

LECTURE V  
THE ĀSRAMA SCHEME

*Varṇa Scheme Comprehends Āśrama.*

The system of *varṇas* is the pivot on which all duties of human beings revolve. This is the reason why the sages are represented as approaching Manu and praying him to "declare to them in due order (*anuparvāśaḥ*) the duties (*dharmaṇāṃ*) of all the *varṇas*, including those of the mixed castes (*antarāprābhavaṇām*) (1), (*Manusmṛti*, I, 2),<sup>1</sup> and the recital includes not only those of *varṇa-dharma*, pure and simple, but of *āśramas*, etc. The sage Yājñavalka is similarly besought (I, 1) to expound to the assembled sages the duties of *varṇas*, *āśramas* and other (*varṇaśrmetarāṇāṃ ca dharmān brāhī*), and he gives a comprehensive account of all duties. A person must belong to a *varṇa*, according to the cosmic scheme expounded by Manu. The *varṇas* are only four, and there is no fifth (*nāsti tu pañcamāḥ*, X, 4). The place of the mixed castes is in the *varṇa*, so far as their duties are concerned, if they are of *pratiloma* birth, and *between* the castes of their respective parents, if *through-out* of *anuloma* descent. Before a person can enter an *āśrama*, therefore, he must have a *varṇa*.

*Classes of Dharma based on them.*

In classifications of duties, Dharma is taken as of five or six kinds: the five on which there is general agreement are *varṇadharmā*, *āśrama-dharma*, *varṇāśrama-dharma*, *guṇadharmā* and *naimittika-dharma*. The sixth is *nitya-dharma* or *sādāraṇa-dharma* or duties common to all men, i.e. common ethical precepts, of which *Manusmṛti* is full, but the systematic treatment of them is not attempted by the great smṛtis, with the result that superficial observers, who have looked for the Indian moral code only in the smṛtis and in the literature of Indian *darśanas*, have made absurd statements denying the existence of moral rules in Hindu literature! *Guṇa-dharma* springs from office or position. In the classifications no separate place is found for the duties peculiar to women, and a code for them should be regarded as coming under both *guṇa-dharma* and *naimittika* (specific or occasional, like expiatory

1. भगवन् सर्ववर्णानां वधावस्तुपूर्वकः ।  
अन्तरेप्रवर्णानां च धर्मोऽत्र वस्तुपूर्वकः ॥ (१,२)

duties) *dharma* as well as under *āsrama* and *varna dharma*, in regard to marriage, etc. In effect the comprehensive consideration of *varṇa* and *āsrama* will exhaust the entire field of human duty, which Dharmaśāstra regards as eternal (*sanātana*)

*Four Āśramas.*

*Āsrama* means literally a stopping or halting place. It is appropriate to describe the stages in the passage through life as those which one is asked to remain at for a considerable time. The stages are invariably described as four, and the order of their enumeration generally is that given by Manu (VI, 87) those of the student (*brahmacārin*), the householder (*gṛhastha*), the hermit or forest-dweller (*vānaprastha*) and the ascetic (*yati*). A synonym for the hermit's name is *vaiśhānasa*, and the ascetic is described also as *sannyāsīn*, *bhikṣu*, *muni*, and *parivrajaka*, terms derived from some of the features of the ascetic's enjoined life. Manu adds to his enumeration the significant declaration that all the four spring from the householder (*gṛhastha-prabhavāḥ*). Without family life there will be no people for any *āsrama*, and as all the other three are dependent for their support on alms given by the *gṛhastha* they are economically dependent upon him. Even the gods look to him; for it is only the householder who is authorized to perform sacrifices on which the gods depend. This is probably the basis of the ancient legend retailed by Baudhāyana that originally there was only the *gṛhasthāśrama*, and the Asura Kapila, the son of Prahlāda, and a foe of the gods, instituted the other three *āśramas* in order that the gods may lose some of their offerings.

Legend of creation of āśramas.

The story may mean nothing more than the rational suggestion that the only natural organization of society is the family, centering round its head (the householder), and that later on, for enabling the disciplined life, which is necessary for the fulfilment of the spiritual pilgrimage of man, the other three were added. Manu's position is that like the *varṇas* they represent the primordial regulation springing from the Supreme Being, and that they rest also on divine sanction. One may find the tendency to form social groups, on a hereditary or occupational basis, more *natural*, as stratification in classes is pretty universal, whereas the division of life into definite periods and the imposition of special duties and discipline to each *varṇa* within the new grouping suggests *artificial* creation. If it was so, it was in very remote times, as the Vedic literature knows the stages, though the name *āsrama* does not occur in the *Saṁhitās*

and *Brāhmanas*. The term *Vaikhānasa* (*Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhmaṇa*, 14, 4, 17) appears, as pointed out by MM P.V. Kane<sup>1</sup>, to refer to *vānaprastha*. The *yati* (the name given to the member of the fourth *āśrama* in *Manusmṛti*, XII, 48), who is declared to have incarnated from the lowest type of *Sātvika* quality, appears in Vedic literature as an enemy whom Indra delighted to "throw to the wolves" (*śalāvṛkṣāḥ*). Can there be any connection between the Vedic *yati* being one who did not honour Indra by sacrifices, and the freedom from the *harma-nārga* claimed for *sannyāsins*?

In *Manusmṛti* the *āśramas* are made sequential in the order of their enumeration by it. It indicates for each one-quarter of the span of human life, the first is to be devoted to *brahmacarya* (IV, 1)<sup>2</sup> dwelling with the teacher (*śiṣyādyaṅ gurau*), the second to *gṛhasṭhya* (family life), the third (which is to be accepted only when the hair begins to turn grey, wrinkles appear on the skin and sons have been born to sons, VI, 2) to forest-life (*araṇyam samāśrayet*)<sup>3</sup>, and the last to cutting away from society altogether by becoming a mendicant ascetic.<sup>4</sup> Manu is definitely of the view that one should progress to *sannyāsa* stage by stage (*sarveṣu kramaśastvete yathāśāstram*) and in accordance to the rules of each stage.<sup>5</sup> There was an ancient view, to which reference is made in the *Jābūlopaniṣad*<sup>6</sup> (which is also upheld by Śaṅkara)<sup>7</sup> that one can proceed to the last stage straight from the first, after that stage is covered. No one can become an ascetic without undergoing the full period of studentship, even in this view. The interpretation is criticised on the ground that the

1. *History of Dharmasāstra*, II, p. 418.
2. चतुर्थमाश्रमो मागस्तु विचार्य गुरौ दिवः ।  
द्वितीयमाश्रमो मासं कृत्वतीति गुरौ वसेत् ॥ (४, १)
3. गृहस्थस्तु वदा पर्येद्व्रतीपल्लितमात्मनः ।  
अस्त्वल्पेन चापल्ये तदारण्ये समाश्रयेत् ॥ (६, २)
4. मनेषु च विद्वैर्लेनं तृतीय मागमाश्रमः ।  
चतुर्थमाश्रमो माग सस्वसा सदात् परिलेजेत् ॥ (६, ३३)
5. सर्वेऽपि क्रमशस्त्वेषु यथाशास्त्रं निषेविताः ।  
यथोक्तकारिण्यं विप्रं नश्यन्ति परमां गतिम् ॥ (६, ८८)
6. ऋषाचर्यं परित्यज्य गृही भवेत्, गृही भूत्वा वनीं मवेदनीं भूत्वा प्रव्रजेत् । यदि देवेषु ऋषाचर्यं प्रव्रजेद्गृहात् वनात् । यदरेव विद्वेषु चरेव प्रव्रजेत् ॥ (जाबालोपनिषद्, ४)
7. ऋषाचर्यान्व, ३, ४, २०. See the discussion in my Introduction to the *Mokṣakāṇḍa* of the *Kṛtyakalpataru* (1945), pp. 29-30.

Vedic injunctions to perform all one's life the *Agnihotra*, and to repay the triple natal debt (*ṛyatraya*) can be discharged only in family life, which cannot therefore be skipped. It may be noted that the apologists for the short-cut to *sannyāsa* support their plea on the ground that some are constitutionally desireless and ascetic in temperament, and to such persons entry into the last *āśrama* after finishing the first is permissible. The verse of Manu (VI, 38),<sup>1</sup> which appears to give an option is really a description of the ritual for abandoning the house-holder's life.

Premature entry into ascetic life of one whose passions have not been conquered, and who is physically still subject to *rājasa* or *tāmasa* impulses, can only spell disaster. From a social standpoint the moral is that one should not fly away from his responsibilities to society (and to the gods, manes and seers) and seek refuge in asceticism. The two last *āśramas* are parasitical

in the sense that their sustenance, even under the safeguards limiting it to irreducible minimum, is an obligation cast on the earning members of society. From an economic and materialistic standpoint a monk is a mere drone in the hive and the limitless multiplication of monks can spell ruin to the community. It is for this reason that asceticism is not commended to the economic members of society. In a famous

apologue in the *Mahābhārata* his queen chides King Janaka, who had become a *sannyāsin*, for desertion of his duties.<sup>2</sup> It was prohibited to women (Yama, in *Smyticandīkā*, Vyavahāra, p. 596).<sup>3</sup> Kauṭilya makes it an offence to persuade a woman to embrace the ascetic mode of life.<sup>4</sup> Manu holds out the assurance of the attainment of supreme bliss only to the person who becomes a *sannyāsin* after going through the earlier stages. From the standpoint of the interests of the community, the first *āśrama* is vital, as no one should remain uneducated, and the second

1. प्राजापत्यां निरुपेक्षि सर्ववेदसदक्षिणाम् ।  
आत्मन्यग्नीम् समारोप्य ब्राह्मणः प्रमत्तेद्गुहाम् ॥ (६, ३८)

2. *Sānti-parva*, 18, 1—26 The queen's speech is a reasoned criticism of escape into asceticism.

3. यमः—स्त्रिया भुवौ वा शास्त्रे वा प्रमत्तया न विधीयते ।  
प्रजा हि तस्याः स्त्री धर्मो सवर्णादिति धारणा ॥

(स्मृतिचन्द्रिका, व्यवहारकाण्ड, ed. Myore, p. 596)

4. पृथेः साहसदण्डः स्त्रिय प्रमात्तयमः (p. 48.)

