

“DAYA KRISHNA’S UNDERSTANDING OF ‘PURUṢĀRTHA’ AS A MYTH”

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Abstract

Puruṣārtha literally means as “object of human pursuit”. It is a key concept in Hinduism, and refers to the four proper goals or aims of a human life. The four Puruṣārthas are Dharma (righteousness, moral values), Artha (prosperity, economic values), Kāma (pleasure, love, psychological values) and Moska (liberation, spiritual values). Almost all philosophical thinking focuses on humans and their life-related problems. The concept of Puruṣārthas is also one of those that contemplates humans and their problems. Any discussion of traditional Indian thought about man and society usually revolves around the notions designated by such terms as Varna, Āśram and Puruṣārthas. Is is also generally assumed that the three are so intimately related to each other each cannot be understood without the other. But even amongst these, the notion of Puruṣārthas is perhaps more fundamental as it defines those ultimate goals of human life which give meaning and significance to it. In Indian context, among the four values or puruṣārthas, artha and kāma are agreed to the worldly matter and hence, can be considered as secular and Dharma and Moksa are admitted as spiritual. But Prof. Daya Krishna has discussed these all as secular or worldly values. He does not deny that dharma, artha, kāma, and moksa have occupied a central place in the systems of values Indians have pursued in their social and moral life. However, he is concerned with various ambiguities surrounding these concepts, which constitute the fourfold system of puruṣārthas or goals of life. He discusses morality as a unitary concept of value, desire, freedom, reason and law. Here, Daya Krishna discusses the concept of desire and freedom in association with the creation (in morality also) of something new. Hence, morality is a unitary concept of desire and freedom. The study of puruṣārthas has been comparatively neglected and the doctrine has even been dubbed a myth. The aim of this article is twofold: to establish the cogency of the doctrine of the puruṣārthas in the face of such criticism and to indicate the directions in which the doctrine could be developed further.

Keywords- *Puruṣārtha, Dharma, Artha, Kāma, Moska, Trivarga, Chaturvarga, Upanishads, Samsāra, Paramārtha, sattva, rajas, tamas, Myth, Svargakāmoyajeta, Pravrtti, Nirvrtti, Niskāmkarma*

Introduction

Prof. Daya Krishna is prominent in contemporary Indian Philosophical era for his interpretation of the Indian tradition of Philosophy. Daya Krishna himself does not establish a definite moral theory that provides an account of how to act properly or morally. He investigates how the concepts of values influence the authenticity on the account of its historical and cultural variations and how they build the conditions of making relation to other and one’s own human situation. The concept of *puruṣārtha* in Indian Philosophy means as a goal of life or what is desired by man implies four in number. In Indian Philosophical tradition,

these four *puruṣārthas* are higher values for self- reflection as opposed to other creatures in one hand and also regulator of man's act of ought as opposed to what he is and determine what man ought to be. These four *puruṣārthas* are: *Dharma* (virtue), *Artha* (wealth), *Kāma* (desire, except the desire to get rid of all desires) and *Moksa* (self-perfection or self- knowledge). *Artha* and *kāma* are taken as secular and worldly value, *dharma* and *moksa* are recognized as spiritual. Daya ji does not find himself agreeing with the way in which the Indian tradition has defined the four *puruṣārthas* by linking them to each other. Through his research paper, Daya ji wants to establish that the concept of *puruṣārthas* that we see in the Indian tradition and when we study it critically, it appears to be a myth. This is because one *puruṣārtha* imposes limits on other *puruṣārtha*.

Theory of Puruṣārthas

According to the terminology, the word "*Puruṣārthas* " refers to the epitome of human A existence, or what it means to be a man in his truest form. A composite sanskrit term, **iq:’kkFkZ** is made up of the words "*Purusha*(**iq:’k**)" and "*Artha*(**vFkZ**)," where "*Purusha*" refers to the "human being," "Soul," and even the "Universal Principle and Soul of the cosmos" and "*Artha*" refers to both wealth or value and purpose or goal. It is a key concept in the Hinduism, and refers to the four proper goals or aims of a human life. The four *Puruṣārthas* are *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Moksa*. The first three objectives *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kāma* were stated first (*Trivarga*), and the last objective- *Moksa* was stated subsequently (*Chaturvarga*). The *Puruṣārthas* are built on the premise that while life should be enjoyed in all of its forms including sexual pleasure and material pleasure at the appropriate times, some ambitions such as righteous living and the pursuit of liberation-eventually transcend others and should be one's highest calling. The ability to assess, reason, reflect on the past, anticipate into the years to come, and plan one's course of action distinguishes humans from the other millions of species that live on our planet and seek food, shelter, security, and reproduction. And because of this ability for decision- making, mankind has entertained a variety of aims, which are known as "*Puruṣārthas*," with each individual's unique approach to unravelling the meaning of existence, ever since the inception of humans in each yuga. The following illustrates the explanation of each *puruṣārthas* with its relevance in previous times along with its implications for the modern man of 21st century.

