

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The main objective of my thesis is to explicate and examine with special reference to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar the Socio-Philosophical understanding of untouchability of past as well as present. Untouchability is a disease, a social one. It is a social disease manifested in the society, community and within the form of life. It is no longer constitutional and hence it cannot be justified or evaluated with regard to constitutional law. That means a victim of untouchability cannot solve his problem by taking the help from law. Untouchability is a concept, a social sanction having no rational and scientific basis. However, it was prevailing in the past and in some sense or other it is still prevailing at present.

What then is the basis of untouchability? If untouchability has no rational and scientific defense, how it was prevailing and is still prevailing in the society in some sense or other? This is the most important question that needs to be taken care of at the very outset. It is observed that the source and locus of untouchability is deeply rooted in Hinduism in some sense or other. In this regard, many critiques including Ambedkar would like to say that Hinduism is responsible for creating untouchability. This position is extremely tricky one and no resolution has yet been taken without begging question regarding this position. Of course, when we are engaging to discuss about the socio-philosophical understanding of untouchability with regards to past and present, we have to focus on the locus and source of such social disease. Most of our discussion developed in this thesis with special reference to Ambedkar on the one hand and Hinduism or Hindu religion on the other hand. Ambedkar was the victim of untouchability like millions and millions of other untouchables. Hinduism or *Hindu* religion in the loose sense of the term in some sense or other would be responsible of creating untouchability. Even if, it is claimed that Hinduism or *Hindu* religion being a universal religion and having a lot of historical background cannot be responsible for

generating untouchability, still it can be said that there are some vested interested people in the name of *Brahmins* behold Hinduism and misinterpreted Hinduism in their own account which eventually might be responsible for creating untouchability. My general position is that the concept of untouchability is in some sense or other is rooted in Hinduism and then priest of Hinduism were responsible for doing that.

The first and foremost problem of Hinduism is that, being a religion it was in its inauguration was unorganized and it was remain unorganized in the past for a prolong period of time. As a result of that many religious commentators would interpret Hinduism “is a series of jungles”. Thus, it is not clear even today who the real *Hindus* are. But Hinduism or *Hindu* religion advocated *Varna-Vyavastha* or *Varna* systems in term of four-fold caste systems, namely, *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Shudra* in a hierarchical order. It was recognized that as far *Varna-Vyavastha* is concerned the *Brahmins* are the superior and the *Kshatriyas* are the most inferiors. Now my contention is that, if Hinduism is a series of jungles and nobody knows who the real *Hindus* are in the true sense of the term, then the so-called *Varna-Vyavastha* or *Varna* system as promulgated by Hinduism is based on unsound argument and it would remain fictitious and unfounded. It might be the case that in the process of socio-philosophical development there are peoples who enjoy and designated as *Brahmin* even though there may be the possibility that they were not coming from *Brahmin* class. The same may be the case in the rest of the other three divisions. Therefore, it may be said that the *Varna-Vyavastha* is itself defective in its inauguration. Of course, Hinduism has a point to defend *Varna-Vyavastha*. They refer the quotation of Lord Krishna, who says:

“*Chaturvarna Maya sristam*  
*Gunakarma vibhagasha*”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Gita* 4/13

Of course, if we believe Hinduism, then we have to follow the message of Lord Krishna, because He has been treated as God in Hinduism. Our concern is not about against the message of Lord Krishna with regard to *Varna-Vyavastha*, rather what we intend to say here is that, those who have been regarded as *Brahmin* may not be real *Brahmins* and those who have been treated as *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Shudra* may not be real *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Shudra* respectively. Our concern is that, even if we carefully scrutinized Hinduism to the best of our knowledge by taking the help from literature, we would no longer be in a position to identify who were the real *Brahmins*, were the real *Kshatriyas*, were the real *Vaishyas* and finally were the real *Shudras*.

Moreover, Lord Krishna classified *Varna-Vyavastha* not on the basis of birth of the *Hindus*, but on the basis of *guna* and *karma* or quality and activity performed by a particular *Hindu*. But this was not maintain at all in the ground of reality for which millions and millions of *Hindus* in the past were treated as untouchables and most importantly Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the architect of Indian constitutions was the victim of untouchables. Ambedkar, being an educator and social reformer said that, at the time of birth of any *Hindu* whatever, there we do not find any distinctive blood. From scientific point of view, there is no point in saying that the blood of a *Brahmin* kid at the time of birth is different from the blood of a kid of non-*Brahmins*. The blood remains the same of all kids irrespective of *Varna-Vyavastha*. Therefore, my point is that the *Varna-Vyavastha* of Hinduism may be accepted as a *division of labor* based on purely *guna* and *karma*, but not as a *division of laborers* based on *guna* and *karma* was implemented and is being implemented and applied everywhere in the world. There is nothing wrong in it's, because, it helps immensely for maximizing the productive capacity of the respective person. Today in global economy we are extremely abided by the division of labor. Today economic environment acknowledges and banks in favor of efficiency, competency and creativity of the individuals arising out of *guna* and *karma*,

quality and activities as well as education of the concerned people. So, my position is that if *Varna-Vyavastha* of Hinduism works or functions along with the intention of Lord Krishna, then there is nothing wrong in *Varna-Vyavastha*. It should be accepted and acknowledge both from religious point of view as well as from socio-cultural and socio-economical point of view. More importantly, I do reckon it is extremely relevant even in today's economic domain.

So, there is nothing wrong in Hinduism and even Ambedkar would agree it, regarding the *Varna-Vyavastha* along with the line of Lord Krishna. If the message of Lord Krishna regarding *Varna-Vyavastha* was being implemented, then millions and millions of people in the past as well as present would not perhaps be the victim of the social curse of untouchability. However, we find a different interpretation of *Varna-Vyavastha* in Hinduism. According to Ambedkar, the *Varna-Vyavastha* of Hinduism or in modern terms the caste system of Hinduism was being treated not on the basis of *guna* and *karma* as it was supposed to be the case, but on the basis of birth which eventually shaped *division of laborers* in Ambedkar's terms instead of *division of labor*. This causes all types of social problems associated with *Varna-Vyavastha* or Caste system.

Untouchability is a concept which goes against humanism. It hates and treats humans as non-humans. Out of literature has been developed on the very perception of untouchability, its origin, but still this social concept is in some sense or other is prevailing in the mind of the people. As a result of that *Hindu* community at large is suffering from unity. We think Hinduism as a religion is good; there is nothing wrong in Hinduism if it is evaluated carefully. However, the only problem of Hinduism is that it was not well organized like other religions.

The problem of untouchability, we think, might be solving considerably if it did not involve with politics. I think that Ambedkar himself in some sense or other had politicized this issue

along with Gandhi. We think that from socio-political and socio-philosophical perspective Ambedkar finds religious justice in Hinduism. For Ambedkar, Hinduism as a religion fails to retain religious justice because instead of eyeing all Hindus equal, it creates religious hierarchism and religious anarchism within Hinduism. Ambedkar was a religious person. He was fond of religion. He said that a man cannot survive without religion. He born as *Hindu* and he desire to die as a *Hindu*. But after his born he comes to know that he was an untouchable because he was belong to *Mahar* community – a community that had been treated as untouchable in Maharastra at that time. As a result of that he was the victim of the social curse of untouchability and he was struggling against the curse of untouchability throughout his life. The history is known to all of us. However, Ambedkar tried his level best to eradicate untouchability throughout his life. He revolted in many different ways, agitated in different ways, gave proposal to many political leaders, particularly to Mahatma Gandhi, to overcome the social curse of untouchability. He felt it very well that without the help of Gandhi; untouchability cannot be eradicated from Hinduism. He involve into different conflicts with Gandhi regarding Hinduism. Ambedkar found the loopholes in Hinduism as far as religious justice is concern. Gandhi thought the other way round. According to Gandhi, as a universal religion, Hinduism is pure and holly. There is nothing wrong in Hinduism. Gandhi advised Ambedkar to forgo the concept of untouchability. Instead of that Gandhi introduces the concept of *Horizon*. *Horizons* are those who are the son of God. Therefore, the debate between Ambedkar and Gandhi had been widening regarding Hinduism and the perception of untouchability. Gandhi said that the concept of untouchability is based on wrong perceptions. Rather everybody should come forward and take those distress people who are socially, economically and culturally backward. In this regard Gandhi, unlike Ambedkar, opened up the mission of Harizon. In this regard did not refer anything about Hindu religion. On the contrary, Ambedkar's concept of untouchability is directly associated

with the negative aspect of Hinduism. In our sense, as Ambedkar has been the victim of untouchability for which Hinduism in some sense or other was responsible, it was natural for Ambedkar to criticize Hinduism. However, in Gandhi's case the situation is completely different. Gandhi was a bona fide *Hindu*. He was committed to his own religion, i.e. Hinduism. He tried to find out the real *Truth* in Hinduism. According to Gandhi, *Truth* means God and God means *Sat*. Thus *Truth = God = Sat*. So, Gandhi tried to reveal the concept of *Sat* or *Sattva* or *Sat-Cit-Ananda* in Hinduism. This is how the difference between Ambedkar and Gandhi stood up. Ambedkar realized it that it is mainly for the Gandhi that any change in Hinduism would not be materialized. So, he needs the support from Gandhi. But Gandhi turned out to help Ambedkar regarding untouchability. At the end of his life, Ambedkar revolted against Hinduism with the support of almost five millions untouchables and took religious conversion from Hinduism to Buddhism.

We think that it was in same sense or other would be treated as a defeat of Ambedkar. Ambedkar, I do believe, at the end surrender to Hinduism and left Hinduism. The task of Ambedkar against Hinduism thus remained incomplete. Having said that there is no point in saying that the concepts of untouchability is justified in any civilized sense. Untouchability of any sort is unwanted, undesirable and unaccepted. If untouchability is linked with Hinduism, then it is of course would be regarded as the misinterpretation and misconception of Hinduism. Whatever the position may be, one thing should be kept in mind that in the years to come everybody, irrespective of caste and creed, should join their hand to eradicate such social evil.

Let me to focus a little bit about the origin of untouchability. So far we have claimed that Hinduism is responsible for creating untouchability where the priests of Hinduism were guilty. But we are yet to know the origin of untouchability. We have seen that as far Hinduism is concern, neither one belonging to *Varna-Vyavastha* would be treated as

untouchables. So, if the four different castes are not treated as untouchables, then who would be treated as untouchables? In this regard there we find a concept of *Antaja*, a *Varna* that is completely different and distinct from the four *Varna-Vyavastha* of Hinduism. The *Varna-Vyavastha* of Hinduism is acknowledged as *Svavarna* and *Antaja* is treated as *Avarna*. In Hinduism, *Antaja* or *Avarna* is created out of *Pratiloma* marriage, where *Sankara* comes from the parents where the father is belonging to lower castes (i.e. *Shudra*) and the mother is belonging to the higher castes (i.e. *Brahmin*). Such type of marriage is not accepted in Hinduism. Even Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra while talking about marriage completely denies *Pratiloma* marriage. According to Thakur a progeny coming out of *Pratiloma* would be detrimental for the welfare of the society and community at large. So, the progenies (*Sankara*) coming from *Pratiloma* would be treated as *Antaja* or *Avarna* of the society. This *Avarna* would be treated as untouchables. This is one of the important sources of untouchability.

Is it acceptable in context of today's society? Certainly it is not. If this prescription of Hinduism is taken into account, then there we find a large number of *Antaja*'s in our society. In India there are hundreds of cases that we can identify where the marriages were held in the name of *Pratiloma*. The modern society at large forgoes the caste, the creed, the *Varna*'s; rather it gives importance on education and economy. Therefore according to *Hindu Shastra*, if we will stick to the concept of *Pratiloma* then the number of *Antajas* would be numerous in numbers.

The second informative source or origin of untouchability was generated out of beef eating. There was a period of time in the past when it was promulgated that all beef eating peoples were treated as untouchables because it goes against the sanctity of Hinduism. It is just a religious injunction associated with the food habit and as far as religion is concerned there is nothing wrong to say. Hinduism as the foundation of spiritualism is based on vegetarianism.

This is the general approach of Hinduism. However, as a religion it can set up its own standard and if any *Hindu* violates this religious sanction he might be treated as untouchables. He cannot violate the sanction of religion in which he belongs to. However, Hinduism as a religion cannot set up a general principle that all beef eating peoples would be treated as untouchables. Hinduism as a religion has no right to say that a *Buddhist* or a *Muslim* or a *Christian* who is eating beef would be treated as untouchables. If it does, then to me it crosses its limits.

So, putting into perspective these two sources of untouchability, we can say that Ambedkar had been treated as untouchable because he was born in an untouchable family. His parents had been treated as untouchables and his forefathers were belonging to *Antaja*'s. As a result of that Ambedkar by birth was regarded as untouchables. So, Ambedkar has no right, at least from *Hindu* religious perspective, to be treated as one of the four caste of *Varna-Vyavastha*. So, Ambedkar by birth belongs to *Avarna* and the *Varna-Vyavastha* is based on *Svavarna*.

So, from the humanistic point of view we can say that untouchability is a social curse and it cannot be tolerated by any means whether it is acceptable to any caste or *Varna*'s whatsoever. But what is the possible means to overcome it? How do we overcome it and realize the society from the curse of untouchability? It seems to us that if we mixed up *Varna* system with Caste system that was happen in the past, then there we do not find any acceptable means to overcome such social curse. That is why the concept of untouchability appears in the society in the name of *Antaja*. Ambedkar himself was victimizing for it. However, if we strict to the concept of *Varna-Vyavastha* within *guna* and *karma* according to Lord Krishna and also do not mixed up *Varna-Vyavastha* with caste system, then we can easily avoid the concept of *Avarna* or *Antaja*. In such a case we have to forgo the difference between *Anuloma* and *Pratiloma*. To resists the concept of untouchability we have to ignore the concept of *Pratiloma* and *Anuloma*. The question then immediately arises: does this

modification hamper the sanctity of Hinduism? Ambedkar throughout his life had tried to do this, but he failed because the rules and principles of Hinduism are stringent, rigorous and inviolable. That is where the problem actually hinges on. Ambedkar was a dynamic social, economic and political reformist. He tried his level best to reform Hinduism from Socio-philosophical perspective. But he failed.

On the basis of the above observations we may conclude by saying that the concept of untouchables has a lot socio-philosophical impact. An untouchable loses so many social and political opportunities by virtue of being treated as untouchable. Therefore, a resolution should be drawn against untouchability whatever its origin might be the case. Every human is an integral part of God according to Rabindranath Tagore. Therefore, to designate a person as untouchable is to designate the *being of the person* as untouchable. And to designate the *being of the person* as untouchable is to designate the being of the God as untouchable. We have seen a lot of debate and conflict about the origin, locus and ground of untouchability. Whatever the reason we have in favor of untouchability but in 21<sup>st</sup> century it would be treated as human disgrace irrespective of the reason laid down in favor of it. It is our responsibility to guide the people in a proper direction and one must take the help from religion. But one must resist the concept of untouchability as his or her level best in the society in which he or she belongs to. Untouchability was regarded as a social curse, it is being regarded a social curse and it will be regarded a social curse in the days to come. Our main objective is to overcome this social curse completely by way of understanding and apprehending Hinduism or *Hindu* religious in proper.

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