(i) Introduction to the Problem of Classification of Virtues

Many efforts have been made in the history of Ethics to classify virtues, but the lists so far formed cannot be considered perfectly satisfactory. Any classification of virtues is obviously arbitrary and artificial, since the virtues overlap and the social order of which men are part is continuously undergoing a change. This was the view of the relativists who treat virtues to be dynamic in character. Whatever may be the importance of stability and solidarity of the traditional virtues, it must not be forgotten that dynamism makes life truly forceful. When the proper times come, society must not hesitate to overthrow the older virtues to replace the newer ones. But this process should be evolutionary in its application of the new virtues. Virtues ought to be considered in relation to time, place and the context of the situation. A gradual evolution alone combines the virtues of the old and the new, while revolutionary approach upsets the virtues of the old resulting into a moral chaos. Hence, changing social conditions make it difficult to set forth any comprehensive list of virtues. As likes and dislikes differ, so also tastes and aims vary with time and
All that one can do is, to pick out those aspects of character which the consciousness of an age recognizes and approves of them contextually as good traits of character. But this too does not appear to be an easy task. Each age exhibits its own particular virtues. Greek Ethics, Christian Ethics, the Middle Ages Ethics, 18th and 19th Century Ethics have put a premium on different virtues.

As with ages so is true of moral thinkers. Socrates believed in 'knowledge' as the sum of all virtues. Plato's cardinal virtues are famous in the history of Greek Ethical thought. Aristotle's 'Golden mean', the habit of choosing the mean, his insistence upon magnanimity and his dictum 'that character is the 'habit of the will' gives a practical turn to the application of moral virtues. After Plato and Aristotle, the two great names in the history of Western ethical thought, are evidently those of Spinoza and Kant, and one cannot but be struck by the contributions they made to ethical philosophy by introducing their concepts of virtues as 'intellectual love of God' and the 'kingdom of ends' respectively. Coming to the modern period we find, Sidgwick, in his distinctive doctrine of philosophic intuitionism, reconciling with the claims of egoism and altruism, and T. H. Green with his doctrine of self-realization.
From the above consideration, 'can virtues be classified?' appears to be a futile question. But if a complete list of virtues is not possible, at least one can attempt to classify virtues from different 'points of view'. What could be these different principles of classification? Of course Hartmann is still pessimistic when he says, "... as historical survey shows that several specific groups of virtues can be distinguished, but that between them the intermediate members are still lacking". Paul Janet says, "I will merely remark that to my mind any classification of virtues would always seem artificial, and that it would always vary according to the standpoint which might be taken. All one can do is to pick out those aspects of character which the consciousness of an age recognises and values."

In this section, I have given different historical classifications of virtues, thinking that if one cannot enumerate all the different virtues, at least one can try to classify them on different 'principles'. The following are the different historical classifications of virtues.

Before we make an attempt to classify virtues, let it be clear at the outset that our present interest is in moral virtues. Virtues are morally good and vices are morally bad. Throughout the history of Ethics, moral thinkers appear to have been concerned about the cultivation of some character-values, or virtues such as honesty, kindness and conscientiousness, etc. Some of these dispositions may be
innate, but some of them must be acquired by learning and practice. Plato and Aristotle seem to conceive Ethics in this way, for they talk mainly in terms of virtues and the virtuous, rather than in terms of what is right and obligatory. Leslie Stephen says, "... morality is internal ... the only mode of stating the moral law must be as a rule of character." This view contains a grain of truth; however, whether the view holds water or not, we may still ask what moral qualities are to be cultivated in order to be virtuous. In a way, the answer is easy; with only a little thought, most of us could make up a long list which would include the various kinds of virtues. But we cannot be satisfied with a list of virtues as an answer to our question any more than Socrates was satisfied when he asked Meno, "what is virtue?" We are interested in knowing the standard by which we are to determine what virtues we are to cultivate in ourselves and expect others to do so. In Stephen's terms, what set of rules of character are we to follow, what are we like to be? The answer to this question perhaps gives us different classifications of virtues.

(ii) Historical Classifications of Virtues

(Western Ethics)

(a) Self-regarding and Other-regarding Virtues:
Nothing in the universe is wholly self-existent or entirely self-sufficing. Nevertheless, it is a convenient and permissible exercise of abstraction to consider certain
exercises by themselves as well as in their inter-relationships; and this logic justifies the attempt to distinguish (a) between those inward characteristics that are primarily inward, and on the other hand, (b) that being inward are also primarily other-regarding. Trait-egoism will reply that we should cultivate the traits which are most conducive to one's own welfare. Trait-utilitarianism will insist that we should cultivate a trait if its expression in our action is at least conducive to the greater general good than any other alternative trait. The traits of the former class are called self-regarding or individual virtues, and the traits of the latter class, other-regarding virtues, or social virtues.

This is the classification of virtues based on the relations sustained between the motives for conduct and certain clearly conceived personal interests which are chosen as ends. The motive for some of the virtues is the end of the good for one-self, the motive for others is the end of the good for others. 'Self-regarding' virtues, as the word indicates, essentially serve the moral welfare of the individual himself, whereas 'other-regarding' virtues, as the word indicates, essentially serve the good of the other human beings. From this point of view, temperance, courage, industry and wisdom are some of the important self-regarding virtues; while justice, kindness, non-violence and brotherhood are some of the other-regarding virtues.
Similarly, purity, peace, joy of the spirit, chastity and modesty are self-regarding traits of character; sympathy, compassion, love, charity, benevolence and generosity are other-regarding springs of action, their motive being the development of the social self. To be more clear, each individual has to look after himself, his life, his health, his happiness and his desires etc. These are self-regarding actions. But at the same time, man, being a social animal, ought to have some regard towards other members of the society. And these springs of actions are, therefore, known to be 'other-regarding' or social in nature.

This classification of virtues, into self-regarding and other-regarding, was held justifiable by some well known ethical thinkers, both Eastern and Western. James Seth enumerates temperance, self-discipline, culture, and purity as the forms of self-regarding virtues. Justice and benevolence as the forms of social virtues. W. H. Wright includes in his list of self-regarding virtues prudence, courage and idealism; and in the social virtues, kindness and friendship in addition to the social virtues given by James Seth. Honesty, justice, fidelity, benevolence, love, courtesy, impartiality and cheerfulness are some of the other important social virtues.

But this appears to be a rough classification of virtues, e.g. Honesty can be interpreted to be a self-
regarding virtue, for it is possible that a particular dishonest act in a peculiar situation would not bring about any noticeable harm to a person against whom it is committed; but it may harm the character of the person who commits it from the point of view of the ideal of the perfection of character. Similarly, one's desire for self-knowledge (Ātmajñāna) with a view to attaining a full development of character and personality is also a self-regarding virtue. The understanding of the value of self-knowledge is shown in such relatively specific attitudes as trustworthiness, truthfulness, steadfastness and patience etc. Trustworthiness is again manifested in specific attitudes such as sincerity, honesty etc. Among the other-regarding virtues, the most abstract and general is "social consciousness" which is manifested in some social attitudes such as kindness, charity, sympathy, friendliness, righteousness, desire to do one's social duties and respect for justice, in particular. It is true that the classification of virtues into self-regarding and other-regarding is artificial because, the human 'self' cannot just be divided into mere two compartments—individual and social. For the total development of the 'self', self-regarding and other-regarding traits should be equally acquired and developed.

Buddha added new concepts to Hindu Ethics. Buddhism stresses the importance of social virtues, but does not ask us to avoid individual virtues; e.g. mahākaruṇā, Lokasaṅgraha,
and ahimsā are some of the basic social virtues, according to Buddhism. His was the mission to wipe out every tear from every eye. Mahātmā Gāndhi also used to say that, he was the man of God, who knew and felt the pains of others as his own. Saint Sunderdās also emphasized 'Lokasāṃgraha' as the highest social virtue.

In brief, the distinction between individual and social virtues had been advocated by many ethical thinkers of the past, both Eastern and Western, but it appears that some of these thinkers have emphasized the distinction with exaggeration. Hence, the classification of virtues into self-regarding and other-regarding appears to be inadequate and in some respects defective. The reasons for this, perhaps, are as follows.

(1) Firstly, the connection between individual and social virtues is natural and hence need not be artificially separated. Besides other instincts, man has social instincts which are inborn or innate. And hence it is but natural that he may have sympathetic impulses towards his fellow beings. Man cannot really realize his own true nature, unless he devotes himself to the common good of the community. Self-realization, apart from its philosophical import, means serving personality in others. The rule for the realization of personality is, 'be a person and respect others as person', as Bradley used to think. In serving others, we serve ourselves, and in both we serve humanity.
At the same time, we should remember that personality is always individual. Individual and society are interdependent. The only personality man can realize is his own personality. He serves others, but this is the only possible way of realizing his own personality.

