Chapter II  

Dr. Ambedkar and His Sociological Writings  

Dr. Ambedkar was born to lead his helpless people from the darkness of slavery to the bright new light of liberty. He relentlessly fought for the cause of the depressed and the deprived masses of the Indian society. His philosophy of sociology revolved around the problems of man without meddling in the vortex of metaphysical exercises.

The main thread, running all through his sociological thoughts, is the human relations approach which means the right relations between man and man based as freedom, equality and justice. He did not study man in relation to God or the supernatural powers.... (he) did not indulge himself in metaphysical vagaries in order to safeguard the human dignity and rights. (Jatava 2001: vii)

He regularly expressed his thoughts about the reasons and remedies for the miseries of the downtrodden masses of India in his books, articles and speeches. He was dissatisfied with the reform activities of the contemporary society.

The path of social reform like the path to heaven at any rate in India is strewn with many difficulties. Social reform in India has few friends and many critics. The critics fall into two distinct classes. One class consists of political reformers and the other of the socialists. It was at one time recognized that without social efficiency no permanent progress in the other fields of activity was possible, that owing to mischief wrought by the evil customs, Hindu Society was not in a state of efficiency and that ceaseless efforts must be made to eradicate these evils. (Vol. 1: 38)

Dr. Ambedkar was highly dissatisfied with the prevalent social system. He did not find any logic behind the caste system and untouchability seen in the Indian society. “The untouchables, who were segregated, had no civic, religious and political rights. It was how Ambedkar’s aim to create those rights, to prepare his people’s heads, hearts and hands to secure Man’s rights, and to make them real men, real counymen out of sixty million virtual slaves.” (Keer 1962: 61) His writings present a new perspective on the social system by his rational arguments based on the scholarly interpretation of the Vedas, Smritis, Puranas and other Vedic literature. His social views found words in his addresses, books and articles named Who Were the Shudras? (1990), The Untouchables (1990), Annihilation of Caste (1989), Castes in India (1989) etc.
Dr. Ambedkar wrote two important books to express his ideas about the social problem of untouchability: *Who Were The Shudras? How they came to be the Fourth Varna in the Indo-Aryan Society?* (1990) and *The Untouchables Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchables?* (1990).

Both these works greatly influenced the thinking of the pre and post-independence Indian society. The age witnessed the emergence of an individual as an autonomous unit in the constitutional jurisprudence of equality and liberty. The books marked the inauguration of the age of reason in our history and made us realize the urge to rearrange our social institution in harmony with the dynamics of freedom. The age of reason was the effect of technologies of freedom and mobility inherent in the railways, roads, telegraphs, mass education movements and greater contacts with the liberal culture of the West. The books are acknowledged as very complex, densely argued and richly scholarly works. “His was an effort to know the social and religious history of India to investigate as to how the fate of millions of people, especially those of the Shudras and the Untouchables, was dumped in the black hole of ignorance and illiteracy by denying to them the right to education.” (Jatava 1998: 130)

**Who Were the Shudras?**

The book was inscribed to the memory of Mahatma Jotiba Phule whom Dr. Ambedkar called the greatest Shudra of modern India who made the lower classes of Hindus conscious of their slavery to the higher classes and who preached the gospel that for India social democracy was more vital than independence from foreign rule.

As Omvedt wrote, “*Who were the Shudras?* is in part a refutation of a racial interpretation; it argues that the ‘Shudras’ were originally a section of Aryans in competition with Brahmans and downgraded in the course of intense factional and political struggle; only later (and it is added as almost an afterthought) were masses of non-Aryans absorbed into the now inferior ‘Shudra’ category.” (Yadav 2000: 133)

Dr. Ambedkar was highly against the rigidity and orthodoxy of the Hindu religion. He was greatly agitated at the idea of converting *Varna* system into caste system. He firmly believed that a society was required to change with the passage of time. According to him, the interpretation of the Hindu religious texts by the Brahmans had perverted the situation beyond cure. He observed:

Ideals as norms are good and are necessary. Neither a society nor an individual can do without a norm. But a norm must change with changes in time and circumstances. No norm can be permanently fixed. There must always be room for revaluation of the values of our norms. The possibility of revaluing values remains open when the institution is not invested with sacredness. Sacredness prevents revaluation of its values.
Once sacred, always sacred. The *Purusha Sukta* makes the *Chaturvarnya* a sacred institution, a divine ordination. Why did the *Purusha Sukta* make a particular form of social order so sacred as to be beyond criticism and beyond change? Why did it want to make it a permanent ideal beyond change and even criticism? This is the first riddle of the *Purusha Sukta*, which strikes a student of Sociology. (Vol. 7: 31)

At the very present Dr. Ambedkar said that keeping in mind the contemporary literature on the subject, a book on the *Shudras* could not be regarded as a superfluity. It was dealing with a problem which could not be considered a trivial one.

He stated the general proposition and then argued against it. The social organization of the Indo-Aryans was based on the theory of *Chaturvarnya*. *Chaturvarnya* meant division of society into four classes – Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (soldiers), Vaishyas (traders) and Shudras (menials). *Chaturvarnya* would have been a very innocent principle if it meant no more than mere division of society into four classes. But it could not happen and the case got worsened due to the misinterpretation and the blind observation of the theory. The Law in British India did not recognize the four *Varnas* of the Hindus. But it did not mean that the *Varna* system had disappeared and the observance of the *Varna* system was a crime. It also did not mean that the *Varna* system was not given effect to in cases where the observance of its rules was necessary to acquiring civil rights. It only meant that the general legal sanction behind the *Varna* system had been withdrawn.

The book deals with Shudras in the Indo-Aryan Society. It is argued that the views presented in the book have nothing to do with the present-day situation of the Shudras. But there are two errors in this argument: Firstly, the present-day Shudras are a collection of castes drawn from heterogeneous stocks and are racially different from the original Shudras of the Indo-Aryan society. Secondly, in the case of Shudras, the center of interest is not the Shudras as a people but the legal system of pains and penalties to which they are subjected. This system has been no doubt originally devised by the Brahmins to deal with the Shudras of the Indo-Aryan society who have ceased to exist as a distinct, separate, identifiable community. Two consequences were found:

One consequence was a change in the connotation of the word Shudra. The word Shudra lost its original meaning of being the name of a particular community and became a general name for a low-class people without civilization, without culture, without respect and without position. The second consequence was that the widening of the meaning of the word Shudra brought in its train the widening of the application of the Code. It is in this way that the so-called Shudras of the present-day
The noteworthy contribution of this book is undoubtedly the conclusions which Dr. Ambedkar reached as a result of his investigations. He provided fresh insight and new vision. He tried to answer these two questions: (1) Who were the Shudras? and (2) How they came to be the fourth Varna of the Indo-Aryan society? The book contains XII chapters. It is written for the ignorant and the uninformed Shudras who do not know how they came to be what they are. It contains an exposure of the real character of the conspiracy against the Shudras.

The book treads heavily on the toes of the Arya Samajists. The conclusions came in sharp conflict with their ideology at two most important points. The Arya Samajists believed that the four Varnas of the Indo-Aryan society were in existence from the very beginning. The book shows that there was a time when there were only three Varnas in the Indo-Aryan society. The Arya Samajists believed that the Vedas were eternal and sacrosanct. The book shows that portions of the Vedas, particularly the Purusha Sukta which was the mainstay of the Arya Samajists, were fabrications by Brahmins intended to serve their own purposes. Both these conclusions were bound to act like atom bombs on the dogmas of the Arya Samajists.

Dr. Ambedkar’s antipathy to the sacred literature could not naturally be less than that of the non-Brahmin. He did not feel sorry for this clash with the Arya Samajists. According to him, the Arya Samajists had done great mischief in making the Hindu society a stationary society by preaching that the Vedas were eternal, without beginning, without end, and infallible. He firmly believed that “…..sacred books contain fabrications which are political in their motive, partisan in their composition and fraudulent in their purpose.” (Vol. 7:14) The social institutions of the Hindus being based on the Vedas were also eternal, without beginning, without end, infallible and therefore requiring no change. He was convinced that the Hindu society would not accept the necessity of reforming itself unless and until this Arya Samajists’ ideology was completely destroyed. The book tried to render this service, if no other.

The Riddle of the Shudras

The first chapter began with Dr. Ambedkar’s explanation of the ninetieth Hymn of the Tenth Mandala of the Rig Veda – a Hymn which was famous as Purusha Sukta. The Hymn narrated the Purusha with a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet. The Brahmins were described as the mouth; the Rajanya made his arms; the Vaishya his thighs and the Shudra as the feet. In short, the Purusha Sukta gave a theory of the Universe i.e. cosmogony. Dr. Ambedkar mentioned that a very similar cosmogony was found in the first chapter of the Genesis in the Old Testament and among the Egyptians. He was of the view that cosmogonies had never been more than matters of academic interest and had served no other purpose than to satisfy the curiosity of the student and to help to amuse children. But the verses 11 and 12 explaining how the four classes, namely, Brahmins, Kshatriyas,
Vaishyas and Shudras arise from the body of the Creator were not a mere cosmogony. They contained a divine order prescribing a particular form of the constitution of society. The constitution of society given by the Purusha Sukta was known as Chaturvarnya. It was not only beyond question but also beyond description and having profound and indelible influence on the Indo-Aryan society. Dr. Ambedkar found that the Purusha Sukta had never been questioned by anyone except Buddha. But Buddha could not shake it too. In Dr. Ambedkar’s research, the references of the propaganda of Purusha Sukta were found in the Apastamba Dharma Sutra and the Vasishtha Dharma Sutra.

All those who had raised any opposition to the sanctity of the ideal set out in the Purusha Sukta, were finally laid low by Manu, the architect of the Hindu society. He enunciated afresh the ideal of the Purusha Sukta as a part of divine injunction. He invested the social ideal of Chaturvanyam the Purusha Sukta, with a degree of divinity and infallibility which it did not have before.

Then he questioned the uniqueness of the Purusha Sukta. The Purusha Sukta and Chaturvāma were considered as ideals. Dr. Ambedkar asked a series of questions regarding this: Was this a sufficient ground for holding the Purusha Sukta as unique? The Purusha Sukta would really have been unique if it had preached a classless society as an ideal form of society. But what did the Purusha Sukta do? It preached a class-composed society as its ideal. The second part of the first chapter discusses the uniqueness of the Purusha Sukta in a very ironical way.

Dr. Ambedkar very systematically gave the features of the social ideal of the Purusha Sukta which made it unique. He noted that the real was elevated to the dignity of an ideal. An attempt was made to give reality to the ideal by invoking the sanction of law. The Purusha Sukta was considered to be sacred and divine. The theory of four classes became a matter of dogma which meant that there could be neither more nor less. It fixed a permanent warrant of precedence among the different classes which neither time nor circumstances could alter.

He tried to prove that the Purusha Sukta was not merely unique but also extraordinary. According to Dr. Ambedkar it was extraordinary because it was full of strange riddles. The Purusha Sukta followed the notion of division of labour. It converted the scheme of division of work into a scheme of division of workers into fixed and permanent occupational categories. Why did the Purusha Sukta commit itself to such a perversity?

As far as sociological point of view was concerned, Dr. Ambedkar found the three riddles in the Purusha Sukta. The first riddle was: Why did the Purusha Sukta make a particular form of social order so sacred and permanent an ideal as to be beyond criticism and change? According to Dr. Ambedkar, the attempt of the Purusha Sukta to idealize the real and to realize an ideal was a kind of political jugglery. He presented the second riddle by asking the motive behind this jugglery of the Purusha Sukta.

The last riddle was related to the position of the Shudra. Dr. Ambedkar believed that the equation of the different classes to different parts of the body
was not a matter of accident. It was deliberate. In short, this Chaturvarna theory addressed two problems at a time: one was to fix the functions of the four classes and the other was to fix the gradation of the four classes after a preconceived plan.

The chapter ended with some questions. The Shudra and the Aṭi-Shudra were non-Dvijas. Why then was the Shudra regarded as Savarna and the Aṭi-Shudra as Avarna? Why was the former within and why was the latter outside the Chaturvarnya? The Brahmins, Kṣhatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras were all within the four corners of the Chaturvarnya. They were all Savarnas. Why then was the Shudra denied the right of Traivarnikas? Could there be a greater riddle than the riddle of the Shudras? Surely, it called for investigation and explanation as to who they were and how they came to be the fourth Varna in the Aryan Society?

**The Brahmanic Theory of the Origin of the Shudras**

The second chapter began with the question if the Brahmanic literature had any explanation to offer which could account for the origin of the Shudras. According to Dr. Ambedkar, the Brahmanic literature was full of legends regarding the creation of the universe, of man and of the different varnas. Then he took each piece of the Brahmanic literature separately. The first section of the second chapter dealt with the Yajur Veda and the Atharva Veda.

Then he dealt with the Satapatha Brahmana and the Taittirīya Brahmana. After giving the complete collection of all the Brahmanic speculations on the origin of the four classes and of the Shudras, Dr. Ambedkar gave his critical analysis on the literature. He said that the ancient Brahmins were evidently conscious about the four Varnas and the place of the Shudras. The variety of the explanations regarding the origin of the Chaturvarnya and of the Shudra given by these Brahmanic literatures seemed bewildering to Dr. Ambedkar. Moreover, the same source gave differing explanations of the above subject. Dr. Ambedkar tried to find the historic rational touches in the literature which he could not find. The chapter ended with the citation of Prof. Max Muller in which he criticized these speculations as the twiddles of idiots. They were of no use to the students of history.

**The Brahmainc Theory of the Status of the Shudras**

The Brahmanic view of the origin of the Shudra was discussed. Dr. Ambedkar found the discussion of the civil status of the Shudra just as a long list of disabilities accompanied by the direst system of pains and penalties to which the Shudra was subjected by the Brahmanic law-givers. To quote him, “The disabilities are so deadening that it would be impossible to believe them unless one sees them in cold print. They are, however, so numerous that it is impossible to present them in their fullness.” (Vol. 7: 43)

He tried to assemble the illustrative statements by the different Sutrakaras and Smritikaras.
The findings of the study of the Brahmanic literature given by Dr. Ambedkar were these: the Shudra was to take the last place in the social order; he was impure and therefore no sacred act should be done within his sight and within his hearing; he was not to be respected in the same way as the other classes; the life of a Shudra was of no value and anybody might kill him without having to pay compensation and if at all, of small value as compared with that of the Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishya; he must not acquire knowledge and it was a sin and a crime to give him education; he must not acquire property. A Brahmin could take his property at his pleasure; he could not hold office under the State; the duty and salvation of the Shudra lied in his serving the higher classes; the higher classes must not inter-marriage with the Shudra. They could however keep a Shudra woman as a concubine. But if the Shudra touched a woman of the higher classes, he would be liable to dire punishment; he was born in servility and must be kept in servility forever.

After making such an ironical summary of the status of the Shudra in the society, Dr. Ambedkar indicated a striking fact that the Shudra alone were selected by the Brahmanic law-givers as a victim for their law-making authority; whereas, according to the ancient Brahmanic literature, the oppressed class in the ancient Indo-Aryan society was the Vaishya and not the Shudra.

Dr. Ambedkar found a close connection between the disabilities of the Shudra and the privileges of the Brahmin. He wrote,

The only Traivarnika who has special rights and privileges is the Brahmin. For instance, if the Shudra is guilty of an offence against the Brahmin, the Brahmin has the privilege of demanding a higher punishment than what a Kshatriya or a Vaishya could. A Brahmin could take the property of the Shudra without being guilty of an offence if he needed it for the purpose of performing a sacrifice. A Shudra should not accumulate property because he thereby hurts the Brahmin. A Brahmin should not live in a country where the king is a Shudra. Why is this so? Had the Brahmin any cause to regard the Shudra as his special enemy? (Vol. 7: 56-57)

Dr. Ambedkar asked a pointed question then: What did an average Brahmin think of these disabilities of the Shudras? It was admitted by all that they were extraordinary in their conception and shameful in their nature. Would a Brahmin admit this?

Then Dr. Ambedkar gave a brief survey of the Roman Law and its division of classes just to compare with the Brahmanic Law and its Varna system. He came to conclude that the basis was same for all in the Roman Law whereas all rights for the first three Varnas and all disabilities for the Shudras was the principle on which the Brahmanic Law was based.
Discussing the differences between these two laws, Dr. Ambedkar asked the reason why the Brahmanic Law did not abolish the distinction between the Traivarnikas and the Shudras as the Roman law did by equating the Plebeians with the Patricians. The Roman Law gave the same punishment for the same offence, no matter who was the complainant and who the accused was. Once an offence was proved, the punishment was the same. Dr. Ambedkar pointed out, "If these two points about the disabilities under the Roman Law are borne in mind, one can at once see what mischief the Dharma Sutras and the Smritis have done in imposing the disabilities upon the Shudras." (Vol. 7: 64)

He painfully noticed, “What the Brahmanic Law does is not merely to impose disabilities but it tries to fix the conditions by making an act which amounts to a breach of those conditions to be a crime involving dire punishment.” (Vol. 7: 64) He turned against the Brahmanic Law as it not only imposed the disabilities upon the Shudra but it also tried to make them permanent. He cited one illustration to justify his observation. A Shudra was not entitled to perform Vedic sacrifices as he was not able to repeat the Vedic Mantras. Nobody would quarrel with such a disability. But the Dharma Sutras did not stop here. They exceeded the limit and said that it would be a crime for a Shudra to study the Vedas or hear it being pronounced. If he committed such a crime, his tongue should be cut or molten lead should be poured into his ear. To Dr. Ambedkar, nothing could be more barbarous than preventing a man to grow out of his disability. He could not understand the reason why the Brahmanic Law-givers took such a cruel attitude towards the Shudras. The Brahmanic Law books only stated the disabilities. According to them, the Shudras had no right to Upanayana. They should hold no office. They should not have property. But these books did not say why the Shudras were prohibited to do certain things. Dr. Ambedkar found the whole thing arbitrary. The disabilities of the Shudra had no relation to his personal conduct. It was not the result of infamy. The Shudra was punished just because he was a Shudra. This, according to Dr. Ambedkar was a mystery which requires to be solved. As the Brahmanic Law books did not help us solve it, it was necessary to look for explanation elsewhere.

