

The Science of Upanishads – Part 31: What Do Upanishads Preach About How to Lead Our Lives Toward Attainment of Moksha? Excerpts from the Pravachan of PBHM Satsang on Sunday, October 8, 2017 (October 17-October 24, 2017)

The last two Mandir Bulletins described “What” and “Why” of Moksha, the ultimate liberation from Samsara (the repeating cycles of birth and death). Now is the time to discuss “How” to attain such a Moksha. Many Upanishads call the mode of achievement of Moksha as “**Purushartha**”, the code of conduct of human life. Purushartha consists of two words (Purusha + Artha), which literally means Objective (Artha) of an Individual (Purusha) life. It consists of four individual components, including **(1) Dharma, (2) Artha, (3) Kama, and (4) Moksha.**

Dharma is an obligatory duty as prescribed by the Vedas to be performed by an individual in accordance with the rules prescribed therein. It is the divine constitution that defines our roles and responsibilities, our social and moral order, our purpose and goals and the rewards and punishments that are appropriate for our actions. Dharma is the true calling of a person, whatever they are destined to do. Examples of a person's dharma are to be a doctor, teacher, writer, warrior, or a priest, but each has to follow the appropriate ethics and morality while performing one's duties.

Artha has dual meanings, one of which has already been described above. Artha in this context means wealth. Artha is the pursuit of material wealth, which brings material comforts to a person. People sometimes believe that the path of spiritual growth and pursuit of material wealth are mutually exclusive, or even that a spiritual seeker needs to be in poverty. But that is not true. **If we look at the Universe, it is a reflection of abundance.** Nature is abundant in everything. None of our deities is poor, see for example, Lord Vishnu, who is being served by Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth! If abundance is the quality of the Divine, how is pursuit of abundance in contrast with the pursuit of the Divine? If one is in poverty, in a state of constantly worrying about how to support and feed, if that is what the focus is on, how can one pursue spirituality? Only when there are no worries is one able to focus their attention to the goal of union with the Divine. The important thing to remember is not to be attached to the possession or attainment of wealth. It can be either transcended or sought with detachment, and with awareness. And in this state of detachment, one will not have the greed to acquire wealth, but instead will be motivated to use the wealth to help the poor and destitute, donate for the good social, moral and religious causes, which in turn will pave the way toward Moksha. **Therefore, unlike other religions, Hinduism does not condemn acquiring wealth.**

Kama is fulfilling one's desires. Desires are in various forms -- to be wealthy, powerful, sexual needs, recognition, service, etc. The Kama purushartha advocates that one's desires in this lifetime need to be fulfilled, albeit in a state of awareness and detachment without harming anyone in the process. For a person to evolve spiritually and to reach the ultimate destination, the barrier of desires needs to be crossed. This can be done either by fulfilling the desires, or by sublimating or transcending them. Suppressing of desires is certainly not recommended

because it is like a fully coiled spring that is held down by force, it can erupt unpredictably causing undesirable consequences. As one becomes aware of their desires and one goes about fulfilling them in awareness and without judgement, one soon reaches the stage of being able to sublimate them.

Moksha is the ultimate prize human life. Dharma, Artha, Kama are the three stepping stones toward Moksha, the fourth and final component of Purushartha. Moksha has been extensively discussed in the earlier two Mandir bulletins, and will not be elaborated here once again.

[Read Here for More on Purushartha](#)