

This means Ambedkar thinks that Hindus were opposing the struggle of Untouchables simply because they didn't understand it and they would not oppose the struggle if they understand it properly.

If Untouchables wage struggle for equality, with whom do they want equality? With Hindus! A struggle for equality is also aimed against Hindus! Hence, the Hindus indeed understood it quite correctly. What they did not like was 'equality'. The Hindus constantly and clearly indicated that Untouchables should not try to become equal to them. They ask the untouchable who comes to the office as an employee: "Do you dare to sit equally with us in the chair?" To the untouchables who wear good clothing they say, "Do you dare wear clothes on par with us?" If an Untouchable is given a ministership, people like Gandhi would say, "So you have found an untouchable to make a minister now?" The Hindus have been warning that the Untouchables should not attempt to become their equals in any respect. The Hindus are opposing Untouchables, not because they have not understood but because they understood that Untouchables are fighting for equality. Should Hindus think that Untouchables were waging struggles in order to improve their economic life? When those struggles are against them, how can Hindus think, "what do we lose if the Untouchables are waging their struggles?" The Hindus know what Hindus lose. Hindus knew that if Untouchables refused to come to clean the toilets, they would have to do that work for themselves. If the situation of Untouchables improves to some extent, the domination of Hindus too diminishes to that extent.

What would Hindus say if Untouchables were to ask them: "Why don't you understand that we are fighting with you for equality? Why do you oppose us?" The Hindus would say, "We know that. That is why we are opposing you". They will not say, "Equality with us? Well, then it is good! Carry on your fight with us nicely!" It is strange to note that Ambedkar interprets that the Hindus misunderstand the struggle of Untouchables as the struggle aimed at them and not as an attempt to achieve equality. Any attempt to achieve equality itself is a fight against Hindus. Both mean the same. The Hindu was, obviously, far more intelligent than Ambedkar!

6) Demands of Dalits

They put forward these in (1) the document presented at the Round Table Conference of 1930 (Vol. 9, p. 304 onwards); and (2) the documents prepared in 1944 and 1947 on behalf of the Indian Federation of Scheduled Castes (Vol. 9, p. 304 onwards; and Vol. 1, p. 381 onwards). However, we should not forget that the demand for reservations as long ago as the

Conference held in 1917 under the Chairmanship of Narayan Chandavarkar. In brief these were their demands:

➤ The Constitution should declare that Untouchability was illegal. Untouchables should be relieved of this social curse before they give consent to the constitution.

➤ All citizens of India are equal before the law. If Hindus resort to atrocities against Untouchables when they try to make use of the rights given to them by law, such atrocities should be declared offences, and punishments should also be announced.

➤ All citizens should have the right to utilize educational institutions, roads, paths, streets, tanks, wells and all other kinds of water resources, land meant for public use, water, air, religious institutions and so on.

➤ The Hindus alone occupied all spheres of life from village to the capital city. Therefore, scheduled castes should have reservations in proportion to their numbers: (1) in the Legislatures, (2) the Executive, (3) in Municipalities and Local Boards, (4) in the Public Services and (5) on the Public Service Commissions. Further these rights ought to be beyond the powers of the Legislature or the Executive to amend, alter, or abrogate.

➤ The Depressed Classes (Dalits) must have the right to elect their own representatives from among the Dalits. They should be elected by adult franchise and not by nomination. Further, Dalit representatives should be elected from Dalit castes only and persons from other castes should not be selected as Dalit representatives.

➤ Like Hindus, Dalits too should have the rights to enter into contracts, rent land, purchase and sell property.

➤ All persons should have the right to pursue any occupation, to reside in any area, to practise and preach any religion.

➤ The Government must allot some funds for the education of Scheduled Castes: State Governments for education within the country and the Central Government for education abroad.

➤ The Joint Electorate system worked out in the Poona Pact should be abandoned and Separate electorates ought to be introduced. (This is in the document of 1947).

➤ At present Dalits are obliged to live in slums on the outskirts of the Hindu villages. Although this appears as if Dalits are living with Hindus in the same village, Dalits are in fact living separately without any relation with others. Therefore, in order to liberate them from those slums, the government should form separate villages for Dalits with all amenities. It

should allot some special fund to purchase the uncultivated land for this purpose from those willing to sell and also uncultivated land. The government should establish a Settlement Commission for this purpose.