**Shudras versus Aryans**

The forth chapter presented Dr. Ambedkar’s turn to the Western writers for the solution of the problem of the origin of the Shudras. The principal elements in the Western theory about the origin and position of the Shudras in the Indo-Aryan society as found by Dr. Ambedkar were:

1. The People who created the Vedic literature belonged to the Aryan race.
2. This Aryan race came from outside India and invaded India.
3. The natives of India were known as Dasas and Dasyus who were racially different from the Aryans.
4. The Aryans were a white race. The Dasas and Dasyus were a dark race.
5. The Aryans conquered the Dasas and Dasyus.
(6) The Dasas and Dasyus after they were conquered and enslaved were called Shudras.

(7) The Aryans cherished colour prejudice and therefore formed the Chaturvarnya whereby they separated the white race from the black race such as the Dasas and the Dasyus.

To test the validity of these theories, Dr. Ambedkar examined each with the evidence in the following way.

The exploration began with the question about the Aryan race. Before giving the answer, Dr. Ambedkar gave the meaning of the word race. A race might be defined as a body of people possessing certain typical traits which were hereditary. The shape of the human head was considered to be one of the most significant features to determine the race by the anthropologists and the ethnologists. He explained in detail the science of anthropometry with the two ways of measuring the head form: (1) Cephalic index and (2) Facial index. In answer to the question raised by him – ‘Is there an Aryan race in the physical sense of the term?’ he quoted two views. The first view favoured the existence of the Aryan race by quoting Ripley, “The Aryan type… is marked by a relatively long (dolichocephalic) head; a straight finely-cut (leptorrhine) nose; a long symmetrically narrow face; well-developed regular features and a high facial angle……." (Vol. 7: 67)

The other view conveyed Prof. Max Muller’s sense of the word ‘Arya’. To quote Prof. Max Muller’s observation, “I can only state that the etymological signification of Arya seems to be: One who ploughs or tills.” (Vol. 7: 69)

The third sense of the word suggested a general name for the Vaishyas, i.e., the general body of the people who formed the whole mass of the people. For this, Prof. Max Muller relied on Panini for his authority. The last sense of the word meant ‘of noble origin’. Dr. Ambedkar cited Prof. Max Muller on the question of the Aryan race, “There is no Aryan race in blood; Aryan, in scientific language is utterly inapplicable to race. It means language and nothing but language; and if we speak of Aryan race at all, we should know that it means no more than……..Aryan speech.” (Vol. 7: 69)

Dr. Ambedkar’s examination of the Vedic literature showed that there were two words in the Rig Veda – one is Arya (अर्य) with a short ‘a’ and the other is Arya (આર્ય) with a long ‘a’. The word Arya (अर्य) with a short ‘a’ was used in 88 places in the Rig Veda with the four different senses namely: (1) enemy, (2) respectable person, (3) name for India, and (4) owner, Vaishya or citizen. As far as the word Arya (આર્ય) with a long ‘a’ is concerned, it was used in the Rig Veda in 31 places without any sense of race.

Then he presented his views on the place from where the Aryan race came to India. Dr. Ambedkar agreed with Mr. Tilak who suggested that the original home of the Aryan race was in the Arctic region. About the subject Mr. Tilak quoted, there were “Two sets of characteristics, or differentiae; one for an observer stationed exactly at the terrestrial North Pole, and the other for an observer located in the Circum-Polar regions, or tracts of land between the North Pole and the Arctic circle.” (Vol. 7: 72) Mr. Tilak considered two sets of
differentiae: Polar and Circum-Polar. Then we had a brief summary of the Polar characteristics and the Circum-Polar characteristics.

Dr. Ambedkar summed up the analysis by quoting Mr. Tilak in the following words, “Here we have two distinct sets of differentiae or special characteristics of the Polar and Circum-Polar regions -- characteristics which are not found anywhere else on the surface of the globe. Again as the Poles of the earth are the same to-day as they were millions of years ago, the above astronomical characteristics will hold good for all times, though the Polar climate may have undergone violent changes in the Pleistocene period.” (Vol. 7: 73)

Mr. Tilak was satisfied that the description of natural phenomenon and the myths and legends contained in the Vedas tally with the natural phenomenon as it existed near the North Pole. He concluded that the Vedic Aryans must have had the Arctic region as their home.

This was of course a very original theory. There was only one point which seemed to have been overlooked. The horse was a favourite animal of the Vedic Aryans. It was most intimately connected with their life and their religion. That the queens vied with one another to copulate with the horse in the Ashvamedha Yajna showed what place the horse had acquired in the life of the Vedic Aryans. But the existence of the horse in the Arctic region was doubtful. If it was so, the Arctic home theory became precarious.

The next section began with Dr. Ambedkar’s quest for the evidence of the invasion of India by the Aryan race and the subjugation by it of the native tribes. But he did not find even a particle of evidence suggesting the invasion of India by the Aryans from outside. He found that the rivers were addressed as ‘my Ganges, my Yamuna, my Saraswati’ and so on. No foreigner would ever address a river in such familiar and endearing terms unless by long association he had developed and emotion about it.

Regarding the conquest and subjugation, Dr. Ambedkar found some facts in the Rig Veda where Dasas and Dasyus were described as enemies of the Aryas. He also found many hymns where the Vedic rishis had invited their gods to kill and annihilate them. Before drawing any kind of conclusion on the matter, Dr. Ambedkar put three points for the consideration. The first point was the reference of the war between the Aryans on the one hand and the Dasas or Dasyus on the other hand in the Rig Veda. Dr. Ambedkar pointed out that out of the 33 places in which the word occurs in the Rig Veda only in 8 places was it used in opposition to Dasas and only in 7 places was it used in opposition to the word Dasyus. He remarked, “This may show the occurrence of sporadic riots between the two. It is certainly not evidence of a conquest or subjugation.” (Vol. 7: 75)

The second point was the reference of a mutual settlement based on peace with honour between the Aryans and the Dasas. Dr. Ambedkar remarked, “This is borne out by references in the Rig Veda showing how the Dasas and Aryans have stood as one united people against a common enemy.” (Vol. 7: 75) The third point was related to the degree of conflict. According to Dr. Ambedkar, it was not a conflict of race but of religion. He
made the conclusion of his study of the *Rig Veda* on the topic in the following words, “……….there is obviously no room for a theory of a military conquest by the Aryan race of the non-Aryan races of *Dasas* and *Dasyus.*” (Vol. 7: 76)

Dr. Ambedkar tried to find the meaning of the words ‘Dasas’ and ‘Dasyus’. He wanted to know whether the terms were used in a racial sense. Dr. Ambedkar noticed that the use of the terms *Dasas* and *Dasyu* in the racial sense was based on (1) the use in the *Rig Veda* of the terms *Mridhravak* and *Anasa* as epithets of *Dasyus* and (2) the description in the *Rig Veda* of the Dasas as being of Krishna Varna. *Mridhravak* meant one who spoke crude, unpolished language. Dr. Ambedkar asked, “Can crude unpolished language be regarded as evidence of difference of race?” (Vol. 7: 76) The term *Anasa* found in *Rig Veda* (v.29.10) was having two interpretations: the first one given by Prof. Max Muller meant ‘one without nose’ or ‘with a flat nose’ and the other given by Sayanacharya meant ‘mouthless’, i.e., devoid of good speech. Which of the two readings could be taken as the correct one?

To quote Dr. Ambedkar,

There is no reason to hold that Sayana’s reading is wrong. On the other hand there is everything to suggest that it is right. In the first place, it does not make non-sense of the word. Secondly, as there is no other place where the Dasyus are described as noseless, there is no reason why the word should be read in such a manner as to give it an altogether new sense. It is only fair to read it as a synonym of *Mridhravak*. There is therefore no evidence in support of the conclusion that the Dasyus belonged to a different race. (Vol. 7: 77)

Regarding the description of *Dasas* as *Krishna Yoni* in *Rig Veda*, Dr. Ambedkar found various points to be considered. He said that without clarifying these points, it was not possible to accept that *Dasas* belonged to a dark race just because they were spoken of as *Krishna Yoni*. By quoting the verses from the *Rig Veda*, Dr. Ambedkar wanted to prove that there was not racial distinction of colour or physiognomy between the Aryans and the *Dasas* and the *Dasyus*. Therefore a *Dasa* or *Dasyu* could become an Aryan. Therefore Indra was given the task to separate them from the Aryan.

Then he discussed the theories of the Aryan races set up by the Western writers. He mentioned Dr. Bopp who, in his epoch-making book called *Comparative Grammar* (1835), considered the theory of the Aryan race just an assumption and nothing more. The theory was based on a philological proposition put forth by Dr. Bopp. The European and Asiatic languages had come to be called the Aryan languages largely because the *Vedic* language referred to the Aryas and was also of the same family as the Indo-Germanic. This assumption was the major premise on which the theory of the Aryan race was based.

Dr. Ambedkar drew two inferences from this assumption: (1) unity of race and (2) that race being the Aryan race. The argument was this: if the
languages were descended from a common ancestral speech, there must have been a race having that language as its mother tongue. And since the mother tongue was known as the Aryan tongue, the race who spoke it was the Aryan race. The existence of a separate and a distinct Aryan race was thus an inference only. From this inference, one other inference was drawn which was that of a common original habitat. It was argued that there could be no community of language unless people had a common habitat permitting close communion.

Dr. Ambedkar considered the theory of the invasion of the Aryans as an invention. He said that it was just a supposition that the Aryans must have come to India from outside. The next assumption by the Western writers was that the Aryans were a superior race. Dr. Ambedkar believed that they said so just to establish the superiority of the Aryans and thereby to invent the story of the invasion of India and the conquest by them of the Dasas and Dasyus.

The last assumption of the Western scholars was that the European races were white and had a colour prejudice against the dark races. According to Dr. Ambedkar, they took Varna as colour. These assumptions were far from being facts. To quote Dr. Ambedkar, “The Aryan race theory of Western scholars is as good an illustration of how hypothesis can be the poison of science as one can think of. The Aryan race theory is so absurd that it ought to have been dead long ago.” (Vol. 7: 80) Dr. Ambedkar was of the opinion that the Brahmin scholars hailed this theory because they believed in two-nation theory. The Brahmins claimed themselves to be the representatives of the Aryan race and regarded other Hindus as descendants of the non-Aryans. The other reason why the Aryan race theory was not dead was the meaning of the word Varna (meant colour). The European scholars found the meaning. This theory got acceptance by the majority of Brahmin scholars.

Dr. Ambedkar asked the following questions on the bases of the above theory: (1) Were the European races fair or dark? (2) Were the Indo-Aryans fair? (3) What was the original meaning of the word Varna?

Dr. Ambedkar made the reference of Prof. Ripley who was quite sure that the earliest Europeans were of dark complexion. While referring to the Rig Veda, Dr. Ambedkar came to know the instances which showed that the Vedic Aryans had no colour prejudice; only their complexion varied.

Then the argument came to the meaning of the word Varna. Dr. Ambedkar searched in the Rig Veda and found that the word, in most of the places, was used with reference to deities. Only four or five times in the Rig Veda, Dr. Ambedkar found the word Varna with reference to human beings. Therefore he asked whether these references in the Rig Veda proved that the Varna was used in the sense of colour and complexion.

As Dr. Ambedkar found the evidence of the Rig Veda in this connection quite inconclusive, he turned for the help towards the literature of the Indo-Aryans. Fortunately, at last, he found the occurrence of the word Varana or Varena in the Zend Avesta. The word was used here in the special sense of ‘Faith, Religious doctrine, choice of creed or belief.’ In his observation of the
word from the *Zend Avesta*, he found that *Varna* meant a class holding to a particular faith and it had nothing to do with colour or complexion.

After making an exhaustive examination of the Western theory of the Aryan race, his conclusion ran thus: The *Vedas* did not know any such race as the Aryan race. There was no evidence in the Vedas of any invasion of India by the Aryan race and its having conquered the *Dasas* and *Dasyus* supposed to be natives of India. There was no evidence to show that the distinction between Aryans, *Dasas* and *Dasyus* was a racial distinction. The Vedas did not support the contention that the Aryas were different in colour from the *Dasas* and *Dasyus*.

**Aryans against Aryans**

The fifth chapter exposed the hollowness of the Aryan theory expounded by the Western scholars. Dr. Ambedkar reproduced the verses from the *Rig Veda* to show the utter futility of the theory of an Aryan race marching into India from outside and conquering the native non-Aryan race. With the reference of the verses of the *Rig Veda*, Dr. Ambedkar tried to convey that there were two different countries of Aryas who were not only different but opposite and inimical to each other. To quote Dr. Ambedkar, “The existence of two Aryas is not a mere matter of conjecture or interpretation. It is a fact in support of which there is abundant evidence.” (Vol. 7: 87)

Second section of the chapter dealt with more evidences by Dr. Ambedkar to prove the existence of two Aryan races. He said that the students of the Vedas considered that there were two Vedas: *Rig Veda* and *Atharv Veda*. *Sama Veda* and *Yajur Veda* were considered merely as different forms of the *Rig Veda*. They knew that the *Atharv Veda* was not recognized by the Brahmins as sacred as the *Rig Veda*. Dr. Ambedkar asked questions, “Why was such a distinction made? Why was the *Rig Veda* regarded as sacred? Why was the *Atharva Veda* treated as vulgar? Then he himself answered, "........the two belonged to two different races of Aryans and it is only when they had become one that the *Atharva Veda* came to be regarded on a par with the *Rig Veda."” (Vol. 7: 87) Moreover, the existence of two different ideologies particularly relating to creation of the Brahmanic literature also proved the existence of different Aryan races.

Dr. Ambedkar quoted detailed references from the *Taittiriya Samhita*, the *Satapatha Brahmanas*, the *Taittiriya Brahmana*, the *Taittiriya Aranyaka*, the *Mahabharata* (the ‘Adi Parvan’ and the ‘Vana Parvan’), the *Ramayana* and the *Vishnu Puran*. He wanted to prove the existence of the two different Aryan races and therefore he compared the ideologies presented in the ancient literature.

The most ‘unimpeachable evidence’ as said by Dr. Ambedkar to support his view was the anthropometrical survey of the Indian people first made by Sir Herbert Risley in 1901. Sir Herbert Risley concluded that the people of India were a mixer of four different races: Aryan, Dravidian, Mongolian and Scythian.
In short, by giving solid foundations from anthropometry, history and the ancient literature, Dr. Ambedkar built the view that there were two Aryan races in India and not the one. To quote Dr. Ambedkar’s views about the Western theory, “The Western theory is thus in conflict with the Rig Veda on a major issue. The Rig Veda being the best evidence on the subject the theory which is in conflict with it must be rejected. There is no escape.” (Vol. 7: 100)

Shudras and Dasas

The sixth chapter tried to find out the real identity of the Shudras. Dr. Ambedkar proceeded to examine the propositions – (1) whether the Shudras were same as Dasas or Dasyus; (2) whether the Shudras were non-Aryan original inhabitants of India and (3) whether they were in a primitive and a savage stage of civilization. Dr. Ambedkar found doubtful validity in the proposition that Dasas and Dasyus were one and the same people. While in some places the references were made regarding the sameness of the Dasas and Dasyus, some other references suggested that they were different. Dr. Ambedkar found that the Dasas were referred to separately in 54 places and Dasyus were referred to separately in 78 places. Therefore he raised a doubt why there should be so many separate references if they did not form two distinct entities. He himself answered in probability that they referred to two different communities.

Next was the proposition in which the Shudras were considered the same as the Dasas and Dasyus. Dr. Ambedkar considered this proposition having no foundation. The word Shudra was said to be derived from Shuc (sorrow) and Dru (overcome) and meant a person overcome by sorrow. Dr. Ambedkar believed that it was silly to take the word Shudra as a derivative not considering it as a proper name. He bitterly charged, “The Brahminic writers excel everybody in the art of inventing false etymologies. There is no word for which they will not design some sort of etymology.” (Vol. 7: 102)

The Vedanta Sutra and the Vayu Purana made the word Shudra a derivative word suggesting ‘a sorrowful people’ which Dr. Ambedkar rejected by calling absurd and senseless. He considered Shudra a proper name of a tribe or a clan and did not take it as a derivative word. With the direct evidences in support of this proposition as mentioned by Patanjali in his Mahabhasya, the Mahabharata in ‘Sabha Parvan’, the Vishnu Purana, the Markandeya Purana, the Brahma Purana and the history, Dr. Ambedkar tried to prove his proposition.

Then Dr. Ambedkar discussed the question whether the words Dasyus and Dasas were used in the racial sense indicative of their being non- Aryan tribes. He wanted to find out if there was any evidence for indicating that they were the native tribes of India.

He found no evidence for the word Dasyus being used in a racial sense indicating a non-Aryan tribe. But at the same time, the Mahabharata (the ‘Shanti Parvan’) provided a hint that the word was used to denote persons who did not observe the Aryan form of religion.
To quote Dr. Ambedkar’s observation on the origin of the word Dasyu, “What is the origin of the word Dasyu it is difficult to say. But a suggestion has been put forth that it was the word of abuse used by the Indo-Aryans to the Indo-Iranians. There is nothing unnatural or far-fetched in this suggestion. That the two had come into conflict is borne out by history. It is therefore quite possible for the Indo-Aryans to have coined such a contemptuous name for their enemies. If this is true, then Dasyus cannot be regarded as the natives of India.” (Vol. 7: 104) According to Dr. Ambedkar, if it was accepted that the Dasa in the Rig Veda was the same as Dahaka in the Aveshta, obviously the Dasas could not be considered the native tribes aboriginal to India.

Dr. Ambedkar made the reference of Mr. Iyengar’s observation to prove that Dasas and Dasyus were not primitive people. They were as civilized as the Aryans and in fact, more powerful than them. Dr. Ambedkar found that the names Dasas and Dasyus completely disappeared from the later Vedic Aryans. But it was not so with the Shudras. The early Vedic literature was silent about the matter. But the later Vedic literature was full of the references of the Shudras. Dr. Ambedkar wanted to say that the Shudras were different from the Dasyus and Dasas.

Were the Shudras non-Aryans? Mr. Kane’s observation and the stanzas from Kathaka Samhita and Vajasaneyi Samhita gave a misconception about the Shudras being non-Aryans. While Dr. Ambedkar, with the evidence from the Rig Veda, wanted to establish the fact that there were two categories of Aryans: the Vedic and the non-Vedic. They were separate and opposite of each other. Therefore, the statement ‘the Shudras were set against the Aryans’ did not mean that the Shudras were non-Aryans. They were Aryans of a different sect or class.

