



## GUIDANCE OF “PUNYA”( PIETY) IN HISTORICAL HINDU LITERATURE

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### ABSTRACT

*Punya is Immensely deep concept of historical Hindu tradition, the word or expression denoting exactly the same sense is not found in English language; piety from Bible is an expression that comes close to Punya, however Punya is much more deeper and subtle in its totality of meaning. Punya is contrary to sin, Punya is grace that is received as outcome of good deeds. Hindu way of life is ancient and historical. Since time immemorial Hindu tradition has had sublime thought process. One of the concepts from it is ‘Punya’. In the ancient scriptures/literature like Ved. Ramayan, Mahabharat, Upnishad, Smruti have had this concept directing and impacting the Hindu life. In the medieval and modern times also the flow and inspiration of the concept Punya has been remained ignited in the Hindu life. In the present research the light is thrown on the concept of ‘Punya’.*

### OBJECTIVES

Objectives were defined at the beginning of the research-

- To collect references about the concept ‘Punya’
- To throw light on various aspects of the concept ‘Punya’
- To analyze ‘Punya’ concept in the way of life of a Hindu.

### Hypotheses

Hypotheses of the research were -

- ‘Punya’ has been the concept of religious binding

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- Social conditioning indicating morality was included in this concept.
- Value nurturing principles were inculcated in Hindu way of life through this concept
- The stimulants motivating welfare deeds are found in this concept.

This presented research wasn't done from outlook of philosophy, moral science or religion, but for the scope and limitation of it in view of historical research.

**The meaning of *Punya*-What it denotes**

*Punya* this Hindu word has several shades of meaning -

Auspicious, propitious, pious, sacred, holy, religious, virtuous, qualitative, just, divine, bountiful, wishful ,good deed, benediction, righteous, piety etc.

This concept expresses several emotions-feelings, that's why it is multi dimensional.

**According to Hindu tradition-**

The mind type energy (चित्त*chitta*) remains purified with a person doing good auspicious selfless deeds. The self realization( *Kaivalya/Moksha*) takes place in the purified *chitta* .

	<b>Sinful intend</b>	<b>Pious intend ( <i>Punya</i> flow)</b>
1.	Lust	Chastity
2.	Gluttony	Temperance
3.	Greed	Charity/ Generosity
4.	Sloth	Diligence
5.	Wrath	Forgiveness
6.	Eenvy	Kindness
7.	Pride	Humility

Thus, *Punya* intend flows in the tendency.

The sacred expression of soul consciousness –*Punya* happens through physical actions, speech and words and sacred waves and vibrations of mind. However if ego-lust, desire etc impurities are included in them the expressions are impure. This impure expression is unholy. The historical Hindu tradition seems to call it *Paap-sin*. Since ancient to modern, up to contemporary times flow of *Punya* has been the concept of sacredness- expression of purest consciousness.

**Hindu belief/ faith of *Punya***



*Punya* has always been a living concept in Hindu since ancient days and the belief of it is revealed through following principles..

- Religious concept
- Moral customs and ideas
- Socially accepted value
- The fruit of good deeds
- Strength and power gained by abiding to righteous rules
- In special period, special company or coming together
- The belief to go to hell by doing sinful acts and good deeds is way to heaven

### Customs about *Punya*

The following symbols, customs and rituals are found in Hindu traditions about *Punya*

- Truth is supreme religion, nonviolence is life vision, the god in the form of existence, from ignorance to knowledge, to see god in human, the world is a family

These Hindu values are found to be nurtured.

- “ Good deeds should be constantly done by a man; yet be not the speaker of your good deeds and do not publish it in the public is said by Deval.

He says- तस्मादात्मकृतं पुण्यं वृथानपरि कीर्तयेत् !

It means the benediction of good deeds is lost when spoken about; do not speak about your good deeds.<sup>1</sup>

- When a person is ready to be a householder on completing education, he is edified by Godlike Guru on the custom of impending life.

