

#### LECTURE IV OUR SOCIAL HERITAGE

The feature of Indian society that strikes a foreign observer as distinctive of it is what is termed *caste*, and what Hindus call *varṇāśrama-dharma*. It is undoubtedly a cardinal item in our social heritage. Those who speak of caste as unique overlook the natural tendency for the formation of social groups on the basis of such things as belief in a common origin, common avocations and community of interests, and for their stabilisation for common defence. Hegel long ago pointed out that superficially the system of classes in mediaeval Europe resembled caste. The clergy, the nobility, the burghers and the serfs and proletariat formed groups not unlike the four Hindu *varṇas*. Class cleavage created class pride, which was signified by confining marriages to those within a group. Even now there is a royal caste in Europe, and the marriage of royalty to a commoner is resented by the class. In countries in which there is supposed to be no privilege, pride of belonging to a few families descended from original immigrants makes a close endogamous group in the United States of America. We have in the half-bloods of Spanish America groups that correspond to the mixed castes of Hindu smṛtis. Connubium and commensality are not criteria exclusively found in Indian caste. It has been so in other countries and also in ancient times.<sup>1</sup> In ancient Iran the fourfold grouping into *atharva* (priest), *rathesṭha* (warrior), *vāstrya-śūnyant* ("head of the family") and *hūiti* (manual worker) corresponds to the fourfold grouping of the Indian people into Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra.<sup>2</sup> The resemblance goes further. As in India, the first three groups of old Iran constituted a higher division, marked from the lower (comprising the body of manual workers) by a ceremony of initiation and investiture with the sacred

1 *Connubium* was the right of contracting a valid Roman marriage with all its consequences (*matrimonium iustum*) in law. As such a marriage could take place only between persons of equal status, the Patricians and Plebeians had for a long time separate *connubium*, until 445 B.C. when the two orders were equalised in this respect by *lex Canuleia* (para 121, W.E. Heitland, *Roman Republic*, vol. I., 1909).

2. Max Duncker, *History o Antiquity*, Trn. E. Abbot, vol. V., pp. 184—200.

thread. If the correspondence between the two systems of ancient India and Iran be considered to be defective on the ground that the last group in Iran, when admitted to Zoroastrianism, was held to be entitled to the rite of initiation (a point that has been questioned by some *savants*), one might point to the rule of Manu<sup>1</sup> (X, 127) giving the Śūdra the right to perform Vedic rites without however using *mantras*. We may also refer to the inclusion of Śūdras in the *varṇa* grouping, and their being held to have "*Ārya-prāṇa*" (*Āryan life*)<sup>2</sup> which made them immune from slavery (*nā tu Āryasya dāsabhāvah*)<sup>3</sup> according to Kaṭilya. The colour strife of modern times has undoubtedly strengthened the case of those who see in the Indian *varṇa* divisions of the original cleavage between the fair-skinned Aryans and the dark-skinned Dasyu (*kr̥ṣṇa-ivaca*). But the Veda shows that the antagonism between Ārya and Dasyu (or Dāsa) was as much on grounds of difference of cults, speech and bodily appearance. The contrast is between Ārya and Dāsa, and there is no reference to the Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya (Rājanya) by *varṇa*, though they were already castes in the Ṛg-Veda period. It is probable that the conquered Dāsa or Dasyu become a Śūdra, though all Śūdras cannot be traced back to a servile origin. The transformation would bring an enemy, who stood outside the community, within its pale. The exclusion of the Śūdra from religious rites of a Vedic type might be due to the original antipathy of the Dasyu (on cultural and cult grounds) to Vedic rites. Original disinclination is translated into involuntary exclusion. The old difference is perhaps implied in the identification of Śūdra and *Anārya* by Gautama.<sup>4</sup> The old resentment and contempt persist in the descriptions of a Śūdra (originally a Dasyu) as a walking cemetery<sup>5</sup> because of his love of meat, and his comparison with a beast of burden. A tradition also persists that the Supreme Being created the the upper *varṇas*

1. धर्मसप्तसु धर्मैः सतां वृत्तिमनुष्ठिताः ।  
सप्तवर्षे न ह्यन्यत् प्रससां प्राप्नुवन्ति च ॥ (१०, १२८)
2. आर्यद्राणो धनार्हाः कर्मकालानुरूपेण मृत्युर्धनं वा विद्युष्येत् ॥  
(कौटिलीय अ. शा., p. 183)
3. श्रेष्ठानामर्षेणः प्रजां विक्रेतुमावातुं वा । न श्रेयार्थेन दास्यमानः (Ibid. p. 181)
4. शूद्रो द्विजातीनातिर्षयायाऽभिद्वय च वाददृष्यपाश्चात्त्यामह मोक्षो वेनोपदम्यते ।  
आर्यक्षिप्रमभिगमने शिद्रोऽदरः स्वदरुण च ॥ (गीतम. ध. अ. १२, २-३)
5. धके वा प्लच्छमशानं वे शूद्राः ।  
दमशाननेतलस्यर्षं वे शूद्राः पापचारिणः ।  
तस्माच्छूद्रसमीपे तु माष्येत्तर्षं कदाचन ॥ (बसिष्ठः, २८, ११, ११)

alone from Vedic metres (*gāyatrī, triṣṭubh* and *jagati*),<sup>1</sup> which is found in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*<sup>2</sup> (V, 12). The system of four *varnas* was already settled in the Vedic period. The ascription of the famous *Puruṣasūktā*<sup>3</sup> to a later period than the other parts of the *Ṛg-Veda*, does not alter the fact that the institution was already a settled fact by that time.

It is difficult for outsiders to perceive the spirit behind an institution, and often to understand even its superficial features. The errors in the description of the seven castes of India by Megasthenes are classical. What is peculiar to the Indian system is the meaning and purpose ascribed traditionally to it. Megasthenes saw the endogamous nature of the *varna* and the occupations that alone could be followed by a *varṇa*. His missing the inner purpose and meaning of the system is not surprising, as outsiders cannot visualize the philosophy of life to which they are related.

The origin of the *varnas* has been stated in many legends, and of the cause of differentiation in philosophical literature. The most famous of the legends is that of the *Puruṣasūktā-Puruṣa*, who is identified with the universe ("whatever has been and shall be") and the source of the Sun, the Moon, Indra, Agni and Vāyu as well as the quarters, the heavens, the sky, the earth, etc., is said to have produced the Brāhmaṇa from his mouth, the Kṣatriya from his arms, the Vaiśya from his thighs and the Śūdra from his feet. This tradition is repeated by Manu<sup>4</sup> (I, 31). The purpose of the creation is stated by Manu as 'the progress of the world' (*lokānam ca vīryādhyarthan*). The expression has elicited a great deal of commentary.<sup>5</sup> The *lokāḥ* is inclusive of all worlds: and the creation of the four *varnas* in this world of ours is said to be for the good of both our world as well as of other worlds than ours. This carries the implication, to which reference has been made in the previous lecture, of the interdependence of worlds and their denizens, and of the way in which the universe is balanced by their harmonious reciprocity in service. *Vṛddhi* means

1. गायत्र्या ब्राह्मणमवजत, त्रिष्टुभा राजन्यं, जमसा वैश्यं, म केनचिद रुद्रसा शूद्र-  
मिलसंस्कारो विद्यायते ॥ (तसिष्ठः, ५, ३)

2. ऐतरेयब्राह्मण, ५, १२ (Trn. (A. B. Keith, *Ṛg Veda Brāhmaṇas*, p. 123--129).

3. *Ṛg Veda*, X, 90, 12.

4. लोकानां तु विद्युष्वर्धं शुद्धमाहुरावदातः ।  
माह्वानं क्षत्रियं वैश्यं शूद्रं च तिरवसेवद ॥ (१, ३१)

5. J. Jolly's *Manuṣikā Saṁgraha*, p. 24.

both "prosperity," and "progress." The allusion is not so much to the inhabitants of the worlds collectively, as to each being individually. The individual being is only a soul encased in a body. Progress is that of the self, not of the body. *Varṇa* or caste relates to the body, not to the self. As described in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (V, 10, 7) a person's birth in a particular form, as Brāhmaṇa, or Sūdra depends on his *karma* in a past birth.<sup>1</sup> His *varṇa* is thus the consequence of his own past actions. Actions in this birth will similarly determine the *varṇa* in which the self will incarnate in the next birth. A man's *varṇa* is part of the retributive justice that pursues the self from birth to birth. The *varṇa* differentiation itself is said to have sprung from *karma*; this world is *Brāhma* (creation of Brahma), and it has evolved *varṇas* by action (*sarvam brāhmaṇam idam jagat, karmabhir varṇatām gataḥ*<sup>2</sup> Śāntiparva, 186, 10). Man attains a superior *varṇa* by righteous acts.<sup>3</sup> (*Ibid.*, 297, 5). One cannot change his heritage by his volition; he must work it out by his *karma* in this life. It is by fulfilling faithfully the duties of his *varṇa* and status that one may ascend in the social scale. The arrangement of the *varṇas* in an order of superiority is not merely a recognition of an accomplished fact; it is a device for the future ascent of those who are now low in the scale. In the work of reclamation of the submerged, the close association with the spiritually highest, the *varṇa* whose members must have some *vāsanā*, (inherited trend, from their past birth) is most indicated. This is the reason why the last *varṇa* is conscripted for personal service to the twice-born in general and to the Brāhmaṇas in particular. The intimacy born of daily association and the example of the spiritual *élite* are means of salvaging the lowest *varṇa*. Society, made up of different cultural or spiritual levels, cannot be transformed in a day. The process of assimilation must necessarily be slow. The idea that every child is a *Sūdraṇa samas tāvad yāvāt vede na jāyate*<sup>4</sup> is that the child and the Sūdra are on a level. Both have to be raised by education; the *dvija's*

1. तत्र इह रमणीयन्तरणा अभ्यासी ह चेत रमणीयां योनिमापेत्स्वः प्राज्ञानयोनि मा क्षत्रियं योनि वा वैश्वयोनि वाध य इह कर्मपुत्ररणा अभ्यासी ह चेत कर्त्ता योनिमापेत्स्वः स्वयोनि वा क्षत्रयोनि वाधायुयोनि वा । (छान्दोग्योपनिषद् , ५, १०, ८)

2. न विश्वेषोऽस्ति वर्णानां सर्वं ब्राह्मणैर्दत्तं जगत् ।

ब्राह्मणाः पूर्वसृष्टा हि कर्मनिर्दिष्टां गताः ॥ (शांतिपर्व १८६, १०-१४)

3. वर्णान्कर्ममवाप्नोति नरः पुण्येन कर्मणा ।

दुर्लभं तमलम्ब्या हि हत्यात्पानेन कर्मणा ॥ (शांतिपर्व २५७, ५)

4. मनु, २, १७२.

child is raised by his *upanayana* (initiation), his rebirth, while the "spiritual" child, of the Śūdra will lean by service to the elect the means of redeeming himself in the next birth.

The same lesson is contained in some of the legends of the origin of *varnas*. They describe how originally there was only one *varna* in the beginning and Brahman alone existed, and He created other gods who partook the features of valour, (*kṛti*), vaiśya-hood and service for progress through variation. These divisions which existed in the divine regions were reproduced in this world,<sup>1</sup> (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, I, 4. 11-15). *Mahābhārata* alludes to a tradition that in the beginning in the Golden Age (*Kṛtāyuga*) the only *varna* was that of the Brāhmanas, who became differentiated by their *karma*.<sup>2</sup> Their assignments to other *varnas* were according to the dispositions they manifested. The deterioration of some sections of mankind, as compared with others is crudely explained as due to the parts of the body of the Supreme Being from which they sprang. This idea is implied in *Mānsmṛiti* (I, 93)<sup>3</sup> where it is stated that the Brāhmana is by right the lord of creation, as he sprang from the mouth of the Creator, as he was the first born and possesses the Veda.

The birth in the four *varnas* in the process of transmigration is elaborately explained by Manu, in the eleventh. The Supreme Being pervades all beings with three qualities (*guṇa*) : *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* (XII, 24).<sup>4</sup> These manifest themselves in disposition, temperament and knowledge in various forms and degrees. Each of these again may be graded as the best, the middling and the lowest. The nine classes

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1. बृहदारण्यकोपनिषद्, (१,४,११-१५)
  2. ऋग्वेदः १०.१३०.१३-१४ ॥  
 कामभोगाभिरास्तीक्ष्णाः क्रोधनाः भिषदाहताः ॥  
 स्वल्पधर्मा रक्षाहास्त्रे दिवाः क्षत्रज्ञा मताः ॥  
 गोपु ब्रूति समाचार्य पोताः क्रुष्युपजीविनः ॥  
 स्वधर्माभ्युत्थिताः के दिवा वैश्वता मताः ॥  
 विलासिताः पुत्र्याः सर्वकर्मोपजीविनः ॥  
 शूद्राः शीघ्रपरिमृष्टाः से दिवा बहुदुःखता मताः ॥  
 इत्येतेः कर्मभिर्व्यक्ता दिवा वर्णोत्तरं मताः ॥ (शांतिपर्व १८३,१०-१४)
  3. वचनाङ्गोद्भवान्मनुष्याः पुत्र्याः शूद्राश्चैव भारणात् ॥  
 सर्वैस्वैवास्व धर्मैस्व धर्मोऽस्मात्प्रभुः ॥ (१. ९३)
  4. सर्वे रजस्तमश्चैव शीघ्रं विषादात्मनो युषाम् । (मनु. १२, २४)

of innate dispositions or heritage (*guṇāḥ*), determine the bent of the self that is animated by it. The *gunas* are primordial. Manu states that in creation itself the selves were affected by *gunas*.<sup>1</sup> Classification by *guṇa* may be described roughly as differentiation by psychic differences in initial equipment. The *Gītā* puts into the mouth of the Lord the statement that the system of four *varṇas* (*cātur-varṇyam*) was created by Him (*mayā sṛjāmi*) according to differences of *guṇa* and *karma*.<sup>2</sup> The allotment of specific duties to each of the *varṇas* follows this principle of making functions tally with the inherited trend of the *varṇa*.

