

Chapter - V

The Concept of Virtue in Indian Philosophical Tradition

5.1 How Virtue Ethics is Compatible with Cultural or Religious Approach to Ethics?

At a first glance, if we go through the traditional perspective of Virtue Ethics, then we can find that it involves personal responsibility and seems entirely secular. It is about developing qualities that will lead to *eudaimonia*. It, therefore, seems compatible with religion, but in fact, independent of it. However, recently in religious ethics there has been renewed interest in the virtues, and it has been recognised that the thought of Aristotle had great influence on the Christian tradition, especially the work of Thomas Aquinas. Since the twentieth-century revival and the work of MacIntyre, Virtue Ethics has become important and influenced theologians such as Stanley Hauerwas and Jean Porter.

For most of the Christians what is important is following the life and teachings of Jesus. They do not understand their religious beliefs as following a code of conduct or a set of concepts. The life of Jesus as related in the Gospels is fundamental; though Paul in his writings often appeals to other values, it is always to the Gospel, to the death and resurrection of Jesus, that he turns when discussing any serious moral issue. Throughout the *New Testament*, there is a constant call for the Christians to be the sort of people they are called to become. This fits well into a Virtue Ethical approach which suggests following the examples of virtuous people in order to become virtuous people ourselves. The appeal of Virtue Ethics is that it places a greater emphasis on being rather than doing – the kind of moral person one is to become, rather than goals or rules that must be followed.

The focus of Virtue Ethics on motivation and transformation of character fits in well with the biblical teaching such as that found in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7). Virtue Ethics also takes on the character of a particular culture, so that it can espouse particular Christian virtues such as mercy and agapeic love. Christianity has also responded to the times, with each major upheaval bringing about a new way of living the Christian life: Benedictine monasticism in the Dark

Ages, Franciscan and Dominican friars in the later Middle Ages, Protestant pietism in the eighteenth century and Blessed Mother Teresa's work among the poor in the twentieth century. Different times have seen the need for new virtues and new ways of living in Christianity.

Virtue Ethics does require practicing the virtues in order to become virtuous, and from a Christian point of view this wouldn't be the right way, instead of this they would like to help the poor to get into heaven. But the relationship between human flourishing (*eudaimonia*) and virtuous activity does not neatly fit into a means-to-an-end category, as all human flourishing is about how we live – it is not an end state. For Christians, the good life is to be found in communion with God and others. So, religious ethics does not need to mean unquestioning obedience to the commands of God, based on some private or particular revelation; it may also appeal to the natural also God-given moral insights and virtues of humans.

Indian philosophy and culture termed "ethics" or moral philosophy as *Nītiśāstra*. *Nītiśāstra* deals with the *Śāstra* or treatise of a branch of philosophy that preaches *Nīti* or moral values or moral norms. It addresses the questions and justifications on morality, good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and injustice etc. It discusses the rightness and wrongness of an action and discusses human values or the *puruṣārtha* or the goal of human life. It also gives emphasis on human being's internal character and their flourishing. Because of the internal character one's behaviour or *ācāra* is considered as good, bad, responsible or accountable. These internal characters also make one's *dhārmik* or virtuous for which one is portrayed as moral, virtuous or *dhārmik* in the society. Thus, for the *Nītiśāstra*, intrinsic character or virtue of an individual is significant to become a good, virtuous or *dhārmik* human being. It also deals with the supreme good or *mokṣa*, which everyone should attain in their life. To discuss human values or virtue in *Nītiśāstra* of Indian tradition, let us focus on the origin and development of virtue or *dharma* in the context of Indian philosophy.

5.2 The Concept of *Ṛta* as *Dharma* or virtue in the *Vedas* and other *Śāstras*:

The concept of *Ṛta* is regarded as the foundation of moral philosophy in Indian culture. It is actually considered to be the treasury of various cosmic orders; such as, the order within the heavenly deities, the order within day and night and

various seasons. Though, gradually with the evolution of time it becomes a treasury of moral order. *Ṛta* in the *Vedas* has a three-pronged meaning which are as follows:

- i. A cosmic order,
- ii. A ritualistic order or religious order and
- iii. An ethical or moral order, and it all the same time.

Though it has three different meaning but still it has a unitary meaning. The three cosmic orders – natural, sacrificial and moral – each of them manifested the very universal concept of *Ṛta*,¹ which is often considered as *dharma*.

The word *Ṛta* comes from the root ‘*Ṛ*’ that has two groups of meaning; one signifies ‘to move’ and another ‘to fit or to arrange’. So, activity or movement and institution including law and order are considered as the two primary foundation of the concept *Ṛta*. Thus, everything in the creation engages with activity and maintains law and order is supposed to have *Ṛta* as its underlying principle.²

Ṛta is an objective principle in *Vedas* so, it is real. Like *satya* and *tapa*, *Ṛta* is also the basic constituent of our universe.³ It is considered as the embracing power of the world.⁴ In a specific sense, *Ṛta* is understood as ideal. Its ideal nature can be clearly understood in the domain of human behaviour. It sets the moral distinction between ‘is’ and ‘ought’ or ‘right’ and ‘wrong’. *Ṛta* is a principle of supreme moral order and there can be no moral disorder in the domain of *Ṛta*. It is wrong to conclude that *Ṛta* is just a universal cosmic order and it has no property of right or wrong in it because the *Vedas* has recognized *Ṛta* as a principle of goodness and righteousness. It is clearly stated in the *Ṛg Veda*, that – “The wicked travel not the path way of law.”⁵ Here *Ṛta* or law is considered as the path of righteousness or *dharma*. In the *Vedas*, *Ṛta* stands for the principle of good and opposite of *Ṛta*, i.e., *Anṛta* is the principle of *pāpa* or evil or *adharmā*.⁶

¹ Tiwari, Kedar Nath, *Classical Indian Ethical Thought: A Philosophical Study of Hindu, Jaina and Buddha Morals*, p. 179, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, 2014

² *Ibid*, p. 179

³ Griffith, Ralph Thomas Hotckin (Trans.), *The Hymns of The Rig Veda*, Book (Mandala) 10, Hymn (Sukta) of Creation CXC.1, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Banaras, 1896

⁴ *Ibid*, Book (Mandala) 4, Hymn (Sukta) of Indra XXIII. 8-10

⁵ *Ibid*, Book (Mandala) 9, Hymn of Soma Pavamana LXXIII. 6, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Banaras, 1896

⁶ Tiwari, Kedar Nath, *Classical Indian Ethical Thought: A Philosophical Study of Hindu, Jaina and Buddha Morals*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, 2014, p. 180

Though *Ṛta* stands for the principle of virtue and righteousness (*dharma*), one could hardly answer to the question that what sort of ethical property or quality that make *Ṛta* so. In response to this question, one may put forward that *Ṛta* is often identified with truth, it is independent of any supreme power. But, Varuṇa, is considered as the guardian of *Ṛta*.⁷ In a passage of the *Ṛg Veda*, Indra, the king of the Gods addressing Varuṇa that –

निर्माया उ त्पे असुरा अभूवन्त्वं च मा वरुण कामयासे ।

ऋतेन राजन्ननुतं विविञ्चन्मम राष्ट्रस्याधिपत्यमेहि ॥

nirmāyā u tye asurā abhūvantvaṃ ca mā varuṇa kāmāyāse |
ṛtena rājann anṛtaṃ viviñcan mama rāṣṭrasyādhipatyam ehi ||

That means “But thou, O Varuṇa, if thou dost love me, O King, discerning truth and right from falsehood, Come and be Lord and Ruler of my kingdom.”⁸ In another passage of the *Ṛg Veda*, the eternal moral law or the *Ṛta* is identified with truth as follows:

युवं वस्त्रणि पुवसा वसाथे युवोरछिद्रा मन्तवो ह सर्गाः ।

अवातिरतमन्तानि विश्व रतेन मित्रावरुणा सचेथे ॥

yuvaṃ vastraṇi puvasā vasāthe yuvorachidrā mantavo ha sarghāḥ |
avātiratamanṛtāni viśva ṛtena mitrāvaruṇā sacethe ||

Which means – “All falsehood, Mitra-Varuṇa, ye conquer, and closely cleave unto the law eternal.”⁹ Truth is regarded as the primal constituent of the universe, so as *Ṛta*. Truth therefore, is the ethical property that *Ṛta* have. The path according to the *Ṛta* is the most truthful and righteous path that considered as the eternal cosmic order and basically an eternal moral order.

