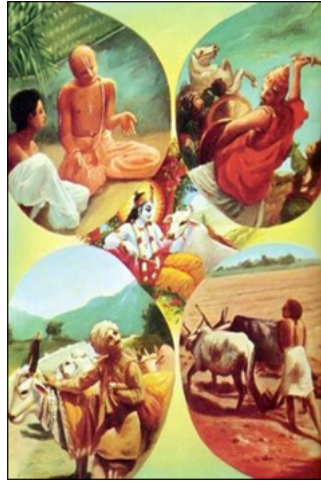


## Examrace

### Indian Ethics Varnashrama & the Concept of Shreyas and Preyas for Competitive Exams

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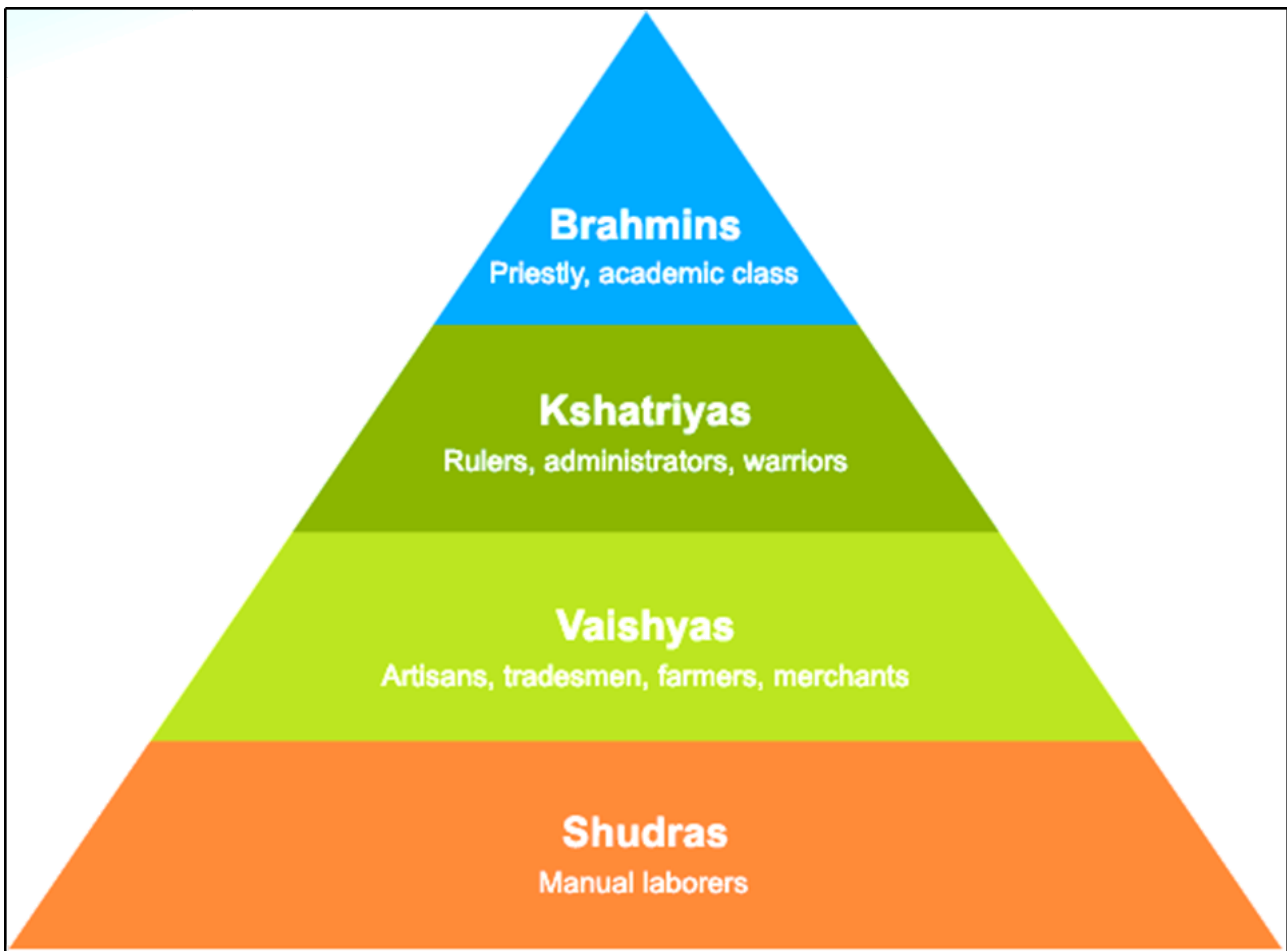
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Complete Video at - [Indian Ethics: Varnashrama & The concept of Shreyas and Preyas \(Philosophy\)](#)

#### **Varnashrama**

- Varnashrama is a fundamental concept of Hinduism.
- Etymologically speaking Varna means colour or the social standings of the people of the society.
- The concept of jati or sub-communities comes under the concept of varna or communities.
- Hence, it can be said that varnashrama is the idealised four-part division of the society into
  - Brahmins
  - Kshatriyas
  - Vaishyas
  - Shudras
- People belonging to these varnas are said to possess certain set of characteristics and perform their individual functions in accordance with dharma.
- It is important to note that the first three varnas, i.e.. Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas are called the “twice-born,” meaning they are allowed to read or study the Vedas.