(2) Secondly, the classification of virtues into self-regarding and other-regarding appears to be defective because, these two springs of action taken separately and independently land us into hopeless confusion and seem to be misleading. Self-regarding and other-regarding virtues are interconnected. This can be easily seen in the famous cardinal virtues advocated by Plato. According to Plato, wisdom, temperance, courage and justice live in unity and co-operate with each other. One supplements the other. Plato's 'wisdom' being an individual virtue, includes all the other remaining virtues, because every courageous or a temperate activity consists in acting wisely. May I say that one should be wisely courageous, or be courageously wise; or one should be wisely temperate or temperately wise, and so on? Wisdom alone would be ineffectual; courage devoid of wisdom, may be ill-directed; even temperance, if separated from wisdom and courage, may be purely negative and repressive. Justice demands the development of the total personality, which is ensured by courage and is directed by wisdom through the harmonizing influence of temperance. Though 'justice' is regarded by Plato as the
highest social virtue, it is intelligence, strength and unity combined. It is not only one virtue among many, but also a due combination of all. Hence, individual and social virtues are not really disconnected. They can be distinguished but not really separated.

If we carefully examine the nature of the self-regarding virtues, we find that these are not absolutely self-regarding in character, but these too react upon the happiness of others, though sometimes it does not immediately become apparent. It is rightly said that all morality involves social relations. What is 'truth' if there is no one to whom to be truthful? What is 'justice' apart from a kind of relationship between man and man? Fidelity and loyalty are nothing but ideal kinds of social connections. Patriotism, without social reference, is meaningless. Even what are sometimes called 'personal' virtues, are not entirely personal. Veracity is sometimes called a personal virtue, but plainly it means keeping one's words with others. Chastity is sometimes called a personal virtue, but surely chastity is not a denial of the relation of the sexes, but a pure relation of the sexes. Temperance is held to be a personal virtue, yet temperance is hardly an end, it is a means to an end—namely, the maintenance of the supremacy of the rational and moral in us. The temperate man is so much more a man, but as a man his place and duty are, in large measure, with men; and
'temperance' is to make to take his part well in the life and work of humanity. Hence, self-regarding virtues, from this point of view, are not absolutely 'personal' as such. Life, evolution, virtue, vice and duty - all these things would have been impossible with only a single jīvātman pervading the universe. The idea of a community is inseparable from the idea of these. A duty towards oneself is also a duty towards others. If I do not follow the general norms of hygiene, that is if I am unclean, I inevitably make my neighbours uncomfortable. Hence, cleanliness has a social reference. An unclean man primarily injures himself, and then to his neighbours. Hence, considered from this point of view, virtues which are self-regarding, may accidently turn to be other-regarding, and vice-versa. Take, 'courage', for example. To be courageous is necessarily a virtue for the brave man himself, when he is facing a danger - although, of course, what courage does to help him may become counteracted by other things which work against him. Courage can also be of the greatest importance to an act which is done for the sake of others, i.e. in battle or in saving our neighbour from disaster. Courage is meaningful if the act is done for the good of others. What is important is motivation. This can be seen in battle or in saving one's neighbour from disaster. Hence, a courageous action may have a social basis. What is true of courage, is also true of temperance and industry.
Similarly, other-regarding virtues are useful from the neighbour's point of view. Consideration, helpfulness and honesty are other-regarding virtues. The considerate man has learnt to conquer the influence of selfish impulses on his judgement as to how his action will interfere with the good of the others. It means that he can show consideration if he cares for his neighbour's good. He has acquired the necessary mental discipline.

(b) Intellectual and Moral Virtues: In the history of Ethics, there had been some moralists, among whom Aristotle was pre-eminent during the Greek period, who have classified virtues into Intellectual and Moral. The former could be called 'theoretical' and the latter 'practical'.

This is the classification of virtues based upon the method through which virtues are acquired by human beings. Many post-Socratic moralists and St. Thomas, in Medieval Ethics accepted such a classification of virtues in terms of Intellectual and Moral. According to Aristotle, the former belongs to the rational and the latter to the irrational part of the soul.

Intellectual virtues are the virtues leading to the rationalizing of desire or appetite itself, while moral ones lead to the knowledge of proper means and ends. And it is to the latter that Aristotle widely applied his doctrine
of the 'Relative Mean'. The moral virtues are concerned with pleasure and pain in various aspects. Pleasure and pain pervade human life and men seek the one and avoid the other, but the virtuous man is the one who is able to resist them when it is right to do so. Hence, 'temperance' is a moral virtue.

The peculiarity of moral virtues is that they can be divided into self-regarding and other-regarding virtues. This can be shown by the following table of classification:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral Virtues</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Self-regarding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temperance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perseverance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courage</td>
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<td>Contentment</td>
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<td>Humility</td>
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<td>Self-improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) Other-regarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piety</td>
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<td>Benevolence</td>
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<td>Justice</td>
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<td>Veracity</td>
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We have, earlier, stated that moral virtues admit the doctrine of the 'golden mean'. But I think that not all moral virtues admit the 'doctrine of the mean' put forward by Aristotle. Coming to the method for the acquisition of the virtues, Aristotle says that virtues are acquired dispositions. Both intellectual and moral virtues are acquired states of character, and not natural or innate dispositions as Kant used to maintain. The chief intellectual virtues are intelligence, knowledge, wisdom, prudence, science, art, intuition and reason etc. These virtues are
acquired through learning, and the moral virtues are acquired through habit.

But such a view, on reflection, appears to be misleading. Habituation, like instruction necessary in intellectual virtues, requires time and experience. Even in moral virtues, the trainer must instruct the person.

Intuition, wisdom, science and art are said to be intellectual virtues. But the supreme good of life is not attained by merely intellectual activities. Thus one may be a good metaphysician or a mathematician, without being a good man. It is not enough for man to think, he must also live rightly. Hence, the need to find out the proper means as well. Hence, prudence, as a moral virtue, becomes necessary.

Some modern ethical thinkers have emphasized moral virtues, rather than theoretical. This attitude was not at least, found during the Greek period. Rightly or wrongly, modern ethics is much more influenced by pragmatism or utilitarianism. Serviceability, practicability, expediency and workability are the watchwords of pragmatism and hence we find that theoretical virtues have been degraded by pragmatists because pragmatic ethical thinkers regard theoretical virtues such as wisdom, knowledge etc. as valueless for all practical purposes.

If a man is to be completely equipped to abide by
the moral law, other habits than those that expand the intellect to its fullest extent are required. The appetitive faculties must be subjected to obey the voice of reason. And these are the moral virtues. A 'moral virtue' is any habit operating under the direction of the will directly ordering man to his end. Since human acts must be subject to his will, and since man's last end is attainable only by good volitional acts, any permanent source of good conduct must be will-directed and conducive to perfect happiness. Since it is the will's function to obey right reason, moral virtue gives man readiness to act in accordance with reason. Since, that which is reasonable leads to the desired end, the person who possesses moral virtue is unquestionably good.

We have seen that Western moral thinkers make a clear distinction between Intellectual and Moral virtues. But the concept of 'Puruṣārtha' in Hindu Ethics reconciles these two forms of virtues. Traditional Hindu Ethics regards integrity of character as the highest ethical ideal, which consists of an harmonious development of the four-fold values of human life—Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa. These are the different parts of the whole personality, and hence no part is higher or lower for the formation of the whole. Western Ethics regards Artha and Kāma as the virtues which are practical, and disregards Dharma and Mokṣa being unpractical. But really speaking, it is Dharma which includes both Artha and Kāma.
This does not, however, mean that Artha and Kama have no place in man's life. These are valuable, and human beings ought to desire them. However, these are not desirable in themselves. These may be basic values of life, but not ultimate values of life. This ancient Hindu Ethics of Puruṣārthas makes a beautiful reconciliation of the practical and theoretical virtues of the West. Aristotle's classification of virtues into theoretical and practical is of the analytical type, while the concept of Puruṣārthas in Hindu Ethics is of the synthetical type, the former gives rise to plurality, the latter gives rise to unity. Of course, it appears that the whole technological and scientific progress in the West is due to their practical attitude. But is it a total perfection? Could it be called a complete progress? To lead a virtuous kind of life, one has to admit the possibility of unfolding the inmost divinity. No human ideal is genuinely human, which is not inspired by the 'goodness' in man. Neither the physical well-being, nor the material prosperity, nor the biological fitness to survive, nor the psychological satisfactions of wants and desires, nor the realization of rights or the fulfilment of obligations by itself form a complete picture of ethical perfection. These are all valuable, and could be realized at their best only through the inspiration born of and sustained through the spirit in man. None of his lower ideals could be reached by the neglect of the central
foundation of ever-energising spirit. The higher is the spiritual which is not anti-moral, but supra-moral. Inner peace does not come to one who cannot transcend the sphere of a dualistic morality. Hence theoretical and practical virtues could be reconciled and transcended. Vyāsa, the author of Mahābhārata says that if Dharma is followed, Artha and Kāma are automatically followed. Similarly, coming to modern Indian ethical thinkers, Mahātma Gāndhi was a practical idealist emphasizing pragmatic spiritualism. Hence, such beautiful and matchless Indian spiritualism which gives beatitude if mixed with Western unimagined technological and scientific progress and power to conquer nature, will bring heaven on earth. We judge men and nations of the past 'not by the happiness they gave to their contemporaries, but solely by what they have done for the humanity at large'.

