Chapter III

Dr. Ambedkar and His Religious Writings

It is important to study Dr. Ambedkar’s views about religion as reflected in his writings because they form the nature of his ideology and his literature. He considered religion to be an essential and unavoidable component for human existence as it instilled hope in man and drove him to activity. He firmly believed that religion as a social force could not be ignored. Dhananjay Keer noticed him saying, “Religion is not opium as it is held by some. What good things I have in me or whatever have been the benefits of my education to society, I owe them to the religious feelings in me. I want religion but I do not want hypocrisy in the name of religion.” (1962: 304)

He studied the Hindu Philosophy minutely in order to reconstruct the Hindu society on the basis of the human values of equality, liberty and fraternity. His intention was not merely attempting an intellectual exercise but also finding out some practical solutions for the existing problems. He aimed at uplifting the downtrodden and absorbing them in the national mainstream.

His close associations with the western thinkers, scholars and politicians and his visits to western countries gave him a wider view of life, and he studied the background of Indian religions and faiths with a humanist frame of mind without going into the realm of mysticism and metaphysics of Indian culture, and in his wisdom, he combined different views of science, religion, constitution, etc., for the welfare of the people. (Jatava 1998: 47)

He ceaselessly struggled throughout his life to empower the powerless for building a healthy society thereby creating a strong nation. He wrote with a caustic pen. Yet his analysis of Hindu philosophy was valued as a definite approach to the strengthening of the Hindu society on the basis of the human values. His interpretation Hinduism and his historical analysis of the Hindu religion as expressed in his writings provide an insight into Dr. Ambedkar the man and writer.

Prof. Ram Meghe, the then Minister for Education, Maharashtra State, states, “Dr. Ambedkar occupies a position of high eminence among the learned scholars of Indian society and philosophy. His erudition and learning as reflected through his writings may serve as a beacon light for rational approach towards our social and religious problems.” (Vol. 3: Preface) His writings, dealing with philosophical and social problems of Indian society, may prove interesting to the scholars and to the new and young generation which is eager to find solutions to the national problems on rational basis.

Dr. Ambedkar characterized religion in his article Buddha and the Future of His Religion. Religion, in the sense of morality, must remain the governing principle in every society. It must function in accord with reason, i.e. science. Its moral code must recognize the fundamental tenets of liberty,
equality and fraternity. It must not sanctify or ennoble poverty. But as he set to evaluate Hinduism in terms of spirituality and morality, he found it wanting. He saw a great disharmony between what he believed in and what he found in Hindu philosophy and religion. As a humanist, Dr. Ambedkar has tried to rationalize his denouncement of Hinduism.

This unpublished script dealt with the aims and ideals of Hinduism. The only social ideal acceptable to the Hinduism was that of Varna Vyavastha. Dr. Ambedkar could never reconcile with it as it promoted inequality, oppression, exploitation and one-class domination. It encouraged anti-humanistic values and promoted unscientific and irrational behavior. He treated Hinduism as a mass of sacrificial, social, political and sanitary rules and regulations – all mixed up. He called it legalized class-ethics.

**Part – I The Philosophy of Hinduism**

After giving a long descriptive quotation on the philosophy of religion by Prof. Pringle Pattison, Dr. Ambedkar declared that philosophy of religion, for him, was both descriptive as well as normative. It was descriptive because it dealt with the teaching of a religion and it was normative science as it utilised critical reasoning for passing judgment on those teachings. On this basis, he made the following study of the philosophy of Hinduism and openly put Hinduism on trial to assess its worth as a way of life.

Dr. Ambedkar proceeded to study the philosophy of religion considering three dimensions. The first was religion which did not mean mythical or civil theology. For him, theology meant natural theology which was the doctrine of God. Natural theology propounded: (1) that God existed and was the author of nature or universe, (2) that God controlled all the events which made nature, (3) that God exercised a government over mankind in accordance with the sovereign moral law. Therefore, he said on the basis of the above three propositions, “I take Religion to mean the propounding of an ideal scheme of divine governance the aim and object of which is to make the social order in which men live a moral order.” (Vol. 3: 6)

The second dimension dealt with the ideal scheme for which a religion stood. Dr. Ambedkar found it very difficult to define the fix, permanent and dominant part and to separate its essential characteristics from those which were unessential in the religion of any society. But he did not find this difficulty in the case of positive religions. He came to know that primitive religions grew up gradually in the course of time. But unlike primitive religions, positive religions had their origins in the teachings of the great religious innovators who spoke as the organs of a divine revelation. He believed that Hinduism, like Judaism, Christianity and Islam, was also a positive religion in which one did not have to search for a scheme of divine governance because of its written constitution. He considered the Manu Smriti to be the divine code full of rules governing the religion as well as the ritualistic and social life of the Hindus in minute details. It was a written constitution of divine governance. He regarded the Manu Smruti as the Bible of the Hindus containing the philosophy of Hinduism.
The third dimension which Dr. Ambedkar considered most difficult one to be ascertained and defined was the criterion to judge the value of the ideal scheme of divine governance on which the religion stood. For him, to judge the philosophy of religion was to study the revolutions that religion had undergone during the passage of time. He noticed that there was a time when religion had covered the whole field of human knowledge and claimed infallibility for what it taught. Gradually, this vast Empire of Religion was destroyed by Copernican Revolution which freed astronomy from the domination of religion. Moreover, the Darwanian Revolution also freed biology and geology from the shackles of religion. This great revolution was the result of the warfare which science had waged against theology for 400 years. He took this religious revolution to be a great blessing for the establishment of freedom of thought. This revolution ennobled the society. This process of secularization was welcome by scientists and also by religious people.

Then, Dr. Ambedkar turned to describe a revolution which brought complete transformation in the nature of religion as it was taken to be by savage society and by civilized society. While making the comparison between savage and civilized society, he found that magic, taboo, totem, fetish were just the means to conserve life and to prevent evil influences from doing harm to life in the savage society. "Life and preservation of life is the core and center of the Religion of the savage society." (Vol. 3: 11) He also came to know that these life-processes of the savage society were the substance and source of the religion for the people of the time. Even after the theological refinements, the essence of religion of the present day society was the same. In short, both the societies had the same central interest of religion that was the life processes by which individuals were preserved and the race maintained.

He came to know that the savage society had no idea of God. The concept of morality was independent of religion. He found the difference between the two societies as God entered the scheme of religion of the civilized society. Morality became sanctified by religion. He considered these two new features in the development of the religion of the civilized society as the first stage of the Religious Revolution.

He found the second stage of the Religious Revolution very radical which split the civilized society into two: antique society and modern society. He found that the differences the Religious Revolution brought in the conceptions of these two societies were those of the relations between God, Society and Man.

The first difference between the ancient and modern world that he came across was related to the composition of society. He said, "Every human being, without choice on his own part, but simply in virtue of his birth and upbringing, becomes a member of what we call a natural society." (Vol. 3: 13) The membership of the society assigned definite obligations, duties, social penalties, social rights and advantages to every human being. He found the ancient and the modern worlds same in this matter. He noticed, "Thus in ancient Society men and their Gods formed a social and political as well as a religious whole. Religion was founded on kinship between the God and his
worshipers. Modern Society has eliminated God from its composition. It consists of men only." (Vol. 3: 14)

The bond between God and society formed the second point of difference between antique and modern society. Dr. Ambedkar found that each group of the antique world had its own God/Goddess that had no relation with those of the other groups. God in the antique society was so closely attached to the community that it had become the God of the chosen community only. As a result, the antique society never believed in the universality of God as well as in humanity in general.

The notion of the fatherhood of the God formed the third point of difference between the ancient and the modern society. Dr. Ambedkar mentioned, “In the antique society God was the Father of his people but the basis of this conception of Fatherhood was deemed to be physical.” (Vol. 3: 15)

The antique world’s notion of blood relationship of Gods and men, found in Greece, Syria, Palestine and Hebrews, proved that God was a human being and as such was not capable of absolute virtue and absolute goodness. The God of the antique world was found full of wants and appetites of man. He was indulged in the vices. The worshipers of the antique society were found appealing God not to lead them into temptations. While as in modern society, the idea of divine fatherhood was entirely different from the ancient society. Man was considered to be created in the image of God and not to be considered as created by God. This change brought a tremendous difference in the nature of God as a Governor of the Universe. He noticed, “This dissociation of God from physical contact with man had made it possible for God to be conceived of as capable of absolute good and absolute virtue.” (Vol. 3: 16)

While changing the nationality, the religion also played an important role. This theory forms the fourth point of difference between the antique and the modern societies. He came to know that in the antique society, social fusion meant religious fusion. And the change of nationality involved the change of cult. It meant that the nationality of a person did not change unless and until there was a change of religion. While as in modern society, a man could be a member of the other society without undergoing a religious fusion. Commenting on this he said, “To distinguish modern society from antique society it is not enough to say that Modern Society consists of men only. It must be added that it consists of men who are worshipers of different Gods.” (Vol. 3: 17)

The fifth point of difference was related to the necessity of knowledge of the nature of God as part of religion. From the antique point of view, the question of the nature of God was not a religious one but a speculative one. Practical acquaintance with the rules on which the deity acted and on which he expected his worshippers to frame their conduct was essential for the religion. But in the modern society, this view got weakened.

The sixth point of difference was related to the place of belief in religion. He was of the view that in ancient society religion was not a system
of belief with practical applications but it was taken as a body of fixed traditional practices. Generally, men first find reason to act and then they act. In ancient society, the reason was not first formulated as a doctrine but practice preceded doctrinal theory.

The seventh point of difference was related to the place of individual conviction in religion. He came to know that in ancient society, religion became a part of the organized social life. People unconsciously conformed to it. There was no place for reason and speculations in religion. “To us moderns religion is above all a matter of individual conviction and reasoned belief, but to the ancients it was a part of the citizen’s public life, reduced to fixed forms, which he was not bound to understand and was not at liberty to criticise or to neglect.” (Vol. 3: 18-19)

The eighth point of difference referred to the relation of God to society and man as well as of society to man in the matter of God’s prudence. He came to know that in ancient society, God was found gracing them by abundance of harvest, helping them against their enemies and counselling them by oracles in natural difficulties. God was the affair of community and not of an individual. The community was sure of the permanent and the unfailing hand of the deity. The next difference was found in the relation of God to man. Dr. Ambedkar found that God, in ancient society, was not the sure helper in every private need and would not help man in matters that were against the interests of the community as a whole. God might help man in his civic life and give him his share in public benefits.

The next was the difference in the attitude of God and society to man. Dr. Ambedkar found that society was indifferent to individual welfare and God was, without fail, bound to society. The blessings sought from God were public in nature encompassing the whole community like fruitful seasons, increase of flocks of herds and success in war. The antique society looked upon the misery of a man as proof of evil-doing. God was not worried about the conflict between individual and individual and between society and the individual. Even men did not ask God to be righteous to them. In this way, Dr. Ambedkar found two Religious Revolutions: external and internal.

The External Revolution was not really a Religious Revolution at all. It was a revolt of science against the extra territorial jurisdiction assumed by Religion over a field which did not belong. The Internal Revolution was a real Revolution or may be compared to any other political Revolution, such as the French Revolution or the Russian Revolution. It involved a constitutional change. By this Revolution the Scheme of divine governance came to be altered, amended and reconstituted. (Vol. 3: 21)

Dr. Ambedkar said that he had given this analysis of the religious revolution in order to discover the norm for evaluating the philosophy of Religion. He found that society was taken to be the end in the revolution of the
antique world. While in the Revolution of the modern world, an individual was conceived to be the end.

To put the same fact in terms of the norm it can be said that the norm or the criterion, for judging right and wrong in the Antique Society was utility while the norm or the criterion for judging right and wrong in the modern Society is justice. The Religious Revolution was not thus a revolution in the religious organization of Society resulting in the shifting of the centre – from society to the individual – it was a revolution in the norms. (Vol. 3: 22)

Dr. Ambedkar considered these as the real norms for judging the philosophy of Religion. With the help of these norms, he proceeded to examine the philosophy of Hinduism.

The whole life of a Hindu was regulated by religion. He found it strange that the educated Hindus looked upon religion as a matter of indifference. The religion was conceived as a scheme of divine governance which was an ideal for the society to follow. He said, "A religious ideal never fails to work so long as there is faith in that ideal. To ignore religion is to ignore a live wire." (Vol. 3: 23-24)

According to him, it was a great error to consider that all religions were true and good and there was no need to discriminate between them. Religion was an institution which might help or harm a society.

Then Dr. Ambedkar started studying Hinduism and said that his inquiry in the philosophy of Hinduism must be faced by the Hindus. He applied the tests of justice and utility to judge the philosophy of Hinduism. For him, justice was simply another name for liberty, equality and fraternity. He answered the question 'which of these tenets did Hinduism' recognize with strong arguments.

As far as equality in Hinduism was concerned, he did not find any. He said that in the Hindu society different castes did not stand horizontally but vertically in which Brahmin was placed at the first rank, Kshatriya held the second, Vaishya the third and in the last place the Shudra (Ati-Shudra or Untouchables) was placed. He condemned Manu for being responsible for designing this principle of gradation and rank. He wanted to prove the lack of equality in Hinduism with examples of slavery, marriage and Rule of Law as observed by Manu.

Dr. Ambedkar found that Manu recognized slavery and confined it to the Shudras. “Manu and his successors while recognizing slavery ordain that it shall not be recognized in its inverse order to the Varna System.” (Vol. 3: 26) A person of any varna might become a slave of a person of the same varna but not of a person of a lower varna in the established hierarchy.

On the matter of marriage, he found Manu opposing intermarriage. “Like Slavery he (Manu) permits intermarriage but not in the inverse order."
According to Dr. Ambedkar, the reason for the discrimination could be none other than Manu’s anxiety to preserve the rule of inequality which was his guiding principle.

Regarding the Rule of Law, Dr. Ambedkar found very strange contrast between the Hindu and non-Hindu criminal jurisprudence. He found Manu’s penal code full of inequalities and considered it as an irrational system of inhuman punishment having no proportion to the gravity of the offence.

Then Dr. Ambedkar turned to discuss the religious inequalities as found in Manu with reference to sacraments and *ashrams*. He came to know that originally there were forty sacraments which cover the most trivial as well as important occasions of a person’s life. They were gradually reduced to sixteen in number. He found the spirit of inequality resting at the core of these rules of sacrament. He then proceeded to comment on various sacraments in order to show how unfair and unequal they sounded.

He then came to the peculiar *Ashram* theory consisted in the philosophy of Hinduism which he had not found in any other religion. Life, according to this theory, was divided into four stages (*ashrams*) called *Brahmachari*, *Grahastha*, *Vanaprastha* and *Sannyas*.

He surprisingly noticed that the Shudras and women were excluded from the benefits of the sacraments and *ashrams*. He wanted to know the reason for this prohibition. But he could not find it. He said that *Sannyas* meant renunciation or abandonment of worldly object. It was a civil death. If a Shudra became a *Sannyasi*, there would be the same consequence as was prescribed by Manu. Then what was the purpose of this interdict?

During his research, he came to know that these sacraments had a purificatory purpose and they were the privileges of the higher classes only. The Shudras were not allowed to sanctify their bodies or purify their souls. They were not permitted to have an aspiration to reach God. He said that Manu had a staunch belief in social inequality and he was aware of the danger of admitting religious equality. Dr. Ambedkar quoted, “If I am equal before God why am I not equal on earth? Manu was probably terrified by this question. Rather than admit and allow religious equality to affect social inequality he preferred to deny religious equality. Thus in Hinduism you will find both social inequality and religious inequality imbedded in its philosophy.”

Moreover, Dr. Ambedkar came to know that Manu advocated a deliberate debasement of human personality. He noticed Manu saying that “… leaving aside the four original castes the rest are simply baseborn!!... Manu in his mad lust for debasing the different castes by ascribing to them an ignoble origin seems deliberately to pervert historical facts.” Manu declared the origins of *Magadha* and *Vaidehik* in the carnal inter-relationships of various *varnas*; whereas Panini declared them as the residents of *Magadha* and *Videha* respectively. Such was the distortion of facts! Dr. Ambedkar found a strange contrast: “… while Religion everywhere else is engaged in the task of raising and ennobling mankind Hinduism is busy in debasing and degrading it.”
The other instance Dr. Ambedkar mentioned was pertaining to the rules for naming a Hindu child. The names of the Hindus were generally related to (i) family deity, (ii) the month in which the child was born, (iii) the planets under which a child was born or (iv) temporal facts for example, business. He found Manu saying the first part of a Shudra’s name should denote something contemptible!!! Manu would not tolerate a Shudra to have the comfort of a high sounding name.

Dr. Ambedkar then proceeded to find out whether the ideal of liberty was recognized by Hinduism or not. According to Dr. Ambedkar, the prerequisites of liberty were social equality, economical security and knowledge. But Hinduism did not satisfy any of them. The issue of social inequality was already discussed.

In the matter of economic security, Hinduism denied freedom of vocation and had no relation to capacity or to inclination. It forced people to serve ends chosen by others. Manu told the Shudra that he was born to serve the higher classes and could not escape or avoid his destined task. Hinduism left no scope for the Shudra to accumulate wealth.

Dr. Ambedkar wrote, “Thus in Hinduism, there is no choice of avocation. There is no economic independence and there is no economic security. Economically, speaking of a Shudra is a precarious thing.” (Vol. 3: 41)

Then he turned to the question of the spread of knowledge. He came to know that Hinduism confined education only to the study of the Vedas and believed that there was no knowledge outside the Vedas. It was also observed that only the Brahmins were benefitted by the schools which taught the Vedas. There was no scope of new perceptions in the educational concepts of Manu. Dr. Ambedkar stated, “Each class managed to transmit to its members the ways of doing things it was traditionally engaged in doing.” (Vol. 3: 42)

He found Manu the only divine law-giver who had denied knowledge to the common men and made the right of reading and writing confined only to the higher classes of the society. Dr. Ambedkar bitterly commented, “Thus Hinduism far from encouraging spread of knowledge is a gospel of darkness.” (Vol. 3: 44) These facts showed that Hinduism was opposed to the conditions in which liberty could flourish. It was denial of liberty. Then he discussed the question of Hinduism and Fraternity. He came to know that there were more than 2000 castes which further divided into sub-castes. There was an infinite process of splitting social life into small fragments going on in Hinduism. The Baniya sub-castes were so inter-related that they found extremely difficult to marry within their castes without transgressing the rules of consanguinity.

He also found the hierarchical character of the caste-system. It was “… a system of gradation in which every caste except the highest and the lowest has a priority and precedence over some other castes.” (Vol. 3: 45) The order of superiority and inferiority was determined on the basis of the rules related to religious rites and commensuality. Religion played an important role in
deciding precedence through ceremonies, incantations and the position of the priest.

Dr. Ambedkar came to know that all the castes could not perform all the sixteen ceremonies prescribed by the Hindu Scriptures. So the caste which could perform and had the right to perform all the ceremonies was higher than the others. It was obvious that Manu had given the right to perform all the ceremonies to the Brahmins.

Moreover, as Manu confined the study of the Vedas only to the Brahmins, it was also the source of precedence for the Brahmins. Hindu religious scriptures had two distinct categories: four Vedas and eighteen Puranas. Curiously, in the matter of sanctity, the Vedas were higher than the Puranas. So a caste which was entitled to use Vedic Mantras was superior to a caste which was entitled to use only Purnaokta Mantras.

Again, Hinduism required the instrumentality of a priest for the derivation of the full benefit from the performance of a religious ceremony. Since that priest was the Brahmin, he was indispensable for the ceremonies. But the Brahmins did not show willingness to accept the invitations to officiate the ceremonies held by different castes. They selected some castes for that purpose depending on some long and well-established custom. The caste at which they would officiate was held as superior to the others.

Hinduism had very strict rules for inter-dining. A person could take food from a caste above him but not from a caste below him in the hierarchy of castes. A caste was higher or lower according as the Brahmin took from it food or not. The Brahmin had an elaborate set of rules in the matter of food and water. Again, he also had a set of rules in the matter of the vessels in which he would accept food and water.

Dr. Ambedkar found the hierarchical system of cates responsible for producing a peculiar social psychology. “In the first place it produces a spirit of rivalry among the different castes for dignity. Secondly it produces an ascending scale of hatred and descending scale of contempt.” (Vol. 3: 48) He found the reference of this hatred and contempt in the Sahyadrikhand, one of the Puranas which condemned the Brahmins by assigning the filthiest origin to them and the noble origin to the other castes. As a natural result, the Peshwas ordered to destruct it.

Dr. Ambedkar very bitterly noted that the Hindus were probably the strongest opponents of Marxism as they were horrified at its doctrine of class-struggle. But they had forgotten that India had been not merely the land of class-struggle but that of class-wars.

He then gave us the detailed record of the bitterest class-wars that took place between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas with the reference of the conflict between the Brahmins and King Vena, between the Brahmins and King Pururavas as noted in the ‘Adiparva’ of the Mahabharata, between the Brahmins and King Nahusha as found in the ‘Udyogaparva’ of the Mahabharata, between the Brahmins and King Nimi as told by the Vishnu Purana. Moreover, Dr. Ambedkar also gave us the examples of the conflict
between two individuals like the Kshatriya Vishvamitra and the Brahmin Vasishtha on the issue whether a Kshatriya could claim Brahmahood. Another example referred to the slaughter of the Brahmans by the Kshatriyas as narrated in the ‘Adiparva’ of the Mahabharata. Then he gave us the example of the slaughter of the Kshatriyas by the Brahmans told in the Mahabharata. The story of Parasuram was presented as he had swept away all the Kshatriyas from the earth for twenty one times. Dr. Ambedkar quoted, “No country has such a dismal record of class war as Hindustan. It was the proud boast of the Brahmans that he exterminated the Kshatriyas twenty one times from the face of Hindustan and recreated them by cohabiting with the widows of the Kshatriyas.” (Vol. 3: 64)

He also informed us that there was no sharing among the Hindus of joys and sorrows because everything was separate and exclusive among them all through their lives. No public charity was possible. He noticed that the Hindus share nothing when they were alive and even when they were dead.

Dr. Ambedkar quoted, “Is there any wonder that the sentiment of fraternity is foreign to the Hindus? With a complete refusal to share the joys and sorrows of life how can the sentiment of fraternity take roots?” (Vol. 3: 65)

As the religion of the Hindus denied to share, the Hindus did not share their joys and sorrows with the other Hindus. Hinduism taught not to interdine, not to intermarry and not to associate. He boldly declared that the philosophy of Hinduism was a direct denial of fraternity. “This brief analysis of the Philosophy of Hinduism from the point of view of justice reveals in a glaring manner how Hinduism is inimical to equality, antagonistic to liberty and opposed to fraternity.” (Vol. 3: 66)

Then he turned to the examination of the philosophy of Hinduism from the point of view of Utility. He was of the view that whatever was unjust to the individual could not be useful to society.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, the ideal of Chaturvarna stood thrice condemned. As a form of social organization, it did not allow Hinduism to form a common front. As a form of production, its technique never advanced beyond that of the primitive man. And as an ideal scheme of distribution, it had generated inexcusable inequality of wealth. In order to judge the social utility of the caste system, he put various aspects of castes together and studied them in combination instead of in separation or in isolation. The conclusion was:

(1) Caste divided labourers. Civilized society needed division of labour. But in no society was division of labour accompanied by that unnatural division of labourers into water-tight compartment. No other society had such a system of gradation of labourers.

(2) Caste disassociated work from interest. The division of labour was not spontaneous. It had nothing to do with natural aptitude or interest of a person. It assigned tasks to the individuals on the basis of the social status of their parents. An individual was not allowed to change his occupation in order to adjust himself to the changing circumstances. A person would starve instead
of taking a non-hereditary occupation. Caste became a cause of unemployment.

Individual choice, sentiment or preference was kept aside and the dogma of predestination prevailed. People were compelled to do the jobs which did not appeal them a bit. Such occupations provoked them to aversion, ill will and the desire to evade.

One must not forget the advantages of the division of labour as presented through the caste system. People could gain expertise in the profession of their forefathers by working for years in the same field. Even a less efficient member of the caste could also earn his bread and butter.

(3) Caste dissociated intelligence from work and created contempt for labour. The Brahmin was permitted to cultivate intellect but prohibited to labour. On the other hand, the Shudra was forced to do vice-a-versa.

(4) Caste devitalized or sterilized men. Interdependence of castes was inevitable. But the dependence of the Shudras for the vital needs was disastrous. The Shudras were kept away from education, wealth and means of defense which were of paramount value for self-preservation. The guardian-ward relationship of the Trivarnyaka and the Shudra got itself converted to the master-servant relationship. The three upper classes managed to live by compromise. But the three agreed to beat down the Shudras.

He (the Shudra) was not allowed to acquire wealth lest he should be independent of the three Varnas. He was prohibited from acquiring knowledge lest he should keep a steady vigil regarding his interests. He was prohibited from bearing arms lest he should have the means to rebel against their authority. (Vol. 3: 70)

No social revolution was possible as the wretched system of Chaturvarna completely disabled the Shudras for any sort of direct action.

They were condemned to be lowly and not knowing the way of escape and not having the means of escape, they became reconciled to eternal servitudes which they accepted as their inescapable fate... There cannot be a more degrading system of social organization than Chaturvarnya. It is the system which deadens, paralyses and cripples the people from helpful activity. (Vol. 3: 70)

Dr. Ambedkar compared the social situations of India to those of Europe. He concluded that in Europe, the strong had never contrived to make the weak helpless against the exploitation as shamelessly as was the case in India among the Hindus. The weak in Europe had military service as his physical weapon, education as his moral weapon and suffrage as his political
weapon. These three weapons for emancipation were never withheld by the strong. But all of them were denied to the weak in India due to Chaturvamya.

(5) Caste prevented mobilization. At particular occasions, the society must mobilize all its resources to one end in order to save itself from a catastrophe. For example, war required militarization of all resources. But the caste system proved to be a great hurdle to that. He boldly stated that the destiny of a defeat which had been the lot of India throughout history was due to caste. The other varnas except the Kshatriyas never came forward to fight and defend the nation.

If these conclusions are sound, how can a philosophy which dissects society in fragments, which dissociates work from interest, which disconnects intelligence from labour, which expropriates the rights of man to interests vital to life and which prevented society from mobilizing resources for common action in the hour of danger, be said to satisfy the test of Social Utility. (Vol. 3: 71)

Dr. Ambedkar found that the center of the ideal of the Hinduism was not an individual or society but a class – the class of Supermen called Brahmins. Anything which served the interest of the Supermen was alone entitled to be called right and good. Dr. Ambedkar quoted Manu who ranked the Brahmin as the Lord of (all) Varnas, creator of the world, the punisher, the teacher and the benefactor; he was produced by God and whatever existed in the world was the property of the Brahmin. Dr. Ambedkar bitterly remarked, “Hinduism is the gospel of the superman and it teaches that what is right for the superman is the only thing which is called morally right and morally good.” (Vol. 3: 74)

Dr. Ambedkar found some similarities between Manu and Nietzsche. Nietzsche himself had openly declared that in his philosophy he was only following the scheme of Manu. As far as the differences between the two were concerned, Dr. Ambedkar found that Nietzsche was interested in creating a new race of supermen while Manu was interested in maintaining the privileges of a class of supermen. The criterion for being a superman according to Nietzsche was worth; while to Manu, it was birth. Nietzsche was a genuine unbiased philosopher. But Manu was a hireling engaged to propound a philosophy which served the interests of people whose title to being supermen was not to be lost even if they lost their virtue. Dr. Ambedkar concluded, “Thus Manu’s is a degraded and degenerate philosophy of superman as compared with that of Nietzsche and therefore far more odious and loathsome than the philosophy of Nietzsche.” (Vol. 3: 77)

Dr. Ambedkar did not find justice or utility in the philosophy of Hinduism. This philosophy could not be called the Religion of Humanity as common men could not find nourishment for souls, comfort for sorrow or help for weakness. He concluded with bitter remarks, “Not less cruel than the crudest irreligion, does it leave men divorced from all communion with God.
Such is the philosophy of Hinduism. It is Superman's heaven and the common man's damnation." (Vol. 3: 78)

Dr. Ambedkar was sure that no orthodox Hindu would be bold enough to deny the authority of *Manu Smriti* as a book of Hindu Religion. He explained how the *Smritis* obtained a place and position of authority among the Hindus.

