I. IN THE ABSENCE OF MUTUALITY

I. Introduction

We have critically examined the question of interrelationship between the various purusharthas. And among the different theories examined we have agreed with the one according to which the purusharthas are interactional rather than hierarchical. That the purusharthas are interactional means that they mutually control the extreme tendencies of each other. The principle of kama exercises control over artha so that lust for political and economic power does not become the goal of life. Similarly, moksha and dharma control artha and kama in such a way that unbridled avarice and pleasure does not become the goal of life. The trivarga controls moksha so that it does not become a kind of escapism. In like manner, dharma is prevented by the other purusharthas from becoming ritualistic. When looked at from this perspective, the purusharthas become mutually complementary.

One more point becomes clear from the mutual control exercised by moksha and dharma on the one hand and artha and kama on the other: In the absence of the one or the other controlling factor, what remains will not be purushartha. But we have not yet illustrated this point sufficiently. We shall therefore now pass on to consider the question: **What would happen if any one purushartha is followed without regard for the other purusharthas?** The result will not really be healthy as is clear from the message of the story of Rishyasringa. What has really happened is evidence enough for us to foretell what would happen. We shall therefore recount what has in fact happened in case of following any one purushartha to the exclusion of others.
2. Illustrations from the Mahabharata

In the absence of mutuality among the purusharthas we are likely to become addict to any one of the purusharthas depending on our concrete life situation. There are several cases of such addictions in the Mahabharata. For instance, addiction to the game of dice is said to have led Yudhistira to part with all his possessions including even his wife Panchali. This kind of extreme addiction to any one purushartha is not limited to any one particular period of history either. It is evident at all times and in all societies. For instance, historians tell us that one of the reasons for the fall of the Roman Empire was its excessive interest in sports and games. Neither is our present day world which fortunately has not yet fully fallen is free from excessive addiction to games like cricket and to the habits like the use of drugs. Given the lesson from the experience of mankind that too much of anything, even amrtu, is poisonous, purusharthas to be purusharthas are to be controlling each other. If not, what remains will not be purushartha.

This can be further illustrated in two ways. One way is to take examples from the Mahabharata. The other is to illustrate it with the present day thinking on ecology. Of these two, we propose to give more attention to ecology for two reasons. One, it has become a theme of current importance and relevance. Two, it brings out sharply what is really happening to us in the absence of mutual control among the purusharthas. While examples from the Mahabharata bring out the harmful effects of discarding the mutuality between purusharthas on individuals, the consideration of ecological problems brings out its harmful effects not only on individuals but also on mankind in its totality.
In addition to the Story of Rishyasringa we have already narrated, We now take just three more examples from the Mahabharata. (i) **The mahabharata Yuddha** the main cause of which was the exclusive pursuit of artha. (ii). The story of Vigitraveerian who was an addict to kama. (iii). A particular behavior of Parasurama who failed to lead an ascetic life without any recourse to the ordinary world.

(i). **Maha(bharata) Yuddha.** The biggest disputes among humans have to do with artha, lust for power. The greatest illustration of this fact is the rivalry and war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, as is detailed in the Mahabharata. Here Duriyodhana, the leader of the Kauravas, is presented as the embodiment of man's lust for power. One of the reasons that led to the Mahabharata war is obviously the avarice of Duriyodhana resulting from his lust for power. He felt jealous of the material prosperity of the Pandavas. The point to be noted here is that the pursuit of artha without regard for the other purusharthas is bound to be disastrous. That is, it can lead to a Maha(bharata) Yuddha.

Incidently, it may be noted, that Yudhistira, the leader of the Pandavas, had a weakness for the game of dias, a form of kama, which also is said to be one of the causes of the Mahabharata war.

(ii). **The Story of Vigitraveerian.** The second instance from the Mahabharata is the story of Vigitraveerian. It illustrates the point that the exclusive pursuit of kama leads to lust and to its undesirable consequences. Vigitraveerian was known for his dharmic behavior before his marriage; but he became an addict to kama after his marriage. He spent seven years with two of his most beautiful wives and is said to have died of tuberculosis (Rajayakshmahav) of the kind that refused to respond to medical treatment. Here the point is not that the gratification of kama in the context of a married life is adharmic but rather that its extreme tendency left unbridled leads to lust.
(iii). The peculiar behavior of Parasurama. The third illustration from the Mahabharata has to do with the great ascetic Parasurama. He becomes over enthusiastic about helping Amba to solve her problem. Under the pretext of helping Amba he fought with Bhishma for twenty four days on end and got thoroughly defeated. Now, what prompted Parasurama to assume the posture of a saviour and to behave the way he did? Why did he resume his attachment to the world to the extent of getting humiliated?

The overt reasons given do not justify his action. For, Bhishma had not done anything against the Raja dharma of his time in forcefully taking Amba away to be given in Marriage. Besides, there were other more reasonable ways of solving Amba’s problems. Also, she was not particularly angry with Bhism. Whereas there is enough textual evidence to show that Parasurama was covertly guided by a perverted form of kama which he had suppressed but got activated at the sight of the attractive princes.1

Here it will help us to recall one of the points of the story of Rishyasringa we recounted earlier. Namely, the ascetics Vibhandaka and his son Rishyasringa found it impossible to live in the seclusion of forest recesses without having any recourse to the ordinary ways of the world. Now, without multiplying stories of this type, we might ask: Is it impossible for an ascetic to live such a life, as is implied by these stories? The answer is that such a life may be logically possible. But there is no clear evidence or instance that it is practically possible. Not even the himalayan Yogi is free from the influence of kama.
II. THE ECOLOGICAL IMPASSE

1. Introduction

Let us now focus on the second illustration of our failure to pursue the four purusharthas as a integral whole. The main problems the world is facing today can be said to be three in number: 1. The production, sale and use of weapons for destructive purposes which have two deadly consequences. 2. ecological crisis. 3. poverty and unemployment. These three problems are intimately related. Of these three, ecological crisis is the most crucial which is caused by the first and is in turn the cause of the third. This we hope to make clear as we explain the central problem of ecological crisis which has become a global concern and a serious question challenging the very existence of the entire living species on earth.

