

## Examrace

### Indian Ethics the Concept of Purusharthas for Competitive Exams

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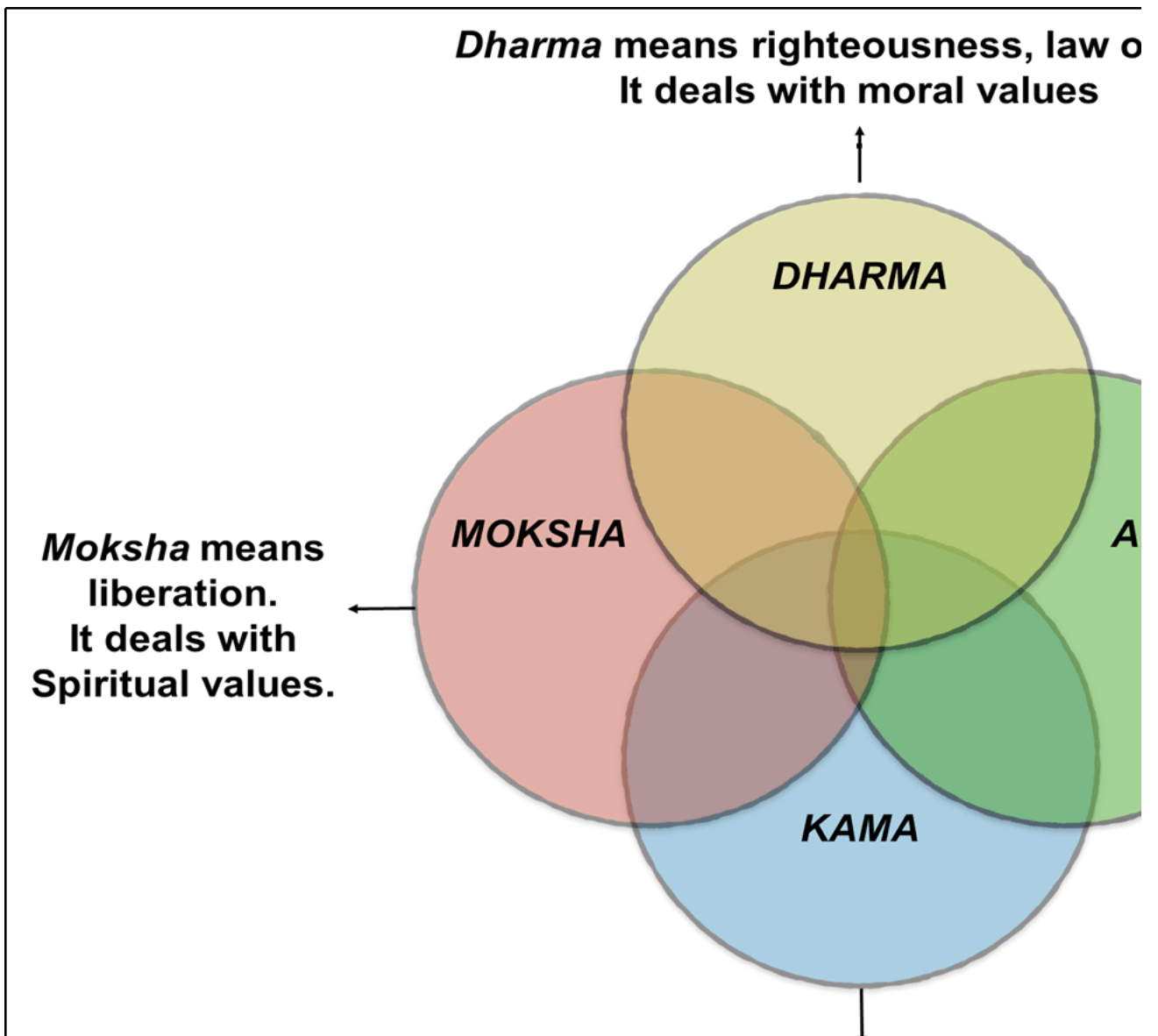
Complete Video at - [Indian Ethics - The Concept of Purusharthas \(Basics of Philosophy\)](#)

#### Understanding the Meaning of Purusharthas

- Purusharthas is referred as the goal or the purpose or the end or the aim of human life.
- Etymologically speaking, the word purusharthas can be understood as Purusha plus Artha. Meaning, purusha is the human being and artha means a purpose.
- They are also defined as the objectives of a human being.
- They are equally applicable to all, men and women.