He found that the *Smritis* were basically concerned with the social traditions, customs and conventions approved of and recommended by those who were learned in the *Vedas*. The *Smritis* were recognised as the things which were remembered in contrast to *Vedas* or *Shrutis* which were known as the things which were heard only.

Dr. Ambedkar came to know that the difference between these two *Dharma Shastras* was due to the status of their authors. The authors of the *Vedas*, i.e. *Rishis*, were considered superior in comparison to the authors of the *Smritis*, i.e. the learned. As a result, the *Vedas* were considered to be more reliable than the *Smritis*. But in the course of time, the authors of the *Smritis* were elevated to the status of *Rishis*. The *Smriti* was considered to be the record from memory of a *Shruti* which was lost. Both the *Smritis* and the *Shrutis* were given the equal position. The *Smritis* were made as authoritative as *Shrutis*. In this way, Dr. Ambedkar showed how the *Smritis* came to be considered as the source of Hindu Religion.

Dr. Ambedkar was of the view that the Brahmins elevated the *Smritis* to the status of the *Vedas* because of their selfish motives. The Brahmins established the doctrine of caste resulting in the superiority of the Brahmins, subordination of the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas and degradation of the Shudras with the help of the philosophy of the *Smritis*.

Dr. Ambedkar found out that the essence of the *Smritis*, the *Vedas* and the *Bhagwat Geeta* was the same. He claimed: “Geeta is Manu in a nutshell.” (Vol. 3: 81) Referring to the *Bhagwat Geeta*, he said that Krishna himself was the creator of the *Chaturvarnarn*. He would punish those who were responsible for the downfall of the *Chaturvarnarn*.

People charged Dr. Ambedkar for using *Manu Smriti* to explain the philosophy of Hinduism as *Manu Smriti* was a legal code and not a moral one. But he firmly said that Hinduism did not distinguish between legal and moral philosophy. He got the evidence from the meaning of the word *Dharma* which occurred 58 times in the *Rig Veda* and which was used in six different senses that denoted: (1) Ancient custom, (2) Laws, (3) Any arrangement which maintains law and order in society, (4) The course of nature, (5) The quality of a substance and (6) Duty of good and evil. Since long, the word *Dharma* in Hinduism had a two fold connotation. It meant both law and moral.

Dr. Ambedkar tried to analyse the Hindu moral code. He said that a Hindu was social but not moral in the strict sense of the term. He was a willing tool in hands of the society, satisfied to follow. The notions of sins gave noteworthy proof of his unmoral character. A list of sins divided into nine classes was given by the institutes of Vishnu. Dr. Ambedkar found that sin
was a desease of the soul. It was a defilement of the body to be cleaned and purified by pilgrimage or by sacrificial offering. But it had nothing to do with the spiritual defilement related to controlling evil thoughts and purposes. This proved that the morality of the Hindu was purely social. According to Hinduism, any conduct showing respect to the Brahmins was praise-worthy. The Hindu ethics taught to worship the superman. Therefore he came to the conclusion that there was no difference between law and ethics in Hinduism.

He clarified that he was concerned with the philosophy of Hinduism as a part of the philosophy of Religion. He was not concerned with Hindu philosophy.

Then he turned towards the discussion of the philosophy of Upanishads. “The philosophy of the Upanishads meant withdrawal from the struggle for existence by resort to asceticism and a destruction of desire by self mortification.” (Vol. 3: 85) He also quoted Huxley who condemned it as a way of life. He also quoted Lala Hardyal who criticized the Upanishads as they were full of absurd conceits, quaint fancies and chaotic speculations.

Dr. Ambedkar took the Upanishad to be the most ineffective and insignificant piece of speculation having no effect on the moral and social order of the Hindus. It taught to know the truth. But knowing truth was not sufficient; one must love it. Philosophy was static as it was concerned with knowing truth whereas religion was dynamic as it was concerned with love of truth. Philosophy must become a working ethic instead of mere metaphysics. The philosophy of Upanishad was incomplete and futile as it did not erase the infamy preached by Manu in the name of religion.

Dr. Ambedkar claimed that inequality was the soul of Hinduism and the Hindu morality was only social in nature. He further added that Hinduism became immoral, inhuman and infamous. He gave the history of the human progress from Savagery to Barbarism and from Barbarism to Civilization. In the course of time, man discovered, developed and used articulate speech, fire, bow – arrow, pottery, ways to domesticate wild animals and an art of smelting iron. These discoveries marked man’s progress. The most striking invention was the art of writing with the help of which the human history became safe and secure.

Then he presented the detailed picture of the lives, customs and manners of the Primitive Tribes, the Criminal Tribes including the Pindharies (armed gangsters) and the Thugs (professional slayers). He informed us that besides these two classes, there were the Untouchables who caused pollution by their touch and the Unapproachables who caused pollution by their presence within a certain distance. Below the Unapproachables came the Unseeables who were not allowed to come out during day time because their sight was enough to cause pollution. “Hinduism is overwhelmed with the fear of pollution. It has not got the power to purify. …It is a misnomer to call it religion. Its philosophy is opposed to very thing for which religion stands.” (Vol. 3: 92)

Dhananjay Keer, the biographer of Dr. Ambedkar, tries to state his conviction about religion explicitly: “The religion which discriminates between
two followers is partial and the religion which treats crores of its adherents worse than dogs and criminals and inflicts upon them sufferable disabilities is no religion at all. Religion is not the appellation for such an unjust order.” (1962: 92) Since Hinduism had been doing the same since long, it could not be taken as a true religion. The Hindus believed that their civilization was older and their religion was superior to the others. But Hinduism had failed to elevate the downtrodden Hindus who were living with shame and guilt and turned to crime. Hinduism had failed to bring hope and enlightenment to them.

Part – II India and the Pre-Requisites of Communism

From the editors’ note, we come to know that Dr. Ambedkar had divided the book India and Communism (2008) into three parts. The first part was captioned as ‘The Pre-requisites of Communism’. This part was to have three chapters but we did not have any. The part two namely ‘India and the Pre-requisites of Communism’ contained only fourth chapter entitled ‘Hindu Social Order’ divided into two sections: ‘Hindu Social Order : Its Essential Principles’ and ‘The Hindu Social Order : Its Unique Features’.

The Hindu Social Order: The Essential Principles

Dr. Ambedkar started with the essentials of a free social order based on the French Revolution. The first was that the individual was an end in himself. The second was the realisation of the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity in the society.

Then he went further to discuss the necessasity of equality by quoting from Prof. Beard’s Freedom in Political Thought. “A society without any respect for human personalities is a band of robbers.” (Vol. 3: 97) To Dr. Ambedkar, fraternity was the nature of an individual to treat men with love and respect and the desire to be in harmony with his fellow beings. “Fraternity strengthens socialites and gives to each individual a stronger personal interest in practically consulting the welfare of others.” (Vol. 3: 97-98) If a person did not have social feeling in him, he would consider his fellow-beings as rivals. Then he came to the necessasity of liberty. He talked about civil liberty and political liberty. He further stated that civil liberty referred to liberty of movement, speech and action. Regarding political liberty, he said that it was the right of an individual to share in the framing of laws and in the making and unmaking of governments. At the end of the discussion, he said, “Once the sacredness of human personality is admitted the necessity of liberty, equality and fraternity must also be admitted as the proper climate for the development of personality.” (Vol. 3: 99)

Dr. Ambedkar wanted to find out how far the Hindu social order recognized these tenets. He believed that the Hindu social order did not identify an individual as a centre of society. It was predominantly based on class or Varna and not on individuals. There was no room for individual merit and no consideration of individual justice. Initially the Hindu social order identified four classes: Brahmmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The fifth new class among them was called the Panchamas or Untouchables. The
privileges, sufferings and disabilities of individuals completely depended on the class to which they belonged.

Then he dealt with the question of fraternity. The Hindus, like the Christians and the Muslims, believed that men were created by God. Moreover, they held that different men were created by God from the different parts of His body and no one was the brother of the other. It was considered to be the divine will that the Hindus should remain separate and distinct. Dr. Ambedkar found from Manu Smriti that there were distinctions regarding the age, garments etc. for the Upanayan ceremony of the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas. Regarding these differences, he said, “They are the result of the Hindu instinct to be different from his fellow which has resulted from the belief of people being innately different owing to their being created from different parts of the divine body.” (Vol. 3: 101)

Dr. Ambedkar noticed that initially there were only four sub-castes. Then he came to know not less than 2000 castes and 92 sects. Castes were sub-divided into sub-castes due to the changes of location, occupation and social practices as well as the changes due to pollution, increased prosperity, quarrel and religion. Their guiding principle was ‘be separate’, ‘do not intermarry’, ‘do not interdine’ and ‘do not touch’. “The Hindu social order is a ladder of castes placed one above the other together representing an ascending scale of hatred and a descending scale of contempt.” (Vol. 3: 105)

Dr. Ambedkar was of the view that the Hindu social order was a revolt against the doctrine of equality. “It refuses to recognize that men no matter how profoundly they differ as individuals in capacity and character, are equally entitled as human beings to consideration and respect … It will not allow equality of circumstances, institutions and manner of life. It is against the equalitarian temper.” (Vol. 3: 106)

Then he discussed the three fundamental principles of the Hindu social order. The first was the principle of graded inequality. In the scheme of Manu, the classes were arranged not horizontally but vertically. They were not only different but also unequal. This system of the Hindu social order was not only conventional but spiritual, moral and legal. To confirm this, Dr. Ambedkar took four illustrations from the Manu Smriti. They were: law of slavery, law of marriage, law of punishment and law of Samskaras and law of Sanyas. Slavery and inter-marriage were not allowed in the inverse order of the caste-system. The Rule of Law was strange and full of contrasts between Hindu and non-Hindu criminal jurisprudence. Manu’s Penal Code was an irrational and unjust system having inhuman and unequal punishments.

The second principle was that of fixity of occupations. Dr. Ambedkar said that the principle of graded inequality had been carried into the economic field also due to the fixation of occupations of each class and continuance of heredity in the business. Everyone must have to follow the trade assigned to the class to which he belonged. None had the choice of occupation.

The third principle was the fixation of people within their respective classes. It was striking and strange to have ban on free inter-change, inter-
course, inter-marriage and inter-dining between different classes of the Hindu society. In short, Dr. Ambedkar found that the Hindu social order opposed fraternity, followed inequality and denied liberty.

The same was true for the political liberty. The doctrine of the Hindu social order proclaimed that the law for governing people were already made and could be found in the Vedas. Nobody was allowed to add to and subtract from it. In that case, a representative assembly of the people was unnecessary. Political liberty to frame laws and to make and unmake the government was futile and had no place in the Hindu social order.

Dr. Ambedkar concluded that the Hindu social order “... is an order in which the status and functions of the classes are determined and fixed. The Hindu social order is a rigid order. The first shall never become the last. The last shall never become the first.” (Vol. 3: 115)

It seems that Dr. Ambedkar was very much prejudiced against Hinduism. On the contrary, Hinduism has always been a liberable religion as it accepted all the other religions and learnt various things from them. It has also accommodated different creeds and sects in it.

The Hindu Social Order: Its Unique Features

Dr. Ambedkar found out three special features of the Hindu social order. Among these three, the most prominent one was the worship of the Brahmins as supermen. “In this respect the Hindu social order is nothing but Nietzsche’s Gospel put in action.” (Vol. 3: 116) The superman had no duty towards the common man. He had the monopoly to receive charity and to become a Sanyasi.

The theory of superman was already discussed by him in the chapter entitled The Philosophy of Hinduism. He had repeated the same quotations of Nietzsche and Manu to prove his point. Even the comments he wrote about this topic were also the same as we find in the above mentioned book.

The next special feature of the Hindu social order was to assign the responsibility of maintaining the social order upon the shoulders of the King. Manu made the failure of the King to maintain the established order an offence for which the King became liable for trial and punishment like a common offender. If a King became inattentive or disparate to the established order, the three upper classes were given a right to rise in armed rebellion against him.

The third special feature of the Hindu social order was that it was a Divine order and designed by God himself. This social order was considered to be sacred and therefore, no criticism, modification or abolition was allowed.

To conclude the discussion with the words of Dr. Ambedkar, “The orthodox Hindu will accept this as an accurate description of the Hindu social order. No one can deny that the Hindu social order has become the habit of the Hindus and as such is in full force.” (Vol. 3: 129)
Symbols of Hinduism

From the editorial note, we come to know that this chapter was tagged with India and Communism. The chapter is incomplete.

Dr. Ambedkar tried to find out whether the social organization of the Hindus appeared to the outsiders and the non-Hindus as normal and natural as it appeared to the Hindus or not.

He referred to the descriptions of castes of India given by the foreigners like Megasthenes who came to India as an ambassador of the Greek King Seleukos Nickator to the Court of Chandragupta Maurya some time about the year 305 B.C.; Alberuni who wrote an account of his travels in India some time about 1030 A.D.; Duarte Barbosa who was a Portuguese official appointed in India from 1500 to 1571 A.D. Dr. Ambedkar believed that these foreigners failed to give the full and detailed picture of caste because the private life of the Hindus was not completely disclosed to them. Moreover, the shape and form of caste was different in the times of Megasthenes, Alberuni and Duarte Barbosa. Commenting on the observations of these foreigners, Dr. Ambedkar said, “But there is no doubt that caste did appear to the foreigner as the most singular and therefore the most distinguishing feature of Hindu society. Otherwise they would not have noted its existence in the record they made of what they observed when they came to India.” (Vol. 3: 141)

Initially there were four classes in the Hindu organization namely (1) Brahmins – the priestly and the educated class, (2) Kshatriyas – the military class, (3) Vaishyas – the trading class and (4) Shudras – the servant class. Gradually, the classes (Varnas) became castes (Jatis) and the four castes became four thousand. Dr. Ambedkar concluded, “No doubt the caste system is an evolution of the Varna system. But one can get no idea of the caste system by a study of the Varna system. Caste must be studied apart from Varna.” (Vol. 3: 142)

Then he took up the point of penalties. A person was expelled from his caste due to various reasons. He quoted Mr. Bhattacharya to enlist these reasons. When a person was expelled from his caste, the penalty was uniform. His relatives and friends refused his hospitality. He could not obtain brides or bridegrooms for his children. The priest, barber and washerman did not serve him. His fellow-members refused to assist him even at the funeral. He was denied access to temples and to cremation ground.

Dr. Ambedkar mentioned that the reasons for dismissal from caste indirectly showed the rules and regulations of the caste. He found that the Hindu who had lost his caste could regain it by the system of Prayaschitas. When the caste was offended, there was no Prayaschita. The Prayaschitas varied according to the offence. He found out two offences for which there was no penance. They were change of religion and inter-caste or inter-religion marriage. For some offences, austere Prayaschitas were prescribed. They were inter-dining with a person of another caste or a non-Hindu and selecting an occupation which was not the occupation of the caste.
He defined caste as a social group having a common name and belief in Hindu Religion. It was bound by certain regulations related to marriage, food and occupation. Regarding marriage, the regulation was that the caste must be endogamous. Regarding food, the rule was that a person could not take food from and dine with the person of another caste. Regarding occupation, one must follow the traditional occupation or his father’s occupation. Regarding the status of a person, it was fixed and hereditary.

He saw that caste was not a loose or floating body. Rather, it was a highly organized involuntary social group. “A Hindu is born in a caste and he dies as a member of that caste. There is no Hindu without caste, cannot escape caste and being bounded by caste from birth to death he becomes subject to social regulations and traditions of the caste over which he has no control.” (Vol.3:145)

He tried to establish the importance of a common name for a caste. A distinct name for a caste was significant to show its perpetual existence and a seal of separate entity. The social groups in India had become organized and involuntary. They were treated as castes and were also given distinctive names which gave them fixity, continuity and individuality. The name of a caste was carried as a part of a surname. It helped to define its members and enforce the rules and regulations on them. An offender having his caste-name as his surname was easy to trace. He could not escape the jurisdiction of the caste.

Then he turned to the study of mutual relationships between different castes. He looked at the caste system as a collection of castes and observed some striking characteristics:

…there is no inter-connection between various castes which form a system. Each caste is separate and distinct. It is independent and sovereign in the disposal of its internal affairs and the enforcement of caste regulations. The castes touch but they do not interpenetrate. The second feature relates to the order in which one caste stands in relation to the other castes in the system. That order is vertical and not horizontal. (Vol. 3: 145-146)

Dr. Ambedkar studied caste as a dynamic phenomenon and found out one more feature namely class-caste system. Caste was different from and opposed to the notion of class. But the caste system recognized a class system. The Hindu castes were divided into different classes. The Hindu was both caste conscious and class conscious. He strongly argued that caste was a perversion of Varna. It was an evolution in opposite direction. The class-system was borrowed from the Varna system as it followed closely the class cleavages of the Varna system.

The Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas were considered to be the ‘Regenerate classes’ as they were entitled to wear the sacred thread and study the Vedas. The Shudras formed the unregenerate class. The
Chaturvarnya system distinctly placed the former three High Class castes above the later Low Class castes. It also made an equally clear distinction between those within the Chaturvarnya and those outside it. Those within the Chaturvarnya – high or low – were called Savarna, i.e. those with the stamp of the Varna. Those outside the Chaturvarnya were called Avarna, i.e., those without the stamp of the Varna. The Europeans called the Savarnas Caste-Hindus and the Avarnas Non-caste Hindus. The studies on the caste-system done so far referred mostly to the caste-system among the Savarna Hindus. Very little was known about the Avarna Hindus.

Part – III Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India

Dr. Ambedkar proposed to write a treatise entitled Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India having seven books under this broad title. But he left many chapters incomplete.

Ancient India on Exhumation

The chapter seems to be an introduction to a larger subject Dr. Ambedkar probably had in his mind.

He did not consider the ancient history of India as true history. He accused that the ancient history of India was deliberately made mythology to amuse women and children by the Brahminical writers. He said that Deva, Yaksha, Gana, Gandharva, Kinnars, Asura and Rakshas appearing in the Mahabharata and the Ramayana were imaginary beings created to fill the horizon but did not exist actually. He also took the reference of Nagas who were represented as serpents in the Hindu belief. He said that such a history must be exhumed.

Fortunately with the help of the Buddhist literature, Ancient Indian History can be dug out of the debris which the Brahmin writers have heaped upon in a fit of madness. The Buddhist literature helps a great deal to remove the debris and see the underlying substance quite clearly and distinctly. (Vol. 3: 152)

He said that the Devas who came to the Buddha to remove their doubts and difficulties were human beings. In the light of the Buddhist literature, he stated that there were two Nagas: womb-born and egg-born. In its original sense, the word stood for the name of a human community. With reference to the Satpatha Bramhana, the Asuras were presented as the descendants of Prajapati. Dr. Ambedkar did not consider the Asuras as monsters but called them as a Jan-Vishesh human beings.

The Ancient Regime: The State of the Aryan Society

This chapter is incomplete. Dr. Ambedkar noticed that the Aryan community of Buddha’s time was engrossed in the worst kind of social, religious and spiritual dissipations. Buddhism started as a religious revolution
and took the form of a social and political revolution. It helped the Aryans go through reforms.

Dr. Ambedkar described the evils practised by the Aryans. Gambling and drinking were widespread. Every king was a gambler and the palace became a gambling house. He cited the examples of the gamblers: King Virat from the *Mahabharata*’s ‘Vanaparva’, King Nala who staked his wife Damayanti and Dharma, the eldest of the Pandavas, who staked everything including his brothers and their wife Draupadi. He also mentioned the vice of gambling found among the common men from the reference of the *Rig-Veda*.

The other vice was drinking of liquors like *Soma* and *Sura*. Dr. Ambedkar noticed that the drinking of *Soma*, a sacrificial wine, was permitted only to Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. *Sura* was drunk by all. He found various references of the people of high rank caught heavily drunk from different scriptures. The priest of *Asuras* named Shukracharya, Krishna and Arjuna were some of them. He found the habit of drinking in the Aryan women (Sudeshana) in the *Mahabharata*’s ‘Sabhaparva’. Even the Brahmin women were addicted to drinking.

Dr. Ambedkar gave us the instances of the sexual immorality of the Aryan society during the pre-Buddhist time. There were the examples of the marriage between sister and brother and father and daughter. He also found, with examples, the vices like polyandry, cohabiting illegally, the practice of renting out women to others and bestiality. He criticized the *Saptapadi* performed in all Hindu marriages with reference to the right of prelibation of the *Devas*.

**A Sunken Priesthood**

Dr. Ambedkar gave the description of the priestly profession monopolized by the Brahmins in the ancient Aryan society. He found the Brahmins habituated to enjoy dance and music, games and recreations. He enlisted various addictions of the Brahmins such as the use of high and large couches, the use of means for adorning and beautifying themselves, the use of quarrelling phrases, the indulgence in low conversations, shopping, acting as arbitrators, living by wrong means of livelihood etc. This chapter is also incomplete.

**Reformers and Their Fate**

Dr. Ambedkar considered Buddha as the first social reformer and also claimed that no history of social reform in India would be complete without mentioning his great achievements. “Oppressed by the evils and misery then prevalent in the Aryan Society he (Buddha) renounced the world at the age of twenty-nine and left his home in search for truth and deliverance……… By hard thinking he got insight into things and as a result of this insight he formulated his own *Dhamma*.” (Vol. 3: 165-166)

Buddha devoted all his life for the enlightenment. Buddha became friend of publicans and sinners. Many a public harlot, finding herself
understood and pitied, gave up her evil ways to take refuge in the “Blessed One”. Dr. Ambedkar mentioned, “He left an indelible mark on the Aryan Society and although his mane has gone out of India the impression of his teaching still remains.” (Vol. 3: 167)

He noticed that Buddhism was spread like wild fire and became not only the religion of the whole of India but also spread to each corner of the then known world. Even the Afghans accepted Buddhism. It was proved that Buddhism was the religion of the celtic Britian. The reason of this rapid spread of Buddhism given by Prof. Hopkins was the influential backing of its founder.

He again stated that to know how great reform which Buddha and his teachings brought to the Aryan society, it was necessary to have idea of Pre-Buddhist condition of the Aryan civilization. He again gave us the picture of the worst kind of social, religious and spiritual debauchery of the Aryan community of Pre-Buddha time. He repeated the narration of the social evils which he had already done in one of the previous chapters.

In addition to it, he gave the description of various sacrifices and an awe-inspiring ceremony of sacrifice. He noticed that every sacrifice meant fee to the priest that included valuable garments, kine, horses or gold. The principal sacrifice was the animal sacrifice which was costly and barbaric. In the list of these animals, man came first.

Moreover, Dr. Ambedkar found the absence of any spiritual basis in the Aryan religion. It was a series of observances. Their hymns were prayers addressed mostly to Indra. They praise him for destroying their enemies. They praise him for killing all the pregnant wives of Krishna, an Asura. They worship him as he destroyed hundreds of villages of the Asuras. They were happy since he killed lakhs of Dasys. They want Indra to abolish the Anaryas in order to secure their food and wealth.

Dr. Ambedkar commented, “Far from being spiritual and elevating, the hymns of the Rig Veda are saturated with wicked thoughts and wicked purposes. The Aryan religion never concerned itself with what is called a righteous life.” (Vol. 3: 176)

He reproduced The Brahma-Jala Sutta to show how good and pure life Buddha led and how impure a life the Brahmins, the best among the Aryans, led. It was a list of low arts and low deeds which Gautama always avoided. He condemned the Brahmins for making themselves busy in such low arts. Appreciating Buddhism, he stated, “This was indeed the highest standard for a moral life for an individual to follow. So high a standard of moral life was quite unknown to the Aryan Society of his day.” (Vol. 3: 186)

Moreover, Buddha introduced a form of Baptism, quite unknown to the Aryan society, to mould the character of the ordinary men and women. This baptism included five precepts known as Panch Sila. They were: (1) Not to kill, (2) Not to steal, (3) Not to lie, (4) Not to be unchaste and (5) Not to drink intoxicants. These were for the common people. In addition to these, there were five more dictums for the Monks. They were: (1) Not to eat at forbidden
times, (2) Not to dance, sing, or attend theatrical or other spectacles, (3) To abstain from the use of garlands, scents, and ornaments, (4) To abstain from the use of high or broad beds and (5) Never to receive money. These Silas framed a moral code which was intended to regulate the thoughts and actions of men and women.

Dr. Ambedkar found out two cardinal virtues of Buddhism. They were love and wisdom. He appealed to cultivate a boundless loving heart towards all beings. “Universal pity, sympathy for all suffering beings, good will to every form of sentient life, these things characterized the Tathagath (Buddha) … he succeeded in a most surprising degree in handing on his point of view to his followers.” (Vol. 3: 187) Buddha firmly believed in the doctrine of wisdom. He held that moral life began with knowledge and ended with wisdom.

Buddha renounced the authority of the Vedas and denounced the Yajna as a form of religion. Dr. Ambedkar gave us the detailed description of it under the title ‘The Story of the Sacrifice’. Another attack against the Yadna was made by Buddha in the form of discourses known as ‘Kutadanata Sutta’ which Dr. Ambedkar presented under the title ‘The Wrong Sacrifice and the Right’.

Buddha convincingly opposed the caste-system and the pretentious claims of the Brahmins for their superiority over the other classes. He gave a determined and a bitter fight against the principle of inequality found as the basis of the caste system. Dr. Ambedkar presented Buddha’s views about the caste-system through a dialogue entitled ‘Ambattha Sutta’.

Regarding the caste opposition, Buddha preached against the belief of the Aryan society. According to the Aryans, a Shudra or a low caste man could not become a Brahmin. But it was Buddha who allowed a Shudra and a low caste man to become a Bhikku. Buddha disregarded the advantages and disadvantages arose from birth, occupation and social status. He discarded all the inequalities sprung from the rules of mere ceremonial or social impurity. Dr. Ambedkar noticed that Buddha practised what he preached. The main authority after Buddha was Upali who was formerly a barber. Buddha also tried to level up the position of the women of all castes by allowing them to become a nun which was against the rule of the Aryans. In the matter of the Ethics of teachers and teaching also, Buddha broke the tradition of the Aryans. Instead of allowing education to the Brahmins only, Buddha allowed this to everyone and anyone. The dialogue between Buddha and the Brahman Lohikka known as ‘The Lohikka Sutta’ was presented to prove the point.

The Decline and Fall of Buddhism

Dr. Ambedkar expressed shock, surprise and regret about the disappearance of Buddhism from India. He distinguished between the fall and the decline of Buddhism for he believed that the fall was due to quite obvious causes while the reasons for its decline were not quite so obvious. The invasions of the Musalmans caused the fall of Buddhism in India. Islam was the enemy of the But which meant an idol. But was the Arabic corruption of
Buddha. The origin of the word showed that idol worship had come to be identified with the religion of the Buddha in the Moslem mind. As a result, the mission to break the idols thus became the mission to destroy Buddhism. He charged Islam for destroying Buddhism in all the countries in which it existed.

He then discussed three circumstances which made it possible for Bramhanism and impossible for Buddhism to survive the disaster of Islamic invasions. The first one was the support of the State that Bramhamism had at the time of the invasions of Islam. Buddhism did not have any such support. Secondly, the Buddhist priesthood got destroyed by the sword of Islam and could not be revived. But it was not possible for Islam to annihilate the Bramhanic priesthood. In the third place, the Buddhist worshipers were victimised by the Bramhanic rulers of India. In order to escape this oppression, the mass of the Buddhist population of India embraced Islam and abandoned Buddhism. Dr. Ambedkar said that each of these circumstances was supported by the Indian history.