As a result of our excessive kama-artha tendencies, 'the earth's foundations are giving way', says the Psalmist.2 In other words, the ecological crisis emerges from our unbridled misuse of our freedom and our quest for selfish gains which destroys the harmony of nature. In order to have more production and thus to enhance pleasure, we have been exploiting nature to the point of destroying it.

2. Meaning of ecology

Ecology is derived from the Greek word 'oikos' meaning 'house'. It is revealing to note that the word 'ecology' appears in the English language by the year 1873 when the industrial revolution began to alter the countryside culture of the English people.
Many have tried to define ecology of which we quote one as a sample:

*Ecology is the study of environmental interactions which control the welfare of living things, regarding their distribution, abundance, production and evaluation.*

One point that this definition reveals is that each phenomenon in nature lives for the other and thus help sustain the total life. The springs 'give drink to every beast of the field'; the high mountains are for the wild goats, the rocks are a refuge for the badgers, the moon marks the seasons and the sun runs its course.

3. The Ecological Crisis

Given this definition, it is easy to explain the present day ecological crisis: Our mother, the earth, is being poisoned and is at the point of death. One of the deeply held truths among the native peoples the world over is that the earth is our mother. But today this mother earth has become the victim of our lust and avarice. The Bhopal and Chernobyl disasters amply illustrate this point.

The ecological crisis looms large over the whole earth and every living thing is affected by it. We humans are responsible for it; we have been behaving like the proverbial fool 'cutting the very branch on which he sits'. Since this crisis has become universal today, let us look at it in some detail and ask how this matricide is committed.

4. Our Manner of Matricide

The ways in which we commit this matricide are many. We Indians, for example, are killing the earth by wiping out forests, turning valleys like Tehri into
Dams, continuing to build new nuclear power stations like Kudankulam, dumping radio-active garbage into rivers and seas, and having factories vomiting smoke into the atmosphere.

(i). **Nuclear wars** have been a clear manner of matricide.

_We are the only species on this planet in its 4.5 billion years of existence to channel such a massive degree ($1.8 million per minute) of our human and natural resources into the design and production of weapons aimed at the destruction of ourselves and the planet. In its nuclear testing of bombs since 1945 in the Nevada desert the United States alone has already ruptured Mother Earth's womb 845 times. Mother Earth is in great pain - a pain inflicted by her own children as they commit matricide._

As a matter of fact, even without a nuclear war, the bomb has already gone off. Think, for instance, of the chemicals that the humans have already dumped into waters, shot into the air, pumped into the earth. Or, take the case of the incalculable quantity of carbondioxide added to the atmosphere from the burning oilwells of Kuwait due to the recent Gulf-war. It is a tragedy that, instead of letting go of war and moving beyond war as a way of settling differences, we talk of 'nuclear survival' and spend a million dollars per minute on weapons of cosmic destruction.

Thus, we are 'turning the world into garbage'. The toxic waste is dumped into the earth and turns the land into desert; is poured into water and turns that water, which is a symbol of life in all cultures, into murderous liquid; is sent into the air changing the atmosphere into a deadly gas-chamber resulting in the depletion of the ozone layer and producing 'green-house' effect.
(ii). The Problem of Unemployment. Intimately related to this ecological crisis is the universal problem of unemployment. For, the money spent on weapons is not a good investment in putting people to work.

*It has been estimated that the money required to provide adequate food, water, education, health and housing for everyone in the world would be seventeen billion dollars per year. This is the amount that the world spends on arms every two weeks! When the human race wakes up to see that it has outgrown war, it will realize that to put our energies of people, knowledge, talent, and capital to work to feed, educate, heal and house the human community would provide work and more than enough work for everyone.*

If this is true, what we have is not unemployment but *misemployment.* Suppose, for instance, we consider artists as workers, then we would put 15 percent of our population to work today making our lives more beautiful and meaningful. It is absolutely unclear how there can be unemployment in a world where there is so much of work needs to be done.

(iii). Poverty. Another aspect of ecological crisis is the question of famine versus food. It raises the challenging questions of what foods are healthy and whether the manner of procuring them and distributing them just and harmonious. Are we prepared to let go of our eating habits that are luxurious and of our farming practices that are injurious to generations to come?

(iv). Abuse of topsoil is another manner of Matricide.

*It takes God and nature ten thousand years to produce one inch of topsoil and the typical agricultural regions contain only six inches of this precious gift.*
It is on this precious gift of topsoil that the lives of plants, animals and humans depend. But our agricultural practices today are destroying this life giving topsoil. It has been estimated that if we continue the abuse of the land at the current rate of soil depletion, in fifteen years hence the earth's fertile land will be reduced by one-third. Thus our avarice only helps to increase the size of deserts by replacing our once fertile and life-giving land.

Even in India which is predominantly an agricultural country and where 'life in partnership with the earth' is the most naturally the way of life we have, with our Five Year Plans, begun to play down the 'cultus', meaning both 'worship' and 'tilling' of the land. Instead, we have replaced it by a 'cultus' of the machines.