From the above discussion it can be established that *Ṛta* as a universal moral order gives a clear-cut criterion that distinguish between right and wrong or moral

⁷ Tiwari, Kedar Nath, *Classical Indian Ethical Thought: A Philosophical Study of Hindu, Jaina and Buddha Morals*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, 2014, p. 181

⁸ Griffith, Ralph Thomas Hotchkin (Trans.), *The Hymns of The Rig Veda*, Book (Mandala) 10, Hymn (Sukta) of Agni CXXIV.5, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Banaras, 1896

⁹ *Ibid*, Book (Mandala) 1, Hymn (Sukta) of Mitra-Varuṇa CLII. 8-10

and immoral. The only criterion provided by *Ṛta* is the principle of truth as a virtue. In this sense whatever is truthful is also in accordance with the *Ṛta* and therefore it is right and moral. Thus, *Ṛta* is considered as the moral principle in the form of truth.

Like *Ṛta*, *dharma* has a moral sense too. The word *dharma* comes from the root ‘*dhr*’, which means ‘to hold’ or ‘to support’, ‘to support’ or ‘to hold’ the individual and the object of the entire universe. So, in this sense, they both are principles of cosmic order though the *dharma* has also an ethical implication. And again, *dharma* not only implies the moral virtues or duties, but also the customs, laws and rituals. According to Van Buitenen “It is as difficult to define *dharma* in terms of Western thought as it is to define ‘culture’ in Sanskrit, and for the same reason: both are all comprising terms including institutions, a way of thinking and living, accomplishments characteristic of people.”¹⁰ ‘*Dharma*’ is a word with wide importance in Indian ethics can never be replaced by any English word equivalent to it. Mckenzie opines:

Dharma “is variously translated as Religion, Virtue, Law, Duty. All these words convey something of the meaning, but to use any one of them as an equivalent is highly misleading. Much confusion might be avoided if it were recognized once for all that the term ‘*dharma*’, as used at any rate in the *Dharmasūtras*, was applied to a condition of things to which modern terms like religion, virtue and law are strictly speaking inapplicable. In India in those days no clear distinction was drawn between moral and religious duties, usages, customary observance and law, and *dharma* was the term which was applied to the whole complex of forms of conduct that were settled or established.”¹¹

In a similar way K. V. Rangaswamy Aiyangar also stated how the term *dharma* is used in a variety of meaning in the Indian culture – “‘*Dharma*’ is used in so many senses that it eludes definition. It stands for nature, intrinsic quality, civil and moral law, justice, virtue, merit, duty and morality.”¹² Aiyer also mentioned that – “the contents of *dharma*, as evidenced by its use in the various treatises on *dharma*, are virtually coextensive with the entire sphere of human behaviour and whose

¹⁰ Buitenen, J. A B. van “*Dharma and Mokṣa*”, Philosophy East and West, Vol. – 7, University Hawaii Press, USA, 1957, p. 33-40,

¹¹ Mckenzie, John, *Hindu Ethics*, Oriental Book Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, 1971, p. 38-39

¹² Rangaswamy Aiyangar, Kumbakonam Viraraghava, *Some Aspects of the Hindu View of Life According to Dharmasāstra*, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1952, p. 63

numerous and vital precepts descend to the minutest details of life and conduct.”¹³ According to Vishwanath Prasad Varma, “Dharma is perhaps the most comprehensive concept in the entire history of Hindu thought.”¹⁴ Hajime Nakamura has given a list of fourteen senses in which *dharma* is used in Hinduism, while noting a further and distinct meaning in Buddhism.¹⁵ S. N Dasgupta maintains that – *dharma* “is used in very different senses in the different schools and religious traditions of Indian thought.”¹⁶ P .V. Kane, who is best known for his work *The History of Dharmaśāstra*, defines *dharma* as a far-reaching concept that helps to embrace human life.¹⁷

We must agree to the concept of Heinrich Zimmer that *dharma* “comprises the whole context of religious and moral duties”¹⁸, and it will be wrong if we consider ‘*dharma*’ simply as ‘religion’.¹⁹ One should be careful in not using *dharma* only in the religious domain. Paul Masson Oursel mentioned that, “The distinction between religion and law can be justified only from the European point of view, the two notions are one in the Indian perspective of *dharma*.”²⁰ According to Bhagavan Das, “Dharma is not mere other world-religion, but is also every duty, every law, every proper and specific function of every thing or being, in this and all other worlds.”²¹ One should be careful to use the term ‘*dharma*’ simply to its various meanings, such as law, duty, morality, justice virtue or religion, though they all together constitute the meaning of *dharma*, but none of them are equivalent to it.²²

¹³ Sivaswamy Aiyer, Paramanheri Sundaram, *Evolution of Hindu Ethical Ideals*, Calcutta University Press, Calcutta, 1935, p. 19-20

¹⁴ Varma, V. P. *Studies in Hindu political Thought and its Metaphysical Foundations*, Motilal Banarsidass, Banaras, 1955, p. 106

¹⁵ Nakamura, Hajime, “The Indian and Buddhist Concept of Law”, in *Religious Pluralism and World Community: Interfaith Intercultural Communication.*, ed. Edward Jurji, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1969, p. 132-33

¹⁶ Dasgupta, S. N., *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 4, Part 2, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1955

¹⁷ Kane, P. V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. 2, Part 2, Bhandarkar Oriental Series, Poona, 1962

¹⁸ Zimmer, Heinrich, *Philosophies of India*, Ed. Joseph Campbell, Pantheon Books, New York, 1951, p. 40

¹⁹ Dube, S. C., *Indian Village*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1955; Dasgupta, S. N., *Hindu Mysticism*, p. 8, Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1959, p. 236

²⁰ Masson-Oursel, Paul; de Willman-Grabowska, Helena; and Stern, Philippe, *Ancient India and Indian Civilization*, Trans. M. R. Dobie, p. 71, Trubner & Co., Trench, 1934

²¹ Das, Bhagavan, *The Science of Social Organization: Or the Laws of Manu in the Light of Theosophy*, p. 123, Theosophical Publishing Society, Madras, 1910

²² Creel, Austeen B., *Dharma in Hindu Ethics*, Firma KLM Private Limited, Calcutta, 1977, p. 2

What we need to show is that the term ‘*dharma*’ is used in a variety of senses in the Indian ethical, mythological and philosophical tradition. *Dharma* holds and maintains the entire world. It is a set of virtues or duties that everyone must follow, so far as virtue ethical perspective is concerned.

