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**SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
: INDIAN, WESTERN**



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Unit- 7 : Social and Political Philosophy: Indian

Mahabharata

This unit will provide us with a clear understanding of the concept of the Rajadharma of Ved Vyasa. He is one of the greatest sages in the history of the Hindu religious world. He is unanimously considered the author of the popular and lengthiest epic the Mahabharat. He was born of sage Parashara and Satyavati. Vyasa appears for the first time as the compiler of, and an important character in the Mahabharata. Shanti Parva is an important part or book among 18 books of the Indian Epic Mahabharat. The political philosophy of Vyasa in Mahabharat is mainly found in Shantiparva. It generally depicts the narration of Bhishma on his death bed to Yudhistira about Rajadharma. The origin of the State (Rajya) as well as the office of the king and the evolving of Raja Dharma the law conferring power on the king to maintain the rule of law and the directives for the exercise of power has been explained in Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata. This unit will also broadly discuss the life and works of Vyasa, the Concept of Rajadharma in Mahabharat, Shantiparva on Caste, and Governance.

Ved Vyasa, the author of the great epic Mahabharat, is known as MaharshiVyasa in Hindu tradition. He is generally considered the author of the Mahabharata, as well as a character in it. He is considered to be the scribe of both the Vedas and Puranas. The festival of Guru Purnima is dedicated to him. It is also known as Vyasa Purnima, for it is the day believed to be both his birthday and the day he divided the Vedas.

Vyasa appears for the first time as the compiler of, and an important character in, the Mahabharata. It is said that he was the expansion of the god Vishnu who came in Dwapara Yuga to make all the Vedic knowledge available in written form which was available in spoken form at that time. He was the son of Satyavati, the daughter of VasuUparichara and the adopted daughter of the fisherman Dasharaj, and sage Parashara (who is credited with being the author of the first Purana: Vishnu Purana), son of sage Vasishtha.

Vyasa was born on an island in the Yamuna River, according to legend Satyavati, the mother of Vyasa used to drive a boat in her youth in the river Yamuna. One day, she helped Parashara to cross the river Yamuna. He was enchanted by her beauty and wanted an heir from her. Initially, Satyavati did not agree, telling that if others would see them, then her purity would be questioned. Parashara created a secret place in the bushes of a nearby island and a blanket of thick fog. She conceived and immediately gave birth to a son. Parashara named him Krishna Dvaipayana, referring to his dark complexion and birthplace. Dvaipayana became an adult and promised his mother that he would come to

her when needed. Parashara restored Satyavati's virginity, gifted her an enchanting smell, and left with his son. Satyavati kept this incident a secret, not telling even King Shantanu whom she was married to later.

Later, Chitrangada and Vichitravirya were born in Shantanu and Satyavati. But, both of them passed away early without leaving an heir. There were two wives of Vichitravirya named Ambika and Ambalika. The bereaved Satyavati initially pleaded before her stepson Bhishma to marry both the queens to preserve the royal ascendancy, but he refused to do so, citing his vow of celibacy. Thus, Satyavati, at last, revealed her secret past and requested Bhishma to bring her first child Vyasa to impregnate the widows of Vichitravirya under a tradition called Niyoga. By this time, Vyasa had compiled the four Vedas. Sage Vyasa was looking so untidy because of his prolonged meditation in the dense forest. Hence upon seeing him, Ambika became afraid and closed her eyes with fear which resulted in a birth of a blind child who was named Dhritarashtra. The other queen, Ambalika, turned pale upon meeting Vyasa, as a result, their child was born with a pale body and who later named Pandu. Having been dissatisfied with all these, Satyavati requested her son Vyasa to meet Ambika again and grant her another son. But, Ambika sent her maid in her place to Vyasa. The obedient maid was calm and peaceful during their meeting, so their child was born with good health who was later named Vidura.

According to Skanda Purana, Maharshi Vyasa was wedded with Vatika alias Pinjala, the daughter of a sage Jabali. They had a son named Shuka, he was his spiritual successor and heir. There were four other disciples of Maharshi Vyasa, they were Paula, Jaimini, Vaishampayana, and Sumantu. Each one of them was

separately given the responsibility to disseminate the ideas of the four Vedas. Paula was made in charge of the Rig-Veda, Jaimini was assigned of the Samaveda, Vaishampayana of the Yajurveda, and Sumantu of Atharvaveda.

