

# VAJRA-SŪCIKA UPANIṢAD

(of the Sāma Veda)



## Introduction

The ideology and institutions of *Varna* (= caste) and *Asrama* (=stages of life) are so deeply ingrained in classical Hinduism that our Dharma is often termed as 'Varnashrama Dharma'. The Vajrasuchika Upanishad, discusses the true basis of one's caste.

The word 'Vajrasūci' is a compound of two words:

1. Vajra = diamond, hard, thunderbolt
2. Sūci/Sūcika = needle

The word 'Vajra-sūcika' therefore means:— “A needle that is as hard as a rock/diamond.” In other words, the name indicates that the text expounds a very precious, and a potent doctrine that can lead one to *moksha* (= liberation). The Upanishad concludes that it is spiritual realization and good conduct alone that determine one's caste.

The Upanishad is often ascribed to the Brahmin Buddhist scholar Aśvaghoṣa, the celebrated author of the 'Buddha-charita' — a biography on Lord Buddha. Sometimes, it is also ascribed to Bhagavatpāda Shankaracharya, the great Advaitin teacher. These ascriptions are impossible to prove. The text has been very popular amongst certain Buddhist circles in the past. However, the text also reveals a clear Hindu ambience throughout and is among the 108 Upanishads enumerated in the list given in the Muktika Upanishad. Although the text is not counted amongst the major Upanishads and is of uncertain date, it is important nevertheless because it expounds certain tenets of other recondite Hindu texts in a lucid manner. All Upanishads are classified under one of the four Vedas, and this Upanishad belongs to the Samaveda. Numerous versions of the text exist, and the shorter one has been adopted here. In future, I propose to add the translation of the extra sections of the longer version as well.

## The Doctrine of the Diamond Needle (Deconstruction of Caste)

*vajra-sūcika pravakṣyāmi jñānam ajñāna-bhedanam |*  
*dūṣaṇā jñāna-hīnā bhūṣaṇā jñāna-cakṣuṣām || 1 ||*

1. I shall teach the Vajrasuci — the diamond needle doctrine which destroys ignorance, condemns those who are devoid of the knowledge (of Brahman) and exalts those endowed with enlightenment.

**Commentary:**— The opening lines indicate that the esoteric doctrine of this text is potent and precious and should be revealed only to the select few who are spiritually inclined and qualified to receive it. If this doctrine is debased by teaching to an unworthy person, the recipient comes to harm and is not able to derive any benefit from it.

*brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya-vaiśya-śūdrā iti catvāro varṇaḥ | teṣāṃ varṇānām brahmaṇa eva*  
*pradhāna iti veda-vacanānurūpam smṛtibhir-apy-uktam || 2 ||*

2. "Brahmin (priests), Kshatriya (warriors and administrators), Vaishya (merchants and agriculturists) and Shudras (artisans and farmers) — these are the four castes. That the Brahmin is the chief among these classes is in accord with the Vedic texts and is affirmed by the Smrtis.

*tatra codyam asti | ko vā brāhmaṇo nāma? | kim jīvaḥ | kī deha | kī jātiḥ | kī jñānam |  
kī karma | kī dharmika iti || 3 ||*

3. In this connection there is a point worthy of investigation. Who is, verily, a Brahmin? Is he the individual Self? Is he the body? Is he the social class based on birth? Is he the [possessor of] knowledge? Is he the [performer of] deeds (previous, present or prospective)? Is he the practioner of the Dharma?

**Commentary:**— The passage questions the possibility that the nature of the Jiva itself changes from one life to another because it is a fundamental dogma of the Veda-based philosophies that the Jiva or the individual Self is immutable and changeless. In fact, it is the non-Vedic philosophies that often hold the opposite teaching about the Jiva.

