



International Journal of Sanskrit Research

अनन्ता

ISSN: 2394-7519

IJSR 2021; 7(1): 126-128

© 2021 IJSR

www.anantaajournal.com

Received: 17-10-2020

Accepted: 02-12-2020

Shiva Bajpai (Tripathi)

Rashtriya Sanskrit Samsthan,
Bhopal Campus, Bhopal,
Madhya Pradesh, India

Dr. Shivbalak Dwivedi

Principal and Professor (Retd.),
Badrivishal P.G. College,
Farrukhabad, Uttar Pradesh,
India

Social life described in *Yajnavalkya smriti*

Shiva Bajpai (Tripathi) and Dr. Shivbalak Dwivedi

Introduction

Society has been of special importance in India since ancient times. The tradition of a society structure had started from the *Vedic* era itself. To build an ideal family and society, beliefs have been laid down in the *Vedas*.

संगच्छध्वं संवदध्वं सं नो मनान्ति जानितां |
देवा भागं यथा पूर्वे संजानानां उपासते|| [1]

This *mantra* symbolizes the imagination of an ideal society. To make this *Vedic* tradition more clear, Upanishads were composed. In it, the person's duties are determined on basis of spirituality rather than materialism and individualism. Dharma sutras and memories are synonymous with an ideal society philosophy. The Vedas represent the form of ancient Indian society. Religion and spirituality are the main themes of the Vedas. In these Vedas, a firm proof of the social life of that time is also found. The practice of Vedic texts gives knowledge of the existing *Varna* system, Marriage, *Rajdharma* and other diverse social subjects. From the practice of *Vedic Vangmaya*, we come to the conclusion that human life was simple in that era. At that time the diverse complexities of social life did not overlap. Various aspects of people's lives were united and organized at that time.

Many such evidences are found in *Vedic Vangmaya*, which makes it clear that the sages and mystics of that era had reached a high stage in the field of social thought [2].

Religion has been the mainstay of social philosophy in the *Vedic* era. *Vedic* religion was quite different from today's religion. *Yajnas* were in the major number in *Vedic* religion [3]. In the modern era, ecology and nature conservation is being given great importance.

It is believed that if the protection and purity of the natural environment is not taken care of, then there will be a great threat to the entire human civilization. Our ancient *Vedic* Sages were already familiar with the importance of nature. Therefore, they gave paramount importance to the worship of nature in their social life. They have paid immense respect to Earth, water, air, sun, fire, flora and natural gratuity [4]. Here are some views of the ancient sages in context:

“O earth! you are the shelter of the afflicted or the poor. My friend! you are my mine for infinite jewels. With your grace, farmers do agriculture. O earth! protect me by giving me the opulence. We do not discharge by solicitation. O earth! Protect me from agony of mind, don't we be sad.” [5].

“O chopped tree, this sharp axe receives you in form of incense for great vision and Yajna.”

“O vegetation, grow at this place with a sprout at night.” [6]

Yajnas in *Vedic* religion were very elaborate and subtle. These *Yajnas* were closely related to the welfare and construction of the society. In the *Yajnas*, king to the poor, individuals of all classes got a role in the process of construction of society. All kinds of businesses, arts and architects got an opportunity to develop them. The rise of such an institution in terms of philosophy and law did not arise anywhere. Even today, the importance of *Yajna* has not been lost. This is a direct proof of the aliveness of this institution. *Ramayana* written by *Maharishi Valmiki* is called *Adi Kavya* of Sanskrit.

Corresponding Author:

Shiva Bajpai (Tripathi)

Rashtriya Sanskrit Samsthan,
Bhopal Campus, Bhopal,
Madhya Pradesh, India

In this, serious views have been expressed related to the character of *Maryada Purushottam Lord Rama* and on the religious subjects, which gives an introduction to the ideology of that era. *McDonald* considers it to be a creation of BC or 6th century [7]. But there are substantial differences among scholars regarding its time. The era whose society is described in the *Ramayana*, the four *varnas* and the four *ashrams* had become completely revered. All the *varnas* were performing their duties properly. The family and the institution of marriage were fully developed. In marriage monogamy system was given importance but polyandry was also prevalent. *Ram* symbolizes the ideal of monogamy. *Dasharatha* is an example of polyandry. Women had special respect. The husband had a special dignity of the act. *Ramayana* is the story of conflict between two cultures, *Dev* and *Asura*. *Ram* is the representative of *Dev* culture and *Ravana* was the representative of *Asura* culture.

