

ARTHA AS A PURUSARTHA

—

A CRITICAL STUDY

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Arts)
of the
University of North Bengal

By

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April 2005

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The thesis entitled "**Artha as Purusartha – A Critical Study**" is the result of an intensive study and critical thinking on the concept of *Artha* as a value in the development of *Purusartha* (human personality). The work was initiated in early 1999 at the department of Philosophy, North Bengal University, Darjeeling 734 430.

I take the opportunity to place on record my deep gratitude to Professor Raghunath Ghosh, Professor and Head, Department of Philosophy, North Bengal University for his inspiring guidance, solicitude behaviour and constant encouragement throughout the entire course of study. Without his profound help and perspicacious directions, the work might not have seen the light of the day. I am grateful to him for sparing his valuable time in solving my problems and allowing me to share the benefit of his research experience and academic acumen.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to other teachers of the department of Philosophy, NBU for their help and cooperation during the period of my research work. My sincere thanks are due to the University of North Bengal for giving me this opportunity to continue study in this department. The sacrifices of my parents, husband and my son always remain off the view, without which I could not have achieved the work completed.

North Bengal University
April 11, 2005.

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Dated.....200....

The 28th March 2005

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the thesis entitled: *Artha as a Purusartha: A Critical Study* written by Sm. Manidipa Basu is the result of her analytic and critical thinking on the subject. So far as I know, the thesis is not submitted before for the award of the PhD degree or any other degree of the University of North Bengal or any other Universities. As the thesis bears the evidence of her original thinking and intellectual exercise, I recommend its submission for evaluation in connection with her PhD degree of the University of North Bengal in Arts (Philosophy).

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Chapter – I

Introduction: The Theory of *Purusarthas*

The present age is for man, no doubt, an age of great achievement; but perhaps for him it is also an age of greater apprehension. Man is justly proud of the stupendous advance which he has made in the field of science and technology, but he was never more alarmingly haunted then now by the spectra of the total extinction of his values, of his culture, indeed, of his very existence. Man is profoundly dissatisfied with himself; he is confused and feels like having lost his moorings. He has become a problem unto himself. It has almost become a truism to say that, in recent years, man has come to know more about the outside world, but less about himself. But in the dialectical process of history, this situation has awakened him to a new awareness. In spite of – or rather because of – such alienations and suppressions, man is now seen to be striving, in an ever-increasing measure, to establish his identity. Man's concern for man no longer remains an academic question – it has now become immediate and concrete. Man now wants to lift himself out of the generality and anonymity to which he has been mercilessly relegated by impersonal, value-free science and technology. The question, “what am I?” now looms large in his mind. Paradoxically, in the present age of total socialization the individual is conspicuously moving towards the center of stage. Man has, as it were, become a subject in search of a predicate.

Though the question of man's identity, dignity, and freedom seems to have assumed a particularly special significance in recent times and though a new enthusiasm seems to have lately become evident for the value of man of man, every religio-philosophical culture had, even in the past, occupies with this fundamental question and had sought to resolve it in its own way. However, science and technology has now world to shrink to such an extent

that the various culture-patterns are tending to shed their insularity and distinctiveness. We are now witnessing the increasing uniformity in the way of life and thought of the people all over the world. The people everywhere now confront more or less the same kind of problems, and their solutions of those problems are devised on more or less similar lines. Additionally, so far as India is concerned, she has, in recent years, been subjected to an almost unbelievable rapidity of social change. As has been rightly pointed out, the movements such as the renaissance and reformation, the industrial revolution, the struggle for independence and the subsequent change in the political dispensation, which have occurred in other nations over several centuries, have, in India, all been telescoped, as it were, into a few decades. Verily, India still continues to be in a state of flux. Such a situation naturally defies a coherent and tangible statement about any cultural item. Therefore, with a view to minimizing the obvious complexities and uncertainties, as also with a view to highlighting the Hindu point of view, we propose to deal with a problem concerning man primarily within the framework of what may be called the traditional Hindu thought.

Broadly speaking, traditional Hindu philosophy has concerned itself mainly with man's relation to himself, to God, and to the world. While considering the role of man vis-à-vis this world in general and his fellow-beings in particular, the Hindu thinkers have always exhibited profound awareness of the belief that the "essential self" of man is in no way involved in the doings of this phenomenal world. From the ultimate point of view, therefore, the question about the role of man, - the '*real*' man, - in this world has but little philosophical significance. Even with reference to the '*empirical*' self the consideration of such a question cannot be said to possess any intrinsic value. For, the highest spiritual goal of a Hindu is to transcend the limitations of his individuality that binds him to this phenomenal world, and thereby to realize his identity with the Supreme Being, which is,

indeed, his native character. Life in this world is accordingly to be looked upon as a bridge over which one has, of necessity, to pass in order to reach one's destination, but on which it would be unwise on one's part to build one's house. Man's role in this world consequently pertains to an essentially lower stage of experience, and is generally treated as such by the Hindu thinkers. The usual charge that, in India, ethics is regarded just as an 'aside' from the serious business of philosophy – a concession, as it were, to necessity of man's contact with the phenomenal world – cannot, therefore, be said to be quite unjustified. However, this must not, be understood to mean that the Hindu thinkers have altogether neglected this aspect of the role of man. One of their most remarkable contributions in this connection is the theory of *purusarthas*.

The theory of *purusarthas* (which are traditionally believed to be four in number, namely, *artha*, *kama*, *anartha*, and *moksa*) constitutes an essential feature of the Hindu system of thought, but no detailed or coherent account of it is said to be found in the religio-philosophical literature of the Hindus. It is difficult to ascertain the exact nature of the *purusarthas* from the available literature. In some contexts, they are described as motivations of human activity. Elsewhere, they are characterized either as individual urges or as human ends. In still other contexts, they are said to represent the human needs or desires to be satisfied, or the ingredients of experience conducive to human fulfillment. But the most generally accepted definition of *purusarthas* seems to be that they are human values, consciously pursued by man. Actually, the concept of *purusartha* is tinged with all these senses. The literal meaning of the word *purusartha* is the end (or, more primarily, destination) aimed at by man. However, it is not clear whether it is an end which man ought to aim at prescriptively. The *purusarthas* (particularly, *artha* and *kama*) may be viewed as the 'desired' sublimated into the 'desirable'. The theory of *purusarthas* is arrived at

inductively. It is not a system, which has been logically derived from metaphysical principles. Perhaps it originated as descriptive statement, which was later developed into a well-knit and well-thought-out scheme of prescriptions.

The Hindu thinkers have recognized that man possesses a complex personality, which seeks expression mainly through four outlets – his craving for power and property, his sensuous and aesthetic urge, his social aims, and his spiritual impulse. They have related these four outlets respectively to the four *purusarthas* or ends of man, namely, *artha*, *kama*, *anartha*, and *moksa*. The first three ends have relevance so far as his empirical life is concerned, while the last refers to his spiritual life. According to the most common view, these four *purusarthas* do not operate to the exclusion of one another. On the contrary, through their proper coordination – that is to say, by so regulating *artha* and *kama* that they do not hinder *dharma* and by subordinating these three to the ultimate end of *moksa* – one is expected to build up a truly integrated personality, and to realize a truly full life – a life which is materially rich (*artha*), aesthetically beautiful (*kama*), ethically sound (*dharma*), and spiritually emancipated (*moksa*). The *purusarthas* are thus made to serve as the psychical-moral-philosophical basis of man's role in this world. The Hindu theory and practice relating to the organization both of man's individual life and his social existence can, therefore, be best understood only in terms of these four *purusarthas*.

However, there is every reason to presume that the scheme of *purusarthas* originally consisted of only three *purusarthas*, namely, *artha*, *kama* and *dharma*. Earlier literature usually mentions only this *trivarga*: and since the *purusarthas* have relevance in the relational human complex, this is quite understandable. The *purusartha*-theory is essentially the social-functional theory, and, by its very nature, *moksa* falls out of its orbit. There is a conceptual disparity and discontinuity between the *trivarga* and *moksa*. The addition of

moksa to the *trivarga* cannot be said to have rendered the *purusartha*-theory either more complete or more satisfactory. Touching as it does the whole life-span, the *trivarga* is quite adequate by itself. The *trivarga* of *artha*, *kama* and *dharma* does by no means imply that these three *purusarthas* are to be sought for in a progressive gradation. They are also not alternative goals. Nor are the different *purusarthas* intended for persons for different aptitude and capacity. Man is expected to pursue all the three *purusarthas*, which are independent values, conjointly and in a balanced way, for the achievement of an integrated human personality and the fulfillment of human life in this world. The *purusarthas* are values not so much in the sense that not seeking them would be wrong as in the sense that not seeking them would result in non-perfection.

The *trivarga* scheme is essentially a social-functional scheme oriented towards the achievement of the goals of a social man. Of course, one of its basic assumptions is that the real value consists in man's conduct in accord with his true nature. The *trivarga* is thus an aspect of religion rather than of philosophy. For, the aim of religion is to cause its followers, or to help the, to do or to be what, according to it, they ought to do or ought to be. The *purusartha*-theory is not influenced by any consideration of class, caste or sex. Indeed, it is emphasized that, though the *purusartha*-theory has been formulated in a specific social milieu and on a specific social background, it can as well be made applicable to any society in the world.

Since the time of Rig Veda, the approach of Indian Philosophy in general has been largely spiritual all-comprehensive. In Indian Philosophy, there is no sharp distinction between metaphysics and ethics. The concepts of *Satyam*, *Ritam*, *Anantam*, *Brihat* and *Jnanam* have ruled over different shades of philosophical thought whether in the field of religion, metaphysics, education or ethics. Although metaphysical thinking in Rig Veda

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appears to be polytheistic, it is truly the *monitic* trend, which is implicitly found as a running thread in various *Suktas* of Rig Veda. In *Purusha Sukta* it is the mantra of four 'Varnas' and concept of manifestation of *Prajapati* within the manifold objects of the universe which speak about relationship of one reality of *Purusha* having thousand facets with the creation of animals, organisms and human beings. Actually, it is not a creation of literal sense, but is manifestation of single reality in various material, organic and phenomenal objects of the universe. It lies implicitly within the beings of the world and being immanently in the empirical world it grows manifold and ascends in the vertical real. '*Prajapati Charati Garbhe antarjaymano bahudha vijayate/Tasya yonim paripashyanti dhirah tasminhatasthuhu bhuvanani vishwa*'. Ultimate reality is both transcendent as well as immanent. When it is said to be omnipotent then it follows that it is potentially capable of manifesting in the manifold universe. It may have many names and forms but essentially is the same poising in several plural species and varieties of phenomena.

It is thus oneness, which are the basic principle of thought as well as that of action in human personality and individuality. Moral philosophy is not entirely autonomous and cannot be thought alone in terms of moral relationship and values. For this purpose, it is necessary to think about the ultimate reality and self that are pivotal for action and intention of agent and individual. It is in this context that four '*Purusarthas*' of human individuality are understood and acted upon during course of Indian tradition. They are (i) *Dharma*, (ii) *Artha*, (iii) *Kama*, and (iv) *Moksa*. Of course in *Manu Samhita* the ideal of *Moksa* is not clearly mentioned. However later this is positively mentioned and *Acharyas* have thought over it. The literature of Vedas is well spread out in four distinct periods and phases such as *Samhita*, *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads*. Out of these four aspects of Vedic literature, *Samhita* has been held in high respect owing to its fundamental source and its

metaphysical nature. *Agni Sukta*, *Vamdeva Sukta*, *Nasdiya Sukta* and others have made lasting influence on subsequent *Brahmanas* and *Upanishads*.

Brahmanas are said to be the portion of deeds, action and performances for ultimate propitiation and obligation performed for fulfilling individual and universal commitments. Of course, there is debate as to whether *Brahmanas* ought to be regarded as authoritative part of Vedic literature. *Brahmanas* dwell upon sacrifices to be performed for cherishing worldly desires and appeasing Gods and Goddesses for terrestrial benefits. Therefore, those who follow knowledge-oriented path for liberation do not favor action-oriented *Brahmanas* to become the part of Vedas. The *Upanishads* have considered various problem of human conduct and life in strongly reflected spirit and have provided sufficient philosophical material to be imbibed in life and behavior for prosperity. The identity between self and *Brahman*, relationship between ignorance and knowledge, life and rebirth, death and immortality, good and pleasant, and immanence and transcendence are some of the issues discussed in the *Upanishads*. From moral point of view, the seers of *Upanishads* have amply thought over the ultimate reality, the nature of human self, bondage, liberation and human goodness. The problems of life have sufficiently raised speculative insights and the thinkers of major *Upanishads* have responded vigorously to them. Meaning of *Dharma* is indeed complex and when looked at from traditional and historical perspective its meaning seems varying and several. This can be observed in several cantos of *Geeta* where *Lord Krishna* in attempting to persuade *Arjuna* why he should fight against his kinsmen is elaborating the concepts of *Dharma* and *Lokasangraha*. It is *kuladharmā*, *svadharmā*, *svabhavadharmā*, “*jatidharmā*”, *rashtradharmā* and ultimately *Lord Krishna* ask *Arjuna* to abandon the so-called *dharmas* and surrender to him alone for he alone is able to liberate him from sin.

There is the concept of '*Loksangraha*', which is central in the *Geeta* and gives relief to seeker of welfare and goodness in society and the world at large.

When one looks at metaphysical concepts, of *Satyam*, *Ritam*, *Brihat* and other such key-concepts in Vedas and Upanishads, one is not able to fix ethical status and its value of moral endeavor and at times one pronounces the futility of moral value in the canvas of ultimate reality. However if one tries to deal with concepts of '*Shreyas*' and '*Preyas*' as dealt within *Katha* Upanishad by *Yama* then one finds true development of moral value as such and one is able to give special status to moral value. One who distinguishes between good and pleasant would be able to attain immortality. *Katha* Upanishad clearly enunciates that this highest truth cannot be attained by reason and intelligence. It can be attained by intuition and highest and abiding experience. Our inward soul is no bigger than thumb. It lies implicitly in our heart. As Lord Krishna says in *Bhagvad Geeta* to the effect that God is residing in our heart implicitly and inwardly.

Ethical value flourishes on inward self-knowledge and self-discipline. Therefore, when individual gathers inner strength, courage and discipline then he cultivates inward knowledge and control. Gautam Buddha met certain young persons who were well versed in various arts and disciplines. He told them that he did not know any art except the art of self-control. This art of self-control is indeed the art of self-discipline and moral cultivation. Aim of division of society into *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas*, and *Shudras* was ultimately to let develop definite internal qualities within certain types of people in society. *Brahmins* should develop the quality of concentration, knowledge, discrimination and internal thinking, *Kshatriyas* should develop the qualities of courage, challenge, service for handicapped, disabled, protection and sense of welfare, *Vaishyas* should develop the qualities of trade, business, management, dealing with outside forces of merchandise,

money, exchange, bargain commodities, *Shudras* should develop the qualities of service, selflessness, detachment and surrender. It was not aimed at injustice, discrimination, and exploitation as it is usually judged about Hindu Society. Its true aim was cooperation, system of work, hereditary quality, learning by experience, education in the family and acquired characteristics. This has universal application in social structure and cultural upbringing. It was in *Manu Samhita* that in alter chapter of the book that Manu becomes harsh about caste system and holds the view that woman ought to become dependent either on husband or upon son and that they do not deserve freedom in society. In fact, in time of Rig Veda it was held that woman was regarded as '*brahmavadini*' and she was thought to be better half and her help and presence was solicited in all sacred deeds. This is shown in the *Ashvamedha yajna* performed by king *Rama* where golden idol of wife *Seeta* was installed in the ceremony. Woman is as much respectable in society and in family as man is. It was also on account of foreign cultures, races and people who acme to India that Brahmins thought Veda to very sacrosanct and did not permit woman and *Shudras* to read Vedas and other sacred scriptures. Gandhi is right in saying that this is a blot on Hinduism. No section of society can be ignored such as *Harijans* as they were called by Gandhi. The original import of caste society as it was inspired in *Purusha Shukta* was later on lost sight of and in that place rigid and traditional caste-oriented idea persisted and to-day we find a superficial structure of Hindu society based on superficial understanding of tradition and society.

In modern renaissance of Hinduism and Ibsian social philosophy in general it is found that *Brahma samaj*, *Arya samaj* and *Prarthana samaj* have played vital role in changing traditional ideas and dogmas of social structure, casteism, marriage, heredity and social interaction. Old taboos are being removed gradually; sectarianism is being abolished from the minds of enlightened people. However, masses were still under the traditional

(*sanatan*) Hinduism. Of course the true meaning of '*sanatan*' is the perennial truth which is undying and real source of religion and human spirit. Humanism flourished in nineteenth century and great religious and spiritual personalities turned to masses to raise them to prosperity and true welfare. Swami Dayananda, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Mahatma Phule, Lokmanya Tilak and a galaxy of thinkers in the country rose and attempted the Herculean task of wiping out the blind tradition, false beliefs, exploitation of the downtrodden, so-called *Shudras* in society, backward state of woman in society, misconception about Vedas, ritualism and worn-out Indian tradition. In this context, Mahatma Gandhi, Prof. Radhakrishnan, Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo attempted to do pioneering work in educational field, in reviving the institution of 'Ashram' in its true spirit in South Africa and in India, in Bengal and in Pondicherry.

It is not true to say that casteism was vigorously opposed in modern times during the times of renaissance in Hinduism. Kshatriyas vehemently opposed it during 7th century B.C. and its results were the religions of Jainas and Buddhists under the leadership of Lord Mahavir and Gautam Buddha respectively. Its root can be traced in the greater emphasis put on ritualism and action-oriented liturgy found in *Brahmanas*, which followed *Samhitas* of Rig Veda. *Brahmanas* were taken to be the spirit of the Vedas with the result that narrow meaning of Vedic knowledge and its rendering in deeds were conceived in Vedic period. Brahmins and Brahmanism took hold of the narrow meaning and sacrament of Vedic scripture and as a result, *Shudras* as well as woman were deprived of reading Vedas and participating in so-called sacrament of Vedic rituals. In fact the later writings, the form of *Puranas* were the result of this *Adhikara-Bheda* forced upon certain class and caste in Hindu society. It was largely thought that *Puranas* and especially *Bhagvata purana* were especially written for *Shudras* and woman. This was a misconception but it persisted for along time in

Hindu tradition and even now, this thought has been nurtured by so-called *sanatani* Hindus in India. Buddha and Mahavir opposed the ritualistic oriented Hinduism and attempted to establish and usher new ethic and spiritual religion in which moral practice and purification of virtue, righteousness, thinking and action were emphasized for individual personality as well as masses. People in large number joined Jain and Buddhist congregations. Owing to the widespread belief, which saturated that Vedas are sacrosanct and spiritual and therefore no alien, impure, unbeliever can read it or interpret it, the casteism spread in the country and there was discrimination and injustice done to masses on lower stage at large. This can be observed in rural areas where there is ignorance, superstition and social dogmatism prevailing. It was nineteenth century that in Bengal, Gujrata, Maharashtra, Mysore, U.P. that there arose renaissance thought and writers, thinkers, saints, political leaders and devotees who heralded new thought of widow remarriage, ban on sati tradition, child marriage, encouraged education for girls, going to foreign land for earning, education and enlightenment. As a result, there was radical social change in many parts of Indian and masses rose for new light in knowledge, action, freedom, sense of equality brotherhood and self-discipline.

Although it is accepted that casteism, sectarianism, discrimination and exploitation have ruined *Hinduism* from within nevertheless the merits of *Hindu* structure, its theoretical foundation and its quality-based cultural lineage cannot be brushed aside easily. It has stood by the travails of Hindu marches through centuries. It is owing to the quality of renunciation, detachment and spiritual experience those great kings, and rulers and sovereigns have bowed down to great sages, seers, and *Rishis* in India. It is on this account that philosophy, religion, moral fervour, art, literature, music, painting, sculpture, science, astrology, education, medicine, physical and social health and agriculture have flourished in India in her glorious

past. Actually, casteism became downgraded when the meanings of 'Religion' became distorted and masses understood it to be institutional and sectarian. Sri Aurobindo, in his book "*Foundations of Indian Culture*" has distinguished between religion and spirituality and has distinctly shown spirituality to be the true character of Hinduism as distinguished from belief in one or many Gods and ritualistic practices prevalent among people and masses.

Samhitas, codes of conduct were written after Epics and *Vedagas* such as *Shiksha*, *Kalpa*, *Vyakarana* and others. This is why they are called '*smritis*'. It is in '*Manu Smriti*' that he had distinguished between *Samanya dharma* and *Vishesha dharma*. According to '*Samanya Dharma*' one is supposed to perform average action according to ordinary norm of society and status enjoyed in the group whereas according to '*Vishesha Dharma*' person is supposed to perform duty according to caste and function in society and heredity. Again Manu lays down the goals of life such as *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kama* which every persons endeavors to devote life for certain ideals of social upliftment, economic betterment and bodily health. The values of body, economic prosperity and detached action as well as rightful duty are to be cherished and fulfilled for systematic and cultured life. Meaning of '*Dharma*' is not only 'value' and 'cosmic law' but it is comprehension of body, vital desires and mental understanding for spiritual nurturing of total personality. Hinduism attempts to look upon individual personality from 'Holistic' standpoint. This is why it upholds the law of '*Karma*' and the principle of rebirth. Death is neither the end of life nor the termination of moral endeavor, but it is the preparation of better and righteous life.

Chapter – II

The Concept of *Dharma* in Indian Tradition

An humble exercise – to spell out the semantic nuances of *dharma* to prepare a background and foreground against which the metaphysical, moral and sociological issues pertaining to *dharma* are addressed to. It goes without saying that *dharma* is most respectable a notion as well as one which has fallen into utmost disrepute. *Dharma* has all through become the focal point of controversies because of the confusions associated with its usage and practice.

Of the varied connotations, fivefold senses of *dharma* stand out as central and conspicuous, viz. *Dharma* as (a) Eternal moral order, (b) Constitutive properties of things and beings, (c) Moral imperative, (d) Regulative principle and (e) Institutionalized practices. In the following, we shall examine how the ontological sense of the term, i.e., *dharma* in the sense of the ultimate moral order, is of seminal significance, for it lends meaning to the other uses of the term.

Human awareness is self-reflective. It has persuaded man to seek to uncover the secret of *Nature* and Man himself. The grand design and orderliness in *Nature* keep us baffled. From the beginning, the perceptive ingenuity of man has led him to take note of an order in the world of human actions. This is termed *dharma* (moral order). As natural order is explained in terms of the casual principle, the uniformities in the domain of voluntary actions are explained by an appeal to the underlying moral calculus. Now the nagging question is: Are the two different orders to be understood in terms of two different kinds of laws? The seer philosophers of the past arrived at the singular conception *Rta* to account for the immanent order in the cosmos, of which the laws of *Nature* and the laws of Karma are

but two different variants. More recognition of order is not enough, as it needs to be explained why at all, there is order. This led them to the concept of Brahman (the transcendental subjectivity consciousness) as the primordial agent and substratum of the phenomenal manifold. The One has become many and lies quiescent in every finite expression of it. *Rta* is nothing but Brahman subsisting as the immanent intelligence of the cosmos. It is *Rta*, which expresses itself in form of the natural and moral order. In moral domain, *Rta* again has twofold expressions, viz. *Satya* (truth) and *Dharma* (righteousness). *Satya* is conceptual apprehension of *Rta* whereas *dharma* is its actional expression. As Brahman is all-pervasive, the order is ubiquitous. The universal order has its instantiation in the particulars as their characteristic essence (*dharma*). In the inanimate, it is discovered as *Vastu dharma* and in the animate, it is termed *Jaina dharma*. Every object has its essential property without which it ceases to have existence and identity. It is *dharma* of water to flow downward and that of fire to burn and emit heat. Similarly, all living beings display their characteristic wont of hunger, thirst, sleep, sex etc. Significantly, human beings constitute a distinct universe of their own. Because of being more evolved, Consciousness, dormant in nonhuman existents, finds explicit expression in the form of Rationality and Free-will. In the evolutionary scale, every creation shows the tendency of unfolding its latent potentiality, and grows into the next higher state. There is the implicit nisus towards the state of absolute equilibrium in which the whole creation has its genesis. It is self-consciously felt as the urge to attain the state of beatitude and bliss (*ananda*) in the human beings. The conscious effort to be restored to the state is termed as *Manava dharma* or *Bhagavad dharma*.

Bhagavad dharma makes us goal conscious. Goal determines direction of movement. But what is really called for is the movement towards the goal. The question of moral imperative, i.e. *ought* or *ought-not*, is determined by twofold considerations, i.e.

disposition ability, circumstances on one hand, and *Nature* of the ultimate *end* on the other. In other words, *ought* is determined by both *can* and *is*. Concept of *svadharma* assumes that the duty of individual is to be determined by innate disposition (which in turn is determined by the relative dominance of the *gunas* of *Prakrti* (*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*) and ability to do. *Guna* and *karma* constitute *svabhava* (one's *Nature*), which determines one's duty. People in the society can be classified into four fundamental types (*varnas*) according to *guna* and *karma*. They are *Brahmana*, *Ksatriya*, *Vais'ya* and *S'udra*. Duties of the respected *varnas* follow from *guna* and *karma* constituting *svabhava*. The fourfold classification of *varnas* corresponds to four basic types of social needs. The *Brahmana* is to offer enlightened guidance, the *Ksatriya* to extend physical security to the individual and the collective body, the *Vais'ya*, to guarantee social security by way of providing the fundamental needs for all and the *S'udra* to offer services to the rest. Discharge of *svadharma* (*varna dharma*) ensures optimum utilization of the individual's potentiality while promoting the cause of collective well-being (*lokasamgraha*), the ultimate social goal. *Varna dharma* specifies one's station in society whereas *asrama dharma* is determined by the stage of life that a person has to pass through willy-nilly. *Brahmacharya*, *Garhasthya*, *Vanaprastha* and *Sannyasa as'ramas* enjoin duties and responsibilities, helping a person to pursue individual excellence, while discharging one's participatory function in society building. Thus, *Varnas'rama dharma* refers to the ethical imperatives, which are determined by contingencies of time, place and person. On the other hand, *Sadharana dharma* refers to a set of obligatory duties. They point to the commonalties in the moral domain, binding upon every individual, irrespective of one's station and stages in life.

Human existence is trifarious, i.e. physico-psycho-spiritual. *Varnas'rama dharma* and *Sadhrana dharma* proffer the criteria for determining the *ought*. But the real existential

challenge is to determine the exact content of *ought* in respect of the trifarious needs. Liberation (*moksa*) and collective well-being (*lokasamgraha*) have been conceived respectively, as the personal and social goals. Pursuit of one promotes the other. But the individual has to harmonize the subjective and the objective in the existential mode. *Kama* and *artha* refer to the physico-psychic and psychic needs of the individual which need to be fulfilled as a prerequisite for satiating one's spiritual longing (*moksa*). *Artha* is seen to have only instrumental value for the pursuit of *Kama*. *Kama* is the end and *artha* is the means in the relative framework of empirical living. But one always stands in need of a criterion for determining the right end and the right means. One can raise the question of *ought-not* both with regard to end, i.e. *kama* and means, i.e. *artha*. Here, *dharma* comes to one's rescue. *Dharma* plays the role of regulative principle by which the individual is helped to pursue both *artha* and *kama* in a manner which facilitates one to attain *moksa*. Bereft of *dharma*, desire (*kama*) tends to degenerate into blind passion and pursuit of wealth (*artha*) into avarice. *Dharma* as regulative principle works out the existential *modus operandi*, enabling the individual to utilize the practical to expedite the pace of progress to the transcendental. *Purusartha*s offer a value scheme showing how the eophysical and the psychic, when regulated by *dharma*, can be *harnessed* for the attainment of *moksa*.

In common parlance *dharma* came to be identified with different institutionalized practices, sects and cults. *Dharma*, in the sense of cardinal values, constitutes the very basis of every religion. It lends rationale to the body of beliefs, set of practices, *do's* and *don'ts* that go under the name of Religion. *Value* as a system of *oughts* and *ought-nots* remain as mere abstraction, unless and until the values manifest in and through the behaviour and conduct of individuals. Religions came into being in their attempt to promote excellence in the individual and social body through inculcation of values in the individual and *Collective*

psyche. In course of time, *dharma* came to be identified with the beliefs and practices. As a result, the superficial, contingent features of religions were mistaken for their essence. This accounts for the so-called religious diversities and inter religious dissensions. Therefore the paradox: Religions, despite their avowed mission of promoting unity and harmony through dissemination of personal and social values like love, mutuality, service, sacrifice have become the virtual instruments of promoting mistrust, hatred, fanaticism and violence at large. This had led people to shun the so-called *sacred* (religious) and seek the *secular* (non-religious). Plurality of religions is a historical inevitability. A religious system is improvised by its founder in order to help his contemporaries to address to the prevailing exigencies. However, what is called for is the undiminished vigilance on the part of the followers so that they don't sacrifice the principles, the essence in favour of excrescences, the *sacred* in favour of the so-called *secular*.

Creation is an inexplicable marvel. From the very dawn of civilization, probing minds have sought to unveil ultimate secrets of the *phenomenal*. What has remained perpetually enigmatic to the rational minds is the very design and grandeur of our universe. Planets, stars and galaxies move on their fixed orbits with absolute precision. Things have their unalterable properties. *Like begets like*. In the animate world, plants, insects, reptiles, animals, birds and human beings are so constituted that they live best when they live the life of mutual interdependence. Think of any object, big or small; it exhibits symmetry or internal harmony. *As above, so below*. If the Sun is the nucleus of the solar system, which holds on to the planets and satellites, a tiny atom is also a miniature replica of the solar system with a nucleus, and electron spinning with definite velocity. Think of a cell! The texture and labyrinth is mind-boggling. Then, what is of an organism! Scientific investigations have made significant breakthroughs in deciphering the workings of Nature.

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Their explanations are couched in the *Principles of Causality*. The scientist explains a phenomenon in terms of its determining antecedents, which in turn are explained in terms of their preceding conditions and so on. What they achieve is a discovery of factors in the causal nexus. Science can hardly answer: *Why are these uniformities at all? Why does an effect follow a cause in a determinate way?* Of course, one may dispute the thesis of design in drawing our attention to the perceived freaks or aberrations in *Nature*. The dreadful visitations of flood, cyclone and pestilence that takes lives in a sweep; earth quakes, volcanic eruptions that trap us unawares; avalanches that engulf us on their way; nuances of weather that haunt us with uncertainty etc. do apparently point to an antithesis. It would suffice to point out that the so-called irregularities or abnormalities do not point to the caprice of *Nature* but are necessary points in causal sequence. There can always be a causal and rational explanation of the so-called accidents. In *Nature*, nothing is accidental, everything is incidental. Besides, the perceived disharmony is only transient, just as sickness is a passing phenomenon in the life of a person. The disorders and irregularities are settled in harmony in the long run. Given the facts of uniformities, the scientists offer description, explanation and prediction of them, but can hardly explain why things behave as they do. Why don't things change their properties every now and then so as to make prediction impossible? We cannot think how the universe would have been like if there were no harmony and order. Could there be a creation at all? Scientific exploration takes order and harmony to be axiomatic. Perhaps, to look for a rationale behind the order shall be dubbed as unscientific or a-scientific.

Brahman & Rta

The *phenomenal* owes its explanation to the *Noumenal*. The *Unconditioned* is invoked to account for the *Conditioned* and the *Absolute*, to explain the relativities. The

dogging impulse to answer the ultimate *why's* of creation led the ancient philosophers to arrive at the notion of *Brahman*, *Rta*, *Satya* and *Dharma*. Reality in its transcendent stance is *Brahman*. *Brahman* by its sheer volition manifests itself as the many. The diversities and the hierarchy in the created manifold point to the varied ways in which *Brahman* expresses itself in and through the particulars. *Rta* does not stand for the perceived *order* but the immanent principle on account of which there is order. In *Rg veda*, *Rta* is referred to as the primeval. Description of *Rta* bears striking affinity with *Brahman* as the most primordial.¹ *Rta* is conceived as the presiding principle in which the cosmos is poised and the power by which it is regulated.²

One comes across parallel descriptions in *S'vetas'vatara* and *Taittiriya upanisada* where *Brahman* is delineated as the ultimate guardian and the ruler.³ *Brahman* is also thought as the ultimate arbiter.⁴ The foregoing observations suggest that as the transcendent principle, *Brahman* and *Rta* are indistinguishable. They are not two, but twofold expressions of the same substance. *Brahman* and *Rta* refer respectively to the transcendent and immanent aspects of the cosmic reality. Reality in respect of transcendental subjectivity is *Brahman* and as the immanent intelligence, running in and through the manifold manifestations, animate or inanimate, mobile or immobile, natural or human, it is termed *Rta*. In the sense, both *Brahman* and *Rta* are ontological.

Rta & Satya

Rta, is the unchanging *universal* beneath the changing particulars, the *eternal* behind the ephemeral, the *noumenal protasis* of the phenomenal. The unalterable *Nature* of *Rta* is termed *Satya* (truth). Truth is defined as the non-sublatable.⁵ Unlike untruth it does not suffer from consequences.⁶ Hence, *Satya* and *Rta* have been used synonymously. It is mentioned that both *Rta* and *Satya* arise from the divine penance.⁷

Satya is the unalterable nature of *Rta* in relation to the relative and changing particulars. In epistemology, *Satya* is defined as conformity to Reality. In axiology, *Satya* refers to the speech, which is in conformity with reality. It means *satya* is ontologically grounded in *Rta*. Mental perception of *Rta* is *satya*. The time honoured maxim, *Truth eventually triumphs, not falsehood*,⁸ suggests that whosoever treads the path of *satya*, i.e. *one who lives in consonance with the cosmic order (Rta)* is sure to come out victorious in the long run. This is the chief purport of epics and mythologies. *Rta*, being the *inviolable Order*, settles scores in its favour. Therefore, any attempt, which seeks to thwart the *Order* is sure to get crushed or court ruination.

Rta & Dharma

Dharma is used in very many senses. Varied shades of meaning of the term make it difficult to provide any one particular definition. Etymologically, it is derived from the root 'dhr' which means to uphold or sustain.⁹ In this sense, it is use interchangeably with *Rta*. It is said that the forces of *Nature* rule according to *dharma*.¹⁰ *Dharma* always comes out victorious.¹¹ It means that whosoever follows the way of the cosmic order (*dharma*) is bound to be crowned with victory. The moral order is irrevocable. Hence, ultimate well-being of the individual and society consists in obedience to it. Those who protect and promote *dharma* are protected by it. The parable of the king and Goddess Laxmi is quite illuminating.

Deeply moved by the hardships of his poor subjects, the king orders to run a market in a remote village. To encourage the sellers, he makes an announcement promising that he would buy anything that remains unsold. This encouraged people to come together for buying and selling, thereby fulfilling their long-felt needs. One day, an old lady approaches the king humbly saying that one of her idols has remained unsold. People are averse to buy

it as it happened to be that of *Alaxmi*. The king buys the idol as he considers it his *dharma* to keep the pledge. He retires to bed but in the first hour of the night wakes up to the uncanny presence of *Goddess Laxmi* who tells him that she is under constraints to leave the palace because of the presence of *Alaxmi*. By bringing *Alaxmi* the king has offended her and that *Laxmi* and *Alaxmi* cannot coexist. The king pleads innocence saying, that was his *dharma* as a king to keep his vow, and that he brought *Alaxmi* under the moral constraints of *dharma*. *Laxmi* could not but leave. Then comes *Narayana* who follows *Laxmi* with the plea that the king has offended Gods and Goddesses by making room for *Alaxmi* in the palace and that in the absence of the Goddess of wealth, the place is not worth living. The king again entreats him, expresses his moral predicament and his helplessness there upon. One by one, Gods and Goddesses follow suit to utter agony of the king. In the last but one hour, the king wakes up again to the sound of the imposing presence of *Dharmaraj*, the God of *dharma*. When he asks the king that would also have to leave the palace, as all else have left, the king retorts: “*Oh god of dharma!*”! *You cannot leave me as it is only for you (for dharma) that everything has happened.* *Dharmaraj* feels morally fettered to stay on. Then the king retires to bed only to get up to a sound from the main entrance. To his utter consternation, he finds a long cue of Gods and Goddesses, with *Laxmi* standing in the front, with her head hung in shame, and *Narayana* behind her, asking the king to let them in. *Narayana* explains that they are no more sought, adored and worshipped by the mortals because *Dharma* is not with them. Thus, the king is protected by *dharma* for he staked everything to abide by *dharma*. *Dharma* stands for the universals, which uphold moral order. Needless to say that ontological use of the term *dharma* is primary and imparts significance to other usages of the term.