Thus in the system there are two features. firstly, birth in a *varṇa* is the result of the combined effect of the innate *guṇa* of the self and its action (*karma*) as moulded by the *guṇa* in the past births; secondly, duties are assigned to each *varṇa* in such a way that by sedulous discharge of them, the self may be raised to a higher plane in the next birth, and ultimately attain liberation.

It will be noticed that the *gunas* correspond to the triple division of primary appetites or ends of existence, *puruṣārthas*; *sattva-guṇa* corresponds to Dharma, *rajo-guṇa* to Artha, and *tamo-guṇa* to Kāma (mere desire). Translated into the *varṇas*, the first *varṇa* is the consequence of past *sattva-guṇa* and its members start with an initial *vāsana* of *sattva*, the second and the third are the embodiments of the drive of *rajo-guṇa* from the past birth, and the last of *tamo-guṇa*. Translated into terms of *puruṣārthas*, the first *varṇa* stands for Dharma, the second and the third for Artha and Kāma, and the last for only animal desires (*Kāma*).

We may now turn to the functions of each *varṇa*, as laid down in all *śāstras*, and as repeated by Manu, on the authority of the Creator (I, 87-91):<sup>3</sup> teaching and study of the Veda, sacrificing for his own benefit and for others, giving and accepting gifts for the Brāhmanas;

1. सदान्मेव चात्मानं संवीणि विद्युयानि च । (मनु १. १५)

2. चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागतः । (भगवद्गीता ४, १३)

3. अध्यापनसंभ्यवनं वजनं वाजनं तथा ।

दानं प्रतिग्रहं चैव ब्राह्मणानामकल्पयत् ॥

प्रजानां रक्षणं दानमिष्ट्याध्ययनमेव च ।

विश्वेभ्यः प्रसादिकश्च क्षत्रियस्य समासतः ॥

पशूनां रक्षणं दानमिष्ट्याध्ययनमेव च ।

वणिश्वर्यं कुसीदे च वैश्वस्य कृषिमेव च ॥

एकमेव तु शूद्रस्य प्रभुः कर्म समादिशत् ।

स्तेषामिव वर्णानां शूद्रश्चात्मनश्च यथा ॥ (१, ८८-९१)

protecting the people, bestowing gifts, offering sacrifices, studying the Veda and abstaining from attaching himself to the gratification of the senses (*viśayেষु anāsaktiḥ*), for the Kṣatriya; tending cattle, bestowing gifts, offering sacrifices, studying the Veda, trading, lending money and cultivation of land for the Vaiśya; and serving without ill-feeling the other *varṇas* for the Śūdra. Looked at as duties as well as means of subsistence, Manu declares that the three means of subsistence, for the Brāhmaṇa are teaching, sacrificing for others and receiving gifts; for the Kṣatriya the bearing of arms, and trade, agriculture, and cattle-rearing for the Vaiśya. Among the occupations the most commendable are teaching the Veda for the Brāhmaṇa, protecting the people for the Kṣatriya, and trade for the Vaiśya.<sup>1</sup>

A feature to note in the prescription of duties and professions is that in every case the aim is to benefit not so much the doer as others. By the study of the Vedas, the world flows with milk and honey<sup>2</sup> (II, 107), sins are dissolved (XI, 263)<sup>3</sup> and taints arising from them are removed (XI, 243-246)<sup>4</sup>. The householder performs the five daily sacrifices to remove the guilt of taking life in the "five slaughter houses"<sup>5</sup> of the house (III, 68-69)<sup>6</sup>. Specific sacrifices are described as having specific effects of a transcendental nature. In his public capacity a king is bound to perform them<sup>6</sup> (VII, 78-80). Their potency is so great that it should not be done for unworthy men<sup>7</sup> (III, 65). In the desire to do a sacrifice, a Brāhmaṇa

1. मनु, (१०, ७४-८०)
2. यः स्वाध्यायमर्थीतिदम्य विधिना निपतः श्रुतिः ।  
तस्य मित्त शरत्सेष पयो दधि घृतं मधु ॥ (२, १०७.)
3. यथा महाहर्षं प्राप्य क्षिप्त और्ध्वं विनश्यति ।  
तथा दुःखरितं सर्वं वेदे निश्चिन्ति मज्जति ॥ (११, २६३)
4. वेदाभ्यासोऽन्वदे सक्त्वा महावक्त्राकिना क्षमा ।  
माशुभस्वाशु पापानि महागतकामान्मपि ॥  
• वेधेयस्तेजसा बहिः प्राप्त निदंति क्षयात् ।  
तथा हानादिना पाप सर्वं दहति वेदविद् ॥ (११, २४५-२४६)
5. पञ्चमृता गृहसस्य युक्ते पेषणयुवकरः ।  
कन्धनी चौरकुम्भस्य भण्यते यास्तु बाहसम् ॥  
यासां क्षेपण सर्वार्थं सिष्कृत्यै महाभिः ।  
पञ्च मत्सा महावक्त्राः प्रत्यदं गृहमेभिनाम् ॥ (३, ६८-६९)
6. पुरोहित च कुर्वीत ब्रह्मदेव चाभिः ।  
तेऽस्य गृह्यापि कर्माणि कुर्वीतानिमानि च ॥ (११, ७८)
7. अवाक्यवाननैवेन . . . . .  
कुलाम्नाशु विनश्यन्ति . . . . . (३, ६५)

may not impoverish by it his family and dependants<sup>1</sup> (XI, 40). Teaching the Veda is economically unremunerative, as it has to be done free; he who receives money for teaching the Veda incurs a great sin. The Indian teacher exacts no fees from his pupils nor does he expect them, while he treats them as members of his own family. Teacher and pupil share the alms. Liberality is one of the means of expiation and of acquiring merit. He who has must give freely. But he who receives gifts (*prati-graha*) lowers himself<sup>2</sup>. Charity blesseth him who gives, not him who takes it. Wealth is regarded as a social trust. It has to be put to proper and unselfish use. The prohibition of the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya to teach the Veda, to do sacrifices for others and to accept gifts is based on reason. The Vaiśya was the affluent person in society, whose protected condition enabled him to accumulate wealth and enjoy it. Persons engaged in vital economic occupations should not be diverted from them in order to attend to their supposed spiritual welfare. An agriculturist and a trader serve the community best by the zealous pursuit of their own occupations. If a Kṣatriya, who represents the armed might of the community, takes to accepting gifts, the gifts may often be exactions instead of being free offerings. Instead of protecting society, he will prey upon it. The conduct of a sacrifice requires expert knowledge, which it will take years of patient study to acquire. Men steeped in the avocations of the world cannot be expected to master the technique. Society will be sterilized economically if every one claimed the right to become a cleric or a conductor in a *yāga*. Lastly, society is held to be founded upon the willing service of the proletariat class which has to do the menial services that require neither training nor superior knowledge. As the Śūdra was not the slave that he might have been, under other organizations, it was not possible to erect an edifice of culture, as in ancient Athens, on the foundation of slavery. Kauṭilya rules that no Ārya can be made a slave. He recognizes both free and servile elements in the Śūdra *varna*, and permits the pledge of even an Ārya in a time of distress. In *Manusmṛiti* the word *dāśya* as applied to Śūdra denotes only service and the words *kr̥tita* and *a-kr̥tita* used to

1. तस्मान्नाल्पभनो यजेत् (११, ४०)

2. प्रतिग्रहसमर्थोऽपि प्रसहं तत्र वचनेत् ।

प्रतिग्रहेण क्षत्रियो मासं तेषः प्रशाम्यति ॥

अथवास्वन्नधीवानः प्रतिग्रहश्चिद्विजः ।

अमस्वस्वाम्भुवेव सह तेनैव मज्जाति ॥ (४, १८६; १९०)



describe two types of Sūdra (VIII, 413),<sup>1</sup> though usually translated as "bought" and "unbought," are rightly interpreted by the commentators as "hired" or maintained in consideration of service" (*bhaidādi bhīrtān vā dāsyam kārayati*). It was servitude, not slavery of the recognized pattern. This is why slavery (*dāsyam*) is brought under contract. The deprivation of full freedom to act was treated, on analogy, as servile. This is why an apprentice (*antevāsin*) who works for his master without a wage and is merely given food and board, is considered by Yājñavalkya (II, 184) under the head of *dāsyam*.<sup>2</sup> The statement of Manu (VIII, 414) that Sūdra has *dāsyam* (liability to service) innate in him, and cannot be freed from the liability, even if released by his master, is properly treated by Medhātithi as glorified exaggeration (*arthavāda*).<sup>3</sup> For according to Manu (IX, 334-335) the highest duty of the Sūdra (*dharma parat*) which will lead him to beatitude<sup>4</sup> or a higher *varṇa* in the next birth, is serving learned and virtuous Brāhmaṇa householders. The attainment of *mukti* or making an advance towards its attainment is possible for every one by doing his appointed duty (*dharma*), and it makes it easier when the duty is one that does not directly contribute to one's own immediate advantage.

In normal circumstances, there should be no encroachment by any *varṇa* on the functions, duties and means of livelihood of the others. The Kṣatriya alone has the duty to be a soldier, for, to him is entrusted the duty of protection. Like the teaching duty of the Brāhmaṇa, it apparently carried with it no worldly remuneration, though there is no prohibition to a Kṣatriya being a paid soldier. Kauṭilya (p. 345) contemplates an army recruited from all the *varṇas*, but he does not favour Brāhmaṇas being recruited to it and regards the Kṣatriya as a better soldier, owing to his familiarity in using weapons. He sees an advantage in an army of Vaiśyas and Sūdras, owing to the possibility of getting a larger force from the two sections of the population that formed its great bulk. Recourse to recruiting others than the Kṣatriya would have been deemed an emergency measure.

1. पूर्व तु काश्चित्प्रसक्तं ज्ञातमस्तीति चेत् । (४, १८९, १९०)  
'ज्ञातमस्तीति' भक्त्युपनसन्निधि निपातितः ।

2. चाक्षयन्त्य, २, १८९, १८९ deal with दारय; the rule about अनैवारी is 2, 184

3. दास्यते च चिच्छेत्सौ ब्राह्मणस्य स्वयंभुजा । (८, ४१३);

4. 'दास्यते च' इति अर्थवादः शेषातिथिः । Kullūka misses this.

5. सुश्रुतेषु तु शूद्रस्य धर्मो वैश्वसः परः ।

माहात्म्याश्रयो नित्यमुत्कृष्टं जातिदन्दुते ॥ (९, ३३४-३३५)

Indian literature has a genius for suggestion by simile. The interdependence of the divinely created *varṇas* is signified by their origin from the same divine body. As health in the body postulates the co-ordination of functions by all the organs, so the health of humanity required that all the four *varṇas* should work in harmony. The face or mouth (*mukha*), from which the first *varṇa* sprang, is the most important part of the body (*uttamāṅga*). Feeding the Brāhmana in sacrifices and *śrāddhas* is transmitting the offerings of food to the gods and the manes through his mouth. The usual method of making offerings to the gods and manes is by throwing oblations into the fire. The Brāhmana is the fire, and food given to him on such occasions is *brahmahutam*. A fire oblation should not be thrown on a fire which has burnt itself out, i.e. on ashes. A learned and virtuous Brāhmana is like well-tended sacrificial fire, it is only to him and those like him that offerings to the manes and gods must be given. The long list of persons who are excluded from *śrāddhas* (III, 150-168) includes Brāhmanas, who are physically defective, moral derelicts, followers of unworthy occupations, and violators of Dharma (e.g., he who instructs a Śūdra in the Veda or teaches for a stipulated fee).<sup>1</sup> The head and the mouth are the organs of direction and control, and he who sprang from the mouth of Brahman is indicated for the spiritual guidance and education of mankind. The arms stand for grasp and strength, and the duty of protection of society devolves on the Kṣatriya, who appropriately sprang from the Deity's arms. In the human frame the parts below the navel are held to be inferior to those above it. The Vaiśya and the Śūdra, who were both of the thighs and feet, the limbs which bear the weight of the entire frame, stand for the economic props of society. For social stability are required the mind that directs, the trained forces that maintain order and protect against external foes, and economic bases of wealth and welfare.

