Chapter-VIII

Conclusion

The main objective of this thesis is to delineate the basic ideals and values on which traditional Indian culture has been built upon. Indian culture is not only one of the most ancient but also one of the most extensive and diversified. The key-note of the cultural heritage of India is the synthesis of a multiplicity of elements drawn from various sources racial, linguistic and religious. India represents a remarkable diversity out of which a unity has developed. India stands for a basic and original unity in its various manifestations. When we study traditional Indian culture, we find that Indian culture is founded on certain eternal values.

The cultural heritage of India covers the Vedic period dating as far back as five thousand years ago, the period in which Buddhism and Jainism flourished, the Ages of the Epics and the Puranas, and the period of the Darshanas comprising the philosophical systems of Nyāya, Vaisesika, Sankhya, Yoga, Minamsa and Vedanta. Further, in the later ages Indian thought also assimilated the creative influence of Islam, and still later the liberal ideas of the West. Such assimilation of ideas is possible because of the ancient ideals of Vedanta, which is monistic, and all embracing. The Vedantic ideal is universal in character because it synthesizes all and rejects none. India has made a great contribution to the ideal of the essential unity of mankind. The spirit of tolerance and sympathetic understanding of diversity and all-embracing acceptance of the essential unity in the midst of diversity of customary beliefs and religious practices is the unique feature of Indian culture. India represents a great synthesis in the philosophical, spiritual and the practical lives of the people. The great ideals of Vedanta loom large in the background of the synthesis. The following quotation from Rig Veda substantiates the ideals of unity mentioned above:

EKĀM SADVIPRĀ BAHUDHĀ VADANTI

“That which exists is One. Wise men speak of It is many ways”.
Similar strain of ideal thinking will be found in the Upanishads and Shrimad Bhagavad Geeta. In the Geeta, Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna that just as water from different rivers flow down from different directions to the ocean, different religions aim at the realisation of the Almighty God. This teaching has demonstrated the oneness in the objective of all the religions. The eminent French writer, Romain Rolland has beautifully praised the all-embracing nature of India in the following words:

“If there is one place on the face of the earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very early days when men began the dream of existence, it is India”.

Regarding the spirit of India, the great poet and seer Rabindranath Tagore wrote:

“I love India, not because I cultivate the idolatry of geography, not because I have had the chance to be born in her soil, but because she has saved through tumultuous ages the living words that have issued from the illuminated consciousness of her great sons—Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahman:

“Brahman is Truth, Brahman is Wisdom, Brahman is Infinite; Santam Sivam Advaitam: Peace is in Brahman, Goodness is in Brahman, and the unity of all beings”.

Tagore also said that “what India truly seeks is not a peace which is in negation, or in some mechanical adjustment, but that which is in Sivam, in goodness; which is in Advaitam, in the truth of perfect union; that India does not enjoin her children to cease from Karma, but to perform their Karma in the presence of the Eternal, with the pure Knowledge of the spiritual meaning of existence”. From the above expression of Tagore we find that the spirit of India is all embracing and that it stands for the eternal values. The expression Śāntam Śivam Advaitam is very signifi-
cant because it represents the Universal spirit of unity, peace, harmony, tolerance and reverence for life, which pave the foundation of traditional Indian culture.

Value occupies the central stage in the traditional Indian philosophical thought. Indian philosophy is closely related with life, its problem and the solution there of. It is not concerned with the pursuit after knowledge for its own sake. Unlike the Western philosophical trends of thinking, Indian philosophy is not much interested with philosophy as an academic subject. Rather it gives much emphasis on understanding the problems of life and aims at the realisation of the highest goal of life. This is the reason why since the time of the Upanisads, Indian thought aims at the pursuit of the Puruṣārtha, which are the goals on values of life. Different aspects of philosophy such as logic, epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and religion are not discussed in isolation. There is no compartmentalizations of the issues relating to these aspects. On the other hand, these issues are considered as issues relating to man and his goals. Even reality is described in terms of values. This is clearly evident in the Upaniṣadic statement: Satyam Jñāna Mananantam Brahman-Brahman, the Ultimate Reality is truth, consciousness and the Eternal. Similarly, in the Vedanta philosophy, the Ultimate Reality is characterized as Saccidananda Brahman, i.e., Brahman that is existence (Sat) Consciousness (Cit) and Blissful (Ānanda).

