

The Puruśārtha Principle

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Abstract

This article explores the concept of Puruśārtha in the Ṛgveda and examines its continuing relevance for contemporary life. Derived from the Sanskrit words *Purusha* (human being) and *Artha* (purpose or meaning), Puruśārtha represents both the fundamental aims of human existence and the principle of purposeful effort. The Rigvedic framework identifies four interconnected goals—*Dharma* (ethical conduct), *Artha* (material prosperity), *Kama* (emotional fulfilment and desire), and *Mokṣa* (spiritual liberation)—which together provide a holistic model for individual and social well-being. The article argues that the Ṛgveda presents a dynamic and action-oriented worldview in which success is achieved through perseverance, disciplined effort, intelligent planning (*Kratu*), and responsible engagement with society. Numerous hymns emphasise self-reliance, courage, cooperation, and the importance of aligning human initiative with divine support. Wealth and prosperity are not rejected but are viewed as legitimate goals when pursued ethically and productively.

The study further highlights parallels between Rigvedic insights and modern psychological theories, including goal-setting theory, growth mindset, and self-efficacy. The Puruśārtha framework anticipates contemporary research on well-being by advocating a balanced integration of moral responsibility, material security, emotional satisfaction, and spiritual meaning. The article concludes that the Ṛgveda offers a timeless philosophy for navigating modern challenges. Its enduring message is that meaningful progress arises from ethical living, persistent effort, social cooperation, and purposeful action, making Puruśārtha a valuable guide for personal development and collective advancement in the twenty-first century.

Keywords

Puruśārtha, Ṛgveda , Human Effort , Dharma, Artha, Kama and Mokṣa , Goal-Setting and Motivation , Well-Being and Human Development

1.0 Introduction

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The concept of Puruṣārtha is a central theme of the Ṛgveda that guides and governs the lives of people then and now. Puruṣa refers to the human or social, while Artha means purpose or meaning; it is the object of human pursuit or the meaning of life that one should adhere to in their life. According to Hindu philosophy, there are four Puruṣarthas, or aims of life: Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Mokṣa. Ṛgveda recommends Puruṣārthato human beings. The word “Puruṣa” in Sanskrit means a human being with prudence; without prudence (viveka), one is not equivalent to Puruṣa.

पुरुषैरर्थते इति पुरुषार्थः (*puruṣārthayārthe iti puruṣārthaḥ*) or attainment of the aims of a prudentially rich person is Puruṣarth.

2.0 The Four-Phase/ Life Goals Model

Puruṣārthaproposes a four-phase model of living life, and one has to maintain a balance among the four. Dharma refers to the conduct of a person, how they should conduct themselves in the world. This refers to ethics, duty and moral law of righteousness. Artha refers to wealth, prosperity, and security. Often, readers ignore that security is not part of Artha—a gross mistake. Hence, earning wealth and its protection are equally significant for this aim of human life. Kama refers to the desire for pleasure, love and emotional fulfilment; sex and progeny objectives are included here. a is the final objective of liberation, self-realisation, and spiritual freedom. In the real world, it means living a life of balance that harmonises all four aims as stated above. It also means pursuing wealth ethically or guided by the principle of Dharma. That is, living a modest life of sensory desires and then progressing to ultimate spiritual liberation (Mokṣa). In practical life, Artha is equated to money or wealth, Kama with pleasure, and Dharma with duty and Mokṣa with death. Puruṣārtha, hence, represents a complete model of the art of living, neither purely material nor sensual, nor rejecting worldly activities, but rather a balanced and evolutionary method of living that integrates ethics, economics, psychology, and spirituality. In other words, it's a fully satisfied model of living in the world.

3.0 Puruṣārthaas persistent effort principle

Puruṣārthaalso has another meaning in the Ṛgveda: constant hard work to achieve an objective, or persistent effort. Ṛgveda invokes Puruṣarth, or self-effort, in various subtle ways. The most memorable and most quoted part of the Ṛgveda is the invocation of Puruṣārtha, or self-effort, in various subtle ways.