Human beings constitute an integral part of the *natural order*. Human body is subject to the laws that otherwise explain all other biological phenomena. It is subject to birth,

growth, decay and extinction. An animate being lives under the propulsion of natural drives and instincts. However, unlike other living counterparts, the humans have a universe of their own. Human existence is distinctive because of *their unique possessions, viz. Rationality, Normative awareness and Free-will*. They have the innate ability to have a sense of *ends and means, ought and ought-not, the pleasurable (preya) and the preferable (s'reya)*. Under the sway of baser propensities, men become prone to seek things that afford transient pleasure or serve their immediate interests. But they possess the capacity to follow the way of the preferable, i.e. the superior path by nullifying the limiting influence of the *crude*. In other words, human beings inhabit a moral universe. *Actions* are what human beings do with rational deliberation. *Actions* are characteristically different from *events*. *Events* are caused, whereas *actions* are willed. An *event* is determined by the act of willing on the part of the *agent*. *Willing* is always intentional. Hence, intention, purpose or goal is built into the very *Nature of action*. Given an existential predicament, the human agent has choices before him. He is free to choose any one of the courses, deemed proper. But an action having been performed, the *agent* is not free to choose the consequences. Consequences follow an action as necessarily as an effect follows the cause. In other words, action and consequences constitute a casual nexus. As is the action, so is the consequence. *No virtuous action goes unrewarded and no vicious action goes unpunished*. This is precisely the law of *Karma*. It points to the fact that as causal uniformities explain order and predictability in *Nature*, there are uniformities, which explain the action-reaction nexus in the moral domain. It is worth noting that the moral; universe is not discontinuous with the natural universe. Rather, they constitute one continuum. *Rta* has both moral and a-moral expressions. It is the protasis of both the natural and the moral universe. As the substratum of the orderliness in *Nature*, it is a-moral but as the ultimate ground of the *karmic law*, it is moral and termed *dharma*. So,

dharma, as the *principle of righteousness*, is nothing but *Rta*, functional in moral domain. *Dharma* as a moral universal is conceived as *Adrsta* in *Vais'esika* system and *Apurva*, in *Purva Mimamsa*.

Adrsta literally means the unseen power. *Adrsta* is understood as the primordial principle on account of which the atoms configure themselves to produce compounds and actions are followed by merits or demerits. Though *Adrsta* is unintelligent, it is verily the underlying principle, which presides over the natural and moral order. Good and evil actions are inalienably bound to their respective consequences. Effects follow their causes because of *Adrsta*. It imparts initial motion to atoms and regulates the whole gamut of evolution. Since *Adrsta* is construed as unconscious, one fails to understand how such unintelligent principle can account for the all-pervasive order. This perhaps led *Vais'esika* thinkers to invoke the existence of God as the efficient cause, who makes *Adrsta* functional. But postulation of God, over and above *Adrsta*, raises more problems than it solves. So, they subject themselves to the usual criticisms levelled against dualistic metaphysics, *Rta* is not conceived as independent of *Brahman*. It is nothing but *Brahman* poised as the underlying continuum of the manifest reality.

Apurva

Apurva has exclusive moral overtone in *Purva mimamsa*. Every action is intentional. Hence, it is performed with a view to securing the desirable fruits or results. For *Mimamsakas*, *dharma* is that which induces one to righteous action. Prescriptions and prohibitions goad individual to perform actions that are in conformity with religious ordinances and restrain from actions that are at variance with them. So both do's and don'ts are action-guiding or injunctive. *Mimamsakas* believe in the ultimate efficacy of rites and rituals and the invariable nexus between actions and their results. Jaimini brings in the

concept of *Apurva* to explain the necessary connection between action and consequences. *Good* having been performed, the reward cannot be denied and *Evil*, having been perpetrated, the punishment cannot be withheld. This is possible because of the causal potency, which brings the consequences in the wake of action. Though imperceptible, the existence of *Apurva*, must be presumed in order to account for the karmic uniformity. *Apurva*, which binds actions to its consequences, has its locus either in the *action* or in the *agent*. *Apurva* literally means that which did not exist before. It is non-existent before the performance of the action. When an *action* is executed, it begins to acquire a force (potency), which fructifies depending on the contingencies of time, place or person. The agent, in the process of performing the action, acquires certain potency on account of which the consequences are appropriated to him. The moot issue is: *Apurva* being unintelligent, it is hard to comprehend how it begins to impregnate either *action* or *agent* with a sense of purpose. What is the locus of *Apurva*? Does it not presuppose an all-pervasive order?

A closure reflection on the *Nature* of *Apurva* brings it to the fore that the purported causal potency predicted of it is teleological. Action does not merely have the capacity to attract consequences but is directed only to certain specific consequences as are appropriate of the *Nature* of *action*. If good actions attract merits, the bad actions do necessarily invite demerits. If *Apurva* is treated as mere efficiency, then it would merely admit the fact of order showing that the *karma* and *karmic fruits* are invariably related. However, it hardly explains as to why there is order at all. This puts one under logical compulsion to postulate an *intelligent agency* as the unseen invariable. If the intelligent agent is thought to be external, then the view will be fraught with irreconcilable difficulties that rank dualism is heir to. On the other hand, if *Apurva* is viewed as potential intelligence, then it will be

indistinguishable from the vedantic notion of *Rta*. Such difficulties obviated in the vedantic framework where *Rta* is conceived as intelligence, immanent in the cosmic moral order.

The foregoing discussions on *Dharma*, *Adrsta* and *Apurva* go to suggest that moral laws are inexorable and inviolable and function irrespective of our knowledge and ignorance of them. The notion of *Universality* of moral laws constitutes the very foundation of the law of *karma*, *Dharma* and *adharma*, in the derivative sense, refer to the merits and demerits that accompany the performance of the good or evil deeds. By doing the action, an agent remains bound to the merits or demerits that necessarily accrue to him. As *prarabdha* it accompanies one beyond the grave. The reactions of actions stored in the potential form (*samskaras*), awaiting congenial circumstances to be actualized. In this sense, *dharma* refers to the moral continuum in and through series of lives, punctuated with phenomena of birth and death. Hence, it is urged that one should do *dharma* to all the beings one can.¹² When *Narada* appears before *Dhruva* to dissuade him from rigorous penance, he replies that life is an uncertainty. Death being the only certainty, which may visit a mortal at any moment, one should seize the opportunity of practicing *dharma* even from childhood. The Oriya poet Madhusudan Rao sings: *I must earn dharma, the precious wealth, right from my early days. Life is uncertain, who knows when shall death come and overtake us by surprise!*¹³

Dharma in the aforesaid sense, points to the fact of moral determinism. Against this backdrop, it is worthwhile to examine the concept of decadence of *dharma* (*dharmasya glani*) Lord Krsna says; *As and when there is decadence of dharma and the reign of adharma, we incarnate myself to save the righteous by obliterating the evil.*¹⁴ Moral determinism points to an order which the mortals cannot upset, obstruct or revoke. Despite power, right and opulence, *Kamsa* could not undo the order (*dharma*) nor could the *Kuravas*. However, unlike other living counterparts, human beings have the capacity to

deviate from the path of righteousness (*dharma*). The state of *Nature* is one of harmony and mutual concordance. Apart from occasional interference by the free-will wielding creatures, i.e. human beings, *Nature* always evolves for the better and higher.

The animate and inanimate existents evolved by internal compulsion of *Nature*, i.e. *Rta*. But when it comes to human beings, the evolutionary scenario is characteristically different. They have latitude to either move in tune with the cosmic order, i.e. the way of *dharma*, or make retrograde march by misuse of their free-will. Freedom is double-edged sword. It needs a direction. When it is invested with a righteous goal, it ensures good of the individual and the society, eventually. When actions of the individuals are in consonance with *dharma* (moral order), one becomes participant in the cosmic process. Conversely, if people by and large, under the blinding influence of the lower instinct and propensities like sex, power, pelf and pride take to the evil ways, there is decadence of *dharma*. Society experiences unrest and instability. Cardinal values are thrown to the fore winds. Evildoers come to have ascendancy in social hierarchy and pilot the destiny of mass. People wedded to values, court suffering in the hands of the perpetrators of *adharmā*. At such social juncture (*yogo sandhi*), *dharma* is dislodged from its native state by *adharmā*. Only such time of social crisis become propitious for the advent of the Great. He does not come to establish *dharma* because *dharma* is eternal (*s'as'vata*), but only for its restoration (*dharma samsthapana*). It means that human beings are free to opt for either good or evil. Those who embrace evil are sure to meet ruination. On the other hand, those who seek to preserve and promote *dharma* come out triumphant in the long run. *Nature* has the built-in potency to curb evil by meting out punishment to the evildoers. Advent of the great has only a catalytic role. *Ista* is nothing but *dharma* incarnate. Lord *Krsna* declares, *I am the abode of Brahman, the imperishable and the immutable the dharma eternal and the perennial Bliss*.¹⁵ Since He

is the very source of *dharma*, His ways fall beyond the ambit of *dharma*. The very axioms of righteousness owe their significance to His ways. He cannot be the subject to the canons of morality because His ways become the very paradigm with reference to which the concepts of morality are defined. So by attaining Him one become exalted to the trans-ethical state whereof one remains beyond dualities of good or evil. *Ista* is also the custodian of the moral order (*dharma*). Having had the realization, Arjun says: *you are imperishable the ultimate being, worthy of knowledge. You are the ultimate abode of the universe, the immortal guardian of the eternal dharma and you are verily, the pristine purusa.*¹⁶ Begetter of righteousness (*dharma*) as He is, he appears in moments of extreme decadence to restore *dharma* in its rightful place.

Classical texts exhort everyone to *speak the truth and practice dharma.*¹⁷ As already discussed, *Satya* in the sense of agreement with reality, is grounded in *Rta*. *Satya* is the human perception of the reality. When *Satya* (truth), conceptualized by the mind, is put into practice, it is termed *Dharma*. *Satya and dharma* are the conceptual and actional expressions of *Rta*, respectively. In *Taittiriya Upanisad*, *Satya* is seen as more primeval than *Dharma*. Here *Satya* is accorded priority because conceptualization of it (truth) is logically prior to the practice. In *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, *Satya* is deemed to have professed *Dharma* and vice versa. *Rta* is ontic, *Satya* is conceptual and *Dharma* is axiological expression of the transcendental subjectivity (Brahman). *Rta, Satya and Dharma* constitute the inalienable triad.

Dharma, in one of its primary senses, stands for the characteristic essence or inalienable property of things and beings. From this perspective, *dharma* can broadly be classified as *Bastu dharma, Jaiva dharma and Manava dharma*.

Vastu Dharma

Things in the world can be brought under two dichotomous categories, i.e. animate and inanimate. *Vastu dharma* is understood as the *dharma* of the inanimate existents. It is a commonplace truism that every object has its essential and accidental properties. The accidental qualities are variable while the essential qualities are invariable. One can think of an object without the former, but never without the latter. The former is constitutive whereas the latter is attributive of the real. The essential property (*dharma*) of water is to flow downward. One cannot think of water without its tendency to flow downward, be it in the river, reservoir, test tube or in the water pool. Similarly, the *dharma* is of a particular end. *Nityakarmas* are duties like prayer (*sandhya*), study (*svadhyaya*) which are to be performed meticulously everyday. On the other hand, *naimittika karmas* are binding on the individual on special occasions like funeral rites, eclipse, etc. irrespective of one's likes or dislikes. Duties enjoined by the scriptures are either of the *Nature* of prescriptions (*vidhis*) or prohibitions (*nisedhas*). It is significant that both do's and don'ts presuppose the fundamental tenets of *dharma*.

Classification of *dharma* in to *varnadharma*, *Asrama dharma*, *Sadharana dharma* is not conclusive. *Dharma sastras* dwell at length on *Jati dharma*, *Kula dharma*, *Gan dharma* suiting to the office or responsibility that one is entrusted with. Having had a fair degree of clarifies about the *Nature*, content and genesis of different *dharmas*, one may pertinently ask: What is that which makes *dharma* worth its significance? Where from do the moral injunctions get their imperative force? Why *ought* one perform one's duty regardless of conditions and consequences? It may here be underlined that an *Ought* gets its ultimate justification from Is, i.e. Moral order (*dharma*, in the ontological sense). *Dharma*, in the

sense of cosmic order, adduces justification to the moral paradigms and pursuits subsumed under the rubric of *Varna dharma*, *Asrama dharma*, *Sadharana dharma* and so on.

Dharma & Religion

In common parlance, *Dharma and Religion* are often used as synonymous terms. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Shintoism, etc. are different religions professed and practiced by people at large. But *dharma* has hardly any equivalence in English language. There are certain words in our language that get their semantic import from the socio-cultural milieu and worldview of the people. From the preceding discussions, it is amply clear that the term *dharma*, in the sense of *cardinal values*, *characteristic essence* and the *regulative principles*, is ontology-specific. Religion, on the other hand, stands for a body of beliefs, set of practices, prescriptions and prohibitions formulated by its propounder in certain social contexts. Before getting hold of the precise relationship between the two, it is necessary to lay bare the meaning of *Religion* against the backdrop of wide range of meanings of the term *dharma*.

It is hardly possible to find a characteristic or a set of characteristics, common to all the religions without exception. Nonetheless, one can get hold of a cluster of characteristics shared by religions, by and large.

a) Belief in God or the Transcendental

Most of the religions take God as the nucleus concept and as central to the religious way of life. God is differently conceived in different religious frameworks. There are religions like Jainism and Buddhism in which God does not find an explicit place though certain states are thought to be the summon bonum of religious pursuit. Religious quest per se presupposes a gap between the actual and the ideal. The actual refers to the state from

where one has to rise higher. The ideal is conceived as trans-empirical or non-empirical, attainable through ardent pursuit of the sacred ordinances. Actions that take one to the ultimate goal are deemed as goodness or virtue, while actions that lead us away are veritable evil. The journey from the actual to the ideal is a journey from imperfection to perfection ignorance to enlightenment. Religions differ in respect of the ways, which are eminently determined by social contingencies and contextual peculiarities. But the cherished goals of the religions have some striking likeness. In some religions attainment of Godhood is the ultimate end and in some, people aspire to be Godlike while in some others, the highest state has been thought as one of the moral perfections. Every religion, despite its peculiar way of describing the transcendental, lays down certain behavioral criteria to judge, if one has really attained the highest state. A religious belief is to be lived. Righteous mode of living provides the real test of one's belief. *Dharma*, in this sense, stands for righteous mode of living. Though religions differ with regard to the beliefs, they urge the individuals to practice *dharma* in unequivocal terms. Under this interpretation *dharma* can be taken as *secular* expression of the religious (*sacred*).

b) Preceptor

Every religion has to have a profounder or prophet or a preceptor. He is adored differently as incarnation of God, son of God, messenger of God, or a personality who is Godlike or has attained godhood. Among the religious followers, he commands ultimate authority and enjoys unconditional allegiance. He is the final court of appeal in religious matters. To find refuge in him is to be perennially assured. In view of their inherent imperfections, individuals stand in need of a guide or preceptor (*guru*) who shows the beacon light to help them out of the pale of the ignorance or imperfection. In some religions, man is thought as inherently capable of attain in Godhood or becoming Godlike without any

mediation and in some systems, the preceptor (*guru*) is considered as indispensable in the *Godward-journey*.

c) Scriptures

Religious induction is deemed as objective and universal in its import. After the departure of the propounder, revelations or prescriptions contained in the scriptures remains as the perpetual guide and inspiration for the followers. The ideals in the holy books find their natural way into the conduct of its followers. This is how spiritual legacy of the Master comes to be perpetuated. They are rightly taken as *dharmasastras* because they are supposed to enlighten us not only about the universal moral laws (*dharma* in its ontological connotation) but also about the regulative principles of conduct (*dharma* in the sense of *ought*).

d) Holy and profane

Good always presupposes its contrary. Human beings are endowed with free-will. So, to obey or not to obey the moral commandment, remain an open choice before them. Holy is defined as conformity to the principle enjoined in the scriptures or by the preceptor. On the contrary, profane is associated with thought words and action incongruous with them. Holy and Profane correspond to the moral pairs, *Dharma* and *adharma*, respectively.

e) Prayer

Prayer is devotional expression of the aspirant for the Lord. It is a form of address to the almighty in which the devotee gives vent to his thought and feeling about God, extolling his greatness, invoking His grace and sometime asking Him to help him out of the plights of life. Generally, prayers take the form of invocation to God for removing the ills and obstacles, granting worldly boons bestowing, worldly prosperity. Such prayers are nothing

but the unguarded expression of our transactional psychology. Here the individual expects certain return through words of sycophancy and offering of gifts. Such religious modes not only betray one's ignorance about God but also undermine the dignity and holiness of the creator – creature relationship. It is motivated by the anthropomorphic prejudice that like lesser mortals, God is amenable to words of supplications, persuasion and physical gifts. If God is all-knowing and loving, it minimally means that God knows our needs better than we know them and that He would dispense the best possible in the most propitious manner. If pray one must, then one should only pray: '*O' Lord! Let thy will be fulfilled to me.* The ultimate well-being of the individual consists in making oneself a fit instrument, (*nimitta*) in the hands of the Almighty. The importance of prayer cannot be over emphasized. It is said: *Much more is wrought by prayer than the world dreams off.* Every sincerest prayer is answered. God cannot but yield to the wishes of the pure and ardent hearts. Prayer makes the mind unidirectional as the individual attunes the bio-psychic rhythm to the *will* and *ways* of God .By such act, one becomes a worthy instrument through which the divine grace flows unobstructed. *Kirtan* is the subtlest form of address to the Almighty.

f) Worship

The anthropomorphic bias that the supernatural agent is amenable to human persuasion, finds expression in varied forms of worship, often accompanied by elaborate modes of rites and rituals. The Aryans, in early times, were worshippers of *Nature*. The whole conspectus of literature was produced by them specifying the details of the performance of rites and rituals. A whole tradition was built on it. The primitive minds were stuck with awe and wonder at the marvels of *Nature*. Man's utter helplessness and dependence on *Nature* found expression in worshipful observances. Studies reveal that human beings, across time and place, think alike. *Tree-worship*, *Phallus-worship* are found

among the simple, primitive and remote communities. The tendency to deify the formless God and to make devotional offerings to Him takes the form of *Idol worship*. *Idol* represent the *ideal* is pushed into the unconscious and the *idol* becomes the sole obsession of the conscious. Eventually one becomes the worshipper of the *crude*. Flow of the mind is favourably conditioned to a particular form. This constricts of mind and arrests its expansion (*vistara*). Of course, we may come across people who are given to *idol worship* and on that account, are spiritually elevated and possess sublime contact. An idol worshipper may have attained the acme of spiritual perfection, which the practitioners of *Brahmavidya* struggle to attain. It is so because what is consequential is not the object of worship but the act of worship, nay, the devotion and steadfastness of the mind behind the worship. But worship is not being recommended because of the inherent risk that in the process of constant ideation of the idol, one might end up with the worship of the *finite* and *crude*.

g) Faith *vis-à-vis* Reason

Religion is construed as a faith of pursuit. God is an article of *faith*, rather than an object of sense-perception or the subject of rational discourse. Descriptions of God, accounts of Divine creation, the notion of Immortality of soul, Reincarnation are accepted on *faith*. The traditional views subscribing to the antithesis between *faith* and *reason* need not be restated. It is said that *faith* begins where reason Religion on *faith*. Accordingly, scientific attitude is considered as irreligious and religious attitude, as unscientific. If this is conceded, then religious following will lose its respectability. It would be tantamount to irrational preoccupation, which only the native, the credulous and the gullible can afford to embrace. A faithful is considered alone who becomes an easy prey to superstitions, prejudices and dogmas. An in-depth understanding of the logic of faith shall show that the aforesaid view is inherently unsound. Sense experience and Reason are not the only sources of valid

cognition. They cannot account for certain experiences and knowledge, otherwise available to us with equal degree of certitude and objectivity. The domain of the *mystical* eludes the grasp of the *rational* or the categorical. *Objectivity* is to be understood only in the sense of *inter-subjectivity*. Cognition is objective, if and only if it can stand the test of inter-subjective corroboration. Judged by this criterion, the intuitive cognition or mystical experience can very well pass off as knowledge *per se*, and *faith* shall retain the respectability of a valid mode of cognition. *Faith* connotes the psychic orientation of the mind by which one can know the trans-empirical in its pristine stance. Reason, on account of its characteristic limitation, can not be applied beyond the legitimate sphere of its application. The limits of *reason* have to be drawn by reason itself to construe that the limit of reasoning is the limit of knowable is an instance of glaring irrationality. *Faith* does not negate *reason* but supplements it. *Reason* is like a ladder, which is to be used in order to go beyond it. Since the transcendental falls beyond the ambit of *reason*, to invoke the rational in order to comprehend the transcendental is to deny oneself the access to the *transcendental*. But the knowledge of *transcendental* does not annul knowledge of the phenomenal. *Faith* does not involve suppression of *reason*. Rather, *reason* finds its supreme fruition in *faith*. *Faith* is the object mode of apprehending the *Absolute*. It is borne out by the inter-subjective consensus of the enlightened. The seeming differences in their account of the *trans-empirical* pertain only to modes of expression and modalities of *explanation* rather than the content of *cognition*.

h) Language of Religion

Language grows out of our necessity to express and codify ideas, thoughts and experiences. It serves the purpose of interpersonal communication and understanding. Words and expression acquires meaning in their actual employment. Difficulties arise when

language, used in course of the normal transaction of life, is employed for articulation of the *transcendental*. That explains why expressions having certain received meaning in ordinary discourse, acquire novel significance when employed in the theological discourse. Most often, expressions are used neither univocally nor equivocally but analogically. The term *love*, in *God is love*, is to be understood neither in the sense of human love (for it connotes the characteristic conditionally) nor in an altogether different sense (for that would render the expression unintelligible), but in the analogical sense. Since God is infinite, His love must be commensurate with His *Nature*. God's love must be unconditional and infinite. Language, used in respect of our thoughts and experiences about the *Absolute*, obviously faces the challenge of doing the odd job of expressing the *inexpressible*. Realizing the inadequacy of concepts and categories of empirical discourse, seers and mystic take to the use of symbols, analogies and metaphors to bring home the *mystical, the blissful and the numinous*. Often, paradoxes, even contradictions, are employed as the significant modes of communication. Religious literature abounds in legends, mythologies and parables. It is absurd to look for empirical corroboration of them for they do not fall in the category of descriptive discourse and their chief purpose is to infuse the sense of the holy and the righteous in people and goad them on the path of righteousness (*dharna*).

Mortality and Religion

Mortality constitutes the rock bottom of religion. Religion owes its justification to its civilizing function, i.e. its role in conservation and dissemination of values that hold people together. It seeks to bring together diverse elements under a universal banner by instilling sense of unity in *Collective psyche*. Differences between man and man in respect of sex, colour, creed and nationality are underplayed as superficial. People are called upon to work

out universal brotherhood on the principle of *live and let live*. Different religions spell out different ways of cultivating the cardinal values like humility, love, tolerance, service, sacrifice, forgiveness etc. The system of beliefs and practices, prescriptions and prohibitions constituting the whole spectrum of religious phenomena is nothing but a set of improvisations, meant for the preservation and promotion of the moral order (*dharma*). Religion came into being, an attempt to incorporate values in the stream of life so that *dharma* as a system of values finds concrete expression in real life. That is why *dharma* has been rightly defined as body of righteous behaviour (*acara*). It is worth noting that the term *morality*, though a nearest equivalent is *Niti*, does not exhaust the semantic richness of the latter. *Niti* has been defined as that which leads one to the state of highest excellence (*ksema*). Morality is defined in terms of value functionality whereas *Niti*, as a system of values is ontologically rooted. It contains the idea of the *Highest Good* and practice of *Niti* helps one bridge the gap between the real and the ideal. As a regulative principle, it provides sense of direction to endeavors, and gives requisite strength and inspiration to stop not till the goal is reached. Thus, *dharma* as the totality of absolute values constitutes the protasis of every religion whatsoever. Bereft of *dharma*, religion degenerates into mere ostentation, signifying nothing.

Sacred and Secular

The dichotomy between the sacred and the secular has been blown out of proportion in recent times. Evidently, sacred is associated with the *religious*, whereas *secular* is understood in terms of *non-religious*. The distinction came to hold water because of certain historical exigencies. Religion, which essentially aims at bringing about all-round transformation of the individual and the collective body came to be viewed as pursuit, over and above other socio-economic pursuits, viz. politics, economics, science, technology etc.

Religion is considered to be one of the diverse pursuits, which a person might or might not adopt according to one's predilections. Thus, *religion* came to be considered as *sacred vis-à-vis* other pursuits, deemed as *secular*. Therefore, *sacred* and the *secular* have been considered as polar concepts. This view has its genesis in the fundamental confusion about the very *Nature* and spirit of religious pursuits. To put it in the language of Gilbert Ryle, the confusion is of the *Nature of category mistake*. To define, *religion* is nothing but an artifice through the individuals is helped to reorient their lives on the bedrock of *values*. *Values* are to impregnate and rhythmic every fabric of the individual and social life. Therefore, *religion* is not to be viewed as an activity apart from other activities. Rather, it is to be assimilated into every mode of living. *Dharma* imparts a sense of purpose to every activity of ours, be it political, economic or sociological. Every thought and every action of our must bear the stamp of *dharma*. So, to consider a religious pursuit at par with other so-called secular pursuits, amounts to a categorical confusion. One of the other important reasons that contributed to the sacred-secular dichotomy is the sociological fact that *religion*, as a social practice, tends to turn into mechanical observances, devoid of the real fervour and commitment because religious pursuits come to be identified with beliefs, practices such as mode of prayer, rites, rituals which constitute the incidental, inessential and variable aspects of religion. People mistake the husk to be grain, the contingencies to be the essentialities. Religious are many, in respect of beliefs and practices which are introduced by its propounder to meet the exigencies of its contemporaries. Hence, they are space-time contingent and bound to vary from religion to religion. But considered from the point of view of their purpose, all religions of the world share a common universal, i.e. *dharma*. Religions are many, but *Dharma* is one. Religion has a history, but *Dharma* is eternal (*sanatan*). *Dharma* is the system of seminal values, points to the *secular* core of the *sacred*.

The Theory *Purusarthas*: A Rethinking

It has been suggested that *artha* (born of the possessive urge) and *kama* (born of the procreative, appetitive, aesthetic urge) are *purusarthas* as a matter of fact, but not in the normative or prescriptive sense. However, rightly understood they are also values to be consciously cultivated for the sake of individual as well as social fulfillment. Presumably, it is with a view to underlining this point that *artha* and *kama* (which are supposed to possess 'power') are fitted into the framework of *dharma* (which is believed to possess 'authority'). *Artha* and *Kama* are said to become real values only when they do not conflict with *dharma*. Indeed, for a life of real fulfillment, it is as desirable to seek material well-being and prosperity and enjoyment of sensual and aesthetic pleasures as to promote social security and solidarity. The normativity of *artha* and *kama* needs to be realized in the proper perspective.

Among the traditionally recognized four *purusarthas*, *dharma* and *moksa* have, received greater attention, for obvious reasons. In Hindu thought, the concept of *dharma* stands next in importance to the concept of reality. However, it is as difficult to translate the word *dharma* in a western language, as it is to translate the word 'culture' in an Indian language. *Dharma*, like culture, is an omnibus term, and, in different contexts, different shades in its meaning are emphasized. For instance, in some contexts, *dharma* simply implies propriety or socially approved conduct in relation to one's fellow men or to other living beings, animals, and super-human powers. Elsewhere it is suggested that the very first generally accepted meaning of *dharma*, namely, religious duty, stays with it throughout. It must, however, be added that *dharma* is believed to express the close connection between religion and ethics; but, here again, *dharma* as a *purusartha* can hardly be equated with ethics in the western sense. *Dharma* is believed to express the close connection between

religion and ethics; but here again, *dharma* as a *purusartha* can hardly be equated with ethics in the western sense. *Dharma* is also represented as a goal of life or as a value to be achieved or as a hypostasis of justice. It is said to be a duty or obligation rather than a value and a function rather than a duty or obligation. It is sometimes regarded as a kind of natural law, imposed upon man rather than as a moral obligation deriving from his disposition.

However, the most persistent sense attached to the term *dharma* seems to relate to the world-order and stability and solidarity of the society. *Dharma* implies the observance of practices, which are deemed necessary for keeping the world and the society intact. In Vedic times, *dharma* was equivalent to sacrifice, the prime concern to which was the maintenance of the proper equilibrium of the cosmos. The same idea was later transferred also to the social sphere, so that *dharma* came to be regarded as promoting the well-balanced social organization, as reflected, illustratively, in the *varnasrama* scheme. However, what seems to have been more or less clearly suggested is that *dharma* aims at the stabilization of a *given* order, whether social or cosmic. *Dharma* thus has a distinct tinge of conservatism. In principle, it represents an eternal pattern of conduct designed to preserve the fixed order of things for which it claims divine sanction. In practice, we may find that *dharma* is fixed in its basic truths but is a little flexible in the historic modes of its implementation. Generally speaking, from among the four traditional sources of *dharma*, Sruti or Veda is only nominal; for, though it may have relevance in cosmic matters, it is not directly concerned with the affairs of the society. It is *Smṛti*, which is believed to have sustained the hallowed tradition that is truly significant and effectual in this context. As for *sadacara* or traditionally approved custom and *matusti* or a feeling of self-satisfaction which is rooted not so much in reason and conscience as in the traditionally engendered *samskaras*, they are for all practical purposes subservient to that hallowed tradition. And a 'new' *smṛti*, of which one

sometimes hears, is 'new' not in the sense that it departs from tradition, but it is 'new' in the sense that it is a restatement of tradition.

Dharma, it should be remembered, is just one of the three *purusarthas* which constitute the *trivarga*; no relative valuation seems to have been originally contemplated among *artha*, *kama*, and *dharma*. But in consonance with the innate tendency of the Indians to view things as being hierarchically structured, *dharma* is often represented as a higher value in relation to *artha* and *kama*, since, as suggested above, conformity to *dharma* (which is essentially a social value) is the ground of the efficacy of *artha* and *kama* (which are, broadly speaking, individual values). So, too, unlike *artha* and *kama*, *dharma* is often regarded as an aid to man's spiritual progress. It may be further noted that *artha* and *kama* hardly ever signify the categorical 'ought' which *dharma* often does. In the case of *dharma*, prescriptiveness is specially emphasized, presumably because the impulse for it is not innate in man. Within the *trivarga*, *artha* and *kama* usually huddle up under the umbrella of *dharma*, so that, not unoften, only two *purusarthas*, namely, *dharma* and *moksa*, have arrogated to themselves all serious consideration.

A proper integration of the interests of the individual and the society is the desired goal of *dharma*, but, strictly speaking, it cannot be characterized as a norm, because it can not be shown to have been derived from a theoretical analysis of the *Nature* of individual and social existence. The primary concern of *dharma* is the discipline of the individual – the inculcation in the traditional Hindu literature of what may be called social philosophy. *Dharma* is more practice than theory. It has no metaphysical basis as such, though it does have implicit philosophical elements. *Dharma* is, indeed, its own justification. Actually, Hindu philosophers were not oriented towards the matters of *dharma*, which they invariably took for granted. It was believed that *dharma* was an established fact, a divinely ordained

phenomenon, and as such did not brook any theoretical analysis and treatment. In Hindu thought, Darsana (philosophy) and *Dharmasastra* (ethical and moral law) have rarely crossed each other's path.

It has been already pointed out that *moksa*, which, in one form or another, has become central to all systems of Indian philosophy and theology, is added to the *trivarga* (which is a self-sufficient scheme) either more complete or more logical and systematic, and that there actually exists a kind of disparity and discontinuity between the *trivarga* and *moksa*. The question as to who the innovators of *moksa* were may not detain us here. Presumably, they belonged to the circles outside of the Vedic religious complex – to the pre-Vedic non-Aryan Muni-Yati-tradition as distinguished in different doctrines. For instance, the Samkhya equates *moksa* with the realization by *Purusa* of his complete isolation from the amplitude of the evolution of Prakrti; the *Nyaya Vaisesika*, with the stripping of the soul of all qualities including consciousness; the *Vedanta*, with the stripping of the soul of all qualities including consciousness; the *Vedanta*, with the merging of the individual soul into the universal soul; the Yoga, with the return through a reverse sequence of self-dissolution to the original state of non-manifestation; and theism, with the most perfect possible union with God. Broadly speaking, however, the common point in all these views is that *moksa* implies the transcending of the phenomenal world which is characterized by plurality, change, and action, and which is generally believed to be without any reality or significance. *Moksa* means release from the continued embodied existence the isolation of the soul from the non-soul. This being so, *moksa* has to be regarded as being, strictly speaking, valueless or beyond value. *Moksa* is an ontological state. As has been rightly pointed out, it is a descriptive term and concept, not an evaluative or normative concept. It is not derived inductively. *Moksa* is intrinsic and not functional; it is personality

and not social; it implies liberation and not liberty. *Moksa* thus forms a sharp dichotomy with the other three *purusarthas*, particularly with *dharma*. While *dharma* aims at the maintenance of the world-order, *moksa* deliberately rejects it. *Moksa* signifies release from the entire realm governed by *dharma*; essentially, it purports to be the negation of *dharma*.

However, this extreme position, which is theoretically inevitable, hardly finds any unequivocal expression- much less any systematic discussion in the traditional Hindu literature. Indeed, as pointed out earlier, the whole theory of *purusarthas* suffers from the lack of a logically argued and analytically defended treatment. Actually, a tendency is discernible in the traditional Hindu literature to slur over- or even to avoid- any possible confrontation between *dharma* and *moksa*. Attempts are seen to have been usually made to harmonize the two concepts within a single religio- philosophical theory. It is, for instance, suggested that *dharma* leads to *moksa* in the sense that *dharma* embodies and develops certain traits and habits conducive to *moksa*. *Dharma* is regarded as *moksa* in the making; if *moksa* signifies complete divinity, *dharma* is divinity under human condition. The epics tell us that the means by which one attains *moksa* are not different from those by which one cultivates *dharma*. This is obviously not true; for, the techniques suitable for the achievement of a certain thing cannot be so also for the achievement of the negation of that thing. Moreover, *dharma* cannot be expected to contribute to its own annihilation. It is also not convincing to say that *moksa* had offered any motivation or justification for *dharma*, and of even altering *dharma*. That is evidently not the case. The attempts to fit in into one single religion-philosophical scheme, the two conceptually incompatible spheres of *dharma* and *moksa*, which are reflected in the views, such as that the spiritual values are but the final flowering of the ethical values, that *dharma* is intended for those, who are not yet ready for *moksa*, that *moksa* does not imply the abrogation of the world but its spiritual conquest, that

dharma-jijnasa (= desire to know *dharma*) is a necessary prerequisite of *Brahma-jijnasa* (= desire to know *Brahman*), and that even a seeker after *moksa* has to be in possession of the *sadhanacatustaya*, are to be attributed to the tendency of the Hindu tradition towards assimilation and adjustment – a tendency, which incidentally has proved highly efficacious in the history of Hinduism.

The conflict between the ideal of *dharma* and ideal of *moksa* is a real one. Indeed, it is this conflict, which constitutes the central theme of the *BhagavadGita*. The *BhagavadGita* has sought to reconcile its own teaching of *lokasamgraha* or the solidarity and progress of the with the Upanadic teaching of *moksa* or the spiritual emancipation of the individual, through its doctrine of *anasakti-yoga*. It argues that action, as such, does not prove detrimental to man's attainment of his spiritual goal. It is his attachment (*asakti*) to the fruits of his actions that keeps him eternally involved in the cycle of births and deaths. The *Bhagavadgita*, therefore, teaches its *Yoga* or skilful art (*yogah karmasu kausalm*) of how to act without being enmeshed in the consequences of action. It teaches the *anasakti-yoga*, that is, renunciation in action and not of action. The *anasakti-yoga* is *moksa* in an embodied state; its practitioner is the *jivanmukta* – the ideal man.

Though the general pattern of a Hindu's personal and social life is more or less fixed, its details vary according to different 'types' of men as also at different physico-psychical stages in an individual's life. It is, indeed, this principle, which is at the bottom of *varnadharma* and the *asramadharmas*. It may be pointed out, in this connection, that this principle involves an important tenet of Hinduism, which may be broadly stated in the following terms. There is no difference between man and man as far as his essential self is concerned. All men realize their basic identity in the mystic union with the Supreme Being. The inequality among men arises as soon as the essential self assumes, as the result of the

‘original ignorance’, individuality by becoming conditioned through body, mind, intellect, and ego. Inequality, in other words, belongs to the empirical life in the phenomenal world. This ‘how’ of the human inequality does not, however, explain the ‘why’ of it. Indeed, this problem of the inequality of human conditions has agitated the minds of great thinkers of all times and of all climes. However, through their doctrine of *Karma*, the Hindu thinkers have made quite a remarkable contribution in this regard.

