CHAPTER III

COMMUNITY LIFE

3.1 Introduction

The community life consists of manifold societal interactions among the various crossections of the people.

The Varna\textit{\textsl{\text{a}}\textsl{\text{r}}\textit{\text{a}}\textsl{\text{m}}\text{a} dharma} encompassing class and life stage is the backbone of the society which paves way for social well-being and harmony. This four-fold classification also facilitates division of labour and specialisation based on one's inherent aptitude and interest.

The family institution is significant in the process of social dynamics. It is the pillar which holds the society together.

Education makes man refined and cultured and is an important social institution.

But education alone does not make one a good person. His association has to be proper and his energies and potentials have to be productively utilised in a group environment.
One may earn great wealth through education. But he should not be selfish. He should distribute at least a portion of his wealth with the poor and needy people. Hence charity is an important social activity.

Social justice is the *sine qua non* for ensuring equity and social harmony. There should not be any discrimination based on caste, creed, colour, race or religion.

A society can be said to be progressive only when women are given their due role in the society. Emancipation of women is therefore a necessary social objective.

The customs, beliefs, moorings of the people belonging to different societal segments present the culture of the society.

*Vedānta Deśika* brings out beautifully the various facets of community life as aforesaid in his works.

3.2 *Varṇāśrama*

*Varṇāśrama* is a great concept which has held the society together for a long time.

*Varṇa* represents the class and *āśrama* denotes the life stage.

*Varṇāśrama dharma* is oriented towards societal efficiency in various spheres of activity. This concept aims at efficiency, specialisation and effectiveness. Those are
proficient and skilled in particular spheres of human endeavour are capable of achieving greater productivity in their chosen spheres.

One shall duly comply with one’s *Varnāśrama dharma*.

*Avikala bahu suvarna hayamakha sahasra nirvahana nija Varnāśrama dharma* \(^{12}\)

*Vedānta Deśika* emphasises the need for one to comply with one’s own *varnāśrama dharma*. One should not break the scriptural rules and regulations.

*Sanniyogenaśṭānāṃ varnādināṃ svasūtratabḥ*

*Pravṛtim ca nivṛtim ca na bhīnddhyaśādhuśabdavat.*

3.2.1 *Varṇa*

*Varṇa* denotes the four-fold classes of *Brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *śūdra*. In a work environment these represent the thinking, administration, trade and service skills inherent in an individual. This focuses on division of labour and specialisation based on one’s natural aptitude and interest.

The Hindu caste system, in its traditional form in India, consisted of four Varnas (grades of being), each of which corresponded to a body part of the mythical purusa, whose dismemberment was believed to have given rise to the human species. Purusa’s mouth issued forth priests (Brāhmans), and his arms gave rise to warriors (Kṣatriyaas). His thighs produced artisans and merchants (Vaishyas) and his feet brought forth menial laborers (Shudras). Hindu scripture holds that each person’s

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\(^{12}\) Raghuvira Gadyam
varna is inherited directly from his or her parents and cannot change during the person’s life. (Gould, 1971).

Each Varna had clearly defined rights and duties attached to it. Hindus believed in reincarnation of the soul (karma) and that, to that extent that an individual followed the norms of behavior of his or her varna, the state of the soul increased in purity, and the individual could expect to be born to a higher varna in a subsequent life. (The opposite was also true, in that failure to act appropriately according to the Varna resulted in a person being born to a lower varna in the next life).

The picture of India’s caste system is complicated by the presence of thousands of sub-castes, or jatis. Each of these jatis corresponds in name to a particular occupation (leather worker, shoemaker, cattle herder, barber, potter, and so on). Only a minority within each jati actually perform the work of that sub caste: the rest find employment when and where they can.

It is important to note that the Hindus have never placidly accepted the caste system. Scholars have frequently noted continuous changes during centuries of the caste system’s development. Even today, changes in the caste system are taking place. Varnas are all but nonexistent, and officially the Indian caste system is outlawed, although it exists informally.  

The phrase “varnasrama dharma”, then, means the duties of the different stages of life of the four classes of people.

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But “varnasrama” in its earlier use meant the different stages of life of the four classes of people-Brahmana, Rajanya (Ksatriya), Vaisya, and Sudra, who together constituted society. In its later use, however, the word meant four castes having these four names.  

Lord Kṛṣṇa says “the four classes were created by me according to quality and work”

 Caitur varṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇakarmavibhāgaśaḥ !

Tasya kartāramapi māṃ viddhyakartāramavyayam!!  

According to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan’s commentary on the aforesaid text, “The emphasis is on guna (aptitude) and karma (work) and not jati (birth). The varna or the order to which we belong is independent of sex, birth or breeding.”

Vedānta Deśika emphasizes the need for one to comply with one’s own Svadharma. He attaches great importance for the proper conduct of a person. He repeatedly stresses that persons born in the so-called high castes cannot be held in esteem unless by their own blemishless conduct they earn it for themselves. One shall duly follow the scriptural injunctions and commands. He severely condemns hypocrisy.

One shall not break the scriptural rules and regulations.

Patatāṁ hanta keśamchith bhajathe malināthmanāṁ

Viśudhavarnayogopi viparītha nimittatāṁ

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15 Bhagavad Gita iv-13
17 Subhasita Nivi iv-4
At the same time, he declares that persons belonging to the so-called high castes should not commit sins and indulge in condemnable behaviour. According to him, such deplorable indulgence and the performance of Prāyaścitta subsequently to wipe of these sins is foolishness. One should refrain from committing sins at the first instance itself. This shows how evolved ethically is he.

One may be a dvija, also a kavi (poet) or a philosopher (Siddhānti) but without a proper conduct he is only a crane and not the adorable hamsa.

Dvijasya sitapatrasya kaverapi nirasyate!
Na hamsa eti śājāhatyam gatisabdita vrittibhib!!

Vedānta Deśika declares that just because one is from a higher caste, he cannot escape while committing sins and having improper conduct. One should not abuse the superior caste status and get away freely with whatever one does. He insists on a proper code of conduct.

Patanānantaram kruchatprarūdhab śuddhimānapī
dvijāḥ samchaddhyate kaścidadharenāpi rāgniā

Vedānta Deśika firmly and decisively believes in the concept of Varṇāśrama. He is of the firm conviction that though a person belonging to an inferior caste excels in terms of possessing virtuous qualities, he cannot be elevated to a superior caste. According to Vedānta Deśika, such a person is bound by the frontiers of his own

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18 ibid iv-7
19 ibid iv- 5
caste and has to operate within its boundaries. At the same time he is worthy of emulation and admiration by the people of the so-called superior castes.

According to *Vedānta Deśika*, the qualities of caste arise at the time of birth and remain until death. Equality by destruction of castes happens only at the time of *mukti*.

Though there are rules and regulations regarding the castes and the code of conduct for compliance by each caste, a person belonging to any caste may be honoured.

*Vedānta Deśika* roars that *Prapatti (surrender)* as means of reaching the Supreme is available to members belonging to all castes.\(^{20}\)

*Vedānta Deśika* severely criticises those who are born in higher castes but are without proper code of conduct.

\begin{align*}
Jāti mātra śaraṇā bahiśkṛtāb \\
Kecidādṛta jaghanya vṛttayaḥ!
\end{align*}

\textit{Rosanā viparidhā vino mudhā}

\textit{Hrepyanti janmujjhithahriyaḥ!!} \(^{21}\)

\(^{20}\) Srimad Rahasyatraya xxiv

\(^{21}\) Sankalpa Suryodayam v-39
3.2.1a Brāhmaṇa

Vedānta Deśika criticises those who do not follow the austerities and samskāras. He condemns those with Mithyācāra.