Vyasa is believed to have his abode on the bank of the river Ganga in modern day Uttarakhand. The site was also the ritual residence of the sage Vashishta and the Pandavas, the five brothers of the Mahabharata.

Owing to his dark complexion and birthplace, Maharshi Vyasa was known as Krishna Dvaipayana in his childhood. He is referred to as Veda Vyasa because he is believed to have arranged the single eternal Veda into four Vedas. The four Vedas are:

- Rig-Veda
- Sama Veda
- Yajur Veda
- Atharva Veda

The word Vyasa' means compiler,' arranger,' It also resembles the word split,' differentiator describe'. The word Vyasa is also used for a holy sage or a pious learned man known for his distinguished writings.

It is generally believed in Hindu tradition that Vyasa had categorized the single Veda into four Vedas to make them easily comprehensible for the common people. Hence, he was called Veda Vyasa, or Splitter of the Vedas'. However, different Puranas and literature have illustrated Vyasa in different ways, which are discussed as follows:

Vyasa was not only regarded as the author of the epic but also remembered as an important character in it. To write the Mahabharat, Vyasa asked Lord Ganesha to assist him but Lord Ganesha placed a condition that he would help him to compose the text only if Vyasa would narrate him the story without pausing. In response to him, Vyasa also set a counter-condition that Ganesha should understand the verses first before drafting them. Thus, Vyasa narrated the entire Mahabharata to Lord Ganesha while he was writing down those.

Vyasa is also believed as the author of the eighteen major Puraṇas of Hindu tradition. His son Shuka was mentioned as the narrator of the Bhagavata Purana to Arjuna's grandson Parikshit.

Badarayana was credited with writing the Brahma Sutras, one of Vedanta's core books and he was also known as Vyasa in some writings, which means —one who arranges. Vaishnava Acharyas mentioned Badarayana as Vyasa. However, some modern historians believe that these were two distinct persons. According to them, there may have been more than one Vyasa or the name Vyasa may have been used several times for the texts. Vyasa is believed to have documented, compiled much of the ancient Hindu literature. He is generally considered the original writer of the great epic the Mahabharat.

THE CONCEPT OF RAJADHARMA IN MAHABHARATA (SHANTI PARVA)

The Shanti Parva is the twelfth of eighteen books of the Indian epic Mahabharata. It has 3 sub-books and 365 chapters. The critical edition has 3 sub-books and 353 chapters. It is the longest book among the eighteen books of the Mahabharat. The book depicts the post-war where the two sides have accepted peace and Yudhishtira was enthroned to rule the Pandava kingdom. The Shanti Parva explains the duties of the ruler, dharma, and good governance, illustrated by the dying Bhishma and various sages. Shanti Parva has been widely studied for its treatises on jurisprudence, prosperity, and success. Shanti Parva recites a theory of governance and the duties of a leader. This theory is outlined by dying Bhishma to Yudhishtira and his brothers (shown), as well as words from sage Vidura.

Shanti Parva is a treatise on the duties of a king and his government, dharma (laws and rules), proper governance, rights, justice and describes how these create prosperity.

The Political Philosophy of Vyasa and his notion of Rajadharma is mainly found in Shanti Parva of Mahabharata. It contains one of the most comprehensive and profound discussions on kingship, the duties of a king as well as subjects, and the whole historical process of order and anarchy; manifest and unmanifest which are expected to happen alternatively in the historical process. Vyasa's discussion on virtue, right, astronomy, and other sciences was also extremely comprehensive. Vyasa also subscribed to the four types of classification of society and activities such as Devotion to knowledge, Ruling, Production, and Menial labour. He defines Dharma (Right) as the activity which maintains balance and harmony among all other activities and thereby sustains them and leads to the supreme good of all.

