

Article

Decoding the elements of human rights from the verses of Ancient Vedic literature and *Dharmaśāstras*

Citation: Lastname, Firstname, Firstname Lastname, and Firstname Lastname. 2021. Title. *Literature 1*: Firstpage–Lastpage.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/xxxxx>

Academic Editor: Firstname Lastname

Received: date

Accepted: date

Published: date

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Abstract: This manuscript aims to provide a nuanced study of the idea of rights and duties prevalent in ancient Vedic society through Vedic literature and *Dharmaśāstras*. This manuscript delves into the exegesis of the Védas and *Dharmaśāstras* to accomplish this. The archaic Vedic literature and *Dharmaśāstra* texts are the origin and backbone of Sanskrit literature. They have a plethora of ideas that, if accepted, could be quite useful for the protection of any person's human rights. In the Védas and *Dharmaśāstras*, rights and duties complement each other, and rights are integrated with duties. According to these texts, rights and duties are correlated and the relationship between rights and duties leads to the core concept of *dharma* (constitutional laws). *Dharma* is a systematic Sanskrit concept that includes traditions, obligations, morals, laws, order, and justice. It was a unique concept of *dharma* that kept checks and balances on sovereign officials and prevented them from becoming autocratic and anarchist. It also provided the common man with a protective shield against the dictatorship of sovereign officials. Ordinary citizens had more privileges and fewer responsibilities relative to the state's highest officials. The greater the authority, the less his privileges were, and the more extensive his responsibilities became. This research is an exegetical analysis of ancient Indian Vedic and later Vedic literature and is primarily aimed at deciphering some of the essential ideas about rights found in these texts, which are akin to contemporary human rights. It endeavours to discern and explain the tenets of human rights obnubilated in the pristine mantras of the ancient Vedic and Smṛti texts of India. The essay further attempts to add a much-needed non-western perspective to the historiography of human rights.

Keywords: Dharma; Duties; Hinduism; Human Rights; India; *Dharmaśāstras*; Vedic literature.

Sanatana Dharma or modern *Hindu* philosophy, does not apply to any single faith, but instead to the spectrum of various faiths, including Vaishnavism, which considers Vishnu to be the supreme deity, Shaivism, which considers Shiva to be the supreme deity, and Shaktism, which considers Shakti to be the supreme deity. According to Charles Eliot, *Sanatana Dharma* or modern *Hinduism* has not been formed, but it has evolved. It's a forest, not a building (Eliot-2004). Likewise, K. M. Sen points out, "*Hinduism* is much like a tree that has slowly evolved than a structure that has been built by a great architect at a certain point of time. It incorporates within itself the roots of other civilizations, and the body of Hindu philosophy, therefore, provides as much diversity as the Indian nation itself "(Sen-2005). However, the terms 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism' are not indigenous to India and have peregrine inchoation (Rosen-2006). Hinduism is more homogeneous as a mode of life or a code of conduct, which regulates a man's work and activities as a member of society and as an individual. There are numerous manuscripts and historical literature associated with Hinduism's various traditions, the most prominent of which are the Vedic Literature and Smṛti texts. Quite often, human rights activists consider faith as a threat rather than an ally. While faith poses significant challenges, it also gives the human rights movement hope for change, together with enhanced influence. As Larry Cox indites, it is unfortunate to believe that human rights and religion are always at odds, particularly because universal standards of morality and dignity are the cornerstone of many religious traditions (Cox-2014). Similarly, in the case of human rights and Hinduism, it is often maintained, that it is derisive to human and civil rights, that if the only possible connection among them is one of equipollently extreme dissent, that the structure of the caste system on which Hinduism is predicated leaves little room for equality on which human rights are predicated. However, such a view appears to be so skewed that it is erroneous. This could involve some validity in particular situations, but it does not overshadow the broader fact that *Sanatana Dharma* is thoroughly welcoming to human rights. According to the Advaita Vedānta theory, the bond of universal brotherhood between all human beings is profoundly engendered, and no laws are necessary for it (Bokil, 2001: 31). Even though no single religion could be declared as the source of human rights, the human liberation movements are mostly religiously inspired (Patel-2005). This manuscript integrates a much-needed non-western perspective into the historiography of human rights. This study is an exegetical work of the Indian Vedic literature and the Smṛti texts and mainly aims to decipher some of the significant ideas of rights innate in these texts that are close

to contemporary modern rights. This manuscript adds to the 79
historiography of human rights a much-needed non-western 80
perspective. This research is an exegesis of Indian Vedic and 81
Dharmaśāstra literature, with the primary goal of deciphering some of 82
the key principles of rights implicit in these books that are akin to 83
present modern rights. Due to practical limits, this study is limited to 84
examining the tenets of rights found in Vedic and Dharmaśāstra 85
literature and excludes the texts' critical parts. The first section of the 86
manuscript focuses on the history of Vedic literature and Dharmaśāstra, 87
as well as a literature review; the second section focuses on the 88
interpretation of various rights-related exegesis of the selected texts; and 89
the third and final section focuses on the conclusion. 90

91

Heritage of Vedic Literature

92

Historians have verbally expressed that Indian literature 93
influenced the history of world literature as it spread to far East Asia, 94
Central Asia, Greece, and Europe (Winternitz-1975). In this aspect, 95
Vedic literature deserves an outstanding place in the history of world 96
literature. According to Max Muller, "In the history of the world, the 97
Véda fills a gap which no literary work in any other language could fill. 98
It carries us back to times in which we have no records anywhere and 99
gives us the very words of a generation of men of whom otherwise we 100
could only get the vaguest estimate by means of conjecture and 101
inferences. As long as man perpetuates his interest in the history of his 102
race, and as long as we accumulate in the libraries and museums the 103
relics of former ages, the first place in that long row of books which 104
contains the records of the Aryan branch of mankind, will belong 105
sempiternally to the Rig Véda." (Muller-1968; p-63). Thus, it is 106
conspicuous that Vedic literature plays a consequential role in Indian 107
history. 108

According to Clayton, the denomination '*Véda*' derives from the 109
Sanskrit word 'Vid', meaning '*to know*', an inchoation that can withal be 110
found in the Latin word '*Videre*' meaning '*to see*' (Clayton-1980:25). 111
Hence, the term *Véda* means erudition (knowledge). Vedic Literature is 112
the oldest documentation engendered by mankind and is the root of the 113
early history of the Indo-Aryan race. One of the significant features of 114
the Védas is the claim of '*apauruṣeyatva*'¹ which implies that '*no human* 115
being' has been responsible for its existence. In other words, the Védas 116
were revealed to the Antediluvian Sages by God himself, and these 117
sagacious men deliberately composed the Védas so that this cognizance 118
could be transmitted from generation to generation. The seers to whom 119

the Vedic hymns were revealed by God were called *Mantradrashitas*². 120
 Nevertheless, the references to the *apauruṣeyatva* of Védas in themselves 121
 are minimal, and not especially clear or convincing. It is mostly in later 122
 ancillary literature that the *apauruṣeyatva* becomes the commencement 123
 point of the Vedic exegesis (Dandekar-2000). It is claimed that the Védas 124
 was not written down and read, but rather recited and perceived 125
 aurally. It was indubitably this that sanctioned the Vedic texts to be 126
 maintained in perfect condition. According to Winternitz, the history of 127
 Indian literature is nothing but one great chapter, one of the most 128
 brilliant and most important chapters in the history of human minds... 129
 and the Védas stands at the head of Indian Literature not only because 130
 of its age, but because only one who has gained an insight into Vedic 131
 literature, could ever understand the intellectual and spiritual life and 132
 culture of India (Winternitz-1977). The stratum of Vedic literature 133
 includes Śruti (texts which have been auricularly discerned and are 134
 aeonian and indisputable) and Smṛti (texts which are supplementary to 135
 Śruti texts and are recollected and have visually perceived many 136
 transmutations over time). The Śruti literature comprises the Védas, 137
 Brahmanas(*the prose texts to explicate the hymns of Védas*), 138
 Aranyakas(constitute the theory underlying the religious sacrifice in the 139
 Védas) and Upanishads (the philosophical texts which are also 140
 called *Vedānta*). The Smṛti literature comprises *Vedāṅgas*(*six secondary* 141
disciplines linked to Vedas such as Shiksha i.e. Phonetics; Kalpa i.e. Rituals; 142
 Jyotish i.e. Astrology; Nirukta i.e. Etymology; Vyakarana i.e. Grammar; 143
 and Chhanda i.e. Vedic Meter), *Epic* (*two great poems such as* Ramayana 144
 and Mahabhārata), Upavédas(applied knowledge such as Ayurvédas 145
 i.e. study of medicine; Dhanurvédas i.e. study of archery and warfare 146
 techniques; Gandharvavédas i.e. study of music and dance; and 147
 Sthapatyavédas i.e. study of architecture), Purāṇas(contain stories about 148
 the creation of the world, from conception to death, as well as 149
 genealogies of kings, warriors, sages, and gods) and Shatdarshan 150
 or Upāṅga(constitute six(6) Schools of Vedic Philosophy 151
 namely Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya Sūtra, Vaiśeṣika, Purva Mīmāṃsā, and 152
 Uttar Mīmāṃsā) (Coward, 2016). 153