Divine and demoniacal tendencies have been expressed through this legend. Describing the qualities of *Rama*, it is said in the *Ramayana* that who is virtuous and brave in this world? Who is a religious, grateful, truth-speaking, engaged in the interest of all beings, scholarly, beloved and subordinate to all senses? Who is such that even the gods get frightened when they are angry in war? [8] Six qualities of *Rama* have been described at one place; lack of cruelty, tenderness, compassion, temperament (modesty) and temperament of the senses and mind control [9]. *Ram's* qualities are considered exemplary for every person in the society and are considered ideal for society even in today's era. In the *Ramayana*, religion, work, salvation has been given due respect to the four social values and thus the trend and retirement path have been coordinated. *Ram* consumes the kingdom, lives a householder, battles with demons to resist injustice, but simultaneously introduces a great detachment. He also appears to us as a great thinker. This is a balanced social philosophy, in which there is an abundance of both yoga and enjoyment. Similarly, in the *Mahabharata Purana* etc., various social subjects have been represented in the same place. *Yajnavalkya Smriti* has a variety of social themes influenced by Vedic social philosophy. Religion is the basic element of Indian society. Therefore, religion has been given special importance in *Vedic Vangmay* to later literature. The field of religion is very wide. Scholars have divided it into two parts based on *Shruti* and *Smriti*. The acts and rites are mentioned in *Shruti* religion are mainly related to *Vedic Samhita* and *Brahmins*. *Smriti Dharmas* are basically based on memories. *Shri Yajnavalkya* has presented an explanation of this *Smriti Dharma*. According to another division there are six types of *Dharma*. *Varna Dharma*, *Ashram Dharma*, *Varnashrama Dharma*, *Naimitik Dharma*, *Ordinary Religion and Properties*. The religions of *Brahmacharya Ashram* are mentioned in the *Brahmachari* episode. The duties of the householder caste are mentioned in the second *Grihastha Dharma* in *Grihastha* episode. The duties of the remaining *Vanaprastha* and *Sanyas (Yeti Dharma)* ashrams, have been discussed in the third and fourth cases of the *Prayaschitadhyaya* (Atonement) Chapter. The text about *Varnashrama* is not mentioned separately in the scripture presented.

The *Rajadharm* episode is discussed at the end of the *Gunadharm* ethos chapter. In this, the entire chapter has been described in a proper way in the behavior chapter by mentioning the general duties. The purpose of the religious religion is to atone it for doing a specific work. For this reason, it has a separate chapter.

Simple religion all the has been discussed incases and chapters as well, that many such topics have been presented in the practice of this *Smriti*, which are also pointing towards the social subject. For example, *Maharishi Yajnavalkya* says that for the sake of family, If any loan has been taken by the family members, then give it to the main person of the family and give it to his successor if he dies or goes out.

अविभक्तैः कुटुम्बार्थं यादृशं दुष्कृतेभवेत् |
दधुस्तीद्रिल्पिनः प्रेते प्रेषिते वा कुटुम्बानि || [10]

The social system at that time was that husband used to give loans to women of nurturers, washermen and fowlers [11]. When the father went, died or became ill, his debt would be returned by his son or grandson [12].

It was a specialty in society at that time that five divine experiments were done for the purity in Libra, Fire, Water, Toxin and Treasures [13].

तुलान्यायो विषं कोशो दिव्यानीह विशुद्धये |

In the society then, it was the rule that if the father did the division of property, he could do as he wished, he could divide by giving the best part to the eldest son into, the middle part to the middle and the smaller one to the youngest.

विभागं चेश्रिता कुर्यादिच्छ या विभजेत्स्तान |
ज्येष्ठं वा श्रेष्ठ भागेन सर्वे वा स्युः समाप्तिनः ||
यदि कुर्यात्सिमानं शान् पत्न्यः कार्याः समाप्तिनः |
न दत्तं स्त्री धनं मासां भर्ता वाश्वशुरेनवा || [14]

Maharishi Yajnavalkya writes about the adopted son in the society at that time:

अक्षतायां क्षतायां वा जातः पौर्भवः सुतः |
दद्यान्मता पिता वायं स पुत्रो दत्तक भवेत् || [15]

One who takes in a *Kshatyoni* or *Akshatyoni Punarbhu* is called *Paunarbhavah* and one who is given to someone else by his parents is called *Dattak* (Adopted son). To get rid of the various types of sins prescribed by humans in the society then, various laws have been enumerated. Many rules have been made for this - *Maharishi Yajnavalkya* says at one place that (inaccessible) charity to those who are prohibited workers and flow of the rivers is very pure. Purification of impure things is done by pure water, purification of sins is done by chanting, purification of the mind is done by asceticism and learning and purification of wisdom is done by knowledge.

