

The Indian Psychology of Values : The Concept of Daanam

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Abstract

The present article examines the concept of daanam in the context of the Indian psychology of values. It is posited that daanam is an example of social behaviour that has its roots in traditional religious-spiritual and moral prescriptions, and to that extent, it represents one of the core traditional Indian values. A study of daanam would be meaningful in order to uncover certain latent characteristics of the Indian culture. It is acknowledged at the outset that there may be many questions regarding the comparability of a traditional concept with a contemporary psychological one, and of the 'idealistic-normative' approach with an 'empirical-purposive' one. Yet the two approaches may be considered viable complements to each other. Daanam apparently resembles what is called prosocial behaviour in contemporary social psychology, but an analysis based on major traditional Indian texts reveals several crucial divergences between the two concepts. The discussion includes (a) a description of the main ideas in traditional Indian values and a brief statement on the contemporary psychological view of values, (b) a detailed examination of the traditional writings on daanam, in terms of its definition, classification, and moral-religious basis. Wherever relevant, parallel or equivalent ideas in the contemporary research on prosocial behaviour are mentioned. The analysis concludes on the note that prosocial tendencies found in the present Indian society possibly reflect collectivist values of the Indian culture that may be a long-term outcome of core values nurtured by traditional concepts and practices like daanam.

The Indian Psychology of Values : The Concept of Daanam

"Values provide perspective in the best of times and the worst." Charles Garfield quotes

Values in Indian Psychology

Why do different individuals choose different pursuits in life, some spending all their time and effort in amassing wealth, others in earning fame, and yet others, in working for the welfare of others ? The answer to this basic question is often summed in a small word called 'values', very simply defined as " what one considers most important in life". The importance of 'values' as the guiding force for human actions can hardly be doubted, although numerous questions may arise regarding the definition, nature and source of values. In general, values are cognitions that indicate what individuals consider significant. They are abstract entities with ethical, moral or religious connotations, possessing a 'good-bad', 'desirable-undesirable', 'right-wrong' 'ought' or 'should' component. They may be difficult to define, but are easy to identify. 'A value expresses the significance 'great or small' which man ascribes to matters related to a particular activity or experience'.. and thus provides him with guidance for his behaviour" (Roubiczek, 1969, p. 219).

Values have generally been studied by philosophers, but contemporary psychology has not been far behind in examining the subject of values, albeit in a positivistic, empirical way. In contemporary psychology, values are defined as general beliefs of people regarding desirable and undesirable ways of behaviour and existence (Rokeach, 1973) ; they are described as "... (a) concepts of beliefs, (b) that pertain to desirable end states or behaviours, (c) that transcend specific situations, and (d) that are ordered by relative importance' (Schwartz, 1992, p. 2). Moreover, cross-cultural psychologists see values as a defining component of a culture (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1992). Since values are central to the social cognition of the members of a culture, the behaviours relevant to those cognitions would be influenced by their underlying values.

Taking off from the focus on values as characteristics of a culture, the traditional Indian (Hindu) culture, like other cultures, contains several values, placed in the context of philosophy, religion and spiritualism, commonly labeled as both 'Indian philosophy' and 'Indian psychology'. In order to understand the core Indian culture, it is important to understand that '...the moral and social qualities that are valued in a society have their roots in religion, philosophy and tradition'..'' (D. Sinha, 1972, p. 153). While these values were largely transmitted through an oral tradition, they have also been preserved in traditional Hindu texts, which are a storehouse of ancient wisdom and represent the rich heritage of Indian thought. A judicious analysis of these texts reveals not only the values that traditional India upheld, but also paves the way for an understanding of the historical, political-economic and psychological foundations of Indian society in those times.

It is extremely difficult to describe traditional Indian (Hindu) values in a few sentences. For the present discussion a specific concept has been selected, namely, the concept of *daanam*, which represents values that form a core of Indian thought. *Daanam* in Sanskrit (*daan* in Hindi) literally means 'giving'. In the context of contemporary psychology, *daanam* would be spontaneously included under charity, altruism, generosity, benevolence, or what social psychologists would collectively call 'helping' and 'prosocial' behaviour. A more careful examination indicates that *daanam* as a traditional Indian concept goes beyond the commonly understood meaning of helping/prosocial behaviour (Krishnan, 2005). The aim of the present discussion is to examine in detail the concept of *daanam* as outlined in traditional Hindu texts, to comment on the values underlying this concept, and to examine possible differences between *daanam* and the contemporary notion of prosocial behaviour..

Exactly where does one locate the concept of *daanam* in traditional Indian thought ? An immediate reply to this question is that *daanam* is one of the numerous prescribed actions that are supposed to be part of an individual's striving towards the attainment of the highest goal in life. *Daanam* is mentioned or discussed in many Hindu texts, in a religious- spiritual background, and not as a purely 'psychological' concept as the latter term is understood in the contemporary context. However, this caveat should not pose a problem because it is mainly such concepts that have been discussed under the umbrella of 'Indian psychology' - concepts that are mentioned in the Indian religious-spiritual- philosophical context, yet are essentially psychological in nature.

In a sense, the whole of Indian psychology encompasses values that are meant to inculcate a particular world view. Some basic tenets are proposed by the six main systems of Hindu philosophy, but each system describes and analyzes the goals of human life with varying emphasis on different concepts. In the religious-spiritual realm of Indian thought, every human endeavour reflects a striving towards the attainment of one of four fundamental goals, namely, *dharma* (duty), *artha* (economic welfare), *kaama* (enjoyment of life), and *moksha* (salvation). The last-mentioned is spiritually the highest

goal ' the state that breaks the painful cycle of birth and rebirth into this world, and transports the soul to the state of eternal bliss (*sat-chit-anand*). *Dharma*, along with *karma* , or action, is considered the route to the attainment of the highest goal. Again, as part of *dharma* , different concepts or values are emphasized by the various philosophical systems. Individuals may choose their own vehicle or medium of 'travel' through the spiritual route to the highest goal. This medium ('*yoga*') may be *bhakti* (devotion with surrender), *jnaana* (attainment of the supreme knowledge), or *karma* (action, or more correctly, action without desire). As part of *karma yoga* , four kinds of actions have been described, namely, *yagnyah* , *tapas* , *daanam*, and *swaadhyayah*. Inherent in the concept of *karma* is an extended meaning : actions lead to outcomes, and ultimately, one obtains only outcomes that are commensurate with the actions performed either in the present or past life. This idea is part of the much-cited 'karma theory', which reflects the facet of 'as you sow, so shall you reap' in Hindu thought. Accompanying this action-outcome relationship is a subtle notion of control. An individual has control only over actions (and is thereby responsible for these actions), and not over their fruits or outcomes. Therefore one should perform actions for their own sake, without any attachment to, or desire for, the fruits of those actions. It is tacitly suggested that while living in this material world, an individual may pursue the goals of *artha* and *kaama* , but without violating the dictates of *dharma* and *karma*. In following *dharma* one encounters hurdles or 'six foes' (*shad-ripu*) in the form of craving for physical desires (*kaama*), greed (*lobha*) and egoism (*mada*), which generate anger (*krodha*), jealousy (*maatsarya*) and a deluded state of mind (*moha*).