It is written in *Taitariy* Upnishad –

“ Be always a speaker of truth! And conduct moral! Never be away from truth- religion!

Never be away from wellbeing-favorable and appropriate conduct! Opt only for the actions blameless and condemn less !Abandon defective and reproachful!<sup>2</sup>(*Taitariy* Upnishad: 11-1 and 2 )

The journey of life must be done by the way of *Punya*. The ancient belief found in Hindu is that a life free from sin and lived doing good deeds is profound and great life. The doer of good deeds (*punyvan* person )has always been highly respected in Hindu society.



## Types of *Punya*–Meritorious Good Deeds

According to various references of Hindu tradition the types of *Punya* are as following-

### Types of *Punya* in the form of togetherness

- To be with spiritual Guru- spiritual entity
- Seeing God - to be in divine company, divine aura, god *Darshan*
- To touch a cow
- Holy bath in sacred river and visiting sacred divine place
- To have divine offering ( *Prasad* )

### Types of Welfare deeds as *Punya*

- To construct a public guest house ( *Dharmshala* ) at pilgrimage places
- To run community kitchen
- To donate food
- To donate education /knowledge ( *vidya-daan* )
- To donate land
- Various donation/charity work
- To serve sufferer/down trodden
- To follow righteous/religious conduct

### *Punya* from religious rituals

- Fasting
- Religious practices of fasting resolutions
- Religious rituals for good cause
- Reading ritual of religious texts/stories etc.
- Chanting
- To do *Yagna* – auspicious fire offerings
- *AgniHotra*( Fire ritual )
- Prayers, utterance of god-name, god remembrance

According to **Karmyoga** given in Gita, the expression of sin or piety goes with senses.

- Body- doing good for others, serving, sick care, loyalty of wife and husband, religious conduct
- Speech- truthful melodious speech, abstain from fault finding, righteous words, kind speech

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- Mind- auspicious contemplations, theist, abstinence from stealing (अस्तेय), non-accumulation etc are expressions of *Punya* (piety).

## Vaidik Outlook

Four Vedas are commentary on Hindu life. In Rigved, various power deeds of gods reveal the auspicious good deeds- *Punya* of gods. The actions that are favorable, benediction to all.

The concept of heaven and hell exist in Ved. In Vaidik culture Yagna- holy fire offerings had tremendous importance. The notions of five accomplishments (*panchyagna*) and debt (ऋण) are related to the idea of *Punya*. In householder stage of life, three debts (ऋण) were redeemed for the liberation, was considered good deeds (*Punya*).

1. God debt- liberation from god debt by studying *Ved*
2. Rishi debt- liberation from this debt by doing *Yagna*-sacred fire offerings
3. Fore-father debt- by begetting son liberation from forefather's debt.

Similarly five accomplishments had a great significance. First accomplishment is -Brahma *Yagna*- in that the study of Ved, second accomplishments is for forefathers for their peace and fulfillment, third is for gods- doing fire rituals, the next one is for spirits- rituals to appease them and the last one is for the unexpected guests-felicitation of visitors (अतिथी).

These five accomplishments would generate respect and faith in family, society and religion.

In vaidik era going away from truth was sin (सत्यप्रराध). The speech -the expressions off the truth was sin, it was uncultured, unreligious. In the rites meant for doing holy fire, various rituals, actions to evaporate sinful deeds are mentioned. " In Rig-ved to express the idea to not to sin words like *ahans, agh, atrut, aagas, enas, duratipapman, vruji* etc are included. The word ' *Pap* 'also comes in Rigved with meaning of it as sinner or misbehaving person." <sup>3</sup>Drinking causes sin, crimes cause sin, crossing the boundaries cause sin etc descriptions are found in it.

In Rigved truth, selfless donations, cooperation, mind oneness etc moral ideas are of a great value. It is written in Rigved( 10/190 ) that Truth and matter (ऋत) were born from penance( *tap* ) of almighty and the world came into existence after it. Alike Rigved , in Atharv-ved the good will in a person is exalted. Ved presents a belief that attachment and desire cause sin and sacrificing is *Punya*.