एमाशुमाशवे भर यज्ञश्रियं नृमादनम् । पृत्यन्मन्द्यत्सखम् ॥ (Ṛgveda, 1.4.7)

[Literal meaning] Offer Soma to Lord Indra- the drink that is the glory of sacrifice, the exhilarator of mankind, which, when pressed, gives delights to Indra.

[Intended meaning] From a Vedic socio-political perspective, the mantra may be understood as a prayer for a well-ordered, prosperous, and cooperative society. May the forces of enlightened leadership bring to society the prosperity born of collective effort; may they promote the happiness of the people, advance the nation, and strengthen bonds of friendship and cooperation."

न स सखा यो न ददाति सख्यै सचाभुवे सचमानाय पित्वः ।

अपांस्मात्प्रेयात्र तदोको अस्ति पृणन्तमन्यमरणं चिदिच्छेत् ॥ (10.117.4)

[Intended meaning] A person who refuses to help others cannot truly be called a friend. A society or institution that withholds support from those in need loses its moral foundation. One should associate instead with those who contribute to the common good, even if they are strangers. Social harmony depends upon generosity, cooperation, and shared responsibility.

यस्य संस्थे न वृण्वते हरीं समत्सु शत्रवः । तस्मा इन्द्राय गायत ॥ (1.5.4)

[Literal meaning] Sing to that Indra, whose horses when yoked for battle in the chariot are not withstood by enemies in the conflict.

[Intended meaning] Honour that system of leadership whose institutions are so well organised and whose productive powers are so strong that adversaries cannot overcome them in times of challenge. Such strength arises from knowledge, discipline, cooperation, and righteous governance.

c 1.4.7 is addressed to God Indra to swiftly bring spiritual joy or intense happiness, so that this prosperity can be used to support noble actions and inspire humanity. Here, the seeker is asking for wealth that enables generosity and social welfare. Note that prosperity is connected with noble actions (यज्ञश्रियं). The hymn is spoken in the context of the Soma sacrifice. Soma is not only a ritual drink but also a source of other things: energy and inspiration (asav), success and collective effort (यज्ञश्रियं), human joy and enthusiasm (nramadana), forward movement or driving progress (patayan), and friendship with the divine or Indra (mandayat-sakham). He is no friend who does not give to a friend (न स सखा यो न ददाति, 10.117. 4).

Likewise, the R̥cā 1.5.4 insists that only through Puruśārthacan one defeat enemies. Here, Indra is invoked to defeat the enemies in the battle. The idea is to cultivate strength and move boldly until victory is achieved (न वृण्वते हरी). Rigvedic vision does not glorify passivity; success comes only after energetic, courageous, and steadfast efforts—pure purushartha. The R̥cā 1.4.7 explains how Puruśārthabrings prosperity to the society, and the R̥cā 1.5.4 elucidates how the power of Indra removes the resistance of enemies and hence one needs to cultivate the strength like him

4.0 The PuruśārthaSūkta (RV 1.89)

The 89th Sūkta in the first Mandala of the R̥gveda is known as the PuruśārthaSūkta. This has 10 hymns. I will discuss a few of the most important ones. The most memorable and most quoted R̥cā or hymn is from the 89th Sūkta of Mandal 1 (1:89.1).

आ नो भद्राः करतवो कष्यन्तु विश्वतो.अदब्धासो अपरीतास उद्भिदः ।
देवा नो यथा सदमिद वर्धे असन्नप्रायुवो रक्षितारो दिवे-दिवे ॥ (1.89.1).

[Intended meaning] May our society remain open to noble ideas and beneficial innovations from every part of the world. May truthful and constructive knowledge overcome ignorance and continually advance human welfare. Let enlightened individuals and institutions protect and strengthen civilization day after day through wisdom, justice, and education."

This is a universal and intellectually open statement in the R̥gveda. This encourages

us to remain open to all good thoughts, irrespective of origin, from all directions and traditions. So, knowledge is accepted as an open, cosmopolitan, and dynamic entity that is also relevant to modern conditions. That is, we must be open to scientific openness, cross-cultural learning, and universal humanism. This idea aligns with Purushartha as active, thoughtful engagement with the world. Although this Ṛcā is a peace or shanti prayer, not an explicit injunction to do or act on, it preaches for striving for what striving is worth.