In the Western philosophical thought, although discussions have been made about the moral principles and virtues in the thought of different philosophers, the development of axiology as a discipline within philosophy took place only in the nineteenth century. Kant, Baumgarten, Hegel, Croce, etc, are some of the prominent thinkers who took up the subject seriously. However, in the subsequent philosophical discussions the treatment on value seems to be mainly academic in nature. Moreover, the discussion, more or less, hovers around the concept of value and valuation rather than on dealing with values as the inalienable aspect of any philosophical pursuit after the goals of life either at the individual or the social level.
In the Western context, values are regarded as the desirable social goals, norms or ends, when these goals find social approval or acceptance they attain the status of social values. In any case, the values are related with the social valuation of certain individual or group conducts or behaviors. Values are the norms which are valued as right or correct in the sense that they serve social interest in the context of social valuation.

Values are broadly classified into extrinsic and intrinsic. The extrinsic values, which are also, known, as instrumental values are the means for the fulfillment of some individual or social interests. Wealth, for instance, is regarded as an extrinsic value because it subserves the material welfare of people. The intrinsic values are the values, which are good for their own sake. Regarding these values, we do not put the question why they are good, since they are good for their own sake. These values are never taken as means but simply as ends. Truth is one such value.

In Western philosophy, there are many theories about values. One of the main issues relating to the values is: Are values subjective or objective? Another issue is: Are values relative or absolute? These questions are answered variously by different schools of philosophy, such as, idealism, realism, pragmatism, etc. The analytical philosophers of the 20th century are not so much interested in answering these metaphysical questions. Rather they are interested in analyzing the concepts and linguistic expressions about valuations in our language.

In Indian philosophy, the concept of Puruṣārtha is the central concept relating to the values. Puruṣārtha refers to those ends of individual human being (puruṣa), which are desirable for the realisation of the higher ideals of life. Four Puruṣārthas are recognized. They are dharma, artha, kama and moksa. There is, however, as school of thought, according to which only three are recognized, namely, dharma, artha and kama. These three are known as Trivarga, whereas the set of four are known as Caturvarga, however, by Puruṣārtha Indian thinkers generally mean the four, which
are considered as the inalienable values of life. These four have been prescribed as
the goals to be pursued by every Indian, with emphasis, no doubt, on this or, that
Puruṣārtha depending upon one's varna (status by birth) and āśrama (stages of life).

These four Puruṣārthas are generally graded in the hierarchical order as kāma, artha dharma and moksa. Kāma refers to the sensuous element of man's na-
ture, which is basically animal nature. Kama thus means the sensuous desires. Artha
relates to the material needs and the pursuit of wealth. Artha is desire relating to man
pursuit of materials wealth, which are essential for his material well being. Dharma
may be interpreted in various senses. Originally, i.e., etymologically, it means the
principle, which binds (dhri). It is, this, the principle which brings about harmony in
the entire world as well as in human life and society. Dharma is also used in the sense
of the essential nature (or attribute) of the things or elements. For instance, the power
of burning is the dharma of fire. Different schools of Indian philosophy have written
about dharma. According to the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra or Kannada, dharma is defined as
that which brings about progress in this life and the hereafter (Yato abhyudayā niśreyasa
siddhi as dharma). Generally, dharma means religious. Different people may profess
different dharmas. Dharma, in the sense of moral and spiritual values, interpreted as
righteousness. Considered in this sense, different schools of thought have spoken
highly of dharma. The Vedas, the Upanisads, the Dharma Sāstras and the Purāṇas have
extolled the inherent values of dharma and urged mankind for the preservation of
dharma. The Bhagavad-Gītā has taught mankind about the different dimensions of
dharma and its preservation. Dharma is regarded as the balancing factor among the
lower Puruṣārtha, viz, kāma and ārtha. When there is too much of sensuous desire it
should be controlled. Otherwise it will bring about ruin for the individuals and the
society. There should be temperance and control of the senses. Similarly, the pursuit
of wealth for its sake is bad. It will bring about many evils in the society. One in-
stance is the ruin brought about to the Kauravas in the Mahābhārata because of their
greed for wealth and power. So artha should be balanced by Dharma.
Indian philosophy is basically spiritual. In India the interest of philosophy is in the self of man. "Ātmanam vidhi" "known thyself"-sums up the central teaching of the highest philosophical thought. All the systems of Indian Philosophy have, therefore, maintained that the true knowledge of the Self is the beacon light which shows humankind the way out of the sorrows and sufferings of life. Hence, in Indian philosophy Ātmajñāna is considered as the way for the attainment of liberation or mokṣa, which is regarded as the supreme end of man (paramapurusārtha). The most essential requirement of Mokṣa is that the individual must be able to step outside his limiting personality. Self transcendence is very much needed for the realisation of the highest goal of man, viz mokṣa Indian philosophers believe that there is the element of divine nature in man and that the divinity in man can be aroused through the noble thoughts, words, and needs. The Gītā has maintained that there are three paths for spiritual realisation namely, karma, jñāna and bhakti. Through any one of these or through all of them together the divinity can be attained leading to mokṣa.