The rulers of most of the Central India were the Rajputs and they were great supporters of the Bramhanic religion. The ruling dynasties of the South were also the followers of orthodox Brahmanism. He came to know in his study of the history of the Muslim invasions on India that the country was governed all over by rulers having orthodox faith in Bramhanism. He said,

Bramhanism beaten and battered by the Muslim invaders could look to the rulers for support and sustenance and did get it. Buddhism beaten and battered by the Muslim invaders had no such hope. It was an unearred orphan and it withered in the cold blast of the native rulers and was consumed in the fire lit up by the conquerors. (Vol. 3: 232)

Dr. Ambedkar gave us the picture of destruction of the Buddhist Universities of Nalanda, Vikramasila, Jagaddala, Odantapuri etc. by the Muslim invaders. The Buddhist monasteries were destroyed. He regretfully concluded, “The sword of Islam fell heavily upon the priestly class. It perished or it fled outside India. Nobody remained to keep the flame of Buddhism burning.” (Vol. 3: 233)

According to Dr. Ambedkar, Brahmanism rose from the ashes and Buddhism did not. The reason for that was not any intrinsic supremacy of the former over the latter. Instead, it was the peculiar feature of their priesthood. All the Buddhist priests died in the attack of the Muslims. While in the case of the Brahmins, every Brahmin alive became priest and took the place of the Brahmin priest who died in the attack of the Muslims.

Dr. Ambedkar mentioned another reason for the fall of Buddhism: the conversion to the faith of Islam by the Buddhist population. He quoted Prof. Sen: “The only way out of this difficulty was to accept Islam because the converts were entitled to all the privileges reserved for the ruling classes. So the Buddhists of Sind joined the Muslim fold in large number.” (Vol. 3: 236)
He took the harassment by the Brahmanic Kings to be one of the prime causes for the fall of Buddhism. He gave examples of two Kings, Mihirkula and Sasanka, who were found busy with the movement of bullying the Buddhist population. He concluded: “There is therefore nothing to vitiate the conclusion that the fall of Buddhism was due to the Buddhist becoming converts to Islam as a way of escaping the tyranny of Brahmanism. The evidence, if it does not support the conclusion, at least makes it probable. If it has been a disaster, it is a disaster for which Brahmanism must thank itself.” (Vol. 3: 238)

**Literature of Brahminism**

Dr. Ambedkar believed that the facts which supply the reasons must be collected from the literature of Brahmanism. He categorized this literature under six titles: *Manu Smriti*, the *Gita*, Shankaracharya’s *Vedant*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana* and the *Puranas*. He stated, “In analysing this literature, I propose to bring out only such facts as are capable of being suggested by inference, the reason or reasons for the decline of Buddhism. There is nothing unusual or unfair in this. For literature is the mirror in which the life of a people can be said to be reflected.” (Vol. 3: 239)

Before starting to examine the subject matter of this literature, he gave a detailed discussion on the periods of their coming into existence. He tried to prove that the literature referred came into being only after the revolution of Pushyamitra. He was sure that no Hindu would accept this as all of them, by the reason of faith, believe in a very high antiquity of their sacred literature.

He labouriously worked on the internal and external references related to this literature as he wanted to find out whether each of them was Pre-Buddhist or Post-Buddhist. He quoted many foreign and Indian critics who contributed in fixing the date and deciding the authorship of this literature. The testimony for his scholarship was found here since he had utilised ample references from the texts to support his arguments and prove his point.

Beginning with the discussion on the date of the *Bhagwat Gita*, Dr. Ambedkar came to know that the *Gita* had undergone essential transformations at the hands of different editors who had added to it from time to time. In addition to it, all these editors of the *Gita* were not of equal calibre. He raised doubt about the originality of the *Gita* in the following words, “While all are agreed that there have been different editions of the Gita under different editors, they are not agreed as to what parts of the Gita are original and what parts of the Gita are additions subsequently made.” (Vol. 3: 246)

The authorship of the *Gita* was assigned to Ved Vyas as the *Gita* was a philosophical conversation between Krishna and Arjuna reported by Sanjay to Dhritarashtra as per the instruction of Vyas.

Then he discussed the origin of the *Vedant Sutras*. He stated that the Vedic literature could be divided into two classes: (i) *Karma Kanda* – literature dealing with religious rites and ceremonies (the *Vedas* and the *Brahmanas*) and (ii) *Gnanakanda* – literature dealing with the knowledge about God (the
Aranyakas and the Upanishads). The former was also called Purva Mimansa and the latter Uttara Mimansa.

Dr. Ambedkar noticed that the literature of the Mimansa Shastra was immense. But two sutras were the principal and leading works in the field of Mimansa: Karmakanda and Gnanakanda. The authorship of the first was attributed to Jaimini and of the second to Badarayan. Jaimini’s sutras were called Mimansa Sutras and Badarayana’s sutras were called Vedanta Sutras.

He felt the need for the systematization of the sutras. The Brahmins should undertake the task to schematise the Karmakand portion of the Vedic literature. “The Bramhins were deeply concerned with the Karmakand. Their very existence, their livelihood depended upon the systematization of the Karmakand portion of the Vedic literature. The Brahmins on the other hand had no interest in the ‘Gnankand’ portion of the Vedic literature.” (Vol. 3: 248)

Further, he raised the questions on the nature of the Vedanta Sutras. He asked whether they were philosophical or theological in nature. He came across the five commentaries on the Vedanta Sutras. To him, these commentaries were far more important than the Vedanta Sutras. Following were the eminent scholars called Acharyas (called doctors of learning) by the reason of their intellectual eminence who gave the commentaries: (1) Shankaracharya (788 A.D. to 820 A.D.) who believed that the Vedanta Sutras taught absolute monism, (2) Ramanujacharya (1017 A.D. to 1137) who believed in qualified monism, (3) Nimbarkacharya (died about 1162 A.D.) who believed in monodualism, (4) Madhavacharya (1197-1276 A.D.) who believed in dualism and (5) Vallabhacharya (born 1417 A.D.) believed in pure monism.

Dr. Ambedkar asked several questions on these five interpretations of the Vedanta Sutras. He asked why five different schools should have arisen as a result of five different interpretations of the same collection of Sutras. He could not make whether it was only a matter of grammar or there was any other purpose behind these interpretations.

In his study of these five interpretations, he came to know that among these five scholars, the four were united to oppose Shankaracharya on two points: the complete oneness between God and individual soul and the world being an illusion. He wondered why Shankaracharya propounded so unique a view of the Vedanta Sutras of Badarayana. He suspected if it was really the result of a critical study of the Sutras or it was just a wishful interpretation designed to support a preconceived purpose.

He concluded that the Vedanta Sutras also had gone through several modifications. Therefore it was difficult to decide the definite date of its composition. It could be said without doubt that the Vedanta Sutras were composed after the rise of Buddhism because the Sutras mentioned Buddhism. They must not be after Manu for he also spoke of them in his Smriti. Dr. Ambedkar mentioned Prof. Keith and Prof. Jacobi who held that the Sutras must have been written between 200 A.D. and 450 A.D.
Dr. Ambedkar made an attempt to fix the period of the composition of the *Mahabharata*. Here also he came across three different editions of the *Mahabharata* by different editors with difference of the title and subject matter. Originally it was known as *Jaya* (Triumph) which was composed by Vyas. The second edition was known as *Bharata* which was composed by Vaishampayana. Besides Vaishampayana, Vyas had many pupils: Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila and Shuka. They all had created their own versions of the *Mahabharata*. The third version, given by Sauti, was considered to be the reorganisation of Vaishampayana’s version of *Bharata*. That was recognised as the Mahabharata grown both in size and the subject matter. *Jaya* was a small work containing 8,800 sholakas. Vaishampayana’s *Bharata* was extended to 24,000 verses. And Sauti’s version contained 96,836 sholaks.

The *Mahabharata* was initially a story of a war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Vaishampayana added didactic subject matter in this purely historical work. And the last editor Sauti made it ‘an all embracing repository of legendary lore’. All the small legends and historical stories existing independently of the *Bharata* were brought together by Sauti because of the fear of losing them. Sauti wanted to make the *Bharata* a storehouse of learning and knowledge. This was the reason why he added sections on all branches of knowledge such as politics, geography, archery etc. Sauti had a habit of repetition. Therefore, the *Bharata* in his hands became the *Mahabharata*.

In his attempt to decide the date of its composition, his first reference was that of the Huns found in the *Mahabharata*. History stated that Skandagupta fought with the Huns and defeated them in or about the year 455. The invasions of the Huns continued till 528 A.D. it could be conveniently inferred that the *Mahabharata* was composed during this time or thereafter.

The next reference was taken from Mr. Kausambi’s *Hindi Sanskriti Ani Ahimsa* (Marathi). The author found the reference to the Mlenchhas or the Muslims in the *Mahabharata*. He quoted the following words from the 190th Adhyaya of the ‘Vana Parva’, “the whole world will be Islamic. All Aryan rites and ceremonies and religious celebrations will cease.” (Vol. 3: 251) Again, the word ‘Vrashala’ mentioned in the 59th verse of the same Adhyaya meant the uncultured which, according to Dr. Ambedkar, referred to the Islamic invaders. The same Adhyaya also had the word ‘Yedukas’ which, according to Mr. Kausambi, meant *Idgaha* of the Musalmans before which they said their prayers. *Idgahas* were built during the rule of Mahamad Ghori. Therefore Dr. Ambedkar concluded that the *Mahabharata* was written after the Muslim invasions of India and its writing was going on till 1200 A.D.

He said that the *Ramayana* also went through three editions. The first edition was without any reference of the author. Valmiki’s *Ramayana* was the second one. He agreed with Mr. C. V. Vaidya’s opinion who did not consider the present *Ramayana* as Valmiki’s *Ramayana*. Dr. Ambedkar stated that the *Ramayana* was a story of the war between Rama and Ravana over the abduction of Rama’s wife Sita by Ravana. A story of sermon was added in the second addition. Dr. Ambedkar mentioned, “From a purely historical work, it also became a didactic work aiming to teach a right code of Social, Moral and
religious duties. When it assumed the form of a third edition, it was again, like the Mahabharata, made a repository of legends, knowledge, learning, philosophy and other arts and sciences.” (Vol. 3: 252-253)

Regarding the date of the Ramayana, it was said that some episodes of the Ramayana took place earlier than the Mahabharata. Dr. Ambedkar said that a large part of the Ramayana was composed after a great part of the Mahabharata had already been composed.

He then came to the Purana. He said that originally there was only one Purana which was claimed to be older than the Vedas. In the course of time, its number reached to eighteen. The origin of the 18 Puranas was accredited to Vyas who reorganised the original one and by additions and subtractions made 18 out of one. The edition of Vyas’s Puranas was called the Adi Purana. Dr. Ambedkar mentioned in the foot note that Adi Purana did not mean a separate Purana of that name but the first edition of each of the 18 Puranas. And thus we got the second edition of the Puranas. Vyas taught the Puranas to his disciple Romaharsana who prepared his own edition of the Puranas and taught it to his six disciples. As a result we had the third edition of the Puranas. Among these six disciples, Kasyapa, Savarni and Vaisampayana produced their own editions of the Puranas. The Puranas came to be revised sometime during the reign of King Vikramaditya.

Regarding the subject matter of the Purana, Dr. Ambedkar said that it was recognised as the department of knowledge. After giving meanings of Itihas, Akhyana, Upakhyana, Gathas and Kalpashudhi, Dr. Ambedkar wrote that the Puranas were distinguished from all these branches of knowledge and were originally connected with five subjects: (1) Sarga – creation of the universe, (2) Prati Sarga – dissolution of the universe, (3) Vamsha – Geneology, (4) Manvantar – the Ages of the different Manus, particularly the fourteen successive Manus who were the ancestors or sovereigns of the Earth and (5) Vamshacharitra –account of royal dynasties. Due to a considerable addition, we had wholly new subjects of the Puranas. He made a list of these subjects: (I) Smriti Dharma including discussion of Varnashrama dharma, Achara, Ahnika, Bhashyabhasya, Vivaha, Asaucha, Shradha, Dravya-Suddhi, Pataka, Prayaschitta, Naraka, Karma Vipaka and Yuga Dharma. (II) Vrata Dharma – observance of holy vows and holy days, (III) Kshetra Dharma – pilgrimages to holy places and (IV) Dana Dharma – gifts to holy persons.

Dr. Ambedkar further noticed that each Purana was related to a particular deity and advocated the cause of a particular deity and the sect devoted to his worship. He informed us that five Puranas (Vishnu, Bhagwat, Narada, Vaman and Garuda) were related to the worship of Vishnu, eight Puranas (Shiva, Brahma, Linga, Varaha, Skanda, Matsya, Kurma, Bramhanda) to the worship of Shiva, one (Padma) to the worship of Brahma, one (Agni) to the worship of Surya, two to the worship of Devi and one to the worship of Genesh. The Puranas also dealt with the history of the Avatars of the God Vishnu.
There were two sections of the ancient Hindus: the Brahmins and Sutas (non-Brahmins). Each of them was in charge of a distinct section of literature. Initially the Puranas were the monopoly of the Suras. But in the course of time, the Sutas were exiled from this profession by the Brahmins. They became the authors of the Puranas. Dr. Ambedkar criticized the Brahmins:

It is probably when the Puranas fell into the hands of the Brahmins that the Puranas have been finally edited and recast to make room for the new subjects. The editing and recasting has been of a very daring character. For in doing so they have added fresh chapters, substituted new chapters for old chapters and written new chapters with old names. So that by this process some Puranas retained their earlier materials, some lost their early materials, some gained new materials and some became totally new works. (Vol. 3: 255-256)

Making generalization, he bitterly commented that all history written by the Brahmins was history without dates and the Puranas were no exception. Only Mr. Hazara’s work contained the description of the composition of the dates of the Puranas. Dr. Ambedkar produced a list of the 18 Puranas with their approximate dates as found in Mr. Hazara’s work. By quoting this survey, Dr. Ambedkar wanted to say that there was no fix date of the Puranas or no one could fix it; the age of the Puranas was Post-Buddhistic; this literature was composed after the triumph of the Brahmins under the leadership of Pushyamitra.

Dr. Ambedkar expressed surprise about the coincidence: Vyas wrote the Mahabharata having 18 Parvas, the Bhagwat Gita containing 18 Adhyayas and the Puranas 18 in number. He doubted whether it was a well-designed plan or not.

Dr. Ambedkar once again turned to the Vedanta Sutras. He discussed the attitude of the two schools – the Vedanta Sutras of Badarayana and the Karma Sutras of Jaimini – towards each other in the matter of doctrine. Jaimini denounced Vedanta by calling it a false Shastra, a snare and a delusion, something superficial, unnecessary and insubstantial. On the other hand, without having courage to condemn the Karmakanda of Jaimini, Badarayana defended his Vedanta Shastra showing an apologetic attitude. Badarayana accepted Jaimini’s Karmakanda as it was based on the scriptures and so could not be rejected. Dr. Ambedkar felt the necessity of explanation for this attitude of Badarayana. But he had not given any.

Then he started criticizing the Bhagwat Gita in general and Krishna in particular but he could not complete. He began with the mental condition of Arjuna who gazed at the opponent army having his own cousins and elders and thought of dropping down his weapons. He was frightened to imagine the dreadful sight of war in which he had to kill his near and dear ones. Dr. Ambedkar said that it was Krishna who, with arguments, brought Arjuna from
his dejected mental position and provoked him to fight. The *Bhagwat Gita* was thought of as a reply of Sanjaya to the questions of Dhritarashtra. But it was actually a conversation between Arjuna and Krishna and was rightly called *Krishna Arjuna Samvad*.

Dr. Ambedkar believed that the one and only subject matter with which the *Bhagwat Gita* dealt at length was the arguments between Krishna and Arjuna on whether to fight or not.

Starting from this point of view it is obvious that the Gita could never have been intended by Krishna to be the occasion for moral instruction for the general public or the doctrinal exposition of any religious system or the catechism attached to any creed. Yet this is just what the Gita has come to be. Although the occasion was to decide to fight or not to fight, the Gita is said to contain what his religious doctrine Krishna is said to have preached to Arjuna. (Vol. 3: 262-263)

Next he criticised the personality of Krishna as revealed in the Bhagwat Gita. Krishna rose from man to superman to direct and control the war and its fortunes. From superman he grew into a demigod and dictator. From demigod he rose to the position of God and was spoken of as *Ishwara*.

Dr. Ambedkar also gave a brief explanation of the three different doctrines of salvation as preached by Krishna to Arjuna by quoting the lines from the *Gita*. Salvation was possible by *Dnyanmarg*, *Karmamarg* and *Bhaktimarg*. He also gave us two other features of the *Bhagwat Gita*: There was a sentiment of decline of the *Vedas* and *Vedic* rituals and sacrifices. To support his statement, he also quoted lines from the *Gita*.

As there was no more explanation found on the subject, the chapter remained incomplete.

**The Triumph of Brahmanism: Regicide or the birth of Counter–Revolution**

Dr. Ambedkar began his discussion on the Brahmanic revolt against Buddhism with the quotation of Prof. Bloomfield who called India ‘the land of religions’. But Dr. Ambedkar went a step ahead by saying that it would have been more profound and arresting if Prof. Bloomfield had called India a land of warring religions. No other country on the earth had such an important role played by religion in forming its history as India had. According to Dr. Ambedkar, the history of India was the history of a mortal conflict between Buddhism and Brahmanism. It was a conflict for supremacy.

He believed that the history of India began with the Aryans. Their social and cultural history was found but very little was known about their political history. He described the beginning of the political history of India: “The political history of India begins with the rise of a non- Aryan people called
Nagas, who were a powerful people, whom the Aryans were unable to conquer, with whom the Aryans had to make peace, and whom the Aryans were compelled to recognize as their equals.” (Vol. 3: 267)

Dr. Ambedkar gave credit of making India great and glorious to the Non-Aryan Nagas. He mentioned that the emergence of the Kingdom of Magadha in Bihar in 642 B.C. was the first milestone in the history. The kingdom of Magadha was established by the Sisunag Dynasty, usurped by the Nanda Dynasty and again restored by the Maurya Dynasty directly related to the Sisunag Dynasty. The enormous extension of the Magadha Empire took place under the Mauryas and under Ashoka. No more description of the history was found due to the missing pages.

Then he provided the description of how Buddhism became the religion of the state in the time of Ashoka. He gave a picture of the pitiable condition of the Brahmins in the time Ashoka. Ashoka banned any kind of animal sacrifice. As a result, the Brahmins lost not only state patronage but also their occupation as it was consisted in performing sacrifices for a fee. The Brahmins of the time suffered nearly 140 years till the Maurya Empire lasted. Dr. Ambedkar found out the reason why Pushyamitra revolted against the rule of the Mauryas. Pushyamitra was a Sung by Gotra and the Sungas were Samvedi Brahmins who believed in animal and soma sacrifices. Dr. Ambedkar wrote, “No wonder if Pushyamitra who as a Samvedi Brahmin was the first to conceive the passion to end the degradation of the Brahmin by destroying the Buddhist state which was the cause of it and to free them to practise their Brahmanic religion.” (Vol. 3: 268-269)

Moreover, Dr. Ambedkar found that the purpose of the regicide by Pushyamitra was to destroy Buddhism. After ascending the throne, Pushyamitra performed the Ashvamedha Yajna or the horse sacrifice, the Vedic rite only be executed by a supreme autonomous. Then he started a virulent and violent campaign of oppression against Buddhists and Buddhism. His aim was to overthrow Buddhism and establish Brahmanism in its place.

The purpose of the revolution by Pushyamitra was strengthened by the announcement of Manu Smriti as a code of laws. Dr. Ambedkar took the authorship of Manu Smriti to be an utter fraud to deceive the people because he did not find any evidence of the place and position of it in the history of India. The real title of Manu Smriti was The Dharma Code of Manu which was signed in the family name of Bhrigu. Referring to Narada, Dr. Ambedkar stated that Sunati Bhargava composed the Code of Manu. According to the scholars, it was written between 170 B. C. and 150 B.C. “Now if one bears in mind the fact that the Brahmanic Revolution by Pushyamitra took place in 185 B.C. there remains no doubt that the code known as Manu Smriti was promulgated by Pushyamitra as embodying the principles of Brahmanic Revolution against the Buddhist state of the Mauryas.” (Vol. 3: 271)

Dr. Ambedkar believed that Manu Smriti was propagated for the first time during the reign of Pushyamitra. He agreed with the scholars who claimed that Manu Smriti was very dissimilar and contrary to the provisions contained in Manava-Dharma-Sutra, Manava Artha Sastra (also known as
Manava-Raja-Sastra or Manava-Raja-Dharma-Sastra) and Manava-Grihya-Sutra. He arrived at the conclusion that Manu Smriti contained the new law of the new regime which was certainly anti-Buddhist.

He quoted some lines from the Manu Smriti which referred to the heretics whom Manu wanted to banish from the kingdom. Manu also expressed his hatred for the worthless philosophy of modern date, differing from the Vedas, based on darkness and bound to perish. Referring to Kalluck Bhutt, a commentator on Manu, Dr. Ambedkar declared that the heretic of Manu was the Buddhist and the worthless philosophy of modern date was Buddhism.

Dr. Ambedkar noticed the deification of the Brhmins done by Manu. He opined firmly, “Pushyamitra and his successors could not have tolerated these exaggerated claims of the Brahmins unless they themselves were Brahmins interested in the establishment of Bramhanism. Indeed it is quite possible that the Manu Smriti was composed at the command of Pushyamitra himself and forms the book of the philosophy of Bramhanism.” (Vol. 3: 273) All these facts suggested beyond doubt that the one and only aim of Pushyamitra’s revolution was to destroy Buddhism and re-establish Bramhanism.

Dr. Ambedkar complained that the whole history of India was presented in terms of the Muslim attacks on India. He said that equally important was the Bramhanic attacks on the Buddhism. He also found the similarities between the Muslim invasions of Hindu India and the Bramhanic invasions of Buddhist India. According to him, both fought for the dynastic ambitions. The mission of the Muslims was to destroy idolatry while that of the Brahmins was to destroy Buddhism and the Buddhist Empire of the Mauryas. He wrote, “The ways and methods employed by the Bramhanic invaders of Buddhist India to suppress Buddhism were not less violent and less virulent than the ways and means adopted by Muslim invaders to suppress Hinduism.” (Vol. 3: 274)

Dr. Ambedkar considered the Muslim invasions on Hindu India was superficial and short-lived while the Bramhanic invasions of Buddhist India were profound. He noticed that the Muslim invaders destroyed only the symbols of Hindu religion such as temples and Maths etc. and did not destroy the principles or doctrines of Hinduism which governed the spiritual life of the people. But the Bramhanic invasions caused a thorough-going change in the principles of Buddhism. He presented the comparision metaphorically,

To alter the metaphor the Muslim invaders only stirred the waters in the bath and that too only for a while. Thereafter they got tired of stirring and left the waters with the sediments to settle. They never threw the baby – if one can speak of the principles of Hinduism as a baby – out of the bath. Bramhanism in its conflict with Buddhism made a clean sweep. It emptied the bath with the Buddhist Baby in it and filled the bath with its own waters and placed in it its own baby. (Vol. 3: 274)
He put to our notice that Islam did not displace Hinduism. But Bramhanism, by acquiring political power, drove out Buddhism and occupied its place.

Dr. Ambedkar charged the historians for not dealing with the history of Buddhist India. He believed that it was because of some wrong notions. It was generally thought that Brahmanism, Buddhism, Jainism were different phases having no major antagonism between them. The culture of India was one and the same throughout history. The history of India was purely political without any social or spiritual significance. Due to these erroneous convictions, the Indian history became purely mechanical presenting a record of one dynasty succeeding another and one ruler succeeding another ruler. He suggested a corrective action to such an attitude and to such a method of writing history in the form of recognition of two indisputable facts. In the first, it must be remembered that historically there had been three Indias: Brahmanic, Buddhist and Hindu each with its own culture. Secondly, the history of Pre-Muslim India was that of a mortal conflict between Bramhanism and Buddhism. He firmly believed that nobody could ever write a true history of India, disclosing meaning and purpose, without knowing these two facts.

Therefore he began the discussion of history with the recognition of the fact: Pushyamitra’s revolution was a political revolution plotted by the Brahmins to discard Buddhism. He listed the deeds or misdeeds of this triumphant Brahmanism:

(1) It established the right of the Brahmin to rule and commit regicide. (2) It made the Brahmins a class of privileged persons. (3) It converted the Varna into caste. (4) It brought about a conflict and anti-social feeling between the different castes. (5) It degraded the Shudras and the women. (6) It forged the system of graded inequality and (7) It made legal and rigid the social system which was conventional and flexible. (Vol. 3: 275)

Dr. Ambedkar said that initially people were not ready to accept the change in the Law made by Pushyamitra. This could be seen in the expression of the poet Bana who accused Pushyamitra for regicide. To him, Pushyamitra was base born and his act of regicide was Anarya. According to Dr. Ambedkar, Pushyamitra rebelled against the Aryan law. In order to place him in right perspective, the Brahmins of the day took a bold step of changing the law. The manifestation of this new law was found in Manu Smriti.

Manu allowed the Brahmin to become Senapati (Commander of forces) and emperor which was earlier considered to be the right of the Kshatriya only. Next change in the law allowed the Brahmin to slay the king and to involve in a general massacre of men if they try to harm his power and position. Earlier the Brahmins were denied even a touch of arms. The third change made it legal for a Brahmin to rebel and to commit regicide. Earlier it was considered a sin. Dr. Ambedkar said that this change in the law was delicately framed and well-defined. He commented, “These legal changes
were as necessary as they were revolutionary. Their object was to legalize and regularize the position created by Pushyamitra by killing the last Maurya King.” (Vol. 3: 277) Thus Brahmanism established the right of Brahmin to rule.

Dr. Ambedkar also discussed certain privileges granted by Manu to the Brahmins. By quoting the lines from Manu Smriti, he said that teaching Vedas, performing sacrifices and receiving gifts were the three monopolies of the Brahmins. Moreover, freedom from taxation and exemption from certain forms of punishment for crimes were the protections that were granted to the Brahmins. Manu placed the Brahmins above the ordinary penal law for crime. They had a special right to become a judge.

The supporters of Brahmanism always pointed out that Manu had imposed some disabilities upon the Brahmins. The ideal placed by him before the Brahmin was that of poverty and service. But Dr. Ambedkar said that it was a gross and deliberate concoction without foundation. He appealed to consider two things in order to know the real nature of Manu’s theory: the place he had assigned to the Brahmins in the general scheme of society and the nature of the disabilities imposed upon them.

Manu had assigned the Brahmins the highest status in the society in unequivocal terms. Keeping that in mind, the examination of the disabilities would show that they were not intended to make the Brahmins suffer. Manu wanted to save the Brahmins from falling from the high pinnacle on which he had placed them and inviting disgrace of the non-Brahmins.

Manu had made special provisions regarding the course of conduct a Brahmin should pursue in the time of distress. He did not want the Brahmins to be poor or destitute. The disabilities imposed upon the Brahmins lasted as long as they were prospering by the occupations belonged to them as of right. But as soon as they were in distress, their disabilities got vanished. They were free to do anything in addition to the occupations reserved to them and that too, without ceasing to be a Brahmin. It fell in their own discretion to decide whether they were in distress or not. “There is therefore no bar to prevent even a prosperous Brahmin to supplement his earnings by following any of the professions open to him in distress by satisfying his conscience.” (Vol. 3: 282)

Regarding the material advantage of the Brahmina, Dr. Ambedkar found the provisions of Dakshina and Dana in Manu Smriti. Dakshina meant the fee which the Brahmin was entitled to charge when he was called to perform a religious ceremony. Manu went to the extent of excusing a Brahmin for anything he would do to recover his fees. It would not be considered an offence under the law.