The notion of *Punya* flows in Vaidik culture through three moral ideas.



1. Religion ( welfare for all-the belief in truth )
2. Debt ( moral responsibilities or moral duties)
3. Endeavor ( earning, procreation, religion and salvation )

### Perspective of Sutra Era ( *sutrayug* )

The period 600 BC is known for sutra literature. Nirukta Sutra of Yaska is of a great importance in Sutra literature. The customs, rituals, rules and rites of religious precepts are mentioned in it. Other important sutras are- *shraut sutra*, *Gruhsutra*, *Ashtaydhyai*, *Dharmasutra*. In Dharmashastra theft, other woman relations-illicit sex and homicide are told to be worst sins. In Dharmasutra the steps of sins and classifications are given- ( अतिपातक ) Extremely damaging act, heinous deeds (अतिपातक), Worst deeds (महापातक), Venial actions (अनुपातक), Away from duty (जातिभ्रश), Impure+ illegibilization (अपात्रीकरण), Incidental bad acts (प्रकीर्ण).

Various sins and atonement penances are depicted in *Dharmasutra*. A list of sins is given by Gautama in Dharmasutra, for instance-false witnessing, slandering to the king, lying to the Guru etc are told to be heinous sins. In *Gruhsutra* the discussion on life of people is given. For instance- marriage, ethical conditioning, cast and creed, aashram etc, in it Hindu customs, path of conduct, moral beliefs are revealed.

### Flow of *Punya* ( piety ) in Epic Ramayana

In view of Ramayana, having the soul belief ( *aatmsthiti* ) that we are supreme consciousness, sans any bondages, omnipresent and pure, causes peaceful mind, mind type emery (चित्त) and good deeds will take place. This is also called soul contemplation (आत्मचिंतन). The mind is purified with soul contemplation and ignorance is eradicated, prejudices and rigidity are wiped out and supreme bliss is gained.

Supreme god is supreme consciousness is the only truth.; all the life forms seen are reflections of the same, says Ramayana. The soul is omnipresent, infinite, pure, blissful and eternal. The soul and supreme god ( *परमतत्व* ) are two sides of the same coin. The Ramayana written by sage Valmiki is the life guiding sacred book of Hindu since ages.



The life of Rama depicted in Ramayana is pure, sacred and beautiful. Ram is personification of truth and morality. He is ideal son, ideal brother, ideal husband and ideal king.

In the depiction of *Ramrajya* (kingdom of Ram) auspicious *Punya* light of illumination is described. No one dies due to sudden untimely death. Every person is hale and healthy, sans any decease. The women were never had to face the sorrow of death of husband or son.

In the kingdom no person was thief, robber, deceiver, corrupt, black marketer. People loved each other soulfully. The trees blossomed in the appropriate season. Drought, flood, natural calamity were absent. The beauty was sacred. The agriculture farming were favorable producing bountiful harvest. The people were happy, contented, pure and transparent (निरभ्र). On the other side materialistic Ravan (egoist, lustful) devilish head of Lanka was symbol of sin.

In *Ramamyana* life of Ram is journey of *Punya*. The message of Ramayana is -refrain from seeing faults in others, have control on mind, speech and body, abandon evilness, do devout worship and good deeds, never give up truth, be always cheerful and victorious to your senses, do not have attachments.

### **Bhagwatgita and meritorious living ( life lived in flow of Punya )**

Cheerful heart, victory over desires, peaceful body and unattached mind are the signs of *satv* qualities reveal merits ( *Punya* ) says Gita. “ *Punya* denotes to something that doesn’t lead to any kind of unnatural, That is fundamentally *Punya*.”<sup>4</sup> (Bhagvat Gita- 7<sup>th</sup> chapter/ *shloka* 9 ) Any action infused with ego can not be “ *Punya*”. The one who knows truth essence his actions are egoless. “ I am not doer of any deeds” work done with this feel is a good deed that turns out to be *Punya*, edifies Gita. The work done selflessly without expectation of fruits reveals *Punya*.

