

AMBEDKAR'S CRITIQUE ON HINDUISM

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Submitted by

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Abstract

My whole work consists of five chapters. The first chapter is introduction. This chapter of introduction deals with the history of the life of Dr. B.R.Ambedkar in brief. Besides this here the mission of his life has been depicted. The second chapter entitled “*Varṇāśrama* system in Hinduism” draws a picture of the genesis, development and the purpose of *varṇa vyavasthā* underlying Hinduism. This chapter also deals with the distinction between the *varṇa vyavasthā* and *jāti vyavasthā*. Here a very brief observation has been made regarding whether *jātibheda* is the result of *varṇabheda* or not. Here an attempt has been made to show whether *varṇa vyavasthā* is an essence and the integral aspects of Hinduism, as it is observed by Ambedkar and Gandhiji. The third chapter entitled “Social Problem Centered around *Varṇāśrama Dharma*” describes what types of problems are brought about by caste system as it is pointed out by Ambedkar. In this context the controversy between Ambedkar and Gandhiji regarding the status of *varṇa* and *jāti* and also the relationship between them have been dealt with. Subsequently the view of Ambedkar has been substantiated by refuting the view of Gandhiji. The fourth chapter gives the description of the salient features of Neo-Buddhism. Along with the difference between the Neo Buddhism and the traditional Buddhism. This chapter further elaborates about how Neo Buddhism helps to construct a casteless ideal society based on the three pillars of equality liberty and fraternity. Subsequently an observation has been made that all the 22 Vows to be taken by a Neo Buddhist as it is suggested by Ambedkar are not essential. Some of the Vows are superfluous and redundant as they are nothing but the repetitions. In the last chapter a number of personal observations have made about the whole work. This chapter, infact exclusively is the result of my personal reflection all over the issues dealt with my thesis.

PREFACE

Dr. Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born on 14th April, 1891 as a fourteenth child in a low *Mahar* caste family. Ambedkar is faced the stigma of caste discrimination and humiliation by the upper class people in Hindu society. By the upper class people of Hindu society was treated his family and the section of whole *Mahar* community as untouchable. This fact of hatred also prompted him to refuse taking oath by touching Gita, the sacred book of Hindu religion. He did not even see eye to eye with M. K. Gandhi, the champion of Harijan. Ambedkar always opposed to Hinduism as well as the *Varna* system, because the *Varna* system was a symbol of inequality, crucially and injustice also. Ambedkar holds that the “*Cāturvarṇa*” is the root cause of all sufferings in our society. But the defenders to this theory of Ambedkar castigates the view by asserting that the four fold classification of varna has been introduced in the Hindu sastra and even by God himself as we know referring to *Bhāgavat Gītā*. The defenders argued that as the different organ of our human body work as an entity so is in it. But Ambedkar estimates this view as a bad analogy since each organ of the human body is assigned different functions so is the different *varṇas* and one is held inferior to other that leads to social injustice and sufferings. But the propagators of *varṇa vyavasthā* validate that fourfold division of people is made on the basis of inherent nature that is *guna* and karma. So, Ambedkar’s objection is null.

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Chapter-I

Introduction

Dr. Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born on 14th April, 1891 as a fourteenth child in a low *Mahar* caste family. He was a distinguished social reformer, a remarkable ethical thinker and political philosopher. He had been fighting till his last breath to uproot all sorts of social evils such as untouchability, exploitation, oppression and so on. He was dreaming of establishing a society based on equality, liberty and fraternity. Initially he was sincerely trying to set up such as a society within the parameter of Hindu religion. So he learnt Sanskrit very carefully and went through the *Vedas*, the *Upanishad*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Gītā* and the other fundamental books on Hindu religion and come to the conclusion that it is absolutely impossible to establish a *Samatā Samāj*, in his own language, within the per view of Hindu religion. Consequently, on 14th October 1956, Ambedkar converted to Buddhism to fulfill his dream.

Ambedkar with other millions of Untouchables gathered so many inhuman bitter experiences in their lives. Ambedkar, in his school days was not allowed to sit on the same bench with his classmates. He was not even permitted to use the blackboard. None of the untouchables had the right write to drink water from public wells and tube wells. They had been debarred from using water from public ponds. Their right to enter into the temples also had been vested. The untouchables had to bear a jar hanging from their necks to spite and also they had to carry brooms hanging from their backside up to the level of the soil to clean the dust of their legs. Ambedkar become fed up with these inhuman and brutal behaviors of the Hindu society. He believed in Hinduism. Generally he used to think that all human beings are equal. So equality should be the basis of an ideal human society. From a society which is based on equality the other two qualities, i.e. liberty and fraternity automatically follow. If all

members of a society are equally treated then they are brother like each other, and all of them must be free. Thus in a society like this, there cannot be any social evils in question. But Ambedkar observed that to set up such an ideal society within the platform of Hinduism is logically inconceivable. He maintained that *Varṇāśrama dharma* is an integral part of Hinduism. But *Varṇāśrama dharma* means “a social order of graded inequality”. Where there is inequality there can’t be equality, the basis of ideal society. Therefore, the ideal society of which Ambedkar himself was dreaming is not possible to establish at least in Hinduism. So he declared in 1935 “*I have born as a Hindu but I don’t like to die as a Hindu*”¹. In this year Ambedkar took the final decision to leave Hinduism. But he took long time, more than twenty years to decide to which religion he should be converted. And ultimately he considered Buddhism to be the best one to fulfill his dream. On 14th October 1956, Ambedkar with his numberless followers converted to Buddhism.

Ambedkar cannot accept the concept of an ideal society proposed in Hinduism. Now let us see that what is an ideal society according to Hinduism? If we have logical analysis about the different Hindu *Śāstras* then we can find out a clear picture about the ideal society depicted in Hinduism. First of all the ideal society according to Hinduism is not created by human beings themselves rather, it is created by God even the very constitution of that society is also already made by God. Here in the ideal society of Hinduism God is all in all. Man infact is nothing but the doll in the hands of God. The people of the whole society have been classified into four *Varṇas* and this classification is again made by God Himself. The activities to be performed by the different *Varṇas* have also been prescribed by God. There is no room for the choice and freedom of the people living in that society. The most adverse aspect of this society is the graded inequality underlying the people living in that society through the *Varṇa* system the position as the status of some persons are made high and the positions and status of some persons have been made low. This inequality in question gives

birth to so many social problems through the *Varṇa* system the status of some of the people have been reduced to zero they do not have their minimum dignity. They have been looked upon as untouchables these people are considered inferior even to the animal like cow and dog. The cows and the dogs are not untouchables. They have their rights to enter into the temples, they have the rights to drink from public ponds but those untouchable inferior people do not have those rights. They are not allowed to enter into the temples, they are not allowed to drink and take their birth in public ponds. In a word in the true sense of the term they are not human beings; at best they can be attributed as sub humans. This inequality established through the instrumentality of *Varṇas Vyavasthā* robs the liberty and fraternity of the particular section of people called downtrodden. The whole thing greatly shocked Ambedkar. Ambedkar himself along with his fellow *Mahars* went through from the very childhood different types of inhuman behaviors and humiliations from the people belonging to the higher *Varṇas*. Ambedkar was exceptionally brilliant and highly interested in education. All the bitter experiences he gathered from his childhood lead him to take a Vow to make all these untouchables to free from the thralldom of the inhuman Hindu Society. But he knew that his dream can be turned in to reality only through proper education. Keeping this view in mind he became highly devoted to his study. One day he went abroad took the highest degree from their why he was leaving in abroad. He saw that there in western countries all people are treated equally; there is no room for high and low, superior or inferior. Ambedkar got the test of what is called a human being; he realized what is called dignity of a human being. Ultimately after finishing his study he come to his pavilion and run through the same type of inhuman experiences like that of his earlier life. He got a service but his subordinates did not give him his due respect. From then onward Ambedkar started sincerely to look for the proper answer to the problem he and his fellow Mahar suffered from. After a long endeavor he discovered his answer in Buddhism. He saw that Buddhism is a

religion which can give birth to an ideal society he was searching for. Ambedkar observed that the ideal society called *Samatā Samāḥ* must be based on the three pillars of equality, liberty and fraternity. In Buddhism each and every human being is looked upon as equal. Consequently, the Buddhists society is based on equality. From equality automatically the liberty and the fraternity followed. As in Buddhism all human beings are equal one shows love and respect towards the other. Consequently of bond of friendship or brotherhood prevails among the individuals leaving in Buddhism.

The Buddhist concept of man and society was really based on humanism in the sense that it brought man into focus, the man who was in suffering, and asked his fellow –beings to guide him in order that he could minimize his suffering by his own efforts. The Buddhists concept did not go into the mystery of man’s origin and his relationship with the supernatural. It saw him only in a social situation, which could be either good or bad according to the Kushal-Karmas or Akushal-Karmas, good or bad Karmas of man himself. Society, in Buddhism, is not divinely created; it is the result of fellow human beings. It cannot be divided into water-tight compartments. It is based and sustained on the principles of *Karunā* and *Maitri*, that is, love and friendship. Without these human sentiments neither man nor society can exist and continue for a long time. The Buddhist concept of man and society is completely autonomous, and its autonomy is maintained, not by any external and supernatural force, but by man’s karmas alone. The Sheel-Sampada the property of righteous conduct based on moral precepts is the real treasure-house of the Buddhist view of life.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in his book ‘*Annihilation of caste*’ says that there is a set of reformers who holds out a different ideal. They go by the name of *Ārya Samāḥjists*. The *Ārya Samāḥjists* in order to construct an ideal society propose to bring the four thousands caste of Hindu society under the banner of four classes called as *Cāturvarṇa*. One point is important to note here that they advise to make this four-fold division of *Varna* on the basis of *guṇa*

(worth) but not on birth. Most of the people, I think, will certify this idea. No social reformer in true sense of the term accepts caste system which gives birth to a number of social evils. *Ārya Samājists* through the introduction of *Cāturvarṇa* suggest to annihilate the caste system. So the idea is excellent. But Ambedkar does not agree with the *Ārya Samājists*.

In the ‘*Annihilation of caste*’, Ambedkar says nothing about the merits of the view proposed by the *Ārya Samājists*. Even he does not mention any name of any person belonging to the *Ārya Samājists*. I think the name of Mahatma Gandhi can be brought under the umbrella of the *Ārya Samājists*. Because, Gandhiji repeatedly argues for the restoration of the *Varṇa Vyavasthā* in our society as it is advised by the different *Śāstras* of Hindu religion. Gandhiji says of the merits of the *Varṇa Vyavasthā* in different occasions. So I think the merits of the view of the *Ārya Samājists* can be shown following what is said by Gandhiji in this regard. Gandhiji says that caste system can’t be accepted. It is harmful both to spiritual and national growth. *Varṇa* and *Āsrāma* are institutions but caste is a custom. *Varṇa* and *Āsrāma* have nothing to do with caste. The division of caste is based on birth but the division of *Varṇa* is based on worth. So the question of confusing one for the other does not arise. There is nothing wrong in the *Varṇa* system, it is full of merits. The law of *Varṇa* teaches us to follow the calling of our ancestors which is conducive to the welfare of the humanity as a whole. It defines our duties but not our rights. He further says that no calling is high and low. All of them are good, lawful and absolutely equal in status. The calling of a Brahmin and the calling of a scavenger are equal and their due performance carries equal merit before God. Both are entitled to their livelihood and no more. Ascription of superior status by and of the *Varṇa* over another is a violation of the law. Gandhiji categorically says that law of *Varṇa* does warrant a belief in untouchability.

The view of the *Ārya Samājists* has been vehemently criticized by Ambedkar. He produces a number of arguments against their views.

Firstly: Ambedkar says that there is no justification behind labeling man as *Brāhmin*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra*. A learned man would be honored without his being labeled a Brahmin. Likewise a soldier would be respected for his devotion to the country without his being designated a *Kṣatriya*. In European society, he says soldiers and other servants are being honored properly without giving them permanent labels. It should be equally true in our society. So it is useless to distinguish the people into four-folds by labeling as *Brahmin*, *Kṣatriya* etc.

Secondly: The names like Brahmin, *Kṣatriya* etc pose so many problems because they are associated with the notions of hierarchy. Therefore as long as these names will be associated with the different classes, Hindus will continue to think of them as hierarchical division of high and low based on birth and behave with them accordingly. So the attempt to reform the Hindu society following the way prescribed by the *Ārya Samājists* must be futile.

Thirdly: *Cāturvarṇa*, Ambedkar opines, is highly impracticable, harmful and has turned to be a miserable failure. It is quite impossible to compel people who have gained a higher status based on birth without reference to their worth to vacate that status. It is equally impossible to compel people to recognize the status due to a man in accordance with his worth, who is getting a lower status based on his birth.

Forthly: Ambedkar holds that to establish the Varna system in our society what is necessary first is to break up the caste system and subsequently to reduce all the people of four thousand castes based on birth to the four *Varṇas* based on worth. Both of them are highly problematic. What is said by Ambedkar is confirmed by the fact the original four classes introduced in the Vedic period have now turned into four thousand castes.

Fifthly: Ambedkar points out of another problem in the way of the establishment of the system *Cāturvarṇa*. If it is taken for granted for the sake of argument that *Cāturvarṇa* is

established then positively problems will crop up regarding the maintenance of the system. This system must face the problem of the transgressor. That is why in order check this problem, penalty system of the death may be induced in our society. The supporter of *Cāturvarṇa* does not think of it.

Sixthly: Ambedkar says of another problem the protagonist of *Cāturvarṇa* must grapple with. In this system a problem will arise regarding the status of women. Are the women to be brought under the banner of four-fold classes? Or are they to be allowed to take the status of their husbands? In either case the problem inevitably crops up. In the former case we have to accept women priest and women soldiers. In the later case of *Varṇa* be violated as the division is not based on the worth of the women.

Seventhly: Assuming that *Cāturvarṇa* is practicable another important problem arises. In the system of *Cāturvarṇa*, *Śūdra* is looked upon as the ward and the three *Varṇas* as his guardians. But who is to safe guard the interests of the *Śūdras* if they are cheated by their guardians. Ambedkar says that inter-dependants of one class an another is inevitable in the system of *Cāturvarṇa*. He further maintains that in some cases inter-dependence may be allowed. But inter-dependence of one class upon another in the case of vital needs like education, defense and foods is not fair and good.

Eighthly: Ambedkar says that the society proposed by the *Ārya Samājists* can't be ideal has already been proved. *Cāturvarṇa* is not new. It is as old as the *Vedas*. From the past it is seen that the clash among the different *Varṇas* had been a common phenomena. Several times *Brāhmins* annihilated the seed of the *Kṣatriyas* and vice-versa. The *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* are full of incidence of the strived between the *Brāhmins* and *Kṣatriyas*. So keeping everything in view to propose to for establishing *Cāturvarṇa* is no doubt a foolish choice.

As far as my observation goes some arguments may be produced in favour of the views of *Ārya samājists* if a hairsplitting analysis is made then it can be understood that *Cāturvarṇa* actually is nothing but the division of labour. Division of labour in the name of *Cāturvarṇa* helps to increase the production in each and every aspect of society and thereby it helps to develop and enrich a society. This division of labour through the exercise of *Cāturvarṇa* ensures the development and wellbeing of the society because the division is made on the basis of worth i.e. the natural aptitude and capacity of the person concerned. If, for example, a person is highly intelligent then it is very natural that he will make a grand success in the field of education. Likewise if a man is stout and strong in the physical side and brave in mental side then it is quite natural that he will be a good soldier. In that case society will get back a healthy return from both of them. Thus it is shown that the idea of *Ārya Samājists* is praise-worthy.

But if a careful scrutiny is made on the *Cāturvarṇa* prevailing in our society then it can be seen that the case is not as it appears to be. So far as the division of the labour the in the name of *Cāturvarṇa* in the Hindu society is concerned the division, infact, is based on birth not on worth as it is claimed. As a result that division is not as per as the capacity and the natural aptitude. But the division of the labour seen in European countries is based on worth in the true sense of the term but not on birth. So I think that the observation of Ambedkar is right. The concept of *Cāturvarṇa* makes a hindrance in the way of its objective. Our observation can be substantiated by what is said by Gandhiji. Gandhiji says that *Varṇa Vyavasthā* teaches us to follow the callings of our forefathers for our livelihood. What does it mean? It means that the profession of us is not determined by our choice and worth rather it determined by our birth. If one follows the calling of one's forefathers then thereby he does not follow the calling determined by his worth. Thus it is seen that the concept of *Cāturvarṇa* is self defeating and therefore dangerous. This self defeating nature of *Cāturvarṇa* has been

well understood by Ambedkar and most of the objections raised by Ambedkar against *Cāturvarṇa* are unanswerable.

Some of the followers of Hinduism tried the best to substantiate the view that Hindu society is the best one. And as the Hindu Society is based on *Varṇa Vyavasthā* they tried to show that there is nothing wrong in it. In this regard we come across some of the fundamental views which support Hinduism. Here I like to deal with the views providing by the ArjyaSamajists. I shall discuss the arguments produced by *Ārjya Samājists* in favour of Hindu society and *Cāturvarṇa*. Subsequently I shall also deal with the arguments given by Ambedkar in order to counter the views of the *Ārjya Samajists*.

Reference:

1. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, '*The Annihilation of Caste*'

Chapter-II

Hinduism and *Varṇāśrama Dharma*

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 received from his very childhood to the days of maturity from a section of Hindus, the *Brāhmin* in particular. Ambedkar is faced the stigma of caste discrimination and humiliation by the upper class people in Hindu society. The whole *Mahar* 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 *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 opposed 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”ⁱ. He further said that, ‘this *Varṇa* system is impracticable, harmful and has turned out to be a miserable failure’ⁱⁱ. 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 believe that, “it is impossible accurately classify the people into four definite classes” and that “the original four classes have now become four thousand caste”ⁱⁱⁱ .

