
Brahmans Must Rise for Brahmanatva

Janeshwar Upadhyay, Ph. D.

Colonial Heights, VA. 23834

Brahmans in general and Brahman Samajs, all around the world including BSNA (Brahman Samaj of North America) has talked about Brahmanatva for a long time but, to my knowledge, no one has done anything to promote it or achieve it. Do we understand what is Brahmanatva. To my thinking Brahmanatva is knowing the Brahman's tatva (Brahman + Tatva) that is knowing and understanding the reality-real meaning of Brahman or truth about Brahma or Brahman (who knows Brahma). In short, if we take the meaning to know about Brahma (the creator), it is beyond our mind. However, one can go into Vedas, Upanishadas, and Shastras like Geeta to know its superficial meaning. If we take the Brahmans as Varna then it is simpler to define. That may be simply defined as one who lives the life prescribed by Brahma, Manu, and Krishna in Geeta. **It is nothing but Karma which is the selfless action that brings forth the existence of beings, bhava, (Geeta 8:3) and that is true thought and action of equality, love and doing good for others.**

Brahmans have lost Brahmanatva and are losing fast whatever is left of it. This is because of several factors including political pressure, economic status, educational changes, religious ignorance, influence of other religions and social stigma.

Since politics holds power for other factors, I would like to describe how politics has brought changes in Brahmans attitude, behavior, Brahmanic values and their way of life. I will also present proposals to Brahmans as to how they can regain Brahmanatva.

Since Brahmans were perceived as leaders of the Hindu society and kingmakers, they were used, exploited or lured by the Mughal Emperors as well as the British rulers for their benefit. Like any invader that wants to rule another country, first tries to break its cultural backbone to enslave it. British and Mughals did the same to India by first trying to convert its population to their own religion and second by changing their cultural history, in many cases by using Brahmans and Kshatriyas. The British rulers using religious conversion on one side and 'divide and rule' policy on the other divided Hindus further apart. They changed the history, economy and society in such a way

that Brahmans became the escape goat for social and religious discrimination and economic poverty. With the help of British rulers some Brahmans and other upper class Hindus did act phonetically in society and in temples.

After independence, the Congress, ruling party, recognized the caste problem but instead of creating harmony among different castes by education and lifting economic level of the poor by helping them on the basis of poverty level and economic needs they developed a double standard policy of eliminating caste system on one hand and creating a new caste system on the other. Mahatma Gandhi and Congress party preached equality and the former suggested people to drop their last names so that their caste would not be recognized and many young people did that (Dr. Shyam N. Shukla: personal communication). Mahatma Gandhi and none of the other senior leaders of the Congress party dropped their last names. The Congress party that ruled India for more than quarter of a century and divided the country on the basis of presumed religious inequality into India and Pakistan, divided India further on the basis of social and caste inequality and past prejudices, into a new caste system namely scheduled castes, backward castes, etc and created more inequality by giving them special privileges, regardless of their economic status. On this basis, even those who were economically well off obtained government jobs and reserved seats in politics and their children received federal and state scholarships, federally supported housing and unqualified admissions in colleges and Universities. Those not trained or qualified for a job were given government positions and appointments on the new caste basis. Qualified and poor upper castes, *Brahmans*, *Kshatriyas* and *Vaisyas* were denied equal opportunity. In 1950, I asked Dr. Rajendra Prasad, first President of India, in a student meeting in Ranchi, Bihar, why I, being the top student among the 110 students in my science class, do not get any scholarship where as several failing Adivashi (aboriginal) well to do students get double scholarships? His diplomatic reply was, it is not right but we are working on removing this inequality. However, even after 55 years that inequality has not changed. As suggested by Mahatma Gandhi many Brahman parents who dropped their children's last names and dropped their *Yagopavit* to be equal to backward

class in getting equality in education and government jobs did not get that privilege and the backward class children who picked Brahmans' name and *Yagopavit* still got the special privileges in schools, jobs and politics.

