group of people.

'Religion is a set of common beliefs held by the group of people often codified as prayer and religious law. There are as many different types of religion and there are different types of people in the world.'<sup>5</sup> The English word 'religion' is derived from the Middle English 'religioun' which came from the Old French religion. It may have been originally derived from the Latin word 'religo' which means 'good faith,' 'ritual' and other similar meanings. Or it may have come from the Latin 'religāre' which means 'to tie fast.'<sup>6</sup>

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary expresses the meaning of the word religion in the following way: i) The belief in the existence of god or gods, and

the activities that are connected with the worship of them. ii) One of the systems of faith that are based on the belief in the existence of a particular god or gods. The New Collins Dictionary gives the meaning of religion as any formal or institutionalized expression of the belief in a supernatural power(s) considered to be divine or to have control of human destiny. In Bengali we arbitrarily say: '*jaler dharma tṛṣṇā nivāran karā*' i.e., the *dharma* of water is to quench thirst and '*āguner dharma dahan karā*' i.e., the *dharma* of fire is to burn. Now rendering the word *Dharma* with the word religion, if we translate the above two sentences that the religion of water is to quench thirst and the religion of fire is to burn, would it be right translations of these two sentences? In Sanskrit, the meaning of the term *Dharma* is different from what we normally understand. The term *Dharma* is constituted with the Sanskrit root verb '*dhṛ*' adding with the suffix *man*. The word *dhṛ* means upholding. Hence, the derivative meaning of the term *Dharma* is something upholding, something sustaining. That, which sustains it, is its *Dharma*. In the case of an object, the essential property upholds it. Hence, the essential property of an object is its *Dharma*. For, this property bears the identity of it. *Dharma* is the essential character of an object through which it is known as such. In the like manner, the essential property of a man which upholds him, distinguishes him, is the *Dharma* of him.

Though actually the meaning of the term *Dharma* is something upholding, i.e. something that sustains an object, an individual, a society and the whole universe harmoniously, yet it is not taken as a similar manner. Now-a-days, we see that many things are being practiced by the name of *Dharma*. Some think that worshiping the idol of goddess is their *Dharma*. Some consider that the imposition of their own faith to others is their *Dharma*, fighting for this is also considered as *Dharma*. Some think that *Dharma* is meant for chanting and dancing besides a tree after smearing it with oil and vermilion. Some feel that to paint the body with ashes or to wear a particular dress is *Dharma*. Indeed, at present, the picture which comes to our mind, at first, for representing the phenomenon of *Dharma* is what is just said above due to the unaware of the real meaning of the term *Dharma*. Keeping the idea in view, it is essential to know the exact meaning of the term *Dharma* as described in our ancient texts.

It is stated that an individual without *Dharma* in the sense of morality is a beast (*Dharmena hīnā paśubhiḥ samānāḥ*). But why are human beings, in spite of being more intelligent and more advanced, considered as animal? The answer from the stand point of the scriptures is that there are four instincts in both men and animals. These are eating, sleeping, fearing and enjoying of the sex life. A dog eats; a man also eats. It may be in the case of man that it is well cooked foods. A dog sleeps, gets fear and takes the enjoyment of sex; a man also adopts these, but in complicated way. It may be the case that he or she sleeps in a well decorated room and takes the enjoyment of sex in association with a beautiful lady. He saves himself in making the weapons. The above said differences do not mean that human beings are different from animals as the purpose remains the same in both cases. The following verse tells us that one is taken to be distinguished from an animal if one holds *dharma* in one's day life. (*āhāra nidrā bhaya maithunañca sāmānyametat paśubhir narāṇām; dharma hi teṣāmadhika viśeṣa dharmeṇa hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ*).<sup>7</sup>

Let us consider some traditional texts. If we first consider the first verse of *Bhagavadgītā*, we can see that Dhritarastra asked Sañjay what his sons and the sons of Pandu had done being assembled in *Kurukṣetra* which is also known as the field of righteousness. The verse is as follows: '*Dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ; Māmakaḥ pāṇdavāś cai va kimakurvata sañjaya*'.<sup>8</sup> Here the term '*Dharma*' in the word '*Dharmakṣetre*' has been used in ethical sense. There is another verse where it is stated that whenever *Dharma* (justice) is demolished as well as *Adharma* (injustice) is increased. Krishna appears on this earth to establish *Dharma* and to protect the honest persons.<sup>9</sup> In this verse also the term '*Dharma*' is taken in the moral sense.

The ethics of the *Bhagavadgītā* is to attain the knowledge by which one can perform one's duties without the hope for the fruits, which is called *Niṣkāma Karma*. Krishna says that this technique of rendering duties to the society will save a man from the material danger. (*svalpam apy asya dharmasya; trāyate mahato bhayāt*).<sup>10</sup> The significance is that this type of *Dharma* is nothing but moral consciousness which is to be attained through its practice in everyday life.

This view is also found in *Śrimadbhāgavatam*. It is stated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> verse of the first canto that one should abandon the so called *Dharma* which is not associated with

good and it is needed to become clean for performing *Dharma* (*dharmah prajjhita kaitavoh'atra paramah nirmatsarāṇām satām*). Here the word 'nirmatsarāṇām' (mentioned in the *sloka*) is very important with a view to performing *Dharma*. *Nirmatsarāṇām* means one whose heart is completely free from dirty.<sup>11</sup> It is one of the moral virtues. This verse also suggests that *Dharma* means to become advanced in moral status.

Now we consider the term *Dharma* in the view point of *Mahābhārata*. It is stated that to think the welfare of all living beings is *Dharma*. This feeling is not taken only for the welfare of human beings, but also for that of all living entities in the world. Friendly attitude to others is also considered as *Dharma* in the eye of this scripture.<sup>12</sup> In this epic justice to human beings is taken so emphatically that for the sake of the good of the human being it is permissible to say false words (*Satyājyāyonṛtamvācah*).<sup>13</sup> This is the uniqueness of this scripture that to speak false is accepted here to ensure the good.

The same view is again substantiated in the *Manusmṛhitā*. According to Manu, *Dharma* is that by which one can attain the highest good. He considers that *Dharma* can be performed by honest and intellectual persons who do not have malice. This feeling of *Dharma*, after Manu, comes from our conscience (*hṛdayenābhyanujñāta*).<sup>14</sup>

It is also stated in *Manusmṛhita* that a person who is *dhārmika* in the true sense of the term must have thirteen qualities, which are as follows: service to other (*aparopatāpitā*), non-jealous to others (*anasūyatā*), softness in temperament (*mṛdūṭā*), non-harassment to others (*apāruṣyam*), friendliness (*mitratā*), capability of speaking lovable words (*priyamvāditā*), sense of gratitude (*kṛtajñatā*), pity to others (*karunyam*), etc.<sup>15</sup> These are all moral virtues which constitute *Dharma* and hence these are to be developed for establishing the welfare of human being as well as that of the society. There is also a mention of ten qualities, which are called *sādhārana dharma*,<sup>16</sup> and these are to be maintained by all.

Apart from these mentioned above, Manu has given a very short definition of *dharma*, which is as follows: '*Ahimsā satyamasteyam śauca saṁyamevaca; atad samāśikam proktam dharmasya pañcalakṣaṇam*'.<sup>17</sup> Non-violence, truth, non-stealing, cleanliness and equality- all these moral virtues are the marks of a *dhārmika* person. Mahānāmabrata Brahmācāri calls these qualities as 'religion of a gentle man'.<sup>18</sup> The

ultimate objective is to become gentle. There is a prayer in *Rgveda* which runs as follows ‘*bhadram no api vatyayaḥ manaḥ*’ i.e. make our mind gentle, satisfied and purified.<sup>19</sup> Without purity no true worship is possible. Unless an individual is pure in body and mind, his coming into a temple and worshipping the Deity are meaningless. Enhancement, development and uplift of these qualities in life are *Dharma*. Hence it may be taken into account that *dharma* is nothing but obtaining some moral values. Here, we can remember the statement of Taslima Nasrin. In her novel (*Lajja*) she comments ‘*Dharmer apar nām āaj theke manuṣyatva hok*’.<sup>20</sup> *Manuṣyatva* or humanity may become another name of *Dharma* from today.

