

CHAPTER II

UNTOUCHABILITY AMONG HINDUS

IN the matter of pollution there is nothing to distinguish the Hindus from the Primitive or Ancient peoples. That they recognized pollution is abundantly clear from the *Manu Smriti*. *Manu* recognises physical defilement and also notional defilement.

Manu treated birth,¹ death and menstruation² as sources of impurity. With regard to death, defilement was very extensive in its range. It followed the rule of consanguinity. Death caused defilement to members of the family of the dead person technically called *Sapindas* and *Samanodakas*? It not only included maternal relatives such as maternal uncle⁴ but also remote relatives.⁵ It extended even to nonrelatives such as (1) teacher⁶, (2) teacher's⁷ son, (3) teacher's⁸ wife, (4) pupil,⁹ (5) fellow¹⁰ student, (6) *Shrotriya*,¹¹ (7) king,¹² (8) friend,¹³ (9) members of the household,¹⁴ (10) those who carried the corpse,¹⁵ and (11) those who touched the corpse.¹⁶

Anyone within the range of defilement could not escape it. There were only certain persons who were exempt. In the following verses *Manu* names them and specifies the reasons why he exempts them :—

1. Chapter V. 58, 61- 63, 71, 77, 79.
2. Chapter III, 45-46 : IV 40-41, 57, 208 ; V. 66,85,108.
3. Chapter V. 58, 60, 75-77, 83-94.
4. Chapter V. 81.
5. Chapter V. 78.
6. Chapter V. 65, 80, 82.
7. Chapter V. 80.
8. Chapter V. 80.
9. Chapter V. 81.
10. Chapter V. 71.
11. Chapter V. 81.
12. Chapter V. 82.
13. Chapter V. 82.
14. Chapter V. 81.
15. Chapter V. 64-65, 85.
16. Chapter V. 64, 85

“V.93. The taint of impurity does not fall on kings and those engaged in the performance of a vow, or of a Sattra; for the first are seated on the throne of India, and the (last two are) ever pure like Brahman.

94. For a king, on the throne of magnanimity, immediate purification is prescribed, and the reason for that is that he is seated (there) for the protection of (his) subjects.

95. (The same rule applies to the kinsmen) of those who have fallen in a riot or a battle, (of those who have been killed) by lightning or by the king, and for cows and Brahmins, and to those whom the king wishes to be pure (in spite of impurity).

96. A king is an incarnation of the eight guardian deities of the world, the Moon, the Fire, the Sun, the Wind, Indra, the Lords of wealth and water (Kubera and Varuna) and Yama.

97. Because the king is pervaded by those lords of the world, no impurity is ordained for him for purity and impurity of mortals is caused and removed by those lords of the world.”

From this it is clear that the king, the kinsmen of those who have fallen in a noble cause as defined by Manu and those whom the king chose to exempt were not affected by the normal rules of defilement. Manu's statement that the Brahmin was 'ever pure' must be understood in its usual sense of exalting the Brahmin above everything. It must not be understood to mean that the Brahmin was free from defilement. For he was not. Indeed besides being defiled by births and deaths the Brahmin also suffered defilement on grounds which did not affect the Non-Brahmins. The Manu Smriti is full of tabus and don'ts which affect only the Brahmins and which he must observe and failure to observe which makes him impure.

The idea of defilement in Manu is real and not merely notional. For he makes the food offered by the polluted person unacceptable.

Manu also prescribes the period of defilement. It varies. For the death of a Sapinda it is ten days. For children three days. For fellow students one day. Defilement does not vanish by the mere lapse of the prescribed period. At the end of the period there must be performed a purificatory ceremony appropriate to the occasion.