Dharmaśāstras or Righteous Science, are the collections of rules of 154
 life. They are ancient Hindu jurisprudence texts that have had a very 155
 significant impact on Indian culture. There are many Dharmashastras, 156
 ranging in number from 18 to around 100, each with different and often 157
 contradictory viewpoints. Each of these texts has multiple versions and 158
 is based on Dharmasūtra texts from the first millennium BC that 159
 emerged from Vedic era Kalpa (Vedāṅga) studies. These texts, written 160
 after the Dharmasutras, use metered verse and are much more elaborate 161

- in nature than the Dharmasūtras. The following are the texts that have survived from the Dharmaśāstras:
- *Manu Smṛti* is the most well-known and earliest metrical work in Hinduism's Dharmaśāstra textual tradition. It was composed by Manu around the 2nd–3rd century AD.
 - *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* was composed around the 4th-5th century AD. Due to its superior vocabulary and degree of complexity, the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* (fourth to fifth centuries CE) has been dubbed the "best written" and "most cohesive" text in the Dharmaśāstra tradition. As a legal theory book, it has been as popular as *Manu Smṛti*.
 - *Nārada Smṛti* was written around the 5th to 6th century A.D. and has been dubbed as the "juridical text par excellence" because it is the only Dharmaśāstra text that focuses exclusively on legal issues, ignoring righteous behaviour and penance.
 - The *Viṣṇu Smṛti* was composed much later around the 7th century AD and does not explicitly address the means of understanding dharma, instead it concentrates on the bhakti tradition.

Rights mentioned in Vedic Literature

Religion has always played a crucial role in the advancement of human rights, particularly in the advancement of human dignity (Harees-2012). This notion is particularly reflected when one seeks to explore the inherent values laid down in the Vedic texts. Human rights defined in Vedic literature tend to be fundamental, unchangeable, and place a greater emphasis on human obligations than on human rights. Some philosophers argue that, like Judaism, Hinduism has no word for "rights" (Pandeya-1986), but there is a Sanskrit word for "fair claims" called "adhikara". The term "adhikara" is similar to the English term 'rights.' However, in Vedic texts, the concept of adhikara is primarily used in conjunction with the term 'duty.' This understanding is based on the fact that rights and duties are correlative, and rights come with duties. We optically discern, ergo, that western human rights are primarily about rights, not obligations. In the case of most religions, the antithesis is true. Furthermore, in Hinduism, obligations come first, not rights (Carman-1988). Obligations are primary, and rights can be derived from them. The central concept of dharma is derived from the relationship between rights and responsibilities. Dharma is a Sanskrit term that refers to rituals, responsibilities, morality, law, order, and equity. The religious and moral duties known as dharma were supposed to guide everyone in the culture, including the kings. As a result, 'Dharma' was the king of kings. It was akin to a code of conduct that governed everyone's behaviour in society, including the King's.

Professor Kane defined dharma as "a term that encompasses man's 204
entire life" (Nanda-1997. p29). 205

According to Justice M Rama Jois, since *dharma* regulated the 206
mutual obligations of individuals and societies, it was expected to be 207
safeguarded in the interests of both (Nanda-1997 p31). Based on a 208
preliminary review of Vedic literature, it appears that the idea of human 209
rights was not well-known in ancient India. However, an in-depth 210
examination reveals that some aspects of human rights are rooted and 211
intrinsic in Vedic hymns. The Vedic king ruled as a sovereign, but not 212
as an autocrat. The Council of Ministers' counsel, old customs, popular 213
opinion, and, most importantly, the dharma influenced it. In 214
comparison to the state's highest ascending bodies, ordinary citizens 215
had more rights and fewer responsibilities. To put it another way, the 216
higher one's heritage, the lower their rights and the greater their 217
responsibilities. The word raj-dharma (king's duties or civil law) ensures 218
that the King can safeguard everyone. Similarly, āpad-dharma' applies 219
to responsibilities that must be met during a crisis. During a crisis that 220
embodied the king's āpad-dharma, the king was forced to perform 221
certain duties. The subjects' privileges were derived from the kings' 222
responsibilities. Nonetheless, no separate set of distinct and enforceable 223
rights for subjects to be governed fairly or reasonably by the King is 224
discussed (Sharma-2004). Other types of Dharma include collective acts 225
(sadharana-dharma), family dharma (kula-dharma), conduct based on 226
the performance of duties appropriate to one's class, gender, and stage 227
of life (varnashrama-dharma), and an individual's specific dharma 228
based on the previous three (sva-dharma) (Sherma-2008). According to 229
Srimad Bhagvat Gita, a person should never consider himself to be the 230
cause of the results of his activities, and never be annexed to not doing 231
his duties³ (Srimad *Bhagvat Gita*, Chapter II, Verse 47). 232

Consequently, it can be inferred that though ancient Indian society 233
was more of a duty predicated and not a right predicated society, the 234
rights conferred upon an individual were the rights to perform his 235
duties (Kumar-2020). Sāntiparvan of the epic Mahabhārata mainly deals 236
with the topic of Raj Dharma, or the constitutional obligations of the 237
king and regime. The paramountcy affixed to the obligation is withal 238
conspicuous from the shloka indited in Mahabhārata's Adi Parva, 239
which verbalizes that being born as a human, every person owes four 240
debts: *Pitra-Rin* (Debt towards parents), *Dev-Rin* (Debt towards the 241
Deities), *Rishi-Rin* (Obligations towards teachers/sages), and *Maanav-* 242
Rin (Debt towards humanity).⁴ A man may repay his parents by 243
preserving the family's continuity, God by worshipping the Supreme, 244
teacher by gaining and disseminating wisdom, and humanity by 245

performing social services⁵ (Mahabhārata's Adi Parva Adhyaya 120.17- 246
20). 247

The Mahabhārata encourages the subjects to rebel against an 248
adharmic king (a king who does not obey the dharma) who is tyrannical, 249
extortive, and sinful, and who fails to fulfill his righteous duty to his 250
subjects (Mahabhārata -Anusasana Parva 61.32-33). The fear of anarchy 251
was a powerful motivator for even a weak and oppressive king to stay 252
on the throne (1959, Basham). According to the Mahabharata, a man 253
should first choose his king, then his wife, and only then amass wealth, 254
because where would wife and property be without a king in the world? 255
(Mahabhārata- Poona edition xii 57, 41). 256

Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 257
which states that the corollary of rights is duties, reflects the idea of 258
rights arising from duties as enshrined in ancient Vedic texts.⁶ Even 259
M.K. Gandhi believed that all rights deserved and protected came from 260
doing one's duty well. As a result, we only have the freedom to live if 261
we fulfill our responsibilities as world citizens. Thus, the very right to 262
live accrues to us only when we do the duty of citizenship of the world 263
(Moyn-2016). 264

