



The Law Code of Manu

A new translation by Patrick Olivelle

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A New Translation Based on the Critical Edition by
PATRICK OLIVELLE

Hi all,

The ***Law Codes of Manu*** (also called **Laws of Manu** or **Codes of Manu**, or **Manu-smṛti**) is the best known legal text from ancient India, dating approximately 3rd-5th c. CE, and all later legal India texts are dependent on his work. These law codes describe the framework of the dominant Brahmanic-Hindu society and consequently figure in to ***later*** Buddhist and Jain texts which engage (often critically) certain aspects of dominant Brahmanic-Hindu society and its approach to civic order and law (remember that Hemacandra refers to some of Manu's various views on meat-eating).

The name "Manu" is shorthand as the actual author is unknown, as are the his date, details of his birth and life. Manu is a title referring to "the first human" or "the first king" in keeping with the fact that most leaders of rival communities also had royal pedigrees, such as Mahāvīra and Buddha, both princes. So "Manu" becomes a mode of comparable authority. The most historians can say about "Manu" is that he was a learned Brahmin from north India.

While this work is acclaimed for its innovation of being composed in verse and its dialog structure, it's also been deeply criticized for its role of solidifying the suppression of women and oppression in the caste system. Nevertheless, as a piece of historical literature depicting religion and law, it is unique, especially for its presentations of opposing viewpoints.

Although Jain and Buddhist communities did not accept the fixity of birth caste as in the Vedas and Codes of Manu, each of these traditions also has its own internal hierarchies, as do all modern societies.

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I thought you might like to see another creation story. Like the Rig Veda [and even the creation stories in Genesis of the Hebrew Bible or Qur'an], there is more than one creation story included suggesting a pluralistic approach to narratives. Karma factors into the end of this first creation story.

CHAPTER ONE

PROLOGUE

¹Manu was seated, absorbed in contemplation, when the great seers came up to him, paid homage to him in the appropriate manner, and addressed him in these words: ²'Please, Lord, tell us precisely and in the proper order the Laws of all the social classes, as well as of those born in between;* ³for you alone, Master, know the true meaning of the duties contained in this entire ordinance of the Self-existent One, an ordinance* beyond the powers of thought or cognition.'

⁴So questioned in the proper manner by those noble ones, that Being of boundless might paid honour to all those great seers and replied: 'Listen!'

Like so many ancient creation stories (as well as the Big Bang theory), this narrative describes the emergence of multiplicity from an ambiguous unity of nonexistence, demonstrating a common source, however inexplicable, of all existing entities, states, and features

CREATION

⁵'There was this world—pitch-dark,* indiscernible, without distinguishing marks, unthinkable, incomprehensible, in a kind of deep sleep all over. ⁶Then the Self-existent Lord appeared—the Unmanifest manifesting this world beginning with the elements, projecting his might, and dispelling the darkness. ⁷That One—who is beyond the range of senses; who cannot be grasped; who is subtle, unmanifest, and eternal; who contains all beings; and who transcends thought—it is he who shone forth on his own.

⁸'As he focused his thought with the desire of bringing forth diverse creatures from his own body, it was the waters that he first brought forth; and into them he poured forth his semen. ⁹That became a golden egg, as bright as the sun; and in it he himself took birth as Brahmā, the grandfather of all the worlds.

¹⁰'The waters are called "Nārā"; the waters, clearly, are the offspring of Nara. Because his first sojourn (*ayana*) was in them, tradition calls him "Nārāyaṇa". ¹¹That cause which is unmanifest and eternal, which has the nature of both the existent and the non-existent—the Male produced from it is celebrated in the world as Brahmā.*

¹²'After residing in that egg for a full year, that Lord on his own

split the egg in two by brooding on his own body. ¹³ From those two halves, he formed the sky and the earth, and between them the mid-space, the eight directions, and the eternal place of the waters.*

¹⁴ From his body, moreover, he drew out the mind having the nature of both the existent and the non-existent; and from the mind, the ego—producer of self-awareness and ruler—¹⁵ as also the great self (12.14), all things composed of the three attributes (12.24), and gradually the five sensory organs that grasp the sense objects. ¹⁶ By merging the subtle parts of these six* possessing boundless might into particles of his own body, moreover, he formed all beings. ¹⁷ Because the six parts of his physical frame become attached (*ā-sṛi*) to these beings, the wise call his physical frame “body” (*śarīra*). ¹⁸ The great elements enter it accompanied by their activities, as also the mind, the imperishable producer of all beings, accompanied by its subtle particles.

