

# Ethics in Ancient India

K.R.Paramahansa



## Table of Contents

	Page No
Preface	5
1. The Ethics of Vidura in Mahabharata	7
2. The Ethics of Kautilya in Arthasasatra	51
3. The Ethics of Narada in Bhagavatapurana	73
4. The Ethics of Vyasa in Brahmapurana	101



## Preface

The ultimate goal of a human being, in general parlance, relates to human conduct in society. What relates to human conduct in society is called ethics. The word 'ethics' or 'ethic' means a pattern or norm or code of conduct adopted by a group of people. Ethical Philosophers formulate and formalize existing standards. Often they propose new standards, new norms and patterns of conduct for observance by the groups. The standards lead afar encompassing considerations of, among others, duty, responsibility, equality, justice, rights, legitimate authority and benefit.

Ethical deliberation begins with specific problems of individuals facing a choice and being uncertain about what to do. Every human being faces one problem or other, and deliberates to some extent in search of a satisfactory solution.

Moral virtues such as liberality, temperance, benevolence, charity come about as a result of habit. That is why its name ethike - ethics is derived from the word ethos (habit). It, therefore, follows that none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature. In a way, we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.

Ethics is, therefore, 'the discipline dealing with what is good and bad, or right and wrong, or moral duty and obligation...' The word 'conduct' implies only persons in as much as only persons conduct themselves, while animals behave, machines function and stars move.

The treatise Ethics in Ancient India is a compendium of the ethics elaborated in great detail in Mahabharata, Arthasastra, Bhagavata Purana and Brahma Purana. The authors of these works have narrated ethics in their entire gamut through the personages, known in those works as epitomes of flawless ethical conduct. The object may be to give authenticity to the principles of ethics so enumerated, as they reflect the standards of ethics then sought to be followed in the society at large, at the time of their compilation.



# 1. The Ethics of Vidura in Mahabharata

## Table of Contents

	Page No
Introduction	9
The Ethics of Vidura in Mahabharata	11



# The Ethics of Vidura in Mahabharata

## Introduction

The Ethics of Vidura is in the nature of a dialogue between Dhritarashtra and Vidura contained in chapters 33 to 40 of Udyoga-Parva of the Mahabharata. This is a precursor to the Sanat-sujata-Gita which is an exposition of the concept of the *Brahman* as propounded in the Vedanta in its entirety.

In the world of classical literature, the Mahabharata is unique in many respects. As an epic, it is the greatest in all literatures. It is considered the mightiest single human endeavour of literary creation of any culture in human history. The effort to conceive the mind that conceived it is itself considered great education. It is the stupendous ocean of all-embracing knowledge. It is a wonderful production bench-marking the high state of Indian civilization long before the Christian era.

While *dharma* primarily relates to the intrinsic law of man's being, righteousness, charity and piety ultimately leading to the enlightenment of the soul for communion with God – the ultimate goal of a human being, *ethics*, though part of *dharma*, in general parlance, relates to human conduct in society.

The term ethics or ethic means a pattern or norm or code of conduct adopted by a group of people. The term also applies not merely to the various codes of conduct approved but also to the activity of appraising, evaluating and revising these codes. This involves consistent and critical enquiry into the ethical beliefs, and subjects them to close scrutiny.

Ethical Philosophers formulate and formalize existing standards. Often they propose new standards, new norms and patterns of conduct for observance by the groups. This means, among other things, that those engaged in ethical evaluation must be willing to pursue the implications of the issues wherever they lead to. They lead afar encompassing considerations of, among others, duty, responsibility, equality, justice, rights, legitimate authority and benefit.

Ethical deliberation begins with specific problems of individuals facing a choice and being uncertain about what to do. These problems can be big or small, great or low, physical or spiritual, personal or family, social or political and the like. Every human being faces one or the other of these problems and deliberates to some extent in search of a satisfactory solution.

Dhritarashtra is in an unenviable position as to resolving the ethical conflict of either following the path of righteous conduct in being fair to the sons of his brother, or following the dictates of his sons for illegal gain. He considers that Vidura is well versed in both religion and profit, and the only one suited to offer him guidance and deliberation as to his conduct in the given circumstances that gives solace to his soul and peace to his mind.

On the request of Dhritarashtra, Vidura elaborates the entire gamut of righteous human conduct applicable to people of all stations and divisions in the society. His elaboration is comprehensive, unique and constitutes one of the earliest ethical treatises of the ancient Indian society.

‘The Ethics of Vidura’ is a liberal translation of the Sanskrit text in Mahabharata verse (*sloka*) by verse true to its spirit. The entire translation into English of The Mahabharata by Kisari Mohan Ganguli is an epic in itself, and this compilation has heavily depended on his work.

## The Ethics of Vidura in Mahabharata

Vaisampayana said:

(He is the Rishi who related the Mahabharata to Janamejaya.)

Having entered Dhritarashtra's chamber, Vidura said, with joined hands, unto that ruler of men who was then plunged in thought, 'O You of great wisdom, I am Vidura, arrived here at your command. If there is anything to be done, here I am, command me!'

Dhritarashtra said:

O Vidura, Sanjaya has come back. He has gone away after rebuking me. Tomorrow he will deliver, in the midst of the court, Ajatasatru's message. I have not been able today to ascertain what the message of the Kuru hero is. Therefore, my body is burning, and that has produced sleeplessness. Tell us what may be good for a person that is sleepless and burning. You are, O Child, versed in both religion and profit. Ever since Sanjaya has returned from the Pandavas, my heart knows no peace. Filled with anxiety about what he may deliver, all my senses have been disordered.

Vidura said:

Sleeplessness overtakes thief, a lustful person, him that has lost all his wealth, him that has failed to achieve success and him also that is weak and has been attacked by a strong person. I hope, O King, that none of these grave calamities has overtaken you. I hope, you do not grieve, coveting the wealth of others.

Dhritarashtra said:

I desire to hear from you words that are beneficial and fraught with high morality. In this race of Royal-*rishis*, you alone are revered by the wise.

Vidura replied:

King (Yudhishtira), graced with every virtue, is worthy of being the sovereign of the three worlds; yet, O Dhritarashtra, however worthy of being kept by your side, he was exiled by you.

You are, however, possessed of qualities which are the very reverse of those possessed by him. Although virtuous and versed in morality, you have yet no right to a share in the kingdom owing to your loss of sight. In consequence of his inoffensiveness and kindness, his righteousness, love of truth and energy, and his remembering the reverence that is due to you, Yudhishtira patiently bears innumerable wrongs.

Having bestowed on Duryodhana, Suvala's son, Karna and Dussasana the management of the empire, how can you hope for prosperity?

He that is not served from the high ends of life by the aid of self-knowledge, exertion, forbearance and steadiness in virtue, is called wise. Adherence to acts, worthy of praise and rejection of what is blamable, faith and reverence is again the mark of a wise man. He, whom neither anger, nor joy, nor pride, nor false modesty, nor stupefaction, nor vanity can draw away from the high ends of life, is considered wise.

He who's intended acts and proposed counsels remain concealed from foes, and whose acts become known only after they have been done is considered wise. He whose proposed actions are never obstructed by heat or cold, fear of attachment, prosperity or adversity is considered wise.

He, whose judgment, dissociated from desire, follows both virtue and profit, and who, disregarding pleasure, chooses such ends as are serviceable in both worlds is considered wise. They that exert to the best of their might, act to the best of their might and disregard nothing as insignificant are called wise.

He that understands quickly, listens patiently, pursues his objects with judgment and not from desire, and spends not his breath on the affairs of others unsolicited is said to possess the foremost mark of wisdom. They that do not strive for objects that are unattainable, that do not grieve for what is lost and gone, that do not suffer their minds to be clouded amid calamities are regarded to possess intellect endued with wisdom.

He who strives, having commenced anything, till it is completed, who never wastes his time, and who has his soul under control is regarded wise. They that are wise, O Bull of the Bharata race, always delight in honest deeds, do what tends to their happiness and prosperity, and never sneer at what is good.

He who does not exult at honours, does not grieve at slights, but remains cool and un-agitated like a lake in the course of *Ganga*, is reckoned as wise. That man who knows the nature of all creatures (that everything is subject to destruction), who is cognizant also of the connections of all acts, and who is proficient in the knowledge of the means that men may resort to (for attaining their objects) is reckoned as wise.

He, who speaks boldly, can converse on various subjects, knows the science of argumentation, possesses genius, and can interpret the meaning of what is written in books, is reckoned wise. He, whose reason regulates his studies, whose reason follows the scriptures, and who never abstains from paying respect to those that are good, is called a wise man. On the other hand, he who is ignorant of scriptures yet vain, poor yet proud, and who resorts to unfair means for acquisition of his objects is a fool.

He, who wishes for those things that should not be desired, forsakes those that may legitimately be desired, and who bears malice to those that are powerful, is regarded to be foolish. He, who regards his foe as his friend, who hates and bears malice to his friend, and who commits wicked deeds, is said to be foolish.

O Bull of the Bharata race! He, who divulges his projects in advance, doubts in all things, and spends a long time in doing what requires a short time, is a fool.

He who does not perform the *sraddha* for the *Pitris*, nor worships the deities, nor acquires noble-minded friends, is said to be foolish. He, who enters a place uninvited, talks much without being asked, and reposes trust on untrustworthy people, is a fool.

He, who, being guilty, casts the blame on others, and who, though impotent, gives vent to anger is the most foolish of men. That man, who, without knowing his own strength and dissociated from both virtue and profit, desires an object difficult of acquisition, without again adopting adequate means, is said to be destitute of intelligence.

O King! He, who punishes one that is undeserving of punishment, pays homage to persons without their knowledge, and waits upon misers, is said to be of little sense. But he who, having attained immense wealth and prosperity, or acquired (vast) learning, does not bear himself haughtily, is reckoned as a wise man.

Who, again, is more heartless than he, who, though possessed of affluence, eats himself and wears excellent robes himself without distributing his wealth among his dependents?

While one person commits sins, many reap the advantages resulting there-from; (yet, in the end) it is the doer alone to whom the sin attaches while those that enjoy the fruit escape unhurt.

When a bowman shoots an arrow, he may or may not succeed in slaying even a single person. But when an intelligent individual applies his intelligence (viciously), it may destroy an entire kingdom along with the king.

Discriminating the *two* by means of the *one*, bring under your subjugation the *three* by means of *four*, and also conquering the *five* and knowing the *six*, and abstaining from the *seven*, be happy.

Poison slays but one person, and a weapon also but one; wicked counsels, however, destroy an entire kingdom along with the king and the subjects.

One should not alone partake of any savoury viand, alone reflect on concerns of profit, alone go upon a journey and alone remain awake among sleeping companions.

That Being who is One without a second, and whom, O King, you have not been able to comprehend, is Truth's self, and the way to heaven, even like a boat in the ocean.

There is only one defect in forgiving persons, and no other. That defect is that people take a forgiving person to be weak. That defect, however, should not be taken into consideration, for forgiveness is a great power. Forgiveness is a virtue of the weak, and an ornament of the strong. Forgiveness subdues (all) in this world; what is there that

forgiveness cannot achieve? What can a wicked person do to him who carries the sabre of forgiveness in his hand? Fire falling on a grassless ground is extinguished of itself. And an unforgiving individual defiles himself with many enormities.

Righteousness is the one highest good; forgiveness is the one supreme peace; knowledge is supreme contentment; and benevolence is the sole happiness.

Even as a serpent devours animals living in holes, the earth devours a king who is incompetent to fight and a *brahmana* who does not sojourn to holy places.

A man may attain renown in this world by doing two things, by refraining from harsh speech and by disregarding those that are wicked.

O Tiger among men! Those women who covet men simply because the latter are coveted by others of their sex, and that person who worships another simply because the latter is worshipped by others have no will of their own.

The desires of a poor man and the anger of an impotent person are like sharp thorns afflicting the body. A householder without exertion and a beggar busied in schemes will never shine because of their incompatible acts.

A man of power endowed with forgiveness, and a poor man that is charitable live (as it were) in a region higher than heaven itself.

Of things honestly got, making gifts to the unworthy and refusing the worthy must be looked upon as misuse.

A wealthy man that does not give away and a poor man that is proud should be thrown into the water, tightly binding weights to their necks.

O Tiger among men! A mendicant accomplished in *yoga* and a warrior that has fallen in open fight can pierce the orb itself of the sun.

O Bull of the Bharata race! Persons versed in the *Veda* have said that men's means are good, middling and bad.

Men also, O King, are good, indifferent and bad. They should, therefore, be respectively employed in that kind of work for which they may be fit.

O King! The wife, the slave and the son cannot have wealth of their own. Whatever may be earned by them would be his to whom they belong.

Great fear springs from the three crimes, namely, theft of others' property, outrage on others' wives, and breach with friend.

Lust, anger and covetousness, besides being destructive to ones' own self, are the gates of hell. Therefore, every one should renounce them.

A follower, one who seeks protection saying *I am yours* and one who has come to your abode should never be forsaken even in imminent danger.

Verily, O Bharata, liberating a foe from distress alone amounts, in point of merit, to conferring a boon, acquiring a kingdom and obtaining a son taken together.

Learned men have declared that a king, although powerful, should never consult men of small sense, men that are procrastinating, men that are indolent and men that are flatterers.

O Sire! Crowned with prosperity and leading the life of a householder, you let the old consanguineous, relatives and high-born persons fallen into adversity, poor friends, and issueless sisters dwell with you.

O Mighty-king! On being asked by the chief of the celestials, Brihaspati declared four things capable of fructifying or occurring within a single day. They are the resolve of the gods, the comprehensions of intelligent persons, the humility of learned men and the destruction of the sinful.

Though they are calculated to remove fear, the *Agni-hotra*, the vow of silence, study and sacrifice (in general) bring on fear when they are improperly performed.

O Bull of the Bharata race! The five fires, namely, father, mother, fire (proper), soul and preceptor should be worshipped with regard by a person.

By serving the gods, the *Pitris*, men, beggars and guests men attain great fame in this world.

Friends, foes, those that are indifferent, dependants and those that are entitled to maintenance follow you wherever you go.

Of the five senses beholding to man, if one springs a leak, then from that single hole runs out all his intelligence, even like water running out from a perforated leathern vessel.

Sleep, drowsiness, fear, anger, indolence and procrastination are the six faults that should be avoided by a person who wishes to attain prosperity.

A preceptor that cannot expound the scriptures, a priest that is illiterate, a king that is unable to protect, a wife that speaks disagreeable words, a cow-herd that does not wish to go to the fields and a barber that wishes to renounce a village for the woods should be renounced like a splitting vessel in the sea.

Verily, truth, charity, diligence, benevolence, forgiveness and patience are the six qualities that should never be forsaken by men.

Kine, service, agriculture, a wife, learning, and the wealth of a *sudra* are instantly destroyed, if neglected.

These six categories forget those who have bestowed obligations on them, namely, educated disciples, their preceptors, married persons, their mothers, persons whose desires have been gratified, women, they who have achieved success, those who had rendered aid, they who have crossed a river, the boat (that carried them over), and patients that have been cured, their physicians.

Health, un-indebtedness, living at home, companionship with good men, certainty as regards the means of livelihood, and living without fear, O King, conduce to the happiness of men.

The envious, the malicious, the discontented, the irascible, the ever-suspicious, and those depending upon the fortunes of others are always miserable.

O King! Acquirement of wealth, uninterrupted health, a beloved and sweet-tongued wife, an obedient son and knowledge that is lucrative comprise the happiness of men.

He that succeeds in gaining the mastery over the *six* that are always present in the human heart, being thus the master of his senses, never commits sin, and, therefore, suffers no calamity. These six may be seen to subsist upon the other six. They are thieves that subsist on persons that are careless, physicians on persons that are ailing, women on persons suffering from lust, priests on those that sacrifice, a king on persons that quarrel, and, lastly, men of learning on those that are without it.

A king should renounce the seven faults that are productive of calamity, inasmuch as they are able to affect the ruin of even monarchs firmly established; these are women, dice, hunting, drinking, harshness of speech, severity of punishment and misuse of wealth.

Hating the *brahmanas*, disputes with *brahmanas*, appropriation of a *brahmana*'s possessions, taking the life of a *brahmana*, taking pleasure in reviling *brahmanas*, grieving to hear the praises of *brahmanas*, forgetting them on ceremonious occasions, and giving vent to spite when they ask for anything are the immediate indications of a man destined to destruction. These transgressions a wise man should understand, and understanding, eschew.

O Bharata! Meeting with friends, accession of immense wealth, embracing a son, union for intercourse, conversation with friends in proper times, the advancement of persons belonging to one's own group, the acquisition of what had been anticipated, and

respect in society are the very cream of happiness of men. These are attainable here, in this world.

Wisdom, high-birth, self-restraint, learning, prowess, moderation in speech, gift according to one's capacity and gratitude glorify a man.

This house (human body) has nine doors, three pillars and five witnesses; it is presided over by the soul. The learned man who knows all this is truly wise.

(The nine doors of the body are the two eyes, the two nostrils, the two ears, the mouth and the two organs of excretion and generation.)

O Dhritarashtra! The intoxicated, the inattentive, the raving, the fatigued, the angry, the starving, the hasty, the covetous, the frightened and the lustful do not know what virtue is. Therefore, he that is wise must eschew the company of such men.

In this connection is cited the old story about what transpired between Suyodhana and (Prahlada), the chief of the *asuras* in relation to the latter's son.

That king, who renounces lust and anger, who bestows wealth upon proper recipients, and who is discriminating, learned, and active, is regarded as an authority of all men.

Great prosperity attends upon that king who knows how to inspire confidence in others, who inflicts punishment on those whose guilt has been proved, who is acquainted with the proper measure of punishment, and who knows when mercy is to be shown.

He is a wise person who does not disregard even a weak foe, who proceeds, with intelligence, in respect of a foe, anxiously watching for an opportunity, who does not desire hostilities with persons stronger than himself, and who displays his prowess in season.

That illustrious person who does not grieve when a calamity has already come upon him, who exerts with all his senses collected, and who patiently bears misery in season is certainly the foremost of persons, and all his foes are vanquished.

He who does not live away from hope uselessly, who does not make friends with sinful persons, who never outrages another's wife, who never betrays arrogance, and who never commits a theft, shows ingratitude or indulges in drinking is always happy.

He who never boastfully strives to attain the three objects of human pursuit (*artha, kama and dharma*), who, when asked, tells the truth, who quarrels not even for the sake of friends, and who never becomes angry though slighted is reckoned as wise.

He who bears no malice towards others but is kind to all, who, being weak, disputes not with others, who speaks not arrogantly and forgets a quarrel is praised

everywhere. That man who never assumes a haughty mien, and who never censures others is ever loved by all.

He who does not rake up old hostilities, who does not behave arrogantly or with too much humility, and who, even when distressed, does not commit an improper act is considered by respectable men a person of good conduct.

He, who does not exult at his own happiness or delights in another's misery, and who does not repent after having made a gift is said to be a man of good nature and conduct.

He, who desires to obtain knowledge of the customs of different countries, and also the languages of different nations, and of the usages of different orders of men, knows at once all that is high and low. Wherever he may go, he is sure to gain an ascendancy over even those that are respected.

The intelligent man who relinquishes pride, folly, insolence, sinful acts, disloyalty towards the king, crookedness of behaviour, enmity with many, and also quarrels with men that are drunk, mad and wicked is the foremost of his species.

The very gods bestow prosperity upon him who daily practices self-restraint, purification, auspicious rites, worship of the gods, expiatory ceremonies, and other rites of universal observance.

The acts of a learned man who forms matrimonial alliances with persons of equal positions and not with those that are inferior, who places before him those that are more qualified, and who talks, behaves and makes friends with persons of equal position are well-conceived, and well-applied.

He, who eats frugally after dividing the food amongst his dependants, who sleeps little after working much, and who, when solicited, gives away even unto his foes, has his soul under control. Calamities always keep themselves aloof from him.

He, whose counsels are well-kept and well-carried out into practice, and whose acts in consequence thereof are never known by others to injure men, succeeds in securing even his most trifling objects.

He, who is intent upon abstaining from injury to all creatures, who is truthful, gentle, charitable, and pure in mind, shines greatly among his kinsmen like a precious gem of the purest ray having its origin in an excellent mine.

That man, who feels ashamed even though his faults are not known to any save himself, is highly honoured among all men. Possessed of a pure heart and boundless energy, and abstracted within himself, he shines in consequence of his energy like the very sun.

King Pandu, consumed by a (Brahmana's) curse, had five sons born unto him in the woods that are like five *Indras*. O Son of Ambika! You have brought up those children and taught them everything. They are obedient to your commands. Giving them back their just share of the kingdom, O Sire, filled with joy, be you happy with your sons. Then, O Monarch, you shall inspire confidence in both the gods and men.

Dhritarashtra said:

Tell me what may be done by a person that is sleepless and burning with anxieties, for you alone amongst us, O Child, are versed in both religion and profit. Advise me wisely, O Vidura!

O You of magnanimous heart! Tell me what you deem to be beneficial for *Ajatasatru* and what is productive of good to the Kurus. Apprehending future evils, I look back only on my previous guilt: I ask you with anxious heart, O Learned one! Tell me what is exactly in *Ajatasatru's* mind.

Vidura said:

Even if unasked, one should speak truly, whether his words be good or bad, hateful or pleasing, unto him whose defeat one does not wish. I shall, therefore, say, O King, what is for the good of the Kurus. I shall say what is both beneficial and consistent with morality.

Listen to me. Do not, O Bharata, set the heart upon means of success that are unjust and improper. A man of intelligence must not grieve if any purpose of his does not succeed, notwithstanding the application of fair and proper means. Before one engages in an act, one should consider the competence of the agent, the nature of the act itself and its purpose, for all acts are dependent on these.

Considering these, one should begin an act and not take it up on a sudden impulse. He that is wise should either do an act or desist from it fully considering his own ability, the nature of the act and the consequence also of success.

The king, who knows not proportion or measure as regards territory, gain, loss, treasury, population and punishment, cannot retain his kingdom long. He, on the other hand, who is acquainted with the measures of these as prescribed in treatises, being necessarily possessed of the knowledge of religion and profit, can retain his kingdom.

As the stars are affected by the planets, so is this world affected by the senses, when they are directed, uncontrolled, to their respective objects. Like the moon during the lighted fortnight, calamities increase in respect of him who is vanquished by the five senses in their natural state, which ever lead him towards various acts.

He, who wishes to control his counsellors before controlling his own self or subdue his adversaries before controlling his counsellors, at last succumbs, deprived of

strength. He, therefore, who first subdues his own self regarding it as a foe, never fails to subdue his counsellors and adversaries at last. Great prosperity waits upon him who has subdued his senses or controlled his soul, who is capable of punishing all offenders, who acts with judgment or who is blessed with patience.

One's body, O King, is one's car; the soul within is the driver; and the senses are its steeds. Drawn by those excellent steeds, when well-trained, he that is wise pleasantly performs the journey of life, and awakes in peace.

The horses that are incapable of being controlled always lead an unskilled driver (rider) to destruction in the course of the journey; so one's senses, un-subdued, lead only to destruction. The inexperienced wight who, led by his un-subdued senses, hopes to extract evil from good and good from evil, necessarily confounds misery with happiness.

He, who, forsaking religion and profit, follows the lead of his senses, loses, without delay, prosperity, life, wealth and wife. He, who is the master of riches but not of his senses, certainly loses his riches in consequence of his want of mastery over his senses.

One should seek to know one's self by means of one's own self, controlling one's mind, intellect and senses, for one's self is one's own friend as, indeed, it is one's own foe. That man, who has conquered self by means of self, has his self for a friend, for one's self is ever one's friend or foe.

Desire and anger, O King, break through wisdom, just as a large fish breaks through a net of thin cords. He, who, in this world, regarding both religion and profit, seeks to acquire the means of success, wins happiness, possessing all he had sought. He, who, without subduing his five inner foes of mental origin, wishes to vanquish other adversaries, is, in fact, overpowered by the latter. It is seen that many evil-minded kings, owing to want of mastery over their senses, are ruined by acts of their own, occasioned by the lust of territory.

As fuel that is wet burns with that which is dry, so a sinless man is punished equally with the sinful, in consequence of constant association with the latter. Therefore, friendship with the sinful should be avoided.

He that, from ignorance, fails to control his five greedy foes having five distinct objects is overwhelmed by calamities. Guilelessness and simplicity, purity and contentment, sweetness of speech and self-restraint, truth and steadiness are never the attributes of the wicked.

Self-knowledge and steadiness, patience and devotion to virtue, and competence to keep counsels and charity, O Bharata, never exist in inferior men. Fools seek to injure the wise by false reproaches and evil speeches.

The consequence is that, by this, they take upon themselves the sins of the wise, while the latter, freed from their sins, are forgiven. In malice lies the strength of the wicked; in criminal code, the strength of kings; in attentions of the weak, the strength of women; and in forgiveness, the strength of the virtuous.

To control speech, O King, is said to be most difficult. It is not easy to hold a long conversation uttering words full of meaning, and delighting to the hearers. Well-spoken speech is productive of many beneficial results; and ill-spoken speech, O King, is the cause of evils.

A forest pierced by arrows or cut down by hatchets may again grow, but one's heart, wounded and censured by ill-spoken words, never recovers. Weapons such as arrows, bullets, bearded darts can be easily extracted from the body, but a wordy dagger plunged deep into the heart is incapable of being taken out. Wordy arrows are shot from the mouth; smitten by them, one grieves day and night.

A learned man should not discharge such arrows, for they touch the very vitals of others. He, to whom the gods ordain defeat, has his senses taken away, and it is for this that he stoops to ignoble deeds. When the intellect becomes dim and clouded, destruction ensues.

You do not clearly see, O Bull of the Bharata race, that clouded intellect has now possessed your sons in consequence of their hostility to the Pandavas.

Endued with every auspicious mark and deserving to rule the three worlds, Yudhishtira is obedient to your commands. Let him, O Dhritarashtra, rule the earth, to the exclusion of all your sons.

Yudhishtira is the foremost of all your heirs. Endued with energy and wisdom, and acquainted with the truths of religion and profit, Yudhishtira, that foremost of righteous men, has, O King of kings, suffered much misery out of kindness and sympathy, in order to preserve your reputation.

Dhritarashtra said:

O You of great intelligence! Tell me again words such as these, consistent with religion and profit. My thirst for hearing them is not quenched. What you say is charming!

Vidura said:

Ablution in all the holy places and kindness to all creatures are equal. Perhaps, kindness to all creatures surpasses the former.

O Master! Show kindness unto all your sons, for, by that, winning great fame in this world, you will have heaven hereafter. As long as a man's good deeds are spoken of in this world, so long, O Tiger among men, is he glorified in heaven.

In this connection is cited an old story about the conversation between Virochana and Sudhanwan, both suitors for Kesini's hand.

Once on a time, O King, there was a maiden of the name of Kesini, unrivalled for beauty; moved by the desire of obtaining a good husband, she resolved to choose her lord in *swayamvara*. Then one of the sons of Diti, Virochana by name, went to that spot, desirous of obtaining the maiden.

Beholding that chief of the *daityas*, Kesini addressed him saying, 'are *brahmanas* superior, O Virochana, or are the sons of Diti superior? And why should Sudhanwan also not sit on the *sofa*?'

Virochana replied, 'sprung from Prajapati himself, we, O Kesini, are the best and at the top of all creatures; and this world is ours without doubt. Who are the gods, and who are the *brahmanas*?'

Kesini said, 'we will, O Virochana, stay here in this very pavilion. Sudhanwan will come here on the morrow, and let me see both of you sitting together'

Virochana said, 'O Amiable and timid girl! I will do what you say. You will behold Sudhanwan and me together in the morning.'

Vidura continued:

When the night had passed away and the solar disc had risen, Sudhanwan, O the Best of kings, came to that place where, O Master, Virochana was waiting with Kesini. And Sudhanwan saw there both Prahlada's son and Kesini.

Beholding the *Brahmana*, Kesini, O Bull of the Bharata race, rising up from hers, offered him a seat, water to wash his feet, and *Arghya*. And asked by Virochana (to share his seat), Sudhanwan said, 'O Son of Prahlada! I touch your excellent golden seat. I cannot, however, suffer myself to be regarded as your equal, and sit on it with you'.

Virochana said, 'a piece of wooden plank, an animal skin, or a mat of grass or straw, O Sudhanwan, is fit for you. You deserve not, however, the same seat with me'.

Sudhanwan said, 'father and son, two *brahmanas* of the same age and equal learning, two *kshatriyas*, two *vaisyas* and two *sudras* can sit together on the same seat. Except these, no other two can sit together. Your father used to pay his regards to me, taking his seat lower than that occupied by me. You are a child, brought up in every luxury at home, and you understand nothing'.

Virochana said, ‘staking all the gold, kine, horses and every other kind of wealth that we have among the *asuras*, let us, O Sudhanwan, ask them this question to answer’.

Sudhanwan said, ‘let alone your gold, kine and heroes, O Virochana! Making our lives forfeited, we will ask them this question’.

Virochana said, ‘wagering our lives where shall we go? I will not appear before any of the gods and never before any among men’.

Sudhanwan said, ‘having wagered our lives, we will approach your father, for he, Prahlada, will never say an untruth even for the sake of his son’.

Vidura continued:

Having thus laid a wager, Virochana and Sudhanwan both, moved by rage, proceeded to that place where Prahlada was. And beholding them together, Prahlada said, ‘these two, who had never before been companions, are now seen together coming hither by the same path, like two angry snakes. Have you now become companions, you who were never companions before? I ask you, O Virochana, has there been friendship between you and Sudhanwan?’

Virochana said, ‘there is no friendship between me and Sudhanwan. On the other hand, we have both wagered our lives. O Chief of the *asuras*, I shall ask you a question; do not answer it untruly’!

Prahlada said, ‘let water, honey and curds be brought for Sudhanwan. You deserve our worship, O Brahmana! A white and fat cow is ready for you’.

Sudhanwan said, ‘water, honey and curds have been presented to me on my way hither. I shall ask you a question, Prahlada! Answer it truly! Are *brahmanas* superior, or is Virochana superior?’

Prahlada said, ‘O *Brahmana*! This one is my only son. You are also present here in person. How can one like me answer a question about which you two have quarreled?’

Sudhanwan said, ‘give unto your son kine and other precious wealth that you may have; but, O Wise one, you should declare the truth when we two are disputing about it’.

Prahlada said, ‘how does that mis-user of his tongue suffer, O Sudhanwan, who answers not truly but falsely, a question that is put to him? I ask you this’.