Brāhmaṇas without samskāras.

Atra cāmimlecchādhiṣṭhitam deśamaparityajatām bahirāvaranamātra samrakṣita varṇāśramadharmāṇam ananyagatikānām dvijaānāmagrahārāḥ!
Samskārāḥ paramutsavaikavapuṣṭāḥ sandhyāvinodāvadhiḥ
Sāvitrī janavādajārsaratanubh śoucannatapṛāyikam!
Ittham mohamahipateranumate visvam viparyasyataḥ
Kālasyaiśa kaleralepakamatavyaktakramah prakramaḥ!!  

Pure knowledge about the Supreme Lord may be sought from the Brāhmaṇas.  

For the Brāhmaṇas, the karma is vaidic.  

A Brāhmaṇa acts as a mediator between persons who argue among themselves.

Pumsaḥ kasya cidāsthāne dvijendraḥ sūricevite!

Guṇavatpakṣapātepi madhye tiṣṭhati Mānabhṛt!!  

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22 Sankalpa Suryodayam v-18
23 Srimad Rastrapyasara xxv
24 Ibid xxvii
25 Subhasita Nivi vii-1
3.2.1b Kṣatriya

The Kṣatriyas are warriors who take up the responsibility of administering and protecting the country.

Vedānta Deśika advises that the King should render equitable justice to all without bending under any circumstances.

On completion of the śarad season the Kṣatriyas make preparations for waging war.

Prāptaḥ sakhyam tava nayanayoḥ padmakośaiḥ prabuddhaiḥ
Sannāham naḥ samayaniyatam sādhu sandukṣhayanti
Senāyogyām saranimadhuna darśayanī śubhāśā
tite nūnam tvaryati śarat tvatsamīpam ninīṣub. 26
śarad season is ideal time for engaging in war.

Patyurdevi praṇayasachivam viddhi dirghayuṣo mām
Jivātum te dadhatamanagam tasya sandeśamantabh
śūrāṇāṃ yāḥ śaradupagame virapatī varānāṃ
Sammānarham samayamucitam sūcayet kūjitaiḥ svaiḥ. 27

Pure knowledge about the Supreme Lord may be sought from the Kṣatriyas. 28

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26 Hamsa Sandesam ii-41
27 Hamsa Sandesam ii-28
28 Srimad Rahastrayasara xxv
For the *kśatriyas*, the *karma* is both *vaïdic* and *tantric*. ²⁹

### 3.2.1c Vaiśya

According to *Bhagavad Gīta*, even among the *Vaiśyas*, *śūdras* and women, whoever seeks refuge in the Supreme Lord attains the highest state. ³⁰

Pure knowledge about the Supreme Lord may be sought from the *Vaiśyas* as well. ³¹

For the *Vaiśyas*, the *karma* is *tantric*. ³²

### 3.2.1d śūdra

For the *śūdras*, the *karma* is *tantric*. ³³

*Āpastamba* and others state that *śūdras* who are under the supervision of *Āryas* are competent to cook food for the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Kśatriyas*. ³⁴

The *śūdra* is really fortunate and *kaliyuga* is verily fortunate. ³⁵

Pure knowledge about the Supreme Lord may be sought from the *śūdras* as well. ³⁶

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²⁹ *ibid* xxvii  
³⁰ *ibid* xxv  
³¹ *ibid*  
³² *ibid* xxvii  
³³ *ibid* xxvii  
³⁴ *Srimad Rastraśaras* xxv  
³⁵ *ibid* xxv  
³⁶ *ibid*
Even a mleccha having Bhakti is to be honoured like a devout Brähmana.  

Auspicious qualities which carry respect do not arise from caste. The Gods consider as a Brähmana even a candāla who conducts himself in accordance with his caste. 

One who ill-treats a devotee of the Lord, whether he is a sūdra, a huntsman or a dog-eater, would go to hell.  

3.2.1e Mixed

The Dharma Sūtra refers to the existence of mixed castes and sanctions two types of inter caste marriage, namely, the Anuloma and the pratiloma. In the anuloma form of marriage, a male of a higher caste took to wife a female of a lower caste, and the rule was that the children born of this union belonged to the caste of the father. In the pratiloma, on the other hand, a male of a lower caste married a female of a higher caste. But the female lost her caste.

There is reference about a Brähmana living with a hunter woman.

* Bhindyāt sārdham pulindya sapadi parihṛta brahmakā jihmagāreḥ  
* Udvelladhilla palli nigaraṇa karaṇa pāraṇa karaṇām nab  

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37 ibid  
38 ibid  
39 ibid  
41 Garuda Pancasat 16
3.2.1 If Multi-religion

Vedānta Deśika also mentions about a mithyācāra family wherein different members belong to different religions like Jainism, Buddhism, Pāśupatam, Cārvākam, śāṅkhya and Vaidikam.

ś vaśūrasya digambaravratavatī sambandhinassaugatā

Mātā cásyā pitā ca pāśupatinau vaiśeṣiko deśikāḥ

Jāyā tiṣṭhati sāṅkhyā yoga samaye cárvākaśisyassakha

Mithyācārasamāhavyāḥ svayamāsau viplāvako vaidikāḥ ⁴²

3.2.2 Āṣrama

3.2.3

Āṣrama means the four-fold lifestage of an individual comprising Brahmacarya, Grhaṣtha, Vānaprastha and Sanyāsi. The celibate student, the married person, the forest dweller and the ascetic constitute the four distinct stages in one’s life.

Brahmacarya is the knowledge acquisition stage with a fresh and focussed mind.

Grhaṣtha is the action-oriented stage where one performs continuous action in line with one’s knowledge and skills.

Vānaprastha is the knowledge dissemination stage especially to the younger generation. Here the phase of activity is less where one is not fully retired from worldly life.

⁴² Sankalpa Suryodayam v-15
Sanyāsi is the spiritual stage where one inquires into the self and is fully devoid of worldly attachments and activities.

Level of education and type of occupation are two measures of social status.\(^{43}\)

People form intimate attachments to parents, teachers, and peers who display conventional attitudes and behavior.

Individuals invest their time and energies in conventional types of activities, such as getting an education, holding a job, or developing occupational skills. At the same time, people show a commitment to achievement through these activities.\(^{44}\)

3.2.2a Brahmacarya

Brahmacarya refers to the life of the celibate student, who studies at the residence of the teacher under the latter’s personal supervision and care. He leads a life which is simple and is dedicated to the service of the preceptor. His concentration is mainly on education and in getting the knowledge directly imparted by the teacher.

Student life was the first stage. The child at the proper age was presented to the teacher for education. After initiation into the sacred formula and being invested with the sacred formula and being invested with the sacred thread, the pupil began his study. He lived with the teacher and served him in all possible ways and studied


\(^{44}\)ibid P. 189
the Veda along with some subsidiary subjects, namely. Siksha (pronunciation), Chhanda (metre or prosody), Vyakarana (grammar), nirukta (etymology), Jyotish (astronomy) and kalpa (sacrifice). He rose at dawn and retired at night at the prescribed time. He worked and rested in the day-time. Student life in ancient India was indeed a strenuous sort of life and a hard discipline.\(^{45}\)

Student life covered 36 years or half of that time or a quarter.\(^{46}\) The students shall worship the teacher like God.

\[\text{Ācāryaḥ sadbhiraprtyupakarana dhiyā devavat svādūpāsyah}\] \(^{47}\)

The teacher shall possess good qualities and conduct.

\[\text{Dambhāsāyadi muktam jīta viṣaya gaṇam dirgha bandhum dayālum}\]

\[\text{Skhāliye śāsitāram sva para hitaparam deśikam bhūṣṇuripset}\] \(^{48}\)

**Brahmacarya** is the first āśrama

\[\text{Pratamāśramam tvam Kṛṣṇājinam yavanikāṁ Kṛtavān}\] \(^{49}\)

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\(^{46}\) ibid P.150

\(^{47}\) Nyasavimsati 2

\(^{48}\) Nyasavimsati 1

\(^{49}\) Dehalesa Stuti 11
3.2.2b Gṛhaṇāśrama

On completion of the studies imparted by the teacher, the Brahmacāri enters Gṛhaṇāśrama (the family life), which is the second āśrama. The life of the householder is very important because the very existence of all the other three āśramas solely depends on it. The married couple have onerous responsibilities towards their family members in addition to the following duties and obligations:

➢ performing sacrifices to propitiate the celestials
➢ offering obligations to the forefathers
➢ providing food to people
➢ offering food to other living beings
➢ study and propagation of scriptures.