Rajadharma

Raja dharma is a Sanskrit term that means the duty of the rulers or kings'. The concept of Rajadharma was intrinsically entwined with the concept of bravery and Kshatriya dharma according to the Hindu scriptures. The concept of Rajadharma generally constitutes the judicious duties of the king towards his subjects. The basic concern of the Rajadharma is the welfare and prosperity of the people or subjects in a kingdom under a ruler. It means taking care of subjects or Prajapalana is the prime duty of the king.

According to ancient Hindu classics, Rajadharma was pertinent to ensure justice, peace, and prosperity for people. Raja dharma is described as an essential element of state administration. According to this, the king was expected to perform his duties righteously so that no person will be deprived of justice and hence there would be no suffering of people in the kingdom. Hence, such a kingdom is known as Dharmarajya and the ruler as Dharmaraj.

The origin of the State (Rajya), the office of the king, and the evolving of Raja Dharma the law conferring power on the king to maintain the rule of law and the directives for the exercise of power have been explained in Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata. After the devastating war of Kurukshetra between the Pandavas and the Kauravas in which the former came out victorious, Yudhistira, the eldest of the Pandava brothers requested Bhishma, who was the master of Rajadharma to expound the same to him and he did so. The Shanthi Parva of Mahabharata incorporates Bhishma's authoritative exposition of the origin and purpose of the state, the rule of law, the institution of kingship, and the duties and the powers of the king. Great stress is laid on the personal character and qualities

which a king in whom vast political power is vested must possess for the proper and effective discharge of his functions. Raja dharma, so clearly laid out is vast like an ocean, consists of invaluable and eternal principles worthy of emulation under any system of polity and by all persons exercising political power. The Mahabharata discourse on the topic of Rajadharma discloses that in the very early periods of civilization in this country great importance was attached to Dharma and it was self-imposed by individuals. Consequently, everyone was acting according to Dharma and there was no necessity of any authority to compel obedience to the laws. There was the existence of a stateless society. In such type of an ideal stateless society, People were acting according to Dharma and thereby protecting one another.

Such a society was the most ideal one for the reason that every individual scrupulously acted according to the rules of right conduct by the force of his own culture and habit and not out of any fear of being punished by a powerful superior authority like the state. Consequently, there was cooperation and protection. Society was free from the evils arising from selfishness and exploitation by individuals. The sanction which enforced such implicit obedience to Dharma was the faith of the people in it as also the fear of incurring divine displeasure if Dharma was disobeyed. However, the ideal society so beautifully described did not last long. While, the faith in the efficacy and utility of Dharma, belief in God, and the God-fearing attitude of people continued to dominate society, the actual state of affairs gradually deteriorated. A situation arose when some persons, out of selfish worldly desires, began to flout Dharma and became immune to the fear of divine displeasure. They were infatuated with pleasure and prompted by their muscle power, began to exploit and torment the weaker sections of society for their selfish ends. The tyranny of the strong over the weak reigned unabated. The danger to peaceful co-existence and consequent uncertainty and anxiety about the safety of life and property of individuals was brought about by such individuals. It was as though the rule of 'Matsyanyaya' (big fish devouring small fish) governed society. This situation forced the law-abiding people to search for a remedy. This resulted in the creation of the institution of kingship and the establishment of his authority (kingship or the state) and the formulation of Raja Dharma which corresponds to modern constitutional law which specifies and limits the exercise of the power of the different limbs and departments of the state.

There was no difference between the ideals kept before the state by Rajadharma and those enshrined in the hearts of individuals. The ideals placed before the individual, for purposes of the welfare and happiness of himself and all others in this world, were

Dharma, Artha, and Kama (Trivarga). Every individual was asked to reject Artha and Kama (material wealth and desires) if they conflicted with Dharma. The ideal of Rajadharma placed before the state was to assist and support the achievement by individuals of the threefold ideals (Trivarga) and to ensure that they secure wealth (Artha) and fulfill their desires (Kama) in conformity with Dharma and do not transgress Dharma. The propounders of Dharmasastra declared that the king (State) was necessary to maintain the society in a state of Dharma which was essential for the fulfillment of Artha and Kama. Raja dharma, which laid down the Dharma of the king, was paramount. All Dharmas are merged in Rajadharma, and it is, therefore, the Supreme Dharma.