Now, we can review of the standpoint of the *Vaiśeṣikas* regarding the notion of *Dharma*. In *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, *Dharma* is beautifully defined as follows. That from which one is associated with prosperity and highest good is called *Dharma*. The activities which connect us with welfare in real sense of the term are called *Dharma*. (*Yato’bhyudaya niḥśreyasa siddhiḥ saḥ dharmah*).<sup>21</sup>

Thus, we come across that all our scriptures are advising everyone to be morally advanced in life. Without morality, spiritualism is not to be attained. To reach the highest level of spirituality one should lead moral life. Besides these, we may cite the position of Jainism and Buddhism in this regard. We know *Pañcamahāvratā* of Jainism and *Pañcaśīla* of Buddhism, which are nothing but moral consciousness.

This very theme is also echoed in the philosophy of Vivekananda and Rabindranath. Vivekananda advises man to manifest the divinity within. *Dharma* is defined by Rabindranath as the extension of the self, i.e. to realize, ‘I’ am among the all things of the world and all things are within ‘me’. It is this which is the journey of human life in the eye of Rabindranath. And this is called *Dharma*. In the circle of his creation (poems, songs etc.), we find the picture of becoming of the extension of the self. In the poem ‘*Prabhāt Utsab*’ he tells:

“*hṛday āji mor kemone gelo khuli*  
*Jagat āsi sethā kariche kolākuli*”<sup>22</sup>

If the above consideration is accepted, some philosophical problems can be raised on the notion of *Dharma*. First, we come across many definitions of *Dharma* in deferent systems of Indian philosophy, but derivative meaning of the term is ‘something upholding’ (*dhāranāt dharmam ityāhuḥ*). How can derivative general meaning of the term be extended to all the definitions? To answer this question we

can say that, if we carefully go through the definitions of *Dharma* in different texts, we shall notice that there is a common message in all the definitions. And the message is to sustain the human beings, society and even the world by providing their wellbeing. Now the question is: what is the thing that sustains the world? It is an order which sustains the world. Likewise, moral principle/morality is that which sustains human beings as well as the society. All the definitions of *Dharma* show that it is moral value which ultimately upholds an individual, the society and the world. The task of moral principle is to bring the harmonious wellbeing to the society. It should not be expected that one's comfort causes the discomfort of another.

We do not find any definition of *Dharma* where there is no moral implication. Caitanya Mahāprabhu once told Sanātana Goswami that the *Dharma* of present age is to show pity or sympathy to others, to feel the fondness of chanting the holy name of God and to give the service to the *vaisnavas* (*Jive dayā nāme ruchi vaiṣṇava sevan, ihā haite dharma ān nāhi Sanātana / 'Caitanya Caritāmrita'*). The word 'dayā' (sympathy) is a moral virtue. All good concepts, generally, are stipulated in the holy name of God. Hence, the chanting of such a vibration of the name of God, I think, must have, at least, psychological value, and it keeps us balanced. The word '*Vaiṣṇava*' does not mean the devotees of Lord *Viṣṇu* only, but all the living entities also on account of the fact that the word '*Vaiṣṇava*' is constituted with the Sanskrit root word '*Viṣṇu*' and its suffix '*sna*'. The suffix *sna* means son. Naturally we all are *vaiṣṇavas* for being the son of God. Hence, *vaiṣṇava sevana* means to bestow the service to all living entities. Accordingly, it can be shown that the basic meaning of *Dharma* can be extended to all definitions.

Secondly, how can the notion of *Dharma* in the sense of morality be extended to other definitions given by the *Vaiśeṣikas*? According to *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* *Dharma* is that which brings prosperity in mundane life and spiritual bliss (*Yato'bhyudaya niḥśreyasa siddhiḥ saḥ dharmah*). In response to this question it is said that values regulate a man's conduct which ultimately brings worldly prosperity and spiritual bliss. Now, we may observe how values regulate the conduct of a man. Here an example is given:

"Let us see how *lajjā* makes us active. We generally do some work being prompted by *caḥṣulajjā* or 'shame of the eye'. If all the members of my family are

engaged in performing different duties, it is not possible for me to sit in idleness as it does not 'look good'. We shall be bound to perform duty so that others do not criticize us. The idea which prompts us to action is called *cakṣulajjā*. In other words, when other family members or members of our society are engaged in duty, our activity becomes the cause of our shame. In order to hide it, we become active. It is a fact that, if a man does not engage himself in the service to ensure the welfare of society, then other social members call him 'self-centred' etc. Nobody wants to be designated as self-centred etc, as these attributes become the cause of shame to him. In order to make himself free from this shame, he comes forward to the service of the society and in this way he becomes active".<sup>23</sup>

Thirdly, a problem may be raised if *Dharma* is taken in the sense of morality, it will contradict the *Bhagavadgītā's* statement: '*Sarvadharmān parityajya māmekāṁ smaraṇam vraja*' (i.e. take shelter with me leaving all *Dharmas*).<sup>24</sup> It may be taken as the contradiction to *Āgama*, which is not acceptable. The problems may be solved when we consider the principles of teaching in the *Vedas*. In Vedic system, we find that a person comes to a bona fide *guru* and he must surrender to the lotus feet of him, which ultimately leads him to lead a moral life.

Fourthly, it is stated in our scriptures that somebody is reluctant to do some work in spite of knowing that it is duty or virtuous (*jānāmi dharmam na ca me pravṛtti*). On the other hand, someone hardly feels to refrain from some action in spite of knowing that it is not virtuous (*jānāmi adharmaṁ na ca me nivṛtīh*). How do such conditions prevail in our society? What are the causes of the same? The causes are that we forget the obligatory sense of the duty. In fact this is *Dharma*. Here *Dharma* means that which stimulates a man in both consciousness and action. Man spoils his energy to render some activities that are rituals. These are the causes behind this problem. When we know that our duty, i.e., our *Dharma* is to become morally advanced, to acquire some divine qualities and to act something which is assigned to us, the society will run smoothly and turn into heaven. In that level, we regain our *Karmasanskṛiti* (work-culture) in the true sense of the term. Actually, we need a state where common people can act according to their morality, not being biased in any religious codes.