(v). Deforestation. Not only the topsoil, tropical forests are also fast disappearing. It is calculated that one-third of our planet's total will be destroyed in the next fifteen years. And, let us remember, most of this destruction takes place in order to satiate our appetite for luxury items. Deforestation has so ruined, for instance, the hill tracts of Nagaland, Manipur etc that today the hills are almost bare and the fertile soil is washed down to the plains and the sea.

As a result of this elimination of our forests many of the diverse species of plants, birds and animals are disappearing. The Tiger Project, the Elephant Project, Rhino Project etc are but a few indications of how we have encroached the forest areas and indiscriminately killed these animals. Let us hope that we will not be the last generation to know, for instance, what it means to hear a bird sing. Another consequence of deforestation is that the very health of the air we breathe will also be seriously affected. For, as every body knows, forests recycle air for all of us.

These are only a few examples of how our mother earth is being done to death. If we continue this matricide there is every reason to believe that within the next one
hundred years no living species will be left on this planet- including we humans. For, our survival totally depends on other living species.

(vi). **Species are Disappearing.** If we can believe the calculations the scientists make, there are roughly ten million species of living things with whom we share this planet. The human is only one of these species, and, in fact, among the most recent. If we condense the age of the earth (46, 000,000,000 years) into the life span of a person 46 years old, the following is the role of man on the planet: Modern man appeared four hours ago; agriculture was discovered during the last hour; the industrial revolution began a minute ago. But during this last one minute, he has overexploited the planet's resources, many of which are non-renewable, poisoned the life support base (the biosphere consisting of air, land and water), and remains now the most serious threat for the future of the planet.12

Scientists tell us that a species is a once-in-a-universe event, never to be repeated. In the ordinary course of events one species disappears about every two thousand years. Currently, however, species are disappearing at the rate of one every twenty five minutes. At this rate humans will eliminate ten percent of the remaining species in the next ten years. If so, it takes only hundred years for us to become extinct.

Mathew Fox has suggested a fantasy exercise which brings out the gravity of the present situation. Suppose we call a 'United Species Conference' - a conference far more representative than the United Nations is. And suppose we put this one question to the ten million representatives (one for each species): "Should the human species be allowed to continue on this planet?" The vote would most likely be 9,999,999 to 1 that we humans be banished to some distant place in the galaxy so that mother earth could recuperate her health.13
One point of this fantasy is that we humans are tilting the balance of nature. This is becoming more and more evident today in the global warming caused by the increase in the concentration of greenhouse gasses, the depleting of the ozone umbrella and the continuous loss of biodiversity.

In short, we are guilty of the three fold sin of geocide, ecocide and biocide, says Mathew Fox. Should we thus sacrifice our mother earth on the altar of greed?

(vii). Exploitation. As a corollary, it may be pointed out here that not only Nature but also Nations have been the object of exploitation. For instance, colonialism which began in 1942, divided the people of our planet into two terribly unequal blocs: The North where 15% of people of the world consumes 85% of the resources, and the South where the remaining 15% of the resources are so unequally distributed that inhuman conditions of absolute poverty, malnutrition, the perpetual struggle to stay alive, and even starvation death, are the lot of the majority.

Thus, the unlimited exploitation of resources goes against not only nature but also against the less privileged nations. It is reported that USA with only 6% of the world's population uses around 40% of the natural resources used each year.

Only we humans are capable of committing such sins. These human sins are only four million years old. Whereas the universe is about twenty billion years old (scientists tell us) and no other creature felt the need of such crimes. Consider for instance the species called whales. They have dwelled on this planet fifty six million years longer than we have and yet they never found it necessary to invent Trident submarines and other fanciful ways of destroying life. In other words, 19 billion years before there was no sin on earth.
But, someone might ask: Has not the earth the inborn power to recuperate itself from the injuries we humans inflict on it? Of course, the earth has this power up to a limit. But that is not the point. The point is that we have become so selfish and careless with our modern style of functioning that the burden of damages imposed on nature is beyond its capacity of bearing it any more. The present ecological crisis is not that the earth cannot endure a reasonable level of suffering but that its ecological balance is destroyed and thereby the very survival of living beings on earth is threatened.

5. How to Explain All This?

What is the explanation for our 'rape of the earth'? As has been pointed out already, one explanation is to be found in our greed to possess and consume, in our kama-artha tendencies. And in this process we fail to see reality in its entirety. At least three tendencies follow from this failure of vision. 1. We tend to have a sort of Newtonian view of nature as an aggregate of disjointed objects. 2. We therefore tend to interfere in one area of ecosystem without paying heed to its consequences in other areas. And as Pope John Paul II puts it, 'the indiscriminate application of the advances in science and technology' facilitates this interference on a massive scale.16 3. As a result, we tend to idealize industrial and economic development.

_We are hypnotised into believing that this is civilization, culture and science._17

In short, in our ignorance of the whole, we are trained to look at the world and to react to it as though it is separate and different from us, something which we must conquer and keep under control.18 And this question of our relationship with the world brings us to the next point.
(i). **Is Man the Master?** Another explanation for the rape of the earth is to be found in an age old misunderstanding regarding our relationship with the earth. The humans have had two beliefs which have been in fact ruling the world. One is the belief that man is the master of the universe. Man is therefore free to 'subdue it' in the way he wants.

*This exclusive distinction endows man with power over the animal and vegetable world and confers upon him the right, nay the duty, to exploit the resources of nature for his own benefits.*

The other is the belief that man is the steward or trustee of the universe. We are only stewards of the 'garden' given to us 'to till and care for'. We have therefore, no right to subdue nature in the sense that we are its masters who can freely exploit it.

These beliefs that we are either masters or trustees are leading us to self destruction, as is clear from the ecological crisis described earlier. So there must be something wrong with these beliefs.