Dr. Ambedkar talked about the provision of Dana – a fruitful source of income to the Brahmins. Manu insisted the King to make Dana to Brahmins. Dr. Ambedkar believed, “Indeed a large part of the wealth of the present day Brahmins lies in this swindle practised by wily Brahmins upon pious but foolish kings…. Manu also allowed the Brahmins to prey upon the public in the matter of Dana.” (Vol. 3: 283) Manu did it in three ways: He insisted
people to give gifts as a part of their duty. Secondly, Manu made Dana compulsory in certain circumstances. Thirdly, in order to make Dana a source of secure and steady income, Manu linked up Dana with penance. Dr. Ambedkar found that the penances set by Manu were many and designed to materially benefit the Brahmins. He found Manu calling the Brahmins the ‘lords of the earth’. Manu designed the Code (Manu Smriti) with such care that they would remain so.

Then Dr. Ambedkar found Manu transforming society by converting Varna into Caste to achieve his purposes. That was the most astounding and selfish task. He did not find any unambiguous chronological history of this conversion but he tried to provide some landmarks which suggested how this transformation would have taken place.

He began with the similarities and differences between Varna and Caste. He said,

Varna and Caste are identical in their de jure connotation. Both connote status and occupation. Status and occupation are the two concepts which are implied both in the notion Varna as well as in the notion of Caste. Varna and Caste however differ in one important particular. Varna is not hereditary either in status or occupation. On the other hand Caste implied a system in which status and occupation are hereditary and descend from father to son. (Vol. 3: 285-286)

Thus, the conversion made status and occupation hereditary.

He noticed the change through three stages. In the first stage, the duration of status and occupation of a person was prescribed for a small period of time only. Second stage made it for lifetime and the third stage made it hereditary. Dr. Ambedkar found evidences from the religious literature.

Manu and Sapta Rishis used to determine the Varna of a person. Manu selected Kshatriyas and Vaishas and the Sapta Rishis selected Brahmins from the mass of the people. After this selection, those who were left from the mass were called Shudras. This determination of Varana lasted for one Yug i.e. a period of four years. Dr. Ambedkar noticed, “It was a sort of a periodical shuffling and selection of men to take up according to their mental and physical aptitudes and occupations which were essential to the life of the community…. At the end of the period of four years there occurred the Manwantar whereby every fourth year the list was revised. Under the revision some changed their old Varna, some retained it, some lost it and some gained it.” (Vol. 3: 286-287) Manu and Saptarshi decided the Varna of a person from how he struck them at the interview.

Dr. Ambedkar then came to the Gurukul system. Explaining it in detail, he said that it was a school maintained by a Guru (teacher) also known as
Acharya (learned man) who taught the students for twelve years. At the end of this period, the Upanayana ceremony was performed at the Gurukul by the Acharya. Dr. Ambedkar gave us the detailed picture of the ceremony. It was a ceremony at which the Acharya determined the Varna of the student and sent him out in the world to perform the duties related to that Varna. It was a new method of determining Varna which came into fashion in place of method of determination by Manu and Saptarshi.

Dr. Ambedkar undoubtedly considered this new method superior to the previous one. It proved to be a great enhancement. It included the original element of the old method namely a disinterested and independent body to decide the Varna. It added a new feature by making training a pre-requisite for assignment of Varna. Varna became for life. But it no more remained hereditary. Dr. Ambedkar said that Brahmins were obviously dissatisfied with the system of Gurukul as there was possibility of a Brahmin child to get declared as a Shudra by the Acharya. They wanted to avoid this by making Varna hereditary.

Next he discussed the three most radical changes made by the Brahmins in the system of deciding the Varna of a child. The first was the eradication of the system of Gurukul. The father of a child was given the authority for the Upanayana. Guru was completely erased from the picture. Secondly, the Upanayana was made a Sanskara i.e. a sacrament. Previously, the Upanayana was a convocation ceremony held by the Guru. But Manu brought a drastic change in the meaning and purpose of the Upanayana. Third was the change of relation of training to Upanayana. Earlier, training preceded the Upanayana. But under the Brahmanism, the Upanayana came before training. A child was sent to the Guru for training but after the Upanayana i.e. after his Varna was determined by his father. The result was that the father having the right to perform the Upanayana of his child gave his own Varna to the child and thus made it hereditary. “It is by divesting the Guru of his authority to determine the Varna and vesting it in the father that Brahmanism ultimately converted Varna into Caste.” (Vol. 3: 289)

By giving such a story of the conversion of Varna into Caste, Dr. Ambedkar wanted to reveal the objective of Manu which was to elevate and ennable every Brahmin even if he was mean or worthless. Manu insisted people to give respect even to an ignorant Brahmin and even to a Brahmin engaged in mean occupation because he was transcendentally divine. Dr. Ambedkar asked a pointed question, “Can there be greater moral degeneracy than what is shown by Manu in insisting upon the worship of the Brahmin even if he is mean and ignorant?” (Vol. 3: 290)

He examined the consequences of the change starting with the spiritual point of view. He compared the law of Manu with the Church Discipline Act. Under the Church Discipline Act, the clergy was subject to the criminal law as a common man; he would be liable to be disqualified as a clergy for morally wrong actions and would be punished if he officiated as a clergy without being qualified for it. Learning and morality were essential for a clergy as he was to administer the spiritual needs of the people. While in the
case of Brahmanism, Dr. Ambedkar noticed that a Brahmin could alone be the clergy and did not require possessing learning or morality.

Next was the secular point of view. The change from Varna to Caste made the Hindus disregard merit and hail only birth. It was due to the dissociation of merits from status. Dr. Ambedkar bitterly commented, “Nothing could be better calculated to produce an unprogressive society which sacrifices the rights of intelligence on the altar of aristocratic privilege.” (Vol. 3: 290)

Brahmanism separated the Brahmins from the Non-Brahmins and divided the Non-Brahmin population into different social strata. Dr. Ambedkar found that Chaturvarna of the Pre-Buddhist era was flexible in which the Varna system had no relation with the marriage system. Though Chaturvarna established four classes in the society, it did not deny inter-marriage between them. To support this information, Dr. Ambedkar produced many examples of the respectable individuals found in the Hindu scriptures. The pairs of Shantanu – Ganga, Parashara – Matsyagandha, Vishwamitra – Menaka, Yayati – Sharmishta proved that inter-varna marriages were common. The geneology of the family of the great Brahmin sage Vyas could also provide testimony for the same. Brahminism with the fierceness of a mad savage tried to put an end to inter-marriage and inter-dinning between the different Varnas.

Dr. Ambedkar noticed that Brahmanism was so keen in sustaining the caste system that it did not mind whether the ways and means used were moral or immoral, just or unjust. He found Manu declaring inhuman rules for the Shudras and for the women. He talked about the Pre-Buddhist Brahmanism which did not prohibit a widow for remarriage and which allowed only adult marriages. He asked why these changes were made by the triumphant Brahmanism. He answered:

According to my view girl marriage, enforced widowhood and Sati had no other purpose than that of supporting the Caste System which Brahmanism was seeking to establish by prohibiting intermarriage. It is difficult to stop intermarriage. Members of different castes are likely to go out of their Caste either for love or for necessity. It is to provide against necessity that Brahmanism made these rules. This is my explanation of these new rules, made by Brahmanism. That explanation may not be acceptable to all. But there can be no doubt that Brahmanism was taking all means possible to prevent intermarriages between the different classes taking place. (Vol.3: 301)

Dr. Ambedkar turned towards Manu’s law against an outcast. He found Manu prescribing severe penalties for an outcast. Manu excluded an outcast from all social intercourse, suspended him from every civil function,
disqualified him for all offices and disabled him from inheriting any property. The laws of Manu for an outcast were devoid of justice and humanity.

Dr. Ambedkar found two peculiarities related to Manu’s concept of outcast. First, the outcast was a creation of Brahmanism. Second, there was a difference between the Christian or Mahomedan Law of Apostacy and the Brahmanic law of caste. “The disqualification under the Christian or Mahomedan law of apostacy was restricted to want of religious belief or the profession of wrong religious belief. Under the Brahmanic law the disqualification had no connection with belief or want of belief. It was connected with the sanctity of a certain form of social organization – namely Caste. It is the act of going out of one’s caste that was made punishable.” (Vol. 3: 304)

While comparing the Brahminic law of the outcast with the law of apostasy in other religions, Dr. Ambedkar came to know that the only essential to Brahmanism was a belief in the sacredness of the Vedas. It did not ask for a belief in God, in life after God or in salvation. Only breach of caste was penalized.

Dr. Ambedkar charged that the act of Brahmanism in prohibiting intermarriage and interdining was a deathknell to unity. Brahmanism, in instituting caste system, had produced the greatest barrier against the development of nationalism.

Dr. Ambedkar came across many examples in which the status of a child was determined by the Varna of his father and not by the Varna of his mother. Then he went further to discuss the effect of the rule of Pitra Savarnya on the Anuloma and Pratiloma systems of marriage. In Pratiloma marriage, the children of the higher-Varna mothers would be assigned the lower Varnas represented by their fathers. In Anuloma marriage, the children of the lower-Varna mothers would be absorbed in the higher Varnas of their fathers. Dr. Ambedkar noticed that Manu stopped Pratiloma marriage. As a result, the higher was prevented to reach to the status of the lower. On the other hand, Anuloma marriage system was sustained. In addition to it, Brahmanism replaced the rule of Pitra Savarnya by the rule of Matra Savarnya according to which the status of a child came to be determined by the status of the mother. By this change, marriage ceased to be a means of intersocial communication. From a larger social point of view, it brought the complete isolation among the Varnas. “It relieved men of the higher Varns from the responsibility to their children simply because they born of a mother of lower Varna. It made Anuloma marriage mere matter of sex, a humiliation and insult to the lower Varnas and a privilege to the higher classes to lawfully commit prostitution with women of the lower classes.” (Vol. 3: 308)

Dr. Ambedkar also noticed that not only the orthodox Hindus but also the enlightened politicians and historians considered caste as an ideal system. They strongly denied that caste came in the way of nationalism. Dr. Ambedkar believed that to consider India a nation was to appreciate a misconception.
Then, explaining the essence of nationality, Dr. Ambedkar said,

It is a longing to belong to one’s own group and a longing not to belong to any other group…. This longing to belong to one’s own kindred as I said is a subjective psychological feeling and what is important to bear in mind is that the longing to belong to one’s own kindred is quite independent of geography, culture or economic or social conflict…. The point is that nationality is not primarily a matter of geography culture….. (Vol. 3: 309)

Then he again turned to the history of India and stated that the Vedic Regime declined and the Brahmins asserted their supremacy. He described the pitiable condition of the Shudras and the women of the time. He believed that the gospel of Buddhism brought a great change and elevated their status. It allowed them to acquire knowledge and wealth. It also allowed them to rise socially to the status of a Brahmin. Therefore it was called the Shudra religion. But this annoyed the Brahmins. As a result, the Brahmins prohibited the Shudras to study the Vedas. Manu prohibited them to accumulate wealth and compelled them to remain servile. His rigid laws did not allow women any social, economic, religious or spiritual freedom. She was subjected to corporal punishment, divorce and even sale. Dr. Ambedkar bitterly criticised that the Hindus considered this as a very sublime ideal for a woman!!! “There is no parallel in history for so foul deeds of degradation committed by a class of usurpers in the interest of class domination.” (Vol. 3: 317)

He accused that Manu Smriti promoted graded inequality and Brahmanism injected this principle into the bone and the marrow of the people. He further blamed that the unjust doctrine had left people incapable of rebellion or revolution and stricken with palsy. To support his charge, he quoted lines from Manu Smriti which presented unequal laws for the four Varnas regarding marriage, treatment of guests and Sanskaras.

Dr. Ambedkar lifted the curtain from the last act of the drama of Bramhanism. The Brahmins claimed the Chaturvarnya system to be unique and excellent. Plato hailed it as an ideal form of social organization. But Dr. Ambedkar strongly opposed them by saying that the whole system was faulty. He said,

The lumping together of individuals into a few sharply marked off classes is a very superficial view of man and his power. Ancient Aryans as well as Plato had no conception of the uniqueness of every individual, of his commensurability with others and of each individual forming a class of his own. They had no recognition of the infinite diversity of active tendencies and combination of tendencies of which an individual is capable. (Vol.3: 321)
He brought in the modern science to show that delimiting an individual was unjust for him as well as for the society. The stratification of society by classes and occupations was incompatible with the fullest utilization of the qualities.

He argued that dimorphism or polyformism might be found in human beings. But it was wrong to separate them into those who were born to do one thing and others to do another. It was unjust to say that some persons had some qualities and the others did not have them. Rather, all persons possess all qualities but some qualities became predominant in some persons. It was also seen that a person demonstrated one quality at one time and the other, even the direct opposite one, at some other time. He mentioned Mussolini and Hitlar as examples to explain this point.

Then he went further to compare the Buddhist order of Bhikshus and the Vedic order of Brahmins to show the triviality of Hindu religion. According to him, although both were intended to serve the same purpose that was to lead and guide society along the right road, the Bhikshu was better than the Brahmins. He noticed that Buddha was the first to recognize that a person who truly wanted to lead the society must be trustworthy, intellectually free and possessing no private property. On the contrary, the Brahmins who formed the educated class were the only people free to hold property. Dr. Ambedkar formed his view on the above matter in the following words,

The right of the Brahmins to rule and the grant of special privileges and immunities made them more selfish and induced in them the desire to use their education not for the advancement of learning but for the use of their community and against the advancement of society. All their energy and their education have been spent in maintaining their own privileges against the good of the public. It has been the boast of many Hindu authors that the civilization of India is the most ancient civilization in the world. (Vol. 3: 322-323)

Then Dr. Ambedkar came across two books entitled The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology by Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar and The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus by Dr. Brajendranath Seal which showed that the ancestors of the Hindus knew almost all the branches of scientific knowledge. But they ceased to make any progress in the field of science. Their scientific progress stopped and left in its undeveloped and incomplete condition. Dr. Ambedkar could find out only one reason for this. He noticed that the Bramhins in ancient India were the only educated class who claimed to be above all. Buddha challenged their supremacy and lodged war against them. The Brahmins would act under the circumstances. They gave up all pursuits and engaged themselves in defending the claim of supremacy and the social, economical and political interests of their class. And as the result, the Brahmins of the ancient time started to write the Smritis instead of writing books on science. “Brahmins found it more important and more
imperative to write Smritis to repel the Buddhist doctrine of social equality.” (Vol.3: 323)

Dr. Ambedkar, by agreeing with Mr. Kane, informed us that there were 128 Smritis. He called these Smritis as law books which hide their nature. According to him, the Smritis were written to expound the supremacy of the Brahmins and their rights to special privileges. Manu gave the Brahmins the right to dana, gift including the gift of a woman. He called the Brahmins as Bhu-devas (lords of the Earth). The Brahmins had a right to immoral sexual intercourse with women of other classes and a right to deflower the women of their own class. These types of adulterous rights were claimed by the Brahmins against the common men. He cited Ludovico Di Varthema, a traveller who came to India in about 1502 A.D., Hamilton and the Gazetteer of Malabar to support his arguments.

The multiplicity of views expressed by various educated classes drawn from different strata of society could have provided India with certain intellectual strength. But India ceased to have safe and sure guidance of a knowledgeable class. Dr. Ambedkar found that it happened on account of the change brought by Brahmanism.

By the denial of education to the Shudras, by diverting the Kshatriyas to military pursuits, and the Vaishyas to trade and by reserving education to themselves the Brahmins alone could become the educated class – free to misdirect and misguide the whole society. By converting Varna into Caste they declared that mere birth was a real and final measure of the worth of a man. Caste and Graded inequality made disunity and discord a matter of course. (Vol.3: 326)

Dr. Ambedkar said that the original Varna system was a matter of social practice. But Brahmanism converted it into a perverted form and gave it the force of law. It was presented as the Law of Persons and the Law of Family in Manu-Smriti. Nobody could challenge it. Manu made it an offence for a person of a lower caste to assume the status of a higher caste.

Selfish Brahminism badly affected two aspects of the Vedic Chaturvarna. First, society was strongly built and inter-marriage and inter-dining did not allow isolation or any other anti-social feelings. Second, the Chaturvarna was conventional. Brahmanism isolated the Varnas and sowed the seeds of antagonism. It transformed the Chaturvarna into the law of the state. If the Chaturvarna was an evil, it would have died out by the force of time. But by making it a law, it was made eternal. This was the greatest mischief done to the society. Besides, Dr. Ambedkar realized that it remained half conventional in the case of the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas and half legal in the case of the Vaishyas and the Shudras. The Kshatriyas were left free as the Brahmins and Dr. Ambedkar saw something more than dishonesty in this foul game. The latter knew that the former would not humble themselves before them. Therefore Manu gave liberties to the Kshatriyas. He
exempted them from the observance of law. But he warned them that they could be punished by the Brahmins in the case of arrogance or rebellion. Soon after uttering this vowes of vengeance, threats and imprecations, Manu suddenly came down to plead with the Kshatriyas for cooperation and common front with the Brahmins. He did not explain the reason of this anti-climax.

Dr. Ambedkar said that one must plunge into the history of the class-wars to find out the clue to the solution of this puzzle. The history was full of examples of the class-wars between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. The issues that brought them in conflict extended over a wide range. They evidenced the bitter feelings and the strained relationships shared by the two classes. The wars were wars of authority, status and dignity.

The result of these wars was obvious. The Brahmins realized that it was impossible for them to crush the Kshatriyas and their attempts of extermination were futile. On the contrary, their war with the Kshatriyas was the way to ruin. Again, during the war-time, nobody was bothered to keep the Vaishyas and the Shudras under control. For the Brahmins, the possibility of suppressing Kshatriyas was remote and the danger of being overtaken by the Vaishyas and Shudras was real. The Brahmins chose the wise alternative of giving up the hopeless struggle against the Kshatriyas and making friends with them. They found a common cause and tried to suppress the growing menace of the Vaishyas and Shudras. They started working for a new ideal namely to enslave and exploit the two classes below them. This new ideal found its first expression in the Satpatha Brahmana. Dr. Ambedkar, quoting a passage from the Satpatha Brahmana, proclaimed that the explanation of the puzzling attitude of Manu towards the Kshatriyas was found there. He found it an 'attitude of willing to wound but afraid to strike, of wishing to dictate but preferring to befriend.'

According to him, Manu was a politician. He knew that the Kshatriyas could not be made submissive to the Brahmins. Therefore he built up a common front between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas against the Vaishyas and the Shudras. The pity of it was that it had been done in the name of religion. Dr. Ambedkar said, "With Brahmanism religion is a cloak to cover and hide its acquisitive politics." (Vol. 3: 331)

The Morals of the House

The editors note that the material found under the title ‘Manu Smriti or the Gospel of Counter-Revolution’ was the same as was found in ‘The Morals of the House’.

Dr. Ambedkar stated that the sacred literature of the Hindus included the Smritis prescribing the morals of the Hindus and their religious creed. According to him, though these Smritis were numerous, they did not differ from each other. On the contrary, they repeated one another thereby being monotonous in nature. Manu Smriti, also called Manava Dharma Shastra, was the source of all other Smritis and they faithfully repeated it. He believed that Manu Smriti was a Code of Law; it was neither a book of Ethics nor of Religion. To take it as a book of Ethics or Religion was to muddle Ethics,
Religion and Law. He also thought that Religion and Law were one in the ancient society.

*Manu Smriti* expressed ethics and morality in terms of duties. It was a book of law, religion and ethics rolled into one. According to Dr. Ambedkar,

Mau was the first to systematise and codify the duties to which a Hindu as bound. He distinguishes between *Varnashramadharman* and *Sadharanadharman*. The *Varnashramadharman* are the specific duties relating to one’s station in life i.e. one’s station as determined by one’s Varna or caste and one’s Ashram or particular stage of life. The *Sadharanadharman* are duties irrespective of one’s age, caste or creed i.e. duties obligatory on man as man and not as a member of particular community or social class or as being at a particular stage or period of life. The whole book deals with duties and with nothing else. (Vol. 3: 334)

He took *Manu Smriti* to be a book of Religion as it dealt with caste which according to him was the soul of Hinduism; a book of Ethics as it dealt with the duties of men and a book of Law as it was concerned with the penalties for the breach of duties. Therefore he did not find anything wrong in considering *Manu Smriti* as the book of the moral standards and religious notions of the Hindus.

He took the term Hinduism to be very illusive and quoted some definitions of it given by Sir D. Ibbetson, Sir J. A. Baines and Sir Edward Gait, Sir Alfred Lyall and Mr. G. P. Sen. But he found their descriptions of the term complex and incomplete. He asked if there was any principle to which all Hindus forgetting their differences, felt bound to render willing obedience.

He found one such principle namely that of Caste. “Indeed a person cannot be born in Hinduism unless he is born in a Caste. Caste and Hinduism are inseparable.” (Vol. 3: 336) He quoted Prof. Max Muller to support his view.

In the second section of the essay, Dr. Ambedkar discussed the Ethical and Religious norms suggested by Manu for the Hindus to observe and to follow. Manu divided the Hindus into four *Varnas* or social orders and graded them in which the Brahmins were first in rank. Manu also gave the reasons for their supremacy.

Dr. Ambedkar repeated the lines of *Manu Smriti* regarding the ranks and occupations Manu assigned to the four classes and the privileges that the first three classes enjoyed. The Brahmins were favoured in the matters like marriage, finance and penalties. Regarding the education of the *Vedas*, the women and the Shudras had to suffer due to the partialities practised by Manu. Dr. Ambedkar found that Manu had nothing to say about the mass education and he was merely concerned with the learning of the *Vedas*. The
Vedas must be learned only from a preceptor and only with his approval. If a person tried to learn them on his own, he would be guilty of theft.

**Essays on the Bhagwat Gita: Philosophic Defence of Counter-Revolution: Krishna and His Gita**

This incomplete chapter is a study of the Bhagwat Gita as a literary book of Hindu Religion done by Dr. Ambedkar. He presented a variety of opinions of modern and ancient scholars on the subject. He started with finding the place of the Bhagwat Gita in the ancient literature. He asked many questions and found bewildering answers from the comments of the scholars of the field. He quoted Bohtlingk who considered the Gita containing repetitions, exaggerations, absurdities and loathsome points besides many high and beautiful thoughts. Hopkins called the Gita 'an ill-assorted cabinet of primitive philosophical opinions.' and described the work as 'the wonderful song, which causes the hair to stand on end.' Holtzman called it 'a Vishnuite revision of a pantheistic poem.' Garbe found that it did not make difference between the two doctrines – the theistic and the pantheistic. Mr. Telang found inconsistencies in the Gita.

Then he considered the views of the orthodox Pandits. According to them, the Gita was not a sectarian book. It upheld the three ways of salvation – Karma marga, Bhakti marga and Jnana marga – with equal importance. Dr. Ambedkar found that though Shankaracharya and Mr. Tilak belonged to the class of orthodox writers, their views were quite contrary to the conventional Pandits. Shankaracharya held that the Gita preached the Jnana marga while Mr. Tilak was of the view that it taught Karma Yoga.

Dr. Ambedkar did not find it surprising to have such verities of opinions on the subject because he believed that the scholars had gone on the wrong path or doing wrong job. These scholars assumed the Bhagwat Gita to be a gospel. But Dr. Ambedkar considered it a false assumption and proclaimed that it is futile to search any message from the book. He did not take it to be a book of religion or a treatise on philosophy. According to him, it just defended certain dogmas of religion on philosophic grounds. It utilised philosophy to defend religion. To prove his thesis, he gave specific instances.

In the first instance, Dr. Ambedkar said the Bhagwat Gita was the justification of war. And this justification has two aspects. On one hand, it propounded that the world was perishable and man was mortal. Death was inevitable no matter it was natural or violently caused. On the other hand, it taught that the body was perishable but the soul was eternal and imperishable. The soul was never killed. “War and killing need therefore give no ground to remorse or to shame, so argues the Bhagvat Gita.” (Vol. 3: 361)

The second instance was found in the philosophic defence of Chaturvarnya offered by the Gita. He charged that the Gita not only propounded the Chaturvarnya as sacred but also offered a philosophic basis to it by linking it to the theory of innate, inborn qualities in men.
The third instance was seen in the philosophic defence of the *Karma marga* given by the *Gita*. It held that the performance of the observances like *Yajnas* was a way to salvation. It taught to keep away from blind faith by introducing the principle of Buddhi yoga as a prerequisite for *Karma yoga*. It preached to become a *Sthitaprajna*. It also warned against the selfishness forming a motive for performing *Karma*. It presented the principle of *Anasakti* (performance of *Karma* without any attachment for the fruits of it).

Then he tried to know the origin of these dogmas and the reasons for which the *Gita* required to offer the philosophical defence. He found that “…the dogmas which the Gita defends are the dogmas of counter-revolution as put forth in the Bible of counter-revolution namely Jaimini’s *Purvaminamsa*.” (Vol. 3: 362)

He said that most of the writers on the *Gita* translated the word *Karma yoga* as ‘action’ and the word *Jnana yoga* as ‘knowledge’. They thought that the *Gita* compared and contrasted knowledge versus action in general. Dr. Ambedkar considered it a wrong interpretation of the book. On the contrary, the book was not concerned with any general, philosophical discussion of action versus knowledge but it dealt with something particular. Moreover, by *Karma yoga*, it meant the dogmas contained in Jaimini’s *Karma kanda* and by *Jnana yoga*, it meant the dogmas contained in Badarayana’s *Brahma Sutras*. According to him, the book was not an expression of inactivity, quieticism or energism in general terms but a manifestation of religious acts and observances. He blamed Mr. Tilak for this trick of making generalisations. Because of this misinterpretation, people began to believe that the *Gita* was a self-contained book and had no relation with the preceding literature. Dr. Ambedkar declared that while speaking of *Karma yoga*, the *Gita* referred to the dogmas of *Karma kanda* of Jaimini which it tried to renew and strengthen.

The reason why the *Gita* defended the dogmas of counter-revolution was to save them from the attack of Buddhism. Buddha preached non-violence; attacked on *Chaturvarnya* and *Karma kanda* and allowed women and *Shudras* to become *Sanyasis*. His gospel of equality was accepted by all except the Brahmmins. Agitated by this, the counter-revolutionaries declared that the *Chaturvarnya*, *Karm kanda* and *Yajnas* were determined by the *Vedas*. As the *Vedas* were infallible, the dogmas must not be questioned. He firmly believed that the Buddhist age was the most enlightened and the most rationalistic age India had known. The dogmas resting on such silly, arbitrary, unnationalistic and fragile foundations could hardly stand the age.

He also claimed that Jaimini’s counter-revolutionary dogmas would not have stood or survived against the energetic attack of Buddhism if they did not have received support from the *Bhagwat Gita*. The philosophic defence offered by the *Gita* for the Kshtriya’s duty of killing could not be justified by saying that it was only body which got killed and not the soul. People said that this kind of doctrines made one’s hair stand on their end. If Krishna were to fight a case taking help of the *Gita*, he would be sent to the lunatic asylum!

Then he found Krishna defending *Chaturvarnya* on the ground of the *Guna* theory of the *Sankhya*. He very critically and bitterly said that Krishan
did not know how he had made a fool of himself as the gunas, according to the Sankhyas, were only three while the varnas were four. He concluded, “The whole attempt of the Bhagvat Gita to offer a philosophic defence of the dogmas of counter-revolution is childish – and does not deserve a moment’s serious thought. None-the-less there is not the slightest doubt that without the help of the Bhagvat Gita the counter-revolution would have died out, out of sheer stupidity of its dogmas.” (Vol. 3: 364)

Dr. Ambedkar said that the Gita upheld the authority of the Vedas and the Shastras and the sanctity of the Yajnas. There was no difference between the Gita and Jaimini’s Purva Mimansa. He considered the Gita more challenging a support to counter-revolution than Jaimini’s Purva Mimansa.