➤ There should be a separate ministry to take care of all the affairs concerning reservations for Dalits.

➤ If the government wants to make any amendments to these provisions, it may be allowed to do so only after 25 years following the implementation of the Constitution. (In 1947 document).

Briefly, these are the demands of Dalits. Some more clarity is needed with regard to the demand for 'separate villages'. When Dalits lived on the outskirts of Hindu villages, their localities were known as 'Mala locality', 'Madiga locality', and 'Mahar locality' and 'Chamar locality'. When separate villages are established for these castes, those villages will be known as 'Mala village' and 'Madiga village' or 'Mahar village' and 'Chamar village'. This does not matter because both conditions are similar. But Dalits may be relieved of some sufferings if all the necessary amenities are provided in their separate villages.

Ambedkar (Vol. 1, pp: 425-6) thought that these separate settlements would also relieve Dalits from the pitiable economic condition in the sense that they could live without depending on the land of the Hindus, the wage labour which the Hindus offer and wage rates which the Hindus fix. We don't find any explanation on this issue: How would Dalits acquire lands just because they live in separate villages? How would they get on without going to the villages of Hindus for work? Without discussing such questions, Ambedkar declares that separate settlements would relieve Dalits from pitiable economic conditions.

All the demands which Dalit leaders put forward are wholly justified. However, education and employment through reservations would reach only a small number of Dalits even if all these demands were really implemented. Yet access to education and employment even to those minimum numbers of Dalits would definitely improve their living conditions. But what actually is needed is a solution not simply for a few but to all Dalits; not only temporarily but permanently.

Ambedkar discussed 'permanent solutions' as well. He discussed the question of 'eradication of poverty' also. When we view reservations together with all these questions, we get all solutions. We have to see what they are.

12 NOT ONLY 'DIVISION OF LABOUR', BUT ALSO 'DIVISION OF LABOURERS' IS FOUND IN ALL THE COUNTRIES

Those who defend the caste system put forward different reasons for the need of the system. Ambedkar's essay *Annihilation of Caste* begins with the answers to all the arguments of the defenders of caste system. We have already seen a couple of those replies. Yet let us first recall them and then examine the other aspects of the subject. All these aspects are, mainly, from the essay *Annihilation of Caste* (Vol. 1, pp: 23-96).

An argument of defenders of caste: Castes came into existence out of racial differences. The caste system was necessary for the continuation of racial purity by preventing admixture and 'commingling of blood' of different races.

Ambedkar's answer: There are no racial differences in the Indian population. Hence the argument that racial differences are the basis for castes is untenable. Even if we assume that there were racial differences, why can't blood relations form between races? There won't be any harm to the reproduction. There should not be blood relations between human beings and animals; but why shouldn't there be blood relations among humans? In fact there are no races in the world which are free from admixture of blood. 'Purity of races' is a meaningless notion.

Another argument of defenders: The caste system came into existence for the formation of better and stronger offspring. Hence, the system should stay.

Ambedkar's answer: If the caste system is meant for better offspring, it is desirable. But, it does not happen so in the caste system. There is no argument in the caste system that only a better woman and a better man in a caste should meet for the sake of reproduction. Any pair of man and woman in a given caste can meet through marriage. If the caste system formed for a strong offspring, all Hindus would have been very strong. But Hindus are a race of pygmies and dwarfs stunted in stature and wanting in stamina. It is a nation nine-tenths of which is declared to be unfit for

military service. Even according to the arguments of the defenders of the caste system there should not be intercaste marriages; but why shouldn't there be intercaste dining? What is the reason?

Gandhi's kind of arguments: The caste system—according to which persons pursue their respective caste occupation—gives a kind of discipline.

Ambedkar's answer: The occupation of an individual should not be decided at birth itself. He or she should have the freedom to pursue occupation of his/her choice. Hence it is wrong to defend the system of caste occupations.

Radhakrishnan's kind of argument: What is the loss for Hindu religion if castes exist? Hindu religion has existed in fact for generations, hasn't it?

