CHAPTER III

AMBEDKAR'S ATTEMPT AT SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Ambedkar's Critique of Hindu Religion and Society:

The inhumanity, superstition and irrationality in Hinduism, made Ambedkar to search for more acceptable religion to fit for his needs. Being an untouchable Hindu, he looked at Hindu law as nothing but against his people. This is the main reason which brought Ambedkar to the fold of Buddhism. He did not stop with conversion to Buddhism. He started reading Buddhism in the context of Hindu society. Finally he emerged with his 'rational humanism' that is the scientific interpretation of Buddha Dhamma. Hence, Ambedkar's Buddhism, can be understood only in the context of Hindu social system. Without considering Hindu philosophy, one cannot do justice in examining Ambedkar's interpretation of Buddhism.

Ambedkar's views on humanity, rationalism, scientific approach to social behaviour - all these should be regarded as reflections and reactions to Hindu social order. Judging the validity of his interpretations in isolation, is not going to help us to make rational conclusions. So studying the philosophy of Ambedkar at
first can help us to make valid and rational judgements on his interpretation of the Buddhism.

Ambedkar's philosophy\(^1\) is the common man's philosophy. Ambedkar did not relate it to the subtle ontological and metaphysical problems which man could not solve with justice to mankind. In Ambedkar's view, philosophy has a social and ethical meaning, because he wanted it to be a means of social change. He feels that, every man, should have a philosophy of life, for everyone must have a standard by which to measure.\(^2\)

The main purpose of Ambedkar's philosophy is to establish the right relations between man and man. That is why, after rejecting the existence of God, the eternal soul, heaven and hell, the transmigration of soul, etc., Ambedkar took philosophy in man's social context. So the vital problem of Ambedkar was not to find out the relation of man with god or the relation between soul and god, but the human relations. That is to say the right relations between man and man.

\(--\)

1. See Appendix II, for Ambedkar's speech on his philosophy.

Ambedkar did not entertain philosophy as a subject of metaphysics and ontology, but as a moral standard, by which one could measure human conduct in relation to man and nothing else. The world is made, not by divine power, but by living human beings, who can by themselves make the world socially prosperous and morally good - the best possible one.

Ambedkar rejected the Hindu philosophy of life and society, because it did not allow the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity to be active and useful values of life. He did not visualise any 'social utility' in Hindu philosophy. According to him, a philosophy which dissects society in fragments, which dissociates work from interest, which disconnects intelligence from labour, which expropriates the rights of man to interests vital to life and which prevents society from mobilizing resources for common action in the hour of danger, cannot be said to satisfy the test of social utility.3

So it is very much apparent, that the Hindu philosophy comes in contradiction with what Ambedkar stood for. His philosophy stands for the social interest of

all; whereas the Hindu philosophy stood for the class-
interests of the first three Varnas. "The philosophy of
Hinduism therefore neither satisfies the test of social
utility nor does it satisfy the test of individual
justice".4

There is no doubt that Ambedkar rejected
philosophy of Hinduism outrightly. In other words he
opposed to call him and his people as Hindus. It does not
mean that he is against of the relevance of religion. For
him, Hinduism as a religion and as a philosophy does not
have any social utility so suggested to the human
community to discard it. But he urged to replace Hinduism
with the religion based on humanity and social
responsibility. So, as some argue that Ambedkar by
denying Hinduism, opposed the role of religion in the
society, is not at all correct and cannot stand by the
evidence.

Ambedkar, very much recognised the need of
religion. And, in order of preference, he gave a
prominent place to religion, morality and law in his
philosophy. But his religion does not involve in the
subtleties of epistemology, metaphysics and ontology,

4. Ibid., p. 71.
because they are speculative and do not have much social utility for the common man.

In Ambedkar's scheme of social relations, morality (fraternity) has been given a primary place in order to bring the people together. Law has been given a secondary place, because the field of morality is wider than the field of law. Law is intended to control the strong from exploiting the weak and applied it only when there are disputes and disturbances among them; but morality binds all the people both in times of peace and disorder.

In fact, people behave like law abiding citizens because not that they are well aware of exact nature of laws which have been made for them, but they follow certain rules of morality. This is the main reason why people in peace and harmony with one another but not because of they know very much of state law. The country like India is very fine example to support this view, where there is illiteracy at high. Therefore, it is true what Ambedkar thought, that man cannot do anything without obeying moral norms of society. Here morality stands for human concern and the spirit of love of many by man. So morality has social utility.
According to Ambedkar, morality does not require the sanction of god. It is not to please god that man has to be moral. It is for his own good that man has to love man. Why Ambedkar did not relate morality with divine power? Ambedkar knows very well that, morality identified with god, soul, prayers, worship rituals, ceremonies and sacrifices, is not going to help man.

In Ambedkar’s view, the purpose of morality is not to please the gods and angels, but to establish the relations among human beings, based on love, liberty, equality and fraternity. The divine sanctioned morality, does not stand by human love and human concern but motivate people to adopt morality for the sake of divine blessings, for material prosperity.

But Ambedkar believed that the demands made by the physical and social environment must be met by man himself. And if man wants to live well with material prosperity, his problems must be met well and boldly by himself but not to wait for any supernatural help; In Ambedkar’s view, supernatural help does not really exist anywhere rather the feeling of suppress human creativity, initiation and social motivation. So social environment must be met by man himself.

The whole responsibility for social and economic well-being lies upon the shoulders of man. Man is a social being. He cannot live in isolation. Therefore, in the social scheme of Ambedkar, human responsibility replaced divine grace emphasised the importance of responsibility in maintaining the human relations. In Ambedkar's Buddhist society, what man chooses, he chooses for all, and in fashioning himself, man fashions not only the being of himself, but also the being of others living with him.

The Buddha's Dhamma is the basic theme of Ambedkar's philosophy. Because, his morality is nothing but Buddha's Dhamma. Ambedkar writes that, in Dhamma morality takes the place of God, although there is no God in Dhamma. He also writes that in Dhamma there is no place for prayers, pilgrimages, rituals ceremonies or sacrifices. And in his opinion, morality is the essence of Dhamma. Without it there is no Dhamma. Morality in Dhamma arises from the direct necessity for man to love man\(^6\). Dhamma is a social and ethical doctrine which appealed to the mind and reason of Ambedkar. He feels that the purpose of Dhamma is to reconstruct the world\(^7\). That is the main reason why he adopted Dhamma of Buddha.

\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^7\) Ibid., p. 322.
Ambedkar wants neither to establish a relation of man with god nor to replace human responsibility with divine responsibility. He preferred Buddha Dhamma, as a great humanist, because the proper object of his philosophy is human, the empirical human, who lives and believes in social relationship. Hence, for Ambedkar, man is the measure of all things, and "the true measure of man is worth, not birth."  

It is true knowledge, which can dispel the wrong beliefs of man, and can encourage him in performing his duties well. Therefore Ambedkar wants, imparting true education for the development of human personality. In his philosophy, the humanist education, is being emphasised, since it is for "the effort of man to rediscover himself as a free being rather than as a child of the church of the state."  

As Buddhist education believes, if the mind is controlled, individual and social life could be harmonious; and for Ambedkar, the most sublime human values are intellectual matters of mind. The exercise of one's intellectual powers, through education, constitutes

8. Ibid., p. 306.
the highest good of man in the type of humanism, Ambedkar thought.

It is only through right education that one could enlighten oneself and organize social forces against tyrannical and oppressive elements of traditional societies in India and the world over. In other words, without education scientific lines, one cannot build up society, for human betterment, rather both illiteracy as well as falsified education, contributes to weaken the society, since this sort of education cannot help people to face their problems. So the right education of Ambedkar is nothing but true knowledge of Buddha Dhamma.

Ambedkar accepted, it, because, he believes that, only Buddhist education, which contains 'true knowledge' can bring human mind to think of humanity, than divinity. And the thinking of humanity by man contributes to betterment of humankind. This is the main purpose of right education in Ambedkar's social thought.

The philosophical insight of Ambedkar is more ethical than metaphysical; because his faith in man and his social being, stands to prove this point. The basic element of Ambedkar's philosophy is nothing but
'Humanism'. In other words, scientific humanism based on Buddha Dhamma. That is Humanism for the betterment of all the people and society based on liberty, equality and fraternity. And means to achieve all these ideals, is right education (i.e. right knowledge).

Ambedkar writes that, to idealise the real which more often than not is full of iniquities, is a very selfish thing to do. Only when a person finds a personal advantage in things as they are, that he tries to idealise the real. He says that to proceed to make such an ideal real is nothing short of criminal. It means perpetuating iniquity on the ground that whatever is once settled is settled for all times.

Ambedkar feels that such a view is opposed to all morality and no society with a social conscience has ever accepted it. On the contrary, whatever progress in improving the terms of associated life between individuals and classes has been made in the course of history, is due entirely to the recognition of the ethical doctrine that what is wrongly settled is never settled and must be resettled, he opines.10

This criticism of Ambedkar, on scripture based arguments, shows that he is a practical idealist. What he wants to say is that, one has to question the ideal, mentioned in religious scriptures. Without questioning the scripture, one shouldn’t accept as it is. Application of reason brought, the motive behind the idealised real, which makes man to re-correct wrongs in his beliefs and able to lead right social life.

