

PURUSHARTHA:-

In India, Ethics is not independent of metaphysics. The ideal that indicates our path towards ethical values is known as Purushartha. The word 'Purushartha' indicates to that ideal that all men wants to achieve in his life. Actually what a man wants in his life as a goal is known as Purushartha.

However according to ancient scriptures we find four kinds of Purusharthas. These are:

- 1) ~~Dharma~~ Dharma
- 2) Arthā
- 3) Kāma
- 4) Moksha.

However opinions vary among people regarding the ~~same~~ number of these Purusharthas. According to some there are three Purusharthas. These are: Dharma, Arthā & Kāma and these three are jointly known as 'Trivarga'. After this in later times the fourth Purushartha 'Moksha' has been joined with these previous three & came to be known as 'Chaturvarga'. Those who believe in 'Trivarga', says that 'Kāma' is the primary requirement in a man's life, while Dharma & Arthā are the means to achieve that end. Again those who believe in 'Chaturvarga' hold that 'Moksha' is the primary Purushartha,

while the remaining three are means to achieve Moksha.

The relation between these Purusharthas with pleasure is not of equal status. It is said that 'Moksha' & 'Kāma' directly creates pleasure, while 'Artha' & 'Dharma' are the means to achieve pleasure. So, for this reason, some people regarded 'Moksha' & 'Kāma' as primary Purusharthas while 'Artha' & 'Dharma' as secondary Purusharthas.

In Indian ethics the word 'Dharma' means duty. This duty not only have ethical value but also have a great social value. This means that a man not only perform his duties as an ethical being but also they ought to perform these duties according to their 'ashramas' and 'varna' in society. However, there are two kinds of Dharma — 'Ashrama Dharma' & 'Varnadharma' or 'Svadharma' and on the other hand 'Shadharan Dharma'. The second Purushartha after this comes 'Artha' which means wealth. It is said that in order to earn livelihood it is necessary to gather wealth. But here it is to be kept in mind that wealth must be gathered through honest means and not through any dishonest means. In Mahābhārata it is said that wealth enriches the life of all human beings and a man ought to earn wealth through hard work. Kautilya in his "Arthashastra" had supported this view

regarding wealth. Almost all ancient scriptures emphasised on man's physical strength and capability behind the act of earning wealth. But wealth acquired by dishonest means is termed as 'Arthādushana'. Only wealth acquired by honest mean is valid and that can bear fruits and also can be used in religious sacrifices.

The third Purushartha 'kāma' refers to love, bodily pleasures, greed etc. Here Dharma also acts as a controller so that kāma can follow a decent path. So, Dharma is the controller of both kāma & Artha. The last Purushartha is 'moksha' which means liberation from all sorrows of life and this can be achieved after fulfilling the previous three 'Purusharthas'.
