

true feature of the old method namely that the Varna should be determined by a disinterested and independent body. But it added a new feature namely training as a pre-requisite for assignment of Varna. On the ground that training alone develops individual in the make up of a person and the only safe way to determine the Varna of a person is to know his individuality, the addition of this new feature was undoubtedly a great improvement.

With the introduction of the Acharya Gurukul system, the duration of the Varna came to be altered. Varna instead of being Varna for a period became Varna for life. But it was not hereditary.

Evidently Brahmanism was dissatisfied with this system. The reason for dissatisfaction was quite obvious. Under the system as prevalent there was every chance of the Acharya declaring the child of a Brahmin as fit only to be a Shudra. Brahmanism was naturally most anxious to avoid this result. It wanted the Varna to be hereditary. Only by making the Varna hereditary could it save the children of the Brahmins from being declared Shudra. To achieve this Brahmanism proceeded in the most audacious manner one can think of.

III

Brahmanism made three most radical changes in the system of determining the Varna of the child. In the first place the system of Gurukul as the place where training to the child was given and its Varna was determined by the Guru at the end of the period of training was abolished. Manu is quite aware of the Gurukul and refers to *Guruvas*¹ i.e. training and residence in the Gurukul under the Guru. But does not refer to it at all in connection with the Upanayan. He abolishes the Guru as an authority competent to perform Upanayan by omitting to make even the remotest reference to him in connection with Upanayan. In place of the Guru Manu allows the Upanayan of the child to be performed by its father at home.² Secondly Upanayan was made into a Sanskara i.e. a sacrament. In olden times Upanayan was like a convocation ceremony³ held by the Guru to confer degrees obtained by students in his Gurukul in which certificates of proficiency in the duties of a particular Varna were granted. In Manu's law that Upanayan was a complete change in the meaning and purpose of this most important institution. Thirdly the relation of training to Upanayan was totally reversed. In the olden system training came before Upanayan.

¹ Manu II. 67 Where Manu.

² Manu II, 36-37.

³ On this point see Pradnaneshwar Yati's booklet on Upanayan.

Under the Brahmanism Upanayan came before training. Manu directs that a child be sent to the Guru for training but that is after Upanayan i.e. after¹ his Varna is determined by his father.

The principal change made by Brahmanism was the transfer of authority from the Guru to the father in the matter of performing Upanayan. The result was that the father having the right to perform the Upanayan of his child gave his own Varna to the child and thus made it hereditary. It is by divesting the Guru of his authority to determine the Varna and vesting it in the father that Brahmanism ultimately converted Varna into Caste.

Such is the story of the transformation of Varna into Caste. The story of the transition from one to the other is of course reconstructed. For the reasons already given it may not be quite as accurate as one would wish it to be in all its details. But I have no doubt that the stages and the ways by which Varna ceased to exist and caste came into being must be some such as have been suggested in the foregoing discussion of the subject.

What object Brahmanism could have had in converting Varna into caste it is not difficult to imagine. The object was to make the high status enjoyed by the Brahmins from ancient times the privilege of every Brahmin and his progeny without reference to merits or to qualifications. To put it differently the object was to elevate and ennoble every Brahmin, however mean and worthless he may be, to the high status occupied by some of them on account of the virtue. It was an attempt to ennoble the whole of the Brahmin Community without exception.

That this was the object of Brahmanism is clear from Manu's ordinances. Manu knew that making Varna hereditary, the most ignorant Brahmin² will be elevated to the status occupied by the most learned Brahmin. He feared that the former may not be respected as much as the most learned, which was the object of this attempt at the ennoblement of the whole class of Brahmins. Manu is very much concerned about the ignorant Brahmin—a new thing—and warns people against being disrespectful to an ignorant and mean Brahmin.

IX. 317. A Brahmin, whether learned or ignorant, is a powerful divinity; even as fire is powerful divinity, whether consecrated or popular.

IX. 319. Thus although Brahmins employ themselves in all sorts of mean occupations, they must invariably be honoured; for they are something transcendently divine.

¹ Manu II. 69.

² Under the Varna there could be no ignorant Brahmin. The possibility of an ignorant Brahmin can arise only when Varna becomes Caste i.e. when one becomes a Brahmin only by reason of birth.

Such a warning was unnecessary if the object was to ennoble the whole Brahmin class. Here is a case where vice refuses to pay to virtue even the homage of hypocrisy. Can there be greater moral degeneracy than what is shown by Manu in insisting upon the worship of the Brahmin even if he is mean and ignorant?

So much for the object of change from Varna to caste. What have been the consequences of this change?

From the spiritual point of view the consequences have been too harmful to be contemplated with equanimity. The harm done may perhaps be better realized by comparing the position of the Brahmin as a priest resulting from the law of Manu with that of the law of the clergy under the Church of England. There the clergy is subject to the criminal law as every citizen is. But in addition to that he is always subject to Church Discipline Act. Under the Criminal Law he would be punished if he officiated as a clergy without being qualified for it. Under the Church Discipline Act he would be liable to be disqualified as a clergy for conduct which would be deemed to be morally wrong although it did not amount to a crime. This double check on the clergy is held justifiable because learning and morality are deemed to be quite essential for the profession of the clergy who are supposed to administer to the spiritual needs of the people. Under Brahmanism the Brahmin who alone can be the clergy need not possess learning or morality. Yet he is in sole charge of the spiritual affairs of the people!! On the value of a creed which permits this, comment is unnecessary.

From the secular point of view, the consequences of this transformation of Varna into Caste has to introduce a most pernicious mentality among the Hindus. It is to disregard merit and have regard only to birth. If one is descended from the high he has respect although he may be utterly devoid of merit or worth. One who is of high birth will be superior to the one who is of low birth although the latter may be superior to the former in point of worth. Under Brahmanism it is birth that always wins, whether it is against birth or against worth. Merit by itself can win no meads. This is entirely due to the dissociation of merits from status which is the work of Brahmanism. Nothing could be better calculated to produce an unprogressive society which sacrifices the rights of intelligence on the altar of aristocratic privilege.