The Shudras were denied the Upanayana ceremony and the sacred drink of Soma as mentioned in the Dharma Sutra. But Dr. Ambedkar found out the fact that the Samskara Ganapati and the story of the Ashvins propounded that the Shudras were entitled for the both. He compelled us to rethink and change our stand about the Shudras being non-Aryans by giving these kinds of references. Then he took the reference of Kautilaya who called the Shudra an Aryan in the most emphatic terms possible.

Dr. Ambedkar dealt with the question of making the Shudras slaves. He said that it was nonsense. He found the word used in this sense only in 5 places in the Rig Veda. He said that even if it did occur more than five times, would it prove that the Shudras were made slave? “Unless and until it is proved that the two were the same people, the suggestion is absurd. It is contrary to known facts.” (Vol. 7: 111)

Dr. Ambedkar also made a significant reference of the participation of the Shudra in the coronation of kings. He found that the king received his sovereignty only when the Ratnis handed over him the Jewel of sovereignty. On receiving this, the king went to the house of each of the Ratnis and made an offering to him. It was important to note here that one of the Ratnis was always a Shudra. Dr. Ambedkar also gave the evidence of the presence of the Shudras at the coronation of the king along with the Brahmans. He cited the
example of the coronation of Yudhushthir in the Mahabharata. Dr. Ambedkar tried to prove that the Shudras were kings with the evidence of the Manu-Smriti (vi.61). Manu said that Brahmins should not live in a country where the king was a Shudra. Moreover, in the ‘Shanti Parvan’ of the Mahabharata, it was mentioned that the Shudras were ministers and that they were almost equal to the Brahmins in number. The Maitrayani Samhita and Panchavimsa Brahmana testified that the Shudras were not poor and lowly but rich. Dr. Ambedkar wanted to find out the reason why they particularly wanted to make slaves of the Shudras and why they should make different laws for the Shudra slaves. In short, the Western theory did not satisfy or help Dr. Ambedkar find who the Shudras were and how they became the fourth Varna.

Who were the Shudras?

The seventh chapter dealt with the three propositions set by Dr. Ambedkar: (1) The Shudras were Aryans. (2) The Shudras belonged to the Kshatriya class. (3) The Shudras were so important a class of Kshatriyas that some of the most eminent and powerful kings of the ancient Aryan communities were Shudras.

By studying the verses from the chapter 60 of the ‘Shanti Parvan’ of the Mahabharata, Dr. Ambedkar found the following important facts: Paijavana was a Shudra; this Shudra Paijavana performed sacrifices; the Brahmins performed sacrifices for him and accepted Dakshina from him.

Dr. Ambedkar tried to find out the identities of Paijavana and Sudas. Quoting Yaska’s Nirukta, he established that Paijavana meant the son of Pijavana and Sudas was the son of Paijavana. A deep study of the Brahmanic literature revealed that there were three persons having the same name Sudas. In the Rig Veda, Sudas was mentioned as the son of Paijavana. In the Vishnu Purana, he was mentioned as the descendant of Sagara as well as the descendant Puru. But both the references had nothing to do with each other. Dr. Ambedkar, from Weber’s observation, derived the fact that the Paijanana of the Mahabharata was none other than the Sudas of Rig Veda. Then he supported his argument with a variety of references made from different scriptures.

Dr. Ambedkar referred to the Rig Veda to prove that Sudas was neither Dasa nor Aryan. Both the Dasas as well as the Aryans were his enemies. This meant that the Sudas was a Vedic-Aryan. Referring to Aitareya Brahmana, he said that Sudas was a king and his coronation ceremony was performed by the Brahma-rishi Vasishtha. The Rig Veda also presented Sudas as the hero in the famous Dasharajna Yuddha. Again, Sayanacharya declared Sudas as a composer of Vedic hymns.

Dr. Ambedkar also found from the Rig Veda that Sudas performed Ashvamedha Yajna and was known for his charity to the Brahmins. The Brahmins praised Sudas for his philanthropy. Providing his argument the authenticity, Dr. Ambedkar wrote, “From the Rig Veda, we know that his real name was Sudas, that he was a Kshatriya. He was more than a Kshatriya. He was a king and a mighty king. To this, the Mahabharata adds a fresh and a new detail, namely that he was a Shudra. A Shudra to be an Aryan, a Shudra
to be a Kshatriya and a Shudra to be a king!! Can there be a greater revelation? Can there be anything more revolutionary?” (Vol. 7: 127)

Then Dr. Ambedkar tried to close his search for biographical details with the discussion of the following questions: was Sudas Aryan? If yes, what was the tribe to which he belonged? If Sudas was a Shudra, what did Shudra signify?

Dr. Ambedkar came to know from his detailed study of the Rig Veda that Sudas belonged to the Bharatas as his father Divodasa was spoken of as belonging to the Bharatas. The Bharatas were of course Aryans and therefore Sudas must have been an Aryan. He also proved that Sudas was a Shudra. But there was no information to determine the clan or tribe to which the Shudras belonged. The chapter ended with the doubt whether the Shudras were a tribe. That the Shudras were Aryans and Kshatriyas was beyond doubt.

The Number of Varnas: Three or Four?

The eighth chapter showed that there were originally only three Varnas among the Indo-Aryans.

Dr. Ambedkar relied on the Rig Veda for finding out the fact regarding the matter. He noticed that there was no mention of Shudra as a separate Varna. He drew the conclusion that during those times, the Varna system did exist but there were only three Varnas. The Shudras were not regarded as a fourth and a separate Varna. Again with the evidence of the two Brahmanas, the Satapatha and the Taittiriya, he tried to prove that there were originally only three Varnas and the Shudras were only a part of the second Varna.

But the ‘Purusha Sukta’ of the Rig Veda maintained that there were four Varnas. What was true?

Dr. Ambedkar drew our attention to one of the most striking facts about the text of the ‘Purusha Sukta’ by saying that it occurred in the different Vedas but was not uniform. Then he cited Prof. Max Muller and others who considered that the ‘Purusha Sukta’ was a later interpolation. To quote Dr.Ambedkar’s concluding remarks on the ‘Purusha Sukta’, “There is only one conclusion, that the Sukta is an addition to the Rig Veda made at a later stage and is, therefore, no argument that there were four Varnas from the very beginning of the Aryan Society................I, therefore, see no difficulty in concluding that there was a time when the Aryan Society had only three Varnas and the Shudras belonged to the second or the Kshatriya Varna.” (Vol. 7: 139)

Brahmins versus Shudras

Then came the problem of the degradation of the Shudras. Dr. Ambedkar replied that it was because of a violent conflict between the Shudras and the Brahmins. He tried to prove this with abundant evidence.

He came to know about a violent conflict between the Shudra king Sudas and the Brahmin rishi Vasishtha. Moreover, he noticed from the
Mahabharata that the enmity between Vasishtha and Vishvamitra was not an enmity between two priests. It was an enmity between a Brahmin priest and a Kshatriya priest. This dispute between the Brahmins and Kshatriyas was on the rights to receive gifts, to teach the Vedas and to officiate at a sacrifice.

The conflict between Sudas and Vasishtha was not the only conflict between kings and the Brahmins. Dr. Ambedkar went on collecting the same kind of examples from the Puranas. He found that the kings named Vena, Pururavas, Nahusha and Nimi also came into conflict with the Brahmins.

He regretfully concluded that the bearing of these cases on the position of the Shudra was realized properly. Nobody had realized that this conflict was a conflict between Brahmins and Shudras. Sudas definitely was a Shudra. The other kings, although not described as Shudras, were described as having been descended from Ikshvaku. Sudas was also described as a descendant of Ikshvaku. There was nothing far-fetched in saying that they were all Shudras. Even Manu had no idea of this. In a sense, the conflict was between Brahmins and Kshatriyas because the Shudras were also a branch of the Kshatriyas. It would, however, have been far more illuminating if they had been described in more precise terms as conflicts between Brahmins and Shudras. The misunderstanding concealed the real nature of an important part of the history of the Indo-Aryan society. It was for this reason that the title given to this chapter was ‘Brahmins versus Shudras’ and not ‘Brahmins versus Kshatriyas’. Understanding the history of conflict between Brahmins and Shudras might help one to understand how the Shudras came to be degraded from the second to the fourth Varna.

The Degradation of the Shudras

The tenth chapter revealed the techniques employed by the Brahmins to bring about the degradation of the Shudras from the rank of the second to the rank of the fourth Varna.

Dr. Ambedkar answered in the following way, “My answer to the question is that the technique employed by the Brahmins for this purpose was to refuse to perform the Upanayana of the Shudras. I have no doubt that it is by this technique that the Brahmins accomplished their end and thereby wreaked their vengeance upon the Shudras.” (Vol. 7: 156)

Dr. Ambedkar did not find the reason for the importance of the Gayatri Mantra for the ceremony of Upanayana. Moreover, he came to know that difference between the Upanayana ceremony of ancient times and modern times. The first asked for Vasa and Uttariya (two garments), Danda or wooden staff and Mekhala or a girdle of grass tied across the waist while the later asked for Yajnopavita. He was surprised at the absence of the mention of Yajnopavita in the early description of the ceremony of the Upanayana.

He also came to know that the wearing of the thread had a strong relation with the adoption of the gotra. And its purpose was to tie oneself to a particular gotra. In short, he came to a conclusion that the thread ceremony was connected with gotra and not with Upanayana.
If this was true, the thread ceremony and the Upanayana ceremony had different purposes to serve. At some later date the two merged into one. The reason for this merger was very natural. The Upanayana, without the thread ceremony, involved the danger of the Acharya taking the boy in his gotra. It was to avoid the danger that the father of the boy performed the thread ceremony before handing him over to the Acharya. This was the probable reason why the two ceremonies came to be performed simultaneously. Upanayana meant the teaching of the Veda by the Vedic Brahmins.

Then Dr. Ambedkar dealt with the following questions: “(1) Is absence of Upanayana the test of Shudradom? (2) Did the Shudra ever have the right to Upanayana? (3) How can the loss of Upanayana result in the general degradation of Shudras? (4) What power did the Brahmins have to deny Upanayana to the Shudras?” (Vol. 7: 161-162)

By showing various courses of judicial pronouncements on the issue of determining the identities of a Kshatriya and a Shudra, Dr. Ambedkar said that “it is a most confusing medley of opinion which settles little and unsettles much.” (Vol. 7: 164) He gave some examples of contrary and controversial opinions: “The Kayasthas of Bihar, of the Upper Provinces (now U.P.) and Benares are Kshatriyas, while the Kayasthas of Bengal are Shudras!!! According to the Madras High Court all Mahrattas are Shudras. But according to the Bombay High Court, Mahrathas belonging to five families and 96 families are Kshatriyas and the rest are Shudras!!! The Yadava community to which Krishna belonged is popularly believed to be Kshatriyas. But according to the Madras High Court, the Yadavas are Shudras!!!” (Vol. 7: 164) Then he came to know that the criteria adopted by the various courts were not the right ones. He concluded, “The real criterion is not the wearing of the sacred thread but the right to wear the sacred thread. Understood in its proper sense, it may be said without fear of contradiction that the right to Upanayana is the real and the only test of judging the status of a person whether he is a Shudra or a Kshatriya.” (Vol. 7: 166)

He found very unnatural supposition in which the Aryan Society from the very beginning treated its different classes differently in the matter of Upanayana. According to the rule mentioned in the History of Dharmashastra, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and other mixed castes were also eligible for Upanayana. He came across ample examples in which Shudras as well as women had at one time the right to wear the sacred thread and did have it performed. Women not only learned the Vedas but they also used to run schools for teaching the Vedas. They were even known to have written commentaries on the Women Purva Mimamsa.

Moreover, with the citation from Sanskara Ganapati by Max Muller, Dr. Ambedkar wanted to prove that there was a provision declaring the Shudra to be eligible for Upanayana.

But he could not find the explanation for the change in which the Upanayana was at one time open to the Shudras and it was closed to them at a later stage. He did not find the reason why the benefit of the Upanayana...
was withheld from the Shudra. The explanation that there was no *Upanayana* of the Shudra because he was a non-Aryan was modern invention which he considered completely baseless. The denial of the *Upanayan* to the Shudras brought not only spiritual but also social significance.

By referring the rules laid down in the *Purva Minansa*, he concluded the matter in the following way, “Without Upanayana, a person was doomed to social degradation, to ignorance and to poverty. The stoppage of Upanayana was a most deadly weapon discovered by the Brahmins to avenge themselves against the Shudras. It had the effect of an atomic bomb. It did make the Shudra, to use the language of the Brahmins, a graveyard.” (Vol. 7: 172)

According to him, the Brahmins doubtlessly possessed the power to deny *Upanayana*. This had two implications: (1) the exclusive right of the Brahmin to officiate at the *Upanayana* and (2) the penalties imposed upon the Brahmin for performing unauthorized *Upanayana*. He came to know a well – established fact that none but a Brahmin could perform the *Upanayana* ceremony and *Upanayana* performed by anybody else was not a valid *Upanayana*.

Dr. Ambedkar discussed the example of Shivaji. He presented many important details related to the coronation of Shivaji. Shivaji wanted to have Vedic rituals for his coronation but the Brahmins of the time suggested the *Pauranic* rituals as they took Shivaji as a Shudra. But Shivaji managed to have the Vedic rituals as “…..the Brahmins claimed the power to do and undo the status of any Hindu at any time. They can raise a Shudra to the status of a Kshatriya. They can degrade the Kshatriya to the status of a Shudra. Shivaji’s case proves that their sovereignty in this matter is without limit and without challenge.” (Vol. 7: 184)

The instances cited by Dr. Ambedkar were drawn from the Bombay Presidency only. But the principles derived from them were clear and general in their application. They were:

(1) That the Brahmins have the exclusive right to perform the Upanayana. Neither Shivaji, nor Pratap Sinha nor the Kayasthas, Panchals or Palashes wanted the Upanayana to be performed by a non-Brahmin. It is only once that the Kayasthas resolved to have their ceremonies performed by Kayasthas. But it was only a paper resolution.

(2) The Brahmin has the right to say whose Upanayana he will perform and whose he will not perform. In other words, the Brahmin is the sole judge of deciding whether a given community is entitled to Upanayana.

(3) The support of the Brahmins for the performance of Upanayana need not be based on honest grounds. It could be purchased by money.
Shivaji got the support of the Brahmin Gagabhat on payment of money.

(4) The denial of Upanayana by the Brahmins need not be on legal or religious ground. It is possible for the denial to be based on purely political grounds. The refusal by the Brahmins of Upanayana to Kayasthas was entirely due to political rivalry between the two.

(5) The right of appeal against the denial of an Upanayana by a Brahmin is only to a Vidvat-Parishad and the Vidvat-Parishad is an assembly for which a Brahmin alone is eligible to be a member. (Vol. 7: 184-185)

On the basis of the above discussion, he tried to prove that the Brahmins possessed the power to deny Upanayana. And he did not find it strange that the Brahmins used the powers and the motive against the Shudras.

The Story of Reconciliation

The eleventh chapter was an attempt of Dr. Ambedkar to answer the following questions: (1) Why should a quarrel with a few kings make the Brahmins the enemies of the whole Shudra community? (2) Was the provocation so great as to create a feeling of hatred and desire to seek vengeance? (3) Were not the parties reconciled? If they were, then there was no occasion for the Brahmins to degrade the Shudras. (4) How did the Shudras suffer this degradation? The conflicts between the Brahmins and the Shudra kings were not individual conflicts though they appear to be so. Though there was no direct evidence, there would be nothing unnatural in supposing that in these conflicts with the Brahmins, the whole Shudra community, not merely a few Shudra kings, was involved.

Answering the first question, Dr. Ambedkar said that the Brahmins did not confine their hatred to the offending kings but extended it to the whole of the Shudra community and applied the ban against Upanayana to all the Shudras.

As far as the matter of provoking a feeling of hatred and a desire to seek vengeance was concerned, the result was predictable as the pretensions to social superiority and the claim for special privileges of the Brahmins had become outrageous in character and unbearable in extent.

On the side of the Kshatriya kings, they could not be supposed to be willing to take things lying low. It must not be forgotten that most of the Kshatatiya kings who came into conflict with the Brahmins, belonged to the solar race. Those Kshartiyas belonging to the solar line were not only the equals of the Brahmins in the matter of learning, but they were their superiors. Several of them were the authors of the Vedic hymns and were known as Rajarishis.
Dr. Ambedkar also came to know that the most famous *Vedic* hymn namely the Gayatri mantra was the production of Vishvamitra who was a Kshatriya. “It was impossible for the Kshatriyas of this caliber not to take up this challenge of the Brahmins.” (Vol. 7: 192) He noticed that their pride which was born out of their prowess and their learning must have been so greatly wounded by the pretensions of the Brahmins that when they took up the challenge of the Brahmins they did it in a ruthless spirit.

Regarding the reconciliation between the Brahmins and the Shudras, he found some evidences throughout the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*. But the instances of conflicts and conciliations between Brahmins and Kshatriyas did not relate to those Kshatriya kings who had figured in history as having declared war on the Brahmins.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, the stories of the *Mahabharata* and the *Purana* were all doctored with a view to glorify the Brahmins and humiliate the Kshatriyas. Who could take such dirty, filthy, abominable and vainglorious stories of reconciliation as true historical facts? Only a supporter of Brahmanism can do so. Coming to the particular case of reconciliation between the Brahmins and the Shudras, the descendants of *Sudas*, there was ample evidence to show that no such reconciliation had taken place.

He also noticed that the Brahmins not only did not forgive the Shudras, they pursued even the progeny of the Shudras with the same spirit of relentless revenge. In short, he came to the final conclusion by his arguments that there was no reconciliation between the Brahmins and the Shudras.

There was a speculation that the Shudras must have been a very large part of the Indo-Aryan society. Dr. Ambedkar thought this assumption to be the base for the last objection. But he found the difference between the Shudras of the Indo-Aryan and the Shudras of the Hindu society. The later were not the racial descendants of the former ones. In the Indo-Aryans, the word Shudra was proper name of one single people indicating a particular race while it was an epithet for a low uncultured class of people in the Hindu society. It was a pity that those innocent and backward people of later days had been rolled up with the original Shudras and subjected to the same penalties for which they had given no cause.