*tatra prathamo jīvo brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na | atītānāgatāneka-dehānām jīvasyaika  
rūpatvāt | akasyāpi karma vaśād aneka-deha-sambhavāt | sarva-śarīrāṇām jīvasyaika  
rūpatvāc ca | tasmānna jīvo brāhmaṇa iti || 4 ||*

4. Of these, is the Jiva or the individual Self (jīva) the Brahmin? No, it is not so; for the Jiva is one and the same in the innumerable previous and future bodies. Since the Jiva (the individual Self) is the same in all the various bodies obtained through (past) karma, and in all these bodies the form of the Jiva is one and the same. Therefore the Jiva is not the Brahmin.

*tarhi deho brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na | ācaṇḍālādi padantānām manuṣyāṇām pañca-  
bhautikatvena dehasaikarūpatvāt | jarā-maraṇa-dharmādharmādi-samya darśanāt |  
brāhmaṇas śveta-varṇaḥ | kṣatriyo rakta-varṇaḥ | vaiśya pīta-varṇaḥ | sūdraḥ kṛṣṇa  
varṇa iti niyamābhāvāt | pitrādi dahane putrādīnām brahma hatyādi doṣa-  
sambhavācca | tasmān na deho brāhmaṇa iti || 5 ||*

5. Then is the body the Brahmin? No, it is not so, because the body which is composed of the five elements, is the same in all classes of human beings down to the chandalas (outcastes), etc. And it is also observed that old age and death, virtue [*dharmā*] and vice [*adharmā*] are found to be common to all human beings. There is also no absolute distinction (in the complexion of the four classes) that the Brahmin is of the white complexion, that the Kshatriya is of the red complexion, that the Vaishya is of the tawny complexion, that the Sudra is of the dark complexion. [If the body is the brahmin] the sons and other kinsmen would becoming guilty of the murder of a Brahmin and other (sins) on cremating the bodies of their fathers and other kinsmen. Therefore the body is not the Brahmin.

**Commentary:**— Murder of a Brahmin is considered one of the greatest sins according to the Dharma Shastras. The author therefore argues that if it is the body that is the Brahmin, then cremation of that 'Brahmin' body upon the death of the person will be akin to the sin of killing a Brahmin.

*tarhi jāti brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na | tatra jātyantara jantuṣvaneka jāti sambhavā  
maharṣayo bahavas santi | ṛṣyaśṛṅgo mṛgayāḥ | kauśika kuśāt | jāmbuko jambukāt |  
vālmīko vālmikāt | vyāsaḥ kaivarta-kanyāyām | śaśapṛṣṭhāt gautamaḥ | vasiṣṭha*

*ūrvaśyām | agastya kalaśe jāta iti śātatvāt | eteṣāṃ jātyā vināpya agre jñāna  
pratipāditā ṛṣayo bahavas santi | tasmān na jātir brāhmaṇa iti || 6 ||*

6. Then is it birth that makes a Brahmin? No, it is not so, for many great rishis have sprung from other castes and orders of creation. We have heard that Rishyasrnga was born of a deer, Kaushika of Kusha grass, Jambuka from a jackal, Valmiki from an ant-hill, Vyasa from a fisher girl, Gautama from the back of a hare, Vasistha from Urvashi (the celestial nymph), Agastya from an earthen jar. Among these, many rishis outside of the caste-system have been accounted as the foremost among the teachers of the Divine Wisdom. Therefore birth does not (make) a Brahmin.

**Commentary:**— The passage mentions several unscientific, popular fables about the origin of Sages but its import is still tenable. Many of Hinduism's greatest sages have had very humble origins. See **Appendix B**.

*tarhi jñānam brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na | kṣatriyādayo'hi paramārtha darśano'bhijñā  
bahavas santi | tasmān na jñānam brāhmaṇa iti || 7 ||*

7. Then is it knowledge that makes a Brahmin? No, it is not so, because among Kshatriyas and others there are many who have attained cognition of divine truth. Therefore knowledge does not make a Brahmin.