(*gṛhasthāśrama*) is equally vital to society. While studentship is lauded, a prejudice grew against prolonging it to 36 and 48 years, on the plea of fully studying Veda after Veda. It is the reason for the condemnation of prolonged celibacy (*dāryakāla-brahmacarya*) as unsuitable for Kaliyuga. The institution of lifelong *Brahmacarya* of the *Naiṣṭhika*,<sup>1</sup> who is to spend his life in the family of the teacher (*ācārya*) and which is commended by Manu (II, 243, 249)<sup>2</sup> as ensuring the student-celibate the highest spiritual destiny, is thus held to be barred. As a celibate student cannot be a teacher, his services are lost to the community by his vow (*vṛata*). A similar social purpose may be seen in the discontinuance of *upanayana* for girls and the consequential life in the teacher's house. A woman has a higher use for society than to become a blue-stocking.

While it is the aim of every one to strive for final liberation and to do all in his power to ensure his progress to the goal, the discipline of two last *āśramas* obviously provides a better approach to it than the second, which can be regarded as a suitable preparation for the two last. In the scale of values, *artha* and *kāma* are suitable to the *gṛhastha*, while that of *mokṣa* is the one and only aim for the hermit and ascetic. It is on this ground that *sannyāsa* is termed *mokṣāśrama*.

*The Life of the Sannyāsin.*

Baudhāyana indicates seventy years as the proper time for one to enter the last *āśrama*. It roughly corresponds to the prescription of the stage in the fourth quarter of a man's life. Entry into the *āśrama* is by formal rites, which are detailed by Baudhāyana and other *sūtrakāras*. An important and symbolic act in the ceremony is the grant of *abhaya* (assurance of freedom from fear) to all created beings (*abhayam sarvabhūtebhya dattvā*, VI, 39). After his formal entry, the ascetic is to provide himself with a drinking vessel, a staff made up of three bamboos tied together (*tridaṇḍa*), a water jar and tattered ochre colored garments. He is debarred from using metal vessels, owning money, having any contact with the world or worldly affairs, recalling his old name or associations, speaking to women, and from remaining in the same place for over

1. B. Bhattacharya, *Kalivarjyas*, 1943, pp. 46-48.

2. यदि स्वात्मिकं वाचं रोचते तदाः कुले ।

सुखः परिचरितेनमाचारैर्विमोक्षणात् ॥

यत्रं वारति यो विप्रो ब्रह्मचर्यमधिकृतः ।

स मण्डसुखमस्मानं न चेद्वालाभते पुनः ॥ (२, २४३, २४९)

three days except during the rainy season. He must pursue the steps in meditation, which are indicated in outline in the twelfth book of Manu, so as first to withdraw his mind from the world and then concentrate it on the Self. He should live abstemiously on cooked food collected after the householder's hearth has been extinguished, *i.e.* in the afternoon. He should wander alone, remain celibate and spend his time in reciting or calling to his recollection Vedic texts.

*Manusmṛiti* speaks of a type of renunciation, which allows the informal *sannyasta* to remain in his own house under the protection of his son (IV, 257-258, VI, 94-96). He gives up the performance of enjoined rites, assumes the ascetic role but remains in the house, without becoming a wanderer.<sup>1</sup>

*The Hermit.*

Manu allows entry into the order of hermit only after one has fulfilled his duties in domestic life and is satiated with it. He must no longer be needed for his family or for his community. His renunciation is only of his associates and his dwelling, and the choice of an *araṇya* (forest) for dwelling is to enable him to practise undisturbed different forms of austerities. (VI, 20-28). He takes his household fires with him, and, in at least the earlier stages of his hermit life, he maintains the five fires. He must bathe thrice a day (VI, 22, 24), and his inhibitions include the eating of flesh, grain grown on cultivated land, honey, and maintaining domestic utensils, and some of the periodical sacrifices also. He may end his life by starvation or by walking on till he drops dead. (VI, 31). He may go alone to the forest, leaving his wife under the care of his sons, or she may follow and serve him in the hermitage. He is allowed to beg his food in the adjoining village (VI, 27-28). He must accept no gifts (VI, 8).<sup>2</sup> He is exhorted to be compassionate to all creatures, to cultivate a mood of serenity, to study the *Vedānta* (*i.e.* the Upaniṣads) and recite the Veda. Unlike the two types

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1. महापितृदेवानां गवाऽऽनुष्य चपाचिषि ।  
पुत्रे सर्वे समासुच्य वसेन्माभ्यस्थमाश्रितः ॥  
एकाकी चिन्तयति विविचे हितमात्मनः ।  
एकाकी चिन्तयानो हि परं त्रैलोक्यमिच्छति ॥ (४, २५७, २५८)  
दशलक्षणं भर्तृमुत्तिष्ठन् समाहितः ।  
वेदात्मं विभिनश्शुक्ला संप्रसेदयुक्तो द्विजः ॥  
सन्मस्य सर्वकर्मणि कर्मदोषानपायुद्वेत् ।  
निपुणो वेदमन्थस्य संप्रसेदयुक्तो द्विजः ॥ (६, २४-२५)
  2. दावा तिस्रमादावा (६, ८)

of ascetics, described already, he does not altogether *renounce* the world; he only *retires* from it. He does not lead a wandering life. He keeps up the lifelong obligation to perform enjoined Vedic rites. The dedication for social service that some modern students have seen in his life is not inferable from the description in the smṛtis.

The two last *āśramas* have more value to their own members than to society, except in removing from active life men who had grown too old for efficient conduct of affairs, and thereby provided a natural mode of superannuation. The third *āśrama* was not only open to Kṣatriyas but was perhaps open to Vaiśyas also, as Manu uses the word *devya* as regards entrants to the *āśrama*. According to the *Vaiśāṅgīya Dharmasūtra* (XIV, 117-118), however, all four *āśramas* are open to the Brāhmaṇa, all except *Sannyāsa* to the Kṣatriya, all but the last two to the Vaiśya and only *Gārhasthya* to the Śūdra.

The selection coincides with the lay interests of society, which can ill afford to lose the services of its economic classes.

Unlike the *sannyāsin*, the *vānaprastha* is not inducted into his *āśrama* by any special ceremonial. The option to leave his wife behind, when he retires to the forest, or take her with him, is interpreted by Medhātīthi as implying that she is to be left behind if still a matron (*taruṇī*) and taken to the forest if she is also aged (VI, 3).<sup>1</sup> Both have to observe the vow of continence.<sup>2</sup> The time for departure to the forest is *Uttarāyana*. The appearance of grey hair and the birth of a grandson are to be taken as *alternative* indications of the approach of the time for departure from household life, according to Vijñāneśvara, but Mitrāmīśra dissents from this view. He should observe a vow of silence as far as possible (*Īpastamba*, XXII, 18, 21). He may build a hut for his fire, but should himself live in the open and sleep on the bare ground (*Ib.* XXII, 24). He can eat only the salt he himself prepares (VI, 12). He should not, according to a dictum ascribed by Mitrāmīśra to Vasīṣṭha but not found in the printed text of the smṛti, re-enter his village. But he is not cut off from his old family and friends. Gautama prohibits his stepping on land that has been ploughed (III, 32-33). He may hoard his food but not for more than a year (VI, 15; Gautama, III, 35). He must become impervious (by his training) to sensation, pleasant or unplea-

1. यदि भार्याया इच्छा तदा सहागमनं, अन्यथा पृच्छाकृतः ।

अन्ये तु वस्त्रो निक्षिप्य वृद्धया संवेति वर्णवस्त्रि ॥ (मिमांसिभिः, ६, ३).

2. निम्नोच्चिन्वतेन्द्रियः (६, ४)

sant; be the same whether his body is shampooed with sandal paste or torn by thorns (*Yājñavalkya*, I, 53) ! The hard life that he leads will take him to the realm of Brahman (*Brahmaloke mahīyate*, VI, 32) "free from sorrow and fear" (*viśaśohabhayaḥ*). The general view is that the hermit has the same access to *mokṣa* as the *yatī*, through his mode of life, but Medhātithi holds (after a long discussion) that he attains only the inferior end of *Brahmaloka*. In two respects the ascetic and the hermit differ. The latter is allowed to commit suicide by starvation or by *mahāprasthāna* (the great journey), while the ascetic must await his natural end, and the hermit apparently has no penance to do or punishment to undergo if he reverts to his house, while the ascetic who gives up *sannyāsa* becomes for life the slave of the king.<sup>2</sup>

Mere entry into the two *āśramas* will not assure one *mukti*. The steps to *mukti* are usually stated as five: loss of illusions; extinction of all desire; overcoming the feeling of personality; complete disappearance of any tinge of attachment to the world; and absolute isolation. All these may be obtained even when one is in the second *āśrama*, but the isolation in the forest or the life of the ascetic offer greater facilities for obtaining them. While the two first stages of life were compulsory for all *devījas*, being *saṁskāras*, and the second obligatory for all but the very few who elect to remain celibate-students for life (*naśthika*), the last two *āśramas* are only commendatory and optional. The third *āśrama* (from the instances in the epics) seems to have been more for Kṣatriyas than for Bāhmanas, and its gradual disappearance, after inclusion among the inhibitions of Kaliyuga, is intelligible. It is noteworthy that it continued to be described in medieval digests as available. It was harder than the last, because of the obligation to continue the prescribed sacrifices. If life is viewed as a sequence of symbolic sacrifices (*yajña*), the life of the first *āśrama* provides for *brahma-yajña*, of the second for *karma-yajña* and the last two for *jñāna-yajña*.

If the *āśramas* are viewed from the standpoint of the relation of the individual and the community, in the first *āśrama* the group looks after the individual *Brahmacārīn* and his teacher, the maintenance of both becoming a social obligation: in the second, the individual, as *pater familias* has to look after groups, family, society, etc; in the third the individual becomes independent of the group,

1. यः कण्ठकैवितुदति चन्दनैरेषं लिम्पति ।  
अकृदोः परितुष्टश्च समस्तस्य च तरव च ॥ (वाङ् ०, ३, ५३)  
2. प्रव्यवाचसितो राज्ञो दास आमरणापिकम् । (वाङ् ० २, १८१)



and becomes absorbed in himself; and in the fourth, though slightly dependent still on the support of society, the individual is only concerned with the ultimate end and not the immediate present, being virtually not only out of society but of this life. From the first to the last, all effort and training for it are to gain the supreme end, and in the progress to it individual and society co-operate. The *abhayādāna*, with which the entry into *sannyāsa* is symbolized, is, like the *vaiśvadeva* offering, a reminder of the one-ness of life and the kinship of self.