-Secular Ideals of the State and Rule of Law 265

Secularism, according to Holyoake, is not an argument against 266
any religion, but rather a social order that is independent of religion. 267
The Holyoake principle of secularism is close to the ancient Vedic 268
literature's principles of government. The word secularism does not 269
apply to atheism in Vedic texts. According to Vedic texts, secularism is 270
more about conducting state affairs in an unbiased manner while 271
considering the welfare of the subjects without discrimination. 272
Following the establishment of a state, the King was given the power to 273
protect the rights of the subjects, which became part of the 'raj-dharma,' 274
or constitutional law. According to Vedic literature, the state's first duty 275
is to protect the rights of its citizens and to treat them all equally, just as 276
a mother does with her children. It was predicted that, just as Mother 277
Earth offers equal support to all living beings, a king would do the same, 278
without bias or discrimination. The notion of the right to equality and 279
the values of a secular state stem from the King's duty to treat all of his 280
subjects equally and without prejudice. The king was supreme and had 281
the power to enact legislation, but this power was limited to regulatory 282
legislation rather than substantive or constitutional legislation 283
(dharma). According to the *Brihadaranyak Upaniṣad*, Dharma was the 284
king of kings, and *Dharma*, fortified by the mighty king's power, allowed 285

the weak to triumph over the powerful. ⁷ It asserts that the law (dharma) 286
is supreme, and that the law (dharma) combined with the king's mighty 287
strength enables the poor to prevail over the strong (Brihadaranyak 288
Upaniṣad 1.4.14). Dharma practice did not imply enforcing Vedic 289
religion and theology, as non-believers in Vedic philosophy and religion 290
had the right to be protected and to practise their faith freely. The king's 291
right to rule was contingent on him fulfilling his duties, failing which 292
his kingship could be revoked. According to *Mahabhārata*, if a cruel and 293
unjust king fails to defend his subjects and purloins them in the name 294
of levying taxes, he should be executed as a mad canine (Huchhanava- 295
2019). 296

The legislators of the post-Vedic period drew on Vedic literature 297
while drafting laws to reflect the state's secular ideals, as shown by the 298
texts of *Manu Smṛti* and *Nārada Smṛti*. According to *Manu Smṛti*, just 299
as mother earth supports all living beings equally, a king should do the 300
same without any discrimination. ⁸ The King was not allowed to break 301
his responsibilities (raj-dharma), so if the dharma was broken, the King 302
would be destroyed. *Nārada Smṛti*, on the other hand, demands that the 303
King protect Vedic believers, as well as Vedic disbelievers and others. 304
Nārada Smṛti holds that the king (State) should not discriminate in 305
accordance with protection to believers in *Vēda (Naigamas)*, as well as those 306
who do not believe in *Vēda (Pashandis)* and of others. The protection 307
should be done in the same manner in which he (King) is under an 308
obligation to protect his fort and territory⁹(*Nārada Smṛti vide* 309
Dharmakosha, P-870). 310

The rules laid down by the lawmakers of the post-Vedic period 311
were not rigid, as the *Dharmaśāstras* often reiterates that the rules may 312
be transmuted or updated for the welfare and aegis of subjects, given 313
the fact that a code that sustains society at one age may choke society at 314
another age. 315

-Liberty, Equality and Fraternity 316

The world came up with the high ideals of liberty, freedom, and 317
fraternity, during the French revolution (Setzer-2013). These three 318
principles are enshrined in almost every democratic constitution in the 319
world. On December 10, 1948, the United Nations adopted the 320
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that all human 321
beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. It goes on to say 322
that humans are endowed with reason and conscience, and that they 323
should behave in a brotherly manner towards one another. The concept 324
of personal liberty and the right to life is one of the oldest known 325

concepts to human beings. This is an inherent right that nature has conferred on humans. Man's Natural Liberty is to be free of any superior authority on Earth, and to be ruled solely by the laws of nature, rather than by man's will or legislative ascendancy (Jones-1975). The word liberty has both positive and negative connotations. Liberty implies the lack of restraints in a negative sense. In his Essay on Liberty (as quoted in Johari-1989), John Stuart Mill defends negative liberty by stating that "leaving people to themselves is often better than restricting them," and that "all restraints quo restraints are evil" (Johari -1989). T.H. Green is credited with coining the term "liberty" in a positive way. He describes liberty as the ability to do or enjoy something worth doing or enjoying in the presence of others. In his words, "Will ! not force is the basis of the state" (Tyler- 1997; 2019). The most important human right is the right to liberty. "Where liberty dwells, there is my country," wrote a famous English poet (Mencken-1942).Rig Véda echoes the ideals of liberty, by calling for the liberty of Tan (body), Skridhi (dwelling place), and Jibhasi (life). These liberties may be compared to contemporary rights such as the right to physical liberty, food, and life (Yasin & Upadhyay, 2004). The ancient Vedic society highly valued the diversity of thoughts, which is evident from the 112th hymn from the 9th book of the RigVéda which states "*diverse are the thoughts and actions of the people*"¹⁰ (RigVéda 9.112.01).

Similarly, another hymn of RigVéda reads, "May noble thoughts come to us from every quarter, unchanged, unhindered, undefeated in every way; May the deities never digress from us; May our protectors care for us, ceaseless, every day"¹¹ (RigVéda 1.89.1). Thus, it is evident that ancient Vedic society was very welcoming to novel ideas and thoughts, and it was the paramount duty of the state to protect the liberty of its people and enable them to live life with dignity and happiness. The epic tale *Mahabhārata* also advocates the civil liberties of individuals in the political state. However, the right to liberty was not paramount and came with certain riders. This is quite conspicuous from the post-Vedic literature called Bharat Nāṭyaśāstra which is the oldest surviving book on performing arts. In the final chapter of the Nāṭyaśāstra (36.33-35), there is an episode wherein Bharata's sons get arrogant with their knowledge of drama and engender a frugal play that ridicules and caricatures prominent seers and saints. Upset by this, the sages cursed the sons of Bharata, but later they concurred to mitigate the effect of their imprecation when deities intervened on behalf of Bharata's son. This instructive episode suggests that there is an inhibition to the liberation of expression and that liberation should not be misused in the designation of artistic liberation and liberty.

According to Ronald Dworkin's theory of equality, the philosophy of equality has its origins in religious heritage. The analysis of the Vedic texts gives credibility to Dworkin's claim. Ṛig Vēda advocates that all humans are equal and no one is born either superior or inferior. Everyone should strive to progress and apportion the means of happiness collectively¹²(Ṛig Vēda, Mandala-5, Sukta-60, Mantra-5). The Upaniṣads expanded on the ṚigVēda's equality concept by declaring that all humans are not only identically tantamount but also distinct.

Thus, Vedic literature emphasises the dignity and unity of all human beings without prejudice, as well as the need for humans to work together to advance and distribute the means of happiness collectively. The Vedic seers regarded the whole universe as a single body, believing that any flaw in one organ would have an effect on the health and safety of the entire human body. All humans were considered to be God's children, and so all were treated equally. In another shloka, Ṛig Vēda emphasizes unity even more, calling for oneness in the intent, emotions, and celebrations of all human beings so that they may live in bliss together.¹³

The philosophy of egalitarianism or equalitarianism is also obvious in the Samjnana Sukta of *Atharva Vēda*, which says, "Everybody has equal rights to articles of food and water. The chariot of life's yoke is balanced on everyone's shoulders. All should live in harmony, fortifying one another like the spokes that connect the rim and hub of a chariot wheel".¹⁴ (Atharvavēda-Samjnana Sukta. Courts of India, p-24).