(ii). **The Truth.** What then is the truth? The truth seems to be that man is neither the master nor the trustee but is part of the universe. This is a universal truth that all true persons and religions celebrate. Namely, the truth that we are born from the earth, are nurtured from it and are destined to return to it. For instance, during the Ash Wednesday liturgy at the beginning of the Lenten Season every christian is reminded of this fact that they are dust (earth, soil) and to dust they shall return. That we humans are dust, part of the earth, is not a curse but a reality. It is only when the humans deny this reality that the earth brings forth 'thorns and thistles'.

We are an integral part of the universe which is a single reality. The Indian tradition has from the very beginning considered the whole cosmos as one reality.
There are two factors that hold this reality together. They are the immanence of the Brahman and the presence of the universal order called Rta. As Dr. S. Radhakrishnan explains, this Rta is dharma governing all creation and maintaining what the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad calls 'purnam' or fullness.25

To put this idea of the oneness of reality briefly, in the words, of Mathew Fox:

*A banquet that was twenty billion years in the making has been spread out for us ....
This banquet we call creation, the human planet. It works for our benefit if we behave toward it as reverent guests.*26

6. Ideal Response?

Our discussion on ecological crisis will not be complete without a word on what ought to be our response to it. One healthy response, as already pointed out, would be a change of attitude to the mother earth. Namely, we ought to recognize and live the fact that the earth does not belong to us but rather it is we who belong to the earth.

Our contention is that only a pursuit of all the purusharthas interacting can bring about an attitudinal change of this kind. The ecological crisis might suggest that we are today without hope. The main reason for this pessimism and the resulting cynicism and unconcern for humanity could only be our pursuit of kama and artha without regard for the other purusharthas. But we are not without consolation.

It is indeed consoling to note that people all over the globe are becoming increasingly aware of the SOS from the mother earth. The Earth Summit at Rio de Janerio, June '92, that brought together a large galaxy of world leaders and more than
30,000 delegates from 178 participating countries is a case in point. To intensify their awareness, the 'Greenpeace', the International Environmental Organization, held a demonstration outside the venue of this Summit, calling attention to today's sins.27

We can stop it. If we humans are responsible for the Ecological crisis then it inspires hope that we have also in ourselves the power to desist from the 'rape of the earth'. Owning up this responsibility also precludes a resignation to the crisis as to a fate, 'it is our karma'. If we are doing it, we can stop it too if we want to. All that we need is to realize what our dharma is.

The ecological crisis has a positive aspect and perhaps it is the only one: It has the potential to bring together all nations, religions, races, languages and cultures. Teilhard de Chardin explains:

*Being in the forefront of the cosmic wave of advance, the energy of humanity assumes an importance disproportionate to its apparently small size.* 28

### 7. Gandhi - Our Guide

If we have the potential to overcome this crisis, how shall we put our potential to work? Here the best way to do it would be the one that the father of our nation suggested. Gandhi was one of the first to discover that modern civilization was a hindrance to us. Even as a young man of twenty-five, he wrote in South Africa that modern civilization, despite its dazzling surface, its material attraction and madly feverish activity, was a block rather than a help to the needs of the human soul and the craving for a better life.29

Gandhi held that there is no basis for the popular belief that material advancement induces moral progress.
Increase of material comforts, it may be generally laid down, does not in any way whatsoever conduce to moral growth.30

What was then his own conception of true civilization? In his definition, civilization is that mode of conduct which points to the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves. The Gujarati equivalent for civilization means 'good conduct'. This may seem an unusual definition of civilization, but Mirabeau, who was the first person in the West to employ the word, similarly gave a moral criterion.

Civilization does nothing for society unless it is able to give form and substance to virtue.32

Gandhi's rejection of the cult of material progress by no means meant any lack of concern with the problem of mass poverty. He went so far as to say that for the poor the economic is the spiritual and that to them God can appear only as bread and butter. The cause of poverty was, in his view the covetousness of the rich and the exploitation of the needy by the greedy. The redistribution of income is more important than the raising of output, and fulfillment of the basic needs of the masses requires the limitation of the wants of the richer classes. If the masses were prepared to shun the evils of capital accumulation, "they would strive to attain a juster distribution of the products of labor".35

To quote a few paragraphs from the famous book The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi by Dr. Raghava Iyer:
Man today is an emasculated - a favorite word of Gandhi - victim of a vast humbug that is kept alive by schools, legislatures, armies, churches, prisons and hospitals. Our civilization has the seductive color of a consumptive who clings to life but is doomed to die.

Gandhi referred explicitly to the teachings of all religions that we should remain passive about worldly pursuits and active about godly pursuits, that we should set a limit to our worldly ambition.

For Gandhi, the villain is the creed of hypocritical materialism, the judge is the individual who frees himself from the collective hallucination, and the executioner is the Moral Law (Karma\Dharma) that inexorably re-adjusts disturbed equilibrium in the cosmos and in the affairs of men.

In his lecture to Muir College at Allahabad in December 1916 he propounded, for the first time, the proposition that material progress is in inverse relation to moral progress. He elaborately defended the view that there is a well-marked tendency in the rise and fall of civilizations, confirming a compensatory law connecting material affluence and moral turpitude.36

8. Concluding Remarks

What is the cause of our ecological crisis? The causes are many: Our consumeristic ways of thinking and acting, commercialized poisoning of the minds of people, and the unquenched pursuit of power and pleasure are only some of them. They are surely bound to have their physically damaging effects. This is certainly a warning and an invitation to all right minded people to put a relentless fight against the killers of mother earth and of her innumerable voiceless children and to be energetic prophets for endangered nature.