*The First Āsrama.*

Entry into the initial stage of life was to be after one has undergone the *sauśkāra* of *upanayana*. *Upanayana* means literally "leading to a person or object". In the case of the initiation of a *dvija*, for which it stands as a denomination, it means both; leading the student to *Sāvitrī-mantra*, and to the *ācārya*, who will initiate him into *Sāvitrī* and be his teacher throughout the period of studentship (*brahmacarya*). The *upanayana* marks not the beginning of education, but of Vedic instruction. After the *sauśkāra* of *caula* (tonsure) comes a ceremony named *vidyārambha*, initiation into learning, i.e. literacy. The *caula* or *caḍākarman* was obligatory for *dvijas*, i.e. it was to be done for the sake of spiritual merit (*dharmaśukra*) between the first and third years of the child. *Vidyārambha* is not a *sauśkāra* as it is teaching a child only his letters. According to Aparārka,<sup>1</sup> it was to be done in the fifth year of the child, and in any case before the *upanayana*. The performance of the ceremony, in spite of its not being a *sauśkāra*, indicates the desire for universal literacy in ancient India. For, according to the smṛtis (e.g., *Manu*, II, 66) every *sauśkāra* was to be done for a girl as for a boy, but (with the exception of marriage), it was to be done without *mantra*. Similarly, Śūdras, though pronounced as not needing sacraments for which they lacked the worth, are allowed by Manu (X, 126-127) to go through the ritual of the *dvijas*, 'without incurring sin but winning praise,' without repeating the prescribed *mantras*. There is a statement of Kauṭilya that a prince (i.e., Kṣatriya) was to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic before his *upanayana* and after his *caula* (I, 5: *vṛttacaulakarmāḥ līpīm saṅkhyānam ca upayujjīta*), but as the *upanayana* of the Kṣatriya is three years later than that of a Brāhmana boy, the duration of lay-schooling must be longer in the case of the former. Manu makes no reference to lay learning, and it must not be presumed from it that in the case of the first *varṇa* especially, the

<sup>1</sup> pp. 20-21.

initiation into the three "R's" was omitted. It was probably done in the case of girls and Śūdras also, without a formal ceremony, as it is still done.

Universal literacy was the ideal. Just as we find that a king (in the *Mahābhārata*) boasts that there are no beggars in his kingdom, so king Aśvapati boasts (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, V, 115) that there was no illiterate person in his kingdom.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the three first *varṇas* at least some advance in literacy must be postulated before *upanayana*, which every boy in these *varṇas* must undergo, unless physically defective. The edicts of Aśoka are incised on rocks or pillars, which were placed on frequented highways and places. They are in the vernacular. It is open to presume that in his far-flung dominions there must have been widespread literacy, as without it they would be purposeless. We have in Vātsyāyana references to the literacy of girls.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of *upanayana*, from a cosmic standpoint, is to enable a *dvija* to discharge the first of the three natal debts. The institution is ancient and goes back to the Veda. The time for it is the eighth year from conception in the case of the Brāhmana, the eleventh in the case of the Kṣatriya and the twelfth in the case of the Vaiśya. These ages may be advanced, according to Manu (II, 37), to the fifth, sixth and eighth years in the three *varṇas* respectively, if the father desires that the son should be proficient in the chief activity of the *varṇa*, *viz* Vedic learning, power, or success in business.<sup>3</sup> It does not mean that the education of the children in the caste-pursuits will begin earlier, but it is expected that the spiritual merit will give the advantage specified in each case. Initiation must be completed before a certain age, if the boy is not to become a *vratya*—the limit is the 16th year for the Brāhmana, the 22nd for the Kṣatriya and the twenty-fourth for the Vaiśya. The later start and longer interval for *upanayana* without loss of caste, in the case of the second and third *varṇas*, may reflect a view of their spiritual immaturity, at the same age as a Brāhmana child, or the absence of any necessity for such children to be proficient in the same Vedic learning as the latter. The curriculum for a prince was probably also that for a Ksatriya

1. न मे स्तेनो जतपदे, न कदर्यो, न मन्थो, नानादितामिर्नोविद्वान् ।

(छान्दो० उप० ५, ११, ५)

2. See *Kāmasūtra*, p. 229; and H. C. Chakradar—"Social Life in Ancient India—Studies Vātsyāyana's Kāmasūtra," p. 175 and pp. 180-181.

3. ब्रह्मचर्यसंकास्य कार्यं विप्रस्य पञ्चमे ।

राशो ब्रह्मर्षिनः षष्ठे वैश्यस्तेष्वामिनोऽपि ॥ (१, २७)

generally; and it included subjects like philosophy, economics, and politics in addition to the Veda, and had to be completed before the age of majority or soon after. In the case of a prince it would be unreasonable to expect the continuance of education beyond the period absolutely necessary for his future responsibilities.

It would be interesting to note the importance assigned to education in ancient Indian social thought. Education came first. It was every one's birthright. If *vidyāranbha* was the beginning of literacy, *upanayana* marks the induction into sacred and redeeming lore. The training for other *varṇa* functions like direction and teaching (*śikṣā*) for the Brāhmana, protection (*rakṣā*) for the Kṣatriya, and productive activity (*jivikā*) for the Vaiśya are involved as corollaries to the education that starts with both the ceremonies. Receptiveness to the urge of social duty is what Hindu educational discipline aimed at. The boy was made from the beginning to realize his dependence on others for both material sustenance and for moral and spiritual food. The rule that marriage should come *after* the completion of education, in the case of *dvijas*, carried the implication that those on whom the main duties of bearing the burden of the community fell, *viz.* the householders, should not remain an uneducated or untrained section. An educated parent implies an educated child. A father, who had undergone the discipline in *gurukula*, will appreciate the value of the training for his own children. In Manu's system, no citizen, at least no *dvija*, can remain uneducated, undisciplined and impervious to his social and spiritual duties. In both a narrower and a broader sense, education, according to the smṛtis, implied a *complete* training. In the larger sense, it was held to comprehend all the preparatory processes for making the body, the mind and the spirit respond to the call for the task of moulding activity to the ultimate end of existence. The body must be sanctified for the residence of the purified self. The *samskāras*, which punctuate life, are designed to this end. Manu is clear on the point. If this human frame is to be made a suitable mansion for the Soul (*Brāhmiyaṁ kriyate tanuḥ*, II, 28), the preparation must be made with the holy rites laid down by the Veda, in the due performance of the rites of sacrament (*samskāras*) like *garbhādhāna*, the *homas* during pregnancy, the *jātakarma*, *caula* and *mañjibandhana* (initiatory ceremony). They remove the taint received from both the parents at birth; and the self must be made fit by the study of the Veda, by the practice of vows, by *homas*, by the acquisition of Vedic learning, by offerings to the gods, sages and the manes, by begetting sons, by performing the great sacrifices and by Śrauta rites. The body and the mind, "the physique and the psyche," are to be freed from the contamination to which the human birth is

subject. The transfiguration of man is to be accomplished by a process, spread throughout life, in which the culture of the mind and the spirit are not more essential than the training of the body. The ascetic habits of studentship, which anticipate the greater rigors of the last two āśramas, and the discipline of vows (*vrata*) spread throughout family life, mark the beginning of the process of the sublimation of body and spirit, which is the purpose of lifelong education of both (*Manu*, II, 26-28).<sup>1</sup>

What the body is to the spirit that secular studies are to spiritual. When a boy, after initiation, takes his place along with boys of his age, in the house of the teacher (*ācārya*), he becomes a member of a brotherhood in which social inequality is obliterated. In submission to a common code of conduct (which begins with the collection of fire sticks, *śamīdh*, for his daily offering to the fire, and is continued in his collection of alms both for himself and fellow pupils and members of the family of the *ācārya*) and to an abstemious mode of life, from which every trace of luxury and comfort has been removed, the *Brahmacārin* learns many lessons: the higher value of the spirit over the body, the pettiness of the grosser appetites, the subordination of self to the call for work for others, the interdependence of all members of society, the transitory nature of family bonds as compared with spiritual bonds, the duty owing to the teacher and guide, who, without remuneration, teaches and cherishes him, the power of continence, and the cultivation of good manners as well of good morals, and vision of ultimate and real values. It begins with the gift of the *Sāvitrī*, to every foot of which mystic virtue is attached (II, 76-79).<sup>2</sup> The mother is the author of mere physical birth; the teacher and *Sāvitrī*

1. वेदिकैः कर्मभिः पुण्येतिष्विवादिर्विजन्मनाम् ।  
 कायैः शरीरसंस्कारः धामनः त्रेल चेह च ॥  
 गुणैर्होमेनात्मनोचोचमोर्जाकश्चने ।  
 वैशिक गाभेके चैतां द्विजानामपशुव्यते ॥  
 स्वाध्यायेन त्रैलोक्येतिष्विष्येन्यथा सुतेः ।  
 महावैश्व यज्ञैश्च मात्मानं क्षिपते तनुः ॥ (३,२९-२८)
2. अकारं चात्युकारं च सकारं च प्रजापतिः ।  
 वेदव्यवाहितदुहृद् भूर्भुवःस्वरितीति च ॥  
 विश्वं पृथुं वेदेभ्यः पारं पादमदुहृद्पृथु ।  
 तदित्युचोडत्याः सावित्र्याः परसेधो ममापतिः ॥  
 परतश्चरमेतां च जगन् व्याहृतिपूर्वकम् ।  
 संव्ययेवेदविद्विषो वेदपुण्येन सुख्यते ॥  
 सद्गुणकृत्वस्वभ्यस्य बहिरितेर्त्तु चिकं द्विजः ।  
 महतीऽप्येनसो मातास्यचेत्वाहिविद्युव्यते ॥ (२,७९-७९)

are the the authors of spiritual birth (II, 170) <sup>1</sup> The teacher who initiates the student is as much a father as his parent (II, 171).<sup>2</sup> But for the initiation he would have remained a Śūdra—for all are born as Śūdras—till reborn through initiation into *Sāvitrī* (II, 172) <sup>3</sup> A third birth for the twice-born comes when a *dvija* is initiated as a sacrificer. It is not mere memorizing of the *Veda* that he must learn; he must master the secret behind the *Veda* (*rahasya*), i.e. the philosophy of existence that one finds in the *Upaniṣads*. That is *Vedāśāstra*. Mere power in the hands of persons who are ignorant of Reality will only be put to improper and ruinous use. Not so when it is vested in men who have mastered the hidden truth of the *Veda*. A general or a king may conquer this world, and lose it and his soul; but he who has mastered the truth behind existence and has a sense of true values has secured union with Brahman, even though he still seems to be in our midst. It is he, declares Manu proudly, who merits the command of armies and the kingship of the world, not the men who get it, without the knowledge, balance and penetration (XII, 100).<sup>4</sup> The magnification of the first *varṇa* which we find in *Manusmṛiti* and in smṛtis generally is not the laudation of a caste as of those in whom this redeeming knowledge, that is used from generation to generation for the education and spiritual uplift of *all*, is found. It is the teacher of *adhyaत्मविद्या*, actual or potential, not the class to which one belongs, that secures veneration. The *śrotriya* (learned Brāhmaṇa householder) is the only person competent to give this teaching. If the class is starved out, society perishes. The *śrotriya* is not an ordinary Brāhmaṇa. In a familiar definition, he is one who has many devoted disciples (*śiṣyārah*), who follow him, and who unites learning to a blameless life. It is he who cannot be drawn away from his higher duty by being summoned as a witness in court (VIII, 65). It is he who is free from taxes (VII, 133), for he pays society by his unremunerated educational and spiritual services. It is his property that cannot be lost by adverse possession (VIII, 149).<sup>5</sup> It is he whom the king must delight to honour and support (VII,

