



# Being a Hindu in America

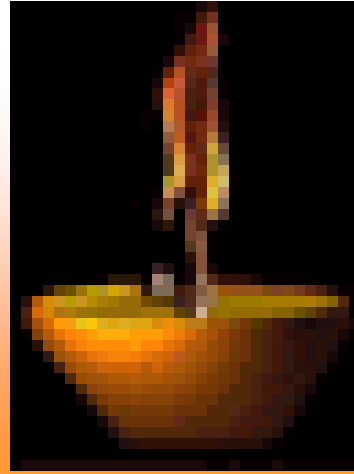
*Challenges and Solutions*



## Hindu Value System

**Camp Vivekananda 2008  
Inawendiwin NJ & Tolland MA**

*Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America*



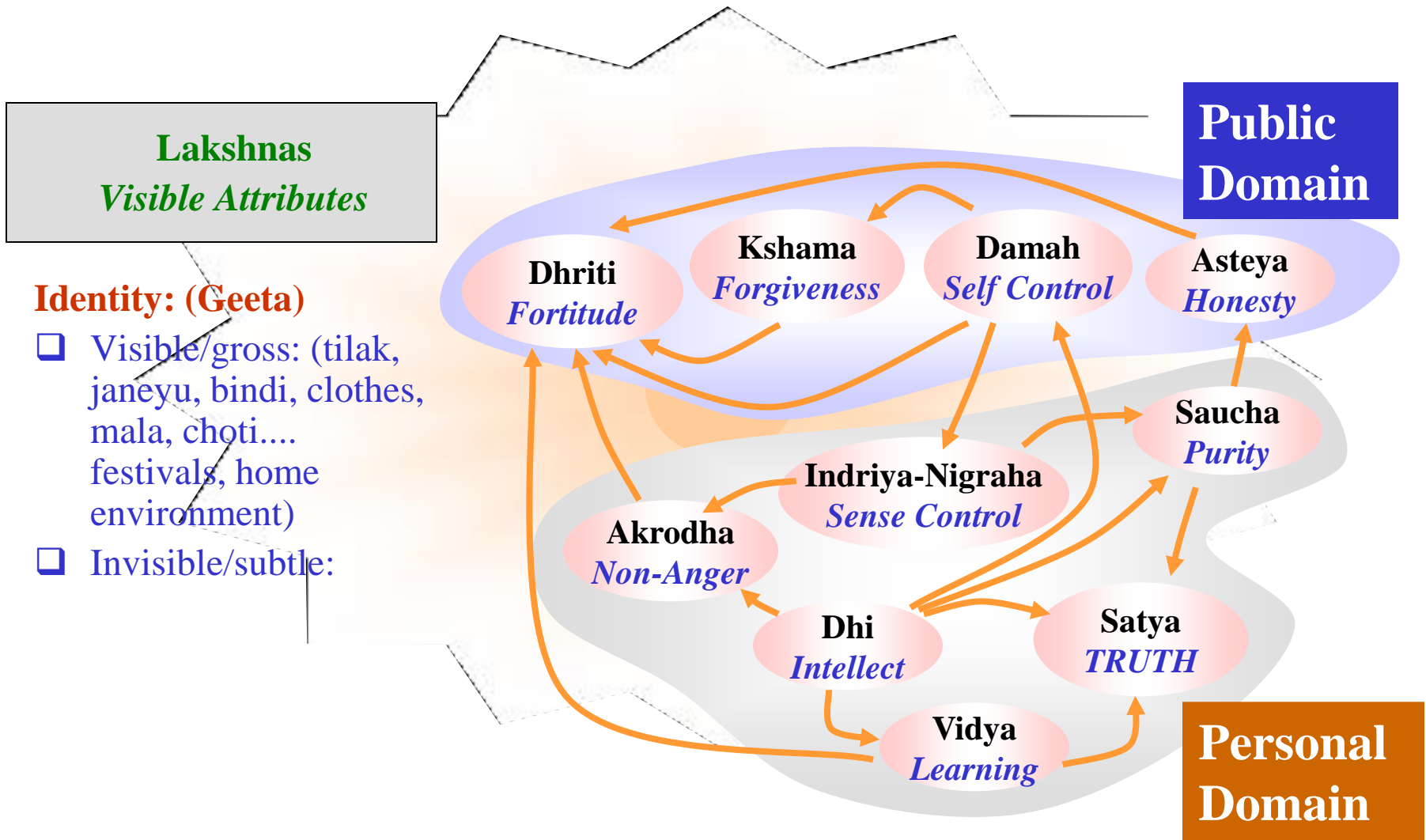
# The Ten Attributes of Hindu Dharma

*VHPA Camp*



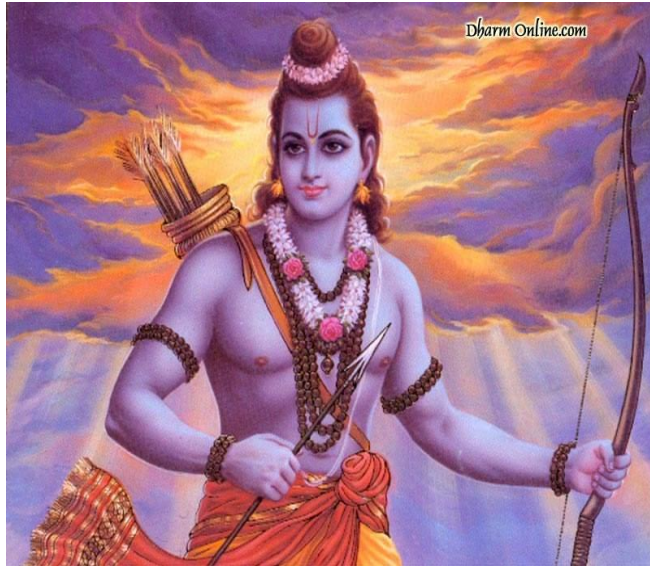
# Hindu Value System

## Hindu Dharma Lakshanas (attributes)





# Dhriti- Patience



- ❑ Man cannot live without activity
- ❑ The development of an individual, the maintenance of family, social service, etc. is dependent upon action.
- ❑ Ideal example of Dhriti is Shri Ram

- ❖ Root “Dhri”
- ❖ Finish what you start – unwavering commitment to the goal/cause; undaunted, focused, clarity; FORTITUDE
- ❖ Sustaining Power: ONLY Vishnu can sustain; Maintenance (house) requires resources to enhance, preserve and protect (Saraswati, Lakshmi and Shakti)
- ❖ Strength --- only the resourceful can sustain!



# Kshama – Forgiveness

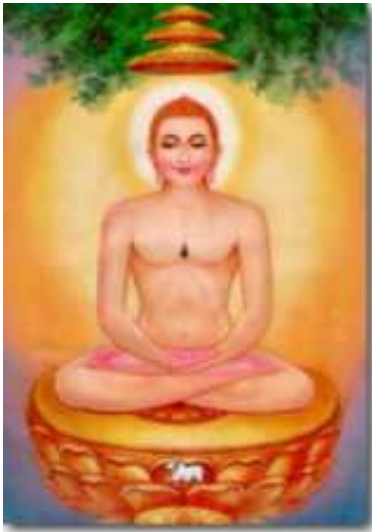


- ❑ A person who forgives others creates no enemies and adversaries.
- ❑ Sign of stable mind, peaceful heart, and awakened soul.
- ❑ An ideal example of forgiveness is Swami Dayanand.

- ❖ Only the strong can forgive “meaningfully”
- ❖ Only the one who is focused on the *larger good, a larger goal, who is unmoved by small disturbances* can forget and forgive
- ❖ Kshama implies strength, resourcefulness and commitment to a larger cause
- ❖ Only those who do not feel violated, who have plenty (abundance), have wisdom and vision can see the bigger picture (Vyas, Vishnu & Bhrgu ...)



# Damah- Control over Mind and Desires



- ❑ It is not possible to overcome wickedness with thoughtless, vengeful approach
- ❑ A person with “damah” quality remains attuned to the noble urges of his self and protects it from ignoble thoughts and rogue desires.
- ❑ An example of damah is illustrated though Mahavir Swami’s vigorous penance and deep meditation

- ❖ Self Control
- ❖ Only one who is confident, has inner strength, conviction and is totally aware of his/her identity can have self control
- ❖ When you know who you are and where you are headed, you can control your perceptions, actions and thoughts.