1. **Dharma** – *Dharma puruṣārtha* signifies behaviours that are considered to be in accord with *rta*(*_r*), the order that makes life and universe possible, and includes duties, rights, laws, conducts, virtues and right way of living. Hindu dharma includes the religious duties, moral rights and duties of each individual, as well as behaviours that enables social order, right conduct, and those that are virtuous.

/keZ ,o grks gfUr /keksZ jf{kr jf{kr%A

Rkl~&ek)eksZ u gUrO;% ekuks /keksZ grkso/khr~AA 8-15AA

2. **Artha** - *Artha puruṣārtha* signifies the “means of life”, activities and resources that enables one to be in a state one wants to be in. The *Artha* incorporates wealth, career, activity to make a living, financial security and economic prosperity. The proper pursuit of *Artha* is considered an important aim of human life in Hinduism. The texts defining

its importance include the *Arthashāshtra* of Kautilya and the *Sukra Niti*. According to Kautilya's *Arthashāshtra*, *Artha* is the foundation for the other two *puruṣārtha*, *Dharma* and *Moksa*.

vFkZ ,o iz/kku bfr AA10AA vFkZewykS fg /keZdkefofrAA11AA

3. **Kāma-** *Kāma puruṣārtha* signifies desire, wish, passion, emotions, pleasure of the senses, the aesthetic enjoyment of life, affection, or love, with or without sexual connotations. Gavin Flood explains *kāma* as “love” without violating *Dharma*, *Artha* and one's journey towards *Moksa*. In the account of well-known literary works related to *Kāma Puruṣārtha* are *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* and *Kāmasutra* of *Vātsyayana*. *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*, one of the early Upanishads of Hinduism, employs the term *Kāma*, also in a more general sense, as any desire: man consists of passion (*kāma*), as his passion is, so is his determination, as his determination is, so is his deed, whatever his action is, that he attains. Some of the earliest verses in the Vedas that are known to exist contain the expression *Kāma*.

dkeLrnxs leorZrkf/k jsr% ijFkea ;nklhr~A

lrks cU/kqelfr fujfoUnUāfn izrhl';k do;ks euh'kkAA4AA

4. **Moksa-** *Moksa Puruṣārtha* signifies emancipation, liberation or release. In some school of Hinduism, *Moksa* connotes freedom from *Samsāra*, the cycle of death and rebirth, in other schools *Moksa* connotes freedom, self-knowledge, self-realization and liberation in this life. In Vedas and early Upanishads, the word Sanskrit: eqP;rs] which imply to be set free or release. Within *Moksa*, there is the utmost tranquillity, the ultimate truth, the ultimate insight and the ultimate joy. In Hinduism self-realization is the path to obtain *Moksa*. *Moksa* is both is both a *Puruṣārtha* and a *Paramārtha* which is necessary not just for mortals but also for the divine beings. *Moksa* actually means lack of *Moha* or delusion. A person obtains liberation when he enhances the quality of *sattva*, suppresses *rajas* and *tamas* and over passes his hunger for sense things by detachment, self-control, surrender to God and surrendering one's activities to Lord. The prominent writings on the quest to *Moksa* encompass the *Upanishads*, *Vivekachudamani*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and sastras on *Yoga*, in notably the fourth portion of *Patanjali's Sutras*. The following verse from *Bhagavat Gita* explains the importance of self-realization.

