THE EKANTIKA-DHARMA - (DECIPLINED WAY OF LIFE) 

ACCORDING TO V.V.

The conception of Dharma is of fundamental importance for any sect and what is important to note is that this conception is more or less common to all the sects. Dharma is the good practices which are enjoined both by the Śruti's and by the Smrutiṣ. As originally delivered by Manu and other inspired legislators¹ the word ‘Dharma’ has a very wide connotation, and it means laws of moral conduct regulating one’s Social relations enjoined by the scriptures and especially by Samhitās.

Dharma in Indian Ethics can not merely be reduced to ‘Duty’ of Western Ethics. The conception by ‘Dharma’ is deeper, when it is said in Tai. UP. follow ‘Dharma’.² It is to bring out its significance which as is said elsewhere is the support of the whole world. Dharma is the real innerfriend of man. Wheras everything else vanishes along with the body on death, the Dharma will follow man.³

＊ Dharma as Define

The word dharma is clearly drived from the root “dhr”-to “phald”, “to support”, “to nourish”. In few passages, the word appears to be used in the sense of ‘upholder’ or “supporter” or “sustainer” as in Rg⁴ and also in Śukla Yjurveda.⁵

In Ai. Bra the word Dharma seems to be used in an abstract sense.⁶ “The whole body of religious duties”. In Chā. Upāniṣad⁷ there is an important passage bearing on the meaning of the word Dharma “there are three branches of Dharma, one is sacrifice, study and charity, the second is an austerities, the third is the Brahmachārin”.

Jaimini defines Dharma as a desirable goal or result that is indicated by Vedic passage. The word Dharma would mean such rites as are conducive to happiness and are enjoined by Vedic passage.⁸

The Vaiṣeṣikasutra⁹ defines Dharma as that from which results happiness and final beatitude.
Anusasana Parva of M.B. defines that 10 and Vanaparva of M.B. also defines that same. 11 In Hindu philosophy, Dharma is recognized as cosmic order from time immemorial. As early as in the Purusa-Sukta of the Rg, we find a passage to the effect that in the beginning there was Dharma alone.

Samkarachārya, in his Brahma Sutra Bhāṣya has defined Dharma as: that which gives stability to the world and brings prosperity and beatitude to all that is Dharma. In Mimāṃsa philosophy, observance of Vedic commandments is called Dharma. According to this System of Philosophy, performance of sacrificial rites along is Dharma.

As per Rāmāyana: dharma is supreme in the world, and truth is based on Dharma.

※ Principles of Dharma:

According to Manu there are ten principles of Dharma. All these are known as:

(1) Dhrti (Fortitude)
(2) Kshama (Forbearance)
(3) Dama (Self-Control)
(4) Asteya (non-stealing)
(5) Shauca (purity)
(6) Indriyanigraha (Control of Senses)
(7) Dhī (discrimination)
(8) Vidyā (wisdom)
(9) Satyam (truthfulness)
(10) Akrodha (freedom from anger)
**Dharma as Duty**

Every man & woman, old and young, in whatever situation or station he or she may be, has a Dharma, which he or she must discharge in order to contribute to the safety, security and stability of the society and the satisfaction of one’s self.

**Dharma as Virtue**

Dharmā takes the form of Virtue Dharma recognizes two types of Dharmā; ‘Sadhāraṇa’ and ‘Vīshēṣa’ i.e. Ahīṃsa (non-violance) Kśāma, or Shānti (forbearance) indriya Nigraha (self control), Dayā (compassion), Dana (charity), Shaucha (parity), Satya (truth), and Tapas (austerity).

**Concept of Dharma**

The concept of Dharma origionating in very ancient times under went an evolution. The term was interpreted in diverse ways, its application was extended to a wide field. What is significant is that Dharma does not merely stand for rituals or religious belief, but can note rules of conduct in various spheres of life-professional, economic, social and political. Dharma was conceived as something which was not aimed at turning away one’s attention from this world. It rather implied intense interest and care in the regulation of life. It covers principles which seek to regulate all human activities - individual and social. Mundane and spiritual. The strength of Dharma and its continued influence on the Indian mind through the ages lies in its comprehensiveness, its diverse, significance - religious and secular and its grounding not only in faith but in religion.12 Dharma as cosmic order is functionally related to Dharma as moral order. If dharma on which the whole of world is sustained, is the essential nature of everything and everybeing, it is then morally obligatory that things and beings should not discard their own nature or character. 13 All these four integral elements Dharma, Jñāna, Bhakti, Vairāgya put together constitute Ekāntika dharma, the chief means for the realization of Mokṣa. In the history, of Vedāntic literature apart from Sri Swāminārāyaṇa, no one has made even a reference to the great tradition of Ekāntika Dharma. Ekāntika Dharma was popularly known as Bhāgawat Dharma, and is discussed in Skanda purāṇa.14
Meaning of Dharma

The word Dharma is oceanic in its character. It is difficult to fathom its depth and measure its territory, to pluge into its profoundity and to fill it in the tiny pot of limited words. Indian perspective of Dharma is subtler than that of the Western. Western philosophers describe religion on the ground of moral consciousness, whereas the Indian concept of Dharma is not confined to morality. It provides a broad perspective of the Universal Consciousness. According to Hindu view, etymological meaning of Dharma has its root in Sanskrit and it is more significant than Western Idea of religion. The English word 'Religion' can never stand as a synonym to the Sanskrit term Dharma.