Lastly, is *Dharma* in the sense of morality relevant today in a secular country like India? In fact, at present we need a religion which is not ritual-centric, around which all problems of social harmony and conflict start. In Buddhism and Jainism, we come across the concept of *Dharma* which is, in fact, founded on morality. Moreover, Buddhism and *Sāṃkhya* are not God-centric also. An individual, if so called religious, but not moral, cannot built a malice less and a peaceful society. Such persons are harmful to the society. Prof. Raghunath Ghosh cites an example of the deed of such a person in '*Facets of Feminism: Studies on the Concept of Woman in Indian Tradition*', which goes as follows:

“Such a picture of ignorance is beautifully painted in a Hindi film recently released called *bhavandar*. It is shown there that some of the persons ignorant about real status of woman have raped a village girl who has raised her voice against their evil deeds. Among the rapists there is a priest of a temple who is found to utter mantra – ‘*yā devi sarvabhutesu mātṛrupena samsthitā*’ in front of the goddess while worshipping just after the rape is performed by him. The priest who is one of the rapists has no right to utter this mantra giving great honour to women. In this context the Director of the film has shown the level of ignorance of ordinary man about great position of women as depicted in our scriptures and maintained by our ancestors. Had he realized the inner significance of such *mantra*, he would have refrained from such action of rape etc. Instead of torturing her he would have treated her as respectable as his own mother. This is one instance of thousand types of woman-torture (pointed out by the director), which are going on every day in our society”.<sup>25</sup>

There are many persons in our society, who commit offence due to the ignorance of inner significance of their deeds. There are many persons also, on the other hand, who not for ignorance rather takes an artificial form (a pretended form) in their nature for doing the evil deeds, which is commonly known as *māyikarūpa*. We know that Rāvana takes the garment of a *sage* for abducting Sita, which is nothing but his *māyikarūpa*. The term *Māyā* as found in *māyikarūpa* is taken in the sense of artificiality (*kṛitrimatā*). Any type of artificial form is called *Māyā*. True humanity or *Dharma* remains in one’s non-artificial form. The picture of such non-artificiality (*amāyikatā*) is found in the following poem of Rabindranath:

‘Bājāo āmāre Bājāo, bājāle ye sure probhāt ālore  
Se sure more bājāo, ye sure bharile bhāṣabholā gīte,  
Śīsur navīn jīvan vanśite, Jananīr mukh tākāno hāsīte, Se sure more bājāo’<sup>26</sup>

This non artificial form of an individual is his real nature, pure identification. Caste, creed, religious identification; these all are something imposed on human beings. Actually we are beyond of all this. The same echo is found in a song, in a form of a simple question, of a village singer of Bengal: '*Āsvār kāle ki jāt chile, ese tumi ki jāt nile, ki jāt havā jāvār kāle, sei kathā bheve balo nā*'<sup>27</sup> (A song, composed by Lalon Fakir)

We shall have to be free from all these imposed identification. Unless we decline these forms of identification, imposed upon us, it is impossible to become pure in the true sense of the term. Sri Rupa Goswami, one of the six Goswamis of Vrindavana, a Vaisnava philosopher, holds the same, quoting a beautiful verse from *Nārada Pancaratra*, in his '*Bhaktirasāmṛta-sindhu*', which runs as follows- '*sarvopādhi vinirmuktam tat paratvena nirmalam*'.

Hence, it can be said that, if *Dharma* is based on morality as well as non-artificial form of humanity i.e. true humanity, one Universal Religion can be prescribed in the whole world for bringing global peace and harmony. And without only this sense that *Dharma* in the sense of morality (not in ritual sense), human beings are, indeed, considered as animals. Even Aristotle once remarked that man is rational animal. If we set-aside rationality from the definition of man then there is no distinction between a man and an animal.

### Notes and References:

1. These six meanings are : i) Religion like Buddhism, Hinduism, Islamism etc, ii) Morality, iii) Attitude of pious man, iv) Ritual activities which is defined as *pāpa & punya*, v) Essential character of an object, like *Dharma* of water is to move downwards, vi) Customs like *deshadharmā*, *kuladharmā* etc. Bankim Chandra: *Dharmatattva*, *Bankim Rachanavali*, 2<sup>nd</sup> part, Sāhitya Samsad, Kolkata, 1361 (B. S.), p. 672.
2. D Miall Eduards: *The Philosophy of Religion*, New York: George H. Doran Company, 1924, p.9.
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12. *Sarvabhūtahitam maitram purānam yam janā viduḥ. Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva* 261/59 ( taken from an article entitled 'Dharma as a Moral Value' by Prof Raghunath Ghosh, The Journal of Religious Studies, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, Guru Gobinda Singh Dept. of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patila, Spring 1997, p. 96.).
13. *Ibid, Dronaparva*, 89/47. ('Dharma as a Moral Value' by Prof. Raghunath Ghosh *The Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, Guru Gobinda Singh Dept. of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patila, Spring 1997, p. 96.).
14. *Manusamhita*, 2/1. (*Manusamhita* [Beng] edit. Manabendu Bandyopadhyay, Sadesh Kolkata, 2004, p. 21.).
15. *Kulluka on M. S.* 2/6. (These accurate English expressions of the Sanskrit terms have been taken from the book entitled '*Sura, Man and Society: Philosophy of Harmony in Indian Tradition* Raghunath Ghosh, Academic Enterprise, Culcutta, pp. 41-42).
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## AN INDIAN OUTLOOK TO THE CONCEPT OF DHARMA: IN THE NEED OF PRESENT DAY

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### ABSTRACT

Generally we use the term 'Religion' and the term 'Dharma' as the same meaning though the term 'Dharma' is completely different from the term 'Religion'. But it is true that the notion Dharma is being practiced as different from what actually the meaning of Dharma is. The Sanskrit term 'Dharma' bears various meanings. Sometimes it means rituals i.e. some activities which are offered to God or goddess. Sometimes it means some customs. Sometimes it refers to the essential character of an object. Bankim Chandra in his article 'Dharmatattva' has mentioned six meanings of the term.<sup>1</sup> In this paper an endeavor has been made to critically evaluate the term 'Dharma' and to show its relevant meaning in the need of present day. If we carefully go through traditional texts of India in order to determine the actual meaning of the term 'Dharma', we find that this term has basically been taken, in these texts, in the sense of moral value. Dharma in the sense of moral value is the basic significance of the term. The other meanings of the term are centered around this. I consider that this sense of Dharma is relevant for present situation of the society in order to remove the religions violence.

**KEYWORDS:** Religion Dharma, Values, Morality, Extension of the Self

### INTRODUCTION

The role of religion, in the history of the evolution of human thought, is very important. From the very beginning of time religion has occupied the central position in human life. It would not be exaggerated, if we say after following Max Muller, that the true history of man is the history of his religion'.<sup>2</sup> We may ponder over the wellbeing which is achieved through religion in society. A historical account says that many conflicts have been occurred in the earth, the major cause of which is religious sentiment. As a result, we have witnessed the different awful violence of the riot and even of the war including murder, bloodshed, women-torture, hampering the chastity of women, burning the house, destruction of the temple, mosque and the church etc. Lajjā, a novel, by Taslima Nasrin, is the testimony of such kinds of religious conflicts. In the novel, Taslima has shown, just after the destruction of the Bavri mosque in India, how the naked violence is spread over the Hindus in Bangladesh. This novel, I think, is the vivid picture of violence arising from religious intolerance. Taslima says

The passionate and insane Hindus have destroyed the Babri mosque. Now the Hindus of the Bangladesh will have to expiate of their (the Indian Hindus) sin. The man belonging to the minority community like Sudhamay was not released from the torture of fanatic Muslims in the year 1990, so why would they be released in the year 1992? In this year, also, the persons like Sudhamay will hide themselves in the cavity of mouse. Is it due to the fact that he belongs to the Hindu community, or as the Hindus have destroyed the mosque in India?<sup>3</sup>

Due to the misconception of Dharma the division and mistrust among human beings has been spread throughout the country. Religion or Dharma makes us blind. It is overall noticed that a man belonging to a particular sect or religion does not tolerate others belonging to another sect or religion. This situation is not only found in present day due to no understanding the wider notion of Dharma, but also if we go through the history, we come to know about the crusade war which is declared by the Christian to recover Palestine, the holy land of Christian being related to Jesus Christ's life, from Mohammedans. The Brahmins did not accept the emergence of Buddhists and Janis in India. In eleventh century the Hindu king Harsena of Kashmir destroyed the Buddhist temples and killed thousand number of Buddhist. Jainism was attacked and their books were burnt. After all, the reason behind this is that there is contradiction among different religious sects. Division of the country India on the basis of religion is crude reality.<sup>4</sup>