He found that Krishna was not satisfied with the establishment of the Chaturvarnya theory based on Guna Karma. Krishna further said that people must not agitate others to rise in rebellion against the doctrine of Karma kanda. Krishna also asked his devotee to do the duty prescribed for his Varna to obtain salvation. Dr. Ambedkar believed that the doctrines of the counter-revolution given by the Gita became necessary because of the severe, rationalistic and revolutionary attacks of Buddhism.

He dealt with the possible objections which might be raised against the validity of his observation. The first was that of the issue of posterity of the Gita. He assumed that the Gita was later in time to Buddhism and Jaimini’s Purva Mimansa. He found that the Gita dealt with the doctrines of Jaimini’s Purva Mimansa in Chapter III, verse 9-13. He claimed that Jaimini’s preaching of Karma yoga was fundamentally modified in the Gita in the name of Anaskti Karma. By this, he proved that this modification came only after Jaimini and not before him because there was no reference of this Anasakti Karma in Jaimini’s Purva Mimansa. He also found the mention of the Brahma Sutra of Badranarayan in the Gita which made him conclude that it came later than the Brahma Sutra.

Then he quoted full passages of all the Hindu scholars who denied that the Gita had borrowed anything from Buddhism. He considered these views absurd which shocked all those who made a comparative study of the Bhagvat Gita and the Buddhist Suttas. He found similarity in ideas and language of both these works. In his first illustration, he informed us that the Gita discussed Brahma Nirvana which no Upanishad even mentioned and which was the wholly Buddhist idea borrowed from Buddhism. Dr. Ambedkar asked one who had doubt on the point to compare the Brahma Nirvana of the Gita with the Buddhist conception of Nirvana presented in the ‘Mahaparani-nibbana Sutta’.

In an other illustration, he mentioned the Chapter VII, Verse 13-20 of the Gita in which there was a discussion – who was dear to Krishna – one who had knowledge or one who performed karma or one who was a devotee. Krishna said that one who had the true marks of a devotee was dear to him. Here Krishna philosophised the character of a true devotee who practised Maitri (loving kindness), Karuna (compassion), Mudita (sympathising joy) and
**Upeksha (unconcernedness).** Dr. Ambedkar again found the source of these characteristics of a true devotee in Buddhism. He gave the proof by comparing them with Buddha’s preachings in the *Mahapadana Sutta* and the *Tevijja Sutta*. He said that this comparison would show that the whole ideology was borrowed from Buddhism and that too, word to word.

The third illustration was that of the discussion of knowledge and ignorance. After quoting a long passage from the verse 7-11, Chapter XIII, he asked, “Can anyone who knows anything of the Gospel of Buddha deny that the Bhagvat Gita has not in these stanzas reproduced word for word the main doctrines of Buddhism?” (Vol. 3: 370)

He found a new metaphorical interpretation of Karmas under various heads presented in the Chapter XIII, verses 5, 6, 18, 19 of the Gita: (1) Yajnas (sacrifices), (2) Dana (Gifts), (3) Tapas (Penance), (4) Food, (5) Svadhyaya (Vedic Study). This he thought was the reproduction of the words of Buddha written in the *Majjhina Nikaya Sutta*.

To sum up the Bhagvat Gita seems to be deliberately modelled on Buddhists Suttas. The Buddhists Suttas are dialogues. So is the Bhagvat Gita. Buddha’s religion offered salvation to women and Shudras. Krishna also comes forward to offer salvation to women and Shudras. Buddhists say, “I surrender to Buddha, to Dhamma and to Sangha” So Krishna says, “Give up all religions and surrender unto Me.” No parallel can be closer than what exists between Buddhism and Bhagvat Gita. (Vol. 3: 371)

He quoted long passages from Tilak and Garbe discussing the date of composition of the *Gita*. He concluded that the forgoing discussion completely destroyed the only argument that could be urged against his thesis – namely that the Bhagvat Gita was very ancient, Pre-Buddhistic in origin and therefore could not be related to Jaimini’s *Purva Mimansa*. He firmly believed that the Gita was basically a counter-revolutionary treatise and Jaimini’s *Purva Mimansa* was the official Bible of counter-revolution.

**Analytical Notes of Virat Parva and Udhyog Parva**

Dr. Ambedkar merely reproduced these two ‘Parvas’ of the *Mahabharata*.

**Brahmin versus Kshatriya**

Dr. Ambedkar mentioned that the sacred literature of the Hindus contained skirmishes between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. He found some examples of such battles from the *Puranas* and the *Mahabharata*. He mentioned the clashes of the kings Vena, Pururavas, Nahusha and Nimi with the Brahmins. Again, there was a conflict between Vashishtha and Vishvamitra. He believed that these cases of conflicts between the Brahmins
and the Kshatriyas were not merely the class or communal conflicts. But as he said, “They were class wars undertaken by one community with the avowed intention of exterminating the other root and branch.” (Vol. 3: 408)

Dr. Ambedkar found these instances of enmity very high in temper on both the sides. The king Nimi’s case showed how Kshatriyas were determined to humiliate the Brahmins. The conflict of Arjuna Kartavirya against the Brahmins indicated his firmness to level them down. On the other hand, the Brahmins were not slow in their action was proved by the way Vayu, the messenger of the Brahmins, talked to Arjuna Kartavirya. They had conferred bitter insults on the Kshatriyas.

Then Dr. Ambedkar talked about the curious stand taken by Manu on the matter. Manu indicated that both of them – Brahmins and Kshatriyas – would only grow with each other’s support. Both of them would have to help each other forgetting all past enmity. Why did he say so? Whom did he want to initiate? In which pressing circumstances Manu wished the end of the class war? Dr. Ambedkar suspected Manu for providing a motive to combine them in a conspiracy to achieve some unholy purpose.

**Shudras and the Counter-Revolution**

Dr. Ambedkar mentioned some of the laws given by Manu with reference to the inhuman treatment conferred on the Shudras. Manu considered the Shudra to be an alien Non-Aryan not entitled to the social and religious privileges of the Aryan. This view was readily accepted by the people. It moulded their psychology and determined their approach to the Shudras. But this view had no foundation in the literature of the ancient Aryans.

Reading religious literature, he came across the names of various communities. He challenged the conventional beliefs about their identities and their inter-relations with each other. He believed that the Asuras and Suras were communities of human beings like the Aryans and both descended from a common father Kashapa. He firmly stated that the mythological history with overstatement was still a history.

He declared that the Aryans were not a race. Those who accepted the Aryan culture were known as the Aryans. The antagonism between the Aryans and the Dasyus was grounded upon the misinterpretation of the words Varna and Anas used with reference to the Dasyus. Varna meant colour and Anas meant without nose. According to him, Varna meant caste or group and Anas, read as An-As, meant uncultivated speech. It was foolish to believe that the Aryans had a colour prejudice which determined their social order.

Again, it was wrong to consider the Dasyus as non-Aryans by race. According to him, it was equally erroneous to believe that the Shudras were conquered by the Aryan invaders. The story of the Aryan invasions did not have any evidence to its support. Instead, India was their home-land. The Devas were the feudal lords and the Aryans were the villains. They sought
protection from the *Devas* for survival. How could they show such military prowess as to win the Shudras?

Dr. Ambedkar propounded that before Manu carved out his place in the Indian history, the Shudras were Aryans, i.e. they followed the Aryan way of life. The Shudras were invited at the coronation of the King along with the other three castes. They were also one the *Ratnis* and were allowed to be members of the two political assemblies of ancient times. Not only this, they could also become kings. They had the right to study the *Vedas* and some of them even reached to the status of *Rishis*. They could also perform spiritual performances and *Vedic* sacrifices. They were even eligible to perform the *Soma Yagna* and to drink *Soma*. The Shudra women also participated in the *Vedic* sacrifice like the *Ashwamedha*. The Shudras were eligible for *Upanayana*. Dr. Amedkar justified these claims by giving examples from the religious literature of India.

He tried then to find out the reason for Manu’s attempt to suppress the Shudras. He believed that this to be a very complex riddle. The Aryans attempted to aryаниз the non-Aryans by performing a religious ceremony called *Vratya-stoma*. The Aryans were not only interested to convert willing non-Aryans but they also made attempts to convert the unwilling *Asuras*. He cited the example of Pralhad who killed his father Hiranya Kashapu, the *Asura* on the issue that Pralhad was willing to be converted to the Aryan Culture while his father was opposed to it.

Then Dr. Amedkar described the mythological origin of the Nishads which contained historical facts to prove that the Nishads were a low, primitive jungle tribe living in the forests of the Vindhya Mountains. They were wicked people opposing the Aryan culture. They invented a mythology for explaining their origin and connecting them with the Aryan society. They wanted to get themselves included in the Aryan fold. None could call *Nishads* a low, uncivilized and foreign tribe or impose any disability on them.

Dr. Amedkar was interested in revealing the reasons for the ill-treatment given to the Shudras who were civilized Aryans.

**The Woman and the Counter-Revolution**

Dr. Amedkar presented Manu’s approach towards women. Manu said that the nature of women was to seduce men and wise men were never found in the company of women. Women were not to be free under any circumstances. Dr. Ambedkar said that to the Hindus, Manu regarded marriage as sacrament and therefore, did not allow divorce. But his law of divorce had a different motive. He did not want to tie up a man to a woman but to tie up the woman to a man and to leave the man free. Men were permitted to sell their wives. Women were reduced to the level of a slave in the matter of property. They were subjected to corporal punishment. They were not permitted to have any intellectual pursuits, free will or freedom of thought. Manu was found saying that sacrifices performed by women were inauspicious and not acceptable to God. Dr. Amedkar satirically said that this was taken as a lofty ideal for a woman by the Hindus.
Then Dr. Amedkar presented the position of women before the days of Manu for comparison. The women in pre-Manu days were highly respected. They were entitled to Upanayana, could repeat the Mantras of the Vedas, attended Gurukul, studied the Vedas and became expert in Mimansa and participated in the public discussion with men on different highly intellectual subjects. With examples like Janaka, Gargi, Maitrei, Sulbha, Shankaracharya and Vidyadhari, Dr. Amedkar showed that Indian women in pre-Manu’s time could rise to the highest pinnacle of learning and education.

Dr. Amedkar also described the position of women in the age of Kautilya. Kautilya advocated monogamy. Women could claim divorce. They could abandon men of bad character. Widows were allowed to remarried. Precautions were taken to guarantee economic independence to a married woman. In short, women, in pre-Manu days, were free and equal partners of men in all respect.

Dr. Amedkar was left bothered about the reason for the degradation of women done by Manu.

**Part IV Buddha or Karl Marx**

In the very beginning of the essay, Dr. Amedkar accepted that the comparison between Buddha and Karl Marx might sound odd as both were divided by 2381 years. One was the founder of religion and had no relation with economics and politics while the other was supposed to be the architect of new ideology-polity – a new Economic system. Yet Dr. Ambedkar found the comparison attractive and instructive.

**The Creed of the Buddha**

Dr. Amedkar presented the doctrines of Buddha as he understood them while reading the Tripitaka. Buddha’s preachings touched various aspects of life: religion, salvation, sacrifices, morality, happiness – unhappiness, ownership of property, equality, fellowship, learning, character, finality of things, change, pious suspicion, war etc. According to Dr. Ambedkar, Buddha’s gospel was, at a time, ancient and fresh, deep and wide.

**The Creed of Karl Marx**

Dr. Amedkar reported the propositions which formed the original basis of Marxian Socialism. Undoubtedly, Karl Marx was the father of modern socialism or communism who struggled against the capitalists and the Utopian Socialists and who propounded scientific socialism. Dr. Amedkar further added, “By scientific socialism what Karl Marx meant was that his brand of socialism was inevitable and inescapable and that society was moving towards it and that nothing could prevent its march. It is to prove this contention of his that Marx principally laboured.” (Vol. 3: 443)

Dr. Amedkar mentioned the theses on which the argument of Marx based. They included various topics like purpose of philosophy, economic factors, division of society, class conflicts, worker exploitation, and
nationalisation of the means of production, impoverishment, revolutionary spirit of the exploited and their dictatorship.

**What survives of the Marxian creed**

Before starting the comparison of these two, Dr. Ambedkar tried to find out the portions of the Marxian concepts which were survived; disproved by history or demolished by his opponents. He found that the Marxian Creed had been subject to much criticism since its establishment. Consequently, the ideological frame-work was broken into pieces. The claim of inevitability was proved wrong. Communism could enter Russia only after much deliberate planning and violence. Dr. Ambedkar found that many of the other propositions mentioned in the list had been destroyed both by logic as well as by experience. He made a list of the survived contentions which he believed were equally important,

(i) The function of philosophy is to reconstruct the world and not to waste its time in explaining the origin of the world, (ii) That there is a conflict of interest between class and class, (iii) That private ownership of property brings power to one class and sorrow to another through exploitation, (iv) That it is necessary for the good of society that the sorrow be removed by the abolition of private property. (Vol.3: 444)

**Comparison between Buddha and Karl Marx**

Dr. Ambedkar moved towards the comparison of the two. In the first place, Dr. Ambedkar cited a dialogue between Buddha and the Brahmin Potthapada which, according to him, showed complete agreement between Buddha and Karl Marx. Potthapada asked Buddha the questions about eternity of the world, about soul, about the relation between body and soul and about the rebirth. Buddha did not give any answers to these questions because they were not related to the Dhamma or to Nirvana.

Next, he quoted a dialogue between Buddha and Pasenadi King of Kosala. Buddha did not deny Pasenadi’s view that there was always a strife going on between kings, nobles, Brahmins, house-holders, between mother and son, son and father, brother and sister and sister and brother, between companion and companion etc... Dr. Ambedkar wrote that Buddha’s *Ashtanga Marga* recognised the existence of the class conflict and took it to be the cause of misery.

Then he cited the same dialogue of Buddha with Potthapada in which the former explained the latter that sorrow and misery did exist in the world. He gave the origin of misery and reasons for the cessation of misery. When Potthapada asked Buddha about his clear opinion regarding misery, Buddha said explicitly that the question was related to profit and concerned with the Dhamma. It taught right conduct, detachment, purification from lust, tranquilisation of heart, real knowledge and and the insight of the higher
stages of the path and *Nirvana*. Dr. Ambedkar wrote, “That language is different but the meaning is the same. If for misery one reads exploitation Buddha is not away from Marx.” (Vol.3: 446) He also quoted an extract from the dialogue between Buddha and Ananda on the issue of private property. He found Buddha saying that avarice was because of possession.

Regarding the fourth point, Dr. Ambedkar quoted the rules of the *Bhikshu Sangh* which were proved to be the best testimony on the matter. The *Bhikku* was denied to possess anything more than these eight articles. They were: three robes or pieces of cloth for daily wear, a girdle for the loins, an alms-bowl, a razor, a needle and a water strainer. Moreover, the Bhikku was not allowed to receive gold or silver lest he should purchase anything. Buddha seemed far more rigorous than Marx in the matter of personal possessions.

**The Means**

Dr. Ambedkar discussed that the means adopted by Buddha and Karl Marx were different but the end desired was the same. The means to establish communism propounded by Buddha were quite definite. Dr. Ambedkar found Buddha preaching the New Gospel named *Pancha Silas* to remove the misery and unhappiness of man which was the result of his own misconduct. The *Panch Silas* were: to abstain from destroying any living thing, stealing, telling untruth, lust and intoxicating drinks. He also found Buddha preaching the Noble Eight-Fold Path in order to establish the kingdom of righteousness, to remove man’s injustice to man. They were: right views, aims, speech, conduct, livelihood, perseverance, mindfulness and contemplation.

Then he found Buddha preaching the doctrine of *Nibbana* which talked about the difficulties in the path of the realization of the Eight-Fold Path. The *Asavas* (hindrances) were: delusion of self, doubt and indecision, dependence on the effectiveness of Rites and Ceremonies, bodily passions, ill-will towards other individuals, suppression of the desire for a future life with a material body, the desire for a future life in an immaterial world, pride, self-righteousness and ignorance. Buddha believed that *Nibbana* consisted in overcoming these hindrances in order to achieve the Noble Eight-Fold Path. Lastly, Buddha discussed the doctrine of Paramitas (States of Perfection) which indoctrinated the practice of ten virtues in one’s daily life. They were: *Panna* (wisdom), *Sila* (moral temperament), *Nekkhama* (renunciation of the pleasures of the world), *Dana* (giving of one’s possessions), *Virya* (right endeavour), *Khanti* (forbearance), *Succa* (truth), *Aditthana* (resolute determination), *Metta* (fellow-feeling), *Upekkha* (detachment as distinguished from indifference). These virtues must be practised with utmost capacity.

Buddha propagated the gospel to end the sorrow and misery by changing the moral temperament to follow the path voluntarily. On the other hand, the communists had different means. They believed that these were the only means of establishing communism. “The first is violence. Nothing short of it will suffice to break up the existing system. The other is dictatorship of the
Evaluation of Means

Then Dr. Ambedkar turned towards the assessment of means of Buddha and Karl Marx. He first took violence. He found that even non-communist countries fought with each other and killed soldiers; a murderer was hanged for killing a citizen. If this was so, why could not a property owner be killed if his ownership led to misery for the rest of humanity? So he expected that there should not be exception in favour of the property owner.

He found that Buddha was against violence but he favoured the use of force for the sake of justice. To exemplify this, he quoted the dialogue between Buddha and Sinha Senapati, the Commander-in-Chief of Vaishali. He said, “A man who fights for justice and safety cannot be accused of Ahimsa…. One must never surrender to evil powers. War there may be....” (Vol. 3: 451) Budha’s Ahimsa was not as absolute as the Ahimsa preached by Mahavira the founder of Jainism. Buddha was deadly opposed to Ahimsa as an absolute principle. As far as Dictatorship was concerned, he found Buddha completely a democrat. Buddha belonged to the Sakyas which was a republic kingdom. He also loved Vaishali which was his second home and which was a republic. The Bhikshu Sangh was based on the democratic constitution. Buddha refused to be a dictator and even to appoint a dictator because he considered the Dhamma as the Supreme Commander of the Sangh.

Then Dr. Ambedkar discussed the value of these means. He tried to find out stability and superiority of them. He found that in achieving their other valuable ends, the communists destroyed private property and killed many. Dictatorship imposed laws and denied the right to criticise.

Whose means are more efficacious

Dr. Ambedkar discussed the alternatives: Government by force and Government by moral disposition. He found Buddha declaring, with appropriate examples, that brutal force reigned supreme when moral force failed. “What the Buddha wanted was that each man should be morally so trained that he may himself become a sentinal for the kingdom of righteousness.” (Vol. 3: 459)

Withering away of the State

Dr. Ambedkar caught the communists accepting their flaw. They said that the State as a permanent dictatorship was a weakness in their political philosophy. They took shelter under the plea that the State would ultimately wither away. Dr. Ambedkar asked: when would it wither away? And what would take the place of the State when it withered away? The communists did not have the answer to the first question.

Dr. Ambedkar disclosed his views about a state. He believed that dictatorship might be good for a while. It might be used for making democracy
safe. But it should liquidate itself after it had done its work. The victors should disarm not only the enemies but also themselves in order to live in peace.

The communists claimed for permanent dictatorship in a state. Though it was a weakness of their philosophy, they got satisfied at the thought that ultimately the state would wither away. But Dr. Ambedkar asked a sharp question: would it be succeeded by anarchy? If it could not be sustained except by force and if it resulted in anarchy when the force holding it together was withdrawn what was the used of building up a communist state?

Dr. Ambedkar firmly believed that the only thing which could sustain a state after force was withdrawn was religion. But the communists cursed religion. Their hatred was so strong that they would not even try to discriminate between the religions which were helpful to the mankind and those which were not. They had extended their disgust of Christianity to Buddhism without considering the difference between the two. Their first charge against Christianity was that it taught people other-worldliness and sublimated poverty and weakness. The second charge was that it had been opium for the people. But Dr. Ambedkar strongly argued that both of these charges could not be applied to Buddhism. He cited an example of the Sermon of Buddha given to his disciple Anathapindika in which Buddha asked to acquire wealth lawfully.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, the establishment of the Sangh by Buddha was communism without dictatorship. Buddha, through his constant preaching of Dhamma, tried to change the mind of man, to alter his disposition. He wanted man to do things voluntarily without any force or compulsion.

As the communist dictatorship was successful in Russia, Dr. Ambedkar said that a Russian dictatorship would be good for all backward countries. But permanent dictatorship could not be accepted. Humanity, along with economic values, also required spiritual values. Dictatorship forgot to cater them. Man must grow materially as well as spiritually. Society required a new foundation based on equality, liberty and fraternity which would only be provided by Buddhism.

**Riddles in Hinduism – an Exposition to Enlighten the Masses (1987)**

This is one of the most debated works of Dr. Ambedkar. According to K. Raghavendra Rao, the book contains “…a relentlessly critical scrutiny of his own Hindu history and Hindu context, a merciless exposition of Hinduism as a torture-chamber from which he wanted to lead himself and fellow-untouchables into a more human and humane space.” (1998: 74) Dr. Ambedkar tried to subject the beliefs of what he called ‘Brahmanic theology’ to a modernist, rational and scientific scrutiny. He wanted to reveal the trickeries, sophistries and cheating executed on the untouchables by the Brahmins.

What did he imply by a Riddle? Rao presents the meaning explicitly –

A Riddle is something which, on the face of it, flies in the face of logic and common sense, but can be
shown to have a meaning and a motive other than what it flaunts in its facade. It is somewhat like the structuralist notion of a phenomenon whose surface reality conceals its real reality deep down and that to understand it is to reach down to its real reality. (1998: 74)

Dr. Ambedkar intended to expose the absurdities and duplicities of Hinduism through the systematic and rational study of the *Vedic* literature.

Dr. Ambedkar expressed his intention for writing this book. He wanted to awaken the common Hindu masses by revealing the Brahmanic theology. Showing them the quagmire in which the Brahmins had placed them, he wished to lead them on to the road of rational thinking. He wanted the Hindus to realize that their religion was not *Sanatan* as they had believed. The other purpose of writing the book was to display the techniques used by the Brahmins to deceive and misguide the people.

He said that originally the Brahmins worshiped the *Vedic* Gods. But in the course of time, they abandoned their *Vedic* religion and started to worship non-*Vedic* Gods. The reason, according to Dr. Ambedkar, was that the *Vedic* Gods ceased to be profitable to them. He found that the Brahmins started worshipping Muslim Pirs. They officiate at the *Darga*. He blamed the Brahmins for doing this just for the sake of money. They were not concerned with the religion but with *Dakshina*. “Indeed the Brahmins have made religion a matter of trade and commerce.” (Vol. 4: 6)

He very bitterly criticized the Brahmins for spreading among the masses the dogma of infallibility of the *Vedas*. He believed that the Hindu intellectuals ceased to grow and the Hindu culture and civilization became stagnant because of this dogma. If India had to progress, this dogma had to be destroyed root and branch. To him, the *Vedas* were worthless books; the sanctity and infallibility attributed to them was a mischief played by the Brahmins through later interpolations. He believed that the Hindu mind should be liberated from the hold of the Brahmins. He wanted to stir the Hindu masses. He was not afraid of the consequences.

**Part – I Religious**

**The difficulty of knowing why one is a Hindu**

Dr. Ambedkar claimed that a Hindu was always found puzzled about the reasons for his being a Hindu. A Hindu could not call himself a Hindu because he worshipped Hindu God, observed Hindu convictions or follow Hindu customs. There was nothing common about Hindu Gods, convictions and customs. All Hindus did not worship one God. They worshipped different Gods and Goddesses. They even worshipped non-Hindu Gods. It was not so in the case of a Parsi, a Christian or a Muslim as they worship single God. Dr. Ambedkar said, “A complex congeries of creeds and doctrines is Hinduism. It shelters within its portals monotheists, polytheists and pantheists.” (Vol. 4: 15)
If any Hindu claimed that he was a Hindu because he followed Hindu beliefs, he was wrong. The Hindus did not have definite creed. They differed in their beliefs because some believed in scriptures while exclude the *Tantras*; some believed in the *Vedas* and some others in the principle of *Karma*. No Hindu could claim that he was a Hindu as he followed Hindu customs. The Hindus had a variety of customs usually differing from each other due to cultural, geographical or social reasons.

Turning towards the caste system of the Hindus, Dr. Ambedkar observed that it was an essential feature of Hinduism. A person who did not belong to a particular caste recognized by the Hindus would not be accepted as a Hindu.

He asked the Hindus to think about this religious chaos.

**The Origin of the Vedas – The Brahminic explanation or an exercise in the art of circumlocution**

Dr. Ambedkar came to know that no Brahmin could speak confidently about the origin of the *Vedas*. He referred to Kalluka Bhatt’s commentary to write on the subject. Kalluka Bhatt propounded that the *Vedas* were *Sanatan* (eternally pre-existing) and were reproduced from memory. But Dr. Ambedkar was not concerned with the reproduction of the *Vedas*. Though there was no end, there must have been a beginning of the *Vedas*. But the Brahmins did not talk about it. He suspected the Brahmins for this circumlocution.

**The testimony of other Shastras on the origin of the Vedas**

Dr. Ambedkar took resort to the other *Shastras* to find out the origin of the *Vedas*. Refering to the *Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishadas, Smritis and Puranas*, he found eleven explanations for the origin of the *Vedas*:

(1) as originating from the mystical sacrifice of Purusha, (2) as resting on Skambha, (3) as cut or scraped off from him, as being his hair and his mouth, (4) as springing from Indra, (5) as produced from Time, (6) as produced from Agni, Vayu and Surya, (7) as springing from Prajapati, and the Waters, (8) as being the breath of Brahman, (9) as being dug by the Gods out of mind-ocean, (10) as being the hair of Prajapati’s beard and (11) as being the offspring of Vach. (Vol. 4: 24)

For Dr. Ambedkar, such a bewildering multiplicity of answers to a simple question became a riddle. He found this problematic because the experts who gave these explanations were all Brahmins and the all belonged to the same Vaidik school of thought. As the only guardians of this ancient religious tradition, the Brahmins provided incoherent and chaotic answers. Why?
Why suddenly the Brahmins declare the Vedas to be infallible and not to be questioned?

He came to know that the Hindus believed that the Vedas were final, conclusive and free from the failings, faults and frailties. The Vedic Brahmins called them *Apaurusheya* and considered them infallible. Dr. Ambedkar did not understand why these Brahmins propounded such a theory of the Vedas. He cited some lines from the Dharma Sutras. He proclaimed that there was a time when the Vedas were not regarded as a book of authority. Again, there was some other time when the Vedas were taken as the only authority. We do not find more discussion on the issue as it was left incomplete by Dr. Ambedkar.

Why did the Brahmins go further and declare that the Vedas are neither made by man nor by God?

Jaimini’s *Purva Mimansa*, a book of Brahminic Philosophy, propounded that the *Vedas* were *Apaurusheya*, i.e. not made by men. But Dr. Ambedkar claimed that the authors of the *Vedas* were the *Rishis*. He observed the *Anukramanis* – systematic indices to various portions of the ancient Vedic literature to find the truth. He called them realistic and referred to Katyayana’s *Sarvanukramani* to the *Rig–Veda* to prove his point. “The Rishis themselves have treated the Vedas as a human and as a historical product.” (Vol. 4: 29) He also quoted from Gautama’s *Nyaya* system of Philosophy; the *Vaishashika* system and Kapila’s *Sankhya* system. He tried to prove that the *Vedas* were the result of an intelligent mind.