(c) Positive and Negative Virtues: Virtues have also been classified into Positive and Negative, as they undertake definite course of action or as they lead us to desist from certain actions. Both lead toward the moral ideal, one positively and the other negatively. The Hindu idea of 'Vidhi' and 'Nisedha' corresponds with this classification of virtues. To illustrate, temperance is a negative virtue, self-culture is a positive virtue. Justice is a negative virtue, while wisdom is a positive virtue. Ten Commandments of Christianity is a beautiful mixture of
both positive and Negative rules of conduct. Similarly, Hegel's "be a person and treat others as persons"; Kant's "Act as a member of Kingdom of Ends" are the illustrations of positive virtues. Positive virtues ask us to develop a particular moral habit, while Negative virtues ask us to abstain habitually from a certain form of action.

Similarly, the virtues laid down by Patanjali in his 'Astanga Yoga' also give us a list of positive and negative virtues. These are non-injury, veracity, non-stealing, freedom from passion and non-attachment—the yamas; and, cleanliness, contentment, arduous application and devotion, recitation of the scriptures and meditation on the glories and perfections of the Lord—the Niyamas. The Yamas may be called the forms of self-restraint (Negative in character) and the Niyamas, the rules of self-realization.

But, I think, there are some virtues which cannot be properly called either as positive or negative but both. It depends upon its import, e.g. non-violence is both positive and negative in character. Verbally it is negative, but really it is positive in character. Verbally, it means abstention from killing, but really it means love towards all creatures. Ahimsa, according to Jñanésvara and Mahātma Gandhi, not only means refraining from violence, but also includes the positive spirit of tenderness and goodwill to all creatures irrespective of caste, colour and creed. The positive element of 'ahimsā' is well brought out by
Jñānesvāra when he said:

"अर्थेष्वात्माधिक्यो नृपावेदिः
शरीरे वाचा मानसे
षाटोगतेः तेन अभिमें
रूप जागः।"

('Happiness of all creatures' is the real positive import of the concept of ahīṃsā. It is more a positive state of love, having a social orientation. Hence, ahīṃsā is not only positive or only negative, but it can be both depending on different standpoints. On this reading, ahīṃsā implies not only the resolve not to kill or harm but also the altruistic endeavour to seek the good of all creatures (Bhūtahātātva) and may be the counterpart of the virtue of love and kindness, on a much wider scale in so far as it includes not only the neighbour but also all creatures as the objects of love. Thus, in the words of Maitra, Patañjali's conception may be regarded as "an attempt to reconcile the ideal of a rigoristic autonomy of the self and freedom from desire with that of the altruistic seeking of the good of creatures through goodwill and love".

The same is true about the virtue of non-stealing. It appears to be a negative virtue because of the prefix 'non', but essentially it is a positive virtue of absolute respect for the property of others. Taken positively, it may be interpreted as the counterpart of honesty.
Thus, the classification of virtues into Positive and Negative, again, appears to be inadequate and hence unsatisfactory.

(d) **Primary and Secondary Virtues**: Virtues have also been classified into primary and secondary. Secondary virtues are those which are deduced from primary virtues. D'Arcy writes, 'if the attempts were made to draw up a fairly complete list of virtues, it would be scarcely possible to avoid making a distinction between primary virtues, virtues covering a wide range of cognate characteristics, and secondary virtues which would be included in corresponding groups under the primary virtues'. This is treated to be the most logical division, because only in this way it would be possible to avoid illogical division. Thus, if benevolence were classed as a primary virtue, the secondary virtues grouped under the head of benevolence would be philanthropy and patriotism and even, perhaps, courtesy. Thus primary virtues are of a wide range, whereas secondary virtues are of a narrower range.

Instead of using the terms primary and secondary in the history of Greek Ethics, virtues have been distinguished into **Cardinal and Subalterm**. The cardinal virtues are central (primary in the above sense) or pivotal virtues on which many subordinate virtues turn. According to Plato, wisdom, temperance, courage and justice are the cardinal virtues. The Greek moralists generally adopt this
classification of cardinal virtues and contend that all the other virtues are subaltern since they follow from these. The subaltern virtues are minor excellences of character, depending upon the major or cardinal or primary. Both these classifications are unnecessarily taken to be different kinds of classification, because the former could be reduced to the latter or vice versa. In principle, they are the same.

These are the so-called historical classifications of virtues advocated by many ethical thinkers. But because of their limitations, if we consider them critically, one cannot forget that these distinctions are artificial. These are overlapping. The different virtues express but different aspects of good character which is the goal of human life. Hume has also distinguished virtues into natural and artificial. But it appears that even artificial virtues are closely connected with the natural virtues; similarly, the positive virtues with the negative, and the passive with the active virtues; and the intellectual with the moral virtues, e.g. true benevolence is inseparable from justice, self-control from self-culture, patience from patriotism, and wisdom from temperance. In fact, the connection of the several virtues is so intimate owing to the organic unity of the mental and the moral constitution that we can deduce all the virtues from any one of them. Some of the expressions by Hume appear to be unhappy and
misleading; e.g. artificial virtues, according to him, rest on convention. But, it does not mean that it rests only on convention, it ultimately draws its sustenance from what is called contradistinction. Sometimes even passive virtues demand a higher strength to act.

Hence, all the attempts to classify virtues are inadequate for one or the other reason. Hence, instead of classifying virtues, a 'gradation of virtues' should be made on a social plane. We are aware of the fact that for ages mankind has set its heart on certain principles of right conduct. What can be the number of such principles? To this no final answer can be given, because there have been as many ethical controversies as there have been lists of such principles. We have seen that certain virtues prescribed are not specifically distinct, e.g. Primary and Cardinal virtues are not distinct from each other. The tabulation of virtues is sometimes too artificial. Virtues are also varied and contrary, and sometimes the virtues of one social culture become the vices of the other. Hence, there is a need to interpret virtues from the sociological point of view, i.e. the consideration of the growth and development of social groups.

According to the sociological approach, virtues are those principles of right conduct which make the social life well disciplined and which ultimately serve the enduring welfare of the individual and the good of the community.
Contrary to these principles, there are the vices which hinder the welfare of the individual and the good of the community.

Secondly, according to this approach, no virtue is to be accepted as final or absolute, because new situations always demand some new principles of conduct. All virtues are relative, conditional or situational in character, e.g. piety is generally recognized to be a virtue, but should not be treated to be an absolute virtue. Virtues are those principles of conduct which are approved by the group, and vices are those which are disapproved. Such a sociological approach gives rise to a teleological character of virtue. Good character is that which tends to develop the highest type of life and bad character, that which debases and cripples humanity. Hence, "the value of virtues or vices depend upon the total effects connected with the practice of them". Truthfulness, justice, chastity, benevolence and the other virtues are such because they serve the true interests of life. In order to achieve these interests they have been called into being, have been slowly developed and strengthened through long centuries of struggle. Truthfulness is prized because there are important truths to speak, because it makes a vast difference in human relations whether things are represented as they are, or are distorted out of all semblance to reality. But for this fact, truth-speaking would be indifferent. Were it not for the significant
political, economic and social interests of men, justice would be meaningless. Justice is important because there are important causes to be adjudicated. So, too, benevolence is a virtue because there is daily and hourly suffering which requires an imaginative sympathy to mitigate. In the same way every single virtue can be shown to draw its strength and sacredness from some primary need of life. Therefore, all virtues are teleological, they serve ends of worth.

(e) The Gradation of Virtues: We have said earlier that all the classifications of virtues appear to be defective for one or the other reason. Hence 'a gradation of virtues' should be made. The gradation of virtues may be shown to consist in the following table:

1. Self-regarding;
2. Other-regarding; and

The first two kinds of virtues may be included under secular virtues, and the third kind of virtue leads to religious Ethics. The first two stand for empirical Ethics, while the third stands for religious Ethics.