The link of Puruṣārthacomes here. The word “Kratu” in Sanskrit is important, and it refers to a combination of intention, will, and an intelligent action plan. The sage asks about goal-directed human effort, or intentional striving, acknowledging that human life advances through right intentions and positive actions. Although the Ṛcā does not explicitly prescribe action, it prepares us for right action by invoking right will and intention (the word Kratu means both). So it’s a meta-level Puruṣārthahymn or Ṛcā. The hymn says that knowledge can come from all directions (Vishrawatah). Thus, it ensures that Puruṣārthais dynamic, adaptive, and non-dogmatic. The Vedic model of action involves three layers: 1. Dhi or cognition, 2. Kratu or will / intention, 3. Action or karma. The Ṛcā (1.89.1) focuses on kratu or the middle layer of purusharth. Beyond 1.89.1, other hymns of this Sūkta extend the vision into ecological, physical, and generational dimensions.

तन्नो वातो मयोभु वातु भेषजं तन्माता पृथिवी तत्पिता द्यौः ।

तद्वावाणः सोमसुतो मयोभुवस्तदश्विना शृणुतं धिष्या युवम् ॥ (1.89.4)

[Literal Meaning] May the life-giving wind bring us healing. May Mother Earth and Father Heaven or Sky bestow blessings. May the Soma and stones that press it bring well-being. O Ashwin, divine healers, hear our prayers.

[Intended meaning] May our atmosphere remain pure and health-giving; may the Earth and the cosmic environment sustain life; may scientific knowledge of medicinal plants bring welfare to society; and may skilled healers and enlightened institutions continually protect public health and human flourishing.

This Ṛcā prays that the wind, earth, and sky all bring healing and well-being (mayobhu), positioning Puruṣārthawithin an ecological framework — the elements themselves are invoked as sources of wellness when humans live rightly. The earth as “mother” and sky as “father” frame human effort as taking place in partnership with a nurturing cosmos, not against it. Human well-being comes from a combination of nature (wind, earth, and sky), human efforts (the pressing of Soma), and divine assistance (the Ashwins).

भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।

स्थिररङ्गेस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥ ॥ (1.89.8)

[Intended meaning] May citizens receive truthful and beneficial knowledge, may they witness justice and progress, may they enjoy health and physical strength, and may they devote their lives to the welfare of society. Such a civilization can fully realize the noble purpose of human life.

This is perhaps the most widely recited verse of the Ṛgveda, even today, and is often

used in daily prayer. It asks that one may hear what is auspicious (bhadram), see what is auspicious, and live out the full lifespan allotted (devahitam yad ayuh) with strong limbs and a body fit for praise. Here, Puruṣārtha extends to the cultivation of the senses and the body — effort is not only mental or spiritual but also physical, maintaining a sound body and healthy faculties as the vehicle through which all other puruṣarthas are pursued.

शतमित्रु शरदो अन्ति देवा यत्रा नश्चक्रा जरसं तनूनां ।
पुत्रासो यत्र पितरो भवन्ति मा नो मध्या रीरिषतायुर्गन्तोः ॥ (1.89.9)

[Literal meaning] May we attain a hundred autumns, reaching the old age of our bodies; may we live to see our sons become fathers. Do not cut off our life in the midst of its course.

[Intended Meaning] May society create conditions in which people enjoy long, healthy, and productive lives; may they witness the prosperity of future generations; and may disease, poverty, violence, and ignorance not prematurely shorten the human lifespan. Let every person have the opportunity to fulfil the complete journey of life.

This Ṛcā prays for a full hundred autumns (shatam... sharadah) of life, in which old age comes naturally and sons in turn become fathers — a complete, generationally fulfilled life. The plea “may our life-journey not be cut short midway” (मा नो मध्या रीरिषत आयुर्गन्तोः) frames longevity itself as both a goal of Puruṣārtha and a condition that allows the other puruṣarthas — artha, kama, dharma, Mokṣa — to be completed in their due sequence. Together, Ṛcās 1.89.8 and 1.89.9 ground the lofty vision of 1.89.1 in the practical realities of health, lifespan, and family continuity.