5.3 *Dharma* is Beyond the Meaning of Duty:

As we have seen, the term *dharma* is generally understood as a duty or a set of obligations that everyone must follow. But, the domain of *dharma* is far beyond than duty or obligation. For example, a *Brāhmaṇa*, has different kind of duties than a *vaiśya*, and a *vaiśya* has different kind of duties than a *śūdra*. Different kinds of virtues are required for each of the *āśramas*, simply beyond the limits of duty. In most of the cases, *Varṇa dharmas* are defined as virtues, as in this list for *brāhmaṇa* from the *parampara* “Assiduous work, the bridling of the passions, compassion, liberality, truthfulness, ...discipline, generosity, righteousness, ...[and] wisdom...”²³ An example may be given in the *Vanaparva* of the *Mahābhārata*, when King Nahuśa asks Yudhiṣṭhira what is *dharma*, Yudhiṣṭhira defines it as the virtues of truthfulness, generosity, forgiveness, goodness, kindness, self-control, and compassion.²⁴ What Yudhiṣṭhira argued here is that a *śūdra* having those virtuous qualities may become a *brāhmaṇa*, and similarly a *brāhmaṇa* without those virtuous qualities may downfall into a *śūdra*. In the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa says that “I have created the four *varṇas* (castes) in reliance upon the division of qualities and actions.”²⁵ Thus, what we can observe in these *ślokas* is that Indian ethics and epics are actually endorsing the concept *dharma* or virtue and provokes us to claim our supremacy by cultivating virtue within us.

Manusmṛti also defines *dharma* as custom not as duty. The righteous king “should ordain (as law) whatever may be the usual custom of good, religious twice-born men, if it does not conflict with (the customs of) countries, families, and castes.”²⁶ Rather being only deontological, *dharma* is, as Paul Hacker opines,

²³ Soosai Arokiasamy, *Dharma, Hindu and Christian according to Roberto de Nobili*, Editrice Pontificia Università, Rome, 1986, p. 25

²⁴ Matilal, Bimal K, and Ganeri, Jonardon. *Ethics and Epics: The Collected Essays of Bimal Krishna Matilal*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2002, p. 54; *Mahābhārata, Shanti Parva, Tirtha-yatra Parva*, Section: CLXXIX

²⁵ Gita, chapter 4 verse 132

²⁶ Doniger, Wendy; Smith, Brian K. (trans.), *The Law of Manu*, Penguin Books India, New Delhi, 1999, p. 156

“radically empirical” and it can be conceived only through experience.²⁷ Even though social customs stand third behind *Sruti* and *Smṛti* on many Hindu textual lists, it could be argued that they are actually the true source of *dharma*. For example, this passage from the *Mahābhārata* gives priority to customs: “*Dharma* has its origin in good practices and the *Vedas* are established on *dharma*.”²⁸ Hacker considers that “this is the most concrete and most precise definition of the Hindu concept of *dharma* that I know.”²⁹ According to Kuppuswamy, “*dharma* does not consist in blind conformity to customs; a human's behaviour should be based upon reasoning, and should contribute to the welfare of humanity and should be guided by conscience.”³⁰

It is believed that the *Vedas* are considered to be the origin of Indian ethics and *dharma*. According to Manu “*vedo 'khilodharmamūlaṃ*” (वेदोऽखिलो धर्ममूलं) means the entire *Veda* is the root-source of our *dharma* or morality.³¹ There are six orthodox systems in Indian philosophy and each of it explains *dharma* or morality in its own way, though they accept the sacred authoritativeness of the *Veda*. The unorthodox systems have also explained *dharma* and morality but they do not accept the authority of *Veda* at all. The ethical ideas can be traced in our thinking thousands of years back. *Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam* (वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्) is such an example from the *Veda* that introduces the concept of morality to the world. Thus, ethics combines both theories and practice. It synthesises the ideal life with our worldly aspects. The four *Puruśārthas*, a key concept in Indian theory of morality that helps human beings to achieve the supreme good, can only be achieved through practice. Thus, Indian ethics focuses on both spiritual as well as social life. It focuses on the values that one should achieve, performs the duties to others and it is their *dharma* to do so. According to T. M. P. Mahadevan, “Indian philosophy is essentially a philosophy of values.”³² For him, it is because that Indian philosophy is closely intertwined with

²⁷ Hacker, P.; Davis, Donald R. Jr, “Dharma in Hinduism” in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, October 2006, Vol. 34, No. 5, p. 486, pp. 479-496

²⁸ Kuppuswamy, Bangalore, *Dharma and Society*, p. 17, South Asia Books, Columbia, 1977

²⁹ Hacker, P.; Davis, Donald R. Jr, “Dharma in Hinduism” in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, October 2006, Vol. 34, No. 5, p. 486, pp. 479-4 96

³⁰ Kuppuswamy, Bangalore, *Dharma and Society*, South Asia Books, Columbia, 1977, pp. 51-2

³¹ Doniger, Wendy; Smith, Brian K. (trans.), *The Law of Manu*, Penguin Books India, New Delhi, 1999, p. 17-18

³² T. M. P. Mahadevan ‘Social, Ethical, and Spiritual Values in Indian Philosophy’, from the *Indian Mind*, edited by C. A. Moore, East West Centre Press, Honolulu, p. 152

religion.³³ According to D.C. Srivastava and Bijoy H. Boruah “Indian ethics, both in its classical and modern shape, is founded upon the cultivation of virtuous attitudes and character.”³⁴ And we have also found that “Indian virtue ethics is primarily founded on the notion of *dharma*.”³⁵

5.4 The Semantic History of the Term *Dharma*:

Philosophers have shown their interest very deeply to the studies of the term *dharma* from time immemorial. People like Paul Horsch and Jarrod L. Whitaker in their “From Creation Myth to World Law: The Early History of *Dharma* and Joel P. Berereton in his *dharma* in the *R̥g Veda* have discussed about the frequent use of the term *dharma* in the *R̥g Veda*. They mentioned that the term has total sixty-seven occurrences with a wide semantic range of cosmological, ritual and ethical uses. They further opine that it decreases its number of occurrences in the other text of this period. In the *Atharva Veda* we find the word *dharma* only thirteen times though it has a similar semantic range to the *R̥g Veda*. But one can find the centrality of *dharma* in both of these *Brahmnical* and *Buddhists* literature. In these literature of the middle and late Vedic periods the term *dharma* represented by the *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas*, the *Upaniṣads* and the *Śrauta-sūtras* and *Gṛhya-sūtras*, which together constitute a wide range of vocabulary.

Patrick Olivelle is not in a position to agree with those previous views. He had a different view regarding the centrality of the term *dharma*. According to Olivelle, *dharma* secures a marginal concept in the religious vocabulary, and does not secure a central position. It is not only dropping the frequency of its usage but also becomes narrower to its semantic range. It restricts its range to *Varuṇa* and its earthly counterpart, the king of the state. He further attempts to show how the term *dharma* contribute to the development to its semantic range in the religious literature of *Buddhism*, *Aśoka* and the *Brahmanical* literature. Let us discuss the semantic history of the word *dharma* as discussed in the *Samhītā*, *Āraṇyaka*, *Brāhmaṇa* and *Upaniṣads* of the each *R̥g Veda*, *Yajurveda*, *Sāmaveda* and *Atharvaveda*.

³³ Malik-Goure, A. “Virtue Ethics in Indian Philosophy” in *International Journal of Academic Research*, Vol. 1 Issue-2(1), July – September 2014, p. 111

³⁴ Srivastava, D.C. and Boruah, Bijoy H., *Dharma and Ethics: The Indian Ideal of Human Perfection*, Decent Books, New Delhi, 2010, p. 1

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 2

Yajur Veda:

The *Yajurveda Saṃhitās* are very old text after *Ṛg Veda*. Let us discuss the four *Saṃhitās*: *Vājasaneyi*, *Maitrāyaṇī*, *Kāṭhaka* or *Caraka* and *Taittirīya*; *Vājasaneyi* belongs to the *Śukla Yajurveda Saṃhitā*, whereas the rest three belongs to the *Kriṣṇa Yajurveda Saṃhitā*. The study of *dharma* in these texts basically cited the verses from *Ṛg Veda* and sometimes they present same verses or passages from the same ritual. We have thus, decided to count the citations from the *Ṛg Veda* only.