Sudhanwan said, ‘the person that misuses his tongue suffers like the deserted wife who pines, at night, beholding her husband sleeping in the arms of a co-wife, or like a person who has lost at dice or who is weighed down with an unbearable load of anxieties. Such a person has also to stay starving outside the city gates, into which his admission is barred.

Indeed, he that gives false evidence is destined always to find his foes. He that speaks a lie on account of an animal causes the downfall from heaven of five of his sires of the ascending order. He that speaks a lie on account of a cow causes downfall from heaven ten of his ancestors. A lie on account of a horse causes the downfall of a hundred; and a lie on account of a human being, the downfall of a thousand of one's sires of the ascending order.

An untruth on account of gold ruins the members of one's race both born and unborn, while an untruth for the sake of land ruins everything. Therefore, never speak an untruth for the sake of land'.

Prahlada said, 'Angiras is superior to me, and Sudhanwan is superior to you, O Virochana! Also the mother of Sudhanwan is superior to your mother; therefore, you, O Virochana, have been defeated by Sudhanwan. This Sudhanwan is now the master of your life. But, O Sudhanwan, I wish that you should grant Virochana his life'.

Sudhanwan said, 'since, O Prahlada, you have preferred virtue and have not, from temptation, said an untruth, I grant your son his life that is dear to you. So here is your son Virochana, O Prahlada, restored by me to you. He shall, however, have to wash my feet in the presence of the maiden Kesini'.

Vidura Continued:

For these reasons, O King of kings, it behooves you not to say an untruth for the sake of land. Saying an untruth from affection for your son, O King, hasten not to destruction, with all your children and counsellors.

The gods do not protect men, taking up clubs in their hands after the manner of herdsmen; unto those, however, they wish to protect, they grant intelligence.

There is no doubt that one's objects meet with success in proportion to the attention one directs to righteousness and morality. The *Vedas* never rescue from sin a deceitful person living by falsehood. On the other hand, they forsake him while he is on his death-bed, like newly fledged birds forsaking their nests.

Drinking, quarrels, enmity with large numbers of men, all connections with connubial disputes, severance of relationship between husband and wife, internal dissensions, disloyalty to the king, and all paths that are sinful should, it is said, be avoided.

A palmist, a thief turned into a merchant, a fowler, a physician, an enemy, a friend and a minstrel are incompetent as witnesses.

An *agnihotra* performed from motives of pride, abstention from speech practised from similar motives, study and sacrifice also from the same motives, though of themselves innocent, become harmful when practised unduly.

One that sets fire to a dwelling house, an administerer of poison, a pander, a vendor of the *soma-juice*, a maker of arrows, an astrologer, one that injures friends, an adulterer, one that causes abortion, a violator of his preceptor's bed, a *brahmana* addicted to drink, one that is sharp-tongued, a raker of old sores, an atheist, a reviler of the *Veda*, a taker of bribes, one whose investiture with the sacred thread has been delayed beyond the prescribed age, one that secretly slays cattle, and one that slays him who prays for protection are all reckoned as equal in moral turpitude as the slayers of *brahmanas*.

Gold is tested by fire; a well-born person, by his deportment; and an honest man, by his conduct. A brave man is tested during a season of panic; he that is self-controlled, in times of poverty; and friends and foes, in times of calamity and danger.

Decrepitude destroys beauty; ambitious hopes, patience; death, life; envy, righteousness; anger, prosperity; companionship with the low, good behaviour; lust, modesty; and pride, everything.

Prosperity takes its birth in good deeds, grows in consequence of activity, drives its roots deep in consequence of skill, and acquires stability owing to self-control.

Wisdom, good lineage, self-control, acquaintance with the scriptures, prowess, absence of garrulity, gift to the extent of one's power and gratefulness are the eight qualities that shed lustre upon their possessor.

But, O Sire, there is one endowment which alone can cause all these attributes to come together; the fact is, when the king honours a particular person, the royal favour can cause all these attributes to shed their lustre (on the favourite).

Those eight, O King, in the world of men, are indications of heaven. Of the eight (mentioned below) four are inseparably connected with the good, and four others are always followed by the good. The first four which are inseparably connected with the good are sacrifice, gift, study and asceticism, while the other four that are always followed by the good are self-restraint, truth, simplicity and abstention from injury to all.

Sacrifice, study, charity, asceticism, truth, forgiveness, mercy and contentment constitute the eight different paths of righteousness. The first four of these may be practised from motives of pride, but the last four can exist only in those that are truly noble.

That is no assembly where there are no old men, and they are not old who do not declare what morality is. That which is separated from truth is not morality, and that is not truth which is fraught with deceit.

Truth, beauty, acquaintance with the scriptures, knowledge, high birth, good behaviour, strength, wealth, bravery and capacity for varied talk are of heavenly origin.

A sinful person, by committing sin, is overtaken by evil consequences. A virtuous man, by practising virtue, reaps great happiness. Therefore, a man, rigidly resolved, should abstain from sin. Sin repeatedly perpetrated destroys intelligence; and the man who has lost intelligence repeatedly commits sin.

Virtue repeatedly practised enhances intelligence; and the man, whose intelligence has increased, repeatedly practices virtue. The virtuous man, by practising virtue, goes to regions of blessedness.

Therefore, a man should, firmly resolved, practise virtue. He that is envious, he that injures others deeply, he that is cruel, he that constantly quarrels, and he that is deceitful soon meet with great misery for practising these sins.

He that is not envious and is possessed of wisdom, by always doing what is good, never meets with great misery; on the other hand, he shines everywhere. He that draws wisdom from them that are wise is really learned and wise. And he that is wise, by attending to both virtue and profit, succeeds in attaining to happiness.

Do that during the day which may enable you to pass the night in happiness; and do that during eight months of the year which may enable you to pass the season of rains happily. Do that during youth which may ensure a happy old age; and do that during your whole life here which may enable you to live happily hereafter.

The wise prize that food which is easily digested; that wife whose youth has passed away; that hero who is victorious; and that ascetic whose efforts have been crowned with success.

The gap that is sought to be filled by wealth acquired wrongfully remains uncovered, while now ones appear in other places.

The preceptor controls them whose souls are under their own control; the king controls persons that are wicked; while they that sin secretly have their controller in Yama, the son of Vivaswat.

The greatness of *rishis*, of rivers, of river-banks, of high-souled men, and the cause of woman's wickedness cannot be ascertained.

O King! He that is devoted to the worship of the *brahmanas*, he that gives away, he that behaves righteously towards his relatives, and the *kshatriya* that behaves nobly rule the earth for ever.

He that is possessed of bravery, he that is possessed of learning, and he that knows how to protect others are always able to gather flowers of gold from the earth.

Of acts, those accomplished by intelligence are the first; those accomplished by the arms, the second; those by the thighs, and those by bearing weights upon the head are the worst.

Reposing the care of your kingdom on Duryodhana, Sakuni, foolish Dussasana, and Karna, how can you hope for prosperity? Possessed of every virtue, the Pandavas, O Bull of the Bharata race, depend on you as their father. O, You repose on them as on your sons.

Vidura continued:

In this connection is cited the old story of the discourse between the son of Atri and the deities called *Sadhyas* as heard by us.

In days of old, the deities known by the name of *Sadhyas* questioned the highly wise and great *Rishi* of rigid vows (the son of Atri), while the latter was wandering in the guise of one depending on eleemosynary charity for livelihood.

The *Sadhyas* said, ‘we are, O great *Rishi*, deities known as *Sadhyas*. Beholding you, we are unable to guess who you are. It seems to us, however, that you are possessed of intelligence and self-control in consequence of acquaintance with the scriptures. It, therefore, behoves you to discourse to us in magnanimous words fraught with learning’.

The mendicant *Rishi* answered, ‘you immortals! It has been heard by me that by untying all the knots in the heart by the aid of tranquility, by mastery over all the passions and by observance of true religion, one should regard both the agreeable and the disagreeable like one’s own self.

One should not return the slanders or reproaches of others, for the pain that is felt by him who bears silently consumes the slanderer; and he that bears, succeeds also in appropriating the virtues of the slanderer. Indulge not in slanders and reproaches.

Do not humiliate and insult others. Quarrel not with friends. Abstain from companionship with those that are vile and low. Be not arrogant and ignoble in conduct. Avoid words that are harsh and fraught with anger. Harsh words burn and scorch the very vitals, bones, heart, and the very sources of the life of men.

Therefore, he that is virtuous should always abstain from harsh and angry words. He that is of harsh and wrathful speech, that pierces the vitals of others with wordy thorns, and that bears hell in his tongue should ever be regarded as a dispenser of misery to men.

The man that is wise, pierced by another’s wordy arrows, sharp-pointed and smarting like fire or the sun, should, even if deeply wounded and burning with pain, bear them patiently, remembering that the slanderer’s merits become his.

He that waits upon one that is good, upon one that is wicked, upon one that is possessed of ascetic merit or upon one that is a thief soon takes the colour from that companion of his, like a cloth from the dye in which it is soaked.

The very gods desire his company, who, stung with reproach, returns not himself nor causes others to return it, or who, being struck, does not himself return the blow nor causes another to do it, and who wishes not the slightest injury to him that injures him.

Silence, it is said, is better than speech; if speak you must, then it is better to say the truth; if truth is to be said, it is better to say what is agreeable; and if what is agreeable is to be said, then it is better to say what is consistent with morality.

A man becomes exactly like him with whom he lives, or like him whom he regards, or like that which he wishes to be. One is freed from those things from which one abstains, and if one abstains from everything one has not to suffer even the least misery.

Such a man neither vanquishes others, nor is vanquished by others. He never injures, nor opposes others. He is unmoved by praise or blame. He neither grieves, nor exults in joy.

He who wishes for the prosperity of all and never sets his heart on the misery of others and who is truthful in speech, humble in behaviour and has all his passions under control is regarded as the first of his species.

He who never consoles others by saying what is true, who gives only having promised, and who keeps an eye over the weaknesses of others is regarded as a mediocre in goodness.

However, incapacity to be controlled, liability to be afflicted by dangers, proneness to give way to wrath, ungratefulness, inability to become another's friend and wickedness of heart are the indications of a bad man.

He, who is dissatisfied with any good that may come to him from others, who is suspicious of his own self, and who drives away from himself all his true friends is the worst of men.

He that desires prosperity to himself should wait upon them that are good and, at times, upon them that are indifferent, but never upon them that are bad.

He that is wicked earns wealth by putting forth his strength, by constant effort, by intelligence and by prowess. But he can never win honest fame, nor can he acquire the virtues and manners of high families (in any of which he may be born).

Dhritarashtra said:

The gods express a liking for high families that regard both virtue and profit without swerving from either, and that are possessed of great learning, I ask you, O Vidura, this question. What are those families that are called high?

Vidura said:

Those families in which asceticism, self-restraint, knowledge of the *Veda*, sacrifices, pure marriages and gifts of food exist or are practised duly are regarded as high. The high families do not deviate from the right course that causes no pain to their deceased ancestors

They who cheerfully practise all the virtues, who desire to enhance the pure fame of the line in which they are born and who avoid every kind of falsehood are born of high families.

Families that are high fall down and become low owing to the absence of sacrifices, impure marriages, abandonment of the *Veda* and insults offered to *brahmanas*.

High families fall off and become low owing to their members disregarding or speaking ill of *brahmanas*, or owing to misappropriation, O Bharata, of what had been deposited with them by others.

Those families that are possessed of members, wealth and kine are not regarded as high families if they be wanting in good manners and conduct, while families wanting in wealth but distinguished by manners and good conduct are regarded as such, and win great reputation.

Therefore, good manners and good conduct should be maintained with care, for, as regards wealth, it comes or goes. He that is wanting in wealth is not really wanting, but he that is wanting in manners and conduct is really in want.

Those families that abound in kine and other cattle and in the produce of the field are not really worthy of regard and fame if they be wanting in manners and conduct.

Let none in our race be a fomenter of quarrels, none serve a king as minister, none steal the wealth of others, none provoke intestine dissensions, none be deceitful or false in behaviour and none eat before serving the *rishis*, the gods and the guests.

He who, in our race, slays *brahmanas*, entertains feelings of aversion towards them, or impedes or otherwise injures agriculture does not deserve to mix with us.

Straw (for a seat), ground (for sitting upon), water (to wash the feet and face) and sweet words are never wanting in the homes of the good. Virtuous men devoted to the

practice of righteous acts, when desirous of entertaining (guests), have these things ready for being offered with reverence.

As the *sandal* tree, O King, though thin, is competent to bear weights which timbers of other trees (much thicker) cannot, so they that belong to high families are always able to bear the weight of great cares which ordinary men cannot.

He that bears himself as a friend, even though unconnected by birth or by blood, is a true friend, a real refuge and a protector. He, whose heart is unsteady, who does not wait upon the aged, or who is of a restless disposition cannot make friends.

Success (in the attainment of objects) forsakes the person whose heart is unsteady, who has no control over his mind or who is a slave of his senses, like swans forsaking a tank whose waters have dried up.

They that are of weak minds suddenly give way to anger, and are gratified without sufficient cause; they are like clouds that are so inconstant.

The very birds of prey abstain from touching the dead bodies of those who, having been served and benefited by friends, showed ingratitude to the latter, when alive.

You may be poor or you may be rich, you should honour your friends. Until some service is sought, the sincerity or otherwise of friends cannot be known.

Sorrow kills beauty; sorrow kills strength; sorrow kills understanding; and sorrow brings on disease. Grief, instead of helping the acquisition of one's object, dries up one's body and makes one's foes glad. Therefore, do not yield to grief.

Men repeatedly die and are reborn; repeatedly they wither away and grow; repeatedly they ask others for help, and they themselves are asked for help; repeatedly they lament and are lamented. Happiness and misery, plenty and want, gain and loss, life and death are shared by all in due order. Therefore, he that is self-controlled should neither exult in joy nor repine in sorrow.

The six senses are always restless. Through the most predominant one amongst them, one's understanding escapes in proportion to the strength it assumes, like water from a pot through its holes.

Dhritarashtra said:

King Yudhishtira, who is like a flame of fire, has been deceived by me. He will surely exterminate in battle all my wicked sons. Everything, therefore, seems to me to be fraught with danger, and my mind is full of anxiety. O You of great intelligence! Tell me such words as may dispel my anxiety.

Vidura said:

O Sinless one! In nothing else than knowledge and asceticism, in nothing else than restraining the senses and in nothing else than complete abandonment of avarice do I see your good.

Fear is dispelled by self-knowledge; by asceticism, one wins what is great and valuable; by waiting upon superiors, learning is acquired; and peace is gained by self-restraint.

They that desire salvation without having acquired the merit attainable by gifts or that which is attainable by practising the ritual of the *Veda* do not sojourn through life, freed from anger and aversion.

The happiness that may be derived from a judicious course of study, from a battle fought virtuously and from ascetic austerities performed rigidly always increases at the end.

They that are no longer in peace with their relatives obtain no sleep even if they have recourse to well-made beds; nor do they, O King, derive any pleasure from women or the laudatory hymns of bards and eulogists. Such persons can never practise virtue. Happiness can never be theirs in this world.

Honours can never be theirs and peace has no charm for them. Counsels that are for their benefit please them not. They never acquire what they have not, nor succeed in retaining what they have. O King! There is no other end for such men save destruction.

As milk is possible in kine, asceticism in *brahmanas* and inconstancy in women, so fear is possible from relatives. Numerous thin threads of equal length, collected together, are competent to bear, from the strength of numbers, the constant rolling of the shuttle-cock over them. The case is even so with relatives that are good, O Bull of the Bharata race!

Separated from one another, burning barns produce only smoke; but brought together, they blaze forth into a powerful flame. The case is even so, O Dhritarashtra, with relatives.

They, O Dhritarashtra, who tyrannize over *brahmanas*, women, relatives and kine soon fall off their stalks, like fruits that are ripe. And the tree that stands singly, though gigantic, strong and deep-rooted, has its trunk soon smashed and twisted by a mighty wind.

These trees that grow in close compact are competent, owing to mutual dependence, to resist winds more violent. Thus, he that is single, however endowed with all the virtues, is regarded by foes as capable of being vanquished, like an isolated tree by the wind. Relatives, again, in consequence of mutual dependence and mutual aid, grow together, like lotus-stalks in a lake.

*Brahmanas*, kine, relatives, children, women, those whose food is eaten and those that yield, by asking for protection, must never be slain.

O King! Without wealth, no good quality can show itself in a person. If, however, you are in health, you can achieve your good, for one is dead who is unhealthy and ill.

O King, anger is a kind of bitter, pungent, acrid and hot drink, painful in its consequences: it is a kind of headache not born of any physical illness; and they that are unwise can never digest it. Do you, O King, swallow it up and obtain peace?

They that are afflicted by disease have no liking for enjoyment, nor do they desire any happiness from wealth. The sick, however, filled with sorrow know not what happiness is or what the enjoyment of wealth is.

Beholding Draupadi won at dice, I told you before, O King, that '*they that are honest avoid deceit in play. Therefore, stop Duryodhana*'. You did not, however, act according to my words.

That is not strength which is opposed to softness. On the other hand, strength mixed with softness constitutes true policy which should ever be pursued.

That prosperity which is dependent on crookedness alone is destined to be destroyed. That prosperity, which, however, depends on both strength and softness, descends to sons and grandsons in tact. Let your sons, therefore, cherish the Pandavas, and the Pandavas also cherish your sons.

O King! Let the Kurus and the Pandavas, both having same friends and same foes, live together in happiness and prosperity. You are, today, O King, the refuge of the sons of Kuru. Indeed, the race of Kuru, O Ajamida, is dependent on you.

O Sire! Preserving your fame unsullied, you cherish the children of Pandu, afflicted, as they are, with the sufferings of exile. O Descendant of Kuru! Make peace with the sons of Pandu. Let not your foes discover your holes (weaknesses). They (Pandavas) all, O God among men, are devoted to truth. O King of men! Withdraw Duryodhana from his evil ways.

Vidura continued:

O Son of Vichitravirya! Manu, the son of the Self-created, has, O King, spoken of the following seven and ten kinds of men, as those that strike empty space with their fists, or seem to bend the vapoury bow of Indra in the sky, or desire to catch the intangible rays of the sun.

These seven and ten kinds of foolish men are as follows:

He who seeks to control a person that is incapable of being controlled;  
He who is content with small gains;  
He who humbly pays court to enemies;  
He who seeks to restrain women's frailty;  
He who asks one for gifts who should never be asked;  
He who boasts, having done anything;  
He who, born in a high family, perpetrates an improper deed;  
He who, being weak, always wages hostilities with one that is powerful;  
He who talks to a person listening scoffingly;  
He who desires to have that which is unattainable;  
He who, being a father-in-law, jests with his daughter-in-law;  
He who boasts at having his alarms dispelled by his daughter-in-law; He who scatters his own seeds in another's field;  
He who speaks ill of his own wife;  
He who, having received anything from another, says that he does not remember it;  
He who, having given away anything in words in holy places, boasts at home when asked to make good his words; and  
He who strives to prove the truth of what is false.

The envoys of Yama, with noose in hand, drag those persons to hell.

One should behave towards another just as that other behaves towards him. Even this is consistent with social polity. One may behave deceitfully towards him that behaves deceitfully, but honestly towards him that is honest in his behaviour.

Old age kills beauty; patience, hope; death, life; the practice of virtue, worldly enjoyment; lust, modesty; companionship with the wicked, good behaviour; anger, prosperity; and pride, everything.

Dhritarashtra said:

Man has been spoken of in the *Veda* as having hundred years for the period of his life. For what reason, then, do not all men attain the allotted period?

Vidura said:

Excess of pride, excess in speech, excess in eating, anger, the desire of enjoyment and intestine dissensions, O King, are the six sharp swords that cut off the period of life allotted to creatures. It is these which kill men, and not death. Knowing this, blessed be you!

He who appropriates to himself the wife of one who has confided in him; he who violates the bed of his preceptor; that *brahmana*, O Bharata, who becomes the husband of

a *sudra* woman or drinks wine; he who commands *brahmanas*, becomes their master or takes away the lands that support them; and he who takes the lives of those who yield asking for protection are all guilty of the sin of slaying *brahmanas*.

The *Veda* declares that contact with these requires expiation. He that accepts the teaching of the wise, he that is acquainted with the rules of morality, he that is liberal, he that eats having first dedicated the food to the gods and the *Pitris*, he that envies none, he that is incapable of doing anything that injures others, he that is grateful, truthful, humble and learned succeeds in attaining to heaven.

Abundant are they, O King, that can always speak agreeable words. The speaker, however, is rare, as also the hearer, of words that are disagreeable but medicinal. That man who, without regarding what is agreeable or disagreeable to his master but keeping virtue alone in view, says what is unpalatable, but medicinal, truly adds to the strength of the king.

For the sake of the family, a member may be sacrificed; for the sake of the village, a family may be sacrificed; for the sake of a kingdom, a village may be sacrificed; and for the sake of one's soul, the whole earth may be sacrificed.

One should protect one's wealth in view of the calamities that may overtake one; by one's wealth, one should protect one's wives; and by both one's wealth and wives, one should protect one's own self. From very olden times, it has been seen that gambling provokes quarrels. Therefore, he that is wise should not resort to it even in jest.

O Son of Pratipa! At the time of that gambling match, I told you, O King, 'this is not proper'. But, O Son of Vichitravirya, like medicine to a sick man, those words of mine were not agreeable to you.

O King! You desire to vanquish the sons of Pandu, who are just as peacocks of variegated plumage, whereas your sons are all as crows. Forsaking lions, you are protecting jackals! O King! When the time comes, you will have to grieve for all this.

That master, O Sire, who does not give vent to his displeasure with devoted servants zealously pursuing his good, enlists the confidence of his servants. In fact, the latter adhere to him even in distress.

By confiscating the grants to one's servants or stopping their pay, one should not seek to amass wealth, for, even affectionate counsellors, deprived of their means of life and enjoyment, turn against one and leave one (in distress).

Reflecting first on all intended acts and adjusting the wages and allowances of servants with his income and expenditure, a king should make proper alliances, for there is nothing that cannot be accomplished by alliances.

That officer who, fully understanding the intentions of his royal master, discharges all duties with alacrity and who is respectable himself and devoted to his master always tells what is for his master's good. He, who is fully acquainted with the extent of his own might and with that also of those against whom he may be engaged, should be regarded by the king as his second self.

That servant, however, who, commanded (by his master), disregards the latter's injunctions and who, enjoined to do anything, refuses to submit, proud as he is of his own intelligence, and given to arguing against his master, should be got rid of without the least delay.

Men of learning say that a servant should be endued with the eight qualities of absence of pride, ability, absence of procrastination, kindness, cleanliness, incorruptibility, birth in a family free from the taint of disease and weightiness of speech.

No man should confidently enter an enemy's house after dusk even with notice. One should not, at night, lurk in the yard of another's premises, nor should one seek to enjoy a woman to whom the king himself might make love.

Never set yourself against the decision to which a person has arrived, who keeps low company and who is in the habit of consulting all he meets. Never tell him '*I do not believe you,*' but assigning some reason, send him away on a pretext.

A king who is exceedingly merciful, a woman of lewd character, the servant of a king, a son, a brother, a widow having an infant son, one serving in the army and one that has suffered great losses should never be engaged in pecuniary transactions of lending or borrowing.

Wisdom, high lineage, acquaintance with scriptures, self-restraint, prowess, moderation in speech, gift to the extent of one's power and gratefulness are the eight qualities that shed lustre on men. These high qualities, O Sire, are necessarily brought together by one only by gifts. When the king favours a person, that incident (of royal favour) brings in all others and holds them together.

He that performs ablutions wins strength, beauty, a clear voice, capacity to utter all the alphabetical sounds, delicacy of touch, fineness of scent, cleanliness, gracefulness, delicacy of limbs and beautiful women.

He that eats sparingly wins health, long life and ease; his progeny also becomes healthy; and nobody reproaches him for gluttony.

One should not give shelter in one's house to one that always acts improperly, one that eats too much, one that is hated by all, one that is exceedingly deceitful, one that is cruel, one that is ignorant of the proprieties of time and place and one that dresses indecently.

A person, however distressed, should never solicit a miser for alms, one that speaks ill of others, one that is unacquainted with the Sastras, a dweller in the woods, one that is cunning, one that does not regard persons worthy of regard, one that is cruel, one that habitually quarrels with others or one that is ungrateful.

A person should never wait upon one that is a foe, one that always errs, one that is wedded to falsehood, one that is wanting in devotion to the gods, one that is without affection and one that always regards oneself competent to do everything that are considered the six worst of men.

One's purposes depend (for their success) on means; and means are dependent, again, on the nature of the purposes (sought to be accomplished by them). They are intimately connected with each other, so that success depends on both.

Begetting sons and rendering them independent by making some provision for them, and bestowing maiden daughters on eligible persons, one should retire to the woods, and desire to live as a *muni* (ascetic).

One should, obtaining the favours of the Supreme Being, do that which is for the good of all creatures as also for one's own happiness, for it is this which is the root of the success of all one's objects. What anxiety has one for a livelihood that has intelligence, energy, prowess, strength, alacrity and perseverance?

Behold the evils of a rupture with the Pandavas which would sadden the very gods with Sakra. These are, first, enmity between them that are all your sons; secondly, a life of continued anxiety; thirdly, the loss of the fair fame of the Kurus; and lastly, the joy of those that are your enemies.

The wrath of Bhishma, O You of the splendour of Indra, of Drona and the king Yudhishtira will consume the whole world, like a comet of large proportions falling transversely on the earth. Your hundred sons and Karna, and the sons of Pandu can together rule the vast earth with the belt of the seas.

O King! The Dhartarashtras constitute a forest of which the Pandavas are, I think, tigers. O, do not cut down that forest with its tigers! O let not the tigers be driven from that forest! There can be no forest without tigers, and no tigers without a forest. The forest shelters the tigers and the tigers guard the forest.

They that are sinful never seek so much to ascertain the good qualities of others as to ascertain their faults. He that desires the highest success in all matters connected with worldly profit should, from the very beginning, practise virtue, for true profit is never separated from heaven.

He, whose soul has been dissociated from sin and firmly fixed on virtue, has understood all things in their natural and adventitious states; he that follows virtue, profit

and desire, in proper seasons, obtains, the force of both anger and joy, and never, O King, loses his senses under calamities, wins prosperity.

Listen to me, O King! Men are said to have five different kinds of strength. Of these, the strength of arms is regarded to be of the most inferior kind. Blessed be you! The acquisition of good counsellors is regarded as the second kind of strength. The wise have said that the acquisition of wealth is the third kind of strength.

The strength of birth, O King, which one naturally acquires from one's sires and grandsires, is regarded as the fourth kind of strength. That, however, O Bharata, by which all these are won, and which is the foremost of all kinds of strength, is called the strength of the intellect.

Having provoked the hostility of a person who is capable of inflicting great injury on a fellow creature, one should not gather assurance from the thought that one lives at a distance from the other.

Is he that can place his trust on women, kings, serpents, his own master, enemies, enjoyment and period of life, wise? (No)

There are no physicians or medicines for one that has been struck by the arrow of wisdom. In the case of such a person neither the *mantras* of *homa*, nor auspicious ceremonies, nor the *mantras* of the *Atharva Veda*, nor any of the antidotes of poison are of any efficacy.

Serpents, fire, lions and consanguineous relatives, O Bharata, should be disregarded by a man; all of these are possessed of great power.

Fire is a thing of great energy in this world. It lurks in wood and never consumes it till it is ignited by others. That very fire, when brought out by friction, consumes by its energy not only the wood in which it lurks, but also an entire forest and many other things.

Men of high lineage are just like fire in energy. Endued with forgiveness, they betray no outward symptoms of wrath and are quiet like fire in wood.

You, O King, with your sons, are possessed of the virtue of creepers, and the sons of Pandu are regarded as *sala* trees. A creeper never grows unless there is a large tree to twine round.

O King! O Son of Ambika! Your sons are as a forest. O Sire! Know that the Pandavas are the lions of that forest. Without its lions, the forest is doomed to destruction, and the lions also are doomed to destruction without the forest (to shelter them).

Vidura continued:

The heart of a young man, when an aged and venerable person comes to his house (as a guest), soars aloft. By advancing forward and saluting him, he gets it back.

He that is self-controlled, first offering a seat, and bringing water and causing his guest's feet to be washed and making the usual enquiries of welcome, should then speak of his own affairs, and taking everything into consideration, offer him food.

The wise have said that a man lives in vain in whose dwelling a *brahmana* conversant with *mantras* does not accept water, honey and curds, and kine for fear of being unable to appropriate them, or because of miserliness and unwillingness with which the gifts are made.

A householder should consider exceedingly dear to offer water to a physician, a maker of arrows, even one that has given up the vow of *brahmacharya* before it is complete, a thief, a crooked-minded man, a *brahmana* that drinks wine, one that causes miscarriage, one that lives by serving in the army and one that sells the *Veda*, when arrived as a guest, however undeserving he may be.

A *brahmana* should never be a seller of salt, of cooked food, curds, milk, honey, oil, clarified butter, sesame, meat, fruits, roots, potherbs, dyed clothes, all kinds of perfumery and treacle.

He that never gives way to anger, he that is above grief, he that is no longer in need of friendship and quarrels, he that disregards both praise and blame, and he that stands aloof from both what is agreeable and disagreeable, like one perfectly withdrawn from the world, is a real *yogi* of the *Bhikshu* order.

That virtuous ascetic, who lives on rice growing wild, roots or potherbs, who has his soul under control, who carefully keeps his fire for worship, and who, dwelling in the woods, is always regardful of guests, is indeed, the foremost of his brotherhood.

Having wronged an intelligent person, one should never gather assurance from the fact that one lives at a distance from the person wronged. Long are the arms which intelligent persons have by which they can return wrongs for wrongs done to them.

One should never put trust on him who should not be trusted, nor put too much trust on him who should be trusted, for the danger that arises from one's having reposed trust on another cuts off one's very roots.

One should renounce envy, protect one's wives, give to others what is their due, and be agreeable in speech.

One should be sweet-tongued and pleasant in his address as regards one's wives, but should never be their slave. It has been said that wives that are highly blessed and

virtuous, worthy of worship and the ornaments of their homes, are really embodiments of domestic prosperity. They should, therefore, be protected particularly.

One should devolve the looking after of one's inner apartments on one's father; of the kitchen, on one's mother; of the kine, on somebody one looks upon as one's own self; but, as regards agriculture, one should look after it oneself.