A man without Dharma is a man without identity. It is an inevitable, inherent and vital element of human nature. It is solely adhered to inner being of man. Just as Oxygen is vital to sustain the physical body, the same way Dharma is to sustain the subtle body. Just as heat is the intrinsic quality of fire, fragrance is of flowers, sweetness is of Sugar, Dharma is of man. Dharma is the center of positivity affirmation and virtuousness of man. Practice of Dharma is practice of righteousness, goodness, justice, truth, love and purity. The righteous man is truly a religious man. So, religious man never chooses immortal path deliberately. His loyalty towards religion refrains him from wrongdoing. It has the potentiality to elevate the soul from sub human level to Super human level. The Bhagawata Gità states that a religious man is ever awake while the rest of the world is asleep.15

Dharma as known as Ekāntika Dharma

Hinduism glorifies it as Sanātana Dharma - the eternal religion, the religion that never extincts. The true meaning of ‘Sanatana’ is that truth which is everlasting and real source of religion as well as for human spirit. It leads all the religions towards religious harmony and oneness. Dharma is approved by Universal Soul Vāsudeva, which is known as Ekāntika dharma. It is undivided devotion exclusively to the Lord and is accomplished by the knowledge of one’s own Dharma and disaffection to objects of worldly enjoyment. There by the Lord Vāsudeva himself becomes extremely pleased by this Ekāntika Dharma and even the devotee has all his wishes fully accomplished.
Ekantika Dharma advocates the purest form of knowledge. It concentrates on the fact that Atman is the basis of our existence. It can disperse the darkness of our underlying ignorance of undue attachment with the physical body. Ekantika Dharma is the knowledge by which all the false identifications caused due to ego comes to an end. A man of true knowledge never gets betray by false ego. Having a clear discription of Mundane and devine, he performs all his actions with soul consciousness.

Ekantika Dharma as propagated by Lord Swaminarayan -

The root of our ideal way of life

In Śikṣapatri Lord Swaminarayana says, "Those of my devotees who shall live in accordance with the precepts laid down here shall surely attain all the four attainments of life (Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa) on earth. To worship the Lord Vasudeva with knowledge and Vairāgya is known as Ekantika Dharma. This Ekantika Dharma is not different from devotion. The form of both Dharma and bhakti is same.

Dharma is the root; Arth is the branch; Kāma is the flower and Mokṣa is the fruit of the tree of life. If the root is watered, the branches and flowers will be healthy and will-yield delicious fruits. At the end of Mahābhārata Vyāsa exclaims :

"With uplifted hands I cry, and none-listen to me. From Dhrama flow prosperity and pleasure. Why then is Dharma not followed by all ?"

In Manusmṛti, four Purusharthās have been upheld and advocated for people. Out of four ideals of life Artha and Kāma are having instrumental value because these Purusarthās fulfil the requirements of domestic life and bring material happiness. But almost all the Hindu philosophers consider Mokṣa as the cardinal value of life. It is the state of perfection where Soul becomes free from all the bandages and shines by its own light.
Among four ideals of life, Dharma is the co-ordinator right from birth to death. Dharma is that reign that does not allow Artha and Kama to exceed their respective limits, instead constantly governs them towards final goal Mokṣa.

* Ekāntika Dharma and Śikṣāpatrī

The Lord Śwāminārāyaṇa was one of the majestic founder, savior and guardian of Ekāntika or Bhāgavata Dharma. Śikṣāpatrī is constituted of four divine Virtues, Dharma, Jñāna, Vairāgya and Bhakti. Lord Śwāminārāyaṇa in Śikṣāpatrī says that each and every code pertaining to Dharma, lower or higher if followed sincerely, leads to ultimate salvation.

The master key to rediscover Dharma is to live truly as the Ātman and to express its infinite perfection through our actions and affairs. A man of Dharma alone can never be regarded as great because even an averse person may have Dharma. He who has devotion for god accompanied with the true knowledge and glory of lord would never fall from the path of Dharma even if he possesses lesser degree of Ātmanisthā, and Vairāgya. Devotion accompanied with the true knowledge and glory of Lord is the essence of Ekāntika Dharma. The implied principle of Ekāntika Dharma leads one to highest Dhām of Brahman.

* Characteristics of Ekāntika Dharma

Śri Nar-Nārāyaṇa narrated the Ekāntika Dharma to the Muni Nārada in (Vaiṣṇava-Vallabhā) Commentary as under :- The Dharma or moral conduct is different for different Varnās (castes) and stages of life. That is called Sva-Dharma.

* Divisions of Dharma : According V. V.

With a view to better grasping the background of the “Vaiṣṇava-Vallabhā” - Commentary in a better way, we turn to the division of Dharma which are of two types:

1. Sādhārṇa (general duty)
2. Viśeṣa (specific or special duty)
The caste organization and the Āśrama organization are also important aspects of Indian Social structure. Hence the Sādhāraṇa and the Viśeṣa Dharma will have to be studied as of the castes and of the Āśramās. The Sādhāraṇa Dharmas of the four Āśramās are: Cleanliness, purity - both mental and bodily, Āchman, Bath, Sandhyā puja (worship), service of elders, visits to the places of pilgrimages repetition of the Mantra, giving up that which is not worth touching, eating or speaking about. 18

* General Ekāntika Dharma in V.V.