Ambedkar's answer: The question is not whether a community lives or dies. There are different modes of survival. But all modes of survival are not equally honourable. There is a gulf between merely living and living worthy.

Argument of Arya Samajists: The existing caste system consisting of hundreds of castes is faulty. But 'the four Varna system' is not bad. Like varnas, castes too should depend not on 'birth' but on 'worth' (guna).

Ambedkar's answer: Why should we divide human beings into four castes only? Can we not respect a good person without calling him a 'Brahmin'? Since opposition to the caste system began in this modern age, they started the argument that 'caste should be based on worth', only in order to attract the lower castes. But it is totally impossible to implement this new method.

There is, however, another argument that is entirely different from all these arguments. It is the argument of 'division of labour'. This we have seen before to some extent. This argument does not defend the caste system like other arguments. It has its own assumption regarding the basis for the beginning of castes. It assumes that division of labour might be the basis for castes. We, however, have already seen the possible question regarding this assumption. That question was, 'when division of labour exists in all the countries, why does caste system exist only in India?' This is a reasonable question. But the researchers could not identify the 'specific situation' that gave rise to the caste system. Though this specific situation is not clear to us, this argument of division of labour seems to be more logical than other arguments. It seems logical to none else; even to Ambedkar! Even according to Ambedkar, occupations were the original

basis for four varnas. The four varnas themselves became castes. It was Ambedkar who said all this. Based on this, it is clear that occupations alone are the basis for castes. Further, Ambedkar made another point still more emphatically:

“The Hindu Social Order is based upon a division of labour which reserves for the Hindus clean and respectable jobs and assigns to the Untouchables dirty and mean jobs and thereby clothes the Hindus with dignity and heaps ignominy upon the Untouchables” (Vol. 5, p.258).

What does this mean? This means that the distinction between Hindus and Untouchables is due to division of labour. Indeed, this argument of division of labour applies not only to untouchables but also to castes.

Ambedkar further says as follows:

“Caste system is not merely division of labour. *It is also a division of labourers.* Civilized society undoubtedly needs division of labour. But in no civilized society is division of labour accompanied by this unnatural division of labourers into water-tight compartments. Caste System is not merely a division of labourers which is quite different from division of labour.—It is a hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one above the other. In no other country is the division of labour accompanied by this gradation of labourers... This division of labour is not spontaneous, it is not based on natural aptitudes” (Vol. 1, p. 47).

Here we need first understand the questions: what is division of labour? What is division of labourers?

Division of labour means, performance of different kinds of labour by different individuals.

Division of labourers, according to Ambedkar, is a hierarchy in which labourers are graded one above the other. That is, existence of labourers in terms of ‘castes’.

Now, we have to understand the meaning of the expression that ‘caste system is not merely division of labour but also a division of labourers’. Here Ambedkar, while acknowledging the fact of division of labour, he is observing further that ‘there is another aspect namely division of labourers’. This means, Ambedkar is not saying that ‘caste system has nothing to do with division of labour’. Moreover, he is acknowledging the relationship between the two. Which means, even according to Ambedkar, division of labour alone is the basis for the caste system.

Here there are three aspects, namely, caste system, division of labour and division of labourers. What is the connection between these three aspects! How should we understand these relations?

Though 3 aspects appear here, there are only 2 aspects in reality.

The first one is division of labour. The second one, division of labourers is due to division of labour (castes). These two are the same. We have seen that division of labour means 'performance of different kinds of labour by different persons'. This we find at any place, in any region and in any country.

Division of labourers, even according to Ambedkar, means 'hierarchy in which labourers are graded one above the other.' This is also found in any country. But, these hierarchical gradations are in the form of castes in India. None has given a right answer as to why the hierarchy of workers assumed the form of castes. Ambedkar too did not say. What we have to understand here is that even where there are no castes, labourers are graded one above the other. Nowhere do we find all workers as a single category without involving hierarchical differences. One can investigate this issue if necessary. Labourers in all the countries are graded one above the other in a hierarchy. It is because the values of the labours—which the labourers perform—are graded one above the other in a hierarchical manner.