The above gradation of the virtues is based on the principle of different springs of action.

1. The fundamental virtue under 'self-regarding' virtues is prudence or rational self-love (with self-control). It consists in proper regard for the interests
of the self—a regard for the good of the self in abstraction from the good of the others. This fundamental virtue expresses itself in and comprises the following subordinate virtues:

(i) Courage: This is the virtue which gives one the power for resisting the fear of pain. It is this which enables the self to undergo present pains and dangers for the attainment of greater future benefits and realization of higher and more permanent ends.

(ii) Temperance: This is the virtue which gives the power for resisting the allurements of pleasure. It consists in power of resisting the impulses of pleasure, especially the lower kind, which would interfere with the well-being of the self.

(iii) Industry or Perseverance: This is the virtue which gives the power of resisting the present desires of ease and happiness in order to obtain higher and more permanent good by the exercise of one's physical and mental powers.

(iv) Thrift or Frugality: This is the virtue which gives the power for resisting the undue use of money.

It should be borne in mind that the above virtues are not to be wholly confined to the class of the self-regarding virtues as they are often necessary for the good of others. These are partly self-regarding or egoistic virtues.

(2) The Other-regarding or Altruistic Virtues: As
we have seen the motive behind these virtues is the tendency of the self to regulate its conduct so as to promote the good of others. They include: e.g.,

Justice or the willingness of giving each man his due. Justice ordinarily means a disposition to secure to everyone the product of his own labour and to put no obstacles in the way of the development of his life. Fairness, equity and impartiality are its various manifestations. In a wide sense, it comprises all those virtues which have their ground in the idea and feeling of fairness or justice such as candour, gratitude, veracity, fidelity, honesty in our dealings with our fellowmen, uprightness and integrity, sympathy, benevolence and so on.

(3) Religious virtues: Celibacy (Brahmacarya), penance (Tapa included in Yama and Niyama), study of Philosophy (Atmavidyā), reverence for master, meditation on God, divine optimism, vision of God—everywhere are some of the religious virtues, according to the Ethics of the Bhagavad-gītā, which I have discussed at the end of this chapter.

(iii) The Classification of Virtues in the Ethics of Indian Philosophy

(1) Introduction: The classification of virtues in the Ethics of the Hindus appears to be much exhaustive as compared to Western Ethics. The virtues are considered in detail by Ancient Nyāya writers as well as by Patañjali and
his commentators. There is also an interesting Buddhist and Jaina treatment of the subject.

The Nyāya treatment of the subject appears both in Vātsāyana's Bhāṣya on the Nyāya-Sūtras as well as in the later writings such as "Nyāya-manjari" of Jayanta Bhatta. For the Pāṇaṇjala treatment of the question we have not only the Sūtras of Patañjali but also the Vyāsabhāṣya thereon. The Buddha and the Jaina treatments are obtained from Buddhist and Jaina writings.

(2) Classification of Virtues in Different Indian Philosophical Systems: Now, different views on virtues and their classifications are possible, corresponding to the different possible views about the nature of man's ideal. Čārvāka, because of its materialistic outlook, regards 'virtue' as a means to 'pleasure', the ethical ideal. Čārvāka views about 'virtue' are found to be similar to Cyrenaics and egoistic hedonistic thinkers in the West. Each of the system in Indian Philosophy advocates its own ideal. The Concept of Nirvāṇa in Buddhism, the concept of Tīrthaṅkara in Jainism, absolute cessation of all sorrows constitutes an ideal in Nyāya, Kaivalya in Śāṅkhya and self-realization in Vedānta are the different philosophical ideals in the different Indian philosophical systems. With regard to the nature of the ideal, the systems differ, but all the systems unanimously agree about the importance of the acquisition of virtues for spiritual experience. The following
is a detail analysis of the classification of virtues in Nyāya, Yoga, Buddhism, Jainism and Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara.

(a) Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Classification of Virtues:

Vātsyāyana classifies will (pravṛtti) into pāpātmikā (wicked, impious) and śubha (pious and auspicious). Latter leads to Virtues, while the former to vices. Hence, the nature of will is principle of classification of virtues in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system.

The pāpātmikā pravṛtti takes three forms with reference to the source:

1. depending on the body,
2. depending on the improper use of speech,
3. depending on the mind.

The vices connected with the first are cruelty, theft and sexual indulgence.

The vices connected with the second source are mendacity, causticity, scandal and gossip.

The vices connected with the third source are hostility, covetousness and irreverence. The vices under the third source are subjective dispositions, the first two are manifested in overt acts.

It is also to be observed that the enumerations under the vices connected with speech are a special characteristic of the Hindu treatment of the question, the comparative neglect of which in Greek and Christian Ethics unmistakably
establishes the accomplishment of the Hindus in this respect who would not excuse even a harsh word which does no visible wrong to anybody like cruelty, ill-will and other vices.

It is however to be noted that the inclusion of theft with cruelty and sexuality under one class, viz., class of vices depending on the body is artificial. It may be possible however to justify this by pointing out that just as cruelty implies injury to the person and sexuality involves injury to the race so does theft involve injury to the individual not by any harm done to his body or person but by the misappropriation of his property.

As with vice, virtue is three-fold:

1) Virtues of the body, viz., charity (Dāna), succouring the distressed (Paritrāṇa), social service (Paricarana).

2) Virtues of the speech, viz., veracity (Satya), the uttering of beneficial speech (Hitavacana), gentleness and agreeableness of speech (Priyavacana) and reciting of the scriptures (Śvādhyāya).

3) Lastly, the virtues of the mind, viz., kindness (Dayā), unworldliness (Aspr̥hā), reverence (Sr̥dha).

It is to be noted that virtues relating to speech constitute one of the specific Hindu contributions to the
ethical knowledge of the world, the only virtue which has received special notice by ethical writers being 'veracity'. It is rightly assumed by Hindu writers that "the ultimate purpose of speech was the good (hita) of mankind and therefore if a rigid adherence to truth was likely to do more harm than good, the evil should be averted by a lie, if necessary".¹⁰ (Satyādapi hitam vadet.)

Another thing to be noticed here is the virtue of unworldliness. It is a characteristic of the Hindu Ethics which regards life of detachment as the highest spiritual ideal. Swāmi Nikhilānanda says in his Hinduism "Hindu Ethics differs both from modern scientific Ethics and from utilitarian Ethics. It prescribes the disciplines for a spiritual life. Hindu Ethics is mainly subjective or personal, its purpose being to eliminate mental impurities as greed and egotism for the ultimate attainment of the highest good".¹¹

(b) Parājñālī's Classification of Virtues: The Yoga Ethics teaches virtues in the Śādhanapāda in connection with the question of the conditions to be fulfilled by those preparing for the life of yoga. The virtues in yoga system are meant to be of universal application, they admit of no exception—of birth, place, time and circumstance. (Yogasūtra II, 31.)

According to Yoga system, virtues are initially classified into two groups; Yama and Niyama which are
further classified into five under each category. This classification of virtues into the Yama and the Niyama is based on the following principle; the virtues which positively help for the attainment of the idea, and those which negatively help us. No man is absolutely good or no man is absolutely evil. If an individual has more and more good traits of character and less and less bad traits of character, he is nearer to a virtuous kind of life. Hence, those qualities which are conducive to the attainment of good character are the virtues, and those which lead to form a bad character are the vices. The virtues, according to Patanjali, are the Yamas, the restraints that purity the mind and the evil tendencies and thus clear the ground for Yoga. They, thus, form a subordinate class within the wider Nyāya classification of virtues—a class of virtues suitable only for Yoga.

These virtues are:

(1) Ahimsā—It is manifested in tenderness, benevolence and goodwill. We have seen that literally, Ahimsā is recognized as a negative virtue i.e. it means abstention from himsā or injury to living beings. But it also implies positive goodwill and amity with all creatures. It is a virtue which is to be cultivated without any exception, and also without any restrictions as to specific occasions or particular methods. In this positive sense, it also implies kindness, self-restraint, subjugation of the
feeling of aversion or hate, or absence of harsh words. In brief, it is the highest virtue (Ahimsā Paramo Dharmah), and veracity (Satya) and the other virtues are to be practised only to the extent that they do not clash with this highest virtue of universal good will and tenderness.

