



Chaturasrama: An Individual Excellence

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Abstract – It is the man only knows his destination. Human awareness is self-reflective. From the beginning, the perceptive ingenuity of man has led him to take note of an order in the world of human actions. Dharma, the moral universal order has its instantiation in the particular as their characteristic's essence. Every object has its essential property without which it ceases to have existence and identity. Human beings constitute a distinct universe of their own. Human beings are self-consciously felt as the urge to attain the state of beatitudes and bliss. The real existential challenge is to determine the exact content of ought in respect of the trifarious needs. Liberation and collective well-being have been conceived respectively as the personal and social goals. Dharma, the cardinal values constitute the very basis of our way of living. Chaturasram, the most important virtues and regulative principle work out the existential modus operandi, enabling the individual to utilise the practical to expedite the pace of progress to the transcendental. Appearance of man was perhaps the most momentous event in the history of evolution. Animals and other living creatures evolve under internal compulsion, external influence, and attraction of the cosmic logus. But the human species comes to possess a distinctive ability either to fast-track the pace of evolution or makes a returning march in moving away from the inevitable goal and thereby delay the journey back home. Chaturasram offers a value scheme showing how the physical and the psychic can follow in a proper channel to attain Purusartha.

Keywords: Dharma, Asramadharma, Purusartha, Cardinal virtue, and Individual excellence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Universe is an uncomprehensible genius. Creation and each created creatures are unique in their structure and nature. Man is something extra-ordinary intellectual being among the rest. As the centre of creation, he/she only understands his/her own reality and knows what the things are has to perform. Human understanding and awareness are self-reflective. That has convinced man to seek the uncover secrets of Nature and man himself. From the beginning, the perceptive ingenuity of man has led him to take note of an order in the world of human actions. Being the part of creation and society, human conduct plays an important role in our social life. Conduct includes behaviour, motive and attitudes are the actional expressions. Actional expressions are the indicators through which judgements take place and judgements are intellectual property to establish virtue and vice. The ancient Indian civilization believes in supreme end of human life. The supreme end (Purushartha) includes Artha(wealth), Kama(happiness), Dharma(virtue) and Moksha(liberation). It's a common psychological acceptance by everyman that a complete well-being is the attainment of Purushartha.

Artha, wealth, an economical transaction that satisfies both psychological and biological desires through the fulfilment of material needs. Because body usually needs material objects to survive. Material needs are the product of mental urge. Kama, happiness, a mental, biological and emotional needs are the most important part of all living creatures having a body and sense. It's an enjoyment of desires produced by sense organs. Dharma, the virtue, a social need is the product of reason or conscience in a form of moral



law. Because human existence and productivity is incomparable with other living beings. Control of instincts, appetites, impulses, desires, emotions and living in with accordance situations are the moral activities of a rational being. Moksha, the liberation, is the highest stage of man that the state of detachment from karmic bondage. If the first three properly fulfils the material, economical, biological, and social needs and surpasses by a man, then only a man realizes transcendental good. Liberation is transcendental perfection. When these four basic achievements were fulfilled in accordance with living that time life became meaningful. Life realizes true nature and became free from world bondage.

2. ASRAM DHARMA

Chaturashrama, the four stages of life are the cardinal virtues. The realization of a cosmic transcendental ought to be the purpose of human life. Asramadharma is the four stages of life i.e. Brahmacharya, Gruhastha, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa. The duties and responsibilities of different stages of a person help to pursue individual excellence. A civilized society completely depends on obligatory duties of each. So, dharma comes to one's rescue. Dharma or Virtue plays the role of the regulative principle by which the individual decides what ought to do? It can be understood with the root 'Dhri' means uphold or sustain a person and society by his individual excellence. The well-being or individual excellence always protect and progress the community and maintains harmony in social life. Dharma stands for the universals which uphold the moral order.

Human beings constitute an integral part of 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. but unlike other living counterparts, humans have a universe of their own. Human existence is distinctive on account of their unique possessions, i, e rationality, normative awareness and free will. they have the innate ability to have a sense of ends and means, ought and ought not, the pleasure and preference. So, dharma is the principle of righteousness. According to Mimamsakas, Dharma is that which induces one to righteous action.

Vastu dharma is the dharma of inorganic existents, the essential property of objects or things. Jaiva dharma refers to the essential qualities of living creatures including animals, plants, insects, and other living organisms. Manav dharma is one of the important dharma that values a lot. The essential property of all human beings through which individual and social life become fruitful. An individual is the combination of gross and subtle bodies. It includes matter and spirit. Indian philosophy believes that human structure and identity is a body, a mind and a soul. That's why man is spiritual living being with the qualities of rationality. Indian orthodox system is completely agreed with moral obligation. Dharma primarily stands for the characteristic's essence or absolute property of things and beings.

