

CHAPTER FIVE

GROUND OF ANNIHILATION OF CASTE TOWARDS RECONCILIATION OF HUMANISM

Annihilation of caste would appear as a stumbling block before the development of nation. Vivekananda once remarked that so long India will not overcome the social disease of caste misnomer there would not any significant progress of India. According to Ambedkar, the social course untouchability was created out of the misperception of caste system. According to Ambedkar, Jat-Pat TodakMandal is an organisation of caste-Hindu social reformers whose main concern was to eradicate the caste system from amongst the Hindus. However, Ambedkar does not like to take any part in a movement which is carried on by caste Hindus. Ambedkar realised that the attitude of caste Hindus towards social reform is different from him and as a result of that he did not share his view with them. Ambedkar did not enjoy their company or association. As a result, when the Mandal first approached him to preside; he immediately declined their invitation to preside. However, the Mandal would not take a refusal from him and sent down one of its members to Bombay to press him to accept the invitation. Eventually Ambedkar accepted this invitation and the annual conference was to be held in the headquarters of the Mandal but eventually it was postponed. The reception committee of the Mandal has cancelled the conference. In fact, the notification came long after his presidential address had been printed. However, due to the cancellation, Ambedkar did not get the opportunity to deliver his address from the presidential chair. As a result, the public did not know about the content of his lecture. Ambedkar decided to supply the printed copies of his address to the markets because the public were extremely curious to know about the cancellation of the said conference. Disagreement was

raised with Mandal over the printing of the address. Ambedkar desired to print it Bombay whereas the Mandal wished to print it from Lahore on the ground of minimising the cost. Ambedkar did not agree with the Mandal. He received a letter from the Mandal in which it was reflected the ground of cancellation of the conference. It stated that majority of the Hindus in the Punjab were against the conference. The Jat-Pat TodakMandal had been subjected to the bitterest criticism and has received censorious rebuke from all quarters. Most of the Hindu leaders were against the Mandal and disassociated. After that the Mandal had earned a bad name for their initiative of selecting Ambedkar as the president of the conference. Accordingly, the Mandal urged Ambedkar to co-operate with them because at that time they were in serious trouble facing from the Hindu leaders. This clearly reflects that the Mandal had no intention to disregard Ambedkar and the leadership of Ambedkar. Rather they found serious protest from the orthodox Hindu leaders.

Ambedkar was perturbed by this letter. The letter was received as a plea to Ambedkar from the Mandal. Ambedkar did not realise why the Mandal turned down to give him the permission to publish the print of the conference lecture from Bombay for the sake of a few rupees. Secondly, he could not understand why Sir Gokal Chand Narang had really resigned as a protest against his selection as president because just before the conference he got a letter from Sir Gokal in which he expressed satisfaction about Ambedkar's participation in the conference as president. Even when the Mandal sent Mr. Har Bhagwan to Bombay to 'talk over matters personally, he did not raise any issue regarding the latter developments. He was only concerned about the contents of the address. Ambedkar felt it very well that the main object of the Mandal was not to save money but to get at the contents of the address. He gave a copy to him. He did not feel very well some parts of it. Bhagwan returned to Lahore and conveyed the message of Ambedkar to Sant Ram

regarding the translation and printing of the lecture. They convinced and expressed satisfaction over the issue and assured that it would have a wide publicity and it would in turn wake up the Hindus from their dogmatic slumber. Of course the written script was gone through before the publication and a few words. For example, 'veda' was supposed to delete from the script for the time being. Ambedkar agreed it and gave consent to left out. The Mandal also requested Ambedkar to make it clear that the conclusion he had developed and whatever he claimed here is his own position and the responsibility did not lie to Mandal. With these few provisions, the Mandal gave formal approval to publish one thousand copies of the address and committed to pay the cost of it. Accordingly, a cheque of Rs.100/ was enclosed herewith and requested Ambedkar to kindly acknowledge it. In this regard, HarBhagwan also conveyed Ambedkar that a meeting of the reception committee would be conducted very soon and the decision of this meeting would be communicated to him very soon. It thus seems that the Mandal was in immense pressure towards reformatting the caste system. According to Ambedkar, it was Mandal which asked him to deal with the subject exhaustively, and more importantly it was the Mandal which sent down to me a list of questions relating to the caste system and asked me to answer them in the body of my address. Such questions very often rose in the controversy between the Mandal and its opponents and the Mandal found difficult to answer these questions satisfactorily. Ambedkar did not think that the Mandal would be upset because of his proposal to destroy Hindu religion. It was only fool, Ambedkar felt, who was afraid of words. In fact, Ambedkar took great pains to explain what he meant by religion and the destruction of religion. Even until he came to Bombay on the 9th April, the Mandal did not know the content of an address. Even Ambedkar did not have any desire to use the platform of Mandal to change of religion by the Depressed Classes. Accordingly, he prepared the address without referring anything. Naturally, he did not

anticipate anything adverse coming from the Mandal that would go against the Depressed Classes. If anything would come in this way then surely it would be a great mistake on the part of Mandal. According to Ambedkar, his faith is more important than anything else. He cannot change anything that would hamper or go against his faith. He cared his faith more than any honor offered from you. Ambedkar got a proposal to change some portion of his original speech but he turned down to does that. In this regard he said, "I told you when you were in Bombay that I would not alter a comma, that I would not allow any censorship over my address, and that you would have to accept the address as it came from me. I also told you that the responsibility for the views expressed in the address was entirely mine, and if they were not by the conference I would not mind at all if the conference passed a resolution condemning them."³⁵ Moreover, Ambedkar clearly informed to Mandal that he was more interested to give an inaugural address rather than a presidential address. He even requested to the Mandal to find someone for doing this so that he would deal with the resolutions. Nobody other than your committee could have been better place to take a decision. Ambedkar presumed that many questions would be raised for selecting him as the president and the Maldal will be asked to explain why it has imported a man from Bombay to preside over a function which is held in Lahore. The Mandal could easily find someone better qualified than Ambedkar to preside on the occasion. At that time Ambedkar questioned the authority of the Mahatma and as a result he was not in the good book of the Hindus. The Hindus actually hatred him; they treated Ambedkar as 'the snake in their garden'.³⁶ Accordingly, it was presumed that the Mandal be asked by the politically minded Hindus to explain why Ambedkar had been called to fill the place of honour. It was indeed a bold step taken by the Mandal because there was every possibility to take this issue as an insult to the

³⁵ Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, Navayana, 1936, p 202.

³⁶Ibid., p.207.

political Hindus including the Mahatma. This selection went against the injection of Hindu scripts. According to Hindu shastras, the Brahmin is appointed to be the guru for the three varnas. Among varnas, the Brahmin is the teacher. In *Manusmriti*, in some versions, Brahmins were treated as *prabu* or lord instead of *guru*. George Butler renders the entire couplet at 10.3 as follows: “ On account of the pre-eminence, on account of the superiority of his origin, on account of his observance of (particular) restrictive rules, and on account of his particular sanctification the Brahmin is the lord of (all) castes (*varna*).”³⁷ Accordingly, it can be said that the Mandal should know from which they take the lessons. The shastras, in fact, do not allow to permit a Hindu to accept anyone as his guru merely because he is well versed. It was made clear by Ramdas, a Brahmin saint from Maharashtra, who was inspired by Shivaji to establish a Hindu Raj. In his *Dasbodh*, a socio-politico religious treatise in Marathi verse, Ramdas asks, addressing the Hindus: can we accept an *antaja* to be our guru because he neither is a *pandit* nor learned? He then gives a negative answer in this regard. Ambedkar was an *antaja by birth*. At the same time, he got the power or knowledge of that caliber that nobody can challenge him. The Mandal knew it very well and that is why they invited Ambedkar as the president of the conference. The Mandal knows the reasons to fix upon a man so repugnant to the Hindus, and so descend so low in the scale as to select an *antaja* – an untouchable-to address an audience of the *savarnas*. The term *antyaja* means last born used for those outside the pale of the fourfold *varna* system which comprises Brahmin (priests) Kshatriya (warriors), Vaishya (merchants) and farmers and Shudra (menials). Of these the first three groups are considered *dwija*, twice-born. The Shudra are the servile class meant to serve the top three varnas. The *antyaja* are outside the pale and untouchables meant to live outside the village.