The paramount importance of kingship and the profound influence a king has on the state of society has been pithily expressed in the Mahabharata. —Whether it is the king who is the maker of the age or the age that makes the king is a question about which there is no room for doubt. The king is undoubtedly the maker of the age. This affirmation is an eternal truth. The ruler, under whatever system of polity, is largely responsible for the state of the nation or society, and whether people, in general, are virtuous or not largely depends upon the character and conduct of the ruler and his capacity to enforce Dharma, i.e., the rule of law. It is for this reason that Rajadharma was considered supreme as the protector of the people since Dharma was entirely dependent upon the effective implementation of Rajadharma.

Shanti Parva on Caste

The 188th and 189th chapters of Shanti Parva delineate the theory of Varna espoused by sage Bhrigu. This describes Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras as white, red, yellow, and black respectively in colour. Rishi Bharadwaj described how castes were created and discriminated against despite the similarities in people's desire, experience, fear and anger, and so on. He asked Bhrigu the question that though the people from all castes and classes born in the same way, have the same colour of blood and die in the same way then why caste still existed and was prevalent in the society. In reply, Bhrigu explained that there was no difference among castes. It came into existence because of the differentiation of work, people were assigned different works, and accordingly, they were clubbed in different castes. No duty and rites were forbidden to anyone. John Muir opines that the Shanti Parva and Anushasan Parva claim neither birth, nor initiation, nor descent, nor bookish knowledge determines a person's merit; only their actual conduct, expressed qualities, and virtues determine their merits. According to Shanti Parva of the Mahabharat, no caste in the society is superior to any caste in the society.

Shanti Parva on Governance

The Shanti Parva mentioned the duties of a king and rules of proper governance through more than a hundred chapters. It argues that truth and justice must be the key to the governance of a prosperous kingdom. According to chapter 58 of Shanti Parva, a ruler should pursue truth and act sincerely to make people happy and prosperous. Chapter 88 says that the king should impose a tax on people judiciously so that they cannot be deprived of their wealth. It means good for someone should not be done at the cost of another's life. Chapter 267 suggests the judicial staff to reflect before sentencing, only sentence punishment that is proportionate to the crime, avoid harsh and capital punishments, and never punish the innocent relatives of a criminal for the crime. Chapters 15 and 90 expresses that the ruler should rule in accordance with Dharma, he should avoid luxurious life and live a humble and simple life. According to Shanti Parva, Dharma is defined not in terms of rituals or any religious connotation but in terms of the principle which facilitates the ideas of Satya (truth), Ahimsa (non-violence), Asteya (non-stealing of property created by another), Shoucham (purity), and Dama (restraint). The ruler should always follow the path of Dharma to make the welfare of all living beings without harming anyone.

The fowler and the pigeon

Shanti Parva illustrates many fables and tales, among those, the fable of the fowler and the pigeons is an illustrative one. This fable is generally explained by Bhishma to Yudhishtira to make him understand the values of virtue, profit, and desires. There was a wicked fowler who used to catch birds in the forest and sell them to make his earnings. One day, while he was in the dense forest, a cold storm blew there. During this storm, a helpless pigeon, who was shivering with cold fell on the ground because of the speedy wind; the fowler saw the pigeon and became happy. He picked up and put the pigeon in a cage. The storm did not stop, it continued, so the fowler decided to spend the night under a big tree. He did pray to the deities and creatures of that tree to allow him for shelter. There was a nest where a pigeon family lived on one of the branches of that huge tree, the lady pigeon who had gone out for food but not come back to the nest. So, the male pigeon was crying by remembering his wife and thinking to end his life if he will not find his beloved wife. Coincidentally, the female pigeon was inside the cage of the fowler, from the cage, she asked her husband not to worry about her but requested him to treat the fowler as his guest. The female pigeon said the fowler is feeling cold and starving. Be generous to him, and do not suffer for me. The lady pigeon said a one should be kind to everyone, even though someone has done something immoral to you. The male pigeon moved according to his wife's request, flew down, and welcomed the fowler. What he