The general Ekāntika Dharma is common to all men according to Manusmṛuti 19

The division of Ekāntika Dharma according to V.V. are as under:

(1) **Ahimśa** (non injury or non violence)

Ahimśa is proclaimed to be the first supreme duty. (abjure) among one’s main moral inclinations what is called absence of ill-will, even of the mental type, in a provocative situation, towards any living being, is known as Ahimśa or non-violence. Satsaṅgi Jīvanam states that 20 same. This first vow begins with the simple prohibition of eating meat and leads to the active practice of non-violence (Ahimśa). Śikṣāpatrī says that follower shall kill or harm goals or other animals even for the sacrificial ceremonies to propitiate a duty or manes because the Śāstrās assert that non-violence alone is the best form of Dharma. 21

One should never kill or harm deliberately any living being in this world though they are negligible tiny insects such as lice and bugs, goats or other animals even for the sacrificial ceremonies to propitiate a deity or manes because the Śāstrās assert that non-violence alone is the best form of Dharma. He (Lord Swāminārāyaṇa) denounces the custom of killing animals even for religious purposes. None shall ever use violence against any person to gain something such as woman, wealth and even an empire. Some of the Kṣatriyās of this country were of the opinion that killing their opponents in an encounter is not a sin when the aim is to get a woman, wealth or kingdom. Lord Vāsudeva disapproves this type of valour in the name of Dharma.

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(2) Truth:

Truth is that speech whereby injury is caused to living beings. We have already seen the condition of King Uparicara Vasu, one who spoke untruth and for that he fell down on the earth from the heaven.

(3) Penance: Penance is characterized by the reduction of enjoyment permitted by the scriptures i.e. Yogasutra of Patanjali.

(4) Purification: It is of two types

(1) external purification

(2) Internal purification

External purification is the essential factor so is the Internal purification. Internal purification is that the Ātmā (soul) must be purified by the knowledge of highest Brahman. By that the Ātmā would be purified and gets one with Brahman.

(5) Steal: Non-taking of what belongs to others either in his absence or by deceit (is non-stealth). One should not steal other's property even for religious or benevolent purposes, and shall not take even a small stick or flowers etc. without the permission of the owner. 22

(6) Proper Celibacy: One should observe proper celibacy. The wise man like the householder controls the senses which have a tendency of being attracted towards their objects. Again, even its any one sense acts without control that effects adversely the intellect of the man. 23

(7) Restraints of desires: One should rave control upon his desire in their life and never attached to the worldly thing for attaining liberation.

(8) Greed: One should control his greed with his sense organs for salvation.
(9) **Anger**: Anger is that thing by which a person loses his control over sense organs so that a person who desires to attain highest *Brahman*, should control his anger.

(10) **Donation**: Donation or Charity means a person must donate whatever he has for poor people and for God. One should gladly donate wealth to a suitable person.

(11) **Satisfaction**: One should be satisfied with what one gets through luck or hardwork.

(12) **Renunciation of injury**: One should never cause injury to oneself at holy places in sacrifices and other religious acts or for obtaining the four ends of human life.

(13) **Injury**: One should never cause injury to the people or animals in holy places.

(14) **Conduct**: One should avoid acts which may cause fall from one’s caste, religion etc.

(15) **Movement**: One should have restraint over hands and feet, stomach (eating), the organ of generation and speech.

(16) **Food**: One should avoid drinking wine and eating meat, and devoid of all vices in his life here the 16th & 17th duties are the same.

(17) **Adultery**: One should abstain from adultery in his life.

(19) **Practice**: One should practice the observance of the traditional good practices of one’s family.

(20) **Fast**: Observance of fast along with the prescribed ten restraints on the eleventh day of the dark and bright half of the month.

(21) **Specific Vrata**: Proper observance of the specific *Vrata* of the birth day of Hari.

(22) **Proper behaviour**: One should behave with straightforwardness towards the good people. *Siksāpatra* narrates that none should ever impute false charges to anybody, even for the sake of self interest and nor at anytime shall use abusive and indecent words.
23 Service: One should give proper service to saint etc.

24 Distribution: One should take the food after its proper distribution as per prescribed rules.

25 Devotion: The last duty one is devotion in which total dedication unto the feet of Lord this includes with nine types of devotion. According to Śikṣāpatrī when his followers see temples of Lord Śiva or others deities, on the way, they shall bow down with reverence and have ‘Darśa’ of them.

These are duties common to all men. There is a close similarity in the items included in ‘Śādāraṇa Dharmās (duties common to all men). 30

2 Specific Duties:

The division of society in to four Varnās and its turns to the references to the Vanāśrama System in Śikṣāpatrī. The Vanāśrama system is the backbone of Hindu Society. Even with the lapse of time, the passage of centuries, the changing of reigns, it has not only survived but continued almost in the same form as it was propounded and practiced. Its rigidity is not minimized, not its observance completely revolutionized even in the present times. It is probably this one system which has contributed more than anything else in the maintaining of social solidarity and unity amongst the persons belonging to the Hindu religion. There are numerous factors which have worked in keeping this system alive. Historically speaking dynasties have with kings belonging to different religious as the heads of administration and the authorities of the state. It has suffered the onslaught from Buddhism under King Asoka, from Islām under the muslim kings in general and in particular under Akbar, from Christianity under the British emperors, Hinduism has always observed the best in others. It is, as Rādha Kṛṣṇa has said, “by a fraternal embrace that Hinduism has faced and conquered other faiths”. But the main factor which has kept the caste system alive is the acceptance and exposition of it at the hands of Hindu religious leaders. It appears from a general study of religious leaders, that inspite of their differences with and deviations from the traditional Hinduism, they had to accept certain of its fundamental principles including caste system.