For the purposes of purification Manu treats the subject of defilement from three aspects : (1) Physical defilement, (2) notional

or psychological defilement, and (3) ethical defilement. The rule¹ for the purification of ethical defilement which occurs when a person entertains evil thoughts are more admonitions and exhortations. But the rites for the removal of notional and physical defilement are the same. They include the use of water.² earth.³ cow's urine,⁴ the kusa grass⁵ and ashes.⁶ Earth, cow's urine, Kusa grass and ashes are prescribed as purificatory agents for removing physical impurities caused by the touch of inanimate objects. Water is the chief agent for the removal of notional defilement. It is used in three ways (1) sipping, (2) bath, and (3) ablution.⁷ Later on *panchagavya* became the most important agency for removing notional defilement. It consists of a mixture of the five products of the cow, namely, milk, urine, dung, curds and butter.

In Manu there is also provision for getting rid of defilement by transmission through a scapegoat⁸ namely by touching the cow or looking at the sun after sipping water.

Besides the individual pollution the Hindus believe also in territorial and communal pollution and purification very much like the system that prevailed among the early Romans. Every village has an annual *jatra*. An animal, generally a he buffalo, is purchased on behalf of the village. The animal is taken round the village and is sacrificed, the blood is sprinkled round the village and towards the end toe meat is distributed among the villagers. Every Hindu, every Brahmin even though he may not be a beef eater is bound to accept his share of the meat. This is not mentioned in any of the Smritis but it has the sanction of custom which among the Hindus is so strong that it always overrides law.

II

If one could stop here, one could well say that the notion of defilement prevalent among the Hindus is not different from that which obtained in Primitive and in Ancient Societies. But one cannot stop here. For there is another form of Untouchability observed by

1. Chapter V. 105-109; 127-128.
2. Chapter V. 127.
3. Chapter V. 134-136.
4. Chapter V. 121, 124.
5. Chapter V. 115.
6. Chapter V. 111.
7. Chapter V. 143.
8. Chapter V. 87.

the Hindus which has not yet been set out. It is the hereditary Untouchability of certain communities. So vast is the list of such communities that it would be difficult for an individual with his unaided effort to compile an exhaustive list. Fortunately such a list was prepared by the Government of India in 1935 and is attached to the Orders-in-Council issued under the Government of India Act of 1935. To this Order-in-Council there is attached a Schedule. The Schedule is divided into nine parts. One part refers to one province and enumerates the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within steps which are deemed to be Untouchables in that province either in the whole of that province or part thereof. The list may be taken to be both exhaustive and authentic. To give an idea of the vast number of communities which are regarded as hereditary Untouchables by the Hindus. I reproduce below the list given in the Order-in-Council.

SCHEDULE

PART I. - MADRAS

(1) Scheduled Castes throughout the Province :—

Adi-Andhra.	Gosangi.	Paidi.
Adi-Dravida.	Haddi	Painda.
Adi-Karnataka.	Hasla	Paky.
Ajila.	Holeya.	Pallan.
Arunthuthiyar.	Jaggali.	Pambada.
Baira.	Jambuvulu.	Pamidi.
Bakuda.	Kalladi	Panchama.
Bandi.	Kanakkan	Paniyan.
Bariki.	Kodalo.	Panniandi.
Battada.	Koosa.	Paraiyan.
Bavuri	Koraga.	Parvan.
Bellara.	Kudumban	Pulayan.
Bygari	Kuravan.	Puthirai Vanan.
Chachati.	Madari.	Raneyar.
Chakkiliyan.	Madiga.	Relli.
Chalvadi.	Maila	Samagara.
Chamar.	Mala.	Samban
Chandala.	Mala Dasu.	Sapari.
Cheruman.	Matangi.	Semman.
Dandasi.	Moger.	Thoti.
Devendrakulathan.	Muchi.	Tiruvalluvar.
Ghasi.	Mundala.	Valluvan.
Godagali.	Nalakcyava.	Valmiki.
Godari.	Nayadi.	Vettuvan.
Godda.	Paga dai	

(2) Scheduled Castes throughout the Provinces except in any special constituency constituted under the Government of India Act, 1935, for the election of a representative of backward areas and backward tribes to the Legislative Assembly of the Province :—

Arnadan.	Kattunayakan.	Kuruman.
Dombo.	Kudiya.	Malasar.
Kadan.	Kudubi.	Mavilan.
Karimpalan.	Kurichchan.	Pano.