One should look after guests of the trader-caste through one's servants, and those of the *brahmana* caste through one's sons.

Fire has its origin in water; *kshatriyas* in *brahmanas*; and iron in stone. The energy of those (fire, *kshatriyas*, and iron) can affect all things, but is neutralized as soon as the things come in contact with their progenitors. Fire lies concealed in wood without showing itself externally.

Good and forgiving men born of high families and endued with fiery energy do not betray any outward symptoms of what is within them. That king whose counsels cannot be known by either outsiders or those about him, but who knows the counsels of others through his spies, enjoys his prosperity long.

One should never speak of what one intends to do. Let anything you do in respect of virtue, profit and desire be not known till it is done. Let counsels be not divulged. Ascending on the mountain-top or on the terrace of a palace or proceeding to a wilderness devoid of trees and plants, one should, in secrecy, mature his counsels.

O Bharata! Neither a friend who is without learning, nor a learned friend who has no control over his senses deserves to be a repository of state secrets. O King, never make one your minister without examining him well, for a king's finances and the keeping of his counsels both depend on his minister. That kind is the foremost of rulers whose ministers know his acts in respect of virtue, profit and desire, only after they are done.

The king, whose counsels are kept close, without doubt, commands success. He that, from ignorance, commits acts that are censurable loses his very life in consequence of the untoward results of those acts. The doing of acts that are praise-worthy is always attended with ease. Omission to do such acts leads to repentance.

As a *brahmana* without having studied the *Veda* is not fit to officiate at a *sraddha* (in honour of the *Pitris*), so he that has not heard of the six (means of protecting a kingdom) deserves not to take part in political deliberations.

O King! He that has an eye upon increase, decrease and surplus, he that is conversant with the six means and knows also his own self, and he whose conduct is always applauded brings the whole earth under subjection to himself.

He whose anger and joy are productive of consequences, he who looks over personally what should be done, and he who has his treasury under his own control brings the whole earth under subjection to himself.

The king should be content with the name he wins and the umbrella that is held over his head. He should divide the wealth of the kingdom among these that serve him. Alone he should not appropriate everything.

A *brahmana* knows a *brahmana*; the husband understands the wife; the king knows the minister; and monarchs know monarchs.

A foe that deserves death, when brought under subjection, should never be set free.

If one is weak, one should pay court to one's foe that is stronger, even if the latter deserves death; but one should kill that foe as soon as one commands sufficient strength, for, if not killed, dangers soon arise from him.

One should, with an effort, control one's wrath against the gods, kings, *brahmanas*, old men, children and those that are helpless. He that is wise should avoid unprofitable quarrels such as fools only engage in. By this one wins great fame in this world and avoids misery and unhappiness.

People never desire him for a master whose grace is fruitless and whose wrath goes for nothing, like a woman never desiring a eunuch for a husband.

Intelligence does not exist for the acquisition of wealth, nor is idleness the cause of adversity; the man of wisdom only knows, and not others, the cause of the diversities of this world.

The fool, O Bharata, always disregards those that are elderly in age, and eminent in conduct, knowledge, intelligence, wealth and lineage. Calamities soon come upon them that are of wicked disposition, devoid of wisdom, envious, sinful, foul-tongued and wrathful.

Absence of deceitfulness, gift, observance of the established rules of intercourse and speech well-controlled bring all creatures under subjection. He that is without deceitfulness and he that is active, grateful, intelligent and guileless, even if his treasury be empty, obtains friends, counsellors and servants.

Intelligence, tranquility of mind, self-control, purity, absence of harsh speech and unwillingness to do anything disagreeable to friends are regarded as the fuel of prosperity's flame.

The wretch, who does not give to others their due, who is of wicked soul, and who is ungrateful and shameless should, O King, be avoided.

The guilty person who provokes another about him that is innocent cannot sleep peacefully at night, like a person passing the night with a snake in the same room.

They, O Bharata, who, upon being angry, endanger one's possessions and means of acquisition, should always be propitiated like the very gods.

Those objects that depend upon women, careless persons, men that have fallen away from the duties of their caste, and those that are wicked in disposition are doubtful of success.

They who have a woman, a deceitful person or a child for their guide sink helplessly, O King, like a raft made of stone.

They that are competent in the general principles of work, though not in particular kinds of work, are regarded by men as learned and wise.

That man who is highly spoken of by swindlers, mimes and women of ill fame is more dead than alive.

Forsaking these mighty bowmen of immeasurable energy, that is, the sons of Pandu, you have, O Bharata, devolved on Duryodhana, the cares of a mighty empire. You shall, therefore, soon see that swelling affluence fall off, like Bali fallen off the three worlds.

Dhritarashtra said:

Man is not the disposer of either his prosperity or adversity. He is like a wooden doll moved by strings. Indeed, the Creator has made man subject to destiny. Go on telling me; I am attentive to what you say.

Vidura said:

O Bharata! By speaking words out of season, even Brihaspati himself incurs reproach and the charge of ignorance.

One becomes agreeable by gift, another by sweet words, a third by the force of incantation and drugs. However, he that is naturally agreeable always remains so.

He that is hated by another is never regarded by that other as honest, intelligent or wise. One attributes everything good to him one loves; and everything evil to him one hates.

O King! As soon as Duryodhana was born I told you, 'you should abandon this one son, for by abandoning him you would secure the prosperity of your hundred sons, and by keeping him, destruction would overtake your hundred sons, that gain should never be regarded highly which leads to loss.

On the other hand, that loss even should be regarded highly which would bring on gain. That is no loss, O King, which brings on gain. That, however, should be reckoned as loss which is certain to bring about greater losses still’.

Some become eminent in consequence of good qualities; others become so in consequence of wealth. Avoid them, O Dhritarashtra, that are eminent in wealth but destitute of good qualities.

Dhritarashtra said:

All that you say is approved by the wise and is for my future good. I dare not, however, abandon my son. It is well-known that where there is righteousness, there is victory.

Vidura said:

He that is graced with every virtue and is endued with humility is never indifferent to even the minutest sufferings of living creatures. They that are ever employed in speaking ill of others always strive actively quarrelling with one another and, in all matters, calculated to give pain to others.

There is sin in accepting gifts from, and danger in making gifts to, them whose very sight is inauspicious and whose companionship is fraught with danger. They that are quarrelsome, covetous, shameless and deceitful are known unrighteous, and their companionship should always be avoided.

One should also avoid those men that are endued with similar faults of a grave nature. When the occasion that caused the friendship is over, the friendship of those that are low, the beneficial result of that connection and the happiness also derivable from it all come to an end.

They then strive to speak ill of their (former) friend and endeavour to inflict loss on him. If the loss they sustain be even very small, for all that, they, from want of self-control, fail to enjoy peace.

He that is learned, examining everything carefully and reflecting well, should, from a distance, avoid the friendship of vile and wicked-minded persons such as these.

He that helps his poor, wretched and helpless relatives obtains children and animals, and enjoys prosperity that knows no end.

They that desire their own benefit should always succour their relatives. By every means, therefore, O King, you seek the growth of your race. Prosperity will be yours, O Monarch, if you behave well towards all your relatives. Even relatives that are destitute of good qualities should be protected.

O Bull of the Bharata race! How much more, therefore, should they be protected that are endued with every virtue and are humbly expectant of your favours? Favour the heroic sons of Pandu, O Monarch, and let a few villages be assigned to them for their maintenance.

By acting thus, O King, fame will be yours in this world. You are old; you should, therefore, control your sons. I should say what is for your good. Know me as one that wishes well to you.

He that desires his own good should never quarrel, O sire, with his relatives. O Bull of the Bharata race! Happiness should ever be enjoyed with one's relatives, and not without them. To eat together, to talk to one another and to love one another are what relatives should always do among themselves.

They should never quarrel. In this world, it is the relatives that rescue and the relatives that ruin (relatives). Those amongst them that are righteous rescue; while those that are unrighteous sink (their brethren).

O King! O Giver of honours! Be righteous in your conduct towards the sons of Pandu. Surrounded by them, you would be unconquerable by your foes.

If a relative shrinks in the presence of a prosperous relative, like a deer at the sight of a hunter armed with arrows, then the prosperous relative has to take upon himself all the sins of the other.

O the Best of men! Repentance will be yours (for this your inaction at present) when, in future, you hear of the death of either the Pandavas or your sons. O, think of all this.

When life itself is unstable, one should, in the very beginning, avoid that act in consequence of which one would have to indulge in regrets, having entered the chamber of woe. True it is that a person other than Bhargava, the author of the science of morality, is liable to commit actions that go against morality.

It is seen, however, that a just notion of consequence is present in all persons of intelligence. You are an aged scion of Kuru's race. If Duryodhana inflicted these wrongs on the sons of Pandu, it is your duty, O King of men, to undo them all.

Re-instating them in their position, you will, in this world, be cleansed of all your sins and be, O King of men, an object of worship, with even those that have their souls under control.

Reflecting on the well-spoken words of the wise, according to their consequences, he that engages in acts never loses fame.

The knowledge imparted by even men of learning and skill is imperfect, for that which is sought to be inculcated is ill-understood, or, if understood, is not accomplished in practice. That learned person who never does an act, the consequences of which are sin and misery, always grows (in prosperity).

The person, however, of wicked soul, who, from folly, pursues his sinful course, commenced before, falls into a slough of deep mire. He that is wise should ever keep in view the six conduits by which counsels become divulged, and he that desires success and a long dynasty should ever guard himself from those six.

The six conduits are intoxication, sleep, inattention to spies set over one by another, one's own demeanour as dependent on the working of one's own heart, confidence reposed on a wicked counsellor and unskillful envoys. Knowing these six doors (through which counsels are divulged), he that keeps them shut, while pursuing the attainment of virtue, profit and desire, succeeds in standing over the heads of his foes.

Without an acquaintance with the scriptures and without waiting upon the old, neither virtue nor profit can be known (won) by persons blessed even with the intelligence of Brihaspati.

A thing is lost if cast into the sea; words are lost if addressed to one that listens not; the scriptures are lost on one that has not his soul under control; and a libation of clarified butter is lost if poured over the ashes left by a fire that is extinguished.

He that is endued with intelligence makes friends with those that are wise, having first examined by the aid of his intelligence, repeatedly searching by his understanding, and using his ears, eyes and judgment. Humility removes obloquy, failure, prowess; forgiveness always conquers anger; and auspicious rites destroy all indications of evil.

One's lineage, O King, is tested by one's objects of enjoyment, place of birth, house, behaviour, food and dress. When an object of enjoyment is available, even that one who has attained emancipation is not unwilling to enjoy; what, again, need be said of one that is yet wedded to desire?

A king should cherish a counsellor that worships persons of wisdom and that is endued with learning, virtue, agreeable appearance, friends, sweet speech and a good heart.

Whether of low or high birth, he who does not transgress the rules of polite intercourse, who has an eye on virtue, and who is endued with humility and modesty is superior to a hundred persons of high birth.

The friendship of those persons whose hearts, secret pursuits, pleasures and acquirements accord in every respect never cools.

He that is intelligent should avoid an ignorant person of wicked soul, like a pit whose mouth is covered with grass, for friendship with such a person can never last.

The man of wisdom should never contract friendship with those that are proud, ignorant, fierce, rash and fallen off righteousness. He that is grateful, virtuous, truthful, large-hearted and devoted, he that has his senses under control, he that preserves his dignity, and he that never forsakes a friend should be desired for a friend.

The withdrawal of the senses from their respective objects is equivalent to death itself. Their excessive indulgence again would ruin the very gods. Humility, love of all creatures, forgiveness and respect for friends lengthen life.

He, who, with a firm resolution, strives to accomplish, by a virtuous policy, purposes that have once been frustrated, is said to possess real manhood. That man, who is conversant with remedies to be applied in the future, who is firmly resolved in the present and who could anticipate in the past how an act begun would end, attains all his objects.

That, which a man pursues in word, deed and thought, wins him for its own; therefore, one should always seek that which is for his good.

Effort after securing what is good, the properties of time, place and means, acquaintance with the scriptures, activity, straightforwardness and frequent meetings with those that are good bring about prosperity.

Perseverance is the root of prosperity, of gain and of what is beneficial. The man that pursues an object with perseverance and without giving it up in vexation is really great, and enjoys happiness that is without end.

O Sire! There is nothing more conducive to happiness and nothing more proper for a man of power and energy than forgiveness in every place and at all times. He that is weak should forgive under all circumstances. He that is possessed of power should show forgiveness from motives of virtue; and he, to whom the success or failure of his objects is the same, is naturally forgiving.

That pleasure the pursuit of which does not injure one's virtue and profit should certainly be pursued to one's fill. One should not, however, act like a fool by giving free indulgence to one's senses.

Prosperity never resides in him who suffers himself to be tortured by grief, who is addicted to evil ways, who denies Godhead, who is idle, who has not his senses under control and who is divested of exertion.

The man that is humble and that, from humility, is modest is regarded as weak and persecuted by persons of misdirected intelligence.

Prosperity never approaches from fear the person that is excessively liberal, that gives away without measure, that is possessed of extraordinary bravery, that practices the most rigid vows, and that is very proud of his wisdom.

Prosperity does not reside in one that is highly accomplished, nor in one that is without any accomplishment. It does not desire a combination of all virtues, nor is it pleased with the total absence of all virtues. Blind, like a mad cow, prosperity resides with someone who is not remarkable (for no known reason).

The fruits of the *Veda* are ceremonies performed before the (*homa*) fire; and the fruits of an acquaintance with the scriptures are goodness of disposition and conduct. The fruits of women are the pleasures of intercourse and offspring; and the fruits of wealth are enjoyment and charity.

He that performs acts tending to secure his prosperity in the other world with wealth acquired sinfully never reaps the fruits of these acts in the other world, in consequence of the sinfulness of the acquisitions.

In the midst of deserts, deep woods or inaccessible terrains, amid all kinds of dangers and alarms, or in the face of deadly weapons upraised for striking him, he that has strength of mind entertains no fear. Exertion, self-control, skill, carefulness, steadiness, memory and commencement of acts after mature deliberation are the roots of prosperity.

Austerities constitute the strength of ascetics; the *Veda* is the strength of those conversant with it; in envy lies the strength of the wicked; and in forgiveness lies the strength of the virtuous.

Water, roots, fruits, milk, clarified butter, (what is done at) the desire of a *brahmana*, (what is done at) the command of a preceptor and medicine are not destructive of a vow.

That, which is antagonistic to one's own self, should never be applied in respect of another. Briefly, even this is virtue. Other kinds of virtue are there, but proceed from caprice.

Anger must be conquered by forgiveness; the wicked must be conquered by honesty; the miser must be conquered by liberality; and falsehood must be conquered by truth.

One should not place trust on a woman, a swindler, an idle person, a coward, one that is fierce, one that boasts of one's own power, a thief, an ungrateful person and an atheist.

Achievements, periods of life, fame and power always expand in the case of him that respectfully salutes his superiors and waits upon the old.

Do not set your heart after those objects which cannot be acquired except by very painful exertion, by sacrificing righteousness or by bowing down to an enemy.

A man without knowledge is to be pitied; an act of intercourse that is not fruitful is to be pitied; and a kingdom without a king is to be pitied. These constitute the source of pain and weakness to embodied creatures; the rains, of decay of hills and mountains; absence of enjoyment, of anguish of women; and wordy arrows, of hurt to the heart.

The scum of the *Veda* is want of study; of *brahmanas*, absence of vows; of the earth, the *vahlikas*; of man, untruth; of the chaste woman, curiosity; of women, exile from home.

The scum of gold is silver; of silver, tin; of tin, lead; and of lead, useless dross.

One can not conquer sleep by lying down; women by desire; fire by fuel; and wine by drinking.

His life is, indeed, crowned with success, who has won his friends by gifts, his foes in battle, and wife by food and drink; they, who have thousands live; and they, who have hundreds, also live.

O Dhritarashtra! Forsake desire. There is none who cannot manage to live by some means or other. Your paddy, wheat, gold, animals and women that are on earth all cannot satiate even one person. Reflecting on this, they that are wise never grieve for want of universal dominion.

O King! I again tell you. Adopt equal conduct towards your children, towards the sons of Pandu and your own sons.

Vidura continued:

Worshipped by the good, and abandoning pride, that good man who pursues his objects without out-stepping the limits of his power, soon succeeds in winning fame, for they that are good, when gratified with a person, are certainly competent to bestow happiness on him.

He that forsakes, of his own accord, even a great object owing to its being fraught with unrighteousness, lives happily, casting off all foes, like a snake that has cast off its slough.

A victory gained by an untruth, deceitful conduct towards the king and insincerity of intentions expressed before the preceptor are each equal to the sin of slaying a *brahmana*.

Excessive envy, death and boastfulness are the causes of destruction of prosperity.

Carelessness in waiting upon the preceptor, haste and boastfulness, are the three enemies of knowledge. Idleness, inattention, confusion of the intellect, restlessness, gathering for wasting time, haughtiness, pride and covetousness constitute, it is said, the faults of students in the pursuit of learning.

How can they that desire pleasure have knowledge? Students, again, engaged in the pursuit of learning, cannot have pleasure. Votaries of pleasure must give up knowledge, and votaries of knowledge must give up pleasure.

Fire is never gratified with fuel (but can consume any measure thereof). The great ocean is never gratified with the rivers it receives (but can receive any number of them). Death is never gratified even with all the living creatures. A beautiful woman is never gratified with any number of men (she may have).

O King! Hope kills patience; *Yama* kills growth; anger kills prosperity; miserliness kills fame; absence of tending kills cattle; and one angry *brahmana* destroys a whole kingdom.

Let goats, brass, silver, honey, antidotes of poison, birds, *brahmanas* versed in the *Veda*, old relatives, and men of high birth sunk in poverty be always present in your house.

O Bharata! Manu has said that goats, bulls, sandal, lyres, mirrors, honey, clarified butter, iron, copper, conch-shells, salagram (the stony-image of *Visnu* with gold within) and *gorochana* should always be kept in one's house for worship of the gods. *Brahmanas* and guests, for all those objects, are auspicious.

O Sire! I would impart to you another sacred lesson productive of great fruits, and which is the highest of all teachings.

Virtue should never be forsaken from desire, fear or temptation even for the sake of life itself. Virtue is indeed everlasting; pleasure and pain are transitory. Life is, indeed, everlasting; but its particular phases are transitory.

Forsaking those which are transitory, betake yourself to that which is everlasting, and let contentment be yours, for contentment is the highest of all acquisitions.

Behold! Illustrious and mighty kings, having ruled lands abounding with wealth and corn, have become the victims of the Universal Destroyer, leaving behind, their kingdoms and vast sources of enjoyment.

The son brought up with anxious care, when dead, is taken up and carried away by men (to the burial ground). With the dishevelled hair and crying piteously, they then cast the body into the funeral pyre, as if it were a piece of wood. Others enjoy the deceased's wealth, while birds and fire feast on the elements of the dead body. He goes to the other world only with his merits and sins keeping him company.

Throwing away the body, O Sire, relatives, friends and sons retrace their steps, like birds abandoning trees without blossoms and fruits. Therefore, men should, carefully and gradually, earn the merit of righteousness.

In the worlds beyond this, there are regions of great gloom and darkness. Know, O King, that those are the regions where the senses of men are exceedingly afflicted.

O King! Let not any of those places be yours. Carefully listening to these words, if you can act according to them, you will obtain great fame in this world of men, and fear will not be yours here or hereafter.

O Bharata! The soul is spoken of as a river; religious merit constitutes its sacred bath; truth, its water; self-control, its banks; and kindness, its waves. He that is righteous purifies himself by a bath therein, for the soul is sacred, and the absence of desire is the highest merit.

O King! Life is a river whose waters are the five senses, and whose crocodiles and sharks are desire and anger. Making self-control your raft, you cross its flow represented by repeated births.

Worshipping and gratifying friends that are eminent in wisdom, virtue, learning and age, he that asks their advice about what he should do and should not do is never misled.

One should restrain one's lust and stomach, by one's patience; one's hands and feet, by one's eyes; one's eyes and ears, by one's mind; and one's mind and words, by one's acts.

That *brahmana* who never omits to perform his ablutions, who always wears his sacred thread, who always attends to the study of the *Veda*, who always avoids food that is unclean, who tells the truth and who performs acts in honour of his preceptor never falls off the region of Brahma.

Having studied the *Veda*, poured libations into fire, performed sacrifices, protected subjects, sanctified his soul by drawing weapons for protecting kine and *brahmanas*, and died on the field of battle the *kshatriya* attains to heaven.

Having studied the *Veda*, distributed, in proper time, his wealth among *brahmanas*, *kshatriyas* and his own dependents, and inhaled the sanctified smoke of the three kinds of fire, the *vaisya* enjoys heavenly bliss in the other world.

Having properly worshipped *brahmanas*, *kshatriyas* and *vaisyas* in due order, having burnt his sins by gratifying them, and then peacefully casting off his body, the *sudra* enjoys the bliss of heaven. The duties of the four orders are thus set forth before you.

Listen now to the reason of my long narration as I discourse it. Yudhishtira, the son of Pandu, is falling off the duties of the *kshatriya* order. Place him, therefore, O King, in a position to discharge the duties of kings.

Dhritarashtra said:

It is even so as you always teach me, O Amiable one!

My heart also inclines that very way of which you told me. Although, however, I incline in my mind towards the Pandavas even as you teach me to do, yet, as soon as I come in contact with Duryodhana, it turns off in a different way. No creature is able to avert fate. Indeed, Destiny, I think, is certain to take its course; individual exertion is futile.

## 2. The Ethics of Kautilya in Arthasastra

### Table of Contents

	Page No
Introduction	52
The Ethics of Kautilya in Arthasastra	53

# **The Ethics of Kautilya in Arthashastra**

## **Introduction**

The Ethics of Kautilya is what is culled from The Kautiliya Arthashastra.

The Arthashastra is a text of political science and is not primarily concerned with the society and its organization. Nevertheless, it cannot avoid a reference to the social order and life prevailing in the society for the reason that political life has no existence outside the society. The social life reflected in the work has thrown enough light on the conditions that actually prevailed in the society when the work was composed.

What relates to human conduct in society is called ethics. The term ethics or ethic means a pattern or norm or code of conduct adopted by a group of people. The term also applies not merely to the various codes of conduct approved but also to the activity of appraising, evaluating and revising these codes. This involves consistent and critical enquiry into the ethical beliefs, and subjects them to close scrutiny.

Ethical Philosophers formulate and formalize existing standards. Often they propose new standards, new norms and patterns of conduct for observance by the groups. This means, among other things, that those engaged in ethical evaluation must be willing to pursue the implications of the issues wherever they lead to. They lead afar encompassing considerations of, among others, duty, responsibility, equality, justice, rights, legitimate authority and benefit.

Kautilya, also known as Chanakya or Vishnugupta, who destroyed the power of the Nandas and placed Chandragupta Maurya on the throne of Magadha is the author of the Arthashastra. As Chandragupta is known to have come to the throne in 321 BC, or thereabouts, the date of composition of this work is assumed to be the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.

Kautilya is primarily concerned with the practical administration of the state by its ruler, in all its facets, in Arthashastra. Whatever codes of conduct he deliberates for individual members of the society constituting the state are to sub-serve the interests of the state. He does not seek to disturb the existing fabric of the society. He is not an idealist to ignore the realities of the day, or his objective. What, therefore, presents in the Arthashastra as to ethics is what existed in the society at the time of its compilation, with the practical advice of the author to the king and the officers of the state to manipulate the codes of human conduct primarily to sub-serve the interests of the state.

## The Ethics of Kautilya in Arthashastra

The Kautilya *Arthashastra*, as the name indicates, is a treatise on *Arthashastra*. The *Sastra* is itself defined in the text thus: *Arthashastra* is the sustenance or livelihood (*vrttih*) of men; in other words, it means the earth inhabited by men. It is the science which is the means of the acquisition and protection of the earth.

Since the Vedic times, *artha* has been regarded as one of three goals of human existence, the other two being *kama* and *dharma*. *Artha* stands for material well-being as well as the means of securing such well-being, particularly, wealth. Like the other two goals, *artha* has primarily the individual in view. It is the individual who is to pursue *artha* as one of the goals of his life.

An essential condition of a man's material well-being is security of livelihood. That is probably the reason why *artha* is, in this text, defined as livelihood. Hence, *vrttih* as sustenance or livelihood is close to *artha*. From the word *vrttih* is derived *vartta*, the three-fold economic activity of agriculture, cattle rearing and trade, which constituted the usual means by which men obtained their livelihood on earth, when the *Sastra* was composed.

If the word *artha* is understood, by implication, in the sense of the earth where men live and seek their material well-being, it ceases to be the goal pursued by individuals; and appears as the means of ensuring the well-being of men in general. This extension of meaning makes it possible for the *Arthashastra* to be regarded as the *Sastra* concerned with the well-being on earth. As the state activity alone can make such well-being generally possible, the protection of the earth and its acquisition are considered the main tenets of this *Sastra*.

It is thus considered that the *Arthashastra* has a two-fold aim. It is first to show how its ruler should protect his territory. This protection principally refers to its administration. Second it shows how territory should be acquired. This acquisition refers principally to the conquest of territory from others. This involves consideration of foreign policy. These two are supposed to cover the whole range of state activity. The *Arthashastra* is thus understood as the science of state-craft or of politics and administration.

The ruler-ship of the earth contemplated in the *Sastra* does not necessarily imply the conquest for the whole world. The field open for such conquest appears restricted to the region lying between the Himalayas and the sea. Territories beyond the borders of India are not included in 'the territory of the Sovereign Ruler'.

One of the reasons for this restriction may be that the conqueror, according to the *Sastra*, is expected to establish a social order based on the *varna* and *asrama* system in the conquered territories; and the establishment of such a social order beyond the limits of India was perhaps considered impracticable or even undesirable. It may also be that such conquest beyond the borders of India was regarded as ethically unjust. It may be

that sense of justice prevented any Indian king from attempting conquest beyond the limits of India.

The *Arthashastra* is a text on political science, and is not primarily concerned with the society and its organization. Nevertheless, it cannot avoid a reference to the social order and life prevailing in the society; for, political life has no existence outside society.

The *Sastra* does not lay down rules in social matters as it does in political matters. Yet it takes notice of the facts of social life as it found them. Though, much theory is mixed up in the references to social organization, it is still possible to find the social life reflected in the *Sastra* as throwing light on the conditions that actually prevailed when the *Sastra* was written.

The *Sastra* lays down for each individual, to whichever *varna* and *asrama* he may belong, the duties of *ahimsa* (refraining from injury), *satya* (truthfulness), *sauca* (purity), *anasuya* (freedom from malice), *anrsamsya* (compassion) and *kshama* (forgiveness). These ideals of conduct are meant for individuals. The *Sastra* regards them as obligatory, though the conduct of public life shall not be guided by rules of individual morality.

The *Sastra* lays down that the ruler is required to safe-guard the social order based on the *varna* and the *asrama* system. This order is believed to have been prescribed in the Veda and, as such, divinely ordained. Therefore, it is considered immutable. The state had no role in its creation. So, it does not have any role to try to modify it. The duty of the state is only to preserve this order and not to allow it to be disturbed in any way. In this respect, the *Arthashastra* shares the same view of the *Dharmashastra*.

The *Arthashastra* describes the specific duties of each of the four *varnas* practically in the same way as the *Smrtis*. It does not prescribe for the *sudra* alone the duty of service of the twice-born, particularly *brahmanas*, as *Manu* does.

The pre-eminent position of a *brahmana* in the *varna* system is, of course, self-evident. But the *Sastra* does not harp on this aspect in or out of place. It does not also explicitly declare that a *brahmana* is above the law, or independent of the state and its authority. Nevertheless, special privileges are intended for him, particularly so for a *srotriya brahmana*.

The *Sastra* recommends that land, free from taxes and fines, be granted to a *srotriya brahmana*, just as such lands are to be granted to the priests and preceptors of the rulers. It also lays down that the property of a *srotriya brahmana* cannot escheat to the state, even if he dies without a heir, like the property of other citizens.

*Brahmanas*, in general, are to be exempted from payment of fees at ferries and pickets. In many cases, punishment for offences is made dependent on the *varna* of the offender. In cases of abuse, defamation, assault, etc an ascending scale of fines is prescribed in accordance with the offender's *varna*, the lower the *varna* the higher the fine or punishment.

However, for the offence of selling or pledging a minor, the scale of punishment is reversed. The highest fine is levied if the offender is a *brahmana*.

The *Sastra* lays down that, in social matters, priority shall be fixed from the *brahmana* downwards. A *brahmana* is declared to be free to refuse to make contributions to common festivals. But he is entitled to take full part in them. That the *brahmana* enjoys a high status in the social order is beyond doubt, as noticed from the privileges and concessions reserved for him.

As a result of the special position occupied by the *brahmana* in the society, his influence on state activity must have been very great. It can be assumed that the advisers of the rulers must have largely come from this *varna*.

Apart from the *purohits* who may normally be expected to exercise a powerful influence on the ruler, most of the ministers, if not all, were also drawn from among the *brahmanas*.

Though the ruler is not bound to follow the advice of the *purohits* or the ministers, their influence on the administration of the state must have been very great.

That ambassadors (*dutas*) were, as a rule, *brahmanas* may be inferred from the remark which an ambassador, threatened with seizure by the enemy, is expected to make as 'even the lowest-born among ambassadors must not be killed, what to speak then of *brahmanas*?'

The influence of the *brahmana varna* on the general social life is of a special kind. He has a monopoly on imparting education which is not available to the great mass of *sudras*. All learning and knowledge is concentrated in the hands of the *brahmanas*.

The *brahmana varna* has a monopoly of priest-craft. The religious life of the community is under its control. Thus, with the control of the intellectual and the religious life in the community, the *brahmana varna* exercises powerful influence on the social order.

There is no need for the *brahmana* caste to organize itself into a church as elsewhere, for membership of the caste is by birth. This position of pre-eminence and influence seems to have been assured for this *varna* from the earliest times of social organization in India. The other *varnas* never seriously challenged the *brahmana varna* because they, too, had come to regard the *varna* system as not only natural, but as divinely ordained. Such reconciliation was easy in the social order because of the firm faith in the theory of *karma* and rebirth. The *Arthashastra* says succinctly, 'the observance of one's own *dharma* leads to heaven and to immortality'.

