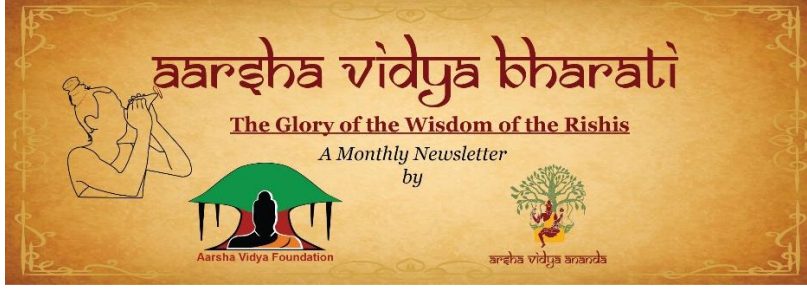

Aarsha Vidya Bharati - Aug 2021

A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



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Spotlight - Mokṣa

Spotlight on word



and meaning for clarity

Mokṣa

Whatever is fundamentally sought after by every human being is called *puruṣārtha*, in Sanskrit. Although what we seek may be specific, the Vedas map all human pursuits into four *puruṣārtha*, human pursuits:

1. **Artha** - That which gives you any kind of security – emotional, economical or social is called *artha*. This may be in the form of cash, assets, stocks, real estate, insurance, relationships, a home, a good name, a title, recognition, influence or power of any kind.
2. **Kāma**- The pursuit of pleasure which may be sensory, like different kinds of food, entertainment, music, travel, intellectual pleasure of knowledge, the pursuit of esthetics– something that satisfies your senses, pleases your mind.
3. **Dharma** - This word has many meanings.
 - i. The universal framework of values (truth, justice, ahimsa and so on)
 - ii. *adr̥ṣṭa phalam*, invisible results such as *punya* which lead one to *svarga*
 - iii. the nature of a thing (e.g. the dharma of fire is to burn)
 - iv. Duties or sacred responsibilities (doing what is to be done)

Because of the importance of Dharma which distinguishes us from animals, the order can be reversed – Dharma, *Artha* and *Kāma*. Conformity to Dharma implies maturity and doing what is to be done, which upholds society (*dhārayate iti dharma*) and moves it forward.

4. Mokṣa - Even though it comes last, *Mokṣa* is a very important *puruṣārtha*. It comes from *muc mocane*, which means to ‘release’ or be ‘free from’. Freedom from what? *Mokṣa* means freedom from something that I do not want. That my security depends on certain forms of security, or certain form of pleasure, or securing a place in *svarga*, shows us that ‘we seek because we are not okay as we are’. Yet, we seek because we want to be free from seeking. If people analysed their Dharma, *Artha* and *Kāma* pursuits, they will see that the problem of sorrow we experience may seem to relate to a topical situation but it points to the sorrow of experiencing the limiting condition of a human being – the fundamental problem. The solution to the fundamental problem is *Mokṣa* .

Once the human problem is discerned you will take steps to resolve it although you may continue to pursue dharma, *artha* and *kāma* . *Mokṣa* is not freedom from *artha* or *kāma* - nor is it opposed to any of these pursuits. A person who has *mokṣa* has the freedom to pursue the other three human goals if he/she/they choose. This is real freedom and not freedom from these pursuits.

Mokṣa is seeing oneself as the limitless being, here and now, free from any sense of limitations or anything that binds us. *Mokṣa* being a discovery, it is not the result of any karma which can only help one gain, reach, purify or modify something.

Mokṣa is not going to *svarga*, a temporary realm where the *jīva* can enjoy the fruits of its good deeds.

Mokṣa is not equivalent to salvation. There isn’t any word in Sanskrit for salvation. In Christianity every human being is born with the Original sin and hence the purpose of every person is get rid of that sin by believing in Christ. If he/she/they believe, only then they can get salvation. However, in *Sanātana* Dharma, also referred to as Hinduism, every *jīva* faces the results of his/her/their karma and hence a sin committed by Adam and Eve cannot affect humanity. *Mokṣa* is a Sanskrit non-translatable and one can discover that one is free and of the nature of fullness, while living.