V

DHARMA AND ITS DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS

In India, ethics is never confined to mere rationalization of certain conceptual models and theories. Morality is never considered as separated from human existence and life. As a matter of fact, it is necessary to consider the basic factors of morality in relation to the study of human nature. Moral type of an individual depends on the basic intrinsic nature of the individuals. Each individual according to his own capacity is supposed to sustain a society, and that is value, that is his ‘dharma’.

Dharma, in the Indian ethics, is a key term and it is a term with many senses. The multivocal character of the word ‘dharma’ is evidenced by the fact that it has been used to denote such widely different things as nature, law, custom, religious rituals, rules, morality, duties, character-trait. This term, actually, covers the entire range of a man’s life. However, behind all of these dimensions, there is a normative one which constitutes also the central core. Dharma as a human value or purusartha, can be said to be the value which consists in, or is constituted by, living a morally good life, a life which is in accordance with the requirements of morality appropriate to a man’s just being a human being in his society or to his being a participant in interpersonal transactions .In this chapter, the word ‘dharma’ is understood in the sense of morality and the other sense of dharma as religious consciousness has been excluded.
The first section of this chapter begins with the analysis and explication of the etymological and other meanings of the word ‘dharma’. In this section, the concept of karma as a duty and the relation between karma and dharma has been presented from the Nyaya-Vaisesika perspective. In some other sense, the word ‘dharma’ has been used in the sense of individual’s character trait. The nature of this type of character trait has been elaborately discussed in the second section. In the concluding section, discussions have been made about dharma as character trait and its consequences.

It is found that the word ‘dharma’ is derived from the root ‘dhri’ which means to uphold, to maintain. In fact, dharma is something, which supports and upholds. In its philosophical sense, the word ‘dharma’ may refer to the harmonious order of the cosmos, i.e. ‘Rta’. The concept of ‘Rta’ may be introduced to understand the social harmony. This concept takes almost purely an ethical turn when it is put in conjunction with dharma. Rta is the principle of the cosmic order, which generates that there is no arbitrariness in the moral world. However, it hardly gives us any criterion to distinguish between right and wrong moral and immoral. It may be said that a life of righteousness is a life in accordance with the principle of Rta. In moral sense, this word may mean various sorts of things. It may mean the moral duties performed by an agent living in the same as well as in different socio-ethical status, or the word may refer to moral sacrifices such as putresti yaga, jyotistama yaga, etc to attain the heavenly pleasures, or the word may mean moral virtues or the character traits. Dharma, in its absolute sense, is trans-temporal, trans-spatial, and self-subsistent.
**Dharma in the Objective sense**

The term ‘Dharma’ may be explained in the sense of objective morality as well as subjective morality. The objective morality of the duties is the groundwork of Hindu ethics. It may also be considered as the preparatory step to the higher morality of self-purification, which necessarily presupposes the meditation of an objective code of right and wrong actions. The moral life of the Hindus has been represented in a scheme of *Varnasrama dharmas* or special duties as well as of *sadharana dharmas* or common duties and these two constitutes the objective morality of the Hindus. However, objective morality is not sufficient by itself and it is necessary that the individual after a period of discipline in objective co-operation and self-restraint, should look inwards into himself and aim at subjective purity and inner excellence of the will.

The *Nyaya Vaisesikas* have taken great interest regarding the classification of the duties into common or *sadharana dharmas* and specific or *visesa dharmas*. The sources of these discussions may be traced back to *Vatsyayanabhasya* on *Nyayasutra*, *Padarthadharmasamgraha* of Prasastapada, and its commentary, *Nyayakandali*. It is also worth mentioning that from the time of Manu, the five fundamental duties have been accepted in the classical Indian tradition and these duties are obligatory for man as man, irrespective of any particular social class. These are: *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non-violence), *brahmacarya* (celibacy), *asteya* (non-stealing) and *aparigraha* (non-attachment). ‘*Satya*’ refers to being veracious in thought, speech and action-all the three. ‘*Ahimsa*’ refers not only to overt non-killing or non-injuring any creature in any way. It carries with it also the positive trait of love, kindness etc. ‘*Brahmacarya*’ generally refers to a control over
all the sense organs, but more specifically, it refers to the control of sex-drive. ‘Asteya’, is non-stealing of the property of others. However, ‘asteya’ prohibits not only actual stealing; it also prohibits entertaining any thought of taking away what belongs to others. Sometimes ‘asteya’ provides such a wide connotation that it comes very near to aparigraha, which means non-attachment to worldly objects.

In the Yajnavalkaya’s Smrti, nine types of virtues have been mentioned and these are non-injury, truthfulness, and honesty, and cleanliness, control of the senses, charity, self-restraint, love, and forbearance. Further, Manu, in his Smrti, has arranged in a string, ten common duties which he calls the ten components or constituents of dharma, which everyone has to honor and practice in his own life. The ten constituents of social morality, according to him, are, steadfastness (dhrti), forgiveness (ksama), self-control i.e. control of mental propensities (dama), cleanliness (sauca), control over the senses (indriyanigraha), Avoidance of theft (cauryabhava), wisdom (dhi), scholarship or knowledge (vidya), truthfulness (satya) and restraint of anger (akrodha).

However, some generally accepted samanya dharman of the Vaisesika system would be explained in this section. In the Vaisesikasutra, Kanada has mentioned thirteen characteristics that will help to signify the word ‘dharma’ as a common duty. Further, Prasastapada, in his Bhasya, has also mentioned two types of duties and these are common duties, i.e. sadharana dharman and special duties, i.e. vishesa dharma. The samanya or sadharana dharman are those, which are common to all asramas or stage of life and all varnas or social classes and community. On the contrary, the vishesa dharman or specific duties are those that are relative to one’s particular station in life as constituted
by one’s asrama or particular stage of life. However, the general duties or sadharana dharmas\textsuperscript{1} are:

1. Reverence to the dharma,(dharme sraddha)
2. Refraining from injury to living beings(ahimsa)
3. Seeking the good of all creatures(bhutahitatva)
4. Telling the truth (satyavacana),
5. Refraining from theft(asteya),
6. Practising brahmacarya , i.e., leading a mode of life marked with devoted study of the Vedas and other scriptures and practicing complete abstinence from sexual and secular pleasures (brahmacarya),
7. sincerity, purity of motive(anupadha),
8. Abandonment of any kind of anger (krodha-varjana),
9. Personal cleanliness(Abhisecana, Snana),
10. The eating of linseeds and other specified substances on special occasions for the object of suci or purification of the body(sucidravyasevana)
11. To be devoted to his or her own God recognized by the Vedas(visista-devata-bhakti),
12. Fasting on special occasions(Upavasa)
13. Moral watchfulness(apramada),i.e. the unfailing performance of the Nitya-naimittika karmas according to the sastras (nitya-naimittikanam karmanamavasyam bhavena karanam)
Now the explanation of the thirteen kind of common duties has been provided in accordance with the commentary of Nyayakandali of Sridhara. The first characteristic that has been referred to in this connection is ‘reverence’towards dharma and this is a certain kind of virtue. Here, the word ‘reverence’ actually means the delightfulness of the mind. Dharma is generated from this delightfulness of the mind. If someone does not have any respect to something, then that thing is unattainable for him. Therefore, ‘reverence’ is necessary for the attainment of dharma.