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There are four Varnās, of the Brāhmīns, Kṣatriyās, Vaiśyās and Śudrās respectively. Amongst these Varnās, each preceding one is superior by birth to that which follow it.31

Gitā says that nature and the virtues are inculcated in the human being according to their caste i.e. Brāhmin, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra.32

Every Varṇa and caste have their specific duties. It is called Varṇāśrama Dharma. According to Manu, code of life is known as the Varṇā-Āśrama Dharma.33 Gandhiji claims, in is Varṇavyavasthā that in its original sense, all Varṇās are equal and they should mix as equals so that society progresses.34

(1) The specific duties of Brāhmīn

The natural duties of Brāhmaṇa are quiescence, self control, forgiveness, purity, faith in Vedās, devotion to the Lord with nine fold devotion, penance.

* The means of livelihood prescribed for a Brāhmaṇa are:

Brāhmaṇas should live in teaching, performance of sacrifices, acceptance of a gift from a pure person. Out of these, the last is laid down in case of adversity. Manu states that the Brāhmaṇa is the first and best deserving to study this Śastra. He is emphasizing the particular necessity for this class to uphold the tradition of learning which is to be transferred to the deserving only.36

Four types of other means of livelihood are prescribed for an excellent Brāhmaṇa who finds fault with performance of sacrifices and teaching (as means) of livelihood. They are gleaning ears of corn, constant mendicancy, settled householdership and proper agriculture. It should be noted by excellent Brāhmaṇās that here in the preceding one (i.e. mode of livelihood) is more conducive to welfare than the succeeding one. The life of Brāhmaṇa is expected to be highly religious & moral, simple and satisfied. He is expected not to have a mass wealth and do not harm to anyone while selecting his occupation and to stick to teaching and particularly expected to be self controlled.37 Śiksāpatrīnarrates that "my followers who are the twice born people shall take initiation into the Kṛṣṇa cult from
an Āchārya and wear two rosaries around their neck, and also Tilak in two vertical lines (in ‘U’ shape) on their forehad, and on the chest and arms. Tilak, the holy marks should be made out of the white clay called as Gopee Chandan or of sandal wood and the paste shall be mixed with saffron etc. and shall be offered to Kṛṣṇa before use.”

Lord Śwāminārāyana says, “my Brāhmin devotees shall cultivate the qualities of tranquility, self-restraint, forbearance, contentment and the love.”

(2) Duties of Kṣatriyās

The specific duties which are to be performed by Kṣatriyās are bravery (i.e. performance of acts of bravery), Courage, generosity, strength, dignity, fitness to be a refuge, protection of Cows, Brāhmaṇās and Saints, performance of sacrifices.

In the Kṣatriyās, he has placed Ksetra (force, imperium) with the duty and the right to devote themselves to study, to make sacrifices and donations, to exercise force of arms, and to protect the wealth and lives of created beings in order to secure the good government of the country. According to Gitā also bravery, brightness, patience are natural characteristics of Kṣatriyās. He would never have a retreat in war, would ever sacrifice money and would always establish his supremacy.

The highest duty of a Kṣatriya is the protection of subjects. The Kṣatriyās should cultivate the qualities of velour, fortitude, generosity etc.

The means of livelihood prescribed for a Kṣatriyās are:

A Kṣatriya should earn his living by weapons (Military profession) while protecting Dharma. In emergency he should follow the means of livelihood of a Vaiśya or should move about in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa.

The means of living for a King is declared to be collection of taxes, except from Brāhmaṇās and from other sources, after keeping contented with all the subjects according to the exogenous of time and place. Even in emergency, the service of a low person is totally prohibited to Kṣatriyās, as that reduces one’s luster.
(3) Duties of Vaisyās

Duties of Vaisyās according to V.V. commentary, faith in the Vedās, doing acts of Charity, rendering service to saintly persons and Brahmanaśas, non-satisfaction in acquisition of wealth and assiduous efforts are the main specific duties of Vaisyās. In the Vaisyās, he has placed with the power of work, with the duty and the right to devote themselves to study, to make sacrifice, to make donations, to cultivate the soil, to do business, to take care of cattle, in order to secure the development of productive labours.\(^{45}\) Gītā also mentioned the same thing\(^{46}\)that the natural duties of a Vaisyās are agriculture, cattle rearing and trade, of a Śūdra, too, the natural duty is in the form of service.