5.0 More from Ṛgveda On Efforts And Reward

I will discuss the following Ṛcās that explain the Puruṣārthain more details.

अस्मान्सु तत्र चोदयेद्रुये रभस्वतः । तुर्विद्युम्न यशस्वतः ॥ (1.9.6)

[Intended meaning] May enlightened leadership inspire citizens to become industrious, innovative, and prosperous. May society generate wealth through productive effort, develop strength through knowledge and organization, and earn lasting honor through ethical conduct and public service."

सं गोमदिन्द्र वाजवदस्मे पृथु श्रवौ बृहत् । विश्वायुर्धेह्यक्षितं ॥ (1.9.7)

May God Indra, bestow upon us vast and lofty fame, rich in cattle and food, giving life to all, and inexhaustible.

[Intended meaning] May enlightened leadership inspire the creation of abundant economic resources, sustainable prosperity, widespread social respect, and enduring institutions that promote the long-term welfare and development of the entire society.

अस्मे धेहि श्रवौ बृहद्भुम्नं सहस्रसातमं । इन्द्र ता रथिनीरिषः ॥ (1.9.8).

[Literal meaning] Indra, grant us great renown and wealth acquired in a thousand ways, and those (articles) of food (which are brought from the field) in carts.

[Intended meaning] May enlightened leadership endow our society with lasting prestige, collective strength, abundant economic resources, and efficient systems of

production, transportation, and organization that advance the welfare of the people

Ṛcā 1.9.6 calls for energetic and industrious efforts (rabhṣvataḥ) and honorable and worthy of a good reputation of the doer to enjoy the favor of divine grace to enjoy prosperity; that is, efforts attract abundance. The Ṛcā (1.9.7) connects structurally to Puruṣārtha. This is a prayer to Lord Indra to provide wealth (cows as a symbol of economic wealth), other resources (vajvat), righteous fame (pṛthu, śravaḥ), which is linked to dharma, and long life (viśvāyuh), and finally undecaying existence (akṣitam) or mokṣa. All four goals of life are thus taken care of by this prayer. However, the sage clearly warns that all these pleasures will only be available when you put in the right efforts. Hymn or Ṛcā (1.9.8) calls upon Lord Indra to grant victory in battle, wealth, and a strong army through persistent effort or puruṣārtha. Only through puruṣārtha one can attain wealth, knowledge, and fame.

यो रुध्रस्य चोदिता यः कुशस्य यो ब्रह्मणो नाधमानस्य कीरिः ।
युक्तग्राण्यो योऽविता सुशिप्रः सुतसोमस्य स जनासु इन्द्रः ॥ (2.12.6)

[Literal meaning] He who inspires the poor, who strengthens the weak, who hears the prayer of the supplicant singer; who is the protector of the Soma-presser, O fair-cheeked one—he, O people, is Indra. [Intended meaning] That leadership is truly worthy of honor which encourages productive citizens, uplifts the economically weak, protects scholars and intellectuals, and supports those who work diligently for the common good. Such leadership becomes the real strength of a nation.

Here, Indra is praised as one who treats rich and poor alike and supports those who crush the Soma for him. So Indra helps the person who has already begun the work, who has crushed soma with stones to prepare soma juice for him. That means efforts must precede the divine help. It gives birth to the “prepare, act, and preserve ” principle. Freeloaders are not rewarded.

इदाहः पीतिमुत वो मदं धुर्न ऋते श्रान्तस्य सुख्याय देवाः ।
ते नूनमुस्मे ऋभवो वसूनि तृतीयं अस्मिन्त्सवने दधात ॥ (4.33.11).

[Literal meaning] O Gods, neither your drinking of Soma today nor your exhilaration comes without effort; friendship is not won without toil. Therefore, O Ṛbhus, bestow your treasures upon us now at this third Soma pressing.

[Intended meaning] No society attains prosperity, progress, or lasting cooperation without disciplined effort and productive work. Therefore, may the innovators, skilled experts, and builders of civilization provide the resources, knowledge, and institutions necessary for collective welfare and sustainable development.