Brahmans were taken for granted to vote for Congress Party regardless of discrimination because Jawahar Lal Nehru, leading freedom fighter and the first Prime Minister of India, was a Brahman. It surely worked for Nehru and his daughter, Indira, and her son, Rajiv and it also worked for Atal Bihari ji but during the last election Brahmans realized that their generosity was not helping them, socially, economically, religiously or politically. Therefore, they neither helped Sonia, Nehru's grand daughter-in-law's Congress party, nor Atal Ji's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Now those politicians who were counting on backward class votes found out that they could not win without Brahmans' vote and started playing equality game. According to recent report from Lucknow, Mayawati of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Mulayam Singh Yadav of Samajwadi Party (SP) who were calling names to Brahmans are trying to please Brahmans in Uttar Pradesh by appointing some Brahmans in high political offices and asking others to join their parties on the promise of equal treatment and no disparity. They are also trying to lure Brahmans to their parties by declaring May 11 as Lord Parashuram Jayanti. This shows a wind in the right direction and Brahmans must take advantage of the time. According to the same report, Dr. Bhagwan Sharma of the Uttar Pradesh Brahman Samaj said that "we shall extend our support to any party that gives due respect to Brahmans" (May 10, 2005, Samachar.com). All Brahmans and all Brahman Samaj members as a group and as individuals should follow the same philosophy. However, Brahmans cannot get due respect simply by giving support to one political party or the other. It will be temporary and short lived. In order to get true respect Brahmans should do the following:

1. Be United: As many Brahmans Samaj organizations are being formed around the world, it is a good sign that Brahmans feel the need for unity. They must be united to learn the Brahmanic values, to promote Brahmanic philosophy, to take collective action to do some good work for themselves and for others and to form a strong political vote bank.

2. Demand for Equality: Brahmans should ask for equality for all, regardless of caste, creed, color or religious preference. We should demand for elimination of reservation, quota system and preferential treatments

based on Congress created new caste groups like backward class, scheduled castes, Dalits, minorities, etc. There should not be separation and discrimination based on new caste basis and there must not be preferential treatment for minorities based on religion, sex, etc except for helpless handicapped and widows. If this continued then Brahmans will be demanding for a minority status as a Brahman family did in Rajasthan over a year ago. Poverty should be the only basis for economic help or appropriate job assignments. It is against human dignity to call other human beings backward, dalit, etc, on the basis of past discrimination supported by British rulers in India. It is a shame to call the citizens of a democratic country, created equal by God; lower, backward, dalit, etc, for political power gains even after 58 years of independence. It is demeaning and degrading the human value to call and treat anyone backward, lower, dalit, etc for any reason where God's presence is seen in every soul.

3. Political Base: Brahmans, as per saint Manu and Krishna in Geeta, have been created as spiritual and social leaders. From the Vedic period they have used their intellect to advise, guide and direct kings, rulers and administrators and thus shaped the life of humanity. Due to foreign political, religious and social influence and falling in economic and lust for power trap, **Brahmans have lost their sense of educational discipline, spiritual ability and social duty and thus lost their social respect and political influence.** In order to regain social respect and political influence, Brahmans have to form a political base by joining an existing party that invites us and respect us as a group. Brahmans should demand equality in education, job and economic opportunity and political power. To succeed **our slogan should be: Equality for all. No caste, race and religion based discrimination.**

4. Social Service: In order to regain social respect and political influence Brahmans not only have to unite together but unite all people through education, spirituality and selfless social service

(a) Education: Brahmans should practice and teach people for free in family, society, schools, colleges, Universities, temples, churches where ever they can, self respect, respect to others, respect for life, human value and believe in God. One should not forget the traditional modern education for earning livelihood. For education, as much as possible, we should build educational and spiritual temples and traditional schools or finance the

existing ones and provide selfless service. Those who are in India or in other foreign countries should take off two to eight weeks time from work during a year and spend that time in this kind of selfless service in India or if not possible somewhere else for their spiritual development and self discipline.

(b) Spirituality: In order to set an example for the society and teach others, 1) Brahmans should educate themselves and their children; 2) study and teach religious literature like Geeta and Ramayan; 3) learn and practice meditation, Yoga, etc. 4) Practice and teach the use of *Satvic food* (no meat, no alcoholic drink and no drugs). 5) Practice and teach cleanliness where ever one lives.

(c) Selfless Social Service: Help others selflessly where ever and whatever way you can with love and understanding. For example: **In sickness:** by providing hospital, medicine, first aid, transportation and other medical services. **In poverty:** by providing food, clothing, job, education for adult and children and help in marriage for poor youth. **In education:** by providing schools, transportation, books, school supplies and home work help for poor children and adults. **In poor villages:** by teaching cleanliness; helping construction of roads and water supply; providing knowledge in agricultural production methods, food safety, marketing, horticulture, dairy, animal farming, poultry, etc.