The *asramadharma* provides a Hindu with an outline of a well-defined plan of life, complete with the four fixed stages, namely, *brahmacarya* (life of a student), *garhasthya* (life of a householder), *Vanaprasthya* (life of a hermit), and *samnyasa* (life of an ascetic), each stage having its own complex of duties. All that an individual is expected to do is to fill in the details in accordance with his propensities and capacities. Indeed this pattern of life, through a unique feature of Hinduism, is so universal in character that it can well become acceptable to all people and at all times. As if to make the broad scheme of the *asramas* more tangible and definite, the Hindu thinkers have correlated it with their more minute scheme of sacraments (*samskaras*). A sacrament is generally defined as a religious rite, which is intended to mark the creation in an individual of some inward spiritual grace. Each important juncture in the journey of life is sanctified by means of a sacrament. In fact, sacraments touch the life of an individual from before his birth until after his death. They represent, in a sense, the principal landmarks in the process of an individual’s development into a full-fledged social being. Attention may also be drawn to the fact that, by prescribing the same *samskaras* for all classes of people – the only difference being that, among the lower classes, the *samskaras* are not accompanied by the recitation of sacred mantras – the Hindu thinkers have achieved a kind of unity and uniformity of their religious culture.

The Hindu *Dharmasastra* is addressed primarily to a householder (*grhastha*) who is the real centre of all human relationships and social activities. Originally, only the state of the householder (*garhasthya*) seems to have received any socio-ethical consideration. In the early Vedic literature, one hardly comes across any reference to the other three *asramas*, namely *brahmacarya*, *vanaprasthya*, and *samnyasa*. From among these three *asramas*, *samnyasa* has played quite a vital role in the social history of India. A *samnyasin* voluntarily opts out of the society by renouncing family, caste, and other personal and social relationships. He does not mind the price which he has to pay for this in the form of indigence and loss of social security, because he feels convinced that the freedom from the bondage of society which is ultimately unreal helps him to find his true being. He loses the world but recovers his true self. The concept of *samnyasa* is thus brought into close association with the concept of *moksa*. It must, however, be emphasized that *samnyasa*, though included in the scheme of the four *asramas* (which scheme, incidentally, is evidently artificial and by which normally upholds the householder's way of life. *Samnyasa* seems to have been sponsored only by a few innovators who stood apart from the multitude of conformists. Nevertheless, an attempt is made somehow to reconcile the two separate worlds – the world of the *samnyasin* and the world of the *grhastha*. For instance, it is suggested that a genuine *samnyasin* was beyond *dharma* but not against it. He regards himself as being committed to the goal of universal welfare, though not under the compulsion of any social law. He is believed to be seeking to translate his philosophical knowledge into actual practice. As pointed out elsewhere, according to the *Bhagavadgita*, the real *samnyasa* is that which manifests itself in man's attitude of non-attachment and not in his actual renunciation of all action. Notwithstanding all this, the general trend of the Hindu tradition seems to have been towards not encouraging *samnyasa*. Indeed, there not

unoften becomes evident a subdued hostility to it. It is also found in literature veiled or open reproach and ridicule of bogus persons who feign *samnyasa* in order to be in position to enjoy the freedom from social obligations and restraints, which it permits.

If the scheme of the *asramas* represented a kind of ethical organization of an individual's personal life, the scheme of the four *varnas* or social orders, which later proliferated into the highly complex caste-system, could be regarded, from a certain point of view, as the ethical organization of the social life of the Hindus. Not much need be said here about this of-discussed feature of the traditional Hindu social life. A reference may, however, be incidentally made to the ethical idealization of the *varnadharma* implied in the *BhagavadGita*. There the emphasis is put not so much on the differences and the gradation among the *varnas*. They are regarded as only incidental matters. What, according to the *BhagavadGita*, is important is the principle of ethical interdependence involved in this system. Society as an integrated whole can be held together and progress only if its various units properly perform the functions assigned to them. The consideration whether a function is high or low, or whether it is to one's liking or not, is not of any real value. The feeling that, by observing one's *svadharma* or *varnadharma*, one is actively promoting the solidarity, stability, and progress of the society is in itself a reward greater than any other to be sought for in this world.

One of the most outstanding features of Hinduism is that it gives man absolute liberty in the world of thought but enjoins upon him a strict code of conduct. Whatever, therefore, might be the philosophical asseverations of a Hindu, he would consider conscientious observance of the *asramadharma* and the *varnadharma* – more particularly of the latter – to be a duty of prime importance. This is, indeed, in a sense, as it should be. Practice relates to the whole mass of people. Therefore, without their conforming to some

disciplined and well-regulated way of life, the solidarity and stability of the society would be difficult to achieve. On the other hand, in the matter of higher thought, with which but a select few were concerned, there could not be any risk in allowing complete freedom to those few. In fact, history shows that such freedom in belief and thought has, more often than not, proved conducive to general progress. It is necessary to add, in this connection, that while strictly conforming to the practice, the spirit underlying that practice must not, as far as possible, be lost sight of. That is, however, what seems to have happened is respect of the *asramadharma* and the *varnadharma*. In the course of time, there developed a sort of gulf between the original concept and actual practice.

The Nature of *Dharma* (Obligation) in Indian Philosophy

We have observed so far that true Freedom which is freedom “from ignorance, evil and ill-will,” lies beyond moral freedom which is as Bradley has said “an infinite process and oscillates between ‘is’ and ‘ought’ actual and ideal.” True freedom consists in recognition of “detached consciousness.” Which is beyond conflict and division of disposition? It may be called spiritual freedom if the connection with the concept of obligation (*dharma*) as held in the Indian Tradition and philosophy is made explicit. To build such a relationship is indeed a very large task as the concept of *dharma* is fluid and its clear articulation as representing “true *dharma*” in Indian culture, tradition and philosophy would be difficult.

We like to point out that in the Hindu religion the concept of *dharma* has a two-fold *Nature* and function. (1) its metaphysical and ontological character which is found in reality, and (2) its moral, autonomous and secular *Nature* expressed as will, imperative and duty, to be fulfilled by pursuing specific vocation in life. The *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Bhagvad Gita* and

other scriptural texts provide us the metaphysics, the ontological and ultimate *Nature* and background of concept. We attempt to show how the concept of *dharma* is derived from metaphysical ideas found in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. In the *Vedas*, the *Rig Veda* is the main source of philosophical teachings. Its fundamental concepts lie in such terms as “*Ritam*,” “*Satyam*,” “*Brihat*,” “*Dhri*” and others. The concept of *dharma* is related with that of “*Ritam*” implicitly. The ultimate reality such as “cosmic order, law and harmony”, may be impersonal, it may be personal, or it may be both. In the Indian tradition, thinkers and philosophers have emphasized either one at the expense of the other or they have held it as both personal and impersonal. When ultimate reality is regarded as impersonal it becomes the source of law, imperative which is *Dhru* and is regarded as impersonal it becomes the source of law, imperative and moral practice. On the other hand when it is regarded as personal, then it is conceived as a specific deity, God and person maintaining the world. “All this verily is the self (*pursha*) – that which has been shall be.” Again, “The indescribable is the ground of all names and forms, the support of all creation.” The real is one, although the learned speak of it as many.” This ultimate reality when described in immanent form stands for both the immutable law of Nature and the moral order providing righteousness, imperative and moral practice. It was implored “O *Indra*, lead us on the path of *Rita*.” At times, the ground of true morality and righteousness was found in the impersonal reality. It was later on realized that it is the inmost self, which is the true supporter of moral activity, the search for *dharma* and true obligation. At times *Rita* is employed to express the instrument through which reality manifests itself in the world. Here *Ritam* does not mean cosmic moral order but the moral law, which an individual has to abide by in moral and social life. The significant point to be noted is that the individual in society was aspiring to live a collective life.¹⁸

At times, there is a criticism to the effect that in the Vedas there is an absence of moral and ethical injunctions as well as imperatives. This is not true. All of the three distinct paths, knowledge, action and devotion were supposed to be harmonized in the human endeavor and search for freedom and liberation was aspired sincerely. This can be easily seen in the Upanishads where both the ethical and religious aspects came to be carefully synthesized. When conceived as the ultimate ground of all is here and now, *Brahman* comes to be a determinate and personal God, *Ishwara*. “Even beyond the reach of all senses, God is the knower, the master, the governor and the support of all objects of the senses.”¹⁹ Again it is said in the in the *Shvetashvata Upanishad* “He is the bringer of *dharma* of and [we should seek to] know him as in one’s self.”²⁰ In the context of the impersonal character of God, moral action was conceived as absolute moral law. It was also conceived as self, master of all being, the witness of our deeds and the abode of the whole universe. Here as in the other case the aim is to get rid of the sense of egoism (*asamkara*) so that all thought of arrogating to oneself the agency of all action performed may be annihilated. All that is done by the agent is done to carry out, so he thinks, God’s will and command. The goal is reached when he attains sameness or nearness with God.²¹ The guideline was set forth for the individual and society by *Upanishads* in absolutistic and theistic perspectives. Besides this guideline there was emphasis on either action or renunciation by the individual and the advice of certain past masters with the result the people of a specific group, community and scriptural tradition follow “*Nivratti Marg*” and understand words as well as its inspiration in the literal meaning. They could not reach behind the literal and grasp the real spirit and intention of it so as to make it dynamic for comprehensive life. After the Upanishads, an attempt was made to make ethics a separate discipline, an autonomous way of strict law and duty oriented action. Such an attempt can be seen in the *Bhagavad Gita* wherein Lord *Krishna*

advises moral action without expecting consequences and yet performing work of social welfare and world upliftment (*Lokasangraha*). Of course, the meaning of the term *dharma* in the *Gita* is manifold and seems that there are different approaches to its ethics and metaphysics. In its ethical aspect, it is unique and original.

Moral Obligation and the *Gita*

What the *Gita* emphatically says is that since every person is born with a Particular station in society, a particular vocation and “*varna*.” Certain obligation of necessity devolve upon the each discharging of which in conformity with the law of this higher self is necessary for the attainment of the highest good. In the forth canto, Lord *Krishna* says to the effect that according to the inborn qualities existing in man’s being, his *Nature* unfolds from within to play definite role through his body. He tells *Arjuna* that he, *Krishna*, is the source and creator of the these orders; yet, because he simply witness the sport of his creative power, which assumes doership as soon as manifests in it, he is forever free and uninvolved, the non-doer.²² It is here that we find two spheres of ethical activity. There is one sphere of “good will”, which may express itself in individual virtues and moral action, and there is another sphere of social morality wherein there is the welfare of the wider society. *Arjuna* was persuaded to fulfill this wider sphere of morality by serving his station and vocation in society. He was told not to renounce society but to act for the good for social harmony and cohesion. *Arjuna* was also asked to listen to the called “*svadharma*.” In the eighteenth canto Lord *Krishna* says to the effect that “Better indeed is obedience to the law of one’s being, though uninviting, than an alien law well wrought, out; one does not incur sin when one acts according to the law of one’s true self”.²³ The meaning of “*svadharma*” is that which is related with one’s station or vocation or knowledge of self which helps in performing one’s duty. In this task of self-knowledge, the *Gita* advocates virtue and purification of mind,

elimination from egoism and efficiency in work. There are various impulses and emotions which if allowed a free hand are destructive of wisdom and discrimination (*jnana-vijnana-nashanam*). So long as he is not able to purify himself of all defilement, he cannot claim any appreciable progress in his spiritual journey. Therefore, there is an aspiration to transcend the limits of the service and welfare others, he can never claim much success in his ambition if the ego-sense is not completely checked and transformed. On the other hand, the seeker for perfection performs the social obligations with dedication, sincerity and consciousness of the comprehensive path towards the divine. He looks upon himself as an instrument of the will of God (*Nimitamatram*). The fruits of actions gained are surrendered to God as a humble sacrifice (*yajana*). The aspirant is constantly working with the love and grace of almighty God. There is security guaranteed by the divine. “That no one devoted to the Divine purpose will ever perish.”

In comprehending all the three paths, knowledge, action and devotion, the *Gita* attempts to do away with extremes and unite self, *Buddhi*, work, duty and total devotion with ultimate reality having both the postures of static and dynamic, personality and impersonality. In this process, the *Gita* harmonizes the views of self and ultimate reality. The self is held to be identical with *Brahman*. It is held to be a portion (*amsha*) of God and as *prakriti*, *svabhava* of the individual. In this harmony of the view of the self with reality, the *Gita* takes note of different states of identity, difference and identity in-difference between self and God. Although in the *Gita* different meanings of the term *Dharma* are held and explained, in the final canto Lord *Krishna* tells *Arjuna* to “abandon all *dharmas* and to surrender to the supreme divine (*Krishna*) alone. “The supreme divine is the liberator of the individual.”

As distinguished from “*Shruti*”, during the “*Smriti*” period *Manu*, *Parashar* and *Yajnavalka* attempted to codify the *dharmas*. There were injunctions regarding marriage, adoption, possession and succession of property, status of women in the family and regarding caste (*varna*) laid down in the *smritis*. There are conflicting contentions in these *smritis* regarding hereditary rights and succession in the family. However, in legal matters these *smritis* are followed by people even today in different parts of India. In the modern Hindu code the law is strict about monogamy, possession of “*streedhan*” property belonging to the wife, adoption and succession permitted even to girls also, restricted right for judicial separation and divorce and opposition of dowry from either spouse.

In modern times the Hindu view of obligation (*dharma*) is followed largely under the impact of the principle of “*Varnashrams*,” castes and period of life, laid down by tradition. There is still acceptance of “*samanya*” and “*Vishesha Dharma*” for individuals and collectivities as laid down by *Manu*. However, this is followed with qualifications existing in modern society. Widow-marriage is generally accepted in modern Hindu society. Child marriage is abolished by both custom and law. Inter-caste and communal marriage have been favoured by people largely. This shows that the meaning of *dharma* is becoming flexible and adjusting itself to *Ritam* of Vedic ideas. It is becoming more catholic and comprehensive. However, the casteism, which became rigid after foreign invasions and mixing of indigenous races with races from outside is still prevalent in rural India and it is a formidable obstruction against the modernization of Hinduism.

“Four *Purusharthas*” and the Nature of Obligation

As we have been thinking about the relationship between freedom and obligation (*dharma*) it would be fitting to undertake the four *purusharthas* as they have been maintained in the tradition. In “*Manu Smriti*”, there are *purusharthas*, *Dharma*, *Artha* and

Kama have been upheld and advocated for people. However, later Manu thinks of adding the *purushartha* of *Moksa* (liberation) for *Yavanas*. This implies that household obligation is compulsory for all the castes. However, with permission of the parents and family members a person can renounce family and society for the realization of self. The ideal of *Moksa* has been variously interpreted in “*Darshanas*” and its pursuit by Indian society in general has been practiced in the spirit of that which has been mentioned earlier as “*Pravriti marga*” and “*Nivratti marga*”. Since the time of the Vedas up to recent times, there have been recurring periods of activity and passivity in the development of spiritual pursuit among the people. However, in the present century with the influence of the “Renaissance” thinkers and philosophers all four *pursharthas* have been adequately interpreted in keeping with the ideals of democracy, secularism and socialism laid down in the Indian constitution.

In the later “*Smriti*” period, there are signs of regarding obligation (*dharma*) as independent and autonomous under the influence of rational speculation, intuitive experience, the development of arts and science and the rise of grammar, language and semantics. As we have noted previously divine will was looked upon as the source of moral law, which is expressed in imperatives and practices. It is this imperative, which is said to be categorical and it does not leave any option for the individual. Such a categorical imperative, or moral will or goodness, was propounded by *Poorva Minansa* and it is the Principle of “*Apoova*”, which is the accumulator and determinator of the activities of the activities of the individual in the world. Prabhakar in *Poorva Mimansa* specifically holds “*Good*” as unconditional and constitutive of duties and obligations in conjunction with station and vocation. Prabhakar makes a distinction between. Vedic injunction and individual “*will*” which when accompanied and apportioned become *dharma* and duty to be fulfilled. There is a self, which selects the good and accordingly performs duties in family and society. *Will*,

for Prabhakar, is the faculty of choice, which is that every act is determined either in accordance with or in supposition to the law of the higher self. Since the only motive that can suitably rank as genuinely moral is that of duty, every act of voluntary choice must be grounded in and determined by the motive of duty alone. As such, to be characterized as genuinely moral an action must be so willed that the content and authority to its choice be derived from no other source than from the law of duty itself. It is such actions alone which, when invested with the authority and content of the moral law, come to acquire a unique purpose.

If the categorical imperative is to have meaning, the *will* must be bound of necessity to an object defined by and included in the imperative itself. Such a relation between the *will* and the empirical object would inevitably be conditioned by desire and therefore would be contingent upon the continuance of the subjective desire binding the *will* and the object together. Prabhakar insists on the unconditional character of *will* and that of law. Since *Apoorva* is “*Niyoga*” under human limitations, at times when limitations disappear *Apoorva* emerges as the law of absolute goodness. It is in the sense that the moral law has been held as the end of the human actions²⁴ or as the law, which has its own purpose immanent therein.²⁵ It may be noted here that emphasis on “*duty for the sake of duty*” in view of Prabhakar does not supersede the goal of *Moksa*. This only means that since every act determined by the categorical imperative has its purpose immanent therein, so the highest good consists in the perfection of the imperative as the law of absolute goodness or “*Niyoga siddhi*.” In Hindu tradition at times besides *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksa* are *Darshana* wherein *Artha* and *Kama* are regarded as high pursuits and in trends of Vedanta wherein the pursuit of *moksa* is regarded as supreme. The point which is significant for us here is that although almost all the Hindu systems accept *Dharma* as the sole ethical motive of all

activity, they differ among themselves as to the *Nature* of the good to be brought about the means of its actual application. Among differences and at times extremes, Prabhakar seeks harmony by saying that if *Dharma* alone can be the sole ethical motive it alone can be logically accepted as the good worth of realization. *Dharma* has its own validity (*svatah Pramanya*) and that being the case it can rank as the highest and absolute good. If it is the sole ethical motive, it is the sole good as well.²⁶

The Nature of Rights

Before we discuss the nature of rights, it may be mentioned with regard to the nature of *Dharma*, which we dealt with above that in Buddhist philosophy the term “*Dharma*” indicates an ontological status as it is the source of ethical virtue and “*sheela*” pointed out by *Gautama the Buddha*. *Dharma* is not only the moral value but also the metaphysical reality supporting the states of consciousness as well as the moral will of the individual. In Jainism the supreme *Dharma* which is the doctrine of non-violence stands as value in the multi-predicated real. *Dharma* as “*Triratna*” is highest from the point of view of character and conduct.

“*Dharma*” and the nature of rights appear to be distinct as the category of *Dharma* is essentially moral and social whereas the category of rights is individual, civic, legal and political in character. However, when right is defined as “a justifiable claim of the individual to obtain something” then there are certain methods of arriving at truth regarding the individual in the context of society and state. When the individual becomes conscious of living in a certain environment, social, cultural and political then rights emanate in the form of claims and demands for better living. Bernard Bosanquet has defined right as “A claim recognized by society acting as ultimate authority to the maintenance of conditions favorable to the best life”.²⁷ So it is the society that offers rights to the individual and at the

time it is the individual who demands such right for adequate living in society. Here the significant point is that when society offers certain rights to the individual then society expects certain obligations and duties to be performed by the individual for its maintenance and continuity. As Swami Vivekananda has said, there cannot be “rights without corresponding duties in society.” Corresponding to the individual good there is social, political and cultural good to be materialized by individual and collective effort.

Man is a social being and so long as he subsists as a social and political being his rights implicitly are the conditions of social existence. This is why these conditions require legal machinery to the guarantee. Besides its demands by the individual, a right requires legal justification. However, it has certain similarity with moral good. Like moral good the demand of right grows within the mind of the individual and takes extension in social form. Rights may be classified into natural, Civil, economic, cultural, political and religious types of rights. The demand of rights assumes specific importance in view of free nations having come into existence during the last century around the world. However, certain rights are not enforceable in the legal sense. Such rights are sometimes called “moral rights”. They are like the demand from a teacher with regard to a student that he should be obedient. Such obedience cannot be enforced by a court of law. In fact, our demand for certain rights starts from our family life, which is a “primary group.” Its regulations are unwritten and yet all of us respect the family group. Similarly, in a complex society such as ours in modern times, where thousands of people live in slum and under bridges, the demand for right has remained largely theoretical. At time, it seems that they are largely guaranteed on paper and in the constitution but it is not feasible to fight for protection and security in the courts.

Thus certain rights are enforceable whereas certain others are not so. For instance, if a person does not repay borrowed money he can be made to do so by action of the court.

Likewise, there are certain rights related to material well-being indispensable for our welfare and progress. The right to property is essential if the individual is to take care of his economic needs and make progress. This has been challenged by communist ideology and it is held by Marx and Engels that an individual is entirely an instrument for state uplift and therefore he has no right to hold property for personal progress. The right to "*Streedhana*" (private property held by a woman) maintained by woman in Hindu society will be objected to by communist thinkers. Similarly, the right to free speech, belief and religious organization were rejected by communists at certain times in the past. Now under the new movement of "*Parastroika*" there are fresh guarantees of freedom of speech and religion. Such legitimization or right requires fresh perspective of individual and social realities in which it would become necessary to think that reality is individual as well as transcendent and immanent.

Moreover to guarantee and safeguard liberty and rights for progress only theoretically would only theoretically would not be enough in modern society. The state will be required to provide measures for realizing them in the law court and corporate bodies. In the third world especially where forty-five percent of population live below the poverty-line and there is illiteracy among large number of Asian and Africans, it would not be enough simply to provide rights in a legal sense without sufficient remedies and aids to their realization. There are definite conditions to be laid down in this context of sanctioning rights for poor and exploited people. They should involve education starting from primary school up to university, including vocational training for a wide variety of jobs. Besides education and training there must also be provided for women as well as for men and for peoples of all classes, castes, and groups. The right to work is legitimate demand among the masses and there should be an obligation for the state to make certain that at least one person per family

has a job in either the private or the public sector. For families in which no one is working or no suitable work can be provided, a living stipend must be provided.

Rights and Philosophy of Work

In modern society, there is keen competition among people, societies and nations of jobs and material goals. In countries having big power, people are rapidly progressing toward the possession of money and goods. On the other hand, in poor countries, people are jobless in great numbers, and they lack the proper spirit of work.

There is a loss of proper perspective in understanding the nature of the right to work and the meaning of true work in a healthy and efficient society. In effulgent societies, people are wealthy but they do not understand the true value of money and it seems that their progress is lopsided. There is a race for getting material goods and wealth but this is at the cost of leisure, which is the real source of thinking and reflection. Real work is not a pursuit after wealth and material happiness but it is for the altruistic spirit of the welfare and betterment of the spirit. Work is the contribution of the individual toward harmony and progress in society. This ideal of collective progress and comprehension of values in mankind is not clearly perceived by those who live in rich countries. In contrast, among the poor countries where there are but meager job opportunities people do not understand the purpose of work in society. In fact, society cannot thrive without proper work by the individual. Work with sincerity and devotion for the progress of society is true service of the individual, man or woman, toward the unity and welfare of mankind. While endeavoring for the right to work, it is expected of people that by working for their own betterment they strive as well for the noble ideal of social betterment.

To recapitulate the relationship between freedom, obligation (*Dharma*) and rights which we have attempted to articulate here. It is desirable to bring forward some of

conclusions of the discussion. Concerning the Concept of freedom, it is the function of philosophy to show its ideal. I have shown that freedom as fact consists of a psychological experience of judging that the individual could have done otherwise than he did in the past. The psychological is only the base for the possibility of choice to be exercised in various stages. Freedom at the moral stage consists of the presentation of several alternatives out of which the individual is supposed to select one and follow the pursuit. In moral freedom, there is the combination of knowledge and volition. Freedom does not become meaningful if it is done in total ignorance. At the stage of moral freedom, there is the presence of partial knowledge, which leads to pitfalls, misconceived error and ill-directed action. The individual attempts to improve upon error and cultivate a better understanding and volition. This reality becomes possible at the still higher stage of spiritual freedom where the individual attempts to become free from error, evil and ignorance. There is an absolute moral *will*, which is being expressed in the will of the individual and an “ought” in moral activity stage of freedom. The moral experience is also strengthened and heightened at the spiritual stage.

The nature of obligation (*Dharma*) can be traced to metaphysical as well as moral principles expressed in the concept of “*Ritam*” and goodness as an autonomous norm of duty. Duty of social betterment is advocated in the *Bhagvad Gita*. In the principle of station and vocation of life (*Charturavarnya*), duty becomes the expression of individual and social desire to bring about harmony. Self-realization can equally be connected to the inspiration of performance of obligation in society. In Hindu society, the principle of caste became rigid. It was not so conceived in the original *Purusha Shukta* where the concepts of harmony and social cohesion have been laid down. Duty as sacrifice done by individuals for social progress has also been propounded in our tradition. In different *smritis* conflicting forms

have been contended. However, their ideals suggested have been uniform with regard to marriage, property and division of functions in society. Obligation as sincere performance of moral act for family, social and unitary welfare has remained persistent in tradition in spite of pitfalls in social development due to historical onslaughts. In modern times, the concept of secularism has been propounded and made part of the constitution owing to the inherent catholic character of *Dharma* subsisting in the Hindu fold. Obligation and freedom are not opposed to each as the concept of freedom facilitates the moral zeal for strict performance of duty. Detachment of action is not exclusive of the sense of duty and endeavor of social uplift but is inclusive of it.

Rights as legitimate social and political expectations make a demand for better living and efficient working of society and state. Rights and obligations are interrelated as a just society would imply righteous behavior and proper discharge of actions from its members without which it would not be possible for the state to provide adequate conditions for a healthy life and administration. In most modern states, rights are not adequately provided nor their justification looked after owing to national and international tensions in economic and political situations. Rights to freedom of speech, belief, faith and expression can be seen as of very great importance in the present world in which there are signs of oppression and exploitation. The right to work and employment is demanded by citizens in the third world. Of course, such a right requires sincere obligation from the citizens to fulfill economic output and satisfaction of needs. Without executing proper duties and social service, it would not be proper to demand condition of well being and material elevation. Freedom and demand of rights are in this way conditional upon the determination and performance of action of action of duty.

Dharma

The term *Dharma* cannot be translated into English or any other language. It is more comprehensive than the word 'religion'. *Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary* gives the following meanings of the word *Dharma*

1. Religion – the customary observance of caste or sect; 2. Law, usage, custom, ordinance; 3. Religious or moral merits, virtue righteousness and good work (regarded as one of the four ends of human existence; 4. Duty, prescribed course of conduct; 5. Right justice equity, impartiality; 6. Piety, propriety decorum, morality, ethics; 7. Nature, disposition, character; 8, Essential qualities or characteristic properties; 9, Sacrifice; 10, Good company; 11, Devotion, etc.

These meanings show that the word *Dharma* is a multi-focal concept charged with several shades of meaning. It includes both the socio-moral duties as well as the religious commands. It also implies social as well as character values. Such connotations are implied in the etymological meaning of *Dharma*, which is derived from the root 'dhr', which means to uphold, to support and to nourish. In the *Rgveda*, it is used with its different meanings in different contexts. It is definitely used, according to Kane, in the sense of 'upholder' supporter or sustainer' in the *Rgveda* (*Rgveda* 1.187 and 10.922).²⁸ Hiriyanna thinks of *Dharma* partly as a religious conception but predominantly as a moral concept.²⁹ In this sense, it predominantly designates socio-moral duties and character values which are essential for man's psycho-social existence. Modern thinkers are coming round to the recognition of the necessity of these values. Stressing upon the imperative necessity of such values, Patrick avers.

“The values which have been preached to us from every pulpit and platform are liberty, equality, opportunity, efficiency, democracy, organization, science, invention and

discovery. We still believe in them heartily and fully. But the time has come when our attention must be focused upon other values which condition the existence and the welfare of society itself such as discipline, self-respect, self-control, respect for law, obedience to law, limitation of desires, temperance, co-operation and education. The practice of these virtues has become urgent and imperative".³⁰

Healthy social life is possible only if the members of the society have a sense of social responsibility and cooperative goodwill.

Dharma as a value contains all the principles required sustaining and upholding human existence in its fullness and integrity. Man is not satisfied with mere survival. He wants to be better and better. He has what the psychologists like Maslow call 'growth needs', i.e. he wants to develop. In the words of E. Fromm, there is a need for transcendence, which stems from the conditions of his existence as a human being. Nobody is satisfied with the status-quo or with the merely physical pleasures. The animal is satisfied when its physiological needs like hunger and sex are satisfied. These needs are also imperative in human life inasmuch as man is an animal. But man is more than an animal. He, therefore, is not satisfied with the gratification of purely physiological needs only. In this context Eric Fromm writes,

"All men are idealists and cannot help being idealists provided we mean by idealism the striving for satisfaction of needs which are specifically human and transcend the physiological needs of organism".³¹

The sustenance of human existence implies man's psychological and social existence and not mere biological sustenance. The development is possible only if there is self-restraint. Thus 'restrain' in order to 'rise' (develop) or to achieve higher levels of human existence is the first lesson of *Dharma*. Lewis Mumford, therefore, rightly says that the habit

of inhibition or the habit of restraint is one of the most essential secrets of man's advance. One important function of *Dharma* is to provide checks and balances to restore man to the sane way of living. Hence, its first lesson is 'to restrain'. It asks us to wait (*samyama*). It checks our irrational and egoistic impulses. But it also gives us self-identity. It provides us with positive socio-moral ideals and spiritual goals. It stands for integrity and nourishment values. It maintains the balance between the egoistic impulses and the social tendencies, the secular and the spiritual (*abhyudayanisreyasa*) goals of man.

Dharma is not against the fulfillment of natural impulses. But unbridled pursuit of them is dangerous to the individuals' pursuit of them is dangerous to the individuals' integrity and social existence. Man is a social animal. He needs society. But society is impossible in the absence of cooperation and the sense of duty. Hence, *Dharma* is a distinguishing characteristic of man; (*Dharmo 'hi tesamadhiko visesah. Dharmenahinahpasubhih samaras*). Unbridled pursuit of political power or material pelf or unchecked gratification of natural impulses leads to disintegration both in individual and social life. Hence, the misers (*aratayah*) and the extremely selfish materialists are condemned in the Vedas. Therefore, *Dharma* aims at giving man a sense of identity and responsibility and asks him to enjoy the world and pursue secular goals in accordance with *Dharma* (*Dharmat arthah ca kamata ca*) from *Dharma* issue wealth (profit, power) and pleasure. It is therefore, rightly admonished that *Dharmaythakamo samameva sevyah*. At least equal time and energy must be apportioned to the realization of different values the pure hedonism or pure utilitarianism, for that matter even 'duty for the sake of duty' are only simplified theories of moral standards. Life-plan must be comprehensive and life-enhancing as well as life-elevating such a scheme is found in the concept of four *puru-sarthas*.

Dharma among them is a very important and cardinal value. It is restraining as well as a growth promoting value. *Dharma* controls all the relationship in society and inspires man to 'rise' to expand his personality and even to ennoble the whole world: *kṛnavanto visvam aryam (Rgveda 9.63.5)*. In the Vedas, we see man attempting to lift himself above the earthly existence. In verse, six of the 30th hymn of the 3rd Mandal of the *Rgveda* the duty to spread the message of truth and integrity is enjoined upon every one. Such an injunction makes *Dharma* dynamic and universal. The society overall was an open society that welcomed noble thoughts from all quarters *ano bhadrāh kratavoyantu visvat ah (Rgveda 1.89.1)*.

It was never a dogmatic or otherworldly religion. Even Manu admonishes us to accept knowledge from even the mean, to learn duty even from the lowest, to accept instructions even from a child and to accept good conduct even from the enemy. (*Manusmṛti*, Chapter 2,238-39). All these instances go to show that the concept of *Dharma* is too comprehensive to be comprehended in any single expression.

But from the axiological standpoint, we will confine it to the concept of socio-moral values. Ontologically, it is grounded in reality, which is the source of the world as well as the values. In other words, it is rooted in the doctrine of conservation of an final triumph of ethico-spiritual values. Religious panentheism is the nearest term, which can best express the doctrine of one God (monotheism), because the Vedic seers definitely did not believe in the doctrine of many Gods (polytheism). Max-Muller coined a new term henotheism suggestive of an intermediary stage between polytheism and monotheism. But even henotheism presupposes the existence of many gods. Therefore, the Vedic doctrine of God is not henotheistic. Max Muller himself says,

“Gods were accepted as persons or as faces of Brahman. Nay, they were recognized as the phenomena of Brahman and whosoever them was led to believe that he worshipped Brahman though ignorantly. Here lies a wonderful amount of wisdom from which even we may have something to learn. The God of Christianity would be to them but another name, another face, or the person of God-head”.³³

He is quoted to have said:

“Hindu idea of God-head is certainly higher, purer and more consistent than that of Greeks, the Romans and the Hebrews. They pass through polytheism, henotheism and monotheism and arrived, at last, at what is generally called pantheism. But this pantheism is very different from vulgar pantheism. God is being without second, without beginning or end, without limitations of any Kind. Whatever there is or seems to be can have the same substance only (*Brahman* or God). They never say, like other pantheists that everything in this phenomenal world is God. But that everything has its being in God”.³⁴

This concept of God is pane theistic and even the Vedic theism is nothing but pane theism. It is very well expressed in philosophical *bymns* like *Purusa sukta*, *Hiranyarbhya sukta* and even *Nasadiya sukta*. *Nasadiya sukta* goes beyond any characterizations of the ultimate reality but traces the manifestation of the phenomenal world to it. While *Purusa sukta* states that it is both immanent as well as transcendent *sa bhumim visvato vrtva atyasthat dasangulam*. The gods are only the personifications of manifestations of the ultimate Reality. The study of their nature and function gives us the basic tenets and principles of *Dharma*. Thus, the basic socio-moral values (*dharmic values*) are implicit in the very process of world manifestation as well as the nature and functions of various Deities.

It was an intellectual fashion towards the close of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century to belittle the achievements of the Vedic seers in the field of science, philosophy, ethics and even religion. Such critics were silenced by the researches of considerate Western Ideologists themselves. The hypothesis of evolution was at the root of such criticism. That which comes earlier in time must be less evolved. Thus, anything ancient must be primitive. Hence, it was at the root of such criticism. That which comes earlier in time must be less evolved. Thus, anything ancient must be primitive. Hence, it was believed that Vedic culture is primitive. It, therefore, is philosophically and religiously backward. As for ethical values (*Dharma*), they are conspicuous by their absence in the Vedic literature. Such sweeping statements have come from learned Indologist like Winternitz. "There is one hymn in the *Rgveda* which is in its higher sense a '*dana-stuti*' a praise of generosity. It is the hymn (*Rgveda* (10.117) which is worthy of mention also because it strikes a moralizing note, which is otherwise quite foreign to the *Rgveda*. The *Rgveda* is every-thing but a textbook of morals".³⁵ Even Ketkar, the great encyclopedias, seems to have been misled by the Western interpretations of the Vedas, otherwise he would not have made a statement like this one, "There is everything in the *Rgveda* except morals".³⁶ Indologists like winternitz are liable to go erratic as here because they are habituated to read morals in the form of commandments. Of course, even such commandments in summary forms are occasionally found in the *Rgveda*. The moral tone of the 'praise of generosity' hymn is very high. Can such a hymn be found in a literature to which, as Winternitz opines, morals are foreign? In many places, generosity and personal charities are extolled. Similarly, the values like truth (*satya*) wisdom (*jnana*), austere and disciplined life for constructive purposes (*tapa*), labour, etc., are held in high esteem by the Vedic seers. Such great values are implicit in the descriptions of Vedic deities. These deities

are the models to be emulated in life to achieve higher and higher phases and levels of human existence both individual and collective. Here it is appropriate to quote Max Muller's well-considered view,

“One of the highest praises bestowed on the Gods in the Veda is that they are *Satya*, true, truthful and trust-worthy”. (*Rgveda* 1.87.4; 1.45.5; 1.174.1; 5.23.2.)