Ambedkar’s main purpose of ‘social realism’, is to widen the frontier’s of human freedom. He exercised his gift of reason in the cause of social freedom and democracy. His contribution to India’s struggle for social freedom is original and abiding and it changed the course of social history of India. It is well said that man is shaped by the environment, but it is equally true that man shapes his environment.

That is why, Ambedkar suggested that the best and the worst of human life is in the hands of human alone. And one can change history one’s own by appropriate efforts. Hence happiness of human mind lies in the purity of human mind. Freedom of mind can be achieved through the true knowledge. That is both knowing as well as practicing Buddha Dhamma.
Ambedkar challenged the status quo masked as divinity. In challenging the status quo he stirred society into action, through his philosophy of social democracy. Ambedkar believed that law could be an efficacious instrument of social change. Otherwise, that law cannot be called as law at all. The idealised real supported by such law should be discarded. For example Hindu social law is nothing but idealised real. The real is caste and untouchability in social belief. But these elements are idealised real of Hindu social law. The whole Hindu social structure is depended on this law, authored by Manu and it serves to support social exploitation. In turn social exploitation supports political and economic exploitations. This Hindu society is based on, in Ambedkar words, ‘graded inequality’.

The laws of Manu, described the working of an ideal system - they were compiled by Brahmins, who drew, an ideal picture of what they thought the social organism should be rather than a portraiture of what it actually was, and presented the ideal as real.

Making such an ideal, real is in Ambedkar’s view, a crime. It is nothing but a very selfish thing to do. This has to be re-settled. He wants to re-define social purpose of social law. His re-definition is, to put in
simple way, **Buddha-Dhamma**. He wants to replace 'Manu Dharma' with socially high qualified **Buddha Dhamma**. So as he says what is wrongly settled is never settled and must be re-settled. The re-settlement is obviously Buddhist social order, based on scientific humanism.

The inclusion of the promotion of **Dhamma** as one of the aims of the state, made the king the champion of **Varnadharma** (caste system), which is based on inequitous principles. It exalts the **Brahmana** and confers on him almost divine honours, while it reduces the sudras and **Candalas** almost to the position of slaves by denying them the most elementary rights of ordinary citizenship. The Sudras were forbidden to hold property and subjected to heavier punishments than those meted out to the **Brahmana** for identical offences. The candalas were treated worse than dogs. With the state championing varnas, it became a party to all these inequities. And the state enforced the iniquitous **Varnasrama Dharma** at the point of the sword to the detriment of the lower classes. This was a case of social injustice. It confounded **dharma** with the existing social order. And the total effect was that it idealised the actual instead of actualising the ideal.11

In the Hindu system, religion and morals are closely interwoven. A distinction between them can be drawn in terms of the authority and sanction attached to their respective prescriptions. Religion implies a relationship between man and man and also between man and some higher power. Hence it, invokes a sanction which is supra social. Any ordinance is thus part of a religious code which eminates from an authority accepted as the interpreter of a creed. And Manu is such an authority and his code is styled the 'Institutes'.

A code is religious when its source is presented as divine authority and its sanction is supernatural. It is moral when it promulgates standards of conduct that directly derive their sufficient justification from the human intepretation of good and evil. Besides, there is the distinction between the religious ideal of 'sin' and the moral ideal of 'wrong'. But the two ideas are blended in Manu.12 The Manu Smriti states: "whatever law (Dharma) has been ordained for any (person) by Manu, that has been fully declared in the veda; for that (sage was) omniscient.13

According to Sabara Bhasya, desirable results attained by national and prudent actions are not dharma; since by definition dharma means only those desirable results which are attainable by operations performed strictly in accordance with vedic inductions. Also the vedic idea of dharma excludes from its concept all that can be known to be beneficial to the performer or to others, through experience or observation - it restricts itself wholly to those ritualistic actions, the good effects of which cannot be known by experience, but can only be known through vedic commands. And it is claimed that Manu's codification of laws is based entirely on the purport of the vedas.

The vedic definition of Dharma contradicts, Ambedkar's definition of Dhamma of Buddha. Since Manu Dharma (laws of Manu) based on vedas, and vedas are basic scriptures of Hinduism, Hindu Dharma is nothing but Manu Dharma of vedas. Hence Hindu Dharma, as it is stated by Sabara Bhasya, cannot stand for rationality and does not benefit to the performer or to others and cannot be known its social value through experience or observation. A conflict may be seen between "faith", that is adherence to a creed as typified in Manu (i.e. Hindu Dharma), and

"works' that is social conduct as pronounced by Ambedkar (i.e. Buddha Dharma).

The blind faith is basis of Hindu Dharma of Manu, whereas reason forms as basis of Buddhist Dhamma of Ambedkar. Divinism, infallible vedas are main supporters of the former, but humanism supports the latter. In the sense, humanism rejects Hindu Dharma, since it is based on creed or belief. So humanism strives to unite people. On the basis of a code of social morality rather on blind divine faith. Tagore puts it, "we, who often glorify our tendency to ignore reason, installing in its place blind faith, valuing it as spiritual, are ever paying for its cost with the obscuration of our mind and destiny. I blamed ... for exploiting this irrational force of credulity in our people, which might have had a quick result in a superstructure, while sapping the foundation." 15

This is what exactly Hindu mind doing and what today is needed that, the purification of mind that is self-purification through self-realisation with the help of true knowledge. this is possible only when Hindu thought is substituted with Buddhist thought. A step

towards this direction, is subscribed by Ambedkar, as a true humanist; and history has seen many following his foot prints. This can be termed as 'humanisation of Indian Society'.

The theistic Humanism of non-Hindu religions (i.e. Islam and Christianity), strive for the benefit of its followers. And belief system within these religions, extends social equality to all its adherents. Whereas theistic humanism of Hinduism, a narrow one and restricts itself to the few.

In other words all Hindus are not socially equal according to Hindu theism. The lower caste Hindus have to serve the higher varna's (castes) and higher varna's have every right to punish lower varnas, to main-tain social status quo. And this is the purpose of theistic humanism of Hinduism. It doesn't equate all its followers as equal but look down some of its followers as 'untouchables'. Hindu law forbades the question of social equality and justifies, its theistic hierarchy. This is the main difference between Hinduism and the rest of the religions in the world.

It has become common to say that, all the religions are same and the purpose of all religions is to
serve human community. This may be a general statement. But, for the scholars, like Ambedkar, who made comparative study of all the major religions, there lies difference, if not among all religions, but between Hinduism and other religions, particularly on the issue of 'social equality'. And, Ambedkar’s examination of the Hindu religious-cum-social system, proves the point.

Ambedkar says that, the Hindu ideal of society as prescribed by Hindu religion has acted as a most demoralising and degrading influence on Hindu society. It is Nietzschean in its form and essence, long before Nietzsche sought to preach. It is a religion which is not intended to establish liberty, equality and fraternity.

It is a gospel which proclaims the worship of the superman, - the Brahmin, by the rest of the Hindu society. It propounds that the superman and his class alone are born to live and to rule. Others are born to serve them, and to nothing more. They have no life of their own to live, and no right to develop their own personality. This has been the gospel of the Hindu religion. Hindu philosophy, whether it is Vedanta, Sankhya, Nyaya, Vaisheshika has moved in its own circle without in any way affecting the Hindu religion. It has never had the courage to challenge this gospel.
The Hindu philosophers had both their philosophy and their Manu, held apart in two hands, the right not knowing what the left had. The Hindu is never troubled by their inconsistency. As to their social system, can things be worse? The caste system is itself a degenerate form of chaturvarna, which is the ideal of the Hindu.

Under the old Hindu law the Brahmin enjoyed the benefit of the clergy and not be hanged even if he was guilty of murder. It seems to be that the Brahmin systematically preyed on society and profited in religion. The puranas and shastras are a treasure-trove of sharp practices which the brahmins employed "to fool, beguile and swindle the common mass of poor, illiterate and superstitious Hindus".16

Indeed the Brahmins were engaged in defending every wrong for the simple reason that they lived on them. They defended untouchability which condemned millions to the lot of the helot. They defended caste, female child marriage, and enforced widowhood. They defended the burning of widows and the social system of graded

inequality with its rule of hypergamy which led the Rajputs to kill daughters born to them.17

It is regarded that Brahmins by caste, are the protectors of Hindu Dharma and it is their duty to direct state (working) to preserve it. And Brahminism designed Hindu social system, which openly claims, social inequity is its major content and gives philosophical support to it. So Ambedkar, rejected outrightly the Hindu social system and reacted strongly against it by the adoption of Buddhism as his philosophy.

Tracing the history of origin of untouchability, Ambedkar writes in his work 'The Untouchables', that followers of the Buddha, are reduced to the level of untouchables or made 'untouchable'. Why do the Brahmin regard the brokenmen as impure? What is the basis of this antipathy? Ambedkar explains this antipathy on one hypothesis. It is that the broken men were Buddhists. As such they did not reverse the Brahmins, did not employ them as their priests and regarded them as impure. The Brahmin, on the other hand, disliked the broken men because they were Buddhists and preached against them contempt and hatred with the result that the broken men came to be regarded as untouchables.18

17. Ibid., pp. 30-31.
On the origin of untouchability, Ambedkar feels that it is born sometime about A.D. 400. He is of the opinion that, it is born out of the struggle for the supremacy between Buddhism and Brahminism which has so completely moulded the history of India and the study of which is so woefully neglected by students of Indian history.\textsuperscript{19}

Ambedkar says that, historically speaking, service to humanity is quite foreign to Hinduism and to Hindus. In his view Hindu religion consists primarily, of rituals and observances. And it is a religion of temples. He feels that love of man has no place in it. And without love of man how can service to man be inspired?\textsuperscript{20} And it is over this issue that Ambedkar questioned the very relevance of Hindu philosophy for mankind.

Ambedkar is of the opinion that, Hinduism is a religion which is not founded on morality. And whatever morality Hinduism has, it is not an integral part of it. Because it is not embedded in religion. It is a separate force, which is sustained by social necessities and not by the injunction of Hindu religion. And his firm view is

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 155.

that, the religion of the Buddha is morality. It is embedded in religion. Buddhist religion is nothing if not morality. He says that, it is true that in Buddhism there is no god. And in place of god there is morality. He feels that, what god is to other religions, morality is to Buddhism.21

Ambedkar observes that, there cannot be a thesis more false than the thesis that all religions are true. However, this slogan gives the Hindus who have raised it the support of the followers of other religions. There are other Hindus who have come to realise that there is something wrong with their religion. The only thing is that they are not ready to denounce it openly. This attitude is understandable. Religion is part of one’s social inheritance.

One’s life and dignity and pride is bound up with it. It is not easy to abandon one’s religion. Patriotism comes in this matter. However, Ambedkar is of the opinion that Hinduism will lapse and cease to be a force governing life. "There will be a void which will have the effect of disintegrating the Hindu society. Hindus will then be forced to take a more positive

attitude. When they do so, they can turn to nothing except Buddhism".22

Seeing the awakening and the trends among the deprived sections of society, Ambedkar warned the Hindus, that these mighty millions have once become conscious of "their degradation and know that it is largely due to the social philosophy of the Hindu religion",23 it is going to be fatal for the Hindu proponents. Ambedkar believed, untouchables will, when they come to know the reasons for their subjugation and the deep rooted prejudices which obstruct their progress, renounce Hinduism.

Proper examination of the Ambedkar's response to existing system in Hindu society, makes us to realise that, Ambedkar is a true Buddhist and principled realist. He reacted on the lines of the Buddha's understanding of society and he adopted the socio-economic democracy as the means for social change, which is the prime motive of Buddha Dhamma. Ambedkar wanted a society based on 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity'. He stated that this philosophy has its roots in religion and is derived from the Buddha.

---------------------
22. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
23. Ibid., p. 11.
In the Indian context, Ambedkar’s liberty, equality and fraternity is a new equity applicable in all spheres of life including law and legal institutions. And law is characterised by seclarism that is it has to be coloured by sacredness of fraternity as well. Law must have human face and it should have social purpose. The synonym of all these features of law is Dhamma (Law) of Buddha. What Ambedkar has done is, applied it to present society and then concluded that law of Buddha is humane jurisprudence and he adopted it to replace manuvite jurisprudence.

In his annihilation of caste, Ambedkar opines that one cannot appeal to reason and ask the Hindus to discard caste as being contrary to reason because Hindu is not free to follow his reason. His feelings could be justified by close study of Manu. Manu has laid down three sanctions to which every Hindu must confirm in the matter of his behaviour. Ambedkar writes those three sanctions prescribed by Manu for the Hindus. "That the vedas, smritis, sadachar and atmapriyatato are the sanctions of religion".

-------------------
25. Ibid., p. 67.
In the context of Manu's Hindu, Ambedkar continues to say that, there is no place for reason to play its part. He finds that according to Manu, Hindu must follow either veda, or the smritis or sadachar, and he cannot follow anything else. Meaning of the word sadachar need to be clarified here. Manu used sadachar as one of the three religious sanctions to be followed by a true Hindu. The word sadachar seems to suggest ethical conduct. However that is not true, as has been clarified by Ambedkar, is the Annihilation itself.

"Sadachar does not mean good acts, or acts of good men. It means ancient customs good or bad". Hinduism is in effect the exaltation of ancient customs and hoary traditions, be they good or bad; whether they stand the test of reason or not.

In the first place, how are the texts of the vedas and smritis to be interpreted whenever any doubt arises regarding their meaning? On this important question the view of Manu is quite definite. Ambedkar writes, that Manu says: "He who even in argument insults the vedas

26. Ibid.,
27. Ibid., p. 70.
28. Ibid., p. 67.
which are the basis of Brahminism, such person is not fit to be associated with the elite in society, and should be considered an atheist".29

Ambedkar further writes, "the same rule is laid down in the Mahabharat... According to this rule, rationalism, as a cannon of interpreting the vedas and smritis is absolutely condemned. It is regarded as being as wicked as atheism, and the punishment provided for it, is ex communication... it is therefore clear that in any matter on which the shrutis and smritis have given a positive direction, a Hindu is not free to use his reasoning faculty".30

Thus, Hinduism condemns reason, and comments caste and untouchability. As Ambedkar observed, that so far as caste and varna are concerned, not only the shastras do not permit the Hindu to use his reason in the decision of the question, but they have taken care to see that no occasion is left to a Hindu examine in a rational way the foundations of his belief in caste and varna.31

29. Ibid., p. 67.
30. Ibid., pp. 67-68.
31. Ambedkar, Dr. Babasaheb, Annihilation of Caste, op.cit., p. 73.
Hence, Ambedkar discarded Hinduism as a path for human progress and propagated Buddhist way of life as the most appropriate to modern society. In his speech on the Buddha and Karl Marx, at Kathmandu, on 20th November 1956, he said, "The greatest thing that the Buddha has done is to tell that the world cannot be reformed except by the reformation of the mind of the mind of man, and mind of the world". And this is what he meant the need of 'notional change' in his speech on the Annihilation of Caste. Ambedkar object is to bring about a real, fundamental, revolutionary, "national change" in man's outlook, if man is to live a full, peaceful and happy life, here on earth. So his call to conversion to Buddhism, to be understood in this light.

Ambedkar clarified his stand on Hindu literature and the reason of his opposition to it. Ambedkar observes, that it would be said that he has shown no respect for the sacred literature of the Hindus which every sacred literature deserves. He says that, if the charge be true, he could plead two circumstances in justification of himself.

Firstly, he claims that in his research he has been guided by the best tradition of the historian who treats all literature as vulgar. He is using the word in its original sense of belonging to the people, to be examined any distinction between the sacred and the profane, and with the sole object of finding the truth.

Secondly, respect and reverence for sacred literature could not be made to order. As has been well said an historian ought to be exact, sincere, and impartial; free from passion, unbiased by interest, fear, resentment or affection; and faithful to truth, which is the mother of history, the preserver of great actions, the enemy of oblivion, the witness of the past, the director of the future. In short, he must have an open mind, though it may not an empty mind, and readiness to examine all evidence eventhough it may be spurious.33

Ambedkar's theory is that anything whether it is accepted or rejected, must be based on logic and rules of evidence. His was essentially the rationalist historian's stand point. Then what did he say about the Buddha? In his article on Buddha and the future of his religion first published in the 'Maha Bodhi' (Calcutta) of May, 1950,

33. Ambedkar Dr. Babasaheb, Who were the Shudras? op.cit., pp. 16-17.
Ambedkar writes his approach to Buddhism as a rationalist and humanist. He says that, the Buddha claimed no such infallibility for what he taught.

In the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, the Buddha told Ananda that his religion was based on reason and experience, and that his followers should not accept his teachings as correct and binding, merely because they emanated from him. Being based on reason and experience, they were free to modify or even abandon any of his teachings, if it was found that at a given time and in given circumstances, they did not apply.

The Buddha wished his religion not to be encumbered with the deadwood of the past. He wanted it to remain evergreen and serviceable at all times. That is why he gave liberty to his followers to chip and chop as the necessities of the case required. In this context, Ambedkar says, "no other religious teacher has shown such courage, I maintain, he says that religion (i.e. religion in the sense of morality) must be in accord with science".34


114
Ambedkar strongly felt, that religion is bound to lose respect and therefore become the subject of ridicule, and there by not merely lose its force as governing principle of life but might in the course of time disintegrate and lapse, it is not in accord with science. In other words, religion if it is to function, it must be in accord with what is merely another name for science.

In the same article, Ambedkar writes that religion as a code of social morality, must also stand another test. It is not enough for religion to consist of a moral code, but its moral code must also recognise the fundamental tenets of liberty, equality and fraternity. Unless religion recognises these fundamental principles of social life, "religion will be doomed". And he is confident that people can develop inquiring attitude in question of religion. Ambedkar feels that, time seems to have changed, and many persons throughout the world have exhibited an unprecedented piece of courage with regard to inheritance of their religion.

Many have, as a result of the influence of scientific enquiry, come to the conclusion that religion

35. Ibid., pp. 11-12.
36. Ibid., p. 12.
is an error, which ought to be given up. There are others who, as a result of the Marxian teaching, have come to the conclusion that religion is an error, which ought to be given up. There are others who, as a result of the Marxian teaching, have come to the conclusion that religion is opium which induces the poor people to submit to the domination of the rich, and should be discarded. Whatever be the causes, the fact remains that people have developed an inquiring mind in respect of religion. For Ambedkar, religion means, ethics or moralituy and must be based on rational or scientific.

Ambedkar's religion aims at to bring to bridge the gap between science, on the one hand, and religion, on the other. His concept of religion is dynamic and progressive and opposed to infallibility and eternal divine concepts. Thus Ambedkar believed that Buddhism alone, among all religions of the world, fulfilled these tests; and Buddhism alone is an essentially scientific or a rationalist - humanist approach to life.

AMBEDKARINE BUDDHISM : A SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC INTERPRETATION:

"Buddhism was a great revolution," says Ambedkar, "it was as great a revolution as the French revolution.

---

37. Ibid., p. 16.
Though it began as a religious revolution, it became more than religious revolution. It became a social and political revolution.\textsuperscript{38}

In 20th Century it was Ambedkar, who set the process of Modernization of Buddhism; as a part of it he felt that, three steps appear to be quite necessary: First: To produce a Buddhist Bible; Second: to make changes in the organisation aims and objects in the Bhikkhu Sangh; Third: to set up a world Buddhist mission.\textsuperscript{39}

Despite having a vast literature, Ambedkar felt that Buddhism's disadvantage \textit{vis a vis} other religions was that it lacked a handy gospel; a book which one could carry in person and read.\textsuperscript{40} And, therefore, he felt the need for having a Buddhist bible.\textsuperscript{41}

The Buddhist Bible does not contain a chapter on ceremonies, birth initiation, marriage and death, as


\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Ibid.},

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 16.
indicated in the Buddha and the Future of his Dhamma. However, he compiled a book of prayers which he described to be accepted as a standard prayer book. He introduced the Twenty-Two Oaths for converts, to ensure complete and absolute renunciation of Hinduism and acceptance of Buddhism. However, Ambedkar did not feel that the need of separate personal law for Buddhists.

To him, marriage is nothing to do with religion since it is purely a social ceremony. But, in his letter, dated 4th December 1956, written two days before his death, he suggested, some sort of uniform identity in the Buddhist marriages. Which means, white dress for the bride and the groom, exchange of garlands; recitation of mangal sutras; and an emphasis on simplicity and identity. Marriage can as well be solemnised according to law. Now most of the followers of the Ambedkar (say Ambedkarites) celebrate their marriage mostly on these lines; and keeping Ambedkar photo on the marriage dia's along with photo of the Buddha, taking oaths before these two photos have become part and parcel of marriage ceremonies conducted by Ambedkarine Buddhists.

In Buddhist countries several customs are followed to solemnise marriages. Similarly, in the matter of the
disposal of the dead through burial or cremation, no hard and fast rules can be laid down. So, for the purpose of identity and giving a uniform code, Ambedkar laid down certain principles and refrained from laying down rules.

Ambedkar did not want Buddhism to be a religion sub-servant to Hinduism, just as Sikhism and Jainism have turned out, to be, for that would have defeated the very purpose of conversion, which in fact was a declaration of religious independence and severance of ties with a religion based on caste system, superstitious beliefs and meaningless, wasteful customs, ceremonies and festivals.

When the teachings of the Buddha reached Ceylon, there appeared Theravada Buddhism. When it reached China it got happily blended with Taoist thought, already prevalent there. The Chinese called it C’han Buddhism. When it reached Japan it was accepted with great veneration; but it soon underwent reframing, assimilating certain philosophic conjurings. It came to be known as Zen Buddhism. Buddhism spread very rapidly upto North America, through Afghanistan, Iran, Italy and France. When it reached Tibet, it was Vajrayana with tantric practices but it got blended with Bon religion of Tibet. Some call it Lamaism. It spread to almost all the Asiatic countries and reached Greece and Russia.
"The Buddha and his Dhamma", "the Buddhist Bible", encompasses the life and personality of the Buddha, and presents an analytical exposition of the Dhamma. In this treatise, Ambedkar has endeavoured to re-interpret the Dhamma in order to show that Buddhism can amply meet the needs of the modern world.

The Bible of Ambedkarine Buddhists is Ambedkar's 'The Buddha and his Dhamma'. It is 'a book meant to be the gospel, for his Buddhist followers, contains his interpretation of Buddhism and the principles which guided him in his work.'42 'The Buddha and his Dhamma', the Buddhist Bible displays Ambedkar’s approach to life, and his basic rationalism and humanism.

In his work, Ambedkar writes, "He (Buddha) accepted that reality must rest on proof. Thinking must be based on rationalism."43 He says, in his work, "Blessed is the Buddha for his is the path of reason, and his is the way of emancipation from superstition."44 Ambedkar also writes, "the Buddha argued that there must

44. Ibid., p. 114.
be proof before one can accept a thing to be a reality." 45
He says, "Buddhism is nothing if not rationalism." 46

Ambedkar also says in his work that, the Buddha was strongly opposed to the first tenet of Brahmanism. He repudiated the thesis that the vedas are infallible, and their authority could never be questioned. In his opinion, nothing was infallible, and nothing could be final. Everything must be open to re-examination and reconsideration, whenever grounds for re-examination and reconsideration arise. Man must know the real truth. To him freedom of thought was the most essential thing, and he was sure that freedom of thought was the only way to the discovery of truth. Infallibility of the vedas meant complete denial of freedom of thought. 47

Ambedkar depended on 'reason and rationale', when he constructed Buddhist theory and ideology. He applied, these two scientific principles (namely reason and rationale) to decide the social validity of religion. His main stress is on 'purpose'. For everything there is purpose. In modern society purpose is more important than

45. Ibid., p. 256.
46. Ibid., p. 250.
47. Ibid., p. 89.
meaning. In other words, Ambedkar concerns more about the purpose of religion and its philosophy than its meaning.

For some, Buddhism is not at all a religion, since it denies 'God'. For others the Buddha is a God so it is a religion. To Ambedkar the traditional meaning of Religion is not acceptable. Hence he feels it is a religion without God. Thus, we can find in Ambedkar's approach, that meaning is not important but the purpose.

Ambedkar does not accept the traditional meaning of Religion since it is not fit into the purpose of the religion which he aspired. So on the basis of the importance of purpose of religion, Ambedkar changed the meaning of religion and accepted the meaning that serves his 'aims'. Here 'his aims', mean not personal but very much 'the aims' which the Buddha himself aimed at.

The important issues which Ambedkar touched in his writings on Buddhism, are: (1) Existence of God, (2) Existence of Soul (3) Karma (4) Re-birth. He deals all these issues, with the application of reason and logic. To be short, it can be said, Ambedkar does not believe in the existence of God and Soul. His Karma is to do with this world only. Re-birth to him has differed with
traditional meaning. To elaborate these issues, his 'The Buddha And His Dhamma' can be taken as basis.

The traditional Buddhists call Ambedkar’s work on the Buddha as deviation from what the Buddha originally said. But Ambedkarine Buddhist scholars proved that the 'Buddha and his Dhamma' is based on the original philosophy of the Buddha and has modified by Ambedkar, wherever needed, only to modernise Buddhism to face challenges posing by modern world.

In the ‘Buddha and his Dhamma’, Ambedkar rationalised the facts related to the life of the Buddha and components of his philosophy. In other words, Ambedkar looked both the life and philosophy of the Buddha from the rationalist point of view. As a rational being, he tried to satisfy himself and his followers by interpreting the Buddha’s life and Dhamma on the basis of 'reason'.

The problem mainly discussed by Ambedkar on the life of the Buddha is ‘Parivraja (renunciation) of the Buddha’. Parivraja is the main event in the life of the Buddha. The traditionalists say that the Buddha took parivarja because he saw a dead person, a sick person and an old person. Ambedkar does not agree to this
explanation. To him it is 'absurd' because the Buddha took Parivraja at the age of 29.

And if he took parivraja as a result of these three sights, how is it he did not see these three sights earlier? These are common events occurring by hundreds and the Buddha could not have failed to come across them earlier. It is impossible to accept the traditional explanation that this was the first time he saw them. The explanation is not plausible and does not appeal to reason. So, Ambedkar gives different reason to parivraja event. He says that, the Buddha took Parivraja to find a solution for the social conflict, which is the root of all sorrow and suffering in the world."48

The other problems which are discussed by Ambedkar in his work, relate to philosophy of the Buddha. These are (1) Four Aryan truths (2) Doctrines of Soul, of Karma and Re-birth. Ambedkar Questions, regarding four Aryan truth, "do they form past of the original teachings of the Buddha?" He felt this formula cuts at the root of Buddhism. He argued that if life is sorrow death is sorrow and re-birth is sorrow, then there is an end of everything. Neither religion nor philosophy can help a

man to achieve happiness in the world. If there is no escape from sorrow, then what can religion do, what can the Buddha do to relieve man from such sorrow which is ever there in birth itself?

The Aryan truths are a great stumbling block in the way of non-Buddhists accepting the gospel of Buddhism. For the Four Aryan truths deny hope to man. The Four Aryan truths make the gospel of the Buddha a gospel of pessimism. Ambedkar Questions not only the originality but also the validity of the Four Aryan truths. Ambedkar makes the Question to answer that they are very much a later accretion by the monks and not at all form part of the original gospel, preached by the Buddha.

Ambedkar felt that the traditional Four Aryan truths do not propose any hope in the present world. It projects Buddhism as pessimistic religion. Ambedkar disagreed with Four Aryan truths and Quoted words of the Buddha,

"You are likely to call my Dhamma pessimistic because it calls the attention of mankind to the existence of suffering. I tell you such a view of my Dhamma would be wrong". 49

49. Ibid., p. 130.

125
"No doubt my Dhamma recognizes the existence of suffering but forget not that it also lays equal stress on the removal of suffering."50

"My Dhamma has in it both hope and purpose".51

"Its purpose is to remove Avijja, by which I mean ignorance of the existence of suffering."52

"There is hope in it because it shows the way to put an end to human suffering."53

For Ambedkar the Buddha's conception of Dukkha is material. His argument is that Dukkha in its original sense given to it by Kapila means unrest, commotion. Initially it had a metaphysical meaning. Later on it acquired the meaning of suffering and sorrow. Unrest brings sorrow and suffering. Soon it acquired the meaning of sorrow and suffering from social and economic causes. So Ambedkar says that the Buddha was very much aware that poverty was a cause of sorrow. He quotes the Buddha, "Woeful in the world is poverty and debt."54 Ambedkar explains 'Dukkha as the cause of gloom' is a truth.

50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., p. 131.
53. Ibid., p. 131.
54. Ibid., p. 115.
recognised by Buddha, not in a metaphysical sense but it should be seen with material meaning.

According to Ambedkar another truth said by the Buddha is that, 'Impermanence as the cause of gloom', that nobody Questions the truth of the doctrine and everything is impermanent is admitted by all. Ambedkar Questions, "But why draw a pessimistic conclusion?" He says that life is short; it is short and need not be gloomy about it. Ambedkar takes it as just a matter of interpretation. If impermanence is pessimistic it is only because permanence was assumed to be true although it was a false one. Therefore Ambedkar maintains that the Buddha's preaching cannot be charged as spreading gloom.

The Buddha's Dhamma has been accused of creating pessimism. The accusation arises from the first Aryan truth which says that there is Dukkha (Sorrow misery) in the world. It also, may be because the Buddha is reported to have said in his first sermon, Birth is sorrowful, old age is sorrowful, death is sorrowful, that a deeper pessimistic colouring has been given to his Dhamma. "But those who know rhetoric know that this is an artifice of exaggeration and that it is practised by skilled literary hands to produce effect".55

55. Ibid., p. 512.
That birth is sorrowful is an exaggeration by the Buddha can be proved by reference to a sermon of his in which he has preached that birth as human being is a very precious thing. Again, if the Buddha had merely referred to Dukkha such an accusation could be sustainable. But the Buddha’s Second Aryan Truth Emphasizes that this Dukkha must be removed. In order to emphasize the duty of removal of Dukkha he spoke of the existence of Dukkha.

"To the removal of Dukkha the Buddha attached great importance,"56 Ambedkar explains. He says "Surely a teacher (Buddha) who is anxious to remove Dukkha cannot be charged with pessimism."57 Ambedkar concludes that, four Aryan truths’ Pessimistic view is not acceptable to the true Buddhist. Emphasise on positivity and hope in the present life is Ambedkar’s option to four Aryan truths. Hence he proves that the Buddha’s philosophy is not an annihilationist philosophy as stated by others, but it is simply the recognition of the existence of ill and the ending of ill.

The another philosophical problem relates to the doctrines of Soul, of Karma and Re-birth. The Buddha denied the existence of the Soul. But he is also said to

56. Ibid.,
57. Ibid.,
have affirmed the doctrine of *karma* and re-birth. If there is no Soul, how can there be *karma*? If there is no Soul, how can there be re-birth? These are baffling Questions. In what sense did the Buddha use the words *Karma* and re-birth? Did he use them in a different sense than the sense in which they were used by the Brahmins of his day? If so, in what sense? Did he use them in the same sense in which the Brahmins used them? If so, is there not a terrible contradiction between the denial of the Soul and the affirmation of *karma* and re-birth? This contradiction needs to be resolved. Ambedkar, infact resolved this contradiction.

The Buddha preached that there was no Soul. But the Buddha affirmed that there was re-birth. The Brahmanical theorists criticised the Buddha for preaching what they regarded as two such contradictory doctrines. They posed a Question that how can there be re-birth if there is no soul. Ambedkar says there is no contradiction in the preaching of the Buddha. He says "there can be rebirth even though there is no soule. He explains there is a mango stone. The stone gives rise to a mango tree. The mango tree produces mangoes. Here is re-birth of a mango".58 But there is no soul. So there can be re-birth although there is no soul.

What happened after death is a question often asked. The Eternalist said that the Soul knows no death: therefore life is eternal. It is renewed by re-birth. But the Annihilationists argued that death is the end of everything and there is nothing left after death. The Buddha was not an eternalist. For it involved a belief in the existence of a separate, immortal soul to which he was opposed. And also he is not an annihilationist. This may raise question that how can the Buddha not believe in the existence of the Soul and yet say that he is not annihilationist. To make clear the contradiction, it is needed to examine another question: Did the Buddha believe in re-birth?

Dealing with the question of re-birth, Ambedkar asks, re-birth of what and re-birth of whom. According to the Buddha there are four elements of existence which go to compose the body. They are Prithvi; Apa; Tej; and Vayu. Now the question is when the human body dies what happens to these four elements? Do they also die along with dead body? Some say that they do. But the Buddha said no, according to Ambedkar. And he explains, that the elements join the mass of similar elements floating in (Akash) space. When the four elements from this floating mass join together a new birth takes place. This is what the Buddha meant by re-birth.
Ambedkar further explained that the elements need not and are not necessarily from the same body which is dead. They may be drawn from different dead bodies. It must be noted that the body dies. But the elements are ever living. This is the kind of re-birth in which the Buddha believed. To support his view, Ambedkar quotes the Buddha words: "In the corpse not only are the plastic forces of the body and speech and mind stilled and quiescent but also Vitality is exhausted, heat is quenched and the faculties of sense broken up; whereas in the alms man in trance vitality persists, heat abides, and the faculties are clear, although respiration, observation and perception are stilled and quiescent." 59

Ambedkar felt this as the best and most complete exposition of Death of Annihilation. He gives the meaning "energy" to the word "heat" used by the Budha. So he says the body ceases to produce energy when the body dies. And he continues that death also means that whatever energy that had escaped from the body joins the general mass of energy playing about in the Universe.

Therefore Annihilation has a two-fold aspects. In one of its aspects it means cession of production of

59. Ibid., pp. 331-332.
energy. In another aspect it means a new addition to the stock of general floating mass of energy. Hence Ambedkar feels that it is probably because of this two-fold aspect of annihilation that the Buddha said that he was not an absolute annihilationist. He was an annihilationist so far as soul was concerned. He was not an annihilationist so far as matter was concerned, Ambedkar explains.

On the basis of Ambedkar's interpretation, it is easy to understand why the Buddha said that he was not an annihilationist. He believed in the regeneration of matter and not in the re-birth of the soul. So interpreted, the Buddha's view is in consonance with science. Ambedkar says that it is only in this sense that the Buddha could be said to have believed in re-birth. Energy is never lost. That is what science affirms. Annihilation in the sense that after death nothing is left would be contrary to science. For it would mean that energy is not constant in volume. In this way only Ambedkar solved the dilemma.

On the Question of re-birth of whom, Ambedkar says, it is most improbable to think that the Buddha believed in the thesis that same dead person take a new birth. He says that the possibility of the re-birth of
the same sentient being is possible, if the elements of existence of the dead man meeting together and forming a new body. But if a new body is formed after a mixture or the different elements of the different men who are dead then there is re-birth but not the re-birth of the same sentient being.

The Buddha preached that there was re-birth. But the Buddha also preached that there was no transmigration. The critics of Buddhism Questioned the Contradictory doctrines. How can there be re-birth unless there is transmigration? Ambedkar says that there is no contradiction between the two doctrines of Buddhism. He says that there can be re-birth although there is no transmigration.

According to Ambedkar, the Buddha is neither eternalist nor annihilationist and successfully removes the contradiction if at all any in the preaching of the Buddha regarding the belief in the re-birth and non-existence of Soul.

There is no doctrine in the Buddha’s Dhamma which has created so much confusion as the doctrine of Karma. One Question can be raised before going to the details of
the *Karma* theory of the Buddha: Is the Buddhist doctrine of *Karma* the same as the Brahminic doctrine? The fact is that, the Buddhist law of *Karma* is quite different from the Brahminic law of *Karma*. The Hindu Law of *Karma* is based on the Soul. The Buddhist is not. In fact there is no soul in Buddhism. The Brahmanic Law of *Karma* is hereditary. It goes on from life to life. This is so because of the transmigration of the soul. This cannot be true of the Buddhist Law of *Karma*. This is also because there is no soul. The Hindu Law of *Karma* is based on the existence of a soul which is distinct from the body. When the body dies, soul does not die. The soul flies away. This is not true of the Buddhist law of *karma*.

According to the Hindu law of *karma* what happens when a man does a *karma* is this. His act produces two-fold results. It affects the doer and secondly it produces an impress upon his soul. Each act he does produces an impress upon his soul. When a man dies and when his soul escapes, the soul is full of such impressions. It is these impressions which determine his birth and status in his future life.

This Hindu theory is inconsistent with the Buddhist theory of no-soul. For these reasons the Buddhist doctrine of *karma* cannot be and is not the same
as the Hindu doctrine of *karma*. Therefore it is simply foolish to talk about the Buddhist doctrine of *karma* being the same as the Brahmanic doctrine of *karma*. Hence Ambedkar says the *karma* of the Buddhism is to do with the deeds in this life and is nothing to do with *karma* of past life. He says that the ignorant Hindus out of sheer want of understanding say by comparing merely the similarity of words that Buddhism is the same as Brahmanism or Hinduism. The educated and orthodox section of the Brahmins also do the same. They do so deliberately to mislead the ignorant masses. So Ambedkar warns the followers of the Buddha to beware of this jugglery.

The Buddha’s law of *karma* applied only to *karma* and its effect on present life. The Buddha did not believe in past *karma* having effect on future life. The doctrine of past *karma* is a purely Brahmanic doctrine. Past *karma* taking effect in present life is quite consistent with the Brahminic doctrine of soul, the effect of *karma* on soul. But it is quite inconsistent with the Buddhist doctrine of non-soul. It has been bodily introduced into Buddhism by some one who wanted to make Buddhism akin to Hinduism or who did not know what the Buddhist doctrine was. This is one reason why it must be held that the Buddha could not have preached such a
The basis of the Hindu doctrine of past *karma* as the regulator of future life is an iniquitous doctrine. The purpose of inventing such a doctrine is to enable the state or the society to escape responsibility for the condition of the poor and the lowly. Otherwise such an inhuman and absurd doctrine could never have been invented. So this is another reason why it must be held that the Buddha could not have preached such a doctrine. Ambedkar felt that it is impossible to imagine that the Buddha who was known as the *Maha karunika* could have supported such a doctrine.

The last but very important problem, which Ambedkar discussed on Buddhism, is the problem relates to the *Bhikkhu*. What was the object of the Buddha in creating the *Bhikkhu*? Was the object to create a Perfect Man? or was his object to create a social servant devoting his life to service of the people and being their friend, guide and philosopher? These questions Ambedkar has dealt in his writings on the Buddhism. Ambedkar feels the future of Buddhism depends on in answering these real questions. If the *Bhikkhu* is only a perfect man he is of no use to the propagation of Buddhism because though a perfect man he is a selfish man. If, on the other hand,
he is a social servant he may prove to be the hope of Buddhism. This question must be decided not so much in the interest of doctrinal consistency but as Ambedkar felt in the interest of the future of Buddhism.

The followers of Buddhism are divided into two classes: BHIKKHU and UPASAKAS (Lay followers). The Bhikkhu are organised into a sangha while the upasakas are not. The Buddhist Bhikkhu is primarily a Parivarajaka. This institution of Parivarjakas is older than that of the Buddhist Bhikkhu. The old Parivarajakas are persons who have abandoned family life and are a mere floating body of wanderers. They roamed about with a view to ascertain the truth. They have no sangh, have no rules of discipline and have no ideal to strive for. It is for the first time that the Buddha organised his followers into a sangh or fraternity, and has given them rules of discipline and set before them an ideal to pursue and realise.

The sangh is open to all. There is no bar of caste. Inside the sangh the rank is regulated by worth and not by birth. The only distinction observed inside the sangh is that of sex. The Bhikkhu sangh is separate in its organization from the Bhikkini sangh. The entrants into the sangh are divided into two classes: SHRAMANERAS
and BHIKKHUS. Any one below twenty could become a shramanera. By taking the TRISARANAS and by taking the ten precepts a boy becomes a shramanera.

The three Trisaranas are: 'I follow the Buddha; I follow the Dhamma; and I follow the sangh'. The ten precepts are: 'I shall abstain from killing; I shall not commit theft; I shall follow Brahmacharya; I shall not tell untruth; I shall abstain from indecent and immoral acts; I shall abstain from ornamenting and decorating myself; I shall abstain from luxuries; I shall abstain from the love of gold and silver'.

A Shramanera can leave the sangh at any time and become a layman. A shramanera is attached to a Bhikkhu and spends his time in the service of Bhikkhu. He is not a person who has taken Parivraja. The status of a Bhikkhu has to be reached in two stages. The first stage is called Parivraja and second stage is called upasampada. It is after upasampada that he becomes a Bhikkhu.

A candidate who wishes to take parivraja with a view ultimately to become a Bhikkhu has to seek a Bhikkhu who has the right to act as an uppadhya. A Bhikkhu can become an uppadhya only after he has spend at least ten years as a Bhikkhu. Such a candidate if accepted by the
uppadhya is called a Pariivrajaka and has to remain in the service and tutelage of the uppadhya.

After the period of tutelage ends it is his uppadhya who has to propose the name of his student to a meeting of the sangh specially called for the purpose for upasampada and the student must request the sangh for upasampada. The sangh must be satisfied that he is a fit and a proper person to be made a Bhikkhu. For this purpose there is a set of questions which the candidate has to answer. Only when the sangh grants permission that upasampada is granted and the person becomes a Bhikkhu.

The rules regulating entry into the Bhikkhuni sangh are more or less the same as the rules regulating the entry into the Bhikkhu sangh.

A Bhikkhu besides taking precepts takes them also as vows which he must not break. If he breaks then he becomes liable to punishment. A Bhikkhu vows to remain celibate, not commit theft, not to boast, not to kill or take life and not to own anything except what the rules allow. A Bhikkhu should not possess more than the following eight articles: Three pieces of cloth to cover his body, A griddle for the lions, An alms-bowl, A razor, A needle, A water-strainer. A Bhikkhu must beg for his
food. He must live on alms. He must sustain himself only on one meal a day. Where there is no vihar built for the sangh, he must live under a tree.

A Bhikkhu does not take a vow of obedience. Outward respect and courtesy to his superiors is expected from the novice. His own salvation and his usefulness as a teacher depend on his self-culture. He is to obey not his superior but the Dhamma. His superior has no supernatural gift as wisdom or of absolution. He must stand or fall by himself. For that he must have freedom of thought.

In this background, one needs to estimate the role of a Bhikkhu in the society. The Bhikkhu is not an ascetic and nor even the same as the Brahmin of Hindu religion. A Brahmin is a priest. His main function is to perform certain ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death. These ceremonies become necessary because of the doctrines of original sin which requires ceremonies to wash it off, and because of the belief in God and soul. For these ceremonies a priest is necessary. And that priest must be a Brahman in Hindu religion.

A Bhikkhu does not believe in original sin, in God and Soul. Therefore, there are no ceremonies to be
performed. He is, therefore, not a priest. Ambedkar writes that a Brahmin is born but a Bhikkhu is made. A Brahman has a caste. A Bhikkhu has no caste. Once a Brahman always a Brahman. No sin, no crime can unmake a Brahmin. But once a Bhikkhu is not always a Bhikkhu. A Bhikkhu is made. So he can be unmade if by his conduct he makes himself unworthy of remaining a Bhikkhu.

No mental or moral training is necessary for being a Brahmin. All that is only expected of him is to know his religious lore. Quite different is the case of the of the Bhikkhu, mental and moral training is his life-blood. A Brahmin is free to acquire unlimited amount of property for himself. A Bhikkhu on the other hand cannot. This is no small difference. Property is the severest limitation upon the mental and moral independence of man both in respect of thought and action. It produces a conflict between the two. That is why the Brahmin is always opposed to change. For, to him a change means loss of power and loss of self.

A Bhikkhu having no property is mentally and morally free. In his case there are no personal interests which can stand in the way of honesty and integrity. They are Brahmins. Nonetheless each Brahmin is an individual by
himself. There is no religious organisation to which he is subordinate. A Brahmin is a law unto himself. They are bound by common interests which are material. A Bhikkhu on the other hand is always a member of the sangh. It is inconceivable that there could be a Bhikkhu without his being a member of the sangh. A Bhikkhu is not a law unto himself. He is subordinate to the sangh. The sangh is spiritual organization.

The Bhikkhu is also not like Hindu ascetic who doesn’t bother about worldly things and spends life in speculation. The Bhikkhu is to devote himself to self culture and to serve the people and guide them without self-culture he is not fit to guide. Therefore, he must himself be a perfect, best man, righteous man and an enlightened man.

For this he must practice self-culture. A Bhikkhu leaves his home. But he does not retire from the world. He leaves home so that he may have the freedom and the opportunity to serve those who are attached to their homes but whose life is full of sorrow, misery and unhappiness and who cannot help themselves.

Compassion which is the essence of the Dhamma requires that every one shall love and serve and the
Bhikkhu is not exempt from it. In the words of Ambedkar a Bhikkhu who is indifferent to the woes of mankind, however, perfect in self-culture, is not at all a Bhikkhu. He may be something else but he is not a Bhikkhu. So for Ambedkar, the Bhikkhu as a social servant rather than just a perfect man. The future of Buddhism is based on the social service of the Bhikkhu to society, to poor and needy.

The greatness of the Bhikkhu, lies in his service and guidance to society, but not in his just knowledge of the Buddha dharma. It is his duty to implement the social equality aspect of the Buddha Dhamma. On this point the Bhikku can be graded as high qualified person than Brahmin of Hindu society. Brahmin or ascetic of Hindu society follow the Dhamma of inequality. So it is infact not a Dhamma. It is a Dhamma which has projected by Brahmins as Dhamma.

In this connection, Ambedkar raises three Questions: what is Dhamma? What is not Dhamma (Adhamma)? and what is Saddhamma?

What is Dhamma? According to Ambedkar: to maintain Purity of life is Dhamma. To reach perfection in
life is Dhamma. To live in Nibbana (following Eight-fold Path) is Dhamma. To Give-up craving is Dhamma. To believe that all compound things are impermanent is Dhamma. To believe that Karma is the instrument of Moral order is Dhamma.

The Buddha did not promise to give salvation. He said he was Marga Data (way Finder) and not Moksha Data (Giver of Salvation). The Buddha did not claim any divinity for Himself for his Dhamma. It was discovered by man for man. It was not a Revelation. Ambedkar says, that the Buddha never claimed in fautibility for his message, unlike the self-claimed Gods of other religions of the world. The only claim the Buddha made was that his message was the only true way to salvation as he understood it. It was based on universal human experience of life in the world.

Ambedkar makes it more clear, "He (Buddha) said that it was open to anyone to Question it, test it and find what truth it contained. No founder has so fully thrown open his religion to such a challenge." This is what the Buddha Dhamma meant for. In one word the Buddha Dhamma is nothing but a Social message, as Ambedkar said.

60. Ibid., p. 222.
What is not-Dhamma (Adhamma)? Ambedkar answers that: Belief in the supernatural is Adhamma; Belief in Ishwara (God) is not essentially part of Dhamma; Dhamma based on union with Brahma is a False Dhamma; Belief in soul is Adhamma; Belief in sacrifice is Adhamma; Belief based on speculation is Not-Dhamma; Reading Books of Dhamma is not-Dhamma (i.e., Brahmans emphasised more on knowledge whereas the Buddha concerned the use of knowledge to society); Belief in the infaltibility of Books of Dhamma is not-Dhamma.

What is Saddhama? Ambedkar puts it that, the Dhamma becomes Saddhama: only when it makes learning open to all; when it teaches that mere learning is not enough. It may lead to pedantry; when it teaches that what is needed is Pradnya; when it teaches that mere Pradnya is not enough. It must be accompanied by Sila; when it teaches that besides Pradnya and Sila what is necessary is Karuna; when it teaches that more than Karuna what is necessary is maitri.

Dhamma to be Saddhama must pull down all social barriers. It must break down barriers between man and man. It must teach that worth and not birth is the measure of man. And it must promote equality between man
and man. Talking on the functions of Saddhamma, Ambedkar says that it is to cleanse the mind of its impurities and to make the world a kingdom of righteousness. He quotes the Buddha words to show the importance of mind for Saddhamma. "The mind is, place of origin of all the things; the mind is the master, the mind is the cause." 61

He says that, if in the midst of the mind there are evil thoughts, then the words are evil, the deeds are evil, and the sorrow which results from sin follows that man, as the chariot wheel follows him (or it) who draws it. It is the mind that commands and it is the mind that contrives. 62

He also says that, if in the mind there are good thoughts, then the words are good and the deeds good, and the happiness which results from such conduct follows that man, shadow accompanies the substance." 63

A unique amalgam of Pradnya or Prajna (understanding i.e., against superstition) and Karuna (Love). Ambedkar says that Dhamma is fundamentally and essentially social. Dhamma is righteousness, which means

61. Ibid., p. 282.
62. Ibid.,
63. Ibid.,
right relations between man and man in all spheres of life. In other words, society cannot do without Dhamma. The purpose of Dhamma is to reconstruct the world. For Ambedkar, Morality is Dhamma and Dhamma is morality. In other words, in Dhamma morality takes the place of God although there is no God in Dhamma. He says mere morality is not enough. It must be sacred and universal.

Another important concept which Ambedkar has discussed is 'Ahimsa'. Ahimsa or non-killing forms a very important part of the Buddha's teachings. It is intimately connected with Karuna and maitri. The Question has, however, been raised whether his Ahimsa was absolute in its obligation or only relative. Was it only a principle? Or was it a rule? Ambedkar says, "People who accept the Buddha's teachings find it difficult to accept Ahimsa as an absolute obligation. They say that such a definition of Ahimsa involves the sacrifice of good for evil, the sacrifice of virtue for vice."64

Ambedkar says that the circumstantial evidence on the point is that the Buddha had no objection to eating meat if it was offered to him as part of his alms. The monk can eat meat offered to him provided he was not a

64. Ibid., p. 345.
party to the Killing of it. The Buddha resisted the opposition of Devadatta who insisted that the monks should be prohibited from eating meat given to them by way of alms. Ambedkar gives another piece of evidence on the point is that Buddha was only opposed to the Killing of animals in Yajna (sacrifice).

Ahimsa permo Dharma is an extreme doctrine. It is a Jain doctrine. It is not a Buddhist doctrine. Ambedkar mentions another piece of evidence which is more direct than circumstantial which almost amounts to a definition of Ahimsa. The Buddha has said: "Love all so that you may not wish to kill any". Ambedkar explains this as a positive way of stating the principle of Ahimsa. From this it appears that the doctrine of Ahimsa does not say "kill not. It says love all". 65

In the light of these statements it is quite easy to have a clear understanding of what the Buddha meant by Ahimsa. Ambedkar says that it is quite clear that Buddha meant to make a distinction between will to kill and need to kill. He did not ban killing where there was need to kill. What he banned was killing where there was nothing but the will to kill. So there is no confusion in the

65. Ibid., p. 354.
Buddhist doctrine of Ahimsa. It is a perfectly sound or moral doctrine. Ambedkar puts it "Brahminism has in it the will to kill. Jainism has in it the will never to kill. The Buddha’s Ahimsa is quite in keeping with his middle path".66

In other words the Buddha made a distinction between Principle and Rule. He did not make Ahimsa a matter of Rule. He enunciated it as a matter of principle or way of life. Ambedkar says that a principle leaves you freedom to act. A rule does not. Rule either breaks you or you break the rule.67

The importance of Dhamma, in Ambedkar words, "In his (Buddha) doctrine there is love to create a longing to own those who are disowned or unowned: to the degraded there is the ennoblement ever present to raise them: to the disenchanted and the downtrodden there is equality blazing forth their path to advancement".68

Regarding the Buddha, Ambedkar says that he was a believer in the Madhyama Marga (Majjhima Patipada), the

66. Ibid., p. 347.
67. Ibid.,
68. Ibid., p. 113.
middle path, which is neither the path of pleasure nor the path of self-mortification. However, he quotes the Buddha: "I say unto you that to satisfy the needs of life is not an evil: to keep the body in good health is a duty, or otherwise you shall not be able to keep your mind strong and clear and have the lamp of wisdom burning".69

Ambedkar says that there was no successor to Buddha. He quotes the Buddha words: "The Dhamma must be (his) successor".70 What critics says about Ambedkar's view of Buddhism? This is the question which needs to be examined on the basis of reason and rationale, apart from the motivation and social background of the critics.

In summing up Ambedkar views in his work the Buddha and his Dhamma, it is commented that, "The title should be changed from the misleading one of 'The Buddha and His Dhamma' to that of 'Ambedkar and His Dhamma', for he preaches non-Dharma as Dharma for motives of political ambition and social reform".71

The critics mainly based their criticism on the five statements of Ambedkar:

--------------------
69. Ibid., p. 120.
70. Ibid., p. 216.
(1) The Buddha never claimed infallibility for his message.72

(2) Dhamma is social.73 (P. 316)

(3) The Buddha’s law of Karma applied only to Karma and its effect on present life.74 (p. 338)

(4) The Buddha meant to make a distinction between the will to kill and need to kill.75 (p. 346)

(5) The Bhikkhus are for the purpose of self-culture and social service, especially social services.76 (p. 435)

D.C. Ahir, a prominent Buddhist scholar, refuted the criticism on Ambedkar and concluded that Ambedkar's interpretation of Dhamma was nothing but the true Dhamma of the Buddha.77 The traditional critics do not agree with the Ambedkar, that the Buddha never claimed infallibility for his message. Their criticism is simply

72. Ibid., p. 222.
73. Ibid., p. 316.
74. Ibid., p. 338.
75. Ibid., p. 346.
76. Ibid., p. 435.
based on idealising or making Buddha with super humane powers.

The Buddha did not claim infallibility for his message because it was based on truth and facts, and did not require the support of any dogmatic and supernatural claims. Neither he claimed divine authority for his teachings nor he claimed that his teachings were not capable of further development. "The fact that without any such claim (the Buddha’s) teachings are still as true as they were over 2,500 years ago, is a great credit to the Buddha ...."78

Ambedkar says, the Dhamma is social’, in the sense that it is all-embracing and for all humanity. Dhamma teacher righteousness which means right relations between man and man in all spheres of life. Society, therefore, cannot do without of the people, then it has no value for suffering humanity. Ambedkar adds equality to Dhamma. The underlying meaning of the Dhamma is a message of equality. Where there is equality, there is hope for individual initiative, progress and attainment of Nirvana, the supreme state of Bliss, the ultimate aim of every Buddhist.

78. Ibid., p. 315.
Regarding Karma Ambedkar does not concern about so called Karma in past life. For him what matters is man's environment, and not hereditary connections. In his interpretation of Karma, man can change his present life by dint of his labour and true efforts. Critics cannot defend their argument that Ambedkar is wrong.

The criticism on the concept of Ahimsa is also can be refuted. Ambedkar's interpretation of Ahimsa, can be said true saying of the Buddha, because the absolute non-violence (Ahimsa) cannot stand the test of the middle path, which is the basic principle of Buddhism. No doubt, the Buddha denounced Himsa (violence) and advocated a ban on the killing of animals for the sake of food, sacrifice, sport or pleasure; but it is wrong to interpret that he banned Himsa under all circumstances. "It is note worthy that for a prospective Bhikkhu, the Buddha has prescribed inter-alia the condition that he should not have run away from the army. This means that the Buddha attached great importance to the defence of the country and did not like soldiers deserting the army with a view to joining the sangha".79

So Ambedkar's principle of 'the need to kill' and 'the will to kill', can be said as correct in the context

79. Ibid., p. 317.
of the purpose of the Buddha Dhamma. To kill is entirely a matter of necessity and personal moral responsibility. Every act has to be guided by man’s own Prajna (wisdom) and Karuna (love or kindness). Thus the Ahimsa of Buddhism is differed with the Ahimsa concept of other religions. The Buddha’s Ahimsa teaches non-aggressiveness and it also teaches self-defence, if one needs to fight, he must fight. What the Ambedkar has made is the positive interpretation of Ahimsa.

Ambedkar’s interpretation of the role of the Bhikkhu, is to be justified in the context of the need of social service. In fact Ambedkar sees the future of the Buddhism, through its social validity. Of course for any religion or Dhamma, the purpose is service to human community. If Ambedkar’s interpretation of Bhikkhu, serves the social cause, there can be no problem in accepting it as the original doctrine of the Buddha.

Why this misunderstanding of the Buddha Dhamma? The critics of the Ambedkar, neither put forwarded any scientific and rational reason nor adopted humanity as their basis. The criticism is mostly based on Hindu interpretation of Dharma. Applying the Hindu view of Dharma and the meaning of Hindu concepts like Karma, soul,
re-birth, Ahimsa etc. to the Buddhism cannot be acceptable to true believers of the Buddha. The critics may claim that they are believers in the Buddha Dhamma, but their traditional view of the Buddha Dhamma cannot be called as original doctrine of the Buddha. All this misunderstanding is because of misunderstanding of the purpose of the Buddha Dhamma.

Ambedkar proved that his interpretation of the Dhamma as the original doctrine of the Buddha by putting on test, which is available. Ambedkar defends his views with argument, "if there is anything which could be said with confidence it is: He was nothing if not rational, if not logical. Anything, therefore, which is rational and logical, other things being equal, may be taken to be the word of the Buddha".\(^\text{80}\) The first test proves that Ambedkar's views are rational, logical and so it can be said that those who criticise Ambedkar's interpretation of Buddhism, do not have rational and logical base.

The second test, which Ambedkar puts forth is that "the Buddha never created to enter into a discussion which was not profitable for man's welfare. Therefore, anything attributed to the Buddha which did not relate to man's

\(^{80}\) Ambedkar, Babasaheb, \textit{Vol. II. op.cit.}, pp. 350-351.
welfare cannot be accepted to be the word of the Buddha".\textsuperscript{81} The traditional critics of the Ambedkar should answer, that what is the problem in accepting the views of Ambedkar, if they serve the human community. Another thing is that, had not the Buddha preached man’s welfare. So the Ambedkar’s views very much fulfil the eligibility to qualify the test, and there is no doubt in calling them as the \textit{Buddha Dhamma}.

There is a third test. Ambedkar explains, "it is that the Buddha divided all matters into two classes. Those about which he was certain and those about which he was not certain. On matters which fell into class I, he was stated his views definitely and conclusively. On matters which fell into class II, he has expressed his views. But they are only tentative views".\textsuperscript{82}

Ambedkar says that in discussing the questions about which there is doubt and difference it is necessary to bear these tests in mind before deciding what the view of the Buddha was there on.\textsuperscript{83} Hence, on the bases of these three tests, one can decide the originality and validity of the Ambedkar’s view of the \textit{Buddha Dhamma}.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., p. 351.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
Ambedkar even evaluated the importance of Buddhism in the context of Marxism. He felt that Buddhism as an alternative to communism. Ambedkar held that communism is inadequate to explain the social evils of untouchability and graded social inequality, based on the caste system. According to Marx, the economic factor is the only determinant factor in shaping human history. But Ambedkar says, there are many non-economic factors which really influenced world history. Ambedkar holds that the social status of an individual by itself often becomes a source of power and authority. This is made clear by the way which the religious saints have held over the common man.

Infact, today, the priestly class (Brahmans) is not rich compared to business, merchant class (vaishya or Baniya). But a rich person always tries to depend on priest for direction in his social life. Even in ancient and medieval period, rulers (Kshatriyas) though they are highly powerful economically, they depended on Brahmans for assistance in almost all spheres of life. And Brahmans always projected themself as socially high than their rulers, which was commonly accepted by ruling Kshatriya class. So, in Indian society, it is not that one’s own economic status decides who is to be high in social ladder but is religion. Why do millionaries in
India obey penniless sadhus and fakirs? That religion is a source of power is attested by the history of India.

India is a country, where religious considerations dominate the human interests. It is the country where everything, even such things like elections, and strikes, so easily take a religious turn and can so easily be given a religious twist.

For Marx the industrial proletariat is the vanguard of total revolution. Ambedkar felt that this concept has no relevance to Indian society. Industrial workers are divided into various castes and caste - Hindu workers do not like to touch the untouchable industrial workers. the caste system has created great divisions amongst the industrial workers themselves. Under such conditions how can the industrial workers be united?

Ambedkar felt that communism has no faith in any moral values and that communist philosophy recognized no universal moral principles. Ambedkar argued that emancipation of the human mind and social-religious revolutions ultimately brought about economic changes in societies. So he opposed the economic interpretation of history. To support this view, Ambedkar explained it with examples in his work, Annihilation of caste'.

Generally
speaking history bears out the proposition that political revolutions have always been preceded by social and religious revolutions. The religious reformation started by Luther was the precursor of the political emancipation of the European people. In England, puritanism founded the new world. It was puritanism which won the war of American Independence and puritanism was a religious movement. The same is true of the Muslim Empire. Before the Arabs became a political power they had undergone a thorough religious revolution started by the Prophet Mohammad.

Even Indian History supports the same conclusion. The political revolution led by Chandragupta (Maurya) was preceded by the religious and social revolution of the Buddha. The political revolution led by Shivaji was preceded by the religious and social reform brought about by the Saints of Maharashtra. The political revolution of the Sikhs was preceded by the religious and social revolution led by Guru Nanak. It is unnecessary to add more illustrations. These will suffice to show that the emancipation of the mind and the soul is a necessary preliminary for the political expansion of a people.84

Ambedkar offered to give a very sound alternative to Marxism, a way of life based on Buddhism. Ambedkar's ideas are fundamental and they have a universal value. Ambedkar criticised violent way of revolution in communism. According to Marx violence is the mid wife of the old society, pregnant with a new social order. He gave theoretical justification for violence and bloodshed. Ambedkar questioned the Marxists, how a violent revolution leading to dictatorship will lead us to achieve a better society. He emphasized the purity of means in achieving our noble ends.

In his speech on Buddha and Karl Marx in 1956, at Kathmandu, Ambedkar said, that, the means that the communists wish to adopt, in order to bring about communism, is violence and killing of the opponents. There lies the fundamental difference between the Buddha and Karl Marx. The Buddha's means of persuading people to adopt the principles, was by moral teaching, Ambedkar said. Ambedkar says that, the doctrine claims that love, not power can conquer anything. That is where the fundamental difference lies. the Buddha would not allow violence; communists do. And he also felt, that the communists get quick results because they adopt the means of annihilating men. Ambedkar was very confident of the
Buddha's way though he felt it is a long way, he had no doubt about it, that it is a surest way.

Ambedkar had tremendous faith in the creativity of man. The human mind according to him is the greatest force. If the creativity of man is unfolded we can change the world. In explaining this argument, Ambedkar said that, the greatest thing that the Buddha had done was to tell the world that the world could not be reformed except by the reformation of the mind of the man and the mind of the world.

Ambedkar's alternative philosophy to Marxism, is based on universal values like equality, liberty and fraternity. He elaborates this principle by saying that, 'we must make our political democracy a social democracy as well'. Political democracy cannot last long, unless there lies at its base social democracy. Social democracy means a way of the principles of life.

These principles of liberty, equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items. To diverse one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy. Liberty cannot be divorced from equality, equality cannot be divorced from liberty. Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity. Without equality, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few
over the many. Equality without liberty would kill the individual's initiative. Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things.

Ambedkar summed up that, man must grow materially as well as spiritually. Society has been aiming to lay a new foundation was summarised by the French Revolution in three words, Fraternity, Liberty and Equality. The French Revolution was welcomed because of this slogans. It failed to produce equality.

We welcome the Russian Revolution because it aims to produce equality. but it cannot be too much emphasized that in producing equality society cannot afford to sacrifice fraternity or liberty. Equality will be no value without fraternity or liberty. It seems that the three can co-exist only if one follows the way of the Buddha. Communism can give one but not all.85

Thus Ambedkar offered to the world a sound philosophy as an alternative to Marxism. His philosophy is based on certain universal and eternal values like the scientific approach and love for humanity. The Buddhism which he advocated is nothing but scientific-humanism.