

Human Nature and notion of Ideal State in Religion: A Glimpse

https://doi.org/10.61703/10.61703/vol-6Vyt8_5

Dr. Minakshi Sethy

Abstract:

Man is a rational and conscious animal. Because of this quality, he is called as an ethical animal too. He can distinguish between good and bad, vice and virtue. He has better realization and application of cultural and religious values. His behavior and understanding makes him special, unique creatures of this universe. He/she not only focuses on his/her progression in life, have responsibility for others in the society. Sattva quality makes him calm and balanced person, rajas quality fulfills his cosmic desires and tamasa quality shows his negative side. When all these three qualities mixed with each other, have the scope of better output. The aim and the great intention of any social decision are to create social cohesion, not social revolution. And that social cohesion makes a society/state as an ideal state.

Key Words:

Sva-dharma, Vaisnava-dharma, Jaiva-dharma, Arthashastra, Macrocosm, Vyavaharika, Paramarthika, Vasudhaiba-Kutumbakam.

Every branch of Philosophy pertains through a general understanding of values and reality on the basis of speculation rather than observational means. It emphasizes a natural and necessary urge in human beings to know themselves and the world around them in which they live and move. Philosophy is intensely spiritual and has always emphasized the need for practical realisation of truth (Farquhar 1920) . It is a comprehensive system of ideas about human nature and the nature of the reality we live and believe in. All the aspects of human life are influenced and governed by philosophical considerations.

In constitutional language, a state and its government is of the people, by the people and for the people. A state itself can't be ideal, if the people were not ideal. It's very much

Corresponding author : Dr. Minakshi Sethy Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, 9968028480 Mail id: msethy@knc.du.ac.in Minakshi_du@yahoo.co.in

reciprocal. One stands for each other. One reciprocates to each other. One pays for each other. We can't ignore one for the sake of other. Literature says- a society is the reflection of human mind. The way a person brought up in a society and its surroundings, his/her mindset fix accordingly. So, before putting effort to think and make an ideal and an exemplary state, we need to spread positive vibes among the people over class and caste barrier.

Man is a rational and conscious animal. Because of this quality, he is called as an ethical animal too. He can distinguish between good and bad, vice and virtue, what should and should not etc. These are some of the predominant attributes (dharma) of a human being. Human being is not simply an aggregate of body, mind, and soul. Dharma of a human being is called as jaiva-dharma including physical, physiological, psychological and spiritual. Those in whom this quality is absent cannot properly be called a human being. As long as the human being remains pure, he maintains his identity and self-conception in accordance with his unadulterated spiritual function (Sva-dharma) (Bhattacharya 1961).

In Kautilya's Arthashastra, the state and king are indispensable. A king is the head of the state. He has the executive, legislative, Judicial and financial powers. For Plato, the state is a macrocosm in which the individual can find his proper place and perform the duties for which he is best fitted (Kangle 1986). For Aristotle, the state is 'a community of equals, aiming at the best life possible'. Hobbes says, the purpose of the state is to maintain social order and protect the people and their right of property. For Locke, the end of Government is the preservation of lives, liberties etc. Rousseau says the state is a 'social contract' to fulfil the general will. Bentham believed that the state exists to secure the greatest good of the greatest number. Herbert Spencer considers the state as 'Joint stock Protection Company for mutual assurance.' Marx believed the state to wither away after establishing classless society.

In the Vedas, the 'notion of state' was considered as a source of peace, law and order, security and justice. In the state, the king are responsible too to maintain peace and order to encourage, moral, religious and material progress and provide a sense of security to his subjects. The aim of a state is the greatest welfare for the whole population and not for a class. The chief duties of the king also can throw some light on the purpose for which the state was created.

Dharma, Artha and kama are usually mentioned as the aims of the state. Dharma was aimed to promote virtue and morality. The promotion of artha was intended to develop national resources. The state promoted kama to ensure peace and order, so that each individual may enjoy life undisturbed. The welfare of the people is the sole objective of the state.