It is worthy of note that the *Sastra* refers to troops recruited from all the four *varnas*. Prior to Kautilya, there had been views expressed in favour of a *brahmana* army as being the best because of the high spirit possessed by them. Kautilya, however,

rejected this view and showed his preference for a well-trained *kshatriya* army or a strong *vaisya* and *sudra* army. There seems no doubt that not all fighters belonged to the *kshatriya varna*, and that when large forces were required, recruitment from the *sudra* men was quite common.

The *swadharm*a of a *sudra* also includes *vartha* and *karukusilavakarma*. In *vartha*, which is prescribed for a *vaisya* also, a *sudra* may be supposed to be subordinate to him as an agricultural labourer, a herdsman, or a trader's servant. The arts and crafts, however, appear to be exclusively practised by the *sudra* alone. This appears to be more in consonance with the actual state of things at the time the *Sastra* was composed.

The *Arthasastra*, significantly, looks upon the *sudras* as an *Aryan* community, as distinguished from *mleccha* or non-*Aryan* communities. The *Sastra* forbids the sale or pledging of a minor belonging to any of the four *varnas* including the *sudra*. By implication, it suggests that only the *mlecchas* may sell or pledge their children for service as slaves.

The inclusion of the *sudra* among the *Aryan* communities is not in conformity with the standpoint of Vedic texts. It may be that this is an attempt, in the *Arthasastra*, to assimilate the masses of settled communities in the *Aryan* fold, though the purpose may be to secure political consolidation, as opposed to *mleccha* communities.

Discrimination on the basis of *varna* is referred to in the *Sastra*, in connection with the oath to be administered to witnesses, in the matter of inheritance by sons born of wives belonging to different *varnas*, and so on.

Again, the zones of residence in the city are determined based on *varna*. For instance, the *brahmanas* are to live in the north, the *kshatriyas* in the east and so on.

Though there can be no rational justification of hereditary class privileges in any social order, there was no significant resistance from those who were victimized by the social system, in the societies of the past, including the social order when the *Arthasastra* was composed.

The theory of the four *varnas*, though broadly true of the ancient Indian society, has had to take into account forms of social organizations which had little relation to that system. There were numerous communities in society whose place in the scheme of four *varnas* could not be easily determined. The *Arthasastra*, as also the *Smrtis*, make an attempt to bring such communities into some sort of relation with the *varna* system by way of intermixture.

The *Arthasastra* states that the son of a *brahmana* born of a *kshatriya* woman, as that of a *kshatriya* born of a *vaisya* woman belongs to the *varna* of the father. But the son of a *vaisya* born of a *sudra* woman is only a *sudra*.

All other mixtures of *varnas* bring new communities into being. For instance, a *brahmana* begets an *ambastha* of a *vaisya* woman, a *parasava* or a *nisada* of a *sudra* woman. A *kshatriya* begets an *ugra* of a *sudra* woman, a *suta* of a *brahmana* woman. A *vaisya* begets a *magadha* of a *kshatriya* woman, a *vaidehaka* of a *brahmana* woman. A *sudra* begets an *ayogava* of a *vaisya* woman, a *ksatta* of a *kshatriya* woman and a *chandala* of a *brahmana* woman.

The *Sastra* also narrates further mixing of these communities giving rise to such ones as *kukkuta* (offspring of *ugra* father and *nisada* mother), *pulkasa* (offspring of *nisada* father and *ugra* mother), *vaina* (offspring of *ambastha* father and *vaidehaka* mother), *kusilava* (offspring of *vaidehaka* father and *ambastha* mother), *svapaka* (offspring of *ugra* father and *ksatta* mother), etc.

As to the origin of these communities, there are conflicting views. It appears that some of these communities such as the *nisada*, the *chandala* are aboriginal communities. Others such as *ugra*, *ksatta* communities appear to have been warrior clans. Names such as *magadha*, *vaidehaka* contain an obvious reference to the region from which they came. Names such as *vaina*, *kusilava*, *suta* appear to be derived from the professions followed by those communities. It is, therefore, difficult to believe that these communities really came to being as a result of mixed marriages among the four *varnas*.

To believe that different communities came into being because of inter-*varna* marriages, there should have been a practice of such marriages in the *anuloma* as well as the *pratiloma* way, with the sanction of the society. Otherwise, it would be very difficult to explain the large numbers of *chandala*, *vaidehaka*, *suta* and other communities.

But if such inter-*varna* marriages are assumed to have been very common, it would amount to saying that the rules about marrying a girl of the same *varna*, which we find in the *Arthasastra*, as in the *Smrtis*, were consistently and, on a large scale, ignored. In other words, we would have to believe that *varna-samkara* or mixing of the *varnas* was a fact of social life.

Such a conclusion is not acceptable. Evidence from all sources such as the *Brahminical*, the *Buddhist* and the *Jain* accounts of the period shows that marriages in the same *varna* alone were the rule, and outside it only rare exceptions. There could not have been such marriages on a very large scale as between *brahmana* men and *sudra* women as to account for a very numerous and widespread community of *chandalas*. Illicit unions instead of marriages, on this large scale, are, of course, still more inconceivable. It, therefore, appears clear that this theory as to the origin of these communities is only a legal fiction to bring them into relation with the *varna* system which alone is considered to have been valid in law because of the belief of its origin in the *Veda*.

As for the mixed communities, the *Arthasastra* makes a statement that, with the exception of the *chandalas*, all the mixed communities should observe the same *dharmas* as the *sudra*. This, in effect, gives them the status of the *sudra*. The exception made for

the community of *chandalas* definitely implies the lowest social status for it. But, nowhere, does the *Sastra* relate the specific *dharmas* of the *chandalas*.

It appears that the *chandalas* are regarded as being outside the pale of society. By way of implication, it is said that they are unclean. But the *Sastra* mentions an illustration that a well of the *chandalas* can be used only by the *chandalas* and by no one else. This implies that they are treated out-castes, possibly also untouchables.

Elsewhere, a heavy fine is prescribed for a *chandala* touching an *Aryan* woman. The offence meant, however, seems concerned with sexual relation rather than with untouchability. In connection with adultery and other sexual offences, the *svapaka* is referred to as the community outside the pale of the *Aryan* society.

These and other out-caste communities seem referred to by the general name of *antavasayin* meaning 'living at the end', beyond the pale of the *Aryan* society.

The *antavasayins* are mentioned beside the four *varnas* in connection with the offence of defamation. If the *brahmanas* are at one end of the social scale, the *antavasayins* are at the other end. That term clearly includes *chandala*, *svapaka* and other out-caste communities.

In the description of the layout of the city, the *chandalas* are allotted accommodation 'at the end of or near the cremation-ground' along with the *pasandas* or heretical monks. This principle may not be authentic, or may be a later day interpolation, as, elsewhere, the *Sastra* refers to *pasandas* staying in the city, to *pasandavasa*, 'residences of heretical monks', inside the city. It may be that the *chandala* and other out-castes alone are allotted accommodation at the end of or near the cremation-ground.

As for the mixed communities, the *Sastra* lays down that each such community should be endogamous and follow its own traditional profession and immemorial customs. It also states that the law of inheritance which may be peculiar to any region or community or group (*sangha*) or village should be recognized and upheld. The Sanskrit word used here for community is *jati* which implies membership by birth and which clearly corresponds to 'caste'. Incidentally, endogamy and other features referred to in the *sutra* (principle) are characteristic of caste.

Elsewhere, the *Sastra* refers to *samaya*, that is, customs peculiar to a *jati*. There can be no doubt that caste, as such, is known to the *Arthasastra*. In a number of places, it refers to experts whose services are required in different technical departments of the state. In such cases, the word *tajjata* meaning 'one born to that (kind of work)' is used. This expression clearly implies the existence of different castes, each following a separate and fixed profession.

It is logical to conclude that *tantuvaya* (weaver), *rajaka* (wahserman), *tunnabaya* (tailor), *suvarnakara* (goldsmith), *chamakara* (leather-worker), *karmara* (smith), *kuttaka*

(carpenter) and others mentioned in the *Sastra* as names of castes which had their origin in the differentiation of their professions.

Apart from these settled communities in towns and villages, the *Sastra* refers to forest tribes called *atavi* or *atavika*. It is said that they are entrenched in jungle fastnesses, and can be a source of great danger to the state. They are said to be well organized, brave, practically autonomous and without any scruples in the matter of looting and killing. In fact, the danger to the state from the forest tribes is declared to be only next to an enemy.

A forest chieftain is often mentioned as one of those who are capable of seizing the throne from the ruler. Nevertheless, the troops recruited from forest tribes, that is, *atavibala*, form one of the six kinds of the troops that may be at the disposal of the ruler. Such troops are apparently under the command of their chieftains, and it is recognized that they are likely to be more interested in plunder than in fighting. The *Sastra* records that one has to beware of danger from them as from a snake in the house.

It is clear that the separateness of the forest tribes from the civilized society is something regarded irrevocable. It appears that the word *mleccha* covers partly these forest tribes. *Mlecchas*, who are stated to be different kinds of communities, are distinguished from the *Aryan* communities. There may be *dasabhava* (slavery) amongst them, but not amongst the *Aryans*. The *sabaras* and *pulindas* mentioned in the *Sastra* have obviously been regarded as names of some of the forest tribes. It is well-known that several forest tribes, some of them wild, have continued their separate existence in our country, all through the centuries, to date.

The *Sastra* refers to other kinds of tribes by the term *bahirika*. This appears to be a general term for nomadic tribes such as the *gypsies*. It is said that they are harmful to the state, and that they should not be allowed in the city.

The *Sastra* refers to a tax called *dvarabahirikadeya* meaning 'to be received from the *bahirikas* at the gate'. This tax is included in the category *durga*, that is, taxes having their source in the city. This implies that when such tribes enter the city, they are made to pay a sort of toll-tax for good behaviour during their stay in the city.

Some of these nomadic tribes seem to correspond to what are called criminal tribes in modern times. To this category of criminal tribes, the *manavas* probably belong. This appears to be a general name for dacoits. It is not however clear whether the dacoits were organized in tribes, or were only gangs of criminals formed haphazardly. The *manavas*, according to the *Sastra*, made use of black magic for achieving their objects.

The description of the society in the *Arthasastra* does not materially differ from the state of things that persisted till the modern times. There are the same four *varnas* with a large number of castes of diverse origin; there are the out-castes including untouchables though against the sanction of law; there are the forest and hill tribes; there are the nomadic tribes, some with criminal propensities, and so on.

The pattern of social groupings that has endured through the centuries almost to this day was, it seems, more or less fixed in the days when the *Sastra* was written. What has happened thereafter is only proliferation of castes and sub-castes, the disappearance or transformation of some of the old communities, and the appearance of altogether new groups as a result of internal stresses and foreign incursions.

Such a society is characterized by extreme rigidity of the lines that divide the different groups constituting it. In this respect, the *Arthasastra* echoes what the *Dharmasastras* say. Hillebrandt says that 'the fact that a reasonable writer like Kautilya finds himself in agreement with the law-books and epics, and, in the whole section (on the duties of *varnas*, etc), shows no contrary views, proves the firmness of the lines that cut through the Indian society.'

This kind of extreme rigidity of the social structure was obviously detrimental to the growth of a sense of unity among all the people. In fact, the consciousness of a feeling of separateness in the various social groups must have prevented any fusion, however gradual, among them resulting in no sense of political unity over the ages. On the other hand, the universal acceptance of theological ideas which explained and even justified the social order of inequity of different groups made it possible for loyalty to be confined primarily to one's own community. Whatever loyalty was felt in the political arena could only be towards the ruler and his dynasty, and not to any such entity as the 'state'.

Incidentally, the *Sastra* contains evidence of loyalties felt on the regional basis. Different regions had evidently different customs, different ways of behaviour, different spoken languages and the like. The *Sastra* lays down that the conqueror (*vijigisu*), on annexing a new territory, should act in conformity with the behaviour, dress, language, etc of his new subjects, so that he may make himself acceptable to them.

One of the qualities essential in a Minister (*amatya*) is that he should be a native of the land or region implying an expectation that he would naturally care for the interests of that land. Similarly, only such persons as are not natives of other lands should be allowed to attend on the king.

All this should not be understood to mean that the idea of a nation in the modern sense of the term is to be found in the *Sastra*. Any concept like the 'nation-state' cannot be conceived contained in the *Sastra*. It may be, for that matter, that the concept of 'nation-state' was not there in any part of the world when the *Sastra* was composed.

Closely associated with the theory of the *varnas* is that of the four *asramas*. The *Sastra* states the duties of the *asramas*, mostly as in the *Smrtis*. It appears that the four *asramas* are represented as four different ways of life to be adopted according to one's aptitude, rather than a succession of stages in the life of the same individual.

The *Sastra* gives primacy to the *asrama* of the house-holder. It may be because of the supreme importance the *Sastra* attaches to this way of life for sustaining the social

order. One of the foremost duties is stated to be marriage. The law concerning marriage and the relations between the husband and wife are stated in detail.

Marriage is the first head of law in the *Sastra* as, it is said, 'all transactions begin with marriage'. The eight forms of marriage are stated and defined as in the *Smrtis*. Though, dowry (*sulka*), in the form of bride-price, figures in the definition of *asura* form of marriage only, it appears that it arises in other forms as well. Even in the case of *dharma-vivaha* (sacramental marriage), the payment of *sulka* is referred to.

It is significant that there is a reference to marriage in the section on the revocation of sale or purchase. It is said that an agreement for marriage may be revoked before the ceremony of *pani-grahana* (clasping the hand) in the case of the first three *varnas*, and before consummation in the case of *sudras*. The mention of marriage in this section implies that the bride is purchased by payment of *sulka*. As all the four *varnas* are mentioned in this section, it may be possible to conceive that the payment of some kind of *sulka* was not uncommon among all the communities.

The *Sastra* dwells at length on the duties of the husband and the wife, and lays down punishment for failure to carry them out. It deals with the issue of harassment of the wife by the husband, and the possibility of her deserting the home.

It allows for separation between the husband and the wife under certain circumstances, and lays down rules concerning the maintenance of the wife. It deals with the issue of the absence of the husband from home for a long period and his failure to return home. The *Sastra* allows various periods of waiting for the wife after which she may consider herself released from the bond of marriage.

The *Sastra* also considers the issue of dissolution of the marriage. It allows dissolution in the case of lower forms if both the husband and the wife hate each other. In the case of higher forms of marriage, that is, the first four forms, it does not allow dissolution. In such cases, *niyoga* is thought of.

Where a marriage is dissolved, a remarriage of the woman is considered quite legitimate. The *Sastra* enumerates the circumstances in which a wife is entitled to leave her husband. It is, however, accepted that a man may take another wife even during the lifetime of the first one, by paying her adequate compensation for her supercession.

A study of the law on marriage and marital relations in the *Sastra* shows that it is more detailed, comprehensive and systematically presented than in the *Smrtis*. Many of the subsections dealt with in detail in the *Sastra* are not even thought of in the *Smrtis*.

Similarly, the *Sastra* gives more freedom to widows. There is a reference in the text to '*chandavasini vidhava*', meaning a widow living according to her will (that is, independently). There is also frequent reference to '*adhya vidhavas*', meaning rich widows, though in the context of the possibility of robbing them of their riches. There is

no doubt that there is enough evidence of the widows living independently, and the rich widows, known to the author of the *Sastra*.

The *Sastra* mentions of the *brahmana* widows becoming *parivrajikas*, meaning wandering nuns. They occupy an honoured place in the society. As such, their use in secret service is recommended.

The provisions concerning the dissolution of marriages and the remarriage of women are, on the whole, totally alien to the spirit of the *Smrtis*. Further, the rules mentioned in these sections show a breadth and depth of outlook that is generally wanting in the *Smrtis*.

In particular, the position of women as revealed in the *Sastra* is very much different from that assigned to them in the *Smrtis*. It provides much greater freedom for women in the rules governing the relations between the husband and the wife. At the same time, the *Sastra* refers to some women as *aniskasini*, that is, not going out of their homes. It is possible that the reference is to the women of the higher social order such as the princely families who do not permit exposure of their women to men beyond their families. Such tradition exists even now, though very rare. Or, it may be that they do not move out because of physical incapacity.

The differences between the *Smrtis* and the *Arthasastra* regarding the marital relations and the position of women may be due to two reasons. One is that the *Smrtis* mainly deal with the upper *varnas* excluding the *sudras*, though the *sudras* constitute the largest segment of the community. The attempt in the *Smrtis* is only to formalize the then prevailing customs and traditions. On the other hand, the *Arthasastra* not only seeks to record what then existed, but also gives impetus to an order, fair and just, in the interest of both sexes and different *varnas* of the community.

The law of inheritance is dealt with in the *Sastra* in detail. The text refers to the special shares of the eldest and other sons at the time of partition. There is no mention or even hint that these special shares were regarded as obsolete in its days, as was the case in the days of the latter *Smrtis*.

The *Sastra* gives a fairly short list of heirs in which the wife does not find a place, as she does from *Yajnavalkya* onwards. The text refers to the twelve kinds of sons such as *aurasa*, *kshetraja*, *paunarbhava*, *datta*, etc and discusses their status and rights.

The *Sastra* does not appear to regard *niyoga* as a relic of the past, or to condemn it, as *Manu* does. As regards the law of inheritance, there is no essential difference between this text and the earlier *Dharmasutra* texts. As in the *Dharmasutras*, the *Sastra* lays down that in the matter of inheritance, whatever regional, communal or other customs may be in vogue, shall be followed by the state.

The *parivrajika* or the wandering monk is an institution peculiar to the Indian society. This institution has existed from times immemorial to date. It seems that house-

holders often took to this life with or without due deliberation. Some of them later repented their hasty decision and returned to the life of the house-holder. The *Sastra* recommends that from such apostates should be recruited secret agents called *udasthita*.

The *Sastra* lays down that before deciding to renounce worldly life and taking on the life of a mendicant, the person concerned must make adequate provision for the maintenance of his family. Only when the urge for sex is gone, should a man think of becoming a mendicant. Even then he should take the permission of the judges (elders of the community) before actually leaving the house-holder's life. It is possible to discern here a desire to check the impulsive tendency on the part of some men to quit the *asrama* of a house-holder on the slightest pretext, and become a mendicant without making any provision for dependents.

The *parivrajika* agent is described as a *brahmana* widow who has become a *sanyasin*, who is honoured in the royal palace and who has free access everywhere. *Brahmana parivrajikas* are contrasted with *mundah vrsalyah*, meaning heretical nuns with shaven heads. This implies that the *brahmana parivrajikas* did not have their heads shaven, or hair removed.

From the evidence of the *Sastra*, it appears that the *brahmana* widows took to this life when they found it difficult to maintain themselves. On the other hand, the *Smrtis* generally do not come across the life of nun-hood for women, though there is evidence in *Sanskrit* literature such as Kalidasa's *Malvikagnimitra* that *parivrajikas* were not uncommon.

The *Sastra* prescribes a fine for the offence of helping or inducing a woman to the life of renunciation and wandering. But it presupposes the existence of wandering nuns. They form a useful class of secret agents.

The *Sastra* lays down in one place that *pravrajitabhava*, monk-hood, other than *vanaprasta* (the *asrama* of forest-dweller) should not be allowed in the countryside. This does not seem to apply to the *parivrajikas* of the *Brahminical* order, for, these, as a rule, do not settle down anywhere for long. It, therefore, appears that the prohibition apparently applies to monks of other orders, and it may be that the purpose of the prohibition is to prevent the spread of heretical sects. Another purpose may also be to prevent enemy agents disguised as heretical monks from operating in the country.

The followers of heretical or non-Aryan sects are referred to as *vrsala* or *pasanda*. Particular sects are mentioned, however, by name only in one place in the *Sastra*, where a heavy fine is prescribed for inviting monks of such heretical sects (*vrsalapravrajitan*) like the *sakyas*, the *ajivakas* to dinners in honour of the deities and the *Pitris*. It is easy to understand the prohibition against inviting monks of the heretical orders to dinners when Vedic rites are performed.

The *sakyas* are the followers of Buddhism. The *ajivakas* are a sect founded by *Gosala Makkhaliputta*, a contemporary of Mahavira, who, according to Jain accounts,

was for sometime his follower. The existence of this sect till the days of Asoka Maurya and his grandson Dasaratha is attested by inscriptions. It is, however, important to note that the Jainas are not mentioned here. It may be because that the Jainas had not yet attained a very prominent position by the time of the *Sastra*. The *ajivakas*, however, failed to survive as an independent sect.

The *Sastra* lays down elsewhere that when there is ample room available, monks of the Vedic order (*asraminah*) and those of the heretical orders (*pasandah*) should stay in the same place without giving trouble to each other, and should even put up with some inconvenience resulting there from.

It also lays down that *pasandipathikas* may be given accommodation in the charitable rest-rooms in the city, and a *pasanda-vasa* is actually included among the places located inside the city. Besides, in the list of cases which the king is supposed to take up for consideration in a specific order, the cases of the *pasandas* appear immediately after those connected with the *devatas* and the *asramas*, even before those of the *srotriyas*. This clearly establishes that there is no ground to suppose that the *pasandas* are intended to be treated as out-castes. On the contrary, great courtesy is expected to be extended to them.

As for the heretical monks, the *Sastra* lays down that they do not possess either money or gold and that, therefore, when anyone of them commits an offence for which a fine is prescribed, he is to be made to undergo fasts and other *vratas*, according to his own religion, for the welfare of the king.

In certain cases, however, fines are to be recovered from them. Apparently, such fines are to be collected from the property of the *pasanda-sangha* to which the offending member belongs. For, there is a reference to such property belonging to heretical orders.

A prince not in favour of the ruling monarch is advised to appropriate the property of a *pasanda-sangha* and even the property of temple deities in order to get resources together to oust his unjust father, that is, the monarch. It is also stated that such property may be appropriated even fraudulently in times of financial stringency or emergency.

Even though the existence of heretical sects is thus not only tolerated, but even shown consideration, it is the Vedic way of life, the *Trayi-dharma*, that is declared beneficial to the people and the state. People, guided and guarded by the *Trayi*, are considered to flourish and not to perish.

In consonance with this *dharma*, the Vedic rites of *caulakarma*, *upanayana*, *godana*, etc are prescribed for the prince. The king is to have an *agnyagara* and *rtvijs* in his service, which implies that he is expected to perform the Vedic sacrifices. *Rajasuya* and other *kratus* are referred to in connection with the special payments to be made to the *adhvaryu* priests in those sacrifices.

However, a religious life, very much different from that recommended in the Veda, is revealed in the *Sastra* in the numerous references to temples, images of deities and their worship. For instance, there is mention of *chaityadevata*, meaning ‘deity in a sanctuary or a temple’; *chaityadaivata*, *daivatachaitya*, meaning ‘sanctuary of a deity’; *devatagrha*, meaning ‘a temple’; *devagrha*, meaning ‘sanctuary’; *daivata-pratima*, meaning ‘an idol’; *devatadhvaja*, meaning ‘the flag of a deity’; *devatapraharana*, meaning ‘a weapon in the idol’s hand’; *devatapidhanam bhumigrham*, meaning ‘an under-ground room (cellar) with an opening covered by the image of a deity’ and so on.

The worship of the deities is referred to in the *Sastra* as consisting of *pranipata*, meaning ‘prostration’ before the image and *upahara*, meaning ‘gifts’ to deities, specially *pushpa-churnopahara*, meaning ‘gifts of flowers and incense’. Devotees of different deities are also indicated.

The *Sastra* records the names of particular deities while recording the layout of the city. It refers to the building of shrines for the deities such as *Aparajita*, *Apratihata*, *Jayanta* and *Vaijayanta*, as well as temples for the gods such as *Siva*, *Vaisravana*, *Asvins*, *Sri* and *Madira* in the centre of the city.

The four deities are apparently different forms of the god of Victory. *Sri* is obviously the same as the goddess *Lakshmi*, while *Madira*, the Intoxicating One, appears to be a form of *Durga* or *Kali*. Temples of these deities and of *Siva* are common, but the temples of *Vaisravana* (Kubera) and the *Asvins* are not otherwise known.

The *Sastra* also states that Brahma, Indra, Yama and Senapathi (Skanda) are the presiding deities of the four main gates of the city in the north, the east, the south and the west respectively. There is no doubt that temples of the deities are meant to be built near those gates.

The *Sastra* makes a reference to *Varuna* and *Nagaraja* in such a way that their images as divinities are meant for worship. There is a reference to a devotee of god *Sankarsana* implying worship of the image of this deity, too.

There is mention of *desadevata* or *desadaivata* which evidently refers to the tutelary deity of the kingdom, or the region if the kingdom is quite vast. Similarly, there is a reference to *nagaradevata*, the tutelary deity of the city; and to *rajadevata*, the family deity of the king. These temples are to be located in the north of the city. There can be no doubt about the existence of temples in large numbers dedicated to different gods.

It is also evident that the temples own large properties. Such property includes cattle, images, servants (slaves), lands, buildings, cash, gold, jewels and grains. The *Sastra* prescribes the highest fine or even capital punishment for their theft.

There is reference to *devavrsah*, meaning temple bulls; *devapasu*, meaning temple cattle, etc in different places. There is also a reference to *devadasis*, meaning temple

servants whose service in the temple is at the end, and who, there after, may be engaged in spinning.

The *Sastra* lays down that the village elders (*gramavrddhah*) are to look after temple property and see that it goes on augmenting. That there would be disputes in which temple property is involved is natural. The king is to take up such disputes in the beginning before he takes up other cases for decision.

It is also laid down that judges should institute, *suo moto*, cases in connection with temple matters, and that they should not dismiss temple cases on grounds of want of jurisdiction, adverse possession or the suit being time-barred.

The *Sastra* refers to an officer of the state called *devatadhyaksha* whose duties are not, however, precisely described anywhere. Apparently, he is to look after temples and their properties, and see to it that they are properly managed by the local trustees. He also seems to have the power of taking possession of the temple property on behalf of the state.

One of the shady ways recommended in the *Sastra* for replenishing the treasury in times of financial stringency is that the *devatadhyaksha* is to collect all temple treasures and property in one place and secretly appropriate them to the state, declaring, at the same time, that they were either looted or burnt down. No scruples about the sanctity of temple property are allowed to come in the way of the interests of the state. Even the prince, who does not favour the monarch, his father, is allowed to appropriate temple property for augmenting his resources in order to over-throw the unjust monarch.

Fairs and festivals are held at the temples. The *Sastra* refers to a fair in honour of the worship of the deity (*daivetajyayam yatravam*), to festivals (*utsava*) and gatherings of people (*samaja*) on such occasions.

The *Sastra*, in fact, advises the king to exploit the faith of the people in deities to replenish his empty treasury, by setting up a 'miraculous' manifestation of some deity at night, and arranging fairs at the place. The idea is that the state would be receiving the gifts made to the deity at such fairs. On the occasion of a *jatra*, permission is to be given to people to prepare and drink liquor freely.

The presentation of such religious life is, on the whole, alien to works on *Dharmasastra*. But, on that account, it cannot be regarded as false or unlikely in the early period of the *Dharmasastras* to which this *Sastra* can be assigned.

It may be mentioned that the *Dharmasastra* had its origin in the Vedic schools and was primarily concerned with the mode of life of the upper *varnas*, in particular, the *brahmanas*. It may be that it has, therefore, ignored such beliefs and practices as did not fit in with the religious life it recommended for them. That does not mean that these beliefs and practices were then non-existent.

In every age, the followers of the Vedic religion of sacrifices must have been belonging to the upper *varnas*, especially *brahmanas*. But they have always accounted for a fraction of the total population. The mass of the people, considered *sudras*, was, as a rule, barred from the Vedic practices. If, as it seems quite probable, the worship of images of gods in shrines and temples with flowers, incense, gifts, etc is a practice of non-Aryan (*sudra*) origin, it is reasonable to presume that the mass of the population (*sudras*) stuck to the beliefs and practices to which they were accustomed.

In any event, there is no reason to presume that such beliefs and practices arose only late in India. It is to the credit of the *Arthashastra* that it takes full notice of the varied religious life of all sections of the people, while the *Dharmasastras* restrict themselves mainly to a description of the Vedic way of life.

The *Sastra* records the widespread belief of the masses in malevolent spirits, the *raksasas* and their propitiation, alongside the belief in deities and their worship in temples. It is said that one of the eight calamities of divine origin is ‘trouble’ caused by the evil spirits. The *Sastra* recommends that the services of the magicians proficient in the *Atharvaveda* be utilized for exorcising them, and various offerings including that of a goat at the *Chaitya* shrines be made.

The *Sastra* not only recognizes the existence of these beliefs, but also suggests that they may be exploited in the interests of the state. Creating the illusion of a danger from *raksasas* is particularly recommended for the purpose of inducing the enemy king entrenched in a fort to come out for their propitiation, and of murdering him when he comes out for the purpose.

Closely related to these beliefs and practices is the belief in magical practices and superstitions of all kinds. The *Sastra* contains ample evidence of the prevalence of such beliefs. It refers frequently to *samvadana* or *samvanana*, meaning ‘winning the love of man or a woman with the help of magical practices and potions’.

It refers to magical rites for obtaining inexhaustible wealth, *aksayahiranyam-karma*; for finding favour with the king, *rajadvarikam*; for afflicting enemies with diseases, *arivyadhikaram*; for securing long life, *ayusyam*; or for getting a son, *putriyam*.

There is also a reference to rites for warding off a danger for the country, *desapidapaham-karma*; and for driving away or destroying enemies, *amitrapaham-karma*. The *tantra* associated with such practices is called *jambhaka-vidya*, and the rites evidently involve the recitation of *mantras* and the use of the roots of the herbs.

Another such *tantra* is called *manava-vidya* of use primarily by dacoits and adulterers who are called *manavas*. This *vidya* is supposed to involve recitation of *mantras* to get doors of houses or city-gates automatically opened (*dvarapoha-mantra*), to put other persons to sleep (*prasvapana-mantra*), to make oneself invisible (*antardhana-mantra*), or to win the love of a woman (*samvadana-mantra*).

The *Sastra* records how *manava* gangs may be apprehended through secret agents posing as experts in these magical practices. However, the *Sastra* condemns black magic (*krtya* or *abhichara*). It is treated as a criminal offence and is included among the *gudhajivas*, meaning 'secret ways of earning a livelihood'.

Similarly, the *Sastra* condemns *samvadana-vidya*, though its use by the wife to win her husband's love or *vice-versa* is permitted. Perhaps, its use by a man to secure the love of a woman with the intention of marrying her is not prohibited.

Most of the account in Book Fourteen of the *Arthashastra* describes a number of rites and practices called *aupanisadika* supposed to produce occult manifestations or miraculous effects. These cause blindness or killing people on a mass scale, various kinds of diseases, objects glow at night, change in the appearance of people, etc. They enable people walk long distances without getting tired, make others sleep for long hours, open doors of houses, gates of forts, etc.