What then made the Brahmins propagate such a view? Why did the Brahmins make such a desperate attempt for establishing a desperate conclusion? He suspected if it was done because the *Vedas* had been made the exponent of the *Chaturvarna* with the Brahmins as the God of all.

The contents of the Vedas: have they any moral or spiritual value?

Dr. Ambedkar compared the views of some modern and ancient critics to prove that the *Vedas* were not infallible, not having any spiritual value and full of vices. He quoted from the modern critic like Prof. Muir who considered the *Vedas* as the natural expression of the personal hopes and feeling of the ancient bards of whom they were first recited. Then Dr. Ambedkar mentioned a native scholar Charvaka who wrote against the *Vaidikas*. Again, he came across the commentary of Brahaspati who more boldly and aggressively opposed the *Vedas* than Charvaka. He then observed the authors of *Nyaya, Vaishashikha, Purva and Uttar Mimansa* defending the authority of the *Vedas*. He inferred that there must have been a respectable group of scholars opposing the authority of the *Vedas* whom these authors were bound to consider seriously.

Moreover, Dr. Ambedkar found the *Rig–Veda* full of indecencies. He suspected the claim of morality and spirituality made for the *Vedas*. He referred to Prof. Wilson who said that the *Vedas* presented a picture of
primitive life filled with curiosity but not elevating. They were not having any philosophical contents; instead, were full of vices.

In his observation of the *Atharva-Veda*, Dr. Ambedkar found it full of witchcraft and black-magic. He also quoted some *suktas* to prove that even the *Rig-Veda* was not free from the black magic and sorcery. After these citations, Dr. Ambedkar presented his riddle – “Neither the subject matter nor contents of the Vedas justify the infallibility with which they have been invested. Why then did the Brahmins struggle so hard to clothe them with sanctity and infallibility?” (Vol. 4: 52)

**The turn of the tide how did the Brahmins declare the Vedas to be lower than the lowest of their Shastras?**

Dr. Ambedkar found that the *Vedic* Brahmins divided the Hindu literature in two categories: (1) *Shruti* which included *Samhitas* and *Brahmanas* and (2) Non-*Shruti* which included *Aranyakas, Upanishads, Sutras, Itihas, Smritis* and *Puranas*. He could not find any logic for this division.

According to him, the *Itihas* and the *Puranas* were too elementary and too undeveloped at that time to be taken as the *Shruti*. They, along with the *Aranyakas*, formed the part of the *Brahmanas*. Again, at one time, the *Brahmanas* were included in the *Shruti* but later on they lost their position. The *Upanishads* and the *Sutras* were excluded from the category of the *Shruti*. He found these segregations puzzling.

Then he turned towards the *Smritis*. He found that the *Smritis* constantly grew in number till the arrival of the British. They formed the largest part of the Hindu religious literature. He made some observations on the *Smritis*: Baudhayana, Gautama or Apastambha did not recognize the *Smriti* as part of the *Dharma Shastra*. The sanction behind the *Smriti* was social whereas the *Shruti* had divine sanction. Moreover, the *Smritis* could not acquire the status or the authority of the *Shrutis*. But, at a certain point of time, the *Smritis* were given a status superior to that of the *Vedas*. Why did the Brahmins, after having struggled too hard for establishing the supremacy of the *Vedas*, degrade the *Vedas* and invested the *Smritis* with authority superior to that of the *Vedas*? He suspected their motive as he noticed that they did it with clever and artificial steps. He enumerated some of them.

The *Smritis* were followed by the *Puranas* in the point of time. He found that the *Puranas*, considered to be too unspiritual to be taken as the *Shruti*, were attributed a superiority over the *Vedas*. He quoted from some *Puranas* to prove his argument.

Running on his path of discussion, Dr. Ambedkar found that the *Tantras* based on the *Bhakti-Marga* were regarded by them as superior to the *Karma-Marga* and *Jnana-Marga* of the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads*. Referring to Kalluka Bhatta, he said that the *Tantras* and the *Vedas* were given equal status.
After making such a kind of survey, Dr. Ambedkar claimed that the Brahmins were not persistent in their beliefs regarding the sacredness of their religious books. The riddle emerged in his mind: what made the Brahmins degrade the Vedas and supersede them by Smritis, Puranas and the Tantras if they regarded their Vedas as the most sacred?

### How the Upanishadas declared war on the Vedas?

Dr. Ambedkar tried to find out the relation between the Upanishadas and the Vedas. Every common Hindu believed that both of them demonstrate the same philosophy and were complimentary to each other. But Dr. Ambedkar challenged this belief. He found out the reason for this misinterpretation. The Upanishadas were also called Vedanta meaning the last part of the Vedas or the essence of the Vedas. Therefore it was thought that there was no antagonism between the Vedas and the Upanishads.

Dr. Ambedkar quoted Max Muller, Gautama Dharma Sutras and Hardatta to make it clear that the Upanishadas were distinguished from the Vedantas and were not accepted as a part of the Vedic literature. He also commented on the etymology and meaning of the word Upanishada.

Referring to Muller and Kane, Dr. Ambedkar declared that the subject matter of the Vedas and the Upanishads were not complimentary but antagonistic. The Mundaka Upanishada preached that the Vedas were inferior to the Upanishads. He also quoted lines from Chhandogya, Brahadaranyaka and Katha Upanishadas to show that they were full of hatred for the Vedas. If such was the hostility, how did they come to be taken as complimentary?

### How the Upanishadas came to be made subordinate to the Vedas?

Jaimini, the author of the Mimamsa Sutras and the upholder of the Vedas, found it necessary to perform Vedic sacrifices (Karma-kanda) while Badarayana, the author of the Brahma Sutras and the upholder of the Upanishads, denied the same giving more importance to the Jnana-kanda. As a result of the contrary views of the both, Jaimini denounced the Vedanta by considering it as a false Shastra, a snare and a delusion, something superficial, unnecessary and unsubstantial. On the other hand, Badarayana defended his Vedanta Shastra with a very apologetic attitude instead of attacking Jaimini and denouncing his theory. According to Badarayana, the Vedanta or the ‘Jnana-kanda’ of the Upanishads was not opposed to the ‘Karma-kanda’ of the Vedas because they both were complimentary. The foundation of Badarayana’s Vedanta Sutras was this. It was not easy to understand Badarayana’s queer concept. Dr. Ambedkar thought that Badarayana, in his Vedanata Sutras, betrayed the Upanishads. Why did Badarayana acknowledge Jaimini on the question of infallibility of the Vedas which were opposed to the Upanishadas?

### Why did the Brahmins make the Hindu Gods fight against one another?

According to the Hindu theology, the world was created by Brahma, preserved by Vishnu and destroyed by Mahesh. It was called the doctrine of
Trimurti which suggested that these three Gods were equal in status; they were allies and friends complimenting each other. Referring to the *Puranas*, Dr. Ambedkar announced that these Gods were worse enemies of each other, competing for supremacy and dominion among themselves. He illustrated the statement by showing the conflict between Brahma and Vishnu on the matter of the *Avatars* of Vishnu and the issue of the first born. Various *Puranas* gave different lists of the *Avatars*. According to the *Skanda Purana*, Brahma’s claim to be the first born was false. Vishnu got the right to be first born even with the help of Shiva. There was also a story, narrated in the *Ramayana*, in which Brahma tried to create enmity between Shiva and Vishnu evidently to secure his position. Initially, Brahma was superior to both of them but gradually, he lost his position. Dr. Ambedkar wrote, “The result of this degrading and defamatory attacks on Brahma was to damn him completely. No wonder that his cult disappeared from the face of India leaving him a nominal and theoretical member of the Trimurti.” (Vol. 4: 75) Brahma was driven out. But either Shiva or Vishnu could not be inferior to the other in the matter of nobility of origin, names and emblems.

Dr. Ambedkar accepted the existence of many Gods among the Hindus. But he commented, “What strikes one as a strange phenomenon is the sight of the Hindu Gods, struggling one against the other, their combats and feuds and the ascriptions by one God to the other, all things that are a shame and disgrace to common mortals. This is what requires explanation.” (Vol. 4: 79)

**Why did the Brahmins make the Hindu God suffer to rise and fall?**

Dr. Ambedkar wrote that there was nothing wrong in the idol-worship of the Hindus. The objectionable thing was the *Pranapratishtha* (life-giving ceremony) of these idols. He compared the Hindus with the Buddhists in the matter of idolisation. He found that the Buddhists, unlike the Hindus, did not take the idols as living human beings. He said the Hindus was that they were polytheists i.e., they worship many Gods. But Polytheism was not the real problem. The real charge was that they were never steadfast in devotion to their Gods. There was no faith, attachment or loyalty in their devotion. It was strange to worship some Gods for some time and then start worshipping new Gods keeping the old ones aside.

Referring to the *Rig-Veda*, he stated that there were three thousand three hundred and nine Gods. But the number was gradually reduced to merely thirty-three. The question was more of their relative rank than that of their numbers. They were classified under the categories: great and small, old and young. He found from a Buddhist essay called *Chula-Niddessa* that Agni, Indra, Soma, Varuna and Surya were successively given the highest position. Then they disappeared and Krishan, Vishnu, Shiva and Rama were brought in. The extinction of the old Gods and the emergence of the new Gods remained a mystery. It got deepened by the fact that some of the new Gods were anti-Vedic. The first illustration was that of Shiva. Shiva’s enmity with his father-in-law Daksha and his destruction of Daksha’s *Yajna* proved him to be anti-Vedic. The *Chhandogya Upanishada* established Krishna as an anti-Vedic God.
Again, he found that the *Devi Bhagwat* claimed that the world and the *Trimurti* were created by the Goddess called Shri. He also noticed that Krishna was a man to who was raised to godhood. He was uplifted to the supreme God above all others as narrated in the *Bhagwat Gita*. Dr. Ambedkar found the case of Rama more artificial than that of Krishna. Born as a man, he was elevated to the status of God with perfection.

Dr. Ambedkar concluded, “Poor creatures they (Gods) became nothing more than mere toys in the hands of the Brahmins. Why did the Brahmins treat the Gods with so scant a respect?” (Vol. 4: 98)

**Why did the Brahmins dethrone the gods and enthrone the goddesses?**

The worship of Goddesses was quite uncommon because Gods were unmarried and had no wives. But Dr. Ambedkar found that the Hindus did worship Goddesses. During the *Vedic* times, as mentioned in the *Rig-Veda*, there were many Goddesses found in action. In the *Puranic* times also, there were many Goddesses. After making a list of the Goddesses, he said that it was difficult to find their parentage and their husbands. It could not be said for sure if these names identified distinct Goddesses or were different names of a single Goddesses. Reading the *Varah Purana*, he came to know that Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati were different names of the same divinity. But this theory looked odd as these Goddesses were known to be the wives of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva respectively and these Gods were at war with each other.

He compared the *Vedic* Goddess with the *Puranic* Goddesses. The *Vedic* Goddesses were worshipped by courtesy, i.e. only because they were the wives of the Gods; whereas the *Puranic* Goddesses commanded worship in their own right. The former did not go to the battle-field while the later performed heroic deeds on the battle-field. Dr. Ambedkar was surprised to find that the *Puranic* Goddesses had to fight against the *Asuras*. In the *Vedic* period, only Gods used to do that. When the Gods like Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva were there, why did these *Puranic* Goddesses go for battles?

It was believed that every God had energy or power which was technically called *Sakti* and the *Sakti* of every God resided in his wife the Goddess. Kali and Durga – the wives of Shiva – were the only Goddesses claimed to be heroic. Why did Sarasvati and Lakshmi not take part in the battle? Why was Shiva’s *Sakti* residing in Parvati as dull, dormant and inactive as to be non-existent? Again, he was left puzzled about the absence of any such *Sakti* in the *Vedic* Goddesses.

Dr. Ambedkar said that the Brahmins made their Gods spineless by making Durga the heroine. It seemed that they were incapable of their own defence. “How can such cowardly Gods have any prowess? If they had none, how can they give it to their wives. To say that Goddesses must be worshipped because they have *Sakti* is not merely a riddle but an absurdity. It requires explanation why this doctrine of Sakti was invented.” (Vol. 4: 107)

**The Riddle of the Ahimsa**
Dr. Ambedkar compared the habits and social practices of the modern Hindus with the Ancient Aryans. He found the change acquiring the status of a revolution.

Studying the ancient literature, he came to know that the Aryans were a race of gamblers and drunkards. Man–woman relationship did not have any moral or ethical standards to follow. The ancestors of the modern vegetarian Hindus were not only meat-eaters but beef-eaters. He took evidences from the *Rig-Veda* and the *Dharma Sutras* to prove that from the Brahmins to the Shudras, all ate meat. The modern Hindus do not even think of killing animals for food. They believe in *Ahimsa*. What made them change their practice of *himsa*? The chapter was left incomplete.

**From Ahimsa back to Himsa**

The *Tantras* came into being only after Manu. The essentials of *Tantrik* worship were the five Makars: *Madya* (liquor), meat (*Mansa*), fish (*Matsya*), fried grain (*Mudra*) and sexual union (*Maithuna*). Dr. Ambedkar observed that the *Tantras* not only removed the prohibition of wine and flesh, but they made drinking and flesh eating a matter of faith. To his astonishment, the Brahmins also played a major role in furthering the *Tantra* and *Tantra*-worship. They recognized the *Tantras* as a fifth *Veda*. They rejected Manu’s prohibition for liquor and flesh and began to drink and eat without any restriction. Why was it so?

**How did the Brahmins wed an ahimsak god to a bloodthirsty goddess?**

He quoted long passages from the *Kali Purana* showing the animal sacrifices made in the name of Kali. He was astonished to find that even after centuries of *Ahimsa* propagated by Manu, he came across such books which were full of *Himsa*. *Himsa*, approved by the *Tantras*, included human sacrifices too. He found that *Kali* was the wife of Shiva and at one time, the animal sacrifice was also offered to Shiva. The Brahmins changed Shiva form a *Himsak* God to an *Ahimsak* God. The striking fact was that the blood-thirsty Goddess Kali was made a wife of an *Ahimsak* God Shiva. This was a riddle to him.

This chapter is followed by five appendices: the riddle of the *Vedas*, the riddle of the *Vedanta*, the riddle of the *Trimurti*, *Smarth Dharma* and the infallibility of the *Vedas*.

**Part – II Social**

**The four Varnas – are the Brahmins sure of their origin?**

Dr. Ambedkar described the *Varna Vevastha* which was the soul of Hinduism. Every Hindu believed that the Hindu Social Order was a Divine Order. It permanently divided the society into four classes – Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras – linked together in an order of graded inequality and fixed the occupations of the four classes. He wanted to find out
the origin of this Varna system. He approached the ancient Hindu literature for the answer.

He found that there was no harmony between the Vedas on the serious matter of the origin of the Varnas. In addition to it, none of the Vedas agreed with the Rig-Veda in its theory that the Brahmans were created from the mouth of the Prajapati, the Kshatriyas from his arms, the Vaishyas from his thighs and the Shudras from his feet. The Sathpatha and the Taittiriya Brahmana also differed and did not conform to the Purusha Sukta. Manu repeated the theory of the Rig-Veda in Manu Smriti and Valmiki showed agreement to Manu in the Ramayana. But again the Mahabharata did not give support to the Vedic origin of the Varna System. Turning to the Puranas, he found that they were incomplete or inconsistent in their explanation.

Dr. Ambedkar found nothing but chaos prevailing in the Hindu religious literature regarding the number and the origin of the Varnas and the rule of graded inequality. He suspected the purpose of the Brahmans to invent such a theory.

The four Ashramas – the why and how about them

Dr. Ambedkar discussed the Ashram Dharma and its principles. He observed:

The Varna Dharma is a theory of the organization of society. The Ashram Dharma on the other hand is a theory of regulating the life of an individual....The Hindus... call the two by a joint name of Varnashram Dharma as though they were one and integral. The two together form the steel-frame of the Hindu Society. (Vol. 4: 205)

He referred to Manu Smriti to know the meaning, origin, purpose and features of the Ashram Dharma. He stated three features: It was not open to the Shudras and women. Brahmacharya and Grahasthashram were compulsory. But Vanaprastha and Sannyas were not compulsory. One must pass from one stage after the other as they stood in order. No one could omit one and enter the next one.

Dr. Ambedkar was puzzled about the enforced Brahmacharya and the mandatory observance of the sequence of the Ashramas. Surprisingly, there was time when a Brahmachari was free to enter any of the three Ashramas. The Dharma Sutras made Grahasthashram an optional state. Then why did Manu make marriage obligatory? Again, there were many similarities between Grahasthashram and Vanaprasthashram as well as Vanaprasthashram and Sannyas ashram. Dr. Ambedkar found it difficult to understand why Manu recognized the third ashram of Vanaprastha in between Grahasthashram and Sannyas as an ashram distinct and separate from both.

Manu's madness or the Brahmanic explanation of the origin of the mixed castes
Dr. Ambedkar found in *Manu Smriti* the groups of castes under the heads like (1) Aryan Castes, (2) Non-Aryan Castes, (3) Vratya Castes, (4) Fallen Castes and (5) Sankara Castes. The Aryan castes included the *Chaturvarna*; the non-Aryan castes included the communities which did not accept the creed of *Chaturvarna* such as *Dasyu*; the Vratya castes included the communities which once believed in the *Chaturvarna* but later on rebelled against it; the Fallen castes included those Kshatriyas who became Shudras because of the disuse of Aryan rites and ceremonies and loss of services of the Brahmín priests; the Sankara castes included the members whose parents did not belong to the same caste.

He reproduced Manu’s list of progeny of the mixed castes. But he found that the list was not exhaustive. Manu had conveniently forgotten to mention certain pairs of castes. Some of the names of the mixed castes mentioned by Manu appeared to be quite fictitious while some others had never been heared of before Manu. Dr Ambedkar was reluctant to believe that a caste being an insoluble substance would lose its separate existence.

Dr. Ambedkar believed that Manu’s theory of the origin of the mixed castes assigned an ignoble origin to a vast number of country men leading to their social and moral degradation. Why did he say that the castes were mixed in origin, when they were independent in their existence?

**What did the Brahmins wish to gain by the change from paternity to maternity?**

Dr. Ambedkar described the Hindu law of marriage and paternity according to which, there were eight forms of marriage: *Brahma, Daiva, Arsha, Prajapatya, Asura, Gandharva, Rakshasa and Paisacha*. This law also recognized thirteen kinds of sons which included *Aurasa, Kshetraja, Pautrikaputra, Kanina, Gudhaja, Punarbhava, Sahodhaja, Dattaka, Kritrima, Kritaka, Apavidha, Swayamdetta* and *Nishada*. Dr. Ambedkar found that many forms of marriage were euphemisms for rape and seduction and many of the sons had no blood relationship with their father. Even Manu considered them as lawful and suggested only some minor changes.

Before Manu, the law of consanguinity assigned the *Varna* of the father to the child ignoring the *Varna* of the mother if they were different. But Manu brought radical changes in this law. The child’s *Varna* came to be decided according to the *Varna* of his mother. Why did he do so?

**Kali Varjya or the Brahmanic art of suspending the operation of sin without calling it sin**

Dr. Ambedkar discussed the Brahmanic dogma of *Kali Varjya*. According to it, there were some customs and usages valid and good in other *yugas* but forbidden in the *Kali Age*. These practices were not immoral, sinful or harmful to society. Without giving any reason, the Brahmins directly prohibited them. He was left puzzled at this technique of forbidding without condemning.
This chapter is followed by two appendices: the riddle of the Varnashram Dharma and compulsory matrimony.

Part – II Political

The theory of Manvantara

Manvantara was related to the political government of the country. It was a period of reign by a corporation consisted of Manu and Saptarishis. Fourteen Manvantaras made one cycle. The Vishnu Purana propounded that each Manvantara had its own Manu. Manu was succeeded by another Manu. But each Manu did not form laws for his own Manvantara. The only Manu who made laws was the Swayambhu Manu. If the laws made by Swayambhu Manu were eternal, why did the Brahmins have separate Manvantara?

Brahma is not Dharma. What good is Brahma?

Dr. Ambedkar discussed the concept of democracy in detail. He concluded that good government meant good laws and good administration which seek the advantages of the whole society including the downtroddens. He believed that the democratic governments failed because the society for which they were established was not democratic. He considered fraternity as the root of democracy. And fraternity had its origin in religion. Democracy did not flourish in India because the Hinduism was not conducive to fraternity. It nurtured class consciousness. The Hindu social system was designed to be undemocratic as there were the barricades like varnas and castes working against democracy. He charged the Hindu religion and philosophy for not producing social democracy and the feeling of fraternity.

He then talked about Brahmaism, Vedanta and Brahmanism. The essence of Brahmaism was – Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma (All this is Brahma); Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahma) and Tattvamasi (Thou art also Brahma). The dogmas of Vedanta were – Brahma was the only reality; the world was maya (unreal) and Jiva and Brahma were, according to some, identical or not separate from him or were distinct and separate. The theory of Bramhanism demonstrated – belief in the chaturvarna; sanctity and infallibility of the Vedas and the only way to salvation was sacrifices to Gods.

Brahmaism and Vedanta agreed on the matter that Atman was the same as Brahma. But Brahmaism did not treat the world as unreal, while Vedanta did. Brahmaism was criticised for giving an arrogant dogma ‘I am Brahma’. Dr. Ambedkar argued that those who scorned at this dogma as an impudent claim should not forget the other part of the above dogma ‘Thou art also Brahma’. He firmly believed that Brahmaism furnished a better foundation for democracy as it propounded equality. It established that all human beings on the earth were parts of Brahma, the same cosmic principle. It “leaves room for no other theory of associated life except democracy…. It makes democracy an obligation of one and all.” (Vol. 4: 286) Unfortunately, Brahmaism was kept at the level of philosophy only. It was not utilized as an instrument for social reconstruction.
Why did Brahminism fail to produce a new society? On one hand, he found the most democratic principle of Brahminism and on the other hand, the society was diseased with castes, sub-castes, outcastes, primitive tribes and criminal tribes. Though the Brahmins did recognize Brahminism, they supported inequality between the Brahmins and the Shudras. The theory of Shankaracharya was ridiculous as he preached both Brahminism and Brahmanism. Dr. Ambedkar commented, “Only a lunatic could be happy with being the propounder of two such contradictions.” (Vol. 4: 287)

Kali Yuga – Why have the Brahmins made it unending?

All Hindus believed that they were living in Kali Yuga that was immoral. It would not allow human efforts to bear any fruit. Dr. Ambedkar discussed some significant issues related to Kali Yuga. He started with the meaning of Kali Yuga. He referred to the ancient Hindu scriptures and some scholars to find out the meaning of the term. He also referred to theology, literature, astronomy and mathematics to prove his point. Kali was one of the cycles made up of four Yugas: Krita, Treta, Dwapar and Kali. The term Kali Yuga was used to label a unit in Hindu system of calculating time.

When did the present Kali Yuga begin? He came across the two different views. According to the Aitereya Brahmana, Kali Yuga began with Nabhanedishta son of Vaivasvata Manu. According to the Puranas, it began on the death of Krishna after the battle of Mahabharata. Dr. Shamshastry gave the date 3101 B.C., whereas Mr. Aiyer believed it to be 1177 B.C.

When was Kali Yuga going to end? He came across the view of the great Indian astronomer Gargacharya who declared the end of Kali Yuga in about 165 B.C. The Brahmins believed that Kali Yuga was going on and the renowned astrologer said that it was closed. The period originally covered by Kali Yuga came to be lengthened. It was done by adding two periods before and after the beginning and the end of the Yuga and by declaring that the period fixed for the Yugas was really a period of divine years and not human years. Thus it became endless.

What did the Kali Yuga stand for? It was taken to be a demoralized age of adharma. Dr. Ambedkar tried to find out the reason for this moral degradation. He compared the later Aryans with the ancient Aryans and found that the later Aryans were greatly improved in their manners and morals. The religion of the Vedic Aryans was full of barbaric and obscene observances. They performed human sacrifices. They were gamblers, drunkards and sellers of women. Their life was full of obscenity. There was a state of complete promiscuity both in the higher and lower classes of the society. The complete disregard of consanguinity in cohabitation was found. The Brahmins of the time were immoral.

The later Aryans were courageous enough to bring about drastic changes in the society. They stopped following the Devas and the Rishis. They stopped gambling. They made marriage permanent and divorce impossible. They ended polyandry and regulated Niyog. They made the law of consanguinity authoritarian. It was a mere perversion to call such an age a
demoralized one. It could be concluded that *Kali Yuga* stood erect as far as the issue of morality was concerned.

The riddle was related to the *Mahayuga* claiming that the golden past would return after the cycle was complete. But how could it be finished when there was no end to *Kali Yuga*? He suspected the Brahmins for indefinitely extending the period *Kali Yuga*.

**The riddle of the Kali Yuga**

According to the *Vishnu Purana*, there were five measures of time: Varsha, Yuga, Maha Yuga, Manvantara and Kalpa. The divisions and sub-divisions of time were extremely perplexing and were not based on either mythology or history. He wanted to find out the reason for the invention of the theory of *Kali Yuga* and its relation to the degraded state of society. The Brahmins of this age recognized only two *Varnas*: the Brahmins and the Shudras. Why was it so? He then repeated the discussion on *Kali Varjya* already mentioned in the twentieth riddle.

This chapter is followed by an appendix named the riddle of Rama and Krishna.

**Buddha and His Dhamma (1992)**

Dr. R. L. Soni writes, “A man of practical sense, this intellectual luminary was, above all, a far-sighted religious leader. He was certainly the hero of contemporary Buddhist renaissance in India. Moreover, in the annals of the world-wide revival of Buddhism in the mid-twentieth century, he stands out as a beacon-light for all times and climes.” (Ahir 2000: vi)

Before Dr. Ambedkar, Buddhism in India was almost a forgotten creed. It was he who endeavoured to promote it. “In fact, he was a crusader who put a new life in Buddhism…. He not only revived but also revitalized the teachings of Lord Buddha’s Dhamma.” (Jatava 1998:115) He restored to mankind the social and religious culture of the Buddha. As a disciple of Buddha, he firmly believed that God or scriptures could not save mankind from perdition; only the right relations between man and man based on morality, equality and fraternity could do it.

