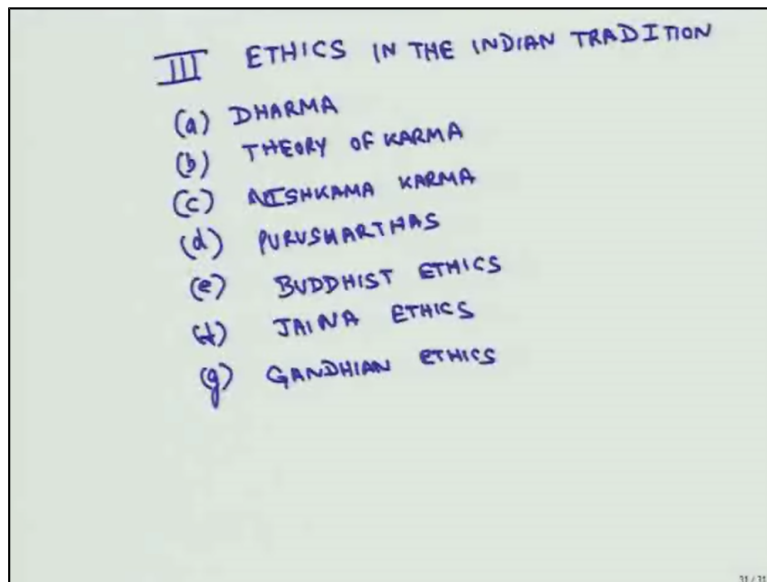


**Ethics**  
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**Module No. #01**  
**Lecture No. #21**  
**Ethics in the Indian Tradition**

Hello. Today, we will begin, with the third module of this course, which is, as you can see the screen, it is Ethics in the Indian Tradition.

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Till now, we have been talking about, various Moral Theories. We have talked about, Metaethical debates. And, which have mostly been, from the western analytic perspective of moral philosophising. Now surely, many of us would be curious about, what happens, or what has happened. And, how has the Indian philosophical tradition, grappled with the problems of Ethics.

What is our lineage, or philosophical heritage, about debating the problems of Moral Philosophy? Now, this module is dedicated to, tackling this issue about Ethics, as it takes place in the Indian Tradition. Now, there may be lot of notions about Ethics, that we have in India. That, the Indian Tradition is perhaps more, some would say, lays great emphasis on Ethics.

We all have an intuitive idea, as we are as Indians, raised in this country. And, this tradition, there

is a certain strong unifying factor. Now, many people have said, that well, we are strictly not one nation, we are of diverse cultures. But then, in our heritage, there has been significantly strong thread connecting, all our various regions and states. So, we can have something called the Indian Philosophy, or something called the Indian Tradition.

Because, despite of the various differences, the history of the country has been united, in fact the history of the subcontinent. So, currently imposed national boundaries, do not limit our cultures, or our Philosophical Tradition. Philosophical Tradition Indian Philosophy comprises of, seven Schools of Indian Philosophy. This is the ancient philosophical tradition, where we have been thinking, our forefathers and ancestors have been debating, on philosophical problems. Okay.

Now, let us first talk about, what is Indian Philosophy. Now, this is a very difficult subject to grapple with. Because, there are varied opinions and justifications of the same. Now, Homogeneity is not, that much of an Indian Traditional feature, as is it in the Western Traditions, which makes it easier to generalise and theorise. So, just as the average Indian. It is may be a mathematical, or an average, but a statistical average. But, there are wide variations, in the average Indian ethos, or average Indian culture.

Now, Indian Philosophy from ancient times, and India has a rich and long tradition of philosophising. And, Philosophy was could have given greater importance, from the times of kings, ancient India, ancient Indian subcontinent, and forward. So, generally it is regarded that, Indians Philosophy has, six plus one, Ancient Seven Schools of Indian Philosophy. Plus one, I say because, it means, there is one School called the Charvaka School, which is a School of the Indian Materialists.

And unfortunately, their text has been destroyed over time. And, what we are talking about is of, more than two millennia back. So, Charvaka is referred as the seventh School. Because, there is a continuity, or there is a similarity, between the six Schools. And, many of their text remains, which Charvaka does not have, that much of a substantiation. But, because of the Purva paksha, or the foreground described, the Indian philosophical debates, had to describe a Purva paksha or, which is the foreground, of the debate to be taken place.

Every philosophical debate had to start with the, explication of the size of the debate. And, in this, from the Purva Paksha's of various debates, which are work of Philosophy, can be picked up. So, of course there are many myths, regarding Indian Philosophy. One, that it is completely otherworldly. Because, we do have one entire School of Indian Philosophy, dedicated to Materialism, and which regarding, physical entities as the ultimate real entities.

Now, let apart. Every Indian Philosophical School, has its ancillary School of Ethics. And, it has its claims, it has its ethical systems. Now, how would these compare, to the Western Moral Theories, that we have come across. We will see this, over this module, when we talk about the various Indian Schools of Theory. Now, what is it? What is Ethics in Indian Tradition? How are we today? Are we religious nation? Are we a spiritual nation? Are we a moral nation? Are we an immoral nation? Are we an amoral nation? Are we a ritualistic nation?