The number of *varṇas* is limited by Manu to those primarily created. They are four; there is no fifth<sup>2</sup> (X, 4). While the restriction applies to the *varṇas*, it does not apply to groups united by consanguinity, birth and heredity, or *jāti*. It stands for the physical type. A low-caste woman is referred to in the *Nirukta* (XII, 13)<sup>3</sup>

1. 'श्रद्धायापको यश्च श्रद्धाभाषितस्तथा ।  
श्रद्धाशियो शुक्लैव बामद्वी कुम्भगोलकौ ॥ (३.१५३)

2. चतुर्थे षड्भारिस्तु शूद्रो नास्ति तु पन्नमः (१०४)

3. 'अग्निं विस्वा न रामदुभेयात्'; रामा रमणादीपयते न धर्मव 'कृष्णजातीया' धर्मसात्ता-  
मान्यात् (निरुक्त-१२-१३); 'रामा' इति शूद्रा उच्यते । सा हि रमणा एव उच्यते न धर्मव ।  
रमणापदेन सा । 'कृष्णजातीया' इत्येकात्री इन्द्री । (दुर्गाचार्यभाष्य, पृ. ११५४, ed. Bhadamkar)

as *kr̥ṣṇa-jāṭīyā*, of a dark group, and it is repeated as *kr̥ṣṇavarṇā* i.e. of dark complexion in *Vasiṣṭha*<sup>1</sup> (XVIII, 17-18). The word *jāṭī-hīna* in *Manu*, (IV, 141)<sup>2</sup> means one wanting in good birth. In *Manu*, (X, 97),<sup>3</sup> *jāṭī* may be held to refer to *varṇa*, from the context in which it occurs. This is not wrong as every *varṇa* is also a *jāṭī*, though a *jāṭī* may be part of a regular *varṇa* or be sprung from a mixture of *varṇas*. To such mongrel groups, the word *jāṭī* is applied in *Manu*, (X, 11, 18, and 40).<sup>4</sup> The obligatory duties are specified for only those of the primary *varṇas*. The occupations mentioned as of some "mixed castes" (*samkara-jāṭayah*) by *Manu* (X, 33-39, 47-49) appear to specify what was actually practised and not what is enjoined as *dharma* for groups, which have sprung from a violation of *dharma*. Nevertheless, as such pursuits also tend to become by custom the duties of such groups, they might seem to resemble the *dharma* of the regular *varṇas*. As the distinction between obligatory duty and duty that becomes so by custom in a mongrel group fade, the lines of demarcation between *varṇa* and *jāṭī* tend to become obscured, and the former be loosely applied in place of the latter (e.g. *Manu*, X, 27, 31).<sup>5</sup> There would be no objection to describing a *varṇa* as a *jāṭī* (e.g., *Manu*, III, 15, VIII, 177, X, 86, 335 and X, 41).<sup>6</sup> The term *ukṛṣṭa-jāṭī* (the best caste) and *hīna-jāṭī* (low caste) are used by *Manu* in referring to the *Brāhmaṇa* and *Sūdra*, but, if used of *caṇḍāla* or similar groups it will be *ukṛṣṭa-jāṭī* (despised caste).

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1. नाति चित्वा रामाद्युपेयात् । कुण्वर्णा वा रामा रमणादेव न भर्माय  
(पासिष्ठ प. १८, १७-१८)
  2. 'जातिदोषांश्च नाधिपेत्' (५, १४१) इति स्नातकधर्मैः; 'जात्या हीनाः'  
निरुद्धत्वात् इति तेषातिथिः ।
  3. परस्मैमेव जीवन् हि सप्तः परति जातितः (१०, ९७)  
Loss of Caste can only refer to the main *Varṇas*.
  4. 'यतो भवति जातितः' (१०, ११) जात्या भवति प्रकृतः (१०, १८) संकरे  
जातयस्तेसाः' (१०, ४०)
  5. एते षट्, छद्मद्वारं वर्णाङ्गनानि स्वपोषिषु ।  
मादृशालां प्रयच्छन्ते प्रपराद्वा च योनिषु ॥ (१०, २७)  
'हीना हीनाम् प्रयच्छन्ते वर्णां पद्मद्वयैश्च द्व' (१०, १७)
  6. हीनजातिसिद्धं योऽद्युद्धदन्तो दिवादायः । (१, १५)  
अनङ्कन्यातिषु (८, १७७) महुँद्वसीरसुश्चां भर्मेकार्यं च नैलकम् ।  
स्वा चैव कुर्महि सर्वेषां नास्वजातिः कुर्मन्म ॥ (९, ८६)  
'सजातिजानन्तयाः षट् छ्वा दिव्यभूमिणः ।  
ब्रह्मणां च सप्तमोऽयः सर्वे' (१०, ४७)

A distinction must be made, however, between duties arising from original *varṇa* and those arising from analogy, or imposed by inference. A person rightfully belongs to a *varṇa* only when he is born of a proper union between parents of the same *varṇa*. The union, outside lawful wedlock, of a man and a woman of the same *varṇa*, as for example the *kunḍa* and *golaba* (III, 174),<sup>1</sup> born in adultery of the wives of men who are alive or dead, is regarded as (sterile) *i.e.* in producing for their begetter the spiritual advantages of a legitimate son (III, 175).<sup>2</sup> The son of an unmarried girl (*kāśīna*) and a son received with the bride *i.e.* already born to her (*sahodhā*) are also the children of passion, not of wedlock. The prime difficulty in these cases is that the real paternity will not be known. In the case of intercaste unions, those which are hypergamous, *i.e.* the union of a man of a higher *varṇa* with a woman of a lower *varṇa*, is termed *anuloma*. Thus, for every woman there is a husband of her own *varṇa*, and possible husbands in higher *varṇas*. But, the discharge of the natal debt to ancestors, the saving of the ancestors from dwelling in the hell (*put*), can be effected only by the son born of an equal (*savayā*) marriage. A *savayā* can alone take part with her husband in religious rites (III, 12 and 18). The rule of hypergamy requires that the brides from the lower *varṇa* shall be taken in the order of the castes; that is there should be no skipping of an intermediate caste. Manu (III, 14-19) expresses strong disapproval of a Brāhmaṇa utilizing this permission and taking a Sūdra bride.<sup>3</sup> He holds that the husband will sink to the level of his wife. Hypergamous marriages, though permitted, were thus not encouraged, particularly where the gap between husband's *varṇa* and that of the wife was wide.<sup>4</sup> The reason is obvious. By close association with one who is unacquainted with Brahmanical rites and *dharma*, the Brāhmaṇa will begin to neglect his appointed duties. It will not have the effect that is behind the rule associating in daily personal service the Sūdra *male* with the Brāhmaṇa. Such association will make the Sūdra familiar with the ideals of his master; he will try to live up to practice the

1. परदारिद्र्यं ज्ञानेनैवो द्युतौ कुण्डमोल्बले ।  
दसौ नीचति कुण्डः स्वामृतं सर्वैरि मोलकः ॥ (३, १७४)
2. तौ तु जसौ पच्छेने प्रामिनो प्रेस चैव च ।  
दसानि ह्यकन्यानि नाशयेते प्रदामिनाम् ॥ (३, १७५)
3. श्रद्धां श्रममारोप्य ब्राह्मणो ब्राह्मणो गतिम् ।  
जननिना द्रुतं तस्यां ब्राह्मणो देव होते ॥ (३, १८)
4. They have been common in Kerala.

prescribed rites (without Vedic *mantras*), "keep himself free from envy, imitate the behaviour of the virtuous (master), and gain exaltation in this world and the next"<sup>1</sup> (X. 127-128). By serving the virtuous among the Brāhmana *varṇa*, the Śūdra becomes gentle in speech, and free from pride, and attains a higher *varṇa* in the next birth (IX, 335).<sup>2</sup> The union with a Śūdra female is based on mere sensual inclination, and in the intimacy of sex relationship, it will pull down the man without lifting up the woman. The attitude of the parties in entering on a union is important. An *anuloma* union, outside wedlock, because it defies moral convention, cannot be expected to produce the same psychological reaction on the minds of the parties, and results on the lives of the pair entering into it and of their offspring, as one in which the parties enter upon their lifelong companionship with a full conviction of moral and ritual responsibility. In concubinage, as in an unequal union, the impulse is infatuation (*moha*).<sup>3</sup> Śūdra concubinage is regarded as morally more deleterious for a Brāhmana than even marriage with a Śūdra woman.<sup>4</sup>

The union of a woman of a higher *varṇa* with a man of a lower *varṇa* is opposed to rules of decency, and is regarded as unnatural (*pratiloma*). All *pratiloma* unions are outside wedlock. The offspring of such unions are persons who have sprung from parents who, in their passion, have defied *dharma*. The greater the disparity in *varṇa* between the partners to so unsanctified a union, the greater the defiance of convention. But the flesh is more powerful than inhibitions laid down by law or custom. To those whose sensual impulses get the upper hand, the post-mortuary risks of the step will hold little appeal. That such unions took place in sufficiently large numbers is seen from literature older than *Manusmṛiti*. Otherwise, there will be no reason for Manu's dealing with them systematically and defining the position of the parties and their offspring. Manu allows the six possible *anuloma* offspring the rights of the twice born, i.e. *sainśkṛas* like *upanayana* (X, 41) but the offspring of *pratiloma* unions (which

1. धर्मैकसस्तु धर्मशाः ससां वृत्तननुष्ठिताः ।  
मन्वसर्वे न दुष्यन्ति प्रसोसां प्राप्नुवन्ति च ॥  
यथा यथा हि सत्कृतसाधिससन्सखः ।  
तथा तथैवं चाहुं च लोकं प्राप्नोति निश्चितः ॥ (१०, १२०-१२८)
2. धृतिरसकृष्टधृष्टश्रुतुर्गुरुनामनरंक्षतः ।  
प्राज्ञनाथाशयो निलसुखं वातिमश्नुते ॥ (९, १३५)
3. 'मोहाद्ब्रह्मन्तो' (२, १५)
4. See *Kṛtyakalpataru, Gṛhasthakāṇḍa*, p. 43.

have the double stigma of violating convention as well as morality) are to be treated only as equals of Śūdras even when both parents are *dvijas*. The *caṇḍāla*, born to a Brāhmana woman by a Śūdra, is stigmatized by Manu (X, 12) as "the lowest of men" (*adhama nṛṇām*). He is beyond the scope of every enjoined duty (*Sarva-dharmabahiṣṛtaḥ*) according to Yājñavalkya (I, 93).<sup>1</sup> The animus against him is ancient. It is due to the feeling of horror generated by the union, which outraged convention and defied the established social order, under the urge of an irresistible and ignoble sex impulse. The *caṇḍāla* is classed with the despised aboriginal dog-eater (*śvapāc*) and both are compelled to dwell outside the Aryan village, as even their touch is held to carry pollution with it. Usually, the *caṇḍāla* is said to constitute a "fifth" caste, but it is noteworthy that Pāṇini and Patañjali (as pointed out by MM.P.V. Kane) class them with Śūdras. Their further fall must be deemed cumulative, and is the beginning of the idea of carrying pollution by touch springing solely from origin. By analogy, the worst offenders are put under the category of *caṇḍāla*, and a late *smṛiti* puts in this division the offspring of a *śagoitra* union.<sup>2</sup> It marks the limit of social reprobation of the defiance of the time-honored rule that those who wed each other should not be of the same *gotra*. The Āndhra and Meda<sup>4</sup> are also to dwell outside the village. The term *antyaaja* is used by Manu in the sense of *caṇḍāla* (IV, 61) and also in the sense of the *last* caste (*i.e.* Śūdra) (VIII, 279).<sup>5</sup>

These are the castes of miscegenation. There are also castes which spring from the mixture of *anuloma* and *prathoma* unions, among themselves and with one another. Manu (X, 6-56) gives a long catalogue of them.<sup>6</sup> The list is obviously illustrative and not meant to be exhaustive. It shows the degree to which, in spite of the religious appeal to maintain the *dharma* of the *varṇas*, they were

1. ब्राह्मणां, चूडाजातस्तु चण्डालः सर्वपतंवाहिष्कृतः ॥ (१,९३)

2. *History of Dharmaśāstra* II., p. 168.

3. समाजगोपयत्कन्यासुखोपगम्य च ।

सत्यासुत्पाच चण्डालं प्राण्णपादेन हीयते ॥

(Sloka-Āpastamba cited in *Śaṅkhāra Prakāśa*, p. 680).

4. वैदेहिकादन्धमेदो बहिष्कृतमसिक्थी ॥ (१०, ३६)

5. नोपसृष्टेऽस्त्यैर्भूमिः (४, ६७) 'वाण्डालादिभिश्चास्त्यैः' इति कुण्डकेन व्याख्यानः ।  
'येन केनचिद्वेत्त हिंसाविच्छेदममलनः' (८, ३७९) अमलनः; चूड इति कुण्डकः ।

6. See M.C. Pandey's *Intelligent Man's Guide to Indian Philosophy* (1935), pp. 421-426.

violated. A society in which sanctions to be applied against its convictions rest only on other-worldly reasons that are not demonstrable in this life, and on public opinion, cannot liquidate large numbers of the social heretics, or outcasts. Manu lays (X, 58) great stress on the psychological effects of the outrage of *dharma* involved in the origin of these mixed castes.<sup>1</sup> He holds that the offspring of such unions may be detected by their un-Aryan conduct, their habitual neglect of duties enjoined on every one, and by their harshness and cruelty. The last qualities are likely to develop in persons, who feel that every one is against them. They develop the fear and animosity of the hunted animal.

The purpose of the Supreme Being will be ill-served if no attempt is made by society to redeem even the worst of those who defy its rules. Accordingly, we find in Dharmaśāstra devices for the moral reclamation of the ethically submerged elements. In the case of most, the purpose is served by indicating the rules of conduct that these have to follow, and the discipline to which they must submit, if they are to be rehabilitated eventually. Segregation, in extreme cases, acts as both a deterrent and a discipline. For the ordinary run of mixed castes an indication of the particular *varṇa*, whose duties they should follow, is enough. In the majority of instances they are lumped for duties with Śūdras. It implies that rehabilitation is possible for them (as for the natural born Śūdra) by pursuing the ideals of uncomplaining, unenvious service and close association with the *élite* in society. For every one the fundamental ethical code is the same ; *ahimsā, satya, astheyam, saucam, indriya-nigrahaḥ* (X, 63). They constitute the *five* commandments of Hindu ethics. Thou shalt not kill nor cause pain to any living being. Thou shalt not utter a lie by word or in effect. Thou shalt not steal, nor covet another's goods. Thou shalt keep thy body and mind clean. Thou shalt keep under control bodily impulses and inclinations.

The *varṇa* system is associated with two correlated ideas. Firstly, persons born in good *varṇas* can maintain their position in them only by faithfully performing the duties enjoined on its members, in normal or abnormal times. The penalty for failure to do so is loss of the status. The second is that failure to perform the *sauṅskāra* of investiture and initiation, in the case of *dvija varṇas*, within the time-

1. अमर्त्या निष्ठुरता क्लृप्ता भिक्षिवात्मता ।  
पुत्रं श्वशुरानाह कोके कलुषयोगिनिभम् ॥ (१०,५८)

limits enjoined for the performance, become *vrātyas*.<sup>1</sup> The latter can be rehabilitated by the performance of a ceremony of expiation<sup>2</sup> (*vrātya-stoma*), while there are ways of the former recovering their lost status.