**Commentary:**— An example of Kshatriyas who were spiritually realized sages are King Janaka of Videha. An example of a Vaishya who was a realized Sage is the Rigvedic seer Bhalandana. Likewise, Matanga, the son of a Vaishya father and a Shudra mother became a realized Sage. See **Appendix B** for more details.

*tarhi karma brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na | sarveśāṃ prāṇinām prārabdha-sañcitāgāmi-  
karma-sadharmya-darśanāt | karmābhi-preritāḥ santo janāḥ kriyāḥ kurvanti |  
tasmān na karma brāhmaṇa iti || 8 ||*

8. Then do actions (karma) make a Brahmin? No, it is not so, since the *prarabdha* karma which gives rise to the present birth, *sanchita* (accrued) karma, and *agami* karma — commenced in the present lifetime which will fructify in a future embodiment is common to all humankind; and that people perform works impelled by their past karma. Therefore actions do not make a Brahmin.

**Commentary:**— The text means that the performance of *karma* or rituals in this life does not form the basis of Brahminhood. Why? Because one is associated or tainted not only with the karma performed in this very life, but also with the unseen karmas performed in previous lives. Moreover, who knows what and how many karmas one will perform in future lives. Since one's net karma is the sum of all the past, present (and future), is it justified to assign one a caste merely on the basis of one's present performance of religious rites? No! Moreover, we see that all people are not inclined equally to the performance of rites. It is stated in the scriptures that inclination to perform good karma in this life itself is a fruit of good karma performed in previous lives. On the other hand, one who performed good karmas might yet willingly shun them in this life, contrary to one's nature. Therefore, when we assign a caste to someone on the basis of one's current life's karma, we are belittling the importance of his past and future karma.

*tarhi dharmiko brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na | kṣatriyādayo hiraṇya-dātāro bahavas santi |  
tasmān na dhārmiko brāhmaṇa iti || 9 ||*

9. Then does the observance of religious duties (dharma) make a Brahmin? No, it is not so; for there have been many Kshatriyas and others who have given away gold [in charity]. Therefore the performer of religious duties is not the Brahmin.

tarhi ko vā brāhmaṇo nāma? yaḥ kaścīd ātmānam advitīyam jāti-guṇa-kriyā-hīnam  
ṣaḍūrmi -ṣaḍbhavetyādi-sarva-doṣa-rahitam | satya-jñānānandānanta svarūpam  
svayam nirvikalpam aśeṣa kalpādhāram aśeṣa bhūty-āntaryāmitvena vartamānam  
antar bahiścākāśavad anusyūtam akhaṇḍ-ānanda svabhāvam aprameyam  
anubhavaika vedyam aparokṣa-tayābhāsamānam karatalāmala kavat sāṣāt  
aparokṣikṛtya kṛtārthatayā kāma rāgādi doṣa rahitaḥ śamādi-guṇa sampanno bhāva-  
mātsarya-trṣṇāśā-mohādi rahitaḥ dambh-āhākārādibhir asāpṛṣṭacetā vartate | evam  
ukta lakṣaṇo yaḥ sa eva brāhmaṇa iti śāti smṛti purāṇetihāsānām abhiprāyaḥ |  
anyathā brāhmaṇatva sidhir nāstyeva | saccidānandātmānam | advitīyam brahma  
bhāvayet | ātmānam advitīyam brahma bhāvayed ity upaniṣad || 10 ||

10. Then, who, verily is called a Brahmin? Whoever he may be — he who, has attained self-realisation, and directly perceives the Atman like a myrobalan fruit in the palm of one's hand. [Realising that the Atman is] of the nature of truth, consciousness, bliss and eternity, without a second, devoid of distinctions of birth, attributes and action, devoid of all faults such as the six infirmities,<sup>1</sup> and the six states<sup>2</sup> and devoid of all changes. [The Atman] is the basis of endless determinations. [The Atman] is the indwelling spirit of all beings. [The Atman] pervades everything within and without like space. [The Atman] is of the nature of unlimited joy, indivisible, immeasurable, and is known only by direct cognition.

