

The Four Social Classes (Caturvarṇa)

Brahmin

The priests and teachers. They are responsible for the preservation of knowledge and culture, the satisfaction of the gods through sacrificial ritual, and the safeguarding of justice and morality.

Kshatriya

The warrior caste, consisting of the protectors and administrators of society who provide security and enforcement of the various rules for society.

Vaishya

The traders and producers of society—artisans, farmers, merchants.

Shudra

The workers and servants.

The Four Ends of Man (Caturpuruṣārtha)

Dharma

The concern with righteousness, virtue, duty.

Artha

The concern with material gain.

Kama

The concern with love or pleasure.

Moksha

The overall goal of life—liberation, enlightenment.

The Four Stages of Life (Caturāśrama)

Brahmacarya

The student stage.

Grihastya

The householder stage.

Vanaprasthya

The stage of retirement from family life and the social world.

Samnyasa

The stage of renunciation in which one focuses upon liberation (*Mokṣa*).