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### **Brahmins**

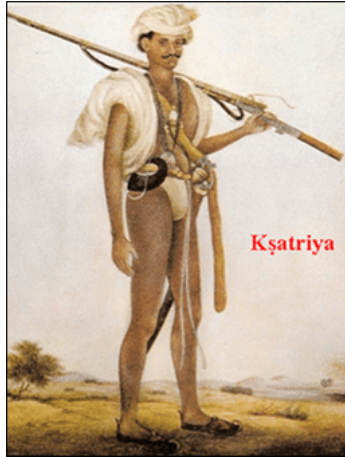
- Brahmins is the top most level of the *Varnashrama* system.
- The people belonging to this varna perform the functions of learning and teaching.
- In other words, their function is to learn the eternal knowledge of the Vedas and perform academic activities and sacrificial rituals.
- The brahmins are said to be of *sattvic* nature.
- They are pure, spiritual in nature and are said to be the society's bank of knowledge and wisdom.



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### **Kshatriyas**

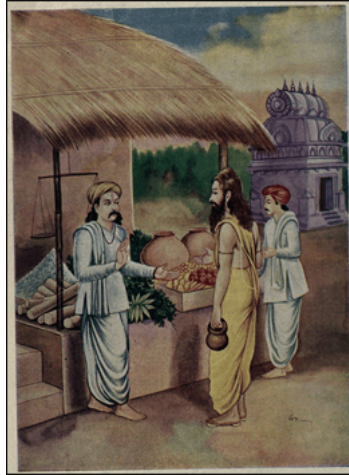
- Kshatriyas are regarded as the martial class.
- They perform the activities of the military defence and also perform the administrative activities or functions of the people and the society.
- They fight the battles against the intruders, rule over the people and defend them.
- They are responsible for maintaining peace and order in the society.
- Their nature is sattvic and rajastic.
- They share the Brahminic privilege of reading the Vedas.



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### III. Vaishyas

- Vaishyas belong to the third varna, they are regarded as the productive class of the society.
- Their functions include trading and business.
- They also deal with the work of cultivation of land, growing of crops, breeding of cattle, etc.
- They belong to the business class and deal with money.
- They always hence generate wealth.
- For them, artha is important.
- They have rajastic and tamasic nature.
- They share the Brahmanic privilege of reading the Vedas.



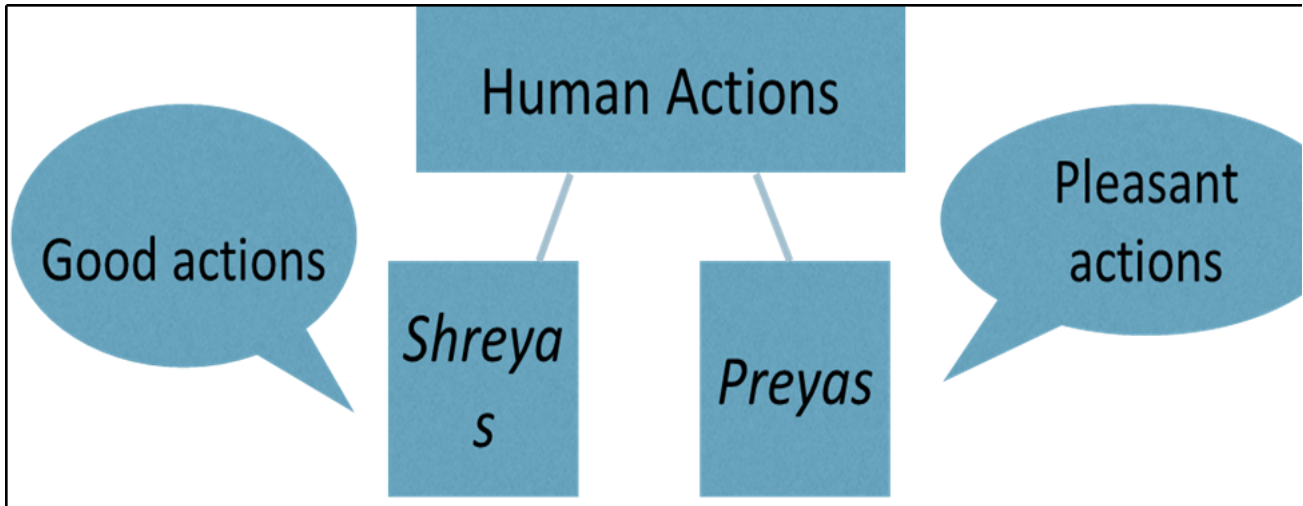
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### Shudras

- They are considered to belong to the lower most *varna*.
- They are believed to serve the other classes.
- They are the artisan class; they are also those who perform the occupations of agriculture and mining.
- They are believed to be of *tamasic* nature.
- In short, they are the serfs or labour class.
- They do not share the Brahmanic privilege of reading the Vedas.

### The Concept of Shreyas & Preyas

- According to the Katha Upanishad, all the human endeavours or actions fall under the two categories of Sreyas and Preyas.
- In other words, there is not a single aspect that lies outside these two.
- According to Katha Upanishad II, “The Shreyas is one thing and the Preyas is another. These two have different purposes which binds a man. The Shreyas (good) and the Preyas (pleasant) will approach a man and only the wise will distinguish the difference between the two.”



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### Preyas

- Preyas means pleasure.
- It deals with the sense bound actions.
- In other words, dealing with those actions which give us pleasure or are pleasant in nature.
- Majority of mankind deals with such actions alone.
- Preyas deals with pleasure or they are pleasure oriented. They are regarded as inferior in nature as they are directed towards the worldly outlook.

### Shreyas

- Shreyas on the other hand means what is good.
- It deals with virtues and strengths.
- It deals with the good and the right actions.
- Shreyas deal with the spiritual outlook, so, they are considered to be superior in nature.
- According to the scriptures, the wise men perform them, while the fool choose preyas over shreyas.

✍ Manishika

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