The means of livelihood prescribed for Vaiśya are -

In the case of a Vaiśya, the mode of livelihood is spoken as consisting of agriculture, trade and commerce, treading of cows and lending money on interest as the fourth, but in emergency he may follow the Śūdra mode of livelihood. According to Dharma Śāstra, money-lending, agriculture, trade and the tending of cattle are sanctioned for the Vaiśyaśa.\(^{47}\) Mahābhārata mentions that trade, commerce, money lending are amongst the natural characteristics of Vaiśyas. Not only that a Vaiśya is also to distribute his wealth amongst the Brāhmaṇaśa, Kṣatriyaśa and his dependents.\(^{48}\)

(4) Specific duties of Śūdra

The specific duties of a Śūdra according to V.V. commentary is proclaimed as faithful service of twice-born castes, Devās and Cows. According to MB one belonging to the Śūdra caste has duty to serve the Brāhmaṇaśa, Kṣatriyaśa, Vaiśyaśa and be happy in rendering service to them.\(^{49}\) The Śūdrās should do service to the above three communities.\(^{50}\)

* The means of livelihood proclaimed for Śudrā’s are:

A Śudrā should maintain himself on the money earned by service rendered to twice-born castes. In emergency he should follow the mode of livelihood of artisans etc. The
duty of a Śūdrā is the service of the twice-born or he may become a trademan or maintain himself with various works of arts.51

Persons belonging to the four castes should associates themselves with saintly people and never with bad person. Association with the saintly good person leads to liberation, while company with evil bad person leads to hell.

Therefore, people born in the four Varṇās should behave as per injunction and should abstain from what is prohibited. Those who are beyond the pale of four Varṇās, their conduct conforming to their family requirements will be conducive to their welfare if it is devoid of unrighteousness like stealing, violence etc. The twice born people should perform the sixteen 'Śaṁskārs', the daily rites and rituals and the Shrāddha ceremonies for the dead at the prescribed time, following the methods mentioned in their respective Grihya Sutra, spending within the limits of their means.52

The behavior of an individual in his personal life was regulated by the several codes of conduct laid down for the various stages of human life. An individual’s life was divided among the four stages called Brahmacharya, Grahaṣṭha, Vānapraṣṭha and Saṁnīyāsa. It the order of Āśramās strictly followed without observing any of the Āśrama rules, the recitation of holy verses, performance of Homa and observance of religious vows, charity, study of Vedās, and offering of ablutions to manes become useless. So one should never remain outside the Āśramās.53

Duties of four Āśram Dharma

The division of society into four Varṇās was added, so far as the Āryās were concerned. A division of life itself into four steps or stages called Āśramās from the root "Śram" "to labour", and particularly to devout oneself to austerity. Man becomes successively student, householder, hermit and ascetic.54

The four Āśramās are as under according to V.V. Commentary:

(1) Brahmacāri (Calibate student)
The theory of the four stages of existence is fully established by the epoch of the *Dharma-Sutras*, but it appears after *vedic* times. The word itself is not found in the *Samhitas* or the *Brahmanas*. The first two stages, however, are known from the *Vedas* onwards. Having distinguished three orders of life following the rules of *Dharma* as practiced, which could correspond to the first three *Āśramas* (the ascetic does not figure there) but each of these orders to attain heaven after death.

The *Aranyakās*, on the other hand, presuppose that the life of the hermit was already organized. What they have in mind is clearly an autonomous mode of life. It is only in the *Dharma-Sutras* that the four asramas appear as successive stages of life. *Varna Dharma* is social planning, in which the spiritual, educational, military, administrative and economic functions are attached permanently to certain hereditary groups ensuring the transmission of professional ideals and standard of efficiency.

**Duties of Brahmacāri:**

One should reside in the house of a preceptor for study of the *Vedas*, he should be pure, have subdued his senses, have control over his anger, be disciplined and be a speaker of truth. The problems connected with the best and most perfect accomplishment of the first quarter of life, in its relation to and as preparation for the other three stages are the problems of *Śikṣā*, of education re-creation, re-generation of body, mind and soul, in all aspects, in the most comprehensive sense. They belong to the student order (*Brahmacāri Āśrama*) and are to be dealt with, by the teaching class, (*Brahmana*), the man of knowledge and philanthropy, the man of the learned professions principally.

He should perform five worship in the morning and in the evening remaining self-controlled. He should always be solely devoted to the service of the preceptor and be free.
from evil habits. Thereupon the young *Dvija* goes to line with his preceptor in order to study the *Vedäs* and the ancillary silences under his direction. For each of the *Vedäs* twelve years study is considered requisite. So that the period devoted to study can be prolonged up to 48 years, though it can be reduced to a minimum of twelve years. 58 He should be sincere to his preceptor. When called, he should study and should bow down at the beginning of and after the completion of the lesson. He should not touch the untouchable, nor eat prohibited articles of food and never drink forbidden drink. He should wear and possess a waist band, a deer-skin, a staff, a *Kamandalu* two white cloths, the sacred thread and a rosary of beads.

A celibate should totally abstain from touching, speaking, playing with women and combing of a woman. With the exception of idols of gods, an intelligent student should never touch even a woman etc nor should he look at them intently. He should not sit in a secret or solitary place.

The stage of *Brahmacārī*, man proposed to enter into the World and so, the *Grahsthaśrama* is in its continuation of course. But the other purpose of the life and education of the *Brahmacārī*, is the acquisition of the knowledge of God. This stage of *Varṇaśrama* in which this knowledge plays a prominent part, therefore may follow the stage of *Brahmacārī*. 59

He should stay there in preceptor’s house till the completion of education. Then, free from worldly attachment, the celibate student should be either a recluse (*Saṅyāsin*) or *Naisthika* i.e. a perpetual religious student who continues with his preceptor, vowing life long abstinence and chastity. But it is proclaimed that in the *Kali*-age, eligibility for adopting the vow of a *Naisthika* is prohibited. By the term *Kali* one should understand not in the junction of *Kali*-age, he should be either a forest-hermit or, if he is not averse to worldly life, he should be a householder. Celibacy (*Brahmacarya*) is of four types :-

1) *Prajāpatya* 
2) *Sāvitra* 
3) *Brahmā* 
4) *Naisthika*

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One should adopt any of these according to one’s capacity.