¹⁹ From the subtle particles of the physical frames of these seven males* of great might, this world comes into being, the perishable from the imperishable. ²⁰ Of these, each succeeding element acquires the quality specific to each preceding. Thus, each element, tradition tells us, possesses the same number of qualities as the number of its position in the series.* ²¹ In the beginning through the words of the Veda alone, he fashioned for all of them specific names and activities, as also specific stations.*

²² The Lord brought forth the group of gods who are endowed with breath and whose nature is to act, the subtle group of Sādhyas, and the eternal sacrifice. ²³ From fire, wind, and sun, he squeezed out the eternal triple Veda characterized by the Ṛg verses, the Yajus formulas, and the Sāman chants, for the purpose of carrying out the sacrifice. ²⁴ Time, divisions of time, constellations, planets, rivers, oceans, mountains, flat and rough terrain, ²⁵ austerity, speech, sexual pleasure, desire, and anger—he brought forth this creation in his wish to bring forth these creatures.*

To exist is to be afflicted with opposites

²⁶ To establish distinctions among activities, moreover, he distinguished the Right (*dharma*) from the Wrong (*adharma*) and afflicted these creatures with the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain. ²⁷ Together with the perishable atomic particles of the five elements given in tradition, this whole world comes into being in an orderly sequence. ²⁸ As they are brought forth again and again, each creature follows on its own the very activity assigned to it in the

1.42 beginning by the Lord. ²⁹Violence or non-violence, gentleness or cruelty, righteousness (*dharma*) or unrighteousness (*adharma*), truthfulness or untruthfulness—whichever he assigned to each at the time of creation, it stuck automatically to that creature. ³⁰As at the change of seasons each season automatically adopts its own distinctive marks, so do embodied beings adopt their own distinctive acts.

³¹For the growth of these worlds, moreover, he produced from his mouth, arms, thighs, and feet, the Brahmin, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya, and the Śūdra.

You can read the second story if you like or stop here; Go on to next page, Ch 12.

*Excursus: Second Account of Creation**

³²Dividing his body into two, he became a man with one half and a woman with the other. By that woman the Lord brought forth Virāj. ³³By heating himself with ascetic toil, that man, Virāj, brought forth a being by himself—know, you best of the twice-born, that I am that being, the creator of this whole world.

³⁴Desiring to bring forth creatures, I heated myself with the most arduous ascetic toil and brought forth in the beginning the ten great seers, the lords of creatures: ³⁵Marīci, Atri, Aṅgiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Pracetas, Vasiṣṭha, Bhṛgu, and Nārada. ³⁶They, in turn, brought forth seven other Manus of immense energy (1.61-2); the gods and the classes of gods; and the great sages of boundless might; ³⁷Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Piśācas, Gandharvas, Apsarases, Asuras, Nāgas, Sarpas, and Suparṇas; the different groups of ancestors (3.192-201); ³⁸lightnings, thunderbolts, clouds, rainbow streaks, rainbows, meteors, storms, comets, and the manifold heavenly lights; ³⁹pseudo-humans,* monkeys, fish, birds of various kind, farm animals, wild animals, humans, predatory animals, and animals with incisors in both jaws (5.18 n.); ⁴⁰worms, insects, moths, lice, flies, bugs, all creatures that sting and bite, and immobile creatures of various kind.