Another cherished principle of the French Revolution is fraternity, or brotherhood. However, the fraternity's definition and description have always been contentious. The theory of fraternity is the least discussed and has the least licit consequentiality of the three ideals of the French Revolution. However, philomaths such as Bhim Rao Ambedkar and Canadian judge Charles Gonthier have argued for the fraternity's supremacy. "Without solidarity, liberation, and liberty will be no deeper than coats of paint," Bhim Rao Ambedkar (as quoted in the PUCL-K report-September, 2012) said in his closing dialogue in the Constituent Assembly Debates of India (September 2012 PUCL-K report). Similarly, as Canadian judge Charles Gonthier put it when explaining the importance of fraternity, "liberty and equality depend on fraternity to flourish" (Gonthier, et al., 2000). Gonthier goes on to say that, in terms of social justice, it is not enough to protect people's right to liberty and self-determination; it is also necessary to protect their ability to flourish by assisting those who need assistance. Liberty and equality, according to M. Rama Jois, are ideals that can be achieved by

constitutional betokens, but fraternities deserve more than 409
constitutional betokens (Rama-2017). For humans to live a joyful and 410
contented life, unity in resolution, spirit, and mind is essential. These 411
lofty ideals of fraternity additionally resonate in the shloka of Ṛig Vēda 412
that says, "Move together, talk together, let your minds understand 413
alike. Common be your prayer, common be the acquirement, common 414
be your purpose, associated be the desire. Common be your purpose, 415
common be your heart (feelings) and common be your mind (thoughts). 416
Let the strength of mutual cooperation be firm among you all. " 15 417
(RigVēda, Mandala-10, Sukta-191, Mantra-4). *Maha Upaniṣad*, another 418
paramount Vedic text, utilizes the term '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*' 419
meaning 'entire world is one family and only diminutive and narrow- 420
minded people adopt two divergent perspectives towards mundane 421
matters.' The shloka of *Maha Upaniṣad* reads as follows, "only 422
diminutive and narrow-minded people adopt two divergent 423
perspectives towards mundane matters and do 'mine and dine'; but for 424
those who are broad-minded and have higher consciousness, the whole 425
world is one's own family"¹⁶ (*Maha Upaniṣad*, Chapter 6, Verse 72). 426

-Justice

According to Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human 428
Rights, "everyone has the right, in absolute equality, to a fair and public 429
hearing before an independent and impartial tribunal in the 430
determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge 431
against him." One can sense this sentiment of UDHR resonating in Vedic 432
literature to some extent. The study of Vedic literature reveals that India 433
had some kind of legal structure in place even during the Vedic period. 434
Law as a matter of divine prescriptions and philosophic debate has an 435
impressive history in India. During the Vedic period, *dharma* was 436
considered to be a special attribute of man, and a man bereft of *dharma* 437
was considered identically tantamount to an animal. The Vēdas are 438
considered as the 'first source of dharma' (Rama-2004). The Vedic Ruler, 439
as head of the Judiciary, was the guardian and protector of Dharma and 440
the duty of dispensing justice was *raj-dharma*. The King was the holder 441
of the law, but not the source of law, and in this process, he was guided 442
by dharma. The King's autonomy was limited by tribal councils known 443
as Sabha and Samiti. The two organisations. The two bodies aided the 444
king in governance and justice administration. The Vedic king 445
represented Lord Yama while performing justice. Yama was the deity 446
of justice, dharma, death, and the south direction. According to the 447
Vēdas, Yama was the first mortal to die, and through implicative 448
insinuation, he became the king of the deceased. There were three 449
sources of Dharma law which availed the king while performing equity. 450

The first source was Védas. The second source was Dharmashastra texts, 451
of which the consequential ones were the Dharma Sūtra of Gautama and 452
Baudhyana, Sūtras of Apastamba, Harita, Vashista, and Visnu. The 453
Dharmastras primarily dealt with civil and criminal law rules. The third 454
source of dharma was called the 'âchâra', which betokens customary 455
law. Âchârs were the norms of a particular community or group. Just 456
like the Smṛti texts, âchâra finds its ascendancy through its connection 457
with the Védas. Where both the Védas and the Dharmasāstra were silent 458
on any issue, a learned person who was well versed in Védas could 459
consider the norms of the community as dharma and perform them. 460
Thus, it is conspicuous that during the Vedic period, the dispensation of 461
justice was one of the most consequential works of the king. According 462
to K.M. Panikkar, the king's coronation ceremony was a Diksha 463
devoting his life to the cause (accommodation of the people) (Panikkar- 464
1963). There is an episode of King Mahendra in Vedic texts wherein the 465
king is visually perceived recollecting the knowledge imparted by his 466
father as a guide to dispensing equity in a cow larceny case. Mahendra's 467
father taught him to be impartial when resolving a dispute and to 468
prioritize the pieces of evidence available over anything else. 469

The foundation of justice established in the Vedic texts was 470
expanded upon in post-Vedic texts such as *Nārada Smṛti*, *Manu Smṛti*, 471
and *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*. *Nārada Smṛti* advises the king to appoint only 472
suitable people as judges who are well versed in the law and who are 473
noble and impartial. *Nārada Smṛti* says, "Let the king designate as members 474
of the Court of Justice honourable men of tried honesty (*sabhyas*) who can 475
shoulder the burden of justice administration and who are well versed in sacred 476
laws, rules of prudence, who are virtuous and unbiased towards friends and 477
foes"¹⁷ (*Nārada Smṛti* p. 36-4-5). *Nārada Smṛti* further advises the king to 478
dispense justice by taking decisions unanimously in consultation with 479
all the judges as this would leave no doubt in the minds of litigants. 480
According to *Nārada Smṛti*, a unanimous decision by the judges leaves 481
no room for doubt, while a majority decision leaves plaintiff with 482
doubts¹⁸ (*Nārada Smṛti*, Dharmakosha, p. 48.). The Vedic texts advise 483
the king to refrain from greed and anger and scrupulously follow 484
Dharma (constitutional law) when dispensing justice. The king and 485
judges were also warned not to hear cases solely, nor should they 486
conduct any private hearings. The judgment should be free from all 487
types of biases. 488

-Humane Treatment 489

Article 23 (3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 490
verbally expresses, "all who work has the right to just and auspicious 491

remuneration sufficient to ensure the survival of respectable human 492
dignity for himself and his family, which must be balanced by other 493
forms of social protection." (UDHR-1948). The concept of just and 494
humane treatment gets resonance in the hymns of Atharva Véda, where 495
the master is directed to take care of the welfare and magnification of 496
those working under him. The hymn verbally expresses; "*Take care of the 497
welfare and magnification of all your people. Then you will grow as the sun 498
grows and shines at dawn and after its rise,*" (Sharma-2004). The Vedic 499
literature authoritatively commands a person not to be indifferent to his 500
wife, auxiliaries, diseases, domestic animals, wealth, erudition, studies, 501
or giving accommodation to a gentleman for even a single moment. 502
These things should always be taken care of. A Noble person is the one 503
who considers the interests of others to be his own and accomplishes 504
them even at the cost of his own loss. (Dwivedi-2009). According to 505
Vedic texts, everyone in the world deserves to be ecstatic and free, and 506
consequently, the king should rule the earth along the right path. The 507
Garuda Purāṇa exhorts the king to not be exasperated with his 508
auxiliaries without ample cause. There are two significant hymns in 509
Garuda Purāṇa which advocate just and humane treatment of 510
employees. They read as follows: 511

*"The king who becomes irate with his employees without ample cause genuinely 512
takes in the poison regurgitated by an ebony serpent"* (Garuda Purāṇa- 513
1.111.27). 514

*"It is despicable for his components to fret and fume without faults in others. 515
He who penalizes his employees unjustifiably becomes a victim of the enemies' 516
attack."* (Garuda Purāṇa-1.111.30). 517

The Mahabhārata gives us a fascinating look at the different types of 518
combat that are acceptable and unsuitable. It even calls for the humane 519
treatment of prisoners of war. Innocents, old people, children, and 520
women who are differently abled should not be harmed by the king. 521
Warriors should not attack unarmed warriors, and war should take 522
place only between equals. Gardens, temples, and other public places of 523
worship should remain unaffected (Subedi-2003). Besides the above, 524
there are several other hymns in Vedic literature wherein the seers are 525
visually perceived praying for the dignity and self-reverence of 526
individuals. 527

-Happiness 528

Every human being wants to be happy, and all consciously or 529
unconsciously endeavor to achieve it. It is the rudimentary desire of all 530

human beings, and many constitutions in the world verbalize the right to happiness. The US Constitution guarantees the right to the pursuit of happiness, not happiness itself, as it is surmised that no one can promise, bestow, or provide happiness when no one has any authority over it. The Vedic texts are full of prayers in which the seers are optically discerned asking for happiness, peace, and prosperity for all. There is a prayer in Sanskrit wherein the seers give a call for "*Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu*"¹⁹ meaning "Let all the people in the world be happy. Let all the world be happy". There is another popular prayer in Vedic literature that prays for the ecstasy and salubrity of the whole world. This prayer is mentioned in *Garuḍa Purāṇa* (35.51). *Aśīrvacanam* (2) of *itihāsa samuccaya*, and *Mantrabhāṣya (Vājasneya Samhitā)* of *Uvaṭa*. The prayer reads, "May all be happy; may all be liberated from infirmities/disease; may all experience good; may no one be suppressed/inundated by grief and suffering," the prayer says. *Om peace, peace, peace*".²⁰ This is one of the most beautiful verses that illustrates the concept of universal salubrity. This verse is often quoted in the context of ecstasy, spirituality, universality, and salubrity. It is like a tranquility benediction for the macrocosmic welfare. It desires the welfare of all humans, irrespective of caste, creed, sex, etc. Similarly, the Brihadaranyak Upanisashad says, "Guide me from falsehood to truth; guide me from darkness to light; guide me from death to immortality."²¹(Brihadaranyak Upaniṣad (1.3.28). Another text, named *Taittiriya Upaniṣad*, identifies the highest Reality (God) with Happiness (*Ananda*), Bliss (*Parama- Ananda*) and queries (*Jigyasa*).