*Manusmṛiti* (XI, 192) lays down that he who had omitted to get initiated into *Sāvitrī* within the proper time may have his *upanayana* done after he has performed the penance of three *kr̥cchras*.<sup>3</sup> This is a mild expiation. *Vasiṣṭha* (XI, 76—79) prescribes three alternative methods of the rehabilitation of the *vrātya*. He may do the *vrātyastoma*, or have a lustral bath alone with one who has performed an horse sacrifice (*Āśvamedha*) or go through the *Uddālaka-vrata*—a penance of graduated starvation lasting a little over four months.<sup>4</sup> The classical historical instance of the performance of the purification is that of *Sivāji* in 1674.<sup>5</sup> *Viśvarūpa* (*Yājñavalkya*, III, 262) reconciles the contradictions by pointing out that for short intermissions of *upanayana* the penance prescribed by *Manu* was adequate, but for one extending to forty-eight years, the *Vrātyastoma* is the only method of rehabilitation.

*Vrātyas* may spring among all *dvija-varṇas*. *Manu* (II, 39) describes the *Vrātyas* as “despised by the Aryans,” and marriage intercourse with *Vrātyas* “who have not been purified according to rule” is prohibited (II, 40). Living as a *Vrātya* is an *upapātaka*. (XI, 63). Sacrificing for a *Vrātya* is atoned by the performance of three *kr̥cchras* (XI, 198). One who misbehaves with a female of the house of a *vrātya* or a *caṇḍālī* has to pay twice the normal fine for adultery. (VIII, 372).

The entire family and the descendants of a *vrātya*, who has not been reclaimed, are under his ban. *Manu* accounts for the origin of eighteen groups of people by tracing them to *vrātya* ancestors, springing from the first three *varṇas*. (X, 21-23). Thus, the

1. अत ऊर्ध्वं षडोष्येते षषाहात्म्यसंज्ञकाः ।

सावित्रीपतिता माला मन्वस्यार्षेयिगर्हिः ॥ (२, ३९)

2. सावित्रीपतिता माला मालस्तोमादृते कृतीः । (बाष्प, १, २८)

3. येषां द्विजानां सावित्री नामूष्येत षषाभिधि ।

तंभारदित्वा नोन् ऋच्छान् षषाभिधुपनापदेत् ॥ (११, १९२)

4. इतिहासविज्ञान उदात्तकर्मतं चरेत् । द्वौ मासौ वायकेन वसेत्, मास पयसा अर्धमा-  
समादिश्या, अष्टमं घृतेन, षड्मासवाचितेन घृतेन, तिरासचम्बुः अष्टोदाससुषुषुचरेत् । अश्वेवाश्वसुषु-  
मच्छेत् । मालस्तोमेन वा चरेत् । (मा-म-११ ७६-७९)

5. Kane, *H.D.S.*, II, pp. 379-380.



Jhallas, Mallas, Licchavis, the Natas, the Karapas, the Khāsas and the Draviḍas are held to be degraded Kṣatriyas by ancestry.<sup>1</sup> A more important statement is that by failing to consult Brāhmaṇas, by omitting to perform enjoined Vedic rites and *śaṁskāras* certain Kṣatriya tribes have gradually sunk to the position of Śūdras. Among these are the Paundrakas, the Ghodas, the Draviḍas, the Kāmbhojas, the Yavanas, the Śākas, the Pahlavas, the Cinas, the Kirātas and the Daradas<sup>2</sup>. (X, 43-44). These being supposed to have been originally of Kṣatriya *varṇa* are *within* the *caturvarṇya* scheme and are not to be deemed *Dasyus*. They are only Śūdras.<sup>3</sup> (X, 43). This is an extension of the field of Dharma to cover peoples, who are obviously foreigners, and is an indication first of the universality claimed for the *Varṇāśrama* organization, and secondly, for the application of the rules of Dharma to them.

Manu's attitude of disapproval of *inter-varṇa anuloma* unions is emphatic. It may be traced to an unwillingness to allow of indiscriminate minglings of persons brought up in different ways of life and different family traditions, and of different psychical types. The Brāhmaṇa, as described by Manu, is an intellectual and spiritual person, the Kṣatriya an active man of the world, and the Vaiśya one who feels the urge to acquire wealth and the means of pleasure. In such types, marriages of an endogamous kind are those likely to be most satisfactory both for their continuance and for the type of children that they will produce. Where both parents are alike in upbringing, ideals and temperament, the children will be like the parents. In *inter-varṇa* marriages the impelling motive is sex-attraction, and the union is not motivated spiritually. Psychological types cannot be changed suddenly. They are, under the postulates of Hinduism, the consequences of past *karma*. Close association in daily work and sharing of ideals might work a better change in the

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1. सत्तो मरुध रानन्यार माहाक्षिप्रिये च ।  
नदस्य करणधिव सरो द्वन्द्व पथ च ॥ (१०-२२)
  2. श्वनकैरु किमालोपादिनाः क्षत्रियवातसः ।  
बृषलत्वं गता लोके ब्राह्मणारक्षणेन च ॥  
पौण्ड्रकाक्षीरुद्रविशः कामोपाः यवनाः शकाः ।  
पाददा पक्ष्वाक्षीनाः किराता दरदाः खशाः ॥ (१,०४३-४४)
  3. बृषलत्वं (श्वरत्वं) गता लोके (१०,४३);  
सुवनाह्वरुषवर्णा वा लोके जात्यो वरिः ।  
मेघच्छमाचक्षार्यवाचः सर्वे ते दरव्यपः स्युताः ॥ (७०,४५)

lower type that would approximate it to the higher, than a mixture of blood. It is this which is sought to be brought about by, describing personal service to the *elite* as the occupation of the lowest stratum culturally. The inclusion of backward people or foreign tribes within the Śūdra group has a two-fold-significance: (1) it gives them the same opportunity of assimilation with the higher type as a real Śūdra, by the imposition of the same occupations and discipline; (2) by hypothesizing a higher original *varṇa* (Kṣatriya) for influential foreign tribes or people, it holds out to them both the lesson of the degradation that follows the neglect of enjoined moral and spiritual duties and the possibility of regaining lost ground by their own efforts to discharge such duties.

*Varṇasamkara.*

*Samkara*, mixture in sex union, reconciles the doctrine of the existence of only four *varṇas* (and not even of fifth) with the presence of innumerable smaller groups, whose number showed a constant tendency to increase. Such blood fusion may take place in hypergamous or the inverse relations, *anuloma* and *pratiloma*. The effect of the birth of a mongrel group is that it tends to produce more mongrels by its own sex affiliations. The endless number of such permutations and combinations generates the feeling of confusion, which is associated in the Indian mind with the concept of *samkara*. In off-spring resulting from such haphazard unions, it is futile to look for clear-cut psychic types. Both types are held as undesirable, the *pratiloma* the more so, because of the element of the revolt against custom and morality instinct in it. Parents, who have themselves defied convention and morality by a *pratiloma* concubinage, are not likely to act as a break on further laxity in selection by their own offspring. In *anuloma* unions alone as many as eight variations are possible. In *pratiloma* the number is infinite. Chaos is the result. Manu adds to the mixed castes that spring from *samkara* those that arise from union that are prohibited (*sagoitra*, *samānapravara* and *sapinda*), and long continued desuetude of *svadharmā* by the members of a *varṇa* (X,24).<sup>1</sup> Social discipline is difficult enough to maintain with the definition of the duties and occupations of four clear-cut castes, each with its distinctive duties and ways of finding a livelihood. It will be impossible if *samkara* proceeds unchecked. This will account for the horror of *samkara*, which leads to its condemnation in works like

1. अग्निबरोण बर्णानामवेचयित्तेन च ।  
खड्गमेयां च ह्यपित्त जायते वर्णतन्त्रतः ॥ (१०,२५)

*Bhagavadgītā* (I, 41-43), and its being described as the road to Hell (*sankaro narakāyāna*).<sup>1</sup> The danger to society from unrestricted sex unions accounts for its being made a high regal duty to restrain people from succumbing to the urge to practise *sankara*. This is why Vāsisthiputra Śrī Puluhāyi, the first century Āndhra king, takes pride in describing himself as one who prevented the indiscriminate intermingling of the four *varṇas* (*vinivartita-caturvarṇa-sankarasya*).<sup>2</sup>

The application of logic to *sankara* (*anuloma*) results in certain conclusions about the status of offspring. In a hypergamous marriage the child stands midway in status between the parents. If the child is a girl and she marries only in the same caste as her mother did, and her daughter does so, and so on from generation to generation, the amount of higher blood in the veins of the sixth generation will almost be equal to that of the pure blooded higher caste ancestor. Thus, according to Manu (X, 64) the offspring in the seventh generation is of the same *varṇa* as the original male ancestor.<sup>3</sup> If the process is reversed systematically, the sixth generation will result in an offspring as completely equal to the lower *varṇa* of the original ancestress as possible. With trifling changes in the length of the period in which this caste promotion and demotion take place the principle is accepted by all *smṛtis*.<sup>4</sup> The technical terms for the rise and fall in caste status are *jāyīvikarṇa* and *jātyapakarṇa*.

Occupation can also exercise an influence on the nature of a person that is comparable to that of blood. If one of a higher *varṇa* (e.g. a Brāhmaṇa) gives up his traditional occupation and takes to that of a lower *varṇa* (e.g. a Kṣatriya), a fall in his nature may be postulated. As a Brāhmaṇa is forbidden to bear arms<sup>5</sup> and to become

1. अथमोपिभवात्कृणु प्रदुष्यति कुलशिवः ।

स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय वाचते नर्गसंकरः ॥

\* सकरो नस्त्रोदय कुलमार्गं कुलस्य च ।

पतति पितरो द्वेषां ह्यसपिबोदकक्रियाः ॥ (गीता, १,४१-४२)

2. *Epigraphia Indica*, VIII, pp. 60—61.

3. शूद्राणां ब्राह्मणाख्यातः श्रेयसा येत्यजायते ।

अभेदाभ्येवर्षां जातिं शक्यन्त्यासतापुमात् ॥ १०-२४

4. बोधावयवमैवत्, १, १९, १३-२४ निषदिन निषादां भाषन्माख्यातो अथहति

शूद्रताम् । तदुपनिषत् पठं यावयेत्समोऽभिकृतो भवति ।

‘अभिकृतः’ नैवमेव नमो प्रतिपन्न श्रवणैः—गोविन्दस्वामी ।

5. परीक्षाभिमति ब्राह्मण आशुषं नाददीत । आपस्तम्ब न-ध. १, १०, ११७

a king,<sup>1</sup> one who does so, need not await the slow process of occupational influence, but may immediately accept a lower status suited to his altered function and outlook. The transformation of the Kadamba dynasty, which started with a Brāhmaṇa, to a Kṣatriya is a classical instance of the operation of the principle in demotion.<sup>2</sup> The claim of foreign dynasties to Kṣatriya rank, that was conceded after some time, was obviously based on the working of an analogous principle applied not to profession but to *varṇa-dharma*. The assimilation of a foreign dynasty, which might be supposed to have lost its Kṣatriya rank by lapse of time, by resuming Kṣatriya duties and living up to its ideals of Dharma, to the body of Hindus becomes possible under this principle.

*Occupation open to Brāhmaṇas : Normal Times.*

One's Dharma determines the occupations, or means of living (*jīvanopāya*) that are open to him; for, in the scheme of planned life it is not open to any one to take up any occupation or profession of his own will. Competition in any occupation or walk of life is limited to those to whom it is open, not to others. There is thus both competition and restriction of it in the Indian scheme of life. A person's *varṇa* entails certain duties; his occupations must harmonize with them. Of the six ways of life open to a Brāhmaṇa, three only are, in any sense, ways of making a living: these are officiating in sacrifices performed by others (*yājñanam*), teaching (*adhyāpanam*) and acceptance of gifts (*pratigraham*) (Manu, X, 75-76). The last source of living is qualified by Manu by the adjective "pure" (*viśuddha*), and it is interpreted as that which entails the performance of no expiatory rite<sup>3</sup>. Of this more later on. To the three sources or means of life for the Brāhmaṇa, Āpastamba (II, 10, 4) adds four: receipts from one's children (*dāyādānam*), i.e. a share of what the sons (who are also Brāhmaṇas) have earned, gleaning of ears of corn that have fallen on the threshing floor (*śiloñcha*) and what is "free wealth" (like wild paddy, *nivāra*, in the forest) in the sense of being the property of no one. It is not the same as *res nullius*, which is only unclaimed property. It will be noticed that these are not means of securing a comfortable life. A teacher cannot accept fees or stipulate for them. The

1. Bāna stigmatizes Puṣyamitra, the Brāhmaṇa founder of the Śuṅga dynasty as अनादि (Cowell and Thomas, Eng. Trn. of *Harṣacarita*, p. 194.

2. *Epigraphia Carnatica*, VII, Int., p. 9.

3. विष्णुकोटिपत्रकम् ( देवगिरि: १०, ७६ )

teaching of the Veda must be absolutely free. A free will gift from a pupil, whose education has been completed, and which will depend on the pupil's own very limited means is what is indicated. The priest who officiates at a sacrifice is not permitted to stipulate for fees. Specific fees are ordained for each person who officiates in a sacrifice, according to his duties in it, and they will be given collectively to all the priests. The ways in which they should share them are indicated under the head of corporate activity (VII, 206-210). No sacrificer should offer less than the prescribed fee or *dakṣiṇā*, whether it be in money or in kind, nor less than what he can afford to give, judged by his own wealth. (XI, 39-40).<sup>1</sup> Even a gift (*dāna*) must be accompanied by a *dakṣiṇā*. Normally therefore these windfalls must be deemed a precarious and undependable source of income for the Brāhmana household (*gṛhastha*) for he alone can discharge these duties, the other three stages of life (*āśrama*) being in effect mendicant stages.

