

Unit 10

T. N. Madan: Non- Renunciation

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Learning Objectives

After studying this unit you should be able to;

- describe domesticity and detachment;
- discuss the concepts of auspiciousness and purity;
- describe the three stories that are analysed; and
- outline the concepts of living and dying.

10.1 Introduction

The work of T.N.Madan is an ethnographical work taking into account the religious patterns of Kashmiri pandits. The work is based on mainly three sources; first the writer's own intensive fieldwork, second, the important written ethnographical works on the Hindu practices of the brahmins of Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, and Karnataka, and the third one is contemporary works on fiction dealing with ancient and recent times in Bihar, North India, Karnataka and Tamilnadu. As brahmins are the custodian of the Hindu religion the book is largely based on their interpretation of the religion, but this book is about the entire Hindu society. The writer has taken the help of the novels on the Hindu society and come up with the sociological interpretation. In this book an excellent description is done on the good way of life and death in the Hindu society and it also throws light on the different relationships between husband and wife, father and son, renunciation of the householder's life, concepts of auspiciousness and other social and cultural practices of the Brahmins. The writer has stressed on the fact that the life of the householder is considered as the prime value in the Hindu society. The Hindu society since long time has found a moral dilemma between philosophical and the mythological tradition. The renouncer and the enjoyers are both towering personalities. The main thrust of the book is then the interpretations of a view which is tradition based and the life of the man in the world as the good life in contrast to

the life of a renouncer. The entire book is divided among five chapters taking into account the different views on the themes of Hindu religion and cultural practices.

10.2 Domesticity and Detachment

The conflict between domestic life and detached life is always a central theme of Hinduism. In pandit society the householders keep a central position in everyday life. Pandits perceive the human being as the creature who can introspect and reflect and according to them this is the central character which distinguishes human being from the other living creatures. A good Hindu should always perform his social role according to the Dharma. To be identified as the pandit they themselves define their external and internal characteristics. The Kashmiri pandits are called as the Bhatta, which means a learned person. They usually keep his *tuft* of the head top hair. They also wear the cotton thread which is called as *yajnopavita*. Their speech is often laden with Sanskrit.

The pandits are divided into several sub-castes. These sub-castes are helpful in the marriage and other types of the hierarchies in day to day life. The identity of the pandit cannot be acquired by any other means other than he is born in the pandit caste only. One loses the identity of pandit by totally abandoning the traditional way of life, or the important and crucial elements of it, as when one eats and lives with Muslims or marries among them.

a) Parenthood: Biology and Morality

The parenthood is very important in the pandit way of life. Barrenness is recognised as a physical deficiency, which may be due to the Karmic causes. This may be due to diseases, sorcery or the curse of the people endowed with supernatural powers. It is believed that male seed contains the entire vital requirement for the making of the complete human beings: flesh, blood, all internal and external organs, hair, nail, intellect, and knowledge. The mother's menstrual blood provides the soil for the seed to grow in when it ceases to flow out and solidifies into the fleshy sack which envelops and nourishes the foetus. The Kashmiri women are said to be child worshippers. Mother for the child is both the human and the divine power. On the other hand the father-child relationship is moral, but it has material dimension also. Because the ancestral property of the family is being shared by both father and son. In other words we can say that the relationship between a child and the parent is bound in terms of the dharma.

b) The Concept of Bhattil

Kashmiri pandits consider the bhattil way of life as the most superior way of life. It is constituted of a range of fundamental purposes of life largely centred in the domestic life, and the appropriate procedures for their fulfilment. For pandits the physical self is not that important as the inner self, as the body is fragile and will be destroyed certainly, but the atma or the inner self cannot be destroyed. When the body is joined to the inner self (antaratma) then it becomes the vehicle of the dharma. They attribute the present life difficulties as the result of the previous life adharmath body which is considered as the meeting point between the past, present and the future. The auspiciousness and inauspiciousness are the two things on which the pandits whole life hinges upon. The inauspicious moments are deaths, eclipses; the hooting of owl etc. and they are also not avoidable. The pandits are expected to take the maximum patience and restraint.