There are many religions in our society simply because different men have different test (bhinnarucirhi lokh). Religious diversity sometimes prompts us to violence. But we can find an oneness, a concord among different religions. When a man in danger or in the position of that he is sinking in the water, can we ask his religion? Shall I decide my duty in considering the fact that in what religion he belongs? What will my humanity/ my heart say? In this context, we will certainly not consider the religion. If we consider my duty on the basis of religion, it will go against humanity. Humanity prompts us to help the endangered person. If we think of the promptness which lies in the heart of every man, the problem is automatically to be resolved. It is the word which Kazi Nazrul Islam says. When man is in danger, we should not ask whether he or she is Hindu or Muslims ("hindu nā orā muslim"? oi jijnāse kon jan?). In that situation we should consider that a man is sinking into the water, who is the son of my mother, i.e. my brother (dubiche mānuṣ, santān mor mār!).<sup>5</sup> Certainly all the religions are in the favor of these teaching. We have to discover the unity among the religions. The words of humanity i.e. service to the mankind, devotion to the duty, love to creature or creation etc have been said in all the religions. Moreover, the apparent contradiction which we feel among different religions, are super imposed to human beings. For instance, I may think that, would that I was born in India, I would probably become Hindu, or would that I was born in Arab, we would become Muslim. In the like manner I would become Buddhist for taking birth in Sri Lanka and would become Christian for the same cause in England. Different situation would make me different 'I'. Hence, it can be concluded that 'I am Hindu' or 'I am Muslim' are imposed to man which are not real identification of him. When we discover such an apprehension to religions, the contradiction among different religions is to be overcome. Besides this different religions are the different way of understanding the ultimate truth. We cannot confine the truth by specific religion. The ultimate aim of all religions is to realize this ultimate truth. Accordingly we should give attention to realize this truth and perform moral duty to others, which are the common teaching of all religions, ignoring the apparent contradiction among different religions, i.e. ignoring different types of worshiping, different manner of the prayer and different rituals. Pratimā (Icon), Krush (Cross), Chandrakalā (Phase or digit of the moon) are the representative symbol of becoming advanced in spiritual life. The ultimate aim is to expand the self. Hence, we have to discover the unity among the diversity of religions. We have to be concerned about the main teaching of the religions, which is nothing, but to love all leaving beings and to perform moral duties to them

One thing is worthy to mention here that although the term 'Dharma' is translated into 'religion' in modern time, yet these two do not convey the same meaning, i.e. the meaning conveyed by the Sanskrit word 'Dharma' is not the same with that of the word 'religion'. In English, usually the word 'religion' means the custom of a group of people.

'Religion is a set of common beliefs held by the group of people often codified as prayer and religious law. There are as many different types of religion and there are different types of people in the world.'<sup>6</sup> The English word 'religion' is derived from the Middle English 'religioun' which came from the Old French religion. It may have been originally derived from the Latin word 'religo' which means 'good faith,' 'ritual' and other similar meanings. Or it may have come from the Latin 'religāre' which means 'to tie fast.'<sup>7</sup>

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary expresses the meaning of the word religion in the following way: i) The belief in the existence of god or gods, and the activities that are connected with the worship of them. ii) One of the systems of faith that are based on the belief in the existence of a particular god or gods. The New Collins Dictionary gives the meaning of religion as any formal or institutionalized expression of the belief in a supernatural power(s) considered to be divine or to have control of human destiny. In Bengali we arbitrarily say: 'jaler dharma tṛṣṇā nivāran karā' i.e., the dharma of water is to quench thirst and 'āguner dharma dahan karā' i.e., the dharma of fire is to burn. Now rendering the word 'Dharma' with the word 'religion', if we translate the above two sentences that the religion of water is to quench thirst and the religion of fire is to burn, would it be right translations of these two sentences? In Sanskrit, the meaning of the term 'Dharma' is different from what we normally understand. The term 'Dharma' is constituted with the Sanskrit root verb 'dhr' adding with the suffix 'man'. The word 'dhr' means 'upholding'. Hence, the derivative meaning of the term 'Dharma' is something upholding, something sustaining. That, which sustains it, is its Dharma. In the case of an object, the essential property upholds it. Hence, the essential property of an object is its Dharma. For, this property bears the identity of it. Dharma is the essential character of an object through which it is known as such. In the like manner, the essential property of a man which upholds him, distinguishes him, is the Dharma of him.

Though actually the meaning of the term 'Dharma' is something upholding, i.e. something that sustains an object, an individual, a society and the whole universe harmoniously, yet it is not taken as a similar manner. Now-a-days, we see that many things are being practiced by the name of Dharma. Some think that worshiping the idol of goddess is their Dharma. Some consider that the imposition of their own faith to others is their Dharma, fighting for this is also considered as Dharma. Some think that Dharma is meant for chanting and dancing besides a tree after smearing it with oil and vermilion. Some feel that to paint the body with ashes or to wear a particular dress is Dharma. Indeed, at present, the picture which comes to our mind, at first, for representing the phenomenon of Dharma is what is just said above due to the unaware of the real meaning of the term 'Dharma'. Keeping the idea in view, it is essential to investigate the meaning of the term 'Dharma', what actually stated in ancient texts in India.

If it is asked that in what aspect human beings are different from animals, answer will, of course, come from different perspectives. Our scriptures have a view to this question. Our scriptures observe that this difference is implicated by 'Dharma'. Dharma is a distinguishing characteristic of an individual. It is stated that an individual without Dharma is a beast (Dharmena hīnā paśubhiḥ samānāḥ). But why are human beings, in spite of being more intelligent and more advanced, considered as animal? The answer from the stand point of the scriptures is that there are four instincts in both men and animals. These are eating, sleeping, fearing and enjoying of the sex life. A dog eats; a man also eats. It may be in the case of man that it is well cooked foods. A dog sleeps, gets fear and takes the enjoyment of sex; a man also adopts these, but in complicated way. It may be the case that he or she sleeps in a well decorated room and takes the enjoyment of sex in association with a beautiful lady. He saves himself in making the weapons. The above said differences do not mean that human beings are different from animals as the purpose remains the same in both cases. The following verse tells us

that one is taken to be distinguished from an animal if one holds Dharma in one's day life (āhāra nidrā bhaya maithunañc sāmānyametata paśubhir narāṇām; dharma hi teṣāmadhika viśeṣa dharmeṇa hūnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ).<sup>8</sup> Now the question is what, in fact, Dharma is. Is Dharma only some activities? Generally we can observe that all the religion (except Buddhism) starts with some activities which are offered to God or goddess. Here activities stand for rituals. All rituals are performed to create the satisfaction of God or to have His grace. There are different rituals in different religions; but the purpose of the rituals is to offer those to God. Hence, it is said that though rituals are different; but purpose is the same. In Hinduism it is stated primarily that rituals are the means of the attainment of Knowledge. We find the instruction for performing jajña in Mimāṃsā school (svargakāmo jajet; arthakāmo jajet, etc). Though such types of activities are purpose oriented, the significance behind these rituals is to tell the need of man; because without necessity no man generally fills inclination to work. Any theory is accepted if and only if its necessity is expressed. Accordingly, man performs some rituals in the purpose of the fulfillment of his need. And through the performance of these rituals man attains the devotion to God. Hence, though different rituals are prescribed in different religions, but the purpose is the same, i.e. to devotion to the God. All the rituals prescribed in different religions help to clean the dirty of our heart. We have to understand the purport of these rituals, which is nothing, but to clean the heart and to proceed to moral life. The performance of such activities is meaningless unless we fail to attain moral and spiritual life. These activities (rituals) are called aparā vidyā and these are to be needed as promoter to attain moral and immortal life. It is stated in Iśopaniṣad : 'avidyā mṛtuym tīrtv vidyāmṛtamśnte.'<sup>9</sup> All the religions prescribe some rituals and admit the fact that the rituals clean the heart. And if it is so we can bring a harmony among different religions. At present, we see that rituals are the root from which religious violence is taken place. Accordingly, if we confess the purport (mentioned above) of rituals, then the controversy among different religions is to be resolved.