Moreover, it is well known that both in modern and ancient times men always ascribed to their God or gods those qualities, which they valued in them-selves. Other words applied to Gods are *adrogha* (not deceiving) (*Rgveda* 3.1.6; 3.32.9) and (*adroghavak*) (*Rgveda* 6.22.2) (true of speech) Similarly, the gods abide by thr *Rta* (straight, direct, teuth) They are born of the *Rta* (*Rtaja*). In India we come across heroic qualities which are displayed in his opposition and resistance to evil and darkness (social evil and intellectual obscurantism) It is ridiculous to say that Vedic society was a primitive and undeveloped one whose morals were simple befitting a primitive society and yet to say that they had appreciated the values like truth, charity, etc. But it is what has been exactly done by Surama Dasgupta when she writes”

“Thus, in the *Rgveda* the morals are of a very simple nature, as the primitive society does not yet know any intricacies of more advanced civilization. Yet the appreciation of truth, charity condemnation of lies, arrogance, fraud and violence show that the people have the fundamentals of the religious and social virtues”.³⁷

The basic tenets of highly developed spiritual life are found in the Vedas. Divinity and immortality of the soul, the final victory of the righteous, the doctrine of rebirth, dignity of man and life in general, harmony between man and society as well as man and the cosmos are found in the *Rgveda* itself. Here, of course, we are mainly concerned with socio-ethical values. The gods and the virtuous are opposed to the *dasyus*, *panis*, *vrtra* and others who are

forces of evil and darkness. They are greedy and crudely hedonistic and permissive (avratah sisnadevah), i.e. devoted to the cult of sex etc.

The Vedas inculcate moral truth and dwell upon the importance of virtuous conduct. It has already been shown as to how the Vedas praise benevolence and condemn niggardliness and selfishly catering for oneself. *Dharma*, thus, emerges an individualistic as well as socialistic value; it is both a stability-value as well as a progress-value. Moreover, it is a moral value par excellence. It also encourages the pursuit of knowledge. Hence, the *Atharvaveda* records the prayer: *budyemasaradah satam, pusema saradah satam* (May we know through hundred years and May we prosper through hundred years (*Atharvaveda* 19.67.3, 5). Thus, life must be a life of achievements, moral and others. It must be a healthy and victorious life. Hence, the Veda says, *ahinah syama saradah satam* (May we live for hundred years with our heads held high). In the *Taittiriya aranyaka*, there is a prayer 'ajitah syama saradah satam' (Let us live unconquered for hundred years). These prayers show that the Vedic morality and religion are vigorous and life enhancing; there is no trace of pessimism or defeatism anywhere. The Vedic axiological thoughts are scattered over the whole of the Vedic literature. They are summarized in one of the verses of the *Atharvaveda*;

Satyam brhat Rtam ugram diksa tapo

Brahma Yajnah prthivim dharayanti (Atharvaveda 12.11.1).

These six values constitute the six-fold *Dharma*, Truth, eternal order, that is stern and great, consecration, austerity, prayer and knowledge, and sacrifice uphold the earth. These values also include the value of honest human efforts and the value of generosity. Hence, we will not dwell upon dharmic values in the order in which they are given in the *Atharvaveda*. We will begin with *Rta* the fundamental value, nay, and the very principle that upholds the eternal significance of values.

Rta

The Vedic morality and religious duties are virtually rooted in the doctrine of *Rta*. It stands both for order in nature as well as for moral order in the universe. It is also treated as cognate with truth. The negative of *Rta* is *anrta*, which is negative of truth. Commenting on the meaning of *Rta*, Hopkins says,

“English word good meant originally fit and so proper, appropriate. Similarly, the Vedic word *Rta* means fit, orderly, good and as a noun *Rtam* is the right order of the universe, of the sacrifice and of the ethical conduct, the true way as opposed to its negative *anrtam*, that is false or untrue. It connotes a certain harmony between ideal and practice. Cosmically, it designates the harmony of the world and regularity of nature”.³⁸

Thus, the value of *Rta* is wider than ethical value of truth. Of course, in one verse, both *satyam* and *Rtam* are said to be born of blazing, spiritual fire (*tapas*) (*Rgveda* 10. 190.1).

Writing on the wider connotation of the term *Rta*, A.C. Bose says,

“*Rta* in its moral aspects, however, is wider than truth, it includes justice and goodness and is almost synonymous with *dharma* as an ethical concept. So *Rta* is sternly (*ugram*) opposed to evil”.³⁹

In this context, the sage says, “the wicked and the vicious do not tread the path of eternal law; *Rtasya pantham na tarati dusrtah*” (*Rgveda* 9.73.6). Thus, *Rta* here stands for the moral government of the universe, which is very emphatically declared in the Upanisadic statement: *satyameva jayate nanrtam*. Ultimately, the truth will prevail, never the falsehood. Thus, *Rta* as an eternal order has socio-ethical implications.

Various deities are the upholders of the *Rta*. The gods are great, lovely and victorious because they stick to the immutable cosmic order. Naturally social order must be modeled

after this order in the universe It is not only an eternal law, it is also an eternal justice, A.C. Bose, therefore, differentiates it from the idea of fate in Greek culture.⁴⁰

According to him the doctrine of Karma is the implication of this stern law of *Rta*. But there is no pre-determination. There is evil but it can be fought and fought successfully within us and without us... Thus, the Vedic outlook is both heroic as well as epic outlook on life. Victory is ours if we are brave and follow goodness resolutely.⁴¹

There are various verses whose message is heroic after the manner of Indra: *Imam sakhaya anuvisyadhvam* (Comrades, be heroic, follow the example of *Indra*) (*Rgveda* 10.103.1). In another verse, we are asked to stand erect and fight the battle of life. The rocky stream flows on, hold together! Stand erect, and cross over, my friends! Here let us leave those who are evil-minded and let us cross over to the powers of goodness (*Rgveda* 10.53.8). *Atharvaveda* also asks us to be heroic and leave the evil minded to get at the forces of good (*Atharvaveda* 12.2.26). These thoughts show that victory of the good and righteous is inevitable provided one sticks heroically to the path of truth. The good-doers are bound to be benefited by their good deeds here as well as hereafter. It is also compatible of *Karma* is a direct corollary of the *Rta* doctrine. It is also compatible with the doctrine of rebirth. Even the doctrine of rebirth was known to the Vedic seers. The references to rebirth may be few, but they are definitely there in the Vedas. Even Griffith translation of the 16th hymn of 10th Mandal of the *Rgveda* gives us the idea of life after death. It is a funeral song containing the prayer for the future state of the departed soul:

Burn him not up, nor quite consume him, Agne;

Let not his body or skin be scattered.

O Jatavedas, when thou hast matured him, then

Send him unto his way unto the fathers.

When thou hast made him ready, Jatavedas then
 Do thou give him over to the fathers.
 When he attains to the life that waits him,
 He shall become the deity's controller
 The sun receive thine eye, the wind thy spirit
 Go as thy merit is (*gaccha charmana*) to earth or heaven
 Go if it be thy lot, unto the water, go make thine
 Home in plants with all thy members.
 Thy portion is goat (*aja*). With heat consumption
 Let thy fierce flame, thy, glowing splendour
 Burn him.
 With thine auspicious forms, O *Jatavedas* bear this
 Man to the region of the pious. (*Rgveda* 10.16.6.1 to 6).

We need not go into the merits of this *translation* but it is certain that it indicates the soul's journey after death according to his deeds. Writing on this hymn, Winternitz says.

“Here we already find philosophical theories on life after death and on the destiny of the soul mixed up with mythological ideas about *Agni* and the fathers”⁴²

Goldstucker is also of the opinion that there is the doctrine of transmigration in the *Rgveda*.⁴³ Ranada stresses to take note of the word *Dharma* in the hymn mentioned above. According to him, it is the earliest trace of a theory of *Karman* especially as the soul is asked to go to heaven or the earth according to its qualities (*dharma*).⁴⁴ The 58th hymn of the *Rgveda* also makes us feel that the soul is alive after the bodily death.

The famous '*Asya vdmasya hymn*' also tells us about the transmigration of the soul. It also refers to the doctrine of two birds (*Rgveda* 1.164.17), viz. the individual soul and the universal soul or the supreme self. The verse 38 of the same hymn tells us that the immortal principle, conjoined with the mortal one moves backwards and forwards by virtue of its natural powers. They ceaselessly move in opposite directions with the result that the one be seen; the other is out of sight. Roth, Bohtlingk, Geldner, Ranade think that this verse proves that there existed the idea of transmigration in the *Rgveda*.

So far we have seen that the doctrine of *Karman* is associated with the doctrine of life after death and it is an essential corollary of the doctrine of *Tra* which is a fundamental presupposition of socio-moral order and virtues. This digression from the subject of the *Tra* is necessary to understand the implications of the *Rta* theory.

The *Rgvedic* Godhead as we have seen is both immanent and transcendent. His presence is felt by the sages. He is constant witness of our actions. The sage says, "The lord sees man's good and bad actions' (*Rgveda* 2.27.3). Hence, the sinful cannot cross the path of *Rta* (*Rgveda* 9.73.6). One of the sages solicits God for preventing his fall in his character: *te ma raksantu vlsrasah caritrat uta* (*Rgveda* 8.45.5). In one of the verses, we come across the idea of hell created by brotherless women going astray or vicious wives hating their husbands or the cheats in the society. Thus, the so-called hell (*naraka*) is nothing but worse type of persons creating chaos and moral anarchy in society (*kutsitah rarah narakah*). Thus, when man fails to accept the implications of the *Rta* or fails to abide by the *vratas*, there is bad society. But the Vedas are not pessimistic about human nature. On the contrary, as we have already seen they have full faith in the powers of man to rise above petty selfishness and biological level so that he can translate the *Rta* in his life as well as in his society. Thus, harmony in both individual and social life can be realised.

Satyam (Truth)

One of the meanings of *Rta* is truth. But, *Rta* is a wider concept. We have already seen how the gods are described as true, truthful, honest and so on. They are also called *adrogha* or *adroghavak* meaning those who are truthful in thought, world and deed. There is a positive demand for making the world and deed. There is a positive demand for making the world truthful place – *visvam satyam krnuhi* (*Rgveda* 3.30.6). In the *Rgveda* (7.106.12), it is said that God (*Soma*) protects and defends only the truth and the straight forwardness and destroys the falsehood and crookedness. Thus, God is on the side of truth and straightforwardness. Ethically, truth stands for honesty and integrity. In the verse 15th of the 17th hymn of the 8th Mandal of the *Rgveda* the sage states, ‘Gods of mature knowledge! You know well the secret of men’s hearts and know the honest man from the deceiver’.

At one of the places, the sage pledges to follow truth and reject falsehood. He declares, ‘I am discarding falsehood and embracing truth *dam aham anrtat satyam upaimi* (White Yajurveda 1.5.5.). He pledges that he will follow truth only and immediately says, ‘Here I go from untruth to truth’.

In the *Atharveda*, it is said that the spies of *Varuna* know all the details of our activities, mental as well as physical. The poet says, ‘*O Varuna*, let your nooses bind the speakers of falsehood-. Let them leave aside those who speak the truth- *sarve anrtam vadantam chinantu, yah satyavaditam atisrjantu* (*Atharvaveda* 4.16.6). It is also said that the liar or deceiver ultimately ruins himself (*Atharvaveda* 4.19.6). In another verse, the wonderful power of truth is shown. Whenever the truth goes, there the wicked, the sinners dare not go (*Atharvaveda* 4.36.7,8). This is the positive message of truth-force. The sage also says that it is sin to utter untruth or lies- *yat unaktha anRtam vrjlnam jihvaya bahu* (*Atharvaveda* 1.10.3). The *Brahmana* treatises are supposed to deal with the mechanical

rituals and ceremonials. But they also did not over-look the inner guard of moral life. For instance, take the *Aitareya Brahmana*. It says, 'Righteousness is the initiation, truth is the initiation, and he who has taken the initiation for a rite should speak only truth' (*Aitareya Brahman* 1.6). *Aitareya Aranyaka* says, 'Truth is the flower and fruit of speech. He will become a master, a man of renown, one of excellent repute, he who speaks this flower and fruit of speech, truth'. The famous *Satapatha Brahmana* of White *Yajurveda* states, 'There are only two, truth and falsehood! The Gods are all truth and men falsehood. Hence, speak the truth only. From truth comes glorious fame to you (*Satapatha Brahmana* 3.2.4.2). In another passage, the *Satapatha Brahmana* indicates the seeming defeat and setback that the forces of truth receive. In the long run, the forces of truth and goodness triumph. It says, 'The Gods who continuously spoke only truth seemed, for the nonce to be comparatively weaker and less affluent. Hence, is this, that he who continues to speak only truth appears to be weaker and poorer, but in the end he becomes strong and affluent for the gods became so eventually (*Satapatha Brahmana* 9.4.2.5.1.16.1). All these Vedic utterances indicate that truth was held in high esteem by the Vedic seers. Gandhiji's concept of truth-force was recognized long back by the Vedic sages. It was also placed as a positive norm before the society.

Truth as a 'metaphysical value' was also pursued by the Vedic poet-philosophers. Therefore, we come across the great philosophical hymns in the Vedas. The qualities essential for the pursuit of truth (to see truth as it is) are definitely found in Vedic seers. They, for instance, are very curious and questioning in their approach towards the real. They are open-minded. Hence, they pray for noble thoughts from all directions (*a no bhadrah kratavo yantuu visvatah*). They were never satisfied with the dogmas and status quo in the field of knowledge. The famous *Gayatri Mantra* is a prayer for the stimulation of intellect. It

is not a prayer for ready-made knowledge. It is called the mother of the Vedas and the savior of the singer. It was held in so high esteem that other *Gayatri* verses were modeled on the resplendent *vivifier Savitr*, may He stimulate our intellect' (*Rgveda* 3.62.10). In regard to a metaphysical truth, the sages would not make sweeping affirmations based on flimsy grounds.

In one of the verses, a sage makes an enquiry with humility befitting an honest enquirer: unknowingly I asked of those who know the sages, as one ignorant for the sake of knowing person and get instructed from him. Thus, one should travel forward (*Rgveda* 10.32.7). Such is the Vedic spirit of inquiry with modesty as a necessary companion of it.

There are also visions of Sat or ontological reality expressed at various places. In one of the verses of the *Yajurveda*, a sage expresses his vision of reality in which all are united as min in one home.

Venas tat pasyan nihitam guha sad

Yatra visvam bhavati eknidam

Tasminnidam sam ca vicaiti sarvam

Sa otah ca protah ca vibhuh prajasu (White *Yajurveda* 32.8)

(The living sage beholds that Being hidden in mystery. Wherein the universe comes to have one home. Therein unites and there from emanates all. The Omnipresent One is warp and woof in created things).⁴⁵

Such is the significance of the value of the truth. As a metaphysical and mystical truth, it will be discussed in the next chapter. But as an ethical value, its significance is abiding and its need is imperative. Even the gang of thieves cannot hold together and maintain its unity, unless the thieves are honest to each other within the group. Hence, the Vedas expressed a profound socio-moral truth when they say, 'By truth is the earth upheld'

(*Rgveda* 10.85.1). Hence, the *Savita* is said to have truth as the law of His being *satyadharmā Savita* (*Atharvaveda* 7.24.1). *Indra*, the great heroic model of resistance to evil is also extolled as truth. The sage says:

Satyam id vau tam vayam

Indram stavama nanRtam (*Rgveda* 8.62.12)

(Let us applaud this Indra who is truth and not untruth.)

These verses make truth as an essential value both in individual and social life.

Tapa

Tapa denotes another important *dharma* value, viz., personal effort as well as spiritual ardour. It shows that the *Dharmapatha* of life is the path of incessant labour and efforts. The concept of *Rta*, as we have seen, implies the concept of *Vrata*. Unless one abides by the eternal law one cannot enjoy the sweetness of the world. The *Madhuparka sukta* of the *Rgveda* (1.90) gives us juicy philosophy of life and contains a prayer for sweetness [cf. *Atharvaveda* (1.34)] *Madhuvindhya*. It is a prayer for sweet and harmonious relations between man and natural phenomena. Such a harmony between man and nature can be achieved by leading a life according to the eternal laws. Thus, the fulfillment of *Vratas*, which are direct derivatives from the concept of *Rta*, is a necessary condition of harmony between man and nature. Man is capable of realizing this harmony which brings sweetness in human life (*Madhuvata Rtayate*). Thus every value – secular or spiritual – is realizable through honest human efforts; and unless one puts in efforts, one will not be able to achieve higher ends. This is emphatically expressed in one of the verses of the *Rgveda* ‘*na rte srantasya sakhyaya devah*’. Gods befriend none but one who has toiled (*Rgveda* 4.13.11). “No pains no gains” and God helps only those who strive to the best of their abilities. In another verse, the Veda says, ‘sloth or laziness is ungodly’.

Icchanti devah sunvantam

Na svapnaya sprhayanti

Yantipramadam atandrah

(Gods desire that man who makes efforts in pressing the juice while performing religious rites. The Gods do not like sleep. The unsleeping Gods punish desoluteness or indolence.)

(*Rgveda* 8.2.18)

The Vedic seers hated economic dependence. In one of the verses, the sage expresses dislike for dependence on others. He earnestly prays ‘O Agni may I not have to live upon the earnings of others’ (*Rgveda* 4.3.13). In another verse, there is a prayer for active life, so that one can be saved from indolence and idle talk: *Ma no nidra isata mota jalpih* (*Rgveda* 8.38.14). The famous *Aksa sukta* advocates us to adopt the way of honest labour. It also denounces the desire to grow rich by gambling. It also denounces the desire to grow rich by gambling. It shows that both wealth and welfare must be achieved through honest labour.

Aksair ma divya krsasva

Vitte ramasva bahumanya manah

Tatra gavah kitava tatra jaya

Tanme vi caste savitayamaryah (*Rgveda* 10.34.13)

(Do not play with dice; cultivate thy cornfield, delight in that wealth, thinking high of it. O Gambler! There is thy cattle and there thy wife-so the noble *Savita* has told me)

Tapas is not mere physical labour, notwithstanding that it involves intense efforts. It involves unsparing efforts for reaching higher goals in life. In this sense, it implies austere life. In this context A.C. Bose says, “*Tapas* is the unflagging, unsparing efforts in the achievement of higher things, the infinite pains one has to take to do something really worthwhile.”⁴⁶ Thus, the concept of *Tapas* is not ascetic or isolationistic. It connotes that one

must be ready to undergo immense sufferings for the sake of reaching higher levels of human excellence and the realization of higher values. Thus, it is not asceticism for its own sake nor it means the mortification of the body. The classical writer, Patanjali defines *Tapa* as *Tapo dvandvasahanam*. The cultivation of powers helps to bear with pleasures and pains, temptations and frustrations, successes or failures. It gives us the power to overcome odds and reverses. Thus, one must be mentally and morally strong enough to resist everything that causes one to deviate from the path of virtue and spirituality. Of course, these *tapas* must be done regularly. Hence, we are asked to adopt the model to the sun and the moon and to imitate them. One of the seers says:

Svasti panthama anucarema suryacandramasaviva

Punar dadata 'ghnata jananta samgamemahi. (Rgveda 5.51.15)

(We will follow the path of righteousness like the sun and the moon following their paths.

We will associate with the liberal, the kind and the knowing).

Here we are asked to strictly follow the moral law even as the sun and the moon undeviatingly follow the laws of natural order. The *Rgveda* also makes an important statement which suggests how fundamental *tapas* is: *Ratam ca satyam cabhiddhat tapaso' dhyajayata. (Rgveda 10. 190.1.)* Here the truth and the eternal law are said to have been born at the beginning of the world-manifestation out of the blazing spiritual fire. This verse shows that *tapas* lies at the beginning of all great things. According to the *Atharvaveda*, it is said that gods and noble men and women achieve excellent things through *tapas* or *brahmacarya*. (*Atharvaveda* 11 5. 17. 19). Here *tapas* means the power of one's morally strong and spiritually developed character. The concept of *brahmacarya* suggests the discipline of mind and body for the concept of *brahmacarya* suggests the discipline of mind and body for the cultivation, knowledge, Veda, soul and ultimate reality, etc. The

brahmacari leads an idealist way of life. He is dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and ultimate truth.

The path of *Dharma* and spirituality is not a path of roses. One has to fight against the odds. One should not flee from the path of struggle, which requires untiring toil and efforts. The Upanishads also say that *tapas* are imperative for a man who wants to realize higher values of human life. Hence, *Varuna* repeatedly urges his son, *Bhrgu*, to practise *tapas*. *Varuna* elevates it to the status of Brahman itself.

Tapas Brahman vijijnasasva, tapo Brahmeti. (*Aitareya Upanishad* 1.9) This *Upanishad* tells us about the spiritual journey of *Bhrgu*. *Bhrgu* realised *Brahman* through his moral and spiritual efforts (*tapas*). The *Kenopanisad* also says that *tapas* is one of the foundations of Brahman – *Tapodamakarmeti pratistha Satyamayanam*. The value of *tapas* is not opposed to ordinary life of labour and toil. It gives an idealist tinge to the life of Karma or activism. Here we must know the fact that the Vedic spiritual seekers (*tapasvis*) were householders (*Grhasthas*). They had not renounced the world. But their activism was geared to the realization of higher levels of human existence. It was in the words of the *Gita*, '*Niskamakarmayoga*'; the 40th chapter of the *Yajurveda* has given the substance of the reconciliation of ordinary life with ideal life in which *karma* is enjoined upon human beings:

“Whatever moving there is in the world, all that is embraced by the lord, enjoy by renouncing, doesn't covet anybody's wealth. Live for hundred years by doing your ordained duties. There is no other way except the path of duties. Doing, thus evil does not taint man.”
(White *Yajurveda* 40.1.2.)

The first chapter of the *Yajurveda* also teaches us to follow the path of noble deeds (*sresthatama karma*): '*Savita devah nah sresthatamaya karmane prapaytu* (White *Yajurveda* 1.4) Thus, Karma must be transformed into *tapas* so that it helps to realize

immortality (*amaratva*), bliss or Godhood (*devata*). The Veda has the following to say in this context.

Ribhus reached immortality through personal efforts and got the status of Godhood (*Rgveda* 1.20.8). The worshippers of the Lord *Agni* got Godhood through the active adoration of *Agni* (*Rgveda* 1.68.2). Ribhu realised immortality by becoming sun-like radiant. He also got the status of a deity thereby (*Rgveda* 1.110.4). It is said that knowledge must be diligently sought because it leads to immortality (*Rgveda* 1.164.23). In another verse, the gods are praised for their divine achievements (*Rgveda* 3.60.2). The Vedas also give warning to them who mechanically recite the name of *Agni*. To such persons, the sage says, 'Those who without making efforts and doing noble deeds merely go on chanting monotonous name of the Lord, eventually get nothing but sorrows and sufferings (*Rgveda* 4.5.14). Thus, God's grace is not unconditional. It does not depend on sacerdotal rituals. It is contingent upon the self-endeavour, the pursuit of knowledge and altruistic deeds. It is enjoined upon us to emulate the great in their greatness, brilliance and achievements. There is no place for idlers or indolent persons in Vedic concept of *Dharma*. The Vedic *dharma* is both energetic and dynamic.

Dana (Generosity and Liberality)

The Vedas condemned, in no uncertain terms, the selfish egoist and crude hedonist. They pursued socio-moral values. Among the secular hymns, the hymns in praise of generosity are very significant from the social standpoint. The Vedic seers were above narrow individualism. Their social teachings are rooted in their comprehensive spiritual outlook to words the world at large. At many places, the selfish and miserly persons are condemned. This speaks for the high degree of value they attached to altruism and benevolence the 117th hymn of 10th Mandala of *Rgveda* contains an excellent exposition of

the value of generosity. The very first verse of this hymn indirectly enjoins upon us the duty to give away wealth for the good of others.

The Gods inflict not hunger as a means to kill; Death frequently befalls even satiated men (*Rgveda* 10.117.1).

A. Ludwig has a very important thing to say in the form of a gloss on this verse. He writes,

“We do not interfere with the rule of the gods by giving nourishment to one who is dying starvation. This is said with irony against the hypocrites who sought to justify their hardness of heart by saying that the fate of the needy ones was determined by the gods. The irony or sarcasm becomes unquestionable through what follows; the poet concludes further that if the poor were pre destined by the gods to death by starvation then the wealthy who had plenty of food must live for ever”.⁴⁷

Commenting on this hymn (*Rgveda* 10.117) in general and this verse (10.117.2) in particular, Ghurye says:

“The anonymous sage has expressed his socially oriented sympathy and generosity in a more positive and almost militant, socialistic and communistic way. Its style is ironical. The sage says that God has not ordained hunger to be our death because even the well-off and well-fed persons are subject to death. The hymn further guarantees that the giver’s wealth never melts away, while the miser or selfish hedonist ultimately plunges into sorrow”.⁴⁸

And even the enemies become friendly to word one who feeds the hungry and the guest. On the other hand, even the relatives, the kith and kin, desert a miserly person. Wealth is also compared to the revolving wheels of a chariot, in this simile; the advice communicated is not to accumulate wealth is meant for use and not for hoarding. It is meant for social

service. Hence, the 6th verse of this hymn condemns selfishness and declares that he is a sinner who caters for himself only. The 6th verse of the hymn is very forceful and its moral tone is very high.

Moghamannam vindate apracetah

Satyam bravimi vadha itsa tasya

Naryamanam pusyati no Sakhayam

Kevalagho bhavati kevaladi (Rgveda 10. 117. 6)

(The unwise obtains food grains to little purpose. I tell you the truth: it is as good as his death. He feeds neither a friend nor a comrade).

And one who eats all by himself, sins all by himself.

The lonely eater is the lonely sinner. Life must be lived on altruistic principles: *Bhunjate te tvagham papa a pacanti atmakaranat*. (Those evil people partake of sin who only cook for themselves). (*Gita* 3-13). The *Gita* verse seems to be a paraphrase of the *Rgvedic* expression. The word *Agha* (sin) is common to both the passages. It will also be appropriate to quote the comments of Ragozin on this whole hymn. He writes,

“Vedic hymns greatly confirm us in the impression that Aryan moral code as mirrored in the *Rgveda*, bore on the whole, singularly pure and elevated character. So nothing can be more noble, beautiful in feeling and wording than the hymn of aims giving or rather on the duty of giving or helping generally”.⁴⁹

This hymn definitely teaches us to be socially oriented and attunes one to the social realities of want and hunger. It is a hymn on generosity and benevolence and not merely on alms-giving because we do not give alms to our guests and friends. Thus, the food or the wealth that one possesses has a social aspect too. These should be used as instruments of

social service by alleviating the miseries of others. It must be earned only to put it to social use.

In another verse, it is enjoined upon us to associate ourselves with the liberal, the kind and the knowing (*Rgveda* 5.51.15). It reminds us of the Upanishadic episode in which the gods, the men and the demons approach Prajapati for his advice and message. Prajapati gave out his message in one letgter da (*Brahadaranyaka Upanishad* V, 2, 1-3). The *devas* interpreted it as self-control (*dama*), men interpreted it as charity (*dana*) and the demons took the message as compassion (*daya*). This message is meant for all the human beings. One must practise self-restraint and out of compassion give away wealth for the good of others. Thus, charity is not to be understood as alms-giving. It is a God-ordained duty. It is social service. Its basis, as we have seen is the philosophy of unity of all existence (*Isavasyamidam sarvam.... Yajurveda* 40.1). Since morality is rooted in metaphysic, it is elevating. Hence it is a divine service, through the service of the living beings because the same Divinity dwells in all.

Atharvaveda commands us to gather wealth with a hundred hands and distribute it among the people with a thousand hands. (*Atharvaveda* 3.24.5) Thus, the generosity has a force of divine ordinance. The gods are on the side of the generous and condemn those who are miserly (*aratayah*). In this context, Spinoza's view is worth quoting. He says, 'wherever justice and charity have the force of law and ordinance, there is God's kingdom.'⁵⁰ It also shows that *Dharma* is a dynamic social force. It consists in living righteously rather than in believing in dogmas or creeds. Radhakrishnan rightly says that service of one's fellows is a religious obligation and to repudiate it is impiety.⁵¹ In this context, lines regarding charity in the famous 'convocation address in the *Taittiriya* Upanishad are worth considering. The teacher says, "*Sradhaya deyam, sriya rhiya, deyam, bhiya deyam savida deyam (Taittiriya*

Upanishad 1, 2, 3) Charity should be practiced with faith and not with unfaith. It must be practiced with magnanimity and modesty, with awe and sympathy. These are the conditions of charity. This reminds us of the episode in the life of Sri Ramakrishna *Paramahansa*, Once someone expressed his desire to help the poor. Ramakrishna got excited and said: Help! Who are you to help? If possible, go and serve the Daridranarayana. Thus, charity here must be understood in a broader sense of service to the people.

Yajna (Sacrifice)

The Vedic people were fire-worshippers. They worshipped fire-god in its various forms. They were, for instance, sun-worshippers. Of course, the sun or fire was symbolic of resplendent and brilliant Reality underlying the whole cosmos. In its external form, *Yajna* is a ritual of offering libation or oblation in the sacrificial fire lighted on the alter. More or less the same ritual was performed with reference to various deities. Different priests did different things during the sacrifice. The *Rgvedic Hotr* first recited the Vedic verses. The *Udgata* chanted the *samans* musically. The *Adhvaryu* (*Yajurveda* priest) did the actual sacrificial performances, while the *Brahma* (*Atharvavedic* priest) supervised the whole ritual. He also delivered the sermon. There are various kinds of sacrifices. It was also used later on, as a political weapon, for instance, *Asvamedha* and *Rajasuya* sacrifices. These extensions of the use of *Yajna* show that *Yajna* was not an ordinary ritual among other rituals. It was a public institution.

Unfortunately, it was reduced to a mere religious ritual. Major part of the *Brahmana* literature is devoted to different sacrificial ceremonials. It came to be known as *Karmakanda* portion of religion and then it was contrasted to the *jnanakand* or knowledge portion of religion. But it is wrong to say that the *Samhita* part of the Vedas is nothing but *Karmakanda*. Swami Dayananda has shown how the Vedas contain both science as well as

philosophy. The Vedas constitute both action and knowledge. They are books on works as well as on knowledge.

Let us come to the subject proper, viz., *Yajna*. In any religion, there are external practices and rituals. Most of them are symbolic. Secondly. With the passage of time, customs and rituals are mechanically observed without understanding their meanings may be forgotten entirely. It may be distorted and the unfortunate part of it is that spurious meaning replaces the genuine meaning. Hence it is rightly said that customs die-hard and outlive their erstwhile utility. The word *Yajna* is interpreted only in a sacerdotal sense by the ritualistic interpreters of Indian tradition. The *Brahmana* treatises long back emphasized on the 'works-part' of the Veda. Of course, there are philosophical as well as moral thoughts even in the *Brahmanas*. Later on, the *Mimamsakas* also understood the Vedas as 'books of rituals' only. *Yajna* was confined to the rituals only. Thus, *Yajna* became a merely formal and sacerdotal rite to be performed according to its rules to get heaven (*svargakamo yajeta*). Hence, the Upanishad has to give a stern warning against the mechanization of genuine faith. *Mundakopanisad* likens the formal ritualistic sacrifices to the unsteady frail boats (*Mundakopanisad* 1.2). *Rgveda* itself has given the warning against the formal ceremonialism.

No one by action (*Karma*) attains to Him who works and forever strengthens;

Not by rites (*naYajnaih*) can Indra be attained, the praised of all the irresistible;

the valiant, the bold in might. (*Rgveda* 8.70.3).

Later on, the *Bhagavad-Gita* has to elaborate the concept of *Yajna* in such a way that we come across several *Yajnas*, which far from being ritualistic, have social and spiritual significance.

Various Vedic references to *Yajna* give us the proper meaning of it. *Yajna* was allegorically and symbolically understood in the Vedas them-selves. The famous *Trisuparna*, which is recited at the dinnertime, is a pointer to this. It gives us the spiritual meaning of it. The so-called killing in sacrifice is to be understood symbolically. Here *Manyu* (wrath) is said to be *pasu* (animal) to be sacrificed at the altar of fire. Thus, the killing of *pasus* 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, *Yajna* was not only a way of worship, but it was also a way of life. *Yajniyavrtti* is nothing but the spirit of sacrifice or the spirit of dedication in doing great and noble deeds. Commenting on this spiritualization of the concept of *Yajna*, A.C. Bose says, 'Even in the Vedas, we find *Yajna* taken in the figurative sense. The Yajurveda says that life prospers through *Yajna* (spirit of sacrifice). Even the ritual of *Yajna*, *karmakanda* prospers through *Yajna* (spirit of sacrifice): *yajno yajnena kalpatam*. May *Yajna* (ritual) prosper through *Yajna*, i.e. spirit in the Vedic literature express higher values.

Let us turn to the etymology of the word *Yajna*. It is derived from *Yaj* meaning *devapuja-sangatikarana danesu*. It connotes and gives us the socio-moral philosophy of the Vedic people. The first meaning of *Yajna* is *devapuja*, reverence for the divine and the learned. The *Deva* has several meanings. According to Satavalekar, *Deva* means God; Soul, sense organ, *Agni*, King, *Ksatriya*, *Brahmana*, Fundamental principle, etc. *Satapatha Brahmana* (3-7-3-10) says: *Satya Samhita vaidevah satyamaya u deva vidvanso hi devah*. Thus, *devapuja* connotes respect for the learned and the wise. It is the duty of every man to respect the men of wisdom. The sages and scientists, the scholars as well as the selfless socio-religious workers should be respected in society. Their words must be honoured.

Generally, council of the wise and the good becomes an anathema to the powers that be. Here the Vedas enjoin upon us the duty to have reverence for the men of learning.

It was the institution of learning that gave full scope to different scholars to freely express their views. *Sabha* and *Samiti* were political in nature while *sadas* and *vedatha* were cultural and religious in character. During the *Yajna* ceremonials, there would be sessions in which different socio-cultural and religious problems were discussed. In this sense, *Yajna* was a great socio-cultural forum or platform. *Devapuja* also connotes worship of the Divine. It was a work of spreading the higher values among the people. Through the institution of *Yajna*, sages carried the message of the Vedas to all the quarters of the earth. Thus, they tried to bring about moral and spiritual upliftment of the people at large. Convent *visvam aryam* (*Rgveda* 9.63.5). We are also nals and sinners should be freed from their sins so that they can lead a good life (*Rgveda* 10. 137. 1). In the *Rgveda* (3.30.6), we are asked to spread the message of the eternal *dharma* in the whole world and make it a universal one. Thus, the Vedic people spread the message of the Vedas through the institution of *Yajna*. Thus, *Yajna* was a cultural institution that gave cultural to the uncultured and uncivilized people. So, in the Ramayana, we come across sages performing sacrifices, not in cities but in forest and undeveloped (back ward) areas. Thus, the worship of God is to do His work. Gods strove for and stood by truth, resisted injustice, selfishness and evil. We have to do this. Hence, the *Satapatha Bahamans* enjoins upon us to emulate the Gods *yet diva akurvani Satapatha Brahmana* 7.3.26). Vedic Gods are paradigms or models of socio-moral ideal. It is only the pauranic culture that says, '*Na deva caritam caret*'. The concept of *devapuja* also implies the Lord through the service of the poor masses.

Secondly, *Yajna* for *sangatikarana* it means to make a friendly union of human beings. This connotation of *Yajna* emphasizes the idea of 'get together' to hammer out the

solution to the problems of human life. In this context, Kunhan Raja's view on the Soma *Yajna* is worth considering. He says,

“*Soma Yajna* 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 and the relations of the man to the *Nature*, etc.”⁵²

Such an assembly of the learned promotes cooperative approach to human problems. It also promotes friendly relations among the people. Of course, it is not friendship for utilitarian profit or creature comforts. Cooperation is indispensable for the sustenance of group-life. John Dewey, a pragmatic and empiricist philosopher, is ready to give religious status to human intelligence and free cooperation. According to him, placing them at the level of religious ideals would not lower man's way of life. It would contribute to its widest possible growth.⁵³ *Yajna* emphasized the social values like sociability and cooperation. The last hymn of the *Rgveda* stands for universal love and harmony. It was a uniting factor against the divisive forces. *Yajurveda* (*Vajasaneyi* 26.2) clearly states that the Vedas are for all human beings. They are not meant for a particular section of society but for the whole of humanity.

Yathemam vacam kalyanim avadati janebhyah

Brahmarajanyabhyam sudraya caryaya ca

Svaya caranaya ca.

[So may I speak these blessed words to all the people at large, to the *Brahman* and the *Ksatriya*, to the *Sudra* and the *Vaisya*, to my own people and to the foreigner (White Yajurveda 26.)]

Yajurveda also makes a positive remark in this regard and asks us to develop friendly eye (*mirasya caksu*) towards the world (White *Yajurveda* 36.18). Thus, *Yajna* helped to develop cooperation and friendship among the people. The spiritual value of the *Yajna* will be discussed while discussing the ultimate value of *Moksa*.

