Dr Shobha Raju

Caste!

A Swamiji was visiting Tirupati. His is called "Perillada Swami". That means, he has no name. By the time I went, an interesting discussion was going on there. One guy, by name Armugam was in dialogue with Swamiji.

Armugam: "I have a doubt Swami. Can you kindly clear it?".

Swamiji: "What's that?", asked Swami.

A: "Why our profession of trading is grabbed by all communities?", he asked.

S: "Can you be clearer?", Swamiji asked.

A: " belong to Vaisya community. Trading is our profession and to speak in terms you understand, it is our Dharma. Why all communities are robbing us of our Dharma? ..thus depriving us of our livelihood also?"
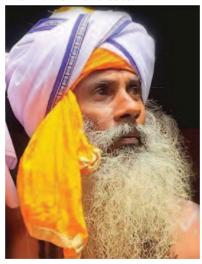
Finally, Swamiji could understand.

S: "If you trade or any one trades.... all of you become traders, traditionally if you want to call them Vaishyas, you may". According to Karma (action), they become Vaisyas.

A: "Are there any other parameters to say that one is a Vaisya?".

S: "Yes. As Krishna says in Bhagavadgeeta, He created four Varnas according to one's character and the work one does.

Now if you are trading, according to work, you are a Vaisya. If your character is also Satvik (peaceful and none violent) then you are Vaisya according to Guna (character) also.

A: "Then all the rulers are Kshatriyas?"

S: "Yes. If they are ruling with dignity, courage and for the love of people".

A: "How about the ones who ruled and made lots of money in corrupt ways?", he asked.

S: "They are culprits. A quack is a quack... cannot be a doctor. You call a person doctor, who is qualified and practicing right medicine. And a person cannot be called a doctor simply because he is born to a doctor unless he also studies and practices medicine".

A: "Is there no bar to any community in this theory?".

S: "No. According to Krishna's Bhagavadgeeta. May be self interest and vote-mongering politics may have different definition for caste that has no logical basis.

A: "No use of caste system?"

S: "See. When a child is born for a carpenter, the child listens to the technicalities, issues, solutions pertaining to the carpentry right

from his life in his mother's womb. Later on sees and learns so many details involuntarily. Everything becomes a memory and settles in his every cell. A little teaching and training would make the child groomed into a specialist in the job. This is the only merit I see. If it is a girl, getting her married to a carpenter makes the ambience of her father in law's place very familiar to her and she will be thorough in helping as she has been groomed at her mother's place.

But.. rare are the people who mind values. Selfishness is so predominant that anything is viewed by people as to what would be the benefit to the self. Survival and self benefit are the basis for present caste system. In olden days the caste system was there on a logical basis but there were no differences among people. Now there are castes only.. no logic. Every caste is involved in the job that is not native to them.... still claiming themselves to be belonging to a particular caste for their own selfish ends. There are people in every community who involve in worst activity and crimes yet claim themselves belonging to a particular caste.

Are you not aware that everyone's worst enemy is one's own mother in law or father in law or husband or wife or sister or brother or sister in law or brother in law and so on?

Now.. let me ask you some questions.

What's your father's name?"

Arumugam : Subrahmanyam Shettiar

Swamiji: What's his occupation?

A: He is a cloth merchant

S: And how about yourself?

A: I am a software engineer Swamiji.

S: Ha ha ha ha ha...(laughed loudly) What's your caste? Software caste?

In olden days, people belonging to a particular profession , character and conduct were called a particular caste. But there was always a scope to transform oneself to another caste by change of profession and character. For example, Rishi Viswamitra was Kshatrya who transformed himself from Rajarshi to Brahmarshi by doing great penance and emulating certain characteristics.

Modern caste system is a farce except in a very few cases.

"Janmanaa jaayate Shoodraha
Karmanaa jaayate Dwijaha
Vedagnyaneshu Vipraanaam
Brahma gnyaanantu Brahmanaaha"

One is born as Shoodra (considered to be the last in the caste system).

With the nature of his actions, he becomes Dwijaha (said to have taken second birth with actions).

With the knowledge of Vedas, one becomes Vipra (A knowledgeable man)

By realizing the Brahman, one becomes Brahmin.

- RIGVEDAM

The Shoodra, who has the character of a Brahmin is a Brahmin though he is a born-Shoodra.

A Brahmin, who posses the character of a Shoodra is Shoodra though he is a born-Brahmin

So is the case with Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. The caste is determined by their work and character. It cannot be derived by birth

- MANU DHARMA SHASTRA

Modern Society has no basis to practice caste. There could be only two castes in the present society : 1. The good, 2. The bad.

Rest is all about self-interest and politics.

Saint Annamayya says :

"ఎక్కువ కులజుడైనా, హీన కులజుడైనా
నిక్కమెరిగిన మహా నిత్యుడె ఘనుడు"

Be it the one born in high caste
Be it the one born in low caste
The one who realises The Truth,
Is the the eternal great one!

(Author is a well-known musician, Devotional singer, writer and composer.) Ⓣ