The householder has to continue the family lineage without any break so that the society is never short of young ones at any point of time for demographic reasons.

When the student had finished his studies the ceremony known as the convocation was held at which the teacher enjoined him to continue his study and do the duties appropriate to the next stage of life. The student now took leave of the teacher and with his blessings entered upon the second stage of life.⁵⁰

In every society, marriage is the binding link that makes possible the existence of the family. All societies have norms or rules governing who may marry whom and where the newly wed couples should live. These rules vary, but certain typical arrangements occur in many societies around the world.

Almost all societies have two kinds of marriage norms or rules: rules of endogamy limit the social categories from within which one can choose a marriage partner.

Rules of exogamy, by contrast, require an individual to marry outside his or her culturally defined group. 51

Once married the new partners must define their relationships to each other and in respect to the demands of society.52

The householders were producers or procurers of food and other necessaries of life, and in fact supported students, hermits and ascetics. So, the healthy working of varnasrama dharma depended upon the efficiency of the householder. So the emphasis was laid upon the household. All the three—the student, the hermit, and the ascetic-emerged out of the household.53

A family at the minimum consists of a man and a woman united as husband and wife. On a large scale it includes their children if they have any.54

52 ibid P.125
54 ibid P.80
Family is an institution. An institution can function effectively only if it follows the rule of continuity and change. The entry of a newly-wed bride into the house of her husband is an important landmark in any family. She is the child of the present and represents ‘change’ whereas the in-laws, the products of the past, represent ‘continuity’.

Though deeply entrenched in philosophical, religious and spiritual pursuits, Vedānta Deśika remained as a householder till his end without turning to Sanyāsa. In this respect he differs from other great religious leaders, most of whom took to ascetic order. Thus he proved that one can ascend to the highest level spiritually in a spotless manner while remaining in Grhaštāśrama and performing his duties and responsibilities as ordained in the scriptures.

The wise man learns from the śrutis and the smritis. He shall not depart from the dharma and the traditional practices of the family. Nor shall he swerve from the ācāras ordained by the Vedas and of the country. One shall lead a righteous life conforming to scriptures.

3.2.2c Vānaprastha

Vānaprastha refers to the third stage representing that of the forest dweller.

The householder after fulfilling his domestic duties and responsibilities towards his children and grandchildren retires to the forest leading a life detached from

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55 “Values: The key to a meaningful Life,” Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras:2003, P.65
56 Srimad Rahastrayasara xvii
57 Subhasita Nivi vi-4
worldly passions and attachments. He turns inward and develops a philosophical and spiritual attitude towards life. He slowly withdraws from mundane cravings and spends time on meditation and spiritual pursuits. He undergoes a life full of severe austerities and rituals. This is the preparatory stage before one becomes a Sanyāsi and renounces all worldly ties.

When the householder became advanced in age, when his skin wrinkled up, his hairs became all grey, and when his sons had sons, he retired into the forest. This was the third stage of life- the life of a hermit.\(^{58}\)

He often went to a village for food. But he was not to hoard against the future; he was to procure food daily.\(^{59}\)

Those who perform austerities become candālas if they do not follow the prescribed code of conduct as applicable to them.\(^{60}\)

3.2.2d Sanyāsa

Sanyāsa is the fourth and final stage which denotes that of a recluse who has completely withdrawn himself from worldly attachments. He no longer clings to the fruits of action but detaches fully therefrom. He is of the nature of śuddha satva representing perfect peace, tranquility and wholesomeness. He leads a life of tyāga resulting in total renunciation. He leads a life of begging and does not

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\(^{59}\) ibid P.151

\(^{60}\) Srimad Rahastrayasara xxv
consider anything as his belonging. He never stays in the same place but visits different places on pilgrimage. He speaks nothing but truth. He has complete control over senses.

Further on there was the fourth and final stage of life, the life of an ascetic. A hermit became an acetic when he left his hut for good and wandered from place to place, meditating on Brahman and sustaining himself by begging.\textsuperscript{61}

Some law-makers, however, permitted Sannyasa or renunciation immediately after student-life or the life of a householder.\textsuperscript{62}

*Vedanta Déṣika* highlights that without *Vairāgya* (dispassion), the external symbols of *Kāśāya* (saffron robe) and *danda* are useless.\textsuperscript{63}

*Sanyásis* become *candālas* if they do not follow the prescribed code of conduct as applicable to them.\textsuperscript{64}

3.2.3 Mid-Stage

There is reference in *Vedānta Déṣika’s works* about mid-stage between *Kaumāram* and *Yauvanam*.

\textit{Akurā youvana sthitam aḥindrapuranātha nāthābhimata manurāpam}

\textit{Nityam svabhāva siddham śṛuyate sūrīmahitam sukham tava rāpam.}\textsuperscript{65}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{61}A.C. Das, “An introduction to the study of society” Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi: 1972 P.151 \\
\textsuperscript{62}ibid P.152 \\
\textsuperscript{63}Sankalpa Suryodayam v p.289 \\
\textsuperscript{64}Srimad Rahastrayasara xxv \\
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3.2.4 Geriatrics

Aging itself is a painful process with which bodily problems coupled with emotional stress cause disturbance. From the point of view of social welfare, aged people require special attention, continuous support and care.

Even though aging is itself a biological process, becoming old is a social and cultural one: Only society can create a senior citizen. From infancy to old age, both biology and society play important parts in determining how people develop over the course of their lives.\textsuperscript{66}

*Vedānta Deśika deals with the problems of old age in his works.*

There is mention about the problems of senility which cannot be avoided by anyone

*Valibhiraviralābhīr varṣma sopānakalpam*

*Dṛtapadadhirūdā durnivārā jareyam*

* tadapi niyati bhūmnā ṭāḍṛṣi cetrayaṣṭib*

*saha carati mayāsau śaiśave samgrhitā* \textsuperscript{67}

In the old age, there is trembling of the body and grey hairs besides full of unfulfilled desires.

*Pratyanga kampapariṇartita kañcukesmin*

\textsuperscript{65} Acuta Satakam 29
\textsuperscript{67} Sankalpa Suryodayam vi-1

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Paryāptarūda palite paratantra pīnde

Aksīnarāgamajādmara jivitāsam

Māmeva hanta hasatīva mamāntarātma

Youth is by-gone and there is greying of the hair.

3.3 Education

It is only education which leads to social upliftment and emancipation. Through education one can raise one’s economic standards and gain social status and recognition. Hence education is a great social institution. The teachers have a significant role to play in imparting proper education to the students. In addition, students look upon the teachers to be their role models and try to draw inspiration from them.