We have already discussed the value of *dana*. *Yajna* also involves the value of *dana* or giving. It is the value of sharing wealth with our fellow-beings. In any society, there are bound to be experts as well as non-experts. It must be seen that the experts do not exploit the helpless human beings. The concept of *Yajna* shows that society's stability and progress depend on the contributions of all the members of society. Hence, cooperation and harmony are essential to this effect. The concept of *dana* also emphasizes generosity and compassion as important social values. 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 Siddhesvara Shastri Chitrava, *Yajna* is also used in the sense of duty, for instance, in the first verse of the 46th hymn of the 5th Mandal of the *Rgveda*.⁵⁴ The dutiful devotee is compared to an obedient horse. The devotee takes of the yoke of duty. He does not shirk his duty. He does not shift his responsibility on others. He asks God to take him to the desired destination.

Yajna is also called *Adhvara* according to *Yaska* (Nirukta 2-7) *adhvara* means *adhvara iti Yajnanama dhvaRta iti himsa karma tatpratishedhah* (*adhvara* means *Yajna*, *Dhvara* means violence, *Adhvara* is the negation of *dhvara*). Not only that it does not involve violence or killing of animals but it suggests good actions. Various *Rgvedic* verses suggest this meaning of *Yajna*. One *Rgvedic* verse contains the following import. It states, "O God, you pervade those sacrifices (deeds) which do not involve killing. Even the wise, devoted to truth, assent to such deeds only" (*Rgveda* 1.1.4). *Yajurveda* verse (1.1) positively

states that the *Yajna* is the *sresthatamam karma*. It is noblest deed. The same verse commands ‘*Pasum pahi*’ (protect the animals). Cow is always referred to as *Aghnya* (that which cannot and should not be killed). Another *Yajurveda* verse (6.11) says, “*Pasum trayetam*”. It is very much like the modern slogan ‘preserve wild life’. Thus, many passages forbid killing.

Another synonym of *Yajna* is *Medha*. The word *Medha* is derived from the root ‘*medhr*’ meaning ‘*dedhasamgamanayorhimsayam ca*’. *Medha* means pure intellect, bond of love or unity among the people as well as killing. Thus, ‘*medhr*’ has three-fold meaning. Only the killing aspect of it is stressed by the modern indologists as well as killing. Thus, ‘*medhr*’ has three-fold meaning. Only the killing aspect of it is stressed by the modern indologists as well as sacerdotalists.

While according to the *Satapatha Brahmana* (13.9.6) *Rastram va asvamedhah viryam va asvah*. It means the citizens must be made powerful and energetic. Similarly, the country must be ably governed. Hence, the *Satapatha Brahmana* says, ‘*Yajna vai Visnuh*’. Divinity lies in doing ethically high deeds, which constitute the divine work.

Pandit Dharmamartanda quotes a *Mahabharata* verse, which explains the meaning of *Aja*, which is generally translated as goat. According to the *Mahabharata*:

Ajai yajnesu yastavyam iti vai vaidiki srutih

Aja sanjnani bijani chaganno hantumarhatha

Naisadharmah satam devah yatra vadhyeta vai pasuh (Mahabharata, Santiparva, Adhyaya

337).

Aja stands for seeds of certain grains. They are offered to the fire. The *Mahabharata* says, “It is the cunning and greedy who have introduced meat-eating into the sacrifices” (*Mahabharata, Adhyay 263-66*). Similarly, Manu says, ‘*Nryajnotithipujanam*’ (*Manusmrti*

3.70). *NrYajna* is not human sacrifice. It is services to the guests. Moreover, *Nrmedha* means unity or love among the people. These ideas are quite clear in their import. It is quite possible that the later sacerdotalists exoterically interpreted the *Yajna* institution and allowed the practice of the killing. It became a mere mechanism to produce certain specific results. The *Brahmanas* seem to have suppressed the growth of the intellectual and spiritual ideology of the *Rgveda* where in the view about the sacrifice has been conceived on an intellectual and spiritual basis.⁵⁵ We also come across a significant term *istapurta* in the Vedic literature. It is a religio-ethical value. The seeker is advised (*Rgveda* 10.14.8) to free him by doing *istapurta* duties and then enjoys the highest type of liberation. Commenting on this term, Kunhan Raja writes,

“The first of it is related to *ista* from *yaj* deans charities to the public or social service. The word has a technical sense of good life. The word is not etymologically. So etymologically, ‘*istapurta*’ means religious rituals and good deeds. Hence, it means good life according to rules of moral life. Good life includes religious rituals and help to others”.⁵⁶ This word *istapurta* frequently occurs in the *Atharvaveda*.

Yajna also means *AtmaYajna*. In this connection, *Yama* is the ideal figure or model of a self-sacrificed himself for the welfare of the mankind (*Rgveda* 10. 81.1). Thus, *Yama* and *Visvakarman* are the great spiritual martyrs who died for the good of humanity. Such *Yama* got immortality and godhood. The famous *Purusasukta* places before us a divine model of sacrifice. The universe itself proceeds from sacrifice. It also refers to the manifestation of the first principles from the *Yajna*: *Yajnena Yajnam ayajanta devahtani dharmani prathamani asan*. Commenting on this last verse of the *Purusasukta*, Kunhan Raja writes,

“The *Yajnas* contain the essence of the moral law. Gods performed the sacrifices and those sacrifices became the primal moral laws”.⁵⁷

The indologists have failed to grasp the socio-moral import of the *Yajnas*. Their impressions are mainly based on the general study of the *Brahmanas*, the books of the *Mimamsakas* and ritualistic tone of the Sayana’s commentary on the Vedas. They were also misled by the present day actual practices of *Yajnas*. Bloomfield has gone to the extent of saying that the Vedic hymns and verses were composed for the purposes of rituals. Bloomfield appears to forget that the Vedic sages were neither bards nor even priests. They were great seers who received illuminations through their spiritual striving and the Vedic words flowed spontaneously from their lips. In this context, Potdar’s warning is worth considering. He says that the scholars should not mix up the ritual of the *Rgveda* with that of *Brahmanas*.⁵⁸ It shows us the path of dynamic morality and enunciates the unique theory of enjoyment through renunciation, which as we have seen is expressed in the 40th chapter of the *Yajurveda*. Negatively, it asks us not to adopt a vulture-like attitude towards others, property and possessions. Positively, it asks us to enjoy the world and wealth with restraint and sense of social responsibility. Hence, *Yajna* is the ladder by which the gods or the wise have ascended higher level of existence –*Yajno hi devanam utkramanam* (*Yajurveda* 7.26) and realized godhood.

According to E.O. James, four ideas are connected with the sacrifice (1) Communion; (2) Conciliation; (3) Honorific offerings, free-will offerings in grateful recognition of the goodness of the deity (4) Ethical notion of self-sacrifice.⁵⁹

Commenting on this view, Potdar has shown that propitiation of deity is prominently present in the minds of the poets. *Yajnas* are performed for various purposes such as protection against the enemy, attainment of fame, wealth or strength, etc. But it mainly aims

at the progress of the individual as well as the group.⁶⁰ He has to say the following when he concludes his scholarly treatise on the concept of sacrifice in the *Rgveda*. He writes,

“The overall impression of the sacrifice that we, thus, secure is of an idea which has been very nobly conceived and developed for a pretty long time. Creation has been thought of in terms of the sacrifice; human life appears to have been considered as permeated by the idea of the sacrifice. Sacrifice thus appears to have been considered as the very basis of life and it is for this reason that the *Rta* has been identified with the sacrifice”.⁶¹

The great ‘five-fold *Yajna*’ or *PancamahaYajna* was obligatory on all the householders: *BrahmaYajna* or *DevaYajna*, *RsiYajna*, *NrYajna*, *BhutaYajna* (*Satapatha Brahmana* 11-5-6-1). *Yajna* is ‘*Bhuvanasyanabhih* (*Rgveda* 1.164.35). It is also described as nodus of truth: *Rtasya nabhi* (*Rgveda* 10.13.3). There is also the concept of *Rna* - indebtedness to God, parents and the great seers. The ethical idea of self-sacrifice was definitely developed during the Vedic age.

Yajna involves as has been already indicated collective efforts. Thus, it helps to develop collective consciousness or ‘we feeling’. The petty ego is gradually erased if *Yajna* is sincerely practiced in the spirit of sacrifice. This helps spiritual development of the individual. Thus, we come to the spiritual notion of *Yajna*.

In this connection, we will discuss briefly the view of Sri Aurobindo who understands *Yajna* symbolically. According to him, the whole of the *Rgveda* is a treatise on esoteric wisdom. He thinks of *Yajna* 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. Explaining and interpreting the word *adhvara* Sri Aurobindo writes,

“Adhvara *Yajna* is not the unhurt sacrifice as it is interpreted by Sayanacarya. *Adhvara* means travelling. It is connected with *Adhvan*—path or journey from the lost root *adh* to move, to extend, to be wide, etc. Thus, *Adhvara Yajna* is connected with the idea of traveling, journeying, and advancing on the path..... This journeying is growing into the Godhood, into the infinite Being’.⁶²

Yajna is also a battle. In this connection, Sri Aurobindo says,

“*Yajna* 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”.⁶³

Sri Aurobindo corroborates a view contained in an *Atharvaveda* statement, which is repeated in four consecutive verses:

Tam tva prapadye tam tva pravisami

Sarvaguh sarvapurusah sarvatma sarvatanuh

Saha yanme ' sti tena.

(I offer thee with my all powers, with body, organs of perception and work, with my spiritual power and abilities to work wonders. With all these, I enter into thee).

In this context, I would like to state the idea of sacrifice in the system of Heidegger. Sacrifice is born out of an inner gratitude of man to that being from which he derives his being and all that belongs to him. Sacrifice expresses the hidden thanking and consummation of man’s life comes from the inwardness out of which the historical man...dedicates his Dasein he has won for himself to the preservation of dignity of Being, and for the truth of Being.⁶⁴

Satavalekar rightly says that the offering of ghee in to the fire is symbolic of sacrificing the possessions are not for self-aggrandisement and self-indulgence. Hence the officiating Priest says, '*Indraya idam havih dattam na mama*'; (It is given to Indra; it not meant for me). In this connection, Satavalekar quotes a verse from the *Atharvaveda*, '*Amartyena manasa havisa davan yajanta*' (*Atharvaveda* 7-5-3). One has to worship the Lord by offering one's immortal mind to Him. Here one has to struggle against the forces of darkness and evil, falsehood and ignorance, narrow-mindedness, egotism as well as petty egotism. Spiritual life is both a journey towards immortality and beatitude as well a struggle against the forces of darkness. Commenting on this journey towards the Infinite, Sri Aurobindo writes,

It is precisely by this progressive surrender of the lower being to the divine activities that the limited and egoistic consciousness of the mortal waken to the infinite and immortal state which is its goal".⁶⁵

Thus, *Yajna* was a *dharmic* value par excellence. It harmonizes the individual with the society and joins the mortal with the immortal. It may be concluded by quoting Sri Aurobindo, because his secret of the Veda is a classic on the psycho-spiritual import of the *Rgveda*.

"The Vedic sacrifice is psychologically a symbol of cosmic and individual activity become self-conscious, enlightened and aware of its goal. The whole process of the universe is in its very nature self-sacrifice; voluntary or involuntary, self-fulfillment by self-immolation, to grow by giving is universal law. That which refuses to give itself is still the food of the cosmic power. The eater eating is eaten (*asanayah mrtyuh*) is the formula, pregnant and terrible in which the Upanishad sums up this aspect of universe and in another passage men are described as cattle of God. It is

only when the law is recognized and voluntarily accepted that this kingdom of death can be overpasses and by the works of the sacrifice, immortality made possible and attained. All the powers and potentialities of human life are offered up in the symbol of a sacrifice to the divine life in the cosmos".⁶⁶

We may begin with the *Vaisesikas* who have concretely and beautifully defined *Dharma* as follows. That form, which is one, associated with prosperity (*abhyudaya*) and highest good (*nihsreyasa*) is called *Dharma*. The activities form, which we are associated with our welfare in true sense of the term, is called *Dharma*. (*Yato' bhyudaya-nihsreyasasiddhih sa Dharmah*).⁶⁷ This type broader definition is found first in the *Vaisesikasutra*. In the *Upaskara* commentary, these two words *abhyudaya* and *nihsreyasa* have been taken in the sense of realization of the right cognition of the reality (*tattvajnanam*) and the absolute cessation of suffering (*atyantiki dukkhanivrttih*) respectively. *Dharma* is kept in an open place and hence it cannot be defined arbitrarily. From the knowledge of the effects, we can presume what *Dharma* is. It can be interpreted as the highest good attained through prosperity in the form of well-being, which gives us a negative perspective of *Dharma* as the cessation of suffering, etc.⁶⁸

For it is said, that *Dharma* is an unseen substance (*adrsta*) attainable through contemplation like *nididhyasana* etc. then it would be taken as a moral injunction (*vidhi*), which makes an individual, inclined to do moral work.⁶⁹

If it is urged that *Dharma* is the uncommon cause of human pursuit (*purusartha*), the two terms *abhyudaya* and *nihsreyasa* have been introduced in order to make other people understand the attainment of both the human pursuits i.e. happiness and absence of suffering respectively. As these i.e. attainment of heaven and liberation depend on the desire which is not free but dependent on the desire of somebody else (*anyecchanadhineccha*), they are

called highest human pursuit (*paramapurushartha*). In other words, it may be argued that any transitory objects like *artha*, *kama* etc. can easily be attained by one's own desire, but the attainment of heaven and absence of suffering do not depend on our own desire, but the desire of somebody else i.e. God as recorded in the *Upaskara*.⁷⁰

In this connection, Sridhara has raised a problem in the following manner. If it is accepted that the right knowledge (*tattvajnana*) is the cause of the highest good called *nihisreyasa*, there is hardly any reason to accept *Dharma* as a cause of the same leading to the contradiction between two *sutras* – '*yato*' *bhyudayanihsreyasasiddih sah Dharmah*' and '*Taccesvaracodanabhivyaktad Dharmadeva*'.⁷¹ That is *Dharma* is that which is manifested by the action sanctioned by God, while previous *sutra* says that *Dharma* is that form which one is conjoined with prosperity and highest good. On the strength of these two *sutras*, Sridhara has raised the problem of contradiction. In reply, he has found some solution that the concerned highest good is available from *Dharma* and the instrument of the highest knowledge is the right cognition of the categories like substance etc. Now Sridhara has made an auspicious attempt to show how the right cognition leads to the cessation of suffering. If the external and internal objects are known *rightly*, an individual will find some defects in those objects, which will ultimately refrain him from attachment towards those objects. Due to this devoid of attachment, he will become realiser of the self and hence he will reject those actions by way of observing the non-desirable results of the actions not sanctioned by the *sruti* and *smrti* and by way of realizing the self-knowledge. After maintaining the style in the above-mentioned way, one gathers merits, which ultimately lead one to the attainment of confirmed self-knowledge.⁷²

Now Sridhara has raised another philosophical issue. The right knowledge of the categories like substance etc. gives rise to merit (*Dharma*), which provides an individual to

have the highest good (*nihsreyasa*). If it is so, what is the utility of God's grace? A question may automatically be raised, what role God plays in the individual's life to *nihsreyasa*. In reply, Sridhara argues that even the acquired merit (*Dharma*) cannot lead an individual to the path of *nihsreyasa* if he is not favoured by God's desire. (*Dharmo' pitavanna nihsreyasam karoti yavadisvarecchaya nanugrhyate*)?⁷³

From this it may be argued that Sridhara has prescribed a three-tier process for availing the highest good. That which makes us inclined to our duties is called God's persuasion (*Isvaracodana*), which is no other than a particular desire of God (*Isvarecchavisesah*). Hence, the right knowledge of the categories (*Tattvajnana*) is the pre-condition of acquiring merit (*Dharma*), which is not taken as self-sufficient for providing *nihsreyasa*, but needs the manifestation of *Dharma* through the intentionality of god (*Isvarecchavisesa*). It helps to manifest the merit (*Dharma*) in the form of activity, which ultimately can associate an individual with the highest good (*nihsreyasa*).⁷⁴

In this part, let us see what the *Purvamimamsakas* mean by *Dharma*. In the *Mimamsasutra* the word, *Codana* is used in connection with the definition of *Dharma*. The Vedic injunction that inspires us in action is called *Codana*. Here the *Purvamimamsakas* have defined *Dharma* in the following way. That which is indicated by Vedic injunction leading to the highest good is called *Dharma*. (*Codanalaksano 'rthah Dharmah*).⁷⁵ The role of *Codana* can easily be imagined as it is the only means to prove *Dharma* which is not at all conceivable through any ordinary means. Perception cannot be proof for *Dharma*, as it is not endowed with external properties like colour, size etc. 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.⁷⁶ If an animal indicated by the term 'go' (cow) were not at all familiar, the 'cow' would not have been the

object of interference or testimonial knowledge. Hence, the Vedic injunction (*Codana*) is the only proof for it. The *sutra* may be explained in two ways – that whose proof is *codana* is called *Dharma* (*codanaiva laksanam yasya*). If this meaning were taken into account, the *codana* alone would become the proof for it. If it is said in another way that *Codana* is the only *pramana* of *Dharma* (*Codana laksanam pramenameva yasya*) it determines that the *codana* itself is *pramana* but not *apramana*. The second alternative proves the validity of *codana*. Both the meanings are accepted in *Sabarabhasya*.⁷⁷

Codana is capable of informing that which is past, present or future and also which is subtle, hidden or remote etc.⁷⁸ It cannot be said that what is informed by Vedic injunction may be true or false as it is possible in the ordinary sentence. What is expressed in the Vedic injunction is not at all sublated by the knowledge of any person in different situation or time. Hence, *codana* or idea expressed through it can never be false. Such is not the case in the ordinary sentences that may be sublated by others in different time and circumstances.⁷⁹

The above-mentioned view is shared by Dharmaraja Adhvarindra. To him also what is said in the ordinary sentences can be verifiable (*anuvadakatvam*) as other *Pramanas* can be applicable here. But in the case of Vedic sentences, this verifiable sentences cannot be applied as the meaning of the Vedic sentence is beyond our experience (*apurva*). In this context, *anuvadakatvam* means ‘the property of knowing something known earlier ‘*grhitagrahitva*’ which is not possible in the case of the meaning of the Vedic sentences as their contents are not *grhitagrahi* or *Apurva* (not known earlier).⁸⁰

Vacaspati Misra in his *Bhamati* on *Adhyasabhasya* argued that as Vedic sentences are not composed by an individual (*apauruseya*), they couldn’t be considered as having defects like illusion etc. Hence, they are always intrinsically valid (*svatahsiddha*). To him so far as empirical truth (*vyavaharika pramanya*) is considered, perception, being the eldest

among the *pramanas* (*pramanajyestha*), should be treated as superior so far as non-empirical truth (*Tattvikapramanya*) is concerned.⁸¹

Any type of action sanctioned by the Vedic injunction is not regarded as *Dharma*, which is indicated through the incorporation of the term *artha* in the *sutra*. If an action, though sanctioned by the Vedas, leads to the non-desired situation, it is not at all *Dharma*. Hence, *Dharma* is that which is always associated with the good.⁸² The Mimamsakas argue that the results like heaven etc. are to be understood by the term '*priti*' (i.e. satisfaction) as per the principle-*priti* 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 enjoined on account of the fact that he inclines to it spontaneously out of attraction towards them (*tasya lipsa arthalaksana*).⁸³

There are three parts in *arthibhavana* viz. thing to be established (*sadhya*), means for doing it (*sadhana*) and how to do it (*itikartavyata*). The Vedic injunctions are necessary in respect of *karana* and *itikartavyata*. For, these being complicated are not desired spontaneously by an individual. But the knowledge of *sadhya*, the cause of satisfaction, leads a man to action and hence there is no necessity of a *vidhi*. The means of attaining result and performance of duty regarding these may 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 this way, *vidhi* can conjoin a man with his well-being by way of inspiring him to act. This type of Vedic injunction is called *codana*, which is *Dharma*.

The suffix '*lin*' in the verb *yajeta* in the example *svargakamo yajeta* indicates the sense of persuasion (*prerana*), which is otherwise called *codana*. The knowledge of *prerana* comes from the cause of inclination, which is caused by the suffix '*lin*'. The means that

leads to the well-being, it would be treated as *Dharma*. As *Sastra* is the only guideline through one can know what *Dharma* is and what is not, the Vedic injunction very much significant that the Mimamsakas sometimes used the term *prerana* instead of *codana* in the same sense. So the English-rendering of the term *codana* would be both 'persuasion' and 'inspiration' which we think, are equally relevant in the Mimamsa system.⁸⁴

The inspiration received through persuasion is the cause of action, which will connect us with our well-being. In ancient time, *srutis* were the only sources of inspiration and persuasion. We think that the 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 the superiors or some non-Vedic sources. It is also a kind of *codana* as it can inspire us to perform action which may create *priti* or satisfaction in us and which is related to our well-being. Moreover, now-a-days one may not feel inspiration to perform sacrifice etc. for having a desired object, but may feel inspired to do any action that is the cause of his well-being and satisfaction (*priti*).

If the *Vaisesika* and *Mimamsa* views are reviewed, the following comments may be made.

The *Vaisesikas* have maintained three-tier position – God, *Dharma* of an individual and *nihisreyasa* or highest good. Though it is true, this position is still questionable from different points of view. First, the question arises in one's mind what is superior – God's will, *Dharma* or both. If God's will is taken as superior, *Dharma* may seem to be impotent having no power of its own. Secondly, if *Dharma* on the other hand, is taken as superior, then one could ask what function does God serve? If God has no function, what is the necessity of accepting God? Thirdly, if God and *Dharma* both are accepted as superior, the position of the *Vaisesikas* will become more complicated, because as God has to depend on

Dharma, he is no longer a powerful being for having some buildings. Moreover, God may be accepted as a dependent being like ordinary persons, but not independent. Other than this, any type of binding (*bandhana*) in God is a kind of contradiction for the following reason. If God is in bondage, dependent and powerless, who will admit God as omnipotent, omnipresent etc? If this were the case, God will lose its Godliness and reliability. Hence, the view of the *Vaisesikas* does not stand in the eye of logic.

The extended meaning of the term *Dharma* in the sense of *Vidhi* (moral codes) as given by the *Mimamsakas* can somehow be accepted if it is sanctioned not only by the Vedic statement but also by non-Vedic ones as well. It is not always accepted that only Vedas will determine what one should do. There are many moral codes prescribed in the non-Vedic *sastras*. The definition of *Dharma* as given by the *Vaisesikas* and *Mimamsakas* are much more broad and we should look at the definitions. In both the definitions, one thing is common. According to both the systems, *Dharma* may be taken as something, which is connected with our prosperity (*abhyudaya*), highest good (*nihsreyas*), *artha* in the sense of *kalyana* and *priti* (satisfaction). If something is not connected with the welfare of an individual society, it cannot be taken as *Dharma* or morality. Such a view is subscribed by the non-Vedas like the *Mahabharata*, *Manusamhita* etc. In the *Mahabharata*, it is said that to think about the welfare of all things is *Dharma*. The main objective of *Dharma* is to think about the welfare of the whole world and become malice less towards all beings.⁸⁵ It directs us to uphold all creatures and restricts us from injuring anyone. *Dharma* is an ideal that helps us to regulate our ends after enjoyment and acquisition and makes it consistent with social progress. In fact, other three human pursuits like *Kama*, *Artha* and *Moksa* are equally important and should be equally pursued for the development of human personality in harmony with social progress.⁸⁶

According to Manu also, *Dharma* is the means of attainment of the good (*Srayah*). *Dharma* is as Manus says, performed by honest and intellectual persons having no malice and support the conscience (*hrdayenadhyanujnatah*).⁸⁷ Those who are really *dharmikas* in nature should possess thirteen mortal virtues which includes service to others (*aparopatapita*), non-jealous to others (*anasuyata*), softness in temperament (*mrduta*), non-harshness to others (*aparusyam*), friendliness (*maitrata*), capability of speaking lovable words (*priyamvadata*), sense of gratitude (*krtajnata*), pity to others (*karunyam*) etc.⁸⁸ All these mortal virtues constitute *Dharma* and hence they are to be developed for the sake of justice to the social beings. If such *Dharma* is properly preserved, it protects all. If not, an individual is ruined.⁸⁹ One should try to achieve the harmonious pursuit of *trivarga*, but *kama* and *artha* are to be forsaken if they are not harmonious with *Dharma*. Its importance is considered to be so great that *vidhi* afterwards is identified with the Divinity. It is said in the *Meghnadbadhakavya* that *vidhi* (in the sense of God) has placed the moon on Siva's forehead (*Vidhure sapila vidhi*).

The performance of rituals may lead a person to the path of the attainment of *Dharma* or morality by way of the purification of his mind etc., but it is not *Dharma* in the true sense of the term. If someone leads a good moral life without the performance of rituals, he is a real *Dharmika*.

Lastly, to remain in this world after adopting various values is a real freedom. Just as a string of a lyre can produce melody if it is connected with two poles, an individual should attain empirical and spiritual values, individual and universal values at the same time. This theory is beautifully mentioned in the *Bhagavadgita* – “*Yatra yogesvarah krsno yatra parthah dhanurdharah // yatra srirvijayabhutirdhruva nitirmana //* i.e. where Krishna, the lord of yogins, remains and where Arjun remains as wielder of bows, there is beauty,

victory, prosperity and eternal justice (*dhruva nitih*).⁹⁰ In this context *yogesvarah krsnah* stands for knowledge and *parthah dhanurdharah* stands for right attitude and action, there remains wealth (*sri*), glory, victory and eternal justice or morality (*dhruvanitih*). In the present context, also, knowledge conjoined with right conduct and attitude brings in real morality or *Dharma*.

References & Footnotes

1. *brahma va idam agra asit* – Br.U.1.4.10
brahma ha va idam agra asit – Maitri, U.6.17.
2. *rtena visvam bhuvanam virajathah* –Rg V., V.63.7
3. *Sa tanmayo hy amrta isu – samstho*
jnah sarvago bhuvanasyasya gopta
ya is'e asya jagota nityam eva
nanya hetur vidyate isanaya – Sveta . U.6.17
4. *bhisaamad vatah pavate, bhisodeti suryah*
bhisasmad agniscendras ca. mrtyur dhavati pancamah – Taitti. U.2.8.1
5. *satyam avadhitam*
6. *satyam aparinami*
7. *rtam ca satyam cabhidhat tapasodhy ajayata* - Rg. V. X.190.1
8. *satyameva jayate nanrtam*
9. *dharanat dharmam ityahuh* – Mahabharat, Santi Parva
10. *dharmana mitravaruna vipasaita*
vrata raksete asurasya mayaya – Rg. V., V.63.7

11. *yato dharmas tato jayah*
12. *Tasmat dharmasada karyah*
13. *valyakalu dharmas dhana mu sancibi e jivana aniscita
kejani kahara mrtyukala aji hoijiba upasthita.*
14. *yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata
abhyutthanamadhamasya tadatmanam srjamyaham
paritranaya sadhunam, vinasayaca duskrtam
dharmasamsthapanarthaya sambhavani yuge yuge – B.G IV.7*
15. *Brahmano hi pratisthaham amrtasya avyayasya ca
Sasvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasya aikantikasya ca – B.G.XIV.27*
16. *Tvamkasaram paramam veditavyam tvamasya visvasya param nidhanam
Tvamavyaaya sasvatadharmas gopta sanatanastvam purusa mato me – B.G.XI.18*
17. *Satyam vada dharmam cara – Tai. U.1.11.1*
18. *Rgveda, 10.191.2*
19. *Yajur Veda, 50.2*
20. *Shvetashvataa Upanishad, III.17-19.*
21. *Ibid., VI.4.*
22. *Bhagvad Geeta, II.31.*
23. *Ibid., XVIII.47.*
24. *Apporvam ha kriya Sadhyam.*
25. *Svayam Prajoyana Bhutam Tatre Rashesye, p. 70.*
26. *Nyaye Manjan, Jayanta Bhatt, Vayrianagerm, Sanskrit Series (Baneras,
Chawkhambe, 1985), p. 349. Shalikantha Panchika. (Chaukhamba Series), p. 5.*

Niyoga eva Preroko Niyoga eva Chanushvetah. *Nahi linadiyuktavakyashu bravana bhavyantaram apekhate apoorvasya bheverya svashabdenadhihitavat.*

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68. "Adhyudayastattvajnanam nihsreyasamatyantiki dukkhanivrttih tadubhayam yatah sa *Dharmah* Adhyudayadvarakam nihsreyasamiti. Sa ca *Dharmah* nivrttilaksano vartate." *Upaskara on Sutra* 1.1.2.
69. "Yadi tu nididhyasanadiyogasadhyo dharmodrstateva tada vidhirupah." *Ibid.*
70. "Evam purusarthasadharanam *Dharma* iti vyaktavya parampurusarthayoh sukhadukhadhavayorvisesatah paricayartham adhyudaya-nihsreyasasiddhityuktam-svargapavargayorevanyechanadhinecchinecchavisayatvena." *Ibid.*
71. "Nanu yadi tattvajnanam nihsreyasahetustarhi *Dharma* na karanam? Tatah sutravirodhah – 'yato' – bhyudayanihsreyasasiddhii sa *Dharmah*' tata aha 'tacesvaracodana-bhivyaktad *Dharmadeva*." *Nyayakandali on Prasastapadabhasya* (Introduction).

72. “Tannihsreyasam *Dharmadeva* bhavati, dravyaditattvajnanam tasya karanatvena nihsreyasasadhanamityabhiprayah. Tattvato jnatesu vahyadhyatmikesu isayesu dosadarsanadviraktasya samihanivrttavatmajnasya tadarthani karmani akurvatah tatparityagasadhanani ca sritismrtyaditani asamkalpitaphalani upadadanasya atmajnan-amabhyastah prakrstanivartakadharmopocaye sati paripakbvatmajnasya atyantika-sariraviyogasya bhavat.” *Ibid.*
73. “Dharmopi tavanna nihsreyasam karoti yavadisvakecchaya nanugrhyate. Codyante preryante svakaryesu pravarttyante naya bhava iti codana Isvaracodana Isvarecchavissha.....” *Ibid.*
74. “Isvaracodanaya adhivvyaktadisvaracodanadhivvyaktad isvarecchaviseseena karyarambha-bhimukhaikrtad *Dharmadeva* nihsreyasam bhavatiti vakyayojana”. *Ibid.*
75. *Mimamsasutra* 1.1.2.
76. *Prabha* on Sabarabhasya on Sutra 1.1.2. Anandasrama granthavali series no. 17. Henceforth, *Prabha*.
77. “Codana Dharmapramanam. Codanaiva laksanam pramanam yasya, codanalaksanameva yasyeti. Tatha prathamavigrahena codanavyatiriktasya pratyaksaderdharne pramanyam vyavarteta. Dvitiye tu codanya apramanyasamka.”
78. “Codana hi bhutam bhavisyantam suksamam vyavahitam atiyakamartham saknoti avagamayitum nanyatkincanendriyam”. *Ibid.*
79. “Na ca niscitimavagamyanamidam mithya syat. Yo hi janitva pradhvamsate naitedevamiti sa mithyapratyayah. Na caisa kalantare purusantare vasthantatre desantare va viparyeti. Tasmad avitathah.” *Prabha* on Sabarabhasya on 1.1.2.

80. "Tara laukikavakyanam manataravagatarthatayam nuvadakatvam. Vede tu vakyar-
thasya apurvataya nanuvadakatvam." *Vedantaparidhasa* (agamaparccheda).
81. "Tasyapaurusetaya nirastamastadosasamkasya vodhakataya ca svatahasiddha-
pramanabhavah Na hi agamajnanam samvyavaharikam pratyaksasya pramanya-
mupahati api tu tattvikam" *Bhamati on Adhyasabhasya*.
82. "Codanajanyapramavisayah purusanihsreyasahetubhutasca yah sa *Dharmah*."
Prabha on Ibid.
83. "Yasmin priti purusasya tasya lipsarthalaksana avidhaktatvat" *Mimamsasutra*, 4.1.2.
84. "Kriyaya yatkindikartavyatacakayagadirupayah pravartakam pravrttitanukulavya-
rarupapravarttana vodhakalinaidpratyayaghatitam." *Prabha on Ibid.*
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Chapter-III

Kama as a Purusartha

Kama as a Psycho-social Value

Man has many desires; he is truly a bundle of desires. *Pulokamo hi martyah* (*Rgveda*1.179.5) or *Kamamayoyam hi purusah*. The word *Kama* has several meanings. It means the desire as well as an object of desire. It also means the pleasure one gets from the satisfaction of desire as also it means affection or love. It is one of the four ends of life. Its connotation ranges from sensual enjoyment to aesthetic joy. In other words, it is not to be exclusively identified with sex only. Man's activities are motivated by various needs and desires. Freud is rightly criticized by some psychoanalysts for his undue insistence on sex and aggression as the only twin motives of human actions. *Kama* as a value must be distinguished from lust or desire for carnal gratification. Thus, unrestrained desire for sensual enjoyment or carnal gratification is not accepted as a value it is a value provided it is pursued in accordance with moral and social norms.

Health, both physical and mental, is essential in order to enjoy the physical pleasures of the world. Indulgence in them disturbs the balance of the healthy body-mind. Hence, only with self-restraint the *Kama* can be attained as a value. *Kama* is a value. Therefore, it is to be pursued consciously and with self-restraint. It is a survival-value in the sense physiological needs must be satisfied in order to live. It is also a developmental value in the sense that the gratification of physiological and psychological needs of man help develop healthy and integrated personality. Thus, the Vedic philosophers did not preach the doctrine of negativism in respect in respect to various desires and urges. They were positive in their outlook towards material as well as psychological needs and their satisfaction. Pleasure as

lust must be tempered by the principles of righteousness and social values. If *Artha* and *Kama* are pursued in this spirit, then they are nourishment-values. They help to nourish both body and mind giving us health and emotional joy. In the words of T.M.P. Mahadevan,

“*Artha* and *Kama* are not intrinsic values but they have their own place in the scheme of things. Man has to live before he lives spiritually.

Physical body is the location of all endeavours. Arts, science, philosophies flourished in India when India was prosperous and the people contented, but earning is not for hoarding but for the pursuit of social sharing.

Hence, even *Vatsyayana*, the classical scientific writer on sexology (*Kamasutra*), advocates the importance of moderation and the significance of reflecting lustful methods of lovemaking. Elaborating this aspect, Walker says:

“*Vatsyayana* reassures his readers that *Kama* is not necessarily opposed to the attainment of the higher goal. However, he recommends moderation in all sensual pleasures. Hence, he does not advise that his readers should indulge in all the forms of lovemaking... He even goes so far as to condemn some of the methods of love-making, which have been described in his scientific treatise on sexology as being undesirable because he regards them as being of a lustful rather than of an erotic nurture”.

Thus, the Vedic outlook towards the earthly life is quite poetic and even romantic too. The Vedic philosophers had recognized the value of material comforts and artistic pursuits. The world would indeed be a dull and drab abode without the enticing allurements of dance and music, sports and recreation, connubial love and filial affection. Hence, there was no ascetic and puritanical repression of impulses. However, they had learnt the just lesson of dharma’ that is, to restrain and regulate, to discipline and sublimate natural impulses through the development of the institutions of the marriage and the family. These

institutions help in chastening the animal passions inherent in man. Family makes man less egocentric and more cooperative in interpersonal relationships. It is a training ground of social and moral values. Yet, they never accepted the domestic happiness as the goal of human life. They always accepted householders' stage only in man's moral and spiritual journey. This is recognized in accepting the higher stage of *Vanaprastha* in *Ashramasystem*. They accepted the actuality of desires and their satisfaction, sensual pleasure and idealistic in accepting the value of dharma including *Moksa* as the supreme value. Hence, T.M.P. Mahadevan rightly says that *Garhastha* is only a stage trial of and school of sublimation. It is not a stopping place. It is only a stage in journey.

'*Sariramadyam khalu dharma-sadhanam*' says Kalidas. It is truism that body is a means to achieve higher and higher ends. Hence, healthy body is a prerequisite to satisfy the need for achievement and other psychological needs. Maslow who accepts the hierarchy of needs ranging from physiological needs through safety needs, affiliation needs, esteem needs, cognitive needs and aesthetic needs to self-actualization is of the view that needs low in hierarchy must be at best partially satisfied before higher needs can become important sources of motivation. This actuality of man's life was well recognized by the Vedic poet philosophers. Sex is not vital for man's survival but it is vital for the survival of human species. Hence, there was the Vedic command *Prajarantum ma vyavacchetsih*, that is, do not discontinue the lineage. Biological continuity should not be disrupted; it is enjoined upon man not to discontinue the line of descendants. The Vedic poet –philosophers as we have seen never condemned the pursuit of material pleasures, which are contingent upon the gratification of sexual urge or appetite. The importance of hunger and sex in human life cannot be underrated by any considerations. Hunger is inseparably related to the survival values of self-preservation for instance. Sex is powerful motivator but it is not vital for self-

preservation for instance. Sex is powerful motivator but it is not vital for self –preservation or survival of a human being as are hunger, thirst and sleep. Hilgaard et al write:

“Sex is not vital to the survival of the organism as the food and water, but it is essential to the survival of the species. Eating and drinking serve to reduce tissue deficits with sex however there are no deficit and sexual behavior uses energy rather than restores it”.