PART II.—BOMBAY

Scheduled Castes :—

(1) Throughout the Province :—

Asodi.	Dhor.	Mang Garudi.
Bakad.	Garode.	Maghval, or Menghwar.
Bhambi.	Halleer.	Mini Madig.
Bhangi.	Halsar, or Haslar.	Mukri.
Chakrawadya-Dasar.	Hulsavar.	Nadia.
Chalvadi.	Holaya.	Shenva, or Shindhava.
Chambhar, or Mochi gar, or	Khalpa.	Shinghdav, or Shingadya.
Samagar.	Kolcha, or Kolgha.	Sochi.
Chena-Dasaru.	Koli-Dhor.	Timali.
Chuhar, or Chuhra.	Lingader.	Turi.
Dakaleru.	Madig, or Mang.	Vankar.
Dhed.	Mahar.	Vitholia.
Dhegu-Megu.		

(2) Throughout the Province except in the Ahmedabad, Kaira, Broach and Panch Mahals and Surat Districts—Mochi.

(3) In the Kanara district—Kotegar.

PART III.—BENGAL

Scheduled Castes throughout the Province :—

Agaria.	Bhumij.	Gonrhi.
Bagdi.	Bind.	Hadi.
Bahelia.	Binjhia.	Hajang.
Baiti.	Chamar.	Halalkhor.
Bauri.	Dhcnuar.	Hari.
Bediya.	Dhoba.	Ho.
Beldar.	Doai.	Jalia Kaibartta.
Berua.	Dom.	Jhalo Malo, or Malo.
Bhatiya.	Dosadh.	Kadar.
Bhuimali.	Garo.	Kalpahariya.
Bhuiya.	Ghasi.	Kan.

Kandh.	Lodha.	Oraon.
Kandra.	Lahor.	Paliya.
Kaora.	Mahli.	Pan.
Kapuria.	Mai.	Pasi.
Karenga.	Mahar.	Patni.
Kastha.	Mallah.	Pod.
Kaur.	Mech.	Rabha.
Khaira.	Mehtor.	Rajbanshi.
Khatik.	Muchi.	Rajwar.
Koch.	Munda.	Santal.
Konai.	Musahar.	Sunri.
Konwar.	Nagesia.	Tiyar.
Kora.	Namasudra.	Turi.
Kotal.	Nat.	
Lalbegi,	Nuniya.	

PART IV.—UNITED PROVINCES

Scheduled Castes :—

(1) Throughout the Province :—

Agariva.	Chamar.	Kharwar (except
Aheriya.	Chero.	Benbansi)
Badi.	Dabagar.	Khatik.
Badhik.	Dhangar.	Kol.
Baheliya.	Dhanuk (Bhangi).	Korwa.
Bajaniya.	Dharkar.	Lalbegi.
Bajgi.	Dhobi.	Majhawar.
Balahar.	Dom.	Nat.
Balmiki.	Domar.	Pankha.
Banmanus.	Gharami.	Parahiya.
Bansphor.	Ghasiya.	Pasi.
Barwar.	Gual.	Patari.
Basor.	Habura.	Rawat.
Bawariya.	Hari.	Saharya.
Beldar.	Hela.	Sanaurhiya.
Bengali.	Khairaha.	Sansiya.
Berya.	Kalabaz.	Shilpkar.
Bhantu.	Kanjar.	Tharu.
Bhuiya.	Kapariya.	Turaiha.
Bhuiyar.	Karwal.	
Boriya.	Kharot.	

(2) Throughout the Province except in the Agra, Meerut and Rohilkhand divisions—Kori.