The unsustainable consumption of resources and the distribution of the life support base of the planet are driving many thinking people to try and halt the mad rush to disaster. The Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro\textsuperscript{37} was an important milestone in this process.

181
What should be our response? The answer as one of our observers of the Earth Summit at Rio puts it, is obvious:

*We must get back to our original position as members of the planet's ecosystem, relinquishing our self-appointed role as its manipulators, if we want to survive. And within the ecosystem itself, we should ensure sustainable living, not only among humans irrespective of the present grossly unequal distribution of resources between the North and South, but of all life forms.*

What about the existing responses? Can the popular responses like the Green Movement be a solution? It is not likely to be a satisfactory response since they are not adequate to create a motivational consciousness of the problem at hand.

Can the scientific-technical responses such as energy conservation programmes and environmental literacy be a satisfactory solution? This is not satisfactory either in the sense that they do not take into account the purusharthas of dharma and moksha. The best response seems to be to counteract the extreme tendencies of kama and artha by bringing in the dharma and moksha structure of our motivation, especially since it still continues to play a key role in the life and activity of people, particularly in a country like that of ours.

Our dharma demands that we maintain the ecosystem from being dead. It is our responsibility to prevent the entire living species on earth from death. For, we the homo sapiens alone are responsible for exploiting the sap of our fellow beings in our ecofamily with our superior, arrogant sapientia. We need to repent for our sins against our fellow organisms in the ecofamily and make reparation for it. In fact, the crisis in ecology is the result of the disorder found within and among the humans themselves. Therefore our healing and health is the prime requisite for the healing of the ecosystem to which we are intimately related.
In other words, our relationship with nature is an ethical one. It is an 'ought' relationship. For, by our very being, we are 'microcosm' of the Macrocosm, as is implied by the vedic concept of 'purusha'. If so, we are called to fight for the protection and preservation of the 'macrocosm'.

Our attitude must be one of respect for life and reverence for other living being.

I like the orthodox Hindu in India watering the Tulasi plant or throwing crumbs to the birds before he partakes his meal, which are but symbolical affirmations that we are not living all by ourselves and we have the vegetation, the animals or birds etc living with us. We need to maintain that relationship and right attitude towards the created world.39

The proper response to the ecological crisis seems to be an ethico-religious one when we consider the following facts. 1) Man's first religious awakening has been the experience of the Divine in the natural world (Panentheism).40 2) All tribal traditions have a great reverence for Nature and their religious experience is rooted in it. 3) In Indian religious traditions, the five principal elements of the environment - water, earth, air, space and fire - play an important role. These 'panchabhutas' has become objects of myth and celebration. In fact, Hindu scholars have argued that our heritage of myth and ritual should be revived so that the holistic view of ecological balances may be maintained.41

Considering these facts, we might confidently conclude that an eco-consciousness with some religious overtones to it would go a long way in helping solve many an ecological problem. This is true especially when we consider that the purusharthas are rooted more in our religious culture than in our philosophical deliberations as we have discovered during our discussion. In short, the solution is a
reverential attitude rather than one of domination and greed. The only caution in this religious approach is that we should not dichotomize the earthly realities from the spiritual including the other worldly realities. This means that we consider our destiny as an earthly one.

And also religious traditions recognize that there is an undeniable unity and mutuality between us humans and the other species in the ecological sphere; therefore it is indeed imperative that we behave towards other living organisms in a responsible manner.

Before we conclude, there is one more point to be noted: We saw that the ecological crisis results from our following kama and artha unbridled by the other purusharthas. Now it may be asked: What about the extreme tendencies of following dharma and moksha? They also have extreme tendencies such as ritualism and escapism. But since they result from what we 'ought to pursue' they are not likely to affect every body or the whole of ecosystem. Whereas artha and kama are not like that. They are 'what we naturally follow' and therefore their tendency to go to extremes is greater as is clear from the ecological crisis.

III. GANDHIAN VIEW OF PURUSHARTHAS

1. Introduction

How the four purusharthas are worth aiming at in life has been the main focus of our analysis so far. Thus we have also followed fairly closely their use and currency in Indian tradition and culture. We now pass on to devote the terminal
sections of our thesis to an articulation of the relevance of the purushartha today and for tomorrow.

By way of bringing this relevance into greater focus we propose to do three things: i) We show that the theory of purushartha is not only theoretically adequate but is inspirational in practice as is demonstrated by the outlook and actual life of Mahatma Gandhi. ii) We posit a metapurushartha, namely, Sarvodaya or Logasamgraha, which takes care of all the other purushartha and the problems they imply. iii) And finally we recapitulate the relevant conclusions on purushartha as they emerge from our deliberations in the previous chapters. These three things together are expected to give a fitting conclusion to our discussion on the purushartha.

2. The Gandhian Definition of Purushartha

The first thing we consider is: How have the purushartha been conceived and lived out by no less a person than Gandhi? A consideration of this question is likely to show the relevance of the purushartha today and for tomorrow. For, it is generally agreed that the Gandhian conception of the purushartha is relevant for all times and seasons.

Gandhi has no separate treatise on purushartha. His views on purushartha are scattered throughout his articles and addresses. What follows is a restatement of his thought on purushartha as found in his writings as well as in the impressive book on him by Raghavan Iyer.42

(i). Two Unusual Definitions. Let us begin this restatement by two unusual definitions of purushartha that Gandhi gives. The first one is:
Purushartha is nothing but a desperate attempt to become a gentlemen in every sense of the term.43

In the same article he adds the other definition:

The epitome of religions is to promote purushartha.44

What Gandhi must have meant by these unusual definitions is expected to become clearer as we recount his views on dharma, artha, kama and moksha. Since his account of dharma and moksha is more complicated than his account of kama and artha, we begin with the latter group.

