Chapter-II

Hinduism and *Varṇāśrama Dharma*

Dr.B.R. Ambedkar was a distinguished social reformer, ethical thinker and a political philosopher. Like Jowharlal Neheru, he did not certainly claim that he was accidentally a Hindu by birth. But he undoubtedly announced that he did not want to die as a Hindu. Because his hostility and wide-spread criticism arose mainly out of the treatment he received from his very childhood to the days of maturity from a section of Hindus, the *Brāhmin* in particular. Ambedkar faced the stigma of caste discrimination and humiliation by the upper class people in Hindu society. The whole *Māhār* community was treated as untouchable by the upper class people of Hinduism. These inhuman bitter experiences made in him an anti Hindu social sentiment and finally he converted to Buddhism on 14th October in 1956 to live in a free society. This fact of hatred also prompted him to refuse taking oath by touching the *Gītā,* the sacred book of Hindu religion. He did not even see eye to eye with M. K. Gandhi, the champion of *Harijan.* Ambedkar always opposes to Hinduism as well as the *Varṇa* system, because the *Varṇa* system was a symbol of inequality, cruelty and injustice also. He emphasizes that, "*to me, this Cāturvarṇa with its old labels is utterly repellent and my whole being rebels against it*".[1] He further said that, '*this Varṇa system is impracticable, harmful and has turned out to be a miserable failure*"[2]. Here Ambedkar seems to confuse between *varṇa* system and caste system. He argues that inequality in fact results from *varṇa* and caste. But Ambedkar, in fact, never confuses *varṇa* with Caste. Ambedkar acknowledge that the *varṇa* and caste are not only fundamentally different but they are also fundamentally opposed. Because the *varṇa* system is based on worth while the caste system is based on birth. Yet Ambedkar believes that, "it is impossible accurately to classify the people into four definite classes" and that "the original four classes have now become four thousand castes".[3]

So the questions comes what exactly is meant by *varna system* and then see whether *Varna-bheda* and *Jāti-bheda* mean the same thing or not.

If we are to reply to the above mentioned question, then first of all we need to examine the exact meaning of *varna-vyavasthā*. Actually the word *varna* is a Sanskrit term which derived from the root word *vr* and the meaning of *vr* is "to cover, to envelop". Generally *Varna* means color like white, red etc. But metaphorically *varna* means to *gunas*. Here *gunas* stand for *svatta, rajaḥ* and *tamaḥ*. The *varna* system of Hindu society is described in the religious texts i.e. *Vedas, Purānas, Smritis* etc. It was first described in the *Puruṣa sukta* of the R*k-vedas* 1090. In *Rk-veda*, initially *Varna* is divided into two classes i.e. *Āryas* and *Dāsa*. But in later *Rk-vedas* pursa-sukta, *varna* was divided into four social classes; *Brāhmana, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya* and *Śūdra*. To substantiate this view the following critique a *Rk-* from *Rg-vedas*, can be cited-

"*Brāhmano śya mukhamāsīt vāhu rājaṇyakah kṛteh, ūru*

Tadasya yat vaiśya padābhyām Śūdrojāyata". [4]

Here the *Rk-vedas* refers to four Principal *Varna s* which are compared to the body of the 'primordial man or *Purusa*; *Brahmana*' was created out of his head, *Rajanya* was created out of his arms. *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra* come from his thigh and feet respectively.

This view is not admitted by the Modern historians' Analysis. According to the Modern Historians the *Varna-bheda* is not traceable in ancient Vedic era. It is to be said that *Varna-bheda* is seen in the later Vedic period. They further argue that with the increase of population, a need for the division of labour on the basis of karma is felt for smooth functioning. In *Rg Veda*, interpreting a *Puruṣa Śukta* they mentioned that all people were not engaged in doing the same work. *Taksa* was collecting wood; *Vaidya* was curving disease;

Stota was engaged in sacrificial ceremony. Even the men of one and the same family were found to engage themselves in different activities. In 9th Rk says, *"Look here I am the Śtrotrakāra, my son is a medical practitioner, i.e. Vaidya, and my daughter is Yababharjana karini, i.e. cook"*[5]

Here the above mentioned example clearly states that the division of *Varṇa* is not made on the basis of heredity but on the basis of *karma*. The same idea is repeated in Aitereya (1/16, 2/17, 2/19), *Chāndogya* (5/4) and *Satapathabrāhmaṇa* (32/1).

Now let us discuss about *Āsrama dharma* which plays an important role in *Varṇa-vyavasthā* in Hindu society. In Vedic tradition *Āsrama* means a stage in the life of human being. The *Vedic Śāstras* have also prescribed the four stages or *Āśramas* in human life, namely *Brahmachārjya*, *Gārhastya, Vānaprastha* and *Sannyāsa*. The specific duties of each *Āśramas* are distinct and different.

In the *Gītā*, we also come across the view of find *Varṇa-vyavasthā* of Hinduism. Here, *Bhagabān* SriKriṣṇa himself declares that *Cāturvarṇa* i.e. *Varṇa* differentiation is his own making and he concedes that this division is in accordance with the attainment of *guna* and *Karma* taken into consideration. SriKriṣṇa says- *Cāturvarṇaṁ maya sṛstaṁ guṇa karma vibhāgasya.*[6] Here the *guṇa* and *karma* are two determining factors for the division of *Varṇa*. It is further to note that the literal meaning of *Varṇa* is color like white, red etc. but metaphorically *Varṇa* stands for the different *guṇas* i.e. *sattva, rajaḥ* and *tamaḥ*. In the first verse of *Sāṁkhyakārikā*, it is stated that, *Prakriti* consists of the above mentioned *guṇas* in a state of equilibrium. These *guṇas* i.e. *sattva, rajaḥ* and *tamaḥ* are compared with whiteness, redness and blackness respectively. In *Svetāsvetara Upaniśad*, we also see that *Lohita-sukla-kriṣṇa* is standing for these three different colors i.e. red, white and black respectively. If we go to *Mahābhārata*, then we notice that there also *sita* is used for white *asita* for black, *pita*

for yellow and *rakta* for red. And these colors stand for *Brāhmaṇa, Śūdra, Vaiśya* and *Kṣatriya Varṇa* . In ancient literature, the color: white, red etc. are frequently used to stand for different *guṇas*, like *sattva, rajaḥ* etc. The division of *Brāhman, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya* and *Śūdra* is due to the variation of the proportion of different *guṇas*. So the name *Varṇa-bheda* seems to be appropriate. These *guṇas* are present in all men, but they are not present equally in all men, some *guṇas* are present more in one than in other. Owing to this the *varṇa-bheda* comes. In *Brāhmanas, Sattva guṇa* is preponderant over the others. In *Kṣatriyas*, the *rajaḥ* preponderant also with lesser *Sattva*; in *Vaiśya, rajaḥ* predominates along with lesser *tamaḥ*; in *Śūdra, tamaḥ* predominates. it is further to note that, the *sattva guṇa* produces pleasure, *rajaḥ* is produces pain and *tamaḥ* is produces indifference.

Now let us deal with *karma-bheda*. The *karma* is another determining factor for the division of *Varna*. In *Varṇa Vyavasthā*, different types of *Karma* or duties for fourfold *varṇa* are prescribed. The *Karmas* of *Brāhmin* is *Yajana-yājana, adhyana-adhyāpanā*, etc. The *karmas* of *Kṣatriya* are the protection of people and country from the internal and external aggression. The karmas of *Vaiśya* are commerce and agriculture, cattle breeding etc., and the *Karmas* of *Śūdras* are to render service to other three *varṇas*. These *karmas* or the duties are compulsory for each and every *varṇas*. In olden times, everyone was *Brāhman* as they were created by *Brāhman*. Later on some of the *Brāhmanas* move towards other *varṇas* by dint of their respective *karmas*. Accordingly, different *karmas* are prescribed for different *varṇas*. Māhārsi Bhṛgu empathically declared that *varṇa* is to be determined by *guṇas* and *karma* but not by birth. In *Umā- Maheswara Saṁbada*, Mahadeva clearly points out that birth in *Brāhman yoni* does not necessarily make one *Brāhmin*. It is really determined by his character. The *Śūdra* who has conquered his senses (*jitendriya*) and has attained purity of mind (*Suddha citta*) is to be treated as a *Brāhman*.

This same view is described in *Manusmrities*. In *Manu*, the verse (1-80) says that the duties of *Brāhmanas* are:

"*Adhyāpanāmadhyāyan yajanam yājanaṁ tathā*

Dānam pratigraham chaiva brāhmanāmakalpayet".

Teaching, learning (studying), worshiping for own and others, giving *dāna* to others and receiving *dāna* from others, these are the works prescribed for *Brāhmanas*.

In the verse (1-89) Manu mentions the duties of *Kṣatriyas* as

"*Prajānaṁ rakśanaṁ dānamijyādhyayanam evacha,*

Vaiśyaes htaprasaktishasheha Kṣatriyasya samāsataḥ"

Taking care and protection of citizens, giving charity, doing rituals and fire scarifies, learning and non-indulgence in pleasures are the works of *Kṣatriyas*.

The verse (1-90) prescribes the works for *Vaiśyas* as

Pashūnāṁ rakśanam dānamijyādhyayanamevacha

Vanik patham kusīdam cha vaiśyasya Kriṣimevacha.

Keeping and protection of cows and animals, giving charity, doing rituals and fire sacrifices, learning, conducting trade cultivation of land and water, giving loans for interest and agriculture are described as the works of *Vaiśyas*.

In verse (1-91), Manu mentioned the duties of *śūdras* as

Ekameva tu śūdrasya prabhuhu karma samādiśat

Eleśāmeva Varṇānām śūshrūshāmanasūgyayā.

The specific duty of the *Śūdras* is to provide the services for all the three types of upper *varṇas*. It is interesting to see that the classification of *karma* mentioned above are also found in the different institutions in our society.

The seers and sages also clearly state the meaning of *Varṇa*. In the ancient time, they were very much aware of the concept of *Varṇa* and caste. They argued that *Varṇabheda* is based on the twin principles of *guna* and *karma*, but they are not based on the principles of birth. They further said that a *Brāhmin* is not only one whose thoughts are *Sāttvika* but his actions are different from the rest ones. A *Brāhmin* must be honest, wise, benevolent etc. A *kṣatriya* is one who is *rājasik* in his thoughts and actions. A *Śūdra* is one who is *Tāmasika* both in his thought and deed. He has minimum control upon his passion like animal. In *Srimad Bhāgvad Gītā*, it is stated clearly that-

"Yasya yat lakṣanami proktani pumso Varṇa bhi Vyanjakani

Yat anyatrapi drsyeta tatteniva vinirdibed." [7]

Varna of an individual according to the *Śūdra* of above *Śūdra* of *Bhāgavad Gītā* is determined on the basis of his *guṇa* and *karma*. If the *guṇas* like *sama* and *dama* belong to an individual then it is understood that he is a *Brāhman*. But if his *guṇas* are otherwise then it is understood that he is not a *Brāhman* but some other else. Similarly this expression 'Samadibhireva prahmanadi Vyavaharo mukhyah na tu jatimatraditi' clearly points that one's *Varṇa* is to be ascertained not by his *jātī* but by his acquisition of *guna* like *sama*, *dama* etc.

In *Mahābhārata*, we also find Yudisthira exclaiming that if the *guṇas* like *sama*, *dama* etc. are present in *Śūdra*, then he is not to be considers a *Śūdra* but *Brahman* proper. On the other hand, if one lacks these qualities then he is not *Brahman* proper, but really a

Śūdra. In *Śāntiparva*, Mahārsi Bhrgu narrates to Bharadwaja the origin of *Varṇa bheda*: "*Ityetaih Karmabhiryasta dwija Varṇa ntaram gataḥ*"[8]. The famous utterance in Bhakti *Śāstras*, '*Condālopi dwijaśrestha Haribhakti-parayanaḥ*' points out to the same thing. Thus the *Varṇabheda* is *guṇa-karmagata*, i.e. *Vyaktigata* and not *Vaṁsagata*. So, *Varṇa -bheda* and *jāti-bheda* do not mean the same thing.

Now let us deal with the concept of *jāti* Prevailing in Hinduism the determining principle of *jāti* is birth. Therefore, so far as the definition is concerned *varṇa* is completely different from the *Jāti*. And in distinguishing *varṇa* from *Jāti* Ambadkar accordingly say's that the distinction between the *varṇa* and the caste is like the distinction between the chalk and cheese. So there is no point of confusing one with another. *Varṇabheda* is made on the basis of *guṇa* and *karma* but *jātibheda* is made on the basis of birth. Besides this, the number of *varṇa* is four but the *Jātis* are more than four thousands in number. Some other differences can be pointed out regarding the difference between *varṇa* and *Jāti*. The *varṇabheda* has been made by God himself in order to establish the wellbeing's of the whole society but *Jātibheda* is nothing but the creation of some individuals in order to satisfy their vested interest. Consequently, *varṇabheda* is the integral part of Hindu religion and Hindu society but *Jātibheda* is not and integral part either of Hindu dharma or of Hindu society. The term *jāti* or caste has come from the Latin word '*castus*' which means "pure, cut off, segregated". It was first used by the Portuguese to describe inherited class status. Here an immediate question that comes in our mind is what the source of *jāti*? More clearly to say, how *Jāti* has taken its birth? Different opinions have been proposed by different thinkers as the answer to the above question. Some of the thinkers are of opinion that *jātibheda* infact is nothing but the inevitable corollary of the *varṇabheda*. Thus according to this view *jātibheda* is the effect and the *varṇabheda is the* cause of it. This view has been supported by Ambedkar himself along with some of other thinkers. Ambedkar says that the four *Varṇas* subsequently have

been by furcated in to four thousand castes. But there are some other thinkers who do not agree with Ambedkar on this issues. They observe that there is no causal connection between the *vaṇra vyavasthā* and the *jāti vyavasthā*. *Jātivyavasthā* is purely a different concept. Gandhiji accepts this view among some other prominent thinkers. Gandhiji here says *Jātivyavasthā* infect is nothing but a custom though he frankly admits that he does not no what is the source of that custom. Gandhiji further points out that though *varṇabheda* has a profound positive impact upon our society but the *jātibheda* does not have any positive impact upon our society. The impact of *jātibheda* towards our society is highly adverse. Therefore Gandhiji thinks that *jātibheda* should be removed from our society. But the question comes how can *jātibheda* be removed from our society? Gandhiji thinks that the four thousand *jātis* have to be reduced to the four varṇas. But how that huge number of *jatis* can be reduced to only four varṇas. This is no doubt a great problem. But so far as my knowledge is concerned, no proper solution has been suggested by Gandhiji. But here a very remarkable observation has been made by Ambedkaran on the suggestion proposed by Gandhiji regarding the annihilation of *jati* (caste). Ambedkar observed that though Ghandhiji apparently proposes for annihilation of caste but in reality his proposal infact gas nothing to do with removing the *jati* (caste) rather if confirms the root of *jati*. Gandhiji maintains that there is nothing wrong in *varaṇa vyavasthā*. If plays of positive, in role making our society developed in different ways. *varṇa Vyavasthā* plays to fold positive role. According to Gandhijithe another name of *varṇa-bheda* is nothing but *karma-bheda*. *Karma-bheda* helps one to attain special skill which in turn helps to make our society sound. Besides, the *varṇa-bheda* also helps a man to be spiritually progressed and thereby it helps an individual to attain his ultimate goal that is *Mokṣa* or liberation. Keeping this in view Gandhiji advises all the Hindus to restore and maintain *varṇa vyavastha* in our society. Thus we see that according to Gandhiji *jāti vyavasthā* should be annihilated but the *varṇa Vyavasthā* should be preserved.

But hare Ambedkar argues that Gandhiji in fact proposes to preserve *Jāti Vyavasthā* in the name of *varṇa vyavasthā*. He never says to preserve *varṇa vyavasthā* in our society.if we have a close explanation then we can see that infact there is no room for *varṇa vyavasthā* in the philosophy of M.K. Gandhi. When he advises the society to preserve *varṇa vyavasthā* then he clearly says that to preserve the *varṇa vyavasthā* is to follow the callings of our fore fathers. Ambedkar observes that here lies the problem. How can we determine the callings of our fore fathers? We determine the calling of our forefathers on the basis of birth. So here birth stands for the determining principle of *varnṇ-bheda*. Later on Gandhiji categorically says that determining principle of *varṇa-bheda* must be birth otherwise it will lose the meaning of it. We have already discussed previously that the determining principle of *jātibheda* is birth. This determining principle that is the *guṇa* and *karma* of *varṇa-bheda* has been replaced by birth, the determining principle of *Jāti* by Gandhiji. This clearly implies that the *varṇabheda* has been replaced by *jātibheda*. So, when Gandhiji suggests the society to preserve *varṇa vyavasthā* then actually thereby he advises the society to preserve *jāti vyavasthā* in the name of *varṇa vyavasthā*. This objection raised by Ambedkar against Gandhiji is really serious. I think the argument produced by Ambedkar is so clear that anybody can understand that the observation of Ambedkar is purely correct.

Some of the supporters of the caste system claim that caste system is not unique in Hindus; it is equally present in Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. So, if it is true as it is claimed by Ambedkar that the caste system underline Hinduism gives birth to untouchability, oppression, discrimination etc. then same caste system prevailing in other societies also give birth to the same type of problems. Thus it can be shown that it is pointless for Ambedkar to leave Hinduism and embrace other religions."Of these, there is one set which finds nothing peculiar nor odious in the caste system of the Hindus. Such Hindus cite the case of Muslims, Sikhs and Christians and find comfort in the fact that they too have castes amongstthem"[9].

In reply to the above objection Ambedkar says that though it is true that the caste system can be traced in Muslims, Sikhs and Christians but the status of the caste system underlining them is not the same with the status of the caste system prevailing in Hindus. Ambedkar observes that the people living in an ideal society must be integrated each other with the sense of fellow-feeling. We know that there is no integration among different flowers existing on a plate. But when a garland is made out of those flowers with the help of a thread then one flower becomes integrated with other flowers in terms of the thread. Here the thread acts as organic filaments as it is called by Carlyle which brings the disintegrating flowers together and united. In the same way the different individuals living in a society should be united and integrated like the different flowers constituting a garland. Though one individual is different from other individuals yet there must be a sense of oneness. They must feel that all of them are the very part and parcel of one and the same society. So the interest of the whole society is virtually the interest of each and every member living in the society. Naturally one individual will consider other individuals living in the same society as his brothers. This type of society is a family in the broader sense of the term. We know that in an ideal family there is no sense of inequality, there is no lack of liberty and fraternity. In other words, in an ideal family all members are treated equally, all of them feel liberated and again there lies a sense of brotherhood among all of them. Now if an ideal society is like a big family then no doubt what is true in the case of a family must also be true in the case of an ideal society. But in that sense Hindus cannot form an ideal society due to the caste system. It is because of the caste system that one individual cannot feel united with all other members of Hindu society. Here one member belonging to Brahmin caste feels akin to the other members belonging to the same caste but he never feels united with the members belonging to the other caste. Presence of the caste in Hindu society always stands in the way to construct an ideal society. There cannot be any organic filaments i.e. elastics threads to bring

the different individuals together and constitute an organic whole. But in the case of Non-Hindus though there are castes, side by side there are also plenty of these organic filaments to bind them together.

Another important difference between the caste systems of Hindus and the caste system of Non-Hindushas been cited by Ambedkar. Ambedkarargues that so far as the social significations is concerned the caste system of the Hindus is different from the caste system of Non-Hindus. In this context Ambedkar says, "Ask Mohammedan or a Sikh, who he is? He tells you that he is a Mohammedan or a Sikh as the case may be. He does not tell you his caste although he has one and you are satisfied with his answer. When he tells you that he a Muslim, you do not proceed to ask him whether he is a Shiya or a Suni; Sheikh or Saiyad; Khatik or Pinjari. When he tells you he is a Sikh, you do not ask him whether he is Jaṭor Roda; Mazbi or Ramdasi. But you are not satisfied, if a person tells you that he is a Hindu. You feel bound to inquire into his caste. Why? Because so essential is caste in the case of a Hindu that without knowing it you do not feel sure what sort of a being he is"[10].

Ambedkar observes thatthere is also another fundamental difference between the caste system of the Hindus and the caste system of the Non-Hindus. The idea of ex-communication is an integral part of the caste system of Hinduism but the same idea is completely foreign to the caste system of Non-Hindus. "There may be castes among Sikhs and Mohammedan but the Sikhs and the Mohammedans will not outcast a Sikh or a Mohammedan if he broke his caste. Indeed, the very idea of excommunication is foreign to the Sikhs and the Mohammedans. But with the Hindus the case is entirely different. He is sure to be outcasted if he broke caste"[11].

Ambedkar points out another difference between the caste system of Hindus and that of the Non-Hindus which he considers to be of paramount importance. Ambedkar observes

that the caste of the Non-Hindus has no religious consecration but the caste system of the Hindus most decidedly it has. Non-Hindus do not consider caste as a religious dogma. Non-Hindus do not consider observation of caste as a virtue. But the Hindus, on the other, regard observation of caste as a virtue. Breaking of caste among Hindus is not optional. If Hindus wish to break caste, their religion will come in their way. But the Religion of the Non-Hindus will not come in the way if some Non-Hindus like to break caste. "It is, therefore, a dangerous delusion to take comfort in the mere existence of caste among Non-Hindus, without caring to know what place caste occupies in their life and whether there areother" organic filaments", which subordinate the feeling of caste to the feeling of community. The sooner the Hindus are cured of this delusion the better"[12].

I think we should focus upon another issue which is highy relevant here. What is the place of *Varṇabheda* in Hindu religion? Is it an essence and therefore an integral part of Hinduism or an accidental property of the same? I think different scholars have given different opinions on this issue again. So far as the observations of Gandhiji as well as of Ambedkar are concerned *varṇa vyavesthā* is an essence and an integral part of Hinduism. Gandhiji have says *varṇa vyavasthā* is as essential as the fire and air in our life. This statement clearly implies that *varṇa vyavasthā* must be the essence of Hinduism. At times Gandhiji says the *varṇa vyavasthā* is a natural phenomenon. I think the observation of Ambedkar on this issue is more or less the same. He believes that untouchability and *jāti-bheda* come from *varṇa-vheda*. But the *varṇa-bheda* is directly sanctioned by Hindu religion itself. Thus, it is seen that the root cause of untouchability and *jāti-bheda* is the Hindu religion itself. So if we are to annihilate the untouchability and *jāti-bheda* then we must have to discard the authority of the Hindu *Śāstras*. But he says that to discard the authority of the Hindu *Śāstras* and to annihilate the *varṇa vyavasthā* is next to impossible. This clearly implies that *varṇa vyavasthā* is an essence and integral aspect of Hindu religion. Had the

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varṇa vyavasthā not been an essence and integral part of Hinduism then *varṇa vyavasthā* would have been destroyed without discarding the authority of Hindu *Śāstras* or Hindu religion. Keeping this in view Ambedkar concludes that reformation in Hinduism is not possible. Therefore if the *Māhārs* are to stay within the Hindu fold then they have to be there accepting all the problems they are suffering from. But if they like to be free from those problems then the only alternative way at their hands is to leave Hinduism as early as possible. Considering this Ambedkar takes the second alternative and therefore embraces Buddhism leaving the Hindu religion.

Now let us examine whether the observation made by Gandhiji and Ambedkar is acceptable or not. If we carry a close and careful review on the different fundamental *Śāstra* of Hindu religion then, I think, it can be understood that ultimately their observations cannot be accepted. Initially we may think that their observation can be substantiated to be true if we go to *ŚrimadBhagvad Gītā*. Srikriṣṇa says Arjuna, "*Svadharme nidhanaṁ śreya paradharma bhayabāha*"[13]. Here 'Svadharma' stands for *varṇadharma*. Srikriṣṇa has given so prime importance upon following the *varṇadharma* that he says its is batter to die by following *varṇadharma* of one's own but to follow the *varṇadharma* meant for others is dangerous. Keeping this in view Srikriṣṇa emphatically advises Arjuna to follow his *varṇadharma* and fight against Kourava. More or less the same view has been given by *Chaitannya Caritāmṛita*. In *Chaitannya Caritāmṛita* we come across an occasion where Mahāprabhu wants to know from Roy Ramananda the way leading to our ulitimate goal. Roy Ramananda says to Mahāprabhu Sri Chatanny Deva that one can be a true devotee of Visnu by following his Varnadharma, "*Prabhu kahe para sloke sādhyer nirnay. Roy kahe Svadharmā carane viṣṇu bhakti hai*"[14].

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by Ambedkar that the caste system underline Hinduism gives birth to untouchability, oppression, discrimination etc.then same caste system prevailing in other societies also give birth to the same type of problems. Thus it can be shown that it is pointless for Ambedkar to leave Hinduism and embrace other religions."Of these, there is one set which finds nothing peculiar nor odious in the caste system of the Hindus. Such Hindus cite the case of Muslims, Sikhs and Christians and find comfort in the fact that they too have castes amongstthem"[15].

In reply to the above objection Ambedkar says that though it is true that the caste system can be traced in Muslims, Sikhs and Christians but the status of the caste system underlining them is not the same with the status of the caste system prevailing in Hindus. Ambedkar observes that the people living in an ideal society must be integrated each other with the sense of fellow-feeling. We know that there is no integration among different flowers existing on a plate. But when a garland is made out of those flowers with the help of athread then one flower becomes integrated with other flowers in terms of the thread. Here the thread acts as organic filaments as it is called by Carlyle which brings the disintegrating flowers together and united. In the same way the different individuals living in a society should be united and integrated like the different flowers constituting a garland. Though one individual is different from other individuals yet there must be a sense of oneness. They must feel that all of them are the very part and parcel of one and the same society. So the interest of the whole society is virtually the interest of each and every member living in the society. Naturally one individual will consider other individuals living in the same society as his brothers. This type of society is a family in the broader sense of the term. We know that in an ideal family there is no sense of inequality, there is no lack of liberty and fraternity. In other words, an ideal family all members are treated equally, all of them feel liberated and again there lies a sense of brotherhood among all of them. Now if an ideal society is like a big family then no doubt what is true in the case of a family must also be true in the case of an

ideal society. But in that sense Hindus cannot form an ideal society due to the caste system. It is because of the caste system that one individual cannot feel united with all other members of Hindu society. Here one member belonging to Brahmin caste feels akin to the other members belonging to the same caste but he never feels united with the members belonging to the other caste. Presence of the caste in Hindu society always stands in the way to construct an ideal society. There cannot be any organic filaments i.e. elastics threads to bring the different individuals together and constitute an organic whole. But in the case of Non-Hindus though there are castes, side by side there are also plenty of these organic filaments to bind them together.

Another important difference between the caste systems of Hindus and the caste system of Non-Hindus has been cited by Ambedkar. Ambedkar argues that so far as the social significations is concerned the caste system of the Hindus is different from the caste system of Non-Hindus. In this context Ambedkar says, "Ask Mohammedan or a Sikh, who he is? He tells you that he is a Mohammedan or a Sikh as the case may be. He does not tell you his caste although he has one and you are satisfied with his answer. When he tells you that he a Muslim, you do not proceed to ask him whether he is a *Shiya* or a *Sunni*; *Sheikh* or *Saiyad*; *Khatik* or *Pinjari*. When he tells you he is a Sikh, you do not ask him whether he is *Jāṭor Roda*; *Mazbi* or *Rāmdāsi.* But you are not satisfied, if a person tells you that he is a Hindu. You feel bound to inquire into his caste. Why? Because so essential is caste in the case of a Hindu that without knowing it you do not feel sure what sort of a being he is.[16]"

Ambedkar observes that there is also another fundamental difference between the caste system of the Hindus and the caste system of the Non-Hindus. The idea of ex-communication is an integral part of the caste system of Hinduism but the same idea is completely foreign to the caste system of Non-Hindus. "There may be castes among Sikhs and Mohammedan but the Sikhs and the Mohammedans will not outcast a Sikh or a

Mohammedan if he broke his caste. Indeed, the very idea of excommunication is foreign to the Sikhs and the Mohammedans. But with the Hindus the case is entirely different. He is sure to be outcaste if he broke caste.[17]"

Ambedkar points out another difference between the caste system of Hindus and that of the Non-Hindus which he considers to be of paramount importance. Ambedkar observes that the caste of the Non-Hindus has no religious consecration but the caste system of the Hindus most decidedly it has. Non-Hindus do not consider caste as a religious dogma. Non-Hindus do not consider observation of caste as a virtue. But the Hindus, on the other, regard observation of caste as a virtue. Breaking of caste among Hindus is not optional. If Hindus wish to break caste, their religion will come in their way. But the Religion of the Non-Hindus will not come in the way if some Non-Hindus like to break caste. "It is, therefore, a dangerous delusion to take comfort in the mere existence of caste among Non-Hindus, without caring to know what place caste occupies in their life and whether there are other" organic filaments", which subordinate the feeling of caste to the feeling of community. The sooner the Hindus are cured of this delusion the better.[18]"

References:

[1] B.R. Ambedkar: *Annihilation of caste*

[2.] Ibid,

[3] Ibid,

[4.] Rg Veda X90, 12

5. Rg Veda, 9th Rk, 112

[6.] *Śrimadbhagbad Gītā*, caturtha adhyāya, śloke 13

7. *Śrimadbhagbad Gītā*, **7/11/35**

[8.] *Mahābhārata*, Shantiparva, 188

[9] B.R. Ambedkar: *Annihilation of Caste*

[10] Ibid

[11] Ibid

[12] Ibid

[13] *Śrimadbhagbad Gītā*, tṛtīya adhyāya, śloke 35

[14] *Chaitannya Caritāmṛita*, madhyalīlā, aṣṭam pariccheda, p. 213

[15] B.R. Ambedkar: *Annihilation of Caste*

[16] Ibid

[17] Ibid

[18] Ibid