

## Purshartha in 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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### Abstract

The idea of Purusharthas has played a very vital role in the mythological history of Indian thought. Purusharthas are applicable to both men and women equally. There are four Purusharthas Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Every individual is expected to achieve these Purusharthas with detachment, without any expectation in the human life. The purpose of Purusharthas is to ensure that people would not neglect their obligatory means duties in their deluded state by becoming obsessed with particular desires that may lead to moral and social decadence and destruction of family values. Dharma and moksha are the one that man ought to seek while Artha and Kama are the one that man is naturally inclined to seek Purusharthas. The Indian expression of right activities is dharma is a means to the attainment of certain ends. This means that, ends like Artha and Kama should be acquired through righteousness, honesty and straightforwardness. In all stages of a man's life either as a student or as a householder, as a forest dweller or an ascetic, dharma has to be accepted as paramount. To understand our goals of life we should not look outside, as to where the world is going, but should rather look within, as to what do I really aspire & want. However with all these things also he is not seen to be happy and contented. Whereby I feel if this ancient wisdom can be used and garbed in modern ways it can definitely help us to find **PEACE OF MIND** which is the birth right of every human being.

**KEYWORDS:** Aham Brahma Asmi , Tat Tvam Asi , Sadhana , Sadhya, Paramarthik Satya

### INTRODUCTION:

Purusharthas means that for which a person strives for. The idea of Purusharthas that is the four aims of life was developed gradually and more fully in the post Vedic Dharmshastras of Smritis. It implies our goals of life. It is extremely important that our goals of life should be very clear. In all these different ways, the *Vedas* have served to promote the well-being of mankind. The *Vedas* were useful for achieving mundane and heavenly pleasures and overcoming pain and giving encouragement and support in the pursuit of such objectives. Their main concern was with the first three *Purusharthas--Dharma, Artha and Kama*. *Moksha* (spiritual liberation) could be attained only through *jnana* (as distinct from rituals and *Yajnas* performed with *Vedic mantras*). The higher wisdom can be won, not through rituals, wealth, but only through sacrifice or renunciation.

According to the Hindu Shastra, Purusharthas is the basis of Human life and it is to be regarded as basis on which the life of man rotates. Just as before starting a journey we should be very clear about our destination, so also before starting any worldly or spiritual effort, we should very clear as to what we are trying to achieve, what is our goal. For instance, the scriptures also before talking about the various sadhana (the means), first tell us about the sadhya (the end). As it is the lack of knowledge of goal which results in absence of enthusiasm to take up any sadhana, so it is very important to know our goals of life that is our Purusharthas.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- ❖ To study about Pursharthas.
- ❖ To collect detail information about Pursharthas.
- ❖ To explain correlation between Pursharthas.
- ❖ To explain importance of Pursharthas in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **METHODOLOGY:**

The present research is descriptive research based on secondary data collected from the Hindu religious books (Bhagavatgeeta, Ramayana), Jain religious text, Buddhist religious text, research studies, government agencies and government departments, international agencies, social workers, nongovernmental organizations etc.

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY:**

The present study deals with accountability of the Purshartha in promoting development of human life.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

The present research paper will help common people, students, teachers, politicians, decision makers, social workers, educationalist and non-governmental organizations in understanding the role of Pursharthas in promoting social change and social progress...

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:**

The study purely based on the secondary data and is restricted to the opinions and views of writers. Social workers, educationalist and nongovernmental organizations of India.

### **TYPES OF PURSHARTHA:**

- A. **Dharma:** actions based on harmonious and virtuous purpose; doing what you are born to do.
- B. **Artha:** acquiring wealth and resources, the means to attain your purpose and live a full life.
- C. **Kama:** gratification of desires; the pleasure of attaining your purpose and fulfilling your dharma.
- D. **Moksha:** final emancipation; the ability to let go (of something, e.g. a purpose once completed).