He who having attained self-realisation becomes rid of the faults of desire, attachment, etc., and is endowed with the six virtues.<sup>3</sup> He who having overcome emotion, spite, greed, expectation, desire, delusion, etc., with the mind unaffected by pride, egoism and the like; he alone, who is possessed of these qualities is called a Brahmin. This is the view of the Vedic texts and tradition, ancient lore and history. The attainment of the status of a Brahmin is otherwise impossible. Meditate on the Self as Brahman who is being, consciousness and bliss, without a second; meditate on the Self as Brahman who is being, consciousness and bliss without a second. This is the Upanishad.

**Commentary:**— The concluding section of the Upanishad makes it clear that not until one has realized the Supreme Being can one be called a Brahmin. This is but logical, because the Brahmin is considered the most exalted human estate, and realization of the Supreme Being is considered the supreme goal of spiritual life. Therefore, a Brahmin, who has not reached this supreme state an imperfect Brahmin, or is a Brahmin only in name because he has not done justice to the teachings of the scriptures and to the social status that is accorded to him.

The passage, in defining the attributes of a true Brahmin, also lists the attributes of Brahman, or the Supreme Being.

The words “as an amalaka fruit in one’s hand” is idiomatic Sanskrit usage meaning “clearly in the front of oneself.”

The words “Meditate upon Brahman” are repeated to signify the end of the text.

The teaching of this section is not novel but is found in numerous Hindu texts. See **Appendix A** for some parallel passages.

<sup>1</sup>six infirmities: (1) old age, (2) sorrow, (3) delusion, (4) hunger (5) thirst and (6) death.

<sup>2</sup>six states: (1) birth, (2) being, (3) growth, (4) change, (5) deterioration and (6) perishing.

<sup>3</sup>six virtues; (1) Sama — tranquility, (2) dama— self-control, (3) uparati — cessation of dependance upon rituals (or continence), (4) titiksha — fortitude, (5) samadhanam— meditation, and (6) sraddha — faith.

## Appendix A: Parallel Passages

This appendix contains a selected anthology of passages from other Hindu scriptures with the similar ideas of the Vajrasuchika Upanishad.

### Rigveda, 9.112.3

I am a poet, my father is a doctor, my mother a grinder of corn.

### Atharvaveda (Paippalada Samhita) 8.9.8-10

“From the Supreme Being arise the Holy Sages  
 From the Supreme Being (arise) these Kshatriyas  
 From the very same Supreme Being are born the Brahmins  
 From the Supreme Being (arise) the food producing third caste (Vaishyas).”  
 “The Supreme Being are indeed these Shudras serving the Kshatriyas,  
 The Supreme Being are all they who perceive (i.e. all living creatures).  
 The Supreme Being are all these benevolent officials  
 The Supreme Being are all these members of the assembly.”  
 “The Supreme Being are the fishermen,  
 The Supreme Being are the servants,  
 The Supreme Being indeed are these gamblers.  
 Man as well as woman originate from the Supreme Being  
 Women are God and so are men.”

### Chhandogya Upanishad 4.4.1-5

"I do not know this, Sir, of what family I am. I asked my mother. She answered me: 'In my youth, when I went about a great deal serving as a maid, I got you. So I do not know this, of what family you are. However, I am Jabala by name; you are Satyakama by name.' So I am Satyakama Jabala, sir." To him he then said: "A non-brahmin would not be able to explain thus. Bring the fuel, my dear. I will receive you as a pupil. You have not deviated from the truth."

### Mahabharata III.312.106

“Listen about caste, Yaksha dear, not study, not learning is the cause of the twice-born status. Conduct is the basis, there is no doubt about it.”

### Mahabharata III.180.20

“O King of Serpents! He in whom are manifest truthfulness, charity, forbearance, good conduct, non-injury, austerity and compassion is a Brahmin according to the sacred tradition.”