In these *Saṃhitās*, here we can find twenty-two passages that occurred with the term *dharma*. In most of the cases these occurrences refer to Varuṇa or Mitra-Varuṇa. Mitra and Varuṇa are both considered as deities and they are the protectors of the righteous order of the cosmic law *Ṛta*. We can find the phrase *dhruvéṇa dhármaṇā* in the passage: *dyutānás tvā māruto minotu mitrávaruṇayor dhruvéṇa dhármaṇā* – which means – “May Dyutāna Māruta establish you in accordance with the enduring *dharma* of Mitra and Varuṇa.”³⁶ (*Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 1.3.1.2; *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* 1.2.11; *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* 5.27) The same phrase *dhruvéṇa dhármaṇā* has been repeated in another context: *Váruṇas tvā dhṛtávrato dhúpayatu mitrávaruṇau dhruvéṇa dhármaṇā* – which means – “May Varuṇa, whose commandment is upheld, perfume you with incense, may Mitra and Varuṇa, in accordance with their enduring *dharma*”.³⁷ (*Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* 4.9.1) Also it is said that: *mitrávaruṇau tvottarataḥ pári dhattāṃ dhruvéṇa dhármaṇā* – which means – “May Mitra and Varuṇa lay you around in the north in accordance with their enduring *dharma*”.³⁸ (*Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* 1.11; *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 1.1.11.2; *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* 2.3; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 1.3.4.4) What we find that the term *dharma* bears almost the same meaning as it is in the *Ṛg Veda*. *Dharma* has been considered as an institute or commandment which is *dhruva*, firm and enduring. The *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* provides a significant commentary on this issue: “*mitrávaruṇau dhruvéṇa dhármanéti / mitráṃ evaināṃ dādhāra, váruṇaḥ kalpayati, vídhṛtyai ca khálu vá e śāṃ prajānāṃ klṛtyai ca mīyate, mitrávaruṇau vai devánāṃ dhármadhárayau, daivám vá etád dhármam adīdharatām /* “Mitra and Varuṇa in accordance with their enduring *dharma*. Mitra, indeed, holds it fast, and Varuṇa establishes it. For the upholding of these creatures and for their

³⁶ Olivelle, P., ‘The Semantic History of Dharma the Middle and Late Vedic Periods’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 32, Springer, New York, 2004, p. 492

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 492

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 492

establishment, it is set up. Mitra and Varuṇa are clearly the ones who uphold *dharma* among the Gods. They upheld here as divine *dharma*”.³⁹ (*MS* 3.8.9)

What we observed in these paragraphs is that the term *dharma* clearly makes a significant and consistent relation to its root *dhṛ* which means to uphold or to bear or to support. The evidence of the relation between *dhruva* and *dharma* has also been found in the *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* 35.7: “*dhruvā dyaur dhruvā pṛthivī dhruvaṃ viśvam idaṃ jagat / devā ha dharmaṇā dhruvā yajamānaḥ paśubhir dhruvaḥ* – “The sky is enduring; the earth is enduring; this whole world is enduring. The Gods are enduring through *dharma*, and the sacrificer is enduring through the sacrificial animals”.”⁴⁰

In the *Yajurveda Saṃhitā*, the connection between *dharma* and Varuṇa has been established by the two rituals closely associated with kingship; one is *Rājasūya* (Royal-consecration) and another is *Aśvamedha* (Horse-sacrifice) to enhance and proclaim the sovereignty of king himself. At the *rājasūya* the king establishes its connection to Varuṇa and *dharma*. Varuṇa, who is actually the lord of the *dharma* or *dharmapati* and king who is assumed as the earthly counterpart of the lord Varuṇa, is also considered as the upholders of *dharma*. In the *rājasūya*, *ćaru* (a special type of cake made from rice and milk is offered to the deities) is offered to *Agni* (the lord of house or *gṛhapati*); *Soma* or *vanaspati* (the lord of forest); *Rudra* or *paśupati* (the lord of cattle); and *Brhaspati* or *vācaspati* (the lord of Speech) and also to the Mitra or *satya* (the lord of character) and Varuṇa or *dharmapati* (the lord of *dharma*) to please with their bliss. (*Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 1.8.10.1)

Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā:

In the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* the Gods are invoked to allow the king as an upholder of *dharma*: *sómā índro váruṇo mitró agnís té devā dharmadh ṛto dhármaṃ dhārayantu* – “Soma, Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni – may these gods, the upholders of *dharma*, uphold *dharma*”.⁴¹ (*Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* 2.6.8, 4.4.2). The *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* also identified the king with the Varuṇa as: *váruṇo 'sisatyadhármā* (you are like Varuṇa, whose *dharma* is upholding the truth). The attribute of Varuṇa is indirectly praised to be applicable to the king. In the *Aśvamedha*, the chariot of

³⁹ Olivelle, P., ‘The Semantic History of Dharma the Middle and Late Vedic Periods’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 32, Springer, New York, 2004, p. 492

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 492

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 493

Varuṇas has been reffered to stop injustice as Varuṇa is the upholder of *dharma*. (*Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* 3:16:5; *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* 22:15; *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 4.7.15.2) In all of the above passages what we want to justify is that the king and his power is closely attached with the *dharma*. They cannot be separated. Here Varuṇa, who is the supreme ruler of heaven and his earthly counterpart, king is also considered as the supreme ruler of the earth. They both are lords and upholders of *dharma* in the universe and in the society.

Brāhmaṇas:

Let us examine the concept of *dharma* and virtue in the *Brāhmaṇas*. As the *Brāhmaṇa* is a larger text in size than *Yajurveda Saṃhitā*, we only consider the three: *Aitareya*, *Taittirīya* and *Śatapatha* in this chapter. In all of these three *Brāhmaṇas*, the term *dharma* occurs eleven times in general. The number of uses of the term *dharma* in these *Brāhmaṇas*, is a bit of surprise because it covers a wide range of materials and issues; such as ethical and ritual of the *Brāhmaṇical* life. So, it becomes a natural query to one that if *dharma* is a key term in the *Brahmaṇical* view to the world and society then it would have been used more in numbers in the *Brāhmaṇas*.

Aitareya Brāhmaṇa:

In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, the term *dharma* has occurred only once in the context of *Rājasūya* or royal consecration.⁴² In the *Mahābhiṣeka* of Indra is immediately followed after this in *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 8.15 – 23. In both of the cases we have a public proclamation. Though both of these have identical words except the *Rājasūya* of king is proclaimed *Rājakartāraḥ* (king-makers) and the audience is men and *Mahābhiṣeka* of Indra is proclaimed by the *Viśvedevas* and audienced by the *devāḥ* (Gods): “*imaṃ janā [devā] abhyutkrośata samrājyaṃ sāmṛājyaṃ bhojaṃ bhojapitaraṃ svarājyaṃ svārājyaṃ virājaṃ vairājyaṃ parameṣṭhinaṃ pārameṣṭhyaṃ rājānaṃ rājapitaraṃ kṣatram ajani kṣatriyo 'jani viśvasya bhūtasyādhipatir ajani viśām attājany amitṛāṇām hantājani brāhmaṇānām goptājani dharmasya goptājanīti.* (*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 7.12 – 17) “Do ye proclaim him, O men [O gods], as overlord and overlordship, as paramount ruler and father of paramount rulers, as self-ruler and self-rule, as sovereign and sovereignty, as supreme lord and

⁴² *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 8.12-14

supreme lordship, as king and father of kings. The *kṣatra* (royal power) has been born, the *kṣatriya* has been born, the suzerain of all creation has been born, the eater of the commoners (*viś*) has been born, the slayer of foes has been born, the guardian of *brāhmaṇas* has been born, the guardian of *dharma* has been born.”⁴³

Here both Indra and the king is announced in the proclamation that they born as the guardian of *dharma*.

Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa:

The term *dharma* is occurred four times in *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* and three of these occurrences are closely associated with Varuṇa and *adhipati*. The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 3.9.16.2 which is also a commentary text on *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 7.4.16 interpreted the *Saṃhitā* mantra: *dhārmovā́ adīpatiḥ, dhārman evāvarundhe* as *namódhipataye*. Here the person identified with *adhipatya* and *dharma* is the king who performing the *Aśvamedha*. Here *dharma* as *adhipati* secured the highest position in *Brāhmaṇa* followed by the respective *Saṃhitā*.

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa:

The term *dharma* has been occurred only in the six passages of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. The most significant statement has been made in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 5.3.3.9 regarding the connection between the Varuṇa, king and the *dharma* in the context of *Rājasūya*. It states: “*athá váruṇāya dhármapataye / váruṇám yavamáyaṃ caruṃ nírvapati tád enaṃ váruṇa evá dhármapatir dhármasya pátiṃ karoti paramótā vaí sá yó dhármasya pátir ásad yó há paramátām gácchati tíṃ hí dhárma upayánti tásmād váruṇāya dhármapataye//.*” This means – “Then to Varuṇa the lord of *dharma* he offers a cake made with barley. Thereby Varuṇa himself, the lord of *dharma*, makes him [the king] the lord of *dharma*. That, surely, is the highest state when one becomes the lord of *dharma*. For when someone attains the highest state, (people) come to him (in matters relating) to *dharma*. Therefore, to Varuṇa, the lord of *dharma*”.⁴⁴

⁴³ Olivelle, P., ‘The Semantic History of Dharma the Middle and Late Vedic Periods’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 32, Springer, New York, 2004, p. 494

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 495

In this context, we have a clear idea of *dharma* what does the author actually mean. In fact, the term deals with the matters regarding which people come to their king generally for their legal disputes. *Dharma* is considered in the public domain of law and social customs that is supervised by the king. Thus, it provides a clear idea about why the term *dharmapati* refers to the king as well as Varuṇa, because Varuṇa is the supervisor of cosmic *dharma*. We have thus seen that this might be the meaning which generally understood as *dharma* during the Vedic period and in the text.

In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, we can find another passage that reflects the meaning of *dharma*. In *śloka*, 11.1.6.24, it is said that Prajāpati has created four Gods i. e.: Agni, Indra, Soma and *Parameṣṭhi*. They all generally observed from four directions. In north direction, it is mentioned that – “*athódīcīm dīśam apaśyan / tām āpo 'kurvatópainām itáḥ kurvīmahīti taṃ dhārmam akurvata dhārmo vá āpas tasmād yádemám lokám āpa āgácchanti sárvam èvedám yathādharmám bhavaty átha yadāv ṛṣṭir bhávati bālīyān eva tarhy ábaliyasa ádatte dhārmoh yāpaḥ/*”. This means – “Then they saw the northern direction. They made it waters. ‘Let us improve it from here,’ they said. They made it *dharma*. The waters, surely, are *dharma*. Therefore, when waters come to this world, all this becomes in accordance with *dharma*. But when there is no rain, then the stronger indeed seizes the weaker ones, for the waters are *dharma*”.⁴⁵

This reflection in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, clearly supports the meaning of *dharma* “as a social order founded on law”. This also relates to *matsyanyāya* of later *Dharmaśāstras*. However, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* does not mention any kingship here. It is a natural fact of abundance by the sufficiency of water and famine and also by the lack of water, that actually make adherence to and deviation from *dharma*. We can similarly find the negative term *adharma*, twice in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* that understands as something done in opposite to the law or natural order. Both in *śloka* 3.7.3.7 and 5.2.4.13, the term *adharma* is basically indicating an act that is against the rule. Apart from that a new meaning of *dharma* as a specific attribute is found in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 11.5.7.1. The *śloka* says “a man becomes independent and wealthy through the Vedic study, and it also helps to grow his intelligence or

⁴⁵ Olivelle, P., ‘The Semantic History of *Dharma* the Middle and Late Vedic Periods’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 32, Springer, New York, 2004, p. 496

prajñāvṛddhi: “*prajñā vārdhamānā catúro dhārmān brāhmaṇām abhinīspādayati brāhma ṇyaṃ pratirūpacaryāṃ yáso lokapaktiṃ, lokāḥ pácyamānās catúrbhir dhārmair brāhmaṇām bhunakty arcáyā ca dānena cājyeyátayā cāvadhyátayā ca*”. That means – “The growing intelligence brings to the *Brāhmin* to possess four *dharma*s i. e. *Brahmanical* stature, fitting deportment, fame, and ‘cooking’ the world. The world, as it is being ‘cooked’, gratifies the Brahmin with four *dharma*s – with veneration, with gifts, with the condition of not being oppressed and of not being subject to capital punishment”.⁴⁶

Thus, it appears that the term *dharma* semantically developed its range from law or social norms to a specific attribute of a particular entity. Except the last passage no significant instances are found to that prove the *Brāhmaṇs* expanded the semantic range of the word *dharma*. In all other cases we found that the connotation of the word *dharma* remains closely associated with the *Varuṇa* and the king. And in all of the instances, it primarily means the law and order of the society, the law that gives the legitimacy to a royal king. Thus, *dharma* is the society’s law and order and the duty or internal character of a king and *Varuṇa*.

The *Āraṇyakas*:

In the *Āraṇyakas*, *dharma* occurs only three times, once in the *Aitareya* and twice in the *Taittirīya*, though none of these occurrences has any serious contribution to the semantic use of *dharma*. In the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, we can find a *śloka* that describes the creation of the world and again connects *dharma* with *Varuṇa*: “*varuṇo 'sya prajāṃ dharmeṇa dādhāra* – “*Varuṇa* supported his offspring through *dharma*”.⁴⁷ Also in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* in *śloka* 2.19.1 and *śloka* 4.42.5, we can find that *dharma* is related to a list of cosmic categories where it is placed as the highest of the categories.

The *Upaniṣads*:

The *Upaniṣads* are the texts that we generally considered as a major source of *dharma*. But this is not exactly the case. In three major *Upaniṣads* i. e. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chhāndogya* and *Taittirīya*, the term *dharma* is occurred in nine

⁴⁶ Olivelle, P., ‘The Semantic History of Dharma the Middle and Late Vedic Periods’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 32, Springer, New York, 2004, p. 497

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 497

passages, and except *Chhândogya* and *Taittirīya* there are no maintained discussion of the term *dharma* to live a righteous life.