They are also expected under the *bhattil* to be ever ready to present to resist the compulsions of bodily appetites until assured of their proper satisfaction as defined in the *bhattil*. The questioning attitude, the exercise of restraint, and the cultivation of the moral consciousness provide the framework within which a *pandit* has to order his life. The basis of the conduct should be of thoughtful discrimination. The *pandit's* attitude to the worldly concerns and rewards is one of the joyful acceptance. They do not seek immediate release from the present life, but try to accumulate merits for the future. Though they consider *karma* as the chain of bondage, but due to this reason it is not unwelcome. One's attitude should not be filled with the ego and thus one should surrender oneself to the God.

All actions should be performed according to the set procedure and conventions. There are three fires of the domestic life, they are as follows:

- i) The fire in the hearth.
- ii) The fire lit periodically to perform rituals.
- iii) The fire of the body.

10.3 Life Cycle Rituals

There are several life cycle rituals like childhood ritual of the purification, which is performed on the eleventh day of the birth of the baby, the ritual of the feeding of the first solid meals which is called *annaprasana*, the ritual of the first tonsure of the child called *zarakasai*, the *yajnopavita* ceremony in which the child take the holy thread. The next step is marriage which is the principal *sanskara* of an adult life. Marriage stands out as the central ritual and social event in the life of every individual, which enables one to take the role of the householder and this is what is required for the renunciation in the Brahminical life. The last and ultimate step is the rite of cremation, which is followed by post-mortuary rites. Apart from these life cycle rites the routine chores and rites of everyday life which are in other words called as *nityakarma* are the abiding concern of every individual *pandit* and constitute the important and ever present element of his *bhattil*. *Nityakarmas* also includes the observance of death and birth anniversaries of the ancestors, the discharge of other social obligations etc. Thus Madan says that the *pandit* way of life is moralistic and the life is mainly based on the good *karma* which is guided by the dharmic principles.

Box 10.1: Bhakti and Shakti

If there is any lapse which has been occurred in the domestic life, it can be corrected by the help of the *Bhakti*. *Bhakti* is not an alternative way of life but a particular orientation of the householder's life. The *pandits* consider *bhakti* as a value in itself. To get the power of divine love and affection one need not have to abandon the family. The love of God is not exclusive and does not require withdrawal. The prayer of *Shakti* is also a means through which a *pandit* tries to take the strength in his daily life. The *Shakti* can be aroused and rises to the head and enables the seeker to realise his own divinity. The ordinary rule of the *bhattil* does not apply to the *sakta*. There cannot be a family of the *sakta* but he may live in his exclusive household of its own, consisting of his family members. It is an alternative way of life.

In the society of Kashmiri Brahmins there is no concept of living away from the home, ofcourse some individuals may live away from home but they do not go through formal initiation into any *sanyasi* order. There is

no emphasis on the termination of the grihastha ashrama in one's life. The attitudes of pandits towards those who make claim of detachment and particularly of renunciation are generally one of scepticism. In fact, the pandits reduce the renouncer to a caricature of his ideal self.

Thus the greatest ambition of the pandit is to become the householder and perform his karma which is backed by dharma. The ideology of everyday life clearly establishes the pandit as the grihastha. The householder is the man-in-world. As a householder, a pandit may legitimately seek plenitude and joy but only if this endeavour is controlled by dharma. Bhattil is a total view of life which excludes nothing but it is a hierarchial view of both the ultimate purpose of life, and the task of everyday existence.