It is difficult to say how far the author of the *Sastra* believed in the efficacy of these rites and practices. He may well have accounted them in the work on the basis of beliefs then persistent and carried over generations. But he is very keenly aware of the gullibility of people to believe in supernatural powers without verification or scrutiny. He, therefore, recommends that the state should take advantage of such gullibility to further its own ends.

The *Sastra* condemns the practice of consulting the stars before starting on an expedition, or undertaking a work. Nevertheless, it refers to astrologers, soothsayers, *mauhurtika*, *naimittika* and *kartantika*. Some of them must have definitely been in the service of the state. Those who know such occult lores as *nimitta*, omens; *vayasa*, interpretation of signs of birds; *svapna*, interpretation of dreams; *laksana* or *angavidya*, interpretation of the marks or movements of the body; and so on, it is said, are to be used in the service of the state.

There can be no doubt that this presentation of belief in stars, omens, miraculous and occult manifestations, magic with its power for good or evil, possession of occult powers, etc is true to life. These powers have been there in all generations in all societies for times immemorial. Their acceptance, as a matter of fact, has been most pronounced in the Indian society. Such acceptance has more often resulted in looking for and demonstrative use of such powers in this society. While those that have these powers may not be many, the attempts by individuals to make a living out of them lead to different ways of exploitation of the gullibility of the people. In several cases they come to grief, bringing the very system of the use of the occult powers into disrepute.

The beliefs and practices stated above go back to the days of the *Atharvaveda* and earlier. The connection of these practices with the *Atharvaveda* is recognized in the *Sastra* when it recommends that the *purohit* should be an expert in warding off calamities by means described in the *Atharvaveda*.

The *Dharmasastra* works practically ignore this aspect of the life of the people. The *Arthasastra* becomes all the more valuable because of its mirroring the faiths, beliefs and practices of the people at large.

The *Sastra* lays down that life in the city is to be well regulated. Residential accommodation is reserved for different communities and trades in different quarters of the city. It is required that the offices of the city administration should record full details of each house-hold in the city. All arrivals and departures are to be reported to them by the citizens. Movement of people in the night is to be allowed only in an emergency or when authorized.

All these precautions are considered necessary as the city is the fortified capital of the kingdom, and its security is the first consideration in its administration. There is to be a constant watch for enemy spies and secret agents who may have got into the city in various disguises.

Details in the legal section on *vastuka*, meaning 'buildings and other property' throw some light on the houses in the city. The rules are mainly concerned with encroachments on the property of the neighbours, causing nuisance to them, damaging their property, etc.

There is a reference in the rules to the erection of a fence around the house (such as the compound wall); to agreements for disposal of the domestic waste and waste water; to arrangements for grinding and pounding, cattle and carriage sheds, and channels for letting out rain water; to making lanes between neighbouring houses, windows in side walls, etc. There is a reference in that chapter to landlords and tenants. It appears that the tenancy agreements on an annual basis were in vogue at that time.

There is also a reference to big buildings with a number of tenants in each. In such places, certain facilities such as the courtyard, pounding sheds, latrines, etc are declared as intended for the common use of all tenants. The details in this chapter are so close to the conditions found in the modern cities that the similarities in most respects are very striking.

The *Sastra* refers to public eating houses (restaurants) of different kinds. There is the *apupika*, the purveyor of bread; the *audinaka*, the one that sells cooked rice; and the *pakvamamsika*, a non-vegetarian restaurant; and so on. Rice-eaters and bread-eaters were apparently catered to in separate eating places.

The *Sastra* refers to rice as the main staple food. When the average rations for an individual are mentioned, only rice is referred to. Wheat or barley is not mentioned even as an alternative. The other principal ingredients of a meal are *supa*, a kind of broth, and an additional dish of vegetables or meat. There are recipes for vinegars and sour juices in the text. It is of interest to note that dried fish and dried meat are included in the *sakavarga* implying that *saka* does not refer to vegetables alone.

The sale of meat is regulated by the state. The officer in charge is *sunadhyaksha*. However, there is no reference to slaughter-houses or their licensing as part of his duty. He is primarily concerned with the unauthorized killing of certain animals, mainly those from animal sanctuaries. The killing of certain birds such as the *hamsa*, the *krauncha*, the *chakora*, and certain other animals is prohibited. The *sunadhyaksha* is also to inspect the quality of meat sold to customers and to punish offenders with fines.

The *Sastra* lays down varying fines for making a *brahmana*, a *kshatriya*, a *vaisya* or a *sudra* eat what should not be eaten (*abhakshya*) or drink what should not be consumed (*apeya*). This does not seem to correspond to the *abhakshya-bhakshana* of the *Smrtis* the basis of which is the prohibition, especially to *brahmanas*, to eat certain things.

There is enough evidence that lunches and dinners formed an essential part of celebrations on auspicious occasions. There is a reference to channels for the flow of water used for rinsing the mouth (*achamodaka*) on auspicious occasions (*kalyanakrtya*) such as a birth in the family, marriage, etc. A kind of a picnic, arranged away from home, is called *prahavana* or *pravahana* to which the text refers in different places.

The state is to regulate the drinking of wine or liquor. There is no general prohibition against drinking wine. As a rule, wine is to be consumed on the premises of the state ale-houses which also seem intended to provide lodging to people coming from outside.

On occasions of festivals, permission is generally given for the manufacture and consumption of liquor without control. The text gives an account of recipes for various kinds of wine. For instance, *medaka* is prepared from rice; *prasanna* from flour of barley; *asava* from sugarcane juice; *kapittha* from fruits; *maireya* from jaggery; *madhu* from grape juice; *aristas* (medicinal liquors), and so on.

Liquor seems to be offered to guests on the occasion of a funeral rite. It may be that this custom was prevalent among the common people only, not among the upper *varnas*. This practice has persisted to date.

As for the dress of the people, there are no specific indications in the text. But cloth of various kinds such as cotton, linen, silk, woolen, woven in different types of coarse or fine weaves, and dyed in various colours, is mentioned in connection with the state stores. Tailors are mentioned. But there is no indication as to the types of clothes they stitched for their customers.

As for washer-men and dyers, there are enough details about their work. The habit of a washer-man wearing the clothes of a customer and his unpunctuality in bringing them back duly washed or dyed is made mention in the text.

The widespread use of jewellery, and gold and silver ornaments of various kinds is implicit in the description of pearls, diamonds, rubies and other precious stones.

Besides, there is a description of the manufacture of various kinds of gold and silver ornaments. The use of perfumes and garlands of flowers is referred to, as also that of fragrant powders, and unguents during and after bath. Sandalwood and aloe wood of which a variety of products is mentioned are apparently used in some of these preparations.

A common form of entertainment for the community, mentioned in the *Sastra*, is *preksha*, meaning a 'show'. Though specifically not mentioned, the shows may have been put up on the stage. For, there is a reference to artists, male and female, 'who make their living by playing on the stage (*rangopajivin*, *rangopajivini*). The *Sastra* distinguishes between *sthri-preksha* and *purusha-preksha*, that is, shows put up by women only and by men only respectively.

Artists such as *nata* (actor), *nartaka* (dancer), *gayana* (singer), *vadaka* (player on musical instruments), *talavachara* (probably dancer), mime and others, frequently mentioned in the *Sastra*, may be supposed to take part in these stage shows.

The word *kusilava* seems to be a general term for actors, mime and similar artists. It is stated that when a show is put up at any place, every house-hold is to make a contribution so that all its members may be entitled to witness it. Refusal to make the contribution and attempts to witness it without payment are punishable offences.

The *Sastra* lays down that at the time of settlements on new lands, halls for entertainment should not be provided in the villages. This is primarily to prevent actors, dancers and others from proving a hindrance to work in the agricultural fields. With the same purpose in view, it may be that the *Sastra* recommends that, during the monsoon, the artists should be made to stay in one place and not to go about.

Special halls in the villages would, in any case, be not necessary. An improvised stage can always be erected anywhere, anytime. Most of the shows in the countryside may be supposed to have been put up on temporary stages erected for the purpose. The monsoon, too, is an unsuitable season for putting up such open-air shows.

The other entertainers the *Sastra* refers to include a *plavaka* (acrobat), a *kuhaka* ( juggler), a puppet-player, a clown, a *saubhika* (a kind of conjuror). The *saubhika* may be the same as the *saubhika* of Patanjali, who puts up some kind of a dramatic show. There is also mention of *aditikausika* which seems to refer to the class of mendicants carrying images of gods.

As for arts, the *Sastra* refers to *nrtta* (dancing), *natya* (acting), *gita* (singing), *vadya* (playing on musical instruments), *pathya* (recitation), *aksara* (writing, calligraphy), *chitra* (painting), *gandhamalya-samyuhana* (preparation of perfumes and garlands), *samvahana* (shampooing) and *vaisikakala* (the arts of the courtesans).

As for the profession of the courtesans, the state is to regulate it. A special officer, the *ganikadhyaksha*, is to appointed for the purpose. The *ganikas*, it seems, are

primarily appointed for attendance on the king, for holding the umbrella on his head, for carrying the water-jug for him, for fanning him or for accompanying him on processions, etc. At the same time, the *ganika*, who is allowed a suitable establishment by the state, is expected to entertain visitors according as the king may direct her. Refusal to obey the king in this respect means heavy punishment.

However, her relations with visitors are to be governed by a strict code of conduct. A *ganika* may free herself from this life if she can find a ransom amount of 24,000 *panas*. Her son can be freed by payment of half of this amount. Otherwise, he becomes a servant of the state to serve as a *kusilava* in charge of artists, supervising their work.

The *Sastra* assigns the name of *rupajiva* to a woman who is not a *ganika*, but belonging to this profession. The word *rupajiva* means one who earns her living by means of her beauty. However, the *Sastra* records that *rupajivas* also appear among attendants in the palace. Residential accommodation for *rupajivas* is reserved in the southern part of the city. Further, in cantonment areas or in military camps, *rupajivas* are to be given accommodation along the main highways. There is a reference in the *Sastra* at one place to a *rupajiva* who is 'reserved for another (*anyoparuddha*)', meaning that the woman is in the exclusive keeping of that person.

In two places in the *Sastra*, there is a reference to *bandhakuposhakas*, meaning brothel-keepers. Beautiful young maidens are the inmates of their establishments. The *Sastra* recommends that the income earned through them be used to replenish the treasury. The inmates may also be used to serve political ends by creating quarrels over them, among the chiefs of the *sanghas*, thus bringing about the latter's ruin.

Like drinking, gambling is also to be under strict state control. The state is to provide not only gambling halls, but also the necessary materials like dice, cowrie-shells, etc. Gamblers are said to be given to cheating or fraud. The *Sastra* provides as to the manner of disposal of the suits arising out of gambling. *Bhikshuka* (beggar) and *pracchandaka* (tramp) find mention in the *Sastra*, which shows that they form part of the society.

The social and religious life and the *inter-se* conduct among the individuals revealed directly or indirectly in the *Sastra*, more or less, reflects faithfully the actual conditions of the day.

### **3. The Ethics of Narada in Bhagavatapurana**

#### Table of Contents

	Page No
Introduction	74
The Eternal Path of Religion	75
Duties of Brahmacharins & Forest – dwellers	79
Code of Conduct for Sanyasins	83
Duties of a Householder	88
Right Conduct	93

# The Ethics of Narada in Bhagavatapurana

## Introduction

The Ethics of Narada is contained in chapters 11 to 15 of Skandha VII of the Bhagavata Purana. This is in the nature of a dialogue between Narada and Yudhishtira, elaborated by Sri Suka.

The Bhagavata Purana is an epic of growth. According to its text, it can be said that its authors are Vyasa, Suka and Suta. In spite of manifold revisions, the Purana bears the stamp of a unified composition.

The Bhagavata Purana incorporates the best of the Vedic tradition. The metaphysical and spiritual legacy of the Vedas and the Upanisads is ably synthesized with the *agama* tradition of the *Pancharatrins*, and it even embraces the non-*Aryan* tribes in its fold. It has exercised the most powerful influence in India and, as such, holds the most prominent position in Indian sacred literature.

An analysis of the text of the Bhagavata Purana shows that it has amalgamated four traditions represented by four lines of teachers of whom Narada is common for three. While it may be that the first three traditions can be comprised under one 'Naradiya' tradition, the fourth appears to be a distinct and different one.

The Bhagavata Purana enunciates the *Bhagavata-dharma* that comprises moral qualities and spiritual practices which purify the mind for receiving the divine grace. It includes the ten *yoga* virtues of *yama* and *niyama*, the decorations of the mind such as universal friendliness, kindness, joyfulness, non-attachment, the Vedantic virtues of serenity, self-control, tolerance, renunciation, concentration and faith, the nine-fold path of devotion and the *tantric* methods of spiritual worship.

The Ethics of Narada is an enunciation of the *Bhagavata-dharma* elucidating the code of conduct from the points of view of *asrama* and *varna* for different sections of the society. It is a reiteration of the *Dharma-sutras* of the Vedic tradition.

## The Eternal Path of Religion

Sri Suka said:

Having heard the narrative so highly praised in the assemblies of the righteous and devotees of the Lord like Prahlada (the ruler of Daityas), the leader of the illustrious devotees of the Lord, whose mind was absorbed in the meditation of God Visnu, Yudhishtira was filled with delight. He again made a further query of Narada, the son of the self-created god Brahma.

Yudhishtira said:

I am anxious to hear from you, O Omniscient Sage, the eternal law, the righteous course of conduct prescribed for men enjoining the duties to be performed by persons belonging to different classes of society (*varna*) and stages in life (*asrama*) the observance of which (*dharma*) leads one to attain knowledge and devotion.

Your worshipful self is the son of no other than the highest deity, Brahma, the lord of all created beings. Of all his sons, you have been the most beloved one by virtue of your asceticism, yogic powers and meditation of the Lord, O *Brahmana*!

Merciful, pious, tranquil *brahmanas* like you devoted exclusively to Narayana know the highest secret of *dharma* but not others.

Narada said:

Saluting the venerable eternal God Narayana, the source of *dharma*, I shall explain to you the eternal law as I heard it from (His) Narayana's lips.

He incarnated along with his part-manifestation Nara, as the son of *Dharma* and *Murti*, the daughter of Daksha. He still continues to perform penance for the welfare of the people, at the hermitage at Badarika.

For, Lord Hari, the embodiment of the Veda, is the source of *dharma*; *smrtis* are codified by those who knew Him. And it is by abiding by that *dharma* that one's soul gets pleased, O King!

Truthfulness, mercy, asceticism, purity, endurance, power of discrimination between right and wrong, control of mind and the senses, non-violence, celibacy, charity, the study of the Veda or repetition internally of prayers to God, straight-forwardness, contentment, service unto those who regard all beings as equals, gradual withdrawal from worldly activities, observance of the futility of human actions, refraining from useless talk, investigation of the nature of the *soul* (and its distinctness from the body), equitable distribution of food, eatables, etc among creatures according to their worth (and needs), to look upon all living creatures, especially human beings, as one's own self and as the

deity, hearing the holy name (or stories) of the Lord, chanting His name, contemplation on, worship of, bowing to and rendering service to God, service to fellow human beings, behaving as His friend and dedication of oneself to Hari who is the goal of all the noble souls are the thirty characteristics said to constitute the highest *dharma* of all human beings whereby the Soul of the Universe is propitiated and pleased, O King!

He is called a *dvija* or twice-born whose (sixteen) purifying rites (accompanied by recitation of *mantras*) have been performed without any break in succession, and whom Brahma has so designated. Performance of sacrifices, study of scriptures and charity are prescribed for all the twice-born *varnas* (*brahmana*, *kshatriya* and *vaisya*) who are of pure birth and conduct. It is for these that duties incumbent on different stages in life (*asrama*) are prescribed.

Scriptural study and others (such as teaching, performance of sacrifice, charity and acceptance of gifts), six (in all), are prescribed for the *brahmanas*. Non-acceptance of gifts is laid down for the other *varna* (*kshatriya*). The means of livelihood of a king, who protects his subjects, is derived from taxes levied on his subjects, with the exception of *brahmanas* (who are exempt from taxation).

The *vaisya* is to maintain himself by agriculture (cattle-breeding) and trade, and should follow the *brahmanas*. A *sudra* is to render service to the twice-born *varnas*, whose means of livelihood constitutes his means of subsistence (on service).

The means of livelihood of *brahmanas* is four-fold, namely, various occupations such as agriculture, cattle breeding, acceptance of articles modestly (without asking any one for anything), begging for grain from door to door like *yayavaras* (vagrant mendicants) and gleaning grains of corn from the leftover of the threshing floor in the field (*sila*) or of the market place (*uncha*), in the ascending order of preference.

With the exception of *kshatriyas*, no person born in a lower *varna* should adopt the vocation ordained for the higher *varna* under normal circumstances, that is, when not threatened with serious danger. The *kshatriyas* can adopt *brahmanical* means of livelihood, except that of accepting charitable gifts. In times of danger, anybody (belonging to any *varna*) may resort to any profession (prescribed for any *varna*).

A person may sustain his life by following the vocations or professions (technically) known as *rta*, *amrta*, *mrta*, *pramrta* or *satyanrta*, but should never lead a dog's life (*svavrtti*) (even) for preserving one's life.

The gleaning of corn from the leftovers of field or of the marketplace is called *rta*; whatever is given to one unsolicited is known as *amrta*; *mrta* is daily begging, and *pramrta* means cultivation; trading is *satyanrta* (a mixture of truth and falsehood), while rendering service to the low-born is *sva-vrtti*. A *brahmana* and a *kshatriya* should always shun that 'dog mode of life' which is detested by all; for a *brahmana* is an embodiment of the Veda and a *kshatriya* (the ruler) is the personification of all deities.

Control over mind and senses, asceticism, purity, contentment, forbearance and forgiveness, straightforwardness. Knowledge, compassion, fervent devotion to Lord Visnu and truthfulness are the characteristics of a *brahmana*.

Valour, prowess, fortitude, adventurous spirit, liberality, self-control, forgiveness, devotion to *brahmanas*, majestic graciousness and defence of the weak constitute the characteristics of a *kshatriya*.

Devotion unto gods, teachers and Lord Visnu, maintenance (and achievement) of three objectives in life (*dharma, artha and kama*), faith in *sastras*, constant effort (in making money) and skill in transactions form the characteristics of a *vaisya*.

Submissiveness, purity, faithful (un-treacherous) service of the master, performance of the five daily sacrifices by bowing down only (without uttering the *mantras*), abstention from thieving, truthfulness, and protection of the cattle and the *brahmanas* are the characteristics of a *sudra*.

The duties of a woman who looks upon her husband as a (veritable) god are rendering service to her husband, compliance to his wishes, friendliness to his relatives and ever-observance of the same vows as those of her husband.

A pious woman should keep the house clean by sweeping and plastering (with cow-dung), and decorating it with auspicious coloured diagrams and pictures on the floor. She should adorn her person with ornaments and clean clothes, and always keep the utensils etc in the house clean and polished. She should, at every time, abide by the desires, great or small, of her husband with modesty, self-control and address him lovingly in true yet pleasant words.

Contented (with what she has), not covetous, diligent, knowing what is *dharma* (righteousness), sweet yet true in speech, careful, pious and affectionate, she should serve her husband who is not fallen.

A person is considered fallen if he commits the sin of murder of a *brahmana*, drinking liquor, theft, adultery with his preceptor's wife or fellowship with a criminal of any of the above crimes.

A woman who, as goddess Lakshmi would do unto Lord Hari, serves her husband with a single-minded devotion, regarding him as Lord Visnu, would, like Lakshmi in the company of Lord Visnu, rejoice hereafter in the region of Hari (Vaikuntha) along with her husband, who (through her devotion) will have attained the resemblance of Hari (in form).

The means of livelihood of mixed *varnas* such as the *antyajas* (the low-born ones), *antevasiyas* (communities living at the farther end of a village such as *chandala, matanga, pukkasas*) are the hereditary callings followed by their respective families, provided it is not robbery and any sinful vocation.

A marriage between a woman of higher *varna* and a man of lower *varna* is called *pratiloma*. The progeny of such marriages are known as constituting the low-born (*antyaja*) *varnas*. These *varnas* are said to constitute washer-men, leather-workers, rope-dancers (*natas*), basket-makers (*burudas*), fisher-men, etc.

In every age, the *dharma* (the course of duties – the ethics) of the people is generally determined by their innate nature (according as they are predominantly of *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas* characteristics). Sages, the Vedic seers, have regarded *dharma* as that course of conduct which is conducive to happiness (of persons with such natures) both here and hereafter.

He, who follows a vocation determined as suitable to his special nature (as determined by his *varna*) and does his duty, and goes on relinquishing that type of work gradually, attains to the state of the attribute-less *Atman*.

A field which is constantly sown with seeds automatically becomes infertile. It is unsuitable for sowing seeds again, and if seed be sown, it perishes.

Similarly the mind, the seat of desires, becomes satiated and disgusted by overindulgence in pleasures.

If what has been described as the characteristic of a particular *varna* in the society be found in any person belonging to a different *varna*, then the latter should be distinctly designated as coming under that *varna*.

## Duties of *Brahmacharins* & Forest-dwellers

Narada continued:

A *brahmacharin* should dwell in the house of his preceptor. He should be self-controlled and comply with what is agreeable to the preceptor. He should behave humbly like a servant, and entertain very strong affection to his teacher.

In the morning and in the evening, he should wait upon the preceptor and worship to Fire-god, the Sun-god and other prominent deities. Observing perfect silence at both the twilights (and in the mid-day), he should repeat the *Gayatri mantra* with concentrated mind (while performing *sandhya*).

If (and when) called by his preceptor, he should study the Veda (at his feet) with perfect concentration and in a disciplined manner. He should bow down to his feet with his head, both at the beginning and the completion of the lesson.

With his hair braided, he should wear a *mekhala* (a girdle of *munja* grass), the deer-skin, (two pieces of) cloth and the sacred thread (*yajnopavita*), and carry with him a staff and a *kamandalu* (water-pot or gourd) and a handful of *darbha* grass as prescribed (in the *sastras*).

He should beg alms both in the morning and in the evening, and offer it to his teacher. If permitted, he should partake of the food, if not (as a test or a punishment, or as occasionally required on days of observing fast) he should fast.

He should be of good character, moderate in eating, alert and prompt (in work), of reverential faith in *sastras* and self-controlled. It is only when absolutely necessary and to that extent only (getting alms) he should deal with women, or with those who are influenced (that is, enslaved) by women.

A person other than a householder, who has taken the great vow of celibacy, should avoid talking to young women. For, the senses are (by nature) so powerful and violent that they carry away the mind of even a recluse (*yati*, who is expected to be perfectly self-controlled).

A youthful *brahmacharin* (student) should not allow any personal service such as combing his hair, massaging, bathing and anointing his person done by any woman from his preceptor's family, especially if she is young.

For, verily a young woman is (like) fire and a man is like a pot containing clarified butter. One should even avoid (the company of) one's daughter in a secluded place and, at other times, one should remain with her so long as the work or duty demands it (even in public places).

So long as, by self-realization, one has not firmly determined that one's body, the senses, the universe, etc are illusory, and the *jiva* has not attained perfect mastery over oneself by identifying oneself with the Supreme Lord, the notion of duality (between a man and a woman) will continue to persist (provoking, thereby, the desire to enjoy) through false attribution of *gunas*.

All the above instructions are laid down for the householder and, more so, for the *sanyasin* (recluse). A householder who is expected to be with his wife may optionally stay with his preceptor.

Those who have taken the vow of *brahmacharya* (celibacy) should avoid the use of collyrium, unguents, massage of the body, dealings with women, painting or viewing pictures of women, meat, spirituous liquor (in the case of those who are permitted to drink, honey in the case of *brahmanas*), garlands, sandal pigment and ornaments.

In this way, having stayed in the preceptor's house, a *dvija* (twice-born) should study and understand, to the best of his ability and to the extent of his requirements, the meaning of the three Vedas (Rig Veda, Sama Veda and Yajur Veda), along with their (six) auxiliaries and the Upanisads (Vedanta philosophical treatises).

The auxiliaries (*Vedangas*) are six. They are phonetics (*siksha*), the science of proper articulation and pronunciation; application (*kalpa*), ritual or ceremonial; grammar (*vyakarana*); etymology (*nirukta*), explanation of difficult Vedic words; prosody (*chandasa*); and astrology (*jyotisa*).

Having presented, if at all he could afford to do so, what was desired by his preceptor (as 'fee for the course') and having obtained his permission, he (the student) should enter the householder's life, retire to the forest (for performing penance, etc), renounce the world to wander as a *yati* (recluse) or stay with his preceptor (as a lifelong *brahmacharin*).

He should look upon (conceive) Lord Visnu as if He had entered into the fire, the preceptor, himself and the elements together with all the creatures sheltered in Him, for, He is their Inner Controller.

A person belonging to the order of *brahmacharya* or *vanaprastha* (a forest dweller), a *sanyasin* (a recluse) or a householder who contemplates thus (the omnipresence of the Lord) and follows the course of duties ordained for his particular *asrama* (stage of life) realizes what is required to be known, and attains to the Supreme Brahman.

I shall now explain to you the code of conduct approved by the sages and prescribed for *vanaprasthas* (forest dwellers) by observing which a sage easily attains *Maharloka*, the heaven of sages.

A forest-dweller should not eat the product of cultivation (rice, wheat) or anything (like fruits, roots, etc) which, though not a product of tillage, ripens before time. He should not partake of food cooked on fire. He should subsist on what is ripe on its own, or cooked by rays of the Sun.

He should prepare an oblation of rice, barley and pulse boiled for presentation to the gods and the manes, *purodasa* of corn and collect wild growth (*nivara*) of a permanent nature. When he procures new and fresh eatables, he should reject the old ones (stored by him).

*Purodasa* is boiled rice rounded into a cake and usually divided into parts which are kept in separate receptacles for offering to different deities.

It is just for the preservation of the (sacred) fire that he should take shelter in a house, cottage or a cave in mountains. He himself should bear exposure to snow, wind, fire, rain and heat of the sun.

The forest dweller with matted hair (on the head) should wear the hair on his body, moustache, beard (without shaving), and nails and dirt (not properly washed). He should take with him *kamandalu* (a pot of water), deer-skin, staff, bark-garments and utensils of fire worship. The sage should thus wander in the forest for twelve, eight, four, two or one year, to that length of time in which the mind gets transcended through the austerities.

If (after the period of stay in the forest) he finds that, owing to ill-health (disease) or old age, he is incapable of pursuing his course of duties (as a forest dweller) or prosecuting his contemplation on the Divine, he should adopt the vow of fasting, etc. (If he is so intent, he should become a *sanyasin* – a recluse).

(Before beginning the fast) he should withdraw and deposit the sacred fires (*ahavaniya* and others) within his self. He should renounce the notions of ‘I’ and ‘Mine’, and should merge the constituents of his body in their own causes (the sky, the air, the fire, the water and the earth).

A self-controlled man should merge the cavities in his body (eyes, ears, nostrils) into the sky (the element – the *mahabhuta* called *akasa*), his exhalations (vital-breaths) into the air, the temperature of his body into the fire, (fluids like) blood, phlegm and pus into the water and the rest (hard substances like bones, muscles etc) into the earth, thus assigning them each to its respective origin.

He should consign his speech along with the organ of speech to the Fire, his hands and their power to Indra, his feet along with (the power of) locomotion to Visnu, the organ of re-generation (along with its power) to Prajapati (deity presiding over procreation).

(He should merge) the organ of excretion and its power in *Mrtyu* (the god of death); his sense of audition along with (its object) sound into (deities presiding over) cardinal points; and his tactual organ along with its tactility in the *atman* or wind-god).

O King! He should deposit his eyes (eye-sight), and the colours and forms (the objects of the eye) with the Sun-god, the tongue and its objects of taste such as sweet, bitter, etc in water (or god Varuna), and the olfactory sense along with its objects that are of various smells, in the earth.

He should merge his mind along with its desires and objects in the Moon-god, the intelligence and the objects to be grasped by it in the highest god Brahma. He should consign actions with self-consciousness to god Rudra through whose instrumentality the activities actuated by the notions of 'I-ness' and 'Mine-ness' proceed. He should merge his *chitta* (reason, heart) along with *sattva* in *Kshetrajna* (*Hiranya-garbha*) and *vaikarika ahamkara* along with *gunas* in the Supreme Brahman.

He should then dissolve the earth into water, absorb water into fire, fire into the air and the air into the ether. The ether (*akasa*) is to be merged into the principle called ego (*aham*), and that into *Mahat* (the principle of cosmic intelligence), and that into the un-manifest *Prakrti* and that un-manifest *Pradhana* into *Paramatman* (the Supreme Soul).

Having thus realized the Soul as identical with *Paramatman*, Indestructible Consciousness, and becoming free from the notion of duality, he should cease to function like fire that consumes its own source (fuel).

## Code of Conduct for *Sanyasins*

Narada continued:

If a person is thus capable and fit (physically and mentally), he should take to the life of a vagrant recluse. Owning nothing else but his body, he should observe the rule of staying only one night in a village and thus wander over the earth, being totally free of desire.

If at all he is to wear a piece of cloth, it should be a strip of cloth just sufficient to cover his private parts. Unless there is some serious danger, he should not take anything which has been renounced, except the staff and other emblems (*kamandalu* - water-pot) characteristic of a *sanyasin*.

Delighted in his own self and seeking no shelter, he should wander all alone as a mendicant subsisting on alms. He should be friendly to all beings, serene and devoted exclusively to Narayana.

He should visualize this universe in the immutable *Atman* (Self) which is beyond (and distinct from) cause and effect, and should perceive the Self as the Supreme Brahman present everywhere in the universe, (a product) of causes and consequences.

During the mediate state between sleep and wakefulness, he should concentrate on the soul within, and should try to perceive the true nature of the Self. He should look upon bondage and emancipation as merely illusory and not real.

He should welcome neither death that is inevitable, nor life that is transitory. But he should simply wait for the Time which brings about the birth and death of beings.

He should not be attached to *sastras* dealing with topics other than *Atman*. Nor should he try to maintain himself by following any profession (like astrology or medicine). He should avoid all forms of disputation. He should not persistently adhere to any point of view.

He should not attract students. Nor should he study numerous books (lest they should cause confusion or distraction). He should not undertake the exposition of some sacred text (other than related to *Vedanta*). Nor should he take up the establishment of any institution or monastery.