The Vedic people upheld the survival values such as self-preservation and race-preservation. Naturally, they always praised the value of heroism and bravery, which are implicit as explicit in Indra and other deities who display them in resisting and defeating the evil forces in society. They always prayed for good and strong progeny. They never fought shy of sex-life. However, unless the gratification of natural urges and drives such as hunger, sleep, sex and others is properly regulated, it comes in the way of leading a sane individual and social life. Since Freud started speculating and publishing his writings on sex, there is loosening of sex- restraints and as a result of which a tendency towards permissiveness and promiscuity in sex relations is increasing in the West. The importance of sex and sexual pleasure in human life cannot be gainsaid. However, today sex is trivialized and dehumanized. It has been separated from the wholeness of man, man’s specifically human needs and human values. Modern man has been too much influenced by technical and mechanical view of man. The result is mechanical and reductionist attitude towards man and sex. Consequently, this tendency has encouraged unrestrained and crude hedonism and sensualism in the province of axiology.

“By implication not only do hydraulic mechanistic and reductionist attitude to sex tend to lower our human stature but this actually tends to promote psychic impotence and loss of creative power in dealing with reality”.

Hence, we must be aware of the danger of depersonalized sexuality and its glamorization which led to the regression of the concept of sex supermarket, Danish sex fairs public sex-voyeurism or sexual exhibitionism. This has brought about sex perversions. Such attitude to sex reduced man to a hydraulic system. This trivializes sex and the human in man. As a result of this, man is reduced to the level of a machine (Homunculus).

Instead of enhancing life, as Freud has believed, it is playing havoc in social life in general and sex in particular in advanced countries such as the United States and many others. Freud has made important contribution to the understanding of human motivation and personality by emphasizing unconscious processes and child experiences. However, unfortunately, his judgments are based on the observations of the mentally disturbed persons of the Victorian Era characterized by strict and puritanical sex constraints. Hence, Freud's scenario is not the picture of a sane and healthy human personality. Since Freudian researches were primarily based on clinical experiences with persons suffering from adjustment problems, his psycho-analytical pronouncements tend to focus on maladaptive behavior and have less to say about the healthy personality. Whatever may be the merits and demerits of Freud's theory, his writings have very much influenced the behaviour of modern educated man. They have emphasized the role of the irrational and have underrated the role of reason in human life. Hence, some thinkers in U.S. are crying halt to the spread of Freudian ideas. They say that they have discarded the old dictum: 'Spare the rod and spoil the child', instead they have gone in for a new slogan 'Spare the Freud and save the child'.

Sex can play its life – enhancing, integrating and life-enriching creative role only if it is regulated and practiced wisely. Sex should not be treated as something larger than life. It is one of the motivators of human behaviour not with standing that it is a powerful instinct in human values it will cease to be a creative value. In this context, thoughts of some

psychologists and others are worth considering. According to them, sex revolution and total sexual and cultural permissiveness are placing limits on individual development and are taking the meaning out of sex relations which reduced human life to what Frankl calls humunculum in which everything human is refused and rejected. Such a sex is not only dehumanizing and depersonalizing but also de-eroticising because it is de-emotionalising. In this context Frankl says, "The sexual partner who is replaceable cannot burden the man with responsibility. She has no value as a person and the man simply has her. Such sexuality has detached from the completely human person and his deepest needs and true meaning. The whole body is reduced to a functioning machine and the woman degraded to the status of object".

Such a sex fails even to sustain the humanity in an individual person. Physical pleasures are not condemnable in themselves. The Vedas never condemned the sex. On the contrary, all the Vedic poet-philosophers or seers and sages were married citizens of the Vedic society. They never taught the morbid and negative ascetism. Nevertheless, they were men of outstanding moral and spiritual height. The bachelor, widow or widower had no right to participate in ceremonial religious sacrifices (*Apatnikah ayajnikah*). The institutions of marriage and family life were highly developed socio-moral institutions. The Vedic society was highly developed, in respect of both utilitarian order of civilization as well as moral, intellectual and spiritual order of culture. In matters of sex, premature, premarital and extramarital sex is conspicuous by its absence in Vedic society. It was never tolerated. Analyzing the concept of morality in the Vedic times, Macdonell says:

"The standard of morality was comparatively high, may be inferred from the fact that adultery and rape were counted among the most serious offences and illegitimate births were concealed". Thus, the Vedic society was not a permissive society in which anyone could

have sex with any he happened to seduce; it was not a society on the level of primitive communism in which any one can have sexual relations with anyone whom he happens to encounter. This type of society is called 'Orgy Society' in modern times. The whole point of Orgy Society is not to know who one's partner is in sexual intercourse. Such a sexuality or sexual pleasure is not a value at all. On the contrary, it goes against human values and reduces man or woman to a meaningless and dehumanized hominid, such an attitude to sex reduces it to a commodity and the body becomes a functioning machine. Such sex-perversion and absurdity were forbidden to thrive through the institutions of marriage and family. Marriage was a sacred institution. Sex-enjoyment within the norms of married life was permitted and enjoined. The householder's stage in life is very much lauded by the later traditionalists and law-givers like Manu. But it also has its social obligations. Sex for sex's sake was never advocated by the ancient seers and sages. It was tied to man's procreative needs and social obligations. But one thing is certain that the sex was never treated as sin in Vedic times. On the contrary, its creative value was well acknowledged by them (*Kamamayoyam hi purusah*). Natural urges and drives including sex are organic needs and hence their proper practiced becomes a source of personal affection and harmony in family life as well as in social life. Understood in this sense, it is a great source of emotional values, while satisfying higher human needs like need for meaning, need to love and to be loved, need to belong, need for affiliation. Notwithstanding that marriage is a committed relationship or a kind of pledged togetherness, it also brings a closeness of meeting and a profound sense of responsibility. Even *Vatsyayana* does not give us ideal of a lustful bachelor. Commenting on this Krishna Chaitanya writes,

“*Vatsyayana's Kamasutra* gives us the ideal of the *Nagarak*. Surprisingly enough, he is a responsible bachelor but a married man. His wife is presiding deity of the household.”

Such is the significance of married life. Commenting further on this aspect of marriage Holbrook writes, "Committed passions in a marriage relationship may yield to those involved in it deep satisfaction, may not only fulfill relational needs but also generate a meaning that is stronger than death. Only the avant-gardes and irresponsible hedonists, physicalists can deny the possibility of achieving such satisfaction and meaning".

In the Vedic hymns on marriage and family, values related to their emotional and social significance are amply illustrating the Vedic ideas and ideals involved in marital relationship. Marriage help to preserve the sexual privacy and intimacy which are essential for making sex creative and emotionally satisfying and life-enhancing Marriage help to transform erotic pleasure and love into agapic love or sacrificial love which is the result of pure giving. Such a married life fulfils the desire for lifelong friendship and companionship. Hence, for the Vedic people, marriage was at eternal and sacred bond between the husband and the wife. It was not a social contract it was a sacrament. In such a system, there is no place for easy divorce and far less for multi-divorce. Sometime divorce may be indispensable but it is certain that are should not be easy. Such a view of marriage sustains the emotional life of the individual concerned and also sustains and establishes societal structure. Therefore, it is said rightly that family is a nursery of social virtues. To make this a reality, marriage becomes an essential instrument of social life.

The Vedic people had developed marriage institution and family organization thousand of years ago. Modern writer like danger and other of his tried to distort the original Vedic text so as to make them fit into the Marxist framework of societal evolution which commences with the earlier phase of primitive communism in which there were neither social norms nor values and social institutions like marriage, family, social structure, etc. In the first place, at many places mention is made of husband-wife relationship in the Vedas.

There are many similes and metaphors, which make use of this intimacy of husband-wife relationship. Moreover, the famous marriage hymns of the *Atharvaveda* (the whole of the 14th Kanda) speak for themselves and are enough to expose the sinister distortions of ancient Indian cultural history at the hands of Dange and others. Both the *Rgveda* and *Atharvaveda* refer to the marriage of *Surya*, the daughter of *Surya* and *Asvinikumaras*. This episode itself may be symbolic of something higher. But for our purpose it is enough to go into the plain contents of the hymn.

In the 9th verse of the 85th hymn of the 10th Mandal of *Rgveda*, there is a reference to marriage by selection. Some one had selected *Surya* for his would-be wife but *Surya* opted in favour of *Asvinikumars* in virtue of their valour. Even the Sun, the father of *Surya*, consented to her choice. It was not a marriage by inclination for sex-enjoyment only. It was a marriage for getting a companion to lead the life of only. It was a marriage for getting a companion to lead the life of virtue. In the 23rd verse of the same hymn, the gods are prayed for making their ascending path less difficult and more comfortable. They are also requested to make them an ideal couple. In the 43rd verse, the bride is asked to be the source of joy to their kith and kin as well as to their domesticated animals. In the next verse, she is blessed to be calm, self-respecting, faithful and to give birth to great heroes; the 45th verse has something unique to say about the husband and the number of children. The husband is asked to be the 11th one in addition to their issues. This means that the old husband deserves attention as is due to a son. Verse 46th has a modern tinge as the bride is asked to be the overpowering mistress of the house. She is asked to be effective and powerful so that her in-laws will be influenced by her. Then we come across the message of unity and amicability between the husband and the wife. The gods are invoked to make their minds harmonious and of identical convictions (*Rgveda* 10.85.47).

The 14th *Kanda* of *Atharvaveda* contains 2 hymns and both of them are about marriage. The very first Mantra of the first hymn of this *Kanda* makes an axiological statement, which asserts the foundational significance of the role of values in sustaining the world. The Seer says: *Satyenottabhita bhumih*. Truth (honesty or integrity in person and social life of man) upholds the earth, the sun upholds the heavenly region and *Tra* (the principle of cosmic order both physical and moral) upholds the *Adityas*. This statement places great ideals before the bride and bridegroom who are asked to practice the values of truth and enlightenment and straightforwardness or integrity. In the 14th Mantra, the good marriage proposers are praised. The bride is told: Even as a cucumber is separated from the stem of the creeper, so you be separated from your father's house and be one with that of the bride-groom's house. In the next verse, the bride is blessed to have brilliant progeny and good fortune. In the 19th Mantra, she is blessed with the future enjoyment with her bridegroom in his home. The husband is expected to be righteous and virtuous (*Rtasya yonau sukratasya lake saha sambhalayaite syomam astu*). In verse, 14.21 of the *Atharvaveda* she is asked to have affection for their progeny and to abide by the values appropriate to the householders' stage in life (*Asmin grhe garhaparyaya jagrhi*). When youthful, enjoy the company of your husband and when old preach good things (*vidatham avadasi*), never get separated from the husband (*ma vi yaustam*).

Thus, the marriage is unending. Divorce is not a natural thing. Enjoy to the full (*ayana devebhyah bhagam vidadhasi*). This is not a greedy or acquisitive family. It shares its fortune with the gods and the learned (*ayam devanam bhagam na minati*). The two are asked to stick to honest dealing in the verse 3 (*yuvam rtam uddesu rtam vadantau*). They are also blessed with brilliance (*teja*) and life of self-respect. The bad is rejected, the good and the brilliant are accepted (38).

In the verse 42nd, goodwill or co-operative will, good progeny, good fortune are said to be natural expectations of the bride. Then she is expected to be in agreement with her husband and follow him in doing deeds (*anuvrata* and get ready to obtain *amaratva* (*amrtatvaya*). She is told: Be a queen in your house. Be queen-like in relation to the father – in-law and the mother-in-law, to the brother-in-law as well as to the sister-in-law. The husband declares unequivocally that marriage is a sacred act meant for coming together and gets united to make the world prosperous and auspicious (*shobhanatvaya*). Such a marriage is sanctioned by the deities. In the verse 51st, the bridegroom says: you are my wife in accordance with dharma (*tvam dharmāna patnī asi*). In the verse 57th, the husband asserts: *Na steyam admi* (I never eat stolen food). I loosen the nooses of *Varuna* and get released mentally (*manasaut amucye*). Let us reach the world of immortality: *Amrtasya lokam aroha*.

In being a queen, the wife should harass others in the house. On the contrary, she should be a source of happiness to all the persons in the home (*Atharvaveda* 14.2.26). The husband poetically says: he is the *prana* (vital force) and she is the *sakti* (energy). He is the *sama* and she is the *Rca*, he is the *dyau* and she is the *Prithivi*. Let us be united to produce good progeny. In the last verse of the second hymn of the Kanda, the bride is blessed with this: ‘Be alert with wisdom. Be always awake for 100 years. Go to your husband’s house and be the powerful mistress or queen of the house’. Further, the Veda says: and at *patatri iva visvasmat enasah pari amuki*. Freed from the egg a bird flies freely, seen so let the householder be free from sins, then he will live and move freely in this world.

These marriage hymn displays how the Vedic people placed an ideal of married life before the youth of both the sexes. The Vedic gods are also highly moral. They never indulge in promiscuous sex. Bhattacharya does not appear to be correct in his indictment that the Vedic gods were not sexually moral in the modern sense of the term. The Vedas

show that the Vedic gods always stood for the rule of *Tra* (*rtavan, rtasya gopa*). They were the upholders of moral evil in society. The standard of morality was high in Vedic times. The Vedic people were definitely not loose in morals concerning sex. They had evolved the institutions of marriage to regulate sex relationships in society. Commenting on the Vedic ideal of marriage, A.C. Bose observes:

“The Vedic ideal of marriage is that of perfect monogamy, the lifelong companionship of two people. This practice must have been well established as is evident from the fact that the Vedic *Rsi*, seeking comparison for the perfect duality, for the twin deities *Asvins*, gives along with the examples of two eyes, two lips etc., that of a married couple: *Dampativ ktatuvida janesu* (*Rgveda* 2.39.2) like a wise married couple among the people”.

Monogamy makes chastity a godly value (*Rgveda* 1.73.3). The noble ideal of family concord later on became a great ideal for the whole of humanity in the concept of *Vasudhaiva kutumbakam*. The whole world must become a global family. This ideal of world unity and concord can be traced to the Vedic ideal of family concord, which is nicely placed before us by the *Atharvaveda*. The whole hymn is worth quoting but here only its first three verses are given:

I will make you of one heart, of one mind, free from hate

Love one another as the cow loves the calf she has borne.

Let the son be loyal to the father, and of one mind with the mother,

Let the wife speak sweet and beneficent words to the husband

Let not brother hate brother, sister hate sister, unanimous, united in

Purpose speak you words joyfully. (*Atharvaveda* III)

Such a noble concept of family helps to realize the emotional values and the much-sought value of personal affection and love. This is possible only if man gives more importance to non-utilitarian values, such as love, higher emotions, beauty, etc. Hence, the great moral philosophers like Rashdall and G.E.Moore had to transcend Bentham's utilitarianism to make room for higher values. This task, they achieved by developing what is known as 'ideal utilitarianism', which accepts knowledge, personal affection, beauty and aesthetic joy along with utility as the moral ideals.

Kama and its Psycho-physical limitations

We have seen the force and significance of *Kama* in human life. Desires are the prime movers of human activities. Hence, they are the source of various pleasures. *Kama* understood in this sense is an emotional and familial value. One cannot be happy by suppressing it. The trouble is that no one can become permanently happy by indulging in the pursuit of it. *Kama* as we have seen is not condemnable by itself. But it cannot become the ultimate value of human life. Firstly, the pleasure one gets from the satisfaction of various needs or desires is passing and transient. In this connection, Hiriyanna observes that both *Artha* and *Kama* are the useful and the agreeable. *Artha* constitutes the means of satisfying the human needs. There is no certainty in regard to many lower or instrumental values. The satisfaction one gets from them is only provincial; these values are precarious (*Anaikantika*). The *Kama* values are unstable (*anatyantika*); thus, the lower values are vitiated by these defects. Secondly, the unrestrained pursuit of *Kama* makes man lustful and greedy and then it ceases to be a value. Thirdly, it is the fundamental nature of desires or craving not to be fully satisfied. The economists state this truism when they say that wants recur and multiply. This basic fact about *Kama* is expressed in a famous verse of the *Mahabharat*:

Na jatu Kamah Kamanam upabhogeṇa samyati

Havisa krtsnavartmeva bhuya evabhivardhate. (Mahabharata 1.75.49)

One's desires can never be satisfied with their indulgence, like fire with clarified butter poured into it, they flare up as one attempts to satisfy them with their indulgence.

This verse is uttered by *Yayati*, the old king who borrowed the youth of one of his sons to enjoy sexual pleasure. Ultimately, he came to the conclusion that his efforts were in vain. His sexual craving could not be fully satisfied. This verse also occurs in *Manusmṛti* (2.44). This truth about the nature of desire and craving was already realized by the Vedic seers. In the *Taittiriya Brahmana* (2.2.5.6) *Kama* is compared to the ocean.: *Samudra iva hi Kamah. Naiva hi Kamasya antostl na samudrasya.* *Kama* is like the ocean. Even as the ocean is unending so is the *Kama*. Today, unrestrained pursuits of the gratification of wants in general and of permissive sex in particular are playing havoc in modern society. Human wants are multiplying very rapidly. Artificial wants are created through the application of the techniques of the advertisements. Unrestrained *Kama* can never be accepted as value. The things desired are not necessarily desirable (*Istavya*). Therefore, any object of any interest is not a value. Hence, *Artha* and *Kama* should not be divorced from *Dharma*. No sooner they are de-linked from *dharma* or moral spiritual values, they generate lust, greed, jealousy, hatred, sexual sadism and exploitation etc., which can be called disvalues because they come in the way of individual development and social integration. Once the supremacy of moral and spiritual values is acknowledged, man will aspire for the desirable pleasures and goods only. When guided and regulated by *dharma*, *artha* and *Kama* help to realize individual happiness and social harmony. That is why even *Vatsyayana*, the great classical sexologist, accepts the supremacy of *dharma* over *artha* and *Kama*. He says that the mutual superiority of *dharma*, *artha* and *Kama* must be understood in order of their precedence (*Kamasutra* 1.2.14). He also observes that the three must be mutually interacted and should

not harm each other (*Kamasutra* 1.1.1). Thus, it is in the interest of the realization of higher values that man must control and regulate his desires for power and self, creature comforts and sensory pleasures. Otherwise, they dehumanize man. One of the sages, therefore, gives vent to this type of fear when he says, 'O, *Kama*, I do not want to want to loose my soul force (*atmasakti*) by embracing you. (*Atharvaveda* 3.29.8). However, if *Kama* is pursued within the limits of *dharma*, it becomes conducive to the realization of higher values such as social justice, harmony spiritual liberation (*Moksa*) etc. In as much as secular values are subordinated to moral and spiritual values, they are also linked to them. The realization of such a *Kama* is one of the genuine values befitting man's efforts to realize it. About such a *Kama*, Shri Krishna says, '*Dharmaviruddho bhutesu kamosmi bharatarsabha*' (*Bhagavadglta* 7.11). There is divinity even in *Kama* provided it is not opposed to and is compatible with *dharma*.

Kama as an Aesthetic Value

The term *Kama* as we have seen has several meanings. Primarily, it means desire or an object of desire. It also means love or pleasure. Hence, it also means aesthetic joy or delight. This fact is acceded to by the writers like V. Raghavan, Krishna Chaitanya and others. The need for beauty appears to be native to human nature. There is an artistic instinct in all of us. We do not want mere shelter to live in; we want a beautiful house. We do not want merely cover our body, we want beautiful shirts to put on; we do not want mere life partners; we want beautiful life-companions. Modern psychologists also state that aesthetic need is natural to human nature. Thus, man has aesthetic demands. He is fascinated by beautiful things and human beings; he is attracted towards them.

There is beauty both in nature and in works of art. Max Muller once said that the idea of the beautiful in nature did not exist in the Hindu mind. It is understandable how a great scholar of Vedic literature could venture to make such a statement.

The study of Vedic literature especially that of the *Rgveda* shows that the Vedic seers were not dry philosophers who took interest only in intellectual and academic discussions. The Vedic seers were both philosophers as well as creative poets they loved nature and the harmony in nature. They were what Kunhan Raja calls the poet-philosophers. There are beautiful Vedic hymns expressing the beauty of natural phenomena like rains, waters, etc. In this context, Havell's view is worth quoting. He writes, "It seems to be that those who refuse to recognize the intense love of nature with which Hindu thought is penetrated must miss entirely the beauty of the great poets, of Valmiki and Kalidas as well as the beauty of Hindu art".

This view of Havell is equally true of the Vedic poet-philosophers. According to Rabindranath Tagore that which gives us joy without any sense of utility is the sense of beauty. The Vedic poet-philosophers were men of feelings and emotions. They loved nature, animals and human beings. Their approach to human nature was not exploitative. They had reverence for the whole earth. In them, we find the combination of both aesthetic and intellectual perspectives. Kunhan Raja, there fore, rightly argues that the Vedic literature shows the inseparable combination of the intellect and the heart of the people. The majesty and beauty of nature attracted the Vedic poet- philosophers. But they did not stop at that. They tried to delve deep into it to discover the source of beauty. 'Nature' (cosmos) was discovered in the western world by the Greek cosmologists dating the fifth and the sixth centuries B.C. But the Vedic seers discovered the *Rta* thousands of years B.C. *Rta* is the principle of natural as well as moral order in the universe. Thus, they appreciated the beauty

of the well-ordered universe (*Bhadram tat visvam yadavanti devah*). The Vedic seers were definitely in communion with Nature. Kunhan Raja rightly says that they were great poets with visions who could see far below the surface. It is said of those powers and those illuminations in language that was known to the ordinary men and in pictures that could be seen and understood by ordinary people... They also guided the nation and the Vedic people clear of aimless materialism making life noble and purposive. That is the great value of the Vedic poetry. They never complained about their lot in this world. They were sure that life could be made happy in this world. According to him this general spirit of the *Rgvedic* poetry was due to the fact that the nation was led by the philosopher- poet and not by the conquerors and the priests. He further writes, "It is not at all correct to speak of Vedas as 'religious poetry', a better and really appropriate way to state the fact is that in the Vedas we find a poetic religion".

It was both a poetic as well as heroic religion. One of the characteristics of a heroic man is sportsmanship and humour.

According to Krishna Chaitanya, the Vedic mind found an aesthetic solution to the problem of the one the many.

"Metaphysical thought asserted the unity of Godhead, but the poetic imagination won the freedom to conceive it in various forms, in harmony with the plural beauty of the world itself. The whole approach is poetic. The Beautiful winged, though He is one, the wise shape with songs, in many figures (*Rgveda* 10.114.5)

He corroborates his statement by giving instances of the poetic imaginations of the Vedic seers For instance; they conceived God as a dancer as well as a poet (*Rgveda* 8.41.5). The beautiful world is a manifestation of the Reality which is supremely beautiful and good and

whose decrees are always true. Hence, the Vedic seer prays God for goodness and beauty. See, for instance, the following prayer for goodness and beauty:

Visvanideva savitardruritani para sura yad Bhadram tanna a suva. (Rgveda 5.82.5);
(White Yajurveda 30. 13) O Sungod, send far away all evil, send us what is good and auspicious.

In another verse, the poet states: 'We glorify Savita with our hymns. He is all-goda-in-one and the protector of the good. His decrees are true According to A.C. Bose, these three principal values or ultimates – *Bhadram* (goodness), *Vaman* (beauty) and *Satyam* (truth). Much earlier than the Greek philosophers, the Vedic seers had seen Reality as an embodiment of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. Hence, Krishna Chaitanya rightly says that the Vedic seers freely sought God because he was the embodiment of value, not because He could punish. Thus, the ultimate reality is the source of order in nature and the loveliness of the world.

The literary value of *Rgveda* is universally acknowledged by the Vedic scholars and indologists. *Samaveda* is nothing but *Rgveda set to music*. Poetry and music are fine arts. The Vedic seers felt that song was the best offering to the Lord who is the creator of harmony and loveliness of the world. In the words of Krishna Chaitanya, the *Rgvedic* hymns are a poetic testament of a people's collective reaction to the wonder and awe of existence. To quote Macdonell, many hymns display a high order of poetical excellence. It also displays a remarkably high skill in composition.

The hymns to Usha, the goddess of dawn, are best specimens of poetical excellence. She is celebrated in about twenty lovely hymns. According to Macdonell, the following stanzas from one of the finest hymns to Dawn (*Rgveda* 1.113) furnish a more general picture of one of the fairest creations of Vedic poetry.

This light has come of all the lights the fairest

The brilliant brightness has been born, far shining, Urged onward for God Svitr's uprising, Night now has yielded up her place to Morning The sister's pathway is the same, unending: Taught by the gods, a'ternately they treat it, Fair-shaped, of different forms and yet one-minded, Night and morning clash not, nor do they linger Bright leader of glad sounds, she shows us riches, Dawn has awakened every creature. There Heaven's daughter has appeared before us, The maiden flushing in her brilliant garments, That sovereign lady of all earthly reassurance, Auspicious Dawn flush here today upon us. In the sky's framework, she has shone with splendour. The goddess has cast off the robe of darkness. Wakening up the world with ruddy horses, upon her well-yoked chariot Dawn is coming. Bringing upon it many bounteous blessings, Brightly shining, she spreads her brilliant luster Last of the countless mornings that have gone by First of bright morns to come has Dawn arisen, Arise! the breath, the life, again has reached us, Darkness has gone away and light is coming. She leaves a pathway for the Sun to travel. We have arrived where men prolong existence.

The poet is full of emotions, especially the feeling of gratitude. Horowitz, compares the poetry of the hymns of Usha to Shelley's famous lyrics.

"Our poet adores the Dawn as Shelley's skylark. The loveliest daintiest of all the Vedic deities is the golden Dawn, the maiden was an important aspect of Vedic deities". "Each vision of the divinity in the Vedas carries an aesthetic value. It is a vision of beauty and splendour".

Bose compares these visions to the vision of the tenth chapter of the Gita and observes that the typical form of the splendour is *Jyoti* (light), (*Bharjas*), (Glory), *Mahas* (greatness), *Sri* (Loveliness), *Vapus* (Beauty), *Chitram* (Wonder, etc.). Hiriyanna is also of the view that the Vedic seers express their appreciation of beauty in nature when they speak

of the beauty of gods they adore; and in the case of the deities like Rudra, it is their sublimity that calls forth admiring awe from the Vedic poets. Indian aesthetics or philosophy of art is famous for its Rasa theory. According to Visvanatha, the writer of *Shitya – darpana*, Rasa is the essence, etc. Thus, Rasa is the aesthetic joy one gets from aesthetic experience. The germinal beginning of later aesthetic theory of Rasa, according to Krishna Chaitanya, can be traced to the *Atharvaveda* verse (*Atharvaveda* 10.8.44) in which the soul is said to be enjoying the flavour or essence of experience.

The Vedic theory of beauty and sublimity is spiritual in the sense that they traced beauty in nature to the ultimate Reality and the Eternal Law. Order or symmetry underlies beauty; and the universe is full of symmetry and harmony. One of the *Rgvedic* verses runs as:

Rtasya drlha dharunani santi

Puruni chandra vapuse vapunsi

Rtena dirghamisadanta prksa

Rtena gavah rtam a vivesuh (Rgveda 2.23.9)

Firm-seated on the foundations of eternal law, in its lovely forms are many splendid beauties. By eternal Law they give us long-lasting nurture, by Eternal Law have world entered the universal order.

The gods are also beautiful; and they uphold the eternal Law. In this way, man can enjoy the beauty of life and world by participating in the world-order. For a man who lives according to the law, the universe is full of beauty and sweetness (*Madhuvata riayate..*). The winds, rivers, plants, days and nights, the dawn are full of sweetness to such a man. Commenting on this thought, A. C. Bose writes, ‘This is Vedic paganism’, – the joy in the

earth, but a joy consecrated under the control of Eternal Law (*Rta*), which is both moral and beautiful. In another verse, the seer solicits for beauty of nature at home.

The Vedic seers were idealistic, though they were realistic notwithstanding. Their positions are in a sense that transcends both epistemological idealism as well as realism. While their idealism is aesthetic, it is moral as well. Both cosmic beauty and cosmic moral order are manifestations of ultimate Reality. Thus, Rasa doctrine can be traced to the Vedas. According to Hiriyanna, the Rasa doctrine can be traced to the Atman theory of the *Upanisads*. For instance, *Brahman* or *Atman* is described as '*Raso vai sah, Raso hyevayam labdhva anandi bhavati (Taittiriya Upanisad 2.7)*. Verily the Atman is the essence or pure bliss (*Rasa*) realizing which one experiences eternal bliss or peace or to use the words of Hiriyanna, 'resful bliss'. In a *Rasa* experience the bliss-aspect of the Atman or Brahman is enjoyed. The *Brhadarayaka upanisad* states the positive nature of *Brahman* as '*VijnanamandanamBrahma*' (Brhadaranyaka Upanisad 3.9.28). In this connection, Mahadevan writes, 'Beauty means love ability. And self is the supremely loveable and its love ability is unconditioned. Thus, in a genuine aesthetic experience, there is the experience of the bliss-aspect of the true self.

Hence, the *Atharvaveda* says: 'The soul enjoys the essence (*Rasa*) of experience (*Atharvaveda* 1.8.44). This shows that the moral and the aesthetic attitude of the Vedic seers was the part of their comprehensive spiritual attitude towards life and the world. The world is at heart full of harmony. This harmony is to be practiced and realised in actual life of practical affairs. Such an outlook makes morality and religion aesthetic. See, for instance, the experience of this attitude in the following lines:

At the approach to the house and exit from it, let the flowering
durva grass grow. And then let a spring rise, and let a lake lie with

Lotuses in bloom: (*Atharvaveda*;6.106.1)

Such an outlook and such solicitations presuppose an aesthetic attitude which is different from and higher than the merely utilitarian one. Commenting on this Vedic attitude to beauty, Krishna Chaitanya remarks, "Only poetic mind could pray for the benediction of a radiant dawn, instead of asking for mere wealth". This poetic attitude is expressed throughout the Vedic literature; see for instance, one of the verses from the Marriage hymns in which the bridegroom says:

I am the melody (*Saman*), you are the lyric

I am the heaven; you are the earth (*Atharvaveda* 7.36)

Aesthetic attitude is impersonal, disinterested and non-utilitarian. Such an attitude and outlook towards life and nature is definitely conducive to the cultivation of moral and spiritual outlook towards life and the world. The Vedic attitude towards life is comprehensive and integral. Naturally, it synthesizes the claims of the hands, the head and the heart, and the claims of the individual as well as that of the social reality. Hence, the Vedic axiology includes secular as well as spiritual values.

CHAPTER – IV

The concept of *Moksa* or Freedom

Quest after Perfection

Man is not satisfied with finite and goals. He is not only conscious of the world around him but he also reflects upon himself and his destiny in the total divine scheme. Soon he reflects of his limitations and imperfections. He has never been consulted as to when he is to be born and he will never be consulted as to when he is to die. But die he must one day. This consciousness of his helplessness or limitations makes him aware of his bondage.

He feels spiritually restless and tries to get at the possible ways to remove the imperfections. Attempt to transcend human limitations is sometimes treated as a form of escapism. In this connection, Julian Huxley's criticism of those who condemn art as a means of escapism is worth quoting.

“We all need escape; apart from our modern need to escape from the dullness of routine and from the over mechanized life of cities, there is the universal and permanent need to escape from the cage of a practical and actual present in which we have of necessity to spend, so much of our life and above all from the prison of our single and limited selves. The question is where and how shall we escape. We can escape downwards through drinks or drugs or dissipations but that is not the best way. We can escape sideways through sport or pastime or entertainments that is within wide limits through sport or pastime or entertainments that is within wide limits desirable and indeed necessary or we may escape upwards into a new world (Blake's mental traveler) which comprises new levels of Being. Something more enduring and satisfying is contacted. We may contact

with some thing higher than is to be found in the world of material needs and everyday routine".¹

Man is also attracted towards the world. He gets several pleasures, pursues happiness. But to his disillusionment he finds that notwithstanding that he is materially rich, he is not yet happy. Firstly, things can give him only temporary pleasures. Secondly, there is no certainty in this object-generated happiness. Thirdly, it involves servility and dependence when he becomes aware of the futility or creature comforts and then he turns to seek eternal or permanent happiness or bliss. He is also dissatisfied with dependence and slavery involved in object-dependent happiness. This makes him more self-introspective. He wants to know about himself and his destiny in this universe and herein lays man's humanity. Even the great utilitarian thinker John Stuart Mill, once spoke of the profound truth about human nature.

"It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied, better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied".²

Socrates was dissatisfied not because he was economically poor or politically without position. He was a saint who was dissatisfied with human ignorance and weakness. His motto was, 'Know thyself'. Human soul itself is the highest spiritual value. In the words of Arnold Toynbee,

"There is absolute value in the human spirit quite apart from its material effects on society".³

Hence it must be realized that this soul is not a petty empirical little ego but it is, as expressed by the Vedic sages, the divinity in man and that the Divine in man are the same. They are not two entities. The *Yajurveda* identifies the true self in man with the Universal Self – 'Yo' savasau puruso so 'ham asmi'. The spirit (*purusa*) that is in the Sun that spirit am

I. (*Yajurveda* 40-17). Axiologically, the realization of this ontological fact leads to bliss or eternal felicity. In other words, it is the same as realizing immortality –*Amaratva*, *Amrtava* (spiritual liberation). According to Swami Dayanand, immortality is synonymous with emancipation.⁴ The Vedic sages are not pessimistic. Yet, they are not satisfied pigs or satisfied fools. They are progressive idealists. They are not satisfied with a little. They would try to ascend higher and higher on the ladder of perfection. Therefore, their approach is positive and optimistic. It is never negativistic or defeatist.

The Vedic concept of *Moksa* is not a term of escapism because they did not preach the doctrine of running away from the life and the world. Their outlook towards the world is affirmative and positive. One has to realize what Julian Huxley calls, ‘the higher levels of Being’ which gives man greater fulfillment and deep satisfaction. This spiritually developmental approach gives direction and meaning to the whole of human life. Mere material prosperity either of the individual or of the society and even the maintenance of the society cannot constitute the highest ideal of human life. It, ultimately, consists only in self-realization or the direct knowledge of the ultimate Reality. Hence, the final or consummatory value consists in spiritual realization in which one finds complete fulfillment and plenitude of joy. Man cannot be fully satisfied by power or pelf. He has to clad the life of spirit, which consists in pursuing the realization of higher values. This approach makes even the pursuit of secular values geared to the achievement of moral perfection and spiritual liberation in which one gets the fulfillment of one’s spiritual aspirations. In this connection, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the great champion of activism, writes,

“Although we accept the maintenance of society as being the chief outward use of dharma yet we never loose sight of the *Ama Kalyana* or *Moksa* (spiritual realization or emancipation) which is the highest ideal according to the Vedic religion and

which is the special feature of our viewpoint. Further emphatically stressing the importance and supremacy of the spiritual value of self-realization, he writes, 'whether it is maintenance of the society or material welfare of all, if these principles obstruct the *Atmalogical* Realization, we do not want them'.⁵

Thus, the spiritual perfection is the highest duty of every man. Realization of this supreme value does not come in the way of the pursuit of other values. It also is not escapism from social duties and responsibilities. It, on the other hand, can be realised through the pursuit of the socio-ethical duties and meditation practices. Thus, it synthesizes the active life with the life of contemplation. This approach is well developed and delineated in the 40th chapter of the White *Yajurveda*. It is the famous *Isavasya Upanisad*.

Some times, it is said that the concept of *Moksa* is conspicuous by its absence in the Vedas. This objection is not correct and is even baseless if we accept *Moksa* in a particular and comprehensive sense. The word *Moksa* and *Mukti* may not be found in the Vedas, but the idea of *Moksa* in the sense of *Amaratva*, *Amrtatva* - self-realization or realization of the Ultimate Reality by being one with it, is definitely present in the Vedas.