The human nature is expressed by the famous Vedic metaphor of the chariot in the Katha Upanishad and in the Bhagavad-Gita. A person is compared to a chariot that is pulled in different directions by the horses set to it, with the horses representing the senses. The mind is the driver who

holds the reins, but next to the mind sits the master of the chariot – the true observer, the self, who represents a universal unity. Without this self no coherent behaviour is possible(Farquhar 1920) .

If we go through the history (specially Medieval), we found one great personality who stood to change the mindset of the people of a particular province with a unique way i.e. through mass devotion, which is popularly known as Sri Chaitanya Bhakti. According to Sri Chaitanya, in reality, all living beings throughout the universe have only one dharma, i.e. vaisnava-dharma. Though human beings appeared to be different from their attributes, but by virtue, they are regarded as human being. These attributes are called as vaisnava-dharma. Without vaishnava-dharma, a man is not a man, they are simply human beasts (Bhaktivedanta 1968) .

He says that there are two types of human beings or jivas, jnani (wise), and ajnani (ignorant). Jnanis can overcome ignorance, whereas ajnanis cannot.

According to the nature of the jiva, there are two types of human activities, physical activity that relate to practical existence (vyavaharika), and spiritual activities that relate to the ultimate goal (paramarthika). A person or a Vaisnava's conviction and performance are the two sides of one coin. It means, his thinking or believing reflects in his living style. When the jiva associated with different types of (rajasika, tamasika or even sattvika) false egoism, his constitutive function becomes perverted. According to him, all the jivas are particles of spiritual consciousness (Bhattacharya 1989). They have a spiritual identity that consists of pure ego, pure consciousness and a spiritual body. When their vision is averted from the Lord and engrossed in illusory material enjoyment, their pure ego and pure consciousness become contaminated with the effects of ignorance.

Vaisnava-dharma or jaiva-dharma is the nitya-dharma of a jiva. When the jiva is liberated from matter, he nurtures Krsna-prema in his pure spiritual form. Before that stage, when the jiva is materially bound although spiritually awakened, he only accepts objects and association that are favorable for his spiritual practice, and he rejects all that is unfavorable.

When medieval Bengal was struggling for social and religious stability, Sri Chaitanya started a neo-Vaisnavite movement. The society was majorly dominated by Brahman caste. With the coming of British rule and order, the whole country was suppressed and oppressed. They hated Hinduism(Chari 1994) .

Irrespective of the brahmanic control over religious life, the worship of deities is hardly above the animistic stage. Side by side, the people practices tantra too. The ill-effects of tantric practices left behind by Buddhism and had also deep impact on current Hinduism, which had gone far in the social order, and they exercised a peculiarity debasing influence on religious thought.

Sri Chaitanya had found the caste system eating the vitals of social fabric. He and his followers were determined to root out this 'evil' from the land. The leaders of the Bhakti movement were primarily interested in the dissemination of the values (of Hinduism) among the lower and middle castes through expressing them in a language, and in an idiom comprehensible to the common people. They sought to create social cohesion by directing the allegiance of the various castes to a common corpus of religious values. Bhakti/ mass devotion is regarded as an accurate reflection of the chronic helplessness of the Indian masses at the current situation (De 1942) .

Manu, a great Vaisnava has said, there are ten characteristics of moral life, for the people who accept moral principles as a sense of duty. These are,

1. Dhrti (determination with patience),
2. Ksama (forgiveness, which means not retaliating when wronged by others),
3. Dama (disciplining of the mind, which means equanimity even in the face of disturbing circumstances),
4. Asteya (abstinence from theft),
5. Saucham (cleanliness),
6. Indriya-nigraha (restraining the senses from their sense-objects),
7. Dhi (intelligence, which means knowledge of the Sastras),
8. Vidya (wisdom, which means realization of the soul),
9. Satya (truthfulness), and
10. Akrodha (absence of anger as demonstrated by even temperedness amidst irritating circumstances).

