

The Science of Upanishads - Part 21: Vajrasuchi Upanishad

What Defines a “Brahmin”? Is It By One’s Birth or By One’s Actions?

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Vajrasuchi (or Vajrasuchika) Upanishad is one of the Upanishads embedded in Samaveda, which literally means **“An Upanishad With A Pointed Diamond Needle”**. It is known as such because of its pointed attack against the misinterpreted or misunderstood caste system (Varnas) of Hinduism. It is a notable Vedanta Text that asserts that any human being, regardless of one’s caste, can achieve the highest spiritual state of existence. **It contends that a person does not become a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra by birth alone. The soul is pure and without attributes. Therefore, it has no caste!** The subtle body also has no caste because it is the same mind, the same breath and the same intelligence, the tattvas, which are active in all. **In making these assertions, the Upanishad is not in conflict with the Vedas, Puranas or any other Hindu Scriptures, all of which convey the message that a person becomes a Brahmin only by knowing the Brahman(Paramaatman)!** Only Brahma-jnanis, the true knowers of Brahman, qualify to be considered Brahmins. The Upanishad has been attributed to the great Shankaracharya (Adi Shankara), an Advaita Vedanta Scholar and the ardent defender of Hinduism, although there is still some uncertainty about the authorship of the Upanishad.

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