³⁷*Manusmriti* 1886/2004, p.276.

This was the problem of the invitation of Ambedkar as the president of the conference. The invitation was based on various extraneous factors. Ambedkar realised and foresaw it. He had no intention to ascend the platform of the Hindus. He made it clear to the Mandal that he would be there because of their own choice and not because of his own choice. Yours' main intention is social reform and in this regard you thought that perhaps Ambedkar is the right person to invite. Of course, the interest of Ambedkar was very much there because he thought it as an opportunity suddenly arose to him that would help to give a lesson to the Hindus who treated him as untouchable and *antyaja*. Ambedkar said, "...I felt I ought not to refuse an opportunity of helping the cause-especially when you think that I can help it. Whether I am going to say today will help you in any way to solve the problem you are grappling with, is for you to judge. All I hope to do is to place before you my views on the problem."³⁸ The path of social reform and the path of heaven is dispersed with many difficulties because social reform in India is deeply rooted in religion which cannot be revised or modified according to the needs. As a result, social reform in India has few friends and many critics. The critics fall into two distinct classes- one class consists of political reformers and other of the socialists. According to Ambedkar, social efficiency is the pillar of overall permanent progress of society. Ambedkar borrowed the term from John Dewey, the leading American pragmatist philosopher, radical democrat and educational theorist who taught Ambedkar at Columbia University and influenced him deeply. Hindu society was wrought by evil customs, it was not in a state of efficiency and ceaseless efforts must be made to eradicate these evils. It was due to the fact that the birth of the National Congress was accompanied by the foundation of the social conference. The social conference was engaged in removing the weak points in the social organisation of Hindu society. However, over the course of time, the two wings developed into two parties, such as, a political reform

³⁸ Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, op. cit., p.210.

party and a social reform party. Subsequently, there raged a fierce controversy. The political reform party supported the National Congress whereas the social reform party supported the Social Conference. Thus, the two bodies became two hostile camps. The central issue was whether social reform should precede political reform and the battle was sustained without victory to either side. Moreover, the majority of educated Hindus were for political advancement and indifferent to social reform. This indifference was soon followed by active hostility from the politicians. Under the leadership of the late Mr. Tilak, the controversy with which the congress allowed the Social Conference the use of its pandal was withdrawn. Thus, over the course of time the party in favour of political reform won and the Social Conference vanished and was forgotten. Accordingly, the victory went to the Congress. However, those who believe in the importance of social reform may ask whether social reform has any bearing on political reform.

Ambedkar was in favour of annihilation of caste because it robs humanity. He mentioned that under the rule of the Peshwas in the Maratha country, untouchable was not allowed to use the public streets if a Hindu was coming along. Even the shadow of an untouchable pollutes the Hindu. The untouchable was required to have a black thread either on his wrist or around his neck. It bears as sign or as a mark to prevent the Hindus from getting them polluted by his touch by mistake. In Poona, the untouchable was required to carry, strung from his waist, a broom to sweep away from behind him the dust he trod on. A Hindu walking on the same dust should be polluted. The untouchables were required to carry an earthen pot hang around his neck wherever he went. It was used for holding his spit. His spit falling on the earth should pollute a Hindu who might unknowingly happen to treat on it. The sanctions imposed on untouchables were inhumane in nature. They were treated just like slaves. The tyranny practiced by the Hindus upon the Balais, an Untouchable community in Central India, was a case in point like many others. It was

reported in the *Times of India* on 4th January 1928. The correspondent of the *Times of India* reported that high-caste Hindus, such as, Kalotas, Rajputs and Brahmins, including the Patels and Patwaris of the village of Kanaria, Bicholi- Hapsi, etc., informed the Balais of their respective village that if they wished to live among them, they must conform to the following rules.

- (i) They must not wear gold-lace-boarded pugrees.
- (ii) They must not wear dhotis with coloured or fancy borders,
- (iii) They must convey intimation of the death of any Hindu to relatives of the deceased – no matter how far these relatives may be living.
- (iv) In all Hindu marriages, Balais must play music before the processions and during the marriage.
- (v) Balai women must not wear gold or silver ornaments. They must not wear fancy gowns or jackets.
- (vi) Balai women must attend all cases of confinement of Hindu women.
- (vii) Balais must render services without demanding remuneration and must accept whatever a Hindu is pleased to give.
- (viii) If the Balais do not agree to abide by these terms, they must clear out of the villages.

Now, if we go through these sanctions imposed on Balais by the Hindus and consider these sanctions from today's perspective, it would certainly hurt everyone. No one can accept these sanctions. These go against humanism. Is there any rational ground of imposing sanctions like these? They were treated just like slaves. We are happy to say that the people in India have already overcome these sorts of social sanctions. Even though the concept of untouchability and the caste system still is prevailing in India, but these sorts of sanctions cannot be applied to any caste whatsoever. We cannot think that a man can do work at present without remuneration and a

Balai can do work in the Brahmin family without taking any remuneration. The social has reformed and progressed and in the days to come we can overcome such social evils. However, the situation was completely different at that time. Balais refused to comply and Hindu element proceeds against them. Balais were not allowed to get water from the village wells. They were not allowed to let their cattle graze. Balais were prohibited from passing through land owned by a Hindu, so that if the field of a Balai was surrounded by fields owned by Hindus, the Balai could have no access to his own field. The Hindus also let their cattle graze down the fields of Balais. The Balais protested and submitted petitions to the Darbar but did not get justice. The oppression continued. Hundreds of Balais with their wives and children were obliged to abandon their homes in which their ancestors had lived for generation. They were compelled to migrate to adjoining states. This clearly reflects the fate, oppressions of Balais. They were victimised and oppressed by the Hindus. They were humiliated in every respect. Ambedkar also mentioned the incident of Kavitha village. The untouchables of Kavitha village enrolled four children in the local school. This invoked both physical assaults and social boycott, and the untouchables turned to the HarijanSevakSangh, an organisation founded by M. K. Gandhi, for help. In fact, both Gandhi and SardarVallabbhai Patel opposed the untouchables' at taking recourse to law, and forced them to withdraw their complaint. Ambedkar, while recounting this incident, does not mince words. With all the knowledge of tyranny and oppression practiced by the caste Hindus of Kavitha against the untouchables all that Gandhi felt like doing was to advise the untouchables to leave the village. He did not even suggest that the miscreants should be hauled up before a court of law. Instead he with the advice of his henchman Patel had gone to Kavitha to persuade the caste Hindus not to molest the untouchables. Ambedkar felt it very well that both Gandhi and Patel were responsible directly or indirectly for the distressed and suffering of the untouchables.