It is popularly supposed that Brāhmanas made fortunes by exacting fees from sacrificers and gifts from the pious.<sup>2</sup> It is not a true view of the actual conditions. Sacrifices were costly, often required the co-operation of many priests and involved for their performance and preparations considerable time. They were of corresponding rarity. Those who speak or write glibly of the "thousands of bloody sacrifices" that Buddhism abolished, know not what they speak of. In animal sacrifices the victim was usually a single animal and in many sacrifices no victim was needed. There are twenty-one periodical sacrifices (*yajñas*), divided into three sets of seven. One set, the *havir-yajñas*, have no animal victims. Another seven, known as the minor (*pākayajñas*) also do not need an animal victim. The remaining seven are *Soma* sacrifices (*somasamsthāh*). They are relatively more expensive to perform, and involve also more time and trouble. Unless one does a sacrifice with devotion (*śradhdhā*) it is best not to be attempted at all. The sacrifices are intended to obtain heaven. But, the end does not justify dubious means. This is why Manu (XI, 10) is emphatic in denying any good either in this world or in a higher world to the man who expends on the performance of a *soma* sacrifice the means needed for the maintenance and support of those dependent on him.<sup>3</sup> Sufficient resources to

1. न सवसद्विगेरैर्भवेत् कर्षेन्न । (११, ३९)

See my *Rājadharma* (1941) pp. 144, 190.

2. The belief is strengthened by exaggerated stories of royal gifts to Brāhmanas in works of poetry and story books.

3. मृतानामुत्तरोपेन वाक्करोषींश्चेद्विद्वम् ।

मनुस्मृत्युद्धोदके जीवन्मम भूतस्त च ॥ ११, १०.

ensure a life free from anxiety on the score of means for a minimum period of three years must be kept in reserve, before a householder is allowed to undertake a *soma* sacrifice (Yājñavalkya, I, 124, Manu, XI, 7-8).<sup>1</sup> Not only does a sacrificer lose the benefits of a sacrifice which he undertakes, with resources so inadequate that he is compelled to give lower *dakṣiṇas* than those prescribed, but they "destroy his acquired spiritual merit (*puṇyāni*), his fame, his hope of attaining heaven, his longevity, his progeny, his cattle and his reputation" (XI, 40). It is not even every king who is opulent enough to attempt some of the sacrifices. If the *yāga* has to be abandoned in the middle by the king for want of means to finish it, grave calamities befall both the king and kingdom<sup>2</sup> (*Saṅkha-Likhita*, in *Grhasthakāṇḍa*, p 135) The practical difficulties of performing the twenty-one sacrifices are clearly visualized by *smṛitis*, and would have been apparent to those who believed in their efficacy. Even the simplest *yajña* needs two (*ghryāgni upāsanaṃ*) persons to do it, and various articles like milk, clarified butter, grain and fuel. Common *yajñas* need four priests, and in some as many as sixteen are required. The sacrificer and his wife have to provide themselves with new clothes, sometimes of silk, besides other things. The fees must be kept ready, for "a lost *dakṣiṇā* means a lost sacrifice".<sup>3</sup> The officiating priests must be not only learned and expert in their work but of the highest character. Such men cannot be had for the seeking. If the sacrificer hopes to obtain the needed financial help for the sacrifice from others, he has to reject wealth of a *rājasic* or *tāmasic* complexion. He cannot accept help from a *non-dvija*.<sup>4</sup> Even a king's help is to be rejected unless he is a righteous ruler *dhārmike satī rājani*, (Manu, XI, 15) As duty is limited by capacity, in *Dharmasāstra*, the inclusion of the *yajñas* under *saṃskāras* by Gautama does not make them obligatory for all

1. यस्य विवाहिक भक्त पचोसं श्रुत्वदृत्तये ।  
अधिकं वापि विधेत् स सोमं पातुमर्हति ॥  
असस्वस्वीयासि द्रव्ये यः सोमं पिबति दिव्यः ।  
सर्वोत्तमपूयोऽपि न तस्मात्प्रोति सकलम् ॥ मनु ( ११,७-८ )  
त्रैवाधिकारिकाशो यः स हि सोमं पिबेत् दिव्यः ।  
प्राप्तोऽभिधीः क्लिप्ताः कुर्वाणस्यार्थं वार्षिक भवेत् ॥ (वाङ् १,१२४)

2. नावसंभारो यजेत नास्तोति सवसररक्षात्तन्निष्ठ हि राष्ट्रं निपसलनिष्ठ यच्चत्वनं वचमानं  
छाद्यति (राजधर्मेषु साङ्गिकस्वितो दति कृत्वकल्पवरी ग्रहस्थकाण्डे प. १३५)

3. दक्षिणाहृत एव हनः (द्वारीतः ) (Cited in *Grhasthakāṇḍa*, p. 152.)

4. मनु ११,२४-न यथार्थं पचं दूदाहिजो विधेत् परमं क्वि ।

Brāhmaṇas. They are compulsory only for those of affluence.<sup>1</sup> Collections from others should not diminish *their* resources for pious acts (XI, 12-14). In some cases what is needed for a sacrifice may be taken unasked from its owner. The implication is that property confers on its owner no exclusive right, which will bar its being made to contribute to the social obligations and religious duties of others. This is justified on the ground that the *yajñas* benefit not only their doers but the whole society.<sup>2</sup> (*Bhagavadgītā*, 3, 14).

So much for the supposed Brāhmaṇa gold-mine of wealth from sacrifices! If we turn to the other source, whose value to the Brāhmaṇa has also been exaggerated, *vis* gifts (*dāna*), it will be found that it is not less illusory as a staple source of income. Every gift is held, in Indian belief, to convey with itself some *a-puṇya* (demerit). He who takes a gift must be able by his own accumulated merit or spiritual potentiality to overcome the demerit. It is dangerous to accept gifts, even if one is dying of starvation, without realizing this, and the rules that regulate acceptance of gifts. (IV, 187).<sup>3</sup> A man of little learning or austerity who accepts a gift is a fool for his pains; for he sinks to Hell (IV, 191). He who makes gifts to the undeserving also is led to perdition by his negligence<sup>4</sup> (Yājñavalkya, I, 202). The acceptance of gifts is apt to create a taste for them. It will produce the social parasite, who likes to live upon the pious liberality of others. The smṛtis condemn this acquired low taste, which they describe as *prats-graha-ruçī*, which is like the taste for forbidden fare. The love of wealth is not by itself ignoble, if it is to be put to pious uses (*dharmārtham vītshā*), but the conquest of a desire for it is better (*garīyasī*). It is better not to soil oneself with mud than to do so and then wash it, says the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, normally, the position of the typical Brāhmaṇa householder, who is a man of virtue and learning, is that of a comparatively poor

1. See my Introduction to Gṛhasthākāṇḍa, p. 61.  
\* यजनार्थं हि शिक्षित्वा चाप्यहः प्रलज्जयते । (cited in *supra*) p. 160 of Gṛhasthākāṇḍa.

2. अथाद्भवति भूदानि पञ्चमादयस्त्वेवः ।  
यथाद्भवते पर्ययो यशः कर्मसमुद्भवः । (गीता ३, १४)

3. See footnote 2 of p. 101 *supra*.

4. विद्यातपोभ्यां ह्यनेन न तु ब्राह्मः प्रतिग्रहः ।  
गृह्णन् हि दातारमथो नयस्वामानमेव च ॥ (याष, १, २०२)

5. धर्मोर्ध्वं यत्नं विचेष्टा तत्त्वानीहा गरीयसी ।  
प्रक्षालनादिं चक्षुस्व दूरादस्पर्शं वरम् ॥  
(cited in *गृह्यसूत्रम्*, p. २५०)

man. The Brāhmaṇa who leads a family life is one of two classes : *sālina* and *yāyāvara* (*Baudhāyana D.S.*, III, 1, 1), and between the two the second is held to be morally superior to the first. The *sālina* is one who enjoyed moderate comfort, though not opulence. He owns a house, has a servant, and resides permanently in a village. The *yāyāvara* lives as best as he can, picking grains of rice from the threshing floor, has neither house nor fixed place of abode, does not reside in the same village for more than ten days, and rejects gifts, fees from teaching and *dakṣiṇas* in sacrifice. He is almost an ascetic but for his married state, and his greatness consists in his abstemiousness and independence of others. Manu has a different classification.<sup>1</sup> A *strict grhastha* of the first *varna* may, from the amount of the provision he makes in food grain for maintaining himself and his family (including his pupils and servants), be one with a brick-built grain-store that can hold enough grain for three years' consumption, (*kusūla-dhānyaka*) by a large family with servants and retainers, or one who has an earthen grain-store capable of holding enough grain for one year's consumption, or has enough for three days only, or one who makes no provision at all for the morrow. The last two will be equal to the *yāyāvara*. Though there is no prohibition of accumulating more than a sufficiency for three years' needs, the implication is clear that excessive wealth is undesirable for the Brāhmaṇa who values his spirituality. In the case of Brāhmaṇas whose reputation gets them large endowments or gift of lands, it is expected that they should give away almost all that they get, not accumulating much wealth. Opulence is deprecated in the first and last *varṇas*.<sup>2</sup> In the first place it will generate pride and unspirituality and in the last a spirit of defiance of social rules. In both contentment points the road to salvation.

*Occupation of the Kṣatriya and Vaiśya.*

Both the second and third *varṇas* are warned off three functions of the first; *adhyaṭpanam*, *yājñanam* and *prati-graha*. Their members are meant for civil and economic occupation. The Kṣatriya's duties are to bear arms, using them to protect others, and he is a king to rule the country righteously. The settlement of disputes between man and man (*vyavahāra*) and maintaining every one within his *Dharma* (*anusāsanam*) are duties of the crowned Kṣatriya, and they pass on

1. ब्रह्मधामको वा स्वार् कुमीधाम्यक एव वा ।  
अद्वैतिको वापि मवेदभस्तानिक एव वा ॥ (४,७)  
2. अनर्थो ब्राह्मणस्यैव बद्धिदानिचयो महारत् । (अनुशासनपर्व ६१,१९)



to a ruler, independently of his *varṇa*. The general rule of *ahiṃsā* is suspended in his case, for the righteous use of force in protection and punishment, according to law. One who is not a king, should follow the profession of arms. A Kṣatriya is prohibited to beg. (Devala, in *Gṛhasaṅgāra*, p. 255)<sup>1</sup> His main duties are military and administrative. If a crowned Kṣatriya abdicates, he still has his *varṇa-dharma*. The functions of the Vaiśya are to breed cattle (*yoni-ṛṣṭanam*) or tend them for wages (*vetanena paśu-akṣayam*). Paiśāra (1, 70) adds to them dealing in precious stones and work in metals (*lauha-karma*).<sup>2</sup> Money-lending is another avocation of the Vaiśya. The rates of interest he can charge are stated as 12 per cent. and 15 per cent. and he is allowed to charge compound interest. He incurs the sin of usury (*vārdhuṣhatva*) if he exceeds these limits. Baudhāyana specifies only the lower rate. The difference is explained as the maximum that a Brāhmana can levy, if he takes to money lending as an emergency occupation (*āpat-vṛtti*). The Brāhmana is not permitted to levy compound interest. Even in trade the Vaiśya is not to sell certain articles, but this is on the analogy of the prohibition to the Brāhmana who takes to a Vaiśya pursuit. Several of the prohibited articles are needed for general consumption. They must have been dealt in by the Śūdra or by special castes outside the four *varṇas*. This has been so with salt, leather and some other articles upto recent times.

#### *Duties of the Śūdra.*

The Śūdra's enjoined occupation and duty is serving the higher *varṇas* (I, 91 VIII, 410) and particularly the Brāhmanas.<sup>3</sup> "The highest duty of a Śūdra, which leads to beatitude," declares Manu,<sup>4</sup> (IX, 334) "is to serve Brāhmanas who are learned, virtuous and householders." The Śūdra attains a higher caste in his next birth by serving a Brāhmana, and by purity of conduct, gentleness of speech

1. 'अवाचनमिति' (क्षत्रधर्मो) Devala cited in पृथक्पाठे, p. 255.