Giving reference of the *Dharma Sutrakaras*, Dr. Ambedkar tried to prove the different identities of the Shudras. He said that *Sacchudra* referred to a cultured Shudra while *Asac-chudra* referred to an uncultured one. *Nirvasita* Shudra referred to a Shudra living in the village community whereas *Anirvasita* Shudra referred to a Shudra living outside the village community. The former referred to the Shudras of the Aryan society while the later referred to the Shudras of the Hindu society.

By citing many instances, Dr. Ambedkar proved how the Shudras suffered the denial of the Upanayana by the Brahmins.

The Theory in the Crucible
The twelfth chapter began with the summary of Dr. Ambedkar’s essay which focused on the origin of the Shudras and discovered the causes of their degradation:

(1) The Shudras were one of the Aryan communities of the Solar race. (2) The Shudras ranked as the Kshatriya Varna in the Indo-Aryan Society. (3) There was a time when the Aryan Society recognized only three Varnas, namely, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. The Shudras were not a separate Varna but a part of the Kshatriya Varna. (4) There was a continuous feud between the Shudra kings and the Brahmins, in which the Brahmins were subjected to many tyrannies and indignities. (5) As a result of the hatred towards the Shudras due to their tyrannies and oppressions, the Brahmins refused to invest the Shudras with the sacred thread. (6) Owing to the loss of the sacred thread the Shudras became socially degraded, fell below the rank of the Vaishyas and came to form the fourth Varna. (Vol. 7: 204)

Dr. Ambedkar tried to answer his critics blaming himself for the scarcity of sufficient evidence for establishing the identities of Paijavana and Sudas. He mentioned the supporting details he found and used to do the same. He made it clear that he did not claim absolute certainty for his thesis. Then he made the following list of the riddles of the Shudra:

(1) The Shudras are alleged to be non-Aryans, hostile to the Aryans, whom the Aryans are said to have conquered and made slaves. How is it then that the rishis of the Yajur Veda and the Atharva Veda should wish glory to the Shudras and express a desire to be in favour of the Shudras?
(2) The Shudras are said not to have the right to study the Vedas. How is it then that Sudas, a Shudra, was the composer of the hymns of the Rig Veda?
(3) The Shudras are said to have no right to perform sacrifices. How is it that Sudas performed the Ashva-Medha sacrifice? Why does the Satapatha Brahmana treat the Shudra as a sacrifice and give the formula of addressing him?
(4) The Sudras are said not to have the right to Upanayana. If this was so from the very beginning, why should there be a controversy about it? Why should Badari and the Samskara Ganapati say that he has a right to Upanayana?
(5) The Shudra is not permitted to accumulate property. How is it that the Maitrayani and Kathaka Samhitas speak of the Shudras being rich and wealthy?
(6) The Shudra is said to be unfit to become an officer of the State. How is it then that the Mahabharata speaks of Shudras being ministers to kings?
(7) It is said that the duty of the Shudra is to serve, in the capacity of a menial, the three Varnas. How is it then that there were kings among the Shudras as testified by the case of Sudas and other cases mentioned by Sayana?
(8) If the Shudra had no right to study the Vedas, if he had no right to Upanayana, if he had no right to sacrifice, why was he not given the right to have his Upanayana, to read the Vedas and to perform sacrifice?

(9) The performance of Upanayana of the Shudra, his learning to read the Vedas, his performing the sacrifices, whether they were of any value to the Shudra or not, were certainly occasions of benefit to the Brahmins in as much as it is the Brahmins who had the monopoly of officiating at ceremonies and of teaching the Vedas, it is the Brahmins who stood to earn large fees by allowing the Shudra the right to Upanayana, the performance of sacrifices and the reading of the Vedas. Why were the Brahmins so determined to deny these concessions to the Shudras, when granting them would have done no harm and would have increased their own earnings?

(10) Even if the Shudra had no right to Upanayana, sacrifices and Vedas, it was open to the Brahmins to concede him these rights. Why were these questions not left to the free will of the individual Brahmins? Why were penalties imposed upon a Brahmin if he did any of these prohibited acts?

Omvedt notices, “… Ambedkar’s theory stresses the contradictions and exploitation inherent in caste and the revolutionary ‘breaks’ in the formation of the system. It denies the ancient character of the Hindu religion and it also denied in effect, the inevitability of its hegemony, the irrevocable and essential character of its association with ‘India’.” (Yadav 2000: 135)

According to Dr. Ambedkar, the orthodox Hindu and the modern scholar had neither attempted to explain them nor did they seem to be aware of the fact that such riddles exist. The orthodox Hindu believed in the Purusha Sukta theory while the modern scholar was content with the non-Aryan aboriginal theory.

To say in brief, as Dr. Ambedkar observed, it is an important issue, or a riddle, to solve, because in all societies and religious, both men and women are allowed to worship, to be educated and to gain knowledge for self and social development. But the Hindu Shastras, especially the Manusmriti, did not permit freedom to both Shudras and womenfolk for being enlightened through education and reading of religious texts. What were the main reasons of such a sorry state of affairs? This has to be studied and investigated by the erudite scholars. (Jatava 2001: 89)

The book was followed by the appendices and index and maps. Dr. Ambedkar claimed that his thesis tried to explain and solve the above riddles perfectly.

While it is true that a non-Brahmin scholar is free from the inhibitions of the Brahmin scholar he is likely to go to the other extreme and treat the whole literature as a collection of fables and fictions fit to be thrown on the dung heap not worthy of serious study. This is not the spirit of an historian. 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 the 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 be an empty mind, and readiness to examine all evidence even though it be spurious. The non-Brahmin scholar may find it difficult to remain true to this spirit of the historian." (Vol. 7: 17)

Dr. Ambedkar tried to plead his case as a non-Brahmin scholarly historian. He was conscious about his role as a historian. He was free from prejudice. He wanted people to evaluate him as an unbiased scholar and not to connect his book with non-Brahmin politics.

Ambedkar showed a keen sense of history, and always attempted to situate his understanding of problems in their historical matrix – explaining their contemporary reality in terms of their historical development and dynamics. In a very significant sense, history was seen as a process internal to social reality, not as an external imposition on it. (Rao 1998: 18)

*The Untouchables (Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchbles?)*

The book was inscribed to the memory of Nandnar, Ravidas and Chokhamela – three renowned saints who were born among the untouchables and who by their piety and virtue won the esteem of all.

Omvedt noted that *The Untouchable* “argues for a late origin of untouchability, after the major structures of the caste system were formed when conquered tribals or ‘Broken Men’ were forced to settle in villages; it also, strikingly, associates the untouchables with Buddhism and their strong degradation with the competition of Brahmanism and Buddhism.” (Yadav 2000: 133)

The book *The Untouchables (Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchbles?)* was considered, as Dr. Ambedkar himself said, to be a sequel to *Who were The Shudras – Who they were and How they came to be the Fourth Varna of the Indo-Aryan Society.*

Dr. Ambedkar was of the view that besides the Shudras, the Hindu Civilization had produced three social classes namely (i) The Criminal Tribes, (ii) The Aboriginal Tribes and (iii) The Untouchables. These classes did not get any attention though their number was high.

He considered the Hindu Civilization responsible for the existence of these classes. He was disturbed to note that it had produced a mass of
people who were taught to accept crime as an approved means of earning their livelihood, another mass of people who were left to live in full bloom of their primitive barbarism in the midst of civilization and a third mass of people who were treated as an entity beyond human intercourse and whose mere touch was enough to cause pollution.

The existence of these classes was disliked and was hardly considered a part of their civilization by the Hindus. They inhumanly plan to suppress and enslave these tribes. Dr. Ambedkar painfully commented that this must have led to searching of the heart and to investigation of their origin. But neither had occurred to a Hindu mind. “The Hindu does not regard the existence of these classes as a matter of apology or shame and feels no responsibility either to atone for it or to inquire into its origin and growth.” (Vol. 7: 239)

According to him, the peculiar social psychology of Hindu scholars was the cause for the inculcation of these false beliefs in the sanity, superiority and sanctity of Hindu Civilization.

He was of the view that the Brahmins were learned but, simultaneously, were too class-conscious to be intellectuals. It was unfortunate that because of this flow, they could not produce a Voltaire who had the intellectual honesty to rise against the doctrines of the Catholic Church in which he was brought up. The selfish interest, the power and the position, the superman attitude of the Brahmins never allowed the lower classes to rise and challenge or threaten the superiority of the Brahmins over them. They were responsible for the lower condition and disabilities of the oppressed or under-privileged classes. By showing the weakness of the Hindu Civilization he says,

The point is that the intellect of a Brahmin scholar is severely limited by anxiety to preserve his interest. He suffers from this internal limitation as a result of which he does not allow his intellect full play which honesty and integrity demands. (Vol. 7: 240-241)

He mentioned that whenever someone tried to expose the Brahmanic literature, the Brahmin scholars would engage in a conspiracy of silence, take no notice of him, condemn him outright on some flimsy grounds or dub his work useless. Dr. Ambedkar also became the victim of these mean tricks while he was engaged in the exposition of the Brahmanic literature.

This book, as said by Dr. Ambedkar, dealt with the Untouchables, the most numerous of the three classes as mentioned above and tried to investigate the origin of this class. He noticed that the orthodox Hindu considered the Untouchability normal and natural while the modern Hindu found the wrong but ashamed to discuss it in public for fear of letting the foreigner know this vicious social system. And the European students of social institutions also were not attracted towards Untouchability.

This book may therefore, be taken as a pioneer attempt in the exploration of a field so completely
neglected by everybody. The book, if I may say so, deals not only with every aspect of the main question set out for inquiry, namely, the origin of Untouchability, but it also deals with almost all questions connected with it. (Vol. 7: 241)

Dr. Ambedkar tried to find out the reasons why the Untouchables lived outside the village; why beef-eating gave rise to Untouchability; why non-Brahmins gave up beef-eating and what made the Brahmins become vegetarians. In short, he presented a new way of looking at old problems.

The propositions made in the Preface of the book were:

(1) There is no racial difference between the Hindu and the Untouchables; (2) The distinction between the Hindu and Untouchables in its original form, before the advent of Untouchability, was the distinction between Tribesmen and Broken Men from alien Tribes. It is the Broken Men who subsequently came to be treated as Untouchables; (3) Just as Untouchability has no racial basis so also has it no occupational basis; (4) There are two roots from which Untouchability has spring: (a) Contempt and hatred of the Broken Men as of Buddhists by the Brahmins and (b) Continuation of beef-eating by the Broken Men after it had been given up by others. (5) In searching for the origin of Untouchability care must be taken to distinguish the Untouchables from the Impure with the Untouchables. This is an error. Untouchables are distinct from the Impure. (6) While the Impure as a class came into existence at the time of the Dharma Sutras the Untouchables came into being much later than 400 A.D. (Vol. 7: 242)

During this elaborate task of finding the origin of Untouchability, Dr. Ambedkar came across many missing links. He, breaking the canons of historical research, used imagination and intuition to bridge the gap. His work was not as simple as writing a history from the texts which spoke with certainty and authenticity. It was a case of reconstructing history. Therefore, one could not claim of having found the truth. Dr. Ambedkar did not claim for the finality of his work. He did not want to influence the judgment of his reader. He did not want to impose his own interpretation of the past on his readers.

A Comparative Survey

The first part of the book consists of two chapters: (1) Untouchability among non-Hindus and (2) Untouchability among Hindus.

Untouchability among Non-Hindus
Before starting his investigations in the identity and the origin of the Untouchables, Dr. Ambedkar raised some important questions which were overlooked so far. He asked whether the Hindus were the only people in the world who observe Untouchability. And, if Untouchability was observed by non-Hindus also, how it was different from the Untouchability among the Hindus.

The notion underlying Untouchability was that of defilement, pollution, contamination and the ways and means of getting rid of that abuse. “……….there can be no doubt that Primitive Society not only did believe in the notion of defilement but the belief had given rise to a live system of well-defined body of rites and rituals.” (Vol. 7: 249)

Turning to Ancient Society, the notion of pollution prevalent therein was not materially different from what was prevalent in Primitive Society. There was a difference as far as the sources of pollution were concerned. There was a difference regarding purificatory ceremonies. But barring these differences, the pattern of pollution and purification in Primitive and Ancient Society was the same.

Then he made survey of the Egyptian, the Greek, the Roman and the Hebrew to conclude that there were no people Primitive or Ancient who did not entertain the notion of pollution.

**Untouchability among Hindus**

In the second chapter, Dr. Ambedkar said that the Hindus, like the Primitive or Ancient people, were also the same in the matter of pollution.

It was seen from the Manu-Smriti that they recognized pollution. Manu recognized physical and notional defilements. Dr. Ambedkar noticed, “The idea of defilement in Manu is real and not merely notional. For he makes the food offered by the polluted person unacceptable.” (Vol. 7: 257) For the purpose of purification, Manu treated the subject of defilement from three aspects: physical defilement, notional or psychological defilement and ethical defilement.

The rules for the purification of ethical defilement (occurred when a person entertained evil thoughts) were more admonitions and exhortations. But the rites for the removal of notional and physical defilement were the same. In the Manu Smriti, there was also provision for getting rid of defilement by transmission through a scapegoat namely by touching the cow or looking at the sun after sipping water.

Besides the individual pollution, the Hindus believed also in territorial and communal pollution and purification very much like the system that prevailed among the early Romans. An animal, generally a he buffalo, was purchased on behalf of the village. The animal was taken round the village and was sacrificed. The blood was sprinkled round the village and towards the end toe meat was distributed among the villagers. Every Hindu, every Brahmin even though he might not be a beef-eater was bound to accept his share of the meat. This was not mentioned in any of the Smritis but it had the
sanction of custom which among the Hindus was so strong that it always overrode law.

There was another form of Untouchability observed by the Hindu. It was hereditary Untouchability of certain communities. So vast was the list of such communities that it would be difficult for an individual with his unaided effort to compile an exhaustive list.

Then Dr. Ambedkar gave a terrifying list including 429 communities having 50-60 millions of people who existed at that time in India whose mere touch caused pollution to the Hindus which was unparalleled in the history of the world.

The isolation prescribed by Non-Hindu societies as a safeguard against defilement, if it was not rational, was at least understandable. It was for specified reasons such as birth, marriage, death, etc. But the isolation prescribed by Hindu society was apparently for no cause. He observed that the Hindu, after getting polluted by the untouchable, could become pure by undergoing purificatory ceremonies. But for an untouchable, there was a case of permanent, hereditary stain which nothing could cleanse.

Non-Hindu societies only isolated the affected individuals or at the most those closely connected with them. They did not segregate them in separate quarters. But the Hindu society insisted on segregation of the Untouchables, i.e. isolation of the whole class. The Hindu would not live in the quarters of the Untouchables and would not allow the Untouchables to live inside Hindu quarters.

Dr. Ambedkar considered Untouchability among the Hindus as a unique phenomenon unknown to humanity in other parts of the world or not found in any other society -- primitive, ancient or modern on the basis of the rule 'once impure always impure'. So he advanced his investigation on the two questions: (1) Why do the Untouchables live outside the village? (2) What made their impurity permanent and ineradicable?

**Problem of Habitat**

The second part of the book consists of four chapters: (1) Why Do The Untouchables Live Outside The Village? (2) Are the Untouchables Broken Men? (3) Are there Parallel Cases? And (4) How did Separate Settlements for Broken Men Disappear Elsewhere?

**Why Do The Untouchables Live Outside The Village?**

The third chapter tried to find out the reasons for the secluded habitat of the Untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar said that according to the Hindu Shastras, the Antyajas should have their abode outside the village. This had two possible interpretations: The first was that the Untouchability had nothing to do with the Untouchables living outside the village. From the very beginning, they lived outside the village. When the stigma of Untouchability fell on them, they were prohibited from coming to live inside the village. The other possibility was that Untouchability had everything to do with the Untouchables living outside the village. In other words, the Untouchables originally lived
inside the village. But when the stigma of Untouchability fell on them, they
were forced to vacate and live outside the village.

Dr. Ambedkar found the second possibility absurd and fantastic. He
believed that those who were called Untouchables lived outside the village
from the very beginning even before they became Untouchables. They
continued to live outside the village because of the supervening of
Untouchability.

He said that the Primitive and the Modern societies were different in
nature: the Primitive Society consisted of nomadic communities and tribal
communities based on blood relationship; whereas the Modern Society
consisted of settled communities and local communities based on territorial
affiliation. The first line of evolution had led the Primitive Society to become a
territorial community from being a tribal community. The second line of
evolution had led Primitive Society to become a settled community instead of
the Nomadic community which it was. He was of the view that this definite and
impressive change did not require illustration to convince anybody of its
reality.

Confining himself to the second line of evolution, Dr. Ambedkar
explained why the Primitive Society gave up its nomadic life and what
happened in the transition from nomadic to settled life. The Primitive Society
was no doubt nomadic because they considered cattle as their wealth. Due to
the change of the wealth from cattle to land, they led to the settled life. When
the Primitive Society was on the process of becoming a settled society, they
confronted two problems. The settled community faced the problem of its
defense against the Nomadic tribe and the Broken men faced the problem of
their protection and shelter.

Regarding the problem confronted by the settled tribes, he presented
three aspects: (1) It was not possible that all the tribes take to settled life at
one and at the same time. Therefore some became settled and some
remained nomadic. (2) These tribes were never at peace with one another
and were always at war. The Nomadic tribes systematically organized raids
on the settled tribes with the purpose of stealing the wealth belonging to the
settled tribes. (3) The settled tribes were greatly handicapped in defending
themselves against these raiders.

Then he furthered the problem of the Broken men. He was of the view
that the Broken men was the result of the constant war of the tribes in their
primitive condition. A tribe which, instead of being completely annihilated, was
defeated and routed broke into bits. Consequently a group which was floating
and roaming in all directions came into existence as the Broken tribes men.

He was of the view that the Primitive Society was fundamentally tribal
in its organization. It meant two things: (1) Every individual belonged to a tribe
and hence no individual had existence outside the tribe. (2) As a tribe was
based on common kinship, a member of one tribe could not be the member of
the other tribe. Dr. Ambedkar gave some more details, “The Broken Men had,
therefore, to live as stray individuals. In Primitive Society where tribe was
fighting against tribe a stray collection Broken Men was always in danger of
being attacked. They did not know where to go for shelter. They did not know who would attack them and to whom they could go for protection. That is why shelter and protection became the problem of the Broken Men.” (Vol. 7: 275-276)

In short, in the life of Primitive Society, the Broken men were in search of patrons who would give them food and shelter and the settled tribes were in search of men who would do the work of watch and ward against the raiders. There was no written text of a contract of agreement but the two struck a bargain as the interest of the one required the co-operation of the other.

