

CHAPTER 7

A Sunken Priesthood

This essay is numbered as Chapter III in the file of the Ancient Regime and contains 16 foolscap typed pages. This Chapter also seems to be left incomplete.—Editors.

The priestly profession in the ancient Aryan Society was monopolized by the Brahmins. None except a Brahmin could become a priest. As custodians of religion, the Brahmins were the guides of the people in moral and spiritual matters. They were to set the standard for people to follow. Did the Brahmins act up to the standard? Unfortunately, all the evidence we have, shows that the Brahmins had fallen to the utmost depth of moral degradation.

A Shrotriya Brahmin was supposed not to keep with him a store of provision lasting for more than a week. But they had systematically trampled upon this rule and were addicted to the use of the things stored up; stores, to wit, of foods, drinks, clothing, equipages, beddings, perfumes, and curry-stuffs.

The Brahmins were addicted to visiting shows such as:—

- (1) Nautch dances (nakkam).
- (2) Singings of songs (gitam).
- (3) Instrumental music (vaditam).
- (4) Shows at fairs (pekham).
- (5) Ballads recitations (akkhanam).
- (6) Hand music (panisaram).
- (7) The chanting of bards (vetals).
- (8) Tam-tam playing (kumbhathunam).
- (9) Fair scenes (sobhanagarkam).
- (10) Acrobatic feats by Kandalas (Kandala-vamsa-dhohanam).
- (11) Combats of elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, goats, rams, cocks and quails.
- (12) Bouts at quarterstaff, boxing, wrestling.
- (13-16) Sham-fights, roll-calls, manoeuvres, reviews.

They were addicted to games and recreations; that is to say,

- (1) Games on boards with eight, or with ten rows of squares.
- (2) The same games played by imagining such boards in the air.
- (3) Keeping going over diagrams drawn on the ground so that one steps only where one ought to go.
- (4) Either removing the pieces or men from a heap with one's nail, or putting them into a heap, in each case without shaking it. He who shakes the heap, loses.
- (5) Throwing dice.
- (6) Hitting a short stick with a long one.
- (7) Dipping the hand with the fingers stretched out in lac, or red dye, or flour water, and striking the wet hand on the ground or on a wall, calling out 'what shall it be?' and showing the form required—elephants, horses & c.
- (8) Games with balls.
- (9) Blowing through toy pipes made of leaves.
- (10) Ploughing with toy ploughs.
- (11) Turning summersaults.
- (12) Playing with toy windmills made of palm leaves.
- (13) Playing with toy measures made of palm leaves.
- (14, 15) Playing with toy carts or toy bows.
- (16) Guessing at letters traced in the air, or on a playfellow's back.
- (17) Guessing the playfellow's thoughts.
- (18) Mimicry of deformities.

They were addicted to the use of high and large couches; that is to say:

- (1) Moveable settees, high, and six feet long (Asandi).
- (2) Divans with animal figures carved on the supports (Pallanko).
- (3) Goat's hair coverings with very long fleece (Gonako).
- (4) Patchwork counterpanes of many colours (Kittaka).
- (5) White blankets (Patika).
- (6) Woollen coverlets embroidered with flowers (Patalika).
- (7) Quilts stuffed with cotton wool (Tulika).
- (8) Coverlets embroidered with figures of lions, tigers, & c, (Vikatika).
- (9) Rugs with fur on both sides (Uddalom).
- (10) Rugs with fur on one side (Ekantalomi).
- (11) Coverlets embroidered with gems (Katthissam).
- (12) Silk coverlets (Koseyyam).
- (13) Carpets large enough for sixteen dancers (Kuttakam).
- (14-16) Elephant, horse and chariot rugs.
- (17) Rugs of antelope skins sewn together (Aginapaveni).

- (18) Rugs of skins of the plantain antelope.
- (19) Carpets with awnings above them (Sauttarakkhadam).
- (20) Sofas with red pillows for the head and feet”.