PART V—PUNJAB

Scheduled Castes throughout the Province :—

Ad Dharmis.	Marija, or Marecha.	Khatik.
Bawaria.	Bengali.	Kori.
Chamar.	Barar.	Nat.
Chuhra, or Balmiki.	Bazigar.	Pasi.
Dagi and Koli.	Bhanjra.	Perna.
Dhumna.	Chanal.	Sepela.
Od.	Dhanak.	Sirkiband.
Sansi.	Gagra.	Megha.
Sarera.	Gandhila.	Ramdasis.

PART VI.—BIHAR

Scheduled Castes :—

(1) Throughout the Province :—

Chamar.	Halalkhor.	Mochi.
Chaupal.	Hari.	Musahar.
Dhobi.	Kanjar.	Nat.
Dusadh.	Kurariar.	Pasi
Dom.	Lalbegi.	

(2) In the Patna and Tirhut divisions and the Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Palamau and Purnea districts :—

Bauri.	Bhumij.	Rajwar.
Bhogta.	Ghasi.	Turi.
Bhauya.	Pan.	

(3) In the Dhanbad sub-division of the Manbhum district and the Central Manbhum general rural constituency, and the Purulia and Raghunathpur municipalities :—

Bauri.	Ghasi.	Rajwar.
Bhogta.	Pan.	Turi.
Bhuiya.		

PART VH.—CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR

<i>Scheduled Castes</i>	<i>Localities</i>
Basor, or Burud ..)	Throughout the Province.
Chamar ..)	
Dom ..)	
Ganda)	
Mang ..)	
Mehtar or Bhangi)	
Mochi ..)	
Satnami ..)	In the Bilaspur district.
Audhelia ..	
Bahna ..	
	In the Amraoti district

<i>Scheduled Castes</i>	<i>Localities</i>
Balahi, or Balai.	.. In the Berar division and the Balaghat, Bhandara Belul, Chanda, Chhindwara, Hoshangabad, Jabulpore, Mandla, Nagpur, Nimar, Saugor and Wardha districts.
Bedar	.. In the Akola, Amraoti and Buldhana districts.
Chadar	.. In the Bhandara and Saugor districts.
Chauhan	.. In the Durg district.
Dahayat	.. In the Damoh sub-division of the Saugor district.
Dewar	.. In the Bilaspur, Durg and Raipur districts.
Dhanuk	.. In the Saugor district, except in the Damoh sub-division thereof.
Dhimar	.. In the Bhandara district.
Dhobi	.. In the Bhandara, Bilaspur, Raipur and Saugor districts and the Hoshangabad and Seoni-Malwa tahsils of the Hoshangabad district.
Dohar	.. In the Berar division and the Balaghat, Bhandara, Chanda, Nagpur and Wardha districts.
Ghasia	.. In the Berar division and in the Balaghat, Bhandara, Bilaspur, Chanda, Durg, Nagpur, Raipur and Wardha districts.
Holiya	.. In the Balaghat and Bhandara districts.
Jangam	.. In the Bhandara district.
Kaikari	.. In the Berar division, and in Bhandara, Chanda, Nagpur and Wardha districts.
Katia	.. In the Berar division, in the Balaghat, Betul, Bhandara, Bilaspur, Chanda, Durg, Nagpur, Nimar, Raipur and Wardha districts, in the Hoshangabad and Seoni-Malwa tahsils of the Hoshangabad district, in the Chhindwara district, except in the Seoni sub-division thereof, and in the Saugor district, except in the Damoh sub-division thereof.
Khangar	.. In the Bhadara, Buldhana and Saugor districts and the Hoshangabad and Seoni Malwa tahsils of the Hoshangabad district.
Khatik	.. In the Berar division, in the Balaghat, Bhandara, Chanda, Nagpur and Wardha districts, in the Hoshangabad tahsil of the Hoshangabad district, in the Chhindwara district, except in the Seoni sub-division thereof, and in the Saugor district, except in the Damoh sub-division thereof.
Koli	.. In the Bhandara and Chanda districts.
Kori	.. In the Amraoti, Balaghat, Betul, Bhandara, Buldhana, Chhindwara, Jubulpore, Mandla, Nimar, Raipur and Saugor districts, and in the Hoshangabad district, except in the Harda and Sohagpur tahsils thereof.
Kumhar	.. In the Bhandara and Saugor districts and the Hoshangabad and Seoni-Malwa tahsils of the Hoshangabad district.