**Duties of Grahasthāśrama (householder)**

The Grahasthāśrama means direct relation and connection with the world while the other three means direct connection with God.

One who desires to become a householder should first pay his tuition fees according to his capacity. After paying the fees, and with his teacher’s permission, he should perform the *Samāvarana* ceremony. He should then marry with due formalities, a girl suitable to his family, junior to him in age, healthy, devoid of masculine characteristics. Then for the favour and delight of Lord Kṛṣṇa, he should according to his eligibility, and authority, perform daily worship by performing the *Tarpana* of Devās, sages and hiving beings as per injunction everyday. He should perform (holy) bath, twilight prayers, muttering of Mantras, worship of Viṣṇu etc.

According to *Manu* - those connected with the fulfilling of needs of the second quarter, are the problems of Jivika, livelihood, of domesticity and population, of feeding, clothing, housing, of production of all kinds of wealth, necessaries and luxuries and all matters. Subservient to these, in short all questions of domestics and economics. They belong to a house-holder order (*Grahasthāśrama*) and are dealt with by the merchant class (*Vaisyās*) the man of (acquisitive) desire and philanthropy, of the agricultural, mercantile industrial profession, principally. The reception of guests with wealth earned by righteous means. One should perform meritorious acts, according to one’s capacity. He should be unattached.

Soon after his return to the paternal health, he must contract marriage and enter the second Āśrama that of the householder (*grahastha*). Marriage is a social and religious duty for every Ārya, bound as he continues the family and to secure the perpetuation of the domestic cult. Thus the *Dharma-Sutras* consider the householder phase as the most important for it is the one upon which the three others depend.
He should carefully form association with devotees of the Lord and saintly persons. He should not keep company of vicious people and greedily persons. He should never look at the wives of others with desire and he should not approach his wife during Srāddha and observance of religion vows. Even though a man has attained maturity in Sāmkhya philosophy and yoga etc., One should avoid from a distance intoxicants, gambling etc.

Everyday, one should listen to the stories and exploits of the incarnation of Hari. A believer should perform all acts for the sake of Lord Vāsudeva. In sense, it is Grihasthāśrama who maintains the Brahmacāri, the Vānprasthi and Sanyasi.62

Grihasthāśrama According to Chāṇakyaṇītī, the home which is giver of joy, - where the sons are of bright intellect, where the wife is a gentle-spoken lady, where there is enough of wealth, where the servants are obedient, where hospitality is never failing, worship of Lord is done, and where there is always satsang, worship of the idol of the Lord and it is performed with great celebration, and where devotees exclusively attached to the Lord.

We have already noticed that the Dharmasutrās regard the stage of householder as the most important, because, without him, there could be no brahmacārī, no anchorite, no mendicant monk. Just as all rivers and all streams find in the ocean their place of rest, so men of the various stages (Āśramās) go and take refuge under the protection of the house-holder.63

(3) Duties of forest-hermits

The third part of life is known as the third Āśrama i.e. forest hermits.

According to Manu, those connected with the second quarter may from one stand point, be said to be the problems of Rakṣā, protection including both promotion of good, Yogā and prevention of ill, Kṣama, in short, all the problems of politics and civics, of administration and forms and methods of government of the constitute as well as the ministate functions of the state. They belong to the public service-order (Vānaprasthāśrama).64 Person should enter a forest with one's wife, if she is agreeable in

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serving one's self, is averse to objects of enjoyment and likes, to perform penance. He, being free from worldly attachment, should enter the forest alone.

The third step i.e. forest-hermits commences when the house holder. "He has wrinkles and white hairs" and he has seen "the son of son" born. His wife can accompany him or even stay at home with the children. He has a fixed abode, a hermitage, and so he is still bound to sacrifice morning and evening to make the daily five great sacrifices as before, and to keep the ritual fire. But he should give himself over to meditation and to study. He should submit to various kinds of mortification, clothing himself in bark or the skins of animals, live chastely, expose himself in summer to the heat of the sun in the middle of four fires etc.

He should retain his water pot of gourd, the religious staff and the articles required for maintenance of sacrificial fire. He should bear (grow) without cutting or timming hair on the head and the body, beard and nails and unscrubbed teeth. If one has intense Vairāgya (aversion against objects of worldly pleasures, the adoption of Sarīnyāsa is beneficial. Otherwise a Brāhmaṇa should stay in the forest. (i.e. continue the state of forest Hermit throughout his life.)

* Duties of Recluse (Samnyāsin)

A recluse should beg alms in the house of the same person everyday. He should never be longing for flavourous food. He should take food once and that too limited. A medicants should generally accept alms from a person who is a forest hermit. His mind gets purified by the extremely pure food of the forest hermit. He should always perform the worship of Viṣṇu and eat what has been offered to Viṣṇu and muttered the Mantrās of Viṣṇu.