If God is one and our business is to arrive at Him, then it does not matter that, what path we follow. I shall pray to God for my need; it may be in Sanskritmantra, or by performing jajña or in the language of Urdu. It does not matter. There is no cause of conflict among different religions simply because the prayer by different language, different manner of worshipping, mosque, or temple- these all are offered to God. If one fails to discover the unity among different religion and thinks that alone his path is true then it is considered that he is in preliminary stage, his heart was not to be expanded, he could not realize the ultimate truth. There is a maxim in Sanskrit: 'tṛṇāraṇi-maṇi-nyaya', i.e. fire has burning power which can fulfill my daily-need. This fire may come from grass, from wood, or from jewel. If I need fire, I should want fire. Do I need to know the source of the fire? Certainly not. In the like manner, if it becomes aim to realize the one God, we have no necessity to consider about in what language, or in which place this realization is to be attained. We need to expand of our heart. If one does not expand his heart, he thinks that his religion, his rituals, his temple, mosque or church is only the path to realize the God. In such a situation he ignores others' religion, he becomes very much intolerant. It is the situation which we may call fundamentalism. The path of Dharma will be followed by reasoning, not by dogma. Manusmṛhitā tells that one who tries to know Dharma by his reasoning knows Dharma in true sense of the term (sastarkeṇanusamdhatta s dharmaṃ veda netṛḥ)

Let us consider some traditional texts. If we first consider the first verse of Bhagavadgītā, we can see that Dhritarastra asked Sañjaya what his sons and the sons of Pandu had done being assembled in Kurukṣetra which is also known as the field of righteousness. The verse is as follows: 'Dharmakṣetre Kurukṣetre samaveta yuyutsavaḥ; Māmakal Pāṇḍavāś caiva kim akurvata sañjaya'.<sup>10</sup> Here the term 'Dharma' in the word 'Dharmakṣetre' has been used in ethical sense. There is another verse where it is stated that whenever Dharma (justice) is demolished as well as Adharma

(injustice) is increased. Krishna appears on this earth to establish Dharma and to protect the honest persons.<sup>11</sup> In this verse also the term 'Dharma' is taken in the moral sense.

The ethics of the Bhagavadgītā is to attain the knowledge by which one can perform one's duties without the hope for the fruits, which is called Niṣkāma Karma. Krishna says that this technique of rendering duties to the society will save a man from the material danger. (svalpam apy asya dharmasya; trāyate mahato bhayāt).<sup>12</sup> The significance is that this type of Dharma is nothing but moral consciousness which is to be attained through its practice in everyday life.

This view is also found in Śrīmadbhāgavatam. It is stated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> verse of the first canto that one should abandon the so called Dharma which is not associated with good and it is needed to become clean for performing Dharma (dharmah prajjhita kaitavoḥ'atra paramah nirmatsarāṇām satām). Here the word 'nirmatsarāṇām' (mentioned in the sloka) is very important with a view to performing Dharma. 'Nirmatsarāṇām' means one whose heart is completely free from dirty.<sup>13</sup> It is one of the moral virtues. This verse also suggests that Dharma means to become advanced in moral status.

Now we consider the term 'Dharma' in the view point of Mahābhārata. It is stated that to think the welfare of all living beings is Dharma. This feeling is not taken only for the welfare of human beings, but also for that of all living entities in the world. Friendly attitude to others is also considered as Dharma in the eye of this scripture.<sup>14</sup> Here, we, as if, can hear the echo of maitri and karunā of Buddhism. In this epic justice to human beings is taken so emphatically that for the sake of the good of the human beings it is permissible to say false words (Satyājyāyonṛtamvācah).<sup>15</sup> This is the uniqueness of this scripture that to speak false is accepted here to ensure the good. In Hinduism and Buddhism there is a common dictum: 'bahujanahitāy bahujanasukhāy. That which is sacrificed for the sake of happiness of much is called Dharma. We shall not accept anything considering as Dharma which is not associated with good. As per Mahābhārata those who are adorned with good virtue are considered to be pious. Forgiveness, steadiness, shame of the eye etc are worthy to mention as good virtues (Birātparva 6/20). Miserliness-less (Akārpanya) is a good virtue, as mentioned in the Mahābhārata. A person who is miser becomes narrow minded. Miserliness is a state where sacrifice-mentality is absent, which is never considered as good virtue. Hence, we see that open minded persons are generally adorned with miserliness-less, which brings religious tolerance. Those who do not have forbearance or tolerance to others' religion are miser or self-centric, which is the source of fundamentalism.

The same view is again substantiated in the Manusmṛhitā. According to Manu, Dharma is that by which one can attain the highest good. He considers that Dharma can be performed by honest and intellectual persons who do not have malice. This feeling of Dharma, after Manu, comes from our conscience (hr̥dayenābhyanujñāta).<sup>16</sup>

It is also stated in Manusmṛhitā that a person who is dhārmika in the true sense of the term must have thirteen qualities, which are as follows: service to others (aparopatāpitā), non-jealous to others (anasūyatā), softness in temperament (mṛdutā), non-harassment to others (apāruṣyam), friendliness (mitratā), capability of speaking lovable words (priyamvādītā), sense of gratitude (kṛtajñatā), pity to others (kārunyam), etc.<sup>17</sup> These are all moral virtues which constitute Dharma and hence these are to be developed for establishing the welfare of human beings as well as that of the society. There is also a mention of ten qualities, which are called sādharma dharma,<sup>18</sup> and these are to be maintained by all.

Apart from these, mentioned above, Manu has given a very short definition of Dharma, which is as follows: 'Ahimsā satyamasteyaṁ śauca saṁnyamevaca; atad samāsikam proktam dharmasya pañcalakṣaṇaṁ'.<sup>19</sup> Non-violence, truth, non-stealing, cleanliness and equality- all these moral virtues are the marks of a dharmika person. Mahanamabrata

Brahmacari calls these qualities as 'religion of a gentle man'.<sup>20</sup> The ultimate objective is to become gentle. There is a prayer in R̥gveda which runs as follows 'bhadram no api vatyayaḥ manaḥ' i.e. make our mind gentle, satisfied and purified.<sup>21</sup> Without purity no true worship is possible. Unless an individual is pure in body and mind, his coming into a temple and worshipping the Deity are meaningless. Enhancement, development and uplift of these qualities in life are Dharma. Hence it may be taken into account that Dharma is nothing but obtaining some moral values. Here, we can remember the statement of Taslima Nasrin. In her novel (LAJJĀ) she comments 'Dharmer apar nām āj theke manuṣyatva hok'.<sup>22</sup> Manuṣyatva or humanity may become another name of Dharma from today.

According to Manusamhitā, Dharma does not mean something static, rather dynamic in nature since when something is associated with the welfare of the humanity, it is considered as Dharma. The authors of our scriptures have framed law in such a way that the people of different sects, the weaker sections, specially the women are protected. As per Manu, though the Brahmins are not generally allowed to take weapons, but they can take weapons for self-protection, or for social justice or to protect women. What is Adharma is considered as Dharma in considering situational context.<sup>23</sup> According to Manusamhitā, Dharma is not only the injunction of Veda or the instruction of Smṛiti but also good conduct as well as imperative of our conscience. Manu has told: 'vidvadbhiḥ sevith sadbhīrityamadveṣrāgibhiḥ; hr̥dyenābhyanuñjāto yo dharmah', i.e. the action which is approved by the instruction of the heart of the person who are learned, honest, and free from anger and greed is considered to be Dharma<sup>24</sup>. It is stated in Manusamhitā that, when we feel doubt to determine which one is our duty between the two alternatives, in such a situation duty is to be determined by the instruction of the conscience of the person who is free from attachment and aversion.

