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THE CASTE SYSTEM: A CURSE ON HINDUISM ARE VEDAS TO BLAME?

A Mini Pravachan

By

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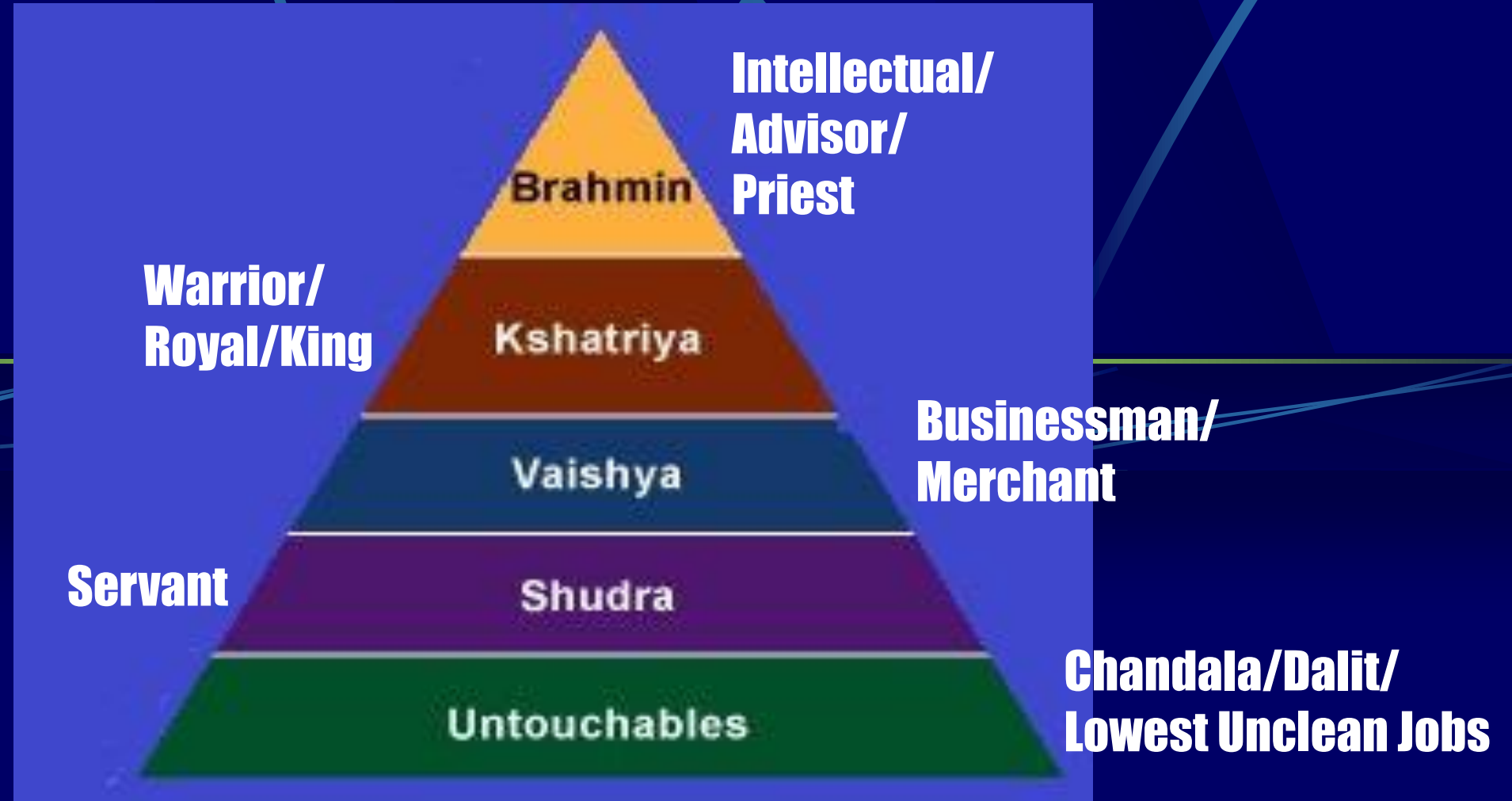
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WHAT IS A CASTE SYSTEM?