The *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣads*:

In the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣads* the term *Dharma* occurs in four passages and had a single occurrence in the *Yājñavalkya-kāṇḍa*. In *sūtra* 4.4.5, a passage where the author demonstrates the list of categories that constitutes *ātman*. In various categories and its opposites, the author mentioned that the *ātman* is made of *dharma* and *adharmā*. The author refers the term *dharma*, as priority. Among the other terms, it occupies the highest position because the author meant the term everything or *sarvamayaḥ*. It is said that – “*tejomayo 'tejomayaḥ kāmamayo 'kāmamayaḥ krodhayamo 'krodhamayaḥ dharmamayo 'dharmamayaḥ sarvamayaḥ*. That means “made of light and the lightless, made of desire and the desireless, made of anger and the angerless, made of *dharma* and *adharmā*, made of everything”.”⁴⁸

The most significant use of the term *dharma* is also found in the *sūtra* 1.4.14 of *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* by in relation to the context of creation. It is said that that at the beginning the world, there was only *Brahman*, then it was not fully developed (*navyabhavat*), so, it was single. After the creation of *Brahman*, the ruling power (*kṣatra*) including God, then *Vaiśya* and finally *Śūdra*, are created, but not in a developed form. It was fully developed when *Brahman* created *dharma*. It is said that – “*tacchreyo rūpam atyasṛjata dharmam / tad etat kṣatrasya kṣatram yad dharmāḥ / tasmād dharmāt param nāsti / atho abalīyān balīyāṃsam āśaṃsate dharmeṇa rājñāivam / yo vai sa dharmāḥ satyaṃ vai tat / tasmāt satyam vadantam āhur dharmam vadatīti / dharmam vā vadantam satyam vadatīti / etad dhy evaitad ubhayaṃ bhavati.*” That means – “So it created *dharma*, a form superior to and surpassing itself. And *dharma* is the ruling power standing above the ruling power. Hence there is nothing higher than *dharma*. Therefore, a weaker man makes demands of a stronger man by appealing to *dharma*, just as one does by appealing to a king. Now, *dharma* is nothing but the truth. Therefore, when a man speaks the

⁴⁸ Olivelle, P., ‘The Semantic History of Dharma the Middle and Late Vedic Periods’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 32, Springer, New York, 2004, p. 498

truth, people say that he speaks *dharma*; and when a man speaks *dharma*, people say that he speaks the truth. They are really the same thing.”⁴⁹

These above-mentioned views may be found in two other different passages of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. One is in the *sūtra* 5.3.3.9, which secures the highest position of *dharma* and the other one is in *sūtra* 11.1.6.24, where it indentifies *dharma* with *satya* or truth. According to this a weaker man can drag even a stronger man to the king’s court. What I would like to focus here is that the term *dharma* here is connected with the legal domain as it was in the *Brāhmaṇas*.

The Chhāndogya Upaniṣad:

In the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad*, the term *dharma* occurs in three passages, none of which had adetailed discussion about it. The first use of the term *dharma* is at *śloka* no. 2.1.4, which considers the veneration of *sāman* as *sādhu* (good). This *śloka* ends with: “*sa ya etad evaṃ vidvān sādhu sāmety upāste 'bhyāso ha yad enaṃ sādhuvo dharmā ā ca gaccheyur upa ca nameyur*. It means – “When someone knows this and venerates the Sāman chant as good, he can certainly expect that good *dharmas* will come his way and fall to his share”.⁵⁰ Though the author’s intention is not clear at all in these lines but, it may be assumed that he uses the term *dharma* as qualities or attributes that is similar to its usage in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.

The second occurrence is at *śloka* no. 7.2.1 which juxtaposed the term *dharma* with *satya* and *sādhu*. It is “*dharmam cādharmaṃ ca satyam cānṛam ca sādhu cāsādhu ca* – “that means *dharma* and *adharmā* – truth and untruth, good and non-good.”⁵¹ Here, we can observe that the author of the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad* is trying to establish an intimate relation between *dharma*, *satya* and *sādhu*.

Finally, the most significant occurrence of the term *dharma* in the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣads* is made in the passages of *dharmaskandhas* (2.23.1). It is said that – “*trayo dharmaskandhāḥ / yajño ' dhyayanaṃ dānam iti prathamah / tapa eva dvitīyah brahmacāry ācāryakulavāsī tṛtīyah*.” Which means – “There are three types of persons whose true source is *dharma*. The first is who pursues sacrifice,

⁴⁹ Olivelle, P., ‘The Semantic History of Dharma the Middle and Late Vedic Periods’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 32, Springer, New York, 2004, p. 499

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 500

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 500

Vedic recitation, and gift-giving. The second is who is devoted to austerity. Third is a celibate student of the *Vedas* living at his teacher's house.”⁵²

Thus, the term *dharma* clearly and specifically refers to the modes of religious life, the life of Brahmanical householder, led by an ascetic and a *Vedic* student. This is for the first time in *Vedic* literature that we find the term *dharma* in a similar way that *dharmaśāstra* uses.

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*:

The term *dharma* occurs in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* at the end of the first chapter, *Śikṣāvallī*. In this chapter, it is generally compared with a remnant part of a *Gṛhyasūtra*, which instructed a *Vedic* student and their return to teachers' house. The Guru or preacher instructs the students as – “*satyaṃ vada / dharmam cara*” (“Speak the truth, Practice the *dharma*”). Here the verb \sqrt{car} is used first time in the *Vedic* literature with reference to *dharma*, and is used in its classical *Dharmaśāstric* tradition.

Thus, in *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, the term *dharmakāmaḥ*, means people who devoted to or loving *dharma*, is presented as a model to the young students. These *dharmakāmaḥ Brāhmins* were considered as authoritative.

The *Śrautasūtras*:

There are numerous numbers of *Śrautasūtras* but their exact time cannot be estimated at all. Though some of them were considered from the pre-Buddhist period and some of them from later *Vedic* period, but most of them were silent about their time and period. *Śrautasūtras* are not considered as a part of *Vedic* canon. They generally follow the traditions of *Brāhmaṇas* to provide rules and explanations of *Vedic* culture.

According to Patrick Olivelle, the term *dharma* occurs in thirtynine passages in *Śrautasūtras*. In most of them the term does not occur in the meaning that it occurs in the *Vedic* literature or *Dharmaśāstras*. A specific meaning of the term *dharma* is used in these literatures that was basically restricted within this tradition, it refers *dharma* as a specific ritual details or ritual rules of a religion. Most of these passages

⁵² Olivelle, P., ‘The Semantic History of Dharma the Middle and Late *Vedic* Periods’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 32, Springer, New York, 2004, p. 500

focuses their discussion on how the term *dharma* extended its meaning from ritual archetypes to ritual details, for example, *Darsapūrṇamāsa* (new and full-moon) sacrifice, which extended its meaning to others. The *Bharadvāja Śrautasūtra*, *śloka* 1.1.9 states that: “*tatraiṣo 'tyantapradeśo ye kecana paurṇamāsīm amāvāsyaṃ vā dharmā anārabhyāmnāyanta ubhayatraiva te kriyante*”. Which means that – “In this connection, this is the general rule. The characteristics (*dharmāḥ*) which have been prescribed in connection with the full-moon day or the new-moon day without specification hold good with reference to both”.⁵³ And again in a different *śloka* 6.15.5, *Bharadvāja Śrautasūtra* states that: “*sarveṣv iṣṭipaśubandheṣu dārsapaurṇamāsikā dharmā anuyanti*” which means – “The *dharmas* of the New-moon and the Full-moon sacrifices are carried over into the *iṣṭi* and animal sacrifices.”⁵⁴

What we in fact want to propose that the meaning of the term *dharma* in which it is used here is shifted. And this extended meaning is found neither in the *Vedic literature*, *Brāhmaṇas* nor in the *Upaniṣads*. May be this technical development has flourished within the seers that devoted to ritual aspects, which results the *Śrautasūtras*. The concept of *svadharmā* is also used in a similar way, as it refers to a particular ritual that deals only with its *dharmas*. This use of *svadharmā* is similar to the use in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 11.5.7.1 and in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 2.1.4.