The Brahmins were addicted to the use of means for adorning and beautifying themselves; that is to say:

Rubbing in scented powders on one's body, shampooing it, and bathing it, patting the limbs with clubs after the manner of wrestlers, the use of mirrors, eye-ointments, garlands, rouge, cosmetics, bracelets, necklaces, walking-sticks, reed cases for drugs, rapiers, sunshades, embroidered slippers, turbans, diadems, whisks of the yak tail and long-fringed white robes.

The Brahmins were addicted to such low conversation as these:

Tales of kings, of robbers, of ministers of state; tales of war, of terrors, of battles; talk about foods and drinks, clothes, beds, garlands, perfumes; talks about relationships, equipages, villages, towns, cities and countries; tales about women, and about heroes; gossip at street corners, or places whence water is fetched; ghost stories; desultory talk; speculations about the creation of the land or sea, or about existence and non-existence.

The Brahmins were addicted to the use of wrangling phrases: such as:

“You don't understand this doctrine and discipline, I do.”

“How should you know about this doctrine and discipline?”

“You have fallen into wrong views. It is I who am in the right.”

“I am speaking to the point, you are not.”

“You are putting last what ought to come first, and first what ought to come last.”

“What you've ex-cogitated so long, that is all quite upset.”

“You are proved to be wrong.”

“Set to work to clear your views.”

“Disentangle yourself if you can.”

The Brahmins were addicted to taking messages, going on errands, and acting as go-betweens; to wit, on kings, ministers of state, Kshatriyas, Brahmins, or young men, saying: Go there, come hither, take this with you, bring that from thence.’

‘The Brahmins were tricksters, droner out (of holy words for pray), diviners, and exorcists, ever hungering to add gain to gain.’

The Brahmins earned their living by wrong means of livelihood, by low arts, such as these:

- (1) Palmistry—prophesying long life, prosperity, & c, (or the reverse from marks on a child's hands, feet, & c.)
- (2) Divining by means of omens and signs.

- (3) Auguries drawn from thunderbolts and other celestial portents.
- (4) Prognostication by interpreting dreams.
- (5) Fortune-telling from marks on the body.
- (6) Auguries from the marks on cloth gnawed by mice.
- (7) Sacrificing to Agni.
- (8) Offering oblations from a spoon.
- (9-13) Making offerings to gods of husks, of the red powder between the grain and the husk, of husked grain ready for boiling, or ghee and of oil.
- (14) Sacrificing by spewing mustard seeds, & c, into the fire out of one's mouth.
- (15) Drawing blood from one's right knee as a sacrifice to the gods.
- (16) Looking at the knuckles, & c, and, after muttering a charm, divining whether a man is well born of luck or not.
- (17) Determining whether the site for a proposed house or pleasance, is luck or not.
- (18) Advising on customary law.
- (19) Laying demons in a cemetery.
- (20) Laying ghosts.
- (21) Knowledge of the charms to be used when lodging in an earth house.
- (22) Snake charming.
- (23) The poison craft.
- (24) The scorpion craft".
- (25) The mouse craft.
- (26) The bird craft.
- (27) The crow craft.
- (28) Foretelling the number of years that man has yet to live.
- (29) Giving charms to ward off arrows.
- (30) The animal wheel.

The Brahmins earned their living by wrong means of livelihood, by low arts, such as these:

Knowledge of the signs of good and bad qualities in the following things and of the marks in them denoting the health or luck of their owners: to wit,

gems, staves, garments, swords, arrows, bows, other weapons, women, men, boys, girls, slaves, slave-girls, elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, oxen, goats, sheep, fowls, quails, iguanas, herrings, tortoises, and other animals.

The Brahmins, earned their living by wrong means of livelihood by low arts such as soothsaying, to the effect that:

The chiefs will march out.

The home chiefs will attack and the enemies retreat.