This stage is referred to by various names: Parivrājaka (the wanderer) Samnyāsin (the enunciate), Muni (the silent), Yati (he who masters his Senses',) Bhikṣu (mendicant). who has offered oblations in fire and overcomes his senses, becomes at length, wornout by aims-giving and offerings, an ascetics.
As vocation for maintaining himself, he should study true non-heteric scriptures which expound bondage and liberation. A recluse should never entertain desire, anger, fear, enmity and avoid storage of wealth, grains of corn etc. He should practice moral restarts and observances. He will live without fire, without home, without joy, without protection, maintaing silence and not opening his mouth except to recite the Veda. He will wander without care for this world or for heaven.

A renunciator (Samnyasin) should give up enjoyments of flowers, sandal, oil and other fragrant materials, otherwise he will entertain the misconception of the identity of the body with the soul. He should not see or touch the painting of a woman. Many ascetics have fallen by merely the sight of a woman's form, According to difference in detachment, Samnyasins are classified as Kuticaka, Bahuda, Haamsa and Paramhaamsa, Kuticakas live in their own house or in a hut built by their sons and beg alms at the house of their sons or relatives. Bahudas have three stuffs, a water, jar, ochrecoloured garments and beg alms at seven houses. Haamsas stay not more than one night in a village, five nights in a town for aims or subsist on vows or perform Candrayaana penance. Paramhaamsas stay under a tree or in a burning ground. They either wear a garment or are naked. They bear (with equanimity) pairs like pleasure-pain. They treat all alike. This is the highest stage of Samnyasa.

* Duties of Women (married woman)

Woman should always serve as his husband a god, and obey him even if he be old, diseased or indigent. According to Sikshapatri, female whose husband is alive shall tender service to her husband taking him as her God and shall never use harsh words against him, though he is blind, sick or importent or poor. His relatives also should be obeyed by serving them as is due to them. Utensils in the house should be kept clean and bright. Everyday the house should be kept clean by sweeping, sprinkling of water etc. What is true, yet agreeable, should be spoken and they should always remain in a pure state. Fickleness, over greediness, anger, stealing, violence and association with the irreligious all these should be avoided by woman. Sikshapatri also narrates that she shall never have
a acquaintance, even casually, with any handsome young man (other than the husband), even though he may be a man of good character. Worship to the Lord of Rāma should be performed by those women who are established in the virtuous duty of exclusive devotion to the husband. The devout housewife shall never keep her body without an upper garment and shall not dress in such a way that may expose her navel, thighs to the viewers. She shall not look at persons of mimical nature and never make acquittance with a woman who knows no modesty.

* Code of conduct for widows

A widow should always serve Viṣṇu, regarding him to be her husband. If there is no emergency, she should never touch a man unless he is a very close relative. She should never look at a man with carnal intention. Śikṣāpatī narrates that widows shall render service to God taking him in the place of her husband and live with their father, brothers or sons render their care. They shall never live as independent ladies. They should never live with any male who has no nearest blood relation. Young widows should never speak to young men without utter necessity. A widow does not get spoilt by the touch of her male child or of an old man, or by speaking with them except in unavoidable situations. She should not enter into inordinate controversy in matters pertaining to practical life. In essential matters she may speak with them. She should not wear ornaments. She should never sleep at day time or on bed steads, except in emergency. The widows should exercise control over their body and senser by frequent observance of fasts and austerities. The widow should never dress as married woman nor like a nun or a female recluse. They should never put on an immodest dress. She should perform religious observance, like Kruhra, Candrayana and others regularly. She should be always engaged in observing restraints. A young widow should not stay in a solitary place even with father, sons etc or with a young man. They should neither keep friendship with, nor touch those ladies who incline abortion and never talk or listen to the amorous talks.

Thus, the different duties have been briefly narrated here as discribed in this V. V. commetory on Vāsudeva Mahatmyām.
Footnotes:

1. S.P.103

2. Tai.UP. 1.11.1

3. Manusmruti - 8.17

4. इममेद्वार्यायमण्यां अकृष्णत: धर्माणमथां विद्येश्य

5. पितुं नु स्तोतं महो धर्मां तविवैम् । (Sukla Yajurveda 34.7)

6. धर्मस्य गोसाजनीतित तम्भृंकृष्णमेवाविद्येश्यक्ष्यकृत: यावीमिन्नयेत । A.B. VII.17

7. त्योधर्मस्यकन्धा यज्ञोच्चयां दानमिति प्रथमस्तप

8. चोदनालक्षणोऽधर्मः । पू भी.सू

9. अनातो धर्मं व्याख्यास्यः । यतोम्ययायिकः स धर्मः । वेशेषिक चूत्र

10. अहिसा परस्मो धर्मः । (Anusasanaparva-11.5.1)

11. अनृथमयपुरोधर्मः । (Vanaparva-313.76)


Sanstha P-31

13. Ibid - P-32

14. SK.P. V.M. 20/1-4

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15. या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।

यस्यां जागर्ति भूतानि स निशा पवयतो मुनेः ॥ २.६९ ॥

16. SP - 206

17. Dharma for all, Sri RamkrisnaMath, P-66

18. Śrimad Bhāgawata-11-17-34-35, कामान्तकीयनीति-232 Manusmruti - 10-36

19. Ahimsā Satyam asteyam Śaucam

Indriyanigrahah evam Sāmāsikam dharmaṃ
caturvarnye brauin Mahāh || Manu - x.63 ||