Keeping the view in mind, Mimamsakas recognize Dharma as Vidhi, i.e. injunction of the Veda. These injunctions bind the man with good and generate satisfaction. The injunctions sanctioned by the Veda for being associated with good are considered to be Dharma.<sup>25</sup> These injunctions generate a persuasion which is called ātmakuta. This ātmakuta, i.e. ethical persuasion which lies in our heart helps us to lead our lives moral. In man's life the injunctions are so significant that the injunctions are described equivalent as God. Madhusudan Dutta in his epic 'Meghnāth Vadh' said: 'sthāpilā vidhure vidhi', i.e. vidhi or God placed the moon in the head of Śiva.<sup>26</sup> In 'Hitopades' also the term 'vidhi' is used in understanding God (vidhurapi vidhiyogād grosyat rāhunāsou), i.e. the moon, with the help of God, has swallowed Rahu. Gandhiji also said: 'law and the law-giver is one'

From the above discussion it may be concluded that Dharma is that which is practiced by malice less person, and that which is associated with good. The same view is substantiated in Vaiśeṣika Sūtra. Dharma is beautifully defined there as follows. That from which one is associated with prosperity and highest good is called Dharma (Yato'bhyudaya niḥśreyasa siddhiḥ saḥ dharmah).<sup>27</sup> Dharma is that from which we attain knowledge and good. We find a great liberty here. The answer of the question, i.e. what is Dharma? will be that which connect us with the welfare of the humanity in true sense of the term. Here 'good' denotes both worldly good and beyond worldly good

Thus, we come across that all our scriptures are advising everyone to be morally advanced in life. Without morality, spiritualism is not to be attained. To reach the highest level of spirituality one should lead moral life.

Besides these, we may cite the position of Jainism and Buddhism in this regard. We know Pañcamahāvratā Jainism and Pañcaśīla of Buddhism, which are nothing but moral consciousness.

This very theme is also echoed in the philosophy of Vivekananda and Ramakrishnadeva. Ramakrishnadeva has shown that all the religions are the different path of the realization of God. According to him the attainment of God is the ultimate aim of human life. We should not concern about the fact whether God is called by the name of Allah or Krishna. Ramakrishnadeva did not mere practice the path of Hinduism but also practice Islamism and Christianity and realize that the aim of religious life is to realize the ultimate truth. Vivekananda advises man to manifest the divinity within. He thinks that the emergence of divinity which lies in an individual's being is the duty of every man. And to him the accomplishment of this duty is considered as Dharma of an individual. Swamiji says

'Do not care for the doctrines; do not care for dogmas or sects or Churches or Temples. They cannot for little compared with the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality and the more this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for good. Earn that first, acquire that and criticize no one; for all doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Show by your lives that religion does not mean words, or names or sects but that it means spiritual realization.'<sup>28</sup>

In fact, the religion which Vivekananda proposed as 'Universal religion' is open to all individuals irrespective of his caste, creed, nationality, gender etc. An individual have the right to follow the religion in accordance with his inner nature and his choice. Such a religion seeks to grow our attention to the positive aspects of all religions and not to the external forms of religions, such as rituals, books, gods and so on. To him the direct transcendental experience of the ultimate reality is the basis of true religion. This idea of realization is common to all religions. The aim of all religions is the realizing of God in the soul. He says: 'I believe that they are not contradictory; they are supplementary. Each religion, as it were, takes up one part of the great universal truth, and spends its whole force in embodying and typifying that part of the great truth. It is, therefore, addition, not exclusion. That is the idea'.<sup>29</sup> He thinks, contradiction among different religions would be vanished, if we proceed to realize the ultimate truth truly and to understand what our duty is. He continues: 'my idea, therefore, is that all these religions are different forces in the economy of God, working for the good of mankind'.<sup>30</sup> 'Good of the mankind' is the ultimate aim of all religions, Hence, the duty of man is to serve the humanity through the realization of the fact that all living beings are the expansion of that truth.

Dharma is defined by Rabindranath as the extension of the self, i.e. to realize, 'I' am among the all things of the world and all things are within 'me'. It is this which is the journey of human life in the eye of Rabindranath. And this is called Dharma. In the circle of his creation (poems, songs etc.), we find the picture of becoming of the extension of the self. In the poem 'Prabhāt Utsab' he tells:

"hṛday āji mor kemone gelo khuli  
jagat āsi sethā kariche kolākuli"<sup>31</sup>

(i.e. I do not know how the door of my heart is opened today. And I see that the whole world is embracing me)

In the philosophy of Rabindranath, we find a consciousness which unites an individual with the universe. In fact, to realize this consciousness and to be governed by this consciousness is the duty of an individual, which is his Dharma. To him Dharma is not to follow the instruction of institutionalized religion, which goes against humanity. He has raised his voice in the following words: 'Dharmakārār prācīre bajra hāno', i.e. to break the wall of such kind of religion, which confines us within ourselves ('Dharma Moho' Parīṣeṣ). According to him the religion of man is to embrace the whole universe, to feel the unity with the universe, which is not mere humanism, but also to acquire the philosophy of the unity of the universe (akāś bhārā surya tārā biśva bhārā prān....). The philosophy of the unity embracing the entire star in the sky is

not called humanism by Rabindranath, but the religion of man. It is religion of man in the sense that man is the only creature to whom the universe is revealed in this manner. He calls it the surplus in man.<sup>32</sup> The same thing is echoed in the song of Boul sect of Bengal. We know the song 'āmi kothāy pābo tāre āmār maner mānuser yere' composed by Gagar Harkara or 'milon habe kato dine āmār maner mānuserai sane' composed by Lalon Fakir. Rabindranath says that the concept 'maner mānuser' of Boul is nothing but to realize the surplus essence in man, i.e. to realize perfection which already lies in the man. The religion which he proposes may be called as poetic humanism, not mere humanism.<sup>33</sup> Rabindranath did not like to confine with the custom of institutionalized religion. He thinks that devotion to custom is one kind of fascination to religion. The persons who are free from this fascination, engaged in doing welfare of the humanity are very much liked by Rabindranath. To him atheism having free mind is better than fascination to religion. We hear in his poem 'Dharmer beśe moho yare ese dhare; andha se jan māre ār śudhu mare. Nāstik seo pāy bidhātār bar, dhārmikater kare nā āramber; śraddhā kariā jvāle budhir ālo, śāstre māne nā, māne mānuṣer bhālo' ("Dharma Moho", Parisēṣ). He was very much concerned about the welfare of the humanity (mānuser bhālo); not rituals. Hence, we come across that both Rabindranath and Vivekananda did not want to accept the instruction of institutionalized religion, rather were concerned about the welfare of the humanity through the emergence of divine power.

We have already mentioned that jajña is considered as Dharma in Mimāṃsā School, because jajña help to lead the man to moral life removing excessive desire and anger. Accordingly, jajña has been considered as Dharma in wider sense. The etymological meaning of the term Dharma is: 'dhṛte anena eti dharmah', i.e. that which sustains is Dharma. That which upholds wellbeing and prosperity is considered as Dharma. If performance of rituals (jajña) helps to bring moral sense to human beings, it may be considered as Dharma indirectly. Those who attain moral sense without performing the rituals may be recognized as dharmika person. If it is seen that a person who performs so called religious duties (rituals), but does not maintain moral life is never considered as virtuous or dharmika.