Now the third deed in the catalogue of deeds done by Brahmanism after its triumph over Buddhism. It was to separate the Brahmins from the result of the Non-Brahmin population and to sever the different social strata of the Non-Brahmin population.

Pushyamitra's Brahmanic Revolution was undertaken for the purposes of restoring the ancient social system of Chaturvarna which under the Buddhist regime was put into the melting pot. But when Brahmanism triumphed over Buddhism it did not content itself with merely restoring Charutvarna as it was in its original form. The system of Chaturvarna of the Pre-Buddhist days was a flexible system and was an open to system. This was because the Varna system had no connection with the marriage system. While Chaturvarna recognized the existence of four different classes, it did not prohibit inter-marriage between them. A male of one Varna could lawfully marry a female of another Varna. There are numerous illustrations in support of this view. I give below some instances which refer to well known and respectable individuals which have acquired a name and fame in the sacred lore of the Hindus.

Husband	His Varna	Wife	Her Varna
1. Shantanu	Kshatriya	Ganga	Shudra Anamik
2. Shantanu	Kshatriya	Matsyagandha	Shudra Fisher woman
3. Parashara	Brahmin	Matsyagandha	Shudra Fisher woman
4. Vishwamitra	Kshatriya	Menaka	Apsara
5. Yayati	Kshatriya	Devayani	Brahmin
6. Yayati	Kshatriya	Sharmishta	Asuri—Non-Aryan
7. Jaratkaru	Brahmin	Jaratkari	Nag—Non-Aryan

Should anybody retain doubt on the question that the division of the society into classes did not prohibit intermarriages between the four Varnas let him consider the geneology of the family of the great Brahmin sage Vyas.

GENEOLOGY OF VYAS

Varuna Mitra = Urvashi

↳ Vashishtha = Akshamala
↓
Shakti =

Parashara = Matsyagandha
↓
= Vyas

Brahmintsm with the ferocity of an outraged brute proceeded to put a stop to these intermarriage between the different Varnas. A new law is proclaimed by Manu. It is in the following terms:—

III. 12. For the first marriage of twice born men (wives) of equal caste are recommended.

III. 13. It is declared that a Sudra woman alone can be the wife of a Shudra.

III. 14. A Shudra woman is not mentioned even in any (ancient) story as the (first) wife of a Brahmana or of a Kshatriya, though they lived in the (greatest) distress.

III. 15. Twice-born men who, in their folly, wed wives of the low (Sudra) caste, soon degrade their families and their children to the state of Sudras.

III. 16. According to Atri and to (Gautama) the son of Utathya, he who weds a Sudra woman becomes an outcast, according to Saunaka on the birth of a son, and according to Bhrigu he who has (male)offspring from a (Sudra female, alone).

III. 17. A Brahmana who takes a Sudra wife to his bed, will (after death) sink into hell; if he begets a child by her, he will lose the rank of a Brahmana.

III. 18. The manes and the gods will not eat the (offerings) of that man who performs the rites in honour of the gods, of the manes, and of guests chiefly with a (Sudra wife's) assistance, and such (a man) will not go to heaven.

III. 19. For him who drinks the moisture of a Sudra's lips, who is tainted by her breath, and who begets a son on her, no expiation is prescribed.

Brahmanism was not satisfied with the prohibition of intermarriage. Brahmanism went further and prohibited interdining.

Manu lays down certain interdicts on food. Some are hygienic. Some are social. Of the social the following are worthy of attention:

IV. 218. Food given by a king, impairs his manly vigour; by one of the servile class, his divine light; by goldsmiths, his life; by leathercutters, his good name.

IV. 219. Given by cooks and the like mean artizans, it destroys his offsprings: by a washerman, his muscular strength;

IV. 221. That of all others, mentioned in order, whose food must never be tasted, is held equal by the wise to the skin, bones, and hair of the head.

IV. 222. Having unknowingly swallowed the food of any such persons, he must fast during three days; but having eaten it knowingly, he must perform the same harsh penance, as if he had tasted any seminal impurity, ordure, or urine.

I said that Brahmanism acted with the ferocity of an outranged brute in undertaking the task of prohibiting intermarriage and interdining. Those who have doubts in this matter ponder over the language of Manu.

Mark the disgust Manu shows with regard to the Shudra woman.

Mark what Manu says about the food of the Shudra. He says it is as impure as semen or urine.

These two laws have produced the caste system. Prohibition of intermarriage and prohibition against interdining are two pillars on which it rests. The caste system and the rules relating to intermarriage and interdining are related to each other as ends to means. Indeed by no other means could the end be realized.

The forging of these means shows that the creation of the caste system was end and aim of Brahmanism. Brahmanism enacted the prohibitions against intermarriage and interdining. But Brahmanism introduced other changes in the social system and if the purposes underlying these changes are those which I suggest them to be, then it must be admitted that Brahmanism was so keen in sustaining the caste system that it did not mind whether ways and means employed were fair or unfair, moral or immoral. I refer to the laws contained in the Code of Manu regarding marriage of girls and the life of widows.

See the law that Manu promulgates regarding the marriage of females.

IX. 4. Reprehensible is the father who gives not (his daughter) in marriage at the proper time.

IX. 88. To a distinguished, handsome suitor of equal caste should a father give his daughter in accordance with the prescribed rule, though she have not attained (the proper age), i.e. although she may not have reached puberty.

By this rule Manu enjoins that a girl should be married even though she may not have reached the age of puberty i.e. even when she is a child.

Now with regard to widows Manu promulgates the following rule.