**DHARMA: RIGHTEOUSNESS & DUTY :**Dharma means that which upholds this entire creation. The word Dharma is derived from the Sanskrit root “dhri” which means to hold or to preserve. Hence the social implication of Dharma as a principle to maintain the stability of the society is brought out in various classical Hindu texts. Dharma is for the welfare of mankind. It is a divine law that is inherent and invisible but responsible for all existence. It exists in all places, in all aspects. It is considered to be the first cardinal because it is at the root of everything. It preserves all that is created by the God. It is surely that principle which is capable of preserving the universe. Hence, Hindu view of dharma is that it is the force of power which protects man from all kinds of dangers.

**ARTHA:WEALTH :**In one of the old Sanskrit lexicons, ‘artha’ is said to mean-meaning, money, a thing, and possessions. Artha also means the attainment of riches and worldly prosperity, advantage, profit and wealth. A person may have the intention to uphold the dharma, but he has no money he would not be able to perform his duties towards dharma.Artha, is a powerful urge in human nature. Acquisition of means for the material well-being, therefore, is a legitimate social and moral purpose. However, if the urge to seek money or possessions is not restricted then it will lead to self-indulgence or greed and will bar the way to highest good i.e., moksha. Today everyone

is running after money. People need money to meet their basic necessities, for higher education, for luxuries of life, for name, fame, etc. Hinduism recognizes the importance of material wealth for the overall happiness and well-being of an individual.

**KAMA: PLEASURE:** According to the Kama sutra, "Kama is the enjoyment of the appropriate objects by the five senses of hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting and smelling, assisted by the mind together with the soul. The urge to enjoy pleasures and satisfy desires, is the most powerful and as an incentive to individual progress, most effective." As Manu regarded Kama as desire, one can say, it is a desire for pleasure. It can be sensuous pleasure, mental pleasure getting through satisfaction of the work, urge for sexual pleasure, etc. It is said, "All that man does is inspired by kama." Everyone is seeking that, which gives them pleasure and luxuries of life. Nobody wants to stay at the bottom level. People feel money is the important factor in the attainment of the pleasures of life by fulfilling our desires. **So one may put artha as a means to kama as an end.**

**MOKSHA: LIBERATION, FREEDOM :** It is release or rid of from the cycle of birth and death is the ultimate goal of Hindu religious life. It is known as mukti by yogis. Nirvana by Buddhist and in Christianity moksha is the salvation. It is highest end of life, attainment by the individual himself with the help and guidance dharma. In Bhagavad-Gita, moksha is mentioned as the supreme tranquillity and the highest bliss. It is delight in the self, contentment with the self, self-satisfaction and self-fulfilment. Moksha as the last end signifies that its attainment is impossible without first fulfilling the obligations of the other three. It is a state of non-action. It is not that on death moksha is attained. Being the ultimate value of man's social existence, the purushartha of moksha is an end in itself. Beyond that, man has nothing to attain. It is the stage where man's cravings cease and along with that ceases the need for attainment and fulfilment. It is realization and living of the truth namely Aham Brahama Asmi (I am Brahman or I am the infinite reality means the supreme self) and Tat Tvam Asi (you are that or you are that means the self). In other words it is walking up of human consciousness at the highest level of reality i.e., Paramarthiksatya (absolute truth or absolute reality).

The liberated person neither acts nor causes others to act. He may work for the good of humanity without moral obligation. But he has no duties to perform. It is total destruction of egoism. We can call moksha as a sublime goal. It can be known through mystical experience.

Many saints like Tukaram, Kabir have talked about it and ultimately we all have to aim at it and only then we will be able to come out of the cycle of birth and death.

#### **PURUSHARTHA IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY:**

We know that a man, like other living beings, act instinctively; but he can also do so deliberately. This means he can consciously set before himself ends, and work for them. It is this conscious pursuit that transforms them into Purusharthas. Thus even the ends which man shares with other animal, like food and rest, may become Purusharthas provided they are sought knowingly. We may thus define a Purushartha as an end which is consciously sought to be accomplished either for its own sake or for the sake of utilizing it as a means to the accomplishment of further end or goal.