The Ṛcā 4.33.11, attributed to Sage Vāmadeva Gautama, associates the concept of Puruṣārtha with rewards. This hymn is to the Ṛbhus, or divine craftsmen, a trio of divine, highly skilled artisans—Ṛbhu, Vibhvan, and Vāja—who were sons of Sudhānvān. They were born mortal but were granted immortality or attained godhood (devatva) through their exceptional skills and austerities, often described as creators who fashioned chariots and cups for the gods and restored their parents' youth.

It emphasizes earning rewards through effort (śrāntasya). This means the fruit that one receives is the combined product of human efforts and divine alignment, or human

efforts (E) + divine alignment (D) = result or fruit (R). The Ṛgveda hence advocates efforts, not simply prayers alone; prayers are an important part of this equation in shaping divine alignment. Reward is linked to effort (na ṛte śrāntasya sakhyāya devāḥ, not without considering the one who exerted, 4.33.11). The reward is conditional effort, not an arbitrary divine favor. The reward is for the friendship of one who has labored (śrāntasya sakhyāya).

6.0 Additional Ṛcās: Rising Up And Steady Effort

उत्तिष्ठ ब्रह्मणस्पते देवयन्तस्त्वेमहे ।
उप प्र यन्तु मरुतः सुदानव इन्द्रं प्राशूर्भवा सचा ॥ (1.40.1)

[Literal meaning] Arise, O Brahamanspati! We invoke you, May the Maruts come and be supported by Indra.

Let knowledge and wisdom become active in society. Let enlightened citizens, skilled workers, and generous contributors unite for the common good. Let capable leadership work in cooperation with them so that collective progress, prosperity, and social welfare may be achieved.

This well-known “Uttiṣṭha” (rise up) invocation calls on Brāhmaṇaspati, the lord of speech and wisdom, to arise, while the devotee likewise rises in devotion. The Maruts, swift and generous storm-deities, are invoked to come forward. The verb uttiṣṭha has, in later usage, become a popular call to action. The Ṛcā connects rising up — physically and spiritually — with the arrival of divine support, again reflecting the E + D = R formula seen in 4.33.11: effort precedes and invites grace.

स्वस्ति पन्थामनु चरेम सूर्याचन्द्रमसाविव ।
पुनर्ददताअघ्नता जानाता संगैमेमहि ॥ (5.51.15)

[Literal meaning] May we ever follow our path, like the sun and the moon prosperously; may we come together harmoniously on the path of truth and be associated with a requiting, grateful, and appreciative people.

[Intended meaning] May society collectively follow a path of sustainable progress and public welfare, as orderly and dependable as the movements of the Sun and Moon. May citizens cooperate through mutual contribution, non-violence, and informed understanding, thereby building a harmonious and prosperous civilization.

This Ṛcā (5.51.15) prays for travelling the path of well-being (svasti panthah) as steadily as the sun and moon traverse the sky — a metaphor for disciplined, regular effort. The sun and moon do not pause; their movement is the model for human persistence. Purusharth, in this light, is not a single burst of energy but a steady, rhythmic discipline, much like celestial motion.

अग्रा यो मर्त्यो दुवो धियं जुजोष धीतिभिः । भस्नु ष प्र पूर्य इषं वुरीतावसे ॥ (6.14.1)

[Intended meaning] A society whose citizens cultivate knowledge, act responsibly, and apply thoughtful intelligence to public affairs attains lasting prosperity, abundant resources, and secure institutions that promote the welfare of all.

This Ṛcā (6.14.1) says that who unites right thought, right praise, and right action

receives nourishment and prosperity, protection, and success in life. The emphasis is not on passive prayers, but Agni favours those who engage mind, speech, and action harmoniously.

7.0 Purśārtha and Collective Action

अश्मन्वती रीयते सं रभध्वमुत्तिष्ठत् प्र तरता सखायः ।

अत्रा जहाम ये असन्नशैवाः शिवान्वयमुत्तरेमाभि वाजान् ॥ (10.53.8)

[Literal meaning] The river named Aśmanvati is flowing. Get up to cross this river to come to the yagna and cross it. O friends, God! Let us leave the unsung and cross the river and find the grains happily.