V. 157. At her pleasure let her (i.e. widow) emaciate her body, by living voluntarily on pure flowers, roots and fruits; but let her not, when her lord is deceased, even pronounce the name of another man.

V. 161. But a widow, who from a wish to bear children, slights her deceased husband by marrying again, brings disgrace on herself here below, and shall be excluded from the seat of her lord (in heaven).

V. 162. Offspring begotten on a woman by any other than her husband, is here declared to be no progeny of hers; no more than a child, begotten on the wife of another man belongs to the begetter; nor is a second husband anywhere prescribed for a virtuous woman.

This is the rule of enforced widowhood for a woman. A reference may also be made to Sati or a widow who burns herself on the funeral pyre of her husband and thus puts an end to her life. Manu is silent about it.

Yajnavalkya¹ an authority nearly as great as Manu says, she must not live separately or alone.

86. When deprived of her husband, she must not remain away from her father, mother, son, brother, mother-in-law or from her maternal uncle; otherwise she might become liable to censure.

Here again Yajnavalkya does not suggest that a widow become a Sati. But Vijnaneshwar, the author of Mitakshara a commentary on Yajnavalkya Smriti makes the following observation in commenting on the above Sloka.

“This is in the case of the alternative of leading a celibate life vide the text of Vishnu²: “After the death of the husband, either celibacy or ascending the (cremation) pile after him.”

Vijnaneshwar³ adds as his opinion that ‘There is great merit in ascending the funeral pyre after him.’

From this one can very easily and clearly see how the rule of Sati came to be forged. Manu’s rule was that a widow was not to remarry. But it appears from the statement by Vijnaneshwar that from the time of the Vishnu Smriti a different interpretation began to put on the ordinance of Manu. According to this new interpretation Manu’s rule was explained to be offering to the widow a choice between two alternatives: (1) Either burn yourself on your husband’s funeral pyre or (2) If you don’t, remain unmarried. This of course is totally false interpretation quite unwarranted by the clear words of Manu. Somehow it came to be accepted. The date of the Vishnu Smriti is somewhere about the 3rd or 4th Century. It can therefore be said that rule of Sati dates from this period.

One thing is certain, these were new rules. The rule of Manu that girl should be married before she has reached puberty is a new rule. In Pre-Buddhistic Brahmanism⁴ marriages were performed not only after puberty but they were performed when girls had reached an age when they could be called grown up. Of this there is ample evidence. Similarly the rule that a woman once she had lost her husband must not remarry is a new rule. In the Pre-Buddhist Brahmanism there was no prohibition on widow remarriage. The fact that the Sanskrit language contains words such as *Punarbhū* (woman who has

¹ The date of the Yajnavalkya Smriti is between 150-200 A.D.

² Vishnu Smriti Ch. XXV 14.

³ He wrote his Mitakshara between 1070 and 1100 A.D.

⁴ See Kane—History of Dharmashastra I. Part I. page.

undergone a second marriage ceremony) and *punarbhav* (second husband) show that such marriages were quite common under the Pre-Buddhist Brahmanism.¹ With regard to Sati the position as to when it arose,² there is evidence to suggest that it existed in ancient times. But there is evidence that it had died out and it was revived after Brahmanism under Pushyamitra obtained its victory over Buddhism although it was some time later than Manu.

Question is this, why these changes were made by the triumphant Brahmanism? What did Brahmanism want to achieve by having girls married before they had become pubert, by denying the widow to the right to marry again and by telling her to put herself to death by immolating herself in the funeral pyre of her deceased husband? No explanations are forthcoming for these changes. Mr. C. V. Vaidya who offers an explanation for girl marriage says³ that girl marriage was introduced to prevent girls from joining the Buddhist order of nuns. This explanation does not satisfy me. Mr. Vaidya omits to take into consideration another rule laid down by Manu—namely the rule relating to suitable age for marriage. According to that rule.

IX. 94. A man, aged thirty, shall marry a maiden of twelve who pleases him, or a man of twenty-four a girl eight years of age.

The question is not why girl marriage was introduced. The question is why Manu allowed so much discrepancy in the ages of the bride and the bridegroom.

Mr. Kane⁴ has attempted an explanation of Sati. His explanation is that there is nothing new in it. It existed in India in ancient times as it did in other parts of the world. This again does not satisfy the world. If it existed outside India, it has not been practised on so enormous a scale as in India. Secondly if traces of it are found in Ancient India in the Kshatriyas, why was it revived, why was it not universalized? There is no satisfactory explanation. Mr. Kane's explanation that the prevalence of Sati by reference to laws of inheritance does not appear to me very convincing. It may be that because under the Hindu Law of inheritance as it prevailed in Bengal, women got a share in property. The relations of the husband of the widow pressed her to be a Sati in order to get rid of a share may explain why Sati was practised on so large a scale in Bengal. But it does not explain how it arose nor how it came to be practised in other parts of India.

Again with regard to the prohibition of widow remarriage, there is no explanation whatsoever. Why was the widow, contrary to

¹ See Kane—History of Dharmashastra, Vol. II, Part II Chapt.

² The available evidence on Sati has been collected by Kane in his History of Dharmashastra Vol. II Part I pp. 617-636.

³ History of India Vol. II.

⁴ History or Dharmashastra.

established practice, prohibited from marrying? Why was she required to lead a life of misery? Why was she disfigured?

My explanation for girl marriage, enforced widowhood and Sati is quite different and I offer it for what it is worth.¹

“Thus the superposition of endogamy over exogamy means the creation of Caste. But this is not an easy affair. Let us take an imaginary group that desire to make itself into a caste and analyse what means it will have to adopt to make itself endogamous. If a group desires to make itself endogamous, a formal injunction against intermarriage with outside groups will be of no avail, especially if prior to the introduction of endogamy, exogamy were to be the rule in all matrimonial relations. Again there is a tendency in all groups living in close contact with one another to assimilate and amalgamate, and thus consolidate into a homogeneous society. If this tendency be strongly counteracted in the interest of Caste formation, it is absolutely necessary to circumscribe a circle without which people should not contract marriages.”