In this monumental treatise, Dr. Ambedkar re-interpreted the *Dhamma* to show that it could amply meet the requirements of modern man. He attempted to present the life and lessons of Buddha in his own manner. He wanted to make it look like a consistent whole. He wished to provide a fresh new perspective to the questions related to Buddha’s life, *Parivraja* and gospel. The book is divided into eight books; the books into various parts and the parts into different subtitles. As Dr. Ambedkar plunged into Buddha’s life and sermons were deeply, the volume consists of many minute details of Buddha’s life and his on interpretation of Buddha’s preachings. Since this study requires emphasising literary perception of his writings, the volume is not evaluated chapter wise. Only important aspects are taken into consideration.
Dr. Ambedkar discussed Buddha’s journey from Siddharth Gautama to Buddha with modern perspective. In the introduction, he presented the theory of Parivraja (Renunciation) in a new light. He wanted to re-state the reason for Buddha’s Parivraja. According to the traditional theory, Buddha saw a dead person, a sick person and an old person and made up his mind for Parivraja. But Dr. Ambedkar rejected this argument saying, “It is impossible to accept the traditional explanation that this was the first time he saw them. The explanation is not plausible and does not appear to reason.” (Vol. 11: Introduction)

To find out a credible answer, he looked into the early life of Buddha. Buddha’s father Suddhodana was a Kshatriya king of Sakya State. Born in the year 563 B.C., he was given a name Siddharth Gautama. Interpreting the dream of Mahamaya (his mother), the learned Brahmins made prophesy and said Suddhodana, “You will have a son, and if he leads a householder’s life he will become a universal monarch, and if he leaves his home and goes forth into a homeless state, and becomes a sanyasi, he will become a Buddha, a dispeller of illusions in the world.” (Vol. 11: 4)

Siddharth had to be trained in war-affairs as he was a Kshatriya and fighting was the duty. Dr. Ambedkar found that Siddharth started challenging the traditions of the Hindu society from the very childhood. Instead of performing his class duties, he bothered himself with the issue of exploitation of the labourers. The anxious mother reminded him of his duty of fighting which could only be learnt through hunting. To her, hunting was a training ground for the warrior class. But Siddharth, even in his early age, believed in developing the spirit of universal love. His philosophy ran thus:

> When we think of living things, we begin with distinction and discrimination. We separate friends from enemies, we separate animals we rear from human beings. We love friends and domesticated animals and we hate enemies and wild animals. This dividing line we must overcome and this we can do when we in our contemplation rise above the limitations of practical life. (Vol. 11: 12)

At his initiation into the Sakya Sangha after the age of twenty, Siddharth took a number of vows and agreed to fulfill all the duties of the Sangha. Dr. Ambedkar described an incident of dispute between the Sakyas and the Koliyas in which Buddha demonstrated a rare combination of politeness of nature and firmness of mind. When called for fight as a Kshatriya, Siddharth rejected traditional view of Dharma: “Dharma, as I understand, it consists in recognizing that enmity does not disappear by enmity. It can be conquered by love only.” (Vol. 11: 25-26)

Finally he was denied to go against the decision of the Sangha. If he would go against the decision, he would be punished. Siddharth was offered three alternatives: To join the forces and participate in the war; to consent to be hanged or exiled or to allow the members of his family to be condemned to a social boycott and confiscation of their property.
Siddharth was very firm in his decision regarding war. He also did not want his innocent family members to suffer because of him. Therefore he chose the second alternative after duly pondering on all the three. He expressed his view: “I am the guilty person. Let me alone suffer for my wrong. Sentence me to death or exile whichever you like. I will willingly accept it and I promise I should not appeal to the King of the Kosalas.” (Vol. 11: 28)

Siddharth had the right to appeal to the king. But a man of conviction, he was willing to forgo even that right. Both the sides suggested that Siddharth should undertake self-Parivṛaja. At that time, he was only twenty-nine. He was called ‘the blessed one’ and admired by everyone because of his selection of the path of peace and goodwill.

Dr. Ambedkar mentioned that Siddharth preferred to go through voluntary punishment which involved the exchange of riches for poverty, comforts for alms, home for homelessness. Before leaving for exile, he advised the Sakya people not to follow him and to create public opinion in order to settle the dispute between the Sakyas and the Koliyas. After many demonstrations and processions, under the pressure of the people, both the Sakyas and the Koliyas agreed for a dialogue to avoid war. The news could have ended his Parivrajaka. But he, after pondering a lot, concluded:

The problem of war is essentially a problem of conflict. It is only a part of a larger problem.... The conflict between nations is occasional. But the conflict between classes is constant and perpetual. It is this, which is the root of all sorrow and suffering in the world.... I see now that my problem has become wider. I have to find a solution for this problem of social conflict. (Vol. 11: 57-58)

Siddharth realized that this conflict was present at all the levels and at all the time in this world. He found the origin of all sorrows in the constant and perpetual class-conflicts. He was determined to find out the solution for the social conflicts. He started with the study of the existing models or the traditional philosophies of life. At Brighu Ashram, where people sought salvation through penance, he did not get satisfaction. Then he reached at the place of Muni Arada Kalam. Under his guidance, Siddharth went through the experience of Samadhi Marg, a part of Sankhya philosophy. Dhayana Marg was also a part of this philosophy. Though Siddharth mastered both Dhayana and Samadhi Marg, they could not help him. Therefore he left the ashram rejecting the way of austerity.

At last, Siddharth meditated under a Banyan tree at Gaya for forty days. He reached the depth of the problem of social conflict through the experience of reason, investigation, concentration, composure, mindfulness and complete purity of mind. He concentrated on two aspects: the suffering prevalent in the world and the ways to remove this suffering and make mankind happy.
Siddharth found a method to handle the two fold problem which he called ‘Samma Bodhi’ (Right Enlightenment) by Siddharth. He became a Buddha after receiving the Samma Bodhi. The Banyan tree under which Siddharth became a Buddha came to be known as Bodhi tree.

Dr. Ambedkar mentioned that Siddharth was a Bodhisatta (a person seeking to be a Buddha) before he became a Buddha. Bodhisatta had to attain ten powers in order to become a Buddha: Mudita (joy), Vimala (Purity), Prabhakari (brightness), Arcishmati (Intelligence of Fire), Sudurjaya (Difficult to Conquer), Abhimukhi, Durangama (going far off), Acala (Immovable), Sadhumati and Dharmamegha. While going through this ten fold life experiences, a Bodhisatta became one with infinity. But he did not cease to be a human because of his great compassion for all beings.

Then Dr. Ambedkar proceeded to discuss the philosophy of the Brahmins and how and why it was rejected by Buddha. Vedic rishis, philosophers (like Kapila, the founder of Sankhya philosophy), Brahmins (like Manu) and the authors of various Upanishadic literature were the precursors of Buddha. But Buddha was more concerned with the literature produced by the Brahmins as it was the basis of the ancient society and continued to be the same in the present Indian society. Dr. Ambedkar explained the Brahmin-philosophy having four theses.

The first thesis declared that the Vedas were not only sacred but also infallible and their authority unquestionable. The second thesis viewed that the salvation of soul or escape from transmigration was only possible through the performance of sacrifices, observance of religious rites and ceremonies and giving gifts to the Brahmins. The third thesis dealt with an ideal society. It proclaimed that the Vedas provided an ideal structure of an ideal society based on Chaturvarna. This structure of society was obligatory.

Dr. Ambedkar propounded five rules on which this structure of the society was based. The first rule was related to the division of society into four classes: (i) Brahmins, (ii) Kshatriyas, (iii) Vaishyas and (iv) Shudras. The second rule did not allow equality among these four classes. The rights and privileges of all the classes were based on the principle of graded inequality and clearly defined by the Shastras. It was considered an offense to claim the rights of a higher class by the lower class.

The third rule presented the division of occupations based upon Chaturvarna. Learning and teaching were the occupations assigned to the Brahmins. Fighting was the occupation of the Kshatriyas. Vaishyas were made engaged in the trade and the Shudras were to serve the upper three classes. No one could change the occupation without being punished. The fourth rule was related to the right to education. Only the men of first three classes were given this right. The women of all classes and Shudras were denied education.

The fifth rule suggested the four stages of human life. In the first stage called Brahmacarya, men were to learn and receive education. In the second stage called Grihasthashram, men had to live a married life. The third stage
was Vanaprastha in which one lived the life of a hermit without leaving one’s home. The last stage was Sanyasa which suggested men to go in search of God and thereby find union with him. Dr. Ambedkar clarified that these stages were meant for the men of the first three classes only.

The fourth thesis of the Brahmin-philosophy indicated the principle of *Karma* (transmigration) of the soul from one birth to other. This transmigration of the soul depended on one’s deeds of the past life.

But Buddha unreservedly rejected the philosophy of the Brahmins. He believed that acceptance of the infallibility of the *Vedas* meant complete denial of freedom of thought. One could not find the truth without the freedom of thought. Buddha also rejected the rituals and sacrifices. He viewed real sacrifice as the sense of self-denial for the good of others. The Brahmins preached inequality as an official doctrine. Dr. Ambedkar bitterly commented that they were not content with inequality. The soul of Brahminism rested in graded inequality. As the human rights were denied to women and Shudras, Buddha rejected the Brahmanism thoroughly.

After gaining knowledge, Buddha was faced with a dilemma: whether to preach his doctrine *Samma Bodhi* or to continue his devotion for self-perfection. He was also doubtful about the power of understanding of ordinary men. A person was required to liberate himself from the entanglement of God and Soul and to give up his belief in rites, ceremonies and *Karma*. And that was very difficult to achieve for a common man. He thought deeply and sought the advice of Brahma Sahampati. Finally, he prepared himself for teaching his doctrine to masses. Brahma Sahampati announced in the following way,

Rejoice at the glad tidings. The Buddha, our Lord, has found the root of all evil and unhappiness in the world. He knows the way out. The Buddha will bring comfort to the weary and sorrow-laden……..In his doctrine there is love to create a longing to own those who are disowned or unowned: to the degraded there is the ennoblement ever present to raise them: to the disinherited and the downtrodden, there is equality blazing forth their path to advancement. His doctrine is the doctrine of righteousness and his aim is to establish the Kingdom of righteousness on earth. (Vol. 11: 113-114)

Buddha began his missionary journey. He gave his first sermon at Sarnath explaining the crux of his *Dhamma*. His *Dhamma* was not concerned with God and Soul, life after death, rituals and ceremonies. He bitterly said that people would not get a concession in rent from landlords by signing the songs of Rama. According to Buddha, “… belief in God was the most dangerous thing. For belief in God gave rise to the belief in the efficacy of worship and prayer and the efficacy of worship and prayer gave rise to the office of the priest and the priest was the evil genius who created all
superstitions and thereby destroyed the growth of Samma Ditthi (right view).” (Vol. 11: 254-255)

The first feature of his Dhamma was related to the human beings and their relation with other people on earth. The second feature was related to sorrow, misery and poverty endured by people. Dr. Ambedkar said that the purpose of his Dhamma was to remove these sufferings. According to his Dhamma, if every person followed the path of purity, righteousness and virtue, it would bring about the end of all suffering.

Explaining Dhammapada, he presented 170 selected verses re-arranged under 13 headings considering their relevance and importance. He added a few things in order to present the Buddha’s teachings in right perspective.

In his explanation of these aspects of his Dhamma, Buddha also laid emphasis on several virtues such as Karuna (loving kindness to human beings). Dr. Ambedkar noticed that Buddha considered love insufficient and felt the need of Maitri. “It is wider than love. It means fellowship not merely with human beings, but all living beings.” (Vol. 11: 129) It proved to be a foundation for the solidarity of not only human beings but also the entire creation. Buddha practised what he preached in his first sermon. He offered an alternative paradigm through the model of his Sangha.

Buddha continued to teach his doctrine to all people of all classes. He taught to the nobility, worshippers of fire (Agnihotris), Brahmins, kings and persons of high status. He asked people to practise good so that good might result from their actions. He taught his Dhamma to his family members also. During a visit to his family members, his son Rahul asked for his inheritance. Buddha said that he could not give him perishable treasures causing cares and sorrows. He wanted to give Rahul an inheritance of a holy life which was an eternal treasure. He told Rahul, “Gold and silver and jewels have I none. But if you are willing to receive spiritual treasures; and are strong to carry them and to keep them, I have plenty. My spiritual treasure is the path of righteousness. Do you desire to be admitted to the brotherhood of those who devote their life to the culture of mind seeking for the highest bliss attainable?” (Vol. 11: 167-168)

Dr. Ambedkar mentioned a remarkable feature of Buddha’s approach towards mankind. Buddha preached not only Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishasyas but also those who were considered as low and unclean. His service was extended to the lowest persons like barber, sweeper, untouchable, vagabond, robber, other criminals and even lepers. He made his Dhamma open to women also. His step mother Mahaprajapati Gautami, his wife Yashodhara, her companions and a young untouchable girl Prakrati (a Chandalika) were the first women converts. At the time of Prakrati’s conversion to Buddhism, Buddha said, “You are of low caste, but Brahmins will learn a lesson from you. Swerve not from the path of justice and righteousness and you will outshine the royal glory of queens on the throne.” (Vol. 11: 200)
Prakrati accepted his *Dhamma* and was admitted into the *Bhikkhuni Sangha*. Buddha introduced rules for the *Bhikkhus*. The *Bhikkhus* were organized into a *Sangha* and followed specific rules. For women, he introduced the *Bhikkhuni Sangha*. The amateur followers of Buddha were known as *Upasakas*. As householders, the *Upasakas* had to follow these rules of life rigorously: to acquire wealth lawfully; to see that their relatives also got their wealth lawfully and to live long and reach a great age.

These three things were welcome, pleasant and agreeable but very difficult to attain. For a true householder, there were four conditions precedent. They were the blessing of faith, the blessing of virtuous conduct, the blessing of liberty and the blessing of wisdom. Moreover, there were also the rules of life for children, students, husbands, wives, masters and servants also.

Dr. Ambedkar found that the *Bhikkhus* took vows to remain celibate, not to commit theft, not to boast, kill or take a life and not to own anything except what the rules allowed. Regarding the *Sangha*, Buddha gave the following rules of discipline: the *Sangha* was open to all. There was no bar of caste, sex or status. All were equal in the *Sangha*. Their rank was measured by worth and not by birth. Equality and equal treatment were fundamental rules for the members. Dr. Ambedkar wrote: “Whatever rules the Blessed Lord had made for the members of the Sangh were voluntarily and willingly accepted by him to be binding on him also.” (Vol. 11: 583)

Explaining *Dhamma*, Dr. Ambedkar enlisted the following six components:

1. *Dhamma* meant maintaining ‘purity of life’ in which one should refrain from taking life, from stealing and from wrong practice in sensual lusts.

2. *Dhamma* was to attain perfection in body, speech and mind.

3. *Dhamma* meant to live in *Nibbana* i.e., release from passion. It demanded a person to live righteous life.

4. *Dhamma* was to give up yearning. Buddha believed that satisfaction was the highest form of wealth. Man should not allow himself to be conquered by greed which had no limits.

5. *Dhamma* was to believe that all composite things were transient. One should detach from property, friends etc. because they were impermanent.

6. *Dhamma* was to take *Karma* as an instrument of moral order which had nothing to do with the fortune or misfortune of an individual. The Law of Karma was to maintain the moral order in the universe.

Dr. Ambedkar derived eight components given by Buddha to explain absence of *Dhamma*:

1. Belief in the supernatural was not *Dhamma*.
2. Belief in *Ishwara* (God) was not indispensible for *Dhamma*. 

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3. Dhamma established on union with Brahma was a false Dhamma.
4. Belief in soul was not Dhamma.
5. Belief in sacrifices was not Dhamma.
6. Belief based on speculation was not Dhamma.
7. Reading books of Dhamma was not Dhamma.
8. Belief in the infallibility of books of Dhamma was not Dhamma.

Buddha considered Dhamma as Saddhamma having two functions: to cleanse the mind of its impurities and to make the world a kingdom of righteousness. Dr. Ambedkar said that Dhamma became Saddhamma only when it promoted Pradnya (knowledge), Maitri (fellow feeling) and it must pull down all social barriers. As Buddha said,

(i) Dhamma must promote Pradnya. It must make education open to all. Bear learning was not sufficient, Pradnya was required.

(ii) Dhamma must promote Maitri. Mere Pradnya was not enough. It must be accompanied by Sila (moral temperament or fear of doing wrong.) Besides Pradnya and Sila, what was necessary was Karuna (loving kindness) and more than Karuna what was necessary was Maitri.

(iii) Dhamma must pull down all social barriers. It must breakdown barriers between humans. It should promote equatity and take worth and not birth as the measure of human being.

In a nutshell, new Dhamma propounded that the principle of salvation was to be found in this life, in inward change of heart to be brought about by the practice of self-culture and self-control.

Dr. Ambedkar’s views on Conversion

Dr. Ambedkar struggled for not less than two decades for the fundamental human rights of the untouchables within the Hindu-fold. Finally, he realised that the only way left for their liberation was conversion. Then onwards, the conversion became one of the main campaigns of Dr. Ambedkar’s life and works. On 13th October, 1935, he declared his definite intention of changing his religion in the presence of more than 10000 people in the conference at Yeola in Nasik. Eleanor Zelliot quoted Dr. Ambedkar’s words: “Because we have misfortune of calling ourselves Hindus, we are treated like thus. If we were members of another Faith, none would dare to treat us so. Choose any religion which gives you equality of status and treatment. We shall repair our mistake now.” (1992: 206)

Again, quoted by Eleanor Zelliot, Dr. Ambedkar also made his personal bold declaration: “I had the misfortune of being born with the stigma of an Untouchable. However, it is not my fault; but I will not die a Hindu, for this is in my power.” (1992: 206)

In the following articles and addresses written between 1926 and 1956, Dr. Ambedkar expressed his views on the conversion: Caste and Conversion (1989), Why Conversion? (2003), Away from the Hindus (1989) and The Great Conversion (2003).
Caste and Conversion

Dr. Ambedkar firmly believed that the caste system had closed all the doors of Hinduism to conversion. On the other hand, the Hindu-Muslim riots of 1926 and the conversion movement carried on robustly by the Muslims became a matter of great anxiety for the Hindus. The Hindus had a conviction that their culture and civilization had some native strength and stamina to survive any circumstances. But they were disillusioned by the Muslim attacks and got flattened physically as well as culturally.

Dr. Ambedkar also found one more factor responsible for the conversion on large scale. He noted, “Fortunately for the Muslims there is a large mass of non-descript population numbering about seven corers which is classed as Hindus but which has no particular affinity to the Hindu faith and whose position is made so intolerable by that faith that they can be easily induced to embrace Islam.” (Vol. 5: 422-423)

The Hindus were alarmed by the situation. “If with a superiority of numbers the Hindus are unable to face the Muslims what would be their fate if their following was depleted by conversion to Islam? The Hindus feel that they must save their people from being lost to them and their culture.” (Vol. 5: 423)

Dr. Ambedkar concluded that Hinduism was once a missionary religion, but for some reason it ceased to be that in the course of time.

Dr. Ambedkar argued that prior to conversion, a society should assure that its constitution permitted aliens to be made its members and allowed to participate in its social life. If there was no such provision on conversion, the question would at once arise where to place the convert. And in this situation, no conversion could take place. Dr. Ambedkar concluded that caste was
incompatible with conversion. As long as caste system or even the feeling of the caste was there, conversion or reconversion had no meaning.

**Why Conversion?**

Dr. Ambedkar could not stop the conversion of the Dalits with his arguments. The *Shuddhikaran* movement was begun by some leading Hindus to overcome this difficulty. But, according to Dr. Ambedkar, it failed in strengthening the Hindu community. Within the next ten years, he realised that the change of religion was the only remedy left for the problem of the untouchables.

The resolution, passed at the Yeola conference, as quoted by Dr. K. David Pandyan, ran thus: “Now the Oppressed Classes must not spend money and man power fruitlessly and must stop the fight on *Satyagraha* front. They must now consider their society separate from the Hindu society and organized the former to obtain for it an independent and respectable place in the country. Henceforth, all Depressed Classes must not take part in any Hindu religion festivals, Ratha, worships and other similar occasions.” (1996: 80)

Dr. Ambedkar also tried to explain the need for conversion to the masses through a written address in Marathi. He wanted to convince them for changing their religion.

Any conversion had two important aspects—social and religious or moral and spiritual. Dr. Ambedkar attached one more aspect to it—knowledge about the nature of untouchability. He was of the view that the class struggle between Hindus and untouchables was the root of the problem of untouchability. The struggle began with the demand of the untouchables for equal treatment. Like the struggle of slaves and masters, this struggle was also permanent without end. Dr. Ambedkar summed up the argument,

> To put it straight, it can be said that the struggle between Hindus and the Untouchables is a permanent phenomenon. It is eternal, because of the religion which has placed you at the lowest level of the society is itself eternal, according to the belief of the High Caste people. No change, according to times and circumstances is possible. You are at the lowest rung of the ladder today. You shall remain lowest forever. This means the struggle between the Hindus and the Untouchables shall continue forever. (Vol.17 Part 3: 118)

Then he asked a critical question whether the untouchables would survive this long struggle. The survival here required strength. According to him, strengths included man power, finance and mental strength which the untouchables did not have. He also gave reasons for this deficiency. He said that they were unorganized and belonged to minority. They had no land or
service or trade to earn wealth. And age-long deprivation might be the cause of the want of mental strength.

Dr. Ambedkar cited an example of the Muslims. He said that the secret of the survival of the Muslim community was their strength and solidarity as a community. But, according to him, as long as the untouchables were a part of the Hindu community, they could not except any support from within. They had to seek it from outside by associating with others through ‘conversion’. He advised people to accept other religions and assimilate themselves with other societies.

Then Dr. Ambedkar turned towards the spiritual upliftment of a person which he considered to be one of the important aspects of conversion. Religion was to govern people. But this was not applicable to Hindu religion as there was no place for individual. He proclaimed that Hindu religion was founded on a class-concept. It did not provide any guideline for behaviour of the individuals. A religion neglecting the individuality of a person was not acceptable to him. According to him, Sympathy, Equality and Liberty, the prerequisites for the upliftment of an individual, were absent in Hinduism. D. C. Ahir observes,

Various experiences convinced Dr. Ambedkar that the decaying and decadent structure of the Hindu society was beyond repair. The salvation of the destitute could only be found in getting rid of the religion which gave birth to the curse of caste and untouchability. He advised his followers to abjure Hinduism and embrace some other faith that would give them an equal status, a secure position and rightful treatment. (Ranga 2000: 93)

Dr. Ambedkar argued further that the untouchables were not Hindus. They were as separate from the Hindus as Muslims and Christians were. Some feared the division of the Hindu community due to conversion. But he denied any such split.

Dr. Ambedkar very clearly asserted the aim of the untouchables to get freedom could not be fortified without conversion. For him, conversion meant a total change of religion followed by the change of name. He referred to the history of conversion movement in India. He mentioned that the ancient Aryans followed Vedic religion. But with the advent of Buddhism in India, a large mass of people left Hinduism and joined Buddhism. He firmly believed that it was because Hinduism was not a religion, but slavery forced upon the people.

He mentioned that the caste system was actually part and parcel of Hinduism. To destroy caste system meant to destroy Hindu religion. On the other hand, Islam and Christianity did not sanctify caste but condemned it. As a result, to destroy caste among Christians or Muslims did not mean to destroy these religions. On the contrary, such a move would be encouraged by them. He also stated that the economic or political rights of the
untouchables would not be affected by conversion. He gave preference to the social strength as compared to these rights. He gave an open call to the untouchables for conversion if they wanted to be happy and secure equality and liberty.

Away from the Hindus

The Mahar conference held in May 1936 left great impact on the society. Dr. Ambedkar’s speech and its result started shaking the foundation of the orthodox Hinduism. Many threats and warnings were announced against the untouchables and their leaders for encouraging conversion. Dr. Ambedkar summarized all the objections of the opponents, Four Principal Objections, in different forms under four categories: (1) What can Untouchables gain by conversion? Conversion can make no change in their status. (2) All religions are true, all religions are good. To change religion is a futility. (3) The conversion of the Untouchables is political in nature. (4) The conversion is not genuine, as it is not based on faith. Dr. Ambedkar tried to answer systematically these objections in the following way.

Is conversion genuine?

Dr. Ambedkar began his discussion on this objection with the example of the European conversion history to Christianity. He mentioned that King Clovis was convinced by Bishop Remigins. The King was baptised with his 3000 followers. Dr. Ambedkar also cited the examples of German, Danish, Swedish and Russian who were also baptised in the same way. He concluded by asserting the genuineness of the conversion of the untouchables,

History records cases where conversion has taken place as a result of compulsion or deceit. Today religion has become a piece of ancestral property. It passes from father to son so it does inheritance. What genuineness is this in such cases of conversion? The conversion of the Untouchables if it did take place then it would take after full deliberation of the value of religion and the virtue of the different religions. How can such a conversion be said to be not genuine conversion? On the other hand, it would be the first case in history of genuine conversion. It is therefore difficult to understand why the genuineness of the conversion of the Untouchables should be doubted by anybody. (Vol. 5: 404)

Is conversion political in nature?

What could be the political benefit through this conversion? Dr. Ambedkar said that nobody ever had proved that there was any direct incentive to conversion of the untouchables. It would be appropriate to add here that there might be incidental advantages in the form of political gain but that could not be taken as a direct temptation. Dr. Ambedkar argued that the
opponents of the conversion must prove their accusation. He firmly believed that an incidental political gain did not make conversion criminal or even unjust. He added that the untouchables were already enjoying the political rights similar to the Muslims and the Christians. Their conversion would not bring any new political rights for them. It was a wild blame made without understanding.

Are all religions same?

Dr. Ambedkar accepted that all religions held a common philosophy that the meaning of life was to be found in the pursuit of ‘good’. At the same time, he added that the definition of ‘good’ was not similar in all the religions. One religion took brotherhood to be good, whereas another considered caste and untouchability to be good.

Then he pointed out a noteworthy feature of the religions. He observed that there were permanent differences found in the method of promoting good. Some religions advocated violence. The claim of equality of all religions could not stand any more. The preference of one over the other could not be denied.

The Hindus who opposed the conversion claimed that all the religions were same. Dr. Ambedkar pointed out that these opponents agreed with the science of comparative religion, which rejected the claims of all revealed religions that they were true and those which were not revealed were false.

That revelation was too arbitrary, too capricious test to be accepted for distinguishing a true religion from a false was undoubtedly a great service which the science of comparative religion has rendered to the cause of religion. But it must be said to the discredit of that science that it has created the general impression that all religions are good and there is no use and purpose in discriminating them. (Vol. 5: 406)

Is there any gain by conversion?

Dr. Ambedkar thought that the charges answered so far were not of serious nature. But the question related to the advantage of conversion required solemn attention. Some people opined that conversion could not make any change in the status of the untouchables. He wanted to draw out the fact.

Dr. Ambedkar started by declaring that the objection was based on an assumption. According to this assumption, religion was a purely personal matter between humans and God and it had nothing to do with social life. Dr. Ambedkar rejected this view and recommended separation of religion from theology. He said that religion was made of the usages, practices and observances, rites and rituals. He considered theology secondary. The aim of theology was to rationalize the content of the religion. During primitive times,
religion existed in the form of fixed traditional practices and not in the form of a system of belief with practical applications. Dr. Ambedkar observed that the primary content of that religion was social.

The Savage society was concerned with life and preservation of life and it is these life processes which constitute the substance and source of the religion of the Savage society. So great was the concern of the Savage society for life and the preservation of life that it made them the basis of its religion......what is true of the religion of the savage is true of all religions wherever things are found for the simple reason that constitutes the essence of religion. It is true that in the present day society with its theological refinement this essence of religion has become hidden from view and is even forgotten. (Vol. 5: 407)

He said that various practices, rites and rituals were primary in religion. They were actually related to the elemental facts of human existence such as life, death, birth and marriage. Magic, taboo and totem were not the ends but only means. The end was life and the preservation of life. These were the means through which people participated in the society. Concluding this argument, Dr. Ambedkar said, “The correct view is that religion like language is social for the reason that either is essential for social life and the individual has to have it because without it he cannot participate in the life of the society.” (Vol. 5: 409)

Then Dr. Ambedkar turned to discuss the purpose and function of religion. According to him, religion emphasized and universalized social values. It brought these ethics to the mind of an individual who was required to be familiar with them in all his acts so that he might function as an approved member of the society. But the purpose of religion was more than this. It spiritualized these morals. As Massey pointed out, “... that these moral and social values, with which religion deals, can be called as ‘spiritual’, but are still connected with personal and social life.” (2003: 35)

Dr. Ambedkar clarified the intention of this foregoing discussion: “... although it was undertaken to show that religion is a social fact, that religion has a specific social purpose and a definite social function it was intended to prove that it was only proper that a person if he was required to accept a religion should have the right to ask how well it has served the purposes which belong to religion.” (Vol. 5: 411)

After explaining the purpose and function of religion, Dr. Ambedkar gave a list of questions which should be asked to Hinduism by the untouchables – Did Hinduism recognize their worth as human beings? Did it stand for their equality? Did it extend to them the benefit of liberty? Did it help them to forge the bond of fraternity between them and the Hindus? Did it teach them that the untouchables were their brothers? Did it say that it was a sin to treat the untouchables as being neither man nor beast? Did it tell them
to be righteous to the untouchables? Did it preach to the Hindus to be just and humane? Did it inculcate the virtue of being friendly to them? Did it tell the Hindus to love the Untouchables, to respect them and to do them no wrong? Did Hinduism universalize the value of life without distinction? Dr. Ambedkar’s answer was ‘no’.