The Vedas speak the language of freedom from dependence, servility, disease and disability, humiliation and defects, etc.- *Adinasyama saradah, satam, ajtah syama saradah satam*. These considerations show that the Vedas despised the state of dependence and servility or bondage. Hence, the well-known Mrtyunjaya verse: *Tryambakam yajamahe sugandhim pustivardhanam, urvaurkamiva bandhanat mrtyoh muksiya ma amrtat* (*Rgveda* 7.59.12). Here, the sage wants to be freed from the clutches of death, but he does not want to be deprived of immortality. There are different kind of references to the concept of *amrtatva* and *amaratva*. There are prayers in which the sages want to be immortal and crave for the eternal felicity. The Vedas also refer to those who achieved immortality through noble and

altruistic deeds. Others got immortality through self-sacrifice. *Yama*, as already seen was a great spiritual pioneer who attained immortality (*Rgveda* 10.13.4). In the verse, *Yama* is said to have embraced death (*avrñita mrtyum*) for the good of humanity. Mention is also made of the self-offering on the part of *Visvakarman* (*Rgveda* 10.81.1). In this verse, *Yama* is said to have made of the self-offering on the part of *Visvakarman* (*Rgveda* 10.81.1). In this verse, *Visvakarman* is said to have entered into the sacrificial fire. He is also described as one who pursued the welfare of the world. Similarly, the *Ribhus* attained immortality and reached godhood (*Rgveda* 1.20.1). Those who worshipped divinity in the form of *Agni* attained divinity (*Rgveda* 1.87.6). These verses definitely show that spiritual liberation in the form of *Sarupyata* (becoming Divine-like) was one of the spiritual ideals of the Vedic people. One of the sages expresses his experience of reaching union with the essence of water (*Rgveda* 10.9.9). One must get liberated from sins as well as ill-will, hatred, malice, etc. which are our spiritual enemies. They must be eliminated from the life of a spiritual seeder (*Rgveda* 10.9.8). O Waters, wash away sins, malicious or malevolent intellect and bad speech. The Vedic man wants to be free from both ill-will and various greed's. Thus, the Vedic sages were aware of the imperfections of the little ego. They would like to be psychologically free from the influences of anything attached with this ego. This idea is very well expressed in the *upanisadic* statement: *Yo vai blama tat sukham nalpe sukham asti* (*Chhandogya Upanisad* 7.23). The real happiness lies in realizing the infinite (*Bhūman*). It does not consist in possessing the finite things. According to R.D. Ranade, *Bhūman* is that infinite happiness which arises by the vision of the divinity all-around. When anything else is seen, that is a'pa.⁶

This *Bhūman* or ultimate Reality is not a Kantian thing-in-itself which lies beyond lies beyond human comprehension. In this connection, the Svetasvatara Upan'sad states:

Tamatmasthan ye'nupasyanti dhirastesam sukham sasvatam netaresam. (It is only to those who regard the universal Being or God as immanent in their own selves, to them belongs eternal happiness, to none else.) (*Svetasvatara Upanisad* 6.12). The same Upanishad quotes the famous *Rgvedic* verse: *Dva suparna.* (*Rgveda* 1.164. 20).

The two birds reside on the same tree (body). One of them enjoys the fruits of the tree (individual soul) and the other (the Universal Self) merely looks on. According to Kunhan Raja, this traditional interpretation is incompatible with the general trend of the *Rgveda* thought. For him Geldner's interpretation of this verses (*Rgveda* 1.164.20) is more correct because the two birds are the seekers after knowledge. The tree according to Geldner is the tree of wisdom. Whereas, Kunhan Raja takes this tree to be the universe. The two birds are two individual souls one ignorant and the other wise.⁷ On page 32 of his *Asya vamasya hymn*, and opines that it is compatible with Geldner's meaning of the phrase 'two birds' Mudgal does not agree with Kunhan Raja.⁸ According to him, it is wrong to accept this position because (i) in order to draw the conclusion that Pippaland was wise and happy, we will have to risk the universal premise, viz., all those who eat berries are wise and happy and hence, the name of Pippalad has nothing to do with the wisdom of the sage; (ii) Kunhan Raja translates '*Abhicakasiti*' as merely 'looks on' in amazement whereas it means 'shines' and even Monier-Williams gives its meaning as that 'shines brightly'. The 'one bird' without eating shines' refers to the Universal Self. In this regard, we also cannot ignore the tradition and, therefore, the sentence '*anasnan anyah abhicakasiti*'. The other one without eating shines point to the detached, contented, self-shining, perfect Being. Thus, the *Rgveda* refers to the Universal Self and the realization of this Universal Self, within and without, is the highest value. Therein lies the realization of immortality.

Commenting on the ultimate category of the Upanishads, Ranade writes:

“It seems as if the ultimate category of existence to the Upanisadic philosophers is God-Atman”.⁹

This can also be spoken of the ultimate category of the Vedas. Unless we do so, we cannot understand the mystical experiences of the vedic sages such as: *Dirghatamas*, *Vamadev*, *Vagambhrini*, etc. There are three important hymns attributed to these three sages. They are highly mystical in character. They also show that the Vedic sages. They are highly mystical in character. They also show that the Vedic sages had also reached the concept of *fivanmukti* (liberation while alive) by realizing the Divine both within and without. Only such a view can explain the philosophical hymns like *Purusasukta* and *Nasadiyasukta* etc. Secondly, such a concept of ultimate reality and ultimate goal can rightly explain the Vedic doctrine of universal patriotism or friendship (*Mitrasya caksusa*). Only such kind of doctrine can explain Vedic activism that has a social content. Only a man who has realized the divine in himself and universe can properly do, to borrow a phrase from the Gita, *Lokasangraha*. It is the concept of affectionate and selfless altruism in the all-around upliftment of the humanity at large. Before dealing with which a social content of high significance, we will deal with some hymns which are philosophical in character and those which are of mystical import.

Some Philosophical Hymns and their Significance

Let us take for instance, the famous *Hiranyagarhha* (*Rgveda* 10.121) sukta. It is a hymn that states that Reality is supreme splendence and bliss (Ka). The last line of each verse of this hymn states: *Kasma iddevaya havisa vidhema*. It is not a question as is understood by the Westerners. It says that one is offering one's oblations to the Godhead who is of the nature of bliss. This Godhead is the lord of the whole creation (*Prajapati*). Paradoxically, the second verse of this hymn states, 'He contains both immortality and

mortality'. It may mean, He is the source both of the mortal and the immortal in this universe. In other words, He is the substantial basis of joy both eternal and physical.

The famous *Purasasukta* (*Rgveda* 10.90) is well known for its religious as well as social significance. It definitely speaks about the immanence-transcendence of the Godhead. The visible universe is only a manifestation of the ultimate Reality. The laws of the power of manifestation became the first ordinances (*Yajnena yajnamayajanta devah tani dharmani prathamanyasan*) (*Rgveda* 10.90.16) for men to abide by. The second verse of this hymn says that this Universal Self is the Lord of the immortality. According to Satavalekar, this verse states that immortality is far higher and richer than the finite world and its pleasures (*Yat annena atirohati*). The hymn also gives us the organic and holistic theory of the universe and human society, according to which all are interrelated organically. We are aspects of the whole. Hence, the ultimate truth is a whole and it also is the ultimate criterion of value. Hence, the realization of the whole is the ultimate value. Therefore, one has to realize this in his life.

In social life, one cannot escape from social responsibilities. One has to develop oneself by doing social duties. Survival of the fittest may be a natural law. But morally speaking, it is the law of the jungle. Even the principle of 'live and let live' is not praiseworthy. From the moral and social point of view, each man must strive for the good of others. Live and let live may imply an attitude of indifference towards others. *Purusasakta* and other ontological as well as cosmological hymns give a philosophical foundation of social dynamism and cooperative good will.

The *Nasadiya sukta* gives us a purely ontological theory of the ultimate Reality. According to it, ultimate reality is beyond any characterization. It defies all descriptions. It is 'that is all'. It is the ontological foundation of everything in the universe. It doubts even the

capacity of the deities and the learned to wholly and fully comprehend the ultimate truth about the positive existence of it. It is beyond the ordinarily real and the unreal, the mortal and the eternal in this universe. According to Will Durant, this astonishing 'creation hymn' is the loftiest of the poems of the Vedas.¹⁰ Commenting on the import of this hymn, A.C. Bose writes,¹¹

“This takes to the loftiest heights of philosophy. It is doubtful whether the human mind ever surpassed these heights”.

This single absolute is all pervasive. Mystical realizations of the Vedic sages must be understood in the light of this philosophical background. This philosophical hymn gives us the Vedic idea of the metaphysical doctrine of Reality. The Vedic sages were never polytheists i.e., they never believed in the reality of many Gods. They were also not henotheists because henotheism accepts the position of polytheism and adds to it the view that one of the Gods or the Deities is held in high esteem at the time of worship. The Vedic sages explicitly state that Reality is one and they called it by various names *Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti* (*Rgveda* 1.164.46 and *Atharvaveda* 9.10.28). It gives us the concept of one Absolute Existence. Similarly, another hymn says: *Ekam santam bahudha kalpayanti* (*Rgveda* 10.114. 15. One Reality is conceived variously. In another verse, the seer emphatically asserts the existence of the one in many forms and names: *Mahat devanam asuratvamekam* (*Rgveda* 3.55.1). Great is the single Godhood or Divinity of all gods. Thus, one God is spoken of in many ways by the sages and the poet philosophers. In one of the *Atharvaveda* verses (134.21.) plurality of gods is deliberately denied and the unity of all gods or deities is affirmed: *Sarve Asmin Devah Ekavrtto bhavanti* (in Him all deities become one alone). There is no equal or parallel to Him. It is in the words of the Veda itself the non-

parallel (*Na tasya pratima asti*) one of the sages confidently and clearly expresses his experience of the Absolute or Supreme Reality:

Vedaham etam purusam mahantam Adityavarnam tamasah parastat Tameva viditva atimrtyumeti Nanyah panthah vidyate ayanaya (Yajurveda Vaja. 31.18)

(I have known this Mighty Being effulgent like the Sun beyond darkness. Knowing Him alone one transcends death; there is no other way to do so.) *Svetasvatara Upanishad* also quotes this verse. The second line of this verse is also found in the *Gita* (*Gita* 8.9).

The statement of the sages' experience is a fair statement of the liberated state of the soul. Commenting on its spiritual significance, A.C. Bose writes,¹²

“If religion means the overcoming of the limits of finite life and projecting the soul into the infinite, then there can be no real religion without this spiritual realization”.

Thus, Reality is all-pervasive and is everywhere (*Atharvaveda* 4.16.2). It is in all directions (*Rgveda* 10.36.14). We have already seen that the ‘two birds doctrine’ states that this divinity is within man. The *Atharvaveda* nicely puts this idea of the Divine in man:

Tasmat vai vadvan purusa idam brahmeti manyate

Sarva hi asmin devata gao gosta evasate. (Atharvaveda 11.8. 37)

(Thus, one who truly knows man regards him as this Brahman.

Truly all deities abide in him as cows in the cow pen.)

World Family

Realisation of this Absolute in man is the highest kind of immortality or spiritual liberation. When one realizes the Divinity in himself and in all, one knows the underlying unity of all existence. Thus, there is no vision of divided and fragmented humanity and existence. With the realization of the unity of all one realizes God in nature, God in man and God in all forms and names of God. Then one realizes how all are due to God, how all

convergence in Him and all diverge from Him. He belongs to all. He is both divine and human (*Atharvaveda* 4.16.8). Implication of this *Atharvavedic* verse leads to reverence and respect for makes them irreligious heretics. Only such a realization truly makes man a global man, nay a universal man. For such a man, ultimate Reality is the source of all beings. For him the earth is one home. Hence, the Yajurveda says:

Venas tat pasyan hihitam guhasad

Yatra visvam bhavati ekanidam

Tasminnidam sa ca vidhu prajasu (*White Yajurveda* 32.8)

(The loving sage beholds that Being hidden in mystery, wherein the universe comes to have one home. Therein unite and therefrom emanate all. The omnipresent one is warp and woof in created things.)

Translation by A.C. Bose

This verse beautifully and nicely expresses the concept of one world family (*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*). This ideal of universal fellowship can be realised only on the basis of spiritual unity of all existence. Poets, saints and mystics have always set this ideal before the people. Rabindranath Tagore chose the second line of this verse as the motto in the insignia of Visva Bharati founded by him. Because nests are the meeting places or resting places of birds.¹³ To the Vedas, the most ancient literature of the world, goes the credit of visualizing the concept of one-world society on the foundation of philosophy and spirituality. Thus, the final goal of man was not egoistic or individualistic. In spite of the fact that liberation or realization of final truth or the beatitude is to be achieved by the individual through his incessant striving, it has a social import and significance. It is not only cognitive insight in the truth but also a widening or expansion of human personality. In this sense, the

liberated soul was a universal man who selflessly and lovingly strove for the betterment of the people at large. In this connection, Sri Aurobindo says,

“The aspiration of the vedic seer was the enrichment and expansion of man’s being, the birth and the formation of the godheads in his life-sacrifices, the increase of force, truth and light and joy of which they are the powers until through the enlarged and ever opening worlds of his being the soul of man rises, sees the divine doors (Devidvarah) swing open to his call and enters into the supreme felicity of a divine existence beyond heaven and earth. this ascent is the parable of Angirasa Rsi”.¹⁴

Hence, the objection that the spiritual goal of liberation is conspicuous by its absence in the Vedas is unjustifiable and baseless. This objection dissolves itself as we study the esoteric or mystical meaning of the Vedas. Even traditional writers like *Katyayana* accept that *Asya Vamasya* hymn contains liberation. He suggests that apart from the literal meaning of this hymn it has a spiritual meaning. Hence, even *Sayanacarya* writes:

Evam uttatatrapi adhyatmaparataya yojayitum sakyam

Yatra dvasuparna ityadau adhyatmiko arthah pratiyate.

While another medieval writer Atmananda says of the *Asya Vamasya sukta* as: *Sarvam etat suktam adhyatmaparam nanyarthata vaktum sakyate*. The whole hymn is spiritual in its import. No other meaning can be derived from it.

Various writers on the Vedas have accepted the fluidity and multi-valence of Vedic words and myths. For instance, dragon and mountains in the Vedas stand for the obstructive evil forces, which come in the way of expansion of human personality or liberation. The value of expansion or spiritual liberation is conveyed through the phrases like release of the cows, the downward flow of the cows, the downward flow of the rivers, etc. the famous episode of Shunahshepa embodies the human aspiration for liberation. Thus, the idea of

Moksa in the sense of liberation is suggested in the Vedas. But the idea of *Moksa* in the sense of realization of Godhead, immortality, ultimate reality, eternal felicity, etc. is definitely present in the Vedas. It stands for positive realization. This aspect of *Moksa* has become amply clear by now.

Sri Aurobindo has interpreted the concept of Adhvarayajna as a journey or traveling. *Vala*, the circumscriber or the encloser, and *Vrtra*, the obstructor, or enfolding coverer, are the great obstacles on the path towards perfection. According to Sri Aurobindo '*Adhvata*' is connected with '*Adhvan*' - path or journey from the lost root, 'adh' to move to extend, to be wide.¹⁵ Thus, *Yajna* becomes a way of self-offering. One has to offer one's has tended, to be wide. Thus, *Yajna* becomes a way of self-offering. One has to offer one's possession and power to the Lord and receive the divine help, which consists in spiritual journey or spiritual struggle. It is a journey towards the conquest of final immortality and beatitude. This journey or struggle consists in perfecting oneself progressively so that eventually it finds its final consummation and destination in the realization of the Godhead or Truth-consciousness. This realization is the ultimate, final and con-summatory value.

In the words of Sri Aurobindo, the whole of the *Rgveda* is practically a constant variation on the double theme, the preparation of the human being in mind and body, the fulfillment of Godhead or immortality in Him by his attainment and development of the truth and the beatitude.¹⁶ The Vedic seers emphasize the role of truth in the realization of final emancipation and beatitude. Truth liberates us from falsehood, weakness and other limitations or imperfections. It also opens to us the door of the Supreme Bliss. In this connection, Sri Aurobindo writes, "The conception of supra-mental consciousness is the condition of the state of immortality or beatitude."¹⁷ The metaphysics of the soul itself points to the higher ranges of mystical experiences. Writing on this Sri Aurobindo says,

“Substance of being light of consciousness, active force and possessive delight are the constituent principles of existence, but their combinations in us may be either limited, divided, hurt and obscure or infinite, enlightened, vast whole and unhurt. Limited and divided being is ignorant. It is darkness and weakness. It is grief and pain and in the vast, in the integral, in the infinite we must see for the desirable riches of substance, light, force and joy. Limitation is mortality. Immortality comes as an accomplished self-possession in the infinite and the power to live and move in firm vastness”.¹⁸

This is not something imposed on the Vedic word. *Atharvaveda* has to say the following about the self or Atman:

Akamo dhiro amrto svayambhuh

Rasena trpto na kutascaonah

Tameva vidvan na bibhaya mrtyor

Atmanam dhiram ajaram yuvanam (Atharvaveda 10.8.44)

(Desireless, firm, immortal, self-existent, contented with the essence, lacking nothing, is He. One fears not death who has known Him, the Soul (Atman) serene, ageless, youthful. (Translation by A.C. Bose)

Thus, the Atman is the dwelling spirit who is ever young and not subject to the process of decay. The attributes of the Atman can be said to be the attributes of the man of realization. It also shows that the Atman is *Sat-Cit-Ananda* (Existence, Consciousness and joy). So the *Taittiriya Upanisad* says: *Raso vai sah. Rasam hyevayam lubdhva anandi bhavati (Taittiriya Upanishad 34.17)*. He is essence or the source of flavor and felicity and by realizing him one is filled with joy or bliss. In another verse, the *Atharvaveda* states: *Purnat purnam udayati, purnam purnena sicyate. Uto adya tata vaidyamayatah tat*

parisicyate. (This whole has emerged out of the Whole. It is watered by the whole.) (*Atharvaveda* 10.8.29). Let us try to know this ‘Spring’ of this universe.

This verse also shows that perfection is latent in the soul. One has simply to realize this. In another verse, the Atman is called Brahman (*Atharvaveda* 10.8.43). The body is called a nine-protalled city. The individual soul lives with the Universal Self in the mortal body having limitations imposed on it. One has to transcend these limitations and attain immortality. Reality is the source of all – *Suryo atma jagatah tasthanasca*. (*Rgveda* 1.115.1, *Yajurveda* 7.42; *Atharvaveda* 13.2.35). It is within us. One has only to realize this and one becomes a liberated or perfect soul: *Yo’ savasau puruso so’hm asmi* (The spirit that is in the Sun that spirit am I.) (*Yajurveda* Vaj.40.16).

On this background, mystical utterances of sages like *Vamadeva*. *Vagabrini* become intelligible. *Vamadeva* claims that he has realised his previous birth. According to *Chittravshastri*. It is the sign of *Vamadeva’s* self-realisation. *Vamadeva* expresses himself thus: *Aham manurbhavam suryah ca aham* (I had been Manu and *Surya* in previous births.) (*Rgveda* 4.26.1). Hence, *Vamadeva* claims that one who realizes the ‘True Self’ becomes one with all. To such a man, according to Ranade, the past is like an eternal now. Hence, *Vamadeva* broke forth in the exclamation that ‘He it was who had lived in Manu and that he it was who had given light to the Sun.’¹⁹ Commenting on the hymns as that of *Vamadeva’s*, Shri Aurobindo says,

“In such hymn as this (*Rgveda* 4.58) of *Vamadeva’s*, the ritualistic veil, so elaborately woven by the vedic mystics, vanishes like a dissolving mist before our eyes and this encourages the vedantic truth”.²⁰

Vamadeva describes the essence of *Agni* as *Catvari sringa trayo asya pada* (*Rgveda* 4.58.3). It is a symbolic description of all-pervading *Agni*. According to Chitravashastri, the hymn has five optional deities. Therefore, it can be explained in five ways.²¹

The grammarians give their own explanation of it. According to Swami Dayananda, 'the four horns may be the four goals of human life or the four stages of consciousness (*visva, taijas, prajnd, turiya*). The three *padas* are the *Karma, Bhakti* and *Jnana* or mind, body and speech. The two heads are the five sense organs, mind and body or soul and body. It is liable to be differently interpreted. Nevertheless, it is the description of mystical experiences. Take the *Vagambri* hymn. *Vagambri* expresses her mystical identification with the whole of the universe including the deities. She says, 'I am the sustainer of *Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Agni* and others' (*Rgveda* 10.125. 4.). The mystic becomes one with the ultimately real and consequently becomes a man of the universe. His little ego vanishes and he becomes a genuine and active friend of the universe. Hence, the fortieth chapter of the White Yajurveda says:

Yastu sarvani bhutani atmanyevanupasyati

Sarva bhutesu catmanam tato navijigupsate

Yasmin sarvani bhutani atmaivabhudvi janatah

Tatra ko mohah sokah ekatvam anupasyatah

(*Yajurveda Vajasaneyi* 40.6. and 7)

(He who sees all beings in the very Self and Self in all beings feels no hatred or contempt or revulsion towards any object or being because self, there is no other. For the man of realization all beings become the self, for such a man of unitary experience there is no delusion or sorrow. Such a man of realization becomes free from ignorance and sorrow.)

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Chapter-V

Artha as a Value Concept

The term '*artha*' refers to both the wealth and the political economy and as such covers both the economic and the political values. All value-theories and theories of normative ethics are centered round the concept of human self and his desires and interests. All of them can be brought under the head of *Kama*. Hence, in the words of Prof. Hiriyanna, 'They, *Artha* and *Kama* are the useful and agreeable and represent the lower values.'

Before dealing with the *Artha*- value proper, it will be better to deal with the Vedic outlook on life and the world. The Vedic outlook on life is integral and comprehensive. Even the literal meaning of the Vedic hymns shows that the Vedic people were interested both in secular as well as spiritual values, both in the individual as well as social reality. Theirs was not an other-worldly and escapist religion. There is no place for pessimistic trends like that of Schopenhauer in Vedic philosophy and religion. Unlike Schopenhauer and other pessimists, the Vedic people prayed for a life span of hundred years and even more. According to Schopenhauer, it is impossible for a man to be completely happy and, hence, in the mood of extreme pessimism, he becomes an advocate of the will to die. On the contrary, the Vedic people were advocates of the will to live and the will to conquer. They appear to be very cheerful and heroic in their lives ordinarily beset with obstacles and struggles. In leading a cheerful and heroic life, they would not be depressed. They would rather pray for God's help in securing earthly ends than indulge in depressive moods.

The Vedic hymns are not religious in totality because there are hymns that are secular and treat of social themes. Their constant prayer is the prayer for a life of hundred years full of strength, health and wealth. But it was not a prayer for mere biological survival.

They also aspired for psychological existence that is genuinely human. Human existence must be a life of vigour and victory. It must be free from misery and humiliation. They would not tolerate the idea of being conquered by others or being victims of circumstances. Hence, the Vedic prayer:

Tat caksur devahitam purastat sukramuccarata pasyema saradh satam jivema saradah satam. (Rgveda 7.66.16)

(Let me see for 100 years the luster that benefits the gods and is revealed before us. Let me live for 100 years).

Similar prayer is found in the *Atharvaveda* and *Sukla Yajurveda* in which important statements have been added to the *Rgvedic* prayer:

Adlnah syama saradah satam (White Yajurveda 36.24)

Nandama sardah satam

Ajl tah syama saradah satam (Taittiriya Aranyaka 4.42)

Buddhyema saradah satam (Atharvaveda 19.67.3)

The sage further prays for a life of hundred years, which is full of joy. He desires to be invincible. There is a desire to be free from any kind of domination. He does not want to be vanquished by others. There is also the prayer for vigour, power of speech, strong lungs, powerful eyes and ears, strong arms, energetic hearts, etc. the objective was to seek a healthy and happy life, without fear and wants, without poverty and slavery. They also aspired for the life of strength and prosperity. Thus, there is no trace of negative, defeatist and reverence for defeatist and escapist approach and outlook in the Vedic philosophy. For this benediction they are grateful to the Almighty. This attitude of gratitude and reverence for various manifestation of the Godhead is expressed in the Vedic hymns. But their prayers are not the prayers of the idlers or lotus-eaters. They are the prayers of heroic people. They

try to achieve their ends by their own endeavour and heroism. It was their firm faith that both the earthly and spiritual ends must be secured by personal toil and efforts. Accordingly, the *Rgveda* says: *Nu rte srantasya sakhyaya devah*. God helps and supports only him who works hard and sweats to his utmost capacity. God helps those who help themselves. Even the earthly values, viz. *Artha* and *Kama* (prosperity, profit, political ends, success or pleasure, or emotional satisfaction and aesthetic enjoyment) must be legitimately realised. The Vedic people not only have positively prayed for wealth and prosperity, pleasure and progeny, they also have positively expressed their hatred for slavery, miserliness, greed and diseases. They also positively prayed for prestige and position in society. The call to banish poverty was given long back by the *Rgveda* (10.155.1). The need for achievement as stated above was very dominant in the Vedic Age. But it requires health as well as constant human effort and as such they aspired for wealth and prosperity. There is a famous episode in the *Aitareya Brahmana* (33.3). This *Brahmana* belongs to the *Rgveda* itself. In this episode, Indra advises Rohit to make efforts and toil to achieve the objectives of life (*caraiveri caraiveti*). Indra admonishes Rohit:

Is there any one who has earned wealth without hard work? Remember, the idle man is a sinner. God helps those who entertain higher aims. Therefore, I ask you to work and achieve the goal. An idle man who always sleeps is the emblem of *Kaliyuga kalih sayano bhavati* (the age of all round degradation, one of the four epochs).

The Vedic philosophers believed in four cultural cycles, which can be realised by human beings. Cultural achievements depend on human efforts. When the thought to achieve something enters the human heart, it is the sign of *Dvapara Yuga* (second stage – *sanjihanastu dvaparah*). In the third stage (*Tretayuyga*), he tries to move in order to achieve

higher and higher values (*krtam sampadyate caran caraivalti*). Thus, man is the maker of his age. Further, Indra says,

“Just see a bee collects honey by moving from flower to flower. The birds enjoy fruits by flying from tree to tree. Does the Sun expect rest or respite even for a moment? (*carunvai madhu vindati caransvadumudumbaram suryasya pasya sremanam yo ra tandrayate caran caraiveti*). Hence, strive to obtain human ends (*caraiveti*)”.

Thus, the Sun is placed before us as an ideal model of selfless activism. The passage gives us a robust philosophy of activism. Thus, even being realistic, the Vedic seers were progressive idealists. They would struggle for existence, for better existence and try to come out with success and victory. They would not allow any encroachment upon the society from within or without. They would pray God to help them to kill their enemies but they would help those who would be friendly to them (*Rgveda* 8.40). They would not like to be idle or in fear. One of the seers says,

“Let me go ahead without fear. The sun and the moon, the day and the night, go on without rest or fear. Similarly, let me proceed ahead”. (*Atharvaveda* 5.20).

Even in earthly life, they valued the pairs of values of light and liberation, liberality and love. With labour they would like to achieve their earthly ends and thus, to get freedom from their worries, poverty and environmental and social slavery.

Vedic Society and Secular Progress

The value of *Artha* is to be understood in its various dimensions. The words *Sampatti* and *Dhana* are not to be understood in the crude sense of the food only. In its true sense, *Artha* is a nourishing and fulfilling value. *Dhana* should lead to *dhanyata*. There are references to ornaments and gold, various types of vessels and vehicles in the Vedas.

Moreover, there are also references to various professions and vocations. There are descriptions of overseas trades. Even such references show that the Vedic people were not barbaric nomads. They were well settled in society. Hence, there are references to social norms. Therefore, Wilson rightly observes:

“It has been a favourite notion with some of the eminent scholars that the Hindus of the period of the compositions of the Vedic hymns were a nomadic and a pastoral people. This opinion seems to rest upon the frequent solicitations for food, horses and cattle, which are found in the hymns and is unsupported by any more positive statements. That the Hindus were not nomads is evident from the repeated allusions to fixed dwellings, villages and towns and we can scarcely suppose them to have been in this respect behind their barbarian enemies, the overthrow of whose numerous cities is so often spoken of. A pastoral people they might have been to some extent but they were also perhaps in a still greater degree an agricultural people as is evidenced by their supplication for abundant rain and for the fertility of earth and by the mention of agricultural products, particularly barley. They were also a manufacturing people, for the art of weaving, the labors of carpenter, the fabrication of golden and of iron nails are alluded to and what is more remarkable they were maritime and mercantile people”.¹

Thus, the Vedic people were very much advanced and civilized. There are references to social institutions like marriage, family and social classes in the *Rgveda* itself. There are also moral gems scattered through out the collections of Vedic hymns. There are highly philosophical hymns in the *Rgveda* itself. Even Max Muller compares the thoughts contained in them to the philosophical thoughts of Plato and Kant. A.R. Wallace, a contemporary of Darwin, compared the Vedic seers to the best religious teachers and poets

of the world. Wallace was an advocate of the theory of evolution or Spencerian Progressivism. While writing on the Vedas, he says, 'In the Veda, we find the essential teaching of the most advanced religious thinkers.' Further, he says:

“we must admit that the mind which conceived and expressed in appropriate language, such ideas as are everywhere present in the Vedic hymns, could not have been inferior to the best of our religious teachers and poets to our Milton, Shakespeare and Tennyson”.²

Marriage was a well-established social institution in Vedic times. Marriage was just not a contract. But, on the other hand, it was to be treated as a sacred bond. Hence, the Vedic seers and sages had placed before society intimate and ideal conjugal life between man and his wife. But those who have assumed the theory of evolution as true even of the social institution and the development of moral and spiritual ideas cannot tolerate the view that the most primitive Vedic people were cultured and civilized to this degree because they believed that a primitive society cannot but be a barbaric society. The Marxists who accept various stages of society from primitive communism to the dictatorship of the proletariat see only primitive communism in most ancient societies. Hence, they fabricate fantastic ideas to interpret the Vedic terms and concepts. Dange's work "*India from Primitive Communism to Slavery*" is a standing example of this distortionist approach. Dange has distorted the meanings of the words like '*yajna*', '*Brahman*', etc. to show that the Vedic society was nothing but a form of primitive communism. Such a society is without any moral and social norms as Dange could see:

“.....well fed and well drunk, the Vedic people slept round the fire in promiscuity in the early days or retired with their selected pairs to their huts. When later on, the pairing family developed in the commune household man was pleased and so was

Agni. Thus, the Brahman, the commune lived and laboured, enjoyed, and multiplied".³

But even a cursory reading of the Vedic hymns shows that the people were living in a society of well-established social institutions and social norms. So many similes in the Vedas refer to the intimate relations between husband and wife. The Vedic literature itself shows that the Vedic people were highly developed; their language is highly developed. Can one imagine the primitive and the most backward society, which has produced highly philosophical hymns like *Asya Vamasya* and *Nasadiya hymns*? It is not for nothing that the Vedas have been recognized and respected as doubtlessly authoritative, at least, in the spiritual matters. The seeds of later dharma and philosophical schools can be traced to the Vedas.

Artha as an Economic Value

There is a positive outlook towards wealth in the Vedas. *Artha* as an economic value was never to be divorced from social commitments and responsibilities. Hence, it was a social value. When wealth is pursued for its own sake, it radiates a degrading effect on the personality of man. Because of worship of money, man gets depersonalized and dehumanized. He loses the sense of emotional values of personal affection and aesthetic appreciation. According to R.H. Tawney, 'functionless property values neither culture nor beauty. It cannot make nor can it create'.⁴ Gradually, such wealth becomes a disvalue both for the individual and the society at large. Goldsmith's warning 'where wealth accumulates man decays', comes true. Even Julian Huxley, the great biologist, has given the warning against converting the legitimate pursuit of wealth and material pleasure into the worship of money and the cult of crude hedonism. In his work '*Humanist framework*', Huxley observes:

“Once we truly believe that man’s destiny is to make possible greater fulfillment for more human beings and fuller achievement by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes sub-ordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs, but only up to a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or T.V. sets, washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary, but bad. Quantity of material production can only be a means to a further end, not an end in itself”.⁵

The Upanishads had clearly given this warning thousands of years ago *Na vittena tarpaniyo manusyah*- material wealth cannot fully satisfy man. Hence, Huxley rightly asks us to abandon the pernicious habit of evaluating every human project solely in terms of its material utility or profit.⁶

Accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few is socially dangerous. It is both an effect and cause of social as well as economic exploitation of the masses. This is a great defect of what is called capitalist social order. A capitalist is one who exploits every human calamity as an opportunity to exploit the people. Thus, the vulture-like mentality is developed. Against this danger, the Veda commands: *Ma grdhaḥ kasyachit dhanam*. (White *Yajurveda* 40.1) i.e., do not covet anybody’s wealth. Do not be envious and jealous of others: *Na krodho na camatsaryam na lobho nasubhamatih* (*Srisukta, Rgveda*). Wealth by itself was never condemned by Vedic sages and seers. On the contrary, they solicited gods for the sake of wealth. They wrote hymns on wealth and prosperity (for instance *Srisuktam*). They never pursued wealth for its own sake. They always treated it as a source of individual and social welfare. Its social significance was never overlooked. There are, therefore, hymns in praise of personal charities. Vedas enjoin upon us to earn and spend wealth in the right way. Let a man think well on wealth and strive to win it by the path of law and by worship.

And let him, take counsel with his own inner wisdom and grasp with spirit still greater ability. Hence, in one of the Rg Vedic hymns economic and hedonic egoism is condemned as a sin.

*Moghamannam vindate apracetah satyam bravimi vadha it sa tasya Naryamanam
psyati no sakhayam kevalagho bhavati kevaladi (Rgveda 10. 117.6)*

Similarly, the verse in the Yajurveda (40.1) further enjoins upon us to enjoy upon us to enjoy wealth with renunciation and restraint '*ten tyaktena bhunjithah*'. The same thought or attitude is expressed in one of the verses of the *Bhagavadgita*:

Yajnasistasinah santo muccante sarvakilbisaih,

Bhunjate te tvagham papa ye pacantyatmakaranat. (Bhagavadgita 3.13)

Those who enjoy wealth and food by themselves are sinners. Personal charity was accepted as a social value. It was also given spiritual foundation. Hence, it would stop the rot of commercialization of human relations and the emergence of what Tawney calls 'acquisitive society'. Thus, wealth was not only an economic instrument but also an instrument of social harmony. Modern thinkers and economists like R.H. Tawney and F.F. Schumacher⁷ insist on the dictum that the wealth is a good servant but a bad master of society. In this context, R.H. Tawney writes, "property is moral and healthy only when it is used as a condition not of idleness but of activity and when it involves the discharge of definite personal obligations. Thus, it should be based on the principle of function".⁸

The following four propositions can be held with reference to the significance of the wealth:

1. Wealth is the foundation of civilization and culture.
2. Wealth is meant for self-indulgence and self-aggrandizements.
3. All wealth is theft:

4. Wealth is an aid to creative work and social service.

The first two propositions advocate purely materialist axiology. The third proposition was stated by Proudhon. This view of Proudhon is a result of his reaction against exploitative nature of capitalist society. Proudhon condemned wealth as theft. Nobody can deny the value of wealth in satisfying the elementary human needs. Hence, not all property can be theft, Wealth collected through illegal and immoral means and used for personal self-aggrandisement only at the cost of the producer, is certainly a theft.

Such an egoistic attitude towards wealth is certainly despicable. But unfortunately modern economists encourage avarice and greed. Keynes, for instance, in 1930, stated:

“The time for valuing ends above means and preferring the good to the useful has not yet come. For at least another hundred years, we must pretend to ourselves and to everyone that fair is foul and foul is fair, for foul is useful and fair is not. Avarice, usury, and precaution must be our gods for a little longer still. For only they can lead us out of the tunnel of the economic necessity into daylight”. Such an outlook towards wealth makes ethical values irrelevant in It makes economics a science of naked selfishness of economics”.⁹

Such acquisitive and selfish orientation towards wealth is condemned in the Vedas clearly. They accepted the fourth proposition, namely, wealth personal efforts and used to promote social and spiritual goals duties of man of man to earn wealth and to give away as much as possible in the form of personal charities. Thus, *Atharvaveda* enjoins upon us the duty: ‘*Satahasta samahara sahastrahasta sankira. (Atharvaveda 3.24.5)* earn and collect wealth with hundred hands and give it away with thousand hands. Earn and liberally use it for the good of all. It helps both the giver and the recipient. It halts the process of accumulation of wealth and commercialization of human relations. Inasmuch as *Dana*

(liberality) for the ancients was a potent instrument of social harmony and economic balance in society, it was insistently and repeatedly advocated and praised by the Vedic poet philosophers.

Trying to understand this phenomenon in present context, it would mean that there was a moral ceiling on both wealth as well as the expenditure of it. Miserliness is repeatedly condemned in the Vedas. To summarize, wealth must be earned through personal efforts. It must not be abused. It must not also be accumulated. It must be enjoyed in a way, which is not opposed, to righteousness or moral values and wealth must be positive used for the good of all. Hence, the insistence on *istapurta* and *dana* as social duties. Thus, not only that there is fine relation between ethics and economics but economics for the Vedic people was a part of social and moral philosophy. Wealth is necessary to lead a life free from economic insecurity. But it should not become a means of the satisfaction of merely egoistic impulses. The Vedas have always warned us against self-indulgence. The glory of the Vedas is that they never overreacted, viz., morbid asceticism, i.e., condemnation of wealth as such. They were men of positive outlook towards the world and wealth. But the pursuit of wealth must be regulated by rightness. (*Rgveda* 10.31.2.)