The second one is ‘benevolence’ or compassion towards any kind of creatures. The third characteristic for attaining dharma is to help each and every being, i.e, ‘bhutahitatvam’. Vyasadeva also adds that ‘paropakarodharmayah adharmah parapiranam,’ i.e., to benefit others is the means to achieve dharma and on the contrary to do harm towards others is the cause of adharma. The fourth one is to tell the truth. The fifth one is not to steal anything, i.e, not to take anyone’s object without the consent of that person (asteyam).

The sixth one is to practise ‘brahmacarya’. In the Nyayakandali, Sridhara intended to say that the resolution of not having any attachment to a woman is ‘brahmcarya’. Instead of this, a person should also avoid eight types of sexual intercourse that will help him to maintain’ brahmacarya’.

The seventh one is ‘anupadha-upadha’. In the Vaisesika sutra² of Kanada, ‘Bhava-dasah upadha adosah anupadha’(6/2/4), it is observed that upadha or impurity denotes impurity of emotion or of the soul and anupadha denotes purity. In the Upaskara, Samkara Misra has distinguished between these two terms. Feeling, desire, attraction,
inattention, unfaith, vanity, conceit, envy and other impurities of the soul are denoted by the word ‘upadha’ or impurity. On the contrary, faith, complacence of mind, perseverance in the performance of prescribed actions, determinations of what should be done in particular situations and certitude are called ‘anupadha’ or purity of the soul. Again the next one is the determination to free oneself from any kind of anger (krodhavarjana). Apart from this it is also necessary for everyone to bathe in the river Ganges. Here, the word, ‘abhisechanam’ means ablution, conveyed through such precepts as ‘one should bathe in the Ganga regularly’. The next one is to have intake of the pure foods always. On the other hand, it means that always be a devotee of the Almighty God by another sadhana. Another one is not to take the food on some special days like ‘ekadasi’ etc. the last but not the least one is to perform the Nitya- Naimittika karmas, i.e. certain obligatory as well as contingent acts (apramada). The addition of ‘bhutahitatva’ speaks clearly of Prasastapada’s concern for social duties. Again, the addition of common duties like regard for dharma, purity of motive, and moral watchfulness are very significant from the moral point of view. It is pointed out that in every case the agent’s positive resolve (samkalpa) must be an antecedent condition of the accomplishment of the duty as in mere external cessation or forbearance (nivritti) there is only avoidance of sin (adharma), but no positive virtue (nivrtte adharmo na bhavati, na tu dharma jayate). Hence, refraining from injury (ahimsa) is a duty not simply in the negative sense of mere cessation from harm or injury (himsabhava), but also in the positive sense of a definite resolve not to hurt a living being (bhutanam anabhidroha samkalpah). Similarly, refraining from theft (asteya) as a duty is not the mere cessation from appropriating what belongs to another but implies, besides the outward cessation,
an internal *samkalpa*, resolve or attitude of the will, i.e. the resolve to disapprove all acts of misappropriation as unrighteous (*asastrapurvakam parasvagraham maya na kartavyam, na tu parasvadananivrttimatram*).

Further, *Brahmacarya* as a duty is not the mere refraining from the outward act of sexual indulgence, but also implies the internal resolve of the will not to long for such indulgence even in thought. Again, sincerity (*anupadha*) in the sense of *bhavasuddhi* or purification, suggests meaning the purification of the motive, i.e. the resolve to free from all impure feelings of pride, etc, in the discharge of one’s duties in the consciousness that duties done only with a pure motive are conducive to morality. This holds good also in the case of restraint of anger (*krodhavarjana*) which is to be observed not merely outwardly but also as regards the inner will (*so api samkalparupah*).

In this context, it will be misleading if we do not mention certain peculiar circumstances where these common duties may or may not be applicable in the society. These are observed in the sixth chapter of the *Vaisesika sutra* of Kanada. In the *sutra* 6/1/7, Kanada has mentioned that ‘*dustam himsayam*’, i.e, impurity lies in killing. Here, the word, ‘*Himsayam*’ indicates all prohibited acts whatever it may be either one has good or bad intention (*pravrtti*). Vatsyayana, in his *Bhasya*, also classifies this *pravrtti*, into *papatmika*, i.e., wicked, impious and *subha*, i.e pious and auspious. The later leads to *dharma* while the former produces *adharma* or unrighteousness. In the *Upaskara*, Sankara Misra mentioned that a person, given to or occupied in a prohibited act, should be known as impure and association with this impure intention are sinful. In the *sutra*6/1/8, Kanada shows that ‘*tasya samabhivyaharatah dosah*’. The intended meaning
of this *sutra*, according to *Upaskara* is, not only non-existence of fruit accrues from entertaining an impure *brahmana* invited at a *sraddha*, but sin may also accrue. Thus, *adharma* or demerit may result also from the association with the *brahmana* having the impure intention. Sankara Misra has also enlisted accordingly the characteristics of an impure person. The persons who are characterized as eating in the same row, sleeping in company, reading in company with a *brahmana* engaged in forbidden acts can also be treated as impure persons. However, for the same time, the entertainment of a pure *brahmana* is not sinful. In the case of *sraddha*, a *brahmana* whose conduct is in accordance with the precepts and prohibitions of the *sastra*, may be considered as a pure *brahmana* and the entertainment of that *brahmana* is not sinful. In the *sutra* 6/1/12, it is also observed that the reception of gift is also a source of dharma and stealing is not sinful in certain circumstances. Kanada has mentioned that *dharma* accrues from the reception of a gift of land etc from a virtuous man, whether he is inferior, equal or superior to oneself. (*enena hinasamavisista dharmmikebhyah parasvadanam vyakhyatam*)

Here the word, ‘*parasvadanam*’ means reception of any kind of property from another person. In this context, someone may explain the word in another way, i.e., and the word may mean ‘to take someone’s property by means of theft. For example, if someone wants to save himself or his family, who are suffering from starvation, by means of stealing food from a *sudra*, or even from the upper three *varnas*, or if he has not obtained food for several days, then stealing food or to save oneself by means of taking one’s food without his consent is not an impure action at all. Thus, in these types of exceptional situations,
stealing is not harmful and this type of situation has been accepted by the Indian Vaidika tradition.