could offer to make the fowler relaxed asked by the male pigeon. Reply to male pigeon the fowler approached the warm fire could push his cold gone. The male pigeon has arranged some dry plants and set them for fire. After some time, fowler warmed up and told the pigeon, he was hungry too. But the male pigeon did not have any food to offer to his guest. However, the pigeon walked around the fire three times and then ask the fowler to eat him and the pigeon entered the fire to afford a meal for the fowler. The pigeon's compassion shook the fowler, who began reflecting on his life. The fowler is resolute to be concerned to all creatures. Fowler realized the female pigeon silently from the cage. But unfortunately, she lost her pigeon husband in fire, female pigeon was deeply loved and walked the fire too. The fowler cried and was besieged with sorrow for all the harm and pain, he had caused to wild birds over the years.

RAJADHARMA-ANUSHASANA PARVA

Raja dharma AnushasanaParva explains that Sorrow comes after happiness, and happiness after sorrow; one does not always suffer sorrow, nor always enjoy happiness. Only those who are stolid fools, and those who are masters of their souls, enjoy happiness here; they, however, who occupy an intermediate position suffer misery. Happiness and misery, prosperity and adversity, gain and loss, death and life, in their turn, visit all creatures; the wise man, endued with an equanimous soul would neither be puffed up with joy nor be depressed with sorrow.

There is nothing that leads so much to the success of kings as Truth, the king who is devoted to Truth enjoys happiness both here and hereafter. Even to the Rishis, O king, Truth is the greatest wealth, likewise for the kings, there is nothing that so much creates confidence in them as Truth.

Similarly, rajadharmaanushasanaParva discusses that nobody is nobody's friend, nobody is nobody's well-wishers, persons become friends or enemies only from motives of interest. Bhisma tells Yudhishtira in Shanti Parva that —I do not instruct you regarding duty from what I have learned from the Vedas alone; what I have told you is the result of wisdom and experience, it is the honey that the learned have gleaned. Kings should collect wisdom from various sources, One cannot go successfully in the world with the help of a one-sided morality; Duty must originate from understanding, the practices of the good should always be determined. A king by the help of his understanding and guided by knowledge gathered from various sources should so arrange that moral laws may be observed.

So, a king should always pay attention to following Rajadharama in his administration whether it is in normal time or problem period.

MOKSHA DHARMA PARVA

However, through a detailed discussion between Bhisma and Yudhistira in Shanti Parva, Vyasa presented a comprehensive meaning and aspect of Rajadharama. He also tried to define what is right or wrong, righteousness, etc. in the context of Rajadharama in Moksha dharmaparva as follows:

All men who live on this earth, are filled with doubts regarding the nature of Righteousness.

What is this that is called Righteousness? Where does righteousness come from? Righteousness begets happiness as its fruits. There is nothing superior to truth; everything is supported by truth and everything depends on truth. One should not take others' properties that is an eternal duty. A thief everybody, the considers

other people as sinful as himself; A pure-hearted person is always filled with cheerfulness, and has no fear from anywhere; such a person never sees his misconduct in other persons. A person should never do that to others, which he does not like to be done to him by others; whatever wishes one cherishes about him, one should certainly cherish regarding another.

The creator ordained Virtue, gifting it with the power of holding the world together. There is no fixed time for the acquisition of righteousness. Death waits for no man. When a man is constantly running towards the jaws of Death, the accomplishment of righteous acts is proper at all times. Like a blind man who, with attention, is capable of moving about his own house, the man of wisdom, with a mindset on Yoga, succeeds in finding the track he should follow. One who walks along the track recommended by the understanding earns happiness both here and hereafter. It means everyone should follow the right path and act in accordance with the principles of goodness to get peace and happiness in life as well as the afterlife that is after death. Vyasa in the Shanti Parva of epic Mahabharata comprehensively discusses Rajadharama through the dialogue between Bhisma and Yudhistira. He also profoundly explained the social, political, spiritual, and cultural ideals of a society where observance of dharma (Right) should be the rule for both the ruler as well as the subjects.

KAUTILYA

Kautilya was the minister in the Kingdom of Chandragupta Maurya during 317 – 293 B.C. He has been considered as one of the shrewdest ministers of the times and has explained his views on State, War, Social Structures, Diplomacy, Ethics, Politics and Statecraft very clearly in his book called Arthashastra. The Mauryan Empire was larger than the later British India which expanded from the Indian Ocean to Himalayas and upto to Iran in the West. After Alexander left India, this was the most powerful kingdom in India and Kautilya was minister who advised the King.