If we take the notion Dharma in aforesaid meaning, i.e. in the sense of morality, then conflict among different religions would be vanished. No one can demand that his religion is superior to any other religion in the world. There is no scope of differentiate among different religions if the purpose of all religions is to create the emergence of moral sense, though there may have different rituals among different religions. No action which is not followed by moral principle, which goes against wellbeing of the human society, is accepted by any religion. Simultaneously, all religions seek the wellbeing and prosperity of the human society. And wellbeing and prosperity comes only when each one of the society becomes devoted to moral principle. Accordingly, it is morality which is to be considered as Dharma, since wellbeing comes from morality in true sense of the term. If the aim of all religions becomes the attainment of morality, then it becomes secondary matter that, which type of rituals or religious procedure, is to be taken. Consequently, the clash man to man will not be taken place on the basis of religion at least. At present, the clash among the religions, in fact, is taken place due to the difference of rituals and also due to having difference between masque and temple, which is to be considered as secondary matter in religion. Misinterpretation to the religion is the root cause of these differences, which make it to be considered as primary one. Man should understand this misinterpretation and be virtuous, which is based on morality. In fact, the religion should be devoted with the welfare of the humanity. It is stated in Kenopaniṣad that the persons who are wise see the God among all living entities in the world and transcend this world by rendering the service to them (bhūteṣu bhūteṣu vicitya dhārāḥ pretyasmalokātmṛtā bhabanti).<sup>34</sup> Hence, from the age of Upaniṣad this ultimate truth (God) has been finding within the man and other living beings. If one spends his day with worshipping the God and keeps him confined within the temple, but hates man, then God is never present there. We hear the same echo in the statement of

Swami Vivekananda: 'bahurupe sammukhe chāri kothā khujicha t̄svar/ jive prem kare yei jan sai jan seveche t̄svar', i.e. searching for God in elsewhere becomes meaningless without leaving the God in the form of different leaving beings in front of us. For, it is one who loves living beings loves God in true sense of the term. Attainment of God is not possible without ignoring the service to the man. A poet of Bengal announced that no truth is greater than man (savār upare mānuṣ satya tāhār upare nāi). God exists in the heart of the grass-root people, who are the smallest of all (yethāy thāke saver adham dīner hate dīn saikhāne ye caran tomār rāye ).<sup>35</sup> Hence, God is absent in the temple which was made by the king with twenty hundred thousand gold coins (binṁśa lakhya sarana mudrā diā) depriving with the shelter to twenty thousand people who were houseless due to the burning of the fire (ye batsar banhidāhe dīna binṁśati sahasra praṣā grihahīn.).<sup>36</sup> Rabindranath thinks that man's heart is the house of God. We can give service to the God with providing the service to the man. When we hate man, we hate God (mānuṣer paroṣere pratidin thekāiā dūre; ghrinā kariāco tumi mānuṣer prāner thākure).<sup>37</sup>

In fact, at present we need a religion which is not ritual-centric, around which all problems of social harmony and conflict start. In Buddhism and Jainism, we come across the concept of Dharma which is, in fact, founded on morality. Moreover, Buddhism and Sāṁkhya are not God-centric also. An individual, if so called religious, but not moral, cannot build a malice-less and a peaceful society. Such persons are harmful to the society. Prof. Raghunath Ghosh cites an example of the deed of such a person in his book 'Facets of Feminism: Studies on the Concept of Woman in Indian Tradition', which goes as follows:

"Such a picture of ignorance is beautifully painted in a Hindi film recently released called bhavandar. It is shown there that some of the persons ignorant about real status of woman have raped a village girl who has raised her voice against their evil deeds. Among the rapists there is a priest of a temple who is found to utter mantra –'yā devi sarvabhutesu mātṛrupena saṁsthitā' in front of the goddess while worshipping just after the rape is performed by him. The priest who is one of the rapists has no right to utter this mantra giving great honour to women. In this context the Director of the film has shown the level of ignorance of ordinary man about great position of women as depicted in our scriptures and maintained by our ancestors. Had he realized the inner significance of such mantra, he would have refrained from such action of rape etc. Instead of torturing her he would have treated her as respectable as his own mother. This is one instance of thousand types of woman-torture (pointed out by the director), which are going on every day in our society".<sup>38</sup>

There are many persons in our society, who commit offence due to the ignorance of inner significance of their deeds. There are many persons also, on the other hand, who not for ignorance rather takes an artificial form (a pretended form) in their nature for doing the evil deeds, which is commonly known as māyikarūpa. We know that Rāvana takes the garment of a sage for abducting Sita, which is nothing but his māyikarūpa. The term 'Māyā' as found in māyikarūpa is taken in the sense of artificiality (kṛtrimatā). Any type of artificial form is called Māyā. True humanity or Dharma remains in one's non-artificial form. The picture of such non-artificiality (amāyikatā) is found in the following poem of Rabindranath:

Ye sure bharile bhāṣabholā gīte,  
śiśur navīn jīvan vanṣite,  
jananīr mukh tākāno hāsite  
Se sure more bājāo'<sup>39</sup>

(i.e. amuse me with the melody which is presented in the languageless song, in the flute of the new life of a baby and in the smiling glance of him towards mother's face)

This non artificial form of an individual is his real nature, pure identification. Caste, creed, religious identification; these all are something imposed on human beings. Actually we are beyond of all this. The same echo is found in a song, in a form of a simple question, of a village singer of Bengal:

'Jāt gelo jāt gelo bale  
asvār kāle ki jāt chile  
ese tumi ki jāt nile  
ki jāt havā jāvār kāle  
sei kathā bheve balo nā' <sup>40</sup>

(A song, composed by Lalon Fakir)

(i.e. had you any caste at the time of your birth? And what caste will you take when you will die? Please tell thinking about this.)

We shall have to be free from all these imposed identification. Unless we decline these forms of identification, imposed upon us, it is impossible to become pure in the true sense of the term. Sri Rupa Goswami, one of the six Goswamis of Vrindavana, a Vaisnava philosopher, holds the same, quoting a beautiful verse from Nārada Pancaratra, in his 'Bhaktīrāsāmṛta-sindhu', which runs as follows-'sarvopādhi vinirmuktam tat paratvena nirmalam'. i.e. we can be clean only when we abandon all types super imposed designation, which is not our real nature.

Hence, if Dharma is based on morality as well as non-artificial behavior of man i.e. true humanity, one universal religion can be prescribed in the whole world for bringing global peace and harmony. Morality and non artificial behavior are the two milestones of real recognition of man, from which wellbeing of the society comes. The basic task of religion is to give service to leaving beings that are actually the expansion of God. Dharma in the sense of morality and also based on humanity is the real meaning of the phenomenon Dharma, which is the teaching of all religions and need of the present day for world peace.

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# An Examination of the Concept of Dharma

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THE VARIOUS MEANINGS OF the Sanskrit word 'dharma' include rituals dedicated to a deity, customs, or the essential character of an object. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in his article '*Dharmatattva*' has mentioned six meanings of this word.<sup>1</sup> This paper attempts to critically evaluate the word 'dharma' and to examine its relevance today. A careful examination of its meaning through traditional texts reveals that it primarily meant morality on which its other meanings are centered. This meaning of dharma is relevant today for countering religious violence.

The role of religion is very important in the history of the evolution of human thought and religion has been central to human life. Following Max Muller we could say that 'the true history of humankind is the history of its religion.'<sup>2</sup> Religion has brought well-being in society. However, it has also been one of the major causes for many conflicts. In the name of religion, humanity has witnessed riots, wars, murders, bloodshed, oppression and assault of women, burning of houses, and destruction of places of worship.