<i>Scheduled Castes</i>		<i>Localities</i>
Madgi	..	In the Berar division and in the Balaghat, Bhandara, Chanda, Nagpur and Wardha districts.
Mala	..	In the Balaghat, Betul, Chhindwara, Hoshangabad, Jabulpore Mandla, Nimar and Saugor districts.
Mehra or Mahar	..	Throughout the Province, except in the Harda and Sohagpur tahsils of the Hoshangabad district.
Nagarchi	..	In the Balaghat, Bhandara, Chhindwara, Mandla, Nagpur and Raipur districts.
Ojha	..	In the Balaghat, Bhandara and Mandla districts and the Hoshangabad tahsil of the Hoshangabad district
Panka	..	In the Berar division, in the Balaghat, Bhandara, Bilaspur, Chanda, Durg, Nagpur, Raipur, Saugor and Wardha districts and in the Chhindwara district, except in the Seoni subdivision thereof.
Pardhi	..	In the Narsinghpura sub-division of the Hoshangabad district.
Pradhan	..	In the Berar division, in the Bhandara, Chanda, Nagpur, Nimar, Raipur and Wardha districts and in the Chhindwara district, except in the Seoni sub-division thereof.
Rajjhar	..	In the Sohagpur tahsil of the Hoshangabad district

PART VIII. - ASSAM

Scheduled Castes :-

(1) In the Assam Valley :-

Namasudra.	Hira.	Mchitar, or Bhengi.
Kaibartta.	Lalbegi.	Bansphor.
Bania, or Brittial-Bania.		

(2) In the Surma Valley :-

Mali, or Bhuimali.	Sutradhar.	Kaibartta, or Jaliya.
Dhupi, or Dhobi.	Muchi.	Lalbegi.
Dugla, or Dholi.	Patni.	Mehtar, or Bhengi.
Jhalo and Malo, Mahara.	Namasudra.	Bansphor.

PART IX. - ORISSA

Scheduled Castes :-

(1) Throughout the Province :-

Adi-Andhra.	Chamar.	Ghusuria.
Audhelia.	Chandala.	Godagali.
Bariki.	Dandasi.	Godari.
Bansor, or Burud.	Dewar.	Godra.
Bavuri.	Dhoba or Dhobi.	Gokha.
Chachati.	Ganda.	Haddi, or Hari.

Irika.	Mala.	Panchama.
Jaggali.	Mang.	Panka
Kandra.	Mangan.	Relli.
Katia.	Mehra, or Mahar.	Sapari.
Kela.	Mehtar, or Bhangi.	Satnami.
Kodalo.	Mochi or Muchi.	Siyal.
Madari.	Paidi.	Valmiki.
Madiga.	Painda.	
Mahuria.	Pamidi.	

(2) Throughout the Province except in the Khondmals district, the district of Sambalpur and the areas transferred to Orissa under the provisions of the Government of India (Constitution of Orissa) Order, 1936, from the Vizagapatam and Ganjam Agencies in the Presidency of Madras :-

Pan, or Pano.

(3) Throughout the Province except in the Khondmals district and the areas so transferred to Orissa from the said Agencies :-

Dom, or Dambo.

(4) Throughout the Province except in the district of Sambalpur :

Bauro.	Bhumij.	Turi.
Bhuiya.	Ghasi, or Ghasia.	