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IS CASTE SYSTEM A BLESSING OR A BANE?

- ❖ *A Conspicuous Curse On Hinduism*
- ❖ *Damage Done for Too Long to Too Many People*
- ❖ *More Damage Done Than The Slavery System of The Western World or The Witch-Hunting Practices of the Medieval Europe*
- ❖ *While Good Progress is Being Made, It Will Still Take Centuries to Undo the Damage*

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WHOM TO BLAME? ARE VEDAS THE CULPRITS?

The Answer is: An Absolute NO!

- ❖ *There Was No Caste System During The Vedic Time!*
- ❖ *There Is No Reference to Caste System Anywhere in The Vedas!*
- ❖ *It Was a Flexible Society Where People Were Identified By Their Vocations, Such as: A Carpenter, A Goldsmith, A Priest, A Farmer, A Physician, Etc.*

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EXAMPLES OF VOCATIONAL CHANGES AT WILL IN A VEDIC SOCIETY

- ❖ *Sage Vishwamitra Was a Warrior by Birth, But a Brahmin by Profession, and Became a Great Rishi.*
- ❖ *Sage Parashurama Was a Brahmin by Birth but a Warrior by Profession.*
- ❖ *Sage Vasishta Was Born To a Prostitute.*
- ❖ *Maharishi Vaalmiki, the Author of Ramayana, Was a Hunter (A Shudra) by Birth.*
- ❖ *Brahmarishi Veda Vyasa Was an Illegitimate Child of an Unmarried Fisherwoman, Named Satyawati.*

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CASTE, COLOR OR CREED PLAYED NO ROLE IN A VEDIC OR IMMEDIATE-PAST VEDIC SOCIETY

- ❖ *Only One of The Ten Incarnations of Lord Vishnu Was a Brahmin (Vaaman Avtar).*
- ❖ *Lord Rama Was a Kshatriya, and Lord Krishna Was a Cowherd.*
- ❖ *Both Rama & Krishna Had Dark Complexion.*
- ❖ *Maharishi Veda Vyasa Was Dark Like “Charcoal” and Hence Was Called by Name “Krishna Dwaipaayana”.*

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WHEN DID THE CASTE SYSTEM COME ABOUT?

- ❖ *Vedic Period Ended at ~1000 BCE (When Did It Start? No One Really Knows! Various Arguments Are Documented.)*
- ❖ *The Post-Vedic Period Lasted For ~ 500 Years, Which Essentially Followed The Same Vedic Culture, and There Was Still No Caste System.*
- ❖ *The Caste System Came About ~500 BCE.*

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WHO STARTED THE CASTE SYSTEM AND WHY?

- ❖ *“Vedic Scholars” Created The Caste System ~550 BCE.*
- ❖ *They Argued That The Creation of The Caste-System Was Hinted in The Later Part of The Vedas.*
- ❖ *They Quoted The Relevant Verses of “Purusha Sukta”, Targeted at Lord Vishnu, to Support Their Claim.*
- ❖ *Foreign Invasion of 538 BCE Was a Major Factor in The Creation of The Caste System.*

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DOES PURUSHA SUKTA REALLY SUPPORT THE CLAIM FOR CREATION OF THE CASTE SYSTEM?

Here Are The Verses of Purusha Sukta Under Attack:

ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीत्। बाहू राजन्यः कृतः।

ऊरू तदस्य यद्वैश्यः। पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥

(Rigveda: 10:90:13)

Translation: My Face Became the Brahmins, My Arms Became
the Kshatriyas (Kings); My Abdomen Became the Vaishyas,
And My Feet Became the Shudras.