# Asteya- Non-Stealing



- ❑ Also means integrity and honesty
- ❑ An honest person practices it in thought, speech, and action.
- ❑ An ideal example of Asteya is described through Acharya Chanakya

- ❖ Honesty
- ❖ Only a person who has self control, is strong and resourceful can be honest
- ❖ When you are established in yourself and are content with who you are, you can be honest and unperturbed by what others have!





# Shauca- Cleanliness and Purity



- ❑ The body of a person whose mind and prana are pure remains healthy
- ❑ Shauca keeps a person free of mental and physical impurities
- ❑ An example of Shauca is through Ramanujacharya

- ❖ External: body, environment we live in
- ❖ Internal: thought, speech and action





# Indriya-Nigrah- Sense Control



- ❑ Optimum food intake
- ❑ Judicious use of money
- ❑ Restrained speech
- ❑ An ideal example of Intiya-nigrah is Mahatma Gandhi

- ❖ **Control organs of Perception:** what we see, hear, smell, taste, touch
- ❖ **Control organs of Action:** speech, location, creation



# Dhi- Intellect



- ❑ A wise person is never daunted by the gravity of any difficulty.
- ❑ Dhi makes a person fearless and engages him in righteous deeds.
- ❑ A well known leader Swami Vivekananda strongly demonstrates Dhi- Intellect

❖ Intellect and Discrimination



# Vidya- Knowledge

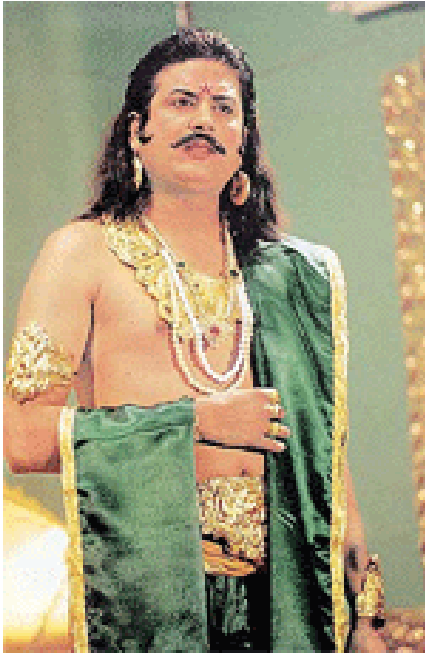


- ❑ Refers to not only school knowledge but also practical knowledge of life gained by experience.
- ❑ In absence of knowledge, a person becomes arrogant.
- ❑ An ideal example of knowledge is learnt through Adi Shankaracharya.

- ❖ Learning and Understanding
- ❖ Processing, assimilating, digesting all we have recorded in our “chita”.



# Satya- Truth



- ❑ Truth means absence of falsehood
- ❑ The one who seeks truth does not get influenced by the masquerade of any person or object.
- ❑ The speech of the seeker of truth is straightforward and his deeds are honest.
- ❑ An example of Satya is shown through Raja Harishchandra.

- ❖ **Truth = Primary attribute of Brahman**
- ❖ **Truthfulness → Fearlessness**



# Akrodha- Non Anger



- ❑ Akrodha means refusing to be provoked by anger under all circumstances.
- ❑ Anger can push a person towards self destruction.
- ❑ An ideal example of Akrodha is demonstrated through the ideal understandings of Lord Krishna.

- ❖ Non-anger
- ❖ Calmness of the mind
- ❖ **Only when the mind is free from all agitations can one realize the Truth; fulfillment of our goals cannot happen as long as we are burdened with anger**



# Hindu Value System

*Stand out in the Crowd!!*



- She has amazing **fortitude**, courage and focus. **She must be a Hindu!!**
- He is **truthful, honest, pure** and **forgiving**. **He must be a Hindu!!**
- She is so **smart, creative**, and so full of life-energy. **She must be a Hindu!**
- He is so together, so **self controlled**, so **calm** and never gets angry. **He must be a Hindu!!**