Generally, discussion on the Indian theory of value is confined to the Puruṣarthas. But it must be remembered that the puruṣārthas are prescribed in Hindu thought in the context of Varnaśarama dharma. i.e., in the social life of the Indian belonging to different strata of society and different stages of life. These puruṣārthas should not be considered in the absolutistic sense as covering any thing and everything relating to man’s various enterprises and pursuits. Professor Daya Krishna has rightly pointed out that there are certain values, such as the intellectual and the aesthetic values, which do not normally fall under the four Puruṣārthas. There are sample evidences in traditional Indian Philosophy, which refer to the lofty beings have been of Truth, Good and the Beauty (Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram) as the ultimate values. Valuable treats have been left behind by the great Indian thinkers and seers on the intellectual, moral and spiritual values. It is therefore, essential that we make a holistic approach to the Indian conception of value and value theory.
We have to provide a genuine solution to the human problems of today by proposing an answer to the question what we ought to do and what ought not to do regarding the dilemmas between matter and spirit, conflicts of inter and intra religious and paradoxes of the values of freedom, pleasure, stability, love etc. Here some peculiar paradoxes are mentioned such as, to avoid pain is to cause pain, one's freedom deprives another's freedom, pursuit of one's economy stability may cause mental instability etc. Like this it will help to the universal peace and unity and will also protect the mind from chaos and frustration caused by scientific inventions by rediscovering the traditional ideals, which can give the meaning of unchangeable human essence. This thesis will also fulfill the hope of entering the spiritual value in all human beings by stirring the spontaneous overflow of value sense from all human hearts. Spiritual value cannot be found by enhancing our purchasing power and by violence.

Today the hierarchical achievement of the value of science and technology attempts to complete the inadequacies of human necessities but the misery of life is still present in every nook and corner of the world. Scientific investigation is never complete still today and its analysis about existence is not absolute, so it cannot give any new meaning of human essence. Regarding these problems, the thesis “The Concept of Value in Indian Philosophy” aims at exploring the ideals of good life and existence which were mainly concerned with universal peace and prosperity by leading towards spiritual progress. This thesis not only provides answers to the imperfection of the scientific investigation about human existence but also leads us to envision a common platform on which all values of human welfare may stand together for the attainment of highest goal of life or attainment of Moksa, true freedom. This thesis will also clear the invisible line of demarcation between the materialist and the spiritualist wrong conception of value in looking for comfort and wasting life for it is a kind of sickness or crippling of human being in this world of today. The highest degree of this sickness or crippling of human mind will produce self-destruction instead of self-realisation.
Man’s safety and happiness in the future is to secure the exact moment he achieves, namely, veritable safety and happiness. The ultimate question is not about how to live longer but why to live at all. The truthful answer to this question reveals the way to true happiness and perfect fulfillment is involved solely in the values of Indian philosophy and gives the key to the concept that “worries will never return”. The pursuit of the values of Indian philosophy will always presupposes a discriminating knowledge about unresolved conflicts of inter and intra religions conflicts and it can make a bridge between the individualistic and universalistic aspects of human values.

