HILL PUBLISHING

Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Studies, 2026, 2(1), 56-77
https://www.hillpublisher.com/Journals/jpbs/
ISSN Online: 3067-4972

Psycho-socio and Philosophical Implications of Isa Upanishad

Aditya Angiras*, Shrikant Angiras

Panjab University, Chandigarh Sadhu Ashram, Una Road, Hoshiarpur 146021, India.

How to cite this paper: Aditya Angiras, Shrikant Angiras. (2026). Psycho-socio and Philosophical Implications of Isa Upanishad. *Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Studies*, 2(1), 56-77.
DOI: 10.26855/jpbs.2026.06.007

Received: April 1, 2026
Accepted: May 22, 2026
Published: June 16, 2026

***Corresponding author:** Aditya Angiras, Panjab University, Chandigarh Sadhu Ashram, Una Road, Hoshiarpur 146021, India.

© 2026 by the author(s).
This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives (CC BY-NC-ND) license, which permits non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited and is not modified or adapted.
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/

Abstract

The Ishavasya Upanishad or simply, Isho Upanishad is a concise yet profound text within the Hindu tradition that introduces the concept of pervading reality. It asserts that everything in the universe, both moving and unmoving, is enveloped by the Divine essence, often termed as 'Ishvara' or Power Supreme. This fundamental understanding shifts one's perspective from dualistic separation to a sense of inherent unity. Recognizing this cosmic presence in all things forms the bedrock for ethical conduct and a holistic worldview. A key teaching within the IshavasyaUpanishad revolves around the necessity of action within a detached framework. It emphasizes that one should desire to live a full life, performing necessary duties, but without clinging to the results of those actions. This balanced approach, often termed 'karma yoga', suggests that true fulfillment comes not from accumulation or possessiveness, but from performing one's part in the cosmic play with equanimity. Furthermore, the Upanishad addresses the relationship between knowledge and ignorance. It cautions against remaining solely immersed in material pursuits, labeling such a state as deep darkness. Conversely, an exclusive focus solely on abstract knowledge, without practical engagement with the world, is presented as leading to even deeper darkness. True liberation, therefore, is achieved by integrating both wisdom and action harmoniously.

Keywords

Ancient Indian wisdom; Upanishads; IsavaysaUpanishad; Textual criticism; Psycho social implecations

1. Introduction

The isa Upanishad also written as IsavaysaUpanishad is one of the shortest yet most philosophically comprehensive Upanishad in the Indian thought. Despite containing only 18 mantras, it heavily focuses on various aspects of human life, from its stress management applications to everyday life to understanding the deep connection of the atman with the cosmos and the brahman itself. What is intriguing about this theological text is how it seeks to explain the monolithic philosophy and puts the main focuses on questioning, rational logic and mainly intuition. It also establishes a relationship between the subject and the object, the knower and the known or in other terms, shiv and shakti.

This particular piece of write up focuses on studying the basic meaning and the symbolic meaning of the mantras, but also puts special emphasis on understanding certain metaphysical questions about existence, consciousness etc.

The isa Upanishad is traditionally considered one of the core Upanishads that belongs to the Shukla Yajurveda

This theological text forms the final chapter of the Vajasnayei Samhita of Shukla Yajurveda. What is unique about this Upanishad is that it emerged during a time when Indian thinkers were focused on two paths of life i.e. jnana walk of life {knowledge} and the karma path of life{action} and isa Upanishad opened a new path that was collective of both the paths, this harmonical approach was later witnessed in the song divine, The Bhagwad Gita.

2. Textual understanding

The shanti-paath

The shanti path or the peace invocation is traditionally been recited before the study process of any Upanishad. The shanti paath or peace invocation for the isa Upanishad comes from the Shukla Yajurveda.

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Transliteration;

Om pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṁ pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate
Pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate
Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ[1]

UNDERSTANDING MEANING:

The term for 'complete' or ‘wholeness’ in this context, 'purnam,' doesn't just point to the fullness of a single thing. Instead, it speaks to an inherent completeness found in two distinct yet related aspects: the subject, which is the individual experiencing or perceiving, and the object, which is what is being experienced or perceived. It suggests that both are, in themselves, entirely whole and lacking nothing.

Expanding on this idea, when we encounter the phrase 'purnadah,' this particular expression for 'complete' refers to something far more fundamental. It points to the supreme consciousness, often conceptualized as Brahman, and its fundamental self-sufficiency. This isn't merely completeness in a quantitative sense, like having all parts; rather, it’s an ontological completeness. It means Brahman doesn't need anything outside of itself to be what it is. It is its own source, its own support, and its own end. This idea carries profound implications for how we understand existence and ultimate reality.

Following this, the phrase 'purnamidam' brings the discussion back into a more tangible, though still vast, domain. 'Purnamidam' refers to 'this universe,' signifying that the entire cosmos, everything we perceive and beyond, is also considered complete. This isn't just a collection of parts that make up a whole; it is seen as a whole entity in itself. The universe, in this view, isn't fragmented or incomplete but is a perfect and self-contained expression of completeness. It implies a deep harmony and interconnectedness within all its components, suggesting that every element has its place and purpose within the larger structure.

The fascinating part arises when we consider these two concepts together. We have 'purnadah,' representing the ultimate, absolute completeness of Brahman, the source of all. And then we have 'purnamidam,' which represents the completeness of the universe, the manifested reality. A central point of inquiry then emerges: if both the ultimate reality and the manifested universe are described as complete, what does that mean for their relationship? Are they distinct yet equally complete entities, or is one a reflection or extension of the other's fundamental nature? The philosophical implication is that there is no inherent lack or fragmentation either at the highest, most abstract level of consciousness or in the physical reality we inhabit. Both are seen as self-contained and perfect in their own being. This perspective challenges us to look beyond superficial appearances and recognize an underlying wholeness that pervades everything. It suggests that the perceived imperfections or lack we experience might be more a matter of our limited perspective than an intrinsic flaw in reality itself. In understanding this perspective, we begin to appreciate the profound truth embedded in these ancient declarations, urging us toward a deeper comprehension of existence. The conceptual structure provided lays the groundwork for a rich exploration of metaphysical unity. The statement, "purnat purna mudchyate," presents a core idea within certain philosophical traditions, especially Advaita Vedanta. It essentially suggests a deep connection between the manifest world and a fundamental, all-encompassing reality. When we break down the Sanskrit phrase, "purnaat purna mudchyate," it conveys the concept that from fullness, fullness indeed emanates or is freed. This isn't just a simple mathematical equation; it speaks to a profound ontological relationship. The empirical universe, referred to here as "idam," is not seen as something separate or created out of nothing, but rather as an expression of a supreme consciousness, often termed "adah." This supreme consciousness is considered complete and perfect in itself, a state of absolute fullness.

The idea here is that the creation or appearance of the universe does not diminish the supreme consciousness in any way. Think of it like a light source. The light it emits illuminates a room, but the light source itself does not lose any of its luminosity. Similarly, the universe, with all its intricate workings and diverse forms, is understood as a manifestation of that same perfect and complete consciousness. This perspective implies that the universe is not an

illusion in the sense of being unreal, but rather a contingent reality[2] Dependent on the underlying supreme consciousness for its existence. The term contingent reality can better be understood in the sense of relation between an ocean and its' reoccurring waves due to gust of wind where ocean and waves both are undeniably inter-connected, real and infinite which cannot be changed but the reoccurring waves in the ocean water are transient in nature. It must be pointed out that they are inseparable rather expressions of it. The universe is real and infinite and the human life is transient in nature which is the expression of Power Supreme. This Power Supreme is timeless and undividable and so is the power behind life.

This particular ontological viewpoint is quite central and widely accepted within Advaita philosophy. Advaita, which literally means "non-dual," posits that there is ultimately only one reality, and that reality is Brahman, the supreme consciousness. All perceived distinctions and multiplicities in the world are considered to be superimpositions (adhyasa) on this singular reality, much like mistaking a rope for a snake in dim light. The universe, therefore, is not an independent entity, but Brahman itself appearing in various forms and names. The statement "purnat purna mudchyate" thus reinforces the idea that the world arises from Brahman without Brahman undergoing any change or depletion. It remains ever full, ever complete. Understanding this fundamental premise leads to a different interpretation of existence and our place within it. It challenges the conventional view of a separate creator and creation, offering instead a unified vision where everything is interconnected as an aspect of the same ultimate reality. The entire cosmos, in this view, is a grand expression of this perfect fullness. The third statement in this context refers to a specific moment of realization concerning the endless nature of the Supreme Being. When one truly comes to understand this through a deepening of their knowledge, it becomes clear that ultimately, the supreme Brahman, or the eternal, everlasting consciousness, remains as the sole entity. This profound insight suggests a terminal perspective in which all other constructs and forms dissolve, leaving only the fundamental consciousness.

This perspective is not merely an abstract philosophical concept but is often described as an experiential understanding that transforms one's view of reality. It's about reaching a state where the individual intellect and the accumulated knowledge converge to reveal a singular truth. This truth is that the ultimate reality is not something separate or distant, but an all-encompassing presence—a constant, unchanging essence that underlies all existence. It's an intellectual and spiritual progression, moving from a fragmented understanding of the world to a holistic one.

Consider, for example, the various spiritual traditions that speak of a return to source or an ultimate unity. While their terminologies might differ, the underlying idea is often the same: a recognition that beneath the myriad forms and appearances, there is an irreducible, fundamental truth. When one grasps this truth through diligent inquiry and self-reflection, the realization of the supreme's infinitude becomes not just an idea but a lived reality. This specific point of realization is often described as a pivotal moment, a turning point in one's interpretive framework of the universe.

The notion that the supreme Brahman is left alone implies a process of discernment where everything transient or dualistic is recognized as temporary. What persists is this singular, everlasting consciousness. This could be likened to stripping away layers of an onion until only the core remains, or seeing through the illusions of a dream to wake up to the true state of affairs. The emphasis is on clarity and the absence of any other contending or co-equal entity. It means that any subjective experience or phenomenal manifestation is ultimately understood as an expression of this one unchanging awareness. The understanding generated by such a revelation about the unending nature of the divine is what underpins this whole conceptual structure. It changes how one perceives the world, oneself, and the very fabric of being. The repeated chanting of the sound "OM" holds a particular meaning within certain traditions, focusing on the idea of removing specific kinds of difficulties one might encounter. This practice is understood to address three distinct categories of obstacles, each representing a different source of personal tribulation. The first of these, known as adhyatmik, centers on the internal disturbances that plague an individual's inner world. These are the struggles that originate from within ourselves, our own minds, and our own bodies. They encompass a wide array of personal distress, such as the persistent feelings of anxiety that can grip a person, making it hard to find peace. The experience of stress, which can stem from daily pressures or deeply rooted concerns, also falls under this umbrella. Burnout, a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged or excessive stress, is another prime example. When we talk about burnout, we are referring to the feeling of being completely depleted, where even simple tasks seem impossible. Physical ailments and disease, too, are considered adhyatmik, as their direct experience is inherently internal, impacting one's well-being and inner state. The aim of repeating "OM" in this context is to gradually ease and ultimately dissolve these inner conflicts and discomforts. It's about seeking a pathway to inner serenity by addressing the root causes of our personal disharmony. This meditative practice serves as a tool to calm the restless mind and soothe the troubled spirit, providing a means to achieve a more balanced and tranquil

inner landscape. The careful study of these internal states is critical to understanding the practice fully. It seems to suggest a deep awareness of human suffering. Following the discussions of personal distress, we naturally turn our attention to the adibhutik (metaphysical), a category encompassing external disturbances. These aren't just minor inconveniences; they're the kinds of disruptions that come from outside an individual's direct control, often having widespread and profound impacts. Consider natural disasters, for instance. A devastating earthquake can level entire communities, displacing thousands and destroying livelihoods in an instant. The immediate aftermath involves not only the physical rebuilding of infrastructure but also the immense psychological toll on survivors who have lost homes, loved ones, or a sense of security. Similarly, a flood can wipe out agricultural land, leading to food shortages and economic instability for entire regions. These events aren't directed at any single person, but their ripple effects touch everyone within their reach.

Moving beyond purely environmental catastrophes, we encounter man-made external disturbances such as wars. Armed conflict, by its very nature, brings about immense suffering. civilian populations often bear the brunt, facing displacement, violence, and the disintegration of social structures. The economic repercussions are staggering, with resources diverted to conflict, trade routes disrupted, and essential services faltering. The mental scars of war can last for generations, affecting individual and collective well-being long after the fighting has ceased. The collapse of an empire, even if seemingly distant, can send shockwaves across continents.

Financial problems also fall squarely into this adibhutik category when they stem from systemic issues rather than individual mismanagement. Imagine a global economic downturn, where recessions lead to mass unemployment, widespread bankruptcies, and a general erosion of public confidence. These aren't isolated incidents affecting just one household; they are broad macroeconomic phenomena whose origins lie in complex global interdependencies, regulations, or even political decisions far removed from the average citizen's influence. A sudden stock market crash, while impacting individual investors, is fundamentally an external market disturbance with far-reaching consequences for pension funds, business investments, and the overall stability of the economy. A sudden regulatory change, for example, a new international trade policy, can unexpectedly devastate an entire industry in a particular country, irrespective of how well individual companies within that industry were performing. These external pressures create a landscape of uncertainty and challenge that individuals must confront and adapt to, often with limited personal agency over the causal factors. The world is full of these influences. And at last comes the adhidaivik (metaphysical), which refers to problems stemming from our relationship with the cosmos, or with forces beyond direct human control. This concept introduces a really interesting layer to understanding hardship, moving beyond simply personal failings or societal issues. Think about, for example, natural disasters like earthquakes or floods. These events certainly create immense problems for individuals and communities, impacting infrastructure, livelihoods, and even mental well-being. These are not issues that arise from individual choices or interpersonal conflicts; they are external forces of nature, which the adidaivik (metaphysical) framework would categorize as originating from our cosmic relationship.

Consider also the challenges posed by disease pandemics. While human actions can play a role in their spread, the emergence of a new virus and its global impact often feels like a force that transcends immediate human agency. There's a certain helplessness that can accompany such widespread health crises, reflecting a struggle against something much larger than any single person or group. The concept helps us to classify these kinds of challenges. We often refer to these as acts of God when insurance companies are involved, which intuitively aligns with the notion of problems originating from a cosmic or superhuman sphere.

Even subtle, less dramatic cosmic influences might fall under this umbrella. For instance, the cyclical nature of seasons, while predictable, can still pose difficulties. A particularly harsh winter or a prolonged drought can lead to agricultural failures, economic distress, and social unrest. These are not the fault of any specific individual, yet they present very real problems that societies must contend with. This perspective challenges us to look beyond immediate human interactions and personal moral choices when trying to understand the full spectrum of suffering and difficulty in life. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of all things and our place within a larger, often unpredictable, universe. So, when facing these seemingly insurmountable problems, this framework offers a way to categorize and understand their origins, even if a direct solution remains elusive. It’s part of a broader philosophical outlook that seeks to explain the various sources of human affliction.

3. Psychological applications and stress management

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे॥

Transliteration:
kurvanneveha karmāṇi jijīviṣecchataṃ samāḥ
evaṃ tvayi nānyatheto'sti na karma lipyate nare[3]

This mantra encapsulates a profound philosophical ideal that intertwines ethical action with the aspiration for a meaningful long life. This isn't merely a suggestion for longevity for its own sake, but rather a reflection of the idea that a life dedicated to righteous deeds, or 'karma' in its broadest sense, is both desirable and conducive to a full existence. It implies a certain kind of positive and active engagement with the world with a commitment to contributing to a more meaningful, rather than passively observing or withdrawing. Such a perspective encourages individuals not just to endure, but to thrive through his actions by understanding that his choices have a direct bearing on their future experiences.

Understanding karma here goes beyond a simplistic notion of cosmic payback. It refers more to the principle of cause and effect in human actions, both intentional and unintentional. When one is instructed to live for a century by 'doing karma,' it means to live a life saturated with meaningful actions, conscious efforts, and moral engagement. This isn't about accumulating good deeds as if collecting points, but about cultivating a way of being that aligns with positive contribution and ethical conduct. For instance, consider the work of a dedicated teacher who invests years in shaping young minds, pouring energy into their intellectual and emotional development. Their karma, in this context, is the long-term impact of their teaching, the positive ripples they create in the lives of their students. This isn't an unloving pursuit, but one deeply rooted in care and dedication.

The aspiration for a century of life, therefore, becomes a metaphor for desiring a complete and impactful lifespan, one that allows ample opportunity for these positive actions to unfold and bear fruit. It rejects the idea of a life cut short by regret or inaction, instead advocating for a proactive stance. Imagine a scientist who dedicates their career to finding cures for diseases. Every experiment, every failed trial, every breakthrough is part of their karma. The wish for a long life in this context is a wish for sufficient time to see their efforts through, to make a lasting difference in the world. It is a subtle push towards persistence and resilience in the face of challenges, knowing that sustained effort over time can lead to significant outcomes.

Moreover, this statement encourages a sense of responsibility towards one's time and capabilities. If one is to live for 100 years while engaged in karma, it implies that this extended life is not to be squandered. Every moment becomes an opportunity for ethical engagement, for learning, for growth, and for making a positive mark. Think of a community leader who spends decades advocating for social justice, organizing initiatives, and building networks of support. Their 'karma' is woven into the fabric of the community they serve. The desire for a long life is so that they can continue to champion these causes and see their visions for a better society come to fruition. This isn't a passive wish but an active commitment to a sustained work ethic.

The instruction thus guides individuals towards a purposeful existence, urging them to construct a life of meaning through their actions. It suggests that a life well-lived, filled with conscientious efforts and contributions, naturally extends itself, perhaps not always in literal years, but certainly in its enduring influence and the satisfaction it brings. It becomes a personal mantra, an internal compass directing choices and behaviors toward a long-term goal of positive societal contribution. It shapes one's outlook, fostering a sense of continuity and enduring purpose, rather than short-term gratification. This holistic view of life and action shapes how individuals perceive their role in the world and their personal connection to a larger collective. For a person who seeks to live authentically, embracing one’s true self and convictions, there really isn’t any alternative path. It’s unavoidable that the results of your actions, your karma, will accompany you. This particular insight carries a particular resonance when we consider the enduring philosophical discussions surrounding personal responsibility and the inescapable consequences of one’s choices. Each decision, each interaction, and indeed, each thought, creates ripples that extend outward, eventually returning to the originator.

Consider, for example, the academic pursuit. A scholar dedicated to intellectual honesty, who diligently researches and presents findings with integrity, will likely experience a positive trajectory in their career, gaining respect from peers and contributing genuinely to their field. The karma here isn't some mystical force, but rather the natural progression of reputation and academic standing built upon consistent ethical practice. Conversely, a scholar who cuts corners, fabricates data, or plagiarizes another’s work will inevitably encounter negative repercussions. These might manifest as damaged credibility when they face the scrutiny of an ethics committee, public censure, or even the eventual dismissal from their position. The actions taken, the shortcuts pursued, invariably lead to outcomes that reflect the foundational choices made. There is no escaping the outcomes of one's actions; even the smallest omission

can contribute to a larger pattern.

The concept extends beyond individual academic conduct to broader societal roles. Think of a leader, for instance, who consistently acts with altruism, prioritizing the well-being of their community even when faced with difficult choices. This leader will likely inspire loyalty and achieve collective success, fostering a positive atmosphere. Their legacy will be shaped by these contributions, remembered for their foresight and compassion. On the other hand, a leader who acts purely from self-interest, manipulating situations for personal gain, will eventually face public distrust and resentment. Their actions, driven by avarice, will produce a harvest of negative public opinion and possibly outright resistance. There isn't an exit lane where this principle doesn't apply.

The fundamental idea here is one of intrinsic justice, not necessarily in a punitive sense, but as an inherent operational principle of existence (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). The universe operates on a system of cause and effect. If you sow seeds of kindness and dedication, you will, in due course, reap a corresponding harvest. If you plant seeds of deceit and negligence, then that is what will inevitably blossom. It's not about divine retribution, but rather an observable pattern in human experience (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). The choices we make shape our experiences, and our present circumstances are often a direct result of past actions. This is why for a man who wants to live as you, with integrity and purpose, there shall not exist another way, where karma may not be stuck with you. It is an unavoidable aspect of being, a constant companion that reflects the essence of our journey. Alright, let's unpack this idea a bit. The concept being presented, quite simply, suggests a fundamental principle for existence: a determination to live, coupled with a commitment to action. It posits that a genuine desire for life should naturally lead to engagement with the world through one's deeds (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). This isn't just about mere survival; it implies a more active, purposeful participation.

Consider, for instance, a student facing a particularly challenging academic program. If they possess a strong inner will to succeed and make something of their future, this feeling isn't enough on its own. That will must manifest in their daily routine. It means putting in the time studying, attending lectures, seeking help when needed, and collaborating with peers. The karma in this context isn't some mystical force, but rather the tangible efforts they expend. Their living is intertwined with their doing.

Another example can be found in the field of public health. Imagine a community grappling with a widespread illness. The will to overcome this crisis, to preserve lives and wellbeing, is a powerful motivator. But this will, as vital as it is, must be translated into concrete actions. This could involve organizing vaccination drives, educating the populace on preventative measures, investing in local healthcare infrastructure, and researching new treatments. These actions, these specific kinds of karma, are the ways in which the collective will to live and thrive is put into practice (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). The simple declaration, "If one has the will to live, then one should focus on living and also do karma," then becomes a very clear and practical guide. It implies a dynamic relationship where aspiration fuels endeavor, and endeavor, in turn, shapes one's reality and that of their community. There's no passive acceptance here; it's an active embracing of life through purposeful activity. The intrinsic value of life is recognized and affirmed, not through contemplation alone, but through engagement. This basic teaching, therefore, emphasizes the inseparable nature of inner resolve and external conduct, suggesting that one cannot truly "live" in the fullest sense without also "doing." This action-focused path is seemingly enjoying the longest human life span by doing karma. This idea suggests a profound relationship between our deeds and the length of our earthly existence. It's not just about what we do, but the intention and energy behind those actions that appear to shape the fabric of our lives, right down to their duration. When we talk about karma here, we're considering it in a broad sense, not just as a simple cause and effect but as a deeper spiritual and physical exchange. The persistent activity, the ongoing engagement with the world through good works or conscientious effort, could be seen as a life-affirming force. It implies that a life lived with purpose, constantly engaged in meaningful and ethical actions, might just be rewarded with more time to continue that engagement. This perspective encourages a view of life where inactivity or a lack of purposeful action could, conversely, lead to a shorter, less fulfilling existence.

Think about the concept of flow, where a person is fully immersed in an activity, experiencing energized focus and enjoyment. This state often comes from engaging in tasks that require skill and provide a sense of achievement, which aligns perfectly with this action-focused path. Such sustained engagement, particularly when it stems from a place of genuine contribution or service, generates a flow of positive energy that could influence one's health and longevity. It suggests that a life dedicated to constructive output, where one's actions are consistently directed towards positive outcomes for oneself and others, inherently fosters a longer and more vibrant physical presence. It's not about being busy for the sake of being busy; rather, it's about the quality and intentionality of the actions

themselves. The sheer dedication involved in pursuing this "karma" could translate into a deeply ingrained habit of living that promotes vitality.

The implication here is that our choices, particularly those leading to action and contribution, are not merely transient events but possess enduring resonance. This enduring resonance affects not only the world around us but also our personal well-being and the very duration of our lives. It's a rather compelling argument for living a life rich in purposeful activity, where every endeavor, no matter how small, contributes to a larger, positive tapestry of existence. For instance, consider individuals who dedicate their lives to research, teaching, or community service. Their days are often filled with continuous tasks, problem-solving, and interaction, all driven by a desire to contribute. This consistent mental and physical engagement seems to ward off ailments often associated with a sedentary or disengaged lifestyle. The sheer act of remaining active, intellectually and physically, through their karma, keeps their systems primed and perhaps even slows down the aging process. It's as if the universe acknowledges and rewards this sustained effort with additional time, allowing these individuals to continue their valuable contributions. This understanding of karma is therefore not a passive acceptance of fate but an active participation in shaping one's destiny through persistent, responsible action. This path requires a sustained effort, a persistent spirit, and a belief that every conscious act matters greatly. The idea that a life of constant, ethically sound action extends one's lifespan is a powerful catalyst for a more engaged and conscientious existence. It's a common observation that if a person's efforts aren't producing results, they might, for all intents and purposes, be seen as idling away their time without accomplishment. This idea gains particular relevance in our present-day society, where many individuals seem to be caught up in the constant stream of digital media consumption, particularly through short videos on their mobile devices. One might reasonably ask what outcomes such engagement truly yields beyond momentary distraction.

Consider, for example, the concept of academic progress. If a student spends hours each day browsing social media feeds instead of engaging with their coursework, even though they are technically "doing something," that activity doesn't contribute to their educational goals. The "karma," in a slightly broader sense here, refers to the accumulated effect of dedicated action towards an objective. If that output is missing, then the hours invested are essentially unproductive concerning the desired end. This isn't to say all leisure is bad; quite the opposite. However, the balance is key.

In a professional setting, we see similar dynamics. An employee might appear busy, perhaps constantly checking emails or attending unrelated meetings. Yet, if these actions don't contribute to project completion, revenue generation, or skill development, their contribution to the organization is negligible. Over time, this lack of contribution becomes apparent, affecting their career trajectory and organizational success. The problem isn't the act itself but its lack of alignment with any meaningful outcome. They are not seeing their contributions materialize into something tangible.

The current societal emphasis on immediate gratification often perpetuates this cycle. The rapid-fire content delivery of platforms often trains individuals to expect instant rewards, which can make sustained, patient effort towards a long-term goal feel less appealing. This shortens attention spans and can make difficult, drawn-out endeavors seem less rewarding by comparison. It highlights a certain impatience prevalent today.

We can analyze research habits as another illustration. A researcher might spend countless hours collecting data without a clear hypothesis or methodology. While the act of data collection itself is necessary, if it's unfocused and doesn't lead to analysis or new insights fitting into a larger theoretical framework, the effort is diffused. The researcher is busy but not necessarily productive in advancing knowledge. The crucial ingredient of purposeful action is simply absent. There is a clear distinction between activity and productivity that needs to be acknowledged. One must understand that simply being occupied does not equate to making headway. The deliberate application of effort toward a specific, predefined outcome is what ultimately results in progress, whether personal, professional, or academic. This particular situation can create a lot of room for various psychological challenges and a deep sense of unease about existence itself. When individuals find themselves in circumstances that disrupt established routines or deeply held beliefs, the psychological impact can be quite profound. For instance, consider a sudden shift in one's environment, such as relocating to a completely different culture without adequate preparation or community support. The familiar anchors that provide a sense of stability and belonging are suddenly absent. This can lead to a feeling of disorientation, a kind of psychological displacement where one struggles to understand their place in the world. Such experiences can often bring about feelings of anxiety, a persistent worry that something is wrong or that one is not truly safe. It's not just a fleeting nervousness, but a more pervasive sense of dread that can affect daily functioning.

Beyond immediate anxiety, there's also the possibility of more complex psychological problems emerging. Take,

for example, situations where a person faces a sudden and unexpected loss, not just of a loved one, but perhaps of a career identity cultivated over decades. The very framework of their personal story, how they define themselves, might be shaken to its core. This can sometimes lead to depressive states, marked by prolonged sadness, a loss of interest in activities that once brought joy, and a general feeling of hopelessness. The sheer weight of such a change can be overwhelming, making it difficult for an individual to cope or to construct a new narrative for their life.

Alongside these psychological aspects, there's the equally compelling concern of existential anxiety. This isn't just about everyday worries; it's a deeper questioning of life's meaning, purpose, and ultimately, one's own mortality. Imagine someone who has dedicated their entire life to a specific cause, only to see that cause crumble. The very foundation of their self-worth and their reason for being might be undermined. This can lead to moments of profound reflection, sometimes uncomfortable ones, where they wrestle with fundamental questions about why they exist, what their life truly stands for, and whether any of it truly matters in the grand scheme of things. Such reflections can be unsettling, forcing individuals to confront the inherent finitude of life and the often-apparent lack of inherent meaning.

A concrete example could be someone who has always believed in a certain societal structure or political system, only to witness its collapse or to discover its inherent flaws. Their worldview, which provided comfort and certainty, is shattered. This can trigger a crisis of faith, not necessarily religious, but a crisis in their confidence regarding their own beliefs and values. They might begin to question the very fabric of reality as they understood it, leading to a profound sense of isolation and detachment. This intellectual disruption is a key component of existential anxiety.

When we consider these interconnected elements, it becomes clear that certain situations don't just present minor inconveniences, but rather, substantial challenges to an individual's mental and emotional well-being. The creation of such scope for psychological problems and existential anxiety is a serious matter, demanding careful consideration of the environments and experiences shaping human lives. The potential for disruption to one's internal landscape is always present when core tenets are challenged. The processes of *doing* and *knowing what to do* are deeply intertwined elements that collectively mold human thought and behavior, creating a sense of assurance and purpose. When there is a clear alignment, a correspondence, between an individual’s internal understanding or thought processes and their external actions or behaviors, it cultivates a work-oriented individual characterized by strong problem-solving skills and a clear sense of direction. This internal coherence, this feeling of 'knowing,' isn't just about accumulating facts. It’s about the active application of that knowledge, the actual engagement in the task at hand. One might consider this as a dynamic interplay where action reinforces understanding, and understanding guides action.

For instance, consider a student learning about historical events. Simply reading a textbook might provide some foundational knowledge. This is 'knowing what to do' in a cognitive sense – understanding the chronology, the key figures, and the causes of events. However, the true deepening of this knowledge, the transformation into a confident, work-oriented understanding, comes when the student *does* something with that information. This could involve writing an essay, participating in a debate, or even designing a presentation that requires them to synthesize information and articulate their own interpretations. Through these *doing* activities, the abstract concepts from the textbook become concrete and internalized, fostering a genuine understanding that goes beyond mere memorization. The act of writing the essay, for example, forces the student to structure their thoughts, to identify gaps in their knowledge, and to refine their arguments. This iterative process of thinking, then acting, then reflecting on the action, solidifies their comprehension.

This phenomenon is not limited to academic settings; it extends profoundly into professional and personal spheres. In a professional context, a new engineer might *know what to do* regarding the theoretical principles of structural design. However, it's only through *doing* – through actually participating in the design of a bridge, troubleshooting unexpected issues during construction, and observing the real-world performance of materials – that their theoretical knowledge transforms into practical expertise. The confidence they gain from seeing their designs become tangible structures, and from adapting their plans based on practical feedback, is immense.

This cycle of knowledge acquisition followed by practical application, where each informs and strengthens the other, is fundamental. It avoids the pitfall of abstract knowledge that remains detached from reality, or practical action that lacks a theoretical grounding. The harmony between thinking and acting, between intention and execution, is what truly empowers individuals to approach new situations with resourcefulness and clarity. This proactive stance, born from the interwoven threads of intellect and application, marks a truly confident and capable person. The ongoing interaction between 'what we believe we know' and 'what we actually enact' is a constant feedback loop shaping our cognitive frameworks and behavioral patterns. This interaction ensures that our understanding is not static but

continually refined through lived experience.

When we look at how people manage stress, it's interesting to consider ideas like those put forward by Lazarus and Folkman.

This perspective is crucial because it differentiates between situations where we perceive we have some influence and those where we do not. In a problem-focused scenario, individuals are actively engaging with the external circumstances. This could involve planning, problem-solving, or even making difficult decisions to alter the environmental stressors. Think about someone who is unhappy with their job. A problem-focused response might involve updating their resume, networking for new opportunities, or even having a conversation with their current employer about their concerns. They are directly confronting the issue, not just trying to feel better about it. This is in contrast to emotion-focused coping, which deals more with the internal emotional response to a stressor that might be outside one's direct power to change. For example, if someone is stuck in traffic, they can't change the traffic itself, so their coping might be emotion-focused, like listening to music or practicing deep breathing.

The works of Lazarus and Folkman provide a foundational understanding for how individuals try to address various life challenges. When they spoke of problem-focused strategies, they were honing in on those instances where the distress stems from a modifiable aspect of our environment or circumstances[4]. It signifies a person's belief that they possess the capacity to intervene and reshape their reality. This isn't to say that such an approach is always successful, but the intention and direction of effort are geared towards external manipulation rather than internal adjustment[5]. An academic example would be a researcher encountering an unexpected obstacle in their experiment. A problem-focused response would involve researching alternative methods, consulting colleagues for their expertise, or re-evaluating the experimental design itself. These actions are all aimed at resolving the experimental issue directly.

The concept of problem-focused coping also implies a certain level of cognitive appraisal – an assessment of the situation where the individual determines that the problem is, in fact, controllable (Folkman, 2013). If someone perceives a problem as uncontrollable, they are more likely to resort to emotion-focused strategies.

The very act of engaging in problem-focused coping suggests an underlying hope or conviction that one's actions can lead to a desirable outcome. It's an active engagement with the world. Consider a community facing a local environmental issue, such as pollution. A problem-focused approach would involve organizing community meetings, lobbying local government, collecting data, or implementing clean-up initiatives. All these efforts are directed at altering the problematic external conditions. Thus, these coping mechanisms, particularly when control lies in our hands, reflect an active, engaged stance toward life's difficulties. The question that often comes up in conversations about personal growth and ethical conduct is, what exactly is karma, and given its nature, what kinds of actions should we choose to undertake? We frequently hear the word karma thrown around in daily speech, sometimes casually, sometimes with a more serious undertone, but its true and nuanced meaning can often be misunderstood. At its core, karma is a fundamental concept in many philosophical and religious traditions, particularly those stemming from ancient Eastern thought (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It posits that every conscious action, thought, and word we produce generates a corresponding reaction. This isn't just about simple cause and effect in a physical sense, like pushing a domino and watching it fall; it's a far more intricate system that weaves together our intentions, deeds, and the outcomes that follow, often across different timelines.

Consider the idea that our choices are not isolated events but rather threads in a much larger fabric. If we act with benevolence, intending to help another person, the ripple effect of that kindness is often positive, not only for the recipient but also for our own internal state and subsequent experiences. Conversely, actions rooted in ill will, even if they appear to offer immediate gain, tend to create less desirable repercussions down the line. This doesn't mean karma is a form of divine punishment or reward in a simplistic sense. Instead, it's often understood as an impersonal law of the universe, much like gravity, where certain inputs invariably lead to certain outputs. The intricate dance of cause and effect is ongoing, shaping our character and influencing the circumstances we encounter.

So, if every action carries consequences, what kinds of actions should we prioritize? This is where the ethical framework of karma becomes particularly relevant. Many traditions suggest that actions aligned with virtues like compassion, honesty, generosity, and non-violence are considered to be positive karma. For example, if someone devotes their efforts to educating others through a teaching profession, their actions are typically seen as generating positive outcomes. They are contributing to the betterment of individuals and society (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984); this is positive karma. Conversely, actions driven by greed, hatred, or delusion are generally viewed as negative karma, leading to less harmonious results for the individual and those around them. Imagine a situation where someone consistently spreads misinformation; this would invariably lead to a lack of trust and create more confusion,

which is negative karma.

The key doesn't lie solely in the outward appearance of an action but critically, in the underlying intention (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Two people might perform the same external act—say, giving money to a charity. If one does it out of genuine care for others and a desire to alleviate suffering, their karma is considered beneficial. If the other does it solely for public recognition or to escape a tax burden, the karmic impact, while still potentially having some positive external effect, is lessened for them personally due to the impure intention. Therefore, a deep introspection into our motivations becomes essential. It's an ongoing process of self-awareness and ethical refinement, where we constantly evaluate why we do what we do. The path to generating what is considered good karma often involves cultivating a sense of altruism—a genuine concern for the welfare of others[6], not just our own. It's about understanding that our well-being is often intertwined with the well-being of the collective.

This contemplation of karma isn't meant to induce fear or paralysis but rather to empower individuals to make more conscious, responsible choices (Biggs, Brough, & Drummond, 2017). It encourages a proactive approach to living, where each decision becomes an opportunity to cultivate a more virtuous existence. The aim is to move towards actions that foster growth, peace, and harmony, both internally and in the broader world. What karma or action should one do, then? The answer invariably points towards actions born from wisdom, kindness, and a sincere desire to contribute positively to the tapestry of life. It's about building a foundation of ethical conduct that supports not only personal flourishing but also the collective good, making every interaction a chance to create something meaningful and lasting. Thinking about what truly shapes a person's path, and how they come to understand their own contributions to the world, leads to deep reflection[7]. It's not a question with a simple, straightforward answer, because the idea of karma itself is rather complex, shifting across various philosophical and spiritual traditions. We're not just talking about immediate cause and effect, like touching a hot stove and getting burned. Instead, it's about a much broader tapestry of actions, intentions, and reactions that play out over a person's entire life, and sometimes, in some belief systems, even beyond.

One could argue that our internal compass, our conscience, plays a crucial part. It's that quiet voice that often tells us whether a particular action feels right or wrong, even when no one else is around to judge. This inner knowing, while sometimes clouded by desires or external pressures, often serves as an initial guide. For example, if someone acts out of malice, there's an inherent sense of unease or guilt that follows, which can be an early indicator of negative karmic interaction. Conversely, acts of kindness or compassion often bring a sense of inner peace and contentment, suggesting a positive alignment. This internal feedback loop, where our emotional responses to our own behavior provide an intuition, can be a subtle but persistent instructor.

Another important aspect is observation. By paying close attention to the patterns in our lives and the lives of those around us, we can begin to discern correlations between actions and outcomes. If someone consistently acts with generosity, they might find that help and support seem to appear when they need it most. Conversely, a person who frequently engages in deceit might find that trust is always in short supply for them. This isn't about magical thinking, but rather understanding how actions create ripples in our social and personal environments (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). For instance, a student who consistently prepares for exams with diligence usually achieves better results than one who procrastinates. The effort invested in preparation, a mindful action, directly influences the eventual outcome. This clear connection between effort and result is a daily lesson in how our choices influence our reality.

Also, seeking guidance from mentors, teachers, or spiritual leaders who have dedicated their lives to understanding these principles can be immensely helpful. Their wisdom, often accumulated over years of contemplation and study, can illuminate paths that we might not see on our own. Think of a seasoned elder in a community who offers advice not based on fleeting trends, but on deep-seated ethical principles. Their perspective can help us interpret the subtle cues of our experience and provide a framework for ethical decision-making. This kind of guidance isn't about being told what to do, but rather about learning to discern the underlying principles that shape our very existence.

Self-reflection, particularly through practices like journaling or meditation, offers another avenue for profound insight. When we take the time to consciously review our past actions, motivations, and their subsequent effects, we begin to connect the dots. It's like creating a personal case study where we examine our own decision-making process and weigh its consequences. For instance, reflecting on a past conflict might reveal that stubbornness on our part exacerbated the situation, leading to further tension. This realization can then inform future interactions, helping us to act with greater flexibility and understanding[8]. This introspective work is essential for developing self-awareness, which is foundational to understanding one's karma.

In essence, understanding our karma isn't a destination reached by following a rigid set of rules, but an ongoing

process of learning, observing, and reflecting. It's about cultivating a heightened awareness of how our thoughts, words, and deeds shape our reality and the reality of those around us. Through this mindful engagement with life, one can gain a clearer discernment of the intricate web of cause and effect that defines their being. The question of life's purpose finds a thoughtful response within Indian ethical frameworks, particularly through the concept of the Purusharthas. These are not merely abstract ideas but rather practical guidelines intended to provide meaning and direction to human existence. The very term "Purusharthas" literally translates into something that gives meaning to human life or serves as a guiding force for an individual's life. It is like a four-pillared structure supporting the edifice of a fulfilling life, offering a holistic perspective on what it means to live well and to find a true sense of purpose.

When we consider these ethical objectives, they present a complete view of individual and societal aspirations. They are not prescriptive rules but rather a descriptive understanding of what motivates us as human beings and what helps us flourish. This ancient philosophical system suggests that by aligning our actions and intentions with these four aims, we can achieve a state of inner peace and external prosperity. It’s an approach that integrates material, psychological, and spiritual dimensions, recognizing that a truly balanced life requires attention to all these areas.

Let's begin with Dharma, the first of these vital principles. Dharma is often understood as righteousness, ethical conduct, or moral duty. It encompasses the idea of living in harmony with cosmic order and personal responsibilities. For instance, in a student's life, upholding Dharma might involve diligently studying, respecting teachers, and contributing positively to the learning environment. In a broader societal sense, it means acting in ways that support the well-being of the community and adhering to principles of justice and fairness. Dharma is the bedrock upon which the other Purusharthas are built; it ensures that the pursuit of personal goals does not come at the expense of moral integrity or societal welfare. It implies an understanding of one's place in the world and the obligations that come with it. This isn't about rigid dogma, but rather a flexible yet firm moral compass.

Next comes Artha (financial activities), which refers to material prosperity, economic well-being, and the resources necessary for a comfortable and secure life. This isn't about greed or excessive accumulation, but rather about acquiring the means to support oneself and one's family, and to participate meaningfully in society. For example, a person pursuing a career and earning a livelihood is engaging in Artha. It is recognized that a certain level of material comfort is essential for reducing suffering and providing the foundation for intellectual and spiritual pursuits. Without adequate Artha, it can be difficult to focus on higher ethical or spiritual aims, as basic needs often take precedence. The pursuit of Artha should always be guided by Dharma, meaning that wealth should be acquired through honest means and used responsibly. The desire for stability is natural and acknowledged here.

Following Artha, we encounter Kama, which represents desire, pleasure, and enjoyment. This includes aesthetic pleasures, love, intimacy, and the satisfaction of sensory experiences. Contrary to some interpretations that might view pleasure as inherently negative, Indian ethics recognize Kama as a legitimate and natural part of human experience. It's about finding joy in life, in relationships, and in engaging with the world through our senses. However, like Artha, Kama must also be governed by Dharma. Unrestrained or unethical pursuit of pleasure can lead to negative consequences, both for the individual and for society. An example of Kama within ethical bounds might be enjoying a beautiful piece of music, savoring a delicious meal, or experiencing the warmth of a loving relationship. It is the joy of living, celebrated within responsible limits.

Finally, we arrive at Moksha, the ultimate goal. Moksha signifies liberation, emancipation, and spiritual freedom. It refers to a state of being free from the cycle of birth and death (samsara) and achieving a profound understanding of self and reality. This is not necessarily an unworldly concept, but rather a state of inner peace and detachment from worldly anxieties and attachments, even while living an active life. It's about transcending the limitations of the ego and experiencing a deeper, more enduring sense of self. While Dharma, Artha, and Kama are pursued within the world, Moksha represents a transcendence of worldly concerns. For someone in pursuit of Moksha, practices like meditation, self-inquiry, and ethical living become incredibly important. It's the yearning for inner freedom, a profound desire for ultimate understanding.

The interdependence of these Purusharthas is crucial. They are not meant to be pursued in isolation but rather as an integrated whole. Dharma sets the moral boundaries for Artha and Kama, ensuring that material gains and pleasures are acquired and experienced ethically. Artha provides the necessities that allow one to pursue Kama and Dharma without undue hardship. Kama, when pursued ethically, can add richness and joy to life, making the journey towards Moksha more accessible. Ultimately, all three—Dharma, Artha, and Kama—are considered stepping stones towards the realization of Moksha. This framework asserts that a truly meaningful and fulfilling human life arises from a balanced pursuit of these four fundamental objectives, creating a path towards enduring happiness and ultimate

liberation. One does not simply discard the world for spiritual pursuits, but rather integrates them.To understand the full scope of this concept, let's consider the brahmacharya stage, which traditionally spans the initial phase of life, roughly from birth until the age of twenty-five. This particular period is not merely about physical growth or an absence of certain activities; it's primarily concerned with how one should conduct oneself in the light of the ultimate reality or divine principle, often referred to as Brahma. It represents a foundational time where an individual is encouraged to develop certain virtues and a specific mindset that will support their entire life's trajectory.

During these formative years, the emphasis is heavily placed on education and spiritual discipline. It's not just about accumulating facts or figures, but about cultivating a deep sense of inquiry and understanding regarding the fundamental truths of existence. For instance, the student, or brahmachari, would typically reside with a guru, or teacher, learning not only scriptures and arts but also the practicalities of a disciplined life. This environment fosters humility, self-control, and reverence for knowledge. Imagine a young person dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to their studies, recognizing that the pursuit of truth requires dedication and a calm, focused mind. This period is less about external achievements and more about inner growth and preparing for future responsibilities with wisdom and composure, much like a plant carefully nurtured in its early stages before it can bear fruit.

The teachings received during brahmacharya are intended to be absorbed deeply, shaping the individual's character and worldview. This isn't a passive absorption; it involves active contemplation and adherence to a moral code[9]. Consider the importance of truthfulness, non-violence, and self-restraint during this phase. These aren't abstract ideals for later life; they are principles to be lived out daily. The intent is to lay a stable foundation for the subsequent stages of life, ensuring that the individual is not swayed by fleeting desires but anchored in a deeper understanding of their place in the cosmos. It stands to reason that without such a solid grounding, navigating the complexities of adulthood would become far more challenging. This initial phase, therefore, acts as a crucible where character is forged, and a comprehensive understanding of the ethical and spiritual dimensions of life is developed, preparing one for the responsibilities and challenges to come. The core purpose during this initial period fundamentally revolves around scholarly pursuits, the practice of celibacy, developing practical life abilities, and laying the groundwork for the subsequent phases of one's existence. This isn't just about accumulating facts in academic settings; it's about a deeper engagement with knowledge itself, allowing for a thorough understanding that will form the basis of future decisions. For example, a student might spend years immersed in classical literature, not simply to memorize dates and authors, but to grasp the nuances of human experience and the historical context that shaped those narratives.

Regarding celibacy, this isn't merely an absence of intimate relations but a chosen path often undertaken for spiritual, philosophical, or educational concentration. It can be seen as a method to channel energy and attention away from romantic or sexual pursuits and toward intellectual and personal growth. Think of ascetics in various traditions, who adopt celibacy to attain a higher state of consciousness or to devote themselves entirely to their studies or community service. This choice can create an environment conducive to deep contemplation and uninterrupted learning.

The acquisition of real-life skills is another crucial component. This doesn't mean just vocational training, though that is certainly included. It extends to cultivating interpersonal skills, problem-solving capabilities, financial literacy, and the ability to adapt to varying circumstances. For instance, learning to budget one's finances, communicate clearly in a professional setting, or even cook nourishing meals are all vital skills that prepare an individual for independence. A young person might spend a summer volunteering abroad, not only gaining practical experience in a different culture but also refining negotiation and communication skills that are invaluable in any career path.

Finally, getting prepared for the next part of life encompasses all these elements. It's about building a solid foundation, both intellectually and personally, so that when challenges arise, an individual is equipped to meet them with confidence and competence. This preparation isn't a passive waiting game; it's an active process of self-improvement and strategic planning. A graduate, for instance, might meticulously research career paths, network with professionals, and hone interview techniques as part of this preparation. This foundational stage is about much more than just accumulating credentials; it's about shaping a well-rounded and resilient individual ready for whatever comes next, acknowledging that each individual's journey is different. In essence, it is a period of intense focus and personal formation that aims to set the individual up for eventual success and fulfillment.

4. Sociological applications

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मन्येवानुपश्यति ।
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥

Transliteration:

yas tu sarvāṇi bhūtāni ātmanyevānupaśyati
sarva-bhūteṣu cātmānaṁ tato na vijugupsate[10]

he who sees all the beings in the self and he who sees self in other being, feels no hate by the virtue of by that realization of this truth.

Okay, let's break down this idea of "non-hatefulness through the lens of empathy." It's not just a simple phrase; it really suggests a way of seeing and acting in the world. At its core, this mantra implies that to genuinely move beyond hatred, one must actively cultivate an understanding of another's experiences, feelings, and perspectives—even those with whom we might initially disagree or feel animosity toward. It's about purposefully putting oneself in another person's shoes, metaphorically speaking, to grasp the factors that shape their behaviors and beliefs. This isn't to say that empathy condones harmful actions, but rather it seeks to comprehend their origins. For instance, when considering disagreements, instead of immediately labeling an opposing view as irrational or malicious, the empathetic approach encourages an exploration of the underlying motivations. Perhaps someone's strong stance on a particular issue stems from a very personal experience of loss or injustice that fundamentally alters their worldview. Without this deeper contemplation, it's easy to dismiss or condemn.

The concept of 'non-hatefulness' here isn't just the absence of hostility; it's an active posture of understanding and a conscious refusal to let resentment take root. It's a proactive stance rather than a passive one. This isn't always easy, of course. Our immediate reactions often lean towards self-preservation or defense, particularly when we feel threatened or wronged. To overcome this, the conscious application of empathy becomes a crucial tool. Take for example a situation where a child acts out in frustration. An immediate, non-empathetic reaction might be to scold or punish. However, looking at the situation "through the lens of empathy" would prompt a parent or caregiver to consider if the child is tired, hungry, or perhaps feeling overwhelmed by a new environment. This wider understanding doesn't excuse the behavior but re-contextualizes it, allowing for a more constructive and less punitive response. The distinction is key: it's not about excusing wrongdoing, but about understanding its roots to address it more effectively.

This way of thinking also suggests that hatred often arises from a perceived lack of understanding or a communication breakdown. When individuals or groups feel unheard, marginalized, or misinterpreted, animosity can fester. By making a deliberate effort to understand, even if that understanding does not lead to agreement, we start to dismantle the foundations upon which hatred is built. It asks us to consider what unmet needs or underlying fears might be driving certain actions or expressions. For instance, in discussions about social issues, it's common for deeply entrenched opposing viewpoints to emerge. If one side views the other solely as an adversary, without trying to grasp the human experiences that inform their convictions, the cycle of animosity simply continues.

Applying this mantra demands a certain intellectual humility, an acknowledgment that our own perspective is just one among many, and that others' experiences are equally valid from their own vantage point. It asks us to momentarily suspend judgment and genuinely listen, not to formulate a rebuttal, but to truly absorb what is being communicated. This careful listening is at the heart of the empathetic process. It implies a departure from a purely transactional view of human interaction towards one that prioritizes mutual understanding, even when consensus is not achievable. This practice of viewing others with an expanded sense of understanding can transform interactions from confrontational to conversational, even when difficult topics are on the table. It is through this sustained effort that genuine non-hatefulness can emerge, not as a platitude, but as a lived reality. In contemporary society, individuals often find themselves separated by perceived differences such as skin tone, sex, ethnic background, spiritual beliefs, social standing, or national origin. This fragmentation, unfortunately, often leads to prejudice and discord. The profound insight within this ancient verse serves as a crucial guide, encouraging us to move beyond these superficial distinctions. It implores humanity to cease the practice of harboring animosity toward anyone purely on the basis of stereotypes or historical narratives that have become associated with a specific person or community.

Consider for a moment the profound implications of such a teaching. Imagine a world where every individual is seen not through the distorted lens of collective assumptions, but through the clear vision of their inherent worth. The idea is that instead of allowing historical grievances or preconceived notions to dictate our interactions, we should strive to look beyond them. We often find ourselves in situations where we are taught, perhaps implicitly, to view certain groups with suspicion or disdain. This lesson, however, suggests a radically different path: one of understanding and acceptance. It's about recognizing the common humanity that binds us, despite the superficial markers that sometimes appear to divide us.

This goes beyond mere tolerance; it calls for a deeper, more fundamental shift in perspective. To truly stop hating based on stereotypes means actively challenging the very foundations of those stereotypes. It requires us to question

where these biases come from and to understand how they perpetuate cycles of division. For instance, if someone holds a negative view of a person from a particular country, this verse would urge them to examine the origins of that view rather than simply accepting it as fact. It demands a personal effort to learn, to engage, and to understand the individual before them, rather than judging them based on the collective narrative. This principle is not a passive acceptance; it is an active call to critical thinking and empathetic engagement.

The wisdom embedded here is not just about avoiding overt acts of hatred, but also about dismantling the subtle prejudices that often shape our daily interactions. These biases, sometimes unconscious, can dictate how we speak to others, how we interpret their actions, and even how we perceive their abilities. By urging us to stop hating anyone based on stereotypes, the verse encourages a deep introspection into our own internalized biases. It asks us to look at the stories we tell ourselves about others and to question their validity. Only then can we begin to dismantle the walls that separate us brick by brick. This approach has the potential to transform not just individual relationships, but the fabric of society itself, fostering a more inclusive and harmonious world where every person's dignity is respected. It’s quite essential to grasp a fundamental concept in interacting with others: that each individual you encounter is a human being, just like yourself, experiencing life and finding joy in their own unique ways. This understanding forms the bedrock of empathy and respectful coexistence. When we remember that the person across from us shares the same basic human needs for recognition, understanding, and dignity, our interactions tend to shift from mere transactions to something more meaningful. It fosters a sense of shared humanity that can bridge divides, whether these are cultural, social, or personal. Every person carries their own history, their own aspirations, and their own set of challenges that shape their perspective and actions. Acknowledging this internal richness in others can profoundly impact how we communicate, negotiate, and even disagree.

Consider, for example, a disagreement at work. If we approach the situation solely from our own viewpoint, it’s easy to become entrenched. But if we pause to consider that our colleague, too, is striving to do their best work, perhaps under their own pressures or with different information, the conversation can become less confrontational and more collaborative. We begin to see not an opponent, but another person trying to make sense of things and contribute. This perspective can transform a potential conflict into an opportunity for mutual growth and problem-solving. This isn’t to say that all differences will vanish, but rather that disagreements can be handled with a greater degree of respect and less animosity when we recognize the shared human element.

The same principle applies in broader social contexts. When we hear about distant communities or people with vastly different lifestyles, it's easy to create abstract categories that dehumanize them. But understanding that they, too, are individuals living and cherishing their lives, with families, hopes, and sorrows, breaks down these artificial barriers. It allows us to connect on a deeper level, recognizing the inherent worth of every individual. This recognition can inform our civic duties, our charitable actions, and even our casual conversations, making us more thoughtful and considerate members of society. It's about seeing beyond the surface, beyond the roles people play, and appreciating the individual human spirit. This process of deeply feeling that another person is a human, with all that entails, allows us to engage with the world more compassionately. It is a continuous effort, a conscious choice in every present moment, to extend that same understanding and grace we would wish for ourselves to others. The core idea is simple, yet its implications are far-reaching and foundational to a harmonious world.We can begin to address many of the world's problems by practicing a simple yet profound exercise: imagining ourselves in the shoes of others. This kind of thoughtful empathy asks us to consider the experiences of those around us, especially when we encounter ideas or perspectives that differ from our own. It’s not just about acknowledging someone else’s existence, but truly trying to grasp their feelings, their history, and the conditions that shape their present. When we encounter feelings of intense animosity, which some have called *hate*, it's important to recognize that such strong negative emotions often stem from a sense of perceived threat or deep misunderstanding. If we pause to reflect, we might see that the very things we dislike in others could, under different circumstances, be aspects of ourselves.

This reflective process is not always easy. It requires a certain willingness to look beyond immediate reactions and to question our own assumptions. For instance, consider a situation where a community experiences strong disagreements over resource allocation. One group might feel that another is being unfairly favored, leading to resentment and anger. Instead of just reacting to this anger with counter-anger, the principle suggests taking a step back to understand the underlying anxieties. Perhaps the seemingly affluent group once faced hardship themselves and now interprets any challenge to their current position as a threat to their newfound stability. Conversely, the less fortunate group might genuinely feel desperate, and their expressions of frustration are a plea for basic needs to be met.

By engaging in this deep reflection, by allowing our mind to contemplate the roots of such intense feelings, we

start to see the common threads of humanity that run through all people. This is how we move *beyond the divisions of mankind*. These divisions, whether they are based on nationality, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, or even political ideology, often thrive on a lack of understanding and a failure to recognize shared human experiences. The idea is that if I can truly see *myself in others*, if I can envision experiencing the same challenges, receiving the same unfair treatment, or feeling the same hopes and fears, then the impulse to categorize people as fundamentally "other" begins to fade.

This mental exercise isn't about condoning harmful actions or ignoring legitimate grievances. Instead, it serves as a foundational step toward resolving conflicts and fostering greater social cohesion. It's about building bridges of understanding even when faced with seemingly impassable chasms of disagreement. When we take the time to think about the hate that you will face, not as something directed uniquely at you, but as an expression of pain or fear that others hold, it transforms our perspective. This perspective shift then allows for more constructive dialogue and problem-solving, rather than perpetuating cycles of resentment. Ultimately, this approach encourages a world where empathy becomes the guiding principle for interaction, allowing us to build societies that are more just and compassionate for everyone involved. The idea that the entire world is one interconnected family is a profound concept, and it finds a particularly beautiful expression in the philosophy of vasudhaiva kutumbakam. This ancient Sanskrit phrase, which translates literally to "the world is one family," offers more than just a poetic sentiment; it provides a foundational worldview that has deep ethical and practical implications for how individuals and societies might interact. It suggests that despite apparent differences in culture, nationality, religion, or language, there is a fundamental unity among all beings and, indeed, all aspects of existence. This perspective encourages a sense of shared responsibility and mutual care, transcending narrow self-interest or tribal loyalties. It implies that just as members of a family are expected to support one another, so too should all inhabitants of the Earth.

When we consider the origins of this idea, we find it rooted in ancient Indian texts, particularly the Maha Upanishad, where it appears as a declaration of universal kinship[11]. This philosophical stance isn't merely about personal feelings; it's a prescriptive ideal for conduct, urging kindness and cooperation on a global scale. Think about how a family operates: there are disagreements, challenges, and sometimes even conflict, but underneath it all, there's a recognition of shared lineage and common welfare. Extending this model to the global stage means seeing every person, regardless of their background, as a distant relative, someone deserving of respect and empathy. It asks us to look beyond immediate circles and recognize that the well-being of someone in a far-off land can and often does have an impact on our own lives. There's a certain intellectual honesty required to truly accept this idea, as it challenges many ingrained assumptions about separateness.

This philosophy holds particular relevance in our contemporary world, where global challenges like climate change, pandemics, and economic disparities undeniably affect everyone. No single nation or community can truly insulate itself from these issues. The notion of vasudhaiva kutumbakam[12] compels us to consider collective solutions, promoting diplomacy, aid, and collaborative research as essential tools for progress. For instance, when a health crisis emerges in one part of the world, its potential to spread globally becomes a stark reminder of our shared vulnerability. In such situations, the principles of universal kinship advocate for open borders regarding scientific knowledge, equitable distribution of resources, and a concerted effort to support all affected regions, rather than focusing solely on national self-preservation.

Furthermore, this worldview encourages a deep appreciation for diversity, viewing varied cultures and traditions not as barriers but as different manifestations of the same human spirit, much like different members of a family contribute unique strengths and perspectives. It suggests that learning from each other, understanding different ways of life, and celebrating the rich tapestry of human experience are all essential components of a thriving global family. The concept pushes against xenophobia and prejudice, advocating instead for an inclusive approach to human relations. It's a call to move beyond narrow identities and embrace a broader sense of belonging. The underlying message is one of interconnectedness, asserting that the welfare of one is inextricably linked to the welfare of all. It's a vision for a world where compassion isn't limited by borders but extends naturally to cover all humanity. Therefore, studying and applying vasudhaiva kutumbakam is not merely an academic exercise; it's an invitation to rethink our place in the world and our responsibilities to each other as members of this vast, singular human family. The idea that divisions made by people should not separate all of humanity is a profound one, suggesting a call for unity that crosses the boundaries we often put up between ourselves. These divisions, ranging from nationality and ethnicity to social class, religion, and even political identity, are products of societal constructs, rather than some fundamental truth about human nature. For example, the concept of a "nation-state" is a relatively modern invention, born out of historical

events and political philosophies that sought to define communities based on shared territory, language, or culture. While these constructs can provide a sense of belonging and community, they can also become barriers, leading to misunderstandings, prejudices, and outright conflict when one group sees another as irrevocably 'other.'

Think about the way religious differences have shaped history. While faith can be a source of comfort and moral guidance for individuals and communities, it has also, sadly, been used to justify wars and oppression. The Crusades, spanning centuries, are a stark reminder of how deeply held beliefs, when coupled with political ambition and a lack of empathy for those outside one's own group, can lead to immense suffering. These are divisions woven into the fabric of societies, but they are not inherent to the human condition itself. We are all, at a fundamental level, members of the same species, sharing common physiological needs and emotional experiences like joy, sorrow, and love.

The statement's core message emphasizes that despite the varied identities and affiliations people adopt, a deeper, shared humanity should always take precedence. It asks us to look beyond the labels and see the individual, recognizing that the hopes, fears, and aspirations of someone on the other side of a self-imposed border are often remarkably similar to our own. This perspective encourages empathy and mutual respect, which are essential for peaceful coexistence.

Consider the ongoing challenge of addressing global issues like climate change or pandemics. These problems do not respect national borders or religious doctrines. A virus does not ask about your passport or your faith before it infects you. The consequences of environmental degradation impact everyone, regardless of where they live or their cultural background. In these urgent situations, the artificial divisions we erect become not just unproductive, but actively detrimental to finding solutions. International cooperation, sharing of scientific knowledge, and collective action become impossible if we allow our individual differences to overshadow our collective responsibility. To overcome such worldwide challenges, we must realize that our shared fate is linked, making collaboration a necessity.

The philosophical implication here is that our identity as human beings should precede, or at the very least, coexist equally with, our identities as members of specific groups. This doesn't mean erasing cultural distinctions or national pride, but rather placing them within a larger framework of shared human dignity. It's about recognizing that while we might celebrate our unique histories and traditions, these should not be used as justifications for erecting walls or fostering animosity. Instead, they should be viewed as different expressions of a fundamentally similar human existence. When a natural disaster strikes, for example, aid often pours in from all corners of the world, regardless of political tensions or historical disagreements. This spontaneous outpouring of support is a powerful illustration of this inherent sense of human connection, showing that compassion can bridge divides when immediate suffering is observed. It is a powerful sentiment that encourages us to build bridges rather than walls, fostering understanding and collaboration across all the boundaries we create. The most valuable application of this idea is its ability to foster and strengthen solidarity among the diverse groups that make up our society. When we consider how different parts of society interact, the concept of solidarity becomes really important. It’s not just about people getting along; it’s about understanding and supporting each other, especially when challenges arise. This principle can be applied in many areas, from social policies to everyday interactions. For instance, think about a community facing a natural disaster. If there’s strong solidarity, people from different backgrounds, income levels, and even political viewpoints are more likely to come together to help their neighbors rebuild, share resources, and offer emotional support. This kind of shared purpose often bridges gaps that might exist during more ordinary times.

Consider the role of education in building this kind of societal unity. When educational systems are designed to promote civic responsibility and an appreciation for different cultures and perspectives, they lay a foundational groundwork for solidarity. Students learn not just academic subjects but also the value of cooperation and mutual respect. This helps them to see beyond their immediate social circles and recognize their place within a larger community. The creation of such an environment requires a dedicated effort to integrate these values into the curriculum and school culture, making sure that young people understand the importance of looking out for one another.

Another key area where this concept truly shines is in the workplace. A workplace where employees feel a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose is often more productive and resilient. When colleagues support each other, share workloads when someone is struggling, or celebrate successes together, it creates a positive atmosphere. This collective spirit can extend beyond the office walls, influencing how individuals interact with the broader community. For example, a company that encourages its employees to volunteer together for a local charity initiative is fostering solidarity not just within its workforce but also contributing to the greater good of the community itself. This shows a genuine commitment to collective well-being.

Furthermore, public discourse plays a crucial role. The way we talk about societal issues—whether through media,

political debates, or everyday conversations—can either reinforce divisions or build bridges. When discussions are framed in a way that emphasizes our shared humanity and common goals, it becomes easier to find common ground and work towards solutions that benefit everyone. Conversely, language that promotes "us vs. them" mentalities can quickly erode solidarity, making it harder for different groups to empathize with each other's struggles or acknowledge their shared aspirations. Therefore, promoting constructive dialogue is an essential component of cultivating societal cohesion. This isn't always easy, given the complexity of various viewpoints, but it is deeply important.

Finally, the very structure of our institutions can either hinder or foster solidarity. When institutions, whether governmental or non-governmental, operate with transparency, fairness, and a commitment to equitable outcomes for all citizens, they reinforce the idea that everyone has a stake in society and deserves respect. Policies that address systemic inequalities, for example, can contribute immensely to strengthening social bonds by ensuring that no particular group feels marginalized or left behind. Ultimately, this approach champions the idea that when one part of society thrives, it helps the whole flourish, creating a stronger, more supportive, and more interconnected community for all. The commitment to this ideal is something that all members of society should adopt as a guiding principle.

5. Philosophical understanding and comparison

5.1 Nature of self and apophatic

The nature of self is described in terms of contradicting dualities which itself creates a paradox, many Indian scholars like adi shankracharya considered these methods of teachings. The famous concept of coincidentia oppositorum by Nicholas cusa seeks to fit here perfectly. In philosophical literature, apophatics are used to describe something but it consists of contradictions, many Indian philosophical viewpoints like the Advaita depends on apophatics and contradicting analogies to explain the concept of atman, self, brahma.

Seemingly the mantra 4 and mantra 5 of the isa Upanishad also uses apophatic to describe the nature of self,

Mantra 4

अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो नैनद्देवा आप्नुवन् पूर्वमर्षत्।
तद्धावतोऽन्यानत्येति तिष्ठत् तस्मिन्नपो मातरिश्वा दधाति॥[13]

Okay, let's break down this idea of "non-hatefulness through the lens of empathy." It's not just a simple phrase; it really suggests a way of seeing and acting in the world. At its core, this mantra implies that to genuinely move beyond hatred, one must actively cultivate an understanding of another's experiences, feelings, and perspectives—even those with whom we might initially disagree or feel animosity toward. It's about purposefully putting oneself in another person's shoes, metaphorically speaking, to grasp the factors that shape their behaviors and beliefs. This isn't to say that empathy condones harmful actions, but rather it seeks to comprehend their origins. For instance, when considering disagreements, instead of immediately labeling an opposing view as irrational or malicious, the empathetic approach encourages an exploration of the underlying motivations. Perhaps someone's strong stance on a particular issue stems from a very personal experience of loss or injustice that fundamentally alters their worldview. Without this deeper contemplation, it's easy to dismiss or condemn.

The concept of 'non-hatefulness' here isn't just the absence of hostility; it's an active posture of understanding and a conscious refusal to let resentment take root. It's a proactive stance rather than a passive one. This isn't always easy, of course. Our immediate reactions often lean towards self-preservation or defense, particularly when we feel threatened or wronged. To overcome this, the conscious application of empathy becomes a crucial tool. Take for example a situation where a child acts out in frustration. An immediate, non-empathetic reaction might be to scold or punish. However, looking at the situation "through the lens of empathy" would prompt a parent or caregiver to consider if the child is tired, hungry, or perhaps feeling overwhelmed by a new environment. This wider understanding doesn't excuse the behavior but re-contextualizes it, allowing for a more constructive and less punitive response. The distinction is key: it's not about excusing wrongdoing, but about understanding its roots to address it more effectively.

This way of thinking also suggests that hatred often arises from a perceived lack of understanding or a communication breakdown. When individuals or groups feel unheard, marginalized, or misinterpreted, animosity can fester. By making a deliberate effort to understand, even if that understanding does not lead to agreement, we start to dismantle the foundations upon which hatred is built. It asks us to consider what unmet needs or underlying fears might be driving certain actions or expressions. For instance, in discussions about social issues, it's common for deeply entrenched opposing viewpoints to emerge. If one side views the other solely as an adversary, without trying to grasp

the human experiences that inform their convictions, the cycle of animosity simply continues.

Applying this mantra demands a certain intellectual humility, an acknowledgment that our own perspective is just one among many, and that others' experiences are equally valid from their own vantage point. It asks us to momentarily suspend judgment and genuinely listen, not to formulate a rebuttal, but to truly absorb what is being communicated. This careful listening is at the heart of the empathetic process. It implies a departure from a purely transactional view of human interaction towards one that prioritizes mutual understanding, even when consensus is not achievable. This practice of viewing others with an expanded sense of understanding can transform interactions from confrontational to conversational, even when difficult topics are on the table. It is through this sustained effort that genuine non-hatefulness can emerge, not as a platitude, but as a lived reality. In contemporary society, individuals often find themselves separated by perceived differences such as skin tone, sex, ethnic background, spiritual beliefs, social standing, or national origin. This fragmentation, unfortunately, often leads to prejudice and discord. The profound insight within this ancient verse serves as a crucial guide, encouraging us to move beyond these superficial distinctions. It implores humanity to cease the practice of harboring animosity toward anyone purely on the basis of stereotypes or historical narratives that have become associated with a specific person or community.

Consider for a moment the profound implications of such a teaching. Imagine a world where every individual is seen not through the distorted lens of collective assumptions, but through the clear vision of their inherent worth. The idea is that instead of allowing historical grievances or preconceived notions to dictate our interactions, we should strive to look beyond them. We often find ourselves in situations where we are taught, perhaps implicitly, to view certain groups with suspicion or disdain. This lesson, however, suggests a radically different path: one of understanding and acceptance. It's about recognizing the common humanity that binds us, despite the superficial markers that sometimes appear to divide us.

This goes beyond mere tolerance; it calls for a deeper, more fundamental shift in perspective. To truly stop hating based on stereotypes means actively challenging the very foundations of those stereotypes. It requires us to question where these biases come from and to understand how they perpetuate cycles of division. For instance, if someone holds a negative view of a person from a particular country, this verse would urge them to examine the origins of that view rather than simply accepting it as fact. It demands a personal effort to learn, to engage, and to understand the individual before them, rather than judging them based on the collective narrative. This principle is not a passive acceptance; it is an active call to critical thinking and empathetic engagement.

The wisdom embedded here is not just about avoiding overt acts of hatred, but also about dismantling the subtle prejudices that often shape our daily interactions. These biases, sometimes unconscious, can dictate how we speak to others, how we interpret their actions, and even how we perceive their abilities. By urging us to stop hating anyone based on stereotypes, the verse encourages a deep introspection into our own internalized biases. It asks us to look at the stories we tell ourselves about others and to question their validity. Only then can we begin to dismantle the walls that separate us brick by brick. This approach has the potential to transform not just individual relationships, but the fabric of society itself, fostering a more inclusive and harmonious world where every person's dignity is respected. It's quite essential to grasp a fundamental concept in interacting with others: that each individual you encounter is a human being, just like yourself, experiencing life and finding joy in their own unique ways. This understanding forms the bedrock of empathy and respectful coexistence. When we remember that the person across from us shares the same basic human needs for recognition, understanding, and dignity, our interactions tend to shift from mere transactions to something more meaningful. It fosters a sense of shared humanity that can bridge divides, whether these are cultural, social, or personal. Every person carries their own history, their own aspirations, and their own set of challenges that shape their perspective and actions. Acknowledging this internal richness in others can profoundly impact how we communicate, negotiate, and even disagree.

Consider, for example, a disagreement at work. If we approach the situation solely from our own viewpoint, it's easy to become entrenched. But if we pause to consider that our colleague, too, is striving to do their best work, perhaps under their own pressures or with different information, the conversation can become less confrontational and more collaborative. We begin to see not an opponent, but another person trying to make sense of things and contribute. This perspective can transform a potential conflict into an opportunity for mutual growth and problem-solving. This isn't to say that all differences will vanish, but rather that disagreements can be handled with a greater degree of respect and less animosity when we recognize the shared human element.

The same principle applies in broader social contexts. When we hear about distant communities or people with vastly different lifestyles, it's easy to create abstract categories that dehumanize them. But understanding that they,

too, are individuals living and cherishing their lives, with families, hopes, and sorrows, breaks down these artificial barriers. It allows us to connect on a deeper level, recognizing the inherent worth of every individual. This recognition can inform our civic duties, our charitable actions, and even our casual conversations, making us more thoughtful and considerate members of society. It's about seeing beyond the surface, beyond the roles people play, and appreciating the individual human spirit. This process of deeply feeling that another person is a human, with all that entails, allows us to engage with the world more compassionately. It is a continuous effort, a conscious choice in every present moment, to extend that same understanding and grace we would wish for ourselves to others. The core idea is simple, yet its implications are far-reaching and foundational to a harmonious world.We can begin to address many of the world's problems by practicing a simple yet profound exercise: imagining ourselves in the shoes of others. This kind of thoughtful empathy asks us to consider the experiences of those around us, especially when we encounter ideas or perspectives that differ from our own. It's not just about acknowledging someone else's existence, but truly trying to grasp their feelings, their history, and the conditions that shape their present. When we encounter feelings of intense animosity, which some have called *hate*, it's important to recognize that such strong negative emotions often stem from a sense of perceived threat or deep misunderstanding. If we pause to reflect, we might see that the very things we dislike in others could, under different circumstances, be aspects of ourselves.

This reflective process is not always easy. It requires a certain willingness to look beyond immediate reactions and to question our own assumptions. For instance, consider a situation where a community experiences strong disagreements over resource allocation. One group might feel that another is being unfairly favored, leading to resentment and anger. Instead of just reacting to this anger with counter-anger, the principle suggests taking a step back to understand the underlying anxieties. Perhaps the seemingly affluent group once faced hardship themselves and now interprets any challenge to their current position as a threat to their newfound stability. Conversely, the less fortunate group might genuinely feel desperate, and their expressions of frustration are a plea for basic needs to be met.

By engaging in this deep reflection, by allowing our mind to contemplate the roots of such intense feelings, we start to see the common threads of humanity that run through all people. This is how we move *beyond the divisions of mankind*. These divisions, whether they are based on nationality, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, or even political ideology, often thrive on a lack of understanding and a failure to recognize shared human experiences. The idea is that if I can truly see *myself in others*, if I can envision experiencing the same challenges, receiving the same unfair treatment, or feeling the same hopes and fears, then the impulse to categorize people as fundamentally "other" begins to fade.

This mental exercise isn't about condoning harmful actions or ignoring legitimate grievances. Instead, it serves as a foundational step toward resolving conflicts and fostering greater social cohesion. It's about building bridges of understanding even when faced with seemingly impassable chasms of disagreement. When we take the time to think about the hate that you will face, not as something directed uniquely at you, but as an expression of pain or fear that others hold, it transforms our perspective. This perspective shift then allows for more constructive dialogue and problem-solving, rather than perpetuating cycles of resentment. Ultimately, this approach encourages a world where empathy becomes the guiding principle for interaction, allowing us to build societies that are more just and compassionate for everyone involved. The idea that the entire world is one interconnected family is a profound concept, and it finds a particularly beautiful expression in the philosophy of vasudhaiva kutumbakam. This ancient Sanskrit phrase, which translates literally to "the world is one family," offers more than just a poetic sentiment; it provides a foundational worldview that has deep ethical and practical implications for how individuals and societies might interact. It suggests that despite apparent differences in culture, nationality, religion, or language, there is a fundamental unity among all beings and, indeed, all aspects of existence. This perspective encourages a sense of shared responsibility and mutual care, transcending narrow self-interest or tribal loyalties. It implies that just as members of a family are expected to support one another, so too should all inhabitants of the Earth.

When we consider the origins of this idea, we find it rooted in ancient Indian texts, particularly the Maha Upanishad, where it appears as a declaration of universal kinship. This philosophical stance isn't merely about personal feelings; it's a prescriptive ideal for conduct, urging kindness and cooperation on a global scale. Think about how a family operates: there are disagreements, challenges, and sometimes even conflict, but underneath it all, there's a recognition of shared lineage and common welfare. Extending this model to the global stage means seeing every person, regardless of their background, as a distant relative, someone deserving of respect and empathy. It asks us to look beyond immediate circles and recognize that the well-being of someone in a far-off land can and often does have an impact on our own lives. There's a certain intellectual honesty required to truly accept this idea, as it challenges many

ingrained assumptions about separateness.

This philosophy holds particular relevance in our contemporary world, where global challenges like climate change, pandemics, and economic disparities undeniably affect everyone. No single nation or community can truly insulate itself from these issues. The notion of vasudhaiva kutumbakam compels us to consider collective solutions, promoting diplomacy, aid, and collaborative research as essential tools for progress. For instance, when a health crisis emerges in one part of the world, its potential to spread globally becomes a stark reminder of our shared vulnerability. In such situations, the principles of universal kinship advocate for open borders regarding scientific knowledge, equitable distribution of resources, and a concerted effort to support all affected regions, rather than focusing solely on national self-preservation.

Furthermore, this worldview encourages a deep appreciation for diversity, viewing varied cultures and traditions not as barriers but as different manifestations of the same human spirit, much like different members of a family contribute unique strengths and perspectives. It suggests that learning from each other, understanding different ways of life, and celebrating the rich tapestry of human experience are all essential components of a thriving global family. The concept pushes against xenophobia and prejudice, advocating instead for an inclusive approach to human relations. It's a call to move beyond narrow identities and embrace a broader sense of belonging. The underlying message is one of interconnectedness, asserting that the welfare of one is inextricably linked to the welfare of all. It's a vision for a world where compassion isn't limited by borders but extends naturally to cover all humanity. Therefore, studying and applying vasudhaiva kutumbakam is not merely an academic exercise; it's an invitation to rethink our place in the world and our responsibilities to each other as members of this vast, singular human family.The idea that divisions made by people should not separate all of humanity is a profound one, suggesting a call for unity that crosses the boundaries we often put up between ourselves. These divisions, ranging from nationality and ethnicity to social class, religion, and even political identity, are products of societal constructs, rather than some fundamental truth about human nature. For example, the concept of a "nation-state" is a relatively modern invention, born out of historical events and political philosophies that sought to define communities based on shared territory, language, or culture. While these constructs can provide a sense of belonging and community, they can also become barriers, leading to misunderstandings, prejudices, and outright conflict when one group sees another as irrevocably 'other.'

Think about the way religious differences have shaped history. While faith can be a source of comfort and moral guidance for individuals and communities, it has also, sadly, been used to justify wars and oppression. The Crusades, spanning centuries, are a stark reminder of how deeply held beliefs, when coupled with political ambition and a lack of empathy for those outside one's own group, can lead to immense suffering. These are divisions woven into the fabric of societies, but they are not inherent to the human condition itself. We are all, at a fundamental level, members of the same species, sharing common physiological needs and emotional experiences like joy, sorrow, and love.

The statement's core message emphasizes that despite the varied identities and affiliations people adopt, a deeper, shared humanity should always take precedence. It asks us to look beyond the labels and see the individual, recognizing that the hopes, fears, and aspirations of someone on the other side of a self-imposed border are often remarkably similar to our own. This perspective encourages empathy and mutual respect, which are essential for peaceful coexistence.

Consider the ongoing challenge of addressing global issues like climate change or pandemics. These problems do not respect national borders or religious doctrines. A virus does not ask about your passport or your faith before it infects you. The consequences of environmental degradation impact everyone, regardless of where they live or their cultural background. In these urgent situations, the artificial divisions we erect become not just unproductive, but actively detrimental to finding solutions. International cooperation, sharing of scientific knowledge, and collective action become impossible if we allow our individual differences to overshadow our collective responsibility. To overcome such worldwide challenges, we must realize that our shared fate is linked, making collaboration a necessity.

The philosophical implication here is that our identity as human beings should precede, or at the very least, coexist equally with, our identities as members of specific groups. This doesn't mean erasing cultural distinctions or national pride, but rather placing them within a larger framework of shared human dignity. It's about recognizing that while we might celebrate our unique histories and traditions, these should not be used as justifications for erecting walls or fostering animosity. Instead, they should be viewed as different expressions of a fundamentally similar human existence. When a natural disaster strikes, for example, aid often pours in from all corners of the world, regardless of political tensions or historical disagreements. This spontaneous outpouring of support is a powerful illustration of this inherent sense of human connection, showing that compassion can bridge divides when immediate suffering is

observed. It is a powerful sentiment that encourages us to build bridges rather than walls, fostering understanding and collaboration across all the boundaries we create. The most valuable application of this idea is its ability to foster and strengthen solidarity among the diverse groups that make up our society. When we consider how different parts of society interact, the concept of solidarity becomes really important. It's not just about people getting along; it's about understanding and supporting each other, especially when challenges arise. This principle can be applied in many areas, from social policies to everyday interactions. For instance, think about a community facing a natural disaster. If there's strong solidarity, people from different backgrounds, income levels, and even political viewpoints are more likely to come together to help their neighbors rebuild, share resources, and offer emotional support. This kind of shared purpose often bridges gaps that might exist during more ordinary times.

Consider the role of education in building this kind of societal unity. When educational systems are designed to promote civic responsibility and an appreciation for different cultures and perspectives, they lay a foundational groundwork for solidarity. Students learn not just academic subjects but also the value of cooperation and mutual respect. This helps them to see beyond their immediate social circles and recognize their place within a larger community. The creation of such an environment requires a dedicated effort to integrate these values into the curriculum and school culture, making sure that young people understand the importance of looking out for one another.

Another key area where this concept truly shines is in the workplace. A workplace where employees feel a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose is often more productive and resilient. When colleagues support each other, share workloads when someone is struggling, or celebrate successes together, it creates a positive atmosphere. This collective spirit can extend beyond the office walls, influencing how individuals interact with the broader community. For example, a company that encourages its employees to volunteer together for a local charity initiative is fostering solidarity not just within its workforce but also contributing to the greater good of the community itself. This shows a genuine commitment to collective well-being.

Furthermore, public discourse plays a crucial role. The way we talk about societal issues—whether through media, political debates, or everyday conversations—can either reinforce divisions or build bridges. When discussions are framed in a way that emphasizes our shared humanity and common goals, it becomes easier to find common ground and work towards solutions that benefit everyone. Conversely, language that promotes "us vs. them" mentalities can quickly erode solidarity, making it harder for different groups to empathize with each other's struggles or acknowledge their shared aspirations. Therefore, promoting constructive dialogue is an essential component of cultivating societal cohesion. This isn't always easy, given the complexity of various viewpoints, but it is deeply important.

Finally, the very structure of our institutions can either hinder or foster solidarity. When institutions, whether governmental or non-governmental, operate with transparency, fairness, and a commitment to equitable outcomes for all citizens, they reinforce the idea that everyone has a stake in society and deserves respect. Policies that address systemic inequalities, for example, can contribute immensely to strengthening social bonds by ensuring that no particular group feels marginalized or left behind. Ultimately, this approach champions the idea that when one part of society thrives, it helps the whole flourish, creating a stronger, more supportive, and more interconnected community for all. The commitment to this ideal is something that all members of society should adopt as a guiding principle.

Mantra 5

तदेजति तन्नैजति तद्दूरे तद्वन्तिके ।
तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तदु सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः ॥[14]

it moves , it doesn't move, it is far yet it is also close, it is the inside yet it forms the outside.

Now the upanshadic thought operates on linguistic dualities like moving-unmoving, far-close, inside-outside, now the reason why self is described in dualities is because it is the supreme consciousness that forms the base of these categories, now biasing or limiting the description to a single side would ultimately hinder our understanding of atman. Now in the normal sense we know the subject perceives the object and the subject precedes the object, but in upanishadic thought, the atman is considered as both the subject and the object, it is inside everything in the form of consciousness and it is outside everything because it is the ultimate reality, now this ontological contradiction is resolved because the atman is perceived as the both the subject and the object.

6. Conclusion

From the beautiful 18 verses of the isavasya Upanishad, it is very clear that the scope to develop psycho-socio models that would guide society towards a utopia just like that which is mentioned in the great books of Indian history and

philosophy. From basic stress management techniques which formed the base for modern day stress theories to social model to stop hate and violence, everything lies in the Upanishads only. The logical contradictions in understanding the atman are mere tools to the absolute which is incomprehensible by mere intellect of words, the apophatic of Indian literature highlight that the absolute is something far more, it highlights the limitations of language in describing the truth. The pathway towards a good life is very well explained in the ancient books of our traditions and it is only a matter of time when the truth shall be given. From the teachings of lord krishna in Gita to the logic of adishankra-charya, everything beautifully answers the questions of modern day problems.

References

Biggs, A., Brough, P., & Drummond, S. (2017). Lazarus and Folkman's psychological stress and coping theory. In C. L. Cooper & J. C. Quick (Eds.), *The handbook of stress and health: A guide to research and practice* (pp. 351-364). Wiley Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118993811.ch21

Folkman, S. (2013). Stress: Appraisal and coping. In M. D. Gellman & J. R. Turner (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of behavioral medicine* (pp. 1913-1915). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1005-9_215

Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1980). An analysis of coping in a middle-aged community sample. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *21*(3), 219-239.

Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1985). If it changes it must be a process: Study of emotion and coping during three stages of a college examination. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *48*(1), 150-170.

Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1988). Coping as a mediator of emotion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *54*(3), 466-475.

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer Publishing.

Obbarius, N., Fischer, F., Liegl, G., Obbarius, A., & Rose, M. (2021). A modified version of the transactional stress concept according to Lazarus and Folkman was confirmed in a psychosomatic inpatient sample. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, 584333. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.584333

Pascoe, E. A., & Smart Richman, L. (2009). Stress and coping with discrimination and stigmatization. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *4*(3), 243-262.

[1] IsavaysaUpanishad: Shanti path
[2] Vishnu Shatpadi Stotram (six verses dedicated to Lord Vishnu) composed by the philosopher-saint Adi Shankaracharya
[3] IsavaysaUpanishad 1
[4] Nina Obbarius et.el.: (2021) A Modified Version of the Transactional Stress Concept According to Lazarus and Folkman Was Confirmed in a Psychosomatic Inpatient Sample. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.584333PMCID: PMC7973375 PMID: 33746820
[5] ibid
[6] ibid
[7] ibid
[8] Obbarius, N., et al. (2021).: A Modified Version of the Transactional Stress Concept According to Lazarus and Folkman Was Confirmed in a Psychosomatic Inpatient Sample": Frontiers in Psychology.
[9] Pascoe, E. A., & Smart Richman, L. (2009): Stress and Coping with Discrimination and Stigmatization": Perspectives on Psychological Science
[10] IsavaysaUpanishad 4
[11] Maha Upanishad 6
[12] kkathoUpanishad 2.8
[13] IsavaysaUpanishad 4
[14] IsavaysaUpanishad 5