(ii). Before that, a word about the historical background. To appreciate Gandhi’s approach to purusharthas, we need to have a look at our historical background. In Indian tradition one can trace a strand of lazy and fatalistic attitude. Asoka was perhaps the first sovereign to react to it in a positive manner as is clear from his edicts. Indian history reveals that genuine seeker after truth loved their fellow men in the abstract and retreated to the solitude of the cave. It is against this background that Gandhi gave a new meaning to satya and ahimsa, moksha and tapas in the context of his political and social activity. He challenged the inherited notions of individualism and saintliness.

With the advent of Buddhism there came a shift in emphasis from Moksha to dharma. This was again reversed during the long centuries of foreign rule that followed the effectual disappearance of Buddhist influence. But Gandhi’s reinterpretation of Hindu values in the light of the message of the Buddha was a constructive response at this historical juncture.
To put it slightly differently: As we have already pointed out, the Indian tradition has often made a distinction between pravrtti (involvement) and nivrtti (withdrawal). Of these, the emphasis was on nivrtti as a means to moksha. And thus, in course of time, moksha became largely a negative notion of escape from samsara. It is in this context that the Gandhian emphasis on pravrtti, on karma yoga, as a necessary means to moksha became a blow to traditional individualism and saintliness.

3. On kama

One thing is abundantly clear from Gandhi's collection of articles on sexual morality entitled Self-Restraint Versus Self-Indulgence: There is certainly need for bridling the extreme tendencies of kama. This view, as already noted, is somewhat supported by the Gita. For, according to the Gita, kama is the enemy of man and the root of all evil. Why Gandhi and the Gita obviously emphasize this point is interesting and important. That is, the perfect man is both capable of absolute detachment and of disinterested action.

4. On Artha

That Gandhi's view of Artha goes beyond the traditional opinion we have already explained in the section dealing with Artha in Chapter Three.

5. On Dharma

Gandhi's view of dharma, at first sight, is rather puzzling. For he identifies it with other concepts such as satya, ahimsa, moksha, tapas, God, swaraj, etc. These
terms are often used interchangeably. Our first task therefore is to clarify what he means by each of these and thus to see how they involve each other.

(i). Gandhi puts his accent on dharma. The other three purusharthas are practically inseparable from dharma. Now, whose dharma is he talking about, it may be asked. There is enough evidence to show that Gandhi was more concerned with the dharma of the citizen than with that of the ruler (i.e. rajadharma). This is another point where he differs from Kautilya who was more concerned with rajadharma.

Dharma is not only inseparable from but also superior to the other purusharthas. Gandhi goes even further. He regards dharma as the highest human value. That is, dharma is an end in itself. Here again Gandhi adheres to the Gita.

Also, he is wholly Kantian in his belief in the universalizability of the Categorical Imperative of duty. We must perform our duty for its own sake if dharma is to have any meaning at all. The very virtue of dharma is that it is universal, that

its practice is not the monopoly of the few but must be the privilege of all. ... He who is not prepared to order his life in unquestioning obedience to the laws of morality cannot be said to be a man in the full sense of the word.45

There are two things that dharma as a categorical imperative does not imply. one, moral authority is never retained by any attempt to hold on to it. It comes without seeking and is retained without effort.46 Two, People do not become virtuous for virtue's sake.

By experience I have also found that people rarely become virtuous for virtues' sake. They become virtuous from necessity. Nor is there anything wrong in a man
becoming good under the pressure of circumstances. It would be no doubt better, if he becomes good for its own sake.47

True morality consists, for Gandhi, not in following the beaten track, but in finding out the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it. No action which is not voluntary can be called moral.

So long as we act like machines, there can be no question of morality. If we want to call an action moral, it should have been done consciously and as a matter of duty. Any action that is dictated by fear, or by coercion of any kind, ceases to be moral. It also follows that all good deeds that are prompted by hope of happiness in the next world cease to be moral.48

To put it in the words of Dr. Raghavan Iyer,

The crucial thing for Gandhi, (as for Kant), is not to teach people what is right, not to lead them to examine and criticize their convictions (though this is more important to Gandhi than to Kant), but to get them to do what they know they ought to do.49

(ii). Satya and Ahimsa. Now, how is dharma related to satya (truth) and ahimsa (non-violence) which Gandhi proclaims as absolute in the sense that they could be invoked by every individual in every situation? Gandhi believed that satya and ahimsa amount to the same thing though satya is higher than ahimsa. How to clarify this puzzling belief? We may clarify this in the form of three propositions:50

i) satya implies ahimsa in the sense that it enables us to accept the need for ahimsa in our relationships with others who are also seekers of truth in their own way. ii) ahimsa presupposes satya in the sense that himsa is rooted in fear which can be removed only by the strength that comes from satya. iii) ahimsa is the means to satya in the sense that, as the end ever eludes us, the means becomes supremely important.
Thus, although satya is higher than ahimsa, ahimsa is in practice more important than satya. More generally, we can take it as a working rule that the degree of ahimsa we display is a measure of the degree of satya we possess. This perhaps explains why Gandhi's name is commonly identified with ahimsa even though he regarded satya as supreme.

What is satya? The word satya is derived from sat meaning 'the one reality'. Therefore it is the source of eternal and universal values like truth, righteousness and justice: Truth in the realm of knowledge, righteousness in the domain of conduct and justice in the sphere of social relations. Of these three, truth is the most important and all inclusive principle to Gandhi. Also, for him, truth is logically prior to all the other human virtues. "Truth is the very breath of our life". It is well known that Gandhi was prepared to sacrifice even national freedom for the sake of truth and non-violence.