Apart from all this, there are seven excellent results of devotion. These are,

1. The truth concerning the identity of the living entity is disclosed.
2. By engaging in the service of Bhagavan, the greed of the material enjoyment is reduced.
3. Just as the soothing rays of the moon cause the white lotus to bloom, Sri krsna-nama-sankirtana, diffusing the moon rays of bhava-bhakti, causes the white lotus of good fortune to bloom for the living entities.

4. When unalloyed devotion arises in the heart of the bhakta by continuous practice of hearing and chanting, the feeling of bhakti, which dispels all desires other than that for the service of the Lord, removes avidya.
5. When the gross and subtle bodies of the living entity have been completely destroyed, his infinite nature becomes evident. At that time, on account of the jiva's inherent being infinite. It is assumed that his constitutional happiness is also infinite. In other words, Sri Chaitanya says that the holy name is an ever increasing ocean of bliss, which expands the inherent transcendental pleasure of the living entity by virtue of the Hladini potency.
6. The jiva, being eternally situated in one of the transcendental rasas of dasya, sakhya, vatsalya or madhurya etc relishes complete nectar at every step by virtue of the ever-increasing freshness of his attachment to Lord.
7. The living entity in the status of prema gives unadulterated ecstatic pleasure to Lord. He is devoid of any selfish motives for personal enjoyment. The living entity, thus, tastes unlimited spiritual bliss in connection with the love-sports (prema-vilasa) of the divine couple.

The Vaisnava ethics springs from the same source as does its theology.

According to Sri Chaitanya, the character of a Vaisnava is compassionate, free from spite, of the very nature of truth, spotless, charitable, gentle, pure, possessing nothing, doing good to all, peaceful, wholly surrendered to Lord, desire less, harmless, victorious over the six passions, friendly, skillful and silent etc. No doubt the above characteristics of a Vaisnava are not devoid, in any sense, moral conduct or principles.

The path of devotion is for the change of the innermost attitude. It is from materialism to God-centered attitude. It is from selfishness to altruistic love. It is a path from exclusiveness to pluralism. It also goes beyond pluralism as it ends into a pathless land. It accommodates all diversities as its foundation is love, divine love and not hatred. It is going beyond all finitudes and freedom from limitations. It is the realization that the divinity is beyond any diversity.

Even in the Taittiriya Upanishad (2.7) it is mentioned that an individual is represented in terms of five different levels that projects the individual's self. These levels are- the physical body (*annamaya kosa*), Energy sheath (*pranamaya kosa*), Mental sheath (*manomaya kosa*), Intellect sheath (*vijnanamaya kosa*), Bliss sheath (*anandamaya kosa*) (Srivastava 2001)

The energy that underlies physical and mental processes is *prana*. Again there are three different levels of an individual. The lowest level is the physical body, the next higher level is the energy system, and the next higher levels are the thoughts. Since the three levels are interrelated, the energy situation

may be changed by inputs either at the physical level or at the mental level. When the energy state is agitated and restless, it is characterized by rajas; when it is dull and lethargic, it is characterized by tamas. The state of equilibrium and calm is termed *sattva*. These three qualities are the essential components of Prakrti, the remote cause of this Universe, well defined by the founder of Samkhya system Saint Kapila.

Mind is an emergent entity requires the presence of the Self. The mind viewed to be constituted by five basic components: manas, ahamkara, citta, buddhi and atman. Manas is the lower mind which collects sense impressions. Ahamkara is the sense of I-ness that associates perceptions to a subjective centre and thus creates “personal” experiences. Once sensory impressions have been related to I-ness by ahamkara, their evaluation and resulting decisions are arrived at by buddhi, the intellect. Manas, ahamkara and buddhi are collectively called the “internal instruments” (*antahkarana*) of the mind. Citta, which is the memory bank of the mind. These memories constitute the foundation on which the rest of the mind operates. But Citta is not merely a passive depository