“Nevertheless this encircling to prevent marriages from without creates problems from within which are not very easy of solution. Roughly speaking in a normal group the two sexes are more or less evenly distributed, and generally speaking there is an equality between those of the same age. But this equality is never quite realised in actual societies. While to the group that is desirous of making itself into a caste the maintenance of this equality between the sexes becomes the ultimate goal, for without this endogamy can no longer subsist. In other words, if endogamy is to be preserved, conjugal rights from within have to be provided for, else members of the group will be driven out of the circle to take care of themselves in any way they please. But in order that the conjugal rights be provided for from within, it is absolutely necessary to maintain a numerical equality between the marriageable units of the two sexes within the group desirous of making itself into a Caste. It is only through the maintenance of this equality that the necessary endogamy of the group could be kept intact, and a very large disparity is sure to break it.”

“The problem of Caste then ultimately resolves itself into one of repairing the disparity between the marriageable units of the two sexes within it. The much needed parity between the units could be realized only when a couple dies simultaneously. But this is a rare contingency. The husband may die before the wife and create a surplus woman who must be disposed of, else through intermarriage she will violate the endogamy of the group. In like manner the husband may survive his

¹ They will be found in my paper on “Castes in India” which appeared in *The Indian Antiquary* for May, 1917.

wife and be a surplus man whom the group, while it may sympathise with him for the sad bereavement, has to dispose of, else he will marry outside the Caste and will break the endogamy. Thus both the surplus man and the surplus woman constitute a menace to the Caste if not taken care of, for, not finding suitable partners inside their prescribed circle (and they cannot find any, for there are just enough pairs to go round) very likely they will transgress the boundary, marry outside and import population that is foreign to the Caste. Let us see what our imaginary group is likely to do with this surplus man and surplus woman. We will first take up the case of the surplus woman. She can be disposed of in two different ways so as to preserve the endogamy of the Caste."

"First : burn her on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband and get rid of her. This, however, is rather an impracticable way of solving the problem of sex disparity. In some cases it may work, in others it may not. Consequently every surplus woman cannot thus be disposed of, because it is an easy solution but a hard realization. However, the surplus woman (widow) if not disposed of, remains in the group: but in her very existence lies a double danger. She may marry outside the Caste and violate to endogamy or she may marry within the Caste and through competition encroach upon the chances of marriage that must be reserved for the potential brides in the Caste. She therefore is a menace in any case and something must be done to her if she cannot be burned along with her deceased husband."

"The second remedy is to enforce widowhood on her for the rest of her life. So far as the objective results are concerned burning is a better solution than enforcing widowhood. Burning the widow eliminates all the three evils that a surplus woman is fraught with. Being dead and gone she creates no problem of remarriage either inside or outside the Caste. But compulsory widowhood is superior to burning because it is more practicable. Besides being comparatively humane it also guards against the evils of remarriage as does burning; but it fails to guard the morals of the group. No doubt under compulsory widowhood the woman remains and, just because she is deprived of her natural right of being a legitimate wife in future, the incentive to bad moral conduct is increased. But this is by no means an insuperable difficulty. She can be degraded to a condition where she could no longer be a source of allurements."

"The problem of surplus man (—widower) is much more important and much more difficult than that of the surplus woman in a group that desires to make itself into a Caste. From time immemorial man as compared with woman has had the upper hand. He is a dominant

figure in every group and of the two sexes has greater prestige. With this traditional superiority of man over woman his wishes have always been consulted. Woman on the other hand has been an easy prey to all kinds of iniquitous injunctions, religious, social or economic. But man as a maker of injunctions is most often above them all. Such being the case you cannot accord the same kind of treatment to a surplus man as you can to a surplus woman in a Caste."

"The project of burning him with his deceased wife is hazardous in two ways: first of all it cannot be done, simply because he is a man. Secondly, if done, a sturdy soul is lost to the Caste. There remain then only two solutions which can conveniently dispose of him. I say conveniently because he is an asset to the group."

"Important as he is to the group, endogamy is still more important, and the solution must assure both these ends. Under these circumstances he may be forced, or I should say induced, after the manner of the widow to remain a widower for the rest of his life. This solution is not altogether difficult, for without there being any compulsion some are so disposed as to enjoy self-imposed celibacy or may even take a further step of their own accord to renounce the world and its joys. But, given human nature as it is, this solution can hardly be expected to be realized. On the other hand, as is very likely to be the case, if he remains in the group as an active participator in group activities, he is a danger to the morals of the group. Looked at from a different view point, celibacy though easy in cases where it succeeds, is not so advantageous even then to the material prospects of the Caste. If he observes genuine celibacy and renounces the world, he would not be a menace to the preservation of Caste endogamy or Caste morals as undoubtedly would be, if he remained a secular person. But as an ascetic celibate he is as good as burned, so far as the material well-being of his Caste is concerned. A Caste, in order that it may be large enough to afford a vigorous communal life, must be maintained at a certain numerical strength. But to hope for this and to proclaim celibacy is the same as trying to cure atrophy by bleeding.

"Imposing celibacy on the surplus man in the group therefore fails, both theoretically and practically. It is in the interest of the Caste to keep him as a Grahastha (one who raises a family) to use a Sanskrit technicality. But the problem is to provide him with a wife from within the Caste. At the outset this is not possible, for the ruling ratio in a caste has to be one man to one woman and none can have two chances of marriage, for in a Caste thoroughly self enclosed there are always just enough marriageable women to go round for the marriageable men. Under these circumstances the surplus man can

only be provided with a wife by recruiting a bride from the ranks of those not yet marriageable in order to tie him down to the group. This is certainly the best of the possible solutions in the case of the surplus man. By this, he is kept within the Caste. By this, this numerical depletion through constant outflow is guarded against, and by this endogamy and morals are preserved.