अकार्यकारिणां दानं वेगो नद्याश्च शुद्धिकृत |
रोधयस्य मृच्चतायं वा संन्यासो वै द्विजन्मनाम ||

तपोवेद विदां क्षान्तीर्विदुषां वर्मषां जलम् |
जपं प्रच्छन्न पापानां मनसः सत्वयमुच्यते ||

भूतात्मनस्त्यो विद्यं बुद्धिज्ञानं विशेषे धनम् |
क्षेत्रग्यस्येश्वर्यानाद्वि शुद्धिः परमां मतं || [16]

Agriculture, craftsmanship (artisans), laborer teaching (teaching with salary), running of rupees on interest, distress (haulage on rent), mountain (sale of trident wood on the mountain) service, *anoop* (Working in large quantity of tree, tree, water spread area) and soliciting and begging from the king.

कृषिः शिल्पे श्रुतिर्विद्या कुसीदं शंकट गिरिः।
सेवानूपं नृपो भेक्षमापत्तौ जीवनानि तु॥^[17]

Maharishi *Yajnavalkya*, at the time of emergency, makes the law that after being hungry for 3 days, *Abrahmin* (Shudra) should steal the food of *Vaishya* or *Kshatriya* in his absence. He should steal grains for one day only. If he gets caught stealing, he should tell the catcher righteously what he has stolen.

बुभुक्षितस्त्रयहम् स्थित्वा धान्यम् ब्राह्मणाद्धदेत्।
प्रतिगृहं तदारन्ये यमभियुक्तेन धर्मतः॥^[18]

Religion was given special recognition in the society then. Maharishi *Yajnavalkya* makes it clear that the accomplishment of religion is not by symbols but by conduct. Therefore, one should not do for others what is not good to himself.

Telling the truth, not stealing, not getting angry, shame, purity, wisdom, peace, control of the senses and learning are all signs of *Dharma*.

नाश्रमः कारणं धर्मे क्रियमाणो भवेद्विसः।
अतो यदात्मनोऽपश्यं परेषां न तदा चरेत्॥

सत्यमस्तेयमक्रोधो हीः शोचम् धीधीतिर्दमः।
संयतेन्द्रियात्म विद्या धर्मः सर्व उदाहरतः॥^[19]

Maharishi *Yajnavalkya* is especially throwing light for social purity. He says that the fruits of certain actions are received in longitude and some of the actions take place in this world, some fruits are found in this world or hereafter. *Satvadi* Bhavna is the only sponsor in respect of the good results of deeds^[20].

The one who keeps thinking about stealing other's things and keeps on contemplating evil (like *Brahmhatya*) is born in the *Chandal Yoni*^[21].

False-speaking, slurry and hard-spoken originate in *Pakshi* (Bird) *Yoni*. But One who is violent, thief and keeps an eye on other's woman gets *Vriksh Lata Yoni* (Birth as plants and trees). Spiritual, Holy Spirit, ascetic, *Jitendriya* (One who has control over his senses), moral, *Vedic* scholar, *Satvik*, receives the *Dev Yoni* (Birth as Gods). Always anxious in tasks, impatient, a *Rajoguni*, trapped in worldly subjects, a receives a *Manushya Yoni* (Birth as humans)^[22].

In a nut-shell, we can conclude that the status of society at the time of *Mahirshi Yajnavalkya* was way more civilized, structured and organized as compared to today's materialistic era.

References

1. "Vaidik Sahitya aur Sanskriti", Pt. Baldev Upadhyaya, Page 40.
2. "Sources of Indian tradition", W.T.Berry, Page 5.
3. "Hindu World", Benjamin Walker, Page 559.

4. Yajurveda-Chapter 5/94
5. Yajurveda-Chapter 5/44
6. Yajurveda-Chapter 5/9
7. "History of Sanskrit literature", McDonald, Page 58.
8. "Ramayana", Balkand-1/2-4.
9. "Ramayana", Ayodhyakand-33/11-12.
10. Yajnavalkya Smriti-Vyahavaradhyaya-45
11. Yajnavalkya Smriti-Vyahavaradhyaya-48
12. Yajnavalkya Smriti-Vyahavaradhyaya-50
13. Yajnavalkya Smriti-Vyahavaradhyaya-232
14. Yajnavalkya Smriti-Vyahavaradhyaya-114,115
15. Yajnavalkya Smriti-Vyahavaradhyaya-130
16. Yajnavalkya Smriti-Prayah-32,33,34
17. Yajnavalkya Smriti-Prayah-42
18. Yajnavalkya Smriti-Prayah-43
19. Yajnavalkya Smriti-Prayah-65,66
20. Yajnavalkya Smriti-Prayah-133
21. Yajnavalkya Smriti-Prayah-134
22. Yajnavalkya Smriti-Prayah-135-138