The only *śloka* in the *Bharadvāja Śrautasūtras* 9.18.4, where the term appears in a *Dharmaśāstric* meaning is that: “*kathaṃ duṣṭaṃ havir vidyāt / yad āryāṇāṃ dharmajñānāṃ dharmakāmānām abhojanīyaṃ na tena devān yajeta*”. That means “How does one know a defiled oblation? Āryas who know *dharma* and who love *dharma* consider unfit to be eaten, with that he should not make an offering to the gods”.⁵⁵ Like *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, we can see the term *dharmakāmaḥ* with another phrase *dharmajña*.

Thus, the term *dharma* is used as rituals and does not play any important role in these texts and literatures.

⁵³ Olivelle, P., ‘The Semantic History of Dharma the Middle and Late Vedic Periods’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 32, Springer, New York, 2004, p. 501-2

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 502

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 502

The *Gṛhyasūtras*:

Though most of the *Gṛhyasūtras* were dated after the emergence of Buddhism, but few of them claimed to be prior. These texts generally focused on the life and rituals of a Brahmin householder. As a parallel text of *Dharmasūtras* one may say that the term *dharma* has a central role in the *Gṛhyasūtras*. However, that person surely disappoints to know that the term has occurred only six times in the whole text. Out of these six occurrences three *ślokas* did not have any serious contribution, two *ślokas* (*Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra* 3.3.7. *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra* 3.4.18) are dedicated in connection with the building of a house, and third one (*Kāṭhaka Gṛhyasūtra*) is about a general occurrence of the term *dharma* and *adharmā*.

Apart from these we find three passages which have similar usages of the term *dharma* is found in the *Dharmasāstras*. At *Sāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*, 2.16.2 we find that *iti dharmo vidhīyate*, which has a close resemblance to *Mānava Dharmasāstra* 3.110. In the *Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra* 3.3.31 we can also find the term *dhārmika* is used for those students who completed their studentship: *vratasamāptau vedasamāptau vā gurudakṣiṇām āhared dhārmiko yathāśakti* – “At the end of the observances or at the end of (the study of) the Veda, the *dhārmika* (student) should bring a gift to the teacher according to his ability.”⁵⁶ And lastly in the *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra* 1.7.1 we find – *atha khalūccāvaca janapadadharmā grāmadharmāś ca tān vivāhe pratīyāt* – “Now, manifold are the *dharmas* of regions and the *dharmas* of villages. One need to observe these at marriage.”⁵⁷ These lines in these passages clearly indicate the connection between *Gṛhyasūtra* with *Dharmasāstras*. Here the term *dharma* is clearly understood as customs and social norms, which is identical with the *Dharmasāstric* meaning.

5.5 The Concept of Virtues in the *Manusmṛhitā*:

Let us focus the concept of virtue as interpreted in *Manusmṛhitā*. But before going to discuss, we need to understand the significance of the concept of self-

⁵⁶ Olivelle, P., ‘The Semantic History of Dharma the Middle and Late Vedic Periods’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 32, Springer, New York, 2004, p. 503

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 503

control (*Samjama*), as available in the *Manusamhitā*. According to Ariel Glucklich⁵⁸ Manu tried to establish a relationship between the senses, emotions and discipline, on the one hand, and well-being, on the other. In simple words, the quest of sensory delights or *bhoga* leads one to misery or *dukkha*, while controlling those senses and mental habits leads one to happiness or *sukha*. This understanding was so widely accepted and shared by the *Upaniṣads*, *Yoga* and the *Bhagavad Gīta*, that it becomes a cultural meme used in one text after the other.⁵⁹ We will attempt to show that Manu's ethical thought, particularly how his conception of *dharma* is related to virtue theory and how closely is it connected with the concept of self-control. We will also discuss the psychological foundation of the three different types of affect namely; sensory-addictive, mastery and freedom, in *Manusamhitā* in relation to concept of virtue.

The category of affect and the practice of cultivating positive affect by regulating the self is very much important to understand the ethical ideas of Manu. Ariel Glucklich has suggested the following definition where Affect is the evaluative information produced by the dynamic system in which the moral actor is an ever-changing agent of adaptation within an ever-shifting environment. This assertion is based on Dynamic system theory, which is frequently used in psychology but it is hardly ever applied to ethical and religious data. The dynamic system provides an ontological environment in which both pleasure or pain and happiness are only affective signals and skill or competence promotes both positive affect and virtue as an outcome. Let us know, how is this systemic adaptive approach generate three distinct types of positive affect in the following manner.

Affect 1 (sensory-addictive): The biological (hardwired) response of “self” to external or internal input in pursuit of homeostasis.

Affect 2 (mastery): The flexible response of self to external or internal input in pursuit of self-regulation relative to an acquired or learned telos.

Affect 3 (freedom): The response to internal input free of external constraints and any telos.

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⁵⁹ Glucklich, A. (August, 2011). Virtue and Happiness in the “Law Book of Manu”. *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 165-190

Manu places regulation of the self in its various conceptions as the standard, by means of which affect should be measured. According to Glucklich the above mentioned understanding of affect is consistent with Manu's theory of virtue by controlling and developing the natural desires. Thus, according to Manu, in this sense self-regulation, the psychological dimension of moral restraint links the subject matter of *dharma* with virtue. In *Manusamhitā*, chapter 2, verse 93 – 96, it is stated that:

इन्द्रियाणां प्रसङ्गेन दोषं ऋच्छत्यसंशयम् ।
 संनियम्य तु तान्येव ततः सिद्धिं निगच्छति ॥ ९३ ॥
 न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति ।
 हविषा कृष्णवत्सैव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥ ९४ ॥
 यश्चैतान् प्राप्नुयात् सर्वान् यश्चैतान् केवलांस्त्यजेत् ।
 प्रापणात् सर्वकामानां परित्यागो विशिष्यते ॥ ९५ ॥
 न तथैतानि शक्यन्ते संनियन्तुमसेवया ।
 विषयेषु प्रजुष्टानि यथा ज्ञानेन नित्यशः ॥ ९६ ॥

indriyāṅgāṃ prasaṅgena doṣaṃ ṛcchatyasamśayam |
saṁniyamya tu tānyeva tataḥ siddhiṃ nigacchati || 93 ||
na jātu kāmāḥ kāmānāmupabhogena śāmyati |
haviṣā kṛṣṇavartmaiva bhūya evābhivardhate || 94 ||
yaścaitān prāpnuyāt sarvān yaścaitān kevalāṁstyajet |
prāpaṇāt sarvakāmānāṃ parityāgo viśiṣyate || 95 ||
na tathaitāni śakyante saṁniyantumasevayā |
viṣayeṣu prajuṣṭāni yathā jñānena nityaśaḥ || 96 ||

That means by attachment to the organs, a man undoubtedly becomes corrupted; but by bringing them under control, he achieves success. Desire is never quenched by enjoying (*bhoga*) desires (*kāma*); like a fire with ghee, it only waxes stronger. Between a man who obtains all these and a man who gives them all up – giving up all desires is far better than obtaining them all. Corrupted as these organs

are by sensory objects, one cannot bring them under control as effectively by abstinence as by constant insight.