⁴¹In this manner through ascetic toil, those noble ones brought forth at my command this whole world, the mobile and the immobile, each creature in accordance with its activity.

Excursus: Classification of Fauna and Flora

⁴²I will now explain to you exactly which type of activity is ascribed here to which type of creature, and also their relative order with

This chapter will address "The Fruits of Action"; keep in mind that this text was written after certain Jain and Buddhist ideologies were circulating and these are reflected in Manu's concerns, though in unique ways that remain tied to the Vedas. One can only approach the complexity of Indian philosophies, practices, religions, and communities in a dialogical way, that is, how they all inform one another.

CHAPTER TWELVE

¹You have described this Law for the four classes in its entirety, O Sinless One! Teach us accurately the ultimate consummation of the fruits of actions.'

²Bhrgu, the son of Manu and the very embodiment of the Law, said to those great seers, 'Listen to the determination with respect to engagement in action.'

ACTION

The Fruits of Action

¹Action produces good and bad results and originates from the mind, speech, and the body. Action produces the human conditions—the highest, the middling, and the lowest.

⁴One should understand that the action of the embodied self—action that in this world is of three kinds, has three bases, and contains ten characteristics—is set in motion by the mind.*

³Coveting the property of others, reflecting on undesirable things in one's mind, and adhering to false doctrines are the three kinds of mental action. ⁶Harshness, falsehood, slander of every sort, and idle chatter are the four kinds of verbal action. ⁷Taking what has not been given, unsanctioned killing, and sex with another's wife are given in tradition as the three kinds of bodily action.

⁸A man experiences the good and bad results of mental actions in his mind alone; those of verbal actions, in his speech; and those of bodily actions, in his body alone. ⁹On account of faults resulting from bodily actions, a man becomes an immobile creature; on account of faults resulting from verbal actions, he becomes a bird or an animal; and on account of faults resulting from mental actions, he becomes a man of the lowest caste.

¹⁰The rod of speech, the rod of mind, and the rod of action—a man in whose intellect these are kept under control is said to be 'triple-rodged'.* ¹¹When a man has laid down these rods with respect to all creatures and brought lust and anger under control, he thereby secures success.

The Inner Selves ¹²The one who makes this body act is called Kṣetrajña, 'the knower of the field'; the one who does the actions, on the other hand, the wise call Bhūtātman, 'the elemental self'. ¹³Another inner self innate to all embodied beings bears the name Jīva, 'the individual self', by whom are experienced all the pleasures and pains in succeeding births.*

¹⁴These two—Mahat,* 'the Great', and Kṣetrajña, 'the knower of the field'—united with the elements, remain pervading the one who abides in creatures both great and small. ¹⁵From his body innumerable forms stream forth, which constantly set in motion the creatures both great and small.

The Process of Rebirth ¹⁶When evil men die, another firm body is produced for them from the same five elemental particles,* a body designed to suffer torments. ¹⁷After experiencing there the torments of Yama with that body, they merge into those very elemental particles, each into its corresponding particle.

¹⁸After paying for the sins resulting from attachment to sensory objects, sins that lead to misery, he is freed from taint and approaches the same two beings of great power.* ¹⁹Unworned, these two jointly examine his merits and sins, linked to which one secures happiness or suffering here and in the hereafter.

²⁰If he acts righteously for the most part and unrighteously to a small degree, enveloped in those very elements, he enjoys happiness in heaven. ²¹If, on the other hand, he acts unrighteously for the most part and righteously to a small degree, abandoned by those elements, he suffers the torments of Yama. ²²After enduring the torments of Yama, Jīva, 'the individual self', becomes freed from taint and enters those same five elements, each into its corresponding particle.

²³Seeing with his own intellect those transitions of this Jīva, 'the individual self', resulting from righteous and unrighteous conduct, let him always set his mind on righteous conduct.

The Three Attributes ²⁴One should understand Goodness, Vigour, and Darkness as the three attributes of the body, attributes by which Mahat, 'the Great', remains pervading all these existences completely.

²⁵When one of these attributes thoroughly suffuses the body, it makes the embodied self dominant in that attribute. ²⁶Goodness is knowledge, tradition tells us; Darkness is ignorance; and Vigour is

Yama is parallel to Mara, the Buddhist reality-figure of death/impermanence) in the image we filled in

What are the 3 attributes and in this section, what are examples of each?

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passion and hatred. These are their pervasive forms that inhere in all beings.

²⁷Among these—when someone perceives within himself a condition full of joy, a sort of pure and tranquil light, he should recognize it as Goodness; ²⁸when it is full of pain and causing anguish to himself, he should understand that it is Vigour, irresistible and constantly drawing embodied beings; ²⁹when it is full of confusion, with an unclear object, unfathomable by argument, and indiscernible, he should recognize it as Darkness.

³⁰I will explain to you completely the fruits arising from all these three attributes—the highest, the middling, and the lowest fruits.

³¹Vedic recitation, ascetic toil, knowledge, purification, the control of the organs, righteous activity, and contemplation of the self—these mark the attribute of Goodness. ³²Delight in undertaking activities, resolve, taking up improper tasks, and constant indulgence in sensual pleasures—these mark the attribute of Vigour. ³³Greed, sloth, lack of resolve, cruelty, infidelity, deviation from proper conduct, habitual begging, and carelessness—these mark the attribute of Darkness.

What are the 3 times?

³⁴These, in brief and in the proper order, should be known as the marks of all these three attributes located in the three times. ³⁵An act about which a man is ashamed after he has committed it, while he is committing it, and when he is about to commit it—a learned man should recognize all that as the mark of the attribute of Darkness. ³⁶An act by which a man seeks to win wide fame in the world and is not disappointed when he fails to win it—one should recognize it as the mark of the attribute of Vigour. ³⁷What a man seeks to know with all his heart and is not ashamed to perform, at which his inner being rejoices—that is the mark of the attribute of Goodness.

³⁸Pleasure is said to be the mark of Darkness; Profit, of Vigour; and Law, of Goodness (2.224 n.). Each later one is superior to each preceding.

What are the 3 marks and what is their ideal order?

³⁹Which of these attributes leads to which types of cyclical existence—I will briefly state them in due order with respect to this entire world.

⁴⁰Those who possess Goodness become gods; those who possess

Vigour become humans; and those who possess Darkness always become animals—that is the threefold course. ⁴¹One should recognize, however, that this triple course based on attributes is itself threefold, namely, lowest, middle, and highest, depending on the specific type of action and knowledge within each.

⁴²Immobile creatures, worms and insects, fish, snakes, creeping animals, farm animals, and jackals—these constitute the lowest course related to Darkness. ⁴³Elephants, horses, Śūdras, despised foreigners, lions, tigers, and boars—these constitute the middle course related to Darkness. ⁴⁴Cāraṇas, Suparṇas, hypocritical men, fiends, and ghouls—these constitute the highest among the courses related to Darkness.

⁴⁵Jhallas, Mallas, Naṭas (10.22), men who live by vile occupations, and people addicted to gambling and drinking—these constitute the first course related to Vigour. ⁴⁶Kings, Kṣatriyas, royal chaplains, and professional debaters and soldiers—these constitute the middle course related to Vigour. ⁴⁷Gandharvas, Guhyakas, Yakṣas, divine attendants, and all the Apsaras—these constitute the highest among the courses related to Vigour.

⁴⁸Hermits, ascetics, Brahmins, divine hosts in celestial chariots, asterisms, and Daityas—these constitute the first course related to Goodness. ⁴⁹Sacrificers, seers, gods, Vedas, celestial lights, years, ancestors, and Sādhyas—these constitute the second course related to Goodness. ⁵⁰Brahmā, creators of the universe (1.34-7), Law, Mahat (12.14), and the Unmanifest—the wise call this the highest course related to Goodness.