Before Kautilya there were other philosophers in India who composed the Shastras but his work was robust and encompassed all the treaties written earlier. I considered Kautilya for three reasons. Firstly, I wanted to highlight the patterns of thinking in the east which was present long before Machiavelli wrote his “Prince”. Secondly Kautilya’s ideologies on state, statecraft and ethics are very realistic and vastly applicable in today’s context. Thirdly, I feel Kautilya’s work on diplomacy is greatly underrepresented in the western world and it is quite apt to analyze his work in that area.

If we compare statesman on the four dimension framework of: War & Peace, Human Rights, International Economic Justice and World Order Kautilya had a strong opinion on all the four aspects. In fact people like Bismark and Woodrow Wilson in recent history had been able to demonstrate their views only on two of the four dimensions. Kautilya’s work is primarily a book of political realism where State is paramount and King shall carry out duties as advised in his book to preserve his state. Kautilya’s work is so deep rooted in realism that he goes to describe the gory and brutal means a King must adopt to be in power. This could have been one reason why Ashoka, the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya whom Kautilya advised renounced violence and war thus taking the path of Dharma or Morals.

In this paper, I shall primarily focus on Kautilya’s thoughts on war, diplomacy and ethics. I have devoted a section to compare Kautilya with great philosophers like Plato and later ponder over why Machiavelli’s work looks so abridged and succinct in comparison to Kautilya’s work. Kautilya’s work is then seen in the light of today’s politics and ethics. As Max Weber put it aptly in his lecture, “Politics as a Vocation”, he said Machiavelli’s work was harmless when compared to Kautilya’s Arthashastra.

KAUTILYA ON WAR

Kautilya was a proponent of a welfare state but definitely encouraged war for preserving the power of the state. He thought that the possession of power and happiness in a state

makes a king superior hence a king should always strive to augment his power. This actually coincides with the Weber's view that there is no moral in international politics which means that states must be at war all the times. Kautilya though did not state this explicitly but we can infer that he did presume to be at war is natural for a state. On the other hand he like Thomas Hobbes believed the goal of science was power. He said that, "Power is strength and strength changes the minds", hence he used power as a tool to control his society as well as his enemies. He also believed that it is the King's duty to seek material gain, spiritual good and pleasures. In this he clearly comes out as a realist and does believe in ethics of responsibility. Kautilya thinks that for a King to attain these three goals must create wealth, have armies and should conquer the kingdoms and enlarge the size of his state. This is quite interesting because he in a way does believe that a state's superiority is in its military and economic might which is what later philosophers and rulers have followed.

In the case of war, Kautilya and Machiavelli have the same reasoning where they advocate the King to be closely involved in the science of war. Kautilya advocated three types of war: Open war, Concealed war and the Silent War. Open war he describes as the war fought between states, concealed war as one which is similar to guerilla war and Silent war which is fought on a continued basis inside the kingdom so that the power of the King does not get diluted. In his opinion open warfare in any form was righteous. In open warfare he believed that State is one up on over morals and no morals can stop the State from fighting an open war. He believed that there were three types of kings who go into warfare and it is important to understand the distinction between the types of kings and the appropriate warfare strategy to be selected. Firstly, he thought there was a righteous conqueror who can believes in power of the state. This is where the open warfare needs to be fought and the righteous king treats the lost king with dignity. Secondly there is a greedy king who fights war for material wealth in which case along with power state's resources are lost and hence to prevent such a war, one should use a tactical and concealed war. Thirdly he thought there were always demoniacal kings who wanted to plunder and here one must use silent wars.