The control of desire and the senses is thus, a psychological skill that leads to excellent personal qualities, those on which virtues depend. The skill is cultivated in a variety of ways, in *Manusamhitā*, chapter 2, verse 177, it is stated that:

वर्जयेन् मधु मांसं च गन्धं माल्यं रसान् स्त्रियः ।
शुक्तानि यानि सर्वाणि प्राणिनां चैव हिंसनम् ॥ १७७ ॥

varjayen madhu māṃsaṃ ca gandhaṃ mālyam rasān striyaḥ |
śuktāni yāni sarvāṇi prāṇināṃ caiva hiṃsanam || 177 ||

This means one should abstain from honey, meat, scent, garland, flavours, women, all fermented acids and also the killing of living creatures. A man who is able to follow the rules of conduct (rising before sunrise, honoring parents, maintaining the domestic fires, and hundreds of others) is more than a follower of the law – he is a virtuous man. In *Manusamhitā* chapter 4, verse 162 & 163 we can find the following:

आचार्यं च प्रवक्तारं पितरं मातरं गुरुम् ।
न हि स्याद् ब्राह्मणान् गाश्च सर्वाश्चैव तपस्विनः ॥ १६२ ॥
नास्तिक्यं वेदनिन्दां च देवतानां च कुत्सनम् ।
द्वेषं दम्भं च मानं च क्रोधं तैक्ष्ण्यं च वर्जयेत् ॥ १६३ ॥

ācāryam ca pravaktāram pitaram mātaram gurum |
na hiṃsyād brāhmaṇān gāśca sarvāṃścaiva tapasvinaḥ || 162 ||
nāstikyaṃ vedanindāṃ ca devatānāṃ ca kutsanam |
dveṣaṃ dambhaṃ ca mānaṃ ca krodhaṃ taikṣhṇyaṃ ca varjayet || 163 ||

This means “One must never cause harm to his teacher, instructor, father, mother, elder, Brahmins, cows, and all who are given to austerities. He should eschew infidelity, denigrating the Vedas, disparaging the gods, hatred, arrogance, pride, anger, and harshness”. All of this is not just right and good: “A man who is

unrighteous, who has gained his wealth dishonestly, and who always takes delight in causing injury will never achieve happiness (*sukha*) in this world” (*Manusāṃhitā* chapter 4, verse 170). This applies for the simple reason that lack of virtue is lack of control and lack of control guarantees misery.

5.6 *Tapas* Mediates Virtue and Happiness:

Tapas is a familiar concept in *Manusāṃhitā* and translates usually as the heat that is generated by austerity. But Manu situates *tapas* in a new moral context in connection with both virtue and happiness. According to him, there is a sharp difference between the object of affect, which is a sensory fact, and the true cause of affect, which is a mental fact or process. Sensory contacts (*viṣaya*) give rise to addiction affect or pleasure and mastery regulates addiction, it is *tapas* that actually causes joy or *sukha*. In *Manusāṃhitā*, chapter 11, verse 234, it is said that –

तपोमूलमिदं सर्वं दैवमानुषकं सुखम् ।
तपोमध्यं बुधैः प्रोक्तं तपोऽन्तं वेददर्शिभिः ॥ २३४ ॥

tapomūlamidaṃ sarvaṃ daivamānuṣakaṃ sukham |
tapomadhyam budhaiḥ proktaṃ tapo'ntam vedadarśibhiḥ || 234 ||

“The intelligent men or sages to whom the *Veda* was revealed said that all this happiness or *sukha* of Gods and humans has inner heat or *tapas* as its root, inner heat as its middle, and inner heat as its end”. *Tapas* is the key religious and psychological concept in Manu’s synthesis between regulated action (where Vedic transactions are subject to self-control and become *dhārmik* action) and the supreme goal of liberation.

The text states that obedience to mother, father, and *guru* - the paradigmatic examples of *dharmā* - is the “supreme generator of inner heat.” The obstacles to *tapas* are desire or *kāma* and anger or *krodha*, where desire includes (in a list that is made explicit for the training of the king but partially resembles that of the student): hunting, gambling, sleeping, gossip, women, drinking, musing, singing, and others. Anger includes slander, violence, malice, envy, resentment, destruction of property, verbal abuse, and others (*Manusāṃhitā* chapter 4, verse 47 - 48). Note that greed (*lobha*) appears in both lists. The text *Manusāṃhitā* does not define *tapas*, but

describes it as the product of self-restraint and spiritual effort among humans and as the realization of one's most authentic nature even for “worms, snakes, moths, livestock and birds...” (*Manusāṃhitā*, chapter 11, verse 241)

Indeed, Manu links *tapas* to the realization of one's intrinsic nature, which combines ontological (*sva-bhāva*) and normative (*sva-dharma*) properties. *Tapas* are the elevated mental capacity for mastery affect, and are the very foundation of the law *dharma*: “By inner heat alone the God who is the Lord of Creatures emitted this teaching (*mahābhāgya*), and in the very same way the sages obtained the Vedas by generating inner heat” (*Manusāṃhitā*, chapter 11, verse 244). It seems to be the realization of one's supreme (and supremely appropriate) nature that is equated with *tapas*. For example, it is said that:

ब्राह्मणस्य तपो ज्ञानं तपः क्षत्रस्य रक्षणम् ।
वैश्यस्य तु तपो वार्ता तपः शूद्रस्य सेवनम् ॥ २३५ ॥

brāhmaṇasya tapo jñānaṃ tapaḥ kṣatrasya rakṣaṇam |
vaiśyasya tu tapo vārtā tapaḥ śūdrasya sevnam || 235 ||

This means “Knowledge is a priest's inner heat, protection a ruler's inner heat, business a commoner's inner heat, and service a servant's inner heat” (*Manusāṃhitā* chapter 11, verse 236). Experts on *dharma* will note that this is an identical formulation with (*svadharmā*) as one's inner nature and inner duty as a single conception. In *Manusāṃhitā*, *sukha* is not merely a result of virtue, but is linked with virtue in such a way that one becomes virtuous simply by pursuing *sukha* effectively. And it is the doctrine of *tapas* that makes this explicit.

One may say that there are different types of force that mediates between the world and the feeling of positive (or negative) affect and that the true cause of positive affect (*sukha*) is never the object of the sense or any other external reality. It is the ascetic restraint (*tapas*) which requires significant effort to master for the purpose of realizing one's authentic nature. Effort and ontological authenticity (*sva-bhāva*) function together, acting as the cause of happiness. In *Manusāṃhitā* chapter 2, verse 118, we can find the following reference:

सावित्रीमात्रसारोऽपि वरं विप्रः सुयन्त्रितः ।
नायन्त्रितस्त्रिवेदोऽपि सर्वाशी सर्वविक्रयी ॥ ११८ ॥

sāvitrīmātrasāro'pi varam viprahḥ suyantritaḥ |
nāyantritastrivedo'pi sarvāśī sarvavikrayī || 118 ||

Which means “A priest (*vipra*) who has controlled himself well (*suyantrita*) is better, even if all he knows is the verse to the sun-God, than a man who is not controlled, who eats everything and sells every-thing, even if he knows the three *Vedas*”.

In a way of conclusion, we can say that the value of recommending happiness as a goal of moral behaviour and consequence of virtue is contingent on both the true nature of affect (mastery as opposed to sensory-addictive) and on realizing the mechanism that produces it (internal *tapas*). This is the insight that Manu shares with the ascetic texts, an essential insight for removing the attribution error (*avidyā*) that generates a false sense of agency (the so-called enjoyment - *bhoga* - self with its false pleasures). With *tapas* Manu shows his indebtedness to the tradition that examines ignorance (*avidyā*) and sensory addiction in far greater detail. Still, *tapas* in Manu acts in the service of *dharma* and society - and not only for liberation (*mokṣa*). Manu has borrowed from one domain in order to apply it in another.

What we find here is that, Manu combines the concept of duty that was based on Vedic transactions with an understanding of virtue that originates in ascetic texts, and he forged a major new conception of *dharma*. This was an elaborate system where acts of *dharma* led to happiness, where happiness - properly understood - depended on the psychological skills (self-control) of ascetics, and finally, where self-control defined the essence of virtue. The underlying cause of happiness was identified with *tapas*, a force that combined ascetic discipline with observance of *dharma*.