Regarding the question of the habitat of the Broken Men, Dr. Ambedkar had two considerations: one was of blood relationship and the other was of strategy. As the Broken men were considered aliens and did not belong to the same blood of group of the settled tribe, they were not allowed inside the area occupied by the home steads belonging to the tribe. The Broken men should live on the border of the village so as to meet the raids of the hostile tribes. According to him, both these considerations were decisive in favour of placing the quarters of the Broken men outside the village.

He believed that there must have been settled tribes and Broken men in Primitive Hindu society. The settled tribes founded the village and formed the village community and the Broken Men lived in separate quarters outside the village for the reason that they belonged to a different tribe and therefore, to different blood. To be more precise, the Untouchables were originally only Broken men. It was because they were Broken Men that they lived outside the village. Dr. Ambedkar wanted to proclaim that the Untouchables had been living outside the village from the very beginning because of the above reasons and they had nothing to do with the Untouchability.

According to him, this was a novel theory and the critics should ask whether there was any factual evidence to suggest that the Untouchables were Broken men and whether there was any evidence that the process of settlement suggested above had actually taken place in any country. Again, if the Broken men living outside the village was a universal feature of all societies, why it was that the separate quarters of the Broken men had disappeared outside India but not in India.

Are The Untouchables Broken Men?

The fourth chapter deals with Dr. Ambedkar’s answer to this question in affirmative. He was of the view that the answer could be gained from the study of the totemic organization of the Hindus and the Untouchables. There were two evidences:

(1) The names Antya, Antyaja and Antyavasin were derived from the root Anta. He considered the argument of the Shastras absurd following which the Hinuds believed that the word Antya meant the last born. According to the Hindu order of Divine creation, the Untouchable was held to be born last. Therefore the word Antya meant an Untouchable.
Dr. Ambedkar said that this theory did not match with the Hindu theory of the order of creation. According to it, it was the Shudra who was born last. The Untouchable was outside the scheme of creation. The Shudra was Savarna. As against him, the Untouchable was Avarna, i.e. outside the varna system. The Hindu theory of priority in creation did not and could not apply to the Untouchable. In his view, the word Antya meant not end of creation but end of the village. It was a name given to those people who lived on the outskirts of the village. The word Antya had, therefore, a survival value. It told us that there was a time when some people lived inside the village and some lived outside the village and that those who lived outside the village, i.e. on the Antya of the village, were called Antyaja.

Then he asked the reason why some people lived on the border of the village. He wanted to find out if there could be any other reason than that they were Broken men who were aliens and who belonged to tribes different from those who lived inside the village. He found the real reason in the use of these particular words to designate them. He was of the view that the use of the words Antya, Antyaja and Antyavasin had double significance. In the first place, it showed that living in separate quarters was such a peculiar phenomenon that a new terminology had to be invented to give expression to it. Secondly, the words chosen expressed in exact terms the conditions of the people to whom it applied namely that they were aliens.

(2) Then he said that the Untouchables were Broken men and that could be well-related to the position of a community called the Mahars – a principal and the single largest Untouchable community in Maharashtra. He informed that the Mahars were to be found in every village having quarters outside the wall of the village doing the duty of watch and ward and claiming 52 rights. He said, “If the Mahars case can be taken as typical of the Untouchables throughout India it will be accepted that there was a stage in the history of India when Broken Men belonging to other tribes came to the Settled tribes and made a bargain whereby the Broken men were allowed to settle on the border of the village, were required to do certain duties and in return were given certain rights.” (Vol. 7: 280)

These evidences made it clear that the Untouchables lived outside the village from the beginning because they were Broken men. They were not deported and made to live outside the village because they were declared Untouchables. Again, the Untouchables were not always Untouchables. There was a time when the ancestors of the present day Untouchables were not Untouchables but were merely Broken men, no more and no less, and the only difference between them and the villagers was that they belonged to different tribes.

Are There Parallel Cases?

In the the fifth chapter answered the question: were there any cases known to history of Broken men living outside the villages? The countries where in such a development had actually been reported to have taken place were Ireland and Wales.
By giving the descriptions of the organizations of the Irish and the Welsh villages in the primitive times, he wanted to say that the case of the Untouchables of India was not the only case of a people living outside the village.

**How did Separate Settlements for Broken Men Disappear Elsewhere?**

In the sixth chapter, he wrote that the Fuidhirs of Ireland and the Alltudes of Wales were Broken men and they lived in separate quarters. But he further noticed that the separate quarters of these Broken men disappeared and they became part of the settled tribe and were absorbed in it.

Finding the reasons why this did not happen in India, he replied that the notion of Untouchability supervened and perpetuated difference between Touchable and Untouchable. And as a result, the system of separate quarters became a perpetual and a permanent feature of the Indian village.

**Old Theories of the Origin of Untouchability**

The third part of the book contained two chapters: (1) Racial Difference as the Origin of Untouchability and (2) Occupational Origin of Untouchability

**Racial Difference as the Origin of Untouchability**

In the seventh chapter, he mentioned a theory given by Mr. Stanley Rice which explained how Untouchability had come into existence. The theory divided itself into two parts as Mr. Rice believed that the origin of the Untouchability were to be found in two circumstances – Race and Occupation. The racial theory of Mr. Rice contained two elements: the Untouchables were non-Aryan, non-Dravidian aboriginals; and they were conquered and subjugated by the Dravidians.

This theory raised the question of the invasions of India by foreign invaders, the conquests made by them and the social and cultural institutions that had resulted there from.

According to Mr. Rice, India was invaded two times. First was the invasion by the Dravidians. They conquered the non-Dravidian aboriginals, the ancestors of the Untouchables, and made them Untouchables. The second invasion was by the Aryans. The Aryans conquered the Dravidians. Mr. Rice did not say how conquering Aryans treated the conquered Dravidians. It might have said that they made them Shudras. Here found a chain. The theory was too mechanical, a mere speculation and too simple to explain a complicated set of facts relating to the origin of the Shudras and the Untouchables.

Dr. Ambedkar then dealt with the question whether these names Aryans, Dravidians, Dasas and Nagas were the names of different races or were they merely different names for a people of the same race?

He began his discussion with the Aryans who were divided into two – Rig Vedic Aryans and the other the Atharva Vedic Aryans. One believed in
Yajna and the later believed in magic. Their mythologies were also different. The *Rig Vedic* Aryans hold that Manu created their race. The *Atharva Vedic* Aryans hold the view that they were created by Brahma or Prajapati. The former produced *Brahmanas, Sutras* and *Aranyakas*. The later produced the Upanishads. He said that due to the cultural conflict between the *Rig Veda* and the *Atharva Veda*, the former did not admit the sanctity of the *Atharva Veda* and the Upanishads and considered the Upanishads not as sacred as the Vedas.

He doubted whether these two Aryans were different in race or not; whether the word Aryan was a term indicative of race or not. So according to Dr. Ambedkar, the historians had made a mistake in their consideration of the Aryans as a separate race.

The other mistake was there in the differentiating of the *Dasas* from the *Nagas*. He was of the belief that the *Dasas* were not different from the *Nagas* but the same. He found the reason why the *Nagas* came to be called *Dasas* in the *Vedic* literature. *Dasa* was a Sansritized form of the Indo-Iranian word *Dahaka*. *Dahaka* was the name of the king of the *Nagas*. Consequently, the Aryans called the *Nagas* after the name of their king *Dahaka*, which in its Sanskrit form became *Dasa*, a generic name applied to all the *Nagas*.

Now he turned to find out the identity of the *Nagas*. In his careful examination, he came to know that early *Vedic* literature did not have any such thing mentioned. But in the *Rig Veda*, *Naga* was introduced as Snake-god in the form of *Ahi Vitra*, the enemy of the Aryan god *Indra*.

He also found the evidences from the *Rig Veda* that *Nagas* were very ancient people. By referring the history, he gave us many examples of the inter-marriages of the *Naga* people with the Royal families of India. He also found that the *Nagas* occupied a high cultural position and they also ruled a good part of India.

Writing on the identity of the Dravidians, he said that the term Dravidians and *Nagas* were merely two different names for the same people. He also came to know that the Dravidians as *Nagas* occupied not merely South India but the whole of India.

By quoting a long citation from Mr. Oldham’s *The Sun and the Serpent*, he wanted to prove that the Dravidians of the South India were the same as the *Asuras* or *Nagas* of the North.

He said that the word ‘Dravida’ was not an original word but the Sanskritized form of the word ‘Tamil’. The original word ‘Tamil’ when imported into Sanskrit became ‘Damita’ and later on ‘Damilla’ became ‘Dravida’. He then came to know that the word ‘Dravida’ was the name of a language and did not denote the race of the people. The language ‘Tamil’ or ‘Dravida’ was spoken all over India and it was the language of the *Nagas* throughout out India.

He also came to know that the *Nagas* of the North India ceased to speak the Dravida language while the *Nagas* of South India adhered to it. In
this way, he tried to prove why the people of South India had come to be called Dravidians. To conclude in his words,

The special application of the use of the word Dravida for the people of South India must not, therefore, obscure the fact that the Nagas and Dravidas are the one and the same people. They are only two different names for the same people. Nagas was a racial or cultural name and Dravida was their linguistic name. (Vol. 7: 300)

Thus the Dasas were the same as the Nagas and the Nagas were the same as the Dravidians. In other words, there had been, at the most, only two races in India, the Aryans and the Nagas. Obviously, the theory of Mr. Rice found no ground to stand erect as it postulated three races in action when, as a matter of fact, there were only two.

Then Dr. Ambedkar, with the anthropometric and ethnological tests, tried to find whether the pre-Dravidian aboriginals were the ancestors of the present day Untouchables of India. Referring to Prof. Ghurye’s volume on *Caste and Race in India*, Dr. Ambedkar said, “…if the Brahmins are Aryans the Untouchables are also Aryans. If the Brahmins are Dravidians the Untouchables are also Dravidians. If the Brahmins are Nagas, the Untouchables are also Nagas. Such being the facts, the theory propounded by Mr. Rice must be said to be based on a false foundation.” (Vol. 7: 303)

Then he went further in discussing the racial theory of Untouchability which also found very little support from the ethnology of India. He informed us that the people of India were actually bound by tribal organizations which later on became castes. Each tribe was divided into clans – a group of families. Each group of families had a totem which was some object, animate or inanimate. Those who had a common totem formed an exogamous group popularly known as gotra or kula. Families having a common gotra were not allowed to intermarry for they were supposed to be descended from the same ancestor having the same blood running in their veins.

He did not agree with the view of Census Commissioners who believed that the real unit of the Hindu social system and the basis of the fabric of Hindu society was the sub-caste founded on the rule of endogamy. According to him, the real unit of the Hindu society was not the sub-caste but the family founded on the rule of exogamy. In the matter of marriage, a Hindu family was primarily guided by consideration of kula and gotra. The considerations of caste and sub-caste had secondary importance. Kula and gotra were Hindu equivalents of the totem of the Primitive Society.

He showed that the Hindu society was still tribal in its organization with the family at its base observing the rules of exogamy based on kula and gotra. Castes and sub-castes were social organizations which were superimposed over the tribal organization; the rule of endogamy instructed by them did not do away with the rule of exogamy commanded by the tribal organization of kula and gotra.
According to him, the study of the names of *kula* and *gotra* prevalent among Hindu families would be of great help to determine the racial composition of the people of India. If the *kula* and *gotra* were to be found same in the different castes and communities, it would be possible that though they belonged to different castes and communities, they were racially the same.

Dr. Ambedkar cited two studies – one was of Maharashtra and another, of Punjab done respectively by Mr. Risley and Mr. Rose. The anthropological investigation showed that the Marathas and the Mahars, the Untouchables of Maharashtra, had the same *kula*. Similarly, the *Jats* and the *Mazabi Sikhs*, the Untouchables of Punjab, most of them being *Chamars* by caste, had the same *gotra*. Therefore he asked the question: how it could be argued that the Untouchables belong to a different race.

He concluded the chapter thus: “The racial theory of the origin of Untouchability must, therefore, be abandoned.” (Vol. 7: 304)

**Occupational Origin of Untouchability**

In the eighth chapter, Dr. Ambedkar turned to discuss the origin of Untouchability on the basis of the occupational theory. He found Mr. Rice’s theory very plausible one. Mr. Rice tried to find the origin of Untouchability in the unclean and filthy occupations of the Untouchables. But Dr. Ambedkar noticed that the filthy and unclean occupations of the Untouchables were also found to be performed by the other people of the world. Why were such people not treated as Untouchables in other parts of the world?

Then he asked if the Dravidians had revulsion against such vocations or against persons engaged in them. But there was no evidence found. Whereas the evidence showed that the Aryans were like other people and their notions of purity and impurity did not fundamentally differ from those of other ancient people. The texts from *Narada Smriti* made it clear that the Aryans did not mind engaging themselves in filthy occupations.

By quoting the lines from the fifth chapter of *Narada Smriti*, he stated that impure work was done by the slaves and it included scavenging. But then, who these slaves were: Aryans or non-Aryans?

Then he came to know the fact that the slavery existed among the Aryans – no matter to what *Varna* an Aryan belonged he could be a slave. He came to know the change in the system of slavery by referring to the *Narada Smriti*. The change was a mere recognition of slavery on the basis of graded inequality. According to this new law, a Brahmin could have a Brahmin, a Kshatriya, a Vaishya and a Shudra as his slave; a Kshatriya could have a Kshatriya, a Vaishya and a Shudra; a Vaishya could have a Vaishya and a Shudra and a Shudra could have a Shudra only. It meant that even a Brahmin was not immune from the law of slavery. To conclude in the words of Dr. Ambedkar,

> It is, therefore, obvious that the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas who are admittedly the
Aryans did the work of scavengers which is the filthiest of filthy occupations. If scavenging was not loathsome to an Aryan how can it be said that engaging in filthy occupation was the cause of Untouchability. The theory of filthy occupation as an explanation of Untouchability is, therefore, not tenable. (Vol. 7: 307)

New Theories of the Origin of Untouchability

The forth part of the book consists of two chapters: (1) Contempt for Buddhists as the Root of Untouchability and (2) Beef-eating as the Root of Untouchability.

Contempt for Buddhists as the Root of Untouchability

The ninth chapter begins with the discussion in which Dr. Ambedkar showed us that the Census Reports for India published by the Census Commissioner gave us a column called “Population by Religion”. Under this heading, the population was shown (1) Muslims, (2) Hindus, (3) Christians, etc. before the year 1910. But after that, it divided the Hindus under three separate categories: (i) Hindus, (ii) Animists and Tribal and (iii) the Depressed Classes or Untouchables.

Dr. Ambedkar informed us that the reason for this new classification of ‘Hindu’ adopted by the Census Commissioner was due to the demand of the Muslim community for separate representation on augmented scale. They wanted adequate representation for their people in legislature, executive and the public services.

It obviously became necessary to know the basis on which the Census Commissioner separated the different classes of the Hindus. He did that by differentiating those who were hundred percent Hindus from those who were not. He introduced a ten tests formula.

Out of these ten tests, some divided the Hindus from the Animists and the Tribal. Those that divide the Untouchables from the Hindus were: (1) do not receive the Mantra from a Brahmin or other recognized Hindu Guru; (2) are not served by good Brahmins as family priests; (3) have no Brahmin priests at all; (4) are denied access to the interior of the Hindu temples and (5) eat beef and do not respect the cow. On these facts, the Census Commissioners of all Provinces were unanimous.

He got the clue to the origin of Untouchability in the answers of the questions like: Why were the Untouchables not receiving the Mantra from the Brahmin? Why Brahmins did not serve the Untouchables as their family priests? Why did the Untouchables prefer to have their own priests?

He stated that the inquiries of the Census Commissioner were one-sided. They showed that the Brahmins shunned the Untouchables. But they did not even mention that the Untouchables also shunned the Brahmins. Many writers had noticed the fact that the Untouchables took the Brahmins to
be impure. He quoted from Abbe Dubois, Mr. Hemingsway and Captain Mackenzie to exemplify the same.

He tried to look at the matter from a different point of view. Both the Brahmins and the Untouchables had aversion for each other. It was not that the Brahmins refused to preside the ceremonies for the Untouchables. On the contrary, as Dr. Ambedkar wanted to put it, the Untouchables refused to invite them for the same. The Untouchables regarded the Brahmins as inauspicious, did not employ them as their priest and did not even allow them to enter their quarters.

He made a hypothesis to explain the reason for the antipathy. He said that the Untouchables were none other than the Broken men. And the Broken men were Buddhists. They did not respect the Brahmins. The Brahmins disliked the Broken men because they preached against them contempt and hatred. As a result, the Broken men came to be regarded as Untouchables.

There was no evidence that the Broken men were Buddhists. But it was not required as during that period of time, the majority of Hindus were Buddhists. The Hindus had severe hatred and abhorrence against the Buddhists. This feeling was created by the Brahmins. This fact stood on sound support. Dr. Ambedkar mentioned *Nilkant*, *Apararka*, *Vradha Harit* and *Shudrak* (*Mricchakatika*) regarding this matter.

Keeping in mind the above arguments, Dr. Ambedkar wanted us to conclude that one of the roots of Untouchability was found in the hatred and contempt which the Brahmins created against those who were Buddhists. But this could not be taken to be the sole cause for the rise of Untouchability. The hatred and contempt preached by the Brahmins was directed against Buddhists in general and not against the Broken men in particular. Since Untouchability stuck to Broken men only, it was obvious that there was some additional circumstance which had played its part in fastening Untouchability upon the Broken men.

**Beef-eating as the Root of Untouchability**

In the tenth chapter, Dr. Ambedkar tried to find out if beef-eating had some relation to the origin of Untouchability. He said that the Broken men came to be treated as Untouchables because they ate beef. It seemed uncontroversial that the co-relation between untouchability and the use of the dead cow had the root of untouchability.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, the Touchables, whether vegetarians or flesh-eaters, were united against the untouchables who ate cow’s flesh. Due to nausea against beef-eating that the Touchables possessed, the beef-eaters were considered Untouchables.