“It will now be seen that the four means by which numerical disparity between the two sexes is conveniently maintained are : (1) Burning the widow with her deceased husband; (2) Compulsory widowhood—a milder form of burning; (3) Imposing celibacy on the widower; (4) Wedding him to a girl not yet marriageable. Though as I said above, burning the widow and imposing celibacy on the widower are of doubtful service to the group in its endeavour to preserve its endogamy, all of them operate as means. But means as forces, when liberated or set in motion create an end. What then is the end that these means create? They create and perpetuate endogamy, while caste and endogamy, according to our analysis of the various definitions of caste, are one and the same thing. Thus the existence of these means means caste and caste involves these means.”

“This, in my opinion, is the general mechanism of a caste in a system of castes. Let us now turn to the castes in the Hindu Society and inquire into their mechanism. I need hardly promise that there are a great many pitfalls in the path of those who try to unfold the past, and caste in India to be sure is a very ancient institution. This is especially true where there exist no authentic or written history or records or where the people, like the Hindus are so constituted that to them writing history is a folly, for the world is an illusion. But institutions do live, though for a long time they may remain unrecorded and as often as not customs and morals are like fossils that tell their own history. If this is true, our task will be amply rewarded if we scrutinize the solution the Hindus arrived at to meet the problems of the surplus man and surplus woman.”

“Complex though it be in its general working the Hindu Society, even to a superficial observer, presents three singular uxorial customs, namely:—

- (i) Sati or the burning of the widow on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband.
- (ii) Enforced widowhood by which a widow is not allowed to remarry.
- (iii) Girl marriage.

In addition to these, one also notes a great hankering after Sannyasa (renunciation) on the part of the widower, but it may in some cases be due purely to psychic disposition.

“So far as I know, no scientific explanation of the origin of these customs is forth coming even today. We have plenty of philosophy to tell us why these customs were honoured. (Cf. A. K. Coomaraswamy— “Sati: a Defence of the Eastern Woman” in the British Sociological Review Vol. VI 1913) Because it is a “proof of the perfect unity of body and soul” between husband and wife and of “devotion beyond the grave”, because it embodied the ideal of wifehood which is well expressed by *lima* when she said “Devotion to her Lord is woman’s honour, it is her eternal heaven: and O Maheshwara”, she adds with a most touching human cry, “I desire not paradise itself if thou art not satisfied with me!” Why compulsory widowhood is honoured I know not nor have I yet met with anyone who sang in praise of it, though there are a great many who adhere to it. The eulogy in honour of girl marriage is reported by Dr. Ketkar to be as follows: “A really faithful man or woman ought not to feel affection for a woman or a man other than the one with whom he or she is united. Such purity is compulsory not only after marriage, but even before marriage, for that is the only correct ideal of chastity. No maiden could be considered pure if she feels love for a man other than to whom she might get married. As she does not know whom she is going to get married to, she must not feel affection for any man at all before marriage. If she does so, it is a sin. So it is better for a girl to know whom she has to love, before any sexual consciousness has been awakened in her”. Hence girl marriage.

“This high-flown and ingenious sophistry indicates why these institutions were honoured, but does not tell us why they were practised. My own interpretation is that they were honoured because they were practised. Any one slightly acquainted with rise of individualism in the 18th century will appreciate my remark. At all times, it is the movement that is most important; and the philosophies grow around it long afterwards to justify it and give it a moral support. In like manner I urge that the very fact that these customs were so highly eulogized proves that they needed eulogy for their prevalence. Regarding the question as to why they arose, I submit that they were needed to create the structure of caste and the philosophies in honour of them were intended to popularize them or to gild the pill, as we might say, for they must have been so abominable and shocking to the sense of the unsophisticated that they needed a great deal of sweetening. These customs are essentially of the nature of means, though they are represented as ideals. But this should not blind us from understanding the results that flow from them. One might safely say that idealization of means is

necessary and in this particular case was perhaps motivated to endow them with greater efficacy. Calling means an end does not harm except that it disguises its real character, but it does not deprive it of its real nature, that of a means. You may pass a law that all cats are dogs, just as you can call a means an end. But you can no more change the nature of means thereby than you can turn cats into dogs; consequently I am justified in holding that, regard them as ends or as means, Sati, enforced widowhood and girl marriage are customs that were primarily intended to solve the problem of the surplus man and surplus woman in a caste and to maintain its endogamy. Strict endogamy could not be preserved without these customs, while caste without endogamy is fake.”

According to my view girl marriage, enforced widowhood and Sati had no other purpose than that of supporting the Caste System which Brahmanism was seeking to establish by prohibiting intermarriage. It is difficult to stop intermarriage. Members of different castes are likely to go out of their Caste either for love or for necessity. It is to provide against necessity that Brahmanism made these rules. This is my explanation of these new rules, made by Brahmanism. That explanation may not be acceptable to all. But there can be no doubt that Brahmanism was taking all means possible to prevent intermarriages between the different classes taking place.

Another illustration of this desire on the part of Brahmanism is to be found in the rule regarding excommunication promulgated by Manu.

Manu says that a person who is excommunicated by his Caste is an outcast.¹ According to Manu an outcast is to be treated as though he was actually dead. Manu ordains that his obsequies should be performed and lays down the mode and manner of performing these obsequies of the outcast.

XI. 183. The Sapindas and Samanodakas of an outcast must offer (a libation of) water (to him, as if he were dead), outside (the village), on an inauspicious day, in the evening and in the presence of the relatives, officiating priests, and teachers.