He said that untouchability was an integral part of Hinduism. Hinduism bore no hope for the untouchables. This made it imperative for them to quite Hinduism.

The next aspect of the same objection referred to the material gain through conversion. Dr. Ambedkar’s argument was threefold. He agreed that there would not be any economic gain. But as Hindus also, they could not prosper. So they had nothing to lose. By changing their religion, the untouchables would not lose any rights. They were likely to join Christian or Muslim community which had been given these rights earlier. Regarding the social benefits, he proclaimed that the untouchables would gain enormously. By conversion they would become members of a community whose religion had universalized and equalized all values of life. Such a blessing was unthinkable for them as long as they belonged to the Hindu-fold.

Dr. Ambedkar’s next concern was the problems of social isolation and inferiority complex. He was of the view that by entering into a new ‘kinship’, the problem of isolation would be solved. He said that kinship made the community take responsibility for defending the wrong done to a member. It generated generosity and invoked its more outrage which was necessary to amend a wrong. It was the will to support the kindred community to meet the tyrannies and oppressions of life.

Regarding the untouchables, he more precisely said,

For the Untouchables to establish their Kinship with another community is merely another name for ending their present state of isolation. Their isolation will never end so long as they remain Hindus. As Hindus, their isolation hits them from front as well as from behind. Notwithstanding their being Hindus, they are isolated from the Muslims and the Christians because as Hindus they are aliens to all – Hindus as well as Non-Hindus. This isolation can end only in one way and in no other way. That way is for the Untouchables to join some non-Hindu community and thereby become its kith and kin. (Vol. 5: 415)

Dr. Ambedkar then talked about the consequences of isolation. He said that isolation caused social segregation, humiliation, discrimination and injustice. It was denial of justice and opportunity; want of sympathy, fellowship and consideration. It was positive hatred and aversion from the Hindus. He believed that kinship with other community would enable the untouchables to
have equal position, equal protection and equal justice. They would be able to draw upon sympathy and good will of that community.

Why was conversion necessary to establish kinship? Dr. Ambedkar went through the history of the development of the concept of kinship. In the early stage, common bloodline used to be the basis of kinship, but later, common religion also became the basis of kinship. Dr. Ambedkar gave an example from the Bible. After getting converted to the religion of Naomi, Ruth said that his people would be her people and his God her God.

Talking about the inferiority complex of the untouchables, Dr. Ambedkar said that it was the result of their isolation, discrimination and the unfriendliness of the social environment. Feeling of helplessness produced by the circumstances cost them the power of self-assertion. He was hopeful about the evaporation of the inferiority complex through conversion.

Lastly, he tried to trace the change conversion brought in the general social status of the untouchables. Change of name was one of the important factors. Names were symbols and represented association of certain ideas and notions about a certain object. He took example of the name ‘Untouchable’ and called it a bad name. According to him, it repelled, forbade and stunk. The social attitude of the Hindu towards the untouchable was determined by the very name ‘Untouchable’. People did not care to go into the individual merits of an untouchable, no matter how meritorious he was. All untouchables knew this.

He noticed that there was a general attempt to find some name for themselves other than the ‘Untouchables’. The Chamars, the Doms, the Pariahs, the Madigar, the Mahars and the Bhangis called themselves Ravidas or Jatavas, Shipakars, Adi-Dravidas, Arundhatyas, Chokhamela or Somavamshi and Balmikis respectively. All of them would call themselves Christians if they were away from their localities.

At the end, Dr. Ambedkar made a call for conversion. He said that religion existed not for the saving of souls, but for the preservation of society and the welfare of the individual. Since Hinduism was unable to do so for the untouchables, they must go for conversion to a better religion.

The Great Conversion

The Deeksha (Initiation) into Buddhism brought the last stage of the conversion movement for Dr. Ambedkar. He expressed his feelings about this conversion in his address delivered the next day.

He announced that the conversion gave him enormous satisfaction and pleasure. He felt himself a liberated soul. In the same address, he gave reasons for embracing Buddhism. Buddhism was truly synonymous with scientific temper and ethical humanism. It was more than two thousand years old. It was an indigenous religion, not an imported one. Though the sermons of Buddha were eternal, he never proclaimed them as infallible.
This address also included Dr. Ambedkar’s clarifications to the questions raised by his opponents. He justified his choice of Nagpur for the conversion by saying that it was historically an important city for the Buddhists. The ancient tribals of Nagpur were non-Aryans and were oppressed by the Aryans. They were saved by Buddha from decay and extinction.

About 250000 people embraced Buddhism after Dr. Ambedkar. Questions were raised about the economic and political damages by conversion. Dr. Ambedkar very emphatically said that self-respect was more important than the material profits. For him, the struggle was for honour, and not for the economic progress only.

Dr. Ambedkar argued vigourously to support his decision to get converted into Buddhism. Even education could not fight back inequality and injustice. Calling Hinduism a diabolical creed, he said that the untouchables, enslaved under the yoke of Hinduism, did not have hope, inspiration or enthusiasm for better life. The only hope waiting for them was Buddhism. He claimed that 75 percent of the Bhikkhus were Brahmins and even then, Buddhism was called the religion of the Shudras.

Dr. Ambedkar mentioned a parallel case of Christianity. When Christianity penetrated into Europe, the scenario was that of dismal poverty. The people who extended a sympathetic response to the call of Christianity were not the spiritually convinced ones but the deprived ones. The poor and the oppressed became converts to Christianity. Quoting a great historian Mr. Gibben, Dr. Ambedkar concluded that just as Christianity was said to be a religion of the poor, Buddhism was called the religion of the Shudras.

Dr. Ambedkar also talked about the reason why Buddhism did not spread in India. According to him, lack of systematic preaching of Dhamma was the reason for it. He advised his followers to take Deeksha and spread Dhamma. He urged them to liberate people.

Dr. Ambedkar’s Views on Christianity

Dr. Ambedkar, along with other egalitarian religions, studied Christianity. In his writings, he directly and indirectly used ample allusions from the Bible to clarify his beliefs. He asked his people not to expect any kind of social justice from Hinduism; it could be brought by Islam, Christianity, or Buddhism. He believed that for Hinduism, preaching the gospel of justice was going against its own existence.

In order to explain the meaning of fraternity, Dr. Ambedkar quoted the lines from the Bible. To spell out the importance of an individual and his moral responsibility, he referred to it again. He compared the stories of creation of man found in the Bible and in the Rig-veda. He questioned the origin of the four social classes. He said,

No theology has made it its purpose to explain the origin of classes in society. Chapter I of the
Genesis in the Old Testament, which can be said to be analogous in intention and purpose to the Purusha Sukta, does nothing more than explain how man was created. It is not that social classes did not exist in the old Jewish society. Social classes existed in all societies. The Indo Aryans were no exception. Nevertheless, no theology has ever thought it necessary to explain how classes arise. Why then did Purusha Sukta make the explanation of the origin of the social classes its primary concern? (Vol. 7: 28)

Dr. Ambedkar gave an explanation why the higher classes would never accept Christianity. He analysed the working of the human mind for that. Christianity preached brotherhood and led to social equality. “Now the interest of the Brahmin and the higher classes is to maintain the system of Chaturvarna which is a system based upon inequality and which in the scale gave them a higher rank, greater opportunity to dominate and exploit the others. How can they be expected to accept Christianity? It means a surrender of their power and prestige.” (Vol. 5: 444)

Christianity in India

Dr. Ambedkar’s essay Christianising the Untouchables (1989) is an in-depth study and analysis of the Christianity in India. He noticed that the growth of Christianity in India was very slow. Before giving the reasons for it, he narrated the history of the Christian mission in India in brief. He found three reasons for the poor result of the Christian missionary work in India:

(1) The bad morals of the early European settlers in India

He referred to John William Kaye’s work Christianity in India: A Historical Narrative (1859) and quoted a number of examples to show the disgraceful conduct of the early Europeans who were sent to India. Irrespective of their classes, they demonstrated base moral standards and disrespectful social behaviour. The situation prevailed till the 18th century. He noted that men drank hard and gamed high, concubinage with the women of the country was the rule rather than the exception. Dr. Ambedkar criticised these evils:

Such was the disorderliness and immorality among Englishmen in India. No wonder that the Indians marvelled whether the British acknowledged any God and believed in any system of morality. When asked what he thought of Christianity and Christians an Indian is reported to have said in his broken English – ‘Christian religion, devil religion; Christian much drunk; Christian much do wrong; much beat, much abuse others’ – and who can say that this judgement was contrary to facts? (Vol. 5: 434)
(2) The struggle between the Catholic and non-Catholic

Dr. Ambedkar found that before the Roman Catholic missionary work began in India, a Syrian Church in South India was already existed. Syrian Christians lived on the coast of Malabar, considered St. Thomas as their founding father and Syria as their spiritual home. They did not know anything about the Pope or Church in Rome. With the advent of the Portuguese who belonged to the Roman Catholic Church in India, the struggle between the two Christian traditions started. They refused to take the Syrian Christians to be Christians. Then Romans tried oppression and military power upon the Syrians. But the Syrians continued to refuse the acceptance of the supremacy of the Rome. At last the Syrians surrendered but could also restore their faith with hard work.

Dr. Ambedkar wrote that there was no such open conflict between the Catholic Church and the Protestant Missionaries. But the rivalry between them was sufficient to prevent cooperation and important activities. This enmity hindered a rapid growth of Christianity in India.

(3) The wrong approach of the Christian missionaries

Dr. Ambedkar noticed that the Christian missionaries assumed that their task of converting the masses would be easy if they succeeded in converting the Brahmins and higher classes of the Hindus. For that, they need to prove that Hinduism was wrong. They started organising public debates with the learned Brahmins on the comparative merits of Christianity and Hinduism. But Dr. Ambedkar believed that the missionaries could not get success in their effort because there was no common ground between these two religions. And if there was any ground, the Hindus could always beat the Christians. He pointed out that the Hindus spoke in terms of philosophy and the Christians spoke in terms of theology. There was no possibility of evaluation, commendation or condemnation. As Christianity was devoid of philosophy, it could not attract the Brahmins and the educated Hindus. Moreover, the abundance of miracles in Hindu theology was sufficient to make Christian theology pale off in comparison.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Ambedkar stated that it was a wrong approach just opposite to that adopted by Jesus and his disciples. It was clear that the people to whom Christianity made a natural appeal were the poorer classes. They accepted Christianity without the help of law or other extraneous advantages.

Another method adopted by these missionaries was opening schools, colleges and hospitals. Dr. Ambedkar stated that this method also failed because the Brahmins and the higher classes took full advantage of the institutions maintained by the Christian Missions. But they hardly thought of the religion which brought these institutions into existence. According to him, since the Christians realised their mistake and started to win over the lower classes, the followers of Christianity are found in India today.
Then Dr. Ambedkar mentioned the event of ‘International Fellowship’ held in 1928. In that event Mahatma Gandhi raised and opposed the issue of conversion by Christian missionaries. He was particularly displeased with the conversion of the untouchables. According to Dr. Ambedkar, Gandhiji’s hatred for Christianity was based on certain propositions which were articulated by him in quite unambiguous term. He selected four propositions to show Gandhiji’s stand in this matter.

In the first proposition, Gandhiji said that all religions were fundamentally equal and all must show equal respect for all religions. He asked the missionaries not to teach anything but to be illustrious lives. He proclaimed that the Gospel of Christ did not need agents. Then he advised the Christians not to expect their patients to become Christians as a reward for the medical service. At last, he said that this conversion could not be a spiritual act; it was only for convenience. Harijans could not make out the relative merits because they had no intelligence and no sense of difference between God and no-God.

Then Dr. Ambedkar tried to find out whether Gandhiji showed a similar opposition to the conversion of the untouchables to Islam. His answer was ‘no’. To support his argument, Dr. Ambedkar cited from George Joseph, a Christian. According to George Joseph, it was necessary to make peace with Muslims as they were huge in number and could be a thorn in the movement of Nationalism. Due to their small numbers, the Christians did not count.

Dr. Ambedkar concluded that Gandhiji did not take the services to suffering humanity by missionaries as an essential requirement of their religion. Instead, he took them as baits or temptations. Dr. Ambedkar blamed that Gandhiji wanted to save the untouchables for Hinduism. He also blamed Gandhiji for being grossly unjust to Christian Missions. He argued, “This attitude of Mr. Gandhi need not deter either the missionaries or the Untouchables. Christinity has come to stay in India and, unless the Hindu in their zeal for nationalism misuse their political, social and economic power to suppress it, will live and grow in numbers and influence for good.” (Vol. 5: 450)

Then Dr. Ambedkar gave some other reasons for the insignificant position of Christianity. He said that the Indian Christians were unorganized. They were completely dependent on the missionaries for everything. Therefore Government did not care for them. Again, the Indian Christians were disjointed, rather disunited, community. They were divided by race, by language and by caste. Their religion had not been a strong unifying force. As a result, they did not have common aim, mind and endeavour. To conclude in the words of Dr. Ambedkar, “In short, the term Indian Christian is just a statistical phrase. There is no community feeling behind this phrase. Indian Christians are not bound together by what is consciousness of kind, which is the test of the existence of a community.” (Vol. 5: 476)

**Condition of the Converts**
In his essay *The Condition of the Convert*, Dr. Ambedkar focused on the condition of the untouchable converts to Christianity. He dealt with three questions: (1) How much Christian missionaries had succeeded in meeting the basic needs of untouchables? (2) Had Christianity succeeded in raising the status of untouchables to the level of touchables? (3) Had Christianity been able to save untouchable converts from the sufferings and the ignominy which was the misfortune of everyone who was born an untouchable?

In answering the first question, Dr. Ambedkar agreed that the Christian missionaries had done good work in the field of social service. He established a criterion for making any judgement on the social services of the missionaries. To him, it was necessary to bear in mind that Indian Christians were mainly the Shudras. The social services of the mission must therefore, be judged in the light of the needs of these classes.

The missionaries mainly provided education and medical relief which were beyond the range of the Indian Christians. Their service gave benefit to the high class Hindus. Dr. Ambedkar, while driving his discussion to the end, said that the Indian Christians wanted the safeguarding of their civil liberties and ways and means for their economic upliftment. This was a great desideratum in the social work the Christian Missions were doing in India.

Then he went further to find out the social status of the converts. Had untouchables become touchables? Had the converts discarded caste? He cited a long quotation from the memorandum submitted by the untouchable Christians of South India to the Simon Commission which made the point clear. The whole memorandum was summarized in the following points:

(1) Though the Christian religion taught the principle of equality among all human beings, yet the Dalit who converted to the Christians remained in the same position as they were in the Hindu society.

(2) A small number of Christians representing the Legislative Council belonged to higher castes.

(3) The most ridiculous rituals were performed to avoid pollution in the Church.

(4) The children of untouchable Christians were denied education ruthlessly.

(5) The Christian untouchables received the same treatment as was given to the Hindu untouchables.

Dr. Ambedkar also noticed that Christianity also failed to remove the pagan practices of the converts. The untouchables continued to follow the Hindu rites and rituals even after the conversion. Dr. Ambedkar studied the Church history of the various missions in India to find out the reason for failure in controlling these activities. He concluded, “The answer is that the Christian Missionaries although they have been eager to convert person to Christianity have never put up a determined fight to uproot paganism from the Convert. Indeed they have tolerated it.” (Vol. 5: 456)
To support his argument, he cited many examples. Father Robert de Nobili who came to India in 1608 declared himself a 'Roman Brahmin' and became a Sanyasi. Through imitation, he produced the ‘Fifth Veda’. In another example, an Anglican missionary Rev. Robert Noble who came to India in 1841 noted that his father did not allow him to mix with the cook’s or stable boy’s children. To him, it was not necessary for the Brahmins to sit with the pariah and the sweeper for taking the gospel of Christianity. He found it unreasonable and unchristian.

Dr. Ambedkar criticised the evil of caste practised even in the Church by asking a poignant question on behalf of his people: how was Christianity good for a Hindu if it did not liberate him from the shackles of the caste system?

Then he declared that Christianity fell short in protecting the converts from age-long misery and humiliation. He tried to find out the reasons for this failure. He believed that a change in the social status of the convert could have been the result of a two fold change. First, there must be a change in the attitude of the Hindus and even caste Christians. Next, there must be a change in the mentality of the convets (untouchable Christians) also. For this, both the groups must move from their old positions. The caste Hindus and caste Christians would not change their basic attitude. Therefore no deep-rooted change was possible.

Did Christianity inspire the Untouchables to move on? No. It was less interested in practical reforms and more interested in the development of Christian social attitude. According to him, the social attitude of the Christians was not related to the material life of the untouchables. The Missionaries as well as the untouchables would have worked together to fight back the social injustice. But the Christian Missionaries were inactive in the matter of the social emancipation of the untouchables. Again, no untouchable Christian took a step forward for the redress of their social wrongs.

Dr. Ambedkar further mentioned three reasons for the failure of the untouchable Christians to raise a movement:

(1) The educated Christians did not have community feeling. They were not interested in giving fight for the cause of their community as they were divided into high and low classes without having any concern for each other. As a result, the untouchable Christians were leaderless and therefore could not mobilize for the redress of their wrongs.

(2) He found that there was no urge seen in the untouchable Christians to break the bond with the past. They did not get converted because of any positive dissatisfaction of the Hindu religious teachings. As a result, Christianity became merely an addition to their old faith.

(3) The Church taught that the fall of humanity was due to his/her sin. One must become Christian because there was a promise of forgiveness of sins in Christianity.
According to Dr. Ambedkar, this lesson was a direct challenge to sociology which held that the fall of man was due to an unfavourable environment and not because of the sins of man. This philosophy misled the untouchables. Consequently, instead of being empowered to win their environmental context, they felt that there was no use of any struggle as their fall was resulted out of their own sins. When an untouchable Christian was a Hindu, his fall was due to his *Karma*. When he became a Christian, he learnt that his fall was due to the sins of his ancestor. In either case, there was no escape for him.

Dr. Ambedkar was deeply interested in these problems and he seriously pointed out the weaknesses of Christian missionary work in India because a large majority of them were drawn from the untouchable classes. He commented as a friend, not as an adversary. He wanted them to be strong to face forthcoming dangers such as hostility of Gandhiji to Christianity, militant Hinduism and so-called nationalism. He wished that they would ponder over his suggestions and try to create difference in the situation.

He was a skillful writer. He offered a review of the traditional forms of religious behavior in order to get them replaced by the new humanistic values. He, while assessing the possibilities and feasibilities of conversion, studied various religions like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Jewism and Buddhism. He was well-aware of the social and political nuances of untouchability. Therefore he was in search of such a society where he would find social, political and spiritual upliftment of his community. He devised his own philosophy of religion in order to convince people of the futility of their age-old religion and utility of conversion.

**Dr. Ambedkar’s Religious Philosophy**

“Religion, then, is conceptualized by him as a system of moral values, a system of injunctions and prohibitions designed to promote a harmonious human life.” (Rao 1998: 66) According to him, religion was essential as it would help the society maintain the socio-moral fabric and organize the social forces. Religion had the capacity to provide an effective sanction for the right conduct of an individual in the form of moral conscience. He argued that no amount of forced law or any authority could replace religion based on social ethics. The fear of *akushal kamma* could effectively keep in check the human appetite. Only the religious morality could create good relations between man and man or between community and community. Law was just a poor substitute for morality which played an important role in maintaining discipline and order in human societies.

The entire philosophical, ethical and religious reflections of Dr. Ambedkar were grounded in humanism. The object of his study was an individual who lived in society. The inherent idea of his thought presented man as the measure of all things. “He protested against a religion, which makes man, or certain individuals, subservient to social divinity and theistic allurement. He offered a philosophy, which stood for solving the problems of the day rather than assuring man for a safe and comfortable life in some non-existent heavenly world.” (Jatava 1998: 59)
He did not entertain theistic ethics. He ruled out the possibility of being moral under the fear of God. He also rejected the Vedantic view of moral philosophy because Brahma was unreal. He was against the Shankara Vedanta as it considered the world to be an illusion. His ethical thought was influenced by Buddha’s idea of Nirvana.

Jatava finds his thoughts relevant to the present day situation:

The theistic charm, i.e., hope for betterment with the help of divine grace, which is very much natural in Hinduism, Islam and Christianity does not find any place in the philosophical, ethical and religious ideas of Ambedkar, more accurately in his philosophy of Social Humanism. His adherence to the secular view of society under the humanist framework is the most relevant principle in the existing situation. As he believed, the demands made by the physical and social environment must be met by man himself, if he is to live at all, and they must be met well and boldly, if he to live well and fearlessly. (1998:17)

He had rational approach to life and the same was demonstrated in his writings. He rejected supernaturalism. He believed that the intelligence of man became useless when he believed in the supernatural elements. This was the reflection of Buddha’s refutation of supernaturalism. Buddha repudiated supernaturalism in order to lead man to the path of rationalism, to free man to go in search of truth and to remove the most potent source of superstition.

Dr. Ambedkar considered the ideas of hero-worship, deification and neglect of your duty to be responsible for the ruin of Hindu society in particular and the country in general. As a result, people, instead of taking a united action against their enemies, awaited the arrival of an incarnation in the time of national calamity. He believed that people had to liberate themselves from superstition, fanaticism, dogmatism, ritualism. They would have strength and strategy to grow with vigour and vitality in the direction of peace and progress.

The Hindu law-givers like Manu declared that the laws were created by God and therefore they were eternal, unalterable and infallible though they might be fouling human relations. But Dr. Ambedkar believed that the laws were human creations. Therefore they were changeable and adjustable according to the needs of social and political life. Manu’s laws were sacred and divine. They were absolute. They were grounded in religious authority. Consequently, they were to be followed in all circumstances without any spirit of revolt and disregard. They were, in a way, dictatorial. But Dr. Ambedkar’s laws were humane. They were relative. They were democratic and dynamic in nature. They were enshrined in India’s Constitution.

The most striking fact about the religious theory of Dr. Ambedkar is that it constantly revolved around Hinduism which he despised to the core of his heart! It can be seen overtly from the allusions and references he gave to prove his arguments that he had studied the Hindu scriptures even more
deeply and thoroughly than a follower of Hinduism. K. Raghavendra Rao rightly observes: “In a way, Hinduism haunted him all his life – like a ghost, and he was constantly wrestling with it one way or the other.” (1998: 68) His obsession with Hinduism is a Riddle that cannot be easily explained away. He had no objections against the pre-Manu structure of the Hindu society. He considered the Buddhist movement as a potential protestant Hinduism. Then why did he turn out to be so fully and fiercely hostile to Hinduism? It can be seen that his contempt for Hinduism was not absolute or without exceptions. The part of Hinduism which he found impossible to be assimilated to the modernist conception and vision stimulated his vitriolic and polemical energies against Hinduism.

It is startling but true to realize that in accepting Buddhism he was, in fact, accepting a version of Hinduism which belonged to the Shudras, and which went against the ideology and institutions of Brahmanical Hinduism. In fact, he was more strictly and accurately opposed to those aspects and dimensions of Hinduism, which prevented the possibility of the emergence of a protestant-reformist system. (Rao 1998: 75)

Dr. Ambedkar considered Hinduism to be amorphous, polysemous and over-tolerant to the point of being non-identifiable. Therefore he was reluctant to accord Hinduism the status of a religion. Here appears a paradox if not a contradiction:

Ambedkar as a liberal and as a humanistic-scientific thinker should have welcomed Hinduism as a non-dogmatic, catch-all hold-all of a religion. But he seems to have been influenced by the Christian/Islamic/Buddhist models based on rigorously worked out theological systems, articulated in definite and identifiable scriptural texts such as the Bible or the Koran. (Rao 1998: 67)

Dr. Ambedkar targeted the Hindu scriptures to express his abhorrence towards Hinduism. This may sound objectionable, prejudiced and unacceptable to the Hindus. Are all the Hindu scriptures humbug? The intensity of his past experiences and his widely-claimed rationality do not allow him to have a freeplay with the religious and spiritual feelings of the Hindu masses.

The central idea underlying his religious writings is the renunciation of Hinduism and establishment of Buddhism as the only acceptable way of life. It sounds scholarly. But such an intellectual theory is difficult for the uneducated masses of untouchables to comprehend. He wanted to prove the worthlessness of Hinduism. But the propaganda of one faith should not be done loathing the other faith. There is no point in raising religious controversies to get people convinced for conversion. He, after comparative
studies of various religions, would be rationally convinced for conversion. But what about those poor untouchables who were unable to come out of their rites and rituals? No logic would appeal them. They got ready for conversion only for their Charismatic leader!

He took more than twenty years to decide on his conversion. He was criticized for that. Some critics say that he embraced Buddhism towards the end of his life in a desperate state of mind because he was not happy with proceedings of the constitution and he proved to be a failure in politics. Some others say that he was frustrated by the slow pace of change in social set-up and blurred the real issues by turning to Buddhism.

He had elaborate plans to write on various subjects related to religion under different titles. But he could not do so. On one hand, many articles, chapters and essays are left incomplete and on the other hand, many of his views on religion are repeated in many of his writings. His social and religious theories overlap each other at several points.

He considered the ideas of hero-worship, deification and neglect of duty to be responsible for the ruin of Hindu society in particular and the country in general. In his concept of religion prosperity or elevation came first and then salvation. He denied the past karmas (acts done in previous lives) as the regulator of human existence. He believed that the law of past actions as formulated in the Hindu way of life shattered completely the spirit of revolt. But then the theory of Karma also made man conscious about his present deeds. It kept the conscience of man awakened.

The scriptures he cited to support his arguments were referred by him not thoroughly or impartially or neutrally or with genuine interest of getting knowledge. He picked up pieces from them leaving the context unuttered. He stuck to the words to substantiate his points. It seems that he, at first, fixed an answer and in order to justify it, outlined the theory afterwards.

The Rig Veda, Mahabharata and Ramayana do bear testimony that the highly abused caste system of the Hindu society has no religious sanction. He cursed Manu beyond limit for propagating Brahmanism. But he forgot that Manu was a Kshatriya!

Dr. Ambedkar is a rare example who always tried to make his people feel disgust for their own religion. He was religious bitterness personified. He was one among few on the earth who earnestly attempted to convince his people to abandon their own religion and accept a new one. He failed to devise practical solution to eradicate material sorrows and turned to a spiritual alternative namely conversion. As he took contradictory positions, he could not properly guide the liberating force and his leap into escapism manifested his reactionary step.

According to my humble belief, religion is a way of thought, a way of life. It is the very essence of one’s existence. As a person grows older, the concept of religion instilled in him from the childhood gets moulded. It shapes his philosophy of life. It becomes a particular bent of mind. Religion gets itself manifested through culture, traditions, rituals, taboos and inhibitions. By
performing a small ceremony of conversion, it is simply impossible to transform an individual thoroughly. It is an act of cutting the root of a full-grown tree. If you succeed at all, the uprooting may not see new blossoms!

Dr. Ambedkar’s conversion was a matter of personal choice. He was well-read; intellectual and intelligent enough to compare various religions and select the best for himself. But he was not supposed to get the untouchables converted. He taught his people a lesson of escapism!

Buddha was love and compassion personified. He taught the lesson of maitri. He advocated liberty, equality and fraternity. He chose the way of persuasion and action. This is what Dr. Ambedkar understood about Buddha and Buddhism. But the most striking fact about Dr. Ambedkar’s philosophy is this: he used to forget every word of Buddha’s gospel as soon as he came across Gandhiji, his work, his followers, the Congress and Caste Hindus. His ideals of compassion and maitri vanished at the thought of the Hindu community. Fraternity and love got evaporated at the thought of Gandhiji and the congress leaders. Persuasion and action did not appeal him any more when it came to support the National Movement.
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