He found the evidence to support this new theory from the *Veda Vyas Smriti*: “It shows that the Smritikars knew that the origin of untouchability is to be found in the eating of beef. The dictum of Veda Vyas must close the argument. It comes, so to say, straight from the horse’s mouth and what is
important is that it is also rational for it accords with facts as we know them.” (Vol. 7: 319)

Thus there were two sources of the origin of Untouchability. The first was the general scorn and contempt of the Brahmins against the Buddhists. But Dr. Ambedkar did not consider it sufficient. Therefore he went for another source which he found more important, “The reason why Broken Men only became Untouchables was because in addition to being Buddhists they retained their habit of beef-eating which gave additional ground for offence to the Brahmins to carry their new-found love and reverence to the cow to its logical conclusion.” (Vol. 7: 320)

The New Theories and Some Questions

The fifth part of the book consists of four chapters: (1) Did the Hindus never eat beef? (2) Why did non-Brahmins give up beef eating? (3) What made the Brahmins become vegetarians? and (4) Why should beef-eating make Broken men untouchables?

Did the Hindus never eat beef?

The eleventh chapter begins with the references from the Rig Veda in which the cow was spoken of as Aghnya (one who does not deserve to be killed). But Dr. Ambedkar believed that there was some misreading and misunderstanding of the texts. He was of the view that the adjective Aghnya was applied to the cow giving milk and therefore not fit for being killed. He said that the Indo-Aryans did not stop eating beef just because of this regard and adorations of the cow. He gave us the evidences of cow-killing and cow-eating from the Rig Veda, the Satapatha Brahmana, the Taittiya Brahmana, the Apastamba Dharma Sutra, and the Grahya Sutras. He quoted the Very Sutra: “The cow and the bull are sacred and therefore should be eaten.” (Vol. 7: 325) The killing of cow for the guest had grown to such an extent that the guest came to be called ‘Go-ghna’ (the killer of the cow).

He, by making a deep reading of the Satapatha Brahmana and the Apastamba Dharma Sutra, wanted to say that the Hindus were against the excess cow-killing and beef-eating but there were no prohibitions against cow-killing. He also quoted Yajnavalkya, the great Rishi of the Aryans, who admitted that he also ate beef if it was tender.

He also gave the reference of the Buddhist Sutra in which the description of Yajnas proved abundantly that the Hindus, at one time, did kill cows and did eat beef. In Samyuta Nikaya, he found a reference of the sacrifice of thousands of the animals like bulls, calves, heifers, goats and rams.

To conclude in his words, “With this evidence no one can doubt that there was a time when Hindus — both Brahmans and non-Brahmins — ate not only flesh but also beef.” (Vol. 7: 328)

Why did non-Brahmins give up beef eating?
In the twelfth chapter, he made the study of the statutes given by Asoka and by Manu on the slaughter of animals.

Asoka did not have any special interest in the cow and its killing. He believed in the sacredness of all life. He felt his duty to prohibit the killing where it was not necessary. Therefore he prohibited slaughtering animal for sacrifice.

Coming to Manu, there was no doubt that he too did not prohibit the slaughter of the cow. On the other hand, he made the eating of cow’s flesh on certain occasions obligatory.

Dr. Ambedkar presented an inference for the non-Brahmins to give up beef-eating. According to Gabriel Tarde, the lower classes always imitated the higher classes. Keeping this in mind, Dr. Ambedkar said that the reason why the non-Brahmins gave up beef-eating was their desire to imitate the Brahmins. To conclude in the words of Dr. Ambedkar,

That the spread of the cow-worship among and cessation of beef-eating by the non-Brahmins has taken place by reason of the habit of the non-Brahmins to imitate the Brahmins who were undoubtedly their superiors is beyond dispute. Of course there was an extensive propaganda in favour of cow-worship by the Brahmins. The Gayatri Purana is a piece of this propaganda. But initially it is the result of the natural law of imitation. (Vol. 7: 333)

**What made the Brahmins become vegetarians?**

In the beginning of thirteenth chapter, he said that it was a revolution for the non-Brahmins to become non-beef-eaters. But more striking was the revolution undergone by the Brahmins. They not only stopped eating beef but also gave up meat.

He criticized the Brahmin and his *Yajna*. He said that the Brahmins were the greatest beef-eaters and the *Yajna* was nothing but the sacrifice of innocent animals carried on in the name of religion with pomp and ceremony trying to obscure it in mystery for hiding their appetite for beef.

He quoted the references from the *Atreya Brahmana* to show that the Brahmins monopolized the whole of the flesh of the sacrificial animal. They themselves played the part of butchers in the slaughter of the animal. He went to the extent of calling the Brahmins butchers.

He said that Asoka and Manu did not prohibit beef-eating. He also informed us that Manu made eating of flesh compulsory. Manu did not regard the cow as a sacred animal. On the other hand, he regarded it as an impure animal whose touch caused ceremonial pollution. Manu did not consider the killing of the cow an offence. According to him, cow-killing was only a minor sin.
While answering the question why the Brahmins gave up beef-eating, he presented two explanations: The deification of the cow was a manifestation of the Advaita philosophy that one supreme entity pervaded the whole universe. All life, human as well as animal, was sacred. But Dr. Ambedkar found this explanation unsatisfactory. To him, it did not fit in with facts. The Vedanta Sutra which proclaimed the doctrine of oneness of life did not prohibit the killing of animals for sacrificial purposes. If the transformation was due to the desire to realize the ideal of Advaita, there was no reason why it should have stopped with the cow. It should have extended to all other animals.

Another explanation, more original than the first one, was that the transformation in the life of the Brahmin was due to the rise of the doctrine of the Transmigration of the Soul. But even this explanation did not fit in with facts. The Brahadaranyaka Upanishad upheld the doctrine of transmigration. Yet it recommended that a man desiring to have a learned son should prepare a mass of the flesh of the bull or ox or of other flesh with rice and ghee. Again, it was not possible that this doctrine propounded in the Upanishads did not have any effect on the Brahmins up to the time of the Manu Smriti, a period of at least 400 years. Dr. Ambedkar did not agree with this explanation too. If Brahmins became vegetarians following the doctrine of transmigration of the soul, why it did not make the non-Brahmins take to vegetarianism.

Dr. Ambedkar considered it a strategy of the Brahmins to give up beef-eating and start worshipping the cow. He found the clue in the struggle between Buddhism and Brahmanism.

He mentioned that due to the spreading supremacy of Buddhism, Brahmanism was in danger once in the history of India. He was of the view that the

Buddhism had made so deep an impression on the minds of the masses and had taken such a hold of them that it was absolutely impossible for the Brahmins to fight the Buddhists except by accepting their ways and means and practicing the Buddhist creed in its extreme form. (Vol. 7: 346)

As the followers of Buddha started building stupas and setting up his images in them, the Brahmins, in their turn, built temples and installed in them images of Shiva, Vishnu, Ram and Krishna etc. They wanted to draw away the crowd that was attracted by the image worship of Buddha. Thus, temples and images, which had no place in Brahmanism, came into Hinduism.

The Buddhists rejected the Brahmanic religion which consisted of Yajna and animal sacrifice, particularly of the cow. The objection to the sacrifice of the cow had taken a strong hold of the minds of the masses especially as they were an agricultural population and the cow was a very useful animal…… the Brahmins could do nothing to improve their position against the Buddhists except
by giving up the Yajna as a form of worship and the sacrifice of the cow. (Vol. 7: 346)

Dr. Ambedkar believed that the purpose of the Brahmins in giving up beef-eating was to snatch away from the Buddhist Bhikshus the supremacy they had acquired. The fact was evidenced by the adoption of vegetarianism by Brahmins.

One of the objectives of the Brahmins in becoming vegetarians was proved by Dr. Ambedkar. In an agricultural population, there should be respect for Buddhism and revulsion against Brahmanism which involved slaughter of animals including cows and bullocks. So it became necessary for the Brahmins to consider the animal sacrifice bad. Referring to Mr. Thomas Walters, Dr. Ambedkar clarified that the Buddhist Bhikshus did eat meat. Then why the Brahmins gave up meat-eating and became vegetarians. “It was because they did not want to put themselves merely on the same footing in the eyes of the public as the Buddhist Bhikshus.” (Vol. 7: 348)

Dr. Ambedkar was of the opinion that to achieve supremacy, the Brahmins had to beat the Buddhists not only by giving up the Yajna system and sacrifice of the cow but also by being vegetarians. In short, Dr. Ambedkar believed that the worship of the cow among the Hindus was the struggle between Buddhism and Brahmanism and this was a means adopted by the Brahmins to regain their lost post position.

Why should beef-eating make Broken Men untouchables?

In the fourteenth chapter, Dr. Ambedkar tried to establish some connection between beef-eating and Untouchability. He argued that beef-eating originally was considered as a secular affair, a mere matter of individual taste. But unfortunately, it was made a matter of religion. The Brahmins made the cow a sacred animal. As a result, beef-eating became a sacrilege. The Broken men, being guilty of sacrilege, were thrown out of the society.

Dr. Ambedkar found that Untouchability was the result of the breach of the interdiction against the eating of the sacred animal, namely, the cow. To quote Dr. Ambedkar, “Once the cow became sacred and the Broken Men continued to eat beef, there was no other fate left for the Broken Men except to be treated unfit for association, i.e., as Untouchables.” (Vol. 7: 353)

Immediately after connecting beef-eating and Untouchability, Dr. Ambedkar thought about possible objections. First was about the evidence of beef-eating by the Broken men and second was about the continuation of beef-eating by them even after the Brahmins and non-Brahmins gave it up.

Dr. Ambedkar found the questions crucial and answered them in detail. He said that beef-eating was common to both, the settled tribes men and the Broken men. The former ate fresh beef whereas the latter ate the flesh of a dead cow. As the former were rich, they killed an animal for food. Since the latter were poor, the former agreed to give dead animals to them as part of their wages of watch and ward.
Then Dr. Ambedkar inferred the reason to answer the second question. The Gupta Emperors made a law against the cow-killers. It did not apply to the Broken men because they did not kill the cow. They only ate the dead cow. “Their conduct did not contravene the law against cow-killing. Nor did their conduct contravene the doctrine of Ahimsa.” (Vol. 7: 354-355) Therefore they were allowed to continue the practice of eating the flesh of the dead cow.

Why did the Broken men not imitate the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins? Dr. Ambedkar answered, imitation was costly. They could not afford it. Again, “…carrying the dead cow had become an obligation though originally it was a privilege. As they could not escape carrying the dead cow they did not mind using the flesh as food in the manner in which they were doing previously.” (Vol. 7: 355)

Untouchability and the Date of its Birth

The sixth part of the book consists of two chapters: (1) The Impure and the Untouchables and (2) When did Broken men become Untouchables?

The Impure and the Untouchables

In the fifteenth chapter, Dr. Ambedkar tried to find out the time when Untouchability came into existence. During his observation, he came to know the belief of the orthodox Hindus to consider Untouchability existent not only in the Smritis but also in the Dharma Sutras. He asked whether Untouchability was as old as was suggested to be. Dr. Ambedkar made the examination of the Dharma Sutras and the Smritis. He found there a class called Asprashya. The term Asprashya etymologically meant the Untouchables. He raised a question whether the classes indicated by the terms Antya, Antyaja, Antyavasin and Bahya in modern India were the same as those indicated by the term Asprashya in ancient India. Unfortunately, he did not find the answer from the Dharma Sutra. He did not find any precision or agreement with regard to the use of the terms Antyavasin and Antyaja.

He summed up the position reached so far in the following way: “…neither the Dharma Sutra nor the Smritis help us to ascertain who were included in the category of Asprashya. Equally useless are the Dharma Sutras and Smritis to enable us to ascertain whether the classes spoken of as Antryavasin, Antyaja and Bahya were the same as Asprashya.” (Vol. 7: 363)

He also came to know, in his reading of Manu, that the Bahyas were not regarded as Untouchables by Manu. Then Dr. Ambedkar came to know the meaning of the word Antya. It referred to the people living on the outskirts or end (Anta) of the village. It did not suggest that the Antyas were untouchables. Next he took the term Antyaja. With the reference of the ‘Shanti Parvan’ of the Mahabharata, he refuted the view that the Antyajas were untouchables. Antyajas were spoken of as soldiers in the army in the ‘Shanti Parvan’ of the Mahabharata. In his research on these terms, he found that the word Antyavasin was applied to a Brahmachari living in the house of the Guru during his term of studentship. Only Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas could become Brahmacharis. How could they be called the Untouchables?
The word *Antyavasin* referred to a body of people. He declared that these terms were found in the ancient literature but did not have any connotations of Untouchability.

By reading the *Dharma Sutras* and Manu, it became clear to Dr. Ambedkar: “(1) That the pollution by the touch of the Chandala was observed by the Brahmin only. (2) That the pollution was probably observed on ceremonial occasions only.” (Vol. 7: 367)

Dr. Ambedkar then talked about the distinction between the Impurity and the Untouchability. “The Untouchable pollutes all while the Impure pollutes only the Brahmin. The touch of the Impure causes pollution only on a ceremonial occasion. The touch of the Untouchables causes pollution at all times.” (Vol. 7: 367)

This argument emerged out of a comparison of the list of communities given in the Order-in-Council with the list prepared from the *Smritis*. The number of communities mentioned in the former was 429; whereas they were only 12 in the *Smritis*. The most striking fact came out after the comparison was that only one community found place in both: the Charmakar community.

Both the lists were said to be referring to one and the same class of people. Why did then they differ and differ so widely? This led to stretching one’s imagination beyond logic: Untouchability, originally confined to 12 communities, came to be extended to 429 communities! What had led to this vast extension of the Empire of Untouchability? More important was the fact that none of the *Shastras* mentioned any of them. Almost all of them were unknown to the *Smritis* also.

Dr. Ambedkar asked to assume that these lists referred to different classes of people. The list presented by the *Shastras* was that of the Impure whereas the list given by the Order-in-Council was that of the Untouchables. If the Impure and the Untouchable were one and the same, why did both the sources not enlist the same communities? One possibility was that some communities, initially Untouchables, ceased to be the same with the passage of time. But this was untenable, because Untouchability was permanent. Time could not erase or cleanse it. More convincing conclusion was that the two lists contained names of communities who fell in altogether different categories.

The reason why the *Chamars* were there on both the lists was that they were the Impure at certain time and subsequently became the Untouchables. They were degraded because of beef-eating. “It is only those among the Impure who were eating beef that became Untouchables when the cow became sacred and beef-eating became a sin.” (Vol. 7: 369)

He concluded that the Impure were different from the Untouchables. And the dividing factor was beef-eating.

Then Dr. Ambedkar came across the narration of the modes and manners of the Indian people given by Fah-Hian. A Chinese traveler Fah-Hian came to visit India in 400 A.D. He observed that the *Chandalas* were treated
very badly. Some scholars claim this to be an evidence of a case of Untouchability. But Dr. Ambedkar argued that this case could not be taken as an evidence for the existence or non-existence of the Untouchability. The Brahmins took the Chandalas as their hereditary enemies. They were prone to attribute to them abominable conduct. They hurled low epithets at them.

Contrary to this, Bana, a Vatsyayana Brahmin, who wrote Kadambari in 600 A.D., described a Chandala settlement and a Chandala girl lavishly. He used eloquent and gorgeous language to do the same. "Is this description compatible with the sentiments of utter scorn and contempt associated with Untouchability?" (Vol. 7: 378) Far from being Untouchables, the Chandalas of Bana’s time were rulers. Bana showed a Chandala princess entering the King’s palace. Dr. Ambedkar concluded that the condition of the Chandalas described by Fah-Hian might only be extreme form of impurity practiced by the Brahmins who were always in the habit of indulging in overdoing their part in sacerdotalism.

The next Chinese traveler Yuan Chwang came to India in 629 A.D. The evidence showed that by the time of his visit, Untouchability had emerged. It could be said that Untouchability did not exist in 400 A.D. and emerged by 600 A.D.

Dr. Ambedkar tried once again to bring in the connection between Untouchability and beef-eating. Referring to Dr. Bhandarkar, he said that cow-killing was made a capital offence by the Gupta kings sometime in the 4th century A.D. Thus, it could be said that the Untouchability was born sometime about 400 A.D.

Dr. Ambedkar gained significance on the social and political scene of India on account of his vigorous efforts to eradicate the evil of Untouchability. His pen was powerful enough to stir the contemporary society. Dr. N. C. Roy comments, "The achievement by which his place in Indian History is determined is his dramatization of the problem of untouchability and incidentally of the caste system in India and in his stimulation of urgency in Indian politics for attacking this problem on the head." (Nim 1969: 16)

Dr. Ambedkar was deeply pained to notice that all the oppressive or negative elements found in the Hindu social order were invariably presented to the ignorant mass wrapped in the foil of religion and coloured with infallibility. “Almost in all of his writings and speeches, Dr. Ambedkar seriously stood against the social evils of Hinduism. He wanted to reform the basic tenets of Hindu social order, but he found that it was next to impossible as its roots were implanted in varna, caste and untouchability, and these social evils were treated as sacred, because the Hindu Shastras made them infallible. For Dr. Ambedkar, untouchability was another name for slavery. He wondered as to why these evils continued despite their disintegrating effects on Hindus.” (Jatava 2001: 50)

Annihilation of Caste

Bhalchandra Mungekar’s observation regarding the aim of Dr. Ambedkar’s life and activities is worth noticing here:
The eradication of untouchability and the caste system was the mission of Ambedkar's life. He therefore analyzed every problem of the Indian society-economic, social, political, cultural and educational, keeping this mission in view. This is because each one of these problems has a caste dimension, the implications of which are disastrous for the low-caste people, variously known as the untouchables, the depressed classes, the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes, and so on....the caste system made the low-caste people, and mainly the untouchables, social outcasts, economically slaves and politically handicapped. They were oppressed, exploited and marginalized in every walk of life. (Thorat 2007: 132)

Dr. Ambedkar severely treated the evils of caste system in his action and literature. He had presented his views on the caste system in his famous address Annihilation of Caste (1989) and in his paper Castes in India(1989).

