

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 extra-marital 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 practice 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 bhumi*. 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 dharmana patni 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 *Asvinas*, 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 pelf, 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*’ (*Brhadarayaka 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.