These obstacles can be overcome through several prescribed actions that every individual is expected to perform, as part of *dharma* . *Daanam* is one of these prescribed actions. In fact, specific texts (for example, the *Dharma-shastras*) have been devoted to the listing of prescribed actions and practices under various circumstances, and for different social roles (for example, for the householder, the lady of the household, the husband, the wife, and so on). Details of such practices are presented in the *Gruhya-sutra* and *Dharma-sutra* , two divisions of the *Kalpa-sutras* . The latter are in turn one of the components of the *vedaangas* , or 'limbs' of the *Vedas* . These texts serve virtually as rule-books or manuals, and also contain descriptions of the consequences of performance (or non-performance) of these actions. *Daanam* is described in the *Dharma-sutra* and also in the *Gruhya-sutra* .

Some of the prescribed actions are said to be part of daily behaviour (*vyavahaara*), and others, part of moral conduct (*aachaara* and *neeti*). *Daanam* seems to have components of both *vyavahaar* and *aachaar* . *Daanam* is also said to be a desired action because it is a good way to use wealth. It is said that wealth should be either consumed by oneself, or given away as *daanam*. If one does neither (and merely hoards it), then it will only be destroyed (Bhartruhari's *Neeti-shatakam*) .

As in the case of other prescribed actions, in the case of *daanam* also, there are many clearly delineated prescriptions regarding who should make *daanam* , who should be the recipient, the circumstances under which various forms of *daanam* are to be given, and the consequences of following these prescriptions, as well as those of not following them. In addition, there are prescribed forms of *daanam* as atonement for unworthy deeds committed knowingly or unknowingly, and for the prevention of aversive consequences of violating dharmic prescriptions.

Adopting a different approach, contemporary psychology examines values empirically and objectively (that is, in a way that can be assessed by any researcher). Whereas philosophers analyze values as abstractions and underline their religious-spiritual and ethical implications, psychologists study values in terms of their antecedents,

correlates, underlying motives and implications for cognition, personality and social behaviour. Both approaches have their own significance. The abstract ideas examined by philosophers eventually find an expression in observable behaviour (actual, or stated in the form of attitudes and values), and it is the latter that are studied by psychologists. Thus values as part of Indian psychology represent the meeting ground between philosophical and psychological perspectives.

Several questions may be posed at this stage : Why only the concept of *daanam* ? What would be gained by an analysis of traditionally prescribed values and practices, especially in the context of psychology ? Is it justifiable to compare a traditional concept, such as *daanam* , with a contemporary concept, such as prosocial behaviour ? Considering that traditional Indian concepts have not been verified through empirical research, is such an analysis acceptable on 'scientific' grounds ?

A brief answer to all of these queries may be given as follows. *Daanam* is being taken up specifically in the present context as an example of a concept and practice that reflects core Indian values, and resembles one form of social behaviour studied by psychologists -namely, prosocial behaviour. The gain, if any, in analyzing traditionally prescribed values and practices, can be known only after such an analysis is undertaken. Minimally, there would be some *intellectual* gain in such an exercise. From a psychological and social-behavioural perspective, one can foresee at least two advantages of analyzing the concept of *daanam* (or any other traditional concept). First, the analysis may yield culturally and cross-culturally relevant information, by way of revealing certain latent characteristics of the Indian culture, including indigenous concepts. Secondly, it could widen the existing perspective on related concepts (such as charity, benevolence and helping behaviour, in the case of *daanam*). Except for a small attempt made by one of the present authors (Krishnan, 2005), there seems to be no detailed analysis of *daanam* with regard to altruistic or prosocial behaviour, and the cultural specificity of this concept. On the other hand, if 'gain' means a concrete practical application, the present paper makes no claim that a theoretical analysis of the traditional concept of *daanam* will necessarily help in applying it to real life.

As for the idea that traditional concepts cannot be justifiably compared with contemporary concepts, on one hand, one could agree with this view and refrain from making such a comparison. On the other hand, it could be argued that there is, indeed, some meaning in comparing traditional concepts with contemporary equivalents. The continuation of a traditional concept and practice in modern society, as in the case of *daanam*, provides an opportunity for examining whether or not there is a change in the *values* underlying this practice. Some traditional cultures such as India might retain 'old' practices, with or without a fundamental change in the underlying values. Even if one agrees that contemporary India has changed sufficiently to render it incomparable to traditional India, knowing that culture is the medium of value transmission across generations (through socialization), an analysis of a value that traditionally existed in India, has a residual form in contemporary Indian society, and also has a parallel in a form of social behaviour (prosocial behaviour) across different cultures, would surely provide some insight into the 'the way we were' and 'the way we are' - with implications for socialization changes over time.

Finally, can such an analysis be considered 'scientific' and objective ? The issue of 'objectivity' in defining what is 'scientific' has been discussed often by philosophers of science. It is true that traditional Indian values were not meant to be 'verified' through empirical methods of the kind used in contemporary scientific psychology. Allowing for a different perspective, another 'route to reality' is one based on intuition combined with rationality, metaphorically referred to as the 'rishi' or 're-see' (*darshan*) approach (S.

Sharma, 2001). This route is one that permits analysis of the self from a spiritual (rather than a worldly) perspective, taking into account higher levels of consciousness, an approach that is adopted and recommended by several spiritual masters (for example, Sri Aurobindo). A parallel distinction is made by Gustavsson, Tripathi and Rao (1996) between the 'idealistic-normative' approach to the study of values expressed in the Indian religious-spiritual context, and the 'empirical-purposive' approach reflected in contemporary psychology. A good example of an attempted blending of the two approaches is found in Chakraborty's (1993) work on Indian values applied to management.

The view taken in the present discussion is that it would be worthwhile to analyze *daanam* as a traditional value and practice, taking an 'idealistic-normative' approach. Although this approach differs from the contemporary 'empirical-purposive' or objective-scientific approach, the two views may be treated as complementary to, rather than as substitutes for, each other. Taking a positivistic approach, the contemporary social-psychological perspective asks and answers the question : under what conditions *do* people show, or do not show, prosocial or helping behaviour ? On the other hand, taking a normative approach, the traditional perspective asks and answers the question : under what conditions *should* people give *daanam* ? The aim is to see if there are points of convergence between the two routes or approaches. Rather than insisting on a conformance to the contemporary objective-scientific methodological approach alone, it is felt that an alternative descriptive analysis would also be acceptable if it provides information related to the wider context' in the present case, information about the wider cultural context of India .

Having clarified some preliminary issues, we may now take a brief look at what contemporary literature in psychology says about values. Much has been written about the subject, and values have been examined in various domains, such as social life, work and spiritual pursuits (Verma, 2004). Some of the Indian research on values reports the findings of value surveys that use existing questionnaires, such as the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values, based on the six Spranger values, namely, theoretical, aesthetic, economic, social, religious and political, Rokeach's inventory, and the Schwartz Value Survey. Work values have been extensively examined in a cross-cultural perspective by Hofstede (2001). Five dimensions were identified (four in the earlier research), in terms of which work values in all cultures may be understood and analyzed. These five dimensions are : individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity 'femininity, and long-term or short-term orientation. The dimension of Individualism distinguishes between cultures in terms of the importance placed by a culture on the individual rather than the collectivity, or the opposite. One of the features of collectivism is the significance it places on interpersonal relationships, including a concern for interpersonal harmony, and for the welfare of others. Helping others or caring for them should be a characteristic of collectivism rather than individualism. Power distance as a dimension indicates the extent to which power position or status is considered significant in a culture. In the recent past, the most-cited work on social values in a cross-cultural perspective is that of Schwartz (1992). The Schwartz value dimensions have been reported to be cross-culturally applicable.