[Intended meaning] When society faces great obstacles and crises, let its people unite, rise with determination, and overcome them together. Let them abandon harmful practices, ignorance, and injustice, and move forward toward prosperity, social welfare, and collective achievement.

This hymn guides human beings through a symbolic language of a river with difficult-to-cross rocks. It calls upon them to unite as friends, cross the river, and forget those who were unhelpful or evil in order to obtain prosperity, strength, and nourishment on the other side of the river. The deeper meaning of this is to attain the objective by collective action (सं रभध्वम्, sam rabhdhwam or act together) and leave the inauspicious that they have experienced behind (जहाम ये-अशैवाः-असन्) and think of gaining prosperity and strength (शिवान् वाजान्-अभि-उत्तरेम). So it is directed to choose auspiciousness, prosperity, and to cross the difficulty (the river). That is, rise and act together, abandon unworthy things behind, and move toward higher fulfilment. This is hence a combination of collective action for an ethical cause or dharma that will bring overall progress for all. Purusharth, hence, is not just for individual progress but also for the progress of society at large as narrated in the sanjnana Sūkta (10.191).

संसमिद्युवसे वृषन्नग्ने विश्वान्यर्य आ ।

इळस्पदे समिध्यसे स नो वसूत्या भर ॥ 10.191. 1.

[Intended meaning] May enlightened knowledge and righteous leadership unite all productive and noble members of society, and may they generate the resources needed for the prosperity and welfare of the entire community.

सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।

देवा भागं यथा पूर्वे संजानाना उपासते ॥ 10.191.2

[Intended meaning] Let citizens work together, engage in constructive dialogue, and develop shared understanding. Just as successful societies of the past achieved prosperity through cooperation and collective responsibility.

समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तमेषाम् ।

समानं मन्त्रंमभि मन्त्रये वः समानेनं वो हविषां जुहोमि ॥ 10.191.3

[Intended meaning] Let society establish common civic goals, shared institutions, and collective understanding. Let public policy be guided by a common commitment to justice, welfare, and national development.

समाना व आकृतिः समाना हृदयानि वः ।
समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसुहासति ॥ 10.191.4

[Intended meaning] May citizens share a commitment to the common good, cultivate mutual trust, and maintain social cohesion, so that society may prosper through cooperation rather than conflict.

The above is called Samjnana Sūkta (संज्ञान सुक्तम्) or hymn of unity. It is the last Sūkta of the R̥gved. This has 4 verses or Ṛcās. The hymn 10.191.1 invokes fire or agni to unite people, or people come together and light the fire, and thus calls for coming together for a purpose. The second hymn 10.191.2 is a hymn called for talking to each other and knowing each other's mind—it's a hymn of unity of movement and speech. The third Ṛcā 10.191.3 justifies collective action as cosmologically necessary, as the cosmos harmonises itself for the coordinated functioning of the universe. It behooves human beings to mirror the cosmic harmony. The last fourth hymn 1.191.4 calls for unity of intention and heart. It requires that not only speech but also the intentions or sankalpa must be unified. The collective action is shown here from ritual or fire lighting to collective communication through speech and mind, and then on to unifying hearts or intentions. This requires four layers: physical gathering, speech, mind, and heart.

8.0 Puruśārtha and Modern Psychology

The R̥gvedic vision of Puruśārtha finds striking parallels in several strands of contemporary psychological research, suggesting that the ancient seers intuited principles that empirical psychology has only recently formalised.

Goal-Setting and Kratu: Goal Setting Theory of Edwin Locke and Gary Latham states that specific, challenging and meaningful goals improve performance and motivation than simple vague goals (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002). The concept of kratu — intention combined with an actionable plan, central to Ṛcā 1.89.1 — closely mirrors goal-setting theory in organisational psychology, which holds that specific, structured intentions translate into higher performance than vague aspirations. The three-layered Vedic model of dhi (cognition), kratu (will/intention), and karma (action) maps onto the modern understanding that effective action requires a clear mental representation of the goal, a committed intention or plan, and finally execution — a sequence that can break down at any stage when motivation fails to convert into behaviour.