To give value sense to all human beings is the most important existential condition of this age. Since the search for values is a deliberate act of human choice, the insistence laid on leading value sense of life with purity in heart and a sincerity of approach towards the transformational nature of life. The essential nature of man is that there is an unrest and discontent in him. At heart he is an interrogating being and needs a scheme of values. Modern life has become much more strenuous and problem-ridden. It is full of conflicts and moral dilemmas. Since a happy life is impossible as long as there is such a conflict, we must have to search for a satisfactory way. The Indian theory of values will give the path of this satisfactory way.

Although the Indian concept of values are orthodox, transcendental and ascetic in nature, the discussion of this thesis aims at covering a wide spectrum of traditional Indian ideals of life.

Though the world, as we live and experience, is governed by plurality and difference, many religious and political leaders to-day have their common quest for peace and unity for preserving the world and survival of life from many chaos and disaster. The most important dimension in the pursuit of peace and unity is inspiring men everywhere in the world until the world shall know that it is one family. The Gita’s dictum “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”, which means, “The whole world is one family” can be mentioned here from the great treasures of the values of Indian philoso-
phy. It is a matter of deep concern for the human being as a whole over the rapid
disaster of values in life. It is obvious that value awareness or value sense is the only
key of human survival. The values of Indian philosophy are identical for all social
systems Varna – Ashrama Dharma and Purusârtha have their valuable and important
role in social systems.

The two evil things which we face in today’s world are – (i) Man tries to
capture power in the name of religion stirs controversy anger etc, and (ii) many sci-
entific inventions for our comforts have opened pandora’s box. Because of these
harmful causes, the world is facing many problems. For solving these problems, we
must struggle in a non-violent manner and by using universally accepted rules. To
bring peace in the world, religions much not try to overcome other religion. They
must regarded and respect each other and they must strengthen others and try to
bring human relations and for making global ethics. Here remembering the Buddhist
ideal to “Bahujana Sukhaya, Bahujana Hitaiya”, which means, “Happiness for all, ev-
everything for the sake of all”, individuals must not avoid the thought that universal
happiness is the happiness of oneself. It is the right time to explore the “Indian con-
cept of value” and offer to all individuals a foundation for building up the unity, peace
and concord in the whole world.

The deep concern of the ancient Hindu thinkers and seers for the quality of
life is reflected in the concept of value, more particularly in the concept of the Purus-
ârthas. According to them, good life is a balanced life which consists in the fulfilment
of all the needs - biological, social, material, mental and spiritual. Each one of these
requirements one is unimportant. Each of them has a function, an important role to
play in life. But the great thinkers have laid emphasis on the gradation of human life
has its own value. Not a single of these needs in the scale of value. This is the reason
why the Purusârthas are placed in the order of kama, Artha, Dharma, Moksa, if we
start from the lowest and rise further to the highest value. The traditional Hindu thinkers
also have laid great stress on Dharma or Righteousness, since Dharma alone is the
binding force behind everything, including human life and society. The great sages
and philosophers were, fully aware of the fact that only when there is peace and
tranquility in the life of the individual, there will be peace and harmony in the society
and the whole world. Dharma is the governing principle of a peaceful and harmoni-
ous life. It is also the binding principle of the entire universe.

The doctrine of Moksha has special significance in the Indian thought. Moksha
is regarded as the highest purushartha in as much as spiritual realisation is the highest
goal that man can ever contemplate. A spiritual life is a harmonious and disciplined
life. Through spiritualism alone one can realize the Divine.

The purusharthas are relevant even to our own lives in the contemporary soci-
ety. We need pleasure, wealth and all the amenities of good living because for living
happily we must be free from all material wants. Hence, Kama and Artha are essen-
tial for us. We have to pursue them. The only thing is that there should be a limit to
that. We should not allow ourselves to become slaves of kama and Artha. We should
be our own masters, not the slaves of passions and consumerism. In this context
Dharma should check us become Dharma is the best leveller. It is the principle of
temperance, justice and harmony. Kama and Artha, therefore, should be tempered by
Dharma. We have to live a life of righteousness, doing good to all in the world.
Further, we have to lead a spiritual life in the midst of the great struggle of practical
life in the family and the society. Briefly speaking, we shall be able to lead an ideal
and peaceful life only if we follow the teachings of the great thinkers and seers on the
purusharthas.