The word satya, it must be noted, does not correspond exactly to what we normally mean by truth or veracity. Rather, sat has a variety of connotations of which the most important are being, real, sincere, existent, pure, good, effectual, valid, etc. This derivation of satya from sat was taken by Gandhi to imply that "nothing exists in reality except truth, everything else is illusion". This is a point that Gandhi stressed on several occasions.

Truth is within ourselves as well as in the universe of law of which we are a part.

*There is an inmost centre of us all, where Truth abides in fullness.*

The fire of his spiritual conviction confirms this:
Earth and heaven are in us. We know the earth, we are strangers to the heaven within us.55

The votary of truth must achieve a harmony between thought, word and deed. His life thus becomes a fulfilled oath, a constant vow or vrata, a perpetual pilgrimage, a continual sacrifice; and this indeed is the means to moksha.

Truth is an absolute value:

No political thinker, with the possible exception of Plato, has insisted as Gandhi did on truth as an absolute value, the sovereign in the kingdom of ends, the common concern of human society. No one, certainly, compares with him in his continual stress on the primacy of nonviolence as a political and social instrument, on the purity of means required for the pursuit of any worthy end. His originality, however, lay chiefly in his commendation of both satya and ahimsa and in his insight into the interdependence of truth and non violence, integrity and sensitivity, fidelity to oneself and respect for the rights of one’s fellowmen.56

If, from first to last, satya is sacred to Gandhi, is the paramarthasatya, the highest of human ends transcending and endowing value to all the four purusharthas,57 how shall we explain Gandhi’s position that dharma is the highest human value? The explanation is that satya is the essence of dharma. At times, it is even identified with dharma. Gandhi declares that dharma is the basis of things and satya is the substance of all dharma.58

It is well known that ahimsa was integral to Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism in various ways. It was generally regarded as equivalent to dharma (the moral law) and as a necessary means to moksha and as a vital part of the spiritual discipline prescribed by teachers of Yoga like Patanjali.
Non-injury is the literal meaning of the word ahimsa. More narrowly, ahimsa means non-killing, and more widely, it means harmlessness, the renunciation of the will to kill and of the intention to hurt any living thing, the abstention from hostile thought, word and act.59

(iii). Rta, dharma and Satya. Rta, cosmic equilibrium, is the same as sat, absolute truth. Therefore, Gandhi believed that even the wheel of worldly power must turn in accord with the motion of the wheel of eternal truth or cosmic justice.

Gandhi derived his metaphysical presuppositions from Hindu and Buddhist thought, but his psychological and ethical standpoint was peculiarly his own, though it has affinities with elements in Jain teaching. The Vedic word rta refers to the principle of moral interdependence and cosmic equilibrium. This word was later replaced by dharma the moral law which maintains the whole world, human society and the individual. This cosmic law was identified with truth and regarded as the ultimate authority to which earthly rulers had to yield. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad depicts dharma as the sovereign power ruling over kshatra or temporal power and we are told that even the weak can overcome the strong with the help of satya, which is dharma, as with the help of a king. The Mahabharata states that for the sake of the promotion of strength and efficacy among beings the declaration of dharma is made. Further, whatever is attended with nonviolence (ahimsa), that is dharma. Bhishma declared that dharma involves abstention from injury to creatures as well as what upholds them. In the Taittiriyaranyaka it is said that upon dharma everything is founded, that it is the highest good by means of which one drives away evil. Thus satya and ahimsa are both traditionally identified with dharma, the cosmic law which governs and determines human conduct.60
Gandhi invoked the Mahabharata in support of his view that dharma signifies the way of truth and nonviolence and not the mere observance of externals. The scriptures, he said, have given us two immortal maxims: 1) ahimsa is the supreme law or dharma and 2) there is no other law or dharma than satya or truth. These two maxims provide us the key to all lawful artha and kama, "the royal road of dharma that leads both to earthly and spiritual bliss".61

6. On Moksha and Tapas

If Gandhi regards dharma/satya as the supreme value, what is his view of moksha? According to him, during our life on earth even moksha is secondary.

To Gandhi, as to the Buddha, the pursuit of salvation is a form of exalted selfishness unless it means the detached, dedicated service of humanity for its own sake.62

The problem in India, as Gandhi saw it, was this: How to adapt the older notions of moksha and tapas to the practical needs of a society in which men were more concerned to escape than to alter the conditions of worldly life? The older notion meant the pursuit of individual salvation through specific austerities and prolonged contemplation.

Moksha and tapas. For Gandhi, moksha is the vision of truth. This is to be attained by means of tapas, self-suffering. The relation between moksha and tapas was mirrored in the relation between satya and ahimsa. In the preface to his autobiography Gandhi declared that the aim of all his strivings was moksha or self-realization.
I live, move, and have my being, in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to this same end.  

At the close of this book he concluded:

My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than truth. And if every page of these chapters does not proclaim to the reader that the only means for the realization of Truth is ahimsa, I shall deem all my labour in writing these chapters to have been in vain.

He regarded his political and social work as part of his training for freeing his soul from the bondage of flesh:

I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth. I am striving for the Kingdom of Heaven which is moksha. To attain my end it is not necessary for me to seek the shelter of a cave. I carry one about me, if I would but know it.

Gandhi regarded the aim of human life as moksha, liberation from impure thought; and the total elimination of impure thought is possible only as a result of much tapasya. The utter extinction of egoism is moksha and he who has achieved this will be the very image of Truth or God.  

Government over self is the truest swaraj (freedom); it is synonymous with moksha or salvation. He also said that ahimsa means moksha and moksha is the realization of truth.