The Hindus of Kavitha ordered the untouchables not to insist upon sending their children to the common village school maintained by the Government. As a result, the children of untouchables did not enjoy the right of education in the Government school. Another instance occurred in the village of Zanu, in the Ahmedabad district of Gujarat. In November 1935 some untouchable women of well-to-do families started fetching water in metal pots. The Hindus looked upon the use of metal pots by untouchables as an affront to their dignity, and assaulted the untouchable women for their boldness. Another incident happened in the village of Chakwara in Jaipur state. It was reported in the newspapers that an Untouchable of Chakwara who had returned from pilgrimage had arranged to give a dinner to his fellow Untouchables of the village as an act of religious piety. The host desired to treat the guests to a luxurious meal, and the items served included ghee also. When the assembly of Untouchables was engaged in partaking of the food, the Hindus in their hundreds, armed with lathis, rushed to the scene, deposited the food, and belaboured the Untouchables who left the food, and ran for their lives. The pertinent question is: why was this murderous assault committed on defenseless Untouchables? The only reason that can be found is that it was imprudent to the Untouchable host in the eyes of Hindus to serve ghee and his Untouchables guests were foolish enough to taste it. What then was wrong with ghee? Ghee at that time was considered luxurious for the rich. But one would think that the consumption of ghee was a mark of high social status. The Hindus of Chakwara thought otherwise and the righteous indignation avenged them for the wrong done to them by the Untouchables, who insulted them by treating ghee as an item of their food. The Hindus felt that it should be known to the Untouchables that to eat ghee was a wrong doing activity that would go against the dignity of the Brahmins. The Untouchables must not use ghee even if they can afford to buy it. It was supposed to be an arrogant towards the Hindus. This clearly reflects that the

Untouchables not only lost their social dignity in the varna-system, they were equally deprived from their external basic requirements, education, food, cloths, and what not. Ambedkar revolted against this. He voiced in favour of annihilation of caste system as he thought that the concept of Untouchability is not only a social evil, it equally robs the humanity of the distress people. These are a few instances of many instances where people treating as untouchables were victimised immensely without any reason or rational account.

Therefore, Ambedkar called for social reform by way of annihilating untouchability. In this regard, he asked the political minded Hindus: “Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow a large classes of your own countrymen like the untouchables to use public schools? Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow them the use of public wells? Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow them the use of public streets? Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow them to wear what apparel or ornaments they like? Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow them to eat any food they like? I can ask a string of such questions.”³⁹ He then challenged that no sensible man will have the courage to give an affirmative answer. In this context, Ambedkar recalled Mill’s dogma⁴⁰ that one country is not fit to rule another country. Accordingly, every Congressman should acknowledge that one class is not fit to rule another class. How that is then the ‘social reform party’ lost the battle? Thus, it would be pertinent to take note of this the kind of social reform. In this regard it would be necessary to make a distinction between social reform in the sense of the reform of Hindu family and social reform in the sense of the reorganisation and reconstruction of

³⁹Ibid., p.218.

⁴⁰ See Mill, John Stuart, *Consideration on Representative Government*, 1861.

the Hindu society. The former has a relation to widow marriage, child marriage, and the latter relates to the abolition of the caste system. As Hindu society is guided by Hindu religion, to reorganize and to reconstruct Hindu society is to revise Hindu religion. This is where the problem actually hinges on. The problem with Hindu society and Hindu religion, according to Ambedkar, is the prevailing caste-system that has been used as the 'division of labourers', instead of 'division of labours'. As the Hindu caste-system does not allow the reconstruction of Hindu society, therefore it would be very essential for Ambedkar to annihilate the caste-system of Hinduism.

The Social Conference was a body which primarily concerned with the reform of the high-caste Hindu family. It addressed the issue of an enlightened high class who were reluctant for the abolition of the caste. This body did not have the courage to agitate for it. They did not stand up for the reform of Hindu society. It did not relate to social reform in the sense of the break-up of the caste-system. However, the very fact is that political reform did in fact gain precedence over social reform. It explains why social reformers lost the battle. It also help us to understand how limited was the victory which the political reform party obtained over the 'social reform party'. To say that social reform need not precede political reform is a view which may stand only when by social reform is meant the reform of the family. Political reform takes precedence over social reform does not make sense to assume that political reform takes the path of impurity over social reform in the sense of the reconstruction of the society. The problem with political reform is that it banks on constitutional questions which are not questions of right but questions of might. Hence, political constitutions have value and permanence only when they accurately express those conditions of forces which exist in practice within a society. So let political reformers turn

in any direction they like, they will find that in the making of a constitution, they cannot ignore the problem arising out of the prevailing social order. Thus, for Ambedkar, social and religious problems have a bearing on political constitution seem to be too particular. The bearing on one or the other is limited. Having said this, history bears out the proposition that political revolution 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. Even the political revolution led by Chandragupta was preceded by the religious and social revolution of Buddha. The political revolution of the Sikhs was preceded by the religious and social revolution led by Guru Nanak. This clearly suggests that the emancipation of the mind and the soul is a necessary preliminary for the political expansion of the people. Can the socialists ignore the problem arising out of social order? Ambedkar contends that religion, social status, and property are all sources of power and authority which one man has to control the liberty of another. Of course, one is predominant at one stage and another is predominant at another stage. That is the only difference. The point is that if liberty is the ideal, and if liberty means the destruction of the dominion, then obviously it cannot be insisted upon that economic reform must be the one kind of reform worthy of pursuit. Having said this, if the source of power and dominion is, at any given or in any given society, social or religious, then social reform and religious reform must be accepted as the necessary sort of reform. Many would emphasize on the doctrine of economic interpretation of history, but Ambedkar did not think that economic interpretation of history is necessary for the validity of the socialist contention, rather equalization of property is the only real reform and it must precede everything else. He then asked the socialists: Can you have economic reform without first bringing about a reform of the social order? Socialist, of course, thinks the other way round. Here Ambedkar quoted the remarks of a prominent socialist who

said, “I do not believe that we can build up a free society in India so long as there is a trace of this ill-treatment and suppression of one class by another. Believing as I do in a socialist ideal, inevitably I believe in perfect equality in the treatment of various classes and groups. I think that socialization offers the only true remedy for this as well as other problems.”⁴¹ The problem with socialist interpretation, according to Ambedkar, is to seek perfect equality in the treatment of various classes. It is not at all clear whether a socialist believes in equality. Does he mind one class ill-treating and suppressing another class as a matter of system or as a matter of principle and thus allow tyranny and oppression to continue to divide one class from another. Of course, there are some factors of realisation of socialism owing to comprehend this issue.

There are various factors in the realisation of socialism. In this regard, one has to have economic reform. But economic reform cannot come about unless there is a revolution resulting in the seizure of power. According to Ambedkar, the seizure of power must be by a proletariat. Will the proletariat of India combine to bring about this revolution? What will move men to such an action? In this regard Ambedkar inclines to say that the only thing that will move one man to take such an action is the feeling that other men with whom he is acting are actuated by feelings of equality and fraternity and above all of justice. Justice means what is just in the real sense of the term. Thus, the main concern of Ambedkar of annihilating caste is to ensure justice based on the trio-concepts, such as, equality, liberty and fraternity. Equality is the hallmark of justice. In the eyes of everyone is equal. In this regard, one may recall John Rawls. Rawls developed mainstream theory of justice which is deontological in nature. In this regard, Rawls was indebted to Kant’s basic idea of deontology. According to Rawls, in the original position everyone is equal. In this regard, Rawls used the metaphor ‘veil of ignorance’. For Rawls, while illuminating

⁴¹Ambedkar, B, R., *Annihilation of Caste*, op. cit., p.231.

the concept of justice in the original position, there is no need for individual introduction that he is such and such. We think that while talking about social justice with regard to Ambedkar, one has to apply 'veil of ignorance' in Rawls' sense. Accordingly, one has to forego which caste a man belongs to. History taught us that men will not join in a revolution for the equalization of property unless they know that after the revolution is achieved they will be treated equally. There will be no discrimination of caste and creed. Can it then be said that the proletariat of India recognises no distinction except that of the rich and the poor? Can it be said that the poor in India recognise no such distinction of caste or creed, high or low? If they would make such distinction, then what unity of front can be expected from such a proletariat in its action against the rich? How can there be a revolution if the proletariat cannot present a united front?

Even if it would be the case for the sake of argument that a revolution does take place and socialists come into power. Will they not have to deal with the problems created by the particular social order prevailing in India? Ambedkar was skeptical to think how a socialist state in India can function for a second without having to contend with the problems created by the prejudices which make Indian people observe the distinctions of high and low, clean and unclean. For Ambedkar, if socialists are not to be content with the mouthing of fine phrases, then they must recognise that the problem of social reform is fundamental and that for them there is no escape from it. A socialist must address and deal with social order prevailing in India. If he would be reluctant, he could not achieve his revolution. If he achieves it as a result of good fortune, he will have to contend with the social order provided that he wishes to realise his ideal. Such position, according to Ambedkar, is unquestionable. A socialist will be compelled to take account of caste after the revolution. For Ambedkar, caste is the monster that crosses your path. You cannot have political reform; you cannot have economic reform unless you kill this monster. This does not

make sense to say that caste system is prevailing without its defenders or proponents. Caste system has been defended on the ground of *the division of labour*. The concept of division of labour is a very popular concept. It is used in modern days in economics. The high growth or high productivity actually hinges on the division of labour. It is a concept through which maximum outcome can be extracted from the labour or individual. Accordingly, it can be said that the division of labour is a very necessary feature of every civilised society. In this regard, there is nothing wrong in the caste system. What then is the problem with caste system? The caste system which actually meant division of labour was not used or treated like this, rather it was used or conceived as *a division of labourers*, where emphasised was given in original. Civilised society requires division of labour, but in no civilised society is division of labour accompanied by this unnatural division of labourers into watertight compartments. According to Ambedkar, the caste system is not merely a division of labourers, rather it is a hierarchy in which the division of labourers are graded one above the other. This is the real hindrance of Indian caste system. A system whatever it is, should be implemented for the benefit of the greater numbers of people. It has its own rational and scientific ground. It cannot run with the dictation of a few religious priests when their own interpretation of caste system actually robbed the humanity or human rights, economic rights, educational rights, social rights of many downtrodden people of India.

According to Ambedkar, there is another point for which he has provoked to annihilate caste-system. Is the division of labour spontaneous? In fact, the division of labour that we are talking of is spontaneous. Nobody raised any question regarding this concept. Now if the caste-system is based on the division of labour, it should be spontaneous. However, the very fact is that the Indian caste-system is not spontaneous at all. It was survived with the costs of life of millions

and millions of people. Hundreds of people were sacrificed their life as the victims of untouchables, millions and millions of people were deprived from basic human rights. It is a system of robbing human rights of the downtrodden people. As it was associated with Hindu religion, its social influence was so effective and forceful that nobody was daring to protest against it. Untouchables were compelled to follow the guidelines of the priests without complain. For Ambedkar, the division of labour is not based on natural aptitudes. Social and individual efficiency requires us to develop the capacity of an individual to the point of competency to choose and to make his own career. This basic principle was violated in the caste-system. It involves an attempt to appoint tasks to individuals in advance ‘selected not on the basis of trained original capacities, but on that of the social status of the parents’⁴² Looked at another point of view that this stratification of occupations which is the result of the caste system is positively pernicious. The caste system is extremely static, but industry is never static. It undergoes rapid and abrupt changes. Accordingly, an individual must be free to change his occupation. Without such freedom to adjust himself, it would be impossible for him to gain his livelihood. The caste system of Hindu religion will not allow Hindus to take the occupations where they are wanted, if they do not belong to them by heredity. Ambedkar remarked “If a Hindu is seen to starve rather than to take new occupations not assigned to his caste, the reason is to be found in the caste system. By not permitting readjustment of occupations, caste becomes a direct cause of much of the unemployment we see in the country.”⁴³ Here Ambedkar resounded the democratic criterion of Dewey. A democratic criterion requires us to develop capacity to the point of competency to choose and make its own carrier.⁴⁴ In fact, John Dewey was an advocate of industrial democracy, which in Noam Chomsky’s words “means democratic production,

⁴²Ibid., p.234.

⁴³Ibid., p.235.

⁴⁴ See Dewey, 1916, p.364.

commerce, and so on, which means eliminating the whole structure of capitalist hierarchy.”⁴⁵ This clearly reflects the very meaning of division of labour where there is no point of hierarchy. However, the division of labour that we are talking of in the caste-system is based on hierarchy directly associated with hereditary relation. There is no scope of changing individual profession. One has to be abided by the *varna-system* based on heredity. Thus, the division of labour that we precept in the caste system is not a division based on choice. Here individual choice, individual preference has no place in it. According to Ambedkar, it is based on the dogma of foreordination or predestination. Thus, consideration of social efficiency would compel us to recognise that the greatest evil in the industrial system is not so much poverty and the suffering that involves. There we witness so many such callings where the individuals associated with such callings are not deeply committed or involved. Such calling, according to Ambedkar, constantly provokes one to aversion, ill will and the desire to evade. It was equally reflected in Dewey. For Dewey, sentimentally it may seem harsh to say that the greatest evil of the present regime is not found in poverty and in the suffering which it entails, but in the fact that so many persons have callings which makes no appeal to them, which are pursued simply for the money reward that accrues. For such callings constantly provoke one to aversion, ill will, and a desire to slight and evade.⁴⁶

India as the hub of spiritualism is dominated by religion in general and Hindu religion in particular. It is our general perception that there is nothing wrong if it is properly understood. According to Gandhi, true religion is the realisation of Truth, the God or the Sat or Satya. One has to realise it. True religion is not all about of interpretation, but is all about of realisation.

⁴⁵ See, Chomsky, Noam, 1993.

⁴⁶ Cited Mukherjee, Arun P., " B. R. Ambedkar, John Dewey, and the Meaning of Democracy" , *New Literary History* 40 (2), 2009, p.364.

However, according to Ambedkar in the name of Hindu religion the Hindu priests treated some occupations as inferior than other occupations and in turn provoked those who are engaged in them to aversion. Moreover, there is a constant desire to evade and escape from such occupations, which arises solely because of the blighting effect which they produce upon those who follow them by the Hindu religion. Ambedkar quips: What efficiency can there be in a system under which neither man's hearts nor their minds are in their work? Thus, it was presumed that as an economic organisation, caste is therefore a harmful institution, inasmuch as it involves the subordination of man's natural powers and inclinations to the exigencies of social rules. The defenders of caste-systems are of the opinions that division of caste is determined biologically. The object of caste was to preserve purity of race and purity of blood. In this regard, Ambedkar referred the anthropologists' position. Anthropologists are of the opinion that men of pure race exist nowhere and that there has been a mixture of all races in all parts of the world. Hinduism is a series of jungles; there are clusters of opinions in Hinduism. It would therefore be very difficult to identify who were or are the real Hindus. Ambedkar in his paper on "Foreign Elements in the Hindu Population" has clearly stated, "There is hardly a class or caste in India which has not a foreign strain in it. There is an admixture of alien blood not only among the warrior classes- the Rajputs and the Marathas- but also among the Brahmins who are under the happy delusion that they are free from all foreign elements."⁴⁷ Ambedkar in this regard referred Devadatta Ramkrishna Bhandarkar who was an epigraphist and archaeologist and who worked for the Archaeological Survey of India. For Ambedkar, Bhandarkar uses evidence from the Vedas and the epics of the Hindu tradition, such as the *Rig Veda* and the *Mahabharata*, to disprove the 'purity of blood' myths attributed to Brahmins. Thus, from historical and anthropological perspectives it can be said that the caste system cannot be said to have grown as a means of

⁴⁷Ambedkar, D. R., "Foreign Elements in the Hindu Population", 1911, p.37.

preventing the admixture of races, or as a means of maintaining purity of blood. In fact, the caste system came into being long after the different races of India had commingled in blood and culture. In his understanding of the caste system and its evolution, Ambedkar here differs strongly from Brahminic appropriations of the racial theory of Aryans and Dravidians propounded by European Indologists.

Thus, to hold that distinctions of castes are really distinctions of race and different castes were identified on the basis of different races. It is a gross distortion of facts. What racial affinity is there between the Brahmin of the Punjab and the Brahmin of Madras, between the Untouchables of Bengal and the Untouchables of Madras; between the Brahmin of Punjab and the Chamar of the Punjab? For Ambedkar, the caste system does not demarcate racial division. In fact, the caste system is a social division of people of the same race. Moreover, a lot of non-sense is talked about heredity and eugenics in defense of the caste system. Some would object to the caste system if it was in accord with the basic principle of eugenics, because few can object to the improvement of the race by judicious coupling. However, one fails to understand how the caste system secures judicious mating? If caste is eugenic in origin, then the origin of sub-castes must also be eugenic. For Ambedkar, it would be absurd to assume that the origin of sub-caste is eugenic. If caste means race, then differences of sub-castes cannot mean differences of race, because sub-castes origin, become ex hypothesis sub-divisions of one and the same race. Again, if sub-castes cannot be eugenic in origin, there cannot be any substance in the contention that caste is eugenic in origin. Again if caste is eugenic in origin, one can understand the bar against inter-marriage and inter-dining. Inter-dining, according to Ambedkar, cannot infect blood and therefore cannot be regarded as the cause of either of the improvement or of the deterioration of the race. This further shows that caste has no scientific origin and who are attempting to give it a

eugenic basis is trying to support by science what is grossly unscientific. Even in the 21st century, eugenics cannot be treated as a practical possibility so long we have defined knowledge regarding the laws of heredity. Professor Bateson says, “There is nothing in the descent in the higher mental qualities to suggest that they follow any single system of transmission. It is likely that both they and the more marked developments of physical powers result rather from the coincidence of numerous factors than from the possession of any one genetic element.”⁴⁸ For Ambedkar, to claim that the caste system was eugenic in its conception is to attribute to the forefathers of present-day Hindus a knowledge of heredity which even the modern scientists do not possess.

Ambedkar further contends that a tree should be judged by the fruits it yields. Now, if the caste is eugenic, what sort of race of men should it have produced? Physically, the Hindus are a C3 people, a race of pygmies and dwarfs and to be unfit for military service. This clearly suggests that the caste system does not embody the eugenic of modern scientists. Rather it should be conceived as a social system which exemplifies the arrogance and selfishness of a perverse section of the Hindus who were superior enough in social status to set it in fashion and who enjoyed the authority to force it on their inferiors. For Ambedkar, there is hardly any positive content in caste-system. It does not result in economic efficiency, it cannot improve race. What it does is to disorganize and demoralized the Hindus. Hindu society, for Ambedkar is a myth because the term Hindu is itself a foreign name. It does not occur in any Sanskrit work prior to the Mahomedan invasion. Nothing exists in the name of Hindu society; Hindu society is only a collection of castes where each caste is conscious about its existence. A caste has no feeling towards other castes except the riot between Hindu and Moslem. Realistically, the ideal Hindu

⁴⁸Batson, W., *Mendel's Principles of Heridity*, 1909, p.205.

must be like a rat having in his own hole, refusing to have any contact with others. Within Hindu there is an utter lack of Hindu consciousness. As a result of that the Hindu cannot form a society or a nation. Of course there are some similarities in habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts among Hindus but this was not enough to constitute men into society. As a result, the anti-social spirit was developed not only to caste even it has gone deeper and poisoned the mutual relations of the sub-caste as well. As a result of that there developed the tendency to protect their own interests and it was the marked feature of the different castes in their isolation from one another. The Brahmin's primary concern was to protect 'his interests' against those of non-Brahmins and vice-versa. As a result of that the Hindus are not becoming an assortment of castes, but are so many warring groups, each living in an isolated and distinct manner. For Ambedkar, the existence of caste and caste consciousness has served to keep the memory of past feuds between castes green and has prevented solidarity. Thus Ambedkar felt it necessary to annihilate the caste-system. It robs the solidarity, tranquility, fraternity, equality and above all the concept of justice of humans. In the name of caste, many unscientific, unaccepted and unreasonable activities were done in the past that would go against humans' solidarity and integrity at large.

Is Hindu Religion a Missionary Religion?

Due to caste debacle many would say that Hindu religion is a missionary religion. However, this is a controversial and debatable issue. Some would say that Hindu religion was never a missionary religion, other hold that it was a missionary religion. However, it was claimed that Hindu religion was once a missionary religion. It could not spread over the face of India if it was not a missionary religion. However, it is also to be a case that today Hindu religion has not been treated as missionary religion. At the juncture, the important issue is not discussed about the issue whether Hindu religion was a missionary religion, but more to discuss about why did the

Hindu religion cease to be a missionary religion? According to Ambedkar, Hindu religion ceased to be a missionary religion when the caste grew up among the Hindus. Caste is inconsistent with conversion. It was indeed a problem which must confuse every Hindu wishing to make aliens convert to his religion. Unlike a club, the membership of a caste is not open to all. The law of caste confines its membership to person born in the caste. Castes are autonomous and there is no place for a convert because in Hindu society each caste is being treated as a close corporation. Ambedkar then presumed that so long as caste remains, Hindu religion cannot be made a missionary religion. Thus the only reason of ceasing Hindu religion as missionary religion is the issue of caste politics. As a result, there is no unity among Hindus. Hindus are cowards unlike Sikh and Mahomedan because unlike the Hindus, Sikh and Mahomedan got their strength arising out of the feeling that all Sikhs will come to the rescue of a Sikh when he is in danger and 'that all Mahomedans will rush to save a Muslim if he is attacked.'⁴⁹ The Hindu can derive no such strength; he cannot feel assured that his fellows will come to his help. As a result, he remains powerless, develops timidity and cowardice. On the contrary, the Sikhs as well as the Muslim stands fearless in attitude and gives battle with the perception that he will not be alone. The presence of this belief helps him to hold out and the absence of it makes him to give way. According to Ambedkar, the reasons for this difference actually hinges in their associated mode of living. The associated mode of life of Sikhs and Muslims produces fellow-feeling. It was absent in Hindu. There is social cement in Sikhs and Muslims which makes them *bhais*, in Hindu it is missing. One Hindu does not regard another Hindu as his *bhai*. This makes the difference. Caste-system is responsible for this. For Ambedkar, this difference is due to caste and so long caste remains in Hindu religion, there will be no *sangathan* and so long there is no *sangathan*, the Hindu will remain weak and meek.

⁴⁹ Ambedkar, B. R., *Annihilation of Caste*, op. cit., p.255.

Of course, tolerance is the great virtue of a Hindu. Hindus claim to be a very tolerant people. Ambedkar thought it a mistake as he saw that on many occasions they can be intolerant and in some occasions they are tolerant. They lack consistency because they are too weak or too indifferent to oppose. This indifference of the Hindus has become so much a part of their nature. Why Hindus are so indifferent? What makes them indifferent? For Ambedkar, this indifferentism is the result of the caste system which had made sangathan and cooperation impossible.

Thus, annihilation of caste is a must because the effect of caste has killed public spirit. It has destroyed the sense of public charity. It has made public opinion impossible. A Hindu's public is his caste. His responsibility and loyalty is only to his caste. Here everything is caste-ridden, virtues have become caste-ridden, and morality has become caste-bound. There is no sympathy for the deserving, there is no appreciation of the meritorious, there is no charity to the needy, and sufferers do not get any response. There is no charity, charity if there be any begins with caste and ends with caste. There is sympathy, but it is only for the own caste and not for the other castes. This position actually distorts humanism at large. Everyone is the son of God. Therefore, to serve one is at par to serve God. It has been acknowledged by many great contemporary thinkers, such as, Vivekananda, Tagore and many others. Therefore, mere caste ridden bar distorts humanism, solidarity and fraternity. There is religious anarchism in Hinduism because here a Brahmin will follow a leader only if he is a Brahmin and the same is happening in every other caste as well. There is appreciation of virtue, but only when the man is a fellow caste-man. The whole morality, Ambedkar opined, is as bad as tribal morality. My caste-man is not standing on the foothold of virtues, rather on the caste itself. Thus, Hindu society cannot be regarded as an ideal society. What then is the standard of an ideal society? In this regard Ambedkar said that my

ideal society would be a society that would ensure *liberty, equality and fraternity*. Neither of these virtues is ensured in Hindu society under the sphere of Hindu religion.

Call for an Ideal Society

According to Ambedkar, an ideal society should be mobile, should be full of channels for conveying a change taking place in one part to other parts. In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared. An ideal society would be one where everyone enjoys equal rights and opportunity. In an ideal society there must be social endosmosis, a sort of interaction between social groups so that they managed to reconcile the two extremes and give a sense of being both separate and connected. Social endosmosis ensures fraternity which is another name for democracy. According to Ambedkar, democracy is not merely a form of government, rather it is primarily a mode associated living of 'conjoint communicated experience'. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellow men. In an ideal society, everyone has the right to choose his or her own profession. There should not be any bar. But unfortunately, in Hindu religion the profession of a man is determined on the basis of caste. Thus, for Ambedkar, to have an ideal society in the desired sense, annihilation of caste is prerequisite. Thus, to create a bar in choosing one's own profession irrespective of caste is to disseminate slavery – a non-legalised form of subjugation where some men are forced to accept their professions on the basis of caste. The concept of justice in the real sense of the term cannot be ensured without the concept of equality. It was the slogan of the French Revolution. In many respects, all men are not equal. Thus, in a sense, equality may be thought as a fiction. Having said this, one must accept it as the governing principle. Men are undoubtedly unequal in respect of social physical heredity, in respect of endowment in the form of parental care, education, accumulation of scientific care and on his own efforts. However, the

pertinent question is: Shall we treat them as unequal because they are unequal? However, from the point of justice, there are instances where equality is a must to count. We cannot escape equality. Even though the doctrine of equality is glaringly fallacious but, talking all in all, it is the only way a statesman can precede in politics. But there is a set of reformers who hold out a different ideal. The concept of *chaturvarnya* is a case in point where the protagonists of *chaturvarnya* take great care to point out that their *chaturvarnya* is based not on birth but on *guna*(worth).

According to Ambedkar, the worth-based classification of *chaturvarnya* may be treated as an ideal with which he cannot reconcile. It should be the case that under the *chaturvarnya* of Arya Samajists, an individual is to take his place in Hindu society according to the worth. But why the Arya Samajists insist upon labeling men as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra? A learned man should be honored without his being labeled a Brahmin. Likewise, a soldier would be respected without his being designated a Kshatriya. Why the Hindu society finds it difficult to follow the same way like the European society follows? The four-fold division is based on hierarchy or fixed order and most importantly it is determined on the basis of birth. This actually ensures the continuance of these labels and it is experienced that certain names become associated with certain notions and sentiments which determine a person's attitude towards men and things. The point that to be taken care of at this juncture is that so long these continues, the hierarchism within Hinduism will prevail and everything would be determined in accordance with birth. Moreover, it equally forbids the Hindus to accept any sort of reformation in terms of caste. If new notions are to be included in the mind of people, it is necessary to give them new names. Accordingly, to continue the old names is to make the reform futile. Thus, Ambedkar favours annihilation of caste for the sake of humanism as he thinks that the concept of caste

actually goes against Humanism. It robs the basic human rights of the millions of the downtrodden and marginal in the names of caste. It does not accept any sort of social reformation which is necessary over the course of history. The perception, taste, and requirements of the society is being changed in every passing days. Nobody can deny it. Therefore, to stick with a unresolved dogmas bears no sense in the real sense of the term. Therefore, Ambedkar inclines to say that this *chaturvarnya* with its old labels is utterly disgusting and 'my whole being rebels against it'.⁵⁰ However, it should be kept in mind that Ambedkar insightfully finds subtle difference between caste system and *chaturvarnya* and that is why he did not raise objection to *chaturvarnya* on mere grounds of sentiments. Instead he finds various grounds of opposition *chaturvarnya* as he thinks that as a system of social organisation, *chaturvarnya* is impracticable. It is harmful as well. He says, "... as a social organisation, *chaturvarnya* is impracticable, is harmful, and has turned out to be a miserable failure."⁵¹ Thus from a practical point of view, the system of *chaturvarnya* does not bear any positive impact to construct a viable society or community. He then says that the principle underlying caste system is somehow or other different from the underlying *chaturvarnya*. They are not fundamentally different; they are fundamentally opposed with each other.

Chaturvarnya, Ambedkar opines, is based on worth. If it would be the case that the four fold division or *chaturvarnyacannot* be determined on the basis of birth as we observe in Hindu religion. If worth is the deciding factor of determining *chaturvarnya*, how do we create a social status without referring to the worth? It Mahabharata, Sri Kishna was also talking about worth. According to Krishna, the varnya would be determined on the basis of *guna* and *karma* of the people and nothing else. Accordingly, it should not be related with the birth. How does birth

⁵⁰Ibid., p.265.

⁵¹Ibid., p.265.

determine the caste or *varnya* of a person? How are we going to compel people to recognise the status due to a man in accordance with his worth? This clearly suggests that the original four classes have now become thousand castes. This is a human disgrace according to Ambedkar because it would vitiate the real program of religion *per se*. The basic tenet of any religion is to seek and ensure religious justice. Hinduism in the name of caste actually does the opposite. It dissects the people in various categories, creates religious envies and jealous among Hindus and instead of ensuring religious justice it ensures religious injustices and as a result of that the sufferers are victimised from social, economic and historical rights as well.

The other difficulty of *chaturvarnyais* the way of promulgating of the system of the same. How are you going to maintain the system of *chaturvarnya*? How it was established? Of course, one important requirement for the successful working of *chaturvarnyais* the maintenance of the penal system which could maintain it by its sanction. In fact, the system of *chaturvarnya* must unendingly face the problem of the transgression. As a result of that, unless there is a penalty attached to the act of transgression, men will not keep to their respective classes. Accordingly, the whole system will break down. Thus for Ambedkar, *Chaturvarnyacannot* subsist by its inherent goodness. It must be enforced by law or religious sanction. It was revealed that without the penal sanction the ideal of *chaturvarnya* cannot be realised and it is proved by the story in the Ramayana of Rama killing Shambuka. The story is like this. It was learn that the Shambuka is told in the seventh book, Uttarakanda, of the Valmiki Ramayana. Shambuka wants to achieve a higher status than the *suras(devtas, gods)* through meditation and austerities. On discovering that Shambuka, a Shudra, was indeed meditating, Rama promptly beheads his to restore *varnasharma dharma*. The same story has been used by the Dravidian movement and in anti-caste literature to ridicule the idea of Rama as the embodiment of perfection. Indeed some people seem to blame

Rama because he wrongly and without reason killed Shambuka. However, to blame Rama for killing Shambuka is to misapprehend the whole situation. Ram Raj was a raj based on *chaturvarnya* and as a king Rama was bound to maintain *chaturvarnya*. AS a result of that, it was the duty of Rama to kill Shambuka, a Shudra who had transgressed his class and wanted to be a Brahmin. This is the reason why Rama killed Shambuka. Many would say that the penal system is necessary and prerequisite to maintain *chaturvarnya*as it is observed in the case mentioned just cited. Even bedside penal sanction, the penalty of death is necessary to retain *chaturvarnya*. That was the reason that Rama did not inflict on Shambuka a lesser punishment. That is perhaps the ground that *Manusmriti*prescribes such heavy sentences as *cutting off the tongue, or pouring of molten lead in the ears, of the Shudra who recites or hears the Veda*.

It is noted here that the *Manusmriti* represents itself as the dharma that Brahma declares to Manu, the first man, and is passed on by him to Bhrigu, one of the ten ‘great sages’. Accordingly, the sanction that has been mentioned in Manusmriti is inviolable and stringent. Ambedkar burned some sections of Manusmriti as he thought that it went against humanism. Assuming that *chaturvarnya* is practicable, still it is supposed to be the most vicious system according to Ambedkar because it is based on a system of division of labour. As a result of that it debarred the Shudra from education because only the Brahmins have the right to educate. Thus, as a theory it is not an alluring theory. What will happen if the Brahmins fail to pursue knowledge? Who is to safeguard the interests of the Shudra? Who is to defend the liberty of the Shudra? For Ambedkar, interdependence of one class on another is inevitable and even dependence of one class upon another may sometimes become allowable. Everyone must have education like Brahmins; everyone must have means of defense like Kshatriyas. How can the fact that his neighbor is educated and armed help a man who is uneducated and unarmed?

Accordingly, the whole theory seems to be absurd, vicious in nature because of its perceptual implication and historical directions. In fact, the defenders of chaturvarnya would be trouble by these questions. It must be admitted that it makes no provision to safeguard the interests of the ward from the misdeeds of the guardians. In fact, in practice the relation was that of master and servants. The three classes, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas though made compromise but they were not happy in their mutual relationship. However, the three agreed to beat down the Shudra. A shudra was not allowed to acquire wealth, he was prohibited from acquiring knowledge; he was prohibited from bearing arms. As a result of that the Shudras were treated by the *tryavarnikas or three varnas* and it was evidenced by the laws of Manu. Moreover, there is no code of laws more infamous regarding social rights than the laws of Manu.

The pertinent question then arises: Why have the mass of people tolerated the social evils to which they have been subjected? Why have there not have been social revolutions in India? The question indeed troubled Ambedkar lot. The only reason perhaps was that the lower classes of Hindu had been completely disabled from direct action on account of this wretched and shameful caste system. They could not bear arms and as a result of that they could not rebel because they were armless. They could receive no education and as a result of that they could not know the way out from salvation and their miseries. They were condemned to be lowly and they did not know the way out of escape. They do not have the means of escape. They became reconciled to *eternal servitude* which they accepted as their *inescapable fate*. This indeed is a disgrace of humanity. It cannot be tolerated from rational point of view. Ambedkar protested against such human disgrace. In this regard, he found the most objectionable sanctions in Manusmriti in favour of chaturvarnya. As a protest, he burned selected portion of Manusmriti and called for annihilation of caste. Ambedkar in this regard, referred some instances of Europe where social

war has been raging between the strong and the weak far more violently than India. The weak in Europe has the right to enjoy military service, have the right of getting education unlike India. Thus, the situation of the European weaker sections is not as much as pathetic than India. The Indian caste system robs humanism, degrades humanism, it is the system which mutes, paralyses and cripples the people from helpful activity in the name of caste. This is no longer exaggeration and history always helps us in this regard. History bears ample evidence. Except Maurya Empire, *the only one period in Indian history*, all other times the country suffered from defect and darkness. However during Maurya period the caste system was completely annihilated. At that time the Shudras, the mass of the people, came into their own and become the rulers of the country.

It thus can be said that Chaturvarnya is not new, it is old as the Vedas. Even from historical perspective we can say that in the past the Brahmins on many occasions involved wars with the Kshatriyas. The Mahabharata and the Puranas are full of incidents of the strife between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. They were involved quarrels over petty questions. The Bhagwat tells us very definitely that Krishna had taken avatar for one sacred purpose and that was to annihilate the Kshatriyas. Keeping these past historical instances of conflicts between Brahmins and Kshatriyas or different varnas before us, it would be very difficult to realise how anyone can hold out chaturvarnya as an ideal to be aimed at. Having said this, the fourfold division of caste retained its foothold because the attitude of the higher caste Brahmins to the problem of caste is not merely an attitude of neutrality, but is an attitude of *armed neutrality*. Secondly, they represent a considerable body of people which did not find anything wrong with the caste system. Such Hindus cite the caste of Muslims, Shiks and Christians and find comfort in the fact that they too have castes amongst them. They have a narrow and intensive code which is often

appears as anti-social. It is true even in Europe. As various groups exist in every society, there is no point in saying that a society having various groups would no longer be treated as an ideal society.

What then is the paradigm of ideal society? What social significance is attached to the ideal group? Is its exclusiveness a matter of custom and convenience, or is it a matter of religion? It is in the light of these questions that one must decide whether caste among non-Hindus is the same as caste among Hindus. It seems that the caste among non-Hindus is fundamentally different from the caste among Hindus. The ties and social bondage among Hindus are non-existent in the true sense of the term, whereas the same is very much present in the case of non-Hindus. There is no question of doubt that the real strength of the society actually hinges on the very presence of points of contact, possibilities of interaction among various groups which exist in it. It is what Carlyle calls *organic filaments*, i.e., the elastic threads help to bring the disintegrating elements together and to reunite them. The basic objective of universal religion is the massive participation irrespective of caste, creed. Unfortunately, there is no integrating force among the Hindus to counteract the disintegration caused by the caste. However, among the non-Hindus we notice plenty of 'organic filaments' which bind them together. Further, it should be borne in minds that like Hindus although the caste system was prevailing among non-Hindus, but the same does not bear any role or significance in social, political and economic decisions. As a result of that nobody is victimised from social, political and economic rights with regard to caste. Ask a Sikh or a Mohamedan what he is, he tells you that he is a Sikh or a Mohamedam. He does not tell you the caste although he has one and you are fully satisfied with the answer. This is unlikely in the case of Hindus. When he tells you that he belongs to Sikh, you do not further ask him whether he belongs to Jat or Roda. However, if a Hindu tells you that he is Hindu, then you

immediately ask him in which caste he belongs to, because in Hinduism the caste would be the determining facts of becoming a human, the rights even human one is determined on the basis of caste in Hinduism. A Hindu would be out-casted if he will violate the sanctions of caste. This shows the social significance of caste to Hindus.

There we witness another important difference between Hindus and non-Hindus. Caste among the non-Hindus has no religious consecration, but it was very much there in Hindus. Among the non-Hindus, caste is merely a practice, but not a sacred institution. They do not origin it. To them it is only a survival mechanism. Naturally, they do not regard it as religious dogma. Contrary to this, religion compels the Hindus to treat isolation and segregation of caste as a virtue. Religion does not compel the non-Hindus to take the same attitude towards caste. If Hindus wish to break caste, their religion will come in their way. Thus, for Ambedkar, annihilation of caste is prerequisite because you cannot build up a nation or morality so long you stick yourself within the foundation of caste.

The only question that would be relevant in the present context is- how to bring about the reform of the Hindu social order? How to abolish or annihilate caste? This was the question of supreme importance to Ambedkar. There was a proposal that to reform Hindu caste system, the first step to take is to abolish sub-castes because it would seem that there is a greater similarity in manners and status between sub-castes than there is between castes. Ambedkar did not favour this proposal because he noticed different grade within the same caste. There is similarity between the Brahmins of the Deccan and southern India. Therefore, this remedy would be neither practicable nor effective. Another proposal was to implement inter-castes dinner as a measure of abolition caste. Ambedkar again did not think it as adequate towards the same. In fact, there are many castes which allow inter-dining, but it was the common experience that inter-dining has

not succeeded in killing the spirit of caste and the consciousness of the caste. For Ambedkar, the real remedy would be inter-marriage. Fusion of blood can alone create the feeling of being kith and kin. So long the feeling of kinship, of being kindred, the feeling of being aliens created by caste will not vanish. Ambedkar further contends that among the Hindus, inter-marriage must necessarily be a factor of greater force in social life than it need be in the life of the non-Hindus. Where society is cut asunder or in twin, marriage would be a binding force and it becomes a matter of urgent necessity to unite the society. Therefore, “the real remedy of breaking caste is intermarriage. Nothing else will serve as the solvent of case.”⁵²