- Another name for the purusharthas are the four pointers of human life.
- They are; 1. Dharma, 2. Artha, 3. Kama and 4. Moksha.
- The four purusarthas provide a holistic understanding of life in all its capacities.
- In other words, it represents a comprehensive approach towards the satisfaction of a man's physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

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## Kama means pleasure. It deals with Psychological value

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### The Concept of Purusharthas in Hinduism

- In Hinduism, the concept of Purushartha is of vital importance because the four purusharthas are regarded to be the goals of each and every being.
- It is too important to note that they are applicable for the twice-born Hindus.
- In other words, meaning, they are only for Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.
- Historically, there were only three purusharthas accepted, they were, 1. Dharma, 2. Artha and 3. Kama. It was called tri-virga or the three categories of human pursuits.
- The fourth purushartha or the fourth goal, Moksha was added later.
- According to Hinduism, the aim of the purusharthas is to ensure that people never neglect their obligatory duties and hold themselves responsible for maintaining the balance in the world.

#### Dharma

- Dharma is the first goal or the first objective of the human life.
- The concept of Dharma has been understood differently by a number of people;
- some understand it as one's duty,
- some understand it as one's faith.
- some understand it as the concept of justice.
- some understand it as the Divine Law which upholds the entire creation.
- Commonly in the religious texts, Dharma is understood as the obligatory duty prescribed by the Vedas where God is taken to be the upholder of the dharma.
- It deals with the notion of doing duty for duty's sake, alone.
- Hence, it defines our roles, our duties and our responsibilities in the society to uphold harmony and order.
- The Vedas and the Bhagavad Gita are regarded as the two important sources of Dharma.

#### Artha

- Artha is the second goal.
- It means material wealth and prosperity.
- Artha is considered important for the overall happiness and wellbeing of an individual and the society.
- According to the scriptures, wealth is pursued for the sake of others, and not for one's own selfish reasons.
- In other words, the desire for wealth is not the same as the desire for greed. The former is for the betterment of the society and the latter deals with one's own selfish reasons.
- Hence, aiming for wealth is a kind of virtue for artha upholds dharma.
- According to the scriptures, Lord Vishu is taken to be the Lord of wealth.

#### Kama

- Kama is the third objective of the human life.
- Kama means pleasure.
- The concept of Kama can be understood in two ways;
- In the broad sense: the concept of Kama deals with mental pleasure and aesthetic enjoyment, without any sexual connotation.
- In the narrow sense: the concept of Kama deals with sensuous pleasure, alone. It deals with bodily or sexual gratification.
- According to the scriptures, *Kama* in accordance with *Dharma* and *Artha*, takes a person on the journey towards the final end, that is, *Moksha*.

#### Moksha

- Moksha is the fourth and the final objective of the human life.
- Moksha means liberation, emancipation, release or freedom for the cycle of rebirth that deals with suffering and pain (samsara) .
- It is regarded as the most important objectives because it is something which leads one to the world of Brahman or closer to God.
- It is because of this reason, moksha is regarded as both, a purushartha and the paramartha.
- Paramartha means the final, the ultimate end or the final purpose.
- The concept of Moksha is also called Mukti or freedom from cessation of mind by Yoga and Samkhya philosophy, Nirvana by Buddhist philosophy, and Salvation by Christian philosophy.

### **Literature in Relation to the Four Purusharthas**

On Dharma:

- Dharma-sastra by Manu
- Dharma-sastra by Gautama.
- Yoga-sutra by Patanjali

On Kama:

- Kama-sutra by Vatsyanana
- Ananga-Ranga by Kalyana Malla

On Artha:

- Artha-sastra by Kautilya
- Niti-sara by Kamandaka

On Moksha:

- The Vedas
- The Upanishads

☞ Manishika

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