The test of love is tapasya and tapasya means self-suffering. Self-realization is impossible without service of, and identification with, the poorest.  
The quest of Truth involves tapas, self-suffering, sometimes the tapas of ahimsa and this means self-suffering and self-sacrifice in the midst of society.
By tapas, by a deliberate attitude of detachment from the fruits of action, we can annul the karma that binds us, the causes that enchain us to an unending train of effects. Proper tapas gives us a foretaste of moksha; and an earnest ascetic is absorbed in his tapas rather than in the prospect of reaching moksha. In short, tapas means immediate, and moksha means total absorption into the oneness of all reality.

7. Gandhi's Integral Approach

When we speak of different values such as truth, Moksha, dharma, etc as ultimate and absolute, it might give the impression of a conflict of values. But it is only an impression. In fact, the different values involve one another. This is the way Gandhi thought of it. The true possessor of one must possess all, according to him. He further believed that an absolute value is sufficient in itself to ensure individual and collective happiness, even if its attainment and it preservation involves a great deal of suffering.

One of the consequences of this integrated view for Gandhi was that the usual dichotomies between contemplative and crusader, saint and politician, private and public virtues were all totally unacceptable to Gandhi.

This gives us an idea of Gandhi’s concern of integration. He firmly believed in the fundamental unity of life and rejected the common distinction between public and private, secular and sacred. What are the implications of this integrated view of Gandhi? Implications are many of which a few important ones are mentioned below.

One is his insight into the relationship between means and end. According to him, the means is inalienable from the goal. To travel on the proper path is more
important than to arrive at the goal. The main reason for this is the fact that the 
earthly attainment of the absolute goal is impossible for any human being.

This Gandhian concept is very much similar to a paradox repeatedly pronounced by many an Indian mystic. The paradox is that we cannot travel on the path unless we have become that path itself. When this happens, our attachment to the attainment of the absolute goal becomes irrelevant.

What follows from this paradox is that our concern must continually be with the next step rather than the summit; also, the exhilaration of climbing becomes an end in itself, rendering irrelevant the attainment of the peak. Gandhi often repeated the phrase "one step enough for me" from his favorite hymn composed by Newman. The seeker of truth advances step by step.

Also, this paradox implies that we cannot use any means to somehow achieve our purpose. Not to scruple about the means to be used is adharma, according to Gandhi. This was illustrated, he felt, in the first Great War.73 Truth is the first and heaviest casualty in war.74

Some other implications of Gandhi's view of purusharthas are: 1) The prevailing notion of spiritual life as a matter of monks in monasteries is to be discarded. 2) A mechanical adherence to certain beliefs which lead to the use of force and of intimidating propaganda is to be given up. 3) The maxim that might is right is to be rejected even if it is the might of the State. 4) Every citizen is entitled to appeal to the law of dharma. 5) The fundamental ethical values are common to all religions.
8. In Sum

What were the main concerns of Gandhi, it may be asked. Gandhi's concerns were: 1) To show that the industrial civilization is sick. 2) to show that the contemporary politics is 'soulless'. 3) To safeguard the integrity of the Indian tradition. 4) To 'spiritualize' political life. That is, to make politics religious and religion practical.

He dealt with these concerns in a remarkably inspirational manner. To sum up Gandhi's position in his own words:

*I cannot practice ahimsa without the religion of service and I cannot find the Truth without practicing the religion of ahimsa .... I am striving for the Kingdom of Heaven, which is spiritual deliverance. For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and of my Humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives. In the language of the Gita, I want to live at peace with both friend and foe. My patriotism is for me a stage on my journey to the land of Eternal Freedom and Peace. Thus it will be seen that for me there is no politics devoid of religion. They subserve religion. Politics bereft of religion is a death-trap because they kill the soul.*75
REFERENCES

1. This is a point proved beyond doubt by Sri Kuttikrishna Marar in his famous book in Malayalam *Bharata Paryatanam*.

2. *The Bible*, Psalm 82.5.


12. Mc Donagh, S, *To care for the Earth*, pp. 17-76.


17. Dr. M. Lakshmikumari, the President of Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, *National Seminar on Eco Awareness*, p. 6.

22. Incidentally, it may be noted that, because of these two beliefs, the Christian theology has often been classified as a theology of domination over nature and as a theology that does not take into account the natural systems and therefore as a theology that has contributed to the present ecological impasse.

23. The Bible, Gen. 3.19; 2.7; Ps 104.29.


33. Young India, May 1927

34. Ibid. October 1931.

35. Ibid. September 1925; Raghava Iyer, op. cit., p.35.


37. 3-14 June, 1992.


41 Kapilan Vatsayan, Ecology and Indian Myth, pp. 4-5.


43 Young India, January 1920.

44 Ibid.

45 Ethical Religion (niti dharma), translated by Rama Iyer, Ganesan, 1922, p. 36

46 Young India, weekly paper, Navajivan, 1919-32, January 1925.


49 The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 69.


51 From Yeravda Mandir, Navajivan, 1932, translated by V. G. Desai, p. 2.


54 Young India. Weekly Paper, Navajivan, 1919-32, July 1931.


56 Raghavan Iyer, op. cit., p. 224.

57 From Yeravda Mandir, Navajivan, 1932, Trans. by V. G. Desai. Chapter I.


63. The Story of my Experiments with Truth, p.xii.
64. Ibid., pp. 503-4.
65. Young India. April 1924.
66. Young India. November 1924.
67. To a Gandhian Capitalist, p. 51.
68. Ibid., p. 50.
69. Young India. December 1920.
70. Young India. November 1925.
71. Young India. June 1922.
72. Young India. October 1926.
73. Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, Natesan, 4th edition, 1934, p. 419.
75. Harijan. August 1939.