In the broadest sense, all societies must have an educational system. That is, they must have a way of teaching the young the tasks that are likely to be expected of them as they develop and mature into adulthood. If we accept this definition of an educational system, then we must believe that there really is no difference between education and socialisation.69

The most obvious goal of education is cultural transmission, in which major portions of society’s knowledge are passed from one generation to the next. In a relatively small, homogeneous societies, in which almost all members share the culture’s norms, values, and perspectives, cultural transmission is a matter of consensus and

68 ibid vi-4

needs few specialised institutions. In a complex, pluralistic society like ours, with competition among ethnic and other minority groups for economic and political power, the decision about what aspects of the culture will be transmitted is the outgrowth of a complicated process.  

3.3.1 Teacher

*Vedānta Deśika* offers a dignified and high pedestal for the teachers in the society.

Teachers are blemishless.

*Hṛdayeṣu deśikānām jahnavi lahariṣu pūrṇachandra eva sphutaḥ*

*Kaluṣa jalesvīva hamsaḥ kaśāya karpūreṣu thiṣṭasyaḥ iti na kṣanam*

One shall get complete clarification through the learned.

*Bahuvidbhyyaḥ samagrāhi samagrāhi matistvayā*

*Atonyajanasaṅgīdhe na sandigdhe hitāhite.*

One shall offer *gurudakṣaṇā* to the teachers.

*Anveṣayan dītsitadakṣiṇohamācāryasāndipinisūnuvṛttam*

*Āvistāśaṅkhāsurasanniveśamprāṇcam mahāśaṅkhāhambānvavindam.*

The teacher is like the eyes of the students.

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70 ibid P.429
71 Acuta Satakam 6
72 Yadavabhudayam vi-54
73 ibid xviii-109
74 Sankalpa Suryodayam ix-42
The teacher shall impart knowledge to a befitting student after testing him.\textsuperscript{75}

The teacher shall teach out of compassion, devoid of any desire for money-making.\textsuperscript{76}

What a person gets by one or two looks of the preceptor can never be attained by three or eight or even one thousand looks of any other person.

\textit{Ekayaiva gurordṛṣtyā dvāḥhyām vāpi labheta yat!}

\textit{Na Tattisṛbhiraṣṭābhibhīḥ sahasreṇāpi karhīcit!} \textsuperscript{77}

3.3.2 Student

\textit{Vedānta Deśika} advises the student to be dedicated to the teacher.

The student shall offer \textit{namaskāra (prostration)} and \textit{abhivādana} (salutation). to the \textit{Guru}. He shall surrender his body, property and life breath to his \textit{Guru}.

The student should not render the instructions to him to become useless like water kept in a skull. He shall be indebted to the teacher for reforming him from wickedness.\textsuperscript{78}

3.3.3 Listening

Listening is an essential aspect of education. One can enrich his knowledge substantially through the art of proper listening.

\textit{Vedānta Deśika} attaches great importance to the process of hearing and listening.

\textit{Tṛṣatairiva te śrortraibḥ sambhūtaśrutisaurabhāṁ}

\textsuperscript{75}Rahasyatrayasara xxx
\textsuperscript{76}ibid xxi
\textsuperscript{77}Subhasita Nivi viii-10
\textsuperscript{78}Rahasyatrayasara xxxi
Papuḥ priyahitām tasya pariṣuddhām sarasvatīm. ⁷⁹

3.3.4 Guerldon

Vedānta Deśika highlights about offering of fees to one’s Guru (teacher) based on one’s capability to pay.

One shall pay gurudakṣiṇā befitting his ability.

Lord Kṛṣṇa offered the deceased son of his Guru Sāndepani Mahārṣi as gurudakṣiṇā by bringing him back to life.

Dideśasāndipanaye dhanurvedhopadesine

Swapadārūḍa tanaya pratyānaya daksinām ⁸⁰

3.3.5 Specialisation

Vedānta Deśika advises one to become specialist in one chosen subject of study rather than losing concentration and spending time and energy in many fields without gaining any proficiency therein.

Instead of studying too many things, it is advisable to specialise in one kalā, which would uplift one.

Yekayāpikalaya viśudhayā

Yopi kopi bhajathe giriśathām

⁷⁹ Yadavabhudayam xxii-53
⁸⁰ Yadavabhudayam x-106
Bhāyasirapi kalāḥ kalankithāḥ

Prāpya kascidhapacyathe śanaib 81

3.3.6 Non-commercialisation of education

Vedānta Deśika strongly condemns commercialisation of education.

One shall not exploit the scriptures with a commercial motive. It shall not be a case of a garland of flowers in the monkey’s hands or emptying of a bag of parched rice in a thoroughfare. 82

3.4 Friendship

Social ties and relationships between individuals get nurtured and nourished through true friendship.

Vedānta Deśika commends real friendship.

A friend always helps. When one commits a mistake, he points out the same and suggests ways to mend him. He also tries to shield him from the knowledge of others. Such a friend should not be hated.

Bahu vidhathupakārān guptvā duritam prakāśayati tejaḥ!
Suhṛdi vihitāhitamatiryanna pratyupakaroti na tat!! 83

A friend shall not be jealous and tamas driven.

Tena nirmalasatvena vinivṛttarajastamāḥ!
Jagatī śāntamoheva Dharmocchasavati babhau!! 84

81 Subhasita Nivi xii-12
82 Rahastrayasara xxxi
83 Subhasita Nivi i-9
84 Yadavabhubdayam i-29
One’s friendship with another with a higher social status gives protection.

_Ugrail śāpairupahitabhiyā rākṣasā dūramuktāḥ_

_Dugdham yogyā hutavahamapi tvatpriyā varṇaśuddhāḥ!

_Utpayanto janakatanayā tejasiva svarakṣām_

_Rodham yasyām anuvidadhate lokapālavarodhāḥ!!_ ⁸⁵

3.5 Materialism and sensory pleasures

Materialistic pursuits and sensory pleasures hold the main sway for ordinary people in the society.

_Vedānta Deśika_ portrays the normal mentality of human beings who are always in pursuit of materialistic endeavours and sensory pursuits.

There is nothing wrong in wealth (artha) which is _puruṣārtha_

_Te pūrvarā pūruṣārthasāyake svayām ca sarva cittāsāṃkam_
_Svādu dayopalabhyamāne sarva rājanya sevaniya caramopaveda siddhe_

_Pratyakṣa pūruṣārthe kāḥ pratyūḥaḥ_ ⁸⁶

A man greatly desires worldly pleasures.

_Sārdham kanthaiḥ śabaraspūṣṭāmadrikunjesu rāgāt_

⁸⁵ Hamsa Sandesam ii-2
⁸⁶ Sankalpa Suryodayam iv
āsīnānām kṣanamasamaye dṛṣṭyacandrodayāśriḥ.  

But he cautions that the sensory pleasures like a mirage.

Mokṣa sukha vṛksa mūlam moha jarātura mahārasāyana pravaram

Sakala kuśalaika kṣetram kinkara satya tava kīrtanāmamṛta nibham

3.6 Social criticism

It is normal social behaviour to discourage one who attempts to explore new and difficult endeavours. But the achievers, undeterred by this discouragement, march ahead in their tireless efforts through adventurous vistas.

The society ridicules one who wants to do something considered impossible by others.

Mitapreksābhaksanaparinamatpancașapada

Maduktistvayyesā mahitakavisamrambhaviṣaye

Na kasyeyam hāsyā haricaranadhātri ! kṣititale

Muhurvātyādhūte mukhapavanavisprūjitamiva.  