2. लौहकर्म तथा रत्नं गवां च परिपालनम् ।  
 कृषिकर्म च वाणिज्यं वैश्वश्रुचिस्त्राहता ॥ (पराशरस्मृ., १, ७०)

3. यत्नमेव तु शूद्रस्य मनुः कर्म समादिशत् ।  
 यतोपामेव वर्णानां शूद्राणामनुसृतया ॥ (१, १११)

4. 'दास्यं यदि द्विजन्मनाम्' (८, ४१०)  
 विप्रार्णं वेदविदुषां शूद्रस्थानां महाशिवनाम् ।  
 शूद्रस्यैव तु शूद्रस्य धर्मो नैदंश्रवसः परः ॥ (९, ३३४)

and freedom from pride (IX, 335).<sup>1</sup> He is not required for the Brāhmana of any other *āśramas* as they do not stand in need of service. The Brāhmana *Grhastha* is so fully occupied with his teaching, sacrificing and social duties that he needs must look to others to care for him in daily life. This is why the Śūdra is conscripted for personal service. The cultural assimilation of the Śūdra can best be effected by bringing him, as already pointed out, into intimate, daily relationship with the highest *varṇa*. His place as a menial attached to the Brāhmana family is shown by the injunction to the former to maintain him when he is past work through old age, (Gautama, X, 60)<sup>2</sup>, by his being given the cast off clothing, umbrellas, shoes etc of his master, (X, 125-4) and of being fed from the remnants of the former's food.<sup>3</sup> The Śūdra is enjoined to serve the Brāhmana both for worldly and other-worldly advantages (X, 122)<sup>4</sup>. The Brāhmana master is enjoined, by Manu, to allot the Śūdra, out of his own property, a suitable maintenance after considering his ability, industry and the number to be supported by him (*Ibid.*, 124)<sup>5</sup>. If he was unable to obtain service under *dvijas*, he could support himself by following arts and crafts. He is held as fitted for trade in those articles in which trade is prohibited for *dvijas*. Contrary to the principle that in emergency (*āpāda*), one can follow only the avocations of *varṇas* lower than his own, the Śūdra is allowed to follow those of the Vaiśya (Yājñavalkya, I, 120)<sup>6</sup> and even the Ksatriya (Nārada).<sup>7</sup> The last means only that he can enter the army. The Vaiśya occupations generally taken over by a distressed Śūdra are cattle-rearing and petty trade. The more he imitates the behaviour of the virtuous, the more does the Śūdra exalt himself in this world and the next. (X, 128)<sup>8</sup>. He is exhorted not to

1. See footnote 4 of p. 102 *supra*.

2. च चार्वेमाश्रयेत् महर्ष्यस्तेन क्षीणोऽपि (गौ. ध. सू. १०,६०)

3. अष्टिष्टमन्न दातव्यं बीभर्षि वसनाति च ।

उष्णकेशिब धान्यानां बीर्गाश्वेष परिच्छदाः ॥ (१०,१२२)

4. स्वर्गादेभ्युभयार्थं वा विमानात्परिभेदु सः । (१०,१२२)

5. प्रकल्पया तस्य वैभूतिः स्वङ्गदुग्मायापार्हतः ।

शक्तिं चालेख्य दाक्षिणं च यजमानां च परिग्रहन् ॥ (१०,१२४)

6. शूद्रस्य द्विजदुष्प्रभा तया बीभर्षु पविग्मभेद ॥ (पाश्चनस्य १,१२०)

7. अङ्गह चापङ्गुर्धं च तसोः कर्म न विचिन्ते ।

मन्वये कर्मणो हिंसा सर्वसाधारणो हि ते ॥ (नारदस्मृति ४,५८)

मन्वये द्वे कर्मणो श्वनवृत्तिवैदम्बुत्सिध (असहायः)

8. यथा यथा हि सद्रूपमातिष्ठत्यन्यतः ।

तथा तथैव चाहुं च लोकं प्राप्नोतिभिरितः ॥ (१०,३२८)

accumulate wealth as it may cause ill-feeling between him and the Brāhmanas, by breeding arrogance in him (X, 129).<sup>1</sup> The Vaiśya and the Śūdra form the economic props of society, and their diversion from the occupations will ruin society. Together they also formed the bulk of the population.

*Distress Occupations (Āpad-ṇīttayah).*

It may happen that a Brāhmana may not find it possible to meet the expenses of maintaining himself and of those dependent upon him, by following the occupations open to him. So with other *varṇas*. In such cases, it is open to the members of the caste to take on the duties of another. The assumption of such pursuits is subject to certain principles. Occupations taken up in distress must be given up as soon as the distress or emergency ceases. Otherwise, expiation will be necessary to overcome the resulting sin (XI, 193).<sup>2</sup> The emergency should be strictly construed. What is barely sufficient, in a life of restraint and contentment, will be taken as the standard below which alone a fall will justify the construction of distress. The occupations indicated for a *varṇa* must be exhausted and completely utilized before the assumption of those of the next *varṇa* or any other *varṇa* is permissible. Thus, *prati-graha* may be extended to receipts of gifts even from Śūdras, and from those who are not 'pure' donors. Even teaching a Śūdra may be tried before undertaking the duty or occupation of another *varṇa*. One should proceed to the gainful means of lower *varṇas*, step by step, without skipping those of an intervening *varṇa*. In one case, however, the *dharma* of the next *varṇa* cannot be undertaken by the next higher *varṇa*, that of bearing arms by the Brāhmana. An ancient rule forbids a Brāhmana to draw a sword even in fun. A Brahmana is allowed to take up arms in self-defence, or in defence of women, Dharma or the social order. But, as he is under the strict rule of *ahimsa*, which will be violated by his undertaking a soldier's duty, the above permission is to be read only as an emphatic way of asserting the social obligation to stand up in defence of Dharma, the weak, women and children. The question is an intricate one, and I have dealt with it recently in a long paper.<sup>3</sup>

1. शक्रेनापि हि शूद्रेण न कान्यो धनसंबन्धः ।

शूद्रे हि धनमादाय ब्राह्मणान्निव शपते ॥ (३०-३२९)

2. यद्ब्रह्मिणेनास्तेनैति कर्मणा ब्राह्मणा धनम् ।

तस्मैस्मैव शृण्वन्ति कथ्येन तपस्ते च ॥ (३३-३९३)

3. See *Atithyivadhya*, or the Right of private Defence in Dharmasāstra, *Dr. Kuntan Raja Presentation Volume*, (1946), pp. 197—232.

Even if the professions open to lower *varnas* are followed, they must be practised only under the ethical standards appropriate to one's own *varna*. The principle that strict adherence to one's own Dharma is the way to salvation, and that taking up that of another *varna* is risky, lays stress on the appropriateness of certain hereditary occupations for those who have inherited aptitudes and the psychological bent for them. Freedom to roam from occupation to occupation leads to baneful and ruinous competition, and the substitution of self interest to the common good, and of transient and immediate benefits to ultimate and permanent advantages. *Laissez Faire* will be substituting "No plan" for "Plan," and *Varna* Organization is social planning on a world-wide scale and for all time.

These principles for distress occupations may be illustrated. Even if obliged to follow the professions of a *Vaiśya*, a *Brāhmaṇa* must avoid *some* of them. First, he must not himself cultivate land, *i.e.* undertake to plough it. The plough, which turns the sod, destroys animal life in the soil. This is why *Hārīta* (*Gṛhasūtrakāṇḍa*, p. 191) calls the plough a slaughter house (*sahasānam* *ku* *lāṅgalam*). *Baudhāyana* declares that agriculture destroys the Veda, *i.e.* destroys the merit of Vedic study, or the aptitude for or the opportunity for Vedic study (*kyśir vedavināśāya*, I, 10. 31). Cultivation is an absorbing occupation, which demands all the time and attention of the cultivator, and he who undertakes it cannot have the leisure for the pursuit of the many religious rites, which are lifelong obligations of the *Brāhmaṇa* *e.g.* the tending of the fire (*Agnihotra*). *Manu* interdicts agricultural operations, even for the *Kṣatriya*, even though the rule of *ahimsā* is not so absolute in his case as in that of the *Brāhmaṇa*<sup>1</sup> (X, 83). *Bṛhaspati*, who softens the asperity of *Manu's* inhibitions, by rational amendments, holds that the agriculturist (if a *Kṣatriya*) by giving to the gods a twentieth of the harvest, a thirtieth in gifts to *Brāhmanas*, and a sixth to the king, is freed from censure (*na doṣabhāḥ*)<sup>2</sup> Cruelty to draught cattle and their castration are prohibited for all agriculturists and particularly for those who are driven to agricultural pursuits by necessity. If driven to trade a *Brāhmaṇa* is prohibited to hold up stock for getting an

1. वैश्यवृत्त्यापि जीवन्तु ब्राह्मणः क्षत्रियोऽपि च ।  
हिंसाप्रार्थनां परार्थानां कृषिं वस्त्रेण वर्जयेत् ॥ (१०-८३)

2. रक्षि दक्ष्ण च शस्त्राग देवतानां च विचक्षम् ।  
विशङ्काम तु विनाशां कृषिं कृत्वा न दोषमाद् ॥ (बृहस्पति १ अत्र. ११३,१०)  
cited in *शुद्धस्थकाण्ड*, p. 195 of the *शुद्धकल्पवृत्त*.

enhanced profit. (See Medhātithi on Manu, X, 90).<sup>1</sup> Neither of the two first *varṇas* is permitted, even when driven to trade by distress, to undertake the sale of cooked food (X, 86).<sup>2</sup> Neither may sell weapons, poison, horses, asses or mules, cloth, cattle generally, milk, spirits, silk, indigo, flesh and human beings. (X, 86-91). The penalty for doing so is loss of caste (*sadyaḥ patati*). A man of a higher *varṇa* sinks to the level of a lower by continuous pursuit of the avocations allowed only to the latter. Instead of selling for a price, when driven to trade by hard necessity, the Brāhmana is advised to resort to barter in preference to sales for money. Money lending, which Brhaspati<sup>3</sup> half-sarcastically commends as superior to all other means of making a living, as it is not exposed to the risks of loss by failure of the seasons, and by the cupidity of the tax collecting king, of the ravages of rats and vermin, and of stoppage of growth by change of season or weather—is a forbidden occupation in normal times to the first two *varṇas* (X, 117).<sup>4</sup> In ancient India lending money was not viewed with the prejudice with which it was in Mediaeval Europe (in which Dante placed the usurer in the same Hell with the Sodomist), but was regarded as a useful act. The smṛtis only suggested the control of loans for interest by fixing legal maximum rates, prohibiting the accumulation of interest beyond the value of the capital, and discouraging compound interest and penal interest. But, there was a feeling that the occupation, if followed by persons for whom it was not normally indicated, might lead to deterioration of character of the capitalist, and make him avaricious and hardhearted. Even distress should not drive a

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1. कामसुखाय कृपागुण स्वयमेव कुर्यात्कलः ।  
विद्विषीत तिकारं शुद्धार्थं धर्माभिमतिरिष्यताम् ॥ (१०,१०)  
'अचिररिष्यताः' अर्थाधिकं लाभमनयेत् स्वल्पं मूल्यमथ कालान्तरे चापामिनि श्रुमूह्यं  
अभेदेनैवं न प्रदीक्षितव्यम् । (निधातिथिः)
  2. सन्नि रदानपोहेतु इत्यात्र च तिलैस्सह ॥ (१०,८६)
  3. नह्येव चर्षणेभ्याः ऋषिभिः परिक्षीर्षिताः ।  
सर्वेषामपि चैतेषां कुलीदमधिकं विदुः ॥  
अनाष्टथा गजभवाग्निफिकापिस्यदसैः ।  
शुद्धादिके भवेद्यानिः सा कुलीदं न यातयेत् ॥  
देवं मत्तानां वा हृदियो यं पुण्योपनीचिनाम् ।  
कुलीदं कुर्वतः सम्पत् सापि तस्यैव जायते ॥  
शुद्धये तथा कृण्ये रजन्मां दिवसेति वा ।  
उभ्ये भवेदतिहाति वा चर्षणेन निवर्तेत ॥  
(बृहस्पतिस्मृतिः, ed. Rangaswami, 1941, pp. 366-367.)
  4. माह्वयः क्षामिषो वापि शुद्धिं देव प्रयोचिष्य । (१०,११७)

Brāhmaṇa to certain professions from which a Brāhmaṇa cannot return unsmirched to his pious pursuits, when pressure of necessity is relieved. Among them are those of the astrologer, the physician, the carrier, the oilmonger and the toddy vendor—the collocation of a semi-learned profession with a despicable one being only to emphasize the reprehensibility of both. Crime and immorality will not be justified under any rule of necessity, for any *varṇa* and so one cannot plead that he had been driven by hard necessity to crime or vice. Even necessity must bow to the moral law (Dharma). Hunger itself will not justify promiscuous solicitation of alms.<sup>1</sup> The accomplished student (*śrīāka*) is allowed to ask for help only of a king (because he has a social duty to prevent *all* deaths from starvation in his dominions,) from his pupils (because a pupil is like a son with the filial duties of a son), of one for whom he has sacrificed, as he would be a man of means, “*and of no other*” (Manu IV. 33).<sup>2</sup> The profession of mendicancy is held in loathing by smṛtis. As a spiritual discipline, to enforce the hard rule of the saving grace of poverty and the social equality it creates, it is enjoined for the student (*brahmacārin*), and the ascetic, but under rigorous safeguards that would prevent them from becoming parasites and social pests. While the claims of humanity and of life generally are pressed on the affluent, and attempts made to soften their hearts, and make them ready to give, it is made hard for a person to ask for alms, except as an obligation of religious necessity. The evils that follow misplaced and indiscriminate charity have been realized nowhere so vividly as in *Dharmaśāstra*. Beggary, like crime, grows like weeds in a neglected field, and only when *Dharma* is relaxed. Solicitation of food for a parent, a teacher or a sick person stands by its vicariousness on a higher level, and is commended (XI, 1-2).<sup>3</sup> Manu connects income from begging with the taint of death by naming it *mīlam* and by placing it only one degree above agriculture, which he stigmatizes (for the Brāhmaṇa) as ‘slaughter’ (*brāmyānti*).<sup>4</sup>

1. See Kane, *H.D.S.*, II., pp. 133-134 for references.

2. राजतो भ्रमभिवर्चससर्वादननालकः क्षुध ।  
वाच्यान्वेवातिमोर्षपि नालन्यत् इति स्थितिः ॥ (४, ३३)

3. सान्नायिक वस्त्रमागमभ्रमं सर्वैर्ददाम् ॥  
युर्वै विदुसाश्रमं स्वाभ्यावाश्रुपतापिनः ॥  
नक्षेतास्त्रालकाविषा हाहागाम्भर्मभिष्टुकार् ॥  
निःश्लेषो देवोतिभ्यो दातु विद्याविशेषतः ॥ (११, १-२)  
ऋतुशुश्रुषिर्लेभेममद्यत् स्वादायाचितम् ।  
युक्तु याचितं मेक्षे प्रदुतं कर्तव्यं स्थगम् ॥ (४, ५)

Dharma has no toleration for the social parasite, whom Elizabethan laws described as "the sturdy mendicant." It is considered a defect in the government of a state if beggary and death by starvation of Brāhmanas increases. The present method of preventing them by total employment is just what was expected of the effective implementing of the *dharma* of *varṇas* and *āśramas*. The growth of vagrant mendicancy under the cloak of religion in later times is the consequence of relaxation of this *dharma*, wasteful competition to occupations, resulting in overcrowding of some and inadequacy of the labour supply in others, and the assumption of mendicant ascetic life by the economic classes to which it had been denied by Manu and *Dharmaśāstra* generally. In ancient Indian criminal law, it was a crime to persuade a woman or a Śūdra to become an ascetic. Europe shows the bad effects on the economy of nations in which the number of celibate monks and nuns increased out of all proportion to the population and the resources of the country. It is this wasteful diversion that is sought to be prevented by the *āśrama* rules in strictly limiting entry to the life of the ascetic and holding up the ideal of family life as the best for normal persons, of all ranks in society.