1. वनं ब्रह्मज्ञानमास्य मौर्षीभ्यश्नानिद्विहम् ।  
सत्रास्य माता सावित्री पिता स्वर्णार्थं वच्यते ॥ (२,१७०)

2. वेदप्रदानादाचार्यं विदं परिचक्षते ॥ (२,१७१)

3. यद्वेदे हि समस्तासनायवेदे न ज्ञेयम् । (२,१७२)

4. सनास्य च राज्यं च दण्डनेत्येवम् च ।

सर्वलोकाधिपस्य च वेदशास्त्रविदरहितं ॥ (१२,१००)

Dr. K. P. Jayaswal construes this as a justification of Puṣya-mitra's usurpation.

5. राजसर्वं श्रोत्रिवस्यं च न भोगेन प्रणश्यति ॥ (८,१४२)

134-136), for he is the spiritual stay of the community.<sup>1</sup> Honour and veneration are his due, and are shown vicariously even to those of his blood (III, 184),<sup>2</sup> who carry his tradition of Vedic learning. It is the apotheosis of the teacher. Manu is not unaware of Brāhmaṇas, who neglect learning and sink to the Śūdra level (II, 168).<sup>3</sup>

The significant change in the position of the *Brahmacārin* that *upanayana* brings about may be seen from a few results. During studentship, the student is cut off from his family. His is a life of dedication for study and service to the teacher. Birth and death impurities in his family do not touch him, for he is one under a vow (*vratin*).<sup>4</sup> Though he may be of opulent parentage, his first act, after his initiation, is to ask for alms, and it significantly begins with his mother, and nearest female relations, who are addressed as *Bhavati* (Lady), as if they were strangers. But afterwards he should collect alms only from strangers, and never exclusively for himself. His membership in society however asserts itself, as his Vedic studies are interrupted by the death of the king or during an interregnum.<sup>5</sup> Though moderation in food is advised for the student, the amount that he may consume is not restricted (*amitam brahmācārīṇaḥ, Vastīku, 6, 20*). The intimate relationship established between the teacher and pupil is indicated by both being regarded in fact as members of the same family. Misconduct with a teacher's wife (*gurutaḥpaya*) is an inexcusable sin, equal to the worst form of incest. The teacher and pupil observe death pollution if one of them dies. They can inherit to one another. Speaking ill of a teacher is like doing so of one's parents. The terms of affection established between them is indicated by the teacher repeating towards the pupil, during *upanayana* virtually the same formula of address, as the bridegroom uses towards the bride: "I place thy heart unto duty to me; may thy mind follow my mind, may you attend on my words single-mindedly; may Brhaspati appoint thee unto me." (In the formula used by the husband Prajāpati is substituted for Brhaspati).<sup>6</sup> The relationship is permanent. Casting off one's teacher is not merely

1. सत्यं राक्षसं विषये श्रोत्रियः सीदति श्रुत्वा । तस्मात्ति सत्युषा राष्ट्रमभिर्येव सीदति ॥  
संस्वप्तानो राजा न कुरुते भर्तृन्मन्त्रवद् । तेनाशुर्भवेत्तसो द्रविणं राष्ट्रमेव च ॥ (७, ११४, ११६.)

2. श्रावियान्मन्त्रजाड्येव विषेयाः पद्विषयतनाः । (१, १८४)

3. योऽनधीत्य द्विजो वेदमन्त्रं कुरुते श्रमम् । स जीवन्नेव द्वाह्यत्समाह्वयं गच्छति साम्बः ॥ (२, १६८)

4. न राज्ञामपरोक्षेऽस्ति प्रातिनां न च सविधाम् । (५, ९३)

5. विषयस्ये च राक्षि भेते (गीतम, १६, ३९)

6. अथास्य दक्षिणां सवधिद्वयमारुहते—“मम मते ते हृदयं दद्यामि मम चित्तमयुचिच्छ तेऽस्तु ।  
मम वाचमेकमना जुषस्व दृष्टव्यतिथ्या मितुनस्तु मद्यम्” इति ॥ (पारस्कर, पृ. ५., २, ३, १८)

indecorous and ungrateful; it is an offence. Each lesson begins with a benediction and prayer which both recite, and which symbolizes their union.<sup>1</sup>

The solemnity of the ceremonial and the way of life in the teacher's house are such as must model the plastic mind of the boy and attune it to the high purposes of life. By making *gṛukūlavāsa* obligatory, the distractions of the boy's family life are avoided. To lead the pupil from darkness to light was the function of the teacher, for which both prayed. A pupil could never forget that the obligation was all on one side, in the relations between him and his *ācārya*, and like the duty to parents it could never be forgotten. Among students, merit alone counted. In learning, its own weight alone counted; neither age nor position. Manu illustrates it by the apologue of young Kavi, who was so learned that he used to address his older relations as 'children' and was upheld by the gods on appeal on the score of his superior erudition (II, 151-153).

The salient feature of *brahmacharya* was its combining spiritual and moral training with intellectual. Deportment and behaviour received great attention, and the rules of salutation were scrupulously taught and enforced. The strict regimen, combined with constant employment in spiritual and mental activity, tended to keep the adolescent student from succumbing to the urge of the senses. Virginity in the student was not less prized than in the girl, and naming celibacy *brahmacharya* indicates the high honour in which personal purity was held as equal to 'living in Brahma', (II, 180, 175). Purity in thought and action must accompany mere bodily purity. Rectitude, abstemiousness, cleanliness and modesty were the virtues that the student imbibed under the teacher's roof. He went out of it, master of not only learning but of his self.

It has been stated that the principle of equality is not held up as a source of natural rights in India. It is recognized, however, in the treatment accorded in the family group, and in the *gṛukūla*, where no difference is made between *brahmachārīn* and *brahmachārīn* on the score of their family and economic position. To share in poverty is to learn to feel for those who suffer from it. That riches and poverty are accidental, that in long range vision they have no value, apart from their repercussion on character, are the lessons driven by the first *āśrama* into the receptive minds of the young pupils in their most plastic age. One's duty to one's fellow beings, and to one's own self (*ātman*), were the things that were taught him. Our advance in

1, *Tatt. Upaniṣad*, II, :

ॐ सद्यः नावबन्तु । सद्यः नो मुनवन्तु । सद्यः वीर्यं कर्तव्यवर्धे । तेजस्विनावधोत्सवस्तु मा विद्वेषवर्धे ॥

educational psychology and the psychology of adolescence has not carried us farther than the rules of the first *āśrama*, which sought to create the foundation for the life that was to make a man ultimately realize his self.

The life of the *brahmacārin* had two sides of activity : that devoted to the acquisition of knowledge in the highest sense (*vidyā*), and that in which the mind, soul and body were disciplined by a course of rigorous adherence to vows (*vrata*) of continence, truthfulness and poverty. The termination of a sacrifice (*yāga*) is signified formally by a ritual bath (*snāna*). The end of studentship was similarly marked. If the student had satisfied himself that he had acquired both *vidyā* and the fruit of the fulfilment of his vows (*vrata*), he was a *vidyā-vrata-snātaka*. He was qualified to enter upon the next stage of life. He had come back to the bosom of his family and the community from which he had been separated as a boy. A new set of vows and discipline awaited him, as one who had shown his capacity and learning. The duties of a *snātaka* are the duties of the citizen. He who had accomplished the aims of his studentship was a valuable potential member of the community. He was welcome as a guest (*atithi*) everywhere and was received with the rare honour of the *madhuparka* (honey - mixture).<sup>1</sup> He could take precedence even over the king in a road block, when way was to be made for both (II, 139).<sup>2</sup>

He is no more under tutelage. His life of disciplined asceticism is over, and he is free to use flowers and unguents. His ethical, civic and social duties descend on him the moment he marks the termination of *brahmacarya*. Even before he marries, he becomes liable to these duties. The Hindu ethical code is summed up in the duties of the *snātaka*. Much space is given by Manu and the *sāstras* and smṛtis to their detailed enumeration. The most important of them from a public standpoint, as noted by *Manusmṛiti* are these. He should not beg for his livelihood of any one but his pupils and the king—a suggestion of their obligation to maintain him.<sup>3</sup> He cannot accept help from a non-Kṣatriya king or a ruler who sets at naught the injunctions of the *Sāstras* (IV, 84, 87),<sup>4</sup> nor remain in the territory of

1. राजविक्रान्तकयूरम् दिव्यशयूलाद्भुजम् । जहंमैम्युपमंण परिसंभसरापुनः ॥ (३, ११९)
2. तेषां तु समवेदानां मान्यो ज्ञातकयाभिर्भो । राजज्ञातकयोश्चैव ज्ञातको नृपमानसाक् ॥ (२, ११९)
3. राजसो धनमन्विच्छेत्संसिद्धिम् ज्ञातकः शुभः ।  
राजास्त्रिभक्तिर्वापि न लभ्यत इति रिशतिः ॥ (५, १३)
4. न राजः प्रतिगृह्णीयाद्राजस्यमयुधितः । यदाचकञ्चजवर्गं विद्वेत्तैव च जीवराजम् ॥  
नो राजः प्रतिगृह्णाति छन्दस्त्वोच्छाकषवर्तनः । स पवविण यातोमात्रकानेकविशयिम् ॥  
(५, ८५, ८७)



a Śūdra king (IV, 61).<sup>1</sup> He should avoid contact with sinners, *mlecchas*, and purse-proud people (IV, 79).<sup>2</sup> He should control the organs of sense gratification (IV, 177).<sup>3</sup> Many of the rules imply the married state of the *snātaka*. The *Gṛhasṭha* is a *snātaka*, in the sense of having successfully graduated in the first *āśrama*.