Gita says *Satva* quality is free from sinfulness yet it is bondage to liberation; it brings forth attachment to life happiness and life knowledge. It conveys the message of liberating from *Punya* as well. *Satva* quality is expressed through action senses and knowing senses of mind. *Tam* quality leads to lethargy, unawareness, illusions and afflictions, inactiveness, sleepiness. *Raj* quality reveals volatility, action-deeds, and expectations of fruits. *Satv* quality generates attachment to happiness; to go beyond qualities the supreme purest consciousness that is eternal, immortal, perpetual, unbiased must be remembered, contemplated, investigated, enquired and worshipped, says Gita.

### **In the era of Dharmashastra**

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The period of Dharmashastra was 300 to 500 BC.

*Smritis*- auspicious commentaries on life and living were written by Manu, Vishnu, Yagyvalky, Narad, Paarasara, Katyayan, Bruhaspati during this period. The descriptions of Hindu rituals, conduct, life concept are written in *Manusmriti*, *Yagyvalkyasmriti*, *ParasharSmriti*, *NaradSmriti*, *Vishnu Smriti*.

In Smart Dharmashastra some heinous actions are mentioned as following-

- “Cow slaughter, animal killing, suicide
- Food offered as *Shraddh*- to dead forefathers /inauspicious food/ inappropriate consumption of food
- Stealing act/ abnormal connect ( अकाम्यागमन ) /illicit relations/ animal sex
- Incorrect living ( प्रताप ) / getting married before elder brother (परिवेदन)
- Bad touch/ infliction / animal bite
- Not to return loan
- Not to do holy fire ritual ( avoid agnihotra )
- To sell unholy, prohibited items
- Polluting daughter
- Renouncing holy fire
- Destroying tree/ unholy donations/ unnatural merging ( संकरीकरण )
- False accusations/ falsifications/ defamation/ false evidence
- Impersonation , unholy dance / pain by mimicry
- Giving up daily holy rituals”<sup>5</sup>

*Manusmriti* is an ancient book on Hindu code of conduct. . In the fifth chapter of *Manusmriti* the descriptions of purifying things, honest earnings, body filth, man woman relations etc are found. In it Hindu morality is stated. Likewise in the sixth chapter of *Manusmriti* the descriptions on refraining from non vegetarian food, kindness to animals, non-accumulation of things, staying at distance from praise and criticism, renouncing laziness, importance of god veneration are included. In the eighth chapter of *Manusmriti* false witnessing, false speech, crime and punishment are stated. In the eleventh chapter the penance for evil deeds, eating unholy- cow slaughter, -*Brahmhatrya* are described. The last chapter i.e. twelfth chapter soul knowledge, equanimity life vision are described in *Manusmriti*.

The fundamental theory of walking the profound path of life by god surrender, spiritual practices, devout austerity ,etc are delineated. Many a things in *Manusmriti* seem unacceptable to new mentality, however the experts of scriptures say about *Manusmriti*-“





*Manusmriti* is in accordance with the meaning of Ved, that's what makes it prominent." 6The ancient Hindu believed that *Manusmriti* directed life and educated on conduct; it also presented the path of salvation and tuning with truth. *Manusmriti* tells of that conformity to religious behavior is equaled with meritorious living-*Punya* path.

In *Manusmriti* the signs of religion ( in the form of sin and *Punya* ) in Hindu traditional life are given as following-

धृतिःक्षमादमोडस्तेयंशौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः !!धीविद्यासत्यमक्रोधोदशकंधर्मलक्षणम !!

### 10 *Punya* deeds- Meritorious acts -

1. *Druti*धृति – patience in every situation
2. *Kshama*क्षमा-forgiving- not to be vindictive, not to indulge in anger despite cause for the anger
3. *Dam*दम- Not to be aggressive
4. *Astey*अस्तेय-Not to think of appropriating anybody's thing/ possession
5. *Shauch*शौच-purity in food, purity of body-mind
6. *EndriyNigrah*इन्द्रियनिग्रह -Control of senses- not allow senses to go impure or indulge in desires
7. *Dhee*धि- know anything
8. *Vidya*विद्या- knowing of religion, earning, desire and salvation
9. Truthसत्य- tuning with truth
10. *Akrodh*अक्रोध- not get angry in adversity of offence, slandering, criticism.