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

In reply to the above mentioned question, we need to examine the exact meaning of *varṇa-vyavasthā*. Actually the word *varṇa* is a Sanskrit term which derived from the root word *vr̥* and the meaning of *vr̥* is “to cover, to envelop”. Generally *Varṇa* means color like white, red etc. But metaphorically *varṇa* means to *guṇas*. Here *guṇas* stand for *svatta*, *rajaḥ* and *tamaḥ*. The *varṇa* system of Hindu society is described in the religious texts i.e. *Vedas*, *Purāṇas*, *Smrities* etc. It was first described in the *Puruṣa sukta* of the *Rk-vedas* 1090. In *Rk-veda*, initially *Varṇa* is divided into two classes i.e. *Āryas* and *Dāsa*. But in later *Rk-vedas* pursa-sukta, *varṇa* was divided into four social classes; *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra*. To substantiate this view the following critique a *Rk-* from *Rg-vedas*, can be cited-

“*Brāhmaṇo śya mukhamāsīt vāhu rājanyakah kṛteh, ūru*

Tadasya yat vaiśya padābhyām Śūdrojāyata”.^{iv}

Here the *Rk-vedas* refers to four Principal *Varṇa s* which are compared to the body of the ‘primordial man or *Puruṣa*; *Brahmaṇa*’ 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 *Varṇa-bheda* is not traceable in ancient Vedic era. It is to be said that *Varṇa-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 in 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 engaged in sacrificial ceremony. Even the men of one and the same 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”^v

Here the above mentioned example clearly stated 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 *Aitareya* (1/16, 2/17, 2/19), *Chāndogya* (5/4) and *Satapathabrāhmaṇa* (32/1).

Now let us discuss about *Āsrama dharma* which also played 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* like *Varṇa* 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 *guṇa* and *Karma* taken into consideration. SriKriṣṇa says- *Cāturvarṇam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa karma vibhāgasya*.^{vi} 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 *Śāmkhyakārikā*, it is stated that, *Prakṛiti* 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 Upaniṣad*, 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 *Sattvādiguṇas*. 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* produces pain and *tamaḥ* produces indifference.

Now let us deal with *karma-bheda*, the *karma* is another determining factor for the division of *Varna*. In *Varṇa Vyavasthā*, there 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 *Karma* 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 well were being 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*. Maharsi Bhṛgu empathically declared that *varṇa* is to be determined by *guṇas* and *karma* but not by birth. In *Umā- Maheswara Sambada*, 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 red. His senses (*jitendriya*) and has attained the 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 yājanam 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

“*Prajānam rakṣanam 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) says the works of *Vaiśyas* as

Pashūnām rakṣanam 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 *guṇa* 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. So 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 Bhāgavad Gītā*, it is stated clearly that-

“*Yasya yat laksanami proktani pumso Varṇa bhi Vyanjakani*

Yat anyatrapi drsyeta tatteniva vinirdibed.”^{vii}

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 than 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 *guṇa* 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 takes these qualities then he is not *Brahman* proper, but really a

Śūdra. In *Śāntiparva*, Maharsi Bhrgu narrates to Bharadwaja regarding the origin of *Varṇa bheda*: “*Ityetaih Karmabhiryasta dwija Varṇa ntaram gatah*”^{viii}. The famous utterance in *Bhakti Śāstras*, ‘*Condalopi dwijasrestha Haribhakti-parayanah*’ 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* Ambedkar 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*. Besides this the number of *varṇa* is four but the *Jāti*’s are more than four thousands in number. Some other differences can be painted 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 an integral part either of Hindu drama 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? The different opinions have been proposed by different thinkers as the answer to the above question. Some of the thinkers are of opinion that *Jātibheda* in fact is nothing but the inevitable corollary of the *Varṇabheda*. Thus according to this view *Jātibheda* is the effect and the *Varṇabheda* cause of it this view has been supported by Ambedkar himself along with some of other thinkers. Ambedkar says the four *Varṇas* subsequently have been bifurcated into four thousands

caste. But there are some other thinkers who do not agree with Ambedkar on this issue they observe that there is no causal connection between the *VarṇaVyavasthā* and the *Jāti vyavasthā*. *Jātivyavasthā* is purely a different concept. Gandhiji accepts this view among some other prominent thinkers. Gandhiji here says *Jātivyavasthā* is nothing but a custom though he frankly admits that he does not know 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 *Jātis* can be reduced to only four *Varṇas* this is no doubt a great problem. But so far as my knowledge is concerned, no light of solution has been suggested by Gandhiji. But here a very remarkable observation has been made by Ambedkar the suggestion proposed by Gandhiji regarding the annihilation of *Jati* (caste). Ambedkar observed that though Gandhiji apparently proposes for annihilation of the caste but in reality his proposal has nothing to do with removing the *Jati* (caste) rather it confirms the root of *Jati*. Gandhiji maintains that there is nothing wrong in *Varaṇa Vyavasthā*. It plays a positive role in making our society developed in different ways. *Varṇa Vyavasthā* plays a positive role. According to Gandhiji another name of *Varṇabheda* is nothing but *karmabheda*. *Karmabheda* helps one to attain special skills which in turn help to make our society sound. Besides the *Varṇabheda* 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 admitted but the *Varṇa Vyavasthā* should be preserved. But here Ambedkar argues

that Gandhiji in fact proposed to preserve *Jāti Vyavasthā* in the name of *Varṇa Vyavasthā*. He never says to preserve *Varṇa Vyavasthā* in our society. If we have a also explanation then we can see that in fact 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 observe 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 *Varṇabheda*. Later on Gandhiji categorically says that determining principle of *Varṇabheda* must be birth otherwise it will lose its meaning. We have already discuss previous that the determining principle of *Jātibheda* is birth. This determining principle that is the *guṇa* and *karma* of *Varṇabheda* has been replaced by birth, the determining principle of *Jāti* by Gandhiji. This clearly implies 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*. 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.

I think we should focus upon another issue which is lightly relevant here. What is the place of *Varṇabheda* in Hindu religion? It is ensure and therefore an integral part of Hinduism or an accident property of the same? I think different scholars have different opinions and this issue again. So far as the observations of Gandhiji as well as of Ambedkar are concerned *Varṇa Vyavasthā* is an ensure an integral part of Hinduism. Gandhiji have says *Varṇa Vyavasthā* is as essential as the fire and air in our life. The 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 the untouchability and *Jātibheda* come from *Varṇabheda*.

But the *Varṇabheda* is directly maintained by Hindu religion itself. Thus, it is seen that the root cause of untouchability and *Jātibheda* is the Hindu religion itself. So if we are to annihilate the untouchability and *Jātibheda* then we must have to discard 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 an integral aspect of Hindu religion. Had the *Varṇa Vyavasthā* not been an essence an 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 *Mahars* 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 thus 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 their observation can be sustained to be true if we go to *ŚrimadBhāgavad Gīta*. Srikrīṣṇa says Arjuna, “*Svadharmā nidhanam śreya paradharma bhayabāha*”^{ix}. Here ‘*Svadharmā*’ stands for *varṇadharmā*. Srikrīṣṇa has given so superior importance upon following the *varṇadharmā* that he says its is batter to die by following *varṇadharmā* meant for others as it gives birth to dangerous consequence. Keeping this in view Srikrīṣṇa emphatically advise Arjuna to follow his *varṇadharmā* and fight against Kourava. The same view more or less has been given by *Chaitanya Caritāmṛita*. In *Chaitanya Caritāmṛita* we comes across and occasion where Mahāprabhu wants to know

from Rāmānanda the way leading to our ultimate goal. Roy Rāmānanda says to Mahāprabhu Sri Chaitanya Deva that one can be a true devotee of Viṣṇu by following his *varṇadharmā*.

Reference

¹ B.R.Ambedkar, *Annihilation of caste*, (XVI), P-42, 1944

² Ibid, P-42

³ Ibid, P-42

⁴ Rig Veda X90, 12

⁵ Rig Veda, 9th Rk, 112)

⁶. *Srimad Bhagbad Gita*, 4/13

⁷. *Gītā*, **7/11/35**)

⁸. *Mahābhārata*, Shantiparva, 188

⁹. *Srimad Bhāgbad Gita*, 4/13

CHAPTER - III

Social Evils centered around *Varṇāshrama Dharma*

In the Annihilation of caste, I think, all the criticisms of Ambedkar against caste system are nothing but the criticism against the *Varṇa Vyavasthā* in Hinduism. And he beautifully shows that all the social problems have come from this *Varṇa* system. But on the other side, we can see that the supporters of *Varṇa Vyavasthā* mainly Gandhiji claims that the problems are coming from caste system, but not from *Varṇa-Vyavasthā*. Ambedkar observes that *Varṇa-Vyavasthā* gives birth to caste system. But Gandhiji claims that *Varṇa-Vyavasthā* has nothing to do with caste. Caste according to him is a custom whose origin he does not know and does not need to know for the satisfaction of his spiritual hunger. The law of *Varṇa* teaches us that we have each one of us to earn our bread by following the ancestral calling. According to Gandhiji, in *Varṇa* system there is calling too low and none too high, all are good, lawful absolutely equal in status. So, all the social problems in our society like untouchability, exploitation etc. comes from caste system which is based on birth but not from the *Varṇa-Vyavasthā* which is based on *guṇa* and *karma*.

On the basis of above discussion one may easily conclude that the concept of Ambedkar about *varṇa-vyavasthā* is something wrong. So, Ambedkar's objection against *Varṇa -Vyavasthā* is not justified. But I think that Ambedkar does not commit any mistake here. He rightly observes though caste and *Varṇa* are different so far as their definitions are concerned but they are not different at all so far as their practice in our society is concerned.

Now I would like to mention the following objections against caste or *Varṇa* system which is raised by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar one by one.

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1. In “*Annihilation of Caste*” Ambedkar says that caste is the monster that crosses the path of political and economic reform in India. Because, our society is not a free society. Here all the people are divided into four classes. As a result people belonging to higher caste or *Varṇa* enjoy some vested interest; consequently they are not interested in belong any reform in society.
 2. Ambedkar says that even today there are some persons who support caste system. The supporters of caste system argue that there is nothing wrong with the caste system because it is not the division of laborer but the division of labor which is supported by any society. But Ambedkar says that the caste system is not merely the division of labor, it is also the division of laborers. According to him, this division of labor again is not spontaneous because it is not based on the natural aptitudes. He says that an individual should choose and make his own career on the basis of his original capacities. But the caste system is not maintained these principles.
 3. Some Biological defenders are of the view that caste is to preserve the purity of blood and race. But Ambedkar also rejects this argument. He thinks that in this field the observation of anthropologists is wrong to note. But they are saying that there is race and blood which pure.
 4. Some supporters of the *Cāturvarṇa* known as Arjya Samajists are to take his place in Hindu Society according to his worth. They suggest that all problems are the problems of caste, but not of *Varṇa*. So caste should be annihilated not the *Varṇa*. Four thousands of caste should be replaced only by four varnas – Brahman, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Śūdra*. But Ambedkar says why the Arjya Samajists insists upon labeling men as *Brahman*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Śūdra*. A learned person would be honored without his being labeled a Brahmin. A soldier would be

respected without his being designated a *Kshatriya*. If European society honors its soldiers and servants without giving them permanent labels. It should also equally be maintained in Hindu society. So the question is that why Hindu society do not maintain this? The supporters of *Cāturvarṇa* do not consider this.

5. Caste system is derogatory for our society because it is demoralized the whole Hindu society. It has been spoiled the public spirit and destroyed the sense of public charity. An individual's responsibility is only to his caste. This virtue has become caste ridden and morality has become caste bound. There is charity but it begins with the caste and ends with caste. There is sympathy but not for men of other caste. All this matter is created the problem and this problem is highly affected to our society.
6. According to Ambedkar, caste prevents Hindus from forming a real society or nation. In fact, the name Hindu is itself a foreign name. It was given by the Mohamedans. It does not occur in any Sanskrit work prior to the Mohammedans invention. The people of caste system had no any concept of their having constituted a community and have no feeling of other caste. Here Ambedkar mentioned that why the Hindus are coward but Muslims and Sikh are brave? It is not due to their physical weakness. It is due to the lack of organization or feeling of unity. A Sikh thinks that he may be one but he is not alone. The same thing can be said in the caste of Muslims. But a Hindu knows that he was one and alone because, if a Hindu was in danger then no Hindu will come to save him but in the caste of Sikh and Muslims, another person of their community must be come to save them. So, that is why Ambedkar told that caste in Hinduism is dangerous for forming a real society or nation.

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7. Ambedkar also observed that an anti-social spirit is the worst features of caste system in Hinduism. This anti-social spirit is not confined to caste alone. It has gone deeper and has poisoned the mutual relations of the sub castes as well.
 8. Ambedkar opines that in unifying society or nation caste prevents a bar. Caste has not been proved fruitful for the race rather it has completely disorganized and demoralized the Hindus. It must be taken into consideration that the Hindus which is the assimilation of different caste and whose name had been given by the Mohamadans had no earlier extinction of a federation and surprisingly there feeling of unification is roused whenever there is a Hindu Muslim riot.

He also thinks that the Hindus which is an aware of consciousness of forming nation by inter-caste marriages live with the pre-conception of residing within the territory of same caste. Moreover, the caste system among different Hindu section compel them to live within the periphery of beliefs, customs and thoughts and therefore they never share the emotions that is cultivated by participating in common activity of different castes of Hindus that ultimately led them to form a perfect society or nation by itself.

9. According to Ambedkar, one of the most distinguishing curses of caste system of Hinduism is keeping adherence towards different sub-castes of one own main caste. That is how the Brahmins want to protect their own caste interest forgetting the respect to other Hindu caste and vice versa. In this way an anti-social mood is roused in following strict conviction and deep-rooted culture. This is not only applicable in the case of present day example but this is heralded down the generations since no caste wants to forget the infamy caste upon their forefathers by the forefathers of the others.

10. Ambedkar also feels that one of the darkest aspects of the caste system prevailing in Hinduism has led them to keep the down-trodden classes of Hindus in the everlasting dungeon of darkness. The upper class of the Hindu society have put a stigma on the aboriginal tribes and have never felt the need of modifying or civilizing even the Hindu Vedic Scriptures, citing from the epic Mahabharata shows that Dronacharya, the royal preceptor to the Kouravas, Pandavas and incarnation of Brahma refused to accept Eklavya only on the pretext that he belonged to the Nishadha, a confederation of jungle tribes of ancient India. Though we have seen the Muslims and Christians have been deliberately trying to modify and uplift their low-caste through fear and kindness. It is to be noted that this so-called savage classes of the Hindus if pampered and converted to other religion would turn into the enemy of his own race. So, this is the worst curse of the caste system in Hinduism.

11. Ambedkar has also established that the upper classes of the Hindu society have been deliberately pushing forward the people belonging to lower class to rise their status and be as per with the upper class. He also exemplified that two so-called lower class in Maharashtra namely the Sonars and the Pathare Prabhus who had desired to raise their social status by following the habits and ways of the Brahmins were scorned by the contemporary masters of Brahmins class who by means of their diplomacy over the *Pashwas* had prevented the *Sonars* or *Pathare Prabhus* to gain their social importance whether by means of wearing "Dhotis" in Brahmin style or by denouncing the widow-remarriage. In this regard Ambedkar held the opinion if the *Mohamadans* has been cruel in uplifting their down-trodden by means of sword to follow one culture and one way of living or the

Christians whose goal is to spread one culture even by conversion; the Hindu has been mean and cruel because they have been trampling over their fraternity.

12. It has been a controversial question whether Hindu religion has been missionary.

Dr. Ambedkar held the view that definitely the Hindu religion had been missionary before the caste system grew up converting a people from other religion his placement in particular caste is a matter in question since no caste in Hindu religion allows people belonging to other caste to make an admission into his own caste. He further viewed that so long the caste system prevails people will fail to accept new one in his caste and therefore Hindu religion cannot be turn into a missionary religion. Thus he nullified the claim of the supporters of *Cāturvarṇa* that the upliftment of *Varṇa* could accomplished by worth since it is predefined by birth. In this regard Ambedkar objected that Hindu is not at all a missionary one.

13. Ambedkar showed that the existence of caste system in Hinduism has made an individual Hindu to feel miserable or unprotected since the barrier of caste system has made him feel helpless whenever he is in danger his entire community will extend their full support and protection. Therefore, the caste barrier has made a Hindu divided of mutual help, trust and fellow-feeling. Moreover, a Hindu is also weak because he lacks the moral strength to oppose and also remains indifferent to oppose.

Dr. B.R.Ambedkar, a renounced social reformer and the father of Indian constitution, who sacrificed his whole life to ensure the wellbeing of the whole society in general and the downtrodden people in particular. Ambedkar was invited by the Jat-Pal-Todak Mandal, an organization of caste Hindu social reformers of Panjab to preside over its Annual Conference which was to be held at Lahore, the headquarters of the Mandal, in 1936. It is important to

note that the one and the only aim of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal, as it is understood by Ambedkar, was to annihilate the Caste System from amongst the Hindus. Ambedkar prepared a long, informative scholarly and thought provoking presidential address. The members of the reception committee of the Mandal went through the speech and came to the conclusion that though the speech as a whole is worthy of being highly certified but some of the passages are detrimental to the purpose of the Mandal. So, Har Bhagwan, on behalf of the Mandal, requested Ambedkar to drop those passages from the speech he prepared to deliver from the presidential chair. But Ambedkar declined to drop even the comma and the semi colon from his speech. As a result the conference was declared postponed since die. Ambedkar thought that owing to the cancellation of the conference people were deprived of the opportunity to know the views of him on the problems imposed by the Caste System in our society. Long before the cancellation of the conference the presidential address prepared by Ambedkar had been printed and the copies of the same were lying on his hand. Therefore, Ambedkar decided to put the printed copies in the market so that people can avail the opportunity to know his views. Like many others Mahatma Gandhi himself also went through the printed presidential address prepared by Ambedkar and came to know the following important views of Ambedkar :-

Firstly, Ambedkar observed that most of the problems our society suffers from like untouchability, starvation, disintegrity, degradation of morality, oppression etc. are nothing but the corollary of the caste system. This caste system, in turn, is the result of the Varṇa Vyavasthā. Varṇa Vyavasthā is directly sanctioned by Hindu Scriptures. So, it can be said that caste system too is indirectly sanctioned by the Hindu Scriptures. As the caste system has ultimately been sanctioned by the Hindu Śāstras, it cannot be eradicated without discarding the authority of the Hindu Śāstras. In this context it is worthy to note that according to

Ambedkar, untouchability also cannot be brushed away without denying the authority of the same as it is an unavoidable corollary of the caste system. Ambedkar held that the Hindus observe caste and untouchability not because they are inhuman but because they are deeply religious. Inhuman behavior of the Hindus are the result of their firm faith inculcated upon their minds by the *Śāstras* so they will change their attitude and conduct when they will cease to believe in the authority and sanctity of the *Śāstras*. In this context Ambedkar very beautifully says, “Make every man and woman free from the thrall of the *Śāstras*, and he or she will inter-dine and inter-marry, without your telling him or her to do so”^{ix}. So, Ambedkar thought that in observing caste and untouchability the Hindus are not wrong, what is really wrong is nothing but the Hindu religion itself, which is the root cause of all the major problems of Hindu society. So, our society can be made cure from the disease only through the destruction of the faith of the people upon the sanctity and authority of the *Śāstras*.

After reading the presidential address prepared by Ambedkar Gandhiji had a close examination of the same and came to the conclusion that each and every reformer needs to go through his address to be benefited. But at the same time he also printed-out that it is important to go through his address not because it is not open to objection, but simply because it is open to serious objection. Gandhiji nicely presented the objections in the following way:

First, Gandhiji said that the texts which Ambedkar quotes to stand his own position mentioned in his address are not authentic and original. So, his position cannot be accepted to be true.

Secondly, to realize the spirit of Hindu religion as well as to understand the actual import of it what is necessary is to interpret its *Śāstras* accurately. But Gandhiji says that the

learned persons are not the right persons to interpret the Śāstras, the right persons to interpret them are only the Saints and Sages. So far as the interpretation and understanding of the Saints and Sages go there is no room for caste and untouchability in Hinduism. Ambedkar is a learned person no doubt, but he is not a Saint. Consequently, his interpretation and understanding of the Hindu Sastras cannot be proper. Gandhiji himself observed that infact Hindu religion has nothing to do with the caste and untouchability. Caste, Gandhiji said, is nothing but a custom, but he frankly admitted that he is fully ignorant of its origin. Gandhiji further pointed out that our religion has the room for *Varṇas* and *Āśramas* but they have nothing to do with the caste and untouchability. There is nothing wrong in the *varṇas* and the *Āśramas* which are sanctioned by religion. The law of *Varṇa* says nothing about our rights, it says only about our duties. It prescribes our professions and nothing else. It advises us to follow the callings of our ancestors for our livelihood which is conducive for ensuring the wellbeing of our society. All the callings are equal in status; none of them is superior or inferior. Due performance of them carries same merit before God. So to ascribe superiority or inferiority to any one of them is to violate the very law of *Varṇas*. Likewise, in *Varna* there is no place for untouchability as well.

I cannot agree with Gandhiji so far as his second objection is concerned. This fact cannot be denied that there are some elements (layers) in religion which lie beyond the reach of our intelligence. But this does not mean that no element in religion can be understood through intelligence. I think whether caste system and untouchability follow from Hindu Religion can very well be understood through intelligence. Well educated persons like Ambedkar are intelligent enough. So, this is not that an educated person is not a right person to understand whether caste system and untouchability follow from Hindu Religion.

In the third argument Gandhiji pointed out that Ambedkar judged Hindu Religion in the light of its worst specimens but not by its best ones. But it is not the proper way to understand any religion. Religion has to be judged not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced. If Hindu religion is judged in the light of the religion professed by Chaitannya, Tukaram, Ramkrishna, Ram Mohan Roy, Debendra Nath Tagore, Vivekananda and so on, the so called good specimens only then the actual spirit of it can be understood. In this case no one can deny the merit of Hindu Religion.

Ambedkar has beautifully countered each and every aforesaid objection raised by Gandhiji against him. He categorically said that any reader of his speech would understand that Mahatma has entirely missed the issues raised by him. Ambedkar further mentioned that Gandhiji has raised some false allegations which are not issues that actually arise out of what he liked to call his indictment of the Hindus. So, the questions put forth by Gandhiji are fully beside the point and the main argument of the speech was lost upon him.

In order to counter the first argument raised against him Ambedkar frankly admitted that he is not the right person to determine which Śāstras are actually authentic and original and which are not but all the Śāstras or the texts cited by him are in fact, taken from the writings of Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak. No one will deny the authority of him on the Sanskrit language and on the Hindu Śāstras. So, this objection virtually does not stand as because the originality and the authority of the texts cited by Ambedkar have been recognized by Tilak. Even if somebody continues to insist that this objection is valid then the objection actually goes against Tilak but not against Ambedkar.

The reply given by Ambedkar to the first objection, I think, is well grounded. If the books which have been cited by Ambedkar to be authentic are taken from the list made by Bal Gangadhar Tilak then the responsibility is of Tilak, not of Ambedkar.

In reply to the second objection Dr. Ambedkar said that according to the Mahatma only the saints and the sages are the right persons to interpret Hindu Śāstras and as far as the interpretations of them are concerned there is neither the place of caste system nor the place of untouchability in Hinduism. Here, Ambedkar said that if what the Mahatma observes is true then the saints should have raised their voice against the caste and untouchability prevailing in our society. But no saint has ever been seen to do so. Moreover, they themselves are the staunch believer in the systems of caste and untouchability. Most of the saints used to live and died as members of caste. Ambedkar cited a classic example of Jnyandeo, one of the best specimens of the Hindu religion mentioned by Gandhiji, who was so passionately attached to his status as a Brahmin that when the Brahmins of Paithan would deny him to their fold he moved heaven and earth to establish his status. Here one may cite the case of saint Eknath as an example which goes against the view of Ambedkar. Eknath used to touch the untouchables and dine with them. So, what is claimed by Ambedkar that none of the saints is seen to touch the untouchables cannot be accepted. But in response to this objection Ambedkar said that saint Eknath did so not because he did not support the system of caste and untouchability but because he wanted to show the magic power of the holy river Ganges. He did believe that through the touch of the untouchables one positively be polluted. But that pollution could be washed away by a bath in the sacred river Ganges. Ambedkar further said that even if the saints would have been seen to break the caste system it would not have affect upon the life of the common people, because it is taught that saints should not be followed by common people. It is taught that a saint might break caste but the common people are strictly prohibited to do the same. On the basis of the discussion so far it can be said that it is nothing but a false consolation that there were saints who understands or interprets *śāstras* differently from the learned few or ignorant many.

So far as the reply to the second objection is concerned I partially agree and partially disagree with Ambedkar. In his second reply, Ambedkar said that if, as a matter of fact, caste and untouchability do not follow from Hindu religion and it is truly understood by the saints then they should have raised their voice against the caste and untouchability which gives birth to so many problems in our society. I fully agree with Ambedkar on this point. But I am in doubt about how much Ambedkar's claim that the saints themselves follow the caste system is justified. Dr. Ambedkar, in order to substantiate his own position, cited a classic example of Jnyandeyo who was passionately attached to his status as a Brahmin. But so far as my understanding goes Brahmin is one of the *Varṇas*, not a caste. Chatterjee, Mukharjee, Banerjee and so on are the instances of caste. So, Jyandeyo claimed for *Varṇas* not for caste. Beside this the objection of Ambedkar that all the saints themselves follow the caste system in their own life cannot be accepted. At least some of the saints like Ramkrishna Dev, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Chaitannya Dev and some other did not follow the same in their own lives. Moreover, they raised objections against the caste system prevailing in our society. So, at least this objection of Ambedkar is not true.

In order to counter the third objection mentioned above Ambedkar said that he himself agreed with every word of the statement that a religion has to be judged not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced. But he pointed out that this did not dispose of the matter. Here the question comes – why are the numbers of worst specimen so many and the number of the best specimen so few? Ambedkar himself assumed two probable alternative answers to this question. The first answer is that the worst ones by the very nature are so perverse that they are not worthy of being morally educated. And the second answer is that the religious ideal is absolutely wrong which has given a wrong moral twist to the masses and in inspite of the wrong ideal the best have become the best just by giving the wrong twist

a turn to the right direction. According to Ambedkar, the second answer is the only logical and reasonable answer. In that case the Mahatma's argument that a religion should be judged in the light of its best specimens shows us no solution to the objection raised by Ambedkar.

In the next step Ambedkar showed that Gandhiji himself did not follow in his life what he preaches. He said that the Mahatma was a Bania by birth. So his calling is trading. But neither his ancestors nor he himself even touched trading to earn their bread. The forefathers of the Mahatma took ministership as their profession which is a calling meant for the Brahmins. Gandhiji before becoming a Mahatma took law as his calling. Subsequently, abandoning law he became half saint and half politician. The sons of the Mahatma too did not resort to trading for their livelihood. Ambedkar said of the youngest son of the Mahatma who was a faithful follower of him. He born as a *Vaishya*, got married a Brahmin daughter and took a profession of newspaper magnate. Most surprisingly the Mahatma, Ambedkar said, is not known to have raised any objection against his son for this. This clearly implies that in the name of *Varṇa Vyavasthā* Gandhiji deceived common people. Besides this, Ambedkar pointed out another logical consequence of this theory which is morally indefensible. According to this doctrine one must pursue the calling of his forefather. If so, the one must continue to be a pimp, if his grandfather was a pimp, likewise a woman must continue to be a prostitute because her grandmother was a prostitute. Is it not a morally indispensable position?

I think the observation made by Ambedkar here is appropriate. As long as the proverb, "*Apani ācāri dharma apare sekhāo*"^{xix} – is concerned Gandhiji's teaching to follow *Varṇaśrama* dharma has lost its moral strength.

The real Brahmins who are living on alms freely given to them, who are otherwise called hereditary Brahmin priest, according to Mahatma, are carrier of the spiritual treasures.

But Ambedkar drew our attention to the dark side of the hereditary Brāhmin Priest will be separate word. He says that a Brahmin can be a priest to Visnu, to Sankara, to Buddha, to Kali, who are the God of love, the God of destruction, the greatest teacher of mankind, teaching the noblest doctrine of love, the Goddess having regular sacrifice of an animal to satisfy her thirst for blood respectively. Likewise, he can be a priest to so many Gods and Goddesses having antagonistic attributes. No honest man can be a devotee to all of them. But here it is said that this is due to the catholicity and spirit of toleration, the greatest virtue of Hindu religion that one Brahmin can be a priest of so many Gods and Goddesses having opposite characters. But Ambedkar sharply reacted to this reply and said that toleration here is nothing but another name for insincerity. In that case a person must be deemed to be bankrupt of all spiritual treasures. A person pursue such a calling simply because it is ancestral, and for nothing else. One cannot have any love and faith upon such a calling. It is nothing but a mechanical process handed down from father to son barring conservation of virtue.

Ambedkar said that there was a time when the Mahatma was a full-blooded and blue-blooded Sanatani Hindu and a blind supporter of caste system. He defended it with the vigor of the orthodox and strongly opposed the inter-dining, inter-drinking and inter-marrying. He had a firm conviction that restraint about inter-dinning etc. helps a lot in cultivating will-power and conservation certain social virtues. Now he is greatly changed. No more he believes in the caste system. He admits that caste is harmful both to spiritual and national growth. Keeping this in view someone may think that the Mahatma has made much progress as he now believes only in *varṇa* but not in caste. But Dr. Ambedkar does not agree with them. He says that Varna as it is understood by Gandhiji is nothing but caste. He actually confuses one for another. Ambedkar says, “The essence of Vedic conception of Varna is the

pursuit of a calling which is appropriate to one's natural aptitude. The essence of the Mahatma's conception of *varṇa* is the pursuit of ancestral calling irrespective of natural aptitude". So as defined by the Mahatma, *varṇa* actually is nothing but another name for caste simply because the essence of both of them is one and the same-namely pursuit of ancestral calling. Actually *varṇa* and caste are distinct as chalk and cheese. Varna advocates determining ones calling on the basis of one's worth irrespective of birth, caste, on the other, advocates to do the same on the basis of one's birth irrespective of one's worth. So, the Mahatma, in fact, advocates the, caste system in the name of *varṇa vyavasthā*. Ambedkar says that the Mahatma has no definite and clear conception about the distinction between *varṇa* and caste and about the necessity of either for the conservation of Hinduism. Does he regard *varṇa* as the essence of Hinduism? In reply to this question Ambedkar says that it is not possible to give any categorical answer. The readers of his article on "Dr. Ambedkar's Indictment" will reply in the negative. But the readers of his article in reply to Mr. Sant Ram will reply in the affirmative. In putting the objection against Sant Ram Ambedkar says that how can a Muslim remain one if he rejects the Quran, or a Christian remain as Christian if he rejects the Bible? Here Ambedkar beautifully raises an objection against Gandhiji following the same reason. He says that if caste and *varṇa* are convertible terms and if *varṇa* is an integral part of Hinduism then how does the Mahatma claim himself as a Hindu as he rejects caste which is nothing but *varṇa*? Ambedkar here puts some objections – why this prevarication? Why does the Mahatma hedge? Has he failed to realize the truth? Or does the politician stand in the way of the Saint? Ambedkar assumes two alternative answers to these questions. One answer is – it may be due to his childlike temperament. And the second answer is – it may be due to the double role played by the Mahatma. His dubious role is the role of the Mahatma and a politician. He wants to spiritualize politics. A politician wants to deceive the society as he believes that a society cannot bear the whole truth and he must not

speak the whole truth as it is bad for his politics. The Mahatma is always supporting the caste and *varṇa* due to the fact that if he opposes them he may lose his place in politics. It is not so important to note that which one exactly is the source of this confusion, what is worthy to note that by preaching caste in the name of *varṇa* he deceives himself and the others as well.

I think the objection that has been raised here by B.R. Ambedkar against Gandhiji is most important. Ambedkar says that Gandhiji, in fact, hopelessly fails to understand the distinction between *varṇa* and caste. According to Gandhiji both *varṇa* and caste propose to follow the calling of our ancestors'. But Ambedkar says that this is not the case at all. *Varṇa* proposes to follow the calling which is suitable to our worth but irrespective of birth. Caste proposes to follow the callings of our forefathers on the basis of birth irrespective of our worth. The significance of this objection of Ambedkar is far-reaching Gandhiji strongly recommends for *varṇa*. He says that each and every person should follow the *varṇa - vyavasthā* as there is nothing wrong in it rather it ensures the wellbeing of our society. But caste, Gandhiji observes, should be annihilated for it gives birth to so many problems in our society. If Gandhiji really confuses *varṇa* for caste then the advice to follow the *varṇa vyavasthā* amounts to advise to follow the caste system and to advise to annihilate the caste is the same as to advise to annihilate the *varṇa vyavasthā*. So, Gandhiji suffers from serious contradiction. Therefore, the question comes – does Gandhiji really confuse *varṇa* for caste? A close scrutiny should be made on this point.

Apparently the distinction between caste and *varṇa* is crystal clear. Caste is determined on the basis of birth but *varṇa* is determined on the basis of worth. Here so far as the caste is concerned there is no problem but problem crops up in the case of *varṇa*. Is the process of being *Brāhman*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaisya* and *Sudra* according to one's worth automatic or is it regulated? The first alternative cannot be true. Had it been automatic then saying of

Varṇa Vyavasthā and advising to follow the same in Śāstra would have been meaningless. In that case there would have been no difference between *Varṇa Vyavasthā* of Hinduism and the absence of the same in other religious systems of the world. This implies that the second alternative is true. But here the question arises – who will regulate the system? Will it be regulated by human being or by God? If the first alternative is accepted then a number of problems will crop up. We know that to err is human. So, there is every possibility that a man may commit the mistake in assessing the worth of a person. Secondly, the chance of manipulation cannot be overcome. The verdict of the authority concerned may not be obeyed by all. So, there is also the chance of chaos and anarchy. All these problems can be overcome if the second alternative is taken to be true. In Śāstra like the *Śrīmad Bhāgavat Gītā* and the Vedas it is clearly mentioned that God Himself regulates the system of *varṇas*. In Gītā it is said, “*Cāturvarṇam mayā śṛṣṭam guṇa karma bhībhāgasa*”^{ix} It means four *varṇas* have been created by God Himself on the basis of worth (*guṇa* and *karma*). But it is absurd to maintain that God comes to us physically and regulate *Varṇa Vyavasthā*. How does He regulate the *Varṇa Vyavasthā* then? The only rational answer, I think, is that He regulates this system through the law of Karma. Following the worth of karma performed by a particular person God determines the birth of that person. More clearly to say on the basis of merit of karma performed by a person God determines whether he will take his birth in a Brahmin family or a *Sudra* family. So following the law of karma God regulates one’s birth and thereby He indirectly regulates one’s *varṇa* too. If one takes his birth in a Brahmin family then he becomes Brahmin by *Varṇa* but if he takes his birth in a *Sudra* family then he turns into *Sudra* by *varṇa*. Thus it is seen that birth turns into an identifying mark for both of the caste and *varṇa*. So, in that case both caste and *varṇa* propose one to follow the callings of one’s forefathers. Thus it is seen that there is nothing wrong in the observation of Gandhiji. If this is the case then how can caste be distinguished from *varṇa*? In reply it can be said that in the

case of caste birth stands both for identifying mark and defining characteristics but in the case of *varṇa* birth stands only for identifying mark but not for defining characteristics. Besides this Caste is the creation of the ill intention of some people living in our society, but Varna is the creation of the Good will of God.

If we agree with the above observation of Gandhiji then some problems inevitably crop up. According to the foregoing explanation the under given cycle follows –

From karma follow birth, from birth follow *varṇa* and from *varṇa* again follows karma. This cycle continues endlessly. In that case a Brahmin will remain a Brahman and a *Sudra* will continue to be a *Sudra* forever. If so then a *Sudra* can never enter into the territory of a *Brāhmaṇa* and vice-versa. But this does not accommodate with the spirit of the Śāstra. When Srikrishna in Gītā says, “*śvadharme nidhanam śreya paradharmo bhayābaha*”^{ix} then it implies that the fact is otherwise. In *Caitannya Caritamrit*, it is said, “keba.....”^{ix} It implies that the Śāstra inspires one to make an upliftment in the sphere of *varṇa*. One who belongs to the *varṇa* called *Sudra* should try his best to enter into the territory of Ksatriya or Brahmanas. In Śāstra we come across some instances of some persons who took their birth in lower *varṇas* but become capable of attaining higher *varṇas* owing to their worth, i.e. *guṇa* and *karma* in the same life. The Saint Viswamitra is the living example of this case. The name Prahallada is also well known who took his birth in the family of *Rāksasa* but became the renounced Bhakta of God. So, the position of M.K. Gandhi mentioned above is not supported by Hindu Śāstras too. Had the observation of Gandhiji been true Viswamitra could not have been a *Brāhmaṇa* who was *Kṣatriya* by birth? So, it needs to re-examine. I think, in the above explanation given to substantiate the position of Gandhiji one important point has been ignored. In the Śrīmad Bhāgavat Gītā, Krishna categorically mentions the criterion for

creating four *varṇas*. This criterion consists of two units – one is *guṇa* and the other is *karma*. In the earlier explanation *guṇa* which, perhaps is given the priority in the *Gitā*, has been ignored. So, *varṇa* determining factors are two – *guṇa* and *karma*. One may take one's birth in a *Sudra*-family but his *guṇa* may not be *Sudra*-like, his *guṇa* may *Brāhmaṇa*-like. In that case though one is *Sudra* by birth but the calling he has to follow is not the calling of a *Sudra* but the calling of a *Brāhmaṇa*. Viswamitra for example, was *Kṣatriya* by birth but as his *guṇa* was *Brāhmaṇa*-like he became *Brāhmaṇa* and followed the callings of a *Brāhmaṇa*. So, one's birth or one's callings of forefathers has nothing to do with the calling of a person. Thus it is shown that the observation of Gandhiji that *varṇa* proposes one to follow the callings of one's ancestors is not acceptable. So far as our observation is concerned, here deviation comes from the *guṇa*. One can come out of the traditional circle due to the new *guṇa*.

If we have a close look into the spirit of the *Śāstra* then it can be understood that the deviation may be taken place due to *karma* even. When in *Gitā* Sri Krishna says, “*Sadharme Nidhanam Sreya Paradharmā Bhayābaha*”^{ix} it implies that if a *Sudra* follows and performs his *Sadharmā* that is the calling of his forefathers as perfectly as possible then that *karma* will lead him to take his birth in the upper *varṇa* that is in *Kṣatriya* or *Brāhmaṇa varṇa* in his next life. And in that case the view of Gandhiji cannot be countered like the above way.

A pertinent question arises – when Sri Krishna says to Arjuna, “*Cāturvarṇa mayā sristam guṇa karma bhivāgasa*”^{ix} then what does it actually mean? Does it mean that the classification into four *varṇas* are being made by God through birth, if so, then why? If the classification is made on the basis of the *karma* performed by one in the previous birth, then what is the problem? If the same classification is made on the basis of the *guṇa* and *karma*

that is the natural aptitude and capacity of the persons of their present birth is it not more scientific and logical? The instance of Viswamitra and Prahallad substantiate this position.

Reference

^{ix} B.R. AMbedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, p. 44

^{ix} *Chaitanna charitamrita*

^{ix} Srimad Bhagbad Gita, 4/13

^{ix} *Gita*

^{ix} *Chaitanna charitamrita*

^{ix} *Gita*

^{ix} *Gita, 4/13*

Chapter-IV

Neo-Buddhism (*Navayāna*) and it's Contribution to Remove Social Evils

The principal aim of each and every social reformer is to establish an ideal society. But the concept of ideal society varies from one social reformer to the other social reformers. Dr. Ambedkar as a notable social reformer holds that an ideal society must ensure equal justice for all the individuals living in it. He gives the name *Samatā Samāj* to such a society. The *Samatā Samāj*, according to Ambedkar, must be based on the three pillars of equality, liberty and fraternity. Though the ultimate aim according to him is to establish the fraternity and liberty yet the equality can't be undermined, for fraternity and liberty are not possible without equality. Fraternity and equality are the necessary corollaries of equality. A society where there is no equality, there cannot be also the fraternity and liberty. Hinduism Ambedkar observes, is not an ideal society as it cannot ensure the justice to all the individuals living in it. The only reason due to which Hinduism cannot render justice to the people is that there is the lack of equality. The very concept of *Varṇāshrama Dharma* which is considered be the essence of Hinduism gives birth to the graded inequality of *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣyatriya*, *Vaiśya* etc. this concept of inequality, infact, is the root cause of all the social problems the Hindu society suffers from. So unless and until the inequality, the root cause is removed no ideal society can be established. But inequality can be removed only through the removal of *Varṇa Vyavasthā* underlying Hinduism. But the elimination of *Varṇa Vyavasthā* embedded in Hinduism is impossible since it is the essence of Hinduism as observed by Gandhiji and many others. The whole matter can be represented through a diagram given below:

Problem

Solution

Varṇa Vyavasthā

~ *Varṇa Vyavasthā*

Inequality

~Inequality

Social Problems/Injustice

~Social Problems/Injustice

Keeping this in view, Ambedkar concluded that as long as the untouchables and the downtrodden community would belong to Hinduism they had to suffer all the problems. The only alternative open to them is to leave Hinduism. Keeping this view in mind Ambedkar left Hinduism. Ambedkar after leaving Hinduism gave his primary focus upon establishing a *Samatā Samāj*. To fulfill this mission he gave the utmost importance upon establishing equality among the people. Here the question comes was it not possible for Ambedkar to establish an ideal society called *Samatā Samāj* only through the social and political movements without religion? Though the elaborate answer to this question cannot be traced but hints are available. From the very childhood, Ambedkar went through *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and other major religious books of Hinduism under the influence of his father. Since then Ambedkar understood that by the very nature man is spiritual being. Quite naturally among other demands spiritual demand or urge occupies an important role in human life. The other demands like social, political, economic etc. can be fulfilled and established through the social, political, and economic movements, but spiritual urge can't be satisfied without religion. So it is quite evident that social, political and other movements are necessary but they are no sufficient for establishing all our demands and needs. It implies religious movement is must. Secondly, so far as our observation goes perhaps Ambedkar thought that social and political movements are handicapped without the help of religious movement. Infact, all of these movements go hand-in-hand. It has to be kept in our mind that all the movements, Ambedkar carried out throughout his life were purely based on non-

violence. This concept of non-violence obviously comes from the sense of *dharma*. The solution settled down by any violence movement cannot be long lasting. So, the permanent solution, Ambedkar believed, can be brought about only through the other movement positively accompanied by the religious one.

From above the discussion it is seen that according to Ambedkar we cannot think of human life without religion. So, the next question that comes immediately is: there were many religions available in front of Ambedkar, but why did Ambedkar prefer only Buddhism? What are the limitations of the other religions like Islam, Christianity, and Sikhism etc. let us discuss them one by one. When in 1935, after Yeola Resolution Ambedkar declared that though he has taken his birth as a Hindu but he would not like to die as the same. Then all other religions had shown their keen interest to welcome Ambedkar. First, let us go to Islam, here we may quote what is said by Sangarakshita in this regard, "*K.L.Gauba, a Muslim leader, telegraphed Ambedkar saying that the whole of Muslim India was ready to welcome and honor him and the untouchables and promising full political, social, economic and religious rights. Other Muslim leaders were no less pressing, and one of them----- later reported to have been then the Nizam of Hyderabad (Probably the then Richest man of the World') ----- offered Ambedkar the sum of forty or fifty million rupees, if he would undertake to convert the whole untouchable community to Islam.....*"^{ix} I think this is really very important to note that the amount offered by the Nizam of Hyderabad to Ambedkar for conversion into Islam not a matter of jock. If we try to calculate the amount in terms of the value of the money of today then no doubt the figure will turn into several cores of rupees and the amount was really very valuable and helpful for the social and economic development for the whole downtrodden class. In spite of thinking of all these Ambedkar

easily turned down the offer in order to impartially select the ideal religion. The limitations of the Islam religion as it was understood and pointed out by Ambedkar are given below:

ISLAMISM

Islam religion, according to the observation of Ambedkar is anti-national. It is fanatic and creates a sense of separate national feeling which is very dangerous for India. Ambedkar declared in 1935 that he would leave Hinduism and embraced Buddhism in 1956. So the gap between the two events is a matter of more than long 20 years. It implies that in between Ambedkar went through the different fundamental books of the different religions with utmost care and carried out a rigorous analytic comparative study to understand the positive as well the negative aspect of all religions. His analytical and research oriented outlook shows that all the problems underlying Hinduism more or less are also there in Islamism and something more.

Secondly, Ambedkar observed that the fate of women belonging to Hinduism is more pitiable than the untouchable ones. That is why he was highly concerned with the problems of the women as well. But he found that the evil of polygamy of Muslim mate and the compulsory system of *Purdah* for Muslim women pushed the whole Muslim women into the hell. So far as this aspect is concerned Hinduism is superior to Islamism to some extent.

Another important drawback of Islamism is that the Muslims do not have keen interest in politics which led them to be politically backward and unconscious. No community can be developed without political consciousness.

Another important problem to accept Islam religion is that if the people belonging to scheduled caste embrace Islam religion then thereby they will go out of the Hindu culture. We know that to loss the culture of one is to loss the identity of him. No one likes to

surrender one's identity. And the most striking drawback to embrace Islam, Ambedkar thinks, is the problem of denationalization. To allow the depressed classes to embrace Islamism is to allow them to be denationalized. If the downtrodden classes embrace Islam religion then thereby they will lead to increase the number of the Muslims double and as a result the danger of Muslim domination over India also will increase obviously double. Ambedkar over all loved India very much. Obviously he could not embrace Islam.

CHRISTIANITY

It is well-known to us that Ambedkar had been in aboard for a long time for his higher education. Consequently, he had been familiar with the Christian tenets. Besides this, he had a living contact with Bishop Waskam Picket of the Methodist Church on December 31st, 1937. Ambedkar in a speech to Indian Christians at Sholapur expressed his views that two personalities could captivate him and one of them was Jesus Christ. From this it clearly implies that Ambedkar was attracted by the Christianity. He had a clear concept about Christian religion. But inspite of this Ambedkar did not embrace Christianity due to the following reasons:

First, it may be one of the reasons that no direct invitation came to Ambedkar from the part of the Christian religion in response to Ambedkar's Yeola Declaration. One response of course came from Bishop Bradley, but it was in the indirect form. In this context Bishop Bradley of the Methodist Church said, "Communities consisting of millions of people could become Christians only if members experienced a real change of heart. It was a change of heart that constituted conversions. At the same time he added, Ambedkar's statement would be welcomed by the Christian Church, since it indicated that the depressed Classes were ambitious for better things in life and that a new era was about to drawn for them."^{xix}

Secondly, Ambedkar observed that Christianity practiced in India was deplorable and sometimes contrary to the tenets of the Gospel of Christ. He noticed that the Christianity in Southern India even observed caste in Churches. The Christians in India were not conscious politically. If the *Mahar* Community embraced Christianity then there was no hope for their financial progress, because the *Mahar* students would lose their scholarships. Moreover Christians were never found to fight for removing social injustice.

Thirdly, Ambedkar was greatly influenced negatively when a memorandum was handed over to Ambedkar by the Tamilnadu Depressed classes Association in August, 1944 at Madras which clearly stated that their conversion to Christianity was of no use. It completely failed to uplift their economic and social position. It further stated that the depressed class Christians received ill-treatment from former caste Hindus who continue to observe caste even after their conversion. The said association through that memorandum requested Ambedkar to rescue the out caste Christians from the hands of the caste Christians.

Fourthly, another important drawback of embracing Christianity according to Ambedkar is the fear of denationalization. If the Mahar Community embraced Christianity then thereby the numerical strength of the Christians would turn to six cores which would lead to strengthen to the hold of Britain on the country. It was no doubt a matter of high concern for Ambedkar.

SIKHISM

Before conversion Ambedkar carried out a rigorous comparative study among different fundamental religions. And accordingly Sikhism was topmost in the list of his choice. First of all a warm welcome was come from the part of the Sikhism. Sardar Dalip Singh Doabia, a vice president of the Golden Temple Managing Committee wrote to

Ambedkar giving a positive assurance. He said, “*Sikhism fulfilled the requirements regarding what Ambedkar hoped for conversion. The Sikh Religion is monotheistic and all loving and provides for equal treatment of all its adherents.*”^{ix} In order to be acquainted with the ins and outs of Sikhism, Ambedkar attained a Sikh Bhajan on January 13th, 1936. Besides in April, 1936 he also attended the Sikh Mission Conference. He also sent his son and nephew to the Gurudwara Mandir in Amritsar. In addition to all these on 18th September, 1936 he sent 13 men to Sikh Mission at Amritsar to study Sikhism.

Ambedkar faced an interview and made a remarkable statement in Times of India on July, 1936, the report made in the press runs as, “*Looking at these alternative faiths purely from the standpoint of Hindus, which is the best --- Islam, Christianity or Sikhism? Obviously Sikhism is the best. If the Depressed Classes join Islam or Christianity, they not only go out of Hindu religion, but they also go out of the Hindu culture. On the other hand, if they become Sikhs, they remain within the Hindu culture. This by no means a small advantage to the Hindus..... Conversion to Islam or Christianity will denationalize the Depressed Classes..... On the other hand, if they embrace Sikhism, they will help the destiny of the country, but they will help the destiny of the country, they will not be denationalized. On the country, they will be a help in political advancement of the country. Thus it is in the interest of the country that the Depressed Classes, if they are to change their faith should go on to Sikhism.....*”^{ix} Another important reason which initially motivates Ambedkar to prefer Sikhism as an alternative religion is the fact that this choice of Ambedkar has been approved by some prominent Hindus. The Hindu leaders who approved the proposal of Ambedkar’s conversion to Sikhism argued that Sikhism was a branch of Hinduism having the same culture and principles.

But the question comes why did Ambedkar ultimately not embrace Sikhism? In answer to this question it is said that Ambedkar ultimately turned his mind away from Sikhism due to the fear of losing the seats for the depressed classes. To embrace Sikhism is to surrender the right of reservation for political power which Ambedkar considered as a great shock for the whole depressed class. Political seats are reserved for the Sikhs only in Punjab but not in the other states. Keeping this in view, Ambedkar decided not to convert to Sikhism. But it is important to note that Ambedkar rejected Sikhism not in the same sense he rejected Islam and Christianity.

BUDDHISM

The reasons for accepting Buddhism as the best alternative religion for conversion is numberless, among them the most prominent ones are the following:

It is already mentioned that Ambedkar went through the fundamental religions and carried out a research to find out the best alternative religion to embrace when he would leave the Hindu fold. Side by side he also devoted to find out the origin of untouchables was originally the broken men who stuck to Buddhism.

Once Hinduism was empowered and governed by Brahmanism. At that time different superstitions were emerged and became prominent and forceful and thereby the spirit of Hinduism was lost. People belonging to the lower *Varṇas* were ill-treated in different ways. They were considered as sub-humans. Sometimes they were treated inferior even to the animals. The miserable conditions of them were really beyond description. Goutam Buddha had been greatly shocked by these miserable conditions of these people. Quite naturally he wanted to rescue those people from the hands of the Brahmins. So, after attaining *Nirvāṇa* he came back to the society. He taught that all men are equal; no one is higher than the others.

Each and every one is equally important. People were greatly influenced by the four ideals of his *Brahmavihāras* i.e. the ideals of *Maitri*, the ideals of *Karuṇā*, the ideals of *Mūḍita* and the ideals of *Upekṣā*. The people who were looked upon as sub humans in Hinduism were greatly moved by the ideology that was taught by Buddha. They considered Goutam Buddha as the living God. Consequently, numberless persons entered into Buddhism leaving Hinduism. That was a great blow to Hinduism as well as to the Brahmins. As long as Goutam Buddha was living that conversion was unabated. But after the demise of Goutam Buddha the followers of Buddhism fall in conflict on different issues and thereby they have been divided into different groups. These groups in the long run, in turn, again had been sub divided into smaller groups. Consequently, they lost their unity and strength. In this situation the cunning Brahmins of Hinduism took this opportunity and mounted pressures upon them to convert into Hinduism leaving Buddhism. A great number of Buddhist joined Hinduism but the rest ones who had been very much **lower** to Buddhism did not agree to join the Hindu fold. Those Buddhists, Ambedkar discovered, were punished by the Brahmin of Hinduism. They were considered untouchables. Naturally, the mind of Ambedkar was tilted infavour of Buddhism.

Other religions like Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam etc. were revealed religions. Revealed religions are the religions of faith; consequently, they cannot satisfy a person like Ambedkar who was a rationalist. But Buddhism was not a revealed religion like other religions already mentioned. It can quite easily pass the test of reason. Therefore it is quite natural that Ambedkar was greatly influenced by and satisfied with this religion. Buddhism teaches *Prajñā* (Understanding), *Karuṇā* (Compassion) and *Samatā* (Equality) which is really unique in Buddhism. No other religion teaches these three principles simultaneously in the strict sense of the term. As Buddhism teaches *Prajñā* it can answer to the question of a rational mind like Ambedkar which other religions fail to do. Ambedkar was greatly attracted

by the second principle of *Karunā*. Ambedkar thinks a religion in the true sense of the term must advise one to stand by others in their ill days. The third principle of Buddhism is the principle of *Samatā* which is most important according to Ambedkar. Ambedkar left Hinduism because the principle of *Samatā* is purely absent from Hinduism which gives birth to so many problems. One of the important and essential features of Hinduism is its *Varṇa Vyavasthā* which establishes the graded inequality of Hinduism. In the scale of the four *Varṇas*, the position of the Brahmins is the highest and the position of *Śūdra* is the lowest. This clearly implies the lack of equality among the Hindus. Where there is inequality there cannot be justice. Consequently the lower *Varṇas* like *Vaiśya* and the *Śūdras* are always deprived and humiliated by the higher *Varṇas*, the *Brāhmin* and the *Kṣatriya*. In Buddhism prime importance has been given upon the principle of *Samatā*. Here each and every individual is treated equally. Therefore, Buddhism ensures the justice to the society. Keeping this in view Ambedkar became attracted by Buddhism to a great extent. He thought Buddhism is the only religion that can show the light of hope to the down trodden people. Buddhism is more democratic, ethical and egalitarian.

Ambedkar thought the time is changing continuously, true religion, according to him, must be changing accordingly. Ambedkar discovered the element of flexibility inherent in Buddhism which is absent from other religions. Ambedkar held that Islam religion is impractical and unethical due to its communal harmony. He was not satisfied with Christian religion even though to some extent it is superior to Islam religion. The great problem of Christianity is that the followers of Christianity do not practice the tenets of the founder of this religion. The religion like Hinduism, Christianity and Islam are theistic which believe in God. These religions maintain that God create all that is on the earth. If so then it implies

that, “*he created the stone in the bladder too which did not appeal to the rational man today*”^{ix}.

It is important to note that Dr. Presler has shown other reasons for Ambedkar’s choice towards Buddhism. He says, “.....*there were in him four personal traits that made his choice of Buddhism likely, namely, his social concern.*”^{ix} According to the observation of Dr. Presler Ambedkar was highly influenced by the negative attitude of *Hinayāna* Buddhism. *Hinayāna* Buddhism shows negative attitude towards a number of established beliefs and practices like No God, No Soul, No immortality, No desire, No attachment etc. The attitude of Ambedkar somehow matches with that of *Hinayāna* Buddhism. Ambedkar himself was anti Philanthropists, anti Congress Party, anti Labor Unions, anti Marxist, anti Priest, anti Gandhi, anti Civil Disobedience Movement, anti Democracy at times, anti the name *Harijan*, anti Village life, anti West and even in an outburst of anger, anti the Constitution which he helped to write.

A careful analysis of the Philosophy of Ambedkar clearly shows that his Philosophy is similar to *Cārvāka* Philosophy to a great extent. Both Ambedkar and *Cārvākas* deny the existence of God, the existence of Soul, the immortality and the Transmigration of Self, the hell, the heaven etc. Both of them believe in materialism. But one important distinction is seen between Ambedkar and the *Cārvākas* Philosophy. *Cārvāka* Philosophy does not bother for religion. But Ambedkar was highly concerned with religions. Here a pertinent question arises why did Ambedkar do so? We see that so far as the metaphysics is concerned Ambedkar is not different from the *Cārvāka* School but the ethics of Ambedkar is purely different from the ethics of *Cārvāka* School. We know *Cārvāka* Philosophers were hedonist. According to them the ultimate goal of human being is happiness. But the happiness meant by them is necessarily meant for the agent himself but not for others. Therefore, they are

known as egoistic hedonist. Their famous saying is, “*Yāvat jīvet sukham jīvet ṛnam kṛtvā ghrītam pibet*”. According to the ethical theory introduced by *Cārvāka* Philosophy an action is right if and only if it promotes the greatest happiness for the agent and wrong if otherwise. But Ambedkar did not agree with the *Cārvāka* Philosophers on this issue. Ambedkar held that if we accept *Cārvāka* view then human being can hardly be distinguished from animal. The Philosophy of *Cārvāka* is sometimes called as pig Philosophy. It implies that *Cārvāka* Philosophy follows the life of animal. The only aim for the animal is to satisfy their physical demands i.e. the happiness of their body. If the aim of the human being is the same then how can we justify the superiority of the human being? For this reason Ambedkar deviated from the moral ideology of the *Cārvāka* School. According to Ambedkar it is the fact that our physical need cannot be denied but it is also true, that physical need is not the sole need for the human being. Over and above the physical need we have also another important need and that is the spiritual need. In order to satisfy our spiritual need a religion is essential for us. Therefore, he recognized the important of religion in our life. Though he did not accept deontological theory like Kant he also could not agree with the egoistic hedonism of *Cārvāka* School. His moral theory is Utilitarian one like that of J.S. Mill. So he is a teleologist. Most probably he is the hedonist. But his hedonism is an altruistic one. According to his moral theory an act is right if an only if it promotes the greatest happiness for the greatest number, and an act is wrong if it is otherwise. Keeping this in view he devoted his whole life and sacrificed his personal happiness for securing greatest wellbeing for the greatest number belonging to the whole society in general and the *Mahar* Community in particular.

Ambedkar was greatly influenced by the Philosophy of Buddhism and the Philosophy of Karl Marks. Because both of them have given prime importance upon removing the sufferings from our day to day life. I think the Philosophy of Ambedkar has a

great similarity with that of Karl Marx. Both of them believe in materialism. Neither Ambedkar nor Karl Marx believes in the heaven or the hail over and above this world. None of them believe in the immortality of the soul. This life is the only life. Heaven and hail belong to this world. It is the human being who can make this world either a heaven or a hail. But it is important to note that so far as the metaphysics is concerned both Ambedkar and Karl Marx go hand in hand. But so far as the ethics is concerned both of them go diametrically to the opposite direction. According to Karl Marx, sufferings of our society can be removing and justice can be established only through the path of violence. But Ambedkar does not believe in this ideology of violence. He observes the path of non-violence is the only ideal path through which all problems of society can be resolved. This ideology Ambedkar takes from the Philosophy of Goutam Buddha.

I do believe that Ambedkar's observation in this regard is justified. It is true that sometimes we can own over so many things through the path of violence but they cannot be long lasting. The permanent solutions can be brought about only through non-violence means.

Another important difference can be traced in the Philosophy of Ambedkar and the Philosophy of Karl Marx. Karl Marx does not accept religion. He says that religion is like opium. Therefore religion should be rejected. Marx observes that religion makes people otherworldliness and make them suffer poverty in this world. A religious minded person undermines this world and considers the other world to be superior. Naturally he will not be interested to develop this worldly life and society. Now if the number of the religious minded people increases in a society then that society is bound to suffer poverty and misery. But Ambedkar does not agree with Karl Marx on this issue. He believes human being by the very nature is religious. Therefore religion cannot be completely separated from man. According

to Ambedkar a man without religion cannot be a man in the true sense of the term. Economic values occupy an important place in our life. But the place in our life that is occupied by spiritual values cannot be ignored. No doubt man needs material comfort but he must grow materially as well as spiritually herein lies the difference between a man and a pig. Keeping all these things in mind Ambedkar does not follow the path of Karl Marx in order to fulfill his mission. He thinks that only the path of Goutam Buddha can lead him to his destination. Here also I agree with the view of Ambedkar. Even if the eternal soul is denied but the fact that we have our mind over and above our body. So we have two aspects one is body and the other is mind. Both of them must have their own demands. Our mind is different from our body consequently the demand and the need of our mind must be different from the demand and need of our body. Material world can satisfy the demand of our body but it cannot satisfy the demand and need of our mind. It is only the spirituality or the religion that can fulfill the need of our mind.

One of the important questions arises in the mind of any intellectual person – how far Neo-Buddhism introduced by Ambedkar has been successful in materializing the mission of Ambedkar. If we have a critical examination then we can easily understand that the mission of Ambedkar has been turned into a reality due to Neo-Buddhism. This fact can be understood if the condition of the Neo-Buddhist is over viewed. The Neo-Buddhists are seen to be greatly influenced and inspired by the famous mantra uttered and advised by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The mantra consists of three important necessities of our life. The first one is education, the second one is agitation and the third one is organization. First of all the Neo-Buddhist community makes so progress in education that it is known as the most educated community in India. Ambedkar says that education is a milk of Tigris and whoever drinks it will roar. He himself is a living example of it. He was the most educated Indian of his time

and till today here is no one to challenge his educational might. Due to the educational progress of the Neo-Buddhist they become capable of entering into Government services. A recent Census Report shows that today Neo-Buddhist have largest numbers of I.A.S officers amongst all other religious minority and non converted Hindu *Dalits*. Consequently the financial conditions of the Neo-Buddhist become sound. We know that education make people conscious about their rights and duties. Because of the proper and higher education that the Neo-Buddhists Community assume that they become highly conscious about their rights and duties. Those educated Neo-Buddhists Youths are seen to fight the cause of their fellow members either individually or collectively. In a word the path of agitation is followed by the Neo-Buddhist community in the literal sense in order to establish justice. And it is worthy to note that all these picture of the Neo-Buddhist Community clearly implies that the Ambedkar's selection of Buddhism in order to fulfill his dream was really excellent.

The fact that the Neo-Buddhist movement to fulfill the dream of Ambedkar has a great success can be substantiated by another event. It is seen that day by day Neo-Buddhism gains its popularity. Very recently a revolutionary incident has been taken place. More than eighty thousand Hindu *Dalits* in Gujrat, Kota District have been converted to Buddhism. Besides this joining of the marginal number of *Dalits* the Neo-Buddhists fold becomes almost are daily phenomenons all over the country. Thus it is seen Neo-Buddhism takes a leading role to fulfill the mission of Dr. B.R.Ambedkar.

It is well-known to us that Dr. Ambedkar was a social reformer. So like any other social reformer he also wanted to establish an ideal society. An ideal society, according to him, must be based on the three pillars of equality, fraternity and liberty. Ambedkar observed that such an ideal society cannot be established within the territory of Hinduism. He thought that the concept of *Cāturvarṇa* underlying Hinduism gives birth to the graded inequality,

cruelty and injustice. Where there is inequality there cannot be liberty and fraternity. Thus it is proved that within the territory of Hindu religion no ideal society can be established. But Ambedkar believed that by the very nature human being is the religious being. So, he cannot live without religion. Keeping this view in mind he started to find out a religion where an ideal society having the three characteristics already pointed out can be established. For long 20 years he engaged himself in careful study and analysis of the different fundamental religions of India and ultimately came to the conclusion that Buddhism is the best among all religions prevailing in our society. Buddhism is the religion where there is no room for inequality. This religion does not know any caste and creed. And that is why he always wanted to live within the religion which would assure the three ideal principles i.e. liberty, equality and fraternity for every adherent. This is the reason owing which he left Hinduism and finally embraced to Buddhism.

Neo Buddhism is a socio economic and ethics oriented religion, which leads to enormous mental satisfaction and unimaginable pleasure. Its functioning is as a catalyst for the wellbeing of outcaste. In Buddhism, there is no room for concept of any supernatural or divine beings, incarnation of God, religious rites etc. It is fully man centric religion where all men are equal. Equality was very important concept in this religion and it is referred not only to men but to women also. According to Ambedkar Neo-Buddhism is the antidote to the problems of Untouchability, social ostracism, gross ignorance and static degraded social status.

Let us now examine what exactly are the salient features of Neo-Buddhism and then see how it can remove the problems of social evils such as untouchability, exploitation, oppression etc. To counter the social evils, Ambedkar prescribe 22 Vows as the important doctrinal beliefs of all Neo-Buddhist people. These Vows will perform two fold activities.

First they will help the Neo-Buddhists to remind that they are no more Hindus and secondly these Vows will lead them to be ideal Buddhists. These Vows are arranged in the following sequence:

1. I shall not recognize *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Mahesvar* as Gods, nor shall I worship them.
2. I shall not recognize *Rāma* and *Kriṣṇa* as Gods, nor shall I worship them
3. I shall not recognize *Gouri* and *Ganapati* as Gods, nor shall I worship them
4. I do not believe in the theory of incarnation of God
5. I do not consider the Buddha as the incarnation of *Viṣṇu*
6. I shall not perform *Śrādhya* for my ancestors, nor shall I give offerings to God
7. I shall not do anything which is detrimental to Buddhism
8. I shall not perform any religious rite through the agency of a Brahman
9. I believe in the principle that all human beings are equal
10. I shall Endeavour to establish equality
11. I shall follow the eight fold path of the Buddha
12. I shall observe the ten *parimittas* enunciated by the Buddha
13. I shall be compassionate to all living beings and I shall nurture them with care
14. I shall not steal
15. I shall not lie
16. I shall not commit adultery
17. I shall not take liquor
18. I shall not strive to lead my life according to the three principles of Buddhism, i.e.,
jñāna, *Sīla* and *Karuṇā*

19. I hereby reject my old religion Hinduism which is detrimental to the prosperity of human kind which discriminates between man and accept Buddhism

20. I fully believe that Buddhism is *Saddhamma*

21. I fully believe that I am reborn now

22. I pledge to conduct myself hereafter in accordance with Buddha's *Dhamma*

If we carry out a careful study about the 22 Vows mention above then we can understand that each and every Vow is scientific. Dr. Ambedkar was very practical and his foreside was fur reaching. Consequently he rightly observed that it's really very difficult for a converted person to follow a new religion. If a converted person is to follow a new religion effectively then first of all he has to keep aside the past habit and impression of his former religion. But as the earlier religion was followed by him from the very childhood the impression that one attains about his earlier religion was really deep rooted. So, it is not an easy task at all to forget his past religion can be uprooted through rigorous and earnest attempt. Keeping this in view Ambedkar proposed for some important Vows. The first three Vows are about the negation of the different Gods and Goddesses like Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Mahesvar, Rāma, Krisna, Gouri, Ganapati etc. Infact in Hinduism there are different cults like Vaishnaba, Sakta, Saiva, Ganapatta etc. As in Hinduism there are rooms for different Gods and Goddesses mentioned above all of them more or less occupy a place in our minds. Keeping this in view, Ambedkar advised the Neo-Buddhists to forget all the Gods and Goddesses. Thus it is seen that the first three Vows are quite justified.

The concept of incarnation plays an important role in Hindu religion. In the Bhāgavat Gītā Srikrīṣṇa Himself says that whenever justice is undermined and injustice is over powered in society then He Himself comes down to the world to protect the religious and virtuous persons and punished the vicious ones and thereby to restore the justice in the

society. Ambedkar observed that this teaching has a far reaching negative effect upon our society. If people do believe in the phenomenon of reincarnation and the purpose of it then they are bound to think that they have nothing to do for establishing the justice in our society. People will believe that today they may be deceived and cheated by some persons but tomorrow God will come and take action against them. This type of believe positively will lead to be a hail. May be this type of believe is one of the leading causes for the pitiable condition of the downtrodden people in Hinduism. That is why Ambedkar in his forth Vow advises Neo-Buddhists not to believe in reincarnation any more.

Keeping the negative affects of the concept of reincarnation mentioned above in mind Ambedkar advises the followers of Neo-Buddhism not to consider Goutam Buddha as the reincarnation of Vishnu if they continue to believe in the reincarnation like the Hindus then they have to suffer from the same problems from which the Hindus actually suffer. The lack of the belief in reincarnation makes the Neo-Buddhists to be self dependent and confident.

Performing *Śrādhya* for the desist for forefathers and offering to god is one of the important aspect of Hinduism. To believe in all these things is to believe in reincarnation and the existence of God which in turn gives birth to the scope to cheat the common people. Ambedkar in his Neo-Buddhism does not like to keep any room where any one can enjoy his vested interest by deceiving the ordinary people.

Ambedkar believes from the very core of his heart that Neo Buddhism as a religion is the best. This religion can easily provide liberty, equality and fraternity to the followers of it. But for this the followers of neo Buddhism must understand the spirit and essence of this religion. If someone fails to understand the real nature of Neo Buddhism and does something detrimental to it then this religion cannot fulfill the mission of its followers. Therefore

Ambedkar warns all the followers of this religion not to do anything which will be detrimental to the purpose of it.

In Hinduism the Brahmins always play the role of middle men as if the people belonging to the others Varnas and caste are not in a position to render their offerings to God by themselves. The Brahmins takes this advantage and fulfill their vested interests and deceive them. Ambedkar again reminds the followers of Neo Buddhism not to commit the same blunder in their new religion.

According to Ambedkar a society is ideal if it can ensure the justice for all the people living in it. Ambedkar presupposes three conditions of justice – equality, liberty and fraternity. Among them equality is most fundamental and primary. Hinduism Ambedkar thinks cannot give justice to the people simply because there is no equality in it as there is graded inequality among the four *Varnas*. The aim of Ambedkar is to establish an ideal society through Neo-Buddhism. Therefore that society must be based on equality. Keeping this in view Ambedkar has given much more stressed upon equality and advises the Neo Buddhist to consider all human beings as equal but to maintain equality is not so easy and that's why some sort of endeavor is needed. Infact the untouchability oppression etc. are the corollaries of the graded inequality of Hinduism. Therefore, if all those problems are to keep aside from Neo-Buddhism then equality has to be maintained.

Buddhism is different from the revealed religions to a great extent. The religion advocated by Goutam Buddha is described as *dhamma*. Here *dhamma* stands for righteousness or morality. If we examine all the eight fold paths very carefully then we can see that they help a man to be moral and to lead a just life. So, eightfold path becomes instrumental to fulfill the mission of Buddha and Ambedkar. Eight fold path taken together constitutes the way following which the mission of Ambedkar becomes materialized. The

first among them is right views here right view is defined as the correct knowledge about the ultimate truth. Through here by ultimate truth in Buddhism we generally mean the four noble truths. But Ambedkar uses the term right view in different sense because he does not recognize the four noble truths in Buddhism. Perhaps by truth he means that this world is the only world. There is no any transcendental, there is no God, no eternal soul, not even transmigration of the soul, all men are equal etc. Ambedkar advises all Neo Buddhists to have proper knowledge about all things just mentioned. But mere knowledge without determination to put the knowledge in to practice is useless. One must resolve to fulfill his mission through the right knowledge one attains. Our speech should be controlled and guided by our right knowledge as well as right determination. Right speech consists in extension from lying, slender, harsh words and frivolous talk. The next step of eight fold path is right conduct; right speech should be followed by our right conduct. Right conduct includes the *Panchasila* such as abstain from killing, stealing, sensuality, lying and intoxication. Next comes right livelihood Ambedkar has given prime importance upon our livelihood by honest means. In no way one will take to forbidden means for ones bread. There is a famous proverb with which we all are acquainted, “easy to say but hard to do” is really very difficult for one to maintain what is already says above. Therefore constant endeavor is needed. The seventh step of eight fold path is right mindfulness. If we are to fulfill our mission then we must constantly remember the actual nature of the realities already mentioned. The last stage is right concentration. Through Ambedkar does not believe in the life or world here after yet. He believes in the life of self controlled and discipline but without concentration no one can be self controlled and self restrained. Keeping this in view Ambedkar has given emphasize upon right concentration.

The next Vow is about the observation of ten Parimittas enunciated by Buddha which are the following Sila, Dana, Uppeka, Nekkema, Virya, Kanthi, Succa, Adhishana, Karuna, Maitri. If we look into the ten Parimittas then we see that the ten Parimittas taken together lead a man to be personality of principle and morality.

The Vows consisting of 13 (thirteenth) to 18 (eighteenth) help one to be a good man, a man of moral character. As long as one cannot give up Hinduism from one's mind he cannot accept Buddhism because there is a sharp contradiction between Hinduism and Buddhism. Hinduism through its graded inequality discriminates between man and man. But Buddhism on the other brings all human beings under the shade of one umbrella. In the eye of Buddhism all men are equal. So there is no room for high and low. That is why Ambedkar in his 19th (nineteen) Vow advises the Neo Buddhists to forget Hinduism and except Buddhism from the very core of their minds. Ambedkar in the 20 (twenty) Vow says that a Neo Buddhist must consider the fundamental principles of Buddhism as his *Svadhamma*. The term *Svadhamma* must have some special significance of its own if one things Buddhism as his *Svadhamma* it implies that he has no way other than strictly following the principles of Buddhism. Ambedkar does believe that if someone forgets Hinduism and abides by all ethical principles of Buddhism then he must turn into a different personality. Therefore, in 21st Vow Ambedkar says that a Neo Buddhist must believe that he has reborn now. Ambedkar at the last stage takes the Vow to lead his life according to the principles of Buddhism. The same should be done by each and every neo Buddhists.

It is an established fact to most of persons that the Neo-Buddhism formulated by Ambedkar plays an important role to show the light of hope to the depressed and oppressed class of peoples on the basis of equality and justice. But some people raise some objections against the Neo-Buddhism advocated by Ambedkar. A Sharpe criticism about the book

“*Buddha and His Dhamma*” is seen in *Mahābodhi Patrika* published from Calcutta in 1959. This *Patrika* says that Neo-Buddhism advocated by Ambedkar is no more of Buddhism that’s why the name of the book ‘*Buddha and His Dhamma*’ should be replaced by “*Ambedkar and His Dhamma*’. It further state that the religion advocated by Gautam Buddha was based on love and sympathy. But the religion advocated by Ambedkar is based on hatred. The most serious objection raised by *Mahābodhi Patrika* against Ambedkar is that Ambedkar propagates *adharmā* in the name of *dharma*. Another important *Patrika* namely the ‘the light of *Dhamma*’ published from Rangun. In this *Patrika* it is said that Buddha religion has been distorted by Ambedkar. Wherever Ambedkar considers any theory of Buddhism to be inconsistent with his own view he describes that doctrine to be incorporated to Buddhism by the later disciples of Buddhism.

I think of the objection mentioned above can be countered. First of all the objection regarding the renaming of the book is not acceptable. So far as the essence of Neo-Buddhism advocated by Ambedkar, is concerned it is not different from the original Buddhism. The next objection also is not justified. If we look into history of the origin of original Buddhism then we see that Buddhism advocated by Goutam Buddha also took its birth as the reaction of inhuman activities of Brahmanism. The same is the true in the case of Neo-Buddhism. Ambedkar introduces his Neo-Buddhism as a sharp reaction against *Jātībheda* and Untouchability introduced by Brahmanism. But though both of them were initiated as reaction against the *Brahmanism*, yet both of them ensure equality, liberty, fraternity and justice to all people irrespective of their caste, creed, gender and birth. The third objection I think is most serious objection. Ambedkar through his Neo-Buddhism sharply criticized the *Varṇabheda Jātībheda* and Untouchability prevailing in Hinduism. According to him another name of *Varṇa Vyavasthā* and *Jātī Vyavasthā* is graded inequality, so the main purpose of

Neo-Buddhism is to annihilate the *Varṇa Vyavasthā* and the *Jātī Vyavasthā* and thereby annihilate or eliminate the graded inequality and established equality and justice in our society. In a word we can say that the another name of Neo-Buddhism is humanism. Realizing all these things can we still say that Ambedkar propagates *adharmā* (injustice) in the name of *dharma* (justice)?

If we have a close examination of Neo-Buddhism advocated by Ambedkar then we can see that his concept of Neo-Buddhism is the outcome of his hairsplitting rigorous logic analyses. So, we cannot say that Ambedkar keeps aside the theories of Buddhism which he considers to be inconsistent with his own views.

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Ambedkar observes that Buddhism as religion is unique. In no way Buddhism can be compared with other religion. He describes Buddhism as the social message of love, liberty,

equality, fraternity, Ahimsa, peace and justice. Ambedkar says, “Buddha has a social message. He answers all these questions. But they have been buried by modern authors”.

[Ref. Bhagawan Das (ed), Thus Spoke Ambedkar, Bangalore: Ambedkar Sahitya Prakashana]

Ambedkar tries to analyze Buddhism critically and find out the essence of it. He says that the essence of Buddhism consists of not in the four noble truths, the concept of Nirvana, the concept of None-soul theory etc. but in the path of righteousness. Righteousness according to Buddha is something interpersonal relation, man nature relations and social interaction Buddhism, in the true sense of the term, is not a religion, it is a Dharma. It is primarily an ethical theory and not a metaphysical one. Ambedkar rightly points out, “In contrast to religion, Dharma was a secular ideology, understanding the world, man and society; and transforming them in the light of reason and on the basis of morality. To test its veracity, no exterior but purely human criterion are required”^{ix}. The social Philosophy of Ambedkar has given the priority of the three principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity which he claims to be derived from Buddhism. In this context we may quote what was said by Ambedkar in an All India Radio Broadcast in 1954, “Positively, my social philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. I have derived them from the teaching of my master, the Buddha”.

Ambedkar repeatedly points out that *Varnabheda* underlying Hinduism gives birth to graded inequality prevailing in Hinduism which was caused by the Varna system, the essence of Hinduism. He says, “graded inequality the Buddha thought, might produce a society of ascending scale of hatred and descending scale of contempt and might be a source of perpetual conflict” [Cited by Rodrique, P. 327.] Ambedkar observes that Brahmanism in Hindu religion tries to justify graded inequality, Oppression of the downtrodden people and

other inhuman activities by presupposing some super natural elements like heaven, hell, Theory of Karma, concept of God, immortality of the soul, rebirth and so on. Ambedkar discovers through his long study and logical analysis that these supernatural phenomena have been recognized by almost all of the religions excepting Buddhism. This is one of the important reasons why Ambedkar prefers Buddhism. Buddha never claims himself to be God or the son of God or the messenger of the God or *Avatara*. Rather he declares himself as a son of ordinary man. He also preaches his gospel as a common man. Goutam Buddha makes a distinction between *Mārga-dātā* and a *Mokṣa-dātā* and claims himself as merely a *Mārga-dātā*. Buddha only shows his followers the right faith which is nothing but moral activities. The place of god in other religions is occupied by morality in Buddhism. Ambedkar has a society where there is no room for equality is a society where also cannot be the room for justice. Hinduism cannot provide any justice to the society simply because there is no room for equality in it due to its Varna system. Owing to these reasons the *Avarnas* and women in particular and the *Sudras* in general were deprived of justice. But in the eye of Buddhism all human beings are equal quite naturally all human beings received equal treatment in Buddhism. In the true sense of the term *Avarnas*, *Sudras* and women were looked upon as sub-human. Consequently, they were not allowed even to enter in to the temples. But in Buddhism all of them have given equal importance and dignity. Any man, in Buddhism has right to become Bhikku (*Sannyāsi*) irrespective of his birth even the women have enjoyed equal right of becoming a Bhikkuni (*Sannyāsini*). In Hinduism great emphasis was rendered to the performance of sacrifices and ritualistic activities. In Buddhism the efficacy of rites and rituals was greatly undermined and performance of sacrifices is purely rejected. The only acts that are eulogized and encouraged in Buddha's teaching are moral acts. The two principal concepts in Buddhism are *Prajñā* and *dhamma*. Ambedkar's principal aim was to show the light of hope and identity to the down trodden people. He wanted to give a lesson to

the depressed classes that all men are equal there is no one who is either superior or inferior to others. All men have equal rights to live in our society. All these teachings become meaningful and effective only within the territory of Buddhism. Ambedkar wants to awake the downtrodden people from their slumber of slavery and the faith of their fate and kindle hope in their mind for a better tomorrow. He wants the downtrodden people to make completely a different person making them aware about their dignity and self respect. Ambedkar ultimately has been successful in his mission to a great extent through his Neo-Buddhism. This truth became evident through the words of a convert which runs as, "I have accepted the Buddhist *Dharma* [doctrine]. I am a Buddhist now. I am not a Mahar, nor an untouchable nor even a Hindu. I have become a human being I am now equal with high caste Hindus. I am equal with all. I am not low-born or inferior now". 7

One of the important reasons due to which Ambedkar chooses Buddhism is that Buddhism actually concerns over all development of an individual. In most of the revealed religions supreme importance and priority have been given upon spiritual development in one's relationship to God. But material welfare has been neglected. Ambedkar observes if any religion cannot satisfy our material need then that religion can hardly be considered as a religion. I think observation of Ambedkar on this issue has a great similarity with the observation of Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji also says the religion which cannot fit the hungry men of the world is not religion in the true sense of the term. What is unique in Neo-Buddhism is that according to this religion change of social status, economic and academic progress and Political awareness as important as one's spiritual satisfaction and bliss. Neo-Buddhism in fact is highly concerned with overall developments of the people. It is important to note that the principal aim of religion is to attain liberation. But the concept of liberation varies from religion to religion. Though *Jivan-mukti* that is emancipation within this life has

been recognized by most of the religious but the ultimate aim according to them is *Videhi-Mukti* that is the *Mukti* or liberation hereafter. But one and the only aim of Neo-Buddhism is to attain liberation within this life. Liberation in Neo-Buddhism consists in devoid of sufferings of all type within this life. Liberation consists in liberty, fraternity and equality. Another important unique feature of Neo-Buddhism is that here liberation necessarily means the liberation of all. Individual liberation is not liberation at all. Ambedkar believes such type of liberation cannot be possible within Hinduism. Therefore if we are to attain this type of liberation then first of all we have to liberate from Hinduism. Here Kadam rightly says, “it was down to earth, healthy robust, rational, enlightened, scientific, cultured by Vedicism, Brahmanism and Hinduism, down the ages that made life a misery for the “Untouchables in India” [Ref. Kadam, K.N., *op. cit.*, p.47] Ambedkar observes that Neo-Buddhism shows the light of freedom not only to the downtrodden people but also to the women. Manu reduces woman to a non-entity. Even the Brahmin woman has no any status over own. Infact the status of human dignity of woman was completely robbed by Manu and thereby they were thrown into dustbin. Ambedkar vehemently criticizes Manu for his heinous activity. As reaction Ambedkar actually burns Manu Smriti in a public gathering. Ambedkar pulls the women and his fellow Mahars along with some other Outcastes people from the dustbin and plays them in the chair of human dignity providing equal rights and freedom.

There is no religion as practical as Neo-Buddhism. Neo-Buddhism stands for an antidote to the problems of untouchability and caste system. The principal aim of Ambedkar was to gain human dignity. Bal Gangadhar Tilak said that Swaraj was his birth right to lead a human and honorable life. Ambedkar thinks it is Neo-Buddhasim through which the downtrodden class can earn their lost honorable human life. Infact Ambedkar throughout his

life runs through struggle after struggle. As long as Ambedkar was there within the caste ridden graded unequal Hindu society. His life was full of following struggles.

Struggle to draw water from the public well, tube-well and ponds, struggle for entry into temple, struggle for equality in education, struggle for liberation, struggle for fraternity, struggle for dignity and so on. It is Neo-Buddhism which liberates Ambedkar along with his fellow Mahars from those struggles.

On the basis of the discussion so far it is seen that Buddhism is not a religion, it is a Brahmana. A religion necessarily is individualistic. The principal purpose of a religion is to lead an individual to the state of liberation or Moksa. Secondly, a religion believes in a transcendental world. Thirdly the basis of the religion is faith. A dharma on the other hand is basically universal and therefore interpersonal. The principal aim of dhamma is to ensure the public or social welfare in other words it is for *bahujanahitaya bahujanasukhaya*. Again *dhamma* does not believe in a transcendental world. Therefore the purpose of *dhamma* of Buddhism then we see that there is no room for faith. The two important features of Buddhism are *Prajñā* and *karuna*. *Prajñā* here stands for rational understanding. Buddha likes to see each and everything about his *dhamma* through the eye of reason. Quite naturally he does not provide in his *dhamma* through any room for supernatural phenomena like God, heaven, hell etc. Ambedkar was greatly impressed by this feature of *Prajñā* as he was himself a rational minded individual. *Karuṇā*, the second distinguishing feature of the *dhamma* Buddha, stands for inter-personal love. It is important to note that there is also the room for love in a religion. But the love underlying a religion is not interpersonal love. Here the love means the love of a devotee for his God. And the aim of that love is to satisfy his personal interest that is the attainment of liberation or the attainment of the kindness of the God. But *Karuṇā* or love in Buddha's *dhamma* signifies the love of one individual for the other

individuals living in the society. Here the purpose love of one for others is not to satisfy his personal interest. Here love stands for *niskām karma* therefore here the love is for shake of love and even if there is any purpose or interest is not the personal of agent, but for the satisfaction of the greater interest of other people of the society. This type of love necessarily follows from the very nature of the human being. Keeping this view in mind John Stuart Mill a distinguished British Philosopher beautifully says, “It is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than to be a pig satisfied”. A beast like a pig by the very nature is self centered. A pig lives for itself. Therefore all the activities of a pig necessarily centered round the satisfaction of his own interest. When a pig becomes hungry it goes out for collecting foods for itself. After words it comes back and goes to sleep. It does not think for others. Man cannot be self centered like a pig. A man in the true sense of the term necessarily lives for others. The living example of such a man is Socrates. We all know that Socrates was actively engaged throughout his life for the betterment of the society. Socrates did not have any scope for thinking of himself. Goutam Buddha, Swami Vivekananda, Mother Teresa and obviously B.R. Ambedkar belong to the category of Socrates. All of them scarified their life for securing the welfare of the whole society. Swami Vivekananda says, “the whole world is my family”. What he says he meanted. First of all he leaves his own family becomes a Monk and spends his whole life an alms. Mother Teresa considers each and every afflicted and patients as her own brother or sister or mother or father. This is understood from the very selfless service and affectionate nursing she provides throughout her life. Rabindranath Tagore very appropriately says, “*mor nam ei bole khyata hok ami tomaderi lok, r kichu noi ei hok mor parichay*”. Rabindranath believes that we have two ‘I’s, one is selfish and limited and another is unselfish or universal ‘I’. the universal ‘I’ has been variously describe by him as *Vishwa Āmi, Jiban Devata, Maner Manush* etc. according to him the duty or religion of us is to entered into the kingdom of the universal ‘I’ by breaking the boundary of our selfish ‘I’. The

same is seen to be true in the life of Goutam Buddha and Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. Goutam Buddha leaves his wife, child and the kingdom. He attains liberation but cannot remain satisfied. He comes back to the society and shows the light of knowledge and morality that the dharma to all the individuals living in the society irrespective of caste, creed and sex. Ambedkar also more or less does the same. First of all Ambedkar himself attains knowledge in the way of becoming one of the highly educated persons. Subsequently he scarifies his life for the wellbeing and betterment of the whole society in general and the downtrodden people in particular by shedding the light of knowledge to them and converting a number of outcaste people to Neo-Buddhism. Thus we see that Neo-Buddhism becomes instrumental for fulfill the mission of Ambedkar.

Reference

1. Sangharakshita, *op. cit.*, p. 58
2. Sangharakshita, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62
3. Cf. Presler, *op. cit.*, pp-53-57
4. Presler, *op. cit.*, p. 11
5. Paradkar, B.A.M., *op. cit.*, p. 64
6. Presler, Dr. H.H., *op. cit.*, pp. 12-14
7. V. Rodrigries, "Making a Tradition Critical: Ambedkar reading on Buddhism in P. Robb (ed), *Dalit Movements and the Meaning of Labour in India*, Delhi: OUP, 1993, P. 307
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.

Chapter-V

Some Critical and Evaluative Comments

In our concluding chapter an attempt has been made to review almost all of the major observations made by Ambedkar regarding the demerits of Hindu Religion as well as the merits of Buddhism. We shall also try our best to examine why Ambedkar did not accept the classical Buddhism in Toto. We shall also see how far his Neo-Buddhism is capable of eliminating the major problems our society particularly the downtrodden people suffers from.

We have already seen in the previous chapters of our work that Ambedkar observes that the root cause in the Hindu Religion itself which gives birth to the social problems like caste system, untouchability, lack of unity, degradation of morality, unemployment, inhuman behavior towards the downtrodden people and so on. Therefore, let us start with the review of this observation of Ambedkar. It has already been seen that fourfold classification of *Varṇa* (*Cāturvarṇa*) has been made by the Hindu *Śāstra* itself. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavad Gītā*, SriKriṣṇa Himself says to Arjuna, “*Cāturvarṇa maya śṛstaṁ guṇa karma vibhāgasya*”¹. If it is taken to be true that as a matter of fact God Himself has introduced the concept of this fourfold division into the society then it cannot produce any evil in our society. The reason is obvious. We know that God by the very definition is loving. In Christianity this view has been emphatically accepted. Hindu religion also accepts the same view. In Hinduism God is variously described as *Karuṇāsindhu*, *Dinabandhu*, *Jagatpati*, *Dindayal*, *Paramapitā* etc. This clearly implies that God is loving. If God is loving like our parents then it is really inconceivable that God has done something which turns to be the cause of our sufferings. It may be that in some cases it may give birth to the sufferings of us but ultimately it happens to be the cause of the wellbeing of the whole society. Keeping this in view it can be maintained

that *Cāturvarṇa* cannot be the cause of the sufferings of our society. In order to substantiate this view the analogy of the human body can be cited. A number of the sociologists are of the opinion that our society can be compared with the body of the human being. A human body is composed of so many different organs. In the same way our society is also composed of so many individuals. So if the whole society stands for the whole body of human being then different individuals obviously stand for the different organs of the same human body. We know that each and every organ of the human body plays an important role for the growth and existence of the whole body. Likewise, different individuals living in our society plays an important role for growing up, betterment and existence of our whole society. What is more important and relevant to note in this respect is that the function of one organ of the body cannot be performed by another organ of our body. The function of eyes cannot be served by our ears and nose. The function of our heart cannot be replaced by the function of our hands and legs. In the same way the function of our brain can be operated neither by our hands nor by our belly nor even by our legs. In the same manner, some of the specific activities can be performed only by a particular class of people which can never be performed effectively and successfully by the other class of people. So it can easily be understood that the fourfold division of the people made by God helps to establish the wellbeing of our whole society. Thus it is seen that there is nothing wrong in the *Varṇa Vyavasthā* of Hinduism.

Now let us see what can be said against the above argument from part of Ambedkar. Here Ambedkar may say that the analogy of our body given above is a bad analogy. We know that the function of one organ cannot be performed by the other organ. No one can deny that the function of our eyes cannot be operated by our ears or nose. But the function of one individual or the function of one class can easily be performed by other individual or the other class provided if the individual or the class are trained properly. We know that

Kṣatriyas are the warrior class *Vaiśya* on the other are the trader class as it is stated by our *Śāstra*. But if a proper training for operating the different arms used in a war is imparted to the *Vaiśya* class and if the proper training for running trade is given to the *Kṣatriya* class then the function of fighting which is considered to be the unique property of the *Kṣatriyas* be performed by the *Vaiśyas* class and again the function of running the trade which is held as the private property of the *Vaiśyas* can be operated by the *Kṣatriyas* too. Thus it is seen that the above argument does not hold good.

In response to the objection raised by Ambedkar it can be maintained that Ambedkar here fails to understand the very spirit of the analogy given above. We sometimes in our day to day life compare somebody with some other person or some other thing or being. Ashutosh Mukherjee for example is compared with Tiger (Ashutosh is known as the Tiger of Bengal). Here one must understand the spirit of that analogy. Here if somebody says that this analogy is quite absurd simply because Tiger is an animal having four feet and one tail but Ashutosh Mukherjee has neither the four feet nor even one tail. Then it is clear that the person who raises this objection misses the point. Here Ashutosh Mukherjee has been compared with Tiger so far as his braveness is concerned. In the same way, one is to understand the very spirit of the analogy made above. When it is said that the function of the eyes cannot be performed by the ears or the function of our hands cannot be operated by our legs, then thereby it is meant that the function of one organ cannot be performed by the other organ so effectively. If we have a close observation then we can see that the function of one organ can be performed by the other organ to some extent. Sometimes we come across the fact that the function of our legs is performed by our hands and the vice-versa. A person who gets lost his legs either from the very birth or in any later stage of his life due to any accidentals walks by his hands. A person on the other hand, though in a very rare occasion, is also seen to write by

his legs. Besides this, our ear or the other organs of our body also are seen to perform the activity of our eyes to some extent. Suppose the leader of a CID group ask two persons X and Y to have an enquiry whether somebody is there within the room of a particular house. Suppose again that X is a person having his eyes of normal vision but Y does not. Mr. X enters into the room and sees that there are two persons whispering each other and comes back inform the same to the CID leader. Y like X enters into the room and listens to the whispering and touches the two persons present there within the room. Subsequently he comes back and informs the same to the CID leader. Here one and the same act has been performed by both X and Y. But the knowledge of the presence of the two individuals within the room is attained by X through his eyes. On the other hand the same knowledge is ascertained by Y through his ears and hands. So, the above observation of Ambedkar that the function of one organ cannot be performed by the other organ cannot be accepted. The very point which is intended to imply through the analogy taken is that though the activity of one organ can be performed by the other organ to some extent but it can never be performed so effectively. It is true that one can walk with the help of hand if one can properly practice but yet he cannot walk with the help of hand as fast as a normal man can walk with his legs. The same is true in writing also. Keeping this spirit of this view we can say that though it is true that through a long and rigorous training people belonging to the *Vaiśya* class can be the worrier and thereby perform the activity of the *Kṣatriya* class yet it cannot be denied that they cannot perform this activity as effectively as it is performed by the *Kṣatriyas* class. We know that for fighting in the war what is most important is the courage and brave. But those properties are the inherent properties. They cannot be implanted or injected from outside through any teaching or training. The four fold division of the people is made on the basis of the inherent nature that is the *guṇa* and *karma*. Thus it is seen that the objections of Ambedkar against this fourfold classification cannot be accepted.

We think Ambedkar may counter the above argument by saying that though the activity of some of the organs may be performed by the other organs, but there are some organs the activity of which can never be performed by any other organs. For example, the function of the heart cannot be performed by other organs. In the like manner the function of our lungs can never be performed by any other organs. The same is equally true in the case of the function of our brain. The operation of the thinking process is strictly a private property of our brain. But if we go back to our society then we see that the function of each and every class can be performed by the other class. Besides this if we have a close examination and analysis then we see that the exact function of a particular organ can never be performed by other organs as it is claimed in discussion above. The function of the eye can never be performed by ear and hand as it is claimed above. What is the exact function of our eyes? The exact function of our eyes is to see but is this function of seeing be performed by any other organ of our body? Our ears can hear the sound; our hands on other can perform the task of touching but both hearing and touching are different from seeing. More categorically to say the object of hearing is the sound; the object of touching is the softness and hardness. But the object of seeing is neither the sound nor even the hardness and softness, it is something else, it is the color. More or less same thing is true in the case of hand and the leg. The specific function performed by our leg is called walking. Can this act of walking be performed by our hand? Positively not. What our hand can perform in this respect is to make our body move from one place to another place. In this way the view of Ambedkar that the above analogy is the bad analogy can be substantiated.

Keeping this view in mind that the aforesaid analogy is not adequate and relevant let us sift to another analogy. We know that in a bank there are workers of the different classes. All of them taken together lead the function of the Bank smoothly and perfectly. Infact Bank

is a miniature of our whole society. So, what is true in the case of a Bank is equally true in the case of our whole society. For the sake of running the function of the Bank smoothly service of the different classes are essential. In the same way for smooth running of our society people or workers of the different classes are highly essential. The manager or the first grade officer of the Bank stands for the people of the Brahmin class of our society. The fourth grade workers of the Bank stand for the *Śūdra* class of our society and the workers in between of the Bank represent the people belonging to the *Kṣatriya* and the *Vaiśya* class of our society. The function of the Manager of the Bank cannot be performed by the fourth grade worker of that Bank. Similarly the function of the Brahmin class cannot be performed by the *Śūdra* class. If the fourth grade workers of the Bank are allowed to perform the function meant for the Manager of the Bank then no doubt some unwanted consequence will follow and the Bank cannot serve its purpose. In the same way, if the responsibility of performing the function of the *Brāhmin* class is handed over to the *Śūdra* class then positively it will led to some unwanted consequence from which our whole society will suffer. From this it can be concluded that the fourfold classification of the people made by our *Śāstra* is quite scientific and it is necessary for the progress and betterment of our society. So there is nothing wrong in it.

Here on behalf of Ambedkar someone may say that in our *Śāstras* as well as in our constitution all men have been described as equal. But if men are distinguished into four classes, then how can we say that all men are equal? The term classification necessarily implies some sort of inequality. Therefore if we accept this fourfold classification of the people as scientific and logical then we cannot, at the same, maintain that all men are equal. And again if we agree that all men are equal then we cannot accept the concept of

Cāturvarṇa (fourfold division) as it is propounded by *Śāstras*, because acceptance of the both at the same time leads to some sorts of self contradiction.

Apparently the above objection raised by Ambedkar looks sound but if we have a close examination then we can easily understand that this objection does not hold good at all. When our *Śāstra* and our constitution claim that all men are equal then we have to keep in our mind that the equality in question is not unqualified one. I think this can be explained with what is said by Henry Sidgwick. He says, “*Justice is the similar and injustice is the dissimilar treatment in similar situation.*”² This clearly implies that all men are equal in similar situation. Keeping this in view it can quite consistently be said that both our *Śāstra* and constitution advise to treat all people equally only in similar situation. Following the same principle it can be said that if the situation is dissimilar then two men cannot be treated similarly. So far as the humanity is concerned both the Manager and the peon of the Bank are equal. But as long as the academic qualifications, experience and the other relevant things are concerned they are not equal at all. Therefore equal treatment of both of them gives birth to injustice instead of justice. Here if the Manager of the Bank is replaced by the peon then obviously it will lead to injustice and adverse consequence. In the like manner a *Brāhmin* is not different from a *Śūdra* so far as their humanity is concerned. But so far as their *guṇa* and *karma* are concerned a *Brāhmin* cannot be equal to a *Śūdra*. If a *Brāhmin* is replaced by a *Śūdra* then it would lead to injustice and positively hamper the progress and the development of the whole society. It is important to note that a peon can be promoted to the post of a Manager of a Bank if the peon acquires all the necessary qualifications for being so. Similarly if an individual belonging to *Śūdra* class gains the *guṇa* and the *karma* of *Brāhmin* as it is stated by *Śāstras* then he should be promoted to the Brahmin class. This is what is meant by the equality of all men.

In order to substantiate his own position Ambedkar here may say that though theoretically this fourfold classification of the people sounds good but practically it takes completely a distortive form. In *Śāstra* it is clearly stated that the criterion for making this fourfold classification is the *guṇa* and *karma* and nothing else. So *Śāstra* suggests to classify all the people of the society into four classes strictly on the basis of *guṇa* and *karma* irrespective of birth. But in our day to day life this classification is made on the basis of birth irrespective of the *guṇa* and *karma*. It is worthy to note that this violation of the criterion is taken place in our practical life not only today but the same thing was found even in the period of *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*. When Srikrīṣṇa, for example, in the *Gītā* advised Arjuna to follow his *Svadharmā* then he did so just on the basis of his birth. And again when Karna was denied to take part in the mock fighting with Arjuna then no doubt it was done due to his birth because people knew him as *Sūtapūtra*. The case of Eklavya is not exception to it. We all know that when Eklavya expressed his desire to take the lesson of archery under the teaching of Dronacharjya his prayer was immediately and directly turned down by Dronacharjya. What is the reason behind it? The only answer is that he took his birth in a lower family called *Vyadh*. I think the strong desire of a tiny boy to take the lesson in archery is sufficient testimony that his *guṇa* and *karma* corresponds to the *guṇa* and the *karma* of *Kṣatriya*. And later on his unparalleled expertness and efficiency in archery without the teaching and guidance of any master bears a strong evidence of his Brahmin like *guṇa* and *karma*.

The aforesaid objection of Ambedkar can be answered in two different ways:-

First, if what is claimed by Ambedkar is taken to be true that really as a matter of fact this fourfold classification is made on the basis of birth yet, there is nothing wrong in it. We know a mango tree gives birth only the mango but not the jackfruit and the vice-versa. Similarly a

Brāhmin positively gives birth to a son who must be Brahmin by his *guṇa* and *karma* and a *Śūdra* gives birth a son who is *Śūdra* by nature.

We think the above view can easily be countered. Though as a matter of fact it is seen that a mango tree gives birth only mangoes but it is not true in the case of the people. Very often we come across the fact that one is an ideal *Brāhmin* but the son of him does not have even the minimum quality of a *Brāhmin*. On the other hand a father is *Śūdra* by his *guṇa* and *karma* but his son has *guṇa* and *karma* of *Brāhmin*. And the classic example cited by *Śāstra* is Prahllada who took his birth in *Rāksasa* family but became a distinguished and unparalleled devotee (*bhakta*) of God. The case of Viswamitra is also worthy to note.

Here someone may point out that the last argument given in favor of Ambedkar contradicts the earlier arguments where the name of Karṇa and Eklavya were mentioned. In the earlier argument an attempt has been made to establish the fact that the fourfold division of the people has been made on the basis of birth, not on the basis of *guṇa* and *karma*. But the immediate last argument where the case of Viswamitra and Prahllada has been cited clearly implies that the fourfold classification has been made on the basis of *guṇa* and *karma*, but not the basis of birth.

In reply to the above objection it can be said that through apparently one argument seems to contradict, the other argument but actually this is not so. The case of Prahllada and Viswamitra are strictly exceptional. Exception cannot be a rule. Rule is one which is followed in almost all of the cases on the basis of birth. So there is no self contradiction between the two arguments given above.

Now questions comes if the fourfold classification is made strictly on the basis of *guṇa* and *karma* instead of birth then yet does Ambedkar continue to raise objection in

accepting fourfold classification proposed by our *Śāstras*? Perhaps not, because in that case the *Varṇa Vyavasthā* does not give birth to any social problems, like caste system, untouchability, lack of unity, unemployment etc. In that case profession, status etc. of the one will be determined by the *guṇa* and *karma* of him irrespective of his birth. But we think the advice of maintaining such type of division is pointless. The activity of one actually is nothing but result of ones *guṇa*. If *svatta guṇa* in a person pre-dominates the other two *guṇas* then it is quite natural that his behavior or the activity will be *Brāhmin* like. The very question of advising him to perform the *Brāhmin* like activities becomes meaningless. The fire automatically burns due to its own nature. The water automatically satisfies our thirst due to its inherent nature. In the same way one man performs his activities due to his potential nature. Is this not useless and illogical to advise a man to perform his activities according to his inherent nature? Thus it is shown that if the fourfold division of the people is made on the basis of birth then it is unwanted as it gives birth to so many social problems and if this classification is made on the basis of *guṇa* and *karma* then it is useless.

Ambedkar says that had there been no *Varṇa Vyavasthā* man would have been self sufficient. We know self help is the best help. But as *Varṇa Vyavasthā* is prevalent in our society there is no scope for any individual to be self sufficient. Here in *Varṇa Vyavasthā* *Śūdra* has to depend upon *Vaiśya*, *Kṣatriya* and *Brāhmin* for their food, self protection and reading and writing their letters etc. respectively. In the same way Brahmin also has to depend upon *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra* for the self protection, food and other essential service like cleaning, cutting their hair etc. respectively. In this way each and every class becomes purely dependent upon the other classes. Thus this system creates an obstacle for becoming one self sufficient.

In reply to the above objection it can be said that the above mentioned allegation cannot be denied. But if we have a close look then we can see that the merits of the system in this respect are greater than its demerits. We all are acquainted with a famous proverb, “Jack of all trades but master of none”. If one tries to perform all the necessary activities for him then he can be master of no work. If all the people of a particular society follow this policy then that society cannot be developed. We know that if an individual is engaged for a long time with the specific type of activity then thereby he becomes efficient and expert in his respective activity which will positively lead that society to its maximum development and progress. Our day to day experiences substantiate this view. Day by day our society proceeds to this direction. One example may be cited to explain this fact. Today we are seeing that in the higher studies this trained is quite evident. We see that the whole higher academic world has been divided into some broader compartments or faculties like Arts, Science, Commerce, Engineering, Medical and so on. Each and every compartment has further been subdivided into smaller units. The Arts faculty for Example subdivided into Bengali, English, History, Political Science, Philosophy and so on. Different teachers are engaged with different subjects throughout their life. And again the teachers who are engaged with the study of Philosophy have further been compartmentalized. Some teachers of Philosophy are engaged with the study of Indian Philosophy, some on the other, are engaged with the western Philosophy. The journey of the specialization is not end with it. The teachers who are engaged with the study of Indian Philosophy have further been subdivided into the teachers of *Nyāya* Philosophy, the teachers of Vedanta Philosophy, and so on. This fact clearly implies that *Varṇa Vyavasthā* helps a lot to develop our society.

Now let us see whether Ambedkar has anything to say against this. I think this objection can be beautifully countered by Ambedkar. As a matter of fact Ambedkar has said

that the above claim may be taken to be true provided the division is made on the basis of the natural aptitude of the persons concerned but in reality the fourfold classification of the people prevailing in our society is made purely on the basis of birth irrespective of natural aptitude. This type of unscientific division cannot ensure the progress and development of any society on the contrary; it ensures the retreat and backwardness of our society. If this division is made exclusively on the basis of natural aptitude then Ambedkar again will say the same thing that the advice of maintaining this division is pointless. The whole thing will smoothly proceed automatically. We think the observation of Ambedkar is well grounded.

Gandhiji once said “*varṇa vyavasthā* in our society is as essential as air and water in our life”³. Let us examine this view. Gandhiji has given maximum importance upon *Varṇa Vyavasthā* of Hinduism. Sometimes he considers this *Varṇa Vyavasthā* as the essence of Hindu religion. He states that how can a Muslim remain a Muslim if he does not follow the Koran? Similarly a Hindu, according to his observation cannot remain a Hindu if he does not follow *Varṇāśrama Vyavasthā*. Perhaps he had been highly influenced by the teaching of the *Gītā*. In the *Gītā* Srikrishṇa categorically says to Arjuna, “*Svadharmye nidhanam śreya paradharma bhayābhaya*”⁴. This statement of Srikrishṇa clearly implies how much important the *Varṇāśrama* system is. If we go to *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita* then again we can see that this view has been substantiated there also. In *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita* we come to know that once Chaitanya Deva happens to meet *Roy Ramānanda*, a great devotee as well as a distinguished and unparallel scholar. Sri *Chaitanya Deva* wants to know from *Ramānanda* about the path leading to God. In reply *Ramānanda* beautifully says that it is through the performance of our *Svadharmā* that is *Varṇa Dharma* the earnest love for God is taken place in our mind. The *Sloke* runs as,

“*Prabhu kahe kara pāth sādhyer nirnay*”

Roy kahe svadharmācharane Viṣṇu bhakti hoy”5.

Arjuna after seeing his near ones and dear ones gathered in his counterpart for fighting in *Kurūśetra* decided not to fight but to leave away the battle field. But Srikrīṣṇa thought that if Arjuna did not fight then it would lead to unwanted consequence in Hastinapur. Srikrīṣṇa knew that the duty of a King is to restore discipline, justice and peace in his kingdom. For doing so he must fight against *Kouravas*. So here the another name for performing *Varṇadharmā* or *Svadharmā* is to establishing justice, morality and peace in the society. Perhaps keeping this importance of performing *Varṇadharmā* in mind Gandhiji has passed the statement in question.

Now if we try to understand the importance of *Varṇa Vyavasthā* in the light of what has been said by Srikrīṣṇa in the *Gītā* then it is clear that *Varṇāśrama Dharma* plays an important role in maintaining the discipline and order in our society. According to Srikrīṣṇa it is the *Varṇadharmā* through the performance of which the discipline, order, peace and justice are preserved and maintained in society. No society continues to exist if there is no discipline, order and justice in it we cannot live without air and water. The existence of no life can be conceived of without air and water. Similarly the existence of no society can be thought of without discipline, order and justice. Therefore the above observation of Gandhiji is well grounded. But problem crops up when we think of the other society and religion. We know that in other religions like Christianity and Islam in general and Buddhism in particular there is no room for *Varṇa Vyavasthā*. How can they then continue to exist? Had *Varṇa Vyavasthā* been as essential as air and water in our life then Christian, Islam and Buddhist society could not have been existent. But as a matter of fact these societies are smoothly running, may be in a better way than Hindu society without maintaining the fourfold classification as it is suggested in Hinduism. We know that no life can continue to exist without air and water. But

some societies continue to exist smoothly without *Varṇasrama Vyavasthā*. This clearly implies that the above observation of Gandhiji cannot be accepted.

Now let us go to another important observation made by Ambedkar against *Varṇa Vyavasthā* prevailing in our society. Ambedkar holds that it is due to *Varṇa Vyavasthā* that the Hindus lack their unity and integrity. In this context he beautifully says “*one Sikh or one Khalsa is equal to Sava Lakh men and one Mohammedan is equal to a crowd of Hindus*”.⁶

Now let us see how much the above observation of Ambedkar is well grounded. I think the truth of that observation of Ambedkar can be established only through our practical experience. If we look in and around our society then I think the truth of his observation cannot be denied. We come across a number of instances where Hindus though they are majority did not dare to fight with the minimum numbers of Muslims. Besides our practical experience I think the above view of Ambedkar can be proved to be true in a different way. We know the sense of unity and integrity comes from the sense of oneness. So it can logically be said that the lack of unity and integrity is generated from the lack of oneness. A Hindu feels lack of oneness due to *varṇa-bheda* which obviously gives birth to the lack of unity and integrity among the Hindus. I think there is another important reason behind the lack of unity and integrity among the Hindus. The *Brāhmins* and the *Kṣatriyas* are seen to suffer from their superiority complex. They always consider themselves to be superior to other *Varṇas*. The *Vaiśyas* and the *Śūdras* on the other suffer from the inferiority complex. They always consciously or unconsciously consider themselves to be inferior to the other two *Varṇas*. Consequently *Vaiśyas* and the *Śūdras* keep themselves away from *Brāhmanas* and the *Kṣatriyas*. Thus a distance is made among all the *Varṇas* which in turn gives birth to the lack of unity and integrity among the Hindus. So, the above observation of Ambedkar cannot be denied.

Ambedkar has raised another important objection against *Varṇa Vyavasthā* of Hinduism. Ambedkar says that *Varṇa Vyavasthā* is responsible for the unemployment, poverty and starvation of the Hindu's. No one can deny the fact that unemployment, poverty and starvation are the crying problems of Hinduism. May be the birth rate of the *Śūdras* increase to a great extent as they are uneducated and unconscious about the justification of birth control. Thus population of the *Śūdra* class becomes higher. But the service meant for the *Śūdra* class remains fixed in our society so it is quite natural that in this situation a number of *Śūdras* will remain unemployed. Consequently they will suffer from poverty and starvation. Thus it is established once again that the observation of Ambedkar is firm footed.

From the viewpoint of Ambedkar another dark aspect of *Varṇa Vyavasthā* can be cited. Demand and supply should be an open process. Our society is ever dynamic. The demand of the society is always changing with the change of time. Sometimes our society needs more amounts of soldiers and sometimes again it needs fewer amounts of soldiers. If the tensions among the different countries intensify then it is quite natural that maximum numbers of soldiers are necessary for the protection of a country. But the number of the *Kṣatriyas* who are capable and worthy of being the soldiers according to *Varṇa dharma* are always fixed. In that case people belonging to the other *Varṇas* should be allowed to occupy the profession of soldiers and thereby participate in fighting or war wherever and whenever situation demands. But according to the *Varṇāśrama* system this cannot be allowed. Thus, *Varṇa Vyavasthā* leads our country to a dangerous situation.

Another important objection raised by Ambedkar against *Varṇa Vyavasthā* or caste system is worthy to note. Ambedkar says that the influence of caste or *Varṇa* upon the ethics of Hindu's are simply deplorable. Caste or *Varṇa*, he observes, destroys the sense of public charity. Hindu's responsibility and ethical duty is always caste-ridden. Ambedkar points out

that there are the sense of charity and sympathy within the Hindus but it begins with the caste and ends with the caste.

Now let us see how much this objection of Ambedkar against *Varṇa Vyavasthā* or caste system is justified. It is an inherent tendency of almost all of us that we serve our duty for the people whom we consider our near ones and dear ones. It is quite natural that one considers one individual as his own if he belongs to his own *Varṇa* or Caste. But one cannot consider one individual as his own if he belongs to the other *Varṇa* or Caste. Thus it is established that the sense of charity and moral duty of the Hindus must be *Varṇa* or Caste ridden.

Ambedkar observes that it is only due to the caste that the Hindu's could not be united and therefore could not make a nation. But the observation of Gandhiji is parallelly opposed it. Gandhiji holds that castes have saved Hinduism from disintegration. Naturally question arises whose observation is correct? I think in one sense Gandhi's observation is acceptable. But in another sense Ambedkar's observation is right. Initially Gandhiji's observation is correct because the phenomenon of *varṇa* helps to maintain the unity and integrity within the different four *varṇas*. One Brahmin feels unity and integrity with another Brahmin. Likewise a *Śudra* considers another *Śudra* as his kith and kin. Thus *varṇa* system maintains compartmentalized unity and integrity. But here another point is very important to note. Though the Brahmin looks upon another Brahmin as his own but at the same time he feels himself to be disunited and disintegrated from the people of other three *Varṇas*. Thus a fence is erected among the different castes. So this fact cannot be denied that the compartmentalized unity and integrity leads to lack of universal absolute unity and integration. Had there been no division of *Varṇa* in Hinduism all Hindus would have been united and integrated and thereby would constitute a single whole. So, ultimately Ambedkar's

observation that because of the *Varṇa Vyavasthā* Hindus have been distinguished into different folds and cannot give birth to any nation.

Gandhiji holds that the four fold divisions of *Brāhmin*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śudra* alone are fundamental, natural and essential. The innumerable sub castes that are sometimes convenience but often a hindrance should be annihilated at the earliest.⁶ Here a question arises why only the fourfold divisions alone are fundamental, natural and essential, why the five-fold or six-fold or the two-fold divisions are not natural? No convincing answer has been given by Gandhiji. Gandhiji emphatically asserts that *Varṇa* system does not connote superiority or inferiority but he also mentions that it cannot be denied that in reality some sort of hierarchy has been evolved in *Varṇa* system. He further says that hierarchy is inevitable, when all *Varṇa* except a common goal of life.⁷ Is it not the case that Gandhiji here suffers from self contradiction?

Gandhiji observed that it is due to the *Varṇa* system that Hindu society could stand. I think this observation of Gandhiji can hardly be accepted. If this observation of Gandhiji is taken to be true then what's about the progress of the other developed countries where there is no room for *Varṇa*. The progress and development taken place in western country is so high that it cannot be compared with the progress and development of India. Now if we conclude that the unparallel progress has been taken place in the western countries because there is no room for *Varṇa* then it would be illogical and lack of truth? So again this observation of Gandhiji cannot be accepted. Gandhiji repeatedly and categorically points out that *Varṇa* System is a natural order of society and therefore he opposes all the attempts to destroy the *Varṇa* System.⁸ Question comes is this observation of Gandhiji really true? We know that what is natural must be universal. Say for example, the phenomena of hunger and thirst are natural property of the human beings. Therefore those phenomena are true of any

human being irrespective of caste, creed, gender and country. Had *Varṇa Vyavasthā* been really a natural phenomenon it would have been present in all communities and in all countries. But as a matter of fact this *Varṇa* system is not present in all communities and in all countries. This fact clearly implies that this observation of Gandhiji is not true. Mahatma Gandhi is highly concerned about the preservation of the fourfold division of *Varṇa* system in Hinduism. Had it been really natural then the very question of its destruction and preservation is pointless. If we are hungry then it's quite natural that we shall look for fruit. If we are thirsty then it is natural that we shall look for water. Can we meaningfully say that those natural tendencies of us should be preserved?

Gandhiji holds that even if one had managed somehow to learn a profession other than one's 'Hereditary' one, i.e. other than one's *Varṇa*, one must not earn a living by it i.e. one should earn one's living by means of doing one's hereditary vocation only.⁹ Here again the problem comes if someone earns mastery over any profession other than one's hereditary one then why one must not earn a living by it? No special reason has been shown by Gandhiji in this regard. If Gandhiji's observation is true then society cannot make any progress. We know that day by day the demand of our society is increasing. Accordingly avenue of new activities are opening up. How can those new activities be adjusted as they are not our hereditary activities.

Another important observation made by Gandhiji regarding the status of *Varṇa* should be examined. Gandhiji says, 'There are four *Varṇas*, all equal in status, and they are determined by birth. They can be changed by a person choosing another profession, but if *Varṇas* are not as a rule determined by birth, they tend to lose all meaning'.¹⁰ Ambedkar does not agree with Gandhiji on this issue. Ambedkar says that our birth cannot be the criterion for the distinction of the four fold *Varṇas*. Infact birth is the standard for the

distinction of the caste or *jāti*. If birth is taken as the standard for the distinction of *Varṇas* then in no way *Varṇa* can be distinguished from caste or *jāti*. Here Ambedkar has raised a serious objection against Gandhiji. Ambedkar holds that Gandhiji confuses *Varṇa* with the caste and he has made this confusion consciously in order to cheat common people and to satisfy the vested interest of his own. Ambedkar observes that there were two 'I's in Gandhiji. One is his spiritual 'I' and another is political 'I'. His spiritual 'I' takes an initiative to spiritualize the politics. But his political 'I' is a selfish 'I' who knows very well that the society cannot bear the whole truth. Gandhiji, Ambedkar observes, is quite conscious that if he takes the truth and thereby tries to destroy this caste system then there is every possibility that he loses his political position. Keeping this in view Gandhiji intentionally tries to make the down trodden people fool by confusing *Varṇa* with the Caste. Now let us examine whose observation is correct? More clearly to say whether the observation of Gandhiji that the criterion for distinguishing the four fold *Varṇas* is birth or the criterion in question is the *guṇa* and the *Karma* as it is mentioned by Ambedkar is correct. So, far as my own observation is concerned I think the observation of Ambedkar in this regard is correct. First of all let us go to *Śrīmad Bhāgavat Gītā*. In *Śrīmad Bhāgavat Gītā*, Śrīkriṣṇa categorically says to Arjuna that the four fold division of *Varṇa* has been made by Himself. But at the same time He says that this fourfold division has been made by Him on the basis of *guṇa* and *karma*. “*Cāturvarṇa mayā sṛstam guṇa karma Vibhāgasya*”¹¹. Here if we have a closer examination then it can easily be understood that when Śrīkriṣṇa positively says that the criterion of the division of fourfold *Varṇa* is *guṇa* and *karma* then it clearly implies that He negatively intends to mean that our birth cannot be the criterion for the same. Thus it is seen that what is said by Śrīkriṣṇa in the *Gītā* to be the criterion of the division of *Varṇa* directly goes against the view of Gandhiji. If we are to understand the very spirit of what is said by Śrīkriṣṇa in the *Gītā* then I think elaborate discussion of the terms *guṇa* and *karma* should be

given. The term *guṇa* actually stands for *sattva*, *rajaḥ* and *tamaḥ*. *Varṇa* also represents the same. Generally by *Varṇa* we mean color of different kinds. But metaphorically *Varṇa* means different *guṇas*. This view is substantiated by the first verse of *Samkhya-kārikā* where *prakṛti* has been compared with *lohita-sukla-kriṣṇa varṇam*. We know that in *Samkhya* Philosophy *pūruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, the two ultimate realities, have been recognized. In *Samkhya* Philosophy *Prakṛti* is held to consist of the three *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajaḥ* and *tamaḥ* in a state of equilibrium. It is further stated that *Sattva*, *Rajaḥ* and *Tamaḥ* can be compared with whiteness, Redness and Blackness respectively. The same view is held by *Svetāśvetara Upanishad* too. We also come across the same type of opinion in *Mahābhārata*. In *Mahābhārata* also *sita* for white, *asita* for black, *pita* for yellow and *rakta* for red are used to stand for *Brāhman*, *Śūdra*, *Vaiśya* and *Kṣatriya* respectively. Thus it is seen that in different religious texts the colors white, red, black etc. are used to stand for *Sattvādiguṇas*. Owing to this reason above give birth to the variations of the different *Varṇas* like *Brāhmin*, *Ksatriya*, *Vaishya* etc. Thus the name *Varṇabheda* becomes appropriate and meaningful. These three *guṇas* are seen to belong to all men but in different proportions. This difference of the proportions of the different *guṇas* gives birth to the difference of the people. This difference of the *guṇa* accounts for the difference in the different *Varṇas*. It is further to note that pleasure, pain and indifference come from *Sattva*, *Rajaḥ* and *Tamaḥ* respectively. Thus *guṇabheda* accompanied by *karmabheda* accounts for *Varṇabheda*. The *karmas* prescribed for one *Varṇa* are completely different from the *karmas* determined for other *Varṇas*. Say for example, *Yajana-Yājana*, *adhyāyana*, *adhyāpanā* etc are prescribed for *Brāhman*. Ruling of the country, protection of the subjects and maintaining the law and order within the state are the activities reserved for *Kṣatriyas*, Agriculture and trade are prescribed for *Vaiśya* and lastly *Śūdras* are advised to render service to the upper three *Varṇas*. All these things as it is stated above clearly imply that *Varṇabheda* is based on *guṇa* and *karma* as it is understood

and pointed out by Ambedkar, but not on birth as it is observed by Gandhiji. But the division of caste or *Jāti* is based on birth, not on *guna* and *karma*. Simply because he has taken his birth in a Brahmin by *Varṇa* which implies that he may not be a Brahmin also. Whether the son of a Brahmin will be a Brahmin by *Varṇa* or not it purely depends upon his *guṇa* and *karma* irrespective of his birth. The son of a Brahmin should be treated as a Brāhman if and only if there will be predominance of *Sattva guṇa* in him and he takes *Yajana-yājana* etc. as his profession or *karma*.

Ambedkars view can be substantiated by refuting the view of Gandhiji in terms of some more informations given below. We can cite here one of the important slokes from Srimad Bhāgavad which runs as

“*yasya yat lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ paṁso Varṇābhi-vyanjakaṁ*

Yat anyatrāpi dṛśyeta tattenaiḥ vinirdibed” 12.

Here *Sama* and *dama* are the distinguishing two virtues of Brahmin. If these two virtues *sama* and *dama* are seen to be present in individuals belonging to other *Varṇas* then they should be treated as Brahmin. In the same way “*Samadibhireva Brāhmanadi Vyavaharo mukhyah na tu jatimatraditi*” categorically says that one’s *Varṇa* is to be determined not by one’s *jāti* but by one’s *guṇa* like *Sama*, *Dama* etc. The same thing is said by *Mahābhārata* too. In *Mahābhārata*, Yudhisthira points out that if the *guṇas* of *Brāhmin* like *Sama* and *Dama* are seen to be present in *Śūdra* then he is no more a *Śūdra* but he is a *Brāhmin*. But if on the other hand the qualities like *Sama* and *Dama* are absent in some *Brāhmins* then they are no more *Brāhmin*, they are either *Śūdra* or *Vaiśya*. “*Na vai bhabet Śūdra Brāhmāno na ca Brāhmanaḥ*”.¹³ The above view is substantiated by Bhṛgu in *Sāntiparva* of *Mahābhārata*. Here Bhṛgu describes to Bharadwaja how *Varṇabheda* has been taken its birth. He says,

‘ityetaih karmabhirvyastā dwijā Varnāntaram gatāh’. Mahādeba in *Umāmaheswara Sambada* describes that birth in does not necessarily make one *Brahmin*. What makes one Brahmin is this character. He says that if a *Śūdra* conquers his senses and becomes pure in his mind then he is very much a Brahmin. The same view is supported by *Bhakti Śāstra* when it says “*Chandālopi dwijaśrestho Haribhakti –Parāyanah*”. Here some concrete examples may be referred to from authentic Hindu *Śāstras* who were treated as upper *Varṇas* by virtue of their *guṇas* though they took their birth in lower *Varṇas*.

Prof Tapan Kumar Chakravarty, Retired Prof. of Jadavpur University, West Bengal, has written a thought provoking enlightening Scholarly article entitled *On defense of Varṇa Vyavasthā*. In his article Prof. Chakravarty raises an objection against Ambedkar. He says that as a matter of fact *Varṇabheda* and *Jātibheda* are purely different but unfortunately Ambedkar fails to understand this distinction and confuses one with other. He further points out that sometimes Ambedkar recognizes the distinction between *Varṇa* and caste. What Prof. Chakravarty claims implies that Ambedkar suffer from contradiction. To authenticate what we are saying we may quote him. Prof. Chakravarty says, “Ambedkar seems to confuse between *Varṇabheda* and *jātibheda* for he argued that inequality resulted from *Varṇa* with *Jāti*.. At times, however, he acknowledged that they were not only fundamentally different but were also fundamentally opposed”¹⁴.

I cannot agree with the aforesaid observation of Prof. Chakravarty. I think Ambedkar never confuses *Varṇa* with *Jāti*. Rather he sharply criticizes Gandhiji when he confuses *Varṇa* with Caste. What Ambedkar says is that so far the definitions of *Varṇa* and *Jāti* are concerned it is clearly evident that one is purely different from the other. We know that the definition consists in the differentiating property (*Vyavartakadharmā*) of the thing to be defined. Here Ambedkar categorically says that the differentiating property or defining

property of *Varṇa* is the worth (*Guṇa* and *Karma*). But the defining or differentiating property of *Jāti* is birth. Quote..... Ambedkar here raises the objection that though theoretically *Varṇa* and *Jāti* are clearly different but practically *Varṇa* has been turned into *Jāti* as in both of the *Varṇa* and *Jāti* the birth has been taken as the defining property. This is the reason why Ambedkar claims that in Hinduism both *Jāti* and Untouchability come from *Varṇa* system and which in turn directly comes from Hindu religion itself. Thus it can quite consistently and logically be said that the root cause of both the *Jāti* and Untouchability is the Hindu religion itself. Quote – “people observe caste and Untouchability not..... but because they are deeply religious. This observation made by me is clearly substantiated by what is said by Ambedkar pointed out by Prof Chakravorty himself in his article mentioned above”. At times, however, he acknowledged that they were not only fundamentally different but were also fundamentally opposed. The former was based on worth while the latter on birth”.

In order to justify his claim that Ambedkar confuse *Varṇa* with *Jāti* Prof. Tapan Kumar Chakraborty says “Ambedkar seems to confuse between *Varṇabheda* and *Jātibheda* for he argued that inequality resulted from *Varṇa* and *Jāti*’. Here if we have a logical analysis then we can easily understand that the above statement has nothing to do with substantiating what Prof Chakravorty claims. The above statement says that one and the same effect called inequality is produced out of the two different causes, one is *Varṇa* and the other is *Jāti*. The fact that here the *Varṇa* and *Jāti* are different has been established by the conjunction ‘and’ used here. If the conjunction ‘or’ were used only then the above mentioned observation of Chakravorty would have been substantiated.

The following quotation made by Prof. Chakraborty seems to substantiate his claim in question. The quotation runs as “*the original four classes have now become four thousand*

castes". Here the statement cited by Chakraborty within the quotation clearly shows that the four *Varṇas* themselves have been turned into Caste or *Jāti*. But here a little reflection shows that here Ambedkar likes to mean that though as a matter of fact there is a consult the original *Varṇas* consciously convert *Varṇa* into *Jāti* (*Caste*) in order to fulfill their vested interests. The living example of such person, as it is clearly stated by Ambedkar, is Gandhiji himself.

If we have a close examination an analysis then we can see that the criterion of *Varṇabheda* was shifted from *guṇa-karma* to birth from the ancient days. It is well known to us that initially karṇa was not allowed to participate in the mock fighting with Arjuna simply because he was known as *Sūtaputra*. So far as the *guṇa* and *karma* are concerned he was not different from Arjuna. If *guṇa* and *karma* is the criterion for *Varṇabheda* then why *Karṇa* was not permitted to participate in the mock fighting. Eklavya is also not exception to it. So far as the worth or potentiality (*guṇa*) of archery of Eklavya is concerned there was none to compare with him but yet Dronacharjya did not agree to accept him as his student simply because he took his birth in lower family (*Vyadha* Family).

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