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HARMONY IN SOCIETY THROUGH PURUṢĀRTHAS

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Abstract: The concept of *puruṣārtha*, is a fundamental element of Indian Philosophy, which has thoroughly been discussed in Sanskrit Literature. The ultimate end of life is to attain fourfold *puruṣārtha*. The four *puruṣārthas* are really four fundamental pillars of human life. We all have known that according to Hinduism there are four aims of life (*puruṣārtha*), i.e. *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*. *Puruṣārtha* means that 'it is desired' by one '*puruṣa*' or man. How to achieve this is a fundamental question. The Sanskrit texts have replied to this enquiry in many circumstances. All the explanations are meant for achieving the four goals. The proposed paper aims at discussing those points here.

Keywords: *puruṣārtha*, *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa*, *Rta*, *Īsopaniṣad*, *āśrama*,

I. INTRODUCTION

Man desires these four *puruṣārthas*. But the fact is that man emphasizes, from time immemorial only, *artha* and *kāma* which only satisfy his immediate physical needs. Man desires after worldly pleasures and properties and runs after them which turn him to be materialist. All the more his efforts naturally are towards these two and not towards *dharma* and *mokṣa*. The word 'religion' is very wide and has been variously defined. Its real significance is mystical and more in ward, than outward. Generally the English word 'religion' is translated from the Sanskrit word '*dharma*'. It is necessary to examine the corresponding meanings between these two words. The word 'religion' is used to signify the satisfaction of hunger of man's heart. Its only significance is realization of God, and its mystical experience and search after everlasting and ineffable peace and awakening of human mind and existence. In a wider sense religion means 'belief in heaven'; 'faith in God,' 'different ways of knowing him' including in its auxiliaries e.g. religious festivals and fasting, *prāyaścitta* etc. leading to different-rituals.

II. WIDER ACCEPTABILITY OF VEDIC IDEAS

The Hindu refers '*dharma*' equal to the 'actions' i.e. *kriyās*, which are obligatory to him. Accordingly '*dharma*' refers to ethics. The reference to '*dharma*' is found in the oldest Sanskrit literature, viz. *R̥gveda*: i.e. the almighty God spreads his three steps in the *ākāśa* and establishes '*dharma*' in the three worlds. In *R̥gveda* the whole universe is *dhārmika* i.e. regulates, should say disciplines the world, Sun, moon, wind, rain, etc. in cyclic order. The word '*dharma*' is used here as law. This meaning is not only based on the derivative meaning of '*dharma*' but is meant is keeping with a view to its *nirdeśa* and *guṇa*. It means that the word (*dharma*) to their own faith and their thoughts and practices are all guided by it. The word 'Religion' means according to them those facts starting from law up its wider meaning of religion. This testifies that '*dharma*' is the very receptacle of the whole world.

III. FOUR PILLARS OF LIFE

The word 'dharma' again is worship. According to *vaiṣṇavas*, 'dharma' is devotional worship 'whoever worships me, that is dharma'. Dharma is devotion, according to the *vaiṣṇavas*, to *Śrī kṛṣṇa*, and nothing else. In this way 'dharma' is an ideal, leading man to spirituality or his spiritual life.

'Dharma' is like an unchangeable or non-crooked discipline, i.e. a 'straight lines which goes in one direction. Generally speaking it is compared to nature and its laws. According to Max Muller *Rta* is ideal which is standard of right and wrong and which inspires spiritual consciousness. *Rta* is derived from the root meaning 'to regulate'. It regulates all kinds of injunctions and duties, etc. The conception of values in ethical and aesthetic judgment is different from that in factual judgment that fill our ordinary mode of life. We get questions in the examination hall with the instruction that all questions are of equal value, offers in advertisements of value added product or services- certain items or amount given free with its purchase.

These we call economic value involving material gain or loss or nothing. (It is nothing to a bald headed person if a pack of hair oil comes with a comb absolutely) Economic value affects us the most, as it is concerned with our weekday living from Monday to Saturday. But on Sunday, when we have a nap in the afternoon after a leisurely sumptuous lunch and during the nap swim over our activities over the past week and try to audit our progress in the journey of life, then we find something else. In this kind evaluation of human activity there emerges certain other values of broad order shooting beyond the here and now. Indian sages put the entire gamut of human pursuit under four value orders:

1. *Kāma*, 2. *Artha* 3. *Dharma*, 4. *mokṣa*.