Ambedkar expressed his satisfaction over the fact that the Jat-Pat-Mandal has adopted this line of attack by approaching a direct and frontal attack to Hindus and also for the courage to tell the Hindus what is really wrong with them. For Ambedkar, political tyranny is nothing compared to social tyranny and the reformer who challenges society is a much more courageous than a politician who defies the government. Caste, thus, would cease to be an operative force only when inter-dining and intermarriage have become matters of common course. The question that needs to be answered why is it that a large majority of Hindus do not inter-dine and intermarry? Why is it that your caste is not popular? The only possible reply is that inter-dining and intermarriage are unacceptable to the beliefs and dogmas which the Hindus regard to sacred. Caste is not a physical object like a wall of bricks; caste is a notion, it is a state of mind. Therefore the destruction of caste does not at par with the destruction of the physical object. Annihilation of caste is a must, because caste is bad, it may lead to conduct man’s inhumanity to man. It must be recognised that the Hindus observe caste not because they are inhumane or wrongheaded, they observe caste because they are deeply religious. The enemy you must grapple

⁵² See, Ambedkar on Annihilation of Caste, 20.5.

with is not the people who observe caste, but the shastras which teach them this religion of caste. For Ambedkar, inter-dining, inter-marriage would be a futile method of achieving the desired end. The real remedy is to destroy the belief in the sanctity of the shastras. Reformers including Gandhi must be working for the removal of untouchability. To agitate for and to organize inter-caste dinners and inter-caste marriages is like forced feeding brought about by artificial means. First and foremost thing is to make every man and woman free from the thralldom of the shatras, cleans their minds of the malicious notions of the same and then let them decide according to their will. What matters the most is not what the shatras advice the man to do, rather how the shatras have been understood by the people. This is exactly the same what Buddha took, what Guru Nanak took. You must not only discard the shatras, you must deny their authority along with the line of Buddha and Nanak.

Of course, social reforms fall into different species. There is a species of reform which is not associated with religion. It is purely secular in nature. There is another reform which not only touches the religious principles but is diametrically opposed to those principles. Caste is the natural outcome of certain religious belief. Therefore, it cannot be disobeyed without committing sin. Thus, the destruction of caste is a reform which falls under the third category. It means to ask people to give up caste is to ask them to go contrary to their fundamental religious notions. This sort of reform, unlike the first two, is a breathtaking task, almost well-nigh impossible. According to the Hindus, caste has a divine basis. As a result of that the Hindus believed that to reform or to destroy caste is to destroy the authority of the shstras and the Vedas. Ambedkar emphasised more on the question of the ways and means of destroying caste. For him, proper ways and means is more important than knowing the ideal. If you do not know the real ways and means, then your shots are sure to be misfired and you would be incapable of achieving it.

Ambedkar then candidly confessed that it would almost impossible to achieve it because in would inevitably lead to hostility with Brahmins. Brahmins know that the bane of Hindu society is caste and as an enlightened caste they could not be indifference to its consequences. Of course, there are some secular Brahmins but they were less in numbers and they were reluctant to reform shatras. According to Ambedkar, as far as reformation of shatras is concerned, orthodox and secular Brahmins are nothing but the two sides of the same coin. “Both are kith and kin. They are two armed of the same body, and one is bound to fight for the existence of the other”, Ambedkar remarked.⁵³

The Brahmin class is of course the intellectual class. This intellectual caste should share the interest and the aspirations of that Brahmin caste. The Brahmins are not only the intellectual class, but it is a class which is held in great reverence by the rest of the Hindus. The Hindus are taught that the Brahmins are *Bhu-devas* (gods on earth). Manu says, “If it be asked how it should be with respect to points of the Dharma which have not been specially mentioned, the answer is, that which Brahmins who are *shishthas* propound shall doubtless have legal force.” When such an intellectual class, which holds the rest of the community in its grip, is opposed to the reform of the caste, the changes of success appears to very remote, Ambedkar quips. Secondly and more importantly, there is a gradation system amongst castes and the higher graded castes enjoyed more rights in compare to the lower graded castes. As a result of that it would be very difficult to organize a common front against the caste system. For Ambedkar, ‘all are slaves in caste system. But all the slaves are not equal in status.’⁵⁴ Even the caste system of Hinduism goes against the slogan of Karl Marx who once remarked, “You have nothing to lose except your chains.”⁵⁵ You

⁵³ Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, 21.7.

⁵⁴ Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, 21.16

⁵⁵ Marx, Karl, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1948.

cannot, therefore, have a general or common mobilization of the Hindus for an attack on the caste system.

Can Hindus then be persuaded to discard caste system contrary to reason? This again goes against the sanctions laid down by Manus. A Hindu must follow either Veda, Smriti or Sadachar. He cannot follow anything else. There is no place for reason. Rational inquiries regarding Vedas or shatras is absolutely condemned and be regarded as wicked as atheism. Severe punishment has been prescribed by Manu to those who violate shatras or Veda. Therefore, there is no scope for rational thinking. Where there is a conflict between two smritis, the *Manusmriti* must prevail. There is no need for rational account. This is the ruling given by Brihaspati. The Hindu is not free to use reasoning faculty, rather they must abide by their directions. Caste and varna are dealt by the Vedas and smritis and as a result of that there is no room for rational appeal. According to shatras, caste is a perpetual lease on life. It cannot be modified and reformed. Therefore, to annihilate caste, you must destroy the religion of shrutis and the smritis. What the Hindus call religion is really law, or at best legalised class-ethics and Ambedkar refused to call this code of ordinances as religion. It tends to deprive moral life of freedom and spontaneity. Under it there is no loyalty to ideals, there is only conformity with commands. Ambedkar says, "I have, therefore, no hesitation in saying that such a religion must be destroyed, and I say there is nothing irreligious in working for the destruction of such a religion. Indeed I hold that it is your bounden duty to tear off the mask, to remove the misrepresentation that is caused by misnaming this law as religion."⁵⁶ You have to convince the people that it is not a religion but a law that needs to be reformed. The idea of religion is not generally associated with change, but the idea of law is associated with the idea change. When people come to know that what is called religion is really

⁵⁶ Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, 23.6.

a law, they will be ready for a change. Here Ambedkar refers Burke who once remarked, “True religion is the foundation of society, the basis on which all true Civil Government rests, and both their sanctions.”⁵⁷

While justifying the reform of Hindu religion and Hindu caste, Ambedkar outlined the paradigm of true religion like the followings:

- (i) There should be one and only one standard of Hindu religion recognised by all Hindus.
- (ii) It would be better if priesthood among Hindus were abolished. If it would not be the case, then it should be at least anti-hereditary. Every Hindu has the legitimacy of becoming a priest.
- (iii) No ceremony performed by the priest who does not hold a sanad shall be deemed to be valid in law.
- (iv) A priest should be the servant of the state and should be subject to the disciplinary action.
- (v) The number of priests should be limited by law according to the requirements of the state.

Apparently, it seems radical, but Ambedkar believes that there is nothing revolutionary in it. Every profession in India is regulated. However, the profession of a Hindu priest is the only profession which is not subject to any code. A priest may be an idiot, physically he is suffering from a foul disease, and morally he may be a wreck. Having said this, he is fit to officiate at solemn ceremonies, entitled to enter the *sanctum sanctorum* of a Hindu temple and to worship

⁵⁷ See Burke, Edmund, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1970,

the Hindu god. All this becomes possible among the Hindus. The whole thing is abominable. Ambedkar was in favour of abolishing Brahmanism and also in favour of annihilation of caste. The real problem in Hinduism is Brahmanism. The principle of religion must be in consonance with liberty, equality and fraternity- the trio concept of justice. Instead of ensuring justice, Hindu religion promulgated injustice in the name of caste. That is why, Ambedkar not only revolted against caste system, he also proposed annihilation of caste.