(5) In the Nawapara sub-division of the district of Sambalpur :-

Kori.	Nagarchi.	Pradhan.
-------	-----------	----------

This is a very terrifying list. It includes 429 communities. Reduced to numbers it means that today there exist in India 50-60 millions of people whose mere touch causes pollution to the Hindus. Surely, the phenomenon of Untouchability among primitive and ancient society pales into insignificance before this phenomenon of hereditary Untouchability for so many millions of people which we find in India. This type of Untouchability among Hindus stands in a class by itself. It has no parallel in the history of the world. It is unparalleled not merely by reason of the colossal numbers involved which exceed the number of great many nations in Asia and in Europe but also on other grounds.

There are some striking features of the Hindu system of Untouchability affecting the 429 Untouchable communities which are not to be found in the custom of Untouchability as observed by Non-Hindu communities, primitive or ancient.

The isolation prescribed by Non-Hindu societies as a safeguard against defilement, if it is not rational, is at least understandable. It

is for specified reasons such as birth, marriage, death, etc., But the isolation prescribed by Hindu society is apparently for no cause.

Defilement as observed by the Primitive Society was of a temporary duration which arose during particular times such as the performance of natural functions, eating, drinking, etc. or a natural crisis in the life of the individual such, as birth, death, menstruation, etc. After the period of defilement was over and after the purificatory ceremonies were performed the defilement vanished and the individual became pure and associable. But the impurity of the 50-60 millions of the Untouchables of India, quite unlike the impurity arising from birth, death, etc., is permanent. The Hindus who touch them and become polluted thereby can become pure by undergoing purificatory ceremonies. But there is nothing which can make the Untouchables pure. They are born impure, they are impure while they live, they die the death of the impure, and they give birth to children who are born with the stigma of Untouchability affixed to them. It is a case of permanent, hereditary stain which nothing can cleanse.

In the third place, Non-Hindu societies which believed in defilement isolated the individuals affected or at the most those closely connected with them. But the Untouchability among the Hindus involves the isolation of a class—a class which today numbers about 50 to 60 million people.

In the fourth place, Non-Hindu societies only *isolated* the affected individuals. They did not *segregate* them in separate quarters. The Hindu society insists on segregation of the Untouchables. The Hindu will not live in the quarters of the Untouchables and will not allow the Untouchables to live inside Hindu quarters. This is a fundamental feature of Untouchability as it is practised by the Hindus. It is not a case of social separation, a mere stoppage of social intercourse for a temporary period. It is a case of territorial segregation and of a *cordon sanitaire* putting the impure people inside a barbed wire into a sort of a cage. Every Hindu village has a ghetto. The Hindus live in the village and the Untouchables in the ghetto.

Such is the Hindu system of Untouchability. Who can deny that it is not altogether different from what is found to exist among Non-Hindu societies? That Untouchability among Hindus is a unique phenomenon is beyond question. Persons were treated by non-Hindu communities as impure but as individuals. Never a whole class was treated as impure. But their impurity was of a temporary duration and was curable by the performance of some purificatory rites. There has

never been a case of permanent impunity based on the rule 'once impure always impure'. Persons were treated as impure by Non-Hindu Communities and they were even cut off from social intercourse. But there has never been a case of persons having been put into permanent segregation camps. A whole body of people have been treated as impure by Non-Hindu communities. But they were strangers outside the fold of the kindred. There has never been a case of a people treating a section of their own people as permanently and hereditarily impure.

Untouchability among Hindus is thus a unique phenomenon, unknown to humanity in other parts of the world. Nothing like it is to be found in any other society- primitive, ancient or modern. The many problems that arise out of a study of Untouchability and which call for investigation may be reduced to two :

- (1) Why do the Untouchables live outside the village?
- (2) What made their impurity permanent, and ineradicable?

The following pages are devoted to finding answers to these two questions.

●●

PART II
PROBLEM OF HABITAT

- Chapter III.* Why do the Untouchables Live Outside the Village ?
- Chapter IV.* Are the Untouchables Broken Men ?
- Chapter V.* Are there Parallel Cases ?
- Chapter VI.* How did Separate Settlements for Broken Men
Disappear Elsewhere ?

