

4 Functions of King according to Manu

Manusmriti tells that the king was created by the lord for the protection of the people when he found them dispersing in all directions through fear in the absence of some one who could provide them security. The Lord took an eternal particles of 'Indra', of 'Vayu', of 'Yama', of 'Soma', of 'Agni', of 'Varuna', of 'Chandra', of 'Kuber' and formed the king out of them.

So, the king is superior from all created beings. He is equal to God and his post is divine. Manusmriti says that the person who hates the king through folly will doubtlessly be perished. All citizens are bound to respect the king and obey the law. Manu emphasises on virtue and limitations of the king. Manu has described the functions of the king comprehensively. Some of them are as follows —

"To err is human, to forgive is divine." - Alexander

(1) The king's foremost duty (Dharma) is as a kshatriya is the protection of his subjects. He should behave like a father towards all men and please all.

(2) The king should watch and control traders — 'Open Cheats'. He must fix the prices of all marketable goods, mark the weights and measures and re-examine them every six months.

(3) The followers of various occupations, mechanics, manual workers come in for state supervision.

(4) Guilty physicians or veterinary surgeons must be fined.

(5) Manu insists on the appointment of a learned Brahmin as the royal priest and also of seven or eight ministers. They should be consulted on matters regarding peace, war, finance, embassies and general administration daily. They should be consulted first individually and then collectively and ultimately king should decide himself.

"Fortune favours the bold." - Virgil

6 (6) The king who enjoys the specified rewards is bound to discharge his duty of protection. The king who receives agricultural tax, tolls, duties, fines etc. if fails to protect his people will go to hell after death.

(7) The king receiving 1/6th of agricultural produce as tax but failing to provide protection takes all the sins of the people upon himself. If he does not punish thieves, his kingdom is disturbed and he loses heaven.

(8) Justice (Dharma) must not be violated. Just violated justice should destroy the king. If a thief escapes punishment, the guilt falls upon the king. (VIII, 14, 15)

(9) Duties of the king are to decide disputes between guilds and families, to control prices and to compel all sections to perform their functions.

(10) The king should look after 7 widows, childless women and the property of the minors.

(11) The king should take care of the poor, the sick and the homeless.