Again, there is another action, killing, where Kanada, in his Vaisesikasutra, shows that it is not sinful in certain circumstances. In this connection, some difference between the two commentaries i.e., the Upaskarati and the Nyayakandali tika are observed. The Nyayakandalikara says that non-violence is the only way to attain dharma as a common duty. Upaskaratikakara have argued that in certain circumstances, violence is not sinful and the violent man may become a virtuous man. So, to make a proper solution of the two contradictory views, it must be kept in mind what Kanada has uttered in the Vaisesikasutra. In the sutra, 6.1.7, Kanada has mentioned ‘dustam himsayam’, i.e. impurity lies in killing, yet he does not deny certain peculiar situations where killing is not harmful at all. The Vaisesika literatures as well as the other commentaries always have tried to prove that the act of killing is not harmful in certain circumstances either in the case of self-annihilation (atmatyaga), or in the case of the destruction of the others (paratyaga)⁴. Thus in a couple of situations it has been noticed that the circumstances are utmost important to settle the fact whether an act is a virtuous or not. So, it may be said that dharma although in the sense of common duties is relative and it is not absolute in the sense that the original meaning of it may be changed from time to time and from society to society as well as from culture to culture. In the modern era, the meaning of the word ‘dharma’ may also vary in different situations. In the Vaisesika sutra, Kanada does not provide any detail analysis about the implications of these statements. However, in the modern Indian tradition, it needs further explanations and elaborations to solve out the recent ethical problems like euthanasia, abortion etc. In the domain of morality many
issues have cropped up around the act of killing. In the first place, the question of allowing violence needs serious consideration. Secondly, how would the Naiyayikas respond towards the issues relating to euthanasia is also an important for study.

However, by critically examining the different kind of duties, it may be pointed out that some of them are of a religious or sacramental nature and some are hygienic. They may, in a sense, be taken as elements of individual morality. The second kind of dharmas, i.e., the ‘vīsesa dharma’ or the varnasrama dharmas are duties relative to the varna or class to which one belong to the society and to the asrama or stage of life through which one is passing at a particular time. From the Rig Vedic period to the period of different systems of Indian systems, there arises a normative dimension to dharma in which the term comes to mean the sum total of one’s obligation by which one ‘fits in’ with the natural and particularly the social world. The ‘Purusa-sukta’, in which the earliest reference to the division of Hindu society into the four classes is to be found, describes the classes as having come out of the different limbs of the body of the primeval being, and thus shows the organic relationship among the classes. This is especially pertinent concerning the duties determined by one’s social class (varna) and stage of life (asrama). It is well known that from the ancient time the Hindu society divides into four classes and every individual’s life span into four stages.

‘Varna’, which is the Sanskrit word for class or caste, means color. Originally, the term may have referred to the color of the skin. India has had to deal with the problems of race in its acutest form. The result was a composite Hindu society; and term varna assumed a new meaning—no longer the color of the skin, but the color of one’s own character. As its
verbal form suggests, varnadharmas suggests the dharma of a varna. A varna is a class of people, a sector of society, as per the Indian theory of social organization according to which society consists of four classes, or sectors of people, called brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya and sudra. However, the varnadharma of an individual is the set of obligations one is obligated to fulfill on account of his belonging to, or being a member of, the class or varna he is in fact a member of. According to the Indian theory of varnadharma, the individual is first a member of a particular varna, and simply on account of this membership of his he has to have a particular set of obligations, more specifically, the set of obligations which every member of that varna, by definition, has to have. Although the reference to the four classes is first found in the Rigveda itself, the different philosophical systems have also dealt with this matter respectively. In this section, mainly the thoughts of the Nyaya-Vaisesikas have been explained. Prasastapada in his Padarthadharmasamgraha also deals with the qualities and duties relative to each varna and asrama in a detailed manner. However, mainly based on this bhasya, the following are the qualities or duties relative to each varna and asrama:

Varna Dharma:

Qualities and Duties of brahmana:

1.(a) Qualities- serenity(sama), self-control(dama), austerity(tapas), purity(sauca), forbearance(ksanti), uprightness(arjava), wisdom(jnana), knowledge(vijnana), faith in religion(astikya).in the Bhagavat Gita, it has been claimed that ‘one becomes a brahmana by his deeds and not by his family or birth’ Thus, class is primarily a question of character. An interesting incident has been mentioned in the Chandogya Upanisad.
Satyakama, a young lad, desired to lead the life of a student. Before he could approach a preceptor for this purpose, he had to know his lineage. He had only his mother to enlighten on this issue. However, the mother could not throw any light on it. She told him, “I do not know to what lineage you belong, my son. In my youth, when I was moving about as a maidservant, I conceived you. Therefore, I do not know to what line you belong, my son. I am Jabala by name, and you are Satyakama. Therefore, you may call yourself Satyakama Jabala. Then the boy went to a preceptor, Gautama, and announced himself in the manner in which his mother had instructed him. The preceptor was pleased with the boy’s outspokenness and concluded that he must be a brahmana because he had spoken the truth. Thus, in Satyakama’s case, character and not birth determined his class.

(b) Duties of a brahmana: studying and teaching of the Vedas, performance of sacrifices (yajna), giving and accepting alms.

2. Qualities and duties of a ksatriya:

(a) Qualities: heroism (saurya), vigour (teja), steadiness (dhrti), resourcefulness (daksya), not fleeting from a battle, generosity and leadership (isvarabhava).

(b) Duties: Protecting people from external aggression and internal disturbances as well as governing them with a view to peace and prosperity, chastising the wicked (asadhunigraha), charity (dana).
3. Duties of a *vaisya*: agriculture, tending cattle and trade.

4. Duties of *sudra*: service to the other three classes.

However, it is sometimes found that the class system (*varna*) depends on the character of an individual and not on the society in which the individual belongs to. Every individual has to belong to a *varna* and to only one *varna*. Mainly the theistic school of thought in Indian ethical system is mostly concern about this *varna* system and they have considered this system as a necessary component of living a good moral life. This classification of the class system becomes sometimes necessary for it is a means to the individual’s realization of his ends. The individual cannot realize his ends without the help of society. His pursuit of *moksa*, spiritual freedom, too, redounds to the benefit of society.

In this way, it is found from the above literature that there is some ‘*visesa dharma*’ according to the different varnas. However, over all, it may be noticed that there are some *samskaras* that have been laid in the *sastras* and these are going to be applied to different *varnas*. However, the *samskaras* of the *brahmanas* are: accepting the objects only from a virtuous person and with the help of them earning a good livelihood. Again, the *samskaras* that are applicable only for the *ksatriyas* are to protect properly the people of a certain state who perform different acts in accordance with the *sastras*. The second one is not to abstain or flee from the war. The third; one is to restrain the evil persons. Again, Prasastapada, in his bhasya, has also mentioned the special *sadhanas* done by the *vaisyas*. Trading of different objects, involving in the agricultural works, farming the domestic animals and the specific *samskaras* that are mentioned in the *Vaidika* literature—these four characteristics are the special characteristics of the *vaisyas*. Lastly, the special
characteristics of the *sudra* is: he may maintain all the *nitya –naimittika karmas* throughout his life without spelling any mantras in anywhere.