Education does not require *upanayana*. Women and Śūdras obtain it without undergoing the rite, for which they are denied the competence. Both are asked to have the *sanskāras* done for them without the recitation of Vedic *mantras*. (II, 66).<sup>4</sup> Just as a child, though born of *dvija* parents, is treated as a Śūdra till he undergoes initiation, a woman is also treated as regards her *adhikāra* (religious competence) to perform Vedic rites like a Śūdra (*stiri Śūdravrat*). There is, however, a great difference in the position of *dvija* women and Śūdras. In all his Vedic rites and vows the *dvija* householder is associated in their performance with his wife. When a *dvija* loses his wife, he loses his *Agni* (Fire) and cannot do the fire-rites unless he marries again. No gift is valid unless the wife pours water over the husband's out-stretched palm. By necessity, therefore a Brāhmaṇa wife must be conversant with Vedic ritual and the meaning of many *mantras*, though she may not be authorized to repeat them. She was expected to learn their meaning from her husband or her father. Manu, consistently with his rule against women's *sanskāras* being done with Vedic *mantras* (with the exception of the *sanskāra* of marriage or *vivāha*) considers that she can be purified by one *ācamana*, even if she is a *Brāhmaṇī*, like any Śūdra, instead of having to make three *ācamanas* like a Brāhmaṇya (V, 139).<sup>5</sup> He considers that marriage is the rite of initiation (*upanayana*) for women, and the contingent duties of living with the teacher and of tending the household Fire, which a Brahmacārin has to do, may be done by her by serving her

1. न चद्राक्ष्ये निवसेन्नापार्मिकजनाह्वते ।  
न वापि निजनाक्रान्ते नोपसृष्टेऽस्त्यैरुचिः ॥ (४,६१)
2. न सवसेच पतिरिदं व्याचक्षते न पुच्छते ।  
न मूर्ध्नि नावच्छिद्येथ नास्त्री संगमनासाधिमिः ॥ (४,७९)
3. न पाणिपादचरणौ न शेषवस्त्रोऽन्यत्रुः ।  
न स्यादात्मचरणौ न पदौ हस्तयोः ॥ (४,१०७)
4. अग्निश्वा इ कर्षेत् स्त्रीणामाह्वशेषतः ।  
संस्कारथे शरीरस्य यथा कालं यथाक्रमम् ॥ (२,६६)
5. विराचाभिदयः पूर्वं दिः प्रशुभ्यात्ततो मुखम् ।

See also

शारिर् लौचमिच्छद् दि कौशुद्रस्तु सकसकृद् ॥ (५,११९)

सकृदाचामिदं विभेति स्युतिर्कोट्युपात् । (शुद्धकलाशुक्ल,

husband and attending to her domestic duties (II, 67).<sup>1</sup> The *anupanīta* (uninitiated) boy of *dviija* parentage is treated as a Sūdra.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, as an un-married girl is treated by Manu as an *anupanīta*, she must be treated also as a Sūdra for ritual purposes. In older literature we read of women who did Vedic rites. Verses, ascribed to Hārīta and Yama, are cited in some digests<sup>3</sup> to show that once upon a time, the rite of *upanayana* was prescribed for girls also, but that such girls did the alms collection (*bhikṣā*) within their own homes and had their Vedic instruction from the male elders of the family. The division of women into *brāhṃavādīnī* and *sadyovadhā*, both of whom underwent *upanayana*, on the ground that if no such initiation ceremony took place for women they will remain Sūdras<sup>4</sup> and *dviijas* could not be born of Sūdra wombs, is not endorsed by Manu. Manu definitely rejects the competence of a woman to perform a sacrifice (IV, 205).<sup>5</sup> In the case of men, *upanayana* precedes, as an essential qualification for the marriage of *dviijas*; in the case of women, according to the rule of Manu cited above, it will coincide with marriage, and obviate the objection that the offspring of such unions will be born in Sūdra wombs. In Manu's scheme women have *varṇa*, not *āsrama*. They were shut out, in Hinduism, from *sannyāsa*. The *pravrajitā* (female ascetic) with whom intercourse is punishable (VIII, 363) is obviously one belonging to a heretical sect.<sup>6</sup>

1. वैवाहिको विधिः स्त्रीणां संस्कारो वैदिकः स्युतः ।

पतिसेवा शुरैः बासो युराशौंडमिवरिमिवा ॥ (१, १७)

2. रक्षसंसारि—अनुपनीताः स्त्रियद्राथ आह्वयस्त्रियया कारयेयुः स्वयं वाऽमनुजं कुण्डं । (सूक्तगणक, p. 54)

3. यमोऽपि—पुरा कस्मै कुमारीणां मौर्धावप्यनमित्यते ।

अध्यापनं च वेदानां सावित्रीवाचनं तथा ॥

स्वयं वैव कन्यायाः शैश्वर्यां विधीयते ॥ (संस्कारप्रकाश, pp. 402—403).

प्रायजसः [स्त्रीणां] समानतेनम् । (संस्कारप्रकाश, p. 404)

4. द्विविधाः स्त्रियः, महावादिन्यः सशोकवधः । तत्र महावादिनीनामुपनयनमस्मिन्न वेदाभ्ययन स्वयं च निष्ठाचर्येति । सशोकवधुर्न तु लभिते विवाहे कर्मविदुपनयनमात्रं कृत्वा विवाहः कार्यः ॥

Cited from Hārīta in संस्कारप्रकाश, p. 402

5. नाश्रोत्रियवस्ते यथे मानयातिकृते तथा ।

स्त्रिया कृत्रिनं च कुले मुञ्जीत माह्वगः कथिम् ॥ (४, २०५)

6. किञ्चित्स्वयं तु दाप्यः स्वासंनार्थां ताभिराचरन् ।

त्रैव्यासु शैकनकासु ररः प्रव्रजितासु च ॥ (८, ३६३)

Govindarāja cites a statement of Baudhāyana, not found in the printed text, that 'some authorities permitted even orthodox women to become ascetics.' Govindarāja and Kullūka take *pravrajitā* to refer to Buddhist nuns.

*The Householder.*

Society is rooted in the family, which is formed of the union of the sexes. Marriage is the foundation of social existence. A celibate is anti-social. If celibacy became universal mankind will cease to exist. This is the reason for the Hindu disapproval of an unmarried state for women, and for the cold attitude even to lifelong celibacy of men. We are familiar, especially after the enormous wastage of man-power in the War, of the dread that creeps on nations in which the birth-rate shows a downward trend, and the encouragement that statesmen offer to motherhood. The attitude of Arthashastra and Dharmaśāstra was the same. They hold up the married state as an ideal, and extol the state of the householder (*gṛhastha*). The first and last *āśramas* are not authorized to cook their own food and have to subsist on alms provided by the householder. Manu permits the hermit also to live on alms that householders provide (VI, 27-28).<sup>2</sup> *Gṛhasthya* is the source of support for the other three *āśramas*. According to the doctrine of sequence of *āśramas*, and the option to become an ascetic either after the life as a hermit or after that of the *gṛhastha*, the second *āśrama* is the stepping stone to the fourth. Manu places the life of the householder above those of the others, because he bears the burden of supporting them (*bhṛti*), and states that as all rivers find their rest in the ocean, so all *āśramas* find their abode in that of the householder (VI, 89-90).<sup>3</sup> This laudation of family life is ancient. Gantana extols it as the source of the others, and as superior to them, as they are by themselves sterile and unable to perpetuate themselves. (III, 35).<sup>3</sup> He asserts that it is the only *āśrama* (II, 36).<sup>4</sup> The redemption of the ancestors from detention in

- 
1. तपसेष्वेव भिक्षुषु वालिकं वैश्रमाचरेत् ।  
गृहमेधिषु बाल्येषु द्विषुषु वनवासिषु ॥  
\* मामादात्मीष वाक्षीषाददृष्टौ यासां वृत्तं वसत् ।  
प्रतिगृह्य सुदैनैव पाणिना शकलेन वा ॥ (६, २७-२८)
  2. सर्वेषामपि वैशेषां वेदरमुतिविधानतः ।  
गृहवच उच्यते श्रेष्ठः स प्रोक्तस्तान् विनाति हि ॥  
यथा गदीनदाः सर्वे सारिरे यातिव संस्थितिम् ।  
तथैवाश्रमैः सर्वे गृहस्थे यातिव संस्थितिम् ॥ (६, ८९-९०)
  3. तेषां गृहस्थो योनिम्रेजनवाहितरेपात् । (गीतम, ३, ३५)
  4. ऐश्वर्यं स्वाचार्याः प्रत्यक्षविद्यात्प्रादुर्यस्य (गीतम, ३, ३६)

*put*, and the three natal debts are possible only to those of this *āśrama*. The magnification of the life in the family represents a reaction to an ancient tendency to set up asceticism as the only form of spiritual life. Dharmasāstra saw in *grhasthāśrama* a support of the ordained system of the universe as well as of human society. Arthasāstra saw in it the foundation of social and economic life. Religious and political considerations converged in appreciation of it.