# Hindu Value System

## *Three Words to Remember*



**Fortitude**

**Attitude**

**Solitude**

**... and Live By**

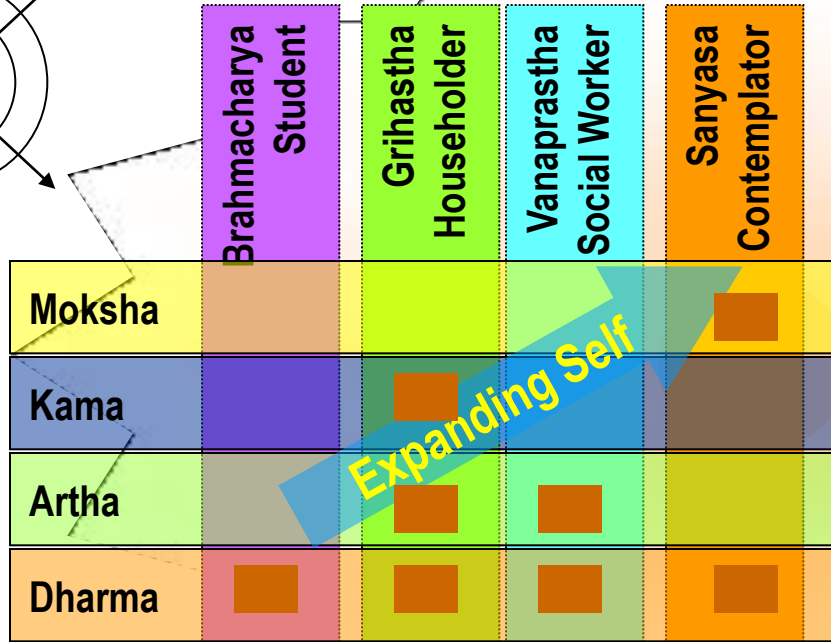
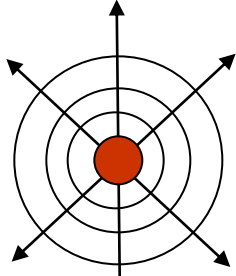


# Hindu Value System

## A Balanced View of Life –



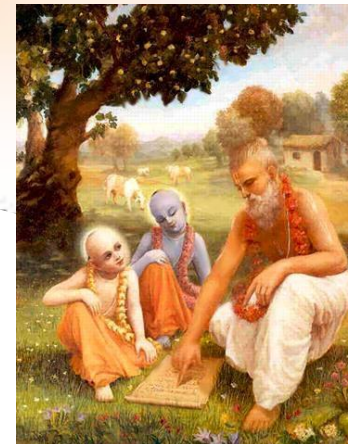
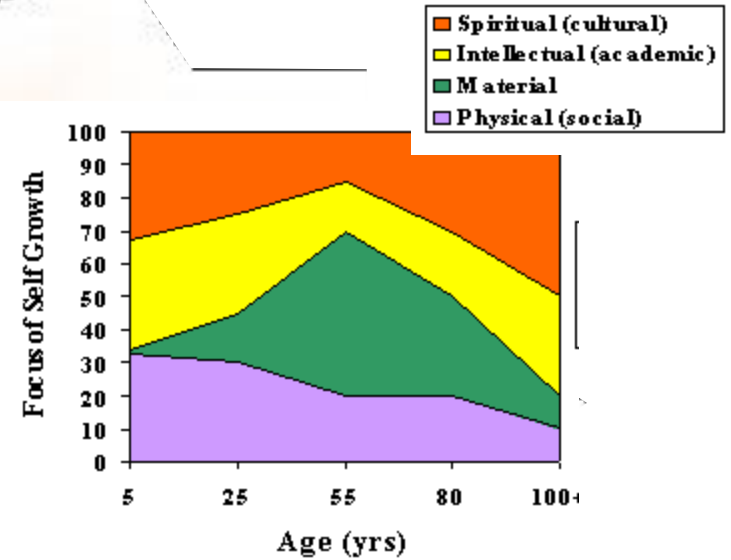
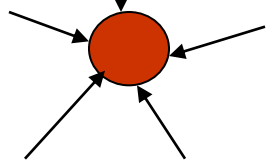
outward focus