The four stages of life (*asrama dharma*)

Turning to the society to the individual, it is noticed that, according to the teachings of Indian thinkers, each individual has to go through the four stages in his life’s journey. These stages are called *asramas*, a term which mean rest places as well as training grounds. The four *asramas* are: *brahmacarya* (the period of studentship), *garhastha* (the stage of a householder), *vanaprastha* (the stage of a forest dweller), and *sannyasa* (the life of renunciation). From the *bhasya*, it is also observed that there are certain specific characteristics that will lead someone to perform in a proper and absolute way in the four *asrama* life, i.e., *bramhacarya, graharstha, vanaprasstha* and *sannyasa*. In the *Vaidika* tradition, being in the *gurukula*, the *brahmacarins* or the students reside for the purpose of studying the *Veda*, then after the twelve years of studying the person is prepared for leading the life of a householder (*grahasthya*), after that the stage of *Vanaprasstha* comes where the person retires from his householder ship and sometimes go to the forest on the ripening of age. Lastly, the stage of *sannyasa* comes and this is the life of self-renunciation. Thus the *asrama dharma* are specific in the sense that these duties are to be performed by the aspirant after spiritual evolution within specific stages of his life. The ordinary aspirant has to pass through these different stages. Nevertheless, one possessing extra-ordinary psychic powers might be able to dispense with the intermediate stages. The scheme of *asrama dharma* considers human nature and prescribes the final stage of renunciation only after giving room for enjoying the good things of the world and for
discharging one’s social duties in a spirit of detachment during the preceding stages. Man’s life becomes one of discipline, study, service, sacrifice, penance, and renunciation—all these leading to the perfection of human personality. However, the different kinds of asrama dharmas have been taken for granted in the following mainly based on Padarthadharmasamgraha of Prasastapada.

B. Asrama dharma (mainly based on Padarthadharmasamgraha)

1. Duties /Qualities of a brahmacari: Attendance upon the teacher, fetching of fuel, offering incense to the sacrificial fire, living on alms in the manner prescribed by the scriptures, avoidance of such things like wine, meat, sleeping during day time, painting of the eyes etc. In short, the duty of a brahmacari is to lead a celibate life based on simplicity, chastity, austerity, and obedience.

2. Duties of a grhastha: a) The morning and evening offerings of the five great sacrifices: bhutayajna (sacrifice to animals), manusyayajna (sacrifice to men in the form of serving and entertaining of guests-atithi pujanam manusya yajnah) devayajna (sacrifice to Gods in the form of offering incense to the sacred fire – (homah devayajnah), pitriyajna (sacrifice to ancestors in the form of praying respect to them by observing sraddha rites(sradham pitryajnah) and Brahmayajna (sacrifice to Brahma or the Veda by reading sacred texts- Vedapathah Brahmayajnah), (b) The taking of the Ekagni fire and the offering into it the absolutely necessary Pakayajna sacrifice and also if possible, of such sacrififces as those of Agnadhyeya, the Hariyajna, the Agnistoma, and the somayajna. (c) Begetting of children, but abstaining from sexual intercourse at improper times.
(3) Duties of a Vanaprastha - Living in a forest, wearing skin and bark of trees, non-shaving of hair and beard and non-cutting of nails, living only on fruits of the jungle and those also as are left after the sacrifices.

(4) Qualities/duties of a Sannyasin - A sannyasin are a wandering ascetic, completely devoid of all sorts of passions and desires. No specific duties are prescribed for him. He is, in a sense, a supra ethical being. Still he is expecting not to avoid his nitya-naimittika duties. Such a man is known by the serenity of his mind, his gentleness, his compassion for all creatures and a complete annihilation on his part of the fire of passions. He is completely indifferent to worldly gains and is firm in his meditation. These four asramas are intended to lead man to perfection by successive stages. In exceptional cases, some of the stages may be skipped. However, whether the progress is quick or low, by grades or by leaps, the goal that one should keep in view is the same, viz, spiritual perfection and freedom.

However, the important point must be noted that the scheme of asrama dharma is based on the ethical principle that man should discharge his duties fully before aspiring for his liberation from the bonds of the world. In this way, the Vaisesikas have argued that the person has all types of desire and aversion in his self as well as he has false knowledge about the object and he is obligated to perform such characteristics to achieve dharma. Therefore, these are the sadhanas or the way to attain dharma and this is also noticed that by means of those duties, the person could not attain moksa. But in this stage of life; it does not mean that the person who performs those duties does not do any adharmic actions. Rather, they also do some actions that will lead them to attain adharma, but the
quality of those actions is very little. Actually, *varnasrama dharma* reflects a temporal dimension in orthodox Hindu normative thought. That is, just as a person gains rights and responsibilities while moving in this life from one *asram* to another, he claims certain privileges and accepts specific obligations according to his present *varna*, which is determined by his actions in his previous life. Here again, a close ideological assumption connecting *dharma* and *adharma* may be found.

In this connection, it may be observed that the karmic causality would relate an agent, an action and a result. Moral evaluation is involved in case of both the action and the result. In this context, a norm may be declared for man’s action to be right either in the light of the intention behind it or its consequences or both. A norm may also have a restricted domain with respect to agents; it may be of the form that an action is right only when done by a certain kind of agent. In Hindu Philosophy, both kinds of restriction operating upon norms for right actions are being observed. Since the scheme of *varnasrama dharma* has been held to be valid. In so far as the worldly life is concerned, by almost all schools of Indian Philosophy, duties and rules of conduct may vary according to the caste (*varna*) and the stage of life (*asrama*) of the agent. Moreover, right conduct may be made to be conditional upon several other factors also, like the time of action, status or position of the agent, the era to which the agent the belongs to. A cursory glance at diverse classifications of *dharma*, understood as duties and code of conduct, makes it amply clear that Hindu thought recognizes both kinds of rules of conduct, those valid for everyone and at all times, thus having unrestricted universality and those relative to an agent’s cast and stage of life, the time in which the individual’s lives and circumstances prevailing at the time of action. In this connection, this may also be noticed that the duties for a man in
the householder’s life are quite different from duties of a woman at that stage of life. Similarly, most of the rules of conduct ordained for women remain the same whichever class they may belong to and specific duties assigned to caste are in most cases applicable only to men. Thus, women are not ordinarily supposed to engage neither in warfare even when belonging to the warrior caste nor in trade or business activities when belonging to the trading caste.

However, the emphasis on following the code of conduct prescribed for oneself (svadharma) makes it clear that a person is always supposed to follow the dharma prescribed for him according to his caste, stage in life and any effort to switch to or to adopt a code of conduct valid for persons of different caste or stage in life is, in most cases, strongly disapproved of. The Hindu system of classifying the duties presents a peculiar combination of flexibility and rigidity. While on one hand due importance has been attached to an agent’s station in life, circumstances, the demands of his profession and time he is living in, on the other hand, within each different category, the code of conduct is often strictly and rigidly laid out. It appears to be quite logical to proceed from the recognition that duties vary according to the agent’s circumstances to the further conclusion that even within each classification, e.g., code for a certain profession, certain flexibility or interchangeability has to be introduced to do justice to the particular nature and circumstances of an individual agent. It may also be observed that certain types of actions, namely those that violate the code of conduct valid for everyone, can be said to be wrong for everyone. However, as far as specific codes are concerned, what is right for one person may be wrong for another, so will happen in the case of wrong action, too.
In this connection, it may be established by the Nyaya-Vaisesikas that dharma is indeed a special quality of the self and in that case, it is subjective in significance, but this subjective quality or trait is itself to be acquired through the properly obeying of the objective code of duties. Thus, it may be said that by means of doing the dharmas or duties that led by the pravrtti of an individual, one becomes the virtuous man. In this sense, in accordance with the quality of the self, an individual may do an action and thus the qualities and the virtues of an individual are inter-related. In this chapter, mainly the objective code of duties has been discussed elaborately and these are the sadharana dharma or the duties of universal scope and application as well as the Varnasrama dharma or the duties of station in life. By maintaining these common or universal duties and the special duties of one’s varna or social class and of one’s asrama or specific state in spiritual growth, one realizes the special quality of the self that constitutes dharma, virtue or righteousness. It may be said that in another sense, these duties may be considered the nimitta karana of dharma as a virtue in general.