One of the themes mentioned in the work of all of these authors is altruism or benevolence in some form (included in the 'social' value/attitude in the Spranger values) (Allport, Vernon & Lindzey, 1960), partly in collectivism in the case of Hofstede's work value dimensions, 'Universal Prosocial' and 'Prosocial Concern' included in Rokeach's values (Rokeach, 1973), and 'Prosocial' (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990) and 'Benevolence' (Schwartz, 1992). Traditional Indian values definitely contain the theme

of Benevolence and Prosocial values, and *daanam* may be considered an expression of this value. Yet there is much more to be said in connection with *daanam* as mentioned in the ancient Indian texts, and this topic will be the main subject of the present paper.

The Concept of Daanam in Traditional Indian Thought

Living creatures can be controlled through *daanam* . Enemies can be destroyed through *daanam* . A stranger may become a loved one through *daanam* . All vices are killed by *daanam* . 1

So says a couplet in one of the ancient Indian (Hindu) texts. In traditional Indian thought, *daanam* literally means 'giving', also translated as 'charity', 'gift', 'alms' or 'offering'. The question raised here is : can *daanam* be treated merely as a subset of 'social', 'universal prosocial', 'prosocial concern' and 'benevolence' values, and of what social psychologists call altruism, helping or prosocial behaviour ? Or does *daanam* represent something more than these ideas ?

At first glance, *daanam* in the Indian tradition is part of a religious prescription that upholds charity as something noble, and as such, finds equivalent concepts in some other religions. Most other religions also consider charity laudable. For example, Sikhism prescribes the giving of *daswandh* , Islam, the giving of *zakaat* , and Judaism, the giving of *tzedekah* that is, the regular donation of a specified proportion of one's earnings to the poor. Charity is extolled as a virtue in Christianity, Confucianism and Jainism as well. Donating for charitable causes indeed appears to be like *daanam* . Yet *daanam* is not quite the same as a charitable donation.

One may then ask : in what ways, if any, does *daanam* differ from altruism, helping or prosocial behaviour forms of social behaviour studied in contemporary social psychology ? The answer to this question can be properly given only when the main features of *daanam* in the Indian tradition are examined closely, and conceptual convergences between *daanam* and prosocial behaviour are pointed out.

Information about the traditional view of *daanam* has been taken mainly from texts such as Hemadri's *Chatur-varga-chintamani* (Bharatchandra Shiromani, 1985) , the *Dharma-shastras* (Dutt, 1979) , *Mahaabhaarata* (*Daana dharma parva*, a part of *Anushaasana-parva*, and the *Bhagavad-Geeta*), and some other sources. Some of the immediately noticeable features of *daanam* in these texts are the following : the concept has been described (a) in a prescriptive way, (b) in great detail, (c) in terms of various taxonomies, and (d) in religious, moral-spiritual contexts. In fact, the sheer detail of these descriptions suggests that *daanam* goes beyond altruism and prosocial behaviour..

Definition

First, in traditional Indian texts, *daanam* has been defined as *an action of relinquishing the ownership of what one considered or identified as one's own, (sva-svatva nivrutti)* 2 , *and investing the same in a recipient (para-svatvaanukoolah ; sva- swaamibhaavaapaadana-paryantah-thyaagah)* 3 , *without expecting any return.*

In the meaning of *daanam* given above, two sets of key-words are *svatva* and *nivrutti*, *sva-swaamibhaavapaadanam* and *thyaagah* . *Svatva* means identifying (anything) with oneself, and *sva-swaamibhaavah* refers to the sense of ownership. Both ideas imply

pravrutti - attachment of the sense organs to sense objects. As long as there is *pravrutti*, it is not possible to relinquish anything without expecting a gain. Relinquishment is possible only when the donor withdraws the sense-organs from the sense-objects to which they are attracted that is, when there is *nivrutti*, or withdrawal/detachment, and *thyaagah* or relinquishment. In short, while *daanam* involves giving, it also involves relinquishment or *nivrutti* on the donor's part. In addition, *svatva-nivrutti* and *sva-swaamibhaavaapadanam* have the aim of being 'other-oriented' that is, in accordance with the *svatva* of the other person (the recipient).

The idea of relinquishment is elaborated further in the context of kindness and charity by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya in *Dharmatattva* (Ray, 2003).

.We usually understand charity to mean the giving of food, clothes, money and similar alms. But this is an extremely narrow sense of the term. Its true meaning is abnegation. Abnegation must not be taken to mean only abnegation of wealth. It means the abnegation of all things; even the abnegation of the self (Ray, 2003, p. 216-217).

Without involving the element of abnegation of ownership, the contemporary Western perspective defines prosocial behaviour in terms of the following criteria : it is that which (a) does good (or is intended to do good) to another person, (b) is engaged in to relieve the other person's state of need, (c) is engaged in with no expectation of a return or reward, and (d) is engaged in voluntarily (that is, not under pressure, or with an ulterior motive, or as a role requirement). Some researchers add cost to the donor or benefactor as yet another criterion of altruistic or prosocial behaviour.

Following the definitions given above for *daanam* and prosocial behaviour, the *overlapping features* between the two are: an 'other-orientation', doing good to another person, and the absence of an expectation of any return or reward. A *non-common feature* between the two is the idea of relinquishing ownership, which is crucial to *daanam*, but is not highlighted in prosocial behaviour : this feature implicitly underlines a *distinction between 'giving' and 'giving up'*, combined with a transfer of ownership from the donor to the recipient. In the process the donor becomes in some sense spiritually enriched.

Yet another feature associated with prosocial behaviour as part of the recipient's reaction or behaviour is reciprocity. In the Western context, by definition, true prosocial behaviour from the *donor's* point of view should not involve an expectation of reciprocity (return of the favour or help). However, reciprocation of a favour that has been accepted is a definite requirement on the part of the *recipient*. In accordance with a universal reciprocity norm (Gouldner, 1960) reciprocation involves a concrete return of the favour to the donor. If the recipient fails to reciprocate the favour, he/she would continue in a state of indebtedness. This notion of reciprocity does not seem to be mentioned in the description of *daanam*, although emotional and attitudinal reactions on the part of the recipient of *daanam* (closer to feelings of gratitude, and respect for the donor) are mentioned as qualities of a worthy recipient. This will be mentioned later in the present discussion. Reciprocity in material terms, however, is not considered a positive factor in *daanam*.

A reciprocity of gifts may be a social function, but is no virtue. It does not bear any religious merit. (*Vyaasa samhita* : 27 in Dutt, 1979, Vol. III)

In other words, reciprocity has some common ground between *daanam* and prosocial behaviour, but its form is different.

With regard to the recipient's need as a determinant of helping, and voluntariness of helping, it will be seen below that although these two features are not highlighted in the initial definition of *daanam*, they enter into the picture in a subtle way.