Asrama Dharma literally means a resting place or a state where one exerts oneself. Both the senses are incorporated in the notion of asramdharma. Here asrama means, a stage of life. Ancient thinkers have divided a complete lifespan into four successive states, viz. Brahmacharya (celibate), Gruhastha (house holder), Vanaprastha (forest dweller), and Sannyasa (renunciate). These are used in the sense of moral imperative, what one ought to do or ought not to do, follows from a stage or a phase of life. The division of four distinct stages is grounded in the physico-psychic state of individuals and the ultimate values of individual life, irrespective of one's station in life. Everyone has to pass through these four successive stages. Each stages preparatory for the succeeding one and the four stages taken together do aim at preparing the individual for the realisation of the highest goal, i, e. moksha. the state of liberation is the state of perfection. Every individual – who is potentially divine at the core of his being–aspire after the state of Truth,



Beatitude and Bliss. The evolutionary spectrum discloses unmistakably nissus towards perfection. Human body is conceived as the fittest instrument for undertaking the godward march and human life, a veritable opportunity for the journey unto perfection. Life is construed not as a hindrance but some help wherein a human being can work out the highest attainment expeditiously.

Brahmacharya is the prime period and foundation of the whole life. The foremost duty of Brahmachari/Brahmacharini is to study and cultivate the sterling values of life. The system of Gurukul, the new name as residential schools, were meant for students in order to live in a proximity with the Guru (preceptor). Guru is not merely a teacher who imparts education by way of furnishing information but one with exemplary conduct. He stands as the embodiment of perfection and values which the celibate tries to emulate. The importance of brahmachari life is believing and following an ideal living. The sole mission of gurukul education system was man-making with ideals were understanding the wisdom with virtue. As it is the beginning of human life that needs a physical and psychic discipline so that one becomes physically sound and mentally alert. Physico-psycho preparedness is the basic prerequisite for spiritual contemplation and makes the individual to lead the life of successful householder in the second stage of Gruhastha.

After completion of brahmacharya life at gurukul one enters into the life of Gruhastha or the life of householder. Gruhasthasrama is taken to be the basic, because it not only provides support to people in other stages of life but also helps one to meet other obligations of life. In fact, all-round training obtained in the previous asrama is put to acid test in the face of the temptations and complexities of real life. living as useful citizen in the community and fulfilling the responsibility in family life. Household life is full of accountability with lot of patience and task. It's an opportunity for all humans to be husband and wife, mother and father to continue the generation through a physical relation. For emotional fulfilment between male and female, the householder exhibits the sense of mutuality, fellowship and large heartedness with a sense of goal and direction. The house holder gets an opportunity to pay back three basic debts (Rna), viz, Devaruna, Pituruna and Rishiruna. When we step in this world, we are associated with the above debts. Devaruna is related to nature and other essential elements to survive. Nature includes air, water, fire, sun, rain, soil are essential elements for life. For every breath of our existence, we are so dependent on the above elements. These elements are recognized as different deity or God. The real spirit of Devaruna is to live a life of gratitude to nature by taking care of flora and fauna and making judicious use the nature given resources. Secondly, we owe our body to parents, grandparents and great grandparents. Gruhastha is a stage where scripture allows someone to perform all rituals, and spiritual worship activities. Rishiruna is another debt that needs study and propagation of knowledge. Wisdom and enlightenment of the seers nourish civilization. Scriptures are source of wisdom and enlightenment. Gruhastha dharma involves synthesis of personal and the social connections.

Vanaprastha is the third stage of ashram Dharam. the successful completion of life a householder is followed by a stage in life when he must retire into relative seclusion. A person, after discharging worldly obligations and entrusting the responsibilities to able successors, has to embrace life of abstinence and non-possession.

Sannyasa is an austerities or penance, a rigorous spiritual practice to prepare oneself towards Mosksha. He lives like a monk or yogi detached from material pleasure and should free from family bondage. A complete conquered over emotions, desires and sensual pleasure lead to yogic life. It's time for complete renunciation. Self-restraint from the duties like Ahimsa(non-violence), Satya (abstention from falsehood),



Asteya(non-stealing), Brahmacharya (sexual restraint) and Aparigraha(non-possession) are the objectives of sannyas

life.

3. CONCLUSION

The uniqueness of Indian culture lies wonderful power of accommodation and synthesis. Indian civilization, by and large, is a complex and plural in nature. Its social variety comprises many races, language groups, and religious faiths. The scriptural guidance and, rigorous practice of religious and ethical teachers of different ages have enlightened society. Wisdom removes ignorance. Understanding things and beings, following moral principles, and practicing the ideals in human life is Dharma. It flourishes the soul to reach his destination. It's the golden means which make a man perfect or well-being. Living like a God, was the dream of Vedic people because we are the part of that divine. All the religious practices central point is individual excellence. An individual excellence is the practice of cardinal virtues. Chaturasram, the four stages, are living force always a guideline for human civilization.

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