87 Hamsa Sandesam i-16
88 Acuta Satakam 69
89 Paduka Sahasram 12

68
3.7 Sufferings

Sufferings of human beings are part and parcel of the social life. These may be due to monetary, physical, psychological and natural reasons. Thus paucity of wealth, diseases, mental ill-health, old age and grief may affect a person.

*Vedānta Deśika highlights the* six sufferings of life including hunger, thirst, sorrow, passion, senility and death.

_Tamvikṣya setu madhunāpi śariravantaḥ_

_Sarve sadūrmi bahulam jaladhim taranti._ 90

3.8 Time

Time is an important aspect of social life, which is beyond the control of human beings. By time a man is born, with time he grows and at a point of time he disappears. This is the natural law. In the process of social evolution, time makes a significant mark. Time runs swiftly even before one takes cognisance of this fact.

*Vedānta Deśika* highlights the importance of time.

One cannot stop the time wheel.

_Atikrāman kālastapanā ratha vegena mahatā_

_Na roddhum śakyeta prativahana vātula rahitaḥ!_
_Gatasrotorodhe na khalu yatithavyam kṛtadhiyā_

---

90 Varadaraja Pancarat 25
Tadārambahśreyānuparanabhiṣṭipratihataḥ!!

Vedanta Deśika mentions that time flies past swiftly.

Time spins like the divine wheel.

Tvāt cakravat dhṛta manehasi gūramane

Nimnoṇṇata krama nidarśita nemi vrataḥ

3.9 Life

Life is short only, as time flies past fast. This is a constant reminder for one to do within the limited framework whatever is possible for the benefits of different strata of society.

Vedanta Deśika mentions about life which passes swiftly.

Whether the eyes are open or closed, life runs fast.

Miṣaṭām milatām vāZpi drutam dhāvati jīvite

3.10 Birth

The repeated cycles of births and deaths make one wonder as to who calls the shot. On an objective analysis, one can say with confidence that it is one’s own activities which drive one to take up different births.

Vedanta Deśika believes in the concept of repeated births.

One takes repeated births based on one’s actions.

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91 Sankalpa Suryodayam iv-60
92 Dehalesa Stuti 3
93 Yadavabhudayam xxii-40
Sukṛuthopachayena jātasidistwadasou kaśchitupastitāparādhaḥ

Anubhūya hiranya rāvantwe bhajate samprati cedirājabhāvam 94

3.11 Death

Death is the ultimate end of life. It draws the final curtain in an individual’s play in the society. It marks the concluding scene of exiting the world.

Telling of a death, hearing of a death, expressing sympathy in the appropriate way, these acts in which mutual recognition of humanness are tested, but there is no single human way of responding. The bereaved is, among other things, a performer in a cultural drama that asserts basic ideas about the nature of life and death and the human heart. 95

Vedānta Deśika picturises the sufferings that a person undergoes at the time of death.

Parisaramupayātā pāduke! Paśya mātaḥ

Karanavilayakhedat kāndiśike viveke. 96

3.12 Health

In order to maintain an effective social life, one needs to be hale and healthy. This is achieved through regulating the body and mind.

94 Yadavabhudayam xv-15
96 Paduka Sahasram 310
**Vedānta Deśika** focuses on the need for maintaining proper health.

For maintaining good health the five *Prānas* are to be controlled.

*Jayā garuda suparṇa darvīkarāhāra devādhipāhāraḥārin*

*Divaukaspati kṣipta dambholi dāra kiṅākalpa kalpānta*

*Vātūla kalpodayānalpa virāyitodyacchamatkāra*

*Daityāri jaitradhvajāroha nirdharitotkarṣa sankarṣanātman*

*Garutman marutpanchakādhiśa satyādī mūrte na kaścit*

*Namaste namaste punaste namab*  

3.13 Charity

Being sympathetic to others’ needs and trying to fulfil them to the extent possible through charity is a great social virtue.

**Vedānta Deśika** inspires one to be charitable and caring for the poor and needy segments of the society.

The philanthropists enjoy by giving wealth to others, living only for the sake of others. They liberally donate making the recipient richer and without any need for the latter to ask for money again. They serve others without expecting any benefit in return.

*Apaunardehi ṣabdārthamapratyupakṛtyikṣamam!*  
*Arthitam kurute Kaścitpunarāvrītvivarjitar!*  

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97 Garuda Dandakam 3  
98 Subhasita Nivi x-8
3.14 Native Place

Native place is dear to all. People generally like to remain in their native environment unless there are compelling reasons for them to live outside. Even in such a situation wherein one has to settle down outside his native place, the attachment towards it remains prominent.

People live in their native place traditionally.

\[ Vayamdhenuśathaiḥ sārdha mathrāsankatakānvayāḥ \]

\[ Anvabhūma nirābhādhamathrāsam katakānvayāḥ \]

3.15 Social Justice

A society can hold its head high only when there is true and equitable justice for all its members irrespective of their caste, creed, colour, sex, race or religion. There should not be any discrimination and equal opportunities must be provided to all so that the social fabric is without any taint.

Statuses and roles together help to define our social interactions and provide predictability.

Statuses are socially defined positions that people occupy in a group or society and in terms of which they interact with one another. Statuses exist independent of the specific people who occupy them. When one of a person’s multiple statuses dominates the others in patterning that person’s life, it is called a master’s status.

\[ ^{99} \text{Yadavabhudayam vi-56} \]
Statutes that are conferred upon a person by birth or other factors not under individual control are called ascribed statuses. Achieved statuses are occupied as a result of the individual’s actions.

Roles are the culturally defined rules for proper behavior that are associated with every status. A role is basically a collection of rights and obligations. A status may include a number of roles, which are collectively known as a role set. When a single role has conflicting demands attached to it, individuals experience role strain. Role conflict results when an individual is unable to enact the roles of one status without violating those of another status. The roles we play can have a profound influence on both our attitudes and behaviour.\textsuperscript{100}

\textit{Vedānta Deśika} is a staunch advocate of social justice. He focuses on the need for rendering equitable social justice as he emphasizes that mere capability alone is not sufficient for the administrators.

\textit{Dhuryāṇāmapi sathkarye gunaśāli vimardinām}

\textit{Anāgamavidām yukthamapanīther nivāraṇam}\textsuperscript{101}

3.15.1 Non-discrimination

\textit{Vedānta Deśika strongly believes in communal equity and non-discrimination.}

One shall not discriminate between the low and the high.

\textit{Nicepi hanta mama mūrdhani nirviśeṣam}


\textsuperscript{101} Subhasita Nivi ii-8
Tungepi yannviśate nigamottamāṅge 102
Gangāpravāhapatitasya kiyāniva syāt.
Rathyodakasya yamunāsalīlādviśeṣaḥ 103

One does not become great by name, place or form.
Tadeva grhyatām nāma cchāgamandākarāsabhaiḥ!
Tisṛṇām tāvata hanta mūrtinām kimihagatam!!
Andajāb pundarīkeṣu samudreṣu janārdanāḥ!
Nilakanthāśca śaileṣu nivasantu na tenate !!
Kāmam likhatu samstānam kaśchidrūpam ca bhāsvataḥ!
Abhittītalambamālokam vilikhetkatham!! 104

One shall not discriminate between various types people.
Dhi samskṛtān vidadhātiṁiha karma bhedān
śuddham jite manasi cintayatām svamekam !
Tvat karma sakta manasāmapi cāparesām
Sūte phalanyabhimatāni bhavān prasannaḥ !! 105

102 Paduka Sahasram 5  
103 Paduka Sahasram 6  
104 Subhasita Nivi ii-1,2,3  
105 Saranagati Dipika 24
3.15.2 Punishment

Actions that discourage the repetition or continuation of the behavior are negative sanctions.