-Gender Rights

Studying the history of the role and status of women within a community is one of the best ways to understand its essence, venerate its value, and acknowledge its limits (Choudhury-2013). During the Vedic period, women relished all privileges equal to men, and both men and women relished fair status in society. According to Ṛig Vēda, "The entire macrocosm of noble people bows to the majestic woman's glory in order for her to enlighten us with sagacity and foresight. She is a pillar of society who imparts wisdom to all. She is a symbol of wealth and a famous sibling. May we value her in order for her to eradicate evil and hate from society"²²(Ṛig Vēda, 1.48.8).

Women's right to participate in war, gymnastics, archery, horse riding, recreational activities, inculcation, decision-making, and the option of choosing male spouses reflected the core of the role of women in the social context of the Ṛig Vedic era (Altekar-1938). Women's freedom to participate in war, gymnastics, archery, horse riding,

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social context of the Ṛig Vedic era (Altekar-1938). 574

Vedic women were entitled to *Upanayana samskara*, which allowed 575
them to wear the sacred thread and be educated by the Vedic mantras. 576
Some of them were *brahmavadinis*, women who dedicated their lives to 577
the study of the Scriptures, expounded the Védas and indited some of 578
the Vedic hymns. Women of the governing and warrior classes also 579
received martial arts coaching and arms training and weapons skills. It 580
was not uncommon for wives to fight alongside their husbands against 581
their rivals. The Asvins (deities who were twin brothers and who 582
introduced medicine to humans) implanted an iron (ayasi) leg in the 583
warrior queen Vispala, the wife of the monarch Khela. Afterward, she 584
continued to fight on.²³ Examples of female philosophers, rulers, 585
teachers, administrators, and saints can be found in the Védas, 586
Upaniṣads, and other scriptures. *Yajur Véda* tells us, "With her intellect, 587
the learned woman purifies our lives. Through her actions, she purifies 588
our conduct. Through her awareness and action, she inspires morality 589
and effective societal management". (*Yajur Véda* 20.84). The Vedic 590
woman was sanctioned to pursue higher education, and the 591
marriageable age was decided only after she had reached puberty. 592
Famous female seers and philosophers included Apala, Ghosa, 593
Lopamudra, Maitreyi, and Indrani, who edited the hymns of Védas. 594
Lopamudra, Agastya Muni's wife, is credited with composing two 595
hymns of Ṛig Véda. In the Vedic era, it was compulsory to be with a wife 596
to perform any Vedic rituals and a man without a wife was considered 597
incomplete as only a wife could consummate him in his journey through 598
life, procuring the four aspects of life, *Dharma (obligation)*, *Artha* 599
(*possession*), *Kama (love and desires)* and, conclusively, *Moksha* 600
(*emancipation*) (Borah-2018). The wife (*patni*) was referred to as *ardhangini* 601
(*better half*), *sahadharmini (equal partner)*, and *dharmapatni (licit wife)* (Pal- 602
2019). Ṛig Véda makes no distinction between male or female and 603
declares the wife and husband to be equal halves of one material, equal 604
in every way, and that both should participate equally in both religious 605
and secular duties. The *Upaniṣads* have pellucidly stated that the 606
individual souls are neither male nor female (Laungani-2015). Similarly, 607
Atharva Véda states that when a woman marries, she is expected to rule 608
the family as a queen, along with her husband (Atharva Véda 14.1.43- 609
44). The husband and wife union was not confined to one life only, but 610
extended to seven lives and beyond. The institution of marriage in Vedic 611
society has been elaborately laid down in Vedic texts. Sage Svetketu is 612
credited with introducing the virtuous practice of fidelity to Hindu 613
marriage. According to Mahabhārata -Adi Parva-122, King Pandu lost 614

his procreative power due to a deer's curse. He tries to convince his wife, 615
Kunti, to raise a progeny from someone else. The story reads, Pandu 616
says to Kunti, "Now I'm going to tell you about the ancient practices 617
developed by the great Rishis, who were experts in every area of 618
morality. In the past, women were not limited to their homes and relied 619
on husbands and other relatives. They used to go around openly, 620
enjoying themselves as they wished. They didn't have to be obedient to 621
their spouses, and then it wasn't considered a sin. This practice is 622
followed even today by birds and beasts, and rivalry is rarely found 623
among them. This was the tradition of antiquity sanctioned by the great 624
Rishis, and the present practice has come into existence recently. There 625
was a great Rishi called Uddalaka, and his son Shvetaketu was also a 626
great ascetic. The present virtuoso tradition of fidelity between husband 627
and wife was founded by Shvetaketu out of rage. One day, he saw his 628
mother being held by hand by another brahmin and carried away, 629
saying, "Let's go." This brought great rage to Shvetaketu. Uddalaka tried 630
to convince his son to claim that nothing was incorrect, as this is the 631
tradition allowed by antiquity, and women are free to do what they 632
want. Shvetaketu disagreed and established the rule of total and 633
exclusive faithfulness between the husband and wife. Women 634
transgressing the boundaries of marriage and men breaching a woman 635
who follows the vow of virginity would be sinful to the point of 636
bhrunahatya (caused by abortion) "(Mahabhārata Adi Parva Adhyaya- 637
122. Courts of India). 638

During the Vedic age, unmarried women also had the *right to* 639
property. A married woman could inherit her father's property only if 640
she had no brothers. The women were also allowed to re-marry. 641
Therefore, it is conspicuous that the position of women during the Ṛig 642
Vedic period was very vigorous and they relished many privileges and 643
freedoms. The Ṛg-Vedā-Saṃhitā mentions the names of several 644
consequential female deities, including Aditi, the goddess of liberation 645
"(trans. Müller 1869, p. 243); Sārasvatī, the "best woman, the best of the 646
rivers, the best of the goddesses "(trans. Griffith 1896, Hymn XLI); 647
Sāvitṛī, the mother of the Védas, and associated with the popular 648
Gāyatrī mantra²⁴ (ṚigVéda 3.62.10); Usha, the goddess of the dawn; 649
Rathri, the goddess of the night; Prithvi, the mother earth; and Vak, the 650
goddess of verbalization. These female deities were worshipped with 651
consummate dedication. However, during the later Vedic and post- 652
Vedic periods, the status of a woman deteriorated and many of her 653
privileges, such as the right to land, Upanayana Samskara, etc., were 654
confiscated. Despite the fact that Manu Smṛti denies women economic 655
benefits, in one of its hymns, the same scripture praises women, stating: 656
"*Wherever women are adored, the gods are found.*" *Wherever they aren't* 657

worshipped, everything is a failure".²⁵ (Manu Smṛti 3/56) In the 658
corresponding hymn, Manu Smṛti says, "a family in which the ladies, such 659
as mother, wife, sister, daughter, and others, are filled with grief will soon be 660
destroyed, but a family in which they do not grieve will always prosper. " 661
²⁶(Manu Smṛti 3/57). 662