10.4 Concepts of Auspiciousness and Purity

Madan has tried to clarify the notion of 'auspiciousness' in relation to the notion of purity. According to him the notion of *subha* refers directly to time and temporal events in relation to particular categories of people. A time which may be considered auspicious for one kind of action may not necessarily consider auspicious for the other kind of action. The other use of the word is in using the word with some special occasions or festivals. There may be several *subha* months and days in a month. *Subha* is also employed to refer happy events in life like marriage, birth of a son, etc. the notion of *subha* is also associated with the places and the direction. A pilgrimage centre which is situated near the holy river bank is considered as the *subha* to take the holy dip there. Certain objects in pandits, society is also considered as the *subha* objects like *kalsa* means a metal or earthen vessel containing the water of the holy rivers like Ganga. The *Kalsa* is associated with the commencement of a ritual of religious and social value. The *grahas* are categorised into two categories viz; *subha* and *asubha* category. Among the nine *grahas* only three *grahas* namely, *brahaspati*, *chandrama*, and *sukra* are considered as the *subha grahas*. *Budha* is considered as the impotent and neutral *graha*.

Reflection and Action 10.1

In which way is auspiciousness different from the notion of purity?
Discuss and note down the main points in your notebook.

The birth of a child particularly the son is considered as the *subh* event, but it is not always a *subh* moment; rather it depends on the position of the particular *grahas* and their position at the time of birth. If the position of *asubha graha* are present at the time of the birth of the child, there may be need to correct it with the help of various rituals. In fact the Brahmins perform regular rituals to ward off the evil *grahas* in their home. These rituals are called commonly as *upayas* or in other words the corrective ritual measures. So we can say that the birth in general is considered as the *subha* event and the death is always considered as the *asubha* event. But there is a degree of inauspiciousness in the event of the death. If the death is occurred in the *subh* days its degree of inauspiciousness is less than the which death occurred in the auspicious days. Death is very inauspicious but widowhood is an even more unfortunate event for the Brahmin women. There are many drastic changes which occur in the status of the women whose husband dies. She cannot take part in any auspicious event including marriage and the birth ceremonies. Auspiciousness is an absolute value which manifests as a quality of events in the lives of human actors and involves the dimension of time and space.

The most pure and sacred thing is the *yajnopavita*, the three stranded cotton neck cord that he wears from the time of his ritual initiation and this also symbolises that he is a twice born caste and is different and far superior to other castes. After the completion of the *yajnopavita* ceremony only the Brahmin can take part in other types of rituals. In other words this ritual grants them the power to take part in the day to day ritual ceremonies. Madan writes that the daily life of a Kashmiri Brahmin is beset by *sanka* or doubt. There is always hesitation as to whether to perform a particular action or not. In Uttar Pradesh the encounter with a *Mahabrahmin* (a type of Brahmin who performs rituals at the time of death) is considered as the inauspicious event. The Brahmins of both Uttar Pradesh and Kashmir consider milk as the purest drink according to Madan. Thus, we can say that the notion of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness are very important in the everyday life of the people. Madan writes further that the particular expressions and associations of the notion of auspiciousness may vary, but quite clearly it is of basic importance, at least in the schemes of values of the upper castes.

10.5 The Notion of Asceticism and Eroticism

The notion of asceticism and eroticism are described with the help of three novels. The first is 'Chitrlekha' from Bhagvaticharan Varma, the second is a Karnatic novel namely, 'Samskara' written by U.R. Anantha Murthy and later translated in English by A.K. Ramanujan, the third novel is a Marathi novel namely 'Yayati' by Vishnu Shangram Khandekar and translated in Hindi by Moreswar Tapasvi. We will discuss all the three stories in brief.

The story of Chitrlekha is based on the concept of papa and punya. There were two disciples of a Guru, who wanted to know the difference between the papa and punya. The guru says that he does not know what is papa, because he didn't have the personal experience of it. He on the contrary sends these two disciples to discover for themselves the concept of papa and punya. The two disciples were from the two upper castes one was from the Brahmin caste and the other one was a Kshatriya. The Brahmin became the disciple of a great yogi called Kumaragiri and the Kshatriya became a servant to a feudal lord namely, Bijagupta.

The yogi Kumaragiri claims that he is free from the bodily desires and attachments. He claims that because of his detachment from the desires, he possesses a good moral character. On the other hand, Bijagupta is opposite of the Kumaragiri and he possesses all types of bodily desires and joys of the worldly things. He is attracted to a famous dancer namely, Chitrlekha. Though Chitrlekha is a dancer by profession she is an intelligent and cultured woman. The dancer and Bijagupta live together fulfilling each other's bodily appetites. Once they Bijagupta and Chitrlekha by chance meet Kumaragiri and seek shelter into his hermitage for one night. Kumaragiri though did not want to give shelter to any woman but out of compulsion he had to give the shelter to a woman. Kumaragiri considers the women as the darkness of the attachment, desire and illusion. After some time this leads to a thorough discussion between Chitrlekha and him. After the discussion, Kumaragiri was much impressed and his conception about women was transformed and produced a positive attitude about them.

After further discussion, Chitrlekha won the argument and Kumaragiri, felt that despite his being a Yogi he has been defeated by a fallen woman, a dancer, but Chitrlekha came again to his hermitage and told that she has come to receive spiritual instruction by him, but actually she was in

love with him. Chitrlekha tries to teach Kumaragiri a view of the nature of woman contrary to that enunciated by him at their first meeting. She says that woman is a source of Shakti and main source of creation. Slowly, Kumaragiri begins to experience, besides the power of her intellect, the attraction of her bodily beauty. Finally, Chitrlekha decides to leave Bijagupta. Later on Bijagupta met another woman namely, Yashodhra, but he already was in love with Chitrlekha, and did not want to marry Yashodhara. For him this was a question of moral judgement and according to him marriage is not a simple event rather an ever-lasting physical-cum-spiritual bond between man and a woman. On the other hand Chitrlekha started living in the hermitage of Kumaragiri and genuinely shared interest in spiritualism and finally he falls in her love. Now Kumaragiri's conception of renunciation has been changed and according to him the real renouncer must include the love of all beings. In this process Kumaragiri lied to Chitrlekha that Bijagupta had married to Yashodhara. This was like a shock to Chitrlekha and she gives herself up to Kumaragiri. Finally, Bijagupta considered that Chitrlekha left him on her own choice and started getting attracted towards Yashodhra. But after some time Bijagupta did'nt marry Yashodhra too and become a renouncer after donating her entire wealth to Yashodhara's new husband. Later on Chitrlekha came to know the truth and then left Kumaragiri and finally joined Bijagupta in the quest of the spirit.

Finally, the both disciples of the guru had returned to their ashram. The guru thus started interpretating that human beings are not autonomous moral agents at all; they are not free and are bound by different situations in life. According to him people neither commit sins nor performs meritorious acts, but they simply do what they have to act according to the situations in life.

10.6 The Story of Samskara

The story of Samskara is from a Karnataka hamlet called Durvasapura. There lived two Brahmins, Pranesacharya and Naranappa. Pranesacharya wanted to be free from all the passions. When he was at the age of 16 he married a 12 year old girl, who was born as an invalid child. He had done this to earn austerity and self sacrifice. He thus became engaged in all types of ritual works and started living as a ideal sadhu. Everybody in the village even older persons started giving due respect to him due to his knowledge and humanity. On the other hand Narappa was a corrupt brahmin and was married to a low caste woman. His mother was a prostitute in her time. He consumed meat and liquor. One day he died of the plague. According to rule till his body is cremated nobody of the village will eat, but there was a problem in his cremation, because nobody wanted to take part in his cremation as he was a corrupt Brahmin. Finally, the villagers came to Pranesacharya for advice, but as the task was very complicated, he also could not come out with any type of solution. In the meantime Narappa's wife Chandri unable to withstand the hunger ate some fruits and drank water from the flowing river without anybody's knowledge.

Chandri awaits Pranescharya's verdict and thanks his gentleness and kindness. Chandri was childless and she recalls that her mother used to say that prostitutes should get pregnant by holy men such as Pranescharya. But Pranescharya was not able to get the solution of the cremation of Narappa's body and in the mean time his dead body started rotting. In this process Chandri came into the contact of Pranescharya and made a sexual contact with him, hoping she would be able to bear a child and her evil will be washed off. Finally, she with the help of a Muslim friend

cremated the body of Narappa, without anybody's knowledge. But Praneshacharya goes back to his home filled with remorse and guilt but internally he is relieved by the sexual contact with one prostitute. He also felt a lightness in the thought even that he had left desire, desire had not left him. Finally, Praneshcharya told the villagers that he is lost and he is no more a aicharya. He finally left the village, his home. He thinks that he is now free without duties or debts. The writer of this story thus concludes that authenticity, rather than an opposition between eroticism and asceticism, as the ultimate criteria of moral choices.

10.7 The Story of Yayati

The third story Yayati is based on one episode of the great epic Mahabharata. Yayati is a king's son. He has a brother also who became renouncer and left the home. Thus his mother takes a promise that he will never leave the home and never become a renouncer like her elder son Yati. As the years progresses Yati became a talented prince, and later on persuaded his father to perform *asvamedha*, the horse sacrifice of world conquest and victory. In the course of his wanderings he meets a *recluse* engaged in the mortification of his body. Actually he happens to be his brother Yati who in his early days became renouncer. Yati says that this body is source of all types of evils and is the main hinderance in the path of spirituality. Yayati's next encounter is with a young man, namely, Kach, who was the son of Brihaspati, guru of the Gods. Kach's viewpoint was that we should not exclude the wordly pursuits like artha, kama and other pleasures as it is the dharma of a man. Later on Kach became the pupil of Sukracharya. Sukracharya's daughter, Devyani falls in love with Kach. But he started avoiding her because her presence will hamper him in the path of the spiritual quest. He also wins the affection of Sharmistha the daughter of the king of demons. He then confesses his love for Devyani but adds that the true love must make one look beyond one's own self. Love is thus not opposed to duty but absorbed into it. Finally Devyani meets Yayati and asks him to marry her and Yayati married Devyani. But their relation as husband and wife was a strained one and their soul was not in unision. Internally, Devyani keeps her love alive for Kach, and one day on the pretext of some ritual performance she invited Kach. Kach came with Yati, whose behaviour was strange to every body. The strange behaviour was due to the fact that in the course of his renouncement he had abandoned his human behaviour. Man acquires merit not by denying the existence of the body but by refining the body appetites and bringing them under the control of his will. Finally as the relationship between Devyani and Yayati was strained, as Yayati was attracted towards Sharmistha and mutual love develops between them. Later on by knowing the fact Devyani forbids Yayati to touch her body. The writer of the story thus suggests that only true moral basis of wordly life can be self-sacrifice, which is what detachment is all about, and not self seeking.

T.N.Madan thus writes that all the three stories question a dualistic conception of the moral domain, therefore, of the viability of the choices which are based on a notion of papa and punya. Morality is thus not an external condition, a mere attribute of the human conduct, but an inner wisdom, a mental state, from which all our acts should flow naturally without an effort of will. Thus the householder should live by the morality of purusartha, as given in the three values of dharma, kama, and artha.

10.8 The Desired and the Good

In the course of studying the pandits of Kashmir, Madan finds one thing repeatedly that is the concern for problem of suffering, i.e., Duhkha,

they also expatiate the causes of these dukkhas. In general it is considered that the cause of every dukkha is the wrong doing by the person. However, these wrongs can be committed in the ignorance and delusion. As pandits believe that the pursuits of wordly pleasures is perfectly legitimate provided it is carried according to dharma. We should thus end our ignorance. Those who attain the moral perfection and discipline does not suffer from the agony of having to face moral dilemmas, he is free from having to make choices. Wrong doings are not committed in a social vacuum: interpersonal relations of the most intimate kinds such as between husband and wife, between parent and child is their principal locus. Moreover, different degrees of wrong doings are recognised, ranging from the ordinary faulty actions to those which are judged as morally reprehensible and evil. What is true to the Kashmiri, a pandit is likely to be true of the other Brahmin communities also.

Box 10.2: Appu's Early Years

T.N.Madan has chosen one novel of T. Janakiraman namely "The Sins of the Appu." The story starts with Appu who is the third and last legitimate child of his mother Alankaram. His other brothers were from the other fathers. Appu's father name was Dandapani, who by profession was an astrologer. Dandapani is a learned person and teaches Sanskrit to some retired person in the city of Madras. On the other hand Alankaram though not a well read woman is an attractive and well built woman. Appu was his mother's favourite child and thus she paid special attention in his upbringing and nurture. She wanted to give him the real education and wanted Appu to learn Veda, and become the scholar of it. Dandapani though opposed to this ideas finally agreed to send Appu for the Vedic study. After 16 years Appu, an adept in the Vedic scholarship was back in his home. Actually, Alankaram wanted that her sins should be washed off as she was not a moral woman, but later on became *pativrata*. Alankaram had hoped to atone for her moral lapse by ensuring the moral perfection of her son and then serving him and thus become herself purified.

Appu wanted to stay on in the village where he learned the Veda, because he is repelled by a morally amorphous city. He also came to know the truth that both his mother and father are morally infirm. Appu was filled with lots of moral and immoral questions about his mother and father. Realising that Appu would not come home; Alankaram visits him in the village. She tells Appu that she is going north far from Madras, to the sacred city of Kashi, to await her death there. Finally, Alankaram goes to Kashi. Alankaram now wants renunciation through divine grace.

Appu met two women at the village Vedic school-its benefactress, Bhavaniammal and her brother's daughter, Indu. Indu was married to one man, but her husband dies soon and she became widow. After the completion of his studies Appu returned to his home to fulfil his familial obligations, but he got the news that Bhavaniammal suffered a paralytic stroke. He rushed back to the village but she was out of danger now and she requested him to stay in the village and teach the children as there were no teachers to teach in the school. Finally Appu accepts the request of Bhavaniammal and, Appu opted to live in the same house where Indu lives and he confessed his love for Indu.

Thus human beings live in the socially created world and the social order becomes the cosmo-moral order. Though one does not choose one's parent, a person may still be faced with a situation involving choice between alternative modes of relating to them. If these choices are not made

wisely, they result in sufferings. Everybody who commits sins thus has to suffer in his own way.

10.9 Living and Dying

According to T.N.Madan the attitudes of a people to death and dying should be viewed in their totality, bringing out the inter-connectedness of belief, emotion and behaviour. Death in every religion including Hinduism is regarded as the divine wish. In Kashmir death is considered as the family affair, though it is not necessary that every members of the family if affected equally from it. Pandits in everyday conversation always says that one has to die one day. The pandits of Kashmir maintained that the ultimate and critical sign of a good life may be available in the manner a person attains his death. In other words when one lived his/her life according to the dharmic principles s/he is bound to attain a good death. The good death here means the death at a good place, a good and auspicious time, and the good physical state of the person at the time of his death. The best place to die for a householder is his own house, because as a householder the person performs his dharma/karma in his own house only. The good death is also one where a person dies in an astrologically good time. One should die in full consciousness of the event, with one's mind fixed on the supreme God or the divine spirit. Good death and the last words spoken by those who attain it, are remembered and talked about for edification for years.

Reflection and Action 10.2

Discuss the notions of living and dying among the Kashmiri Pandits. How are they unique? Write down your observations in your notebook.

A bad death is understood and explained as the result of bad karma of the previous life of the people. The notion of collective death is referred as *Pralaya* but pralaya is a rare event in the life of the pandits. Malefic spirits are held responsible for such type of occurrences. This is also attributed as the decline of dharma in the society. The rearrangement of the social relations that follows a death is different for men and women. A widow has to lead a life of a sufferer, and the man can remarry, widowers suffer from, none of the ritual and social disabilities that widows do, on the other hand a man has to hide his emotional feelings at the death of his wife, and if he expresses his sorrow openly he will be ridiculed, but the women have to display every kind of grief and sorrow.

Killing of any kind is completely prohibited in the pandits' society. Argument is that as nobody can create anything or the birth is given by God and he only can take it back. The killing of Brahmin is the most heinous crime and is called as *brahmahatya*, and it is equivalent to the killing of a cow.

There are lots of rituals involved after the death. The rituals are also prescribed for them at the time of death. The last moments of a pandit's life are accompanied by the reading of the Bhagwad Gita, which describes the imperishability of the soul. If water from the river Ganga is available, a few drops are poured into the mouth of the dying person. As soon as the death occurs, the event of the death is made public through loud weeping and wailing by women and the children. The weeping at the death is a kind of special one, though the weeping by the women in other occasions also happens. At this point of time the neighbours and kiths and kins assemble in the deads man's house. The visitors then try to control the mourners and arrange for cremation of the dead and they also arrange

for the feeding of the family, because no food is cooked in the deceased family for three to *twenty* days.

After the weeping, the body of the dead man is taken for the ritual bath with the recitation of the mantras by the priest. Then the body is taken for the burning process. In fact cremation offers the opportunity for release from transmigration. After the cremation the dead man is considered to live in the state of transition i.e, he is in the state of *preta* (ghost) for eleven days. During this time the various rituals are performed and food offerings are made to sustain the *preta*, for it is very dangerous. The rituals of the eleventh day is considered that the *preta* entered or transformed into the category of *pitr* (manes), therefore, it is a biannual affair to offer food to the dead on the death anniversary.

The post cremation rites are very complex as not everybody is entitled to get the status of the *mane*. If a person dies before becoming a parent s/ he not given the status of the *pitr*. Thus, in the relationship between the living and the dead, the notions of *pitr* and *punarjanma* (rebirth) negate the notion of death as the terminal event. On the other hand a good life and a good death frees oneself from the chain of birth-death-rebirth. Death is thus made bearable in the life of a pandit culture by it being treated as an opportunity for the individual soul to realise union with that from which it had got seperated i.e, *kaivalyam*. Thus, it is the help of various rituals through which a pandit is able to cope with the stress of the death. They conceptualise their death as something necessary for the fulfilment of the life cycle. Moreover, in pandit society death is not considered as a threat to or a sacrilege against the social order.

10.10 Conclusion

In the conceptualisation of Hinduism it is very clear that the Hindus are primarily concerned with the dharma which refers to what people do according to their dharmic doctrine. Madan writes that the distinction between the 'religious' and the 'secular', which is fundamental in western society and in the western thought, is not easily made in Indian society. Such a differentiation, and further elaboration of it (most notably between sacred and profane dichotomy), are a characteristic of the outsider's effort to understand Hindu society and this also entered in the mind of the modern Hindus and modern Indians, who is by definition an alienated person. Thus we can understand the Hindu ethos and culture in its own way and any deviations in interpretations can give an image of a distorted picture of this way of life. Today the challenges that Hinduism faces does not come from an alien religion but from the western ideals of secularism and the concept of western modernisation. Madan considers that the history of Hinduism constitute also the sociology of Hinduism.

From the above discussion it is also clear that the brahminical tradition is more or less similar everywhere i.e, in every part of the country. The notion of *papa* and *punya* is based on the Dharma and its adherence. Another point which is time and again came in the discussion that the life of the householder is of utmost importance and in order to attain renunciation one has to complete the life cycle according to *purusartha*. The Hindu always lives a life of a moral dilemma which is treated since very long in the Hindu literature, the dilemma is between renountcer and the enjoyer, between the self-control and power of enjoyment. For a Hindu thus, the moral awareness is very important and for it one has to lead a good life, the good life here means the consistent effort of self-improvement through attention to the proper dharmic life. The Hindu life tries to overcome the evils of the world, and it teaches not to fear death.

The birth and death are not separate but are recurrent event in a cosmological process. The traditional base of Hinduism is thus interpreted in this work as the view of man-in the world as the good life in contrast with the life of a renouncer.

10.11 Further Reading

Veena Das, (1982). *Structure and Cognition: Aspects of Hindu Caste and Ritual*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

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S.Ramakrishna (1927), *The Hindu View of Life*, George Allen and Unwin, London.