In a popular view, one becomes a *grhastha* only in order to marry. This is an inversion of the truth. He marries to become a *grhastha*, as competence for many religious acts springs only from the association of husband and wife. The birth of the child completes marriage, by fulfilling its primary object. The Hindu unit of society is a triad, consisting of father, mother and son. On the completion of *brahmacharya* and the lustral bath, one is qualified to become a householder, and it is only by taking a wife of his own *varṇa*, in accordance with *Dharma*, that he can set up as a householder. In the pilgrimage through life (*lokayātrā*), i.e. of worldly activity, the companionship of the wife is necessary not only for happiness and the satisfaction of desire, but for the performance of enjoined rites and for the full discharge of the duties of the new *āśrama*. For religious duties marriage is necessary, and a single marriage, resulting in the birth of a son, is sufficient to meet the requirements. This is why *smṛtis* view with disfavour the taking of more than one wife. *Āpastamba* prohibits the taking of a second wife by a *Grhastha*, who has already a wife who has borne him a son (II, 11, 12-13) <sup>1</sup> From the standpoint of religious obligation, a second marriage is pointless and unnecessary. The satisfaction of the sex-urge in a lawful way is but one of the many gains of marriage, as pointed out by *Manu* (IX, 28): progeny, life-long service, the highest pleasure, and heaven for himself and his ancestors are the gains<sup>2</sup>. Both service and sex-pleasure can be obtained by unions outside wedlock, but not the ritual and spiritual gains, to which the trained mind will attach more value. The *śnātaka* is virtually a householder, and is treated as one in the *smṛtis* in the specification of the duties laid on him, which makes no distinction between the two. For example, *Manu* prohibits a *śnātaka* from looking at a nude woman, except during sex-intercourse<sup>3</sup> and eating

1. धर्मज्ञानार्थं च दरे वाङ्मया कुर्वीत । अयमवराभाषि काव्यो प्रातन्यपिवादि ।  
(आप. प. ख., २, ११, १२-१३)
2. अपत्यं धर्मसाधार्थं क्षुद्रं वा रतिरुत्तमा ।  
दासकीनस्त्वया स्वर्गः विनुषामानन्दस्य ह ॥ (२, २८)
3. नर्घां नैक्षत च क्षिपन् ॥ (४, ५३)  
न नर्घा क्षिपन्नेक्षत भेषुनादन्वप । (तात्पर्यायनमृच्छसूत्र, ४, ११, १)

in company with his wife (IV, 43).<sup>1</sup> The chapter on the religious duties of the householder is headed, for instance, in Lakṣmīdhara's great digest, *snātakavratāni*. There was usually so little interval between the completion of studentship, the bath (*snāna*) and marriage that it was difficult to distinguish between *snānika* and *gṛahastha*. There must have been an interval between the return of the student home (*samāvartana*), after he became a *snānika*, and his marriage; for time must have been needed for the enquiries that must be made into the fitness of various possible brides, before the wedding can be settled. Nowadays, as *brahmacharya*, in the sense of living for many years with the teacher, has disappeared as a practice, there is an ample interval between *upanayana* and marriage, and the performance of the rites of *samāvartana*, *godāna* and *snāna* are done as a matter of routine, without any understanding of their meaning and purpose. The termination of one stage of life and the entry into another were solemn matters, which had to be marked by ceremonies that would impress the entrant with the gravity of his new responsibilities. This was the purpose of the institution of the three ceremonies, and of the ranking of marriage as a *samskāra*—a perfecting and purifying rite. Life is *incomplete* without matrimony. Marriage is the way to heaven (*dāraḥ svargasya samskārah*), because a wife has to be associated in the libations to ancestors and the sacrifices to the gods. Even in the married state, if the wife is temporarily incapacitated by ceremonial impurity, the rites have to be stopped till she is again pure.

Marriage is theoretically optional for the man, but in practice it was probably not; for women it was obligatory. The insistence of the marriage of girls before they attain puberty was not only to ensure marriage at a time when sex purity can be absolutely assured in a girl, but was due to the pressure of competition among eligible brides. This is the reason for the permission to a girl to choose a partner for herself and marry him, if she is kept unmarried for three years after she becomes nubile.<sup>2</sup> The woman who remains a spinster incurs both sin and loss of caste, according to the legend of Dirghatamas in the *Mahābhārata* (I, 113, 36-37).<sup>3</sup> To be mothers

1. माश्रीयाद्वार्यया धार्यं नैनाग्नीक्षेण वाश्रयाम् । (५,४१)

2. प्राणि वर्णाश्रुदक्षिण सुमनुं कुमती सती ।

कर्णे तु काण्ठदेहसामिच्छित्तं सद्दृशं पतिम् ॥ (९,९०)

3. अपतीनां तु नादीनामथामृतिं प्रातस्तम् ।

वयसि चैद्धनं सर्वं वृथयोगा सवस्तु ताः ॥

श्लोकानि: परिशुद्धाश्च नित्यं ताता भवन्तु वै ॥ (आदिपर्व, ११३, ३६-३७)

were women created, and to be fathers men. Husband and wife should do Vedic rites together (IX, 96)<sup>1</sup>; and the unmarried have no spiritual capacity (*adhikāra*) to do them, nor wife or husband apart from each other. The religious obligation to marry lies on both sexes. The strict rules restricting begging to stated occasions and purposes are relaxed in favour of a Brāhmana soliciting help for his marriage expenses (XI, 1), but it must be only for his first marriage.<sup>2</sup> If he has a wife already, and gets help for marrying a second wife, it will be only help given to procure him sensual gratification, and donor and donee lose the merit of the gift (XI, 5).<sup>3</sup> This is a discouragement of polygamy, which Manu, like other smṛti writers, views with disapproval, though he could not prohibit it altogether, as it was an old but disappearing custom. Its survival is shown by the rules regarding seniority among wives of equal caste, and of the rule that all the wives are mothers if one of them begets a son (IX, 183).<sup>4</sup> Marriage is eternal, and neither by sale nor by repudiation can a wife be released from the marriage tie (IX, 46).<sup>5</sup> and he who takes such a woman cannot become her husband. The sale of a wife is sinful (XI, 62).<sup>6</sup> If a wife bears no son, the marriage is, from the religious standpoint, a failure, and a husband will be at liberty to take another wife, but the first wife cannot be put away, after the second marriage, or lose the right to act in all sacramental functions with her husband. A barren wife can be superseded only after seven years, she whose children have all died in the tenth, and she who bears only daughters in the eleventh year. A wife of character, who is an invalid, cannot be superseded or disgraced without her own consent (IX, 81-82).<sup>7</sup> Wives of lower castes are

1. प्रजनाई शिष्यः दृष्टाः संतानार्थं च मानवाः ।  
तस्मात्साधारणौ धर्मः श्रुतौ परम्या सद्योक्तिः ॥ (९, ९६)
2. सांतामिक यद्वयागमभ्यर्चनं सर्वदेवसम् ।  
युर्वै शिष्यायार्थं स्वाभ्यासभुङ्क्तेवापिनः ॥  
नवैतान् ज्ञातवान् पिशादास्तान् धर्मभिक्षुकार् । (११, १-२)
3. कुत्सरोऽसम् दारान् विद्विना शोडश्याच्छति ।  
रतिमानं फलं तस्य दृग्ददुस्तु संततिः ॥ (११, ५)
4. सर्वोसामिकपत्नीगामिका वैश्वविनी न्येत् ।  
सर्वोस्तास्तेन पुत्रेण प्राह पुत्रवतीभ्युः ॥ (९, १८३)
5. न निष्कथयिस्ताभ्यां चतुर्भ्यां विमुच्यते ॥ (९, ४६)
6. (स्वामीयुवतावकाशि) तत्राचारानन्दरागामपलस्य च विक्रयः ॥ (११, ६९)
7. वन्यादभिशिष्याभ्ये दशमे द्वे मृतमना ।  
धृकार्थे क्वीजननी सप्तस्यवित्वादिनी ॥  
या रोगिणी स्वापु द्विजा संपथा वैज शोचतः ।  
सासुभ्यापेवेत्तया नावमाना च कर्हिपित ॥ (९, ८१-८२)

sacramentally unnecessary, and taking such wives is discouraged by Manu. The custom could not be condemned outright, but disapproval of it is evident in the rules laid down by Manu. Among wives of different castes, the wife of the same caste as the husband is alone competent to officiate in religious rites (IX, 86). If a man gets that wife's duty done by a wife of a lower *varṇa*, he is to be despised as a *caṅḍāla* (IX, 87).<sup>1</sup> Custom apparently allowed a man to marry wives of lower *varṇas*, but he could do so only in the order of the *varṇas* and only after he had taken a *savarna* wife (III, 12-13).<sup>2</sup> Manu disapproves of such unions, and cites rules to show that the husband sinks to the level of his lower caste wife by cohabiting with her and having sons by her. He denounces taking a Śūdra wife by a *dvija* (III, 12-17).<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding the condemnation, the practice persists in Kerala, and we have a historic record of the Brāhmaṇa poet Bāṇa's having a brother by a Śūdra wife of his father, who is still described as a *śrotriya*.

#### Marriage.

So important a step as marriage must be taken only after vigilant scrutiny of the fitness of the parties. They must be of equal lineage (*kula*), conduct and qualities, and the wife must be younger than the husband. The ancestry, health, and family history must be thoroughly examined. The rules detailed by Manu provide for the mating of only parties who have no physical defects, no trace of heritable disease, and are healthy. Manu recommends the rejection of a bride, even if her family be wealthy, if it is one in which religious rites have been neglected and the Veda is not studied, or in which male children are not born, or in which heritable diseases appear (III, 7).<sup>4</sup> As the object of the union is to carry on the line, Manu recommends the rejection of girl who has no brother (as there is a risk of her being made a *putrikā* or her son being taken

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1. मनुः सदैरक्षुभ्रं भर्तृकारं च नैवकम् ।  
स्वा चैव कुर्वन्स्वेषां नास्वजातिः कथंचन ॥  
वस्तु तस्कारयेमोहासजासा स्थितवान्मया ।  
यथा मातृजनचाण्डालः पूर्वदृष्टस्वथैव सः ॥ (९,८९-९०)
  2. सवर्ण्ये द्विजातीनां प्रशस्ता दारकर्मणि ।  
कामतस्तु प्रवृत्तानामिमाः स्युः क्रमशोऽहराः ॥ (३,१२)
  3. शूद्रां सवर्णमारीभ्य माहापो मास्यभोगीवित् ।  
जनवित्सा शूतं तस्यां माहाभ्यादेव ह्योवते ॥ (३,१७)
  4. ह्येनामिन्ने निष्पुत्रं निष्कन्धो रोमशाशंसम् ।  
क्षत्र्यामवावन्पत्नारिभिरिदुङ्गिङ्गुणादि च ॥ परित्तन्नेवैविल्लसुपङ्कः (३,७)

by her father as son), or whose father is not known. The parties must not be *sapindās* of the mothers and of the same *gotra* as the fathers (III, 5).<sup>1</sup> The rule of *gotra* and *sapindya* is laid down by Manu only for *dvijas* but *Sūtras* observe the prohibited degree of relationship, according to tribal or family custom.<sup>2</sup> The bride must be a virgin, and ordinarily one who had not attained puberty. Insistence on marriage within the *varṇa* for religious purposes is endogamous; exogamy comes in the *sapinda* and *sagota* prohibition. Hypergamy is discouraged, and *pratiloma* relations do not of course constitute marriage. Exclusion by *gotra* (assumed relationship) applies to *dvijas* and is absolute, that by relationship applies to all *varṇas*. Manu rules out cross-cousin marriages, (XI, 171-172) and considers them as likely to lead to loss of caste, but they are allowed as a local custom for the people of the South by Baudhāyana.<sup>3</sup> Under the maxim that an express rule of Manu supersedes those of any other *smṛti*, the prohibition has been upheld by digests like the *Kalpataru*.<sup>4</sup> The bridegroom should also be free from defects, and caution in marrying a girl to one devoid of character is enjoined by Manu (IX, 89).<sup>5</sup> He must be of attractive appearance, of good character and of good disposition. Manu does not refer to the question of his not being impotent, though the purpose of marriage will be defeated by allowing such a person to marry a girl, but writers like Nārada insist on tests of potency.<sup>6</sup> The rule that a *dvija* should marry only after his studentship is over, makes a boy—bridegroom impossible. The rule that a *dvija* bride should not have attained puberty before marriage rules out girls of over twelve years of age. The ideal ages of bridegroom and bride are stated illustratively by Manu (IX, 94); a man of thirty may marry a girl of twelve, or one of twenty-four a girl of eight. The existence of such disparity in age, at the outset, has been defended on the ground that a woman