The pursuit of secular values must be tempered with righteousness and moral values. So, the Vedic injunction to give away money and wealth. Notwithstanding their positive outlook towards wealth, they never preached materialistic value theory. Their comprehensive axiological outlook includes both secular as well as used for the good of all has elevating effect on human beings. It helps to get rid of narrow-mindedness and the petty selfish egotism. Thus, one's personality is expanded. This approach towards wealth defuses social tensions and brings about social integration. The same attitude towards wealth is given expression by Kalidas in his description of the rulers of Raghu-dynasty. Kalidas says,

“These rulers accumulated wealth in order to serve society: *Tyagaya sambhrtarthandm*”.
(*Raghuvamsa* 1.7).

The very concept of human person is conditioned by the awareness of higher values. Man develops his personality as he strives to realize values. At the same time, he must have the consciousness of the distinction of values into instrumental or contributory and end-values or consummatory values. Vedic axiology being integral and comprehensive, the secular values were aspired only for the sake of their contribution to social service and maintaining spiritual integrity. In this sense, wealth was conceived as an instrument to fulfill one’s socio religious duties (*istapurta*). Thus, the pursuit of realization of *Artha* as a value received direction from the higher values of *Dharma* and *Moksa*. Secular values, therefore, were oriented towards higher values. In this way, Vedic economics was regulated by spiritual outlook – (*Isavasyamidam sarvam*) (White *Yajurveda* 40.1). This approach implicitly accepts the ‘divine ownership of property’. It avoids ‘private property theory’ as well as the view that the property belongs to society. Gandhi’s doctrine of trusteeship is directly traceable to this Vedic verse. Gandhi himself always stressed the spiritual significance and social implications of this verse. According to him, this single Vedic verse gives us the very essence of Vedic philosophy and religion. Commenting on the opening verse of *Isopanisad*, a part of the *Sukla Yajurveda Samhita* Gandhi says:

“If all the upanisads and other scriptures happened all of a sudden to be reduced to ashes and if only the first line in the *Isa-upanishad* were left in tact in the memory of Hindustan, Hinduism would live forever”.¹⁰

With this attitude, the man of wealth and power becomes a mere trustee of them. Such a trustee cannot use them for personal advancement. He has to use them for the welfare of and fulfillment of human beings. Such an approach is incompatible with the artificial

multiplication of wants and the concept of production for profit. This approach can check economic egoism as well as unrestrained consumerism. Thus, the Vedic axiology shows wealth its proper place in the scheme of human values. Such an axiology makes economics, therefore, cease to be a science of selfishness and becomes a science of altruism and benevolence. Wealth earned with this attitude is fit to be called 'Sree' because it makes the world absence of social enmity and hatred, absence of greediness and ill-will, absence of malice and jealousy- *Na krodho na ca matsaryam no lobho na subhamatih*. It is rightly said that we have enough for our needs but not enough for our greed. Hence, greed is discouraged and condemned.

The values of liberality and love are very profusely applauded. Such an attitude towards economic values cannot encourage what Russell calls 'possessive instincts'; on the contrary, it promotes creative instincts as well as appreciative and co-operative tendencies in man. Thus, even economic values can be made to contribute to the stabilization of the society provided they are harnessed in the service of and the fulfillment of human beings. Wealth must also be earned righteously: The means of the satisfaction of human desires cannot be earned in any other way. Purity in earning income and wealth is stressed. *Atharvaveda* (4.33.1) states '*Rrayim susugdhih*'. Let the wealth come in a purified form, that is to say, let it come in legitimate and moral ways. Hence, even *Manusmriti* has given prominence to the purity of wealth:

Sarvesameva saucanam arthasauca paramsmrtam

Yo 'rthe sucih sa sucih na mrdvari sucih (Manusmrti 5.106)

Alabdham caiva lipseta labdham rakset prayatnatah

Raksitam vardhayet caiva vrddham patresu nih kshipet. (Manusmrti 7.99).

The purity of wealth is the purity among purities. It is a genuine purity. Mere bodily cleanliness is not purity. Earn that which is not yet obtained. Preserve with efforts whatever is obtained; increase it further. When it increases, let the surplus be given away to the deserving persons and institutions. Thus, the 'acquisitive' tendency is never encouraged by the Vedic seers. They always stressed the social value of wealth. Hence, the great sages and seers are seen praying for wealth. Thus, to quote R.H. Tawney, "What gives meaning to economic activity is the purpose to which it is directed".¹¹ Hence Schumacher also advises the economists to study meta-economics. According to him, "Economics must derive its aim and objectives from a study of man and major part of its methodology must be derived from the study of nature".¹² He also wants to revise ends and to give a secondary place to material things in the life-style because the logic of production is neither the logic of life nor logic that of society. It is a small and subservient part of both.¹³

The great sages were deeply involved in social life and the propagation of higher ideals among the masses. Their words are characterized by the social as well as divine quality, which can come from a highly developed man. So the *raison d'être* of *artha* lies in promoting and sub serving social and spiritual values. It therefore, remains, at the most, an instrumental or contributory value. It can never be conceived as an intrinsic end-value.

Artha as a Socio-political Value

Artha as an economic value was never to be divorced from social commitments and responsibilities and, therefore. It was a social value too. There are also references to 'varna system' in the Vedas. Of course, it was it was a functional arrangement. It was not a rigid caste system. There was no untouchability or social segregation in the Vedic society. Social mobility was also there which gave the society its dynamic character. There are references to the concept of motherland. Indian tradition shows that the country was always regarded by

the Indians as *Karmabhumi* (i.e., a land of action) and not as a *Bhogahumi* (i.e. a region of enjoyment). There is a famous hymn (*Prthivi sukhta*) in the *Atharvaveda* in which the earth is addressed as mother. Similarly, is a famous prayer (*Abrahman*) in the *Yajurveda* which can be definitely shown to be a Vedic national song (White Yajurveda 31.22). In this song, there is a prayer for men of learning, men of valour as well as life of health and prosperity etc. They had developed thoughts about administration and political economy of the state. In the *Rgveda*, the King is addressed as *Visastva sarva vanchantu* (*Rgveda* 10.173) may the subjects wish you to be the ruler.

This shows that there was some understanding between the king and his people. There is a mention of the king by the people. In '*Satapatha Brahmana*'. In the *Aitareya Brahmana*, which is a *Brahmana* of the *Rgveda*, the monarch says, "If I have at any time betrayed my duty, then let my merit that has been accumulated through *istapura* karma (religious rites and good deeds) be destroyed at once". (*Altareya Brahmana* 8.15). This shows that there was a constitutional monarchy in ancient times. In the *Rgveda*, there is a reference of paying the taxes to the king (*Rgveda* 10.173.6) According to Jaisval,

"the regular tax as a royal due had already developed. No one else but the king alone was entitled to it. It shows that the state as an organism was realised as early as Vedic times".¹⁴

There are references to *Samiti*, *Sabha* and *Vidatha*. According to B. Hardas, *Samiti* represents modern parliament; *Sabha* is the same as legislative assembly and *Vidatha* is the association of intellectuals who determine military and religious matters of the state. (*Atharvaveda* 6.87.88). This shows the existence of some sort of constitutional monarchy in the Vedic times. The king might not be directly elected by the people but he was elected by the *Samiti*, the parliament of the *Sabha* to elect the king.¹⁵ According to Barnett, the king

was elected at least nominally by the assembly of free men in the Vedic times.¹⁶ Hence, Spellman rightly says, “The idea of oriental despotism was not, in theory at least encouraged in Indian political philosophy”.¹⁷ Even Megasthenes remarks that when the failure of heirs occurs in the royal house, Indians elected their sovereign on the principle of merit. There was nothing higher than *dharma*. A.S. Altekar, in his article ‘Vedic society’ refers to the existence of republic tradition down to the days of Alexander’s invasion of India. Further, he says, ‘republics were not unknown to the Vedic age though they were rare’.¹⁸ It is interesting to note that this republic tradition continued in Punjab even in later times. At the time of Alexander’s invasion, there were several republics in Punjab. *Rgveda* (3.4.2) refers to the fact that *Visas* elected the king (*Tvam viso vrnatam rajyaya*). According to the *Atharvaveda* (2.14.81), the king to be crowned must be elected by the *Visas*. Let the enemies challenge you. We have elected you (*Atharvaveda* 3.3.6) According to Altekar several families constituted *Visas* and several *Visas* constituted *jana*.¹⁹ According to others, *Visa* means the people. Thus, in both the interpretations of the term *Visas* the elective principle is upheld. These considerations show that at least sometimes, the kingship was elective.

Atharvaveda (3.3.1) implicitly refers to the restoration of a deposed or an exiled king. The king residing in some other region is asked to come back like a ‘syena bird’ (*Atharvaveda* 3.4) there is a reference to the elective principle. The king is told that he has come to his state or nation. There is an explicit verse (*Atharvaveda* 3.4.2) to the democratic model of government. Democracy is a government by the consent of the people.

Tvam viso vrnatam rajyaya tvamimah varsman rastrasya Kakudi srayasva tato na ugro bibhaja vasuni. (*Atharvaveda* 3.4.2). Let the people accept your rule over this state. Let the five types of people accept your rule. Occupy this highest position in

the State. Let your government be strong enough and fully distribute the wealth among the people.

Thus, the concept of socio-economic justice is intimately related to the function of the government. In the fourth verse of the same hymn, the king is asked to aim at the just distribution of the wealth.

The concept of *Virat* is the concept of a kingless state not in the sense of anarchy, but in the sense of pure democracy. According to Altekar in such states coronation was offered to the whole population.²⁰ The 13th hymn of the 7th kanda of *Atharvaveda* is also very important in this connection. According to the first verse of this hymn, the *Sabha* and *Samiti* are the daughters of the benevolent king. Both must unanimously profit the king. In this hymn the king expresses his mind, “Whomsoever I meet should instruct me. O protectors, I will speak appropriately in the conference of meeting”. The parliament is called *Narista*. The king further says,

‘Let your members speak to me on the footing of equality. Let them speak the truth. Let them give their consent without fear or favour. I get the energy and knowledge from those who are present in the parliament. O Indra, make me a participant of this parliament. O members, of the parliament, let your minds not wonder away to any other subject. I bring them back. Let them pay attention to me.’

Commenting on this, Satavalekar says that the *Sabha* and *Samiti* are called daughters because they fall outside the power and authority of the king, ‘*dure hita duhita*’ (*Nirukta* 3.1.4). They are beneficial, provided they are outside the control of the king. According to Satavalekar, *duhitrgamana* is nothing but the king’s encroachment on the powers of the *Samiti* and *Sabha*. Commenting on the word *Narista*, because (i) it is desired or liked by the people or their leaders (*Naraih ista*), (ii) that which does not destroy anybody or no one can

harm it, (iii) it protects both the people and the King (*Na rista*). The probability of the existence of the elective principle is certainly greater in the early Vedic period than in later time. According to K.P. Jayaswal, one hundred and seventy-third hymn of the *Rgveda* is an election hymn. In this connection, Spellman remarks “the spirit of the passage accords better with the views of Jayaswal.”²¹ After coronation, the king is required to take the oath before the priest. Take away everything if I pray thee false. Rules according to *dharma* and for the welfare of the people. (*Aitareya Brahmana* 8.15). Hence, Spellman rightly says,

“The doctrine of royal absolutism and capriciousness did not find favour with the theorists of our period. The king had obligations to his people –the paramount of which was protection. Even the king was not above Dharma. The need of *Danda* by which he punished, would also punish the unrighteous king”.²²

The king could neither claim divinity nor had he any prerogatives. Tyrants were expelled or destroyed. Kingship was purely a human *Sanstha* (institution). Divinity could not be any excuse for tyranny. *Nahusa* and *Ven* had to pay the price of unjust and unrighteous rulership. Thus, the right to revolt against or change the unjust king was sometimes exercised by the people. Thus, both kingship and rebellion must have moral justification.

In this regard, it is appropriate to mention an episode²³ in the life of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Once, a ticklish question was put to Tilak. The answer he gave is very appropriate to the Divine right theory of king. Lokamanya Tilak was up in arms against the British rule over India. Hence, one gentleman asked “Are you not doing irreligious job in working against the emperor of India who according to your scriptures is an embodiment of divinity?” “Yes, Sir”, retorted Tilak, “The king is no doubt a part and parcel of the Godhead,

but so is every member of the subject people, for, is not the soul a chip from the same block of Brahman"? Tilak further, said,

"I challenge anyone to point out any text which lays down that the yoke of tyranny of a ruler whoever he may be, be quietly borne? The divine king, as soon as he ceases to be divine".

So in our scriptures we come across instances of tyrants who were overthrown by the people. The king Ven, for instance, was dethroned by the sages of his times. Thus, in Vedic politics, security, self-government, equality, justice were the important political values. The authorities were to protect the social order by protecting social values and morals. The main function of the government was to protect the social order by protecting social values and morals. The main function of the government was to protect the innocent and good and to punish the bad and the anti-social elements. The head of the state was to constantly look after the welfare of the people and try to fulfill their legitimate aspirations. Thus, the government must be both strong and good but even the strong and benevolent government must be constitutional.

Spellman, therefore, rightly says that constitutional monarchy was accepted lest there should be anarchy that represents what is known as *Matsya Nyaya* (the analogy of the stronger fish devouring the smaller ones or what is called 'dog eat dog way of life'). Thus, social harmony was accepted as the condition of individual perfection. Social harmony was accepted as the condition of individual perfection. Social harmony was accepted as the condition of individual perfection. Social harmony was considered as an echo of cosmic harmony or *Rta*. There is both natural and moral order in the universe. Because of this principle of *Rta* the political power was meant to create and maintain conditions conducive to the performance of duties and to the realization of various human values. Hence,

Yajurveda (22.25) says, "That nation is excellent where spiritual power and temporal power move together in harmony. Even Gods with *Agni* move there." In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

"The State, the sovereign or the supreme political authority was an instrument of coordination and a general control and efficiency; and exercised supreme and not an absolute authority, for in all its rights and powers, it was limited by the law and by the will of the people and in all its internal function only a co-partner with the other members of the socio-political body".²⁴

Thus, the law is above the sovereign. It is necessary to curb the powers of the kingship. The state and the society are not the ends but the means to an end. They must facilitate the realization and the perfection of the individuality of each man. The socio-economic structure of society must be so maintained and stabilized that there will be no socioeconomic injustice; and positively the natural talents of the citizens will be developed and social demands will be fulfilled.

Even the concept of nation was developed within the Vedic period. The word '*Gana*' means a group, a republic and the '*Ganapati*' was the head of the republic. Even the word *Jesta* suggests headship or leadership.

There are various types of Vedic states. There are various words *Samrat*, *Samrajya*, *Ekarat*, *Adhiraja*, etc. *Ekarat* is the sole ruler of the people. *Adhiraja* is the head of the kings. *Satapatha Brahmana* (5,1,1,13) distinguished a king from an emperor, the performer of *Rajaysya Yajna* was a king while the performer of *Vajasan ya Yajna* was an emperor. *Altareya Brahmana* refers to various grades of sovereignty, such as '*Samrajyam*, *Buojyam*, *Vairajyam*' etc.

The Nature of Monarchy

Thus, it can be definitely said that the concept of monarchy in the Vedic times was constitutional in character. It was subordinated to the will of the people and the principle of dharma. There was the tradition that during the coronation ceremony the king could say. “*Adandyo ‘smi adandyo’ smi-* I am not subject to the law. I cannot be punished by the law. I am above law” The officiating priest pointing him his real position would say. “*Dharmadandyo*” si. “*Dharmadandyo*” si-O king. Even you are subject to the law of *Dharma*. In case you misbehave, even you are subject to the law of *Dharma*. In case you misbehave, even you cannot escape from the clutches of law.” The Vedic monarchy was also a benevolent monarchy. The king was concerned with the protection and the welfare of the people. Hence, *Yajurveda* (6.31) records the prayer of the Vedic ruler and the prayer is “Let my subjects be satisfied, my herds be satisfied, my people be satisfied, let not my people be needy”. This prayer of the Vedic ruler is elaborated in the famous couplet in kautilya’s *Arthashastra* (1.9.16)

Prajasukhe sukham rajnah prajanam ca hite hitam Natmapriyam hitam rajnah prajanameva priyam hitam.

(Disinterested service of and catering to the interest of the people was the positive concern of the king).

Thus, the king must protect the innocent and punish the wrong, the desperadoes. He must also practice the cardinal virtues of self-restraint, truth fullness righteousness, fortitude, etc.

Hence, according to some thinkers, *Arthashastra*, the science of wealth and polity, is an *Upaveda* of the *Atharvaveda*. Its aim is to secure and preserve power over the earth. But if there is a conflict between the *Arthashastra* and *Dharmashastra* the latter must prevail

(*Yajnavalkyasmṛiti* 11.21.). *Arthasastrattu balavat dharmasastram iti sthitih.*²⁵ Thus, *Arthasastra* was a branch of *Dharmasastra*. Of course, the word *dharma* is not to be confused with the word 'religion'. It has a wider connotation. It means the ethical and spiritual values such as duty, law, justice, and righteousness. All our economic pursuits and political objectives must be compatible with these values. Thus, both power and pelf are tied to socio-spiritual obligations. Therefore, whatever was the form of the government, it was never arbitrary and unrestrained.

Dharma was above both the king and the people. Thus, *Artha* is not only the material prosperity of a single individual but also a material prosperity and stability of the whole nation. In this sense, it was a controlled and just economy. It restrains the egoistic self-aggrandisement with respect to the secular ends such as power and the pelf as well as fame. Hence, the gratification of urges like hunger for power was accepted as a legitimate goal to be pursued assiduously but not at the cost of social and moral values. In *Chandogya Upanishad*, the ideal socio-political order is described as reality in the kingdom of *Asvapati* who confidently proclaims:-

Na me steno janapade na kadaryo na madyaph Nanahitagnirnavidvan na svairi svairini kutah. (*Chandogya Upanishad* 5.11)

In the *Mahabharata*, *Santiparva* (59.14) also the ideal society is visualized by *Bhisma* who says:

Na rajyam na ca dandyo na ca dandikah Svadharmena prajah sarva raksantisma parasparam.

The best government is one that governs the least. It means the government must aim at a social order, which will require no need of external authority such as government to rule over the society.

Thus, the ideal social order is one, which is literally self-governed. Each individual is dutiful, responsible and self-controlled one who is devoted to higher values the pursuit of which is individually elevating or self-perfecting and, therefore, satisfying and socially integrating with the Marxist ideal of the higher phase of the communism in which the state will wither away or in the words of M.N. Roy, the state will at least scatter away and will be conterminous with the society. In such a society social role is understood as a form of mission (*vrata*) or in the words of *Gita*, a *svadharma* of life. This view makes social roles both pleasurable and honourable.

Thus, *Artha* was treated as one of the foundational values. But its instrumental character was rightly recognized and upheld by the Vedic philosophers. *Artha* as means of satisfying man's desires and *artha* as a power to safe-guard the moral order in society was rightly pursued as divorced from its socio-moral in society was rightly pursued as a value. But it was never pursued for its own sake and hence never divorced from its socio-moral functions. Hence, the *Atharvaveda* sought the basis of a nation (*Rashtra*) in the higher values: *Satyam Brhat Rtam ugram diksa tapo brahma yajnah prthivim dharayanti* (*Atharvaveda* 12,1,1). Honesty and integrity, bravery and austerity, wisdom and respect for the great and good sustain the world. Unless, the people and the leaders actively hold these values in high esteem, a society cannot attain stability and saturation.

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Chapter – VI

Artha as Paramapurushartha: A Critical Study

The present portion with the concept of *artha* in Indian Philosophy and an effort has been made to show that it is a value concept. The first part of this chapter deals with the various philosophical meanings of the term. In this connection, it has pointed out that *artha* has got wider connotation, which is implicitly found in different philosophical literature. The second part of this chapter deals with how *artha* plays an important role in promoting human welfare. In this part an effort has been made to use the term *artha* in other senses i.e. economy of enjoyment, economy of labour, economy of recreation, economy of time etc., which is not explicitly found in philosophical literature. In the concluding part some philosophical observations have been made from our standpoint. It includes the relation between *dharma* and *artha*, inevitability of *artha* in the attainment of *dharma* and *kama*, reducibility of *kama* into *artha*, etc. We have confined our discussion on the *trivarga*, alone which has got this worldly value i.e. social value. Here the term ‘economy’ is used in the sense of balance. ‘Economy of labour or enjoyment’ means ‘adherence of that quantity of labour or enjoyment’ by which our life becomes ‘meaningful’, which refers to a balance life. A ‘meaningful’ (*arthavan*) life is a ‘balanced’ life, which can save us from *anartha* or harmfulness. That which is harmless to us is also called *artha* (as opposed to *anartha*). Again, the object, which is associated with harmlessness or wellbeing becomes ‘meaningful’ (*arthavan*) to our life. The strong sense of economy in all spheres of life is connected with our wellbeing and hence it is ‘meaningful’ or *arthavan* to us.

Artha, which is enumerated as one of the *purusarthas* has been described as having economic value in Indian tradition and it has been taken, as an aid to fulfill human wants. A human being has been described as embodiment of complex desires. Any type of desire presupposes the motive for having certain object. An individual thinks certain object as desirable and he inclines to attain it (*istasadhanatajnanam*).

The economic sense is induced by Manu again when he advised the social beings to save for the future. He has classified man into various types according to their rate of savings. Those who are desirous of maintaining their livelihood for three years or more from the accumulated food are called *Kusaladhanyaka*. In the same way, he has described others in various ways after considering their respective savings of crops etc.¹ That Manu was not at all opponent to the policy of saving is again evident from the following statement. An individual who is desirous of happiness receives satisfaction in his mind and refrain from having more money which is not essential on account of the fact that satisfaction is the root of all happiness.² Manu has also pointed out in connection with the discussion on the duties of woman in a society that women should not spend whatever they want (*byaye camuktahastaya*)³. That the economic value is given due honour is evidenced from the recognition of *varta* as a form of *vidya* by Vatsyasyana and Manu.⁴ The agriculture, poultry and commerce (which is technically called *varta*) have been received much attention and emphasis because social beings may maintain themselves by way of adopting these. Kamandaka in his *Nitisara* admits that when *varta* is destroyed, this world is surely dead, though it seems to breath.⁵

From the above deliberation it is shown that economic consciousness is highly essential for smooth running of the family and society. One can preserve what one has earned by observing moderation in enjoyment. 'Moderation in enjoyment' means 'to be

economic' in enjoyment. The importance of restriction lies on the fact that it does not permit an individual to enjoy as much as he can. The restriction makes him balanced by way of resisting him from the excessive enjoyment. If enjoyment goes on for an endless period of time without any restriction or if suffering continues for a long time without intervention, both the situations lead us to the disbalance. Just as excessive enjoyment is 'non-economic, poverty or excessive suffering is also non-economic'. Hence, restriction has got a regulative value in our day-to-day life. 'To regulate' means 'to destroy irregularities in our life'. Hence, regulation (*niyama*) either economics or other fields comes from restriction (*niyantrana*). For the sake of others' well-being an individual puts restrictions on his own personal freedom. An individual should resist his temptation and impose restriction on his own freedom after considering bad consequences of it. The disciplined freedom is a real one as it is associated with our wellbeing. The imposition of restriction on enjoyment or minimization of enjoyment conjoins him with his own well-being. What distinguishes a man from a beast is that he recognizes universal interdependence in a society and orders his life accordingly. He establishes conventions, mutual understanding, laws of conduct for the welfare of the society, thereby imposing restriction on himself for the benefit of the whole.

The contemporary thinkers like Rabindranath Tagore etc. have also admitted the economic value of the above-mentioned type. According to Rabindranath, the fundamental thing for the performance of high austerity in the whole world is to curb the enjoyment and to curtail the desire of happiness. We should go in such a way so that we do not lean towards a particular side in which there is too much burden without adhering to harmony.⁶ In other words, the minimization and limitation of enjoyment help us to maintain harmony. This phenomenon may be described as economy of consumption.

It has been stated in *Manusamhita* in the context of describing the duties of a king that hunting, dice-playing etc. are described as vices or *vyasanas* of the King. The main contention of this description is that if a king engages himself too much in hunting, dice-playing etc., it would come under *vyasana*, but otherwise not. That is too much for absorption towards these is prohibited. This hunting etc. may be tolerable in a king's life if they are performed 'economically' i.e. after maintaining balance or limit. In the *Bhasya* Medhatithi says that drinking or dice playing may be taken as a *vyasana* if someone is addicted to it. Hence, addiction towards object is prohibited but not occasional drinking or dice-playing.⁷ Hence, an economic enjoyment is always desirable. In the same way, too much charity or penance is not also advisable, because it may lead to loss of money or health. From the above discussion it follows that an uncontrolled and unregulated life of love and pleasure (*kama*) is evil and is, therefore, not desirable. Rabindranath Tagore observes that nothing can be made beautiful or meaningful if there is no limit and hence, limit has a prominent role in beautification. Ugliness or meaninglessness in life lie there where there is limitation or restriction. Where there is this sense of economy, there is beauty. Hence, an individual who adheres to limitation in every field is always associated with his well-being which is called *artha* (as opposed to *anartha*) in our life.⁸

Artha, we think, is the fundamental factor in all-human pursuits. Hence, *dharma* and *kama* are subordinated to it. Morality (*dharma*) and pleasure (*kama*) cannot remain in a society if there is no economic stability or power. The social organization or social good always follows if every social being realizes the economic value. That which promotes life and that which is conducive to the maintenance of life is called *artha*.⁹ Survival in this world is a value. Hence, no moral and spiritual matter can deny the permanent importance of life.

If someone does not survive at all, how can he maintain moral and spiritual life? Hence, *artha* comes first for our own survival.

Dharma at the initial stage cannot step its foot if an individual has no *artha* in the sense of wealth for survival. For the acquisition and maintenance of the earth *artha* is inevitable.¹⁰ In the context the term 'earth' which is referred to by the term '*artha*' by Koutilya denotes both the source of income and human society supported by it.¹¹ From this, it does not follow that *dharma* is not essential. When an individual acquires money or wealth, which is more than his own necessity, he should utilize it for the service of mankind. Otherwise, it would be treated as evil. Hence, the economic system needs some social or moral control for achieving maximum human good or for achieving a society free from exploitation etc.

It may argued that there is no necessity of *dharma* for the achievement of social good, because strong 'sense of economy' (in the sense mentioned earlier) belonging to the social beings in respect of enjoyment will bring social good automatically. That is, the strong economic sense of an individual will give rise to him a pattern of life by which other social beings will automatically be associated with the good. Hence, there is no need of controlling factor like *dharma* etc.

In reply, it can be said that the strong sense of economy may bring social good as well as individual's good no doubt in some cases. But there are situations, when an individual may think about the social good voluntarily, how would this idea of doing 'social good' come? When someone extends himself or his own self to other social beings voluntarily, the tendency to serve people does not merely from the sense of economy but from morality also. Hence, both *dharma* and *artha* are intermingled though initially *artha* in the sense of wealth becomes prominent. That is why, it has been said that *dharma* is *artha*

and by *dharma artha* is earned. The one is means and support of the other and vice-versa. In the previous case when an individual is doing social good by way of leading an economic life, there is no role of good will as well-being follows automatically and hence there is no role of *dharma*. But in the latter case when there is a good will to serve others or to associate others with their well-being, there is certainly the role of *dharma*.

To our opinion, *kama* may be incorporated in *artha*. That is, any type of pleasure or happiness may be called *artha* in a wider sense as mentioned above. The *artha* refers to the notion of good. That which is worthy of being aimed at or desired (*ista*) is also called *artha*. In other words, *artha* is opposite to *anartha* (which causes our harm). As pleasure or happiness (*kama*) is worthy of being aimed at and as it has connection with our good in the form of satisfaction, it may be described as *artha*. If someone finds pleasure in performing undesirable works, it comes under *anartha* (but not *anartha*), as it is *dharmaviruddha* (not in accordance with *dharma*). This point may find support in the Purvamimamsa. According to them, *dharma* is always associated with the good. If any ritualistic action leads one to the non-desired situation (*anartha*), it is not at all *dharma* which is indicated through the incorporation of the term *artha* in the sutra “*Codonalaksano’ rtho Dharmah*”.¹² That which creates *priti* (pleasure or happiness) etc. is desired (*artha*), because *priti* is that in which an individual finds pleasure.¹³

Artha, which is in accordance with *dharma*, is nothing but pleasure (*kama*). Hence, there is no necessity of admitting *kama* other than *artha*. *Kama* or pleasure has been used as *artha* in various places of Sanskrit literature as in the case of *putrарtha* etc. Here the hedonistic value of this is not neglected, but it is stated that *artha* can fulfill both economic and hedonistic value. What *artha* gives us is always pleasant and good as opposed to evil (*anartha*).¹⁴

In the phenomenal world the moral and economic value are very much essential, because they have got a prominent role in bringing social harmony or justice. Hence, this value has much bearing upon the society. We may conclude after mentioning the view of Sri Aurobindo who has shared the above-mentioned idea. According to him, it is not proper for mankind to be the slave of money, as it creates problem in bringing *divyabhava* due to having addiction to it. It is not proper at the same time for a man to reject the importance of money. Without the help of it an individual cannot proceed for awakening *divyabhava* in others. He observes: "Money is the visible sign of a universal force, and this force in its manifestation on earth works on the vital and physical planes and is indispensable to the fullness of the outer life. In its origin and its true action, it belongs to the divine. But like other powers of the divine it is delegated here and in the ignorance of the lower Nature can be usurped for the uses of the ego or held by *Asurik* influence perverted to their purpose. This is indeed one of the three forces – power, wealth and sex – that have the strongest attraction for the human ego and the *Asura* and are most generally misheld and misused by those who retain them. The seekers or keepers of wealth are most often possessors rather than its possessors; few escape entirely a certain distorting influence stamped on it by its long seizure and pervasion by the *Asura*. For this reason most spiritual aspects were on a complete self-control, detachment and renunciation of all bondage to wealth and of all personal and egoistic desire for its possession. Some even put a ban on money and riches and proclaim poverty and barrenness of life as the only spiritual condition. But this is an error, it leaves the power in the hands of the holistic forces.... you must neither turn with an ascetic shrinking from the money power, the means of it give and the objects it brings, nor cherish a *rajasik* attachment to them or a spirit enslaving self-indulgence in their gratification. Regard wealth simply as a power to be won back for the Mother and placed at

her service.¹⁵ From the above discussion, it is proved that *artha* is a valuable human pursuit and hence it is to be taken as most valuable one if the term '*artha*' is taken in a liberal sense.

Artha can also be depicted as a highest *Purusartha* even if it is taken in the sense of property or money. *Artha*, if earned through righteous means, is equivalent to Divinity, just as *Kama* practiced through righteous means is called Divinity as evidenced in the *Bhagavadgita* – '*Dharmaviruddhah Kamo'smi*'. Hence '*artha*' cannot be neglected in our life, because it has a tremendous value. Sri Aurobindo has taken it as a form of *Mahalaksmi*. Sri Aurobindo observes: "Money is the visible sign of a universal force, and this force in its manifestation on the earth works on the vital and physical planes and is indispensable to the fullness of the outer life. In its origin and its true action, it belongs to the Divine. But like other powers of the Divine it is delegated here and in the ignorance of the lower. Nature can be usurped for the uses of the ego and held one of the three forces – power, wealth, sex, that have the strongest attraction for the human ego and the *Asura* and are most generally misheld and misused by those who retain them. The seekers or keepers of the wealth are more often possessed rather than its possessor; few escape entirely a long seizure and pervasion by the *Asura*. For this reason, most spiritual disciplines insist on complete self-control, detachment, and renunciation of all bondage to wealth and of all personal and egoistic desire for its possession. Some even put ban on money and riches and proclaim poverty and barrenness of life as the only spiritual condition. But this is error; it leaves the power in the hands of the hostile forces. To reconquer it for the Divine to whom it belongs and use it divinely for the divine life is the supra-mental way for the *Sadhaka*."

Even *Dharma* cannot come into being if there is no economic stability. *Dharma* in the sense of morality is formed in a person if he is provided with minimum food or drink. If a man does not get food for his sustenance, there does not arise any question of morality.

Any moral question falls flat on the persons who remain hungry. We may recall here the view of Swami Vivekananda who first advocated – ‘first bread, then religion’. He said, “What we want is not so much spirituality as a little of the bringing down of the Advaita into the material world. “First bread and then religion”. (*Complete works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. 3, p. 432; Advaita Ashram, Mayavati, 1940). He thinks that all the forces that are working in this body have been generated from food. If fasting is adopted, our body will get weak leading to the loss of physical forces. Due to the gradual loss of physical force the mental forces become lost as a result of which we cannot think of undertaking any course of reasoning. To him – “We have, therefore, to take care what sort of food we eat at the beginning, and when we have got strength enough, when our practice is well-advanced, we need not be so careful in this respect”. (CWS, Vol-3, p-136). That is why we thought of amalgamating ‘*Islamic body and Vedantic thought*’. We generally try to convince ordinary persons about religion when they actually need food. Dogmas or theories about religion will fall flat upon other if their hunger is not appeased.

The above view of Vivekananda finds support in our tradition, which says – ‘*Sariram adyam khalu Dharmasadhanam*’, i.e. for practicing religion body has to be given priority. Sound health alone can give sound thinking. This sound health is related to food. To set minimum food or bread we need money.

For the performance of *Dharma* in the sense of rituals, we need sound body and sound mind. That is why; *artha* is not always creating *anartha* to human being. Considering such importance of it, it is put in the second place in the list of *Purusarthas*.

It is said by Sankara that money is always to be considered as object of harmfulness (*artham anartham bhavayet nityam*). If an individual always thinks of getting property, it will lead him to the state of harmfulness. The attainment of money can increase the greed of

a man, which makes him involved in attaining more. It actually leads us to the state of harmfulness.

In response to the above problem, it may be said that property is an indispensable factor in our life, but it should have limit. We should not want money that is not at all essential for maintaining our livelihood. It has been suggested by our ancient seers one should long for money, which is necessary for his basic needs. If he desires money more than his basic needs, he is a thief. The *Srimadbhagavadgita* tells us that the extra property should be distributed to others. If he keeps this to him without giving to the needy persons for his own enjoyment, which is not at all essential, he is to be considered as a thief and be punished accordingly. Considering this aspect, it is said in the *Isopanisad* – ‘*Ma grdha kasyasviddhanam*’ (Do not be greedy with others properties).

Artha is very much valuable because it may be taken as both end and means. When someone tries to attain wealth, it is an end no doubt considering its importance in our daily life, but at the same time, this has to be obtained through honest means i.e. *anartha* like getting money through bribery, robbery etc. *Artha* or wealth is to be obtained through the means associated with well-being (*artha*). If this mean becomes auspicious, the role of *Dharma* becomes redundant as *artha* serves the same purpose. This view finds support in the *Arthasamgraha* where *Dharma* is defined as *vedapрати-padyaprayojanavadartha Dharmah*, i.e. *Dharma* is taken as equivalent to *artha* having utility in performing activities prescribed in the Vedas. Here, *Dharma* is taken as equivalent to *artha* but not *anartha* in the sense of well-being – both material and spiritual. Moreover, if the religious activities or mortality (*Dharma*) depends on economic stability (*artha*) and if *artha* can provide all types of well-being to man, it should be taken as superior to other *Purusarthas*, even to *Dharma*.

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1. *Manusamhita*, 4/7
2. *Ibid*, 4/13
3. *Ibid*, 5/150
4. *Vatsyayanabhasya* on Sutra no. 1.1.1.
5. *Nitisara*, 3/12
6. Rabindranath Tagore: *Santiniketan. Rabindra Rachanabali*, Vol. 12, p. 438, W.B. Govt.
7. *Vyasanabdena atyanto' bhyasa etadvargavisaye usyate, atasca abhyasa pratisidhyate, no tu isadasevanam*, Madhutithi on *Manusamhita*- 7/47.
8. "Sima nahile sunder hai na ei janyai sima Praman mane naye rup sei kurupa, taha samagreri virodhi". *Vicitra Pravandha*, Visva-Bharati, p. 122.
9. "Prthivyah labhe palane ca yavaniyarthasastra", *Arthasastra*- 1.111.5.
10. *Ibid*.
11. *Ibid*, 180.1.1.
12. *Mamamsasasutra*- 1.1.2.
13. "Yasmin priti purusasya tasya lipsarthalaksana avibhaktatvat. *Mimamsasutra*- 4.1.1.
14. *Arthasastra*- 3/5.
15. Sri Aurobindo: *The Mother*, Vol. 25, Pondicherry, 1972, pp. 10-12.

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