The enemies' chiefs will attack, and ours will retreat.

The home chiefs will gain the victory, and ours will suffer defeat.

The foreign chiefs will gain the victory on this side, and ours will suffer defeat.

Thus will there be victory on this side, defeat on that.

The Brahmins, while living on food provided by the faithful, earn their living by wrong means of livelihood, by such low arts as foretelling:

(1) There will be an eclipse of the Moon.

(2) There will be an eclipse of the Sun.

(3) There will be an eclipse of a star (Nakshatra).

(4) There will be aberration of the Sun or the Moon.

(5) The Sun or the Moon will return to its usual path.

(6) There will be aberrations of the stars.

(7) The stars will return to their usual course.

(8) There will be a jungle fire.

(9) There will be a fall of meteors.

(10) There will be an earthquake.

(11) The god will thunder.

(12-15) There will be rising and setting, clearness and dimness of the Sun or the Moon or the stars, or foretelling of each of these fifteen phenomena that they will betoken such and such a result."

The Brahmins earned their living by wrong means of the livelihood, by low arts, such as these:

Foretelling an abundant rainfall.

Foretelling a deficient rainfall.

Foretelling a good harvest.

Foretelling scarcity of food.

Foretelling tranquility.

Foretelling disturbances.

Foretelling a pestilence.

Foretelling a healthy season.

Counting on the fingers.

Counting without using the fingers.

Summing up large totals.

Composing ballads, poetizing.

Casuistry, sophistry.

The Brahmins, while living on food provided by the faithful, earn their living by wrong means of livelihood, by low arts, such as:

- (1) Arranging a lucky day for marriages in which the bride or bridegroom is brought home.
- (2) Arranging a lucky day for marriages in which the bride or bridegroom is sent forth.
- (3) Fixing a lucky time for the conclusion of treaties of peace (or using charms to procure harmony).
- (4) Fixing a lucky time for the outbreak of hostilities (or using charms to make discord).
- (5) Fixing a lucky time for the calling in of debts (or charms for success in throwing dice).
- (6) Fixing a lucky time for the expenditure of money (or charms to bring ill luck to an opponent throwing dice).
- (7) Using charms to make people lucky.
- (8) Using charms to make people unlucky.
- (9) Using charms to procure abortion.
- (10) Incantations to keep a man's jaws fixed.
- (11) Incantations to bring on dumbness.
- (12) Incantations to make a man throw up his hands.
- (13) Incantations to bring on deafness.
- (14) Obtaining oracular answers by means of the magic mirror.
- (15) Obtaining oracular answers through a girl possessed.
- (16) Obtaining oracular answers from a god.
- (17) The worship of the Sun.
- (18) The worship of the Great One.
- (19) Bringing forth flames from one's mouth.
- (20) Invoking Siri, the goddess of Luck.

The Brahmins earned their living by wrong means of livelihood, by low arts, such as these:

- (1) Vowing gifts to a god if a certain benefit be granted.
- (2) Paying such vows.
- (3) Repeating charms while lodging in an earth house.
- (4) Causing virility.
- (5) Making a man impotent.
- (6) Fixing on lucky sites for dwellings.
- (7) Consecrating sites.
- (8) Ceremonial rinsings of the mouth.
- (9) Ceremonial bathings.
- (10) Offering sacrifices.
- (11-14) Administering emetics and purgatives.

- (15) Purging people to relieve the head (that is by giving drugs to make people sneeze).
- (16) Oiling people's ears (either to make them grow or to heal sores on them).
- (17) Satisfying people's eyes (soothing them by dropping medicinal oils into them).
- (18) Administering drugs through the nose.
- (19) Applying collyrium to the eyes.
- (20) Giving medicinal ointment for the eyes.
- (21) Practising as an oculist.
- (22) Practising as a surgeon.
- (23) Practising as a doctor for children.
- (24) Administering roots and drugs.
- (25) Administering medicines in rotation.

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