### Mahabharata III.180.27

“O Serpent! He, in whom this conduct is manifest is a Brahmin, he in whom this is absent treat all such as Sudra.”

### Mahabharata, XII.269.34

“The gods consider him a Brahmin (a knower of Brahman) who has no desires, who undertakes no work, who does not salute or praise anybody (with a selfish motive), the fruits of whose deeds have exhausted and who maintains equanimity.”

### Shukraniti, Chapter 1

“If one’s birth were to decide one’s caste, then all should be Brahmins because all humans beings have one Father — Prajapati (God, the protector and master of all creatures).”

### Srimad Bhagvata Purana

“Vyasa, born of a dancing girl, became a great Rishi;  
Hence, it is *tapas* that makes one a Brahmin, and not his birth.  
Sakti, born of a Chandala woman, became a great Rishi.  
Hence, it is *tapas* that makes one a Brahmin, and not his birth.  
Parasara, born of Swapāki, became a great Rishi;  
Hence, it is *tapas* that makes one a Brahmin, and not his birth.  
Vyasa, born of a fisherwoman, became a great Rishi;  
Hence, it is *tapas* that makes one a Brahmin, and not his birth.”

**Note:** Tapas = performance of austerities, pious deeds, meditation and adherence to truth.

## Appendix B: Hindu Deities, Sages and Saints Who were not Brahmins

“The origin of Sages, Truth and Rivers are unknown”—Mahabharata

This appendix lists some non-Brahmin or mixed caste great Deities, Saints and Sages of Hinduism. It will be apparent that these great men and women are responsible to a great extent for the development of Hinduism and that the title ‘Brahminism’ is rather a misnomer for our Dharma.

1. **Sri Rama:** He was a Kshatriya belonging to the Suryavamsa. His life is the theme of the popular Hindu epic Ramayana. He is considered the 7<sup>th</sup> incarnation of Lord Vishnu, who in turn represents the ‘Preserver’ aspect of God. He is considered an ideal son, an ideal king and so on. Hindu Utopia is often called ‘Ramarajya’, i.e., ‘the kingdom of Sri Rama’.
2. **Sri Krishna:** He too belonged to the Yadava sub-caste. The Yadavas are currently enumerated amongst the ‘Other Backward Castes’ (OBC’s) in India. He is considered the most popular deity of Hindus, and revealed the ‘Bhagavad Gita’, which is the bedrock of modern Hinduism, and summarizes the philosophical teachings of all Hindu scriptures in a masterful manner. He is considered as the 8<sup>th</sup> incarnation of Lord Vishnu.
3. **Lord Shiva:** He is often termed as a ‘Kirata’ in the Puranas. The Kiratas would currently fall in the ‘Scheduled Tribes’ (ST) category in modern India. He is considered as a representation of the ‘Destroyer’ aspect of God and is one of the chief Hindu deities. He is the chief subject of numerous Hindu scriptures like the Shiva Purana, the Kurma Purana and so on.