Annihilation of Caste is considered as one of his most famous addresses which also attracted the attention of the father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi. This speech which Dr. Ambedkar prepared for the presentation in the 1936 Annual Conference of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal of Lahore but not delivered owing to the cancellation of the conference by the Reception Committee on the ground that the views expressed in the speech would be unbearable to the conference. In this address he found that the reformers among the high-caste enlightened as well as intellectual Hindus concentrated on the removal of social evils like the enforced widow-hood, child-marriage, etc. But these Hindus did not possess agitation and courage for the abolitation of castes. Dr. Ambedkar believed that the political revolutions in India were preceded by the social and religious reforms led by saints. But he found that during the British rule in India, the political reforms and activities were given due importance and activities of social reforms were neglected. He expected from the socialists to fight against the monster evil i.e. cast either before or after the revolution. He in his observations found that the caste of the prevalent society was not based on division of labour but it was based on a division of laboureress. He urged the Hindus to annihilate the caste which he considered as a great hindrance to social solidarity. He believed that the evil of caste was a great hurdle to establish a new social order based on the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity in consonance with the principles of Democracy. He not only presented the evil effects of caste but also recommended solutions like inter-caste marriage. He firmly believed that the Shastras were the main cause behind the castes. So he recommended, “Make every man and woman free from the thralldom of the Shastra, cleanse their minds of the pernicious notions founded on the Shastra, and he or she will inter-dine and inter-marry without your telling him or her to do so.” (Vol. 1: 68) He held the view that the society must be based on reason and not on atrocious traditions of caste system.
Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development was a paper of Dr. Ambedkar read before the Anthropology Seminar of Dr. A. A. Golenweizer at the Columbia University, New York, U.S.A. on 9th May, 1916. During this time he was at the Columbia University for the Doctoral studies. Obviously he dealt with the topic of caste system from the Anthropological perspectives. In his research he found that the population of India was a mixture of Aryans, Dravidians, Mongolians and Scythians. Ethnically all people are heterogeneous. He believed that it was the unity of culture that binds the people of Indian Peninsula from one end to the other. after making an analysis of of the views of the authorities on caste, he stated that the superimposition of endogamy over exogamy is the main casue of formation of caste groups. He believed that the customs of ‘Sati’, enforced widow-hood for life and child-marriage are the outcome of endogamy. He viewed that subdivisions of a society is a natural phenomenon and these groups become castes through ex-communication and imitation.

He cited some definitions of castes given by Senart, Nesfield, Risley and Ketkar. Then he turned to the Indian caste system. There were two major characteristics of the Indian caste system: its membership was confined to those who were born in it and the members were forbidden to marry outside. He quoted Dr. S. V. Ketkar’s observation: “As long as caste in India does exist, Hindus will hardly intermarry or have any social intercourse with outsiders; and if Hindus migrate to other regions on earth, Indian cast would become a world problem.” (Vol. 1: 6)

Dr. Ambedkar bluntly asked how a caste-ridden society could have homogeneous classes, especially a homogeneous proletariat. He was the first to lay bare the fundamental contradiction of Indian social revolution namely the mutually exclusive and inseparable unity constituted by the opposites of caste and class that had come into existence with the colonial regime in India. Can there be a socialist revolution with the caste system remaining intact?

S. K. Gupta commented: “Undoubtedly, these conditions of commensality did create inferiority and superiority complexes in the Hindu society, but what added the most obnoxious and oppressive dimension to it was the purity-pollution syndrome. It was this very syndrome which categorized the Dalits into untouchables, unapproachable, unshadowables, or even unseeables.” (Ranga 2000: 49)

Dr. Ambedkar firmly believed that the caste system would not have been perpetuated for centuries only through subjective prejudices and the idea of pollution. A forbidding factor that provided enduring sustenance to the caste system was its material foundation sanctified by the Hindu religious scriptures. These scriptures had played great mischief making the discriminations deeply internalized. Since caste had a religious fervour, the idea of pollution prevailed. The prohibition for eating with outsiders was a natural result of exclusiveness. Endogamy was one of the peculiar traits or the essence of caste. As far as inter-caste marriages were concerned, the principle of endogamy reigned supreme. Dr. Ambedkar remarked, “…I am justified in holding that, whether regarded as end or means, sati, enforced widowhood, and girl marriage are customs that were primarily intended to
solve the problem of the *surplus men* and *surplus women* in a caste and to maintain the endogamy. Strict endogamy could not be preserved without these customs, while caste without endogamy is a fake." (Vol. 1: 14) The origin of caste meant the origin of the mechanism for endogamy.

He found the solution of the problem in the religious revolution. As K. Raghavendra Rao puts it:

The most effective and practicable way of eliminating caste is to strike at its roots – the system of caste endogamy….Hence he advocates a religious revolution as an essential prelude to a social revolution, which, in its turn, is a prelude to a political revolution. He recommends the religious revolutionary models of indigenous origin such as the ones initiated by Buddha or Guru Nanak.” (1998: 26)

Close reading of his writings suggests that the caste system became a legal system. It survived for long due to prevention of the masses from the possession of arms, denying to the masses the right of education and depriving the masses of the right to property. Dr. Ambedkar believed that the caste system was an imposition by the ruling classes upon the servile classes. He drew out these four points: (1) In spite of the composite make-up of the Hindu population, there was a deep cultural unity. (2) Caste was a parceling into bits of a larger cultural unit. (3) There was one caste to start with. (4) Classes had become castes through initiation and excommunication.

One of the unique features of the caste system was that it assigned an occupation not to an individual but to a group of individuals. A particular individual was to undertake a particular occupation just because he belonged to a particular group, by birth. The division of labour was not spontaneous; it was not based on natural aptitudes or on choice. Individual sentiments did not find any place there. It was based on the dogma of predestination. The caste system “… 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.” (Vol. 1: 47)

This led Dr. Ambedkar to argue that the caste system did not stop at the division of labour but culminated in the division of labourers. The former was the result of preference, choice and aptitude of an individual; the latter was independent of individual will. The former was voluntary; the latter was not only enforced, but also bullying. Thus, as in the social sphere, in the economic sphere too, the caste system amounted to a pretense of individual freedom.

Caste became a reason for unemployment as there was no readjustment of occupations. It was proved to be a harmful economic institution as it demanded for the subordination of man’s natural powers and inclinations to the exigencies of social rules. It disorganized and demoralized the Hindus. “… turn in any direction you like, caste is the monster that crosses
your path. You cannot have political reform, you cannot have economic reform, unless you kill this monster.” (Vol. 1: 47)

It was argued that the ultimate aim of the caste was to preserve purity of race and purity of blood. But Dr. Ambedkar did not think so.

As a matter of fact the Caste system came into being long after the different races of India had co-mingled in blood and culture. To hold that distinctions of Caste are really distinctions of race and to treat different Castes as though they were so many different races is a gross perversion of facts……Caste system does not demarcate racial division. Caste system is a social division of people of the same race. (Vol. 1: 48-49)

A question was raised whether the case system embodied the eugenics of modern scientists. Answering negatively Dr. Ambedkar added that it embodied the arrogance and selfishness of a perverse section of Hindus who were superior enough in social status to set a fashion and who had authority to force it on their inferiors.

Dr. Ambedkar believed that the consciousness that exists in every Hindu was that of the caste. The word ‘Hindu’ could be found in Sanskrit literature only after the Mohammedan invasion. Hindu society was a collection of castes. They did not even form a federation. Physical proximity, similarity in habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts were not enough to constitute men into society. It only happened because of their common possessions and their communication. He remarked: “The caste system prevents common activity and by preventing it, it had prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with a unified life and a consciousness of its own being.” (Vol. 1: 51)

Dr. Ambedkar noticed that one of the worst elements of the caste system was an antisocial spirit. Hindu were not only an assortment of castes but they were quarrelling groups each living for itself and for its selfish motives. The existence of caste and caste-consciousness had served to keep the memory of past feuds and had prevented solidarity. He remarked that the present-day non-Brahmins could not forgive the present-day Brahmins for the insult their ancestors gave to Shivaji!

He saw that castes were autonomous. There was no authority anywhere to compel a caste to admit a new-comer to its social life. Hindu society consisted of such close groups that there was no place for a convert. Again, caste was inconsistent with conversion. He concluded, “So long as castes remain, Hindu religion cannot be made a missionary religion and Shuddhi (purificatory conversion) will be both a folly and futility.” (Vol. 1: 54-55)

He despairingly noticed that there was no social cement among Hindus. The fraternity seen amongst Sikhs and Mohammedans was not found amongst Hindus. As Hindus lacked unity, they could not rest assured that there fellow religionists would come to their help. He believed that so long as
caste remained, there would be no sangathan, and so long as there was no sangathan, the Hindus would remain weak and meek. He said, “Caste has made sangathan and co-operation even for a good cause impossible.” (Vol. 1: 56)

K. Raghavendra Rao effectively commented on the vicious implications of the caste system and Dr. Ambedkar’s views on it:

The caste system prevents such communication and hence prevents the Hindus from becoming a genuine society. The caste system generates anti-social patterns of behavior. It also encourages bitter inter-caste animosities and conflicts, often based on myths of the past. Moreover, it has not enabled the Hindus to handle the tribal people successfully. By making it impossible to convert them into Hindus, it has allowed non-Hindus to convert them and thus ‘swell the ranks of the enemies of the Hindus.’ Hindus have also not attempted to raise the cultural level of the lower classes. Ambedkar even goes to the extent of asserting that the Muslim and Christian fanaticism and tendency to persecute the others is preferable to the Hindu practice of keeping suppressed groups within their own field. This Hindu meanness is worse than Muslim cruelty! (1998: 22)

Dr. Ambedkar harshly criticized the right of excommunication which, according to him, meant death. He wished it to be made an offense punishable by law. But caste being autonomous, nothing could be done to it. It had been a powerful weapon, in the hands of the orthodox, for persecuting the reformers.

He bitterly commented that caste destroyed the sense of public charity. Charity began with caste and ended with caste. Virtue became caste-ridden and morality became caste-bound.

He declared his view clearly that Chaturvarnya based not on birth but on worth was a snare. It presupposed a clear classification of people into four definite classes. Dr. Ambedkar here brought in a simile. He said that Chaturvarnya had a close affinity to the Platonic ideal. Plato divided people into three classes: producers, defenders and law-givers. Dr. Ambedkar was highly against Plato’s idea of dumping individuals into a few sharply divided classes underestimating their powers.

He believed that varna and caste were fundamentally opposed to each other. The former was based on worth and the later was based on birth. If the system of Chaturvarnya was to be established, the system of caste must be abolished. But Chaturvarnya proved to be highly impracticable harmful and miserable. He saw the same reason for the failure of both Chaturvarnya and Plato’s Republic. He said, “To me this Chaturvarnya with its old labels is
utterly repellent and my whole being rebels against it.” (Vol. 1: 59) Even if the system of *Chaturvarnya* was practicable, it was a vicious system.

Dr. Ambedkar raised an important question to answer: Why were there no social revolutions in India? He answered, “… the lower classes of Hindus have been completely disabled for direct action on account of this wretched system of *Chaturvarnya*.” (Vol. 1: 63) The lower classes were condemned to be lowly. They, being unknown to any means of escape, became reconciled to eternal servitude. They accepted servility as their inescapable fate. The weak in Europe had in his freedom of military service his physical weapon, in suffrage his political weapon and in education his moral weapon. All these three weapons were denied to the masses in India by *Chaturvarnya*. Dr. Ambedkar bitterly concluded, “There cannot be a more degrading system of social organization than *Chaturvarnya*. It is the system which deadens, paralyses and cripples the people from the helpful activity.” (Vol. 1: 63)

Dr. Ambedkar noticed that the Maurya period, in the history of India, was a period of freedom, greatness and glory. He found the reason that it was because of the complete annihilation of the *Chaturvarnya* system. The Shudras became the rulers of country during that period.

He believed that the flourished *Chaturvarnya* brought defeat and darkness for the society and country. The Brahmins and the Kshatriyas were eyesores to each other. The Kshatriyas became tyrannical. Many such examples were found in the Mahabharata and the Puranas. The incarnation was for one sacred reason and that was to annihilate the Kshatriyas. The rivalry and enmity between different Varnas were prevailing in society. Harmony was lost. Jatava comments, “The social concept of Varnasrama Dharma is rooted in the philosophy of alienation of man from man, whereas Ambedkar's social thought is based on assimilation of all human beings.” (1998: 117)

One striking fact about caste was that it bore too much significance for the Hindus whereas no significance for the non-Hindus. Without knowing caste of a person, the judgment on his/her personality or character was considered to be incomplete! The Non-Hindus did not regard the caste as a religious dogma. Excommunication was foreign to the Sikhs and the Mohammedans. Religion compelled Hindus to treat isolation and segregation of caste as a virtue. Dr. Ambedkar concluded with disappointment, “There is no integrating force among the Hindus to counter act the disintegration caused by caste.” (Vol. 1: 65)

Then Dr. Ambedkar challenged an age-old belief. It was always said that the Hindus had survived for centuries. Dr. Ambedkar argued that the fact of survival was no proof of fitness to survive. Caste was not the reason for their prolonged survival. The foreign invaders who conquered the Hindus did not kill them. Dr. Ambedkar bitterly commented that the Hindu history was the story of the surrender of India in front of foreign invaders. The Hindus never faced any onslaught and never shown the capacity to organize a rebellion to get themselves free from the foreign yoke. On the contrary, they tried to make slavery comfortable. In fact, the general mobilization of the people for defense
was impossible under the caste system. It needed general liquidation of the occupational theory underlying the caste system. To Dr. Ambedkar, the label of a class was not important. But the service offered by that class was important.

He believed that caste divided people into different communities and these communities took graded order in social status.

Castes form a graded system of sovereignties, high and low, which are jealous of their status and which know that if a general dissolution came, some of them stand to lose more of their prestige and power than others do. You cannot, therefore, have a general mobilization of the Hindus, to use a military expression, for an attack on the caste system. (Vol. 1: 72)

For the problem of the caste system, Dr. Ambedkar suggested a unique solution. He said,

Fusion of blood can alone create the feeling of being kith and kin and unless this feeling of kinship, of being kindred, becomes paramount the separatist feeling -- the feeling of being aliens -- created by caste will not vanish. Among the Hindu inter-marriage must necessarily be a factor of greater force in social life than it need be in the life of the non-Hindu. Where society is already well-knit by other ties, marriage is an ordinary incident of life. But where society cut asunder, marriage as a binding force becomes a matter of urgent necessity. The real remedy for breaking caste is inter-marriage. Nothing else will serve as the solvent of Caste. (Vol. 1: 67)

Dr. Ambedkar expressed his reformative ideas about the change required in the prevalent social system. He believed that psychological change was essential. He challenged the sanctity of the Shastras. He thought that people behaved according to their beliefs inculcated upon their minds by the Shastras. This divinity behind the Shastras must be destroyed thereby liberating people from their deep-rooted religious prejudices.

…the Hindus observe Caste not because they are inhuman or wrongheaded. They observe Caste because they are deeply religious. People are not wrong in observing Caste. In my view, what is wrong is their religion, which has inculcated this notion of Caste. If this is correct then, obviously the enemy, you must grapple with, is not the people who observe Caste, but the Shastras, which teach them this religion of Caste. Criticizing and ridiculing people...is a futile method of achieving the desired
end. The real remedy is to destroy the belief in the sanctity of *Shashtras*. How do you expect to succeed, if you allow the *Shashtras* to continue to mould the belief and the opinion of the people?....Reformers working for removal of untouchability ...do not seem to realize that the acts of the people are merely the result of their beliefs inculcated upon their minds by the *Shashtras* and the people will not change their conduct until they cease to believe in the sanctity of the *Shashtras* on which their conduct is founded. (Vol. 1: 68)

Dr. Ambedkar became critical about the authority of *Vedas* and *Smritis*. People took them to be the infallible ones. He wanted people to know which of these two accorded with reason. People were made to believe that the *Shastra* enjoined and observed caste and Untouchability as a religious duty. He wanted them to examine rationally the basis of their belief in varna and caste. He commented bitterly that rationalism as a canon of interpreting the Vedas and Smritis was absolutely condemned.

Then Dr. Ambedkar attacked the theory of *Prayashchitta*. If anybody broke the rules of castes, he was allowed to express regrets and do some penance thereby maintaining his position in the society. He pointed out that the *Shastras* had propounded the *Prayashchitta* theory producing the spirit of compromise which eventually gave caste a perpetual lease of life and smothered reflective thought which would have otherwise led to the destruction of the notion of caste.

As Omvedt wrote, in *Annihilation of Caste*, “the main historical development was interpreted in terms of conflict between social systems representing different religious-cultural values, a conflict carried on in terms of force and violence as well as political maneuvering and creations of systems of ideological deception.” (Yadav 2000: 133)

One of his friends Veceant Sheean with whom Dr. Ambedkar used to share his thoughts acknowledges that Dr. Ambedkar was prejudiced against the Hindu society and did not spare anything or anyone from his criticism. “He had no inhibitions whatever; he could say anything that came into his head; if you discounted his unfairness to the Brahmin caste and the government of India – discounted it pretty heavily – there was verve and acumen in everything he had to say.” (Nim 1969: 14)

Commenting on Dr. Ambedkar’s thoughts, Gandhiji wrote three articles in *Harijan*. W. N. Kuber quoted Gandhiji’s thoughts about the matter from *Harijan*, 18 July, 1936:

> Religion does not live by learning. It lives in the experiences of saints and seers, in their lives and sayings. Caste has nothing to do with religion. Varna and ashrams are institutions which have nothing to do with castes. The law of varna defines
not our right, but our duties….There is nothing in the law of varna to warrant a belief in untouchability. Dr. Ambedkar’s profound mistake lies in his picking out the texts of doubtful authenticity and value, and the state of degraded Hindus who are no fit specimens of the faith they so woefully misinterpreted. In his able address, the Doctor has over-proved his case. A religion is to be judged not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced. (2009: 49)

Gandhiji believed that these Shastras should be interpreted not by the learned scholars but by the saints. Dr. Ambedkar objected to it by saying that none of the saints ever attacked the caste system. On the contrary, they were staunch believers in the caste system. He remarked that the saints had never carried on a campaign against caste and Untouchability. They were not concerned with the struggle between man and man. They were concerned with relation between man and god. They preached that all men were equal in the eyes of god. According to Dr. Ambedkar, this was an innocent proposition which nobody could find difficult to preach or dangerous to believe in. But people remained staunch believers in caste and Untouchability. This proved that the pious lives and noble sermons of the saints had no effect on their life and conduct as against the teaching of Shastras.