The word 'purushartha' consists of two words, viz, 'purusa' meaning person and 'artha' meaning aim or end. Hence, as defined earlier, Purushartha means aim or goal of human life.

Dharma and moksha are the one that man ought to seek but ordinarily does not; while Artha and Kama are the one that man is naturally inclined to seek. Human life without

purpose would be meaningless. One needs to have an end or purpose in life towards which our actions can be directed. Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha are the aims of human life which man ought to strive for attaining it throughout his life. Till man lives or the species of human beings is alive, Purusharthas are going to add meaning to our life. It was there earlier; it is sought today, and is going to be there till man lives. The order in which these Purusharthas are given in different texts of Indian Philosophy may vary. A person may have the intention to uphold the Dharma, but he has no money he would not be able to perform his duties towards Dharma. It is given in one of the Pali text, that "one who enjoys his wealth and does meritorious deeds with it, experiences pleasure and happiness". It has therefore to be coupled with charity, also to Kautilya "wealth and wealth alone is important in as much as charity and desire depend on wealth for their realization." Artha helps in the attainment of Kama

#### **IMPORTANCE OF PURSHARTHAS:**

- ❖ The Indian expression of right activities is dharma.
- ❖ In Mahabharata it is mentioned as an ethical concept, defined as that which is right and good. Dharma is stated as that which upholds the society. Dharma is duty. It is the higher good to achieve the highest i.e., moksha.
- ❖ In Mimamsa, dharma is a means to the attainment of certain ends. This means that, ends like Artha and Kama should be acquired through righteousness, honesty and straight forwardness.
- ❖ In all stages of a man's life either as a student or as a householder, as a forest dweller or an ascetic, dharma has to be accepted as paramount. An IAS officer has got lots of riches, money and pleasures in his life, but these are to be acquired by doing his duty with sincerity and honesty, and not with bribery, corruption or other mal-practices; only then it will add meaning to his life, otherwise Artha and Kama without Dharma would be meaningless. Teacher also get moksha means ultimate end of the purushartha through following proper Dharma, Artha and Kama.
- ❖ Dharma is the most important urge and should be developed to regulate both Artha and kama. If dharma is the common regulator, moksha or liberation, is the common aim, though difficult to attain.
- ❖ Dharma is always held higher than Artha and Kama. Infact, Dharma is that which helps man to fulfill the obligations of Artha and kama directed to the ultimate end of Moksha.
- ❖ In the attainment of Moksha only Dharma can help, provided it has been cultivated through rather and Kama.
- ❖ If Artha is higher as social aim, social life will be dominated by violence and universal corruption, as we see in modern times.
- ❖ If Kama is pre-dominant aim of life, it will lead to a social system based on pleasure. Moral decay and disintegration will follow. In either of the case moral vacuum will follow and people would have little chance to pursue the path of the highest good.
- ❖ The conception of society where people are pursuing rather and kama within the confines of dharma and thus preparing themselves for the final beatitude is at the basis of the doctrine of the purusharthas. In the 21st century youngsters are seen to run after negative, false ideals. They are observed to find solace in extreme materialism, drugs, unwarranted sex and body-mind concerning lifestyles.

Whereby I feel if this ancient wisdom can be used and garbed in modern ways it can definitely help us to find PEACE OF MIND which is the birth right of every human being. Purusharthas means that for which a person strives for. It implies our goals of life. It is extremely important that our goals of life should be very clear. Just as before starting a journey we should be very clear about our destination, so also before starting any worldly or spiritual effort, we should very clear as to what we are trying to achieve, what is our goal.