4. **Maharshi Aitreya Mahidasa:** According to tradition, his mother was a maid named 'Itara'. This Rishi is credited with the compilation of the Aitreya Brahmana and sections 1-3 of the Aitreya Aranyaka (the latter contains the Aitreya Upanishad- one of the 10 canonical Upanishads for Hindus) belonging to the Rigveda.
5. **Rishika Lopamudra:** She was a Kshatriya princess from Vidarbha, who married Maharshi Agastya. She is the Seer of some verses of the Rigveda. Several edifying dialogs between her and Sage Agastya are recorded in the Puranas.
6. **Maharshi Vishwamitra:** He was originally a Kshatriya named 'Vishwaratha'. He is credited with revealing the 'Gayatri Mantra', the Hindu prayer par-excellence. He was elevated to Brahminhood because of his spiritual luster.
7. **Maharshi Veda Vyasa:** He was the son of a fisher-woman named Satyavati, from Rishi Parashara. Considered the greatest Rishi of classical Hinduism, he is believed to have give the 4 Vedas ( = the most authoritative scriptures of Hindus) their present form. He also compiled the Mahabharata and the Puranas, which are the mainstay of popular Hinduism. He also authored the Brahmasutras- a text considered as one of the triple canon of Vedantic Hinduism (the other two being the Gita and the Upanishads). His birthday is celebrated as 'Guru-Poornima' by Hindu monks every year. All Hindu monastic orders trace their lineage from him and a popular saying goes: "vyasocchishtam jagatsarvam" meaning that so great was the learning Rishi Veda Vyasa, that even his voluminous writings represent only the periphery of his knowledge.
8. **Maharshi Matanga:** He was the son of a Shudra mother and a Vaishya father. In fact, Chandalas are often addressed as 'Matanga 'in passages like Varaha Purana 1.139.91
9. **Maharshi Valmiki:** He was descendant from Sages but had become a *chandala* (= an outcaste) named Ratnakara, because he took to murder and highway robbery. He was reformed by Prajapati Brahma and was inspired by the divine Sage Narada to compose the Hindu epic par excellence- the Ramayana.
10. **Rishika Sulabha Maitreyi:** She was a Kshatriya lady who promulgated the Saulabha Shakha of the Rigveda. She is counted among the revered teachers of Rigveda to whom respects are offered in texts like the Kausitaki Brahmana. The Saulabha Brahmana is now lost but is mentioned in the Kashika- a commentary on the grammatical text named Ashtadhyayi. A dialog of Rishika SulabhA with King Janaka of Videha on spirituality is recorded in the Shanti Parvan (12<sup>th</sup> book) of the Mahabharata.
11. **Mahatma Vidura:** He was the son of Maharshi Veda Vyasa and a maid of King Dhritrashtra (the father of Kauravas in the Mahabharata). He is a wise man in the Mahabharata and counseled many towards truth. His teachings are collected in the 'Viduraprajagar' section of the Udyog Parvan (5<sup>th</sup> book) of Mahabharata.
12. **Gautama Buddha:** The founder of Buddhism belonged to a marginal Kshatriya tribe called Shakya. He lived and died as a Hindu, although his followers founded a new religion in his name. He advocated the supremacy of good ethics and morality over philosophical speculation and ritualism. He is considered the 9<sup>th</sup> incarnation of Lord Vishnu by devout Hindus.
13. **Mahavira:** The 24<sup>th</sup> and the last great Teacher of Jainism. He belonged to the Kshatriya Licchivi tribe of Bihar. He advocated vegetarianism and the centrality of compassion in Dharma.