*Theory of Privileges and Disabilities.*

Doing a duty for its own sake, without any expectation of reward is enjoined by Indian religion. It does not mean that unselfish effort is sterile either in this life or in the next. The implication is only that to do one's duty in the hope of a benefit, or expressly to secure an advantage in this life or in the next, though permissible, is of a lower order in a gradation of spiritual values than desireless effort (*niṣkāma-karma*). To deny results to action will be to deny a paramount and universal moral law,—that of *Karma*. Self-regarding action, even if its effects are beneficial to others, is of a lower type than un-egoistic activity. But such a view will not find acceptance among common minds. To them there must be a material and tangible benefit for service, or there must be an attractive equivalent for it. Economists are familiar with the notion that the love of excellence, or the love of distinction appeals to finer natures more than mere love of comfort or well-being. In the accumulation of material goods a point is reached at which satiety begins. In the acquisition of distinction or the aesthetic satisfaction that springs of the consciousness of excellence or perfection, there is no such satiety. Post-mortuary benefits, like post-mortuary punishments, do not appeal to all minds. Distinction in life has attraction to most persons. It is this that lies at the root of conceptions of worldly honour, position and privilege, even if these are not translatable into tangible economic advantages. A prince

enjoys a greater prestige than a commoner, and a prince of the Church a greater position in the common estimation than an ordinary lay prince.

We see the working of these ideas in the duties and inhibitions of the *varṇa* scheme. The Brāhmana is relegated, not by his own choice but by birth, to a hard and comfortless life of poverty and constant occupation. His is a lifelong and almost tragic dedication to the cause of spiritual uplift and education of society. When barely out of childhood, he is taken out of the family and subjected to the rigors of an educational discipline which will last twelve years or more. He is enjoined to marry and start family life, when his education is over. But the life that he then enters upon is not less hard, and its ideal is even more unselfish. The life of the householder is social dedication. What pleasure or happiness he may derive from marriage is a mere by-product of the institution. He cannot refuse his spiritual or educational services to any one who demands them of him, and who is qualified to be served. He is not expected to hoard wealth, and is encouraged to lead an abstemious, if not an ascetic, life. Manu condemns the erudition from which income or fame are expected. A Brāhmana sophist will not command in India the honor that a sophist enjoyed in ancient Athens; on the other hand he is deemed a lost soul. Poverty is in his case no excuse for failing to discharge his lifelong religious obligations like the *Agnihotra*.<sup>1</sup> Even distress cannot free him from the need to watch his steps, when he takes up the avocations of lower *varṇas*. The hand that is, metaphorically speaking, held out to pull him from economic difficulties cannot be grasped if it is that of one whose spirituality and morals are questionable. The gifts or donations of the wicked carry an indelible taint, which pollute receivers and infect the purposes for which they are given. The recipient is to look (as against the worldly adage) not into the mouth of the gift-horse, but into the antecedents of the donor.<sup>2</sup> The idea is that on the Brāhmana depends not only the educational but the spiritual uplift of the entire society. A king gives *visible* protection; a Brāhmana *invisible* protection. Both are described as *dhyta-vratu* i.e. vowed for social service. Accordingly, both are praised, but the Brāhmana more than even the king, because the latter has compensations in comfort and an easier life that the other has not. Manu clearly believed that spirituality, when properly

1. सर्वेषु च शिरोऽङ्गानामपि हेतुस्तदात्मना ।  
इति पार्ष्णिपान्तीयाः केनञ्च निर्वपेत्सदा ॥ (४, १०)



sustained, made the Brāhmaṇa wield a power greater than that of a mere ruler. The eulogies of the Brāhmaṇa mount to a paean of praise in *Manusmṛti*. (See I, 93-101, IX, 245, 313-322 and XI, 31-35). The creation of the Brāhmaṇa is a blessing to the world. He is a living incarnation of Dharma and is born to fulfil it (I, 98).<sup>1</sup> He is the guardian of the "treasure house of Dharma" (*dhanukoṣa*, I, 99). The entire universe is the property of the Brāhmaṇa, who has no worldly possessions (I, 100-101). The god Vāyuṇa is king of mortal kings, because he wields the rod of punishment; the Brāhmaṇa is lord of the whole universe, because he has mastered the Vedas (IX, 245). His anger spells destruction (IX, 314-315). With the exaggeration which is a literary device for emphasis, he is declared a divinity (IX, 317, *brāhmaṇo dāivatam mahat*). It may (for example) be noticed that the king (who is not a Brāhmaṇa) is described by almost the same expression *Mahati devata hyeśā nararāpeṇa ṛṣṭati*—*Manu*, VII, 8). The Brāhmaṇas are always entitled to veneration because each of them is a great divinity (*paruman-dāivatam hi tat*, IX, 319). The good of the world requires that the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya should work in union (*Sampṛkṭam*) for there will be no Brāhmaṇa without a Kṣatriya and no Kṣatriya without a Brāhmaṇa (IX, 322). A Brāhmaṇa need not seek the help of the king to redress his wrongs for by his own spiritual power he can do it (XI, 31-32). Let no word of inauspiciousness (*i.e.* curse) be uttered against the Brāhmaṇa, and no hot word be spoken to him (*na Suṣṭhām giram vrayet*, X, 35) because he it is who declares (*vaktā*) Dharma, who enforces (*śāsitā*) it, and befriends (*mitra*) all. Let not the king provoke the Brāhmaṇas to anger, "for they, when angered could instantly destroy him together with his vehicles and goods" (IX, 398). The king should cherish them for the sake of sacrifices (XI, 4). The sacrificer is to be suitably maintained by the king, for the possessions of those who offer sacrifices are verily the possessions of the gods (XI, 20-22). A king should honor and cherish a learned and virtuous Brāhmaṇa (*Śrotriya*); it brings luck to him if he worships them daily (VII, 37-38.). The gift made by a king to a learned Brāhmaṇa is an imperishable treasure (VII, 82). The *sūta* (accomplished student) should be supported by the king. The kingdom where learned Brāhmaṇas die of hunger will itself be devastated by famine. (VII, 133-134).

The magnification of the Brāhmaṇa should be read with the privileges claimed for them. A *śrotriya* should not be taxed

1. उत्सर्पिते विप्रस्य मूर्तिर्बर्मस्य चाश्रतो ।  
स हि धर्मर्षिमुत्स्रो मद्बधुशाय कल्पते ॥ (१, १८)

(VII, 133). Even the *Aṭhaśāstra* upholds the exemption, and calls on the state to grant tax-free lands to learned Brāhmanas, *ṛtviks*, *purohitas*, and teachers, and confer on them freedom from fines (II, 1) <sup>1</sup> The idea is that they pay in kind *i.e.* by the religious merit accruing from their acts of piety and devotion, a part of it accrues to the king. A modern sceptic may deride the value of such services, but belief in their efficacy was then widespread, and was shared by kings as well as the people. The exemption from taxation was ancient and is seen in *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIII, 6, 2, 18).<sup>2</sup> Kālidāsa refers to the contribution of a sixth part of the indestructible *puṇya* accruing from their austerities made by hermits (*āranya-vāsīnāḥ*) to the king for his protection. (*Śākuntala*, II, 13).<sup>3</sup> A belief shared by scholars and great poets cannot be described as the credulity generated in ignorant minds by a priest-craft. Another privilege was that a Brāhmana need not give back to the king one-half of any buried treasure that he might discover, as others had to (VIII, 37)<sup>4</sup> and the king was even advised to give one half of any treasure-trove found by himself to Brāhmanas (VIII, 38).<sup>5</sup> Heirless Brāhmanas' property did not escheat to the state but was to be distributed (like the property of a teacher to his pupils) to other Brāhmanas "and thereby *Dharma* will not be violated" (*tathā dharmo na hiyate*).<sup>6</sup> There are two restrictions implied in the rule. Firstly, the failure of all heirs means not only absence of any relations, male or female, who are entitled in law to inherit to the deceased in the prescribed order but even fellow students (*sarvāṅgāni abhāve yaduktāni tat sa-*

1. ऋषिगानाचतुरोहितश्रोत्रिषेभ्यो ऋद्धेवानि अदृक्कृताणि अमिरुक्पदायकानि प्रपच्छेत् ।  
(को. अ. शा. घ. ४६)
2. अथातो दक्षिणनाम् । मर्थं प्रति राभ्यस्य यदन्वद्भूमेभ्यः प्राह्यणस्य विचात् ।  
(सप्तमपनाह्यम्, १३, ६, २, १८)
3. राजा—अदृष्टिष्ठति यमेभ्यो नृपाणां क्षयि ताकलम् ।  
तपयद्भूमाममक्षयं ददस्वरायका हि नः ॥ (अभि. शाङ्ग., २, २३) -
4. निद्रांस्तु प्राह्यो दृष्ट्या पूर्वोपनिहितं निषिम् ।  
अक्षेपसौष्ठव्यददीप्त सर्वेत्वापिपतिहि सः ॥ (८, १७)
5. सं तु पश्येतिर्षि राजा पुरातं निहितं शिषो ।  
तस्माद्दक्षिणेभ्यो दद्याधेनर्ष कोशे प्रवेक्ष्येत् ॥ (८, १८)
6. सर्वेषामप्यन्धारे तु प्राह्यणा रिष्यमागिनः ।  
श्रैविचाः श्रुचयो दान्तास्तथा धर्मो न ह्येवमे ।  
अहर्षा प्राह्यणद्रव्यं राजा नित्यमिति रिषतिः ।  
हातेर्षां तु वर्णानां सर्वानामपि हरेन्मृत्यः ॥ (९, १८८-१८९)

*brahmacāryāderapi dhanahārītvārthan*). Secondly, the allusion to prevention of *dhanmahāni* is that the Brāhmanas to whom the property is distributed will have to offer the funeral sacrifices to the deceased. The provision that a widow might raise a son to the deceased by *nyoga*, and in that contingency the entire property will pass on to the son (IX, 190)<sup>1</sup> is not in discord with the provision of escheat, as absence of all possible heirs means also absence of a surviving wife.

The right to take precedence of even a king on the road is a mere distinction, which was doubtless appreciated as a mark of deference and honor. There is an historical anecdote that it was deftly used to save a difficult situation that might have become serious otherwise.<sup>2</sup> Exemption from being summoned as a witness in a law suit is also granted to the student of the Veda, the *śanyāsin* and the king. The motive is not to interfere needlessly with persons who have absorbing duties to perform. (VIII, 65).<sup>3</sup> One engaged in doing a *yāga* (*dīksita*) is also exempted.

There are, however, certain rights which involve discrimination. They have come for much criticism in modern times. A *Brāhmana* is immune from capital punishment, for crimes for which it is prescribed. Instead of the death penalty, he is to have his head shaved and banished, without deprivation of his property. (VIII, 378-379) Mann holds that there can be no greater *adhama* (wrongly translated by Buehler as "crime") than killing a Brāhmana and that a king should not even think of it. Kautilya (IV, 10) was less considerate,<sup>4</sup> though even he admits Brāhmana immunities.<sup>5</sup> Mann,

1. संविद्यतव्यनपसवस समोवातुपमाहरेद ।  
तत्र यद्विषयजाडं स्वाधरचस्मिन् प्रविषादयेद ॥ (९, १९०)
2. When the Peshwa Bāji Row I invaded Udaipur, the question of the seat he was to have before the *Alahātāna* was settled by Bāji Row's appearing as the Brāhmana *Frādit Pradhān*, and being given a seat in front of the throne. (Tod, *Annals of Rajasthan* • Vol. I, ed. 1914, p. 337).
3. न साधो मृषतिः क्षायो न कारुण्यद्वेषो ।  
न श्रोत्रियो न लिङ्गयो न संशयो विनिर्गतः ॥ (८, ६५)
4. राज्यकमुक्तं ... यत्तरेत् । ब्राह्मण तस्यः श्रेयसेत् ।  
(कौ. अ. शा. ४, १०, p. 227).
5. सर्वोपराधेषु अपाचनोयो ब्राह्मणः । तस्यानिस्रताद्दो ललाटे स्वादुष्यवहारपसनाय  
स्तेषु शो । मनुष्यवेषे कल्पः । युक्तस्ये मयम् । सुरापाने मयव्यवः ।  
ब्राह्मणं पापकर्मण्यदुद्वेष्याङ्कृतमणम् ।  
कुर्वाविषिमं राजा यास्येदाग्नेषु वा ॥ (कौ. अ. शा. ४, ८; p. 220).

like Kautilya, rules that the criminal Brāhmaṇa be branded with various indelible emblems, reflecting his guilt, and be turned out of society. He was to be excluded from commensality, from sacrifices, from instruction, from matrimonial alliances, from all religious duties, be cast off by all his relations and receive neither compassion nor salutation (IX, 238-239).<sup>1</sup> Kautilya provided banishment and labour at the mines for the Brāhmaṇa criminal. He was subjected to other indignities like being paraded on the back of a donkey. A Brāhmaṇa was not above being fined, and in some offences his fines were made heavier than those imposed for the same offence on lower *varṇas* (VIII, 337-338).<sup>2</sup> The immunity appears to have been due to the persistence of the old feeling that killing a Brāhmaṇa carried with it a heavy load of sin, and to growing doubts of the value of capital punishment, of which we have a fine illustration in the discussion on its value in the *Mahābhārata* (XII, 267, 10-16).<sup>3</sup> Further, the supposed leniency to the Brāhmaṇa was really greater severity. He was made not only an outlaw, socially and legally, but was practically starved to death thereby. Banishment did not mean that he would be received in other countries with more tolerance, when he carried indelible marks of his infamy on his body. But the greatest penalty was that he was made incapable of performing any expiatory rites that would atone, even partially, for his moral lapse, and thereby condemned him to *endless* punishment in reincarnations. As already pointed out, the purpose of the Hindu criminal law was to adjust the penalty to the mood and mentality of the offender and the opinion of the times. Judged thus, the discrimination is not in favour of the Brāhmaṇa, and may be even construed as against him. Unlike the clergy in Mediaeval Europe and officials in many modern states, the Brāhmaṇa was tried only in the ordinary courts, by ordinary rules of procedure and by ordinary methods of evidence, and when adjudged guilty was sentenced in the ways that *appear* to but do not

1. असंभोक्त्वा क्षत्रयाज्या असपाठ्याऽपिवादिनः ।  
चरेद्युः पृथिवीं दीनाः सर्वधर्मवहिष्कृताः ॥  
ज्ञातिसम्भिनिरस्तेते त्यक्तव्याः क्रुच्छ्रणाः ।  
विदेवा विनमस्कारास्तन्मनोरुशासनम् ॥ (५, २३८-२३९)
2. ऋष्टपाथं तु ब्रह्मस्य स्तेपे भवति किल्बिषम् ।  
भोऽददेव इ वैश्वस्य द्वाविशश्रित्यस्य च ॥  
ब्राह्मणस्य बद्धःपथिः पूर्वं वापि शतं भवेत् ।  
विपुत्रा वा बद्धःपथिस्तदीपपुत्राविदि सः ॥ (८, ३३७-३३८)
3. ज्ञानिपर्व, २८३, १०-१६ (ed. Kumbakonam)

really discriminate in his favour. Unlike the British peer, a Brāhmana could not claim to be judged by his peers. Ancient Indian law did not accept the principle of the equality of all persons, because it will really result in inequitable punishments.