**DHARMA in 21<sup>st</sup> Century ( CONSCIENTIOUS LIVING):** The word Dharma means duty, religion, law, etc. But here it means something akin to duty-duty towards oneself, duty towards society, and duty towards God. Observance of Dharma enables him an outcaste, sinner etc. Man is a social being, he lives in group, and every person has to attain his or her purusharthas of Artha & Kama. This being the case it is necessary to frame some ground rules in the spirit of **live & let live** (apandit Jawaharlal Nehru our former prime minister accepted this as one of the principal of Panchasheela) that's the spirit behind Dharma. It makes us sensitive to others and makes us care for others. It helps us to expand our family and brings about a holistic vision. The moment we see the whole world as one great whole, we also become sensitive to a supreme intelligence, who has not only created this beautiful world & cosmos, but is also running the show. As no effect is possible without a cause, we infer the existence of a creator when we see this beautiful creation. If creation is so beautiful, how will the creator be? Dharma thus wakes us up to the existence of God. Dharma does not make us afraid of God, but rather shows that he is someone who deserves our greatest love & reverence. We are his creation, act as per his dictates, will live as long as he likes and will leave when he so wishes. We cannot influence his wishes but should know his ways & means and live accordingly, in a spirit of surrender & love.

The basic spirit of science is to conquer nature while dharma motivates us to respect it and live in tune with it. Science, even though says that there can be no effect without a cause yet does not accept any intelligent cause of the creation. They prefer to say it was all an accident, a big bang that started this whole process. Dharma on the other hand says that the creation is so orderly, beautiful & purposeful that we cannot in our wildest dreams think that this is all a product of an accident. We are simple minded people, who on seeing a creation believe in the presence of a creator, and plan out our lives accordingly by keeping him into account, always. We look upon the whole creation as a great, grand orchestra which is already presenting a beautiful music, we have just joined the orchestra and should be sensitive to the harmony and tune ourselves to it. Just as only that person can enjoy the music who becomes sensitive to it, so also only that person can enjoy the holistic living who sees a basic harmony & order around.

The benefits of turning our attention on God, being sensitive to his ways & means, the order & harmony etc. are so great that even if God was not there we would have loved to invent him. But as he is very much there so the question also does not arise. When we accept the existence of someone who is an embodiment of knowledge, power, love, compassion & holistic vision, then anyone who loves & reveres such a being will not only be free from various self-imposed problems, but will also start being an embodiment of all that God represents. The train is already moving we unload ourselves and live life fully, without worries. **Acceptance of God is the essence of Dharma.** This not only helps us become a better person here but also helps us to attain our Artha & Kama in a better way too. Not only this but acceptance of God prepares us for our real goal of life, called Moksha.

**ARTHA in 21<sup>st</sup> Century (SEEKING SECURITY):** Remember discovering security is our main objective and as money plays an important part to play here lets recognize it as our second Purushartha, called Artha. *Artha means wealth. Hinduism advocates the acquisition of wealth for wealth's sake, Purushartha is no apporove the acquisition of wealth through dishonest methods.* The first & foremost thing which everyone is seeking is security. Every person appears to be basically insecure, and that is not a comfortable feeling. Money is the most important worldly resource to provide us some security, so that's what people want - desperately. We can't think of life without money. If we were not so insecure then there would not have been any thoughtless desperation. It would be just one important thing for which necessary intelligent efforts are called for. Money is not only a means to some security, but it is also a means for getting enjoyments, comforts of life. Money plays a very important role in life but is never a complete answer to the problem of providing complete security. Nevertheless, every person must be taught the art of acquiring money and bring about a sense of freedom & independence.

**The most intelligent way to acquire money is to discover a way by which money runs after you and not vice versa.**

- ❖ For this it is extremely necessary to specialize in a particular field which is compatible to your nature & capacities, and make that **specialization a means to serve the society.**
- ❖ If you really love your work, if you are a specialist in your field, if you have an attitude that through your work you contribute to the society in some positive way, then rest assured money will follow you.
- ❖ In & through this pursuit it is extremely important to remember that people with lots of money do solve some of their initial problems, but discover new avenues of insecurities, and one of them is how to protect this hard earned money itself.
- ❖ Don't become complacent after acquiring some wealth, because the very reason for which you have got all this itself is yet to be really achieved.