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MISINTERPRETATION OF PURUSHA SUKTA BY EARLY POST-VEDIC SCHOLARS

Most Current Vedic Scholars Interpret These Verses of
Purusha Sukta Quite Differently:

- ❖ *There Is No Mention of any “Caste” or “Varna” System Anywhere in These Verses of Purusha Sukta.*
- ❖ *The Meaning Is Highly Metaphorical & Symbolic As Is Usual with Many Sanskrit Texts.*
- ❖ *Mentioned Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras in These Verses Represent Knowledge, Protection, Wealth, and Service, respectively.*

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MISINTERPRETATION OF PURUSHA SUKTA (CONTD.)

- ❖ *The Described Four Qualities, Knowledge, Protection, Wealth, and Service Are Required To Eliminate Four Social Ills of The Society, Including Ignorance, Injustice, Inadequacy, and Indolence.*
- ❖ *Those Four Qualities Serve Mankind According To Their Functional Values and Natural Propensities, For Example, Some Are Naturally Inclined To Knowledge (Brahmins), While Others Are For Service (Shudras) Or Valor (Kshatriyas) Or Wealth (Vaishyas).*
- ❖ *But All Four Qualities In Unison Are Required To Run An Efficient, Well-Maintained, and Orderly Society. The Word “Pur” in Purusha Sukta Stands for A City, Society or a Community.*
- ❖ *In all, Purusha Sukta Had Nothing To Do With Caste or Creed!*

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THE MISINTERPRETATION BY EARLY POST-VEDIC SCHOLARS WAS DELIBERATE!

- ❖ *It Later Turned Out That The Misinterpretation of Purusha Sukta Verses By Post-Vedic Scholars Was Deliberate In Order To Protect The Indian Society From Foreign Invasion.*
- ❖ *In 538 BCE, Indian Subcontinent Was Attacked By Cyrus The Great of Achaemenid Empire.*
- ❖ *Vedic Scholars Feared That The Structural , Cultural, and Moral Integrity of The Indian Society Would Be Destroyed By Foreign Occupants Filtering Into Indian Society, Unless Rigid Codes of Conduct (Dharma Shastras) Were Formulated and Strictly Enforced.*

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THE CREATION OF “MANUSMRITI” NOBLE INTENT BUT DELETERIOUS OUTCOME!!

- ❖ *The Society Was Divided Into Four Categories: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra Depending Upon Their Natural Inclination.*
- ❖ *These Categories Were Dictated by The Mentioned Verses of Purusha Sukta. Notice That There Is No 5th Category of Chandala (Untouchable) Since Purush Sukta Had Only 4!*
- ❖ *Codes of Conduct (Dharma Shastras) Were Formulated For Each of The Four Divisions of The Society.*
- ❖ *While Many Dharma Shastras Exist, The One Called “Manusmriti” Was The Most Comprehensive and Widely Followed Even Today by Orthodox Hindus Everywhere.*

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“MANUSMRITI” GOT TOTALLY CORRUPTED OVER A PERIOD OF MANY CENTURIES!

- ❖ *Over a Period of Many Centuries, Manusmriti Got Totally Corrupted.*
- ❖ *Today There Exists Scores of Different Versions of Manusmriti. None of Them Looks Anywhere Close To The Original Version!*
- ❖ *Because of Many Variations of Manusmriti Texts, Combined With The Existence of Many Other Dharma Shastras Besides Manusmriti, There Is No Absolute Uniformity In The Modern Day Observance of Hindu Rites & Rituals.*

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MANUSMRITI IS OFFICIALLY REJECTED BY THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT & THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

- ❖ *In 1927, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, The Principal Architect of The Indian Constitution, Openly Burned A Copy of Manusmriti. Dr. Ambedkar Was A Born Chandala (An Untouchable).*
- ❖ *Mahatma Gandhi, A Contemporary of Dr. Ambedkar, Rejected The Cast System Advanced by Manusmriti, Although Did Not Go To The Extent of Burning It.*
- ❖ *Serious Efforts Are Being Made By The Indian Govt for The Past ~90 years To Rectify The Problem, But It Will Likely Take An Additional 100 Years Or More To Undo All The Damages Caused By The Indian Caste System.*

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THE END