*The Sūdra's Position.*

The position of the last *varṇa*, as indicated by its duties and inhibitions, has been regarded as unduly harsh. Sūdra disabilities have been greatly exaggerated and misunderstood. Some of the disabilities are really advantages over the other *varṇas*. They have been based on the principle that strength, (physical, cultural and spiritual) determines the duty and the penalty for violating duty. In the attainment of the common Indian aim viz, *mokṣa*, the Sūdra syllabus of activity towards this end is lighter, and easier. He need not go through the laborious course of Vedic education with its discipline. From merely hearing the epics and the Purāṇas (whose author Vyāsa, Indian tradition identifies with the editor of the Vedas and the author of the *Brahmasūtras*), he can obtain the same guidance and salvation. He is redeemed not by austerity, or learning or vows but by *dāna*, i.e. by making use of his wealth in mere charity. He is free to dwell anywhere. He is not taunted, and does not lose his *varṇa* status by what he eats and drinks. His rites are simple. If he is so disposed he can perform, without *mantras*, the five daily *yajñas*. He is not denied the sacrament of marriage. There is no lower moral code for him; the ideals he is asked to cherish and the ethical qualities that he is advised to foster are identical with those for the other *varṇas*. He was even allowed to become a king. He could enter the army, in emergencies. Wealth was deprecated in his case only as possibly generating arrogance, and making him restive of the position to which he had been brought by his own past Karma. He was asked to be treated as a member of the family. His women were under the same protection against insult or assault as dvija women. He was given the hope of a higher *varṇa* in the next birth, by good actions in this life (IX, 335).<sup>1</sup> The arts and crafts were open to him. The prohibition to him to carry the corpse of a Brāhmana prevents his relegation to the position of a common undertaker (V, 104).<sup>2</sup> He is not shut out from spiritual advice and guidance from the Brāhmana (X, 2). He can commute for his tax by personal

1. श्रुतिस्मृत्युक्तयुक्तधर्मव्याख्यानसङ्ग्रहः ।  
 ब्राह्मणशास्त्रो मित्युक्तार्थं वाचिमस्तुते ॥ (१, २२५)

2. न शिरं विपु तिष्ठस्य तुवं श्चद्रेण नाचयेत् ॥ (५, १०४)

service (VII, 138)<sup>1</sup>. His exclusion from judicial office and assessor's work in trials is obviously consequent on his defective knowledge of the bases of *Dharma* in Vedic literature.

*Brāhmaṇa and Śāstra in Criminal Law.*

It is in the imposition of different standards, on a *varṇa* basis, for punishments and for estimating the gravity of offences that modern criticism sees the hand of the sacerdotalist. Ancient Indian authorities on *Dharma* are quite familiar with the fundamental rules of criminal jurisprudence. It is difference of fundamental outlook, and failure to allow for differences of circumstances or context, that lead to the modern failure to see the reason behind discrimination in punishment. Modern criminal law is not innocent of discrimination. In weighing punishment, judges to-day have to weigh the effect of the penalties in relation to their effects on society, the political order, and the offender and his class. Punishments have to be deterrent, where social security requires it. The *Brāhmaṇa* was the unsalaried spiritual guide, teacher, judge, assessor and sacrificer of ancient Indian society.

The need to protect—by making punishments more stringent than they need be—was not a feature of ancient Indian jurisprudence or *Dharma*. Modern judges, for example, are sensitive of criticism of their judicial actions from lay quarters. We have in modern laws an elaborate device for punishing contempt of court, in which the courts themselves are final adjudicators. An independent judiciary often tends to become an irresponsible one. In ancient India anyone was at liberty to go and criticize a judge in open court or the king himself. The comparative severity against those who threatened a *Brāhmaṇa* with assault or actually attacked him and drew blood is based the principles we still follow *viz.* enforcement of deterrent penalties in the interest of social discipline. The lighter punishment for *ābrośa* (reviling), when the offender is of a higher caste than the person who is reviled, is based on the same principle, and it constitutes something like "privilege". (VIII, 268). In theft, where no question of discipline is apparently involved, but social discipline is, the heavier penalty for the *Brāhmaṇa* (VIII, 337-338) is on the score of a social upset if those who are better educated and esteemed as spiritually and socially higher set a bad example. The horror of mongrelism and desire to maintain a high standard of sex purity and to prevent the sex urge creating *saṅkara* are behind the stern

1. कावकान् शिल्पिनश्चैव यद्दार्ताश्चासौवर्जीविनः ।  
एकैकं कारयेत्कर्म मासि मासि महापतिः (७, १३८)

attempts to repress sex offences by men of lower against women of the higher *varnas*. As it was a matter of administrative concern and political expediency as well, the *Arthaśāstra* was hardly less severe than Manu in such cases, and it also proceeded on the same principles. The bitter animus to (and savage penalty of) the Śūdra who lectures on *Dharma* to the Brāhmaṇa (i.e. to the whole community) (VII, 272) can be paralleled by modern laws against social or political revolutionaries, who openly flout the established order. So are the rules condemning Śūdra asceticism<sup>1</sup> (Yājñavalkya, II, 254) and Śūdras in the garb of the twice-born (IX, 224).<sup>2</sup> How in spite of such rules society became chaotic, *varṇasaṅkara* spread, and the purpose of the *varṇa* scheme was defeated day by day will be seen from the lurid pictures in the Purāṇas of Kaliyuga effects, which probably only reflect actual happenings.

#### Conclusion.

*Varna-dharma* is the keystone of the arch of the Indian social scheme. It has been the foundation of Hindu society through the ages. Its roots are lost in remote antiquity. Its influence is still unextinguished. It has concerned itself with men in large aggregates, not with individuals. Its scope has been universal. Its purposes have been both worldly and unworldly, concerned with this life and with after-life. It has proceeded on the hypothesis that life in the universe is an endless chain, revolving round the wheel of action (*Karma*). It has stressed individual responsibility as well as collective. While recognizing the force of heredity, it has envisaged its limitations, and the risks of mere racial fusion, looked at simply as fusion of blood. It aimed at a permanent solution of every side of the social problem, genetic, psychological, spiritual, and economic. Society was to be so planned as to meet every need that change brought up. It was to be organized for *all* time. Its outlines were broad, simple and general, and afforded scope within its ample limits for every possible adjustment that time or circumstance might demand. It aimed at gradual changes, brought about by the educated efforts of its own members, instead of revolutionary changes, induced by external influences. In its designation as the Caste System it has won the appreciation of discerning sociologists and students of history. Their admiration has been for the elements in it which made for social balance and stability, the elasticity, which made it respond to changing

1. ब्रह्मर्षिजिज्ञासां च द्वेषे पित्र्ये च भोजनः ।  
[शतदण्डशास्त्रं] (शाश्वतस्वयं, २, २२५)

2. ब्राह्मणं द्विजजिज्ञासां (१, २२४)

needs and which kept it from disintegration in the numberless vicissitudes of foreign invasion, conflict with alien cultures and religions, and dissent within its own fold. It humanized society, and spiritualized it. It made for harmonious development through co-operation of its elements. Its recognition of fundamental instincts to which man responds by his activity, and its scheme for canalizing and transforming them to common purposes through the system of *dramas* so as to raise both the individual and the mass, made for its success. It has probed deep into the human motives for economic and political action and by taking due notice of their strength and need for training provided a stable political machine, which ensured good government, full employment, and harmonious cooperation. Its main negative contribution is that it prevented society slipping into barbarism, by its constant emphasis on achievement and character, even more than birth, as the real credentials of personal worth of permanent value, and it made it look *up* instead of look *down*, look forward instead of backward.

The praise of the system should be considered side by side with the criticism levelled against it. To many, whose vision has been blurred by inadequate knowledge of the system and of the philosophy behind it, as well as of its aims, or who have been animated by loyalty to other faiths and cultures and have imbibed the belief that perfection is found in them alone, Indian Caste has seemed a hard, cruel, and discriminatory system, which was devised to create and maintain the selfish domination of a body of priests over the masses. In such criticisms, it has been usual to describe the *varna* system and the rules of *varna-dharma*, as the fabrications of Brāhmanas to gain overlordship, and to ascribe the origin of the system to writers like Manu. The criticism loses sight of certain facts. The roots of the *varna* classification go back to hoary antiquity. The tendency for the formation of classes is natural, and almost universal. Ascription of the system to Brāhmana ambition and selfishness loses sight of fundamental features of the system, and consequent weakness in its own hypothesis. The effect of the system was to keep a small and highly intellectual body in a permanent condition of austere poverty and hard work, sterilized of all ambition for political domination and position or for riches and splendid living. By the theory of influence of occupation in demoting or promoting a *varna* position in any individual born in it, not only in future births but in this life itself, it prevented the most intellectual section of the community, from seizing political power. In the long history of India, the number of dynasties founded by Brāhmanas can be counted on the fingers. In every such case the act was stigmatized as an usurpation and a violation



of Dharma, and reprobated by the very community from which the usurpers came. To Bāna, Pusyamitra was not even an *Ārya*, because of his seizing a throne. In the case of the Kadamba and Vākātaka dynasties, which claimed a Brāhmaṇa origin, the seizure of thrones reduced their caste rank, led to intermarriage with even non-*Kṣatriya* princes like the Guptas, and showed the limits of their social demotion for violating their *varṇa-dharma*. The Peshwas never claimed to be kings, but kept, like the *de facto* rulers of modern Nepal only the rank of ministers, whose appointments still needed the approval of titular *Kṣatriya* kings. The Brāhmaṇas were not an organized body, with a hierarchy of offices, like the Christian Church or even the Buddhist *Saṅgha*. They had no wealth, and no territorial power to back any claims they might put forward for lordship. The language of hyperbole in which the Brāhmaṇa was likened to a god, is also applied to a king. It is paralleled by the retort to the statement 'there is no king without divinity' in him that 'there is no subject (*prajā*) without divinity in him' too. It is forgotten by the critics, who often challenge, on what are now regarded as weak grounds, the claim of Brāhmaṇas to have been the sponsors of *adhyaत्मविद्या* in the past as against the *Kṣatriyas* to whom the critics assign the credit, that the very same *Kṣatriyas* conceded the Brāhmaṇa claims. That education was widespread and that there was great critical acumen even in the masses in ancient India will be admitted. If it was so, how could any small body keep up the fiction of its natural superiority, by mere repetition of its claims, in a literature springing from it? While the line of criticism can be used as a missile in *modern* conflicts between class and class, its large draught on powers of belief must rule out its historical validity.

Rather must the success of the scheme be sought in its own inherent qualities. Unless it satisfied all its component elements it could not have survived. If those at the head of the scheme had freed themselves from its rules, they could not have continued to wield any influence. Impartial students will admit that the praise of the Brāhmaṇa was generally deserved, and the unworthy member of the *varṇa* was sure of denunciation from his own group as well as from others. To this day, lives worthy of comparison with the highest in tradition continue to be led by members of the *varṇa* in the obscurity of their homes on the country side, though to sustain them in the conditions of modern town life is almost impossible. The scheme of *varṇas* lived, served and survived because it was based on a reasoned philosophy of existence, of rational perception of the strength of instincts, and of the possibility of conserving them by heredity.

Emphasis on duty instead of privilege, on the interdependence of individuals despite divisions, on the fundamental equality of all selves engaged on a common pilgrimage to the distant spiritual goal, and on common ethical duties against a background which coincided with Time and Space in their infinity, tended to results on human nature, which produced in every one both contentment and self-respect and the desire to strive for his own salvation and that of every one else. There is both experience and philosophy behind the proverbial patience of India's millions, which have enabled them to survive vicissitudes in the face of which other cultures and peoples have crumbled up. These are crystallized in the system which has been expounded, to those who understand their implications and basic assumptions, by writers like Manu. A study of their sociological ideas might still have value in the disillusioned modern world, whose faith in old dispensations has been shattered in the impact of two world wars, and which hankers for some guidance towards re-constructing society on a plan that would save it for ever.