When a negative action is applied, it is due to the failure of social controls: The undesired behavior has not been prevented. Therefore, a society that frequently must punish people is failing in its attempts to promote conformity.107

One who does not punish the Dustaḥ also deserves punishment.

Chalinam satkathānarham svātmopahatajātikam
Na nigrhnāti yaḥ kāle sopi sabhyairnigrhyate.108

A durvṛttā deserves punishment.

Tamaḥ svabhāvamalinam vṛtyālokojjhitāsrayam!
Daṇḍayam mitreṇa rājñā ca drśta dosānvayam viduḥ !! 109

The celestial women suffer in the prisons.

Madhye tasyā niśicarapeṭḥ sadma ruddhāntarikṣam
Yugmam neyair divi sumanasām sevyamānam vimāniḥ !

Kārāgāram vibhudha sudrśām vikṣa māno vicitram

\[106\] ibid 15
\[108\] Subhasita Nivi iii- 8
\[109\] Subhasita Nivi iv- 10
śoka prātivyatikaravatim vakṣyase citta vṛttim !!

3.15.3 Social fear
One shall fear of lokāpavādaḥ and behave properly at all times. This social fear is only against unrighteousness.

One should always fear about doing wrong deeds contradicting the doctrine of dharma which are against the interests of the society.

Duṣtairāropitaḥ kaścidanarthakriyayānvitaḥ
Asatkāreṇa grhyena viruddhakāravedibhiḥ. 111

3.15.4 Social service
A human being is expected to be considerate and compassionate. He should understand the sufferings and pains of the fellow human beings and try to do whatever is possible for him to mitigate the same.

One shall help others in times of difficulties.

Apyetat te manasi nihitam sāhyamouyājabandho
Pratyākhyātum prabhavati na khalvānṛṣamsyam tvādiyam
Prāgapyeyam parinnatagunāṁ naiṣadhe vikṣya vārtām
ārtatrāṇam vratamiti vidurhamsa śuddhātmanāṁ vaḥ. 112

110 Hamsa Sandesam ii-6
111 Subhasita Nivi iv- 9
112 Hamsa Sandesam ii-47
The blind and the lame shall be helped by others.

_Andhonandha grahaṇa vaśago yāti rangeśa yadvat_

_Pangurnaukā kuhara vihito niyate nāvikena !_

_Bhunktve bhogānavidita nṛpaḥ sevakasyārbhakādīḥ_

_Tvatsamprāptau prabhavati tathā deśiko me dayāluḥ !!_  

One shall help others according to one’s capability.

_Tathāpi vayam tvadādiṣṭāstvadamadhīna vrṛtatayo yathā sāmarthyam_

_Yatiśyāmahe! Kapayopi kākutsthasyopakurvanī!_

_Vallalvāsca vāsudevasya sāhye sannahyanti !!_  

3.15.5 Selfless service

One should serve the society in a selfless manner without expecting any return benefit. This alone is the service of the best order. The body is meant only for rendering service to others as evidenced by the famous statement “paropakāraṇa idam ārām”. By serving the society without any selfish expectations, one reaches divinity.

_Vedānta Deśika_ emphasises on doing service to the society without an eye on the personal benefits.

One shall engage in selfless service to others.

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113 Nyasa tilakam 21
114 Sankalpa Suryodayam v-65

78
Tvāt pūjāsu mukunda pātu kṛpayā tvam kāmadhenu satām.\textsuperscript{115}

3.16 Emancipation of women
Women occupy a crucial role in the society. Unless they are educated and provided opportunities for growth, there can never be real social development. Thus empowerment and emancipation of women would lead to development of the families at the micro level and economic progress at the macro level.

Women may experience various combinations of career, marriage, and child-rearing throughout their lives.\textsuperscript{116}

\textit{Vedānta Deśika} acknowledges and appreciates the role of woman in the society as being equal to God.

The woman is \textit{Brahman} as she gives bliss and begets children. Here the \textit{ananda} does not connote the sensual pleasure, but the supreme happiness in creating, nurturing and bringing up socially desirable children who bring kudos to the family members and to the society.

\textit{Paramānanda dāyinyāḥ prajānam srṣṭi hetavāḥ!}

\textit{Brahmalakṣaṇa śālinyāḥ na katham brahma yoṣitab!!} \textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{115} Paduka Sahasram 349  
\textsuperscript{117} Sankalpa Suryodayāni iv-8
3.17 Customs, beliefs, moorings

The culture of a society is reflected through its value systems, norms, beliefs, customs, heritage, ethos, symbolic practices, rituals and moorings.

All religions endorse a belief system that usually includes a supernatural order and also often a set of values to be applied to daily life. Belief systems can vary widely. Some religions believe that a valuable quality can flow from a sacred object-animate or inanimate, part or whole-to a lesser object.118

A symbol is anything that represents something else and carries a particular meaning recognized by members of a culture. Symbols need not share any quality at all with whatever they represent. Symbols stand for things simply because people agree that they do. Thus, when two or more individuals agree about the things a particular object represents, that object becomes a symbol by virtue of its shared meaning for those individuals.119

A culture’s norms and values make up its moral code, or the symbolic system by which behavior is viewed as right or wrong, good or bad within that culture.120

Cognitive culture is the thinking component of culture, which consists of shared beliefs and knowledge of what the world is like—what is real and what is not, what is important and what is trivial. The beliefs need not even be true or testable as long as they are shared by a majority of people. Cognitive culture is like a map that guides us through society.121

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120 ibid P. 209
121 ibid P. 77
Vedānta Deśika describes about various customs, beliefs and moorings prevailing in the society. His works present a panoramic view of them. They cover the multifarious practices of a wide range of people belonging to different strata of society. Thus one can observe worshipping of nature, oblations to forefathers, prayers to city gods, observing omen, looking for auspicious time, undertaking fasting, bathing in rivers, following marriage related customs etc.

3.17.1 Talisman
Man aspires to be cautious and does not wish to be bogged down by the evil planetary effects.

Wearing of talisman by children to ward off evil effects of planets, etc.\textsuperscript{122}

3.17.2 City Gods
Worshipping of the God of people’s choice is a religious belief whether it is city or village.

Existence of city Gods

\textit{Mumudire madhura pura devataḥ.}\textsuperscript{123}

3.17.3 Omen
Beliefs in various types of omen are common across the various parts of the Globe. Omens are believed to indicate the forthcoming events. In this universe all things are

\textsuperscript{122} Yadavabhudayam iv-6,9
\textsuperscript{123} ibid iii-6
brilliantly connected and inter-woven. The cosmic consciousness alerts the human beings through the omens, which indicate the forthcoming good or bad things.
Good omen due to the tickling of the left eye or left thigh of a woman.

\[ \text{Atyāsannapriyavacanatām sūcayadbhirnimitaiḥ} \]

\[ \text{Etāmaśṛṭsthāgitanayanam viksaṁāṇa diśam va} \] \(^{124}\)

Bad omen due to the ticking of the right eye of a woman.

\[ \text{Kṛpānikabhīḥ kukuraḥ kambhiābhirkampayan} \]

\[ \text{dvīsatām tadvadhūnam ca citra dakṣinālocane} \] \(^{125}\)

\[ \text{Daśa vadana vadhūnam dakṣināir netrakośaiḥ} \] \(^{126}\)

3.17.4 Auspicious time
People tend to feel greatly influenced by the almanac and they want to undertake important activities only during auspicious time.
Auspicious time for one's travel.

\[ \text{Upaṇamati muhūrtam ṝeṣa siddhāntasiddham.} \] \(^{127}\)

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\(^{124}\) Hamsa Sandesam ii-11
\(^{125}\) Yadavabhudayam xxii-134
\(^{126}\) Paduka Sahasram 225
\(^{127}\) ibid 244

82
3.17.5 Auspicious water
Auspicious water is used for good functions and ceremonies as *mangala Vastu.*
Auspicious water

*Nirājanāsanamasou nayatu svayam tvāṃ* \(^{128}\)

*Nirājīta caraṇa rājīva* \(^{129}\)

3.17.6 Blowing of conches
One celebrates victory musically by blowing of conches. The conch of Lord *Viṣṇu*
represents *sātavikāhankāra.* Hence the sound of the conch declares the victory of
the acceptance of the supremacy of the Lord.