The duties so prescribed for the order of recluses (*sanyasins*) are not meant for securing religious merit to the noble-souled ones (*paramahamsas*) who are of serene and equable mind (The duties are to be observed till the recluse realizes the highest wisdom). Thereafter, he may continue to practise the duties, or discard them.

One whose external signs of being a recluse are not evident but continues one's purpose (meditation on the Self) may, though learned, show himself (behave externally

like) a mad person or an ignorant child; though highly intelligent and wise, he appears to be dumb in the eyes of the public.

On this issue, an old historical (mythological) account has been traditionally handed down as an illustration. It is the conversation between Prahlada and the sage Dattatreya observing the *ajagara* mode of life.

Dattatreya is the Lord incarnated as Datta, the son of Atri and Anasuya, who taught spiritual lore to the king Alarka and Prahlada.

The *ajagara* mode of life is that of a python which is supposed to swallow whatever comes its way, without making any move on its path.

While Prahlada, the beloved (devotee) of the Lord, accompanied by a few ministers, was travelling through various worlds with a view to acquainting himself with the true nature of the people, he happened to see, on the top of the Sahyadri (western ghats), on the bank of the Kaveri, some person lying on bare ground, his pure effulgence concealed under a coat of dust covering all parts of his body.

By his actions, appearance or words, people could not recognize him who or what he was and what he was not, as to his *varna* or *asrama*.

Having bowed to the sage by touching his feet with his head and having worshipped him with due formalities, the *Asura*, (himself) a prominent votary of the Lord, was curious to know (the truth about) him (the sage) and asked him the following question.

‘You have a robust body like an industrious person who enjoys a luxurious life. Wealth accrues to persons who are industrious, and comforts and luxuries can be afforded by people of wealth. Indeed, only the bodies of those who are given to luxurious life become corpulent, and not otherwise.

Lying supine without doing any work as you do, O *Brahmana*, you obviously possess no wealth which is the source of enjoyment (luxurious life). If you think proper (to disclose), please tell us how your body is corpulent despite your non-indulgence in luxuries and lack of comforts.

Learned, capable, clever, possessing wonderfully sweet power of speech and of equable temper as you are, how is it that you lie down (doing nothing) simply looking on, while all other people are exerting themselves.

Narada said:

Being thus questioned by Prahlada, the king of *daityas*, the great Sage, magnetized by the nectar-like words of the king, smilingly spoke to him.

The *Brahmana* said:

O the Foremost of *asuras*! Your honour is esteemed by all great and learned people. By your spiritual insight, you certainly know this, that is, the consequences of activity for (obtaining) worldly objects, and of renouncing them.

Owing to your absolute and pure devotion, the glorious Lord Narayana always abides in your heart. He dispels your ignorance as the sun disperses darkness.

We, however, shall (try to) answer your questions according to what I have traditionally learnt (about them). For, you deserve respect from those who desire to purify their hearts.

Being (induced) to do various acts by powerful desire which is never satiated by enjoyment of suitable objects, and thus become the source of the stream of births (and death), I have been forced to take birth in various species.

While wandering (through various types of existence) by the force of *karma*, and through sheer Providence, I have been brought to the human form of existence which is a gate-way to heaven or final emancipation.

Having observed the frustrations and failures of married couples while performing actions for securing happiness and avoiding pain in this life as well, I retired from worldly-activities.

Happiness is the essential nature of the soul. It is manifested after withdrawal and cessation of all activities. Having perceived that enjoyment and experience are fanciful creations of the mind, I lie down (enjoying whatever comes my way ordained by the Divine).

Having forgotten that this blissful nature is inherent in one's self, a man is verily enmeshed into *samsara* which is terrible (owing to birth, death and other miseries) and yet strange (as it consists of birth in celestial, subhuman, human and other-species).

He, who (being ignorant of his innate blissful state) thinks of finding his object (happiness) elsewhere (outside his self), is like an ignorant person who, with a desire to get water (to quench his thirst), leaves water (near him, but) runs after the mirage.

The body and the sense-organs are controlled by destiny. All the actions and efforts of a person without luck, repeatedly done through their instrumentality, for securing his happiness and removing his miseries become fruitless.

(Granting that a man's efforts are successful) what pleasures can be derived, from the hard-earned wealth and desired objects obtained with great difficulty, by a mortal (obsessed with the fear of death) and plagued by three types of miseries such as bodily ailments and others?

I perceive the agonies and tensions of wealthy and covetous persons who have no control over themselves, and who have lost their sleep, out of fear, as they are suspicious of everybody on all sides.

I observe that those who are anxious about their life and wealth entertain fear from kings, robbers, enemies, their kinsmen, birds and beasts, beggars, Time and themselves, at every moment.

(Therefore) a wise man should give up longings for life and property which are the source of sorrow, infatuation, fear, anger, attachment, despondency, over-exertions and such other (troubles).

In this world, the bee and the big python are our best teachers. By following their example, we attain renunciation and contentment.

I have learnt renunciation of all worldly objects from the bee, the gatherer of honey, for any person may kill the master and usurp the hard-earned money like honey, after killing the bees.

Free of all desires and with mind contented, I accept whatever is brought to me by Providence. Otherwise, I lie inactive like a big serpent for many days, depending on my innate power.

Sometimes I eat scant food; sometimes I enjoy a heavy meal, irrespective of the deliciousness or otherwise of the food; sometimes I partake of highly rich dishes, and sometimes worthless food.

At some places, I eat food that is offered to me with respect, and sometimes with irreverence. Sometimes, I do justice to food after eating; sometimes, I eat food by day or by night as is offered to me by chance.

Ever contented in mind, I enjoy whatever is ordained by fate; and I wear linen garments or silks or deerskin or rags or any other (fabric) that is offered to me.

Sometimes, I sleep on the bare ground; sometimes, on grass, a heap of leaves, a slab of stone or in ashes; sometimes, I lie inside a mansion on a rich bed over a precious bedstead as desired by God.

Sometimes, I take bath with my body anointed with fragrant pigments. I put on rich garments and wear garlands and ornaments. Sometimes, I ride in a chariot, on an elephant or on a horse; and sometimes, I wander stark-naked like an evil spirit, O King!

I do not revile or praise people who are of diverse nature. I pray for their welfare, and bless them for their union with the Almighty Lord Visnu.

One should obliterate (merge) one's notion of diversity in the mental faculty that perceives such differences, that mental faculty into mind which mistakes the unreal for the real, the mind into the *sattvic ahamkara* and that *ahamkara* through *Mahat* in *Maya* regularly.

The sage who perceives the Reality should merge that *Maya* into the realization of his soul. Devoid of all desires, he should establish himself in Self-realization, and cease all activities.

In this way, I have described to you my way of life which is closely guarded as a secret, though it is far different from the canons of conduct stated in the *sastras* (for the benefit of common people). (I have thus frankly explained to you) as you are the beloved of God.

Narada said:

Having heard the code of conduct of the highest order of recluses, the lord of *asuras* (Pahlada) worshipped him respectfully. Being pleased in mind, he bade goodbye, and returned home.

## Duties of a Householder

Yudhishtira said:

O celestial Sage! Please explain to me that course of conduct by which a householder like me whose mind is clouded with attachment to house and property will attain to the above state of emancipation (*moksha*) without difficulty.

Narada said:

Even though you know it, you have asked this question for the good of the world, O King! I shall explain to you how the duties of a householder lead one to the state of 'no-action' (attainment of *Jnana-yoga*).

Staying in the household and performing duties (such as *sandhya*, worship and five *maha-yajnas*) laid down for a householder as direct offering to Lord Vasudeva (without expecting any return), one should wait upon great sages to know the Truth.

Devoutly listening to the nectar-like stories of the Incarnations of Visnu during leisure after performance of duties, one should constantly be associated with (that is, surrounded by) persons who are tranquil by nature.

Through companionship with saintly people, one should gradually release oneself from attachment to oneself, one's wife, one's sons, etc who are in the process of being separated from one, and should rise above them like a person awakened from a dream (does in the case of objects seen in the dream).

A wise man should be disinterested in and dispassionate to his body and house, but should attend to them to the extent to which they are indispensable. Simulating attachment to them, a man should transcend his status as an ordinary human being and be a recluse, or (carry out his duties in life).

Free of attachment to himself and his property, he should acquiesce in what his kinsmen, parents, sons, brothers and other well-wishers propose and desire.

A wise man should carry out his duties while enjoying what he gets from the heaven (crops due to rain-fall), from mines (gold, precious stones, etc) and what he gets accidentally by wind-fall, as all wealth is created by Lord Visnu (and is obtained through his grace).

Embodied beings can lay claim to that much wealth as is just necessary for filling their bellies. He who lays claim to more than what is necessary is a thief, and deserves punishment.

One should look upon beasts, camels, donkeys, monkeys, rats, serpents, birds and flies like one's own sons (and hence these should not be driven out of the house or fields

if they enter and begin to eat), for there is very little difference between them and one's sons.

Even though a man is a householder, he should not put in extraordinary effort for getting the three *purusharthas* (*artha*, *kama* and *dharma*). He should enjoy what is afforded to him by Providence.

He should duly share his objects of enjoyment with all, down to dogs, sinners and people belonging to the lowest strata of the society (that is, who dwell at the end of a village). He should allow his wife, whom he ardently claims his own, to receive guests (unmindful of his inconvenience).

He, who can forego his claim on his wife for whose sake he should lay down his life or would kill his father or preceptor (if he suspects of any illegal or extra-marital relationship with her), has conquered (secured the grace of) the unconquerable Lord Visnu.

How despicable is the body that is convertible into worms (if buried), excretion (if eaten up by carnivorous animals) or ashes (if cremated)! Equally despicable is (the body of) wife which contributes to its erotic pleasures! How great is the Soul which pervades the whole of the space!

A wise person should make a living by eating the left-over food after offering oblations to the deities in five *maha-yajnas*, while relinquishing the notion of his claim to what remains as surplus. That way, he attains to the station of a *paramahamsa*.

A man should worship the *Antaryamin* (the Inner Controller) daily by sharing what he has obtained in his own vocation with gods, sages, human beings, other living beings, the *Pitris* and himself.

If he possesses all the required materials as well as the requisite qualifications for performing sacrifices, he should worship the Lord as laid down in the *Srauta* and *Kalpa sutras*.

But verily, this venerable Lord, the Enjoyer of sacrifice is not propitiated to that extent by oblation offered through the (sacrificial) fire, as through (the morsels of food offered to Him) through the mouths of *brahmanas*, O King!

One should, therefore, worship this Inner Controller (God) through the *brahmanas*, gods presiding over the five *maha-yajnas* as also through mortals like human beings and other creatures, by offering them objects of enjoyment, according to their respective order, after (feeding) the *brahmanas*.

If sufficiently rich, a twice-born person (*brahmana*, *kshatriya* or *vaisya*) should perform, according to his means, the *sraddha*, that is, the *mahalaya* in honour of his (departed) parents as well as their kinsmen and others, in the dark half of *Bhadrapada*.

He should (also) perform their *sraddha* at the time of the summer and the winter solstices (*ayanas*); the vernal and autumnal equinoxes (*visuva*); during the division of time called *vyatipata*; on the day when a *tithi*, that is, the lunar day begins and ends between two sun-rises known as *dinaksaya*; during the lunar and solar eclipses; on the twelfth lunar day when the constellations known as *sravana*, *dhanishta* and *sata-taraka* are on the ascendance; on the third day in the bright half of *vaisakha*; on the ninth lunar day in the bright half of *karttika*; on the eighth day in the dark half of the months of *margasira*, *pausa*, *magha* and *phalguna*; on the seventh day in the bright half of the month of *magha*; on the full-moon day when the constellation *magha* is ascended; on days when the constellations associated with the names of other (lunar) months are ascended on a full-moon day; on that day when the moon rises one digit less than the full; on any twelfth lunar day when the constellations *anuradha*, *sravana*, *uttarashadha*, *uttarabhadrapada* and *uttaraphalguni* are ascendant; on the eleventh lunar day (of any month) associated with (any of) these three constellations; (and lastly) on any day when the constellation under which a person was born or the constellation called *sravana* is ascendant.

These are very auspicious times for men conducive to their attainment of prosperity. On these days, a person should, by every means, try to perform pious acts to the best of his abilities. Thus his merits become most effectual and contribute to his longevity.

On these days, performance of ablutions, uttering prayers or *mantras*, oblations to fire, observance of sacred vows, worship of gods and *brahmanas*, and gifts donated in the names of manes, gods, men and living creatures bear ever-lasting benefit.

O King! *Sraddhas* should be performed when it is the time of the purificatory rites, observed in the behalf of himself, his wife or children; as well as at the time of the cremation of a dead body or on the death anniversary of a person; and at the time of any other function like marriage.

Now I shall narrate to you the (holy) places which enhance religious merits and other good. That is the most sacred place where a worthy and virtuous recipient is found.

For, he (such worthy recipient) is the very image of the Almighty Lord in who abides the whole creation, mobile and immobile. That is the hallowed place where *brahmanas* characterized by penance, knowledge and kindness dwell.

All the places where the image of Hari or Saligrama is found (or wherever the worship of Lord Hari is done) are the abodes of blessings; and so are the regions through which rivers like the Ganga and others, celebrated in *puranas*, flow.

(The regions where) lakes like *pushkara* and others are situated; and places inhabited by venerable sages, and places known as Kurukshetra, Gaya, Prayaga, the hermitage of Pulaha known as Salagrama Kshetra.

Forests like Naimisa, Kanyateertha, the holy bridge built by Rama at Rameswara, Prabhasa, Dwaraka, Varanasi, Mathura, the lake Pampa and Bindusara where stood the hermitage of Kardama, the father of Kapila;

The Hermitage of Narayana (Badarikasrama), the Alakananda, Chitrakuta where stood the hermitage of Rama and Sita and such other places; all principal mountain ranges such as Mahendra (Eastern-ghats), Malaya (Western-ghats) and others, O King!

These are the most-sacred places where the idols of Hari are installed. He, who is desirous of blessings, should constantly sojourn at these places. Righteous duties performed here yield fruits thousand-times more than what accrues at other places.

The foremost judges of worthy recipients, and wise people have decided that, in this world, Hari and Lord Hari alone is the only worthy recipient. O Lord of the earth! Everything mobile and immobile is constituted of Him.

Accordingly, O King, even though gods, sages, worthy persons such as the sons of Brahma and others were present at your *Rajasuya* sacrifice, Lord Krisna was conclusively selected as deserving the first place for adoration at the sacrifice, owing to His worthiness.

The great tree in the form of the universe (Brahmanda) is crowded with multitudes of the *Jiva* and is without limit. But Acyuta being the root of that tree, His worship brings gratification to all the *Jiva* and to one's own soul.

The dwellings (bodies) in the form of human beings, sub-human species, sages and gods have been created by Him. He dwells in these bodies in the form of *Jiva*, and hence He is called Purusa (the Dweller of habitations or Inner Controller).

In these bodies, the Lord is present (manifests Himself) in different degrees (of intelligence, wisdom, etc). Hence, even though every man is a worthy recipient, he is proportionately so according to the manifestation of the Self (spiritual wisdom, penance, etc) in him.

O King! Wise sages have taken into account the mutual hatred and disregard among men in the Treta and other ages, and have, therefore, instituted Hari's idols for worship, and other religious duties.

Some persons with perfect devotion in the worship of Hari propitiate Him thereby; but, to some, the worship of Hari, even though performed, is not fruitful as they hate the Lord in the form of His creation.

O Lord of kings! Even amongst men, a *brahmana* is regarded as the really worthy recipient as he bears in him the body of Hari, the Veda, along with the virtues of penance, learning and contentment.

O King! The *brahmanas*, who purify the three worlds by the dust of their feet, form really the Supreme Deity, Lord Krisna, who is the Soul of the universe.

## Right Conduct

Narada said:

Some *brahmanas* (householders) are devoted to rituals prescribed for their particular *asrama*; some (forest-dwellers) are bent on performing austere penance; some others (*brahmacharins*) to the study of the Veda; some to the teaching and exposition of the Veda; some to spiritual enlightenment (as in the case of *sanyasins*); and some to perfection in yoga.

A person desirous of attaining eternally lasting merit should offer the gifts of food, etc intended for manes (the *Pitrs*) and those meant for gods, to persons who are solely devoted to spiritual knowledge and, in their absence, to others according to their merit.

One should feed two *brahmanas* in rites connected with gods; three for ceremonies (*sraddha*) intended for (the *Pitrs*), or may feed one only in each. Even though a person is very affluent, one should not invite a large number (of guests).

If invitations are extended on a large scale, and food, etc is distributed among relatives, conditions regarding proper place, time, piety, devotion, proper materials, worthy recipients, etc are not properly observed.

At the appropriate time and place, if food, worthy of offer to sages, is first offered to Hari and then given, following the formalities and with devotion, to a worthy recipient, it yields the desired benefit and everlasting merit.

While distributing food to gods, sages, the *Pitrs*, beings and one's relatives, one should look upon these all as identical with the Supreme Person.

A person who knows the essence of *dharma* should not give (serve) flesh (non-vegetarian food), nor should eat it, at the time of *sraddha*, for there is no real gratification in the slaughter of animals, for there is supreme satisfaction with the type of food worthy of offer to sages.

For those persons who desire to follow the right course of conduct, there is no supreme *dharma* other than abstinence from violence to living beings caused by thought, word and deed.

Some persons who are well-versed in sacrificial lore and who have spiritual wisdom, become free of desire, and offer the ritualistic sacrifices (in the form of external actions) into the fire of self-control kindled by spiritual knowledge.

Living beings (animals, etc) become apprehensive on seeing a person who performs sacrifices with gross materials. (They say), 'this cruel man, not grasping the

spirit of the rules prescribed for *yajnas*, and thirsting after my life (flesh), will surely kill me’.

Therefore, a person knowing the real path of righteousness should be satisfied with the hermit’s way of life providentially obtained by him, and should every day carry out the prescribed daily and occasional duties.

A man versed in righteousness should steer clear of the five forms (branches) of *adharma* (impiety), namely, *vidharma*, *paradharmā*, *abhasa*, *upama* and *chala* regarding them all as *adharma* (impiety).

*Vidharma* (black-magic of *Tantra*) is that which, though practised as *dharma*, obstructs real *dharma*. *Paradharmā* is the course of conduct ordained for another *varna* or *asrama*. *Upadharmā* is heresy opposing the Veda. *Upama* is hypocrisy. *Chala* is distortion of the text, but showing apparent conformity to the letter of the scriptures, or quibbling.

The course of conduct different from the duties (prescribed in the Veda for different *varnas* in society and *asramas* in life) but adopted according to one’s fancy (the *avadhuta* mode of life) is called *abhasa*. Who would regard *abhasa* (*dharma*), which is agreeable to one’s innate disposition, as not conducive to one’s (inner) peace and prosperity?

An indigent person should not try to earn money either for the sake of charitable donations or for the maintenance of his life. The effortless state of one who ceases from activities becomes one’s means of subsistence, as in the case of the (proverbial) python.

How can the happiness enjoyed by a self-contented person, cherishing no desires and delighted in his own self, be obtained by a person who, actuated by passion and covetousness, runs in all directions in quest of wealth?

All directions are full of happiness to a man who is ever contented in his mind, just as the feet protected by shoes have complete safety against gravels, thorns and others.

With what will not a self-contented man pull on, say even with water? Owing to beggarly yearning for the pleasures of sex and tongue, a man behaves like a dog.

The spiritual power, learning, (the power accrued from) penance and glory of a *brahmana* leak away (are exhausted) because of discontent, and his spiritual knowledge gets dissipated.

A person may cease to feel the sexual urge owing to intensity of hunger and thirst (as these are more powerful); and he may see the end of anger when its fruit (revenge) is achieved. But he never sees the end of avarice even after conquering all the quarters and enjoying the sovereignty of the world.

There are a number of learned scholars of extensive knowledge capable of dispelling the doubts of others and leaders of assemblies, who have fallen because of discontent.

One should overcome passion by foregoing love for it; anger by eschewing desire; greed by looking upon wealth and worldly things as evil; and fear by perception of truth (about the objects of fear).

(One should conquer) grief and delusion, by realizing the distinction between the self (*atman*) and the not-self (*anatman*); hypocrisy, by association with the great; interruption to *yoga* (mental concentration), by observing silence; and violence to other beings, by bodily inactivity (to secure merit).

One should overcome troubles caused by other beings, by cherishing compassion (towards the trouble-makers); and those caused by destiny or gods, by equipoise and concentration of the mind; the ailments of the body, by the force of *yoga* (*pranayama* and other *yogic* expedients); and sleep, by recourse to *sattvic* food.

One should vanquish *rajas* and *tamas* by *sattva*, and *sattva* by complete withdrawal of attachment (and activity for it). One can easily overcome all the above-mentioned, through intense devotion to the spiritual preceptor.

The spiritual preceptor is verily the Venerable Lord Himself who imparts to the seeker the light of knowledge. But the spiritual knowledge or learning of a person, who entertains the perverted notion that his preceptor is an ordinary mortal, is as useless as the bath of an elephant (which besmears itself with dust immediately after the bath).

For, the spiritual preceptor, whom people regard as merely a human being, is the Almighty God, the Supreme Ruler both of *Prakrti* and *Purusa*, and His feet are sought after by masters of *yoga*.

All the precepts ordained (for performance of sacrifices, etc) are intended for restraint of six passions (desire, anger and others, or alternatively the five senses and the mind). If they do not lead to the accomplishment of *yoga* (*dhyana*, *dharana* and *samadhi*), all the above is only a source of sheer (fruitless) labour.

Just as the rewards and benefits of agriculture and other pursuits do not bear the fruits of *yoga* (final emancipation from *samsara*), the performance of sacrifices and undertakings for public welfare (construction of tanks, etc) will only lead to evil results in the case of a person whose mind is attached to external objects (of worldly nature).

He who has resolved to subjugate his mind should dissociate himself from all attachments and belongings; he should become a recluse and live alone in a secluded place, eating moderately whatever he gets as alms.

One should arrange one's seat in a clean hallowed level place, and sit erect, in a stable and comfortable posture, repeating silently the sacred syllable Aum, O King!

With one's gaze fixed on the tip of one's nose, one should control one's breath (*prana* and *apana* – inhalation and exhalation) by inhaling, suspending and exhaling one's breath till one's mind gives up desires.

A wise man should retrieve his ever-roving mind, smitten with desires, from whatever external object it goes onto, and confine it into his heart.

A recluse who strives to exercise such control, day and night, finds, in a short period, that his mind attains quiescence like fire for lack of fuel.

When the mind, not agitated by desires and passions, and with its activities calmed down, is touched by the ecstasy of realization of the *Brahman*, it never responds to external objects in *samsara*.

If a recluse who has earlier renounced his house which is a nursery of *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* (three objects of human life) again takes to the householder's life and enjoys them, the shameless fellow (is like a man who) is swallowing up his vomited food.

If those, who have regarded their own body as distinct from soul, mortal and reducible to excrement (if the body is eaten up by a carnivorous animal), worms (if interred in a grave) and ashes (if cremated on a pyre), highly extol it as if it were the *Atman*, such persons are the vilest ones.

Avoidance of religious rites and duties in the case of a *grhastha* (householder), non-observance (of the vow of celibacy, studies, etc) in the case of a *brahmacharin*, residence in an inhabited locality in the case of an ascetic performing penance, and lack of self-control in the case of a recluse (*sanyasin*) are all the accursed banes of their respective *asramas*, as such practices certainly reduce their *asramas* to mockery. Out of compassion, one should neglect such people who are deluded by the illusive power (*Maya*) of the Almighty God.

If a person realizes his self as the Supreme Brahman, all the traces of attachment are shaken off his mind by that spiritual knowledge. (It is not known) with what ulterior motive or for who does this addict to worldly pleasures nourish his body.

The wise say that this body is a chariot, the senses are the horses, mind, the controller of senses, is the reins, the objects of senses are the paths, intellect (reasoning faculty) is the charioteer, and the heart is the all-embracing cordage created by God.

The ten vital breaths form the axis, *dharma* and *adharma* its two wheels, the soul that identifies itself with the body due to ego (*ahamkara*) is the owner (occupant) of the chariot. They say that the sacred syllable AUM is the bow; the pure self is the arrow, and *Paramatman* (the Supreme Self) is the target.

The ten vital breaths are said to be *prana*, *apana*, *samana*, *vyana*, *udana*, *naga*, *kurma*, *krkala*, *devadatta* and *dhananjaya*.

Love, hatred, greed, sorrow, infatuation, fear, pride, haughtiness, disgrace, jealousy, deceitfulness, violence, envy, passion, negligence, hunger, sleep, etc are the enemies to be vanquished. These are born of *rajas* and *tamas*, and rarely of *sattva*.

While one continues to hold the chariot in the form of human body with all its constituent parts (the sense organs) under one's control, one, deriving one's strength from Lord Visnu, and wielding the sword of spiritual knowledge sharpened through the service of the highly exalted souls, should put an end to all the (aforesaid) enemies. Enjoying to one's utmost satisfaction the highest bliss of the Self, one should attain (perfect) tranquility, and cast off this (human body).

Otherwise, these wicked horses in the form of senses, and the (feeble) charioteer take the careless and unwary occupant astray to the path of *pravrtti* and land him among a band of robbers, that is, objects of sense-enjoyment. Those robbers hurl him along with the horses and the charioteer in the deep well of blinding darkness, in the form of *samsara*, beset with the terrible fear of death.

Acts prescribed in the Veda are of two kinds, *pravrtta* (leading to enjoyment of worldly life) and *nivrtta* (leading to spiritual life). By performance of *pravrtta karma*, a person is born again in *samsara*, while by *nivrtta karma*, he attains to immortality (*moksha*).

Ritual (like *syena-yaga*) to destroy the enemies, sacrifices involving slaughter of animals, *agnihotra* (maintenance of daily domestic sacrificial worship), *darsa* (sacrifice to be performed on the New-moon day), *chaturmasya* (a sacrifice to be performed at the beginning of a four-monthly division of the year), animal-sacrifice, soma-sacrifice, *visvadeva* (oblations to the *Visvadevas* offered before taking meals) and *baliharana* (symbolic offer of food to demi-gods, house-hold divinities, men and other creatures) are known as sacrificial (*ista*) acts; while construction of temples, gardens, tanks or wells, and booths supplying water to men and animals form (what are known as) *purta* acts. Both of these (*ista* and *purta*) acts are included under *pravrtta karma*.

(The gradual ascension of the departed soul is marked by the subtle modifications of materials of his astral body *linga sarira* which is supposed to be escorted by the deities presiding over), the smoke, the night, the dark half of the month, the *dakshinayana* (representing the sun's apparent movement to the south of the equator), and the orb of the moon. (After enjoying the fruits of its action, the path of descent of the *Jiva* is through) the New-moon day, plants and creepers, food grains and the semen. This is the path of the *Pitris* which leads to birth again. Having gone through these stages, one by one, the *Jiva* is born again and again in this world.

A twice-born person (a *brahmana*, *kshatriya* or *vaisya*), who is consecrated with the sixteen purificatory rites from *garbhadana* to the funeral obsequies, oblates all his activities as sacrifice into his five cognitive senses kindled by the light of spiritual wisdom.

He offers (merges) the senses into the mind, the mind born of *vaikalika* (*sattvic*) *ahamkara* into the speech, the speech into the body of articulate sounds and that collection of sounds into *pranava* AUM. He should merge that *pranava* into *bindu*, *bindu* into *nada*, *nada* into *prana* (vital breath) and *prana* in the Supreme Brahman.

Treading the path wherein the progress is watched by deities presiding over fire, the sun, the day time, the evening, the bright fort-night, the full-moon day, *uttarayana* (the period during which the sun appears to move in the north of the equator), *Brahma* (Brahma's region marks the highest point in the ascent of the departed soul), *visva* (when the soul identifies itself with the gross matter), *taijasa* (where-in the soul merges the gross into the subtle *upadhi*), *prajna* (where the soul is merged into the *karana upadhi*) and *turiya* (where the self is mere witness to all the states), he becomes Pure Self (liberated). This path is known as the path of gods (*deva-yana*). Going through these stages in that order, this propitiator of the (Supreme) Self, being established into the Supreme Self, attains to perfect tranquility and never returns (to *samsara*).

He, who distinctly and correctly understands these paths of the *Pitrs* and gods as stated in the Veda and the *sastras*, does not get deluded (and does not fall to a lower stage in life), even though he still abides in this (physical) body.

For, the knower of the path is factually aware of whatever exists before the creation and after the extinction of the body. He himself is whatever is outside the body (external world to be enjoyed) and inside the body (the enjoyer of the world), what is high and low, knowledge and the object of knowledge, the world and the object denoted by it, darkness as well as light.

Just as a reflection, though logically disproved in everyway, is supposed to be something real, so objects which are cognized by senses are imagined to be really existent. But their objective reality is difficult to be proved.

This 'shadow' (psycho-physical organism called body which is regarded as a combination of five elements) is nothing of (unrelated to) the earth and other elements; for it is neither a collection or a mixture, nor a compound or modification. It is neither of them separately or conjointly. Hence, it is unreal in the sense that it is perishable. (Here the unreality of the body is logically proved).

The ingredients or 'the roots' of the body, that is, the five gross elements being themselves composed of components cannot exist apart from their subtle forms (*tanmatras*) which form their components; and when the whole that is combination of the constituents proves to be unreal, the parts (constituents) *ipso-facto* cease to be real. (Here it is shown that the constituents making up the body are unreal).

An objection may be raised thus: In case the existence of an individual is denied, the identity of the same individual at different stages in life or periods of time cannot be recognized.

The objection may be countered thus: When the Supreme Brahman is One and Immutable, it is through similarities between the successive appearances that the mistake in identification will take place under the influence of *avidya*. The force of injunctions and prohibitions of the *sastras* is similar to the distinction between wakefulness and sleep, both perceived during the dream-stage.

A contemplative sage is who, through the realization of the self, comprehends the unity of *bhava* (thought), *kriya* (action) and *dravya* (materials) of the *atman*, and shakes off the three states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep.

*Bhava-advaita* (non-duality of thought) is the comprehension of the essential oneness of cause and effect like that of thread and cloth (woven out of thread), their difference being unreal.

O Yudhishtira! The resignation of all acts performed to the instrumentality of thought, words and deeds directly to the Supreme Brahman is the *kriya-advaita* (non-duality of action).

The *dravya-advaita* (non-duality of substances) is the realization of *artha and kama* (wealth and enjoyment) of one's own self, one's wife, children as well as other embodied beings.