(2) Satya—(Veracity) :- It is the opposite of mendacity and consists in correspondence in thought and speech with the objective fact or event as ascertained by valid proof. Veracity implies two things: (a) that the object as ascertained by valid proof is to be correctly apprehended by the speaker’s mind, i.e. there should be no illusion or error (bhrānti); and (b) that the speaker should faithfully describe his own ideas in his speech, i.e. there should be neither intentional deceit (Vancāna), nor indulgence in meaningless words (pratipatti-vandhya) from inability to express oneself. Hence, half truths, evasions, subterfuges are to be treated as lies, for they do not convey what the speaker has in his mind. Again, truth-speaking should be directed towards the ‘good’ of the creatures. Thus, even the most truthful speech which hurts or injures creatures is to be reckoned amongst the forms of unrighteousness, not as the virtue of truthfulness. In this sense, it is a sin to recount even the faults of others when such recounting will serve no good purpose.

(3) Asteya (Abstention from theft) :- It is the opposite of steya or unlawful material prosperity being
tainted by the faults of deceit and cruelty etc.

These virtues are universal or absolute in character, and these can be best described as Kantian\footnote{categorical imperative} in the sense that these are to be practised without any restrictions as to class, place or occasion. Thus the abstention from cruelty is to be practised even by the soldier and the fisherman without reference to his profession or class. The virtues are to be practised in all bhūmis or planes of the mind in regard to all objects and in every respect without exception.

Patañjali appears to make a distinction between the common man's morality and Yogic morality, just as Jainism purported a different kind of morality for the tīrthaṅkaras which were required to follow mahāvratas, and the common man who was supposed to follow anuvratas. It is assumed that the common man's morality consists of a multitude of moral codes which are unorganized and often mutually contradictory. It is this multiplicity and conflict of moral codes, i.e. to save ethics from relativism, the Yogin seeks to overcome and reconcile by insisting on the highest standard of morality in liberation through unison with the universal self. The faith then must grow into a living force by being backed up by one's own efforts, and this can be done by one who has mental courage to do the experiment. The Yoga is a moral process culminating in the final stage of Samādhi.
(c) **Jaina Classification of Virtues**: According to Jainism, virtues are necessary for bringing about the reformation of man's nature, and the way to Nirvāṇa goes through the 'three jewels' (śrāvaṇa, jñāna and samyak karma). The three together form one path and are to be simultaneously pursued. 'Virtues' consist in the five-fold conduct of one who has knowledge and faith. Though injunctions of Jainism do not come strictly under those of orthodox Hinduism, yet we may consider here some of the Jaina classifications not only for the philosophical interests they possess, but also for the purposes of comparison and contrast with the strictly Hindu standpoint.

(1) **Vidyānanda's classification of the virtues in the Aṣṭaśāhasrī**: According to Vidyānanda, a Jaina thinker, righteousness (Puṇya) and unrighteousness (Pāpa) depend on the subjective intention (abhisandhi) and not merely on consequences of happiness or suffering. It resembles with the view of Vātsyāyana's interpretation of virtue and vice in terms of suḥṣa pravrती and pāpaḥstika pravrती. Hence, morality and immorality do not arise merely from the results of happiness or unhappiness but depend on subjective intentions. The nature of this subjective intention, which determines right and wrong, is pure in the case of puṇya and impure in the case of pāpa. Hence, it is a classification of the virtues based not on the consequences of happiness or unhappiness, but on the purity or impurity of
the subjective intention or attitude of the moral agent. This is the intentionalists view found in Western Ethics, according to which intention and not consequences, determine what is right and wrong. Good or bad. This is the view which may be called internalism, as against externalism. The latter is a kind of consequential kind of morality. While the consequence by itself does not determine virtue or vice, it furnishes the content, as it were, in relation to which the subject has to determine itself in the direction of pāpa or puṇya. Hence, cruelty regarded merely as a consequence of unhappiness to creatures is neither righteous nor unrighteous, but when it results from the aggressive nature of the moral agent it is no longer morally neutral but becomes a form of unrighteousness.

(2) Another Jaina classification: Āśrava is that by which Karma enters the soul.

Samvara is the Nirodha, i.e., the arrest of the Āśrava, the arrest of the flux of Karmic matter into the soul.

Dharma (righteousness) is one of the means (upāyas) of arrest of karma. Dharma is the highest quality. The Dharmas, virtues or excellences, are:

1) Kṣamā (Forgiveness)
2) Mārdava (Humility)
3) Ārjava (Sincerity)
4) Saucē (Cleanliness)
5) Satya (Veracity)
6) Tapas (practice of physical hardships and privation in view of the acquisition of strength of will for devotion)
7) Tyāga (Renunciation)
8) Brahmacarya (Continence)

This, it will be seen, is a mere enumeration of the virtues without any scientific basis of classification. As a point of inadequacy, Jaina classification does not include the other-regarding virtues of benevolence, succour and social service. This shows that Jaina virtues aim more at self-culture than at social service. This is particularly evident in respect of the virtue of forgiveness or Ksama in the Jaina list, a virtue we miss in the Hindu enumerations proper and which consist primarily in effecting the moral uplift of the forgiving person at the expense of the forgiven.

In Jainism, virtuous life is looked upon as a necessary preparation for spiritualization. It is not necessary to surrender any higher being nor to ask for any divine favour for the individual to reach the highest goal of perfection. Jainism believes in, to use the words of Potter, "do-it-yourself philosophy". But moral perfection is a long and continuous process, hence the individuals are asked to follow the path cherished by the Tirthaṅkaras. What is ethically important is the cultivation of equanimity and indifference to the things of the world. Friendship,
cheerfulness and compassion are the cardinal virtues necessary for ethical preparation so that the highest goal could be ensured. Anger, conceit, deceit, avarice, hatred, quarrelsomeness, slander, defamation, abuse of others, lack of self-control, hypocrisy and false faith tie us down, say Jaina thinkers, to the world; and their opposites of patience, humility, simplicity, and contentment further the ethical growth of the individual and pave the way for the highest ideal.

(d) **Buddhist Classification of Virtues** :- If Aristotle is the father of Logic, Ethics is an offspring of Gautam Buddha, the light of mankind and the founder of Buddhism. Like Aristotle's 'Golden Mean', Buddha also asks mankind to go by the 'Middle Path' which is between extreme Hedonism at one side and extreme Aseticism at the other. The way to Nirvana is through the life of virtue, knowledge, conduct, intuition and equanimity.

The subject of the virtues is considered in **Madhyamikāvṛtti** by Candrakīrti where the virtues are classified into:

1) Virtues that express themselves in overt actions, viz., virtues of speech.
2) Virtues that are non-manifest, or without physical expression.

These are internal subjective traits without external manifestation, viz. hurtful nature or injurious nature.
These are the vices; while dispositions which are non-manifested, viz., a beneficial nature.

According to Rhys Davids all the virtues are arranged in seven groups, which are sometimes called the divisions of the Way (Skr. Mārgāṅga). The virtues are also called organs (Indriyas) of moral practice and their practice consists in the Eightfold Holy Way (Ariyamagga). The virtues are: faith, exertion, mindfulness, contemplation, and wisdom. Among these, faith, contemplation and wisdom are the cardinal virtues of Buddhism and are included in every other group of virtues; and, on the other hand, several others are added to the other five; such as shame, fear of sinning, sympathy, which taken in various groups make up the seven or nine virtues. The practice of sympathy, for instance, is divided into four, alms-giving (dāna), kind word (peyyavajja), beneficial act (atthacariya) and all-identification (samānāttata); these virtues make up the 'Eightfold Way'.

By way of comparison it appears that Buddhism lays more emphasis on the intellectual side than Christianity. And in this respect these virtues may be compared with Greek virtues. Yet one thing is certain that faith plays the central part, both in Buddhism and Christianity.

As regards Buddhists virtues, we have to speak of pāramitas which bring one to Nirvāṇa. And this is logically justifiable from the Buddhistic point of view because the
aim of Buddhism is to bring us to the attainment of arhat (saintship) or to *buddhahood*, to the final goal of perfect enlightenment. So in this respect, every virtue is a pāramita.

It is sometimes said that Buddhist analysis of the virtues is suggestive, unique or original. But it appears from a critical point of view that the analysis of virtues in Buddhism may be suggestive, however, there is nothing very special about the Buddhistic Ethics either in the individual or social aspect, nothing which is original and unknown to the Vedic and the upanisadic seers. Virtues like friendliness, compassion, joyfulness, non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy, non-possession and a host of other virtues mentioned in the Dhammapada and other Buddhistic works were long ago known at the time of the Mahābhārata.