;rsfUnz; eufs cqf) eqfu eks{k ijk;k%A

foxrsPNk Hk; Øks/kks ;% lnk eqDr ,o l%AA5-28AA

Discourse of Prof. Daya Krishna about *Puruṣārthas* as a Myth-

Daya Krishna defines *Puruṣārtha* that which can provide a sense of significance into man's life and experience. This significance does not only define any particular value which ought to be pursued, but also considers the human situation in search of values. Value indicates that what men seek is significant, values to be of utmost significance and importance of life. Hence, the search for values implies the search for importance or significance. He does not consider value (*Puruṣārtha*) as series of specific value content but *Puruṣārtha* as a general value structure that enquires how are values organized and conceived.

Values can be regarded as goals of human life that provide a sense of obligation as well. The studies on values require a consideration of their plurality and their variations in different realms of society, times and cultures. So, values are the subject of variability. A distinction is founded between an *ideality* of man's seeking and the actuality in relation to the idea of reality. It refers the distinction between reality and values. From this distinction two basic characteristics of values can be found in Daya Krishna's works, first- values are to be actualized by self-reflecting and values are to be transformed or they transform reality itself.

According to Daya Krishna, *Puruṣārtha* is also a 'Myth'. The problem is as to how the word *Puruṣārtha* itself is to be understood. *Puruṣārtha* may be defined in two senses-descriptive or prescriptive. He calls *Artha* and *Kāma* descriptive, and *Dharma* and *Moksa* prescriptive. In the first sense, it describes what persons actually pursue in their life. In the second sense, it suggests what persons ought to pursue in order to be worthy of beings human. According to Daya Krishna, "There does not seem much sense in saying one ought to pursue *Artha* or *Kāma*, as one naturally pursues them and needs no great exhortation to do so." *Dharma* and *Moksa* have a regulatory or evaluative force, because they are not naturally pursued by the human beings. But according to Daya Krishna, the term '*Moksa*' is inconsistent with the other three *Puruṣārthas*. According to Daya Krishna, there were only three *Puruṣārthas* excluding *Moksa*. Concept of *Moksa* was introduced later in the tradition. For Daya Krishna, there is no clear demarcation between *Artha* and *Kāma*, because they overlap in some cases. The fulfilment of desire or *Kāma* also satisfies the desire of *Artha*, since they are so much interconnected. *Dharma* in this connection may be seen to be part of *Artha*, "as it can be legitimately argued that without the maintenance of *Dharma*, or what may be called the normative order", we cannot fulfil our desire for material wealth with a great degree of success. But in the tradition, *Dharma* has always been regarded as the foundation of social and moral life in which *Artha* and *Kāma* are placed. Daya Krishna assumes that, "by implication anything will come under the category of *Kāma*, one can and does not only *Artha* but even *Dharma* and *Moksa*." Daya Krishna says that, *Kāma* cannot only be restricted to "those desires whose objects are sensuous in nature." Every sort of desire falls under the category of *Kāma*. The Vedas prescribe specific sacrifices to fulfil specific desire or *Kāma*, such as, *Svargakāmoyajeta*. He writes, "There is no difference between *Svargakāmah* and *Vṛstikāmah*, even though the latter is the sort of object which is known to everybody while the former is accepted only on the authority of the Vedas." But once the term *Kāma* is spread to cover all ends of human seeking, there would remain no difference between it and the other *Puruṣārthas*. *Artha* could mean instrumentalities for the satisfaction of what is desired. *Dharma* could mean the desire for social and political order without which no desire could be fulfilled. Daya Krishna explains the meaning of '*dharma*' thus, "Or, alternatively, it could mean any ordering principle which would obviate or adjudicate the conflict between desire, whether of one and the same individual or of different individuals."

The greatest conceptual difficulty that Daya Krishna finds is with regard to the juxtaposition of *Artha* and *Kāma* with *Moksa* in the same system of values. *Moksa* is released from desire and so negates *Artha* and *Kāma*. Therefore, *Artha* and *Kāma* are diametrically opposed to *Moksa*. This has led to the concepts of *Pravṛtti*(*izo`fr*) and *Nirvṛtti*(*fuō`fr*), with the former meaning "giving or devoting one's self to" external action, while