Except in the case of calamity (that is, normally), one should perform one's duties with materials the acquisition of which is permitted by whatever means, from whatever source and at whatever time and place.

O King! He who abides by these and other duties prescribed for him in the Veda and is deeply devoted to Lord Krisna attains to the realm of the Lord, even though he is staying home.

O King of kings! Just as you (and your brothers) tided over a series of insurmountable difficulties by the grace of the Lord, and have performed sacrifices after conquering the guardian-elephants of all quarters, so you may cross over the *samsara* through the grace of Lord Krisna, the saviour of all.

In the previous *mahakalpa*, I was born as a *gandharva* named *Upabarhana* and was highly respected among the *gandharvas*.

Being an amiable person with beautiful appearance, comeliness, sweet in speech and fragrance, I was a favourite with women. I was always intoxicated and extremely lascivious.

Once upon a time, in a sacrifice performed by gods, *gandharvas* (celestial musicians) and *apsaras* (heavenly damsels) were invited by the Prajapatis (lords of creations) to chant verses in praise of Lord Hari.

Coming to know of that invitation, I, in the company of women, went there (drunk) singing (profane songs). Being informed of my contemptuous conduct, the creators of the universe cursed me with their ascetic powers thus: ‘Bereft of your glory, you shall be born instantly a *sudra*, as you have behaved disrespectfully’.

At first, I was born of a female servant. Even in that birth, through my reverential service to and in association with the sages who had realized the Brahman, I became the son of Brahma.

The righteous course of conduct prescribed for householders and which is capable of destroying sins has been described to you in detail. Following this course, a householder easily attains to the goal of a *sanyasin* (liberation).

In this world, you are certainly highly fortunate inasmuch as the sages who sanctify the world come to your house where the Supreme Brahman disguised in human form resides.

This (Lord Krisna) is verily the Supreme Brahman, the embodiment of the realization of the ecstatic bliss of eternal emancipation which is sought after by great sages. This venerable Lord is your beloved friend, maternal cousin, your most adorable preceptor, your (very) soul and the executor of your commands.

May this Lord of *Satvatas* (Lord Krisna) be propitious to us! Lord Krisna, whose essential form (nature) could not adequately be (comprehended and) described with their intellectual faculties even by great gods like Siva, Brahma and others, is worshipped by us in silence, devotion and tranquility.

Sri Suka said:

Hearing the above discourse of the divine sage Narada, the foremost one of Bharatas (Yudhishtira) was highly delighted and, overwhelmed with devotional love, worshipped Krisna.

The sage, who was duly worshipped, took leave of Krisna and Yudhishtira. Yudhishtira was highly amazed to learn that Krisna was the Supreme Brahman.

Thus the genealogy of the different dynasties of the daughters of Daksha has been severally described to you, and gods, *asuras*, human beings and other creation, mobile and immobile, in the world are included in these (dynasties).

#### **4. The Ethics of Vyasa in Brahmapurana**

##### Table of Contents

	Page No
Introduction	102
Conduct of the Good	103
Assignment of Duties to Different Castes and Stages of Life	115
Characteristics of Mixed Castes	120
Review of Virtue – 1	125
Review of Virtue – 2	130

# The Ethics of Vyasa in Brahmapurana

## Introduction

The ethics of Vyasa is contained in chapters 113 to 117 of Brahmapurana (Part III). This is in the nature of a dialogue between Vyasa and the sages, and also a dialogue between Mahesvara and Uma elaborated by Vyasa to the sages.

What Vyasa describes to the sages relates to the compulsory and optional duties prescribed for the householders with various do's and don'ts. It also relates to the special duties of the four castes and the four stages of life, and also the circumstances leading to upgrading and downgrading of castes with considerable sociological significance of the period when these chapters in Brahmapurana are compiled. There is a detailed elaboration of the role and content of virtue as a means of social conduct.

The Brahmapurana is classified as *Rajasa* and is assigned to Brahma, the god of *rajas* quality. The Purana takes the name after Brahma, for it is Brahma that narrates this Purana to the sages on the mount Meru. That version with certain modifications was repeated by Vyasa to the sages at Kurukshetra, and by his disciple Romaharsana to the sages at Naimisa. The Purana derives its name merely because it has come out of the mouth of Brahma.

The Brahmapurana is predominantly Visnuite. It glorifies Visnu, incarnated in various forms and worshipped in different forms and different continents. It also portrays the legends of Siva, immolation of Sati, the Sun-god, etc.

In spite of the presence of a multitude of gods, the central theme of the Purana is towards monotheism. It is a strong advocate of non-sectarian religion where all gods stand on equal footing.

The ethics of Vyasa is an enunciation of the code of conduct from the points of view of *asrama* and *varna* for different sections of the society. It is a reiteration of the *Dharma-sutras* of the Vedic tradition.

## Conduct of the Good

Vyasa said:

The deities and Manes are to be duly worshipped by the householder by means of the *Havya* and *Kavya* offerings. The guests and kinsmen should be honoured with cooked rice.

The living beings, the servants, animals, birds, even ants, the mendicants who beg for alms, and all other travellers who come to the house are to be received hospitably.

Brahmins observing the disciplined conduct of life of the good should be honoured by the good householder.

The sages said:

O Brahmin! The *Nitya* and *Naimittika* rites have been recounted by you. Human activities are three-fold, namely, *Nitya*, *Naimittika* and *Kamyā*. O Sage! Even as you recount, we wish to hear the rules of good conduct by pursuing which a man attains to happiness here and hereafter.

Vyasa said:

Good conduct should always be preserved by a householder. There is no welfare here or hereafter to one who is devoid of good conduct.

Sacrifices, charitable gifts and austerities are not conducive to the prosperity of the person who transgresses the rules of good conduct.

A person who maintains good conduct attains to the longevity of Brahma. Virtue and good conduct should always be maintained. Virtue is the symbol of good conduct.

O Brahmins! I shall recount the form and general outline of good conduct. One shall maintain it with great concentration. A householder should endeavour to achieve the three-fold aim of life. The achievement of the householder here (in this life) and hereafter depends on the realization thereof.

With one-fourth of his wealth, the self-possessed man shall achieve the other-worldly welfare. With half of his wealth, he shall sustain himself as well as perform the *Nitya* and *Naimittika* rites. With the remaining one-fourth, he shall increase his original capital. O Brahmins! If one pursues thus, one's wealth becomes fruitful.

Similarly, for the sake of overcoming the effects of sins, virtuous rites should be performed by a learned man. That component of *dharma* which has the fruit of welfare in the world hereafter should be accomplished here itself.

The three, namely, *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* are of two types each. One type causes sinful effect; the other type is not antagonistic. One thinks of these as mutually complementary.

O excellent Brahmins! Know them to be conducive to the contrary results. (For example), the wealth that is conducive to virtue is intrinsically virtuous. That which does not afflict the soul is virtue. *Kama* (desire) is split into two by the other two, *dharma* and *artha*; and the other two are split into two each by *kama*.

One shall get up in the *Brahma-muhurta* and think about virtue and wealth. After getting up, one shall perform the *Achamana* rite. After taking bath and making oneself pure, one shall worship the *Sandhyaas*. The early *Sandhyaa* at dawn shall be performed even when the stars are seen. One shall perform the evening *Sandhyaa* at dusk even when the sun is visible. One shall perform *Sandhyaas* daily. Except for reasons beyond one's control, one shall not forsake them.

O Brahmins! One shall avoid evil utterances, falsehoods and harsh words. One shall eschew ignoble scriptures, evil arguments and service of ignoble persons.

One shall perform *Homa* both in the evening and in the morning, with perfect restraint over the self. One shall not see sunrise and sunset directly.

Washing the teeth, applying collyrium, embellishing the hair, looking into the mirror and the *Tarpana* rite to the deities are the activities to be performed in the forenoon.

Fasces should not be discharged on the path leading to the rural residences, holy centres and fields, not in a ploughed field, nor in a cow-pen.

One shall not look at the naked wife of another man; one shall not look at one's own ordure. (One shall avoid) seeing, touching and talking to a woman in her menses.

One shall not discharge urine or fasces into the waters (of a tank, etc). Nor shall one indulge in sexual intercourse under water. One shall not stand on fasces or urine, or on hairs or ashes. One shall not stand over the sharp edge of any cutting instrument.

An intelligent man shall not stand on scattered husk, burning coal, bits of ropes, clothes, etc on the road or in a ground.

After performing the rite of worship of the Pitris, deities, human beings and other living beings, the householder deserves to take food in accordance with his affluence.

After performing the *Achamana* rite, without unnecessary talk, remaining pure, the householder shall sit facing the east or the north and take food with the mind therein. He shall keep the hands between the knees.

Except in the case of decomposition of food, the wise man shall not complain about the defects of food at the time of taking it. One shall avoid taking salt directly. (Salt should be mixed with food and then taken in.) He shall avoid wasting any food.

The self-possessed man shall not discharge urine or fasces while standing or walking. He shall not eat any food defiled or left over by others. If one is defiled by the leavings of food, one shall not speak anything. One shall avoid reciting the Veda, too.

One shall not look at the sun, moon or the stars as one pleases. One shall avoid using a seat, bed or a vessel if it is torn or broken.

One shall honour and greet elderly persons by standing up and offering them seats. An intelligent man shall talk in a way favourable to them (elderly persons). He shall follow them. He shall not act against them.

No intelligent man shall take food, worship the deities or invoke them with a single cloth on. O Brahmins! No intelligent man shall perform a sacrifice if there is no fire. No man shall take bath or lie down completely naked. One shall not scratch head simultaneously with both hands.

Head-bath should not be repeatedly undertaken by an intelligent man without cause. One who has already had head-bath should not touch any limb with oil.

One shall avoid studying the Veda during the holidays. One should never disregard or insult Brahmins, fires, cows and the sun.

One shall discharge fasces and urine facing the north during the day, and facing the south during the night. During distress one shall discharge them as one pleases.

One shall not speak of the misdeeds of the preceptor. If the preceptor is angry, one shall propitiate him. One shall not listen to others who slander him.

Priority in access to the path shall be given to the Brahmins, to the King, to one who is miserable, to one of superior learning, to a pregnant woman, to one who is afflicted by sickness, to a greater person, to the deaf, mute or blind, to one who is elated and to one who has become mad.

A learned man shall circumambulate a temple, a tree in a monastery, cross-roads, and the preceptor who is of superior learning. One shall never wear shoes, clothes, garlands, etc worn by others.

One shall avoid taking oil-bath or indulging in sexual intercourse with women on the eighth, fourteenth and fifteenth lunation as well as on auspicious days.

No wise man shall ever stand with arms and upper leg raised up. One shall not throw up the feet. One shall not keep one leg over another.

One shall avoid reviling, wounding the sensitive spots of and slandering an unchaste woman or a boy who has indulged in an unworthy act or a fallen fellow.

A clever man shall never be arrogant, proud and harsh. One shall not laugh at or find fault with a fool, a mad fellow, a person in distress, an ugly person, a person with deficient limbs or a poor person. One shall not lift up another man's stick to chastise a disciple or a son.

A wise man should not drag a seat with his leg and sit thereon. One shall not prepare a cake of wheat flour or a dish of rice and peas mixed together or meat solely for oneself.

Food should be taken in the evening and in the morning after worshipping the guests.

O Brahmins! One shall always clean the teeth sitting silently facing the east or the north. One shall avoid the forbidden creeper. No man shall ever sleep with his head placed towards the north or the west. One shall place one's head towards the south or the east.

One should never take one's bath in scented water, especially in the morning. If, at all, one has to take one's bath at other times during the day, it should be only during the eclipse. The limbs should not be wiped off with the edges of a cloth or with one's hands.

One shall never shake tresses or the clothes. No learned man shall ever apply unguents before taking bath.

One shall never wear a red or a black cloth, or one of variegated colour. No one shall exchange clothes or ornaments with others.

A cloth should be abandoned if it is excessively worn out and the threads come off, if it is defiled by worms and hairs or if it is touched by dogs.

One shall avoid the meat if it is licked by a dog, if it is defiled after the essence has been taken away, that of the back or the forbidden one.

A man shall never take in salt directly. O Brahmins! A foodstuff that has been left over for a long time, that has become dry or that has become stale should be eschewed.

O excellent Brahmins! The resultant products of sugarcane juice, milk, vegetables and flour as well as the products of gravy need not be abandoned even if they are left over for a long time.

One shall avoid lying down at the times of sunrise and sunset. A man shall never take food if he has not taken his bath, if he is sleeping, if his mind dwells on other things, if he is seated on the bed or on the bare ground or if he has not given a part of it to his servants. While taking food he shall not make sounds.

One shall take food only after taking bath in the morning as well as in the evening.

A learned man shall not approach carnally the wives of other men. Sexual intercourse with the wives of other men destroys the merits of *Ishtapurta* and also longevity. There is nothing as destructive of the span of life of a man as the outraging of the modesty of the wives of other men.

It is only after duly performing the rite of *Achamana* that one should perform the holy rites of deities, Pitris, and fire-god. The obeisance to the preceptor as well as the routine of taking food shall be performed only after the *Achamana* rite. The water used for the *Achamana* rite should be clean. It should be devoid of smell and foam. No sound should be made at that time. It should be serenely performed.

One shall sit facing the east or the north, and then perform the rite of *Achamana*. Before that rite one shall wash one's hands and feet after applying clay. The clay taken for this purpose shall not be that taken from under water, that taken from residential localities, that taken from the ant-hill, that from the rats' den or that which remains after performing the purificatory rites. One shall avoid these five types of clay.

With great concentration and keeping the hands between knees, one shall perform the *Achamana* rite three or four times. After wiping off the limbs and whirling the water round the head, and after performing the *Achamana* rite perfectly, one shall perform the other holy rites. One shall perform the *Achamana* rite after sneezing, licking, breaking the wind, spitting, etc. After touching what should not be touched (and as expiation thereof), one shall look at the sun or touch the right ear.

These rites are in accordance with their availability. If the previous one is not available, the latter one is sought; when the previous one is available, the latter is not performed.

One shall not grind one's teeth, nor beat one's own body. While sleeping, meditating or taking food, one shall eschew the self-study of the Veda.

One shall avoid sexual intercourse and journey during *sandhya* (dusk). One shall perform *Tarpana* rite unto the Pitris, with full faith, in the early afternoon. The head-bath and the holy rites unto deities and the Pitris shall be done in the afternoon. One shall get the shaving done facing the east or the north.

For matrimony, one shall avoid a girl with crippled limbs or one wanting a limb even if she is free from ailments or born of a noble family. One shall marry a girl

removed by (not less than) seven generations on his father's side and (not less than) five generations on his mother's side.

One shall protect one's wife. One shall avoid jealousy as well as sleeping and indulgence in sexual intercourse during the day. One shall eschew infliction of pain on animals, and all other activities that cause distress and sorrow to others.

In respect of all castes, a woman in her monthly course should be avoided for the first four nights. To prevent the birth of a female child, one shall avoid the fifth night also.

Thereafter, one shall carnally approach one's wife on the sixth night or other nights even in number. Boys will be born (if intercourse is carried) on even nights and girls on nights, odd in number.

Unrighteous persons indulge in sexual intercourse on auspicious and other days and impotent persons during dusk time. A clever man shall avoid *Rikta* days.

Even if rude people speak a lot, one shall never listen to them.

An honourable seat should not be offered to a person who is not magnificent.

After shaving, vomiting or sexual intercourse with a woman, an intelligent person shall take bath along with the clothes worn. He shall take bath also after going to the cremation ground.

O Brahmins! One shall not make slanderous remarks about the followers, or laugh at deities, Veda, Brahmins, noble and truthful persons, preceptor, chaste women, the Brahman, yajnas and ascetics.

One shall be in perfectly auspicious dress, clad in white garments, and embellished with white flowers. One shall never be inauspicious in dress and features. One shall not be on friendly terms with arrogant persons, mad fellows, the foolish and impolite, persons of no good conduct, those who are defiled by the defects of age and caste, those who habitually spend much, those who are enemies, those who are censured, those who are inefficient in their work, those who are in contact with lecherous persons, those who have no money, those who are solely interested in arguing and other base men.

One shall stand up while meeting friends, persons who are initiated, Kings, religious students who have finished studies and become householders, and the father-in-law. When they come to one's house one shall greet them in accordance with one's affluence.

O Brahmins! After honouring and worshipping them in accordance with one's capacity, one shall bid them farewell to their respective places, after they have stayed for a year.

One shall then offer worship. One shall offer oblations into the fire in due order. The first oblation shall be offered to Brahma, the second to Prajapati, the third to the Grhyas and the fourth to Kasyapa. After offering oblation to Anumati, one shall offer the domestic oblation.

The holy rites that have been recounted by me at the time of laying down the rules regarding the *Nitya* rites shall then be performed. The *Vaisvadeva* rite shall be performed thereafter.

O Brahmins! Even as I recount, listen.

After allotting the different divisions in the abodes (places) in regard to deities, one shall offer three oblations in the water jar to *Parjanya*, *Aapah* (waters) and *Dharitree* (earth). One shall offer oblation in every quarter to *Vayu* beginning with the east, and in due order. Then one shall offer oblations to Brahma, to the firmament and to the sun in due order. Subsequently, with purity, one shall offer oblations to the *Visvadevas*, to all living beings, to *Ushas* (dawn) and to the *Bhootapati* (the Lord of living beings). In the south, one shall offer oblations to the *Pitris* after saying ‘*Svadhaa cha namah*’ making it anticlockwise. One shall duly offer the water mixed with the remnant of cooked rice in the south-east, uttering ‘*Yakama etat te*’. Thereafter one shall perform the rite of obeisance to deities and Brahmins.

The line at the root of the thumb of the right hand is known as the *Brahma-Tirtha* for the rite of *Aachamana*.

The spot between the index finger and the thumb is cited as the *Pitr- Tirtha*. Except in the case of *Naandemukha* type of *Pitris*, water libation shall be offered by means of this spot to the *Pitris*. The *Tirtha* pertaining to deities is at the tip of fingers. The holy rite unto deities is by means of *Pitr-tirtha*. The *Tirtha* of Prajapati should be assigned at the root of the little finger. Thus, by means of these *Tirthas* alone should all the rites be performed to the respective deities along with the *Pitris*. They should never be performed through the *Tirthas* of others.

The rite of *Aachamana* by means of *Brahma-Tirtha* is excellent. The rites of *Pitris* shall always be performed by means of *Pitr-Tirtha*; the rites of the deities by means of *Deva-Tirtha* and the rite of Prajapati by means of the *Tirtha* of Prajapati. With the same, one shall perform the rites of water libation and offering the ball of rice unto the *Nandimukha* category of the *Pitris*. Everything connected with Prajapati shall be performed by means of *Prajaapatya Tirtha*.

No shrewd man shall hold water and fire together. One shall not stretch one’s legs in front of one’s preceptors, deities, the *Pitris* and Brahmins.

One should not look at a cow suckling her calf; one should not drink water with the palms joined together to form a cup; an intelligent man shall not cause delay in the short and long periods of cleaning. One shall not blow fire with the mouth.

O Brahmins! One should not stay in a place where there is no one who offers debt; a physician, a Brahmin well-versed in the Veda and a river abounding in water.

An intelligent man shall always stay where the King is strong, interested in virtue and has complete control over his servants. Whence can one have happiness if the King is bad?

It is conducive to happiness to stay at a place where the citizens are united, where they abide by justice, where they are peaceful and where they rival with one another (to work for the welfare of all).

A shrewd man shall live in that country where the husbandmen are generally not very arrogant and where all medicines are available.

O Brahmins! One shall not stay in that place where there is anyone eager to conquer, a previous enemy and people who continuously celebrate festivals, together.

A learned man shall stay among his fellow travellers of very good conduct. One shall always stay at a place where the King cannot be thwarted, and where the earth yields plenty of vegetables.

Thus, O Brahmins! I have mentioned everything for the welfare of you all. Henceforth, I shall state the rules of procedure regarding the food-intake.

Cooked rice, though stale, can be taken in if it is soaked in oil. It can be kept thus for a long time. Wheat, barley and milk products kept for a long time can be eaten even if they are devoid of oil.

Hare, tortoise, alligator, porcupine and fish with darts may be eaten. The village boar and the cock should be avoided.

Even if one eats meat, one is not defiled if it is the remnant of offerings unto the *Pitris*, deities, etc, if it is cooked in *Sraddha* at the request of the Brahmins and is sprinkled with holy water, or if it is taken as a medicine.

Conch, rock, gold, silver, rope, garments, vegetables, roots, fruits, baskets of split bamboos, hides, jewel-studded cloth, coral pearl, (ordinary) vessels and vessels used for drinking *soma* juice can be cleaned with water.

The cleansing of stony vessels may be with water or by scrubbing with a stone. The cleansing of oily vessels is by means of hot water.

The sieves, deer skins, mortars and pestles, or clothes in a bundle are cleaned by just sprinkling (of water over the bundle). The cleansing of all types of bark-garments is by means of clay and water.

The cleansing of wool and all types of hairs is done with the *kalka* (paste) after being boiled well of white mustard or *sesame* seeds. The cleansing of cotton dress shall be with water and ash; that of wood, ivory, bones and horns is through paring.

The purity of pots made of clay is effected by baking them. What is received by way of alms, the hand of an artisan and the mouth of the harlot is pure. Perfect knowledge, passage through the street, that which is consecrated by servants, that which is praised at the outset, that which is past after a long time, that which is hidden by many, that which is light, that which has many boys within, that in which old people are active, the chambers of barn and storage for sugarcane, grain, etc and the two breasts of a woman are pure.

The flowing waters devoid of odour are pure. A plot of land becomes pure by the efflux of time, by being burnt, by being swept or when herds of cows pass over it.

(The ground becomes purified) by smearing (with cow-dung), by scraping, by sprinkling (with water), and by sweeping. If cooked rice is defiled by hairs or worms, if it is sniffed at by a cow or if flies settle on it, clay, water and ash must be put over it for the sake of purity.

The purity of (a vessel) made of *Udumbara* tree, tin or lead is affected by means of alkaline water. The purity of bell metal vessels is affected by means of water mixed ashes. If a liquid is defiled by contact with impurities, it is to be filtered or its foul smell is to be dispelled by means of clay and water. One shall remove the colour and the (bad) odour of other materials, too (similarly).

The (piece of) meat dropped down by a *chandala* (low-caste person), beasts and birds of prey, etc is pure (intrinsicly). Oil, etc that is spilt on the street is pure. The water that gives satisfaction to a cow is pure.

Dust particles, fire, the shadow of horses and cows, rays (of the sun), wind, earth, sprays (of water), flies, etc are not defiled by means of their contact with (other) defiled things. Goats and horses are pure in their mouths, but not the mouths of cows and calves. The flow of milk of the mother is pure. A bird felled down by an arrow is pure. Seats, beds, vehicles, river banks, grasses, etc are purified by the rays of the sun and the moon, and by the wind, like the articles of trade.

One shall duly perform the rite of *Achamana* after traversing through streets, after a bath and during the activities of eating and drinking. One shall perform *Achamana* after wearing a cloth.

Those touched by the foul marshy water of the street get purified by contact with wind. So is the purity of a platform built of baked bricks.

One shall take away the upper part of the cooked food defiled much and leave it off, and sprinkle the remaining part with water along with clay. The person who partakes of defiled food is to fast for three nights and perform the rite of *Achamana* by means of water, to become pure. This atonement is prescribed when the partaking is due to ignorance. If it were to be with full knowledge, that defect does not abate.

After touching a woman in her monthly course or a woman who has come into contact with her, or a woman who has just given birth to a child, and persons belonging to the meanest caste, one shall take bath for purity. So also, one shall take bath after touching persons who have carried a dead body. If a Brahmin touches a human bone, he can become pure by taking an oil-bath. If he does not take oil-bath, he shall have to perform the *Achamana* rite, touch a cow and look at the sun. (He shall then become pure.)

One shall not tread on spittle or vomited matter.

The leavings after food, fashces, urine, and water used for washing the feet shall be cast out of the house.

Without concluding the rite of offering five *Pindas*, one shall not take bath in the water belonging to others.

One shall take bath in natural water reservoirs (literally, those dug by gods), in eddies, the Ganges (and other) rivers.

An intelligent man shall never remain in gardens and other places at wrong times.

One shall never converse with those persons who are hated by the people, as well as women bereft of sons.

One becomes purified by looking at the sun if one touches or converses with the persons who speak in contempt of deities, manes, scriptures, performance of sacrifices and saintly persons.

This selfsame purificatory rite should be performed by intelligent persons after looking at a woman in her monthly course, a dead body that has been left abandoned and lying (unattended), persons devoid of righteousness or persons of other religions, a woman who has just given birth to a child, a eunuch, a naked man, a man of the lowest caste, persons who have carried a dead body and those who are enamoured of other men's wives.

A person who is conversant with righteousness becomes purified by taking a bath if he touches a mendicant not worthy of being fed, a heretic, a cat, an ass, a cook, a fallen

man, an outcaste (a person ostracized), a *chandala* (low-caste person), those who bear dead bodies, a country-pig and a woman in her monthly course. Similarly, one has to take bath for purification if one touches any person defiled by a woman who has just given birth to a child, a person who has been polluted due to child-birth, a person who fails to perform his daily round of duties at home, a person abandoned by brahmins or the meanest man who commits sins by his (indiscriminate) eating.

One shall never fail to perform the daily duty of observing rituals. Only on the occurrence of a death or birth (in his family), a Brahmin shall refrain from the rites of performing sacrifice, offering sacrificial fire, etc.

(In similar circumstances), a *kshatriya* shall refrain from performing the daily rites for twelve days, a *vaisya* for half a month and a *sudra* for a month.

Thereafter all these people shall perform their duties duly.

Water (libation) should be offered to the dead man (body) by the members of his *gotra* after taking it out of the house. The bones of a dead person shall be collected on the first, fourth, seventh or the ninth day. They shall be gathered by the members of his *gotra* on the fourth day.

After the rite of *sanchayana* (collection of bones after cremation), the touch of their limbs is laid down in the *Sastras*. The prescribed rites should be performed by the members of the *gotra* of the dead person after the rite of *sanchayana*.

On the day of death in a family, two sagotrikas (*sapindas*) can touch each other, for they are related to each other. If death takes place owing to weapons, hanging, fire or enemy the prescription is the same as mentioned afore. If death takes place owing to protest fasts or starvation, men are purified immediately. But the sagotrikas will have pollution for three days.

When a sagotrika dies after the death of another (that is immediately thereafter), a single purificatory rite is sufficient. The routine daily rites should, however, be performed. The same is the procedure when a birth takes place.

According to injunctions, the father shall take bath at the birth of a son. He shall take bath along with the clothes he is wearing at the time of the birth.

Even in the case of (post-natal pollution), if another birth takes place while pollution is current, the purity is mentioned as having been affected in the course of days of the previous birth. The people of different castes shall duly perform their duties and rituals after ten, twelve, fifteen or thirty days, as the case may be, as ordained in the *Sastras*.

After the ordained period, the rite of *Eloddista-sraaddha* should be performed in regard to the dead man and gifts given to the Brahmins.

Whatever was pleasing unto, whatever was liked by him (the dead man) in the house should be given to a worthy Brahmin by the person (performing the rites) who wishes that the same should be inexhaustible.

When the days of pollution are past, the people shall touch water by their vehicles and weapons. After offering water libations and *pindas* to the dead, people of all castes will have fulfilled all their due rites.

They shall perform all rites maintaining purity for prosperity here and hereafter. The Veda should be studied everyday. One should try to be a learned scholar.

One should earn and amass wealth righteously. One should assiduously perform sacrifice whereby the *Atman* will not be infuriated. O Brahmins! Sacrifice shall not be treated with contempt. Without hesitation one shall perform that rite which need not be concealed by a great man.

O Brahmins! If a householder practises the foregoing conduct of life thus, he attains virtue, wealth and love. It is splendid for him here and hereafter.

This is an esoteric secret. It is conducive to longevity and affluence. It increases intellect. It dispels sins. It is meritorious. It bestows glory, health and nourishment. It is auspicious. It confers fame and renown. It increases splendour and strength. It is a means of attainment of heaven. It should always be practised by men, o excellent sages. It should be practised by Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras.

This should be known carefully by those who desire prosperity. He who understands and practises it on all occasions shall be rid of sins. He is honoured in the heavenly world.

O excellent Brahmins! This is the essence of all that has been related. It is the virtuous path mentioned in *Srutis* and *Smrtis*. This secret should not be imparted to anyone, least to an atheist, a defiled mind. Nor should it be imparted to an arrogant fellow, a foolish person or a prattler of unsound arguments.

## Assignment of Duties to Different Castes and Stages of Life

The sages said:

O holy one! We wish to hear about the special duties of different castes. O excellent Brahmin! Recount the duties of the four *varnas* (castes) and *ashramas* also.

Vyasa said:

Listen, with restraint, to the duties of different castes, namely, Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras in due order as they are being recounted by me.

A Brahmin shall be devoted to (the practice of) sympathy, charitable gift, austerities, sacrifice unto the gods and study of his own branch of the Veda. He shall regularly perform water libations. He shall maintain sacrificial fires.

For his livelihood, he shall perform sacrifices on behalf of others. He shall teach Vedic lore to the twice-born. O Brahmins! For performing sacrifices, he shall accept monetary gifts with discretion.

O Brahmins! He shall do everything beneficial to the world. He shall not perform what is detrimental to anyone. Friendliness to all living beings is the excellent asset of a Brahmin.

O Brahmins! He shall view a cow and another man's precious gem as equal. O Brahmins! His carnal approach to his wife during the permissible period after the days of menstruation is commended.

A Kshatriya shall give charitable gifts to the Brahmins as much as they wish. O Brahmins! He should perform different sacrifices and read the Veda.

He shall maintain himself through his weapons. Protection of Earth is his excellent means of livelihood. Sustenance of Earth is his primary duty.

Rulers of men (kings) are content only by due sustenance of Earth, since the protection of the King himself is accomplished by such holy rites as sacrifice.

By chastising the wicked and protecting the good, the King attains the desired worlds. He is the one who establishes and stabilizes different castes.

O excellent sages! Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, granted breeding of cattle, trading activities and agriculture as means of livelihood unto a Vaisya.

For him, reading of the Veda, sacrifice, charitable gifts, practice of piety and the performance of compulsory and optional rites are also recommended.