Again, a comparative study of the ethical doctrines of the Brahmanic, Buddhistic and the Jaina system, notwithstanding their differences, indicates that they all substantially agree on importance of a virtuous life which is based on 'dharma'. These ethical systems expound different virtues the goal of which is the same. In Jaina system, as the author of 'Tatvārthādhigama Sūtra' says, the 'dharma' consists of ten moral branches, e.g., forgiveness (kṣamā), humility (Mārdava), straightforwardness (ārjava), truthfulness (Satya), cleanliness (Sauca), restraint (Saiyama),
penance (tapa), indifference to wealth or possessions and control of sexual passions (brahmacarya). These Jaina modes of 'dharma' substantially agree with the ten 'pāramis' of the Buddhistic Ethics; such as, dāna, shīla, naiṣkarmya, prajñā, vīrya, kṣānti, satya, adhiṣṭhāna, maitrī, and upekṣā. Coming to the Brahmānic system of Ethics, we find the author of the 'Padmapurāṇa' mentioning the following as the 'aṅgaḥ' or parts of dharma. These are: brahmacarya, kṣamā, sāuca, ahimsā, susānti, asteya and many others similar to Jaina or Buddhistic lists of virtues.

The above similarity between the moral virtues of the Jaina, Buddhistic and Brahmānic Ethics points out to non-violence as the fundamental virtue of a good life. All moral virtues, directly or indirectly, are subsumed in the practice of non-violence as the source of all virtues. It is a supreme virtue. All the above systems believe in the plurality of virtues. According to them, virtues are many. The various virtues are the various branches, applications or manifestations of an attitude of non-violence. Non-violence, therefore, could be treated to be the essence of all virtues. Amṛtacandra Suri, in his 'Puruṣārtha Sidhyupaya' shows how the virtues of satya, asteya, brahmacarya, and aparigraha are deducible from and have their explanations and justification in the virtue of non-violence. Non-violence, therefore, could be said to be the supreme virtue by common consent of Brahmānic, Jaina and Buddhistic Ethics.
The ideal of non-violence, as a sure means for good life, is found even in the ethical literature of Mahātma Gandhi Kabir and many saints of Mahārāstra, such as Jñānesvara, Ekanāth and Tukārām. Jñānesvara's analysis of virtues and particularly his analysis of non-violence, has become classical and outstanding in the Hindu ethical literature. Even religions like Buddhism, Christianity, Islām and the Ethics of Zarathustra, regard non-violence as the cardinal principle or the ultimate source of all moral virtues.

When we say that ahimsā is a central concept, of which all other virtues are manifestations, in Hindu Ethics, we do not mean to suggest that it is so to the same extent or in the same sense as it is in Buddhism or in Jainism. Jainism takes non-violence to absurd extreme. Hinduism does not. Hinduism has been more pragmatic or relativistic or utilitarianistic in its treatment of non-violence, as in so many other respects. It accepts non-violence as the ideal, but it is prepared to make compromises in exceptional circumstances or in special contexts. That is why the killing of animals for Vedic sacrifices is not considered contrary to the precept of non-violence. Similarly Kṛṣṇa's advice to Arjuna to fight, is justified on the ground that the latter was a member of the Kṣatriya Varna, whose duty it was to protect Dharma i.e. the rule of Law. If this involved violence, as it naturally did, it was unfortunate but it could not be helped. The preservation of Dharma must
come first. Similarly, when Gāndhiji ordered the killing of the ailing calf in his āśrama, it was not considered an infringement of the rule of non-violence, for the motive in this killing was to relieve the poor calf of its terrible suffering caused by its incurable ailment. But whatever the nature of these exceptions, non-violence as a rule of life has been accepted by all sections of Hinduism.

(e) Virtues according to the Ethics of the Advaita Vedānta: Advaita vedānta is an absolutistic philosophy and the charge made against it is that if everthing is Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, and the world being an appearance, then the distinction between good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice would just be meaningless. If the ultimate goal is beyond the gunas, there would be no incentive for the acquisition of virtues and that moral life would be entirely robbed of its meaning.

In a way the charge is correct. The Brahman, which transcends all dualisms, also transcends the dualism of virtue and vice. But be it carefully noted at the outset that the way to the Beyond is easier to be found through a moral preparation which culminates into spiritualism. Super-moralism is nearer to moralism than to anti-moralism. Sama, dama, uparati, titiksā, samādhāna and śrādaḥ are virtues recognized in Vedānta as indispensable for Brahmavidyā. The world has its roots in Brahman. We have to pass through the world of phenomena to get beyond it. As the pathway to the
noumena lies through the phenomenal, the pathway to perfection lies through the cultivation of virtues in the life of the aspirant. The cultivation of virtues is absolutely necessary for the attainment of the Higher (Gunātīta).

It will be interesting to note how even the Yogic eightfold discipline which comes very close to the Ethics of Vedānta is interpreted by Śaṅkara in a novel manner in his brief but famous work known as 'आध्यात्मिक विद्वान्' (Āddhāyātmik Vaibhava). He has shown well as to how the Yogic virtues themselves shine with the new lustre of devotion and knowledge. Instead of the five restraints in Yoga Ethics, Śaṅkara says that "All is Brahman" is the real restraint. To rivet the attention on Brahman constantly and to feel disgusted with everything else which may distract it is the Niyama. That is the true posture (āsana) in which there goes on uninterruptedly the contemplation on Brahman; there occurs naturally the regulation and even the suspension of breath. This is the real prāṇāyāma and not the one which may cause discomfort. This itself will enable the sādhaka to withdraw his senses from all other objects, except the Brahman, and to accomplish what is known as pratyāhāra. And lastly, it is the meditation on Brahman, the state of being lost in it, becoming one with it, which constitute dharanā, dhyāna and samādhi in the Advaita vedānta.

In brief, virtues have also been considered in detail by ancient Indian philosophers. If we now compare the
cardinal Greek virtues with these in the Hindu lists we find that the virtues of the mind, viz. detachment (asprāhā), compassion (Dayā) and reverence (Srādha) are specially native. We may contrast them with the characteristic Greek virtues, justice and friendship. It is otherwise with the Hindus. Instead of friendliness which is based on strongly defined individuality and worldliness, they recommend compassion (Anukampa) and faith (paralokasrādha). These two are also the characteristic Christian virtues, but according to the Hindus these are to be cultivated with a view to Asprahā i.e. detachment, which is the highest virtue, which is diametrically opposed to the Christian ideal of life.

It is also to be seen that the Hindu virtues are not merely negative, consisting merely in abstaining from vice. These virtues such as ahimsā, asteya etc., also provide for social service, besides self-culture, but for the Hindus it is self-culture which is highest in rank and social service is only a means to self-culture and self-autonomy to be attained by cultivating unworldliness.

The Ethics of Rāmānuja also regards moral preparations as a means to God-realization. Rāmānuja conceives God-realization as the moral ideal which implies ascription of certain qualities to Him. This is very similar to the Christian doctrine of imitatio christi. On this ideal the virtues that we must practise and the qualities that we
must acquire become quite clear. For this, according to Rāmānuja, requires the knowledge of the Vedānta. To the moral aspirant, the Vedānta reveals that real knowledge is not verbal knowledge of the scriptures. Real knowledge is a steady, constant remembrance of God (dhrūva smṛti).

Intense remembrance of God, or devotion (bhakti) ultimately matures into immediate knowledge (darsāna or sākṣātkāra) of God. We should remember that this cannot be attained simply by human efforts. Like Christianity, Rāmānuja also believes that God, being pleased by devotion helps the devotee to attain perfect knowledge.

At the same time, Rāmānuja does not deny the importance of the virtues on the social level. Devotion is the highest virtue, and this religious attitude is reflected on a social or empirical level. On a social level, the devotee must give knowledge to the ignorant (jñānam ajñānam), must forgive the guilty (Kṣamā Sāparādhanam), must help the weak to help their moral failure (śakti aśaktānām), must show kindness to the distressed (krpa dukkhinām), tenderness to the imperfect and deficient (Vātsalyam sadoṣānām), humility to the arrogant or uncivil (Śīlam mandānām), straightforwardness to the crooked (ārjavam kutīlanām), sympathy to the wicked in heart (sauhārdyam dustarhudayanām) and gentleness to the shy and timid (mārdavam vislesabhirūnām).

It is needless to add that in this scheme, like that
of the Bhagavadgītā, the incentive to cultivate the above virtues comes from the sentiment of love for the God. The Christian virtues of faith and hope are implied in the Ethics of Rāmānuja, though not specifically mentioned.

(iv) Analysis of Virtues in Bhagavadgītā

(a) Analysis and Classification of Virtues according to Ethics of the Bhagavadgītā: Analysis of virtues into this last kind would lead us understanding the relation between Ethics and spiritualism and to a doubt as to the validity of spiritualism as anti-moral and as to the transcendence of virtues and vices. This analysis will also raise a doubt: the worth of virtues in spiritualism and so on. In this section an attempt has been made to study the theory of virtues in the Bhagavadgītā, as it forms a very important contribution to the ethical status and worth of virtues in spiritualism.