Gandhiji and Dr. Ambedkar were equally concerned for the destitute. But their perception and solution of the problem were greatly different. Veceant Sheean, an eminent American writer and journalist, indicates a peculiarity of Dr. Ambedkar’s nature: “He was highly irreverent about Mahatma Gandhi, to whom I believe he was (underneath this irreverence) genuinely attached. He was so obsessed by the caste system and untouchability in particular, that he could not possibly be fair to the government of India, of which he formed a part…Few cabinet ministers I have ever seen could distribute such tongue lashings to his own associates.” (Nim 1969: 13)

Gandhiji respected Indian culture, traditions, Vedic wisdom, social relation and Hindu religion. He had his own methods and means, a sense of priority and pace for leading India into an egalitarian society. He had an unflinching faith and lifelong commitment to non-violence therefore he wanted to cause least resistance and least social discord during the process of social reconstruction. His approach of handling the problem of the destitute was centered on the theory of ‘change of heart’ and ‘the self-purification model’. He distinguished between varna and caste. He believed that the Veda was based on absolute equality of status. Misappropriation of a superior status by and of the varna over another was a denial of the law. He said that the law of varna did not include in any such notion of untouchability.

According to him the law of varna only taught that everyone had to earn his bread by following the ancestral calling. No calling was too low and none too high. All were good, lawful and absolutely equal. He firmly believed that varna system should prevail. Many people could not understand his
philosophical differences between caste and varna as they were too subtle to be grasped by common people.

Dr. Ambedkar challenged the stand of Gandhiji by calling him a conservative hypocrite. He said that *varna* was the parent of caste. The idea of bringing social change through exegesis could not appeal him. He followed ‘the Mahad Model’ or ‘the self-respect model’ for creating social revolution. His model emphasized education, self-help, self-assertion and self-organization.

Gupta rightly points out:

For Gandhiji, to apply coercion or legislation to bring about a social revolution was a negation of the intended revolution itself. In contrast, Ambedkar believed primarily in the efficacy of law and legislation and he struggled to evolve a constitutional mechanism to fashion India of his dreams, where equality, liberty and fraternity would have an unhindered play. (Ranga 2000: 54-55)

Dr. Ambedkar considered Gandhiji’s ideal of observance of one’s ancestral calling to be not only an impossible and impractical one but also morally an indefensible one. Gandhiji saw great virtue in a Brahmin remaining a Brahmin all his life. He was satisfied that there were real Brahmins who lived on alms freely given to them and imparted freely the spiritual treasures. Dr. Ambedkar said bitterly that this “spiritual treasure” was not a conservation of virtue but it was the prostitution of a noble profession which was no other than the service of religion.

Dr. Pitambar Dutt Kaushik rightly notes, “Yet, contrary to the popular opinion, I believe that the anti-untouchability programmes of Ambedkar and Gandhi were, despite their apparent incompatibility, complementary to each other. Gandhi had an unparalleled hold on the masses. His epic fasts, more than anything else, destroyed the belief in Untouchability would not have forfeited its public approval so quickly. But at the same time I feel that the Gandhian movement against Untouchability would not have been that great success, as it had been, had Ambedkar not exhorted his community to agitate for their rights. Under his leadership the submissive and meek Untouchables became defiant.” (Nim 1969: 40-41)

**The Hindu Code Bill**

Dr. Ambedkar believed that India had a uniform code of laws covering almost every aspect of human relationship. But the province the civil law had not been able to enter was marriage and succession. The law of adoption was also chaotic. These areas badly required amendments. The Hindu law was full of uncertainties, incongruities and whims. It was contradictory in nature. The solution suggested to this situation was the intervention of the legislature. The codification of law could be the only remedy.
He categorically stated that the state would retain the right to interfere in the personal law of any community in this country. And therefore, there was a sound basis for liberalization of personal laws so as to broaden the freedom of the individual and the unity of the country based on such freedom. He lucidly explained the reasons for consolidation and codification. The chaotic condition of the Hindu law was reduced to neat propositions in the form of judicial pronouncements. The codification was the legislative recognition of the judge made law.

To uplift the downtrodden and to improve the wretched conditions of the weaker sections of the Hindu society, Dr. Ambedkar drafted the Hindu Code Bill very honestly. Manohar Joshi, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, appreciates him thus: “Dr. Ambedkar, by codifying the Hindu Law in respect of marriage, divorce and succession, rationalized and restored its glory. Dr. Ambedkar has preserved marriage as sacrament and promoted the growth of family values.” (Vol. 14: VI)

To uplift the downtrodden and to improve the wretched conditions of the weaker sections of the Hindu society, Dr. Ambedkar drafted the Hindu Code Bill very honestly. His analysis and examinations in the bill proved to be a landmark in the social and legal history of India. The bill can be considered to be a milestone in the field of the non-fiction Indian writing in English. Clarifying the purpose of the bill, he, in the Parliament, announced,

...that those who want to conserve must be ready to repair and all I am asking of this house is this: that if you want to maintain the Hindu system, the Hindu culture, the Hindu society, do not hesitate to repair where repair is necessary. That Bill asks for nothing more than repairing those parts of the Hindu system which are almost become dilapidated. (Vol. 14, Part I: 283)

He found that the orthodox Hindus followed the existent Hindu law with religious conviction as it was given by Manu. It was considered to be immutable and unchallengeable. But it could be seen from the different Smritis that there was a periodic revision of the Hindu law. Therefore it could be safely asserted that the present Hindu law was not divine.

Dr. D. R. Jatava, an enthusiastic researcher in Ambedkar Literature, comments on every aspect dealt by Dr. Ambedkar. About the Hindu Code Bill, he writes,

In Indian society, especially in Hindu society, a female has a low social status, because she is treated as the 'doors of hell', i.e., Narka ka dwar. It was Dr. Ambedkar who raised his voice against the deplorable conditions of womenfolk in Hindu society. Looking into the social history and the rules of Shastras, he introduced the 'Hindu Code Bill' in Parliament to empower the womenfolk by
giving them legitimate rights, relating to property, marriage, divorce, maintenance, etc. (2001: 90)

Dr. Ambedkar's scheme of social transformation revealed his modern way of thinking. Yogendra Yadav notes: “The central idea underlying this scheme was that the traditional Hindu social order is completely static. It has no capacity to generate change from within it, change can come only from outside, with the help of modern ideas and institutions.” (Yadav 2000: 177)

The law aimed at liberalizing the personal laws thereby broadening the freedom of an individual. He also wanted to establish equality of men and women in the Hindu social system through the Bill. The most striking fact was that the Hindu code was consistent with our constitution. The codification of the Hindu law was a continuation of the work of framing the constitution.

The areas included in the bill were: Preliminary, Marriage and Divorce, Adoption, Minority and Guardianship, Joint Family Property, Women's Property, Succession, Maintenance and Miscellaneous. Four new things introduced were: abolition of the doctrine of the rights by birth, absolute right over property to women, share to daughter and provisions for divorce.

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According to Dr. Ambedkar, the Bill was aimed at removing the obstruction of law in the social advancement of women. He emphasized the empowerment of womenfolk in all spheres of India's national life for the sake of the creation of a good and just society.

The Hindu Code Bill was introduced in the Constituent Assembly on 11th April, 1947 by Dr. Ambedkar. The long discussions, debates and disputes that took place at the Constituent Assembly proved the Bill to be a part of 'social engineering.'

It was not only unfortunate for Dr. Ambedkar but also for the entire Hindu society that inspite of the involvement of the leading and prestigious jurists, social scientists and political leaders, the conservative members of the house did not allow the Bill to be passed in house. The discussion was stretched for a long period of four years and as a result, remained inconclusive. Consequently, Dr. Ambedkar resigned on 10th October, 1951 and left the house in anguish. The Bill was, thus, “killed and buried unwept and unsung” as Dr. Ambedkar lamented. Dr. Ambedkar was the only man who laboured much to draft the Bill for the purpose of reconstructing the
Hindu Society legally as well as socially. He emerged as a writer who loved radical changes in the Hindu society as well as in the legal system. Though he emerged as a promoter or propagator or an ardent advisor of a legal system based on liberty, equality and fraternity through the pages of the Bill, he was bitterly criticized as the critique of the Hindu system and Shastras. To quote Dr. Ambedkar,

No law passed by the Indian legislature in the past or likely to be passed in the future can be compared to it (Hindu Bill) in point of its significance. To leave inequality between class and class, between sex and sex which is the soul of Hindu society, untouched and to go on passing legislation relating to economic problems is to make a farce of our Constitution and to build a palace on a dung heap. This is the significance I attached to the Hindu Code. (Vol. 14, Part I :I)

D. R. Jatava summarizes the main objectives of the Hindu Code Bill in the following way:

(1) To help and encourage the entire family members to come together for mutual participation in matters affecting each and every one; (2) To give to the female member of the Hindu family full rights in matters of property, marriage, divorce, adoption, maintenance, inheritance, minority and guardianship; (3) To provide all members of a Hindu family the individual freedom and social equality and also protection to womenfolk against the evils of dowry and deprivation, disease and hunger; (4) To achieve the aim of making the widow, the daughter and the widow of a pre-deceased son eligible to inherit property; (5) To give them the right to knowledge and the right to realize their spiritual potentialities along with men; and ultimately; (6) To reform the basic structure of the Hindu social and legal systems in consonance with the spirit of the preamble and provisions of our noble Constitution highlighting the principles of justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation. (2001: 213)

Dr. Ambedkar wanted to build a new Hindu society by strengthening its weaker members. He wished to restore the human dignity for the destitute who were subjected to many indignities for centuries. S. K. Gupta noted:

Ambedkar’s appraisal of Hindu social order not only highlighted its in equalitarian strands but also the nodal points from which these had originated. He had a very sharp and analytical mind, and he
made the best use of the works he read during the
course of his academic pursuits in India and
abroad for the amelioration, upliftment and service
of the Dalits. Ambedkar questioned each and every
kind of theorization which denigrated or ostracized
the Depressed Classes, or heaped contempt or
humiliation on them. He also endeavoured to
discover alternative theories from within his rich
and vast knowledge and the realm of his analytical
acumen.” (Ranga 2000: 49)

**Education**

Dr. Ambedkar was highly critical about the denial of education and
knowledge to Shudras. He said that the ancient society might have been
guilty of refusing to shoulder the responsibility of mass-education. But there
had never been a society guilty of keeping its people away from even the
religious books. No society had been found guilty of prohibiting people from
acquiring knowledge. Most strikingly, no society had ever declared an attempt
to gain knowledge by the common man a punishable crime except the Hindu
society.

He found that education was restricted to the Brahmins. They were
given the authority of learning, teaching and interpreting the Shashtras. They
became the storehouse of knowledge. No wonder many distortions crept into
Hinduism. Even the other *dvija* castes were marginalized in the field of
education. In their case, education was mainly domestic or practical. It only
increased the skill to do a particular thing. It did not “lead to new perception. It
did not widen horizon, with the result that the practical education taught him
only an isolated and uniform way of acting so that in changing environment
the skill turned out to be gross ineptitude. Illiteracy became an integral part
of Hinduism by a process which is indirect but integral of Hinduism.” (Vol. 3: 42)

He valued education a lot. If the education was long-term measure to
alter the consciousness of the depressed classes, state and its laws were to
be immediate guarantee of their freedom and dignity and also a vehicle for
bringing far-reaching changes in their material conditions of life. He insisted
on inculcating rational thinking and scientific temper among masses in general
and students in particular.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, it was important to remove the inferiority
complex from the depressed people in order to make them free from the
depressed people in order to make them free from slavery. They were
ruthlessly robbed of dignity and self-respect by the existing social order.
Therefore, it was necessary to create in them the consciousness of the
importance of their lives. This could only be done through the spread of higher
education. He believed firmly that education was the only panacea of all social
troubles.

He believed that education only could bring social emancipation. It
was a vital force for individual development and social change. It could be an
effective instrument of mass movement for the safeguard of life and liberty. It
could mitigate miseries of ignorance and poverty. This could encourage the oppressed ones to fight and remove injustice and exploitation. It could relieve people of their dogmatic beliefs. He wanted them to prepare themselves for a social revolution and spiritual enlightenment through education and organization. His philosophy of education was to inculcate the values of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice and moral character among the children of all shades.

Dr. Ambedkar analyzed the Indian society keeping in mind both of its theoretical and practical aspects. He seriously pondered over them and expressed his view in a very critical way that may not be palatable to many Hindu scholars and readers. He discovered the nerves of society deeply as he himself went through the realities of Indian social structure and functions. He traced the roots of the evils of Indian society. Simultaneously, he offered suggestions and remedies for eradicating various socio-economic problems. Other social reformers fought for the removal of Untouchability on the grounds of compassion and charity but he asserted that social equality was not a question of anyone’s charity; it is, rather, a matter of right.

He explored various the aspects of Indian society and tried to explain the nature and function of it. He fiercely opposed the caste system and clearly stressed the need of one single creed of humanity so that right social relations may grow for safe-guarding the dignity of man and his human rights. A well-ordered society, based on the harmonious combination of law and morality, individual freedom and dignity, social equality and fraternity, could provide favourable environment for the common good.

He was a fact-finder. He always presented his analysis and arguments with appropriate examples. His approach was realistic and logical. He studied not only the Indian history but also the world history in order to know how the Negroes and the Jews suffered at the cruel hands of the exploiters and the feudal lords of their respective societies. They have been facing endless atrocities for long.

The main thread, running all through his sociological thoughts, is the human relations approach which means the right relations between man and man based as freedom, equality and justice. He did not study man in relation to God or the supernatural powers. This is the most significant aspect of Dr. Ambedkar’s sociological thoughts. (Jatava 2001: vi-vii)

Dr. Ambedkar’s sociological thoughts are reflected very well in his writings and speeches. They have significant importance in tracing the history and growth of social thoughts in India. Many of his social, economic and political observations are coming true after his demise. We can find him relevant in the present-day situation too.

It is clear that Dr. Ambedkar was opposed to an individualistic outlook of human life. By common good, he meant that society should satisfy the common needs of members. It should correspond to human interests and
aspirations. It should exercise a beneficial effect on society as a whole. His moral philosophy insisted upon man’s material needs for food, clothing, housing, etc. Simultaneously, it taught people to advance in spiritual values namely knowledge, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. It centered round man and his problems -- poverty, illiteracy, slum-dwelling, exploitation, feudalism, etc. It stood for man’s good thoughts and good deeds for social emancipation and social justice for all members of human society. For him, the highest good was man’s social emancipation. A man should believe himself to be a creator of all material goods and spiritual values in this world. His moral philosophy must be translated into practice to make it more palatable to the common man.

In brief, Dr. Ambedkar thought that man could derive numerous values from the existing sociological facts. Accordingly, the laws and rules might be framed by society and the state to solve the socio-economic problems of the people. We may conclude that he emphasized the need of human resources like freedom, equality, education, unity, sacrifice, mutual faith, fraternity, moral conduct, in order to derive maximum advantages through their right application.

… we may assert that Dr. Ambedkar was very much concerned to bring the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity into people’s practical life, not because out of any political expediency, but genuinely as the governing principle in the contest of rampant caste inequalities and severe economic disparities in Indian society. The ideals of democracy and secularism that we have accepted in our Constitution would be strengthened only when the people and their representatives recognize and accept the need of ‘constitutional morality’ as was emphasized by Dr. Ambedkar fifty years ago. Practically, we may face many hurdles, harsh and hostile facts, yet sooner or later we have to recognize and practice the tenets of liberty, equality and fraternity, if we want radical changes in our social life in order to solidify the roots of our political system based on democracy socialism and secularism, which stand, as Dr. Ambedkar visualized, respectively, for freedom, equality and fraternity (social brotherhood), all leading at the same time, towards, unity and solidarity of our nation in this highly competing and complex world. This means that we must properly utilize the human resources for man’s peace, progress and prosperity.” (Jatava 2001: 172)

It is quite natural to get influenced by the scholarship, knowledge and language of Dr. Ambedkar. The critics have appreciated him for the same. Challenging his intellect and theories is a difficult task. But Veceant Sheean,
watching him closely, dares to present altogether different point of view on the theory of Dr. Ambedkar:

......in the torrential flood of his talk there came up great chunks and whirling avatars of learning. He may not have been the greatest of Sanskrit scholars but he could plaster a text with dozens of reference to early Hindu authorities. His treaties on The Origines of Untouchability was thus embellished with Sanskrit erudition, but its central theme was a rather daring theory, and one which, I imagine, could never be proved. He thought that untouchability arose through the breaking up of tribes in the ancient wars; when a tribe no longer had enough members to be a tribe, its remnants were “broken men” and were compelled to live outside the walls of the town or village, doing unclean work and enduring the insults of the unbroken. This hypothesis reposes upon analogy chiefly; “broken men” from such shattered tribes did exist in ancient times in Wales and perhaps elsewhere. Ambedkar never convinced me, in print or in talk, that such was the case in India. (Nim 1969: 13-14)

The caste system has been one of the most misrepresented and misunderstood aspects of Hinduism. To understand the truth, one must go to antiquity to study the evolution of the caste system. Over the course of centuries, it degenerated as a result of exploitation by some priests and other socio-economic elements of society. The caste system has never been the ideology of Hinduism. The Vedas, the Upanishadas and the Bhagwad Gita all say in one or the other way that God resides in every one of us without exception.

Sir George Birchwood has said, “So long as the Hindus held on to the caste system, India will be India; but from the day break from it, there will be no more India that glorious peninsula will be degraded to the position of a bitter ‘East End’ of the Englo-Saxon Empire.” (Nehru 1995: 247)

The Caste system should not be portrayed as the ultimate horror. In fact, it has been observed that the caste society has been the most stable society in history. Nirad C. Chaudhari defends the caste system: “The caste system has only organized the disparities created by historical forces and movements. By doing so, it has done a great good by reducing the competition of the diversities, by freezing them within certain limits, and by making each not only legitimate but even moral.... It canalized competitions and helped the coexistence of elements which otherwise would have been at war.” (Chaudhari 1965: 60)

As a political category, caste is a British invention. The caste system in ancient times was not static. Castes rose and fell. It was due to the
extended foreign rule that castes became rigid. Historically, many of the revered rishis were Dalits. Sage Vyas, Sage Valmiki, Sage Vidura, Sage Aitareya, Rishi Parasar, Rishi Vashishtha came from the humble class of Hindu society. In short, untouchability was unknown to the Vedas.
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