⁵¹I have declared above everything coming from the three kinds of action—the entire transmigratory cycle affecting all beings, a threefold cycle which contains a further threefold division.

⁵²Vile and ignorant men attain evil transmigratory paths by their attachment to the senses and by their failure to follow the Law.

⁵³Which kind of womb this Jīva, the 'individual self', attains in due order within this world through which kind of action—listen to all of that.

Sin and Rebirth ⁵⁴Those who commit grievous sins causing loss of caste first go to dreadful hells during large spans of years; upon

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the expiration of that, they reach the following transmigratory states.

⁵⁵A murderer of a Brahmin enters the wombs of a dog, a pig, a donkey, a camel, a cow, a goat, a sheep, a deer, a bird, a Cāṇḍāla, and a Pulkasa.

⁵⁶A Brahmin who drinks liquor enters the wombs of worms, insects, moths, birds that feed on excrement, and vicious animals.

⁵⁷A Brahmin who steals enters thousands of times the wombs of spiders, snakes, lizards, aquatic animals, and vicious ghouls.

⁵⁸A man who has sex with an elder's wife enters hundred of times the wombs of grasses, shrubs, creepers, carnivorous animals, fanged animals, and creatures that commit cruel deeds.

⁵⁹Vicious individuals become carnivorous animals; those who eat forbidden food become worms; thieves become cannibals; and those who have sex with lowest-born women become ghosts.

⁶⁰A man who forges links with outcastes, has sex with someone else's wife, or steals what belongs to a Brahmin becomes a Brahmin fiend.

⁶¹A man who steals gems, pearls, corals, or any of the various precious substances out of greed is born among goldsmiths.* ⁶²By stealing grain, one becomes a rat; by stealing bronze, a ruddy goose; by stealing water, a Plava coot; by stealing honey, a gnat; by stealing milk, a crow; by stealing sweets, a dog; by stealing ghee, a mongoose; ⁶³by stealing meat, a vulture; by stealing fat, a Madgu cormorant; by stealing oil, a cockroach; by stealing salt, a cricket; by stealing curd, a Balāka flamingo; ⁶⁴by stealing silk, a partridge; by stealing linen, a frog; by stealing cotton cloth, a Krauñca crane; by stealing a cow, a monitor lizard; by stealing molasses, a flying fox; ⁶⁵by stealing fine perfumes, a muskrat; by stealing leafy vegetables, a peacock; by stealing various kinds of cooked food, a porcupine; by stealing uncooked food, a hedgehog; ⁶⁶by stealing fire, a Baka heron; by stealing household utensils, a mason-wasp; by stealing dyed clothes, a francolin partridge; ⁶⁷by stealing a deer or an elephant, a wolf; by stealing a horse, a tiger; by stealing fruits or flowers, a monkey; by stealing a woman, a bear; by stealing water, a cuckoo; by stealing vehicles, a camel; and by stealing farm animals, a goat. ⁶⁸If a man steals anything at all belonging to some one else by force or eats an oblation before the offering has been completed, he inevitably becomes an animal.

⁶⁹ Women also, when they steal in the above manner, incur guilt; they become the wives of the very same creatures. 12.69

⁷⁰ When people belonging to the social classes deviate from their respective occupations outside a time of adversity, they go through evil cyclical existences and end up as servants of the Dasyu people.
⁷¹ When a Brahmin deviates, he will become an Ulkāmukha ghost eating vomit; a Kṣatriya will become a Kaṭapūtana ghost eating filth and corpses; ⁷² a Vaiśya will become a Maitrākṣajyotika ghost feeding on pus; and a Śūdra who deviates from the Law proper to him will become a Cailāśaka ghost.

