CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

The ancient societies are full of miseries and problems. Everybody needs the help of the society which would be rendered by the society through its agency like religion, custom, and so on. Ethics and values were appropriate to ancient times and will continue to hold good for the days to come. In recognition of its significance Lamont says:

“Economic and political systems will come and go, nations and empires and civilizations rise and fall, but ethics and values, as a philosophic system in which mankind’s interests upon this earth are the first word and the last word is unlikely to become obsolete.”

The humans require reasoning which will be provided by psychological and philosophical thinking. It is said, for moulding personality and adjustment the humanity requires the help of government, as the modern societies are vast and the joint families breaking down into nuclear families posing the peaceful co-existence of the society. The science and technology, the commercial aspects of the society push the mankind on its back foot. S.B. Roy writes:

“Man has become selfish in nature. His thirst for money and wealth has made him an anti-element in the society. The social evils like castism, racialism, hunger for power, corruption, white collar crime, religious

fanaticism, gulf between rich and poor push the society downwards.\(^2\)

Only the philosophy of ethics and values can protect the society from the onslaughts of these social evils. Humanity is only the way to bring the unfortunate people up to achieve the social goals. The idea of ethics and values is to be adopted by all forms of governments and all agencies of the societies. Ethics is only the medicine to cure the illness of the society. Right from the ancient to the modern days the human beings rely upon the idea of ethics and values which can make them to live harmoniously in the society. The economic balances, social equality, political unity democratic tendencies and granting rights can be brought only by the idea of ethics and values.

**Religious Applications:**

In Indian context, classical philosophy has been eminated from Indian Epics like the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Lokāyatās* and from the Buddhist and Jainist jatakas.

Hindu ethics and values go back to ancient times with Āryan invasions of North India which were chronologically parallel to the Hellenic invasions of Greece (c. 2000-100). The culture of these conquering tribes was in sharp contrast to that of the declining Indus civilization. Not long after their occupation of the Gangetic pastures, the

Āryans commenced their speculative activities which issued in the formation of the Vedas.\(^3\)

The Vedas did not deal directly with the ethics and values. All the four Vedas were not written at one time and one place. It can be understood that all the four Vedas were written at different times. Hence fourth, the cosmic life, ethical life and the Samskārās are changed from time to time. Similarly the thought of ethics and values had not been proposed directly but had been persisted by different modes through the divine life and the nature of reality with different performances. Different Gods had been originated to perform these Samskārās in different stages of human life. The Vedas, Brahmaṇās and Upanishads, are all linked with the ethical, moral and cosmic life of human beings. Ānanda (bliss), Viśāda (sorrowfulness) and the Sukḥavardana (comfortness) are all derived from Vedic Upaniṣads which have produced the thought of ethics and values through Intellect and Intuition.

The ancient Indian seers recognized a cosmic order which served as the foundation of their ethics and values. They called it Ṛta, a concept which Macdonell, an eminent historian, has described as: “The highest flight of Rg-Vedic thought.”\(^4\) Originally Ṛta was a concept pertaining to the physical universe, denoting the Law of Nature operative in the movement of the planets, the success in of night and day, and the rotation of the

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seasons. As the principle of order in the universe, it endowed all of the natural phenomena with symmetry and aesthetic form. The beauty and uniformity of heaven and earth were looked upon as proceedings of unalterable observance of cosmic law. Gradually the cosmic sense of Ṛta as Natural Law developed into the social sense of Ṛta as moral law. The nature of this development was crucial for the status of morality. It meant that virtue was given the same immanent position in the social world.⁵

The idea of Ṛta as Moral Law became a salient feature of Vedic thought. It is the sense of value based on this idea which accounts for the remarkable unity of thought among the poets. They are all agreed:

“A man should think on wealth, and strive to win it by adoration the path of Order, Counsel himself with his own mental insight, and grasp still nobler vigour with his spirit.”⁶

Exhortations of this kind are numerous. They point to the fact that Ṛta was the summum bonum around which the whole of Vedic religion and society was modeled. So great was its influence that in later time its principles were perpetuated through the characteristic Hindu concepts of dharma and the law of karma. The hymns not only present with a universal standard of morality represented by Ṛta, but also lay down certain duties as the concrete manifestation of Ṛta. The first set of duties is religious, consisting of prayers and sacrifices to the gods. Without