### 10 sins

1. The desire to appropriate someone's wealth
2. Various abhorrent deeds
3. To take body as everything
4. Harsh speech
5. Lying
6. Slandering
7. Chattering unnecessarily
8. Stealing
9. Causing sorrow to others by body, mind and actions
10. Illicit relations with other woman or other man

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## Perception of Hindu Darshanas

Six darshana of india are fundamental contemplations of life. *Sankhyadarshan* of Kapil ( 3200 B C ) , *Yogdarshana* of Patanjali ( 200 BC) *VaishvikDarshan* of Kanad ( 1000 BC ) , *NyayDarshan* of Gautam ( 500BC ) *MimansaDarshana* of Jemini ( 400 BC ) Badrayan's *VedantDarshan* ( 800 BC )

According to *NyayDarshan*- “ To indicate righteousness and unrighteousness the concepts of piety (*Punya* ) and sin exist. *Punya* of self is expressed in welfare of others whereas sin is expressed in damaging others. With this perspective “duties” are righteous conduct.” 7.

## Upanishad and *Punya*

To seat near Guru to learn soul knowledge is Upanishad. Upanishads are called *Vedant* ( end of Ved) Upanishads are several.

- Inspired by Rigved: *Aitereya* Upanishad.
- *Kausitaki*
- Inspired by Yajurved: *kanth, shwetashwet, esh, Bruhdarnyak, Prashn, Mundak*
- Inspired by Saamved: *Kena and Chandogya*

According to Vedanta “ *Punya* ” is invisible wealth. *Punya* is seed of happiness and sin is seed of sorrow. All the pains and pangs are evaporated by *Punya* and the journey towards liberation begins with it.

According to *BruhdarnyakUpanishad* after death the deeds done in human life determine the direction of liberation.

A *shloka* in *ChandogyaUpanishad* has a reference “ पुण्यजितलोकः ” ( blissful *Brahmlok* ).

King Ashwapati says with pride-

“ In my kingdom there is no thief; violent, armed person is not found. There is no drunkard, no body who refrains from doing agnihotra- holy ritual, nobody is ignorant and naïve, nobody is loose in the conduct, no body is womanizer.” 8 (*Chandogya* 5,11,5 )

Five Heinous acts that degrade man ( theft, relation with other woman, addictions, unrighteous acts, homicide ) are stated in it.

According to *upnishad* “By snapping off the bondages of desires, the one who submerges into blissful soul form is a free human being.” 9



## Retribution in Chanakya's *Arthshastra* Script

Chanakya considered crimes as sin ( abhorrent act ). In his book *Arthshastra* he narrates various crime and retribution, some of them are –

- Hanging for opening secret plan
- 250 coins ( पण ) if renounced life to be monk without making living arrangements for women and daughters
- 250 coins ( पण ) for false coins in treasury
- Death penalty for using gems of treasury
- If the account is not given in time, the punishment is of ten times of the amount.
- Thumbs are chopped if the material given for artistry is stolen.
- The prostitute is thrown in fire who kills a man
- If walked around disguised or armed in night, punishment of a criminal
- Death penalty on raping a married woman
- Asking donations by threatening , punishment like thief
- Robbing leads to death penalty
- A murderer gets death by torture
- Death for false order on the name of king or using false royal stamp
- In rape if the unmarried girl dies penalty for culprit
- A woman who falsely accuses a man for sexual advances, 200coins ( पण ) punishment
- Snapping off the tongue of offender of guru-spiritual devout ( *tapasvi* )

Several crimes and retribution are written by Chanakya. Chanakya was of the view that the vices in human are due to lack of knowledge and education. “ Three types of transgressions occur due to anger ( harsh speech, destruction of valuables, harsh governance )

Four types of transgressions take place owing to lust-desire for self-gratification ( hunting, gambling, to have woman and drinking )”<sup>10</sup> If spiritual strength attained , if in the company of wise, experienced, spiritual devout, if senses are kept in check, anger and libido remains in control, states Chanakya.