It is also noteworthy that most ancient Indian lawmakers of the later 663
Vedic and post-Vedic periods did not recognize a woman's right to own 664
immovable property such as land, houses, etc., but they all unanimously 665
acknowledged a woman's right to *stridhana* (ornaments, jewelry, cash, 666
etc. given to her at the time of her marriage or gifts received from her 667
husband, parents, etc.). The woman had the prerogative over *stridhana*. 668
According to Hindu law, no one can take away the *stridhana* of a woman, 669
not even her husband. 670

-Education 671

The term "*Véda*" implicatively insinuates "sacred knowledge". 673
Knowledge is alluded to in the Vedic literature as an essential need and 674
a purifying potency. It was believed to be the enlightening, 675
transforming, and purifying force on earth (Srimad Bhagavat-Gita, 676
chapter 4. verse 38). According to F. E. Keay, "*the Vedic education system* 677
was built in such a manner that it managed to survive not only in the events of 678
the crumbling of empires and the changes in society, but, also, through all those 679
thousands of years, managed to keep the glow of the torch of higher learning" 680
(Keay-1960). Albeit the Vedic Society talks about the Varna system, i.e. 681
social stratification dependent on occupation, such as Brahmins (edifiers 682
and priests), Kshatriya (warriors and rulers), Vaishya (traders and 683
peasants), and Shudras (artisans and laborers) in the 90th hymn 684
"Purusha Sukta" of the 10th Book of the ṚigVéda, yet the Varna structure 685
was not rigorous, and many philomaths found Purusha Sukta to be a 686
later addition to ṚigVéda (Nagarajan-1994). Nevertheless, the Dalit 687
bellwether and engenderer of the Indian Constitution, B.R. Ambedkar, 688
did not concur that the Varna structure did not subsist in the Vedic age, 689
but endeavored to point out that the fourth caste, Shudra (considered to 690
be the lowest) was not pristine in the Vedic age, and the Purusha Sukta 691
described above could have been tampered with by Brahmin priests of 692
the latter time (Ambedkar, 1970). Ambedkar has theorized that Shudras 693
pristinely belonged to the Kshatriya community and cites *Shanti Parva* 694
from *Mahabhārata*-60.38-40 as the primary piece of evidence 695
(Marbaniang-2015). It is evident that during the Vedic period, everyone, 696
including people from lower *Varana* had access to education and could 697
become Brahmins after receiving education. For example; Aitareya 698

Rishi was the son of a servant who rose through the ranks to become a high-ranking Brahmin and the author of the Aitareya Brahman and Aitareyopanishad. The importance of Aitareya Brahman in understanding the Rigveda cannot be overstated. Ailush Rishi was also the son of a servant. He did, however, conduct research into the Rigveda and made several discoveries. Seers not only invited him, but also made him an Acharya (Teacher). Satyakaam Jaabaal was the son of a prostitute who rose through the ranks to become a Brahmin. Prishadh was King Daksha's son, but he became a Shudra. Furthermore, he did penance to achieve salvation after repenting. Similarly, seers like Valmiki hailed from lower Varna, but became renowned Brahmin sage and composed the popular epic literature Ramayana. *Ved Vyasa* who composed Mahabhārata was also born in lower Varna but became a Brahmin sage after receiving education.

Everyone in Vedic society had the right to read the Vedas. There is evidence that women like Gargi and Shudra named *Janashruti* received Vedic education from a sage named '*Raikyamuni*'. The second mantra of the 26th chapter of Yajurveda explicitly declares that "all human beings have the right to read and teach the Vedas, and scholars to teach them. That is why God commands that – "*O human beings! Just as I teach you the four Vedas, in the same way, you also read and teach them to all human beings. Because the voice of these four Vedas is for the welfare of all and (avadani janebhya:) as I preach the Vedas to all human beings, so do you always*".²⁷ Both Uvata and Mahidhara (who lived before Sayana) explain this verse clearly in their Shukla Yajur Veda commentaries. To put it another way, they accept the meaning at face value. According to Uvata, "I will speak for the sake of the people in this auspicious, nonviolent discourse. Who are these individuals? brahma-rajanya, i.e. brahmana and kshatriya, and shudra-arya - arya is vaishya, one's own people and others (i.e. strangers)".²⁸ Similarly, according to Mahidhara, "I spread this auspicious nonviolent speech all over the place. I told them that they should use this speech. To whom are you composing? brahma-rajanya, that is, brahmana and kshatriya, shudra-arya, that is, vaishya, one's own people, and to outsiders".²⁹ Manu Smṛti ordains the king to make arrangements for the security, education, and marriage of all the boys and girls of his kingdom.³⁰

However, there is no denying that the situation of women and Shudras gradually deteriorated in the post Vedic period, and they were denied many privileges, including the right to receive Vedic education. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has chastised Manu Smṛti for discriminating against the Shudras and depriving them of several rights. Ambedkar writes in his book 'Philosophy of Hinduism', "Manu advocated the four varna

system. Manu laid the foundation of the caste system by telling us about 741
the separation of these four varnas. However, it can not be said that 742
Manu has created the caste system. But he did sow the seeds of this 743
system "(Ambedkar-2017). 744

-Property 745

The right to own property is no longer just a constitutional or statutory 746
right; it is also a human right. The R̥g Vedic society was rudimentarily 747
pastoral. During the later Vedic period, the pastoral economy turned 748
into an agrarian economy. The king was the owner of the entire land in 749
his kingdom, but simultaneously the owner and the joint family 750
additionally owned it. However, private ownership was inhibited only 751
on agricultural land. During the R̥g Vedic age, the king realized *Bali* was 752
a voluntary tax. This denotes that no particular consequentiality was 753
integrated into land rights because society was mainly pastoral. The 754
king didn't establish absolute rights over the land owned by his subjects. 755
His ascendancy over the land was inhabited and he was entitled to have 756
a portion (*Bhaga*) of the produce. According to Atharva Vēda (as quoted 757
in Sharma-2004), the King's ascendancy over land was constrained and 758
it is pellucid from one of the hymns of Atharva Vēda wherein Lord 759
Indra is invoked to give the king's portion (*Bhaga*) in the village 760
engender. Similarly, *Panchavimsa Brahmana* verbalizes, the king was 761
entitled to accumulate his quota (*Bhaga*) on the farm's engender as a tax. 762
Further stressing the right to property, *Ishopanishad* verbally expresses, 763
"enjoy by giving, do not covet others' wealth" (Goyandaka-1972). The 764
right to ownership of land developed only during the later and post- 765
Vedic periods, and it is evident from *Manu Smṛti* which says that the 766
title of land belongs to a person who first cleared the woods. 767

-Children's Rights 768

The Vedic concept of children's rights is profoundly ingrained in 769
the notion of parents' obligation and dharma. The right upbringing of 770
the child was the required obligation of the parents. The children were 771
considered a harbinger of bliss and bliss in the lives of the parents. 772
According to Brihadaranyak Upaniṣad, a person can live a 773
consummating life on earth only by having children (Brihadaranyak 774
Upaniṣad 1.5.17). In the other line of the same verse of the *Brihadaranyak* 775
Upaniṣad, it is mentioned that parents are obliged to give their children 776
education and enable them to recognize '*Svadharmā*' (one's prescribed 777
duty in life). Responsibilities for children during the Vedic period can 778
be optically discerned from the fact that a range of Vedic sacraments 779
(called *Samskāras* in Sanskrit) have to be performed by the parents 780

with full dedication. Life was thought to be celebrated as a reminder 781
that it was a gift from God. Every phase of a person's life is considered 782
to be very sacred and should be celebrated. There were 16 sacraments 783
(*Ṣoḍaśa Saṃskāras*)³¹ that were to be performed from birth to death. 784
(Pandey-2003). Of these 16 sacraments, twelve (12) were to be 785
performed by parents for their children afore their children reach the 786
age of twenty-five (25). This shows that parents are obligated bound to 787
protect their children and ascertain their opportune upbringing. These 788
obligations of parents mentioned in Vedic literature could be 789
interpreted as children's rights. 790