XI. 184. A female slave shall upset with her foot a pot filled with water, as if it were for a dead person; (his Sapindas) as well as the Samanodakas shall be impure for a day and a night. Manu however allows the outcast to return to Caste on performing penance as will be seen from the following rules:

XI. 187. But when he has performed his penance, they shall bathe with him in a holy pool and throw down a new pot, filled with water.

¹ The outcast is quite different from an Untouchable as will be shown later.

XI. 188. But he shall throw that pot into water, enter his house and perform, as before, all the duties incumbent on a relative.

XI. 189. Let him follow the same rule in the case of female outcasts; but clothes, food, and drink shall be given to them, and they shall live close to the (family) house.

But if the outcast was recalcitrant and impenitent Manu provides for his punishment.

Manu will not allow the outcast to live in the family house. Manu enjoins that

XI. 189.....Clothes, food, and drink shall be given to them (i.e. the outcast members of the family), and they shall live close to the (family) house.

III. 92. Let him (i.e. the householder) gently place on the ground (some food) for dogs, outcasts, chandals, those afflicted with diseases that are punishments of former sins, crows and insects.

Manu declares that having social intercourse with an outcast is a sin. He warns the Snataka

IV. 79.....not (to) stay together with outcasts.

IV. 213.....Not (to eat food given) by outcasts.

To the householder Manu says:—

III. 151. Let him (i.e. the householder) not entertain at a Shradha.

III. 157. (A person) who forsakes his mother, his father, or a teacher without (sufficient) reason, he who has contracted an alliance with outcasts either through the Veda or through a marriage.

Manu ordains a social boycott of the outcast by penalizing those who associate with him.

XI. 181. He who associates himself for one year with an outcast himself becomes an outcast; not by sacrificing, reading the Veda, or contracting affinity with him, since by those acts he loses his class immediately, but even by using the same carriage or seat, or by taking his food at the same board.

XI. 182. He who associates with any one of those outcasts, must perform, in order to atone for (such) intercourse, the penance prescribed for that (sinner).

Then there are penalties against an outcast who defies his caste and chooses to remain an outcast. Manu tells him what will be his penalty in the next world.

XII. 60. He who has associated with outcasts (will) become Brahmarakshas (i.e. an evil spirit).

Manu however was not prepared to leave the outcast with this. He proceeds to enact penalty the severity of which cannot be doubted. The following are the penal sections of Manu Smriti against an outcast.

III. 150.....Those Brahmins who areoutcasts
Atheists are unworthy (to partake) of oblations to the gods and manes.

IX. 201.Outcast receive(s) no share (in inheritance).

XI. 185. But thenceforward (i.e. after the obsequies of the outcast have been performed) it shall be forbidden to converse with him, to sit with him, to give him a share of the inheritance, and to hold with him such intercourse as is usual among men;

XI. 186. And (if the outcast be the eldest) his right of primogeniture shall be withheld and the additional share, due to the eldest son; and in his stead a younger brother, excelling in virtue (i.e. who observes the rule of caste) shall obtain the share of the eldest.

Such is the law of Manu against an outcast. The severity of the penalties prescribed against him is quite obvious. Its effect is to exclude him from all social intercourse, to suspend him from every civil function, to disqualify him for all offices and to disable him from inheriting any property. Under these pains and penalties the outcaste might as well be dead which indeed Manu considers him to be, directing libations to be offered to the manes as though he was naturally so. This system of privations and mortifications was enforced by prescribing a similar fate to anyone who endeavoured to associate with an outcast. The penalty was not confined to the outcast. Nor was it restricted to males. Males and females were both subject to the law of the outcast. Even their progeny was subject to penalty. The law was extended to the son of the outcast. Born before

son was entitled to inherit immediately, as though his father was dead. Born after excommunication he lost his right to inherit, i.e. he became an outcast along with his father.

The laws of Manu regarding the outcast are of course devoid of justice and humanity. Some might think that there is nothing very strange about them. That is because these laws are very similar to the laws against apostacy and heresy to be found in all religious codes. It is unfortunately a fact. All religions —*Except Buddhism*— have used or misused the laws of inheritance for enforcing adhesion and conformity to their codes. The conversion of a Christian to Judaism or paganism or any other religion was punished by the Emperors Constantines and Jul

Emperors Theodosius and Valentinianus added capital punishment, in

case the apostle endeavoured to pervert others to the same inequity. This was borrowed by all the European countries¹ who maintained a similar system of penalties to enforce the Christian faith.

Such a view of the law of the outcast would be quite superficial. First of all the outcast is a creation of Brahmanism. It is a necessary coefficient of caste. Indeed once Brahmanism was determined to create the caste system the law against the outcast was absolutely essential. For only by punishing the outcast can the caste system be maintained. Secondly there is a difference between the Christian or Mahomedan Law of Apostacy and the Brahmanic law of caste. The disqualification under the Christian or Mahomedan law of apostacy was restricted to want of religious belief or the profession of wrong religious belief. Under the Brahmanic law the disqualification had no connection with belief or want of belief. It was connected with the sanctity of a certain form of social organization—namely Caste. It is the act of going out of one's caste that was made punishable. This is a very important difference.

The Brahmanic law of the outcast as compared with the law of apostacy in other religions shows that a belief in God is not essential to Brahmanism; that a belief in life after death is not essential to Brahmanism; that a belief in salvation either by good deeds or by a belief in a prophet is not essential to Brahmanism; that a belief in the sacredness of the Vedas is essential to Brahmanism. This is only one thing that is essential to Brahmanism. For it is only breach of caste which is penalized. All else is left to violation.