The difference in conceptualization of the orders of values is due to the difference between the cultural milieu of India and that of the West. The India seer sees beyond the existent and the present. He seeks to transcend the fetters of all sorts that limit the fullness and perfectibility of man. "*nālpe sukhamasti, bhumaiva sukham*." The western thinkers do not get tired of condemning this philosophy of self-transcendence as the attitude of self – effacement, self-abnegation, running away from reality, otherworldly and contra- progress and contra-good life of the individual in society.

The Indian thinker has never denounced the material or the physical order of human existence. The human being at base is a physio-psycho-intellectual structure called body-the gross body. Hunger and thirst of this body are the two inbuilt mechanisms that create in him desires to get appropriate matter for his subsistence. Protection of the body from the sun and rain and attack of wild animal create in him the desire to have more of matter. Who can be greater advocate of the importance of material order than *Cārvāka* ? *yavat jīvet sukham jīvet, ṛṇam kṛtvā ghṛtam pivet*, he advocates.

Everything that is eaten is edible and everything that heard is audible, but everything that is desired is not desirable and everything that is valued is not valuable. The Indian sage mentions a priceless, one of the most valuable, distinction between *preya* and *śreya*.

It is the market force that dictates the order of the day. In such an order, *artha*, or money, or matter, private property is the prime value of life. Along with that, of course, comes *kāma* or desire. The motto of life or philosophy of life is, desire more property, produce more goods, sell more goods and acquire more property.

IV. UPANISHADIC REFLECTIONS

The Indian concept of *sarvodaya* - *sarvānām udyā*- is the true spirit of globalization backed by the *Īśopaniṣad*'s teachings namely, *tena tyaktena bhujjithāḥ*. Renunciation for others is the ground of enjoyment for one self.

We have said about *kāma* & *artha* and we observed how both of them might harm rather than help human progress. The sense organs are the source of our power for generation of actions. Like any power, they have the tendency to corrupt. If they are well organized and harmonized, then one's progress is smooth without deviation or collision with any other's progress.

There is the *puruṣārtha* of *dharma* that organizes and harmonizes *kāma* and *artha* and ensures smooth progress. It needs clarification here that *dharma* is not what religion is. Of many differences between them, religion has sectarian identity that *dharma* does not have. Of course, the word *dharma* has several senses, but in the sense in which we are using it at present, it concerns the whole domain of creation, for the preservation and well being of all *prajāḥ*, animate, inanimate of all spheres- biosphere, stratosphere, ozonosphere, etc.

V. DHARMA AND KARMA

The Sanskrit texts regard *dharma* as a moral concept roughly corresponding to the good, as it is understood in the west. It includes virtues that count for character of a person like fortitude and temperance, but goes beyond them. It includes *varṇāśrama dharmas*, (mainly social duties), *Kāmyakarmas* (concerning the agent's rank and riches). *Dharma* is what supports the being and becoming of the entire cosmos. *Dharma* protects us all, but not unconditionally. We have to protect *dharma*, simply because one, who protects *dharma*, gets the protection of *dharma* – *dharmo rakṣati rakṣitaḥ*. We protect *dharma* by doing our duties without being anxious about what benefit would be there for us.

My desires, wants, and aspirations are one with those of the whole of created beings, *prajā*. There must not, therefore, be any envy of anybody's resources and acquisitions. *mā grdhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam*, exhorts the *Īśopaniṣad*. Some like Gandhiji extol *ahimsā* as *parama* (the highest) *dharma* as highlighted in Indian tradition.

There is another *puruṣārtha*, which is regarded as ultimate value. The ultimate value. The Indian seer terms it as '*mokṣa*', which is generally translated as 'liberation'. To my mind, the approximate English rendering of '*mokṣa*' would be 'perfection'.

mokṣa is not a state to attain or domain to land on after death, like *śivaloka*, *viṣṇuloka* or *brahmaloka*. These are concepts of religion articulated to appeal to the low witted persons (*manda- buddhi-* not in any derogatory sense). When one performs virtuous deeds, one attains those lokas on the strength of virtue. But when the strength of virtue gets depleted, one has to retreat from that loka. One gets *mokṣa* and one must get it now and here. There is no retreat from it – *na saḥ punarāvarte*. The seeker gets what's already with him (*prātaprāptiḥ*); for him to get is know and to know is become. This state is known as *brāhmīsthiti*. Brahman, That is, *Sat-cit-ānanda* (Existence-consciousness-Bliss), is the transcendental group of all empirical manifestations of reality, Knowledge and value. The man who realizes Brahman, is in *brāhmīsthiti*, he does not put off work and turn a recluse (*sannyāsī* in the popular sense), but he does regularly perform with commitment and involvement actions that are conducive to the good life of all (*nitya sannyāsī*).

