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Perception of Nivṛttidharma In-*Manusmṛti* and *Bhagavatgītā*

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Introduction

The concept of Dharma holds a pivotal role in most of the ancient Indian traditional concepts. Texts like Veda-s, Upaniṣad-s, Epic-s, Puraṇa-s, Smṛti-s exemplify this and have elaborated its importance in the society. According to Manu there are four puruṣārtha-s. They are dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa. Mokṣa is the ultimate reality and liberation is its main goal. To achieve this goal, dharma is the basic principal. The word Dharma has wide meaning. The basic signification of dharma is that it is the path of artha, kāma and mokṣa for the wellbeing of the world. Any discussion on Indian thoughts and about man and society is usually rooted in some dharmic concepts. Dharma is delineated in personal and social terms. The Indian theistic cult is mainly attached with mokṣa. The renowned texts like *Manusmṛti* and *Bhagavatgītā* suggests two different spiritual paths: pravṛtti dharma and nivṛtti dharma to attain mokṣa or the ultimate reality.

Pravṛttidharma can be attained through yajña and dāna along with artha and kāma for example swarga kāmo yajeta and it needed so many wealth. But Nivṛtti dharma can be fulfilled only through acquiring knowledge and tapas. So to achieve that rationale we must abide to sadācāra and ātmanatuṣṭi or pleasure of self-conscious-

वेदोऽखिलो धर्ममूलं स्मृतिशीले च तद्विदाम् ।
आचारश्चैव साधूनामात्मनस्तुष्टिरेव च ॥¹
वेदः स्मृतिः सदाचारः स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः ।
एतच्चतुर्विधं प्राहुः साक्षाद् धर्मस्यलक्षणम् ॥

The concept of Dharma is based upon different kinds of duties: srāuta and gṛhya which includes qualities of devotion, prayer, social welfare, individual attainment, and honesty. Upaniṣad-s preaches righteous conduct, requirement to develop good qualities, and glorifies sacrifices and penance. Sages suggested that artha, kāma and mokṣa are possible only through dharma which leads to the ultimate reality or mokṣa. So every concept of puruṣārtha is based on dharma.

धर्म एव हतो हन्ति धमी रक्षति रक्षतः ।
तस्माद्धर्मो न हन्तव्यो मा नो धर्मो हतोऽवधीत् ॥²

Dharma is meant for the stability and maintenance of humane forms of living. Our traditional culture gives prominence to the entire creation that lives in harmony and proves beneficial for the happiest society, or an ‘Utopia’ and for this, Man has to be devoted exclusively to the cultivation of virtue and moral growth.

According to Yajñavalkya, dharma means the practices of the good, the inclination of spirituality, purified mind, and the vows proceeding from right resolve-

श्रुतिः स्मृतिः सदाचार स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः ।
सम्यक् सङ्कल्पजः कामो धर्ममूलमिदं स्मृतम् ॥³

According to Manu, man is the pillar of the society. So, he suggests that a man must keep up to the qualities of vigor, duty, ethics, morality and heroic spirit. Hence man must retain the ten features of Dharma which are contentment, mercy, control over the mind, not committing theft, external and internal purification, restraint over senses, intellect desirous, acquire spiritual knowledge, self-realization, truth, and the absence of anger-

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धृतिःक्षमादमोऽस्तेयं शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।
धीविद्या सत्यमक्रोधो दशकं धर्मलक्षणम् ॥⁴

Dharma protects those who protect it and those who destroy dharma, get perished and doomed-

धर्म एव हतो हन्ति धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः । तस्मात् धर्मो न हन्तव्यो मा
नो धर्मो हतोऽवधीत् ॥⁵

To define dharma theory Manu narrated the right way of thinking for the wellbeing and prosperity of a society. A well-established society needs a central idea of unity, prosperity, responsibility and social order in the world.

Pravṛttidharma and Nivṛttidharma

Religious devotion is the divine way of spirituality. Indian spirituality is proud for its profound thoughts on self-realization, attainment of God or attaining salvation. Dharma concentrates spiritual path through two ways that are pravṛtti dharma and nivṛtti dharma. Dharma ācāra-s are essential to attain sukha, abhyudaya, and salvation. Manu places dharma into two classes for the wellbeing of the entire society as Pravṛtti dharma and Nivṛtti dharma-

सुखाभ्युदयिकं चैव नैः श्रेयसिकमेव च । प्रवृत्तं च निवृत्तं च द्विविधं
कर्म वैदिकम् ॥⁶

These dharma depend on jñāna and karma-

इह चामुत्र वा काम्यं प्रवृत्तं कर्म कीर्त्यते । निष्कामं ज्ञानपूर्वं तु
निवृत्तमुपगच्छते ॥⁷
प्रवृत्तं कर्म संसेव्य देवानामेति साम्यताम् । निवृत्तं सेवमानस्तु
भूतान्यत्येति पञ्च वै ॥⁸

According to Vyasa in *Bhagavatgīta*, he narrates the importance of pravṛtti and nivṛtti. Bhaṣya of Sri Sankara also mentions these two dimensions. Both kinds of dharma are cause of life on the earth. Pravṛttidharma leads and promotes for the enhancement and wellbeing of the community. Nivṛttidharma stands for knowledge and detachment. But one who deviates the way of virtue or moral path never attains utmost happiness or bliss-

द्विविधो हि वेदोक्तो धर्मः प्रवर्तिलक्षणो निवृत्तिलक्षणश्च जगतः
स्थितिकारणम् ॥⁹

These two ways leads to the attainment of purity of the mind, prosperity, real happiness and the self-realization or attainment of supreme supernatural being. Pravṛttidharma is characterized by action through a firm stand in dharma to live and practice in virtue and to finally attain the liberation.

Nivṛttidharma

The path of jñāna leads to mokṣa hence the Upaniṣad-s preferred jñāna as the way to attain mokṣa-Yt̄xt̄tnGHūñt̄ it̄Ō EṀŌñt̄±TM̄t̄@t̄gh̄. The nivṛttidharma mostly depends upon the individual and elite classes. It leads man to the path of renunciation or mokṣa without karma. Sankaracharya defines that nivṛttidharma is characterized by knowledge or jñāna and detachment or vairāgya.

निवृत्तिलक्षणं धर्मम् ज्ञानवैराग्य लक्षणम् ।¹⁰

The essential features of nivṛtti is knowledge of the self and detachment from the sensual pleasures.

निवृत्तिमोक्षहेतुः सन्यासमार्गः ।¹¹

Renunciation does not mean giving up all activities and wealth. It is a detached approach to the worldly consequent on spiritual awakening and turning of the mind to the eternal. Freedom from desires is one of the obstacles in the way of renunciation. One who are in the path of nivṛttimārga, must practice jñāna or self-knowledge, vairāgya or detachment and sanyāsa or renunciation of actions. Spiritual evolutions of nivṛttidharma occurs at different stages. But the result reaches its culmination only at a later stage. Pravṛttidharma or ethics of activity are the preparations to acquire certain qualifications which are the fundamentals of nivṛttidharma. The pre-requisites are four in number-Discrimination between real and unreal, dispassion or detachment from the sensual pleasures, attainment of six qualities śama or control of the mind, dama or control of the external organs, and the desire for the release.

सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मानि ।
समं पश्यन्नात्मयाजी स्वराज्यमधिगच्छति ॥¹²

Mumukṣu must treat all living and nonliving being in the same way.

नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेक-इहामुत्रार्थफलभोगविरागः शमादिषट्खसम्पत्ति
मुमुक्षुत्वमं च ।¹³

These virtues are interrelated. Of all of these virtues, the aim is the desire for liberation. The attainment of other qualities also depends upon the desire for liberation. The purity of the mind or chittaśuddhi is often mentioned as the fitness for entering nivṛttidharma. The purity of the mind is reached when one develops discrimination and dispassion or viveka and vairāgya and thus one's mind becomes constantly fixed on the self.¹⁴ Viveka is the intellectual attitude towards the ultimate reality, a strong intellectual conviction that ātman alone is real and eternal. Vairāgya is a withdrawal from worldly pleasures.

वैराग्यं नाम दृष्टादृष्टभोगेषु दोषदर्शनाभ्यासात् वैतृष्यम् ।¹⁵

One must have complete self-control and it implies both of the control of the body and the mind including five sense organs. Overcome rāga or attachment by dispassion and anger by forgiveness and love, practice brahmacharya, prayer and meditation; conquer greed by service and charity are the ways to nivṛttimārga. The path of nivṛtti is completely intended to those whose only aim in life is the realization of the truth. They are not satisfied with the mere performance of ethical actions, though they have attained ethical excellence. The performance of certain action aims at the welfare of the other as well as at one's own inner purity. The man who enter the path of nivṛtti must attain the essential purity of mind. In nivṛtti, one strives for the completion of all their aspirations.

Conclusion

The Indian religious philosophy is vast, broad and deep. The school of spiritual thought, the concept of life, actions and relationship with the Supreme Being are variegated with nuances. To reach a higher level of spiritual evolution, there are no easy ways. Dharma sustains and upholds man as a human being in honest, common and progressive way of life. The path of nivṛttimārga is hard and long. But it is the path to be trodden if one wants to move ahead towards perfection. There are various paths prescribed by Hinduism to reach the realization. The basic opinion of dharma is the realization of the self-esteem of the human spirit, which is the dwelling place of the ultimate. The nivṛttimārga leads to manifestation of divinity within us.

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