If we consider a 'place of work', it requires both manual and mental labours. (In some work places only manual labours are required and not mental labours). If we consider one kind of manual labour and one kind of mental labour in the same measure of time, the value of manual labour will invariably be more than the value of mental labour. Or, if the two are mental labours and if they stand at a different place from one another, their values too differ. Similarly, values of different kinds of manual labour also differ.

If we take the 'lowest' manual labour (e.g., toilet cleaning) and the 'highest' kind of mental labour (e.g., the work of a doctor), there will be a vast difference between their values. All this is correct according to the law of value.

If a person always performs a manual labour and another person always performs mental labour, the education, training and the labour-power that they have to learn will be different. The values of the labours that they perform will be graded one above the other. Which means, the income of one person will be higher and the income of another person will be lower. Though both persons are labourers, they will be unequal rather than equal persons. This means, they form different categories. Hence, the old division of labour should change in such a way that every person would do certain kinds of manual labour and certain kinds of mental labour. Only when this happens will the categories disappear. That is a different discussion.

What we have to understand for the present is that the values of different kinds of labour will be different since the levels of labour are different. To the naturally formed differences between values, some unnatural factors in exploitative societies add and those differences will further increase manifold.

It is natural that there exists some difference between the value of labour of a toilet cleaner and that of a doctor. None can remove that difference. But it is not necessary that the difference is so wide as it exists in a society based on exploitation. However, these two kinds of labourers cannot become equal even if we consider their difference to a natural extent because that naturally existing difference is also a difference. Hence they constitute two different categories. This is the reason for the division of labourers into different categories. Further, in any work place, there will be employees (these people are also labourers) who perform the labour of control over other labourers. This labour of control is necessary due to relations of exploitation. This situation too results in 'hierarchical difference' among labourers. In this manner too, labourers will be graded one above the other. If we consider these conditions of hierarchy as 'division of labourers', this exists not only in India but also in all the countries. There will be hierarchical differences among labourers even where there are no castes. We should not assume that these hierarchical differences are present only in India.

Another point in Ambedkar's argument is that the division of labour in India is not spontaneous nor is it based on natural aptitudes. Not only in India but also in any country do we find division of labour based on spontaneity. In no country do we find choice of occupations by the labourers based on aptitudes.

In countries where capitalism began a long time ago, labourers are able to change their occupations quickly enough due to modern machinery. Even such changes do not always take place according to the aptitudes of the labourers. Under capitalism, demand for labourers in different branches of industry varies frequently, it rises or falls. Labourers do receive education and training in accordance with the branches where there is demand. All this will be in the form of race in search of livelihood wherever there is opportunity and not something based on personal aptitudes.

In countries like India where capitalism started late, skill in labour still depends to a degree on hand tools and small scale machinery due to the absence of system of modern machinery. Under these conditions, labourers are tied down to some extent to the hereditary caste (family) occupations. Yet the process of moving away from the caste occupations has already begun among the labourers in India. Commenting on the

abandonment of caste occupations by Brahmins in the contemporary situation, in another context, Ambedkar said:

“Almost every Brahmin has transgressed the rule of Caste. The number of Brahmins who sell shoes is far greater than those who practice priesthood. Not only have the Brahmins given up their ancestral calling of priesthood for trading but they have entered trades which are prohibited to them by the *Shastras*” (Vol. 1, p. 95).

It is not possible, however, for those engaged in manual labour to change occupations as easily as the Brahmins do. Yet this change has not altogether left out the lowest castes. But, we find this change to a limited extent among them.

Finally, the essence of the matter is that Ambedkar's arguments are not correct: that division of labourers is specific only to India and that labourers in India alone are unable to choose their occupations according to aptitude. The same thing happens not only in India but also in every country.

If we correctly analyse the expressions, 'caste system is not merely division of labour. It is also a division of labourers', we will arrive at the following meanings:

1) Division of labour is the basis of castes (occupations) just as in the case of four varnas.

2) Division of labourers (hierarchical differences among laborers) exists in all countries. Here, it is in the 'form of castes'. This means that whether you call 'caste' or 'division of labourers', both mean the same thing.

There are no greater meanings in the expression 'division of labourers' which Ambedkar used.

1) Some comments of Ambedkar on 'caste system'

The following are some of the useful observations of Ambedkar on the caste system.