⁵ Cromwell Crawford, S., The Evolution of Hindu Ethical Ideals, p.3.
going into the specific nature of these duties, we shall enquire into their hearing on the moral life.\(^7\)

After the *Vedic* literature the Indian philosophy was blossomed on the two Epics i.e. *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*. The scholars are not having concurrent view on the growth and development of two epics. *Rāmāyaṇa* is believed to be the earliest than the *Mahābhārata*. *Rāmāyaṇa* is a story of an ideal King who tried to establish the Aryan supremacy over aboriginal tribes. The King Rama only with humanitarian tendencies ruled the Kingdom. According to *Vedic Dharma* monogamy, sharing love and affection sacrifice giving respect to elders are the main principles enunciated by *Rāmāyaṇa*. *Rāmāyaṇa* is the story of a person who followed the truth and efficacy. The killing of the demons and the war between Rama and Ravaṇa is nothing but a war between good and bad. The characters in *Rāmāyaṇa* are the symbols of ethics and values. During the later times the picture of ethics and values is totally changed whenever political, social, cultural relationship have shown some change. Different dates have been mentioned by different scholars regarding the development of *Bharata Vamsa* (dynasty) and the battle of Kurukṣetra of *Mahābhārata* in which Pandavas were victorians Epic philosophy.\(^8\)

The *Mahābhārata* describes the great war waged in ancient times between the two branches of the one royal family, that of the Bharatās.

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\(^7\) Cromwell Crawford, S., *The Evolution of Hindu Ethical Ideals*, p.4-5.

\(^8\) Cromwell Crawford, S., *The Evolution of Hindu Ethical Ideals*, pp.78-79.
It is mentioned in the Satapatha Brhāmaṇa that “the greatness of the Bharatās neither the men before nor the men after them, have ever attained to.” The epic relates the heroic deeds of valour which were performed in the Great War fought about the thirteenth or the twelfth century B.C. This war had preached the real human values on the basis of the sufferings faced by the soldiers of the both sides. Thousands of people lost their lives leaving behind their wives and children. The real human philosophy is taught by the War which led the rulers to implement the welfare measures to heal the wounds and sufferings of the people according to Dharmaśāstrās. These ideals had become the base for the founding fathers to draft a Constitution containing human values. ⁹

The philosophy of Buddhism is one of the eminent philosophies by which entire world has been emancipated. The thought of ethics and values can be considered as a vehicle from which Buddha Dharma (Dhamma) has been derived. The Buddhist principles especially the four noble truths have relied upon the humanistic philosophy of Thathagata. This philosophy is based on Triratnas like Sanga, Dhamma, and Buddha. The entire Dharma or Dhamma is an implied meaning of ethics and values. Middle path way of life and four Noble truths and the tripitakas depicted the Buddha’s teachings which are relied upon

⁹ Ibid.
humanistic philosophy. Thereby Goutama was considered as one of the early scholars of ethics and values.

Śīla (Sanskrit) or sīla (Pāli) is usually translated into English as "virtuous behavior", "morality", "ethics and values" or "precept". It is an action committed through the body, speech, or mind, and involves an intentional effort. It is one of the three practices (sīla, samadhi, and panyā) and the second pāramitā. It refers to moral purity of thought, word, and deed. The four conditions of śīla are chastity, calmness, quiet, and extinguishment.¹⁰

Similar to that of Buddhist philosophy of ethics and values the Jains have their own philosophy. Mahavīra who was regarded as the reformer of Jainism has produced immense thought of ethics and values through his teachings. The non-violence, disclosing the truth, ahimsa and brahmacharya and not having desire on the body are the main principles of Jainism. The Parisita Parva and other Jain texts have vividly expressed the Jain thoughts of Karma, metaphysics, and ethical viewpoint of Jain Thirthānkarās.