It is also worth mentioning that the practical teaching of the Nyaya-Vaisesika school is formulated to bring about the right knowledge of the self. It comprises both the moral and the intellectual training. The type of intellectual training will be discussed later. The moral training consists in the pursuit of what Gautama calls Yama and Niyama. These two terms , Vatsyayana says, signify respectively the duties that are common (sadharana dharma) to all stages of life (asrama) and those that are specific to one’s particular stages of life. He does not mention ‘classes’ (varna) here. Uddyotkara is silent on this point. Vacaspatimisra, following Vatsyayana, identifies the two terms with the first two members in the eight-fold discipline taught in the yoga system to mean ‘abstention from
forbidden deeds \textit{(nisiddha parivarjana)} and \textquote[\textit{Veda}]{\textit{yat itikartavyatavisesana niyamyate sa niyamah}}.\textsuperscript{8}

\textbf{Varnadharma and Samanya dharma- The Question of Priority}

In any moral theory that admits of more than one sort of virtues or obligations, the issue of priority becomes important. Moreover, in the Indian ethical theory, this issue is that of priority between a \textit{varnadharma} and a \textit{samanya dharma}, for example, a caste –virtue or obligation and a general virtue or obligation. Most of modern works on Indian ethics interpret Indian ethical theory as holding that whenever there is any conflict between a \textit{varnadharma} and a \textit{samanya dharma}, the \textit{samanya dharma} is to be preferred, i.e. to be given priority over the \textit{varnadharma}. S.K.Maitra has pointed out that the universal duties formed the basis for performing special duties and that whenever there was an occasion for conflict between the two kinds of duties, the universal duties were given the priority over the caste duties. To say this is not false, for there were many instances of this position available in classical Indian works and in the Indian ethos. For example, both Mahavira and Gautama Buddha adjure doing their duties as householders as well as the duties they are required to do so because of their caste. Both of them devote their life to doing what may be called a \textit{samanya dharma}. Another example of the priority of \textit{samanya dharma} is found in the stories of \textit{Ramayana}. In the \textit{Rama} tradition, it is found that \textit{samanya dharma} is prior to \textit{varnadharma}, on the contrary, in the \textit{krşna} tradition, as presented in the \textit{Gita}, it is found that the priority has been made to the \textit{varnadharma} over the \textit{samanyadharma}. And, the \textit{Gita} ethos is not in any way less respected than the \textit{Rama} tradition in Indian ethos.
It would be fair to say that Indian ethics considers neither samanyadharma to have overall priority over varnadharma nor varnadharma to have this over samanya dharma. Its attitude in this regard may be called either ambivalent or indecisive, leaving it to the individual to use his moral maturity to decide in which situation, which one of the two should be given priority over the other.9

The Word ‘Dharma’ in the Subjective Sense

The word ‘dharma’ may be used by the classical Indian thinkers, in the subjective sense, i.e. in the sense of subjective morality. In the sense of subjective morality, dharma aims at the preservation or promotion of all being’s well being. From the second verse of the Kanada’s Vaisesikasutra, a concrete explanation is found of the term ‘dharma’ in its subjective sense.

Following the sutra two10 it is found that, morality (dharma) leads to the moral man’s total well-being or flourishing (abhyudaya) in his worldly life as well as to that of his highest objective (nihsreyasa). In that sense, ‘dharma’ leads to the attainment of heavenly pleasure and to the supreme good or liberation. The two kinds of attainment, through the means of dharma make it clear that the word ‘dharma’ may be used in the subjective sense and it is the subjective morality of Hindu ethics without which an individual could not look inwards into himself. It is assumed that cittasuddhi or the purification of the mind is an indispensable condition for the higher stages of moral life. The ordinary man should be purified and spiritualized only if he properly lead and maintain a dharmic life. The ordinary person might become a virtuous one if dharma in the sense of virtue inheres in his soul as a subjective quality. Actually, the word ‘dharma’
understood in the subjective sense, means ‘virtue’. In this connection, the explanation will be considered regarding the use of the word ‘dharma’ in the subjective sense following the second verse of the Vaisesikasutra. The sutra 1/1/2 says that ‘yatoh abhyudaya nihsreyasah siddih sah dharmah’\(^{11}\), and it means that, the word ‘dharma’ connotes the path which leads to the attainment of heavenly pleasures and to the supreme good or liberation. In this sutra, the two words, abhyudaya and nihsreyasah have been introduced in a consecutive way. The word, ‘abhyudaya’, may be understood as the prosperity, happiness in one’s own life and the word nihsreyasah connotes the ultimate bliss or final happiness in one’s life. In the Upaskara commentary of Sankara Misra, these two words have been taken in the sense of the proper realization of the ultimate reality through tattvajnana and the absolute cessation of the suffering respectively.

In this connection, an objection may be drawn in the following manner. If the right knowledge (tattvajnana) has been considered as the cause of the highest good called nihsreyasah, there is hardly any reason to accept dharma as the cause of the same for this will lead to the contradiction between the two sutras , ‘yatoh abhyudaya nihsreyasah siddih’ and ‘Taceesvaracodanabhivyaktad dharmadeva’\(^{12}\)The later sutra suggests that dharma is that which is manifested by the action of God ,while the previous sutra says that dharma is that way which leads an individual to realize the highest good. If one keeps in mind both of these two sutras, there arises a contradiction. In another way, the objection may be raised whether dharma is supposed to be only one means to the end ‘supreme good’ or it acts only as the mediator (vyapara) to attain the highest good. To avoid the complexity of this issue, the bhasya has tried to solve this by providing an alternative opinion. it maintains that the direct cause of attaining the highest or supreme
good is the true knowledge of the resemblances or the differences of the six padarthas, i.e., Substance, Attribute, Action, Samanyat (Universal), Visesa (particular), and Samavaya (a particular variety of relation) and ‘dharma’ is the vyapara or mediator to attain this kind of knowledge.

Thus, from the Vaisesika sutra, it is found that the word ‘Abhyudaya’ does not mean the well-being of only that person who leads a dharmic life but it means the well-being of all those with whom his leading this life is concerned, directly or indirectly. In addition, since it leads to happiness in this life, it protects or promotes social harmony, or rather, harmony of one man with the rest of his universe. According to it, living a moral life makes the life of the moral man happy in all respects by establishing a harmony between his and other’s interests. The other thing which morality does is to lead to the attainment of nihsreyasa. Nihsreyasa means the highest value, literally, that than which nothing else is greater or better in value, or as a value, i.e. as a purusartha. As a matter of fact, the central point of the Vaisesika’s explication of the role of morality is that it is a precondition for leading a life, which is desirable in all respects, hedonistic as well as non-hedonistic. This view explicates the concept of morality as well as justifies leading a moral life. It answers both the questions, ‘What does morality (dharma) mean?’ and ‘why should one be moral?’ In this connection, it is worth mentioning that the word ‘dharma’, in its subjective sense, presents a very optimistic and encouraging account of morality.