Those who are not blind to these forces of integration will admit that this act of Brahmanism in prohibiting intermarriage and interdining is nothing short of a complete dismemberment of society. It is a deathknell to unity, an effective bar to united action. As will be shown hereafter Brahmanism was keen on preventing united action by Non-Brahmins to overthrow Brahmanism and that is why Brahmanism brought about this segmentation of Indian Society. But the fatal effects of a poison can never be confined to the limits of the original intention of the perpetrator. The same thing has happened in the case of Caste. Brahmanism intended to paralyse the Non-Brahmins for action against Brahmins, it did not design that they as a nation should be paralysed for action against a foreign nation. But the result of the poison of Caste has been they have become stricken for action against Brahmanism as well as against foreigners. In other words Brahmanism in instituting Caste system has put the greatest impediment against the growth of nationalism.

¹ See Stephen's Commentaries on the Laws of England (15th Ed.) Vo. IV. p. 179.

In spite of what others say the Hindu will not admit that there is any thing evil in the Caste system, and from one point of view he is right. There is love, unity and mutual aid among members of a family. There is honour among thieves. A band of robbers have common interests as respects to its members. Gangs are marked by fraternal feelings and intense loyalty to their own ends however opposed they may be to the other gangs. Following this up one can say that a Caste has got all the praiseworthy characteristics which a society is supposed to have.

It has got the virtues of a family inasmuch as there is love unity and mutual aid. It has got the honour known to prevail among thieves. It has got the loyalty and fraternal feeling we meet with in gangs and it also possesses that sense of common interests which is found among robbers.

A Hindu may take satisfaction in these praiseworthy characteristics of the Caste and deny that there is anything evil in it. But he forgets that his thesis that Caste is an ideal form of social organization is supportable on the supposition that each caste is entitled to regard himself as an independent society, as an end in itself as nations do. But the theory breaks down when the consideration pertains to Hindu Society and to the Caste-System which goes with it.

Even in such a consideration of the subject the Hindu will not admit that the Caste system is an evil. Charge Hinduism with the responsibility for the evils of the Caste-system and the Hindu will at once retort, "What about the Class System in Europe?" Upto a point the retort is good if it means that there exists nowhere that ideal society of the philosophers marked by organic unity, accompanied by praiseworthy community of purpose, mutuality of sympathy, loyalty to public ends and concern for general welfare. Nobody can have much quarrel if the Hindu by way of analogy were to say that in every Society there are families and classes marked by exclusiveness, suspicion, and jealousy as to those without; bands of robbers, gangs. narrow cliques, trade unions. Employees' Associations, Kartels, Chambers of Commerce and political parties. Some of these are held together by the interest and plunder and others while aspiring to serve the public do not hesitate to prey upon it.

It may be conceded that everywhere *de facto* society whether in the past or in the present is not a single whole but a collection of small groups devoted to diverse purposes as their immediate and particular objectives. But the Hindu cannot take shelter under this analogy between the Hindu caste system and the Non-Hindu Class system and rest there as though there is nothing more to be said about the subject. The fact is there is a far bigger question which the Hindu has still to

face. He must take note of the fact that although every society consists of groups there are societies in which the groups are only non-social while there are societies in which the groups are anti-social. The difference between a society with the class system and a society with the caste system lies just in this namely the class system is merely non-social but the caste system is positively anti-social.

It may be important to realize why in some societies the group system produces only non-social feeling and in some societies the group system produces anti-social feeling. No better explanation of this difference can be given than the one given by professor John Dewey. According to him every thing depends upon whether the groups are isolated or associated, whether there is reciprocity of interest between them or whether there is lack of reciprocity of interest. If the groups are associated, if there is a reciprocity of interest between them the feeling between them will be only non-social. If the groups are isolated, if there is no reciprocity between them the feeling between them will be anti-social. To quote Professor Dewey¹:

“The isolation and exclusiveness of a gang or clique brings its anti-social spirit into relief. But this same spirit is found wherever one group has interests ‘of its own’ which shut it out from full interaction with other groups, so that its prevailing purpose is the protection of what it has got, instead of reorganization and progress through wider relationships. It marks nations in their isolation from one another; families which seclude their domestic concerns as if they had no connection with a larger life; schools when separated from the interest of home and community; the divisions of rich and poor; learned and unlearned. The essential point is that isolation makes for rigidity and formal institutionalizing of life, for static and selfish ideals within the group.”

The question to be asked is not whether there are groups in a Society or whether the Society is one single whole. The question to be asked is what degree of association, cooperative intercourse and interaction exists among the different groups; how numerous and varied are the interests which are consciously shared by them: how full and free is the interplay with other forms of Association? A society is not to be condemned as body because there are groups in it. It is to be condemned if the groups are isolated, each leading an exclusive life of its own. Because it is this isolation which produces the anti-social spirit which makes co-operative effort so impossible of achievement.

This isolation among the classes is the work of Brahmanism. The principal steps taken by it was to abrogate the system of intermarriage

¹Democracy and Education p. 99

and interdining that was prevalent among the four Varnas in olden times. This has already been discussed in an earlier section of this chapter. There is however one part of the story that remains to be told. I have said the Varna system had nothing to do with marriage. That males and females belonging to the different Varnas could marry and did marry. Law did not come in the way of inter-varna marriage. Social morality was not opposed to such marriages. Savarna marriage was neither required by law nor demanded by Society. All marriages between different Varnas—irrespective of the question whether the bride was of a higher Varna than the bride-groom or whether the bride-groom was of the higher Varna and the bride of the lower Varna—were valid. Indeed as Prof. Kane says the distinction between Anuloma and Pratiloma marriage was quite unknown and even the terms Anuloma and Pratiloma were not in existence. They are the creation of Brahmanism. Brahmanism put a stop to Pratiloma marriages i.e. marriages between women of a higher Varna and men of lower Varna. That was a step in the direction of closing the connection between the Varnas and creating in them an exclusive and anti-social spirit regarding one another. But while the inter-connecting gate of the Pratiloma marriage was closed the inter-connecting gate of Anuloma marriage had remained open. That was not closed. As pointed out in the section on graded inequality Anuloma marriage i.e. marriage between a male of the higher Varna and the female of the lower Varna was allowed by Brahmanism to continue. The gate of Anuloma marriage was not very respectable and was a one way gate only, still it was an interconnecting gate by which it was possible to prevent a complete isolation of the Varnas. But even here Brahmanism played what cannot but be called a dirty trick. To show how dirty the trick was it is necessary first to state the rules which prevailed for determining the status of the child. Under the rule existing from very ancient times the status of the child was determined by the Varna of the father. The Varna of the mother was quite unimportant. The following illustrations will place the point beyond doubt:

Father's name	Varna of father	Mother's Name	Varna of mother	Child's name	Varna of child
1. Shantanu	Kshatriya	Ganga	Shudra (Anamik)	Bhishma	Kshatriya
2. Shantanu	Kshatriya	Matsyagandha	Shudra (Fisher)	Viehitra Virya	Kshatriya
3. Parashar	Brahmin	Matsyagandha	Shudra (Fisher)	Krishna-Dwaipayana	Brahmin
4. Vishwamitra	Kshatriya	Menaka	(Apsara)	Shakuntala	Kshatriya
5. Yayati	Kshatriya	Devayani	Brahmin	Yadu	Kshatriya
6. Yayati	Kshatriya	Sharmishta	Asuri (Nonaryan)	Druhya	Kshatriya
7. Jaratkaru	Brahmin	Jaratkari	Nag. (Nonaryan)	Asita	Brahmin

The rule was known as the rule of Pitra Savarnya. It would be interesting to consider the effect of this rule of Pitra Savarnya on the Anuloma and Pratiloma systems of marriage.

The effect on Pratiloma marriage would be that the children, of mothers of the higher Varnas would be dragged down to the level of the lower Varnas represented by their fathers. Its effect on Anuloma marriage would be just the contrary. The children of mothers of the lower Varnas would be raised up and absorbed in the higher Varnas of their fathers.

Manu stopped Pratiloma marriages and thereby prevented the higher from being dragged to the status of the lower. However regrettable, not much damage was done by it so long as the Anuloma marriage and the rule of Pitra Savarnya continued in operation. The two together formed a very useful system. The Anuloma marriage maintained the inter-connection and the Pitra Savarnya rule made the higher classes quite composite in their make up. For they could not but help to be drawn from mothers of different Varnas. Brahmanism did not want to keep this gate of intercommunication between the Varnas open. It was bent on closing it. But it did it in a manner which is disreputable. The straight and honourable way was to stop Anuloma marriage. But Brahmanism did not do that. It allowed the system of Anuloma marriage to continue. What it did was to alter the rule of determining the status of the child. It replaced the rule of Pitra Savarnya by the rule of Matra Savarnya by which the status of the child came to be determined by the status of the mother. By this change marriage ceased to be that means of intersocial communication which it principally is. It relieved men of the higher Varna from the responsibility to their children simply because they were born of a mother of lower Varna. It made Anuloma marriage mere matter of sex, a humiliation and insult to the lower Varnas and a privilege to the higher classes to lawfully commit prostitution with women of the lower classes. And from a larger social point of view it brought the complete isolation among the Varnas which has been the bane of Hindu Society. Notwithstanding all this the Orthodox Hindu still believes that the caste system is an ideal system. But why talk about the orthodox Hindus. There are among enlightened politicians and historians. There are of course Indians both politicians and historians who vehemently deny that the Caste system comes in the way of nationalism. They presume that India is a nation and feel very much offended if anybody instead of speaking of the Indian Nation speaks of the people of India. This attitude is quite understandable. Most of the politicians and historians are Brahmins and cannot be expected to have the courage to

expose the misdeeds of their ancestors or admit the evils perpetrated by them. Ask any one the question, is India a nation, and all in a chorus say, 'yes.' Ask for reasons, they will say that India is a nation firstly because India has a geographical unity of the country and secondly because of the fundamental unity of the culture. All this may be admitted for the sake of argument and yet it is true to say that to draw an inference from these facts that India is a nation is really to cherish a delusion. For what is a nation? A nation is not a country in the physical sense of the country whatever degree of geographical unity it may possess. A nation is not people synthesized by a common culture derived from common language, common religion or common race. To recall what I have said in another place "Nationality is a subjective psychological feeling. It is a feeling of a corporate sentiment of oneness which makes those who are charged with it feel that they are kith and kin. This national feeling is a double edged feeling. It is at once a feeling of fellowship for one's own kith and an anti-fellowship feeling for those who are not one's own kith. It is a feeling of "consciousness of kind" which binds together those who are within the limits of the kindred and severs them from those who are outside the limits of the kindred. It is a longing to belong to one's own group and a longing not to belong to any other group. This is the essence of what is called a nationality and national feeling. This longing to belong to one's own kindred as I said is a subjective psychological feeling and what is important to bear in mind is that the longing to belong to one's own kindred is quite independent of geography, culture or economic or social conflict. There may be geographical unity and yet there may be no "longing to belong". There may be no geographical unity and yet the feeling of longing to belong may be very intense. There may be cultural unity and yet there may be no longing to belong. There may be economical conflicts and class divisions and yet there may be an intense feeling of longing to belong. The point is that nationality is not primarily a matter of geography culture or".....

In the declining¹ days of the Vedic Regime, the Shudras as well as women had come to occupy a very low position. The rising tide of Buddhism had brought about a great change in the status of both. To put it briefly a Shudra under the Buddhist regime could acquire property, learning and could even become a king. Nay he could even rise to the highest rung of the social ladder occupied by the Brahmin in the Vedic Regime. The Buddhist order of Bhikshus was counterpart of the Vedic order of Brahmins. The two orders, each within its own

¹By declining days I mean the period since when the Brahmins started disturbing the balance of Chaturvarnya system by asserting their supremacy.