There are various opinions, that we receive. And, it is not an easy job to, just stick with one. Because, the truth is, little more complicated, in this case. Because, how are we? What is our moral standpoint? Are we an honest nation? Are we a dishonest nation? Can these questions, it all be asked, about general people at large. Well. Though, there are applied questions, that do come up, and those are talks of common room debates.

But, we will see, how theorising has taken place in the Indian Tradition. And, what are the key concepts, that have been used. And, how have we arrived at the various theories. Well. The first issue, that we talk about is, Dharma. Now, Dharma is something, that anybody raised with an Indian upbringing, would be familiar with. But, what is this notion of Dharma. Many people have called this as, the cornerstone, or the foundation, or the bedrock of ethical theorising, in the Indian Tradition.

What is the meaning of Dharma? Does it mean Ethics? Does it mean duty? Does it mean quality? Does it mean ethos? What does it mean? Now, this is a question that is, many philosophers have also come across, to say that well, Dharma as a concept, cannot be translated into English term, and definitely not religion. So, our first point of engagement would be, the notion of Dharma.

What do we mean by Dharma? Whether, how best can we understand it, and how is it a part of moral theorising, in the Indian Tradition.

Now, after we talk about Dharma, we are going to talk about, the Theory of Karma. Now, this is a theory, that we have talked about, that has been very frequently, and fondly, and prevalently talked about. That in fact, it is also become a word in the English Dictionary, Karma. So, Karma would mean the, cycle of actions and their desserts. Now, what is the Indian Theory of Karma, if at all, there can be one. What are the sources of the, what are the text, we refer to?

We will talk about them also. There are Prasthanatrayi, the three texts, that comprise the base of Indian theorising in Ethics. Bhagwat Gita is one of them. The Brahma Sutra is another. Now, the Theory of Karma is something, that we would engage with, and find, how is it explicable in modern terms. Now, in the course of this module, find that, how is Indian Metaphysics, or Indian Epistemology, relate to Indian Ethics. Is, Indian Ethics, deeply otherworldly?

So, let us explore, what are the various perspectives, to the debates in Indian Philosophy. And, what are the pre-suppositions, for the Indian theorising in Ethics. That is, Indian Ethics definitely dependent on the notion of god. Well. Most of us, may be more familiar with, the Indian mythology. And, mythology has bring-forth, many of these debates in a, very engaging form.

Some of these interesting debates could be like, about the loyalty of Karna, as a character in Mahabharata, doing the right thing, or doing what is just, and his loyalty to his friend, Duryodhana. Now, a moral engagement, or a moral theorising comes about, when we have a conflict between two things that are right. Two choices, that are both necessary, but cannot both be met. And, sometimes, and mostly, one at the cost of the other.

So, this is where, Indian mythologies have raised various debates. And then, well, has it been ritualistic. Well. Very often, we have had the notion of Pancha Siddhis. And, after which, Sita has been left out, as a sati. Now, these are examples of mythological stories, that have engaged with the notion of Ethics, and brought forward the problems of the moral existence, that human beings lead. And, what are the moral problems, that once comes across. And, how people have tackled

it.

So, of ram, of Sita's test by Agni Pariksha. It is a test by fire. And, these are all examples of moral problems, raised in Indian mythology. Well. Apart from the Theory of Karma, the next we talk about Nishkama Karma, which is again, another theory of an action. I am leaving of the diacritical marks, for the time being. But, there is a system of diacritical marks to put down, terms of Sanskrit in English alphabets. Okay.

Now, Nishkama Karma is again, what many of us would be familiar with, the various things that happen, is that the desire-less action, is that possible, is that futile, and what is the deeper debate in that. Well, apart from Nishkama Karma, we go ahead to Gandhian Ethics, which perhaps talks about the modern day version of Gandhi, seen as an ethical spiritual leader. Of course, this is something, that we would be tackling, towards the end.

So, in fact, if there may be a minor correction of the syllabus, which would be mentioned on your website. I hope, it is updated by the time, you have access to it. So, we can actually go to the Purusharthas, or the various goals of human life, that are to be pursued in a human life. So, there are roughly divided into four, which is learning, material, prosperity, or living by the pleasures, or enjoying the pleasures.

Meanwhile, being just, and doing the duty, as it is. And thereof, is a final Purusharthas, or the aim or goal of live is, moksha or liberation. We will talk about, all those four Purusharthas, when we talk about Purusharthas. And then, when we go ahead, we will talk about the Buddhist Ethics, and Jain Ethics, followed by finally it would be, Gandhian Ethics. So, we talk about Buddhist Ethics. How Ethics or Moral Philosophy, has been tackled in Buddhism.

How the Jains have tackled their Ethics? And, then finally, we talk about Gandhian Ethics. In this, we will also be trying to cover, as many ancillary problems, that come up. Now, we need to think, or we will need to collate, that what would be our basic knowledge, about Indian Ethics. That, how apart from folklore and culture, that we have been raised in, what has been the notion of moral theorising in the Indian Tradition.

So, when we engage with some of the text, that is referred to, and we will find out, well, how moral theorising has taken place. And, whether Indian theorising, has been moral or not. And, this will raise some of the crucial problems, in the moral theorising, that takes place in the Indian Tradition. So, let us proceed to know more about, how Ethics takes place in the Indian Tradition.