## **Misconceptions Causing Havoc**

Misconceptions about dharma cause rift and mistrust among humans. One does not usually tolerate someone belonging to a different sect or religion. This situation is not new as history is witness to countless killings guised as religious crusades over the ages. Dividing nations on the basis of religion is a sad reality.<sup>3</sup>

There are many religions because people have

different tastes. Religious diversity sometimes incites violence. But we can find concord among different religions. When one is in danger or is sinking, should we ask that person's religion? Should we decide what to do after knowing that person's religion? A sense of humanity and empathy prevents us from seeing that person's religion in such a scenario. Kazi Nazrul Islam says that when a person is in danger, we should not ask whether that person is a Hindu or a Muslim. When someone is sinking we should consider them as our sibling.<sup>4</sup> All religions teach us only to serve humankind. The apparent contradictions between religions are superimposed by humans based on certain cultural and national preconceptions. Different contexts lead one to have a different notion of 'I'. Different religions are different paths of finding the ultimate truth. Accordingly, we should strive to realise the truth and serve others ignoring the different practices and beliefs of various religions.

It is noteworthy that although the word 'dharma' is translated into English as 'religion', these two do not convey the same meaning. Religion is usually considered to be some common beliefs shared by a group of people. The English word 'religion' is derived from the Middle English word '*religioun*' which came from the Old French 'religion'. It may have been originally derived from the Latin word '*religo*' which means, among other things, 'good faith' and 'ritual'. Or it may have come from the Latin word '*religare*' which means 'to tie fast'.

The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*

defines religion as 'the belief in the existence of a god or gods, and the activities that are connected with the worship of them, or in the teachings of a spiritual leader; one of the systems of faith that are based on the belief in the existence of a particular god or gods, or in the teachings of a spiritual leader.'<sup>5</sup> The *Collins English Dictionary* defines religion as 'belief in, worship of, or obedience to a supernatural power or powers considered to be divine or to have control of human destiny; any formal or institutionalized expression of such belief.'<sup>6</sup> When used in the sense of the characteristics of anything, the Sanskrit word 'dharma' could be used in sentences such as 'the dharma of water is to quench thirst' or 'the dharma of fire is to burn'. The broadness of the meanings of the word 'dharma' and the narrow meaning of the word 'religion' can be understood clearly if we substitute 'religion' for 'dharma' in the above sentences. They would ridiculously read as 'the religion of water is to quench thirst' and 'the religion of fire is to burn'!

The Sanskrit word 'dharma' is derived from the root *dhri*, which means 'to uphold'. Hence, the derivative meaning of 'dharma' is 'that which sustains or upholds'. In the case of an object, its essential property upholds it and hence is its dharma. This meaning of dharma is generally not understood and it is mistaken to be some practices or rituals. Thus, it is imperative that we understand the correct meaning of 'dharma' from ancient texts.

### **What is Dharma?**

Human beings are different from animals in various ways. Ancient texts hold that without dharma human beings are identical to animals if they concentrate only on food, sleep, preservation, and procreation.<sup>7</sup> What is dharma? Is it just a set of rituals? The purpose of rituals is to give some offerings to gods. Through such

rituals one attains devotion to God and also purifies the mind.

If God is one and our aim is to realise God, then it does not matter what path we follow. There is no cause of conflict among different religions simply because of prayer in different languages or different methods of worship—all these are offered to God. If one fails to discover the unity among different religions and thinks that one's path alone is true, such a person is in the preliminary stage, and the heart is yet to expand and such a person is yet to realise the ultimate truth.

The Sanskrit maxim, '*trinarani mani nyaya*' says that fire irrespective of whether it is produced from grass, wood, or a gem, has the utility of fire. Similarly, the aim of religion is to realise God irrespective of the path followed. In many verses of the Bhagavadgita, the word 'dharma' is taken to mean morality.<sup>8</sup> It is also used in the sense of doing one's duties, which would save one from grave danger (2.40). 'Dharma' has been used in the sense of virtue in the Bhagavata.<sup>9</sup> In the Mahabharata friendliness towards all beings is considered dharma.<sup>10</sup> The Mahabharata equates dharma with justice (7.89.47). Dharma is also taken to mean forgiveness and steadfastness (4.6.20). The *Manusmriti* defines dharma as 'non-violence, truth, non-stealing, cleanliness, and equanimity'.<sup>11</sup> 'Without purity no true worship is possible. Unless an individual is pure in body and mind, his coming into a temple and worshipping the Deity are meaningless.'<sup>12</sup> The followers of Mimamsa consider dharma to be 'that which is indicated by the injunctions of the Vedas'.<sup>13</sup> From these texts, we can safely conclude that 'dharma' is the good practised by a pure person. It follows that morality is the bedrock of spirituality. The same idea is present in the *Pancha-mahavrata* of Jainism and *Pancha-shila* of Buddhism.

Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have shown that various religions are but different paths to God. Sri Ramakrishna held that God-realisation was the ultimate aim of human life. Swami Vivekananda taught that we should strive to manifest the divinity inherent in us. He said:

This is the message of Shri Ramakrishna to the modern world: 'Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or sects, or churches, or temples; they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man which is spirituality; and the more this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for good. Earn that first, acquire that, and criticise no one, for all doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Show by your lives that religion does not mean words, or names, or sects, but that it means spiritual realisation. Only those can understand who have felt. Only those who have attained to spirituality can communicate it to others, can be great teachers of mankind. They alone are the powers of light.'<sup>14</sup>

The universal religion envisaged by Swamiji is open to all irrespective of caste, creed, nationality, and gender. About different religions, he said: 'I believe that they are not contradictory; they are supplementary. Each religion, as it were, takes up one part of the great universal truth, and spends its whole force in embodying and typifying that part of the great truth. It is, therefore, addition, not exclusion. That is the idea. ... My idea, therefore, is that all these religions are different forces in the economy of God, working for the good of mankind' (2.365-6).

If dharma is construed as morality then religious conflict would end. No religion can claim superiority over others. Hence, it is best that morality is considered dharma. All rituals and beliefs should be secondary to that. Almost all religious clashes are due to differences in observances. Swamiji believed that one could attain

God by service of fellow beings seeing God in them. Therefore, based on morality and a spirit of spiritual service all religions can come together. This could be an idea for an universal religion that does not see differences but only the underlying unity of all faith-systems. 

### Notes and References

1. These six meanings are: Religions like Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam; morality; piety; rituals; essential characteristics of a thing; and social customs. See Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, 'Dharmatattva' in *Bankim Rachanavali*, 3 vols (Kolkata: Sahitya Samsad, 1361 BE), 2.672.
2. D Miall Edwards, *The Philosophy of Religion* (New York: George H Doran, 1929), 9.
3. See Aravinda Basu and Nivedita Chakrabarti, *Dharmadarshan* (Bengali) (Kolkata: Firma K L M, 2007), 5.
4. See 'Kandari Hushiar' in Kazi Nazrul Islam, *Sanchita* (Kolkata: D M Library, 1928), 60.
5. <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/learner/religion>> accessed 15 January 2016.
6. <<http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/religion>> accessed 15 January 2016.
7. 'Ahara nidra bhaya maithunancha samanyametat pashubhir naranam, dharma hi tesham-adhika vishesha dharmena hinah pashubhih samanah; food, sleep, fear, and procreation are same among humans and animals, dharma is special only to humans; without dharma the humans are akin to animals.' (Mahabharata, *Shantiparva*, 294.29).
8. See Gita, 1.1 and 4.7
9. See Bhagavata, 1.1.2.
10. See Mahabharata, *Shantiparva*, 261.59.
11. *Manusmriti*, 10.63.
12. Ranjit Kumar Barman, 'An Indian Outlook to the Concept of Dharma: In the Need of the Present Day', *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4/5 (August-September 2015), 59-70; 64 <<http://tinyurl.com/zv5fxhv>> accessed 26 January 2016.
13. *Mimamsa Sutra*, 1.1.2.
14. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1-8, 1989; 9, 1997), 4.187.