14. **Bhakta Nammalvar:** The foremost of the Alvar Vaishnava saints, he was a Shudra by birth. His composition 'Tiruvayamoli', which is in the Tamil language, is considered at par with the Vedas by the Sri Vaishnava Hindus.
15. **Sikh Gurus:** All the Sikh Gurus, from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, were Kshatriyas. The teachings of the first 5 and the 9<sup>th</sup> Guru are compiled in the Adi Granth- the Sikh scripture. In the face of Islamic persecutions, they revitalized the Hindu community of what is now Pakistan and parts of Northern India and preached the simple path of performance of good deeds, devotion to God by recitations of His names and singing of His glory and sharing of one another's joys and sorrows without regard to caste.
16. **Saint Kabir:** He was brought-up by 'Julaha' couple. Julahas are a Muslim caste of weavers. He preached in the language of the masses and many of his verses are common proverbs in North India.
17. **Narsi Mehta:** He was born in a Vaishya family is a renowned Vaishnava saint of Gujarat. One of his compositions- "*Vaishnava Jana*" was a favorite of Mahatma Gandhi. According to some however, he was a Brahmin.
18. **Saint Tukarama:** He was a Vaishya who composed touching poems called the 'Abahngas' on devotion to God. These compositions are recited with great fervor by numerous Hindus, especially in Maharashtra by the members of the Warakari community.
19. **Saint Ravidas:** He was a cobbler, and therefore of Shudra origin. He advocated Bhakti and 16 of his compositions were incorporated in the Adi Granth- the Sikh scripture.
20. **Saint Mira:** She was a Rajput Kshatriya princess of Mewar and devoted her life to the service of Lord Krishna. Her beautiful poetical compositions addressed to Lord Krishna are recited with great fervor by Hindus down to this day.
21. **Swami Vivekananda:** One of the foremost reformers and teachers of modern Hinduism, he was of Kayastha subcaste of Bengal. He spread the message of Vedanta in the United States and Europe and his writings and speeches are contained in "The Collected Writings of Swami Vivekanand." He founded the Ramakrishna Mission- a religious organization to propagate the teachings of his Guru Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa. In Bengal, Kayasthas are considered as Shudras.
22. **Vatsa**, a descendant of Kanva RV 6.1; 8.8 etc; was called a Shudra-putra (Panchavimsha Brahman 14.66).
23. **Kakshivat**, a Brahmavadin, was the son of Dirghatamas by a Shudra maid servant (Brihaddevata 4.24-25).
24. According to Mahabharata (Anushasana Parvan 53.13-19), Sage Kapinjalada was a Chandala and Sage Madanapala was the son of a boatwoman.
25. According to Mahabharata Shanti Parvan, King Sudas was also a Shudra. Sudas is one of the most celebrated kings of the Rigveda, being the hero of the Dasarajna war.

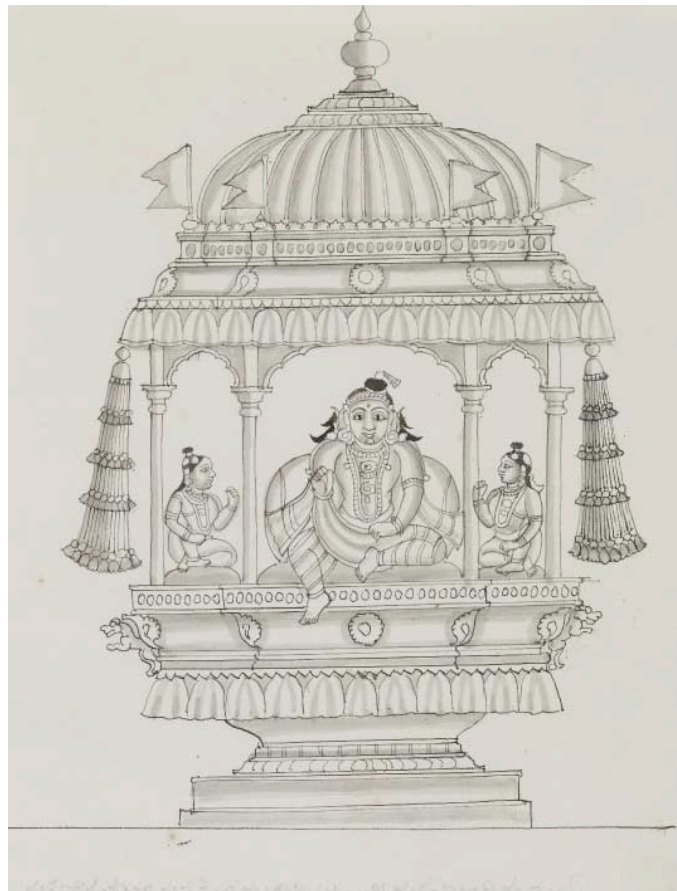


## Bibliography and References

1. S. Radhakrishnan; The Upanisads; Indus (Publishers); New Delhi; 1995 [This text is the major source of this website]
2. Jagdish Lal Shastri; Upanishatsagrahah; Motilal Banarsidass; Delhi; 1970 [This book gives the text of the Upanishad in Devanagari script]

## Links

1. Global Hindu Electronic Network [ <http://www.hindunet.org> ]
2. Yahoo Links on Hinduism  
[http://dir.yahoo.com/Society and Culture/Religion and Spirituality/Faiths and Practices/Hinduism/](http://dir.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Religion_and_Spirituality/Faiths_and_Practices/Hinduism/)
3. The Caste System <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/9089/hr/caste.html>
4. The Himalayan Academy <http://www.HimalayanAcademy.com> At this website, a search by 'Caste' will give several articles of interest.