⁷³ The more that people addicted to sensual pleasures indulge in sensual pleasures, the more their proclivity to them grows. ⁷⁴ By repeatedly engaging in these sinful actions, these men of little understanding undergo torments here in various births—⁷⁵ tossing about in dreadful hells such as Tāmisa; the hell Asipatravana and the like; being tied up and cut up; ⁷⁶ various kinds of torture; being eaten by crows and owls; being burnt by hot sand-gruel; being able tortures of being boiled in vats; ⁷⁷ taking birth constantly in evil wombs full of suffering; being assailed by cold and heat; terrors of various kinds; ⁷⁸ repeated residence in different wombs; being born agonizingly; being wrapped up in painful ways; doing servile work for others; ⁷⁹ being separated from relatives and loved ones; having to live in the company of evil people; earning and losing wealth; winning friends and enemies; ⁸⁰ old age, against which there is no remedy; being assailed by illnesses; various afflictions; and death itself, which is impossible to overcome.

⁸¹ When a man engages in any act with a certain inner disposition, he reaps its fruits with a body corresponding to that disposition.

⁸² I have declared to you above all the fruits arising from actions. Listen now to these rules of action for a Brahmin, rules that secure the supreme good.

Actions Leading to the Supreme Good

⁸³ Vedic recitation, ascetic toil, knowledge, controlling the senses, refraining from causing injury, and service of the teacher—these are the highest means of securing the supreme good.

⁸⁴ Among all these splendid activities, a particular activity has been

12.99 declared as the best means for a man here to secure the supreme good. ⁸⁵ Among all these, tradition holds the knowledge of the self to be the highest; it is, indeed, the foremost of all sciences, for by it one attains immortality.

⁸⁶ One should understand that acts prescribed by the Veda are always a more effective means of securing the highest good both here and in the hereafter than the above six activities. ⁸⁷ All these activities without exception are included within the scheme of the acts prescribed by the Veda, each in proper order within the rules of a corresponding act.

⁸⁸ Acts prescribed by the Veda are of two kinds: advancing, which procures the enhancement of happiness; and arresting,* which procures the supreme good. ⁸⁹ An action performed to obtain a desire here or in the hereafter is called an 'advancing act', whereas an action performed without desire and prompted by knowledge is said to be an 'arresting act'. ⁹⁰ By engaging in advancing acts, a man attains equality with the gods; by engaging in arresting acts, on the other hand, he transcends the five elements.

⁹¹ A man who offers sacrifices within himself attains absolute sovereignty when he sees equally himself in all beings and all beings in himself. ⁹² Leaving behind even the acts prescribed above, a Brahmin should apply himself vigorously to the knowledge of the self, to inner tranquillity, and to vedic recitation. ⁹³ This, indeed, is the consummation of one's existence, especially for a Brahmin; for only by achieving this does a twice-born accomplish all he has to do, and never otherwise.

⁹⁴ The Veda is the eternal eyesight for ancestors, gods, and humans; for vedic teaching is beyond the powers of logic or cognition—that is the settled rule. ⁹⁵ The scriptures that are outside the Veda, as well as every kind of fallacious doctrine—all these bear no fruit after death, for tradition takes them to be founded on Darkness. ⁹⁶ All those different from the Veda that spring up and then flounder—they are false and bear no fruit, because they belong to recent times.*

⁹⁷ The four social classes, the three worlds, and the four orders of life, the past, the present and the future—all these are individually established by the Veda. ⁹⁸ Sound, touch, visible appearance, taste, and, the fifth, smell, are established by the Veda alone; their origin is according to attribute and action. ⁹⁹ The eternal vedic treatise bears

on all beings; it is the means of success for these creatures, therefore, I consider it supreme. 12.99

¹⁰⁰ A man who knows the vedic treatise is entitled to become the chief of the army, the king, the arbiter of punishment, and the ruler of the whole world. ¹⁰¹ As a fire, when it has picked up strength, burns up even green trees, so a man who knows the Veda burns up his taints resulting from action. ¹⁰² A man who knows the true meaning of the vedic treatise, in whatever order of life he may live, becomes fit for becoming Brahman while he is still in this world.

¹⁰³ Those who rely on books are better than the ignorant; those who carry them in their memory are better than those who simply rely on books; those who understand are better than those who simply carry them in their memory; and those who understand and carry them are better than those who only understand.