Conclusion 791

The study concludes that Vedic and later Vedic texts, which 792
constitute the fulcrum of Sanskrit literature, resonate with some 793
important elements of rights. The in-depth study of Vedic and later 794
Vedic literature reveals that the human rights concept was largely 795
present in ancient India with a rider of equal accentuation on 796
performing obligations. The exegesis of Vedic literature and 797
Dharmaśāstra reveals the important ideals of innate rights, which are 798
akin to contemporary human rights. It is also evident that the concept 799
of human rights could be further reinforced by treating obligations as 800
corollaries of human rights, as mentioned in Vedic texts. The concept of 801
dharma is another remarkable feature mentioned in Vedic texts, which 802
can be correlated to the concept of law, equity, rights, and obligations. 803
According to Vedic texts, secularism is more about conducting state 804
affairs in an unbiased manner while considering the welfare of the 805
subjects without discrimination. Ancient Vedic texts suggest that all 806
humans are equal and no one is born either superior or inferior. It even 807
calls for the humane treatment of all, including prisoners of war. There 808
are further shlokas in Vedic literature that are relatable to the concept of 809
the right to education, the right to happiness, the right to justice, the 810
right to property, non-discrimination, child rights, gender rights, and 811
the right to equality. 812

Notes 813

1. The term *apauruṣeyatva* means 'no human beings. In the 814
Appendix of the "R̥gVēda Samhitā", the discussion 815
on *apauruṣeyatva*, has been reiterated. ABORI 80. 10-13. 816
2. Mantradrashtas refers to the seers who saw (drashta) the 817
Vedic hymns that were revealed to them by God himself. 818
3. कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन । 819

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भुमा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ 820

	(Bhagvat Gita, Chapter II, Verse 47)..	821
4.	ऋणैश्चतुर्भिः संयुक्ता जायन्ते मानवा भुवि । पितृदेवर्षिमनुजैर्देयं तेभ्यश्च धर्मतः ॥	822 823
	(Mahabhārata's Adi Parva Adhyaya 120.17-20)	824
5.	यज्ञैस्तु देवान् प्रीणाति स्वाध्यायतपसा मुनीन् । पुत्रैः श्राद्धैः पितृश्चापि आनृशंस्येन मानवान् ॥	825 826
	(Mahabhārata's Adi Parva Adhyaya 120.17-20)	827
6.	Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR:) at 70: 30 Articles on 30 Articles - Article 29. Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23999&LangID=E	828 829 830 831
7.	स नैव व्यभवत्, तत्क्षेत्रेयोरूपमत्यसृजत धर्मम्; तदेतत् क्षत्रस्य क्षत्रं यद्धर्मः, तस्माद्धर्मादपरं नास्ति; अथो अबलीयान् बलीयांसमाशंसते धर्मेण, यथा राजैवम्; यो वै स धर्मः सत्यं वै तत्, तस्मात् सत्यं वदन्तमाहुः, धर्मं वदतीति, धर्मं वा वदन्तम् सत्यं वदतीति, एतद्ध्येवैतदुभयं भवति ॥ १५ (Brihadaranyak Upaniṣad 1.4.14) Despite this, he did not thrive. That excellent shape, justice, was especially displayed by him (Dharma). The Kṣatriya is controlled by this righteousness. As a result, there isn't anything higher. As (one contending) with the king, even a weak man seeks (to vanquish) a stronger one by virtue. That righteousness is unquestionably correct. As a result, they say of a person speaking the truth, "He speaks of righteousness," or of a person saying the truth, "He speaks of truth," because both are righteousness.	832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847
8.	Manu Smṛti : The Manu Smṛti . IX-31 reads: यथा सर्वाणि भूतानि धरा धारयते समम् । तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि बिभ्रतः पार्थिवं व्रतम् । । १.३११ । । Much as the mother earth provides equal support to all living beings, a king should provide equal support to all without discrimination.	848 849 850 851 852 853 854
9.	Nārada Smṛti vide Dharmakosha, P-870 says,	855 856

पाषण्डनैगमश्रेणी पूगव्रातगणादिषु । संरक्षेत्समयं राजा दुर्गे जनपदे तथा	857
॥ १०.२ ॥	858
	859
The king should protect all Vedic believers (Naigamas) and	860
disbelievers in Védas (Pashandis) and others.	861
	862
10. नानानं वा उं नो धियो वि व्रतानि जनानाम् ।	863
तक्षां रिष्टं रुतं भिषग्ब्रह्मा सुन्वन्तमिच्छतीन्द्रायेन्दो परि स्रव ॥	864
(Rig Veda 9:112:1)	865
...diverse are the thoughts and actions of the people	866
11. भद्राः क्रतवः नः विश्वतः आयन्तु ,	867
आ ! नः भद्राः क्रतवः विश्वतः यन्तु (Rig Veda 1.89.1)	868
(Let noble thoughts come to us from all sides	869
Let our noble thoughts spread across the universe)	870
12. अज्येष्ठासो अकनिष्ठास एते सं भ्रातरो वावृधुः सौभगाय ।	871
युवां पिता स्वपां रुद्र एषां सुदुघा पृश्निः सुदिनां मरुद्भ्यः ॥ ५ ॥	872
	873
Rig Veda 5: 60:5	874
[No one is superior (<i>Ajyesthaaso</i>) or inferior (<i>Akanisthaasa</i>). All	875
are brothers (<i>Yete san bhrataraha</i>). All should strive for the interest	876
of all and should progress collectively(<i>Sam Bhraataro Vaavrudhuh</i>	877
Soubhagaya)]	878
13. सं गच्छ ध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानता म	879
समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्त मेषाम् ।	880
[<i>Move together, talk together, let your minds understand alike.</i>	881
<i>In other words Common be your prayer, common be the</i>	882
<i>Acquirement, common be your purpose, associated be the desire).</i>	883
	884
14. समानि प्रपा सह वोन्नभागः	885
समाने योक्त्रे सह वो युनज्मि	886
अराः नाभिमिवाभितः ॥	887
(<i>All have equal rights in articles of food and water. The yoke of the</i>	888
<i>chariot of life is placed equally on the shoulders of all. All should</i>	889
<i>live together with harmony supporting one another like the spokes</i>	890
<i>of a wheel of the chariot connecting its rim and the hub)</i>	891
	892
(Atharvaveda-Samjnana Sukta)	893
	894

15. समानी व आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः I	895
समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति II	896
	897
Rig Veda 10:191:4	898
<i>(Let there be oneness in your resolutions, hearts and minds; let</i>	899
<i>the determination to live with mutual cooperation be firm in you</i>	900
<i>all. In other words, Common be your purpose, common be your</i>	901
<i>hearts(feelings) and</i>	902
<i>common be your mind(thoughts). Let the strength of mutual</i>	903
<i>cooperation be firm in you all]</i>	904
	905
16. अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लघुचेतसाम् ।	906
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ॥	907
<i>(only small and narrow minded people adopt two different</i>	908
<i>outlooks towards common matters and do ‘mine and dine’; but</i>	909
<i>for those who are broad minded and have higher</i>	910
<i>consciousness the whole world is one’s own family)</i>	911
(Maha Upanishad, Chapter 6, Verse 72)	912
17. “राजा तु धार्मिकान् सभ्या- न्नियुञ्ज्यात् सुपरीक्षितान् । व्यवहारधुरां वोढुं ये	913
शक्ताः पुङ्गवा इव । धर्मशास्त्रेषु कुशलाः कुलीनाः सत्यवादिनः । समाः	914
शत्रौ च मित्रे च नृपतेः स्युः सभासदः” इति ।	915
(King should appoint the honourable men of tried integrity	916
[<i>sabhyas</i>] who are able to bear the burden of the administration	917
of justice and who are well versed in the sacred laws, rules of	918
prudence, who are noble and impartial towards friends and	919
foes)	920
(Narada Smṛti.p. 36-4-5 [Dharmakosa ..43]	921
18. यथाह नारद् यत्र सभ्यो जनः सर्वः साध्वेतदिति मन्यते ।	922