As a nation can be divided into several classes, progress of human life can also be divided into several stages. Such a division existed in ancient India in which human life was divided into four distinct stages known as *āśrama*-s. During the course of this schooling he has to pass through four stages or four grades of training as it were called *āśrama*-s.

VI. ĀŚRAMA LIFE AND DISCIPLINE

Derivatively, the term *āśrama* means "where there is continuous toiling." Literally, the word signifies a place of halt in the journey of life. In other words, it may be regarded as a resting place on the way to final liberation.

According to R.K. Mukherjee, the scheme for four stages of life (*āśrama*-s) has proper kind of discipline and toil (*śrama*) with due importance on individual rights, duties and obligation.

Āśramas are four in number, *Brahmacarya*, *Grāhastya*, *Vānaprastha*, & *Sannyāsa* or *Yativrata*.

BRAHMACARYA

This is the first stage of an ideal Hindu life and it starts from the seventh year of one's birth. The student career of perfect Hindu begins at this stage.

GrHASTHĀŚRAMA

Consequent upon completion of the student career, an individual enters the second *āśrama* called *Grhasthāśrama*. According to Manu, there were four types of house holders, namely, *jñānaniṣṭha*, *taponiṣṭha*, *Svādhyāyaniṣṭha* & *karmaniṣṭha*.

VĀNAPRASTHĀŚRAMA

Although *Grhasthāśrama* has been said to be the best of all *āśrama*-s and accorded place a lofty place. During this stage, a *Vānaprasthin* lives in a leaf-cottage in a forest.

SANNYĀSĀŚRAMA

This is the final stage of journey that an individual undertakes during his life time. In this *āśrama*, an individual concentrates all his energy in attainment of *mokṣa*.

In the *Arthaśāstra* the word *dharma* has also been used in the sense of merit of virtue. In the ninth chapter while dealing with the doubts about *artha*, & *anartha* he refers to three kinds of *puruṣārthas* i.e. *artha*, *dharma* and *kāma*. He says that "it is better to secure that which is mentioned first than that which is subsequently mentioned in order of enumeration.¹ And subsequently he describes what is not regarded as *artha*.

anartho 'dharmaḥ śoka ityanarthatrivargaḥ/

tasya purvaḥ pūrvaḥ śreyān pratikatturm //

Anartha, Adharma and *śloka* from what is called as *anarthavarga*. Of these it is better to avoid or get rid of these mentioned above one by one by which there will be betterment individual life and in society as well.

The paired terms like *dharma* and *adharma* have also been mentioned in the sense of merit (virtue) and demerit in the text frequently.

“artho 'natha iti, dharma'adharma iti, kāmaḥ śoka iti saṁśaya trivargaḥ//
śreyānupasaṁprāpum//”

tasyattrapakṣyasiddhau pūrvapakṣyaḥ

When there are doubts in above pairs it called as *saṁśyatrivarga*. Out of these *anartha, adharma & śoka* have to be avoided and *artha, dharma & kāma* have to be achieved. As *dharma* is basis of *artha* and *kāma* is the end of *artha*, success in achieving that kind of *artha* which promotes *dharma, artha* and *kāma* is termed as success in all respects which is called as *sarvārthasiddhi*.² The importance of *dharma* lies in building one's life in such a manner that rest of *puruṣārthas* are achieved automatically. One has to follow the path of righteousness by inculcating the virtues and this path shows him the the right direction to march ahead for the betterment in one's life.

CONCLUSION

The search for the ultimate reality takes the enquirer higher and there does not exist the highest. To stick to any one stage would breed dogmas. This is the plan of forging perfect persons. When perfect persons are produced, then there is no strife, no war, anything of the sort; there is no harmony and peace. When everyone does his /her duty, everyone's right is automatically ensured. Perfect man is the leader in the house, in the society, in the business organization, everywhere. Perfect man is the *kamayogī*, not *karmasaṅgī* in the words of *Bhagavadgītā*.

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