The discussion of moral virtues is spread over various chapters of the Bhagavadgītā, particularly four.

(i) In the twelfth chapter we have a series of verses beginning with:

अद्वेष्टा सर्वं भूतानाम् .......... (१२/१३)

in which God-devotion is regarded as the supreme virtue.

If we read verses "यो मद्विरलं स मे प्रियं......(१२/१६)" भक्तिमन्त्र स मे प्रियं...... (१२/१६), 'भक्तव्यति सतीव मे प्रियं..... (१२/२०)"
from the 12th chapter we will see that all moral virtues arise from the one central virtue of God-devotion.

(ii) In the 13th chapter we have "अमान्तितं..... (7-11)" where the virtues are regarded as constituting knowledge.

(iii) In the 16th chapter we have "अभवं..... आत्मचित्तं" where we have a full account of Divine heritage. And (iv) finally in the 18th chapter we have "शामो रमस्तपरद्विभावयम्" (16/42) where we have a catalogue of moral virtues.

The following is the analysis of virtues according to the Bhagavadgītā based on the above verses.

According to the Bhagavadgītā, virtues could be classified into this-worldly and other-worldly. Earlier we have seen Aristotelian classification of virtues into Moral and Intellectual; and we had also said that the moral virtues could be further classified into self-regarding and other-regarding springs of actions. In this section, we may include this-worldly virtues under self-regarding and other-regarding virtues. If we maintain that there are some forms of conduct which are conducive to the moral development of an individual and society, in this world, we can safely argue with the same logic that there are some qualities or traits of character which do not belong to any of the above classes. These are the qualities the source of which is not 'individual consciousness' nor 'social consciousness' but rather 'self-consciousness'. Man is not
merely body and mind, but spirit as well. Secular virtues are self-regarding and/or other-regarding, but religious virtues are 'God-regarding'. God is said to be the highest object of love, and is realized through devotion (Bhakti), according to Jñāneśvara. The devotee must possess unpretentiousness, straightforwardness, devotion, purity, self-control, dispassion and unegoism; similarly celibacy, penance, introversion, study of philosophy, meditation on God, divine optimism, vision of God's omnipresence and so on are the cardinal religious virtues according to the Ethics of the Bhagavadgītā. The characteristics of the true devotee well describe the religious virtues. According to the Bhagavadgītā, Devotion is the highest religious virtue, and all other virtues, mentioned above, are subservient to it. It is the source of all religious virtues.

**Ethics and Spiritualism**:- The distinction between secular and religious virtues makes ethics enter into spiritualism. Ethics must begin on a secular or on an empirical level, but it should culminate into spiritualism. Ethics is transformed into spiritualism. In the history of Western Ethics, St. Augustine was the first to recognize the great Christian truth that it is man's relation to God that gives cohesion and unity to moral life. It is a metaphysical doctrine of the substantial unity of the soul. Faith, hope and charity, together with the Platonic virtues, well co-ordinate the Christian character. This is not merely
an addition to the cardinal virtues of the Greek thinkers, but were so fused and incorporated with them as to create spiritual disposition which penetrates the total personality of man. Similarly Kant and Bradley advocated that Ethics by its very nature goes beyond itself. Ethics must have a metaphysical basis. In the spiritual life alone, the moral conflicts are dissolved. According to Śrī Aurobindo, in the ultimate truth-consciousness, there is a freedom from the duality of good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice and so on. This is the spiritual experience which is not a-moral but supra-moral.

But this transcendental experience, by no means disproves the indispensability of virtues. In the evolution of man, every stage has its own importance in the whole process towards perfection. Secular virtues, because they are this-worldly, are not to be treated as unnecessary but rather lower in character. The higher stages do not negate the lower, but integrate with them, while transcending them.

**Virtue and Spiritualism** :- From the spiritual point of view, virtues are treated as means to an end, rather than as end in themselves. Virtues are having an instrumental value, rather than an intrinsic value. They are 'preyas' and not 'sreyas'. The ethical treatises of various saints, Indian and Western, were spiritually oriented, and the reference to virtues was emphasised
indirectly. Practice of virtues was advocated as a right method for God-realization or the attainment of Divine happiness.

According to Hinduism and Christianity, the ethical life in this world is regarded as a necessary preparation for the attainment of Divine happiness. The constant practice of virtues on every single occasion was regarded by Hinduism and Christianity as the precondition of fellowship with God. The Buddhistic concept of 'Pañcāśheel' leads to Nirvāṇa, the Yamas and the Niyamas morally qualify an aspirant for spiritualism; similarly, even the study of the Vedānta requires a moral preparation (sama, dama etc.). Hence, "secular well-being is fundamental to spiritual and religious well-being. If material well-being is not conducive to spiritual well-being, then the former is suicidal to human life as a whole". There is no antagonism between the secular and the religious virtues.

Nature of Virtue:— According to spiritualism, virtue is a matter of spiritual excellence. All virtues are divinely oriented. Virtues are those qualities which are conducive to spiritual realization and vices are those which hinder spiritualism. The virtues of the 'Sthitaprajña' (Gītā, Chap. 2), virtues of the devotee (Gītā, Chap. 9, 12), the virtues of the Jñāni (Gītā, Chap. 13), the virtues of the Divine heritage (Gītā, Chap. 16), are the virtues which are conducive to self-realization.
Every virtue in its imperfect form is a means to spiritual experience, and becomes perfect in spiritual realization. Hence, in spiritualism, virtues are sometimes treated as the qualities of the devotee and sometimes the qualities of the liberated self. The former are contained in the latter. This is based on the view that 'End is contained in the means'.

Origin of Vices according to Bhagavadgītā: According to Advaita Vedānta and Bhagavadgītā, desire and anger (Kāma and Krodha) are the roots of vices. The great enemies of man are desire, cravings, attachment, and aversion. Arjuna asks Śrī 'Kṛṣṇa' "but by what is a man compelled to commit sin, as if by force, even against his will, O, Vārṣṇeya (Śrī-Kṛṣṇa)?" In answer to this the author of the Bhagavadgītā says, "This is craving, this is wrath, born of the mode of passion, all devouring and most sinful know this to be enemy here". All these enemies could be controlled by wisdom, the knowledge of the 'self'. Viveka (discrimination), Vairāgya (non-attachment) and Abhyāsa (repetition or practice) help us to control the inner enemies of man and give real knowledge of the 'self' (Ātmajñāna). Humility, integrity, non-violence, patience, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control, indifference to the objects of the world, constant single-mindedness of purpose and devotion to God, are the moral qualities of a man of God-realization. The
knowledge and devotion to these virtues lead to spiritual experience.

Evil doers cannot attain to the supreme, for their mind and will are not instruments of the spirit but of the ego. They do not control their impulse, but their impulses overpower them. They are a prey to the rajas and tamas. Sattva should control them. Hence, to go beyond the three gunas, we have to attain first the rule of Sattva. We have to become ethical, before we can become spiritual. This is the stage of gunatita where one crosses the dualities and act in the light and strength of the spirit in us. We do not act then to gain any personal interest or avoid personal suffering but only as the instrument of the Divine. This is the substance of the state of evil-doers described in the Bhagavadgita. 

The pathway to self-realization consists of the removal of vices, and corresponding stabilization of virtues. The relation between virtues and vices is that of inverse ratio. Virtues increase as the vices decrease and vice versa. Devotion is the source of all the religious virtues. According to Gurudev R. D. Ranade, all the other virtues are the effects of devotion which is the source of all religious virtues.

Devotion, then, is the cardinal virtue. The world around us is full of suffering, pains, conflicts, crisis
and evils. In this world, sins are the realities; anxieties and fears are the common experiences. In such a world, as described above, man aspires for peace and happiness, and therefore requires a mental equipment to eradicate evils for the experience of the Divine happiness. This inner peace or happiness can be attained by devotion to God, and hence devotion gets prime importance in man's religious quest.

Man's life has some meaning and purpose. Man is a goal seeking animal. According to Bhagavadgītā God-realization could be the ideal of human life. God created man in order that the latter may become God. Every man has a spiritual instinct. Man is not satisfied with what is 'Preyas'. He aspires for 'Sreyas'. He aspires for that which is complete, unlimited, unconditional, and permanent happiness. And this 'happiness' is concretised through God-realization. True devotion transforms the total life of man. Even the most evil man, if he takes recourse to devotion, is transformed and gets permanent peace. "Even if a man with vile conduct worships me with undistracted devotion, he must be reckoned as righteous for he has rightly resolved."¹⁷ There must be a right resolution. If one repents honestly after one commits the sins, one is freed from it; if he resolves that he will never commit the sin again, he becomes purified. The evils of the past can be washed away only by turning to God with undivided heart.
One must really repent in mind, reflect over the misdeeds committed and practise austerity and penitence.