Growth Mindset Theory: Growth mindset theory which gives the “Prepare, Act, Persevere principle, is mirroring principle drawn from Ṛcā 2.12.6 — that Indra helps the one who has already begun crushing the soma, i.e., divine favour follows initiated effort — resonates with the psychological construct of a growth mindset, where ability and outcomes are seen as developed through effort rather than fixed at birth (Dweck, 1986, 2006; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Yeager & Dweck, 2012). The R̥gvedic insistence that freeloaders are not rewarded anticipates the modern finding that perceived effort, not talent alone, predicts persistence and eventual achievement.

Self-Efficacy Theory and Progress: Self-efficacy theory was developed by Albert Bandura; self-efficacy is a person's belief in his or her ability. The E + D = R Formula

derived from Ṛcā 4.33.11 — human effort plus divine alignment yields the result — parallels the psychological construct of self-efficacy: the belief that one's actions causally contribute to outcomes (Bandura, 1997, 2000). Where the Ṛgveda frames the “D” (divine alignment) as grace or cosmic order, modern psychology might reframe this component as environmental, social, or chance factors outside one's control. Both frameworks agree that effort (E) is the variable within human agency, and that dwelling on the uncontrollable “D” without contributing “E” produces no result — a useful corrective to learned helplessness, in which individuals stop exerting effort because they perceive outcomes as entirely beyond their control.

The Saṁjñāna Sūkta's progression — physical gathering, shared speech, aligned minds, unified hearts (10.191.1–4) — corresponds closely to the psychological concept of collective efficacy: the shared belief among group members that coordinated effort can produce desired outcomes. Modern research on team performance similarly identifies communication, shared mental models, and emotional cohesion as sequential prerequisites for effective group action, in much the same order the Sūkta presents them.

Hedonic Adaptation and the Four Purushartha: The balanced four-aim model — Dharma, Artha, Kama, Mokṣa — anticipates the psychological critique of hedonic adaptation: the finding that pursuit of any single goal, such as wealth or pleasure alone, yields only temporary satisfaction before the baseline resets (Brickman & Campbell, 1971). By distributing human striving across ethical conduct, material security, emotional fulfilment, and ultimate meaning, the Puruśārthamodell implicitly guards against the diminishing returns that come from over-investment in any one domain — consistent with modern well-being research emphasising multiple, balanced sources of life satisfaction rather than a single maximised variable.

Longevity Goals and Health Psychology: Health psychology views longevity as the outcome of sustained health-promoting behaviours, influenced by beliefs, motivation, self-efficacy, and goal-directed action (Ajzen, 1991). Ṛcā 1.89.9's prayer for a full, uninterrupted lifespan situates physical health as foundational to all other pursuits — an idea echoed in health psychology's framing of physical well-being as a precondition for sustained goal pursuit in any other domain, whether career, relationships, or personal growth. The Vedic linkage of bodily soundness (1.89.8) with the capacity to perceive and act upon what is auspicious (bhadram) reflects the modern understanding that cognitive and emotional functioning depend on physical health.

9.0 Conclusion and Guidance to Modern Youths

The world today is facing unprecedented challenges. People are striving to secure meaningful employment, build stable families, find suitable life partners, provide for their children, and improve their overall quality of life. In this relentless pursuit of a better future, uncertainty and anxiety have become common companions.

The Rīgvedic vision emphasizes the importance of human effort, perseverance, and self-reliance. It teaches that success is not achieved through passive expectation of miracles but through dedicated action, patience, wisdom, and foresight. Individuals are encouraged to work diligently, overcome obstacles with courage, and remain steadfast

in the face of adversity. Many people turn to astrology, rituals, talismans, and various spiritual practices in the hope of finding solutions to life's difficulties. While these traditions hold cultural and personal significance for many, the message of the R̥gveda offers a timeless and practical perspective: God helps those who help themselves.

Ultimately, our persistent efforts, disciplined actions, and ability to plan for the future become the true instruments of our liberation and progress. The R̥gveda reminds us that divine support accompanies those who actively strive to improve themselves and their circumstances. In this sense, human effort and divine grace are not opposites; Your persistent efforts, patience, and foresight are your final liberator

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