स निःशल्यो विवादः स्यात्सशल्यस्त्वन्यथा भवेत् ध्यमर्थ	923
यच्चतुष्पादान्वितं च यत् । राजमुद्भान् ि पत्रकमिष्यते ॥'	924
<i>(Unanimous decision by all the judges leaves no room for</i>	925
<i>doubt while a majority decision leaves doubt in the minds of</i>	926
<i>litigants)</i>	927
 (Narada Smṛti.vide Dharmakosha p. 48)	928
 19. This is a generic sanskrit verse and many Hindu rituals and	929
ceremonies prayers ends with it. The origin of this prayer is	930
however obscure and some experts trace its origins to Vedic	931
literature and some trace it to stone scripture of Sangama	932
dynasty. The complete prayer reads as follows:	933
स्वस्तिप्रजाभ्यः परिपालयंतां न्यायेन मार्गेण महीं महीशाः ।	934
गोब्राह्मणेभ्यः शुभमस्तु नित्यं लोकाः समस्ताः सुखिनोभवंतु ॥	935
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः	936
 20. सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः।	937
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग् भवेत्।।	938
ॐ शांतिः शांतिः शांतिः	939
 (May all be happy; May all be free from infirmities/disease; May	940
all experience good; May no one be suppressed/overwhelmed	941
by grief and suffering. Om Peace, peace peace)	942

(<i>Garuḍa Purāṇa</i> (35.51). <i>Aśīrvacanam</i> (2) of <i>itihāsa samuccaya</i> ,	943
and <i>Mantrabhāṣya</i> (<i>Vājasneya Samhitā</i>) of <i>Uvaṭa</i>).	944
21. ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय ।	945
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।	946
मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।	947
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥	948
Guide me from falsehood to truth; Guide me from darkness to	949
the light; From death guide me to immortality”. Another text	950
named <i>Taittiriya Upanishad</i> , identifies the highest	951
Reality(God) with Happiness (<i>Ananda</i>), Bliss (<i>Parama-</i>	952
<i>Ananda</i>) and queries(<i>Jigyasa</i>)	953
(<i>Brihadaranyak Upanishad</i> (1.3.28).	954
	955
22. विश्वमस्या नानाम् चक्षसे जगज्ज्योतिष्कृणोति सूनरी ।	956
अप द्वेषो मघोनी दुहिता दिव उषा उच्छदपु सिधः ॥	957
	958
Rig Veda 1.48.8	959
	960
23. युवं धेनुं शयवै नाधितायापिन्वतमश्विना पूर्यायं।	961
अमुञ्चतं वर्तिकामहंसो निः प्रति जङ्घां विशपलाया अधतम् ॥	962
Rig Veda 1.118.8	963
24. ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः।	964
तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि।	965
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्॥	966
(May we imbibe his grandeur and brilliance within us as we	967
contemplate on the glory of that being (Savitri, the sun) who	968
has created this universe and is the essence of our life exist-	969
ence.	970
The second translation reads, “we revere the excellent great-	971
ness of the holy Savitra; may she motivate and inspire our	972
intelligence”.).	973
Rig Veda 3.62.10	974
25. यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः ।	975
यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः ॥	976
	977
(<i>Manu Smṛti</i> . 3/56)	978
	979

26. शोचन्ति जामयो यत्र विनश्यत्याशु तत्कुलम् ।	980
न शोचन्ति तु यत्रैता वर्धते तद्धि सर्वदा ॥	981
(Manu Smṛti.-3/57)	982
	983
27. यथेमां वाचं कल्याणीमावदानि जनेभ्यः।	984
ब्रह्मराजन्याभ्यां शूद्राय चार्याय च स्वाय चारणाय च।	985
प्रियो देवानां दक्षिणायै दातुरिह भूयासम्,	986
अयं मे कामः समृध्यतामुप मादो नमतु। यजुर्वेद 26.2	987
(Yajur Veda 26.2)	988
28. यथेमाम् । यथा इमां वाचं कल्याणीं अनुद्वेजिनीम् । दीयतां	989
भुज्यतामित्येवमादिकाम् । आवदानि जनेभ्योऽर्थाय । के ते जना	990
इत्यत आह । ब्रह्मराजन्याभ्यां ब्राह्मणाय राजन्याय च शूद्राय च	991
अर्याय च । अर्यो वैश्यः । स्वाय चात्मीयाय च । अरणः अपगतोदकः	992
पर इत्यर्थः ।	993
(commentary on Shukla Yajurveda by Uvata)	994
29. इमां कल्याणीमनुद्वेगकरीं वाचमहं यथा यतः आवदानि सर्वतो	995
ब्रवीमि दीयतां भुज्यतामिति सर्वेभ्यो वच्मि । केभ्यस्तदाह ।	996
ब्रह्मराजन्याभ्यां ब्राह्मणाय राजन्याय क्षत्रियाय च शूद्राय अर्याय	997
वैश्याय स्वायात्मीयाय अरणाय पराय ।	998
(commentary on Shukla Yajur Veda by Mahidhara)	999
30. परस्परविरुद्धानां तेषां च समुपार्जनम् । कन्यानां संप्रदानं च	1000
कुमाराणां च रक्षणम् ।	1001
(Manu Smṛti. 7.152. i.e. Chapter 7; Mantra: 152)	1002
	1003

31. There were 16 sacraments (<i>Ṣoḍaśa Saṃskāras</i>) that were to be	1004
performed from birth to death and Upanayana Samskara was	1005
one of them. The sixteen <i>Saṃskāras</i> were as follows:	1006
i. Garbhadhana (Conception)	1007
This Saṃskāra was to be performed by the parents when	1008
they decide to have a child. It is made up of earnest prayers	1009
to God for help in conceiving a decent and worthy child for	1010
the couple. Thus, it is evident that parents' responsibilities	1011
begin once they decide to have a child.	1012
	1013
ii. Punsavana (Foetus protection)	1014
This Saṃskāra was performed during the third or fourth	1015
month of pregnancy to protect the fetus in the womb.	1016
iii. Simantonnayana (Satisfying the cravings of the pregnant	1017
mother). This Saṃskāra was akin to a present-day baby	1018
shower ceremony, and was, performed during the seventh	1019
month of pregnancy wherein the prayers were offered to God	1020
for the health of both mother and child in the womb.	1021
iv. Jatakarma (Childbirth) Mantras were recited for a healthy	1022
and long life of the child at his birth.	1023
v. Namakaran (Naming the child)	1024
The child was given a name.	1025
vi. Nishkramana (Taking the child outdoors for the first	1026
time)	1027
This Saṃskāra was performed in the fourth month after birth	1028
when the child was taken out of the house for the first time.	1029
vii. Annaprasana (Giving solid food)	1030
This Saṃskāra was performed in the sixth, seventh, or eighth	1031
month child when the child was given solid food for the first time.	1032
viii. Mundan (Hair shaving)	1033
This Saṃskāra was performed in the first or third year of a child's	1034
age when the child's hair was shaved.	1035
ix. Karnavedha (Ear piercing)	1036
This Saṃskāra was performed in the third or fifth year of the	1037
child's age when the child's ear was pierced.	1038
x. Upanayana (Sacred thread ceremony)	1039
This was one of the most important Saṃskāra that was performed	1040
when the child was introduced to education.	1041
xi. Védarambha (Study of Védas)	1042
This Saṃskāra was performed either at the time of Upanayana or	1043
within one year of Upanayana Saṃskāra. The child starts learning	1044
Védas from his teacher and the first shloka that was taught was	1045
the auspicious Gayatri Mantra.	1046
xii. Samavartana (Returning home after completion of education)	1047
This Saṃskāra was performed to celebrate the returning of the	1048
child to home from teacher's ashram after completing his educa-	1049
tion at the age of about 25 years.	1050
xiii. Vivaha (Marriage ceremony)	1051
xiv. Vanaprastha (Preparation for renunciation)	1052
This Saṃskāra was performed at the age of 50 when the person	1053
started his spiritual journey by renouncing worldly life and pro-	1054
ceeding to the forest for spiritual upliftment.	1055
xv. Sannyasa (Renunciation)	1056

This Saṃskāra was performed after Vanaprastha at the age of 75 1057
when a person starts preparing for salvation. 1058
xvi. Antyesthi (Cremation) 1059
This was the final Saṃskāra that was performed by a person's de- 1060
scendants after his death. 1061

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