¹⁰⁴ For a Brahmin, ascetic toil and knowledge are the highest means of securing the supreme good; by ascetic toil he destroys impurity and by knowledge he attains immortality.

¹⁰⁵ Perception, inference, and treatises coming from diverse sources—a man who seeks accuracy with respect to the Law must have a complete understanding of these three. ¹⁰⁶ The man who scrutinizes the record of the seers and the teachings of the Law by means of logical reasoning not inconsistent with the vedic treatise—he alone knows the Law, and no one else.

¹⁰⁷ This is the totality of activities leading to the supreme good as prescribed. The secret doctrine of this Treatise of Manu will now be taught.

Excursus: Secret Teaching

¹⁰⁸ If it be asked: what happens in cases where specific Laws have not been laid down? What 'cultured' Brahmins state is the undisputed Law. ¹⁰⁹ Those Brahmins who have studied the Veda together with its supplements in accordance with the Law and are knowledgeable in scripture, perception, and inference, should be recognized as 'cultured'.

¹¹⁰ Alternatively, when a legal assembly with a minimum of ten members, or with a minimum of three members firm in their conduct, determines a point of Law, no one must question that Law.

12.121

¹¹¹ A man who knows the three Vedas, a logician, a hermeneut, an etymologist, a specialist in Law, and three individuals belonging to the first three orders of life—these constitute a legal assembly with a minimum of ten members.* ¹¹² A man who knows the R̥gveda, a man who knows the Yajurveda, and a man who knows the Sāmaveda—these should be recognized as constituting a legal assembly with a minimum of three members for settling doubts regarding the Law. ¹¹³ When even a single Brahmin who knows the Veda determines something as the Law, it should be recognized as the highest Law, and not something uttered by myriads of ignorant men. ¹¹⁴ Even if thousands of men who fail to follow the observances, who are unacquainted with the Veda, and who merely use their caste to earn a living, come together, they do not constitute a legal assembly. ¹¹⁵ When fools enveloped by Darkness declare something as the Law, though they are ignorant of it—that sin, increased a hundredfold, stalks those who declare it.

¹¹⁶ I have explained to you above all the best means of securing the supreme good. A Brahmin who does not deviate from them obtains the highest state.

CONCLUSION

Excursus: Summation

What is the best way to attain the highest good and how does this relate to the creation story at the start of the text?

¹¹⁷ In this manner, the blessed god, desiring to do what is beneficial for the people, revealed to me in its entirety this highest secret of the Law.

¹¹⁸ With a collected mind, a man should see in the self everything, both the existent and the non-existent; for when he sees everything in the self, he will not turn his mind to what is contrary to the Law. ¹¹⁹ All the deities are simply the self, the whole world abides within the self; for the self gives rise to engagement in action on the part of these embodied beings.

¹²⁰ Let him deposit space within his spaces;* the wind within his motion and touch; the highest fire within his digestive organ and eyes; water within his fluids; earth within his physical form; ¹²¹ the moon in his mind; directions in his ears; Viṣṇu in his stride; Hari* in his strength; Fire in his speech; Mitra in his organ of evacuation; and Prajāpati in his organ of procreation.

¹²²The ruler of all, more minute than even an atom, resplendent like gold, and to be grasped by the sleeping mind—he should know him as the supreme Person. ¹²³Some call him Fire, some Manu the Prajāpati, others Indra, still others Breath, and yet others the eternal Brahman. ¹²⁴This one, pervading all beings by means of the eternal forms (12.16), makes them go around like a wheel through birth, growth, and death. ¹²⁵When a man thus sees by the self all beings as the self, he becomes equal towards all and reaches Brahman, the highest state.

¹²⁶When a twice-born recites this Treatise of Manu proclaimed by Bhr̥gu, he will always follow the proper conduct and obtain whatever state he desires.

"twice born" refers to first physical birth, and second "birth" into knowledge of Vedic studies