1. अक्षयिष्ठा च वा मातुस्तमेया च वा पितुः ।

सा प्रशस्ता द्विजालीनां शतकर्मणि मैत्रिण ॥ (३,५)

2. Kamalākara (शुद्धकमलाकर, p. 109) holds the *sapindya* prohibition as applicable to *Sūtras*; but it is ignored in many areas, e.g. the Andhra country.

3. वैदुष्येयो नितिनी श्वलीयां मातुरेव च ।

मातुश्च भ्रातृस्तनयां मया चान्द्रायणं परेव ॥

पुत्रास्तिलस्तु मायांश्चैव नोपयच्छेदु बुद्धिमात् । (११,१७१-१७२)

4. *Gṛhasihabṛṇḍa*, ७-२२.

5. न वैधेतां प्रयच्छेत् शुभदीनाव कश्चिदिदम् । (९,८९)

6. *Nārada-smṛiti*, XII, 8-18.



is at her best when she is about eighteen and a man when he is about thirty, and that a union at those ages is best eugenically. Misfits in marriage arise when wives have already built up ideals of what their future husbands are to be like and find themselves disappointed. In Indian marriages romance comes after marriage and does not precede it. A girl whose affections are mentally pledged (*manodatta*) is regarded as equal to a married girl, and is recommended for rejection by some smṛtis, like any *puṅgarbhā*. A girl of very tender age can qualify for wifehood for religious purposes, says Lakṣmīdhara<sup>1</sup>, though not for progeny, and that is sufficient, as a bridegroom younger than twenty-four is permitted (IX, 94).<sup>2</sup> All that is required is that the wife should be younger.

Some aspects of marriage should be noted. Its primary aims are unworldly and uncaral. As a bride is required by an accomplished student (*śrīlābha*) to enable him to set up as a householder and establish the fires, the gift of a bride is the greatest of all gifts. It must be made without expectation of any return. If conditions are imposed, they must be only for the fulfilment of the sacramental purposes of the union. They are stated in *kanyādāna*. The sale of a bride, i.e. accepting a bride-price is *ātura*, not *dhārmika*. The ceremony of marriage involves two main steps: the gift of the bride and the subsequent ceremony of *udvāha*. To both are ascribed "unseen fruits" (*adr̥ṣṭa-phala*). There is no contract between bride and bridegroom in a marriage. This is why it cannot be annulled by any human power. Manu does not recognize divorce. The bond is not snapped that ties the wife and husband, even if he sells or abandons her (IX, 46). It is open to a wife to show aversion to a demented, impotent, or leprous or outcaste husband (IX, 79).<sup>3</sup> Manu, who disallows the remarriage of a widow (V, 162; IX, 65)<sup>4</sup> appears to allow the remarriage in *proper form* of a virgin widow (IX, 176) but she will still be held to be a *puṅgarbhā*.<sup>5</sup> Kauṭilya, who allows divorce, will not permit it after the first four forms of marriage (the

1. *Gṛhasāhāya*, p. 46.
2. अथर्ववेदवेदिका वा (१, १५)
3. अमरं धर्तुं कृमिभयान्नं पापरोगिणम् ।  
न स्तोत्रं हि विभ्रंसात् । (१, ७९)  
न द्वितीयं साध्वीनां कल्पिन्नरैरिच्छते । (१, १६९)
4. न विवाहविषादक विषमवेदनं पुनः ॥ (१, १६५)
5. सा चेदहस्त्वोपिः स्वाह्वलस्रजालाति वा ।  
पौत्रभेदेन अत्रो सा पुनः संस्कारमर्हति ॥ (१, १७९)

reputable forms).<sup>1</sup> As these are the common forms, it is tantamount to a rejection. That marriage is a contract between the parties will presuppose capacity to enter into a contract in both parties, which cannot be upheld at the age of the average ancient Indian bride. What a wife is entitled to springs from *Dharma*, not from stipulation at the time of marriage. The so-called conditions imposed on the bridegroom in the *Prājāpatya* form of marriage are promises and are not contractual.

Eight forms of marriage are named by Manu (III, 21). He rejects the *Rākṣasa* and *Puśāca* forms for all (III, 25). The quality of the form must be suited to the *guna* of the suitor, as indicated by his *varṇa*. The restriction of the first two to the *Brahmana* is due to their involving *kanyādāna*, for only a *Brahmana* may accept a *dāna*.<sup>2</sup> The belief is that only marriages suitable to a caste result in unseen benefits (III, 36-39).<sup>3</sup> As marriage is a duty, anything that might diminish the chances of a man or a girl discharging it must be discountenanced by *Dharma*. This is seen in the rules of *parivedana*, i.e., a younger man or girl marrying before the elder brother or sister is married.<sup>4</sup> (III, 171-172). All parties, in such an alliance, including the officiating priest are condemned as liable to fall into hell. But the forbidden act is allowed in the case of a

1. परस्परं द्रैयान्मोक्षः । स्त्रीविभक्त्यादात्तं पुरुषभेदोक्षमिच्छेद्यथाशुदीतमस्यै दद्यात् । पुरुष-  
विभक्तास्त्रा स्त्री भन्मोक्षमिच्छेत्सत्ये यथाशुदात्तं दद्यात् । श्रौ. श्र., p. 155)

2. A real *dāna* has unseen benefits. The gift of a bride to non-  
Brahmanas will not amount to a real *dāna* even though the transfer of  
the bride takes the form of a *kanyādāna*. Kamalākara (*op cit.* p. 109)  
writes—उदकपूर्वं कन्यादानस्य शूद्रं विकल्पेः । शूद्रकं माक्षे—

युक्तं तु पाणिग्रहण सर्ववर्णेषु सर्वथा ।  
जलपूर्वं तु विरायायन्येषामपि कान्यथा ॥  
मयुरसि—आर्द्धेण द्विजाग्रवाणा कन्यादानं विशिष्यते ।  
इत्येसां तु वर्णानामितरेतरकान्यथा ॥ (३,३५)

3. दश पूर्वान् परान् संवदानात्मान वैश्विषकम् ।  
माक्षीपुत्रः शुकुलकर्मोत्प्रेतरसः पितृन् ॥  
द्वैवीश्वजः सुतमैत्र सप्त सप्त पराशरम् ।  
आषोडशः सुतस्त्रोशोश्च पद् पद् कायोऽनः सुतः ॥ (३,३७-३८)

4. दाराशिशोषसंधानं कुर्वते योऽस्यते स्थिते ।  
परिक्षिप्ता स विद्वेषः परिक्षिपितस्तु पूर्वजः ॥  
परिक्षिपिः परिक्षिप्ता च यथा च परिक्षिप्यते ।  
सर्वे ते नरकं गच्छन्ति दारुमानकवधमाः ॥ (३,१७१-१७२)

man, if his elder brother definitely refuses to marry, or has disappeared from view for many years; it will also be allowed if the brother is an eunuch, or has become an ascetic.

*Gṛhasṭha's Rules of Conduct and Life.*

Rules of *Dharma* are classified as *yama*, what is forbidden, and *niyama*, what is imposed or enjoined. Both must be observed by every one, according to his *āśrama* and *varṇa*, and their detailed enumeration in *smṛtis* makes an ethical code. Manu makes the paradoxical statement that even in distress one should follow the *yamas*, though he need not observe the *nyamas*<sup>1</sup> (IV, 204). Rules may be stated in the imperative, or (as in the Christian decalogue) negatively, as prohibition. Buehler has rendered the two as 'paramount' and 'minor' duties. Manu's famous rule (which has often been misunderstood) that one must speak the truth and speak agreeably, must not speak what is true and unpleasant, and in any case never speak what is not true, is an instance of a *yama*<sup>2</sup> (IV, 138). Invasion of the right of property by theft (*steḥa*) is an offence against a *yama*. As only a householder can hold property, the *gṛhasṭha*, who violates the rule, acts suicidally. *Niyama* is enjoined conduct. To resist natural but wrong or unsocial impulses brings action under *niyama*. The duties of the householder are not exhausted by the two. The Indian systems of philosophy have dissected the psychological bases of action, traced the filiation of motives and evolved a moral code on psychological bases, which digests and late *smṛtis* reproduce.<sup>3</sup> A wise *gṛhasṭha* will by study, meditation and association with the virtuous learn them. It is when he gets the feeling that he has lived a good life, in accordance with *Dharma*, and is no more needed for the family, or society that he can proceed to the next *āśrama*.

*The Position of Women.*

We may close the consideration of the position of the *āśramas* with a review of the position of women in *Dharmaśāstra*. A society is rightly judged by the place it gives to women.