➤ It was the Mohammedans who introduced the term 'Hindu'. We do not find the term 'Hindu' in any Sanskrit text before the invasion of Mohammedans. In fact there is no such thing as 'Hindu society'. What exists is a collection of castes.

➤ Some people argue that there is unity in the diversity of castes. But we find diversity only when there the rights are common to all. Where is the question of unity when some people do not have any rights at all?

➤ It is possible for Hindus to embrace other religions. But it is not possible for the people of other religions to embrace the Hindu religion because of the question of which caste should one join in order to embrace Hindu religion. The caste system does not allow people to change from one caste to another either. It does not permit newcomers.

➤ Among Muslims there are certain groups, namely, Shiya, Sunni, Sheikh, Saiyad, Khatik and Pinjari. The group among Sikhs are Jat, Roda, Mazdi and Ramdasi. But these groups, according to Ambedkar, are fundamentally different from castes among Hindus. They do not have the same social significance. However, he has not given details whether intergroup dining and marriage exist. "Among the Hindus inter-marriage must necessarily be a factor of greater force in social life than it need be in the life of the non-Hindus" (Vol. 1, p. 67). This implies that intergroup marriages do not take place among non-Hindus and that they have to take place. If intergroup marriages do not take place, those groups too constitute castes, don't they? There is no information in Ambedkar's essay to understand this aspect.

13

WHAT DID AMBEDKAR SAY IN "ANNIHILATION OF CASTE"?

The arguments of those who defend the caste system do not stand to reason. Hence, the solution for the problem of castes is to abolish castes altogether.

To abolish caste, inter-caste marriage should begin and they should take place as a normal practice. "The real remedy for breaking caste is inter-marriage", says Ambedkar (Vol. 1, p. 67). This view is hundred percent correct. Though we can not trace the origin of castes clearly, inter-caste marriages are the means to abolish castes. As a result of inter-caste marriages an offspring that has no caste barriers will emerge. Without this change, the caste distinctions will not vanish even if inter-caste dining and inter-caste friendship continue for generations. Castes will disappear only if inter-caste marriages take place as a normal practice.

Well, then, how should we start this programme? As an answer to this question, Ambedkar says that we have to begin the programme of abolition of castes by reforming the Hindu religion. For it is the Hindu religion which dictates the caste system. Then how to reform Hindu religion? What should we do?

1) How to reform the Hindu Religion?

Concerning this issue, Ambedkar enumerates certain 'cardinal items' of reform as follows:

"There should be one and only one standard book of Hindu Religion, acceptable to all Hindus and recognized by all Hindus. This of course means that all other books of Hindu religion such as *Vedas*, *Shastras* and *Puranas*, which are treated as sacred and authoritative, must by law cease to be so and the preaching of any doctrine, religious or social contained in these books should be penalized. (2) It should be better if priesthood among Hindus was abolished. But as this seems to be impossible, the priesthood must at least cease to be hereditary. Every person who professes to be a Hindu shall be entitled to be a priest unless he has passed an examination prescribed by the State and holds a *sanad* from the State permitting him to practise. (3) No ceremony performed by a priest who does not hold a *sanad* shall be deemed to be valid in law and it should be made penal for a person who has no *sanad* to officiate as a priest. (4) A priest should be the servant of the State and should be subject to the disciplinary action by the State in the matter of his morals, beliefs and worship, in addition to his being subject along with other citizens to the ordinary law of the land. (5) The number of priests should be limited by law according to the requirements of the State as is done in the case of the I.C.S." (Vol. 1, pp: 76-77).

This is how we have to reform Hindu religion, according to Ambedkar. Of these five items, the first point is most important. The government should prepare a single standard book for Hindus just as Christians have the Bible and Muslims have the Quran. Such a book should not have any mention of the Four Varnas or castes. All Hindus should recognize and accept the book. Once such a standard book is formed, propagation of other Hindu religious texts ought to be made an offence!

Ambedkar opines that inter-caste marriages will undoubtedly take place if we reform the Hindu religion, since such reform would not mention 'castes'.