## References from various Vaidik literature

Sin is absence of piety. In vaidik literature 49 sins are included -

“cow slaughter/illicit relation / selling against soul / renouncing spiritual guru/ renouncing mother/ renouncing father/ not taking care of father/ giving up spiritual studies/ giving up fire ritual /Renouncing son/ marrying younger before elder/marrying daughter to bad person

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/living on unreligious resource / inebriation / polluting girl /away from rituals / living off  
abhorrent / renouncing oath ( celibate taking up sexual relation)/child sale / selling liquor/  
selling offsprings/ marriage not fixed at right age / renouncing brother/ giving knowledge by  
taking money/ selling items morally not meant for selling/ ownership on gold silver mines/  
Extra use traditional oil machine, running machine to sharpen weapons/ hypnotism / to chop  
living tree/ not doing rituals for gods and departed ancestors despite good health/ consuming  
abhorrent food/ theft misappropriation/ not repaying loan / studying of false scriptures/ art  
deeds ( constant indulgence in dance-musical instruments )/ stealing of grains/ stealing of  
animals/ besides gold and silver stealing of other mettles/ sexual liaison with woman who  
drinks. / killing a woman/ killing of *shudra*( lower caste person )/ killing of trader  
(*vaishya*)/killing a Brahman./ killing a warrior/ atheism”<sup>11</sup>

The life of those who refrain from sins is considered pure. In *Puran* too description of sin and piety is given. *Puran* means ancient commentary; there are 18 prominent *puran* and 29 sub-*Puran* in the form of stories. Likewise in ancient times *Homandri*, *Rakhunandan*, *Narayan Bhatt*, *Chandeshware* etc wrote essays. Discussions on the same are found in them too.

### Other ancient references

In other religious streams like Buddha, Jain, Charvak, the concept of *Punya* is analysed; some of the explanations found in research is presented here. In four pillars of householder's life- earning, procreation, religion, liberation, the flow of piety is necessary, was Hindu belief and for that the structure of religion, holy fire, debt was in Hindu. Good meritorious deeds generate auspicious energy in way of life. Sacred strength (power source) is created and transformation to soul realization takes place, this explanation is found in Bodhisattva stories. Desire for matter is root cause of sorrow, believes Buddha *darshana*, sacred cosmic intelligence-purity-compassion is the sacred way and eight folded path to keep life in equilibrium. Non violence, no stealing, no illicit relation, no lying, no indulgence in addiction, -this five precepts were guiding principles for sacred pure meritorious life.

According to Buddha customs meritorious deeds are-

- Donation to deserving
- To follow moral conduct
- Expansion and development of good thoughts in mind
- To serve and care taking
- Respect and serve mother father and teachers
- Spread fragrance of your *Punya*
- Accepting *Punya* of others.



- Regular listening of pure religion precepts
- To spread precepts of pure religion
- Eradication of faults

Buddha religion prohibits lying, slandering, harsh speech, unnecessary talk, stealing, violence, envy-hatred, immoral conduct. It is believed that the root of sin is 'desire'. The religious signs good will, selfless love, faith on truth, purity, emotional generosity and kindness are found in Buddha Darshan. Desire (lust, desire for gratification, libido, ambition, lacking) cause sin, according to Buddha tradition.

