Chapter : 5

CRITIQUE OF CASTE (JATI-MIMAMSA)

BY SRI NARAYANA GURU

Narayana Guru was a very great Mystic-Philosopher. Through meditative contemplation he has attained his own vibhuti that is called as nissamadi wherein the subject-object distinction obliterate Such a yogi will see the presence of Brahman everywhere. Gita calls him as samadharshini. It says : A yogi will see his own presence in all the beings and sees all beings in his own self. When such is the case how can a yogi make any discrimination in whole of existence? not to speak discrimination among the human beings.

Sri Narayana Guru-like Sri Vidyaranya, Sri Nijagruna Shivayogi, Vemana, Servigna, Basaveshwara, Valluvar and others- ‘was not only a very great mystic-
saint of the first order but also a very great social revolutionary. If we know truth and keep ourselves silent, it will not be useful to society. A saint is one who knows the truth and attains the highest form of equanimity (samatvam) and also communicates it in order to uplift his fellow-beings to herald peace within and without. This, in fact, leads universal harmony and peace. Vidyanany says: ज्ञानिवाचिन्द्रश्यक्षं सम्यग राज्यादि लीकिकम्. ¹³ means, a jnanin of the first order is capable of managing worldly affairs including ruling of the state. Sri Nijaguna Shivayogi, a very great saint from Karnataka, has also opined that ‘तसका विद्वान ज्ञानकल्याणानि समस्तं सम्यगं राज्यादि लीकिकम्’; this is exactly what is meant by philosopher king of Plato.

Sri Narayana Guru, in this respect, has most concern towards the society, that is why, he bulldozes
shastras which maintain caste discrimination. Vajrasuchi upanishad says: “Vajrasuchim pravaksam: Sastramajnanabhedanam which is similar to Narayana Guru’s attitude towards caste-system. Sri Narayana Guru has written one work in Sanskrit concerning critique of caste (Jati-mimamsa). First-Narayana Guru poses several questions to the casteist: will not child takes birth if a Brahmin boy marries Sudra girl or vice-versa? Can you find Hindu blood in Hindu child? Christian blood in Christian child? or can you find God’s or natures seal on Brahmin child as Brahmin Parair child as Parair? Hence he says all these castes are foolish creations of foolish persons.

The term ‘Jati’ means to take birth which means those who are taken birth that follows there are as many Jatias many human beings. This problem is posed by Guru and on that basis also he dismisses caste system.
He gives example of tree; in tree, there are roots, there are branches, etc., etc. but tree is one in the same way even among the human beings there is different color, form etc. but still manness as such is one. Narayana Guru dismisses the caste system not only philosophically but also scientifically. He says, there is one Akash encompassing in the whole of existence which is common to one and all, air is one, water is one, fire is one, earth is one, and all these five great elements are common to one and all. Is there any bifurcation? No, not at all. Then how can you make caste discrimination? All are born, Brahmin or Holaya whether varna or avarna, no one falls from the Akasha. Then how can we make caste distinction?

Guru says -

"In bygone days of a paria woman the great sage purasara was born"
As even of vedic-aphorism fame of a virgin of the fisher-folk”7.

“Man’s humanity” makes out the human kind even as bovinity proclaims a cow.

Brahminhood and such are notthus-wise;
None do see this truth alas!” 8.

“One of kind, one of faith, and one in God is man; of one womb; of one form; difference herein none”.

“Within a species, it is not, that offspring truly breed?
The community of man thus viewed to a single caste belongs”9.

“Of the human species is even a Brahmin born, as is the pariah too,
Where is difference then in caste as between man and man."¹⁰

Sri Narayana Guru has both philosophically and scientifically. In order to maintain unity in the mankind establish harmony and peace in the world, caste system should be abolished in the world. Later on Ambedkar by taking this clue writes a book called "Annihilation of Caste." Sri Narayana Guru has advocated one caste one religion one God in all his works. We shall be seeing it in detail in next chapter.
Foot notes :

1) See, Sarvam Kalvidam Brahmah, Brh. UP 4.4.8

2) सर्वभूतस्थमानं सर्वभूतात्मि चालनि ईशाते योगयुक्तांता सर्वं व ज्ञानं। - Gita, VI, 28.

3) Dr. B.P. Siddhasharma : The Philosophy of Jivanmala Vivek of Sri Vidyarana, P.4

4) Dr. B.P. Siddharshama : The metaphysics and the mystics of Sri Nijaguna Shivayogi, P.189.

5) Vajrasuchi Upanishad - i


8) Ibid, P-273