Blowing of conches on attaining victory.

*Yeṣāṃ dhvanir vijaya śankharavo babhūva.* \(^{130}\)

3.17.7 Pāduka as witness
The divine *Pāduka* is considered to be witness of all actions done by a person.

*Pāduka* as witness for performing action.

*Abhisaranavidhīnāmagriṃā sākṣīnī tvam* \(^{131}\)

\(^{128}\) ibid 247
\(^{129}\) Raghuvira Gadyam
\(^{130}\) Paduka Sahasram 224
\(^{131}\) ibid 302

83
3.17.8 Footprints
The footprints of a person are unique and distinct and can be used to trace anyone.
Identifying one based on foot prints.

śamayitumalamāsicchancakacakraḍicihṇā

Pratipadavickitsāṁ pādūke! Paddhatiste.  

3.17.9 Re-birth
Re-birth is a strong belief based on the concept of Pūrva Karma phala (result of action in previous birth). One takes repeated births in accordance with his karma. The karma theory inspires one to tread along the path of dharma. The people may act whimsically if there is no dharma or adharma phala, resulting in chaos in the society. The belief about re-birth stems from the karma theory.
Re-birth based on one’s good deeds and sins.

Puruṣamupanayanantī pundarikākṣamagre

Punarudaranivāsakleśavicchedanam nab.  

3.17.10 Application of dust
It is widely believed that application of dust would ward off evil spirits.
Applying of dust on children for warding of evil spirits.

Avalepa piśāca mocanārtham rajasā limpati tāvakena dehān.  

132 ibid 304
133 Paduka Sahasram 310
134 ibid 354
3.17.11 wearing of \textit{pañcāyudha}

People desire to protect themselves from evil spirits and get rid of obstacles. Wearing of specific ornaments is oriented towards this objective.

\textit{Wearing of pañcāyudha around the waist of children.}\textsuperscript{135}

3.17.12 worshipping of mountains

Mountains represent nature's great beauty. For the people living in the panoramic maountaineous region, they provide all resources and are worth worshipping. They also remind that people should properly align their living with nature and not move away from it.

\textit{Worshipping of mountains like one's parents}

\textit{Sabhā-janam vadhamyeta̍t gavyai̍ḥ sarasa-bhājanam}

\textit{Sabhājanam girerarthya̍m svavrtyullāsa-bhājanam}

\textit{Bhavatā bhava tāpaghne bāvite bāvi-tejasā}

\textit{Su tarā sutarāmasmin surabhīssurabhisvara}

\textit{Sevā mānanamāvase vāsitāhīhitāsivā}

\textit{Mātā pītā tāpitāmaṁ nahitatatata ā hi na}

\textit{Vasudā trasadānanda dhīṣudānta mudā nata}

\textit{Nānadā muktidā ramyā sanadātra sādā rasa.}\textsuperscript{136}

\textit{Mountain is better than the God Indra.}

\textit{Sahasā saha sārthaṁma tarsataraśeṇanam}

\textsuperscript{135} Yadavabhudayam iv-9
\textsuperscript{136} Yadavabhudayam vi-52, 53,100, 103
Tanu tāta nutādvajrīti nagato na gatorcyatām.\textsuperscript{137}

3.17.13 Worshipping and offering oblations to forefathers
Forefathers are responsible for the continuity in the family lineage and hence are worthy of respect of the descendants and the society.

Worshipping of one’s forefathers

\textit{Niyama vidhīnām pravṛtīḥ sarveśāmapi dāsasatyoddiśya tvām}

\textit{śrāddha nimanḍita brāhmaṇa samādhi siddhām labhante tridaśā bhūktim.}\textsuperscript{138}

One pays his respects and shows his gratitude to his forefathers by offering oblations to them.

Offering of oblations to one’s forefathers.

\textit{Pitru kriya nivṛtajamadagnyam.}\textsuperscript{139}

\textit{Tarpīṭa pitṛka Bhṛgupati sugati vihatikaranata paruḍisu parigha}\textsuperscript{140}

3.17.14 Offering oblations to elders and seers
Elders and seers are to be respected as part of social decorum. The aged persons have an important place in the society as they are the repositories of rich and varied experience.

\textit{Offering waters as oblations for receiving elders.}

\textsuperscript{137} ibid vi-50
\textsuperscript{138} Acuta Satakam-17
\textsuperscript{139} Yadavabhudayam xviii-64
\textsuperscript{140} Raghuviira Gadyam
Janayitumalamarghya daityaajtpadarakse

Namati mahatideve nakasindhorvisrnah.\textsuperscript{141}

Offering of Padya, arghya, and madhuparka for the seers.

Diyatamasmai devarsye padyamaraghyam madhuparkasa\textsuperscript{142}

3.17.15 Observance of fasting and penance
Austerities in the form of fasting and penance are found in all types of religions. These practices are seen in various societies. Fasting ensures bodily health and mental alertness. Also, one develops satvic qualities through such austerities.

Observance of fasting and penance on auspicious days.

Adya khal vapavastam maya vratamangikrtam, yadvadha tulas vanavasinim dvadasim sambhavayami, tavanna khiicitkutascit pratigrnami.\textsuperscript{143}

3.17.16 Offering to God
Before consumption, one offers the food to the Lord by performing certain rituals as a token of gratitude to the Supreme.

Performing of daily rituals and eating after offering to God.

Tataca jatyasraya nimitta dustrairistaireva dravyair mrstahara vihare drstaceshe puruse kathamiva vivekasya vijayasamsa\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{141} Paduka Sahasram- 48
\textsuperscript{142} Sankalpa Suryodayam viii
\textsuperscript{143} Sankalpa Suryodayam viii
\textsuperscript{144} ibid v
3.17.17 Bathing in auspicious rivers

Human beings strive for cleansing of sins and purification of the body and mind. Bathing in auspicious rivers is considered sacrosanct which addresses the aforesaid objectives and makes a man pure. Reverential floral offerings are made to the rivers.

Warding of sins by bathing in auspicious rivers and tanks.

Punarupajāniḥbhītaḥ pundarikādibhiṣtaḥ
ciraparicita purvam sriharikṣetrametat!
sakṛdapi vimalesan majjataścakratīte
bhava jalanidhigartāt kṣiptamunmajjanam syāt!! 145

3.17.18 Wearing of forehead ornament

People desire to be prosperous and wearing of forehead ornament is considered auspicious.

Wearing of forehead ornament for prosperity.

Simanta mauttika maniḥ pratibhātī candraḥ 146

3.17.19 Oblation to Sun

Sun is the natural deity, which is powerful and visible for all. From time immemorial people worship and offer oblations to the Sun. The solar energy is most beneficial to the society as it is a great source of renewable form of energy.

Offering of oblations to Sun in the morning.