Stage of Life

*Artha (Wealth) and Kama (Enjoyment) rooted in Dharma*

inward focus

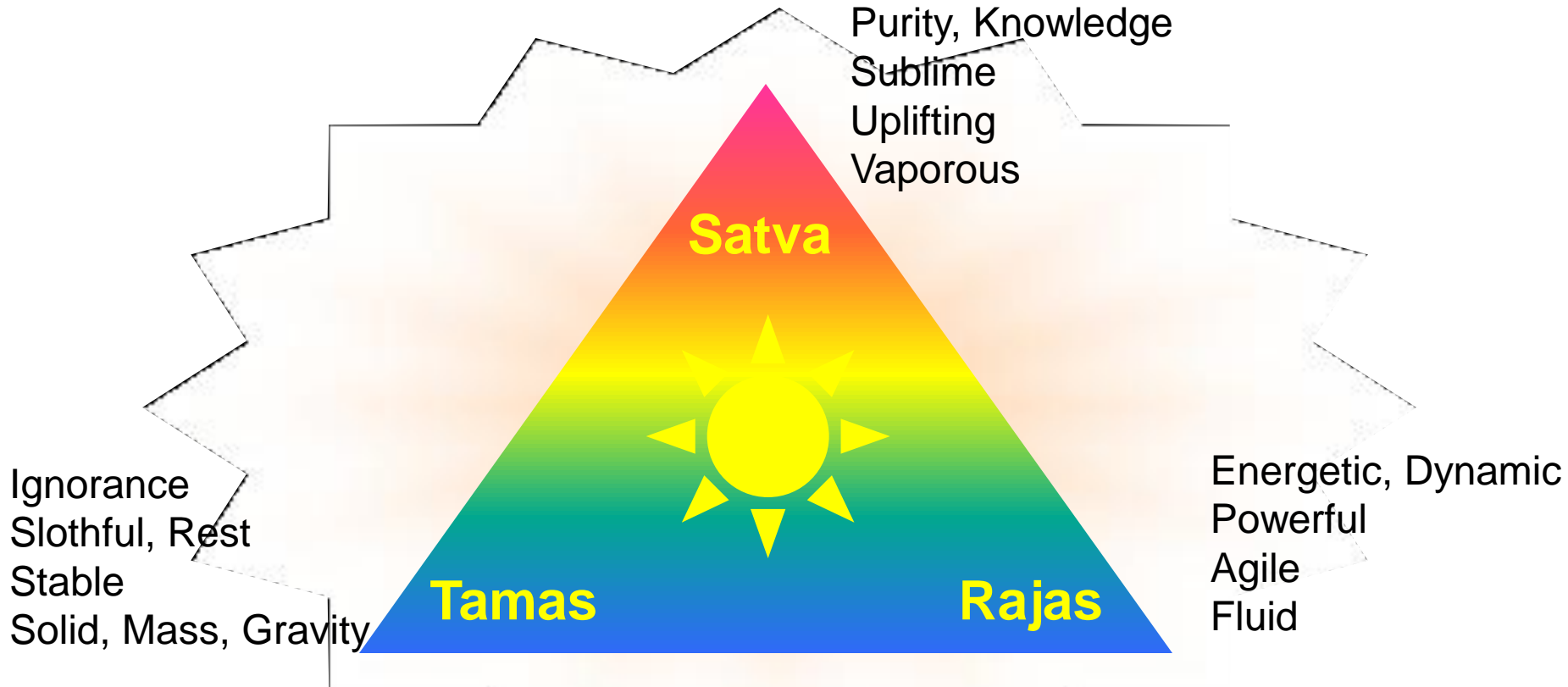


**Focus of Self Development Changes with Age**



# Hindu Value System

## *Gunas (Attributes, Properties, Qualities)*



**Balance - All entities have these three attributes in various proportions**



# Hindu Value System

## The Four Stages of Life (Ashramas)



- ❑ The first of the four stages is ***Brahmacharya***.
  - Brahmacharya is the learning stage. It is when you are living with your parents or the Guru (teacher). It is also the stage when a child gets his/her *Upanayan*.
- ❑ The second stage is ***Grihastha***.
  - This is the stage when you are married and living with your family. You enjoy your life, sharing and helping your children, family and the community.
- ❑ The third stage is ***Vanaprastha***.
  - This is when your family obligations are taken care of, so you can focus all your energies in helping others in the community. You devote your wealth, skills and wisdom in the service of the society.
- ❑ The fourth stage is ***Sanyasa***.
  - In this stage you go beyond the community to understanding, seeing and serving the *Ishwar-Brahman* in all of us. These four stages are the basis for Hindus to conduct their lives.