Considering the criteria of prosocial behaviour, one finds concepts that are part of traditional Indian values that are very close to these criteria, namely, *paropakkaar* (doing good to others), *sahaayataa* (helping), and *audaarya* (generosity); however, these are not synonymous with *daanam*. An informal survey regarding the similarities and differences between *daanam*, *paropakkaar*, and *sahaayataa* (Krishnan, 2005) revealed the following general responses. The intended welfare and well-being of the recipient was said to be a common feature between *daanam*, *paropakkaar*, and *sahaayataa*. Selfless giving characterizes both *daanam* and *paropakkaar*, but in *daanam*, such giving may not be intended to fulfil the recipient's need, whereas *paropakkaar* and *sahaayataa* are geared to the recipient's need. Moreover, *daanam* involves giving a concrete resource, whereas the other two may involve concrete or abstract resources. Both *daanam* and *paropakkaar* contain a moral-religious element, but such a component is not present in *sahaayataa*. The latter may be seen as small-scale *paropakkaar*, exhibited towards peers instead of persons of a different status; *daanam* is given to persons of higher or lower status. In general, *daanam* is perceived to be somehow different from *paropakkaar* and *sahaayataa* (the latter two being more similar to each other), but this difference is not easy to specify. Although many of these perceptions are not consistent with prescriptions in the texts, the responses show that in contemporary Indian society also, *daanam* is conceptualized as something different from the two forms of helping.

In contemporary psychology, although it is not explicitly stated, the values underlying altruistic behaviour would be 'social' (Spranger), 'universal prosocial' and 'prosocial concern' (Rokeach) and benevolence (Schwartz), all of which contain an element of philanthropy or love of human beings. Such underlying values, while certainly not ruled out in *daanam*, are in the form of tacit assumptions rather than clearly expressed themes.

Classification

Secondly, *daanam* has been classified according to more than one taxonomy. Most of such taxonomies are elaborate and detailed. In these classifications, the basis of each one highlights a particular dimension underlying the values associated with a particular kind of *daanam*. In research on prosocial behaviour following the contemporary psychological perspective also, taxonomies have been proposed. More often than not, such classifications deal with (a) the *nature of the resource given* (Amato, 1983), and with (b) *determinants* of helping, specifically, donor, recipient, resource and contextual variables in some cases, also including developmental aspects and cultural factors (Bar-Tal, 1976; Clark, 1991). Because contemporary psychology follows the empirical-purposive approach, all taxonomies are based on empirical research that employs the conventionally accepted methodology.

On the other hand, the analysis of *daanam* takes an idealistic-normative approach, and examines the traditionally proposed taxonomies from a spiritual, non-empirical perspective. Some ideas contained in the traditional perspective are echoed (in some form) in the contemporary analysis of prosocial behaviour. Yet there are details in the

traditional analysis of *daanam* that cannot be conceptualized (and are therefore absent) in the contemporary approach to prosocial behaviour.

The first classification of *daanam* possibly the one most familiar to readers of traditional texts - describes three kinds of *daanam*, distinguishing between its underlying motives, namely, *saatwik*, *raajasik*, and *taamasik*. These kinds of *daanam* are described in texts such as the *Bhagavad-geeta* (Chapter XVII, Verses 20 to 22) and *Skanda-puraana*. Based on the *tri-guna* concept, a core concept in Hindu philosophical systems, the three kinds of *daanam* are associated with three *gunas*' or propensities, namely, *sattwa*, *rajas*, and *tamas*.

Saatwik daanam (based on *sattwa*, or purity and virtuousness):

When the daan (gift) is given for the sake of giving, to one from whom no benefit in return is expected, and in their right place, at the right time and to the right person, that gift is said to be *saatwik* (Sri Aurobindo, 1992, p. 533 *Bhagavad-Geeta*, Ch. XVII, Verse 20).

In the *Mahabharata* also *saatwik daanam* is upheld as the one that enables a *saatwik* person to attain all that he wants.

Raajasik daanam (based on *rajas*, associated with stimulation and action) :

That daan (gift) which is given grudgingly for the sake of a return or with a view to fruit and reward, is said to be *rajasik* (Sri Aurobindo, 1992, p. 534 *Bhagavad-Geeta*, Ch. XVII, Verse 21)

Except for the element of expected return (such as the grace of God, spiritual enhancement or salvation in the next life), *rajasik daanam* is considered virtuous in other respects.

Taamasik daanam (based on *tamas*, associated with darkness and indifference) is that which is inappropriate in terms of almost all the prescribed components of *daanam*.

That daan (gift) which is given at an improper place and time and to an unworthy person, with disrespect and contempt, is said to be *tamasik* (Sri Aurobindo, 1992, p. 534 - *Bhagavad-Geeta*, Ch. XVII, Verse 22)

A second classification mentioned in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* also contains a motivational substrate, and is interpretable in both spiritual and worldly contexts. This classification distinguishes between (a) *daanam* that is made with faith and care (*shraddhayaa deyam*) as contrasted with one made without faith (*daanam* without *shraddhaa* is prohibited : *a-shraddhayaa a-deyam*), (b) *daanam* given with *shree*, that is, with a pleasant demeanour (*shriyaa deyam*), (c) *daanam* given with an accompanying sense of humility (*hriyaa deyam*), (d) *daanam* that is given with a sense of fear (*bhiyaa deyam*) fear that the resource given may be inappropriate or inadequate, and (e) *daanam* that is given with *vivek*, or reasoning and wisdom (*samvidaa deyam*) (J. Sharma, 1966). 4

A similar idea is present in another classification also (to be described below).

Interpreting the categorization of *daanam* described above in contemporary terms, it can be seen that they emphasize the importance of the motives underlying *daanam* – a factor that is underlined also in the discussion of prosocial behaviour. Within the boundaries of psychological concepts, these motives would involve mainly expected gain. With regard to the first (*tri-guna* -based) classification, the existence of 'pure' altruism (closest to *saattwik daanam*, without the spiritual implication) has been debated by some researchers in the contemporary perspective, and there is no general agreement on the existence of something like *saattwik* helping. Beyond this, no strict parallel is found in the contemporary analysis to the *tri-guna*- based forms of *daanam*. With regard to the second classification mentioned above, helping mediated by empathy may be seen as helping based on care and faith : the donor places himself in the recipient's role, and 'feels' the need for help as the recipient does. *Shree* -based 'giving' may be evident in the case of a donor who is in a good mood, and therefore gives help with a pleasant demeanour. Helping out of shame or guilt (because a required action is not being carried out), and fear (of possible social disapproval if help is not given) has been referred to by some authors who have examined shame, guilt and fear as possible underlying factors in helping behaviour. However, it must be admitted that this kind of comparison between the traditional and contemporary perspectives is somewhat forced.

A third set of taxonomies has been presented by Hemadri, and will be described in detail. This scholar has put together, in one place, descriptions and prescriptions related to *daanam* in different ancient texts, along with appropriate explanatory and elaborative comments. Two major classification schemes are described by Hemadri .

A) According to the first taxonomy (Hemadri), *daanam* is said to have the following constituents : (1) two 'bases' (2) six 'domains', (3) six 'limbs' , (4) six 'consequences', (5) four 'kinds', (6) three 'types', and (7) three 'destructions'. Further details of each constituent are provided in very precisely written couplets (*shlokas*), which serve almost as formulae, a feature typical of ancient Sanskrit texts. 5

I. The two 'bases' (*dwi-hetu*) consist of (a) care and faith, and (b) devotion (*shraddha* and *bhakti*) - A *daanam*, becomes effective when it is given with utmost care/faith and devotion, irrespective of the quantity of what is given. This effectiveness spreads to the donor. 6

II. The six 'domains' (*shadadhishtaanam*) 7 of *daanam* are made up of :

Dharma-daanam giving habitually to the appropriate recipient, as an act of relinquishment, without expecting any return. This kind of *daanam* would be considered *saattwik*. 8

Artha daanam giving in specific circumstances by sheer chance, but with the expectation of a return or favourable outcome. 9

Kaama daanam - a *daanam* meant to satisfy carnal pleasure with women, wine, hunting, and gambling, given to an undeserving person. 10

Vreeda-daanam given with a sense of shame, in front of courtiers, or being persuaded by the teacher, or by a supplicant (seeking *daanam*), or as a submission to sycophancy. 11

Harsha-daanam a *daanam* made by those are aware of righteous actions, with a sense of pleasure or happiness, prompted by the sight of dear ones, or by hearing pleasant news. 12

Bhaya-daanam - giving with a sense of fear, to appease one who can do harm, or to a person who could potentially help to take revenge (in the form of a rebuke, sabotaging a plan, and the like). 13

III. Next, six 'limbs' (*shadangam*) of *daanam* are mentioned : the donor (*daata*), the recipient (*prati-gruheetaa*), the resource or object given as *daanam* (*dravyam*), time (*kaalah*), place (*deshah*), and faith and devotion (*shraddhaa*) towards the recipient and resource. 14

1. The donor (*daataa*), or the one who gives *daanam* : . Certain (especially six) personal qualities are prescribed for an ideal donor. 15 He should be physically healthy (free from diseases such respiratory ailments, smallpox, and infectious or contagious diseases), should be pious, virtuous, free from the seven addictions 16 (hunting, gambling, illicit relations with women, love for liquor, use of foul language, extravagance and cruelty). He should be neat, and should have a respectable means of livelihood. The donor should desire to give without any compulsion.

2. The recipient (*prati-gruheetaa*), of the *daanam* - There are prescribed qualities for the worthy recipient as well. He should be a *viprah* 17 not in the narrow sense of a Brahmin by caste, but in the expanded sense of one who spreads the name and fame of the donor. Not caste, family, knowledge or scholarship, but character and behaviour are what qualifies one to be called a ' *viprah* ' 18 . A worthy recipient is one who does not proclaim his greatness and thereby bring humiliation to the donor. A humble ascetic, a person who follows religious vows (*vrata*), a destitute (*daridra*), and a *kshatriya* (one born in an aristocratic or reputed family) can all qualify to be worthy recipients.

Furthermore, eight specific personal characteristics of a worthy or deserving recipient are delineated as follows : forbearance (*kshaanti*), desire (*sprihaa*), compassion (*dayaa*),

Truth (*satyam*), being generous and giving (*daanam*), good conduct (*sheelam*), penance

(*tapah*- of all three kinds, namely, physical, verbal and mental), and having knowledge (*shrutam* - , that is, one who has faith and is oriented towards the Ultimate truth). 19

In general, a recipient's worthiness can be assessed through association, social etiquette, and interaction. Associating with the person would reveal his behaviour, etiquette his purity or piety, and interaction, his intelligence. In addition to all of the above, the recipient should not be one who exploits the *sudras* (the working class). The idea is that one should maintain dignity by earning one's living, and not live on *daanam* or by exploiting the weak.

Since the recipient is the beneficiary of *daanam* , some recipient duties (*prati-gruheeta-dharmaah*) have also been prescribed. He should be pure (*shuchih*), 'clean-handed' (*pavitra-paanih*), facing the East (*uttaraamukhah*), meditating on his favourite god (*abheeshshtha devataam manasaa dhyaayan*), composed, and in control of his sense-organs (*vijitendriyah*), wearing an upper garment (*kritottareeyako*), with his hands

covered (*nityamantarjaanukarah*), restrained, subdued and submissive (*prayatah*), and thinking of the well-being of the donor (*daaturishtamabhidhyaayan*). 20

This notion of the recipient's worthiness may be compared with recipient characteristics as they appear in the research literature on prosocial behaviour. Generally speaking, donors are more likely to give help to recipients who appear to be in a need state because of circumstances that they could not control, and not because of their own fault. However, no other 'ideal' or morally upright behaviour is prescribed as a condition for defining a recipient as 'worthy' of getting help.

One may ask : in the traditional perspective, is it necessary to list in such great detail the criteria of a recipient's worthiness ? Would it not be sufficient to consider only the recipient's need, and some immediate circumstances, in order to decide the worthiness of a particular recipient ? The basic answers to such queries is that what appears from the outside may not be a reliable or valid indicator of a recipient's worthiness. For example, a flower, however beautiful and fragrant it may be, is often the breeding house for pests. Scholarship and knowledge may be found also in demons, who may act like virtuous persons while actually living an evil life. Similarly, water found in an unhealthy place may also taste good, but is still not recommended for drinking because of the unhygienic place where it is found. In other words, simply because a recipient *appears* to be needy, or seemingly 'worthy', it should not be concluded that he is in fact worthy and deserving of *daanam* . The personal qualities mentioned in the traditional view focus on true worthiness of the recipient.

In the contemporary view of prosocial behaviour, the recipient's worthiness is closer to deservingness as judged by the donor, and recipient need is the dominant consideration, as mentioned earlier. At the same time, in the context of prosocial behaviour also, a needy recipient who is also morally and socially acceptable is more likely to be given help than one who lacks these qualities.

3. The resource, or object given as *daanam* (*dravyam*) : 21

Here, *dravyam* stands for money, or any other equivalent resource whose value remains stable, and that can be used for economic transactions. Money given as *daanam* , whether small or large in magnitude, should be earned by the donor himself without causing harm or trouble to anyone else. Possibly, the donor's own earned resource is what unambiguously defines 'ownership', so that relinquishing of ownership becomes genuine. If the resource of *daanam* is not earned by the donor himself, a true transfer of ownership from self to other may be in question, and therefore, strictly speaking that act may not even be *daanam*. The significance of the actual resource given as *daanam* is even more emphatically brought out in the second taxonomy presented by Hemadri, to be described.

4. and 5. Time (*kaalah*) and Place (*deshah*) of *daanam* : these two 'limbs' are to be considered together, as they make up the circumstances in which *daanam* can be considered appropriate and useful. A *daanam* is appropriate if made as and when required by the recipient, in smaller or larger quantity, depending on whether there is a scarcity of the resource, and whether the resource has utility in the situation. 22

6. Faith, care and devotion (*shraddhaa*) : This component refers to the attitude of the donor towards the recipient and the resource. It is prescribed that the donor, while giving *daanam*, should have a pleasant expression, devoid of animosity, with a

demeanour that depicts respect for the recipient, and the attitude of a well-wisher of the recipient. 23

IV. The six consequences (*shad-vipaakam*) of *daanam* are as follows : 24

a) An adverse consequence (*dushphalam*) follows when *daanam* is made to a morally degenerate and unworthy recipient, such as an atheist, a thief, or one who creates mischief. 25

b) A futile *daanam* with no consequences, or one that is less meaningful (*nishphalam*) : this is the kind of *daanam* that is otherwise in accordance with other prescriptions but is made without care and devotion. 26

c) A consequence devoid of goodness (*heenam*) occurs when *daanam* is made by hurting or harming someone, although it may otherwise apparently fulfil all other requirements of a *daanam* . 27

d) *Tulyam* is a consequence that merely resembles that of a true *daanam* , but actually follows a *daanam* made with an impure heart or the wrong motive. 28

e) A consequence of *daanam* is abundant or profound (*vipulam*) when the *daanam* fulfills the requirements of all the six 'limbs', namely, donor, recipient, resource, time and place, faith and devotion. 29

f) A consequence of *daanam* that is imperishable or indestructible (*akshayam*) is that which follows from *daanam* given out of pure compassion. 30

V. Four 'kinds' of *daanam* (*chatuh-prakaaram*) are discussed next : 31 these are

(1) permanent or everlasting (*dhruvam*) for example, constructing places where water is distributed to travelers, or parks where they can rest. Once created, these charitable

facilities continue to exist. 32

(2) recurring or incessant (*aajasrikam*) for example, donating things daily or with regular frequency to the needy such activities are repeated. 33

(3) *daanam* with some desire in mind (*kaamyam*) for example, *daanam* made with a desire for success in an endeavour, for material prosperity, to get offspring, and so on. 34

(4) purposive (*naimittikam*) that is, *daanam* prompted by a particular occasion, required in the fulfillment of a particular work, or to fulfil a specific purpose (including some monetary benefit). 35

Unlike *kaamyam daanam* which is made in response to an internal state of the person (his wish or desire), *naimittikam daanam* is made in response to a requirement external to the person.

VI. Further, three 'types' (*tri-vidham*) of *daanam* are described, namely : 36

(a) *U ttamaani*, or *daanam* of superior, or the best, objects offering honey, yoghurt, food in general, shelter, a cow, a horse, an elephant, utensils, furniture, medicine, land, ornaments, asylum (protection), and knowledge would be considered *uttamam*, or of the highest type. 37

(b) *M adhyamaani*, or *d aanam* of the medium type would include the offering of objects such as footwear (e.g. sandals or shoes), a vehicle, an umbrella, a swing, chairs, firewood, light, drinks, and fruits. 38

(c) *Adhamaani*, or *d aanam* of the inferior or lowly type would include giving old, abandoned, or decayed objects. 39

VII. Finally, three kinds of 'destructions' (tri-naasham) are mentioned, namely : 40

(1) Boasting or self-praise (*anukeertanam*) that is, the donor boasting about a *daanam* he has made;

(2) Regret (*anushochanam*) that is, a donor regrets having made a *daanam*.

(3) Talking meaninglessly (*vruthaa parikeertanam*) about a *daanam*.

Praising oneself for making a *daanam*, expressing regret after making a *daanam*, and mentioning the *daanam* repeatedly and unnecessarily will ultimately destroy all the good results of *daanam*. This theme occurs in Bhartrihari's *Neetishatakam* as well.

(B) The second taxonomy of *daanam*, also described by Hemadri, is based on *the kind of recipient and the nature of the resource given*.

1. Daanam to guests (*atithi-daanaani*) It is said that such a *daanam* is made because of guilt stemming from the occurrence of a forbidden thought, or the performance of a

prohibited or forbidden act. This kind of *daanam* is akin to a virtuous deed that helps

to atone for, and compensate for a sinful one. (Hemadri, p. 849)

2. Physical, verbal and mental daanam (*kaayika vaachika maanasa daan-lakshanaani*). 41

(a) Physical daanam (*kaayika*) consists of giving gold (symbolizing money in general) to a deserving person.

(b) Verbal daanam (*vaachikam*) consists of giving asylum (protection) to a helpless person, with the assurance of protection even at the cost of the donor's own safety.

(c) Mental *daanam* (*maanasikam*) consists of giving knowledge, or initiating someone into the world of learning, or wishing that someone become learned. Implicit in the idea of giving or imparting knowledge is the notion that the recipient is being taught the technique of acquiring knowledge.

3. Giving away a girl in marriage (*kanyaa-daanam*) : 42

In traditional Hindu thought, women in general and virgins in particular are revered. Therefore, it is said that there is no *daanam* comparable to the *daanam* of a daughter. Those who desire to attain all kinds of virtue should give away their daughter in marriage to a suitable person. This is one of the foremost duties of a householder.

A latent theme in *kanyaa-daanam* is that of ensuring the welfare of women. If women are satisfied, self-reliant, well-educated and self-controlled, society will flourish and prosper because it is women who are starting point of generations, and the strength of a society depends on that of women. Therefore, along with the significance of *kanyaa-daanam*, at many places Hindu texts point out the need to take good care of women.

4. Munificence, or excessive daanam (ati-daana-lakshanam) : 43

This kind of *daanam* involves the giving of three resources, namely, cows, land, and knowledge. These are supposed to be the basic means of survival, and save one in adverse times (*narakam*). Therefore, the giving of such resources reflects great generosity.

5. Giving food (anna-daanam) : (Hemadri, p. 973)

The giving of food is considered a superior *daanam* because food sustains. If one wants grace for oneself, this kind of *daanam* is prescribed, even if this means giving away a share from the food to be consumed by one's own family. Since this *daanam* entails some expectation, it is considered to be a *raajasa* kind of *daanam*.

6. Giving of bronze and silver (apaaka-daanam) :

Bronze and silver were used in ancient times for making coins, and in this sense, the giving of these metals signified the giving of money. These metals were supposed to be distributed among people after certain rituals, in order to attain comfort, glory and popularity.

7. Giving of asylum/protection (abhaya-daanam) : (Hemadri, p. 946-951)

In Hindu tradition, giving asylum or protection to one who comes seeking it was always considered noble, even if the seeker is an enemy. Giving asylum implies giving shelter to a person who has lost faith and trust in his own protector who has lost virtuousness, and is now fearful, insecure, diffident and distrustful. Providing asylum to a person in this state gives him reassurance and revives his faith in humanity. On the other hand, if such protection is refused, this is perceived as a breach of trust, which, in turn, generates a feeling of insecurity, and adversely affects the harmonious co-existence of the members of a society.

An example of *abhaya daanam* from Ramayana is that of Sri Rama's giving asylum to Vibheeshana, the brother of Ravana. Despite advice that giving protection to an enemy was not appropriate, Sri Rama did give Vibheeshana asylum, thus reinstating his confidence.

8. Giving ornaments (alankaara-daanam) : 44

The objective of this kind of *daanam* is to find happiness in seeing others well-groomed and decorated ? This raises a question : if this kind of *daanam* is for the donor's

happiness, can it be called true *daanam*, which is meant to be 'other-oriented' rather than self-oriented?

9. Giving (relinquishing, or giving up) pride (*ahankaara-daan-vidhih*) 45

Here we have a special case of *daanam*, which refers to the confession of sins to God, the assumption being that these sins are acts committed out of *ahankaar*, or 'ego'. In this case, what is the resource, and who are the donor and the recipient of *daanam*? Apparently, the resource is *ahankaar* or ego, very unlike the other resources that are meant to do good to the recipient. The 'donor' is the confessor, the one who gives up his ego in order to cleanse himself of guilt because of his sinful deeds. The recipient in this case would be a symbolically created person, someone greater than the donor, to whom the donor can give his *ahankaar* (and thus get rid of it). The whole idea is strongly reminiscent of the Christian practice of confession to a priest.

But there is still a query : what good comes out of this kind of *daanam*? The answer is that it helps in getting rid of one's sins (*paapaah*), all self-denigrating factors, which, if not prevented, would lead to one's spiritual downfall. Confessing to one's sins forces a person to reflect upon his deeds, to understand their consequences (for oneself and for others), and ultimately to change oneself. In a sense, the donor or benefactor is also the recipient or beneficiary. This kind of *daanam* is different from other kinds.

10. Giving health (*aarogya daanam*): 46

The giving of health is considered to be as important as giving food – both have the component of nurturing another person. This kind of *daanam* involves providing medicine and healthy food to the ill, showing them love and affection, and taking care of their physical needs. Such *daanam* is prescribed because not everyone can be a doctor and give direct treatment to those who need it. It also implies that the physical body being the means through which the major goals of life (*dharma, artha, kaama*, and *moksha*) are to be attained, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that all remain physically healthy.

11. Giving resources of luxury (*bhoga daanaani*) : 47

Since items of luxury are of greater material value and are usually more cherished possessions, it requires greater detachment to give away such resources. Hence the giving away of precious items (such as gems and jewels), especially to a Brahmin (whose worthiness as a recipient has already been described), is considered particularly praiseworthy.

12. Giving of wayside shelter and food to travelers (*prati-shraya-daanam*) : 48

This is self-explanatory. Constructing wayside shelters which provides relaxation as well as food and other amenities to travelers is yet another form of superior *daanam*.

13. Giving *daanam* by proxy (meant for a Brahmin recipient) (*daana-visheshah paatraasannidhaane*) : 49

So high is the status of a Brahmin as a recipient of *daanam*, that any trustworthy Brahmin can take a *daanam* on behalf of the actual recipient, in case the latter is unavailable. Moreover, such *daanam* can be given to the recipient's relatives, members of his clan, teachers and friends or well-wishers. Thus it appears that the core idea in

daanam is to *give*, even if the target of giving is not a specific recipient. This prescription for particular forms of *daanam* needs to be compared with all that has been said in the texts regarding the worthiness of the recipient. Evidently, the worthiness of a specified recipient can spread to others associated with him, and a trustworthy Brahmin may be considered worthy in this sense.

Hemadri's second taxonomy, described above, relates primarily to *daanam* involving specific resources. Despite the length of the list of prescribed forms of *daanam*, it cannot be considered exhaustive: all resources having the properties mentioned above may be added to this list.

How do the *daanam* taxonomies discussed in the present context compare with the contemporary view of altruism or prosocial behaviour? Apart from the positivistic and worldly perspective of the latter versus the idealistic-normative perspective of the former,

some equivalent aspects may be noticed. Contemporary research on prosocial behaviour deals with similar 'limbs' as determinants, classified into donor, recipient, resource, and contextual characteristics. The last-mentioned determinant might include *kaalah'* and *deshah'*. Personal qualities of the donor have been examined in terms of demographic factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, and some personality characteristics. For example, whether male or female donors are more likely to help would be influenced by the gender of the recipient. Male donors are most likely to help female recipients, and female donors are least likely to help male recipients. People of the middle socioeconomic class are more likely to exhibit prosocial behaviour than those of the upper or lower socioeconomic class. Specific personality characteristics of the donor, such as being high on empathy, extroverted, and oriented towards affiliation, have been described. Much less has been said in the contemporary research literature regarding recipient characteristics other than need.

Resource characteristics include cost and magnitude of help. Some resources are given with greater frequency and greater willingness; this is explained in terms of the cost of the resource to the donor. As one would expect, low cost resources are more frequently and more willingly given as help compared to high-cost resources. As a parallel, the *daanam* taxonomies also point out the superiority of 'high-cost' *daanam* over 'low-cost' *daanam*. Not only is the former more virtuous, but it also brings more favourable consequences to the donor. Moreover, in the case of *daanam*, resources are distinguished in terms of (a) donor motives, (b) the fulfillment of recipient needs, (c) the comfort it can give even to a non-needy recipient, (d) the long-term consequences of the *daanam* for the donor, and (e) the concreteness of the resource (ranging from gold or money, goods such as cows, horses, and furniture, through human resources such as a daughter being given in marriage, to something as abstract as knowledge). The last-mentioned variable bears some similarity to the resource theory propounded by Foa and Foa (1974), which can be applied to any aspect of social exchange. Both dimensions proposed in this theory—namely, concrete-abstract, and universalistic-particularistic—seems to be subtly incorporated in the various *daanam* taxonomies.

With regard to contextual factors, in the case of prosocial behaviour, these are mainly related to donor motives, and judgment of the recipient's motives by the donor. In short, the contemporary psychological literature on prosocial behaviour deals with the four kinds of determinants in less detail, and without an emphasis on moral or spiritual qualities.

Finally, a word is in order about the role of the recipient (*prati-gruheeta* of *daanam*). In both the traditional and contemporary perspectives, a typical setting of *daanam* and prosocial behaviour consists of a donor and a recipient. In both perspectives, in general, giving is considered to be virtuous and noble, but seeking or receiving help (or charity) is considered demeaning. Receiving help or a favour is said to generate a sense of indebtedness, a negative attitude and emotional state (M.S. Greenberg & Shapiro, 1971). A question may arise in this context. Giving is said to be noble, and it can be done only if there is a person to receive what is given. But if receiving is considered demeaning, how can a donor fulfil the act of 'giving' ?

One answer to this question is that accepting *daanam* is demeaning only to the extent of reflecting dependence. The implication is that nobody should be so dependent on charity that he is compelled to ask (or beg) for charity, and has no independent means of livelihood. Asking (for alms) is like death' says Kabeerdas, an Indian poet of traditional times. However, in the context of helping (and in the case of some forms of *daanam* , for example, *atithi-*, *anna-*, *prashraya-* *daanam* , and the like), a donor who perceives the recipient's worthiness and need can take the lead and *offer* to give resources to the recipient. It is then the recipient's turn to decide whether or not to accept the given help. The contemporary perspective highlights the role played by the recipient's self-esteem (pride and dignity), and the extent to which the recipient perceives control over getting the required resources through his own efforts (Nadler and Fisher, 1976). The contemporary view adds the requirement of material reciprocity to recipient behaviour. It is assumed that the negative effects of accepting help, such as the feeling of indebtedness, can be obliterated by returning the favour. In other words, help will be accepted only if it does not lower the recipient's self-esteem greatly, and if the recipient foresees an opportunity to reciprocate. Thus there is always a possibility that offered help may be refused by the recipient.

All this is applicable to prosocial behaviour and recipient reactions, as interpreted in the contemporary perspective. Does the same kind of thinking apply to *daanam* also ? The answer is that the recipient's direct reactions have not been analyzed in such great detail. Overall, in all those situations in which *daanam* closely resembles *paropakaar* or prosocial behaviour, the ideas of 'indebtedness' and 'threat to self-esteem' may come into the picture. However, in the case of *daanam* , one of the qualities of the *prati-gruheeta* (recipient) is that of gratitude, a positive attitude and emotional state. Gratitude is allowed for in the contemporary view also : accepting help from the 'right' kind of donor may actually increase the recipient's self-esteem, and generate a sense of gratitude. As the preceding analysis shows, there are so many other prescriptions regarding *daanam* , that the question of a potential recipient refusing *daanam* does not arise. The requirement is also that *daanam* be accepted by an appropriate recipient from the right kind of donor, with the right attitude. Material reciprocity does not come into the picture in this case. The contemporary view requires reciprocity even when the recipient experiences gratitude.

Moral religious basis

It is the moral-religious and spiritual basis and goals of *daanam* that place the concept in the context of values. One may pose a simple question : why should anyone give *daanam* at all ? Likewise, in the contemporary perspective, one may ask 'why should anyone help anyone at all ? An easy and brief answer given in the contemporary context is that (a) we are guided by a 'social responsibility norm' (Berkowitz & Daniels, 1964) - each one of us is socially responsible for helping a needy or dependent person, and /or that (b) as we develop morally, we should be oriented towards others around us - it is not only good, but morally required, that we help others who need our help.

In the context of *daanam* , the answer given is partly similar to the one given in the contemporary perspective, but is coloured largely by spiritual consideration.

Why not give away your riches in charity which you shall have to leave behind, after death ? (*Vyaasa samhita* , 20 Dutt, 1979, Vol. III)

If you have but a morsel of food, why don't you give half of it to the poor ? Will anybody ever get his wished-for riches in this life ? (*Vyaasa samhita* , 23, - Dutt, 1979, Vol. III)

Thus one should make *daanam* out of a spirit of abnegation or relinquishment, rather than mainly because giving is noble.

In addition, *daanam* should sometimes be given as atonement for sins. But why atone through *daanam* , and not by other means ? The answer is given in the suggestion that *daanam* should be made as a routine activity because :

- it involves the giving away of wealth that belongs to everyone.
- everyone has an equal right to acquire wealth
- it is the duty of everyone to ensure that others are getting the proper share that is their due.
- whatever we consume in this world is only for the sustenance of the mortal body this fact being common to everyone, one must ensure that such sustenance is possible for everyone.
- nothing truly belongs to us we act as mere custodians of the wealth that actually belongs to someone else. When the real owner (in the form of a recipient) comes along, we return with due respect what belongs to him.

This is reminiscent of what has been said in Eeshaavaasyopanishad (the first verse) 50 . If such an attitude is developed, the tendency to hoard wealth disappears.

Similarly, why are so many detailed characteristics listed for an appropriate donor (as mentioned by Hemadri, and in *Daana - dharmaparva* (in the *Mahaabhaarata*) ? One concise answer is that such a listing ensures that the donor will make the *daanam* appropriately. If the donor is unattached to his own *daanam* , or if he has the other qualities stipulated for a donor, then he would make a good *daata* (donor). If the donor shows no detachment about his giving, then the *daanam* may have some of the following negative consequences. Such a *daanam* may 'fail' because :

- It may cause disappointment to the donor.
- It may cause depression in the donor
- The donor may start showing his authority/ superiority over the recipient
- The donor may expect recognition
- The donor may experience anger and feel vengeful when and if the *daanam* is not acknowledged
- The donor may experience anxiety even after giving for example, if the given object is lost, handed over to someone else, depreciates or is disregarded by the recipient.

The traditional and contemporary perspectives : A summary statement

From the preceding discussion, it may be concluded that *daanam* (representing a concept in the traditional Hindu perspective) bears an apparent resemblance to helping or prosocial behaviour (a concept in the contemporary psychological perspective), but *daanam* is not synonymous with prosocial behaviour.

The following features are common to both concepts. Both *daanam* and prosocial behaviour aim to do good to another person, to avoid doing harm, have an 'other-orientation', and are engaged in without expectation of any return. Both examine components such as donor, recipient, resource and contextual characteristics, and emphasize the significance of positive motives in giving. The features that differ between the two concepts are as follows : the sense of relinquishment or abnegation is highlighted in *daanam* but not in prosocial behaviour, and reciprocity in material terms (return of a favour or charity to the original donor) is important in the context of prosocial behaviour but not in *daanam* . The consequences of *daanam* to the donor is a topic that is carefully dealt with in the case of *daanam* , but this topic is not salient in the case of prosocial behaviour. Much more is said about various kinds of resources that are given as *daanam* , than in the case of resources that are given in prosocial behaviour. Moreover, in the case of *daanam* , apart from listing the characteristics of a deserving or worthy recipient, the recipient's reactions to *daanam* (by way of acceptance or refusal) is not discussed . possibly because no allowance is made for the refusal of *daanam* . However, in the case of prosocial behaviour, the recipient's reaction is considered an important component (sometimes as a determinant of a potential donor's helping behaviour).

The extent of details in the case of *daanam* is striking ; these are presented as prescriptions from authority, in the form of elaborate taxonomies and statements that have a wide scope. On the other hand, the analysis of prosocial behaviour is non-prescriptive, and is based on empirical as well as theoretical research. Therefore, it contains as many details as are necessary and relevant within an explanatory-predictive framework. There is also a fundamental difference in the initial approach and the contexts in which the two concepts are proposed. *Daanam* , as part of traditional Hindu thought, is analyzed in a moral- religious, spiritual and philosophical context, and involves an idealistic-normative approach. Prosocial behaviour, on the other hand, is studied in a worldly or mundane context (albeit with a moral component), and involves an empirical-purposive approach.

Can it be said that because of a tradition that emphasized a concept such as *daanam* , prosocial behaviour is a salient theme in Indian society today ? Can it be said that the values underlying *daanam* are also part of prosocial behaviour in contemporary Indian society ? If this were true, then this should be expressed through a cultural salience of values related to prosocial behaviour (for example, Benevolence as one of the Schwartz values).

In response to these two queries, it can only be said that

(a) *daanam* continues in today's Indian society, mainly as a ritual (in a non-derogatory sense) for religious and spiritual goals, and in general, *daanam* is believed to be different from helping or prosocial behaviour ;

(b) the extent of prosocial behaviour (helping) in Indian society is not very high when compared to some Western cultures, such as the U.S. (L'Armand and Pepitone, 1975), and tends to be affected by factors such as ingroup or outgroup membership of the recipient, and perceived resource scarcity. Since the underlying values of prosocial behaviour in the two cultures have not been directly investigated, it would be

inappropriate to attribute this cross-cultural difference in prosocial behaviour to value differences.

It may also be kept in mind that one of the indicators of cultural collectivism (Hofstede, 2001) is a concern for the welfare of others. In some form, this kind of concern is seen even in the changed Indian society today, in the form of a community spirit, and a social support system, that seem to emerge when the need arises. The tendency to show concern for the welfare of others, or everyone is, indeed, a prosocial attitude. This feature corroborates the relative collectivism which is said to exist in India (Hofstede, 1980; Verma, 2004).

Perhaps such collectivist and prosocial attitudes show that a late crop has grown, even in the midst of weeds, out of the seeds of 'giving' sown in the Indian tradition.

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