The message of the Bhagavadgītā that true devotee never perishes should not be misinterpreted. The message in the verse does not mean that there is an easy escape from the consequence of our sins. The sinner must change his heart, he must feel sorry for the past sins and have a firm decision to prevent repetition of sins in the future. When this firm decision is adapted, the transformation of the lower self into the higher self is steadily effected. The lower self must give up its ego and open itself to the Divine; the Divine takes up the burden and lifts the soul into the spiritual plane. Just as a piece of charcoal loses its blackness only when fire penetrates it, similarly a sinful man becomes a soul of righteousness through 'surrender' to God, and he hence never perishes.

True devotion is beyond all the distinctions of caste, colour and creed of the devotee. What matters, says Jñāneśvara, is the sincere feeling of devotion and love for God. One who surrenders himself to Him singularly and without personal reservations, becomes one with Him, as particles of salt in the ocean. The real devotee of His will never perish. In order to experience the power of devotion, purity and dedication are necessary. So long as the mind is not pure, or ego is not removed, power of devotion cannot be known, and God-realization would not be
possible. "Let a man lift himself; let him not degrade himself; for the self alone is the friend of the Self and the Self alone is the enemy of the self." In order that the devotee may lead towards God, Jñāneśvara prescribes a long list of virtues under the name of Divine heritage, e.g. the practice of "fearlessness, purity, fixity of knowledge, charity, self-restraint, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, control of one's limbs and body, straightforwardness, truth, non-anger, tranquillity, compassion, uncovetousness, softness, bashfulness, spiritual lustre, courage, love towards all and absence of pride; on the contrary, he denounces the practice of certain qualities that go to form the demonic heritage i.e. hypocrisy, pride, arrogance, anger, harshness and ignorance etc.

In spiritual experience, every virtue is instrumentally valuable for the removal of ego and passions, the root of all the vices, and the chief obstacles in the path of Divine happiness.

Jñāneśvara's analysis of virtues has become classical in the history of ethical literature of India and has a universal appeal. He classifies virtues, mainly into four kinds:

(i) Negative virtues
(ii) Individual virtues
(iii) Social virtues
(iv) Spiritual virtues.
Even this classification of virtues appears to be invalid because it suffers from the fallacies of too wide and too narrow definitions of virtues mentioned in this classification.

(1) **Negative virtues** :- These are the virtues, in practising which, we are asked to deviate from some qualities of character; e.g. humility (aṃāṇītva), fearlessness (abhaya), absence of pride (adambhitva), freedom from anger (akrodhā), freedom from malice (adroha), aversion to fault finding (apaśūnya), non-attachment (anāśakti), absence of fickleness (aśāpala), freedom from covetousness (alolupatva), forgiveness (kṣama), and so on. Out of this, humility, absence of pride and forgiveness psychologically help to remove man's ego (ahāmākāra); and non-attachment, freedom from covetousness and absence of fickleness are the qualities which are conducive to the control of the passions (vāsānās).

(2) **Individual virtues** :- Stability, purity (Sucitā), renunciation (Vairāgyam), self-control (dama), truth (satya), tranquillity (Śanti), vigour (teja), austerity (tapa), and fortitude (dhrīti) are some of the important self-regarding virtues under spiritualism.

Jñāneśvara's analysis of virtues has become classical and outstanding in the Ethics of the saints of Mahrāstrā. Jñāneśvara analyses these virtues on a purely psychological level; e.g. Ātmavinigraha must culminate into meditation.
(dhyāna), an attitude of renunciation requires severe practice of vows (vratas), senses cannot be controlled without an attitude of Vairāgya, and real ṣānti cannot be attained without an experience of non-dualism. All these, therefore, are psychologically important virtues for Divine Happiness.

(3) Other-regarding virtues: Non-violence (Ahimsā), uprightness (ārjavam), charity (dānam), compassion to living beings (dayā bhūteṣu), gentleness (mārdavam), friendliness (maitrī), all these are some of the other-regarding virtues. The ultimate result of these virtues is to lead the aspirant towards an attitude of universal oneness (Ātmavatsarva bhūteṣu).

(4) God-regarding virtues: The recognition that the world is full of sorrows and sufferings, with the study of philosophy and scriptures (ananyabhakti), constitutes one of the main God-regarding virtues.

Even God-regarding virtues also have a psychological basis. An attitude of renunciation cannot be developed without recognizing the world being full of sorrows and sufferings, and that the rise of the power of discrimination cannot be possible without 'Knowledge of the self' and study of scripture, and hence their psychological significance and importance in moral preparations for spiritual experience.
Under God-regarding virtues, devotion (bhakti) is the crown of all religious and spiritual virtues. Bhakti is manifested in various forms; such as, kindness (Karunā), oneness of mind (samattva), purity (śucitā), non-violence (ahimsā), sense-control (indriya-nigraha), non-attachment (anāsakti), fearlessness (abhayam), tranquillity (śānti), vigour (teja) and so on. In brief, according to secular Ethics, those actions are virtuous which promote well-being of man in this very world. Secular Ethics, in one form or the other, emphasizes primarily hedonistic, utilitarianistic, pragmatic, rationalistic, or humanistic, and democratic approaches towards Ethics. All these approaches are valuable towards the ethical ideal. Co-operativeness, tolerance, openmindedness, reliability and a willingness to accept responsibility are some of the secular virtues which are essentially needed in our interdependent world, where our moral health and welfare frequently depend upon the actions of others. Similarly, self-control, courage, wisdom, justice, brotherly love and other virtues like these are as valuable as ever.

But a mere secular justification of Ethics may not make man truly moral. Man's moral life, if restricted to the utilitarian, the secular or the social considerations alone cannot create good life for man on earth. The higher is the spiritual, which is not anti-moral, the more it tends to supra-moral. Morality must ultimately be dissolved
into a kind of spiritual experience. The truly good man is the religious man who is profoundly moral, and yet much more than moral in the secular sense. The social utility of his conduct follows automatically from his leading a life of disembodied spirit. Man is not merely a social or a rational animal. Besides body and mind, he has a spirit as well, which transcends the five kosas of his soul. In this, intuition appears to be a legitimate method of knowledge where ordinary Empirico-rational method fails.

Hence, according to spiritualism, those qualities are virtuous which make self-realization possible, and those which cannot, are to be regarded as vices. Hence, the importance of the concepts of the God-like and the Demonic mind of the Bhagavadgītā. The God-like virtues, if fully developed lead one towards perfection, the ideal of human life, in which morality culminates into super-morality. It is a different kind of serene experience from the moral experience tossed between good and evil, right and wrong, better and worse, virtue and vice. Inner peace does not come to one who cannot transcend the sphere of a dualist morality. In the sixteenth chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā we have a moral account of the Divine heritage.

(b) Does the Ultimate Goal Transcend Virtues? :- It is believed that all actions of men are either good, bad or a mixture of good and bad. But psychologically it appears
that a man's life is a mixture of virtues and vices. The difference is only of degree, and not of kind.

However, actions which the perfect yogins perform are neither good nor bad, for they have transcended the three gunās. This is the yogic view which is due to the Sāmkhya influence according to which Prakṛti is tawny, white and black, and Puruṣa is beyond these three; and it is an anticipation of the Vedāntic view that the liberated man is not affected by any of the three types of Karmas, viz., the Saṃcīta, the Prārabdha, and the Kriyamāṇa. This is the stage of Gunātīta in which all the dualities of life such as eternal and non-eternal, good and bad, true and false, Dharma and Adharma, virtue and vice, are transcended. Virtues and vices are real on the empirical plane; however, from the empirical point of view, the knowledge and the practice of virtue is essential. But this is the lower Ethics which ought to be transcended. From the Vedāntic point of view, Brahman alone is real, and all else is an illusion.

Tukāram beautifully describes such a state of ethical perfection culminating in spiritualism, where virtues are expressed by the devotee spontaneously. The devotee prior to realization has to make efforts for the deliberate acquisition of virtues. After self-realization, virtues are expressed spontaneously, as if their expression becomes the devotee's second nature.
What is the nature of this highest moral ideal worth realizing by man? According to the Bhagavadgītā, the answer to this is found in its famous doctrine of sthitaprajña. In the history of Greek and Indian Philosophy we find that the sage of the Stoics is described by ἀπαθία, the sage of the Epicureans by ἀταραξία and the sage of the Bhagavadgītā by sthitaprajña. These are all on the same level. These stand for human ideals. The ideal of 'sthitaprajña' has various characteristics as is evident from the Bhagavadgītā; such as psychological, ethical, social and mystical.  

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