While striving to get more & more money always ask this question to yourself - Am I fully secure now? Never be overwhelmed by some achievements so as to forget your own real aspiration. Keep striving & inquiring till you become really secure within. However, to begin with do discover ways & means to acquire necessary wealth.

**KARMA in 21<sup>st</sup> century ( THE ART OF ENJOYING PLEASURES):** Having acquired some money, having got some security the next step for everyone is to use this money for your comforts, enjoyments & fulfilling your duties, desires & responsibilities. That which we want next is the experience of fulfilment, joy & pleasure. As various sensual enjoyments are seen to provide that experience we go for them. So fulfilment of our desires is the third Purusharthas – called Kama. Let's remember that we do not acquire or enjoy the objects for objects sake but for the sake of a satisfying wonderful experience. The moment an object starts giving us the opposite we change our paths. So even though we should & do realize that various objects are means to some end, and not the very end itself, still we should learn the finer secrets of making the best of our enjoyments & experiences. Our full availability is the secret of making the best of all our enjoyments. A person whose mind is free from all worries, hankerings and egoistic problems alone is available for experiences. Necessary training is required for bringing about such a mental disposition. Pleasure we can get through different ways such as, meditation, yoga and hard work.

**MOKSHA in 21<sup>st</sup> century (FREEDOM FROM ALL LIMITATIONS):** Until now we have seen that every person wants security & happiness, and thus should learn the

secrets of Artha& Kama, which are the means to acquire relative security & pleasure here in this life. This journey should be a very conscientious one too, we should be sensitive to others and thereafter live our lives. Now, presuming that there is a person who has learned the art of acquiring wealth, enjoys the various pleasures nicely, and also cares for his brethren around, what more does one want. He appears to be an ideal person, what bondage does that person have.

Real security within will be revealed only when the very desire to get security becomes redundant. So also the dawn of real happiness will be inferred only when there are no self-centred desires any more. Not that such a person will be averse to prosperity , but is not averse to absence of these too. Motivations at such levels disappear, such a person is at home everywhere. Such a state of existence alone is real freedom, that's liberation. Liberation is freedom from a sense of lack, a sense of insecurity & fear. This is possible when a person discovers that he or she is free from all limitations of time & space, that one is really the transcendental reality itself. The taking of ourselves as a limited being is an erroneous conclusion of our mind. This is not true. If there is one basic reality in the world then that reality should be the basic essence of all. That is what the Upanishads are thundering - you are that. Turning our minds from all other preoccupations and starting a process of deep introspection to realize our basic essence is what Moksha is all about. It is not turning away from life all together, but till you discover your true Self. Having known your true being live like a truly healthy man, this is how all avatars and saints lived. A life that leaves your footprints even on the sand of time. It is real Moksha.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The scriptures do not ask us to blindly follow someone but only help us conduct this inquiry. This is called the inquiry into Purusharthas of life. The Four Aims of Life is a simple model that addresses the totality of your human experience. It describes the steps required to find, actualize and enjoy your true purpose, your dharma, and once it is completed, to be able to let go of that purpose so that you can find and complete another purpose. In the process you fill your life with things that give you and others meaning.

All human beings require all four of these aims if they are to establish a stable life that allows them to achieve their goals. Unfortunately modern society is focused on artha and Kama (wealth and physical pleasure) in the most materialistic sense. This means that many people do not give enough time to dharma and moksha (their purpose and their ability to let go).

They may say that they are modern educated people and do not blindly follow anyone, but this is what they are doing, blindly following others, for the simple reason that they themselves are not clear as to what do they really want. They join some rat race and in the end realize that they have been on a meaningless trip, by then it is too late. So let's pause and try to know what is it that which I really want, what is that attaining which I will certainly quench my thirst. Let's look within, introspect & discover. The knowledge of self starts with such fundamental questions. All religious text stated that you will get Pursharthas, when you follow right belief, right action and right time.

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