The Naiyayikas similar to the Vaisesikas, also have tried to explicate the subjective sense of dharma in the Nyayasutra and in the Nyaya bhasya. In the Nyayasutra, ‘Pravrtti dosajanitoarthah phalam’13, Gautama also explained that dharma and adharma are the
causes of pleasure and pain. In this sutra, the term, *phala* may be taken to suggest the experience of pleasure and pain or *sukha* and *duhkha*. Thus, ‘fruition’ consists in the experiencing of pleasure and pain, as every action leads to pleasure and pain. In addition, pleasure and pain appear only in the empirical self along with the body and the sense organs. The word ‘*dharma*’ is considered as the moral virtue i.e. in the sense subjective morality and in this sense, *dharma* is ‘*purusagunah.*’ The word ‘*purusa*’ stands for the empirical self and *dharma* is supposed to be the qualities of that particular self. Another characteristic that has been mentioned by the *Nyaya-Vaisesikas* is ‘*kartu priyahita moksa hetuh*’. From the *bhasya* of Prasastapada and the *Upaskara Tika* of Samkara Misra, the clue that has been observed is that the individual has maintained his life in accordance with *dharma* as well as has tried to avoid all kinds of *adharma* or the immoral activities by means of doing various sorts of sacrifices and avoiding most of the painful circumstances.

From the *Vaisesika sutra*, it is found that the two qualities of the self, i.e., *dharma* and *adharma* are present in the empirical self in the relation of *samavaya* as well as the other two qualities, i.e., pleasure and pain inheres in the same locus, the empirical self, in the same relation, i.e., the relation of *samavaya*. Hence, it is found that the locus of these two sets of the qualities is the same and there is no contradiction between the two. In the *Vaisesika sutra*, it is observed that attributes of one soul do not produce effects in another soul, the person who reaps, the same must sow. According to Kanada ‘*Atmantaragunanamatmantare akaranatvat*’.14 In addition, these words express the fact that the result of the action indicated by the *sastra* accrues to the performer, because there is no causality of the attributes of one soul with the attributes of another soul. For the
attributes of one soul, e.g., merits and demerits that arise from the performance of sacrificial acts are not causes of the attributes, in the shape of pleasure and pain, of another soul. Another characteristic feature of dharma, according to Prasastapada, is ‘Visuddhabhisandhijnah’, i.e., it comes out from the purity of the agent’s intention and it is also free from any kind of pride and the like (dambhadirahitasamkalpavisesah). For that reason, Prasastapada, in his bhasya, has mentioned that dharma actually originates from the conjunction of the soul with the mind (manas) along with the intention of the purursa and the purusa must be qualified by the qualifier: that purusa must be free from any kind of pride. 15 Hence, the samavayi karana of dharma in its subjective sense i.e. virtue, is the atman or the empirical self and the asamavayi karana of dharma is the conjunction of the soul with the mind. It must also be noticed that this kind of dharma is obligatory to all the four varnas and the asramas of a Hindu society. Thus, following Prasastapada, we may sum up the Nyaya –Vaisesika views on dharma as well as adharma in their subjective sense i.e. in the sense of moral virtues.

Firstly, it is known to us that dharma and adharma are the two special qualities of the self and these two results from the purity and the impurity of the intention of the agent. In the case of dharma, the agent must be free from any kind of pride and in the case of adharma the agent may be influenced by the pride or vanity that inheres in the soul.

Secondly, dharma and adharma are that kind of qualities that inhere in the self in the relation of samavaya and the conjunction of the self with the mind is the asamavayi karana of dharma as well as adharma and the nimitta karana of these two is to achieve the result of the action.
Thirdly, these two appertain to the self in its phenomenal life, i.e., as participating in experience and therefore, implying *purusantah karanasamyoga*, i.e., the contact of the self, *atman* or *purusa* and the *antahkarana*, the internal organ or instrument of experience, i.e., the mind or *manas*. There is this contact of the self and the mind that there is experience and it is as far as there is experience that there is *dharma* or *adharma*.

Fourthly, these two qualities are super sensuous (*atindriya*). They are qualities or dispositions of the self, but not in the sense in which pleasure and pain are the qualities of the self. These two qualities are the objects of internal perception, as they can be perceived by means of the mind without the aid of the external senses. These are objects of *Yogika* intuition only, i.e., the intuition of the sages and of any ordinary person who can perceive only their effects, namely, happiness and unhappiness.

Fifthly, *dharma* and *adharma* are the effects of experience as they are born out of the self’s participation in *samsara* or empirical life. They are thus contingent phenomena and thus cannot be eternal.

Now, as these two qualities of the self are perishable, then obviously the question arises to how and when they are destroyed. From the *Prasastapadabhasya* and the *Nyayakandali tika*, it has been expressed that it is ‘*antasukha samvijnanavirdhi*’, i.e., contradictory to the experience of the last happiness, the last fruition. Actually, *dharma* is the cause of fruition or happiness and thus it may exhaust itself by the last fruition, i.e., by the experience of the last happiness. On the contrary, *adharma* is cancelled through the process of experiencing of the sufferings that were accumulated. Nevertheless, these are not the only ways in which righteousness and unrighteousness may be exhausted.
They may also be exhausted by the knowledge of the true nature of things. Such knowledge by clarifying intellectual vision and remaining all delusion destroys attraction (raga) and aversion (dvesa) which are the causes of volition (pravrtti) and thereby of participation in experience and samsara. In this way, by persuading the individual to withdraw from empirical life, it ensures his freedom from the moral order of karma and of right and wrong and thus prepares the way to his mukti or liberation. Thus, it is very clear to us that for the Naiyayikas there is no absolute dualism between the empirical and the transcendental self, the atman that participates in experience and thereby is qualified by dharma and adharma being also the same atman that becomes free from the empirical life through spiritual discipline and thereby recovers its transcendental purity of being.

The knowledge of the true nature of reality is contradictory to any active participation in experience and thus there is no more any righteous or unrighteous action. And subsequently, there are also no agami karmas, i.e., right or wrong actions. According to the Naiyayikas, the true knowledge of the self cannot destroy any kind of actions. Actually, whenever this true knowledge appears in someone’s self, then the false knowledge disappears and after that attraction and aversion may disappear, and if these two disappear, then the person could not do any kind of action further. But the other two karmas, i.e., the sancita and the prarabdha karmas could not be destroyed by the true knowledge; rather these are destroyed by means of duly experiencing results of those karmas. Thus, these two karmas though they are already in the state of fruition, take their course and consume themselves by the natural process of maturing into these proper effects.
In this connection, another point that has to be noticed is: whether do the other schools of Indian philosophy share the same view regarding the nature of virtue? It is found that the other schools, the theistic as well as the non-theistic schools have taken into account the nature of virtue in the following way:

The *Nyaya-Vaisesika* schools have asserted the virtues as a character trait or the disposition of the empirical self that produce in the self by performing certain duties. In the same way, the *Samkhya* school, though they have not the same metaphysical framework with the Naiyayikas, have pointed out that the word ‘*dharma*’ in its subjective sense, ‘virtue’ may mean the specific function of the mind of the individual. However, the word ‘virtue’ has been empirically used and not yet transcendentally used in the *Samkhya* philosophy.