the latter means “withdrawing and restraining one’s self from” external action in order to focus on one’s own liberation. *Artha* and *Kāma* are *Pravṛtti*, while *Moksa* is *Nivṛtti*. Thus, it is difficult to keep *Moksa* as a value along with *Artha* and *Kāma*. Similarly, Daya Krishna finds the relation between *Dharma* and *Moksa* no less conceptually puzzling; for, if one pursues *dharma*, then at the same time one cannot pursue *Moksa*. The reason being that, while *Dharma* is committed to the duties to others, *Moksa* denies any such duties. The *Moksa* is released from bondage to the world, while *Dharma* operates within the world. *Dharma* and *Adharma* are the causes of bondage and rebirth. For liberation, one has to go beyond both, that is, not only beyond *Adharma*, but *Dharma* also. *Dharma* helps one in getting *Svarga* but not *Moksa*. If a person pursues the *Artha* and *Kāma*, one is normally not praised in such a way that a *Dharmic* or *Mumuksu* is praised. *Dharma* or *Moksa* cannot be categorized under some other ideal value, say, intellectual knowledge, every kind of reform and freedom. The best way might be to construe it as being both descriptive and prescriptive. Thus, *Moksa* is a transcendent value that cancels all other values in the sense that in attaining *Moksa*, one is liberated from the worldly life for which *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Dharma* have relevance. He writes: “The seeking for both *Artha* and *Kāma* leads one naturally out of oneself and seeks establish a relationship with objects and persons, though primarily in instrumental terms. It is the pursuit of *dharma*, which makes one’s consciousness see the other, not as a means to one’s own ends, but in terms of one’s obligations towards it.”

In his thought, Daya Krishna is not agree with the concept of *Niskāmkarma* for *Moksa* or liberation. Because liberation could mean either for freedom in all its senses, or the desire to be free of all desires. The idea of *Niskāmkarma* such a second order desire ‘ought’ to be desired. Daya Krishna writes, “But this ‘ought’ is essentially a conditional ‘ought’ as it is formulated in the context of the desire to be free from the consequences of the one’s action.” If anyone is ready to accept the result of his action, the instruction to do *Niskāmkarma* will make no sense. It may be argued that result definitely will bind a person, and that as no one desires bondage, the imperative for *Niskāmkarma* is essentially unconditional. However, it is not clear why all forms of bondage should be treated as intrinsically undesirable or why consequences should necessarily bind one. According to Daya Krishna, the traditional notion of the *Puruṣārtha* does not include *Karma* as a *Puruṣārtha*. Perhaps it is assumed as a generalized means of attaining all *Puruṣārtha*. But, then, *Karma* would become necessary for attaining not only *Kāma*, *Artha* and *Dharma* but also *Moksa*. *Advait Vedānt* would at least not accept it because it believes that *Karma* is a sign of one’s being in *Avidyā* and hence in bondage. But the *Gītā* emphasizes the inescapability of *Karma* for all embodied beings.

Thus, there is an uneasy relationship between the first three *Puruṣārthas* and the fourth one. The Advaita conception of *moksa* brings out the radical sense of *Moksa*, which cancels every other *Puruṣārthas* including *Dharma*.

Conclusion-

As a conclusion we can say that these four *Puruṣārthas* are very vital to develop in every human existence for the growth and advancement as well as the welfare of human culture in the framework of 21st century. But whenever we try to explain these *Puruṣārthas*, it leads us to a ambiguity and perhaps due to the ambiguity prevalent in the

interpretation of these *Purusārthas*, Daya ji calls them as a myth. What is the actual meaning of *Dharma* is not clear. It is defined in terms of ‘system of observances’, ‘the order of the world and of society’. Sometimes *Dharma* is supposed to be the holder of whole the universe. But *Moksa* is the denial of the world. Inconsistency among the *Purusārthas* forces to Daya Krishna to establish them as a myth. Daya Krishna holds the view that there is nothing wrong in having diverse values in life, some concerning worldly life and others concerning the other worldly or transcendental life. He does not think, however, that the *Purusārtha* system of values itself can addresses the multidimensional life of values of the human beings. Many more *Purusārthas* are needed other than the four traditionally admitted. Daya ji accepts the concept of *Purusārthas* prevalent in the Indian tradition only in a general sense, but when he explains it in detail, he establishes it as a myth. There are various social, historical, cultural presuppositions that are underlying as particular value content. Daya Krishna’s interpretation towards this is not purely accompanied with ethical interpretation. His investigation is how the concept of values influences the authenticity on account of its historical and cultural variations and how they build the condition of making relation to other and to one’s own human situation. Daya Krishna’s re-interpretation, here, is in a way to comprehend the presuppositions of the moral and axiological theories and at the same time is to increase the sense of value beyond the limited scope of the moral realm.

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