"...it would take ages before a breach is made. But whether the doing of the deed takes time or whether it can be done quickly, you must not forget that if you wish to bring about a breach in the system then you have got to apply the dynamite to the *Vedas* and the *Shastras*, which deny any part to reason, to *Vedas* and *Shastras*, which deny any part to morality. You must destroy the Religion of the *Shrutis* and the *Smritis*. Nothing else will avail. This is my considered view of the matter" (Vol. 1, pp: 74-75).

Frequently, Ambedkar refers to 'reason'. But how can religion, god and priesthood coincide with reason? Reason will naturally take people

so far that they give up religion. But Ambedkar's reason stops at a standard religious text, religious teachers, priests and passing of a government examination!

How much reason is there in such activities as making idols of stone or brass, constructing temples around those idols, putting food stuffs in front of them, decorating them with silk clothes, putting crowns over their heads and worshipping them? How much knowledge would be manifested in all such activities?

Ambedkar considered the jobs of priests and religious teachers as 'occupations' and 'labours' that are necessary for society. Ambedkar thinks that worshipping god and religious activities are as necessary as weaving, tailoring, carpentry and transport and all those who do such acts of worship are also toilers. Hence, his talk of reason and religious reform went on in this fashion!

We have to see many more issues which Ambedkar discussed concerning 'inter-caste marriages'.

Ambedkar originally wrote this essay on *Annihilation of Caste* in order to read it in a conference of an association of Hindu reformers in Lahore called "Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal". The objectives of the association included inter-caste dining and inter-caste marriage. This means that this association had a higher objectives than Mr. Gandhi's Harijan Sevak Sangh. In his essay, Ambedkar tells those reformers that organizing inter-caste dining and inter-caste marriages would serve no purpose. It is necessary to free people from 'the thralldom of Shastras' and if they do so, people would inter-dine and inter-marry!

But does organizing inter-caste marriages not mean making people free from the thralldom of Shastras? Why do people prefer and organize inter-caste marriages if they believe in Shastras that dictate practice of caste distinctions. Does it not mean that those who like such changes are practically expressing their rejection of Shastras? Also, does it not mean that reformers who encourage such changes are preaching people not to care Shastras? What is there to oppose in this matter?

But Ambedkar says, "you must not only discard the *Shastras*, you must deny their authority, as did Buddha and Nanak" (Vol. 1, p. 69). Ambedkar says that it is not enough if the reformers of Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal 'discard' Shastras but they should also 'deny' the authority of Shastras. He says that the two (discard and denial) are not the same. What does 'doing things as Buddha and Nanak did' mean? Buddha denied the authority of the Hindu religion and started Buddhism. Guru Nanak started Sikhism. Should the reformers of Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal too give up the

Hindu religion? If Ambedkar wanted people to deny the authority of the Hindu religion, why did he propose some cardinal items of reform of the Hindu religion? Should people totally discard or deny Hindu religion totally or retain it by reforming certain parts of it? This is not clear.

Addressing those Hindu reformers, Ambedkar further says:

“You must have the courage to tell the Hindus, that what is wrong with them is their religion—the religion which has produced in them this notion of the sacredness of Caste. Will you show that courage?” (Vol.1, p. 69).

How could those reformers undertake the reform of inter-caste marriages if they lacked courage? In fact they had named their association as ‘JAT-PAT-TODAK MANDAL’ (meaning an association that breaks caste and other related barriers). In fact the reformers such as these face many hurdles. They would need to confront conflicts and controversial arguments and counter-arguments. Condemnation, blame and threats fall on them. The reformers will withstand all such things.

When a marriage takes place between a person of a lower caste and a higher caste, it is the person of the higher caste that has to show courage. The person belonging to the lower caste will not have any role in showing ‘courage’. It only means that the person of high caste has demonstrated goodness, refinement, courage, as well as denial of *Shastras* and society.

Similarly if Brahmin reformers organise inter-caste marriages, we can undoubtedly say that they are very good, refined and courageous persons.

But, disregarding the goodness of such reformers, Ambedkar questions them as though they lack courage and he alone has the courage to reject castes and *Shastras*. Does it not mean belittling people with good intentions, if he questions them like this: “Do you have the courage to say so? Can you show such courage? Do you have courage? Do you have...?” And so on.