20. Ekāntdharmaśitrya gruhibhiyajanm hare

Dravya yajnārhinestu Vidhavyam Yathāuidhi || S.J. 102.36

21. S. P. - 12

22. S. P. - 17

23. Manusmruti 2.18 & 99

24. S. P. - 14

25. S. P. - 15

26. S. P. - 18

27. S. P. - 20

28. Bhāgawata

29. S. P. -23
30. In ancient texts like *Visnu Dharma Sutra* II. 16-17, *Āp Dh. Sutra* I 8.23-26, *MB Śānti Parva* 60.7-8, 297. 24-25

31. *Āp. I.1.1.1.4-5*

32. ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशाः शुद्रगच्च परन्तप ।
कर्माणि प्रविन्कतानि स्वभावप्रभवेः गृहे: II Gita 18.41

33. The science of social organization of laws of *Manu*, by Bhagwandas, P-147

34. A reconstruction of the original interpretation of the *Manu Smruti* by R.S. Betal, P-170

35. V.V. 23-27 & BG XVIII. 42-44

36. A reconstruction of the original interpretation of the *Manu Smruti* by R.S. Betal, P-213

37. A reconstruction of the original interpretation of the *Manu Smruti* by R.S. Betal, P-213

38. *SP*-41

39. *SP*-42

40. *SP*-89

41. The classical law of India, by Robert Lingat P-30

42. शैर्य तेजो धूमिन्द्रक्षं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।
दानं धार्मिक्यश्चात्रं कर्म स्वभावकज्ञम्॥ BG 18.43

43. The Dharmasastra V-I, Manathnath dutt, P-21

44. *SP*-89
45. The classical law of India, by Robert Lingat P-30
46. \textit{कृष्णोरक्षणवाणिज्य वैश्यकर्म स्वर्गायम्} I
\textit{परिवर्त्यायमकर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावायम्} II \textit{BG 18.44}
47. The Dharmasastra V-I, Manathnath dutt, P-21
48. \textit{M.B. - Udyogparva-40.27}
49. \textit{M.B. - 5.40.28}
50. \textit{SP - 90}
51. The Dharmasastra V-I, Manathnath dutt, P-21
52. \textit{SP} - 91
53. \textit{SKP Kasi} I - 36
54. The classical low of India, by Robert lingat P-45
55. \textit{Rg. X-136.2}
56. The classical low of India, by Robert lingat P-47
57. Some Spects of the Hindu View of life K.V.R. Aiyanger P-105
58. \textit{Ap. I 1.2, 12-16} & Gautama, II.45-47
59. Reconstruction of the original Interpretation of the \textit{Manu Smruti}, by R.S. Betal, P-62
60. The laws of \textit{Manu}, Bhagvandas V.I P-154
61. \textit{Gaut, II.3, Vas-VII.14, Baudhayana II.11.27 Vis. VIII 14-15}
62. \textit{Manu Smruti} 6.89

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63. Vas, VIII-15 cf M.VI.90 Manu returns more once to the superiority of the Grhasthā, Āpastamba (II.9.23, 3-12 and 24.1-8)

64. The laws of Manu, Bhagvandas V.I P-154

65. Vis, XCIV. 1-2, cf M.VI.2

66. Bādarāyaṇa - III.3

67. Manu VI.6

68. The classical low of India, by Robert lingat P-46

69. The classical low of India, by Robert lingat P-46

70. Āp. II.9.21.10

71. रमर्थ काभिनाषीयम् सेव्यः स्वपतिषीतवत् ।
   अन्धो रोगी दरिद्रो वा शुद्धो वाच्यं न दुर्वचः ॥ SP-159

72. रूप्यान्वयुक्तस्य गुणितक्ष्यनस्य तु ।
   प्रसखो नेव कर्त्त्वयस्तामिः साहजकोशाः च ॥160 ॥ SP-160

73. नैनक्ष्यनाम्भूक्तांकुशतुष्कीया च नो भवेत् ।
   साध्वी स्त्री न च भण्डक्षा न निर्लक्षादिषः ॥ SP-161

74. भूसादोद्धशक्षृति: पर्योपदेशनम् त्याज्यम्
   हास्यादिच स्त्रीभि: पत्यव देशान्तरं गते ॥ SP-162
   विववामित्वो योधाभि: सेव्यः पतिधिर्य हरिः ।
   आज्ञायं पिन्दप्राप्तवर्जयं स्वातन्त्र यतो न तु ॥ SP-163
75. स्वास्थ्यसम्बन्धीना नर: स्पृश्या न कहिति।
तस्मिनोपरिशंक हाथयेः नावश्यकं विना। SP-164

76. विद्यानासनसंबंधात्ताभि: पाठया न कारपि नुः।
वृत्तिप्रवर्ती: कर्तव्यो युहदेहदमस्तथा। SP-166

77. कार्यश्रे सकृदाहास्ताभि: स्वापस्तु मूतलेः।
मैथुनासत्योर्वैवश्च क्रापिकायां न देहिनो: SP-168

78. सजानेन गर्भपातिन्या: स्पर्शः कार्यश्रे मोहित:।
श्रൃङ्कावात्ता न नृणां कार्याः: श्रव्या न दै कच्चित। SP-170

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