Manu notes that the two sexes are unequal in strength, stamina and psychology. Each complements the other. The attraction of the sexes to each other is deep-rooted in nature. Suppression or repression

1. यमाम् सेवेत सततं न तिलं निषमाम् दुषः ।  
यमाम् वतलङ्घनीणो निषमाम् केवलाम् मन्त्रम् ॥ (४, १३८)  
2. सखे मयादे प्रिय मयात्र श्रुयात्सखामिषम् ।  
प्रियं च चातुर्न मूढादिव धर्मैः सनातनः ॥ (४, १३८)  
3. See e.g. Lakṣmīdhara's *Gṛhasṭhahatya*.

of natural instincts is not; so, canalizing and sublimating them is the better way. Manu does not look down on *Kāma*, and only provides safeguards against improperly yielding to its urge. Unrestrained sex union might lead to a lowering of the human being; untrained, it may make him its slave. It is on this ground that celibacy is prescribed for the male, during studentship, and both the bride and bridegroom are expected to come together in wedlock without ante-marital sex experience. The passages in *Manusmṛiti* which seem to condemn the nature of women (II, 213-215 and IX, 17-20) are in reality warnings against the strength of the sex urge,<sup>1</sup> and the tendency of both men and women to succumb to it, unless taught restraint. In the family, in treatment as children, a girl and her brothers are equal. In the family, husband and wife are equal partners, and are unable to function independently of each other. The famous discussions on soil and seed are intended to enforce the importance of both man and woman. The husband is reborn in the wife as a son, and hence she is called *jāyā*. Fidelity in marriage is mutual (IX, 101).<sup>2</sup> The wife is the goddess of the home. Husband and wife are not two persons but one. If a woman fails it is due to her husband's lack of care and to want.<sup>3</sup> Woman is a social trust. If a girl has no guardian, the king becomes her guardian. A defenceless, or destitute woman becomes the king's charge. Woman's not being permitted to study the Vedas is a concession to her different nature. The high standard of conduct expected of a woman is a compliment, as she is made the custodian of social morality. The home is her field. The path to emancipation is made easier and shorter for her. The prohibition for her to do sacrifices or observe vows, independently of the husband, or without his approval, is to prevent her more important duties to her children, husband and home suffering by an unbalanced desire to duplicate the work of her husband. Manu enjoins the entire relegation of the management of the house to the wife. Vātsyāyana elaborates the idea and makes it the duty of the wife to maintain domestic accounts and frame the family budget. Woman is not to be kept ignorant or uneducated. Only her education is to be on lines different from those of man. Her school must be the home, her teachers her male relations, and her best teacher her husband. The birth of a son is necessary for the

1. मात्र स्वस्व दुष्टिना वा न निर्विच्छन्नो भवेत् ।  
बलानिद्रिष्टयामो विद्वत्समपि कर्तुः ॥ (२, २१५)
2. अन्येभ्यस्तथात्मचारो भवेदात्मणानिकः । (९, १०१)
3. अशुचिर्काशिता हि को प्रदुष्येतिपतिमसपि ॥ (९, ७४)

the salvation of the ancestors of a man, but a woman's liberation (*mukti*) does not depend on the birth of a son.<sup>1</sup> Hence a superseded wife need not re-marry. Even in submitting to *vivoga* a widow's purpose is not to raise a child for herself but to her dead husband, whose salvation is contingent on the birth. The ascetic life of the Hindu widow parallels that of the *vānaprastha*. The more emotional nature of woman necessitates the prohibition of asceticism to her, as she may lose herself in it. She needs to be shielded from its roughness. In the narrow limits of the family, a woman may find ample scope for her vogue for sacrifice as daughter, sister, wife, mother and widow. The home is her school of service and suffering. A wife must bear with even an unworthy spouse, and try to wean him from his evil courses by her meekness and virtue. Remarriage is not a haven for a wife deserted for eight years; the injunction of Manu to her to wait so long for a husband that may return, is not to be taken as a permission for her to remarry at the end of the period; its purpose is to make her enter then on the ascetic life of the faithful widow, as pointed out by Medhātithi (IX, 76). There is more virtue in resisting the sex-urge than in yielding to it. The lower rank of a Gāndharva marriage, and of penalizing a girl for giving herself away to a suitor of her own choice, by denying her jewellery, (IX, 92) are due to this truth.<sup>2</sup> The idea of the perpetual tutelage of the Indian woman is a myth. It is contradicted by the large freedom enjoyed by the wife in the management of the household,<sup>3</sup> (IX, 11), in the wife's concurrence being necessary for all gifts by the husband, including the giving away of a daughter in marriage (*kanyādānam*), by their enjoying rights of separate property and of disposal of it, by the rule that the family estate should not be partitioned between the sons during the life-time of the widowed mother<sup>4</sup> (IX, 104, and Kautilya, III, 5),<sup>5</sup> by the recognition of a widowed mother as the natural guardian of her minor children

1. See the elaborate discussion in Medhātithi's *Manubhāṣya*, ed. Jha, II, pp. 263—265.

2. अलङ्कारं नादत्तं विभं कन्या स्वयंवरा ।  
मालुं प्रायुदं वा स्तेना स्वाधदि सं हरेत् ॥ (९, ९२)

3. अथैव सुभदि धनं व्यये वैव निजोन्नेत् ।  
शौचे धर्मोन्नयनं न पारिषाद्यस्व वेद्ये ॥ (९, ११)

4. ऊर्ध्वं विदुश्च मालुम संमेल आतरः सतम् ।  
भवेत्तु वैदुर्कं रिक्थमनीयास्ते हि जीवतोः ॥ (९, १०४)

5. अनीश्वरः विदुस्त्वन्निधनादृक्कः युवाः । (शौ. अ. शाः p. 160.)

(Nārada, I, 37)<sup>1</sup> and by historical instances of women who have inherited kingdoms and governed them as queens. The famous declaration of Manu that the wife, the son and the slave (*dāsa*) are *adhanāḥ* (wealth-less, VIII, 416),<sup>2</sup> and his statement that a woman should not be left to herself (*na stri svātantryam arhati*, IX, 3)<sup>3</sup> because she has the protection of the father as a girl, of her husband as a wife and of her son as a mother, have been relied upon to support the doctrine. Correctly interpreted neither supports the view. The first is merely a limitation of a woman's freedom to dispose of family property, without the sanction of her husband. The second is only an enunciation of the duty cast on the father, the husband and the son to protect (and maintain) her. A woman never loses her lien on some male for support—and in the last resort on the State. . .

Dharmaśāstra raised a chaste wife to the rank of a goddess; it has raised the mother to the rank of divinity (*mātṛ-dēva*), along with the teacher and the father, and placed them immeasurably below her in the right to love and veneration (II, 145).<sup>4</sup> She is the best of teachers, and a super-teacher (*atī-guru*) according to *Viṣṇusmṛti* (XXXI, 1-2).<sup>5</sup> So long as one has a mother he never feels old (*Mahābhārata* XIII, 268, 30).<sup>6</sup> Indian history knows of some royal parricides but of no matricide. Abandoning a mother, even if she be an outcaste, is both a sin (III, 157, XI, 60) and a crime (VIII, 389).<sup>7</sup> The first earnings of the student must be tendered to his mother (*Āpastamba*, I, 7, 15).<sup>8</sup>

1. श्रीबहोस्सतन्त्रः स्वास्त्रस्यापि समन्वितः ।  
तवोरपि पिता श्रेयान् बीज्यायामन्दर्शनम् ॥  
अमतिं ब्रह्मिणीं माता सदमतिं तु पूर्वजः । (नारदस्मृति, ed. Jolly, p. 58.)
2. भार्या पुत्रश्च दासश्च अथ स्वात्मनाः स्मृताः । (८, ४१६)
3. पिता रक्षति कोमारं मर्ति रक्षति वीचने ।  
रक्षति स्वभेदे पुत्रा न को स्वात्मन्महति ॥ (९, ३)
4. उपाध्यायान् दशाचार्यं आचार्योणा क्षत्रं पिता ।  
सर्वत्रं तु पितृन् माता गोविद्यातिरिच्यते ॥ (२, १४५)
5. अथः पुत्रस्यापिपुत्रो भवति । पिता माता आचार्यश्च ॥ (विष्णुस्मृति, ३१, १-२)
6. अमुखासनपथं, २६८, ३०.
7. न माता न पिता न शौ न पुत्रस्त्वामहति ।  
स्वजनपतितानेतान् राजा वृष्णाः क्षणानि पदं ॥ (८, ३८९)

Kautilya forbids the abandonment of the mother even if she is an outcaste.

- तस्यां ब्रह्मणं निष्ठा पतितावामपि । (आप. प. च., १, २८, ९)
8. समाहृष्टो मति दधात् । (आप. प. च., १, ७, १५)

In *Manusmṛiti* woman attains her apotheosis, as wife, mother and dependent relation, serving and radiating her love. The gods rejoice when women are honoured, and rites in their honour yield no rewards in homes in which women are not cherished and revered. The tears of dependent women blight a family; their grateful smiles make it blossom into fortune; their curse, when treated with contumely, wither the home. Honour and cherish your women, therefore, for your own good, on holidays and in festivals, with gifts of dainty fare, raiment and jewels! Joy dwells in the home in which there is conjugal love. Let a woman cherish her beauty that she may retain her husband's love and become fruitful. With her radiance the house will be alit, and without it, be dark and dismal. It is in such terms that Manu, supposed to be the derider of woman, makes almost a religion of her adoration.<sup>1</sup> (II, 56-62).

Indian society was kept from disintegration by the sublime conception of the scheme of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, which gave its women and men a clear vision of the spiritual winning post, and showed them how to order their lives and mould their actions in order that they may, in the fulness of time, or even in this life itself, triumphantly reach it.

1. वयं नार्थस्तु पूर्ववन्तो रमन्ते तत्र देवताः ।  
 वयंतास्तु न पश्यन्ते सर्वस्वनाफलाः क्लिप्ताः ॥  
 बोचन्ति जामयो यद्य विनश्यन्तास्तु तच्छुभम् ।  
 न बोचन्ति तु वयंता वयंते हाङ्गे सर्वदा ॥  
 जामयो वाति वेदानि शपस्वयतिपूजिताः ।  
 तानि श्रुत्वाहतामीव विनश्यन्ति समन्ततः ॥  
 तस्मादेताः सदा पुण्या शृणुणाच्छादनाद्यनिः ।  
 भूतिकामैर्नैर्मिल संस्कारैस्तुतेषु च ॥  
 संसृष्टो भार्गवो भर्ता भर्ता भार्या तर्पय च ।  
 वृत्तिश्रेण कुले निरुल कर्तव्यां तत्र वै शुभम् ।  
 इति हि श्री न दीपत पुमान् न मनोदयेत् ।  
 अयमोवास्तुनः मुंसः प्रवर्त्त न प्रवर्त्तते ॥  
 विद्यां तु दीपमानायां सर्वं तदीचो कुर्वन् ।  
 तस्यां त्वदीपमानायां सर्वमेव न दीपते ॥ ( ३, ५६-६२ )