The Buddhists, though they have no belief in *Veda* or *Isvara*, have maintained the meaning of the word ‘*dharma*’ in the sense of the *vasana* or disposition of the mind and in this way they have more or less the similar view with the *Samkhya*, the *Astika* school. As according to the Buddhist presupposition, nothing is permanent, so the mind or *citta* is also not a permanent entity and in that sense, the disposition or the *vasana* that lies in the mind is continuous in nature. It may be pointed out that these dispositions are subjective in nature. As far as their metaphysical outcomes, they also have laid more emphasis on the fact that in the empirical level, these *dharma* and *adharma* have more significance but in the transcendental level, these dispositions of the mental state will be annulled.

However, the word ‘*dharma*’ may mean a certain kind of disposition or potency of a person, but not always mean the character trait or the subjective category. In some other
sense, the word ‘dharma’ may signify the objective category and that idea reflects on the position of the Mimamsakas. More specifically, it may be said that the Mimamsakas are the only advocates of the thought that dharma and adharma are the objective categories. Amongst the Mimamsakas, only the views of the Prabhakaras and the Bhattas have been considered in this context. The Mimamsakas have maintained that dharma is a thing worthy of being aimed at. From their own definition of dharma, as mentioned in the Mimamsaka sutra of Jaimini, it has been examined that dharma is nothing but the sacrificial activities performed by those individual who belong to the Vaidika tradition. Thus, the Mimamsakas position reminds the old Rig Vedic view of dharma.

From the source of the Mimanmsaka sutra, It might be pointed out that according to the Mimamsaka tradition, the word, ‘dharma’ has to satisfy the two conditions: (1) it must be an artha or good, i.e, must not produce pain in excess of pleasure (sukhadhikadukkhajanaka) and (2) it must sanctioned by codana or sastric prescription and in that case, it is non-empirical in nature. In the Mimamsa sutra, the word ‘codana’ has been used in connection with the definition of dharma. The Vedic injunction, that inspires an individual in his action, may be called ‘codana’. This Vedic injunction may lead to the highest good and it may be called, ‘dharma’.

In this context, one may ask: whether it might be always the case that the thing, which is sanctioned by ‘codana’ or Vedic prescription must be entitled as ‘dharma’. The answer will be negative. Any type of action, sanctioned by codana, or vedic injunctions, cannot be subscribed as dharma. Moreover, an action, though sanctioned by the Vedic literatures, leads to some undesired situation, cannot be called dharma at all. Hence,
"dharma" is that which is always related with good. Therefore, the extended meaning of the term ‘dharma’ in the sense of *vidhi* or moral codes as given in the different sutras of the *Mimamsakas* can somehow be accepted if it is sanctioned not only by the Vedic statement but by non-Vedic ones as well. It is not only that *Vedas* are the only sources that will determine what one should do. There are many *vidhis* or moral codes prescribed in the non-Vedic *sastras* that will also determine what one should do or do not. Henceforth, in the present context, the details of the discussions of *Mimamsaka* School regarding this matter will not be discussed.

**Classification of the Virtues**

In the *Nyaya* tradition, the classifications of the virtues have also been noticed in the *Vatsyayana bhasya* and in other commentaries on *Nyaya* philosophy. Vatsyayana classifies *dharma* according to the faculties involved in the exercise of the virtues or duties concerned. According to him, a *dharma* may be related to body (*kayika*), or to speech (*vacika*), or again to mind (*manasika*). Similarly, there can be corresponding vices relating to all the three. Vatsyayana presents a list of both virtues and vices relating to the three faculties. Virtues relating to body are according to him: *paritrana* (serving or saving the distressed), *dana* (charity) and *paricarana* (social service). Virtues relating to speech are: *satya* (truthfulness), *priyavacana* (agreeable speech), *hitavacana* (the uttering of beneficial speech), and *svadhyaya* (reciting of scriptures). Virtues relating to the mind are: *daya* (kindness), *asprha* (non-covetousness or non-attachment), and *sraddha* (reverence). The corresponding vices are the following:
Vices related to body: himsa (violence), steya (stealing) and pratisiddha maithun (prohibited sexual intercourse). Vices relating to speech: mithya vacana (false speech), parusa katukti (harsh speech), sucana (insinuation) and asambaddha (gossip). Vices relating to mind: paradroha (hostility), paradravyabhipsa (attachment for others belongings) and nastikya (irreverence, want of faith in scriptures).

Prof. Rajendra Prasad comments, “Normally, general virtues, in the Indian ethos, are such traits of character which are supposed to make a man’s character good in an organismic sense. It is possible that the specific traits, which constitute what we call good moral character in a restrictive sense, form a subset of these traits. Rather, it is assumed in Indian ethics that this is always the case. This point will become clearer if the notion of a good character should be extended. From what has been said so far, it is obvious that the virtues of a man make his character good (and therefore their opposites, vices, make it bad.). However, simply the possession of some virtues as isolated, independent, traits does not do that. The virtues do that if they are organized in such a coherent manner that none of them is so greatly inflated that it hurts some other important virtue and leads to some obviously evil consequences."17

Further, Rajendra Prasad claims that the Indian theory of virtues is one of virtue coherentism. He says in his famous essay, that “virtue- coherent theory to be made practical, requires that some ordering or relative grading of virtues is provided, that is when a list of virtues is given, a principle is also given showing which virtue is higher than another so that an individual may prefer the higher to the lower if the two conflict in
any situation." However, no classical philosophers seem to have provided a list fortified with such a principle.