Kautilya was also very harsh in narrating the exact methods of fighting a silent war and use of spies and women as tools to reduce the strength of a state. Machiavelli, in his work does not labor into the details and one reason could be that the time when Machiavelli wrote, *The Prince*, the world had changed and already quite immoral in many ways. The aspect which I dislike in Kautilya's work is where he advocates the use of women as weapons of war. He saw women as a source of pleasure and charm which should be used

to instill clashes between kings. One reason why he wrote in detail explaining the strategy was because he was a strong proponent of social structure. He strongly believed in the caste system and the relative position of a man and a woman in a caste. This could be another reason why during his time there were many Kshatriyas. Using secret agents, assassins, lies were tactics which he advocated to win a war. He vehemently defends the state and believes that religion and morals are supposed to serve the state. In Kautilya's concept of war, chivalry does not have any place and he is a realist. When compared to two early Indian writers Bharadwaja and Vishalaksha, the former is a realist and the latter is an idealist. Kautilya, takes the side of Bharadwaja in his Arthashastra and believes that war is a means to an end for wealth and stability. It is very difficult to say what inspired his thinking on the concept of war as we know that he was born as a poor Brahmin and strongly believed in social structures.

Kautilya also took the societal structure and King's power as given and never challenged it. His focus was not on war per se but on the strategy and tactics of war which elaborates in his work. In describing his opinion on war, I think he has been very right in saying that a state which seeks power is in war all the time if we use his classification of war.

Kautilya on Justice

Kautilya believed that for the prosperity of a state, the state must be devoid of internal conflict and the King should be in control of the state. To maintain this internal peace he believed in a just and realistic rule of law. His definition of a state was one which had power and wealth and hence he put property rights and protection of wealth as one of the important themes in his jurisprudence. In fact he advocated that one could get rid of corporeal punishment by paying off fines.

Kautilya also attaches great importance to human rights on how the invaded ruler and his ministers should be treated. He shows a deep understanding of criminal justice and war justice. Surprisingly, for a harsh and realist man like Kautilya he shows mercy towards the people defeated in a war and recommends humanity and justice towards them. He thinks that this is important to preserve the mandala structure of war and peace. He advocates that a defeated king shall be treated with respect and he should be made an ally. He thinks that the key people advising the defeated king should be eliminated through a silent war.

Kautilya believes that law should be in the hands of the King and punishments need to be awarded to those who are guilty so that the King can protect himself from the social unrest and unhappiness. He believes that punishment is a means to an end and it needs to prevent the commission of the crime. Kautilya also was a reformer where he thought

punishments could reform a person and hence a society. His devotion to social structure was so strong that he thinks that Brahmins need to be punished less by only exiling him and not torture him. This unequal social justice was in itself injustice but so was his belief. He attaches great importance to dandaniti which includes, protecting property, acquiring property, augmenting them and distributing them. He thinks that justice is an important constituent of sovereignty and it needs to be preserved by the State and the ultimate responsibility lies with the King.

Kautilya's view on crime and justice is very elaborate and goes on to differentiate between various crimes. He advocates different punishments depending if they were crimes committed while in public office, civil crimes, sexual crimes, religious crimes etc. This shows that he had great grasp to customize the rule of law depending both on the offence and the structure of the society. He believed that the structure and peace is preserved in a society by effective jurisprudence. In today's context some of his ideas might be irrelevant but it shows that the ancient Hindu jurisprudence was codified and actually more resembled the common law.

Kautilya's understanding of justice, war, diplomacy and human rights makes him unique in his times. In ancient India there is no one comparable who could have stood the test for justice being a tool for statescraft. Kautilya believed that while it is as much important for the state to wage a war and conquer, it is also important to maintain law and order within the state in order to make it more powerful.

KAUTILYA ON DIPLOMACY

Kautilya believed that nations acted in their political, economic and military self-interest. He thought that foreign policy or diplomacy will be practiced as long as the self-interest of the state is served because every state acts in a way to maximize the power and self interest. He thought that the world was in such a state that a kingdom was either at war or was preparing for a war and diplomacy was yet another weapon used in this constant warfare. He believed that diplomacy is a series of actions taken by a kingdom such that it gains strength and eventually conquers the nation with which diplomatic ties were created. He also believed that treaties should be made in such a way that King benefits and serves the self-interest of the Kingdom. He did talk about violating treaties and creating dissension between states so that his kingdom might benefit which directly is similar to Bismarck's strategies of treaties. In fact Kautilya can be compared to Bismarck that both of them though of extremely complex network of treaties and relationships without any successor in either case.