According to **Jain Darshan** the grace of meritorious deeds fetches happiness to the being and *Punya* blesses him to enjoy happiness. It is told to cause physical-speech – mind impact bringing happiness and liberation to the good doer. It is presented in Jain *Darshan* that in nine ways *Punya* grace is received and there are 82 ways to enjoy the favours granted by good deeds. Jain is of the opinion that *Punya* is also a bondage. A man is to experience benediction of his good deeds peacefully and to walk on the path of liberation towards *Nirvan*. The results of sin are experienced in the form of sorrow whereas the outcome of good deeds are experienced in the form of joyous happiness. However to attain Nirvana the boat of auspicious deeds is to cross the ocean of the *samsara*. Afterwards renounce boat (*Punya*) and step into squaring up karmas (*nirjara*) and ultimate salvation (*Nirvana*).

***Nine Punya of Jain Darshan are as following:***

1. Piety of food- giving food donations
2. Piety of water-giving water
3. Piety of land-giving land
4. Piety of rest- giving rest and comfort
5. Piety of clothes-giving clothes
6. Piety of mind- auspicious feelings and emotions
7. Piety of words-auspicious speech
8. Piety of actions-serving others in humility
9. Piety of bowing to god-surrender to god and pure souls

### **Approach of Shankaracharya**

Shankaracharya was a great non-dualistic philosopher, spiritual entity. Deep devotion was his being. He spread his non dualistic philosophy across India and religious reforms brought into practice. He inspired people to for eternal attainment of truth. Shankaracharya says in his book "Vivek Chudamani"



“ How would be sin and piety for me- that is without any limbs- without mind and speech- without change-without any form?” <sup>12</sup>(VivekChudamani, pg-504 )

It says that the outcome of auspicious deeds is ‘grace’ ( *Punya*), and outcome of inauspicious deeds is ‘sin’. In spite of this the limitation of *Punya* is also narrated by Shankaracharya. He edifies by saying beyond *Punya* exist soul and super-soul.

### Edification of Medieval Indian saints

Hindu tradition was guided by devotional Movement of medieval period. Kabirdas says-

“कबीरासंगतिसाधुकी , हरेऔरकीव्याधी  
संगतीबुरीअसाधुकी, आठोंपहरउपाधि”

Kabir tells about the company one has determines the quality of life one has; the path of piety or road of sin, the company one keeps determines the life pious or sinful.

Meera, Tulsidas, Ravidas, Ramanand, Vallabhacharyaetc expressed devotion.

### Saint Dhyaneshwar says-

Religious rituals like chanting , penance, holy fire offerings etc if done with expectation of fruit they are as good as sin. Any work or religious practices done in egoless selfless manner, with no expectations , is “pure piety”.In medieval period , along with dhyneshwar saints like Namdev, Eknath, Tukaram, Ramdas preached on life knowledge ( *jeevanvidya* ).

- Prayerful life is meritorious life” while presenting this believe Guru Nanak gave five prayer types- 1. Devout to truth 2. Do only what is sacred 3. Charity on the name of god 4. Good intend 5. Exalting lord-describing lord.
- In BangalChaitanya sect of Krishnchaitanya was spreading *Punya*.
- In medieval period Varkari sect, Datta sect, Dharkari sect, Mahanubhav sect etc kept the flow of *Punya* ignited in Maharashtra.

“ Devotion has a great importance in Hindu religion. Devotion is precious treasure of Hindu religion. For the welfare of mankind, profound work done by devotion has been exalted.” <sup>13</sup>

Various devotional paths in india such as Vaishnav, Shaiv, Shakt, Sufi, Sikh etc have kept the flow of sacred piety illuminated. While revealing philosophy of devotion Shankaracharya( non-dual philosophy ), Ramanujan ( special dual philosophy ), Nimbark (dual & non dual philosophy ), Madhavacharya( Philosophy of duality), Vallabhacharya ( pure oneness) have thrown light on sin and piety as well. This is a prominent feature of medieval India.

### Piety in Modern India



In modern india too awareness and understanding of *Punya* concept has been observed. Swami Dayanand Saraswati says about pious conduct-“ man should think deeply on all scriptures, ved, conduct of good people, all the things not against our soul, use eyes of spiritual knowledge, take *shruti* as proof, and follow the religion suitable to yourself.”<sup>14</sup> The reasons for going away from flow of piety are elaborated by Shriramkrishn Paramhansa, “Woman and gold keep a man trapped in worldly life –*samsara*, they don’t let him go to god.”<sup>15</sup> It means materialism (fascination for worldly things-desires) prevents *Punya* to enter in life.