The holy rites of a Sudra depend upon the collaboration of the twice-born. For that purpose, he supports and nourishes them through riches earned by purchase and sale of articles, or by practising arts and crafts. A Sudra shall offer charitable gifts. He shall worship by means of *Pakayajnas* (offering cooked food unto gods). He shall perform rites unto the *Pitris*.

There are certain virtuous observances common to the four *varnas*. All of them can accept gifts for sustaining their dependents.

O excellent Brahmins! They should carnally approach their own respective wives during the permissible period after the days of menstruation.

Kindness and sympathy towards all living beings, forbearance, absence of over-exertion, auspiciousness, loving and gentle speech, friendliness, absence of desire, abstention from miserliness and being devoid of jealousy are recounted as the noble characteristics of all the *varnas*.

O Brahmins! These alone are the characteristics common to people of all castes. There are special qualities and subsidiary duties of the Brahmins and others.

In times of adversity, the vocation of a Kshatriya or a Vaisya is recommended for a Brahmin; the vocation of a Vaisya to a Kshatriya and the vocation of a Sudra to both a Kshatriya and a Vaisya.

O Brahmins! In case of incompetence, such assignment of vocations shall be avoided. One shall pursue one's own vocation even during adversity; and chaotic mixing up of vocations shall not be effected.

O Brahmins! Thus, the duties of a Brahmin (and of other castes) have been mentioned by me. Understand now the respective duties of the people of various stages of life even as I explain them to you.

A boy who has been invested with the sacred thread shall be devoted to the study of Veda, residing in the abode of his preceptor, O Brahmins!

A student shall be mentally pure. He shall be engaged, with devotion, in the practice of cleanliness. He shall render service to the preceptor. He shall grasp the Veda intelligently and with devotion.

O Brahmins! With concentration and purity of mind, he shall make obeisance to the sun-god and fire-god at dawn as well as at dusk. He shall salute the preceptor, too.

O excellent Brahmins! He shall stand when the preceptor remains standing. He shall follow when the preceptor goes ahead. When the preceptor is seated, he shall be seated at a lower level. He shall avoid whatever is not to the liking of the preceptor.

He shall sit in front of him. Without his mind dwelling on anything else, he shall repeat the Vedic text recited by the preceptor. Thereafter, on being permitted by him, he shall partake of the cooked food received as alms.

He shall take bath in the water wherein the preceptor has taken bath. Early in the morning everyday he shall fetch water for libation and sacrificial twigs for the preceptor.

Having learnt the required Vedic texts, he shall offer fees to his preceptor. On getting his permission, he shall return home and enter the stage of a householder.

The householder propitiates the Manes by means of oblations, deities by sacrifices, guests by cooked food, sages by regular recitation of Vedic texts, the spirits and other living beings by oblations, etc and the entire world by the truthfulness of words. Thus he attains celestial regions by his own actions.

The recluses and *brahmacharins* (religious students) who sustain themselves by cooked food received as alms depend on the householder. Hence the stage of householder is the noblest.

O Brahmins! Some Brahmins are engaged in disseminating the Vedic knowledge. Some wander over the earth for pilgrimage, taking holy dips in sacred waters. Some wander visiting different countries of the world. They have no abode of their own. They do not prepare their own food. To these people, the householder offers a home for rest in the evening. Hence it is said that the householder sustains and supports them.

The householder should welcome them. He should speak sweet words always. He shall give them gifts. He shall offer seats, food and beds to those who come to his house.

A guest, returning disappointed from a person's house, goes taking away the merits of the householder after handing over his own sins.

Dishonouring (others), egotism, arrogance, slandering, attacking and speaking harsh words to others are despicable for a householder.

The householder who duly adheres to what is thus enjoined becomes liberated from bondage, and attains to the most exalted worlds.

O Brahmins! At a ripe old age, the householder who has duly fulfilled his duties shall entrust his sons with the duty of looking after his wife, and retire to the forest. Or he can allow his wife to accompany him.

O Brahmins! There he shall stay as a sage sustaining himself with leaves, roots and fruits. He shall let the beard and facial hairs grow. He shall have matted hairs on his head. He shall sleep on the bare ground. He can be the guest of anyone.

O excellent Brahmins! His wearing apparel and upper garments shall consist of leather, *darbha* grass or *kaasa* plants. Taking head-bath thrice a day (in rivers or lakes) is recommended for him.

Worship of the deities, offering ghee into the fire, greeting and honouring visitors and guests, begging alms and offering oblations are highly recommended in his case.

Massaging his limbs by means of oil obtained from forest produce is also commended. O leading Brahmins! Ability to bear the extremes of cold and heat is a form of penance unto him.

The forest-dwelling recluse who regularly performs duties fixed for him shall burn off his defects like fire. He shall attain to the eternal worlds.

O excellent ones! Follow me even as I relate the nature and general characteristics of the stage of a mendicant sage called the fourth stage (of life) by the wise.

O excellent Brahmins! A mendicant shall eschew affection and attachment unto his sons, wife and assets. He shall enter the fourth stage of life after eschewing competitive spirit and rivalry.

O excellent Brahmins! He shall leave off the enterprises of the three *varnas*. He shall behave alike unto friends and others. He shall be friendly to all creatures.

He shall maintain yogic practice. He shall never injure the oviparous, viviparous and other creatures mentally, verbally or physically. He shall refrain from all attachments.

He shall never stay in a single place permanently. In a village he shall stay for a single night. In a city he shall stay for five successive nights. He has neither pleasurable attachment nor hatred unto the lower creatures and birds.

For sustaining himself, he shall visit, begging for alms, the houses of men of noble caste where coal has ceased to burn but the inmates have not yet taken food.

He shall not be dejected when nothing is obtained. He shall not be over-joyed when something is obtained. He shall have that much which is necessary to maintain his life. He shall be out of all attachment to quantities.

He shall have absolute contempt for over-cherished acquisitions. Even the liberated sage is bound by over-cherished acquisitions.

Eschewing such defects (emotions) as passion, anger, arrogance, greed, delusion, etc, the full-fledged saint shall be free from all possessions.

After offering freedom from fear to all living beings, he shall wander over the earth. Liberated from the shackles to his physical body, he shall have no cause of fear anywhere.

By means of sacrificial offerings such as ghee acquired through begging, the Brahmin-sage shall perform the symbolic *Agnihotra* in his own body. He shall perform *Homa* unto bodily fire through his mouth. He attains to the other worlds through the funeral pyre.

He, who is pure, endowed with good conceptions and intellect, and passes through the stage of life pertaining to salvation in the manner mentioned above, becomes calm like the fire wherein no fuel is consigned. That twice-born attains to the world of Brahma.

## Characteristics of Mixed Castes

The sages said:

O highly blessed One! You are omniscient. You are engaged in activities beneficial to all. O Sage! There is nothing past, present or future that is not known to you. O highly intelligent One! By what activities does the downward fall of the *varnas* take place? Tell us. We wish to hear how and by what means does a Sudra attain to the status of a Brahmin and a Brahmin to that of a Sudra.

Vyasa said:

The beautiful peak of the Himalayas is embellished by different minerals. It is covered by various trees and creepers. It is endowed with wonderful features. The Three-eyed Lord of deities, that Supreme God, the Destroyer of the three cities was seated thereon. The Goddess of charming eyes, the daughter of the King of mountains, bowed down to the Lord, O Brahmins, and put this question formerly unto Him. O excellent sages! I shall describe that. Listen.

Uma said:

O Three-eyed Lord! O Destroyer of the eyes of Bhaga, the teeth of Pusan and the sacrifice of Daksha! I have this great doubt (to be cleared). The arrangement (of the people) into four castes had been formerly brought about by the self-born lord. What are those activities as a result of which a Vaisya attains to the status of a sudra? By what means does a Kshatriya become a Brahmin or a Vaisya become a Kshatriya? O Lord! By what activity does a Kshatriya attain to the status of a Sudra? O Lord of goblins! Please clarify this doubt of mine. How do the persons of the three *varnas* attain to Brahmin-hood naturally?

Mahesvara said:

O Goddess! Brahmin-hood is very difficult to attain. The Brahmins are naturally auspicious; the Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras are not auspicious.

The Brahmins fall off their status by performing evil deeds. For this reason, one is forced to a lower level even after attaining to the most excellent of castes.

One who, whether a Kshatriya or a Vaisya, adheres to the characteristics of a Brahmin attains to Brahmin-hood.

He who forsakes Brahmin-hood and resorts to the activities and features of a Kshatriya slides from the status of a Brahmin, and is born of a Kshatriya womb, thereafter.

Even after attaining the rare distinction of being a Brahmin, if a person becomes greedy and deluded with deficient intellect and resorts to the activities of a Vaisya, that Brahmin attains to Vaisya caste in a later life. A Vaisya (in similar circumstances) attains to Sudra caste. A Brahmin deviating from his duties shall thereafter attain to Sudra caste.

That person who has fallen off his *varna* attains to hell. He who falls off the world of Brahma is born of the womb of a Sudra woman.

O highly blessed Lady of sacred activities! If a Kshatriya or a Vaisya eschews his own duties and resorts to the occupation of a Sudra, he falls off his original status, and becomes one of mixed castes. A Brahmin or Kshatriya or a Vaisya, on becoming one of mixed castes, attains to Sudra caste.

A Sudra who maintains his own duties, who is endowed with wisdom and perfect knowledge, who is conversant with piety and who is engaged in holy activities attains to the fruit of those holy activities.

O Goddess! This, too, another thing pertaining to the Atman, has been cited by Brahma. Eternal achievement is resorted to by those who are desirous of righteous activities.

O Goddess! The food cooked by a person of the mixed caste *ugra* is despicable. The food collectively cooked, the food pertaining to *sraddha*, the food defiled by pollution owing to the birth or death of someone in the family and the food that is loudly proclaimed should not be eaten. The food cooked by a Sudra should never be eaten.

The food cooked by a Sudra is despised by gods and noble men, O Goddess! That which is uttered by Brahma is authoritative.

A Brahmin, a person who maintains sacrificial fire or who performs sacrifice attains to the caste of Sudra if he were to die with the remnants of the food cooked by a Sudra within the stomach. This is certain.

A Brahmin takes birth in the womb of a woman of the caste as the person whose food he generally uses for sustenance, or the remnants of whose food remain undigested in his stomach at the time of his death.

After happily attaining to the rare privilege of being born a Brahmin, if one slights it off, or if one partakes of forbidden food, one falls off the status of a Brahmin.

A Brahmin falls off his status if he is a wine-addict, a Brahmin-slayer, a thief, a robber, one who has violated the vow of holy observances, an unclean one who refrains from regular study of the Veda, a sinner, a greedy person, one who indulges in misdemeanour, a knave, one who does not observe religious vows, the husband of a Sudra woman, one who has taken food for sustenance from a bastard, one who sells soma-juice and one who serves a mean person.

A Brahmin who defiles the bed of his preceptor, who hates his preceptor, who delights in despising his preceptor or who is hostile to Brahmins falls off his status.

O Goddess! By performing these splendid holy rites, a Sudra attains to Brahminhood and a Vaisya the status of a Kshatriya.

A Sudra attains to the status of a Vaisya if he performs his duties justly and in accordance with the injunctions of his caste, if he is hospitable to all and partakes of the food left by them, if he assiduously renders service to and attends upon the persons of superior castes, if he is not dejected or disheartened in his attempt, if he remains an excellent man, if he clings to the path of the good, if he honours and worships the twice-born and the gods, if he observes hospitality to all as a holy rite, if he approaches his wife only on the permissive nights after the period of menstruation, if he is regular in habits and taking food, if he is an expert at his work, if he seeks good persons for companionship, if he partakes of the food left by others, and if he does not partake of meat without consecrating it.

A Vaisya becomes a Brahmin if he is truthful in speech and an expert in the employment of peaceful means, if he is not affected by mutually opposite extremes, if he does not boast about himself, if he performs daily sacrifices, if he is devoted to the study of the Veda, if he maintains purity, if he controls his sense organs, if he honours Brahmins, and if he is not envious of any of the four varnas.

Taking meals twice a day, that Vaisya observes the duties of a householder. He does not hesitate to eat the remnants of food. He controls his diet. He is devoid of passionate desire. He is not arrogant. He performs *Agnihotra* carrying out *Homa* in accordance with injunctions. He entertains everyone that goes to him as his guest and partakes of his learning. He duly maintains the three sacrificial fires.

A Vaisya, who is pure, is reborn in a noble family of Kshatriyas. That Vaisya who is reborn as a Kshatriya shall be purified with the consecratory rites on his maturity. After investiture with the sacred thread, he shall be devoted to all holy observances. Thus consecrated, he becomes a Brahmin. He gives charitable gifts and performs sacrifices with rich monetary gifts. Always seeking refuge in the sacrificial fires and continuing the study of the Veda, he shall hope to achieve heaven.

A Kshatriya shall study the Veda with a desire for the attainment of heaven. He shall seek refuge in the three sacrificial fires. He shall always make gifts so that his hands remain wet. He shall protect the subjects righteously.

He shall be truthful. He shall perform truthful deeds, with his vision on purity for ever. By self-imposed righteous punishments he shall burn off his sins. He shall acquire virtue, love and wealth. He shall be self-controlled by his organs of action. He shall partake of only a sixth of the produce of his subjects. He shall be shrewd in monetary dealings.

He shall not indulge freely in licentious activities. He shall be virtuous. He shall carnally approach his wife only during the prescribed periods after the days of menstruation. He shall be strict in the observance of fasts and other holy rites. He shall be engaged in the study of the Veda. He shall be pure.

Even in his house, he shall always sleep in the well-protected apartments free from strangers. He shall be hospitable to all in regard to the three aims of life, namely, virtue, love and wealth.

He shall be pure in mind. To the Sudras who are desirous of food he shall say, 'Well, it is ready'. He shall not look at anything with selfishness or passionate love. He shall gather all the things necessary for the manes, gods and guests. He shall duly perform worship, in his abode, even by resorting to alms. He shall duly perform *Agnihotra* twice everyday. He shall be prepared to face even death in battle for the welfare of cows and Brahmins.

Such a Kshatriya shall become a Brahmin. He shall purify himself by reciting mantras for maintenance of the three sacrificial fires. He shall become richly equipped with perfect knowledge and wisdom. He shall consecrate himself. He shall master the Veda.

O gentle Lady! A virtuous Vaisya shall become a Kshatriya by performing his own duties. By the fruits of these activities in a lower birth, he can become so.

Even a Sudra who is richly endowed with the knowledge of the Veda can become a Brahmin and cultured. Even a Brahmin may forfeit his Brahmin-hood and become a Sudra if his conduct is mean, and if his diet and culture are debased.

Brahma himself has said that even a Sudra should be considered a Brahmin, O Gentle lady, if he is virtuous, purified by holy rites or has conquered his sense-organs. A Sudra who clings to his duties faithfully and truthfully should be considered purer than the twice-born ones.

Neither the womb of birth, nor the consecratory rites, nor the Vedic knowledge, nor the lineage can be the cause of Brahmin-hood. Conduct is the real cause. All men are Brahmins if their conduct is pure. Even a Sudra who strictly adheres to good conduct attains to Brahmin-hood.

O Lady of splendid hips! The inherent quality of a Brahmin is the same everywhere. He is a Brahmin in whom the attribute-less, faultless, pure Brahman resides.

O gentle Lady! Those persons who are free from impurities are the exponents and guides of good conduct. All these issues were mentioned by Brahma himself, the Bestower of boons, while creating the subjects.

The Brahmin is, as it were, a great mobile field that has feet. If any one sows seeds therein, they fructify after death. A person who desires prosperity shall always be contented. He shall always cling to the path of the good. He shall regularly study the Veda, but should not make it his means of livelihood. A Brahmin who acts this way, who abides by the path of the good, who maintains the sacrificial fire and who studies the Veda regularly becomes eligible to attain to liberation.

O gentle Lady! After attaining to Brahmin-hood, the man of controlled-self shall protect it by holy rites such as acceptance of monetary gifts only from worthy persons.

O Lady of pure smiles! Thus, the secret doctrine has been recounted to you as to how a Sudra becomes a Brahmin or how a Brahmin falling off virtue attains to the status of a Sudra.

## Review of Virtue - 1

Uma said:

O Lord of all living beings! O Lord saluted by deities and demons! O powerful Lord! Please clear my doubts in regard to the notions of piety and sin among men.

All embodied beings are bound in three ways, that is, thought, word and deed. How are they released there-from?

O Lord! By what habitual practice, by what holy rite, by what sort of conduct and good quality do men go to heaven?

Mahesvara said:

O goddess Uma of perfect knowledge of the principles of piety! O gentle Lady of permanent adherence to virtue! Your question is conducive to the welfare and wisdom of all living beings.

Persons of tranquility, engaged in truth and piety and devoid of all external symbols, are free from doubts. They are fettered neither by piety nor by blasphemy.

Those persons who are omniscient, who are conversant with the principles of creation and annihilation, who see everything and who are devoid of passionate attachment to anything are released from the bonds of *karma*.

Those who do not injure anybody or anything, whatsoever, mentally, verbally or physically and those who are not involved in anything are not bound by *karma*.

Those who refrain from violence to living beings, who possess good conduct and mercifulness, and who have equanimity to others' hatred and love are released from the bonds of *karma*. They have self-control.

Those who are merciful to living beings, who are worthy of being trusted by living creatures and who have eschewed violent activities go to heaven.

Those who are indifferent to others' assets, who always avoid other men's wives and who enjoy the riches virtuously acquired by them go to heaven.

Those men who always associate with other men's wives as though they were their own mothers, sisters and daughters go to heaven.

Those who cling to their own wives, who carnally approach them only during the prescribed period after the days of menstruation and who never indulge themselves in vulgar lechery go to heaven.

Those who desist from stealth, who are content with their own wealth and who enjoy their own good luck go to heaven.

Those who view other men's wives with eyes enveloped by chastity, who have conquered their sense organs and who value good conduct very much go to heaven.

This divinely evolved path should be resorted to by men. Only a path untarnished by sins should always be resorted to by wise men. Only a path that never needlessly harms others should be resorted to by wise men. A path of such holy rites as charitable gifts and austerities, a path of good conduct, cleanliness and mercy should be resorted to by those who wish to attain to heaven. No other path shall be resorted to.

Uma said:

O sinless Lord of living beings! Recount to me those activities wherein a man is fettered verbally but is again released there-from.

Mahesvara said:

Those who never utter a sin-based lie either for their own sake or for others' sake go to heaven.

Those who never utter falsehood either for livelihood, or for virtue or out of desire for the same go to heaven.

Those who welcome others speaking sweet, sinless and polished words with clearly pronounced syllables go to heaven.

Those who never speak harsh, incisive and cruel words and who never indulge in slanderous gossip are good men who go to heaven.

Those who do not speak calumnious words or words that antagonize their friends or inflict pain on others go to heaven.

Those who desist from knavish blabber, those who avoid antagonistic activities and those who speak gently go to heaven.

Those who, out of anger, do not utter words that wound the hearts of others and those who attain to peace, in not being angry, go to heaven.

O gentle Lady! This act of piety relating to word (speech) should be resorted to by men. False (speech) should be eschewed by wise men that possess the auspicious quality of truthfulness.

Uma said:

O highly blessed Lord of gods! O Pinaka-wielding Lord! Tell me about those mental acts whereby a man is held in bondage.

Mahesvara said:

O Lady of weal! Those who possess virtues of thought do always go to heaven. Listen even as I narrate them.

O Lady of splendid countenance! Man is held in bondage by his mind. Listen how his inner working binds him.

When another man's property is seen (known) kept in a forest or a lonely place, (good men) do not even think of appropriating it. They go to heaven.

Good men do not become overjoyed on seeing other men's property left in a lonely place whether in the village or in the house. (Nor do they think of appropriating it.) They go to heaven.

Similarly, good men do not even think of molesting lecherously the wives of others (on meeting them) in lonely spots. They go to heaven.

Good men mentally view friends and enemies alike. They have a friendly attitude towards all. They go to heaven.

Good men are learned, merciful, pure and truthful; they are contented with their own riches. They go to heaven.

Good men are devoid of enmity. They do not overstrain themselves. They always maintain a friendly attitude. They are merciful towards all living beings. They go to heaven.

They possess knowledge. They perform holy rites. They are fond of their friends. They understand piety and sin. They go to heaven.

Good men, O gentle Lady, are indifferent to the accumulating fruits of auspicious and inauspicious deeds; they go to heaven.

After attaining to prosperity, good men are devoted to gods and learned Brahmins. They shun the sinful. They go to heaven.

They go to heaven owing to the splendid results of holy rites. O gentle Lady! Those who tread the path of heaven have been enumerated by me. What more do you wish to hear?

Uma said:

O great Lord, I have a certain doubt concerning mortals Hence it behooves you to explain it fully.

O Lord, by means of what holy rite does a man attain to a long life? By what type of penance, O Lord of gods, does he obtain a great span of life?

By means of what activity does man on earth get longevity reduced? O uncensored Lord, it behooves you to narrate the consequences of actions.

Differences are observed in men. Some are highly fortunate. Others are less fortunate. Some are born noble and others are born ignoble.

Some are very odious in appearance as if they are made of wood. Others are very pleasing to behold.

Some appear to be evil-minded. Some appear to be highly learned. Others have highly developed intellect with pure wisdom and prescience.

O Lord, some are men of very few words. Others are highly eloquent. Hence it behooves you to explain this diversity.

Mahesvara said:

O gentle Lady! I shall explain to you the outcome of the fruits of actions whereby all men in the mortal world deservedly experience their respective benefits. If a man raises his weapon and kills a host of living beings, he is sure to fall into hell. Even a yogi goes to hell if he injures living beings.

One who is ruthless to all living beings, one who causes heartburn even unto germs and worms, one who is extremely merciless and one who never affords refuge (unto others) falls into hell. One who does not act that way is a pious soul and is reborn in human form.

A man of violent nature goes to hell. A nonviolent man goes to heaven. The man who goes to hell undergoes terrible and unbearable torture in hell.

If anyone, by any means, survives and comes out of hell and attains to human birth, he becomes short-lived.

O gentle Lady! One who commits sinful actions, violence, etc is inimical to all living beings and becomes short-lived.

On account of his splendid activity, O gentle Lady, a good man eschews slaughter of living beings. He lays aside his weapons. He does not mete out punishment (to

others). He never injures others. He neither kills, nor abets slaughter. He does not encourage killing. He does not make anyone kill another.

Such a person is friendly to all living beings. He views others as himself. A man of this type, O gentle Lady, attains to divinity. He enjoys pleasures and happiness deservedly. He rejoices if ever he happens to be re-born in the mortal world. This is the path of men of good conduct and activity. As a result of their avoidance of injury to living beings, they are destined to live long. This has been declared by Brahma.

## Review of Virtue - 2

Uma said:

What are those things which a man should regularly do in order to attain to heaven? What should be his conduct and what holy rites should he perform? What should he give in charity?

Mahesvara said:

Any man coming under this category, O gentle Lady, goes over to the world of gods: He should be a donor. He should honour Brahmins. The highly intelligent one should distribute edibles and foodstuffs, cooked food and drinks, clothes, etc among the poor, the distressed and the wretched. He should build places of rest and assembly chambers, sheds for giving water to travellers, etc. He should dig lotus ponds.

He should be pure in mind and body. He should perform the daily routine of duties enjoined. He should make charitable gifts of seats, beds, vehicles, houses, jewels, money, plants, fertile fields, young women, etc always with a tranquil mind.

Such a person spends a long time in heaven enjoying unsurpassed pleasures. He sports about in Nandana and other gardens rejoicing in the company of celestial damsels. O great Goddess! O gentle Lady! After returning from heaven, he is re-born among men in a highly blessed family endowed with wealth and grain.

There, he will be possessed of desirable qualities. He will be joyous. The man becomes rich. He enjoys great pleasures and accomplishes great deeds.

These highly blessed living beings of charitable disposition are those spoken of formerly by Brahma as men of pleasing appearance liked by all.

Other men, O gentle Lady, are the twice-born ones of miserly nature who do not give anything to anyone. Those thoughtless ones do not give foodstuffs even when they have them.

Even after seeing the poor, the blind and the wretched mendicants, even on beings requested by them, they turn away because they are gluttonous and covetous of palatable things.

They never give away money, garments, means of enjoyment, gold, cows or items of cooked food.

They are highly greedy and covetous, atheists, devoid of liberal- mindedness. Men of this nature, O gentle Lady, are the thoughtless ones who go to hell.

After the lapse of some time, when they take human birth, those men of deficient intellect are born in some family devoid of wealth.

They are tormented by hunger and thirst. They are boycotted by the world. Devoid of any hope for the enjoyment of pleasure, they keep on living their evil lives.

They are born of families of inferior worldly pleasures. Those men are engrossed in spurious pleasures. O gentle Lady, it is by these activities that men become devoid of wealth.

There are other types of haughty people who are arrogant and engrossed in other activities. These narrow-minded people do not offer seat unto those who deserve one. These thoughtless people do not yield way unto those who deserve one. They do not honour those worthy of honour owing to consecrated rites. Being thoughtless, they do not offer water for washing feet or drinking.

They do not lovingly address their splendid and desirable elders in view of the fact that they are overwhelmed by greed that has increased owing to their arrogance. They insult those who are worthy of honour. They slight elders.

All men of this sort, O gentle Lady, invariably fall into hell. If, somehow, those men come out of hell after many years, they take birth in the despicable families of *svapaakas*, *pulkasas* of thoughtless despicable nature. It is in these families that those people who slight and insult preceptors and elders are born.

O gentle Lady! He who is neither arrogant nor overwhelmed by false pride or prestige, he who worships deities and guests, he who is worthy of worship by the whole world, he who performs obeisance, he who speaks sweet words, he who is pleasing to all due to his activities, he who is fond of all living beings, he who does not hate anyone, he who has pleasing countenance, he who speaks polished sweet words full of love, he who offers words of welcome unto all living beings, he who does not violently hit or injure anybody, he who honours everyone as one deserves by good actions, he who stands aside after offering the path unto one who deserves it, he who worships his preceptor always, he who takes pleasure in receiving guests or he who worships honourable visitors attains to heaven.

After his sojourn in heaven, he takes birth in the mortal world in an excellent family. There he enjoys all sorts of pleasures, and possesses all jewels. He gives to the deserving ones charitable gifts in accordance with their merits. He is devoted to pious rites. He is honoured by all living beings. He is bowed to by the entire world. He obtains the fruits of his acts. This is the means of virtue declared by the Creator himself, and I have described it.

He who has a horrible habit, he who is terrifying unto all animals, O splendid Lady, he who tortures and harasses living creatures with his hands and feet, with a rope or a stick and with clods of earth, columns or other means, he whose mind is bent on

violence, he who makes creatures suffer or he who approaches living creatures making them tremble with fear falls into hell.

After the lapse of some-time, if he attains human form or birth, he is born in a debased family overwhelmed by many kinds of suffering. He is hated by the world. He is the lowliest among men as a result of his actions. This, O gentle Lady, should be understood in regard to human beings in the midst of their kith and kin.

The opposite kind of man looks at all living beings with kindness. He is like a father to them. His eyes are full of fondness and friendship. He is devoid of inimical feelings. He has perfect control over his sense-organs. Being merciful, he does not cause fear in the living beings. He does not kill them.

He earns the confidence of all living creatures. He does not injure any living being with his perfectly controlled organs of action. He does not cause them any harm or frighten them by means of a rope, a stick, clods of earth or a weapon. The actions of the man are always splendid.

A man of such habits and conduct goes to heaven. There, in a divine mansion, he lives joyously like gods. If, after the end of his tenure in heaven, he returns to the mortal world, he enjoys increased happiness. He has less stress and strain. He is devoid of terrifying grief. He enjoys pleasures. He has no strenuous labour to undertake. He is always free from mental agony. This, O gentle Lady, is the path of the good where there is no affliction.

Uma said:

Some of these men are observed to be clever and mightily enthusiastic. They are richly endowed with wisdom and prescience. They are intelligent, and experts on the subjects of wealth. Others, O Lord, are evil-minded and devoid of wisdom and prescience. What is that action as a result of which a man becomes intelligent? How does a man become deficient in wisdom? O Siva! Clear this doubt of mine.

O Lord, the most excellent one among the virtuous! Some are blind by birth. Some others, O Lord, are distressed by sickness. Some men are observed to be impotent. Please tell me the reason thereof.

Mahesvara said:

Men of the following type attain heaven: They who enquire after the welfare or otherwise of the Brahmins well versed in the Veda and of the persons of accomplishment conversant with virtue, and they who avoid inauspicious activities and resort to splendid ones attain to heaven. In this world, they attain to happiness and then go to heaven later. If anyone among them takes human birth, he is born with an extraordinary intellect. His learning is befitting the performance of sacrifices, and is auspicious.

Those who cast their evil eye on other men's wives are born blind owing to that evil conduct.

Men of sinful actions who look at a naked woman with a defiled mind become distressed owing to sickness.

Foolish men of evil conduct who indulge in sexual acts with beasts become deficient, and defiled in wisdom as well as impotent. They become eunuchs.

Uma said:

O the most Excellent one among the gods! What is a despicable action? What is it that is not despicable by doing which a man attains to prosperity and renown?

Mahesvara said:

He who seeks the path of prosperity and enquires Brahmins about it, he who seeks virtue and he who yearns for good qualities attains to heaven.

If, at any time, he takes up human birth, O gentle Lady, he is born highly intelligent, wise and endowed with memory.

This, O gentle Lady, is the path of virtue of the good. It should be followed. It is conducive to prosperity. This has been described by me for the perpetual benefit of men in the world.

Uma said:

There are some men of deficient wisdom who hate virtue. They do not wish to approach Brahmins well-versed in the Veda.

Some men observe holy rites. They have faith, and they closely adhere to the path of self-control (subjugation of sense-organs). Others are devoid of holy observances. They swerve from the path of discipline. They can be compared to demons.

Still others are regular performers of holy sacrifices. There are others devoid of delusion. Tell me how they become so. What is that action as a result of which they become so?

Mahesvara said:

The holy scriptures, in the understanding of the sages, prescribe the limits of pious activities in the world. There are holy men who obey them as their Authority. They are seen to be men of steadfast holy rites.

Those who are deluded call sin by the name of virtue. They do not observe holy rites. They do not observe rules of decorum and morality. They are said to be *Brahmarakshasas*. If, owing to the lapse of time or owing to their endeavour, they are born as men, they do become base men devoid of *homas* and *vasatkaaras*. In order to clear your doubts, O gentle Lady, the ocean of virtue has been expounded by me. Men may be efficient or inefficient in its observance.