Jainism, a religion and philosophy of India, founded in about 6ᵗʰ century BC by Vardhamāna who is known as Mahāvīra (“Great Hero”). Due to this perception of the “livingness” of the world, Jainas hold an affinity for the ideals of the environmental movement. The practice of nonviolence in the Jaina context fosters an attitude of respect for all life-

¹⁰ Peter Harvey, An Introduction to Buddhism, p. 187
forms. The observance of truthfulness prompts an investigation of the
interrelatedness of things. The vow of not stealing can be used to reflect
on the world's limited resources and prompt one to think of the needs of
future generations. Sexual restraint might help minimize population
growth. The discipline of non-possession gives one pause to think twice
before indulging in the acquisition of material goods.\textsuperscript{11}

The ethical interest in human freedom is the determining
consideration. The theories of the creation of the world by God, or its
development out of \textit{prakṛti} or its unreality, are criticized on the ground
that they cannot account for either the origin or the cessation of
suffering. To regard the intelligent subject as the product of the five
elements is as fruitless from the ethical point of view as to make out that
the variety of the world is a manifold presentation of the one intelligent
principle. Moral distinctions lose their value on the hypothesis of the
passivity of the soul. To say that the soul is safe in its eternity and the
events of the world are the results of the mechanical combination and
separation of the elements of existence would take away the initiative
from the soul and make moral responsibility meaningless. The fatalist
theory that all things are fixed by nature obviously leaves no room for
individual effort. Ethical values require that the individual can make or
unmake himself in the world, and that the soul has a self-identity which it
preserves even in the ultimate condition.

\textsuperscript{11} Manivannan J.D., \textit{Great Vows in Jainism}, p. 120.
At present in India, the social structure in the context of which the Bhagvad-Gītā had a social relevance is disappearing, but the universal appeal of the Bhagvad-Gītā remains relevant and will always remain relevant for all times to come, as will that of all other religious texts. Chandradhar Sharma emphasizes:

“Bhagvad-Gītā represents a unique synthesis of action, devotion, and knowledge. Man is complex of intellect, will and emotion; he is a being who thinks, wills and feels. Intellect has given rise to the philosophy of knowledge; will to the philosophy of action; and emotion to the philosophy of devotion.”

On the basis of the Indian classical philosophy the founding fathers of the constitution have drafted an analytical constitution. The constitution of India comprises the antiquity traditions, culture, and the customs of the Indian society. After having a dealt deliberation, the detailed constitution has been drafted containing humanist principles. The constitution of India is the lengthiest one consisting of most of the human values in the form of the fundamental rights and the directive principles. The detail idea on the fundamental rights of the Indian Constitution had the historical bearing on the human values.

The Hindu philosophy Jain and Buddhist, even Christian and Islamic religious principles are based on the idea of ethics and values. The Hindu is guided by rules and regulations prescribed by his religion. There is nothing that has to do with the whole life of a Hindu, and every

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12 Chandradhar Sharma., A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, p.33.
possible detail thereof, from the cradle to the grave, which is not regulated by such rules. Cromwell Crawford writes:

“Hinduism does not have a science of morals fashioned after some Aristotelian or Thomistic model. However, it does have a moral philosophy which postulates a *Summum Bonum* and specifies the proper means for achieving it. This highest ideal is the state of Liberation or *mokṣa*. In it a man finds his self-fulfillment and deepest bliss. It is founded on the metaphysical conviction of the oneness of Reality which is attainable through direct experience.”

In order to understand Christian practice, one must realize the importance of the conception of man. Mark’s Gospel stated very directly that man is tainted by evil:

“For from within, out of men’s hearts come evil thoughts of lust, theft, murder, adultery.”

Because of the evil within man, the body must be mortified and chastise. St. Paul likened the fight against flesh to an athletic contest. The flesh is not the sole source of evil. Man’s intellect and will has also been affected by the sin of Adam and Eve. Therefore, even man’s higher nature needs guidance and assistance. In Matthew’s Gospel the same view is expounded:

“Therefore, if you, evil as you are, know how to give good gifts to your children…”

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17 Ibid., *Matthew*, 7:11, p.1002.
Not only the religions but the governments and the Constitutions are forced to accept the idea of ethics and values to achieve the social, political and economic goals as pointed out by the Constituent Assembly which is set up to draft a Constitution. Thereby the Indian Constitution is totally based upon the humanistic philosophy. These issues are discussed in detail in the present which is intended to bring the value and importance of the idea of ethics and values.

Fasting, as an institution, is made a spiritual, moral and physical discipline of the highest order, and this is made clear by changing both the form and the motive. Fasting, according to Islam, is primarily a spiritual discipline: On two occasions in Quran those who fast are called *sa’ih* (from *saha* meaning *he travelled*) or spiritual wayfarers.\(^\text{18}\) According to one authority, when a person refrains, not only from food and drink but from all kinds of evil, he is called a *sa’ih*. While speaking of *Ramadhan*, the month in which fasting is ordained, the Quran specially refers to nearness to God, as if its attainment were an aim in fasting, and then adds:

“Therefore, let them answer My call and put their trust in Me, that they may be rightly guided.”\(^\text{19}\)

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\(^{19}\) Ibid., 2:186, p.20.
Indian Thinkers on Ethics and values:

Since the earliest days of philosophic reflection in ancient times, in both East and West, thinkers of depth and acumen have advanced the simple proposition that the chief end of human life is to work for the happiness of humans upon planet earth and within the confines of the nature that is our home. This philosophy of enjoying, developing, and making available to everyone, the abundant material, cultural, and spiritual goods of this natural world, is profound in its implications, yet easy to understand and congenial to common sense. This human-centered theory of life has remained relatively unheeded during long periods of history. While it has gone under a variety of names, it is a philosophy that it believes in most accurately designated as humanism. M.K. Gandhi’s search for truth penetrated the barriers of human community. Bhatia says:

“Gandhi envisaged a universal community of free persons without artificial barriers of caste, creed, wealth and power.”

Gandhi’s religion is often called a humanistic religion for a variety of reasons. The way he speaks of morality surprises. He resorts more to moral principles in the explanation of religion, hence the label ‘ethical religion’. Gandhi says:

“When morality incarnates itself in a living man, it becomes religion, because it binds, it holds, it sustains him in the hour of trail.”

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Gandhi and Nehru were humanists but their views were rooted in different sub-strata. Gandhi's ethics and values had roots in religious sentiment and faith in God while Nehru's conception was based on implicit faith in man's innate power and potential.

“He had the deepest sentimental faith in mankind and believed in the ideal of a single, united world. He had profound faith in man's innate greatness. While Gandhi's ethics and values are essentially religious, Nehru's ethics and values may be considered scientific and ethical.”22

Nehru puts his faith in the welfare and freedom of the individual. His ethics and values and liberality are fostered by an inner respect for the individual self. The mild temper of the humanist prevails all through, and the relation with other individuals is often enough based on a tender human touch. Emotional feelings in personal life are not infrequently marked, and human feeling from others is appreciated with emotion. He writes:

“Even my jailor and the policemen, who have arrested me or escorted me as a prisoner from place to place, have been kind to me, and much of the bitterness of conflict and the string of goal life has been toned down because of this human touch.”23

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Ethics and values as a philosophy have ever competed with other philosophic viewpoints for the allegiance of human beings. However, far-reaching its disagreements with rival philosophies of the past and present, Ethics and values at least agree with them on the importance of philosophy as such. That importance stems from the perennial need of human beings to find significance in their lives, to integrate their personalities around clear, consistent, and compelling view of existence, and to seek definite and reliable methods in the solution of their problems. Philosophy brings clarity and meaning into the careers of individuals, nations, and civilizations. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was a great humanist. He considered human freedom as the most valuable element to be safeguarded by the society and the state. He said:

“Human personality is a sacred thing. He has a right that he should be considered an end in himself and, therefore, he has right to life, liberty and security.”  

The aim of the life according to Radhakrishnan is to train the mind in an atmosphere of free thinking. According to Radhakrishnan:

“The freedom of human soul is the most valuable.”

Radhakrishnan showed reverence for man as it was shown by contemporary western humanists like Bertrand Russell along with

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24 Radhakrishnan, S., *This is My Philosophy*, p. 315
contemporary Indian Humanists like Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath and Gandhi. As a philosopher he considered the individual as a part of reality. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan rightly pointed out:

“The fate of a nation depends upon character. A country whose people have low character can never become great. When we want to build a great nation, we should educate more and more young men and women in such a way that they may have strength of character.” 26

Rabindranath Tagore played a large role in the artistic and cultural renaissance of India which occurred in the 20th Century. Rabindranath Tagore tried to fuse the best of Western and Eastern values, fusing the spirituality of the East with the scientific progress of the West. Pointing out humanist element in Tagore's philosophy, Bhattacharyya, K wrote:

“Rabindranath Tagore was one of the greatest humanists that the world has known. The keynote of his life was resistance to tyranny in all forms. He struggled against economic exploitation, political subjugation, social inertia and injustice and religious intolerance and insensitiveness.” 27

Present society is full of evils which create miseries and sorrow in the life of the people. The political clashes the economic imbalances are

27 Bhattacharya, K., ‘Rabindranath on Religion’, p.32
creating distress among the people. The political parties have no obligation except to grab the power. The political vandalism is prevailed everywhere. Both capturing bribing the people to cast their votes in favour of political party is responsible for the growth of violence in society. The political turmoil has pushed the country back to the walls. The political uncertainty makes the country poor. The political murders increase of rowdies makes the lives of the people so critical. Under these circumstances human values and the ethics and values are so essential to the society. Human values make the people so thoughtful. Good thoughts on the part of the people would draw them to take up progressive steps for the welfare of the people. In the words of Radha Kamal Mukherjee:

“Ethics and values may be defined as an integral system of human meaning, goals and values and harmonizes programme of human fulfillment. Individual and collective. It seeks to clarify and enrich man’s goals, values and ideals and achieve his full humanness though bringing them in ever deeper and more intimate kinship and harmony with the surrounding life, society and cosmos.”

Ethics and values simply help the man to develop the humanity which would be useful to curb the social menace. The value based life of human being is only the option to reduce the gulf between rich and poor. The ongoing globalization is creating a kind of fear among the people. This fear is undoubtedly is responsible for the growth of cruel activities on the part of political officials and bureaucrats. The human

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values however may reduce such tendencies among the people. In recent years the government of India and State government have conducted a few camps to train the people in ethics and value systems by the parapsychologists with a view to reduce the selfish and power hunger.

As Aristotle once remarked, “we each adhere to a philosophy whether we are aware of it or not”. All adult human beings conduct their lives according to some general pattern of behavior that is more or less conscious, more or less consistent, more or less adequate, to cope with the everyday affairs and inevitable crises of the human scene. Plato has given importance to education which moulds the child in character from the beginning of his childhood. The humanist definition of education propounded by Plato is still the most widely accepted meaning of education in the West. Education everywhere has been used as a process of inculcating values. As Plato said,

“Now, I mean by education that training which is given by suitable habits to the first instincts of virtue in children.”

Plato devoted his most serious thought to the question ‘what is good?’ All of Plato’s speculations begin with an inquiry about the good and the beautiful and only after this did he discuss knowledge. Plato considered the happiness of the individual the highest good. Regardless

\[\text{29} \text{ Plato, } \text{Laws, Jowett, 653.}\]
of what man does, he seeks happiness. He undergoes hardships so he can acquire something that will bring him happiness.\textsuperscript{30}

The Renaissance embodied a reaction against asceticism and the concern for the things of afterlife which turned scholars toward human concern. The reformation signaled the end of the authority of the Church and along with the rejection of the feudal system, gave rise to national states. Industrialization created a new breed of poor who worked long hours in the factories in order to maintain minimum subsistence for themselves and their families. To them the benefits of education were completely out of reach. It was for them that the educational reformers were to demand a more practical education which would enable the industrial serf to rise above his unhappy lot. Social equality had to be accompanied by equality of educational opportunities in order to better the condition of the industrial worker. J.H. Randall suggested that science became the keystone in building the new world to take the place of that broken by the Renaissance.\textsuperscript{31}

John Locke, a seventeenth-century thinker, in his treatise on civil government, argued that all men are rulers; no individual or class can lay any claim to rule others. Rousseau, in his Social Contract, expressed the same belief; namely, that no man has a natural authority over his fellow men.\textsuperscript{32}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{30} Plato, \textit{Symposium}, 204.
\bibitem{32} Adrian M. Dupuis., \textit{Philosophy of Education in Historical Perspective}, p.96.
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Man is no longer viewed as evil, or inclined to evil; the spiritual element in man is denied or disregarded in favor of an emphasis on natural man; the validity of mind-body dualism is questioned; the superiority of one man over another is rejected and replaced by an egalitarian view of freedom and authority; the limited individualism born in the Renaissance reaches adolescence in the eighteenth century and later attains maturity in the rugged individualism of the nineteenth century. Man has been freed from the restrictions of monarchs, ecclesiastics, and supernatural authority.33

33 Adrian M. Dupuis, Philosophy of Education in Historical Perspective, p.97.