When soul-strength is depleted sin occurs. On this Swami Vivekanand says-

“ Vedant doesn’t believe in existence of sin, it only believes existence of delusions. I am weak, I am sinner, I am sad, I have no strength, I am incapable to do any work’, such talks are giant illusions.”<sup>16</sup>

Yogi Arvindo called motherland ‘ Divine Mother’. In accordance with state of consciousness reflection of a man is revealed.

Contemplative philosophers Osho, J Krishnmurti, Raman Maharshi, Mehr Baba, Dr. Radhakrishnana, Rajgopalachari have contemplated deeply and analysed *Punya* and liberation. The stream of ancient Hindu tradition has taken forward to new age by them.

### Important Observations

While investigating on the concept of *Punya* some observations are noted.

#### 1. Negativity ( inauspiciousness )

Negative destructive thoughts –imagination-emotions- mental flaws are more harmful than enemy and grace (*Punya*) is depleted in their company.

#### 2. Contemplation on eternal-immortal

Any thought, imagination, emotion of matter causes sorrow and suffering. Whereas remembrance of god, supreme soul, truth, peace, love, kindness, compassion etc eternal ( immortal ) consciousness gives stress freeness, freedom from sadness, freedom from pain and bliss.

#### 3. State beyond qualities ( Beyond qualities )



Piety is not possible with raj( रज) and tam( तम) qualities; satv(सत्त्व)quality infuses body-mind energy to express piety. However, the state beyond satv quality is liberation. This is a state ahead of *Punya*.

#### 4. Equanimity- Liberation

Piety ( happiness ) sin ( sorrow ) are the forms of righteousness and unrighteousness.

However going beyond them, in a state of witnessing-alooofness-in state of equilibrium liberation happens.

#### 5. Piety for liberation

Life energy is purified with piety, mind type energy ( *chitta* )is cleansed , this assists in liberation.

### CONCLUSION

The research has resulted in some conclusions, they are-

1. Piety is religious concept. In Hindu unrighteousness and sin are synonymous.
2. Piety and sin both are considered worldly-of physical world. The belief is to go beyond both of them to be liberated. Equilibrium is believed to be liberated state.
3. The belief that when piety ( in actions done from body, speech, intention ) is flown in life, energy strength and power are gained for salvation and attaining *Moksha*, is found in Hinduthoughts.
4. The faith that piety brings happiness and sin invites sorrow, is found at the root of thinking.
5. Analyses of pious actions (body, mind, speech), are located in traditions-streams.
6. When piety is taking place or flowing in life, it has to be free from pre conceived purpose or intention (selfless actions ), this is believed by the Hindu tradition. The actions are not meant to gratify the self but to connect to a sacred offering , this propensity is observed in the historical tradition.
7. The concept of piety has been guiding light for the various paths of theist Hindu.

### EPILOGUE

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In historical Hindu tradition the concept of piety has been inspirational showing moral direction. Various sects and paths, point of views of Hindu have largely unanimous acceptance of religious piety. In various parts of India the concept of piety has been proven to be important and most of the elements of it has remained the same all over. Thus in the history of Hindu the concept of piety has unparallel importance. An important concept of Hindu life knowledge is *Punya* consciousness.

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**PUNE RESEARCH**

ISSN 2454-3454

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN ENGLISH

**VOL 4, ISSUE 2**

UGC Approved Journal No 48520 (Arts & Humanities) ENGLISH

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**UGC Approved Journal No 48520 (Arts & Humanities) ENGLISH**

**VOL 4, ISSUE 2**

**[www.puneresearch.com/english](http://www.puneresearch.com/english)**

**MAR – APR 2018**

**(IMPACT FACTOR 3.02) INDEXED, PEER-REVIEWED / REFEREED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL**