

Shloka-by-Shloka Breakdown of Kautilya Arthashastra, Book 1, Chapter 3

Overview

The shlokas (01.3.01 to 01.3.17) from Book 1, Chapter 3, *Vṛddhasamuddesha* ("Association with Elders"), detail the components of *trayī* (Vedic knowledge) and the duties (*svadharma*) of the four *varṇas* (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra) and four *āśramas* (Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha, Sannyasa). The chapter emphasizes how adherence to these duties maintains social order, supports *dharma*, and aids the king in governance. Each shloka is analyzed with its Sanskrit text, transliteration, meaning in Sanskrit, English notes, and discussion prompts for collaborative study.

Shloka Breakdown

Shloka 01.3.01

- Sanskrit:**

साम। ऋग्यजुर्वेदाः त्रयः त्रयी

- Transliteration (ITRANS):**

sAma.R^igyajurvedAH trayaH trayI

- Meaning in Sanskrit:**

सामवेदः, ऋग्वेदः, यजुर्वेदः च एते त्रयः त्रयी संनादति।

- English Notes:**

This shloka defines *trayī* as the three Vedas: *Sāmaveda*, *Rigveda*, and *Yajurveda*. These form the core of Vedic knowledge, essential for the king's education and the Brahmin's duties, emphasizing ritual and spiritual authority.

- Discussion Prompts:**

- Why are only three Vedas included in *trayī* here?
- How might Vedic knowledge shape a king's governance?
- What modern equivalents provide foundational knowledge for leaders?

Shloka 01.3.02

- Sanskrit:**

अथर्ववेद इतिहासवेदौ च वेदाः

- **Transliteration:**

atharvaveda itihAsavedau cha vedAH

- **Meaning in Sanskrit:**

अथर्ववेदः इतिहासवेदौ च वेदाः संनादति।

- **English Notes:**

The *Atharvaveda* and *Itihāsaveda* (historical texts, likely including Puranas and epics like Mahabharata) are also considered Vedas but are distinct from *trayī*. This broadens the scope of Vedic knowledge, incorporating practical and historical wisdom.

- **Discussion Prompts:**

- Why is *Atharvaveda* excluded from *trayī*?
- How might *itihAsaveda* contribute to a king's strategic thinking?
- What role do historical narratives play in modern leadership?

Shloka 01.3.03

- **Sanskrit:**

शिक्षा कल्पो व्याकरणं निरुक्तं छन्दोविचितिर्ज्योतिषं इति चाङ्गानि

- **Transliteration:**

shikShA kalpo vyAkaraNaM niruktaM chhandovichitirjyotiShaM iti chA~NgAni

- **Meaning in Sanskrit:**

शिक्षा, कल्पः, व्याकरणं, निरुक्तं, छन्दोविचितिः, ज्योतिषं च एतानि वेदाङ्गानि संनादति।

- **English Notes:**

The six *Vedāṅgas* (auxiliary sciences) are listed: *shikShā* (phonetics), *kalpa* (rituals), *vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *nirukta* (etymology), *chhandovichiti* (prosody), and *jyotiṣa* (astronomy). These support Vedic study, ensuring accurate recitation and interpretation.

- **Discussion Prompts:**

- How do *Vedāṅgas* enhance the study of *trayī*?
- Why is *jyotiṣa* (astronomy) included as a *Vedāṅga*?
- What modern auxiliary disciplines support core knowledge areas?

Shloka 01.3.04

- **Sanskrit:**

एष त्रयीधर्मश्चतुर्णां वर्णानां आश्रमाणां च स्वधर्मस्थापनाद् औपकारिकः

- **Transliteration:**

eSha trayIdharmaH chaturNAM varNAnAM AshramANAM cha svadharmasthApanAd aupakArikaH

- **Meaning in Sanskrit:**

एषः त्रयीधर्मः चतुर्णां वर्णानां आश्रमाणां च स्वधर्मस्य स्थापनात् उपकारति।

- **English Notes:**

The *trayī* (Vedic knowledge) and its *dharma* (righteous principles) benefit society by establishing

the *svadharma* (specific duties) of the four *varṇas* and *āśramas*. This underscores the role of Vedic tradition in maintaining social order.

- **Discussion Prompts:**

- How does *trayīdharma* support social stability?
- Why is *svadharmasthApana* (establishing duties) critical for governance?
- What modern systems assign roles to maintain societal order?

Shloka 01.3.05

- **Sanskrit:**

स्वधर्मो ब्राह्मणस्य अध्ययनं अध्यापनं यजनं याजनं दानं प्रतिग्रहश्च

- **Transliteration:**

svadharma brAhmaNasya adhyayanaM adhyApanaM yajanaM yAjanaM dAnaM pratigraHashcha

- **Meaning in Sanskrit:**

ब्राह्मणस्य स्वधर्मः अध्ययनं, अध्यापनं, यजनं, याजनं, दानं, प्रतिग्रहः च संनादति।

- **English Notes:**

The *svadharma* of a Brahmin includes studying (*adhyayana*), teaching (*adhyāpana*), performing sacrifices (*yajana*), officiating sacrifices (*yājana*), giving (*dāna*), and accepting gifts (*pratigraha*). These duties emphasize intellectual and ritual roles.

- **Discussion Prompts:**

- Why are *adhyayana* and *adhyāpana* central to Brahmin duties?
- How does *pratigraha* (accepting gifts) balance with *dāna* (giving)?
- What modern roles parallel the Brahmin's intellectual duties?

Shloka 01.3.06

- **Sanskrit:**

क्षत्रियस्याध्ययनं यजनं दानं शस्त्राजीवो भूतरक्षणं च

- **Transliteration:**

kShatriyasyAdhyayanaM yajanaM dAnaM shastrAjlvo bhUtarakShaNam cha

- **Meaning in Sanskrit:**

क्षत्रियस्य स्वधर्मः अध्ययनं, यजनं, दानं, शस्त्रेण जीवः, भूतानां रक्षणं च संनादति।

- **English Notes:**

The *svadharma* of a Kshatriya includes studying (*adhyayana*), performing sacrifices (*yajana*), giving (*dāna*), living by weapons (*shastrājīva*), and protecting beings (*bhUtarakShaNam*). These reflect the warrior-ruler's role in governance and defense.

- **Discussion Prompts:**

- Why is *bhUtarakShaNam* (protecting beings) a Kshatriya duty?
- How does *shastrājīva* align with a king's responsibilities?
- What modern professions embody Kshatriya duties?

Shloka 01.3.07

- **Sanskrit:**

वैश्यस्याध्ययनं यजनं दानं कृषिपाशुपाल्ये वणिज्या च

- **Transliteration:**

vaishyasyAdhyayanaM yajanaM dAnaM kR^iShipAshupAlye vaNijyA cha

- **Meaning in Sanskrit:**

वैश्यस्य स्वधर्मः अध्ययनं, यजनं, दानं, कृषिः, पशुपालनं, वणिज्या च संनादति।

- **English Notes:**

The *svadharma* of a Vaishya includes studying (*adhyayana*), performing sacrifices (*yajana*), giving (*dāna*), agriculture (*kṛṣi*), animal husbandry (*pāśupālya*), and trade (*vaṇijyā*). These duties focus on economic productivity.

- **Discussion Prompts:**

- Why are *kṛṣi* and *vaṇijyā* central to Vaishya duties?
- How do these duties support state prosperity?
- What modern economic roles align with Vaishya *svadharma*?

Shloka 01.3.08

- **Sanskrit:**

शूद्रस्य द्विजातिशुश्रूषा वार्त्ता कारुकुशीलवकर्म च

- **Transliteration:**

shUdrasya dvijAtishushrUShA vArttA kArukushllavakarma cha

- **Meaning in Sanskrit:**

शूद्रस्य स्वधर्मः द्विजातिनां शुश्रूषा, वार्त्ता, कारुकुशीलवकर्म च संनादति।

- **English Notes:**

The *svadharma* of a Shudra includes serving the twice-born (*dvijātishushrūṣā*), engaging in economic activities (*vārttā*), and performing artisanal/craft work (*kārukushīlavakarma*). This reflects a supportive role in society.

- **Discussion Prompts:**

- How does *dvijātishushrūṣā* define the Shudra's role?
- Why include *kārukushīlavakarma* (crafts) in Shudra duties?
- What ethical concerns arise from this hierarchical structure?

Shloka 01.3.09

- **Sanskrit:**

गृहस्थस्य स्वधर्माजीवः तुल्यैरसमान। ऋषिभिर्वैवाह्यं ऋतुगामित्वं देवपित्रोऽर्पितं
sheShabhojanaM cha

- **Transliteration:**

gR^ihasthasya svadharmAjlvaH tulyairasamAna.R^iShibhirvaivAhyam R^itugAmitvaM

devapitR^atithipUjA bhR^ityeShu tyAgaH sheShabhojanaM cha

- **Meaning in Sanskrit:**

गृहस्थस्य स्वधर्मः स्वधर्मेन जीवः, तुल्यैः असमानैः ऋषिभिः वैवाह्यं, ऋतुगामित्वं, देवानां पितृणां अतिथीनां च पूजा, भृत्येषु त्यागः, शेषभोजनं च संनादति।

- **English Notes:**

The *svadharma* of a householder (*gṛhastha*) includes living by one's duty (*svadharmaAjīva*), marrying equals or sages (*tulyairasamāna.ṛṣibhiḥ*), timely procreation (*ṛtugāmitva*), worshiping gods/ancestors/guests (*devapitṛ.atithipūjā*), generosity to servants (*bhṛtyeṣu tyāga*), and eating leftovers (*śeṣabhojana*). This reflects domestic and social responsibilities.

- **Discussion Prompts:**

- Why is *ṛtugāmitva* (timely procreation) a householder's duty?
- How does *śeṣabhojana* (eating leftovers) promote humility?
- What modern household duties parallel these?

Shloka 01.3.10

- **Sanskrit:**

ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाध्यायो अग्निकार्याभिषेकौ भैक्षव्रतित्वं आचार्ये प्राणान्तिकी वृत्तिः तदभावे गुरुपुत्रे स-ब्रह्मचारिणि वा

- **Transliteration:**

brahmachAriNaH svAdhyAyo agnikAryAbhiShekau bhaikShavratitvaM AchArye prANAntikI vR^ittiH
tad.abhAve guruput্রে sa-brahmachAriNi vA

- **Meaning in Sanskrit:**

ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वधर्मः स्वाध्यायः, अग्निकार्यं, अभिषेकौ, भैक्षव्रतित्वं, आचार्ये प्राणान्तिकी वृत्तिः, तदभावे गुरुपुत्रे स-ब्रह्मचारिणि वा संनादति।

- **English Notes:**

The *svadharma* of a student (*brahmachāri*) includes self-study (*svādhyāya*), fire rituals (*agnikārya*), ablutions (*abhiṣeka*), living by alms (*bhaikṣavratitva*), and lifelong service to the teacher (*āchārye prāṇāntikī vṛttih*), or to the teacher's son or fellow student if the teacher is absent. This emphasizes discipline and learning.

- **Discussion Prompts:**

- Why is *svādhyāya* (self-study) central to a student's life?
- How does *bhaikṣavratitva* (living by alms) foster humility?
- What modern educational practices reflect these duties?

Shloka 01.3.11

- **Sanskrit:**

वानप्रस्थस्य ब्रह्मचर्यं भूमौ शय्या जटाजिनधारणं अग्निहोत्राभिषेकौ देवतापित्रोऽतिथिपूजा वन्यश्चाहारः

- **Transliteration:**

vAnaprasthasya brahmacharyaM bhUmau shayyA jaTA.ajinadhAraNaM agnihotrAbhiShekau
devatApitR^atithipUjA vanyashchAhAraH

- **Meaning in Sanskrit:**

वानप्रस्थस्य स्वधर्मः ब्रह्मचर्यं, भूमौ शय्या, जटाः अजिनं च धारणं, अग्निहोत्रं, अभिषेकौ, देवतानां पितृणां अतिथीनां च पूजा, वन्यः आहारः च संनादति।

- **English Notes:**

The *svadharma* of a forest-dweller (*vānaprastha*) includes celibacy (*brahmacharya*), sleeping on the ground (*bhūmau śayyā*), wearing matted hair and animal skins (*jaṭā.ajinadhāraṇa*), fire offerings (*agnihotra*), ablutions (*abhiṣeka*), worshiping gods/ancestors/guests (*devatāpitṛ.atithipūjā*), and eating forest produce (*vanyaḥ āhāra*). This reflects asceticism and detachment.

- **Discussion Prompts:**

- Why does *vānaprastha* involve *brahmacharya* and *vanyaḥ āhāra*?
- How does this stage prepare for spiritual liberation?
- What modern practices resemble *vānaprastha* asceticism?

Shloka 01.3.12

- **Sanskrit:**

परिव्राजकस्य जित इन्द्रियत्वं अनारम्भो निष्किञ्चनत्वं सङ्गत्यागो भैक्षव्रतं अनेकत्रारण्ये च वासो बाह्याभ्यन्तरं च शौचम्

- **Transliteration:**

parivrAjakasya jita indrayatvaM anArambho niShki~nchanatvaM sa~NgatyAgo bhaikShavrataM
anekatrAraNye cha vAso bAhyAbhyantaraM cha shoucham

- **Meaning in Sanskrit:**

परिव्राजकस्य स्वधर्मः जितं इन्द्रियत्वं, अनारम्भः, निष्किञ्चनत्वं, सङ्गस्य त्यागः, भैक्षव्रतं, अनेकत्रारण्ये वासः, बाह्यं आभ्यन्तरं च शौचं संनादति।

- **English Notes:**

The *svadharma* of a wandering ascetic (*parivrājaka* or *sannyāsi*) includes controlling senses (*jita indrayatva*), non-initiation of actions (*anārambha*), possessionlessness (*niṣkiñchanatva*), detachment from ties (*saṅgatyāga*), living by alms (*bhaikṣavrata*), residing in forests (*anekatrāraṇye vāsa*), and maintaining external/internal purity (*bāhyābhyantara śauca*). This reflects complete renunciation.

- **Discussion Prompts:**

- Why is *jita indrayatva* (sense control) essential for a *parivrājaka*?
- How does *niṣkiñchanatva* (possessionlessness) support spiritual goals?
- What modern lifestyles echo *parivrājaka* principles?

Shloka 01.3.13

- **Sanskrit:**

सर्वेषां अहिंसा सत्यं शौचं अनसूय आनृशंस्यं क्षमा च

- **Transliteration:**

sarveShAM ahiMsA