**Pursuance of Dharma and its Results**

By performing the various kinds of obligatory and the occasional deeds, an ordinary person, as Gautama and Sridhara describe, acquires the quality, 'dharma', in his own self, which leads to self-purification (atma-samskara). In that case, the ordinary person may turn out to be a virtuous person. Visvanath interprets purification of self in terms of fitness of the self to attain liberation (atmanah apavargaksamata). This qualification is acquired through the ethical training. It enables the aspirant to enter upon the second stage of the discipline which is predominantly intellectual and which comprises three factors, i.e. sravana or formal study, manana or reflection, and nididhyasana or meditation. The virtuous person first learns from a proper preceptor that the true nature of the self is distinct from the body-mind- sense complex and also from the features like knowledge, happiness, misery etc. which are adventitious to it and with which it has falsely identified itself. This stage of training is called *sravana*. After the stage of *sravana*, the aspirant must argue himself based on reasoning and convince himself that what he has learnt through *sravana* is true. This stage of training is called *manana*. This secures intellectual conviction about the truth of this self. The knowledge of the self that is derived through *sravana* and *manana* is mediate in nature. Hence, what is needed is that this mediate knowledge must be transformed into direct experience. This can be done by the method of dhyana or nididhyasana which Gautama says yoga or samadhi.
In fact, the meaning of the word, ‘dharma’ is sometimes understood as a purusa-guna, i.e. the character trait and in some other sense; it may be understood as the duties, i.e. common and special duties of an individual. Consequently, the question may arise, how could we determine the sense of the word ‘dharma’ in different context? To answer shortly, it may be noticed that in the Nyaya-Vaisesika framework, the common duties or sadharana dharmas as well as the special duties or visesa dharmas are lying in the third category, i.e. karma, among the six positive categories (bhava padarthas) maintained by the Nyaya-Vaisesikas and by performing all of these karmas, one ordinary person would acquire certain qualities in his own self and these gunas or qualities are dharma and adharma. Thus, the second category, guna, has been accepted by the Naiyayikas and the word ‘dharma’ is sometimes accepted as guna that inheres in the individual soul, which is the substratum of these qualities. However, the Nyaya-Vaisesika systems have tried to cover the broad categories, i.e. guna and karma under one heading and this is ‘dharma’. Thus, the quality, guna, i.e. dharma is acquired through the ethical training, (karma). Dharma, i.e. sadharana dharma and visesa dharma. After the moral training, the second kind of training is intellectual that comprises three factors, i.e. sravana, manana and the nididhyasana that has been discussed earlier in details. After maintaining these three, the knower of the truth would experience the real nature of the self by tattvajnana.

Overall, it can be said about the Indian concepts of virtues and duties that by going through them one can hardly miss being impressed by their subtlety and depth. The Indian thinkers are to be admired for their vision of human qualities of character. They count both virtues and vices in details and count them so minutely that hardly any quality worth considering is left out. The Indian distinction between the sadharana dharma and
the varnasrama dharma has also its specialty and significance. Certain dharmas become obligatory for one by virtue of his being the member of a particular stage of life may be considered as the pravartaka dharma. The dharmas led by some kind of pravrtti either pure or impure are known as pravartaka dharma. Moreover, in accordance with pravrtti, an individual does the righteous or unrighteous action in the practical plane. More over in the Vaisesika sutra, it has been observed that dharma and adharma are also the causes of birth and death. Kanada says, ‘Tatsamyogah Vibhagah’\(^{23}\), i.e., conjunction of soul with body, sense and life are produced by dharma and adharma and this may be called birth, whereas disjunction of body and mind from the soul is also produced by dharma and adharma and this may somehow be called death. In this discussion, the problem of birth and death of an individual have not been discussed immediately. In this way, this system of birth and death, samsara, or ceaseless flow of existence and pretyabhava or rebirth are also caused in some way by dharma and adharma. Prasastapada, in his bhasya, offers another explanation about dharma and adharma to show how these two qualities become ‘pravrttilaksana’ and the ‘nivrttilaksana’. By the term, ‘pravrttilaksana’, the bhasya implies dharma and adharma, in their subjective sense, helping an ordinary person to become a virtuous person. The term, ‘nivrttilaksana’, on the other hand, explains how does a virtuous person, having the two qualities, dharma and adharma, in their own self, follows the path of moksa.

In this connection, some of the sutras and their explanations must be noted. In the Vaisesika sutra, Kanada has mentioned,’ Atma karmmasu moksah vyakhyatah’, i.e, moksa or liberation can take place when there exists the actions of the soul. The next point is to discuss: How does ‘dharma’, as the nivartaka dharma, lead someone to attain
moksa or apavarga? Here, ‘nivartaka dharma’ means nivrttilaksana dharma. The person, who has acquired the nivrtti laksana dharma, has no desire, i.e., he is uninfluenced by any kind of worldly desires. That kind of person may be called a virtuous man. The Vaisesika have argued that the ordinary person should perform the pravartaka dharma. For him, ‘the ordinary person’ signifies the person who has the false notion of ‘I’ in respect of the body-mind –sense complex and he performs the sadharana dharma as well as varnasrama dharma. In this stage, his tendency will be to do actions more of the nature of virtuous actions. But this does not preclude his absolute non-performance of vicious actions. At this stage, he engages himself in any activity with the sense of agency of the form, ‘I am the agent of this action’ and in this stage, though the moral training is complete, but the intellectual training remains to be completed. In this stage, an ordinary man may become a virtuous person but he is not liberated. After this stage, the seeker of liberation (mumuksu) will perform certain kind of action without any desire. This is same as the Gita discipline of ‘disinterested duty’. This would give rise to ‘merit’ which as Gautama and Sridhara describe, as self-purification (atma-samskara). In this sense, Prasastapada has explained the need of nivartaka dharma in his bhasya. Prasastapada says that while performing the nivrttilaksana dharma, the atmajnana must be present and it is coherent with the dharma. Prasastapada adds that the person who is born in a higher family, and he has the desire to remove all sorts of duhkha, as well as he is free from the false notion of ‘I’ in respect of the body- mind –sense complex and over all, he has got the atmajnana, or tattvajnana about the difference of the self and the not-self, he becomes the person ‘virakta’ in the sense that he has no desire or attraction and aversion towards anything. As soon as his desire and aversion disappear, no dharma and
adharma are produced. As there is no dharma and adharma, no new kriyamana karma will produce. Now, the knower of the truth will continue to live until his prarabdha karma has fructified. Such a person who is free from sancita karma that has not yet fructified is called a jivan-mukta – one who is liberated and yet alive. This state of jivanmukti is admitted by Uddyotkara, Vacaspati Misra, Visvanath, Udayana, and Jayanta Bhatta. When the prarabdha karma is exhausted after giving forth its fruit, the body of the jivan-mukta would fall off, and he would remain as the self free from the nine qualities which were adventitiously foisted upon it. The self would become free from worldliness and would remain in its intrinsic nature. However, this nature of liberation will be discussed in the succeeding chapter. However, in performing the nivrtti laksana dharma, the virtuous person feels a special kind of pleasure and that is total satisfaction (santosa sukham). This pleasure is present in allover his body and bodily movements. In this stage, the virtuous person is present in the verge of his liberation, still he is not liberated.
Notes and References


3. *Sutra*, 6. 1. 20, ibid

4. *Hine Pare Tyagah*, 6.1.14, *Same Atmatyagah paratyagah va 6.1.15,* *Visiste Atmatyagah iti*, 6.1.16, ibid


11. Ibid

12. *Vaisesika Sutra of Kanada*, ibid


15. Ibid

16. Codanalaksana arthah dharmah, *Mimamsasutra* of Jaimini, 1.1.2


18. Ibid
19. *Nyaya sutra* by Gautama, 4.2.46, *Nyaya kandali* by Sridhara Bhatta, E.J.Lazarus and co., Benaras, 1895, p-278

20. *Nyaya sutra Vrtti* by Visvanatha, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 2003,p-1096


22. *Nyaya sutra*, 4.2.38 and 46, ibid


25. ibid