Would Ambedkar have any answer, if those reformers had asked him, “Are you not able to understand that we have the courage and culture since we are encouraging inter-caste marriages?” But those reformers, without asking like that, tolerated Ambedkar’s words.

Ridiculing such reformers, Ambedkar further says:

“Reformers working for the removal of untouchability...do not seem to realize that the acts of the people are merely the results of their beliefs inculcated upon their minds by the *Shastras* and that people will not change their conduct until they cease to believe in the sanctity of the *Shastras* on which their conduct is founded. No wonder that such efforts have not produced any results. You also seem to be erring in the same

way as the reformers working in the cause of removing untouchability”
(Vol. 1, p. 68).

If we consider the issue of untouchability, it was Ambedkar himself who said that the *Vedas* and *Manusmritis* did not mention them. When there is no reference to untouchability, where is the need to offer a critique of the Shastras to the people as part of the programme for eradicating untouchability? What is the need to tell them to reject the Shastras? If at all we want to tell people, we have to tell them in such a way that they develop respect for the Shastras: “There is no reference to untouchability either in the Vedas or in the other Shastras. Shastras are very positive in this respect”. Why should the reformers tell people so that people reject Shastras?

The fact that reformers working for the eradication of untouchability did not reject the Vedas, etc., (since there is no reference in them to untouchability) indicates that they (the reformers) have not committed any mistake.

It is only Ambedkar who has always been taking wrong steps at every point. It is he who said that there is no reference to untouchability in Shastras. It is again he who is finding fault with reformers for not rejecting such Shastras (in which there is no reference to untouchability). Nowhere do we find evidence to suggest that Ambedkar realizes how haphazard his arguments were!

2) Is fusion of sub-castes ‘mischievous’?

After advising the Hindu reformers to ‘reject’ Hindu religious texts, Ambedkar discussed the question of how to abolish castes. This discussion is again in the essay, *Annihilation of Caste*. Of all the writings of Ambedkar, this essay is most important for our examination because it discussed the question of ‘annihilation of caste’. What is the path which Ambedkar showed for the annihilation of caste? Is annihilation of caste possible or not according to him? Has he discussed the issues correctly? We have to carefully understand all these questions.

This is how Ambedkar begins his discussion:

“How to abolish caste? This is a question of supreme importance. There is a view that in the reform of caste, the first step to take, is to abolish sub-castes. This view is based upon the supposition that there is a greater similarity in manners and status between sub-castes than there is between castes. I think, this is an erroneous supposition” (Vol. 1, p. 67).

‘Sub-castes’ mean branches, sects or constituent parts within a caste. For example, let us say that there are some sects within the Brahmin caste. Those are ‘sub-castes’. All persons in all the sects/sub-castes are Brahmins.

'Brahmin' is the cover term of the main caste. Similarly, 'Mala' is the main caste. If there are sections within Mala caste, they would be 'sub-castes'.

Marriages do not take place between different castes. Every one knows this fact. There is a situation where there are no marriages between sub-castes either. While this is the situation, the question is how to start the programme of annihilation of caste? We have to find out the correct path.

Some people argue that we should begin with the fusion of sub-castes. When they say like this, it does not mean they are saying that 'fusion of sub-castes alone should take place and not the fusion of the main castes'. Anything can happen depending upon the situation and possibility. But they think that to begin a programme for the annihilation of caste, fusion of sub-castes is an easy thing that can take place.

But Ambedkar does not agree with this view. His argument proceeds like this: suppose North Indian Brahmins and South Indian Brahmins constitute two branches. The North Indian Brahmins are cooks and water carriers and the South Indian Brahmins are of high social position. The Vaishyas and Kayasthas are intellectually and socially on a par with Brahmins of the Deccan and Southern India. While situation is such, it is practically possible to fuse Vysyas and Kayasthas of Northern India with the Brahmins of Southern India instead of fusing the Brahmins of Northern and Southern India in the name of fusing sub-castes of the main castes. Similarly in the matter of food, Southern Indian Brahmins are vegetarians while Kashmiri and Bengali Brahmins are not vegetarians. It is easier for the two different castes with similar food habits to fuse together than the fusion of the two sub-castes with different food habits though both are Brahmins. The non-Brahmins like Vyshyas, Jains and Marvaris are closer to Southern Indian Brahmins in their food habits. Hence, we need not think that fusion of sub-castes is much easier than the fusion of main castes
(Vol. 1, p. 67).