An Upanayan is a ceremony in which a child having demonstrated the essential intellectual and spiritual maturity is accepted as a part of the community and enters a rigorous phase of academic and spiritual pursuit. During the *Upanayan* ceremony, a child must make three vows.

- The first vow is to study hard and practice celibacy.
- The second vow is to respect elders, and
- The third to always strive for excellence and achieve prominence in the world.



# Hindu Value System

## *The Four Aspirations (Purusharthas)*



One of the most basic principles of the Hindu thought is that every person is unique and free to enjoy life in a manner consistent with the natural laws (Dharma) that guide our actions. This guideline, which forms much of the basis for Hindu philosophy, is characterized by four aspirations, or *purusharthas* that all Hindus engage in.

❑ **The first of these aspirations is Dharma.**

- The term Dharma may be described as duty performed by an individual in accordance with his or her unique and intrinsic nature. For example, my duties (and probably yours, also, at this stage of our lives) are to respect my parents, teachers, and friends, to strive to do well in my studies and to be healthy and strong.

❑ **The second aspiration is called Artha.**

- For a Hindu, life is meant to be lived to its fullest through the creation, accumulation, and enjoyment of things of value. These things of value may consist of material possessions, of course, but a Hindu has high regard for other things of value such as knowledge, technology, arts and architecture.

❑ **The third aspiration is Kama or desires that uplift or liberate you**

- All of us have desires to do things, but the question is where will these desires take us? It is important for us to realize whether a desire will lead us to success or failure, happiness or despair, and, accordingly, take the appropriate path. Dreams and desires are where it all begins. The Sages ask us to channelize our energies in a disciplined way to achieve our dreams. Immediate gratification of our senses is contrary to the Hindu notion of self-control. There is a proper time and place for every action.

❑ **The fourth aspiration is Moksha or liberation from the repeated cycle of birth and rebirth**

- This aspiration is realized only when we have understood our relationship with all other creatures in this universe and with Brahman. It represents the search for the Supreme Truth.



# Hindu Value System

## *Discipline, Organization, Regularity*



The sages have said that if we want to ride over difficult circumstances then we need to be strong within. It is the inner weakness that causes us to break and it is the inner strength that leads us to success. The source of this inner strength is rooted in self-discipline, organization and regularity.

- ❑ **Organization** - Have you ever been to a junkyard? Many useful things can be found there but they are all lying around in piles. One can spend the day going through heaps looking for the one item we need. On the other hand, there is the department store. Everything is nicely laid out. A disorganized home has no music, no harmony and no peace. Material possessions can provide us comfort and convenience but not peace and happiness. It is up to us to weed out the unwanted and organize the rest into a bouquet. When we organize the exterior the interior gets organized as well with time. Our thoughts and our behavior get tuned to the same rhythm.
- ❑ **Regularity** - Life is a string of years, months, weeks and days. We live only one day at a time. Rain comes down only one drop at a time. We live one breath at a time. There is a pattern, a routine to life. All great people urge us to get up early in the morning before sunrise, walk bare foot on the grass and breathe the refreshing morning air. But, laziness grabs us along with its twin sister carelessness. We allow the TV and the Internet and the Cell phone to run our lives. We eat dinner while watching TV. We stay up late and then get up late. If we want to fix our day we need to fix our mornings. If the morning is set life is set. We only need the resolve to make this happen.
- ❑ **Self Discipline** - Discipline is when some one else drives us, like the captain in the army. Self discipline is when our inner self directs us. Mind does not control us but we are governed by our inner self. No matter how well we arrange our home and how elaborate a routine we create. If we do not have the discipline to stick to the routine it is of no avail. Remember the story of hare and the tortoise. Like the hare we dream, start of with great burst of energy and enthusiasm but then fizzle out. Overconfident, we relax, procrastinate, are careless, and lose. But the one who is regulated, slow and steady wins.