Kautilya described three types of political system namely rule making, rule application and rule adjudication and has been recognized for his contributions to bringing diplomacy at the helm of state's affairs. In his words he defines diplomacy as, "A King who understands the true implication of diplomacy conquers the whole world". To understand his concept of diplomacy it is important to understand the Mandala concept, six types of foreign policy and four solutions. I shall explain the Mandala concept which is quite apt in today's context.

The Mandala Concept

The Mandala concept is one in which there are circles of friends and foes with the central point being the King and his State. This embraces twelve kings in the vicinity and he considers the kingdoms as neighbors, the states which are the enemies neighbors are his enemies' friends and the next circle of states are his friends. He also believes that the states which are his neighbors and are also neighbors of his enemies are neutral and should always be treated with respect. He believes that this circle is dynamic and the King should strive to be expanding his central position and reduce the power of the other kings in the vicinity. He also proposes to build alliances with states which are two degrees away from the center to create a balance of power. Though Bismarck did not exactly operate with the Mandala concept in Mind, I do see that he strived to create alliances and ties to enhance his strength and expanding the power of German-Prussia.

The Mandala concept is more multipolar than the current structure we see. Though our world has emerged into multipolar on the economic front, it is still unipolar on the military front. Also the intermediate powers in today's world play a major, thanks to De Gaulle but in the Kautilyan world he did recognize the importance of middle powers. In addition he mentions that war is an outcome of a power struggle and state sovereignty hence he treats diplomacy as a temporary phenomenon. That being said he elaborates on the six forms of diplomacy which I find very interesting and shall quote examples where they can be used.

Kautilya elaborates on strategies for not only the strong king and the aggressor but also explains the strategies a weak king should follow to defend himself and protect the state. His forms of diplomacy also depends on the type of the king whether the policy is directed toward the superior, inferior or equal¹⁵. The six types of foreign policy that he advocates are

1. **Sandhi** : This means accommodation, which means that kings seek to accommodate the each other and does not resolve to hostile means. These Sandhis could be temporary or permanent and it depends on the environment and relative powers of

the kings. The various sub-forms in this sandhi have been practiced by statesmen later. Bismarck had used Karmasandhi with Austria and now Britain's foreign policy has been to maintain Anavasitasandhi with the United States.

2. **Vigraha:** This means hostility shown to neighbor or a state. Kautilya strongly believed that the states are always at war and seek power hence it is necessary to have hostile foreign policy towards few states which are either equal in power or subordinate in power.
3. **Asana:** This means indifference and he chooses this policy for states which are neutral in his mandala concept of nations. He also believes that an indifferent foreign policy works well in the case of equal power. I may not agree on this point as we have seen in case of equal powers in history, there has been always tension which either led to a war or an alliance. Germany viewed Britain as an equal power and could not be indifferent neither could US be indifferent to Russia during the cold war.
4. **Dvaidhibhava:** This means double policy which was very well practiced by Bismarck. Kautilya advocates this foreign policy for states which are superior militarily. Kissinger followed this strategy where he made alliance with China such that at no time Russia and China could become closer in ties than US and China. Kautilya advocated the same concept within his Mandala framework.
5. **Samsarya:** This policy of protection is followed where a stronger state intervenes and shelters a weak state. Kautilya advocates this policy when a stronger state needs a shield to protect itself from an equal power it is good to use this policy of protection for a third state and use this alliance to defend against the potential enemy. In one sense the colonization was followed where European powers started controlling weak nations in Africa and Asia and thus strengthening their position against one another.
6. **Yana:** This policy is to attack. Kautilya does mention that peace and stability in a state makes the state even powerful but never shies away from attacking the weak and unjust king. He thinks that an unjust king keeps the society unhappy which makes that state a potential target as it is weak due to social unrest. Who knows may George W. Bush read Kautilya before pursuing the Yana policy on Iraq!

Thus Kautilya's foreign policy was formed by his strong belief in King and the state's continuous thirst for power and wealth. His diplomacy tactics were also influenced by Hindu religion and the social structure which shaped his thinking in terms of types of foreign policies and their application.