Different castes rather than sub-castes can definitely fuse in such situations when they are socially closer. No one will say that they should not merge. Here the question is, 'is closeness not possible between sub-castes of the same region when closeness is possible between different castes living in different regions?' There may not be similarity or closeness between Northern Indian Brahmins and Southern Indian Brahmins, but will it not be between different sects within North Indian Brahmins? Can we not fuse them? Similarly, are there not different sects within Southern Indian Brahmins? Can't they merge? Compared to the closeness between different castes living in distant regions, we find more instances of closeness between the sub-castes of a caste in the same region.

Those who talk of fusion or abolition of sub-castes do not oppose fusion or abolition of actual castes. They favour abolition of any kind, whether of sub-castes or of main castes. Similarly, those who insist on the abolition of castes in the first instance should not oppose the abolition of sub-castes either. But Ambedkar considers the abolition of sub-castes in the first instance as mischievous. Because, Ambedkar says, abolition of main castes may not take place after the abolition of sub-castes and that the main castes would become more powerful and hence we should begin with the abolition of main castes. In Ambedkar's words:

“...assuming that the fusion of sub-Castes is possible, what guarantee is there that the abolition of sub-Castes will necessarily lead to the abolition of Castes? On the contrary, it may happen that the process may stop with the abolition of sub-Castes. In that case, the abolition of sub-Castes will only help to strengthen the Castes and make them more powerful and therefore more mischievous. This remedy is therefore neither practicable nor effective and may easily prove to be a wrong remedy” (Vol. 1, p. 67).

This means, according to Ambedkar fusion of main castes should take place first. Only then the fusion of sub-castes should take place. For example, if we assume that there are some sub-castes within the Brahmin caste, marriages between these sub-castes should not take place. Similarly, fusion of sub-castes within the Mala caste should not take place first. Marriages between Brahmin and Mala castes should begin and these two castes should fuse together. Only then, fusion of sub-castes of Brahmin caste and likewise the fusion of sub-castes of Mala caste should take place. It follows that a Brahmin sub-caste, though not inclined to fuse with other sub-castes of the same main caste must agree to fuse with any one of the Mala sub-castes! Only then should it fuse with other Brahmin sub-castes! Does any one with common sense call this 'reasoning'?

When the Brahmin and Mala castes fuse and become one, where is the question of existence of sub-castes and their subsequent fusion? How strange is this argument! “What guarantee is there that the abolition of sub-castes will necessarily lead to the abolition of castes?” asks Ambedkar, doesn't he? But, a reform, from whichever side it may begin, will extend its influence to all sides. A 'change', whether good or bad, does not stop where it began. If fusion of sub-castes is really taking place at a given point of time, the main castes during that period cannot remain intact. We need not doubt that the reform would stop at the abolition of sub-castes only.

Let us suppose that it may happen like that. That is, suppose the entire change would stop at the abolition of sub-castes only. What do we

lose from this? Compared to the past it is more advantageous and there is no harm. This is how it is advantageous: Let us suppose that there are 8 sub-castes within Brahmin caste and marriages do not take place between those sub-castes. This means, there are 8 castes here. In such a situation as this, let us say, there began marriages between sub-castes following the path of abolition of sub-castes first. Which means, all sub-castes become one and only Brahmin caste remains. That is, instead of 8 castes, only one caste remains.

Similarly, if we assume that there were 4 sub-castes within the Mala caste and marriages have now begun between those sub-castes, there remains only one caste instead of 4 castes.

Once there were 12 castes in total at the 2 places taken together. Now that situation no more exists and only 2 main castes remain. They are the Brahmin and Mala castes. If these two castes also merge, there won't be a caste system at all. Or, even if those 2 castes still remain separately, what do we lose? The situation in which those 2 castes exist was already there in the past. Those castes continue to exist even now as they did in the past. There is no loss afresh.

But Ambedkar argues that fusion or abolition of sub-castes will only help to strengthen the castes, make them more powerful, therefore more mischievous and hence it is a wrong path. Well what will the main castes