Vajra-sūcika Upaniṣad  
(of the Sāma Veda)

The Doctrine of the Diamond Needle

वज्रसूचिका प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानमज्ञानभेदनम् । दूषणं ज्ञानहीनं भूषणं ज्ञानचक्षुषाम् ॥

ब्रह्मणक्षत्रियवैश्यशूद्रा इति चत्वारो वर्णः । तेषां वर्णानां ब्रह्मण एव प्रधान इति वेदवचनानुरूपं  
स्मृतिभिरप्युक्तम् ॥

तत्र चोद्यमस्ति । को वा ब्राह्मणो नाम । किं जीवः । किं देह । किं जातिः । किं ज्ञानम् । किं  
कर्म । किं धर्मिक इति ॥

तत्र प्रथमो जीवो ब्राह्मण इति चेत्तन्न । अतीतानागतनेक देहानां जीवस्यैक रूपत्वात् । अकरु  
यापि कर्म वशादनेकदेहसम्भवात् । सर्व शरीराणां जीवस्यैक रूपत्वाच्च । तस्मान्न जीवो ब्रह्मण  
इति ॥

तर्हि देहो ब्राह्मण इति चेत्तन्न । आचण्डालादि पर्दन्तानां मनुष्यानां पंचभौतिकत्वेन  
देहसैकरूपत्वात् । जरामरण धर्माधर्मादि सम्य दर्शनात् । ब्रह्मणश्श्वेतवर्णः । क्षत्रियो रक्तवर्णः ।  
वैश्य पीतवर्णः । शूद्र कृष्णवर्णः इति नियमाभावात् । पितृदि दहने पुत्रादीनां ब्रह्महत्यादि दोष  
संभवाच्च । तस्मान्न देहो ब्रह्मण इति ॥

तर्हि जाति ब्राह्मण इति चेत्तन्न । तत्र जात्यन्तर जनतुष्वनेक जाति संभवा महर्षयो भवस्सन्ति ।  
ऋष्यशृंगो मृगयाः । कौशिक कुशात् । जाम्बुको जम्बुकात् वाल्मीको वाल्मिकात् । व्यासः  
कैवर्तकन्यायाम् । शशपृष्ठात् गौतमः । वसिष्ठ ऊवश्याम् । अगस्त्य कलशे जात इति शातत्वात् ।  
एतेषां जात्या विनाप्य अग्रे ज्ञान प्रतिपादिता ऋषयो बहवस्सन्ति । तस्मान्न जातिर्ब्रह्मण इति ॥

तर्हि ज्ञानं ब्राह्मण इति चेत्तन्न । क्षत्रियादयोऽहि परमार्थ दर्शनोऽभिज्ञा बहवस्सन्ति । तस्मान्न  
ज्ञानं ब्राह्मण इति ॥

तर्हि कर्म ब्राह्मण इति चेत्तन्न । सर्वेशां प्राणिनां प्रारब्ध सञ्चितागामि कर्म सधर्म्य दर्शनात् ।  
कर्माभि प्रेरिताः सन्तो जनाः क्रियाः कुर्वन्तीति । तस्मान्न कर्म ब्राह्मण इति ॥

तर्हि धर्मिको ब्राह्मण इति चेत्तन्न । क्षत्रियादयो हिरण्य दातारो बहवस्सन्ति । तस्मान्न धर्मिको  
ब्राह्मण इति ॥