Arcyasya samprati satāmavagādhatīrtha

145 Sankalpa Suryodayam vi- 34
146 Yadavabhudayam xix-44
manye nigrhya nalinī makarandamarghyam 147

3.17. 20 Marriage
Marriage represents an attractive and important social event wherein people belonging to different strata of society participate and mingle with each other enthusiastically. It facilitates effective and close interaction among the family members and friends circle. Also there is collective feeding and sharing of happiness among all participants of the function. It also triggers and accelerates socio-economic activity in and around the locality.

The following marriage related customs are noticed in the works of Vedanta Deśika:

3.17.20a Usage of auspicious instruments
Manjusvanāḥ madhulihaḥ te svāyamvaram
Kamapi mangala tūrya ghoṣam svayam vidadhub. 148

3.17.20b Exchange of garlands by the couple
Anyonyamālya parivṛttimabhūṣṭuvantāḥ
vācālayanti vasudhe rasikāḥ trilokīṁ
Nūnādikatva samatā viṣayaiḥ vivādaiḥ 149

147 ibid xix-68
148 Godha Stuti 16
149 ibid 21
3.17.20c Offering of rice unto fire as part of marriage ritual

Pravālavahnaṁ paridipyamāne Muñcanyasau Mauktījavarṣam

Amusya velā dhṛtavepathuste vaivahikīṁ smārayati sma velām 150

3.17.20d Māngalya Sūtram

Wearing of Māngalya Sūtram by the bride. 151

3.17.20e Marriage gifts

Marriage gifts which are given as token of affection to the couple have social implications. These enable the newly wed to start their life with certain minimum standards of comfort. They also facilitate effective bondage of relationship.

Presenting gifts to the couple at the time of marriage.

Sambandhibhāvapratipattibhājā sandhāya bāṇena sa satyasandha!

Uṣapaternityoutakalābhakṣyāt jetā jahāraiva vipakṣalakṣmīṁ
Athatamuṣasahāyamupayātamupāyanavān
janapadapattanaprabhṛtikādugamya janaḥ
Upacaratisma samyaguppannadhrītbahudhaa

yadunagare vivāhavijayotsavanyantritadhib. 152

Presenting gold and gems to the couple.

150 Yadavabhudayam xvi
151 Sraranagati dipika xxxvii
152 Yadavabhudayam xx-94,99
Hiranyaratnāni hiranyapūrvaiḥ balādupāttanyupadāya bāṇah
Nirodhakhinnāvucitopacāraih ānarca sasnehamuṣaniruddou.\textsuperscript{153}

3.17.20f Practice of parting of hair
Prasūticitrikṛta śuktiramyāḥ \textsuperscript{154}

3.17.21 Performance of Pūja
Man performs Pūja to propitiate various deities to ensure his continued welfare.
Suradrumānāṃ prasavaḥ sujātaḥ
Abhyarçayantyapsaraso muhustvam \textsuperscript{155}

3.18 Animal welfare
Animal welfare occupies a key area of concern for the economic and ecological Development. It reflects the broader perspective of human beings towards the well-being of animal life. People should take care of cattle feeding and protection.

Vedānta Deśika highlights the concern and care for animals and birds.

When the Lord wears the Padukā and roams about in Brndāvanam for cattle grazing, it becomes the garden of the celestial Indra.

\textsuperscript{153} Yadavabhudayam xx-93
\textsuperscript{154} ibid xviii-127
\textsuperscript{155} Paduka Sahasram 326
Sancāratastava tadā manipādarakṣe!

Brndāvanam sapadi nandanatulyamāsit.\textsuperscript{156}

\textit{Sri Rāma} worship the \textit{Rāja Hamsa} reverentially.

\textit{Cakre tasmai sarasijadalaḥ sopacārām saparyām}

\textit{Kāntāślesādadhikasubhagāḥ kāminām dūtalabhāḥ.}\textsuperscript{157}

3.19 Plant welfare

The flora and fauna play a crucial role in maintaining the subtle ecological balance. Conservation and protection of plant life contributes significantly to the social welfare.

\textit{Vedānta Deśika} reveals his affection towards plant life and calls upon humanity to respect and acknowledge their contribution to human welfare.

Trees are to be worshipped in token of the gratitude towards them for yielding flowers.

\textit{Diśidīśi munipatnyo daṇḍakāraṇyabhāge}

\textit{Na jahati bahumānānānānamadhīyāpi mūlam}

\textit{Raghupatipadarakṣe! Tvaparīśkārahetob}

\textsuperscript{156} Paduka Sahasram 286
\textsuperscript{157} Hamsa Sandesam i 4

92
apacitakusumānāmāśramānakahanām. 158

3.20 Rivers
Rivers play a dominant role in ensuring the agricultural and economic prosperity. Besides they provide drinking water, which is the basic necessity for human survival. They also facilitate inland navigation, connecting various places. In the river banks many cultures have flourished. The rivers represent the social and religious values at any point of time. The purity of waters has to be protected by human beings with great care and concern. People should not pollute the waters, which is the chief source of human welfare.

Vedanta Deśika eulogises the greatness of various rivers in his works.
Many rivers find a place of pride in his works.

3.20.1 Ganges
➢ Ganges

Mandākini vigalita makaranda dhāra 159

3.20.2 Pennar
➢ Pennar

Paṇṇā bahuva bhuvane bahumāna pātram 160

3.20.3 Vara
➢ Vara, which surrounds the place vārāṇasi

158 Paduka Sahasram 341
159 Dehalesa Stuti 13
160 ibid 15
3.20.4 Nasi

➢ nasi which surrounds the place vārāṇaśī

idam tārhi bhāgīrathī taradgautaparyanta bhāga bhāvita

niyamaīḥ paramṛśibhirupasevitam bhagavat katāksapatram
bhavatu vārā nasi nāmaka nadīdvaya parigatopakāntantam
vasumatī lalāmabhibhūtam vārāṇaśī kṣetram.\(^{161}\)

3.20.5 Yamunā

➢ Yamunā

Krṣṇānvayena duśaitī yamunānubhāvam\(^{162}\)

When Lord Krṣṇa’s lotus feet set on the branches of the kadamba tree on the branch of the river Yamuna, they were revered as the branches of the Vedas.

Tata bhuvī yamunāyāstasthuśi yanniveśāt

Vahati nigama śākhā vaibhavam nipāśākha.\(^{163}\)

The sapphire gems of the Lord’s Padukā generated the black yamuna.

Paricarati vidhau tvām pāduke! Ranga bhartuh

Padasarasijabhṛngairbhāśurairindranīlaiḥ!
Prakatitayamunaughā bhaktinamrasya śambhoḥ

\(^{161}\) Sankalpa Suryodayam vi
\(^{162}\) Godha Stuti 4
\(^{163}\) Paduka Sahasram 52

94
Parinayasi cūdavisnupadyāḥ prayāgam ! ! 164

3.20.6 Kāverī

➢ Lord Ranganātha’s sevā (service) is available on the banks of the river kāverī.

Kamapi kanakasindhob saikate sañcarantam
Kalaśajaladhikanyāmedinīdattahastam
Aniśamanubhaveyam pāduke! Tvayadhīnam
Sucaritaparipākam sūribhib sevanīyam. 165

3.20.7 Vegavatī 166

➢ Sarasvati appears as Vegavatī river.

Vegā samjñāṁ vahati mahatīṁ vallabhā padmayoneḥ 167

3.21 Summary

This Chapter has presented the various aspects of community life with specific focus on Varnasrama, social justice, customs, beliefs and moorings.

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164 Paduka Sahasram 699
165 ibid 309
166 Vegasetu Stotram 1
167 Hamsa Sandesam i-29

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Family is the most important social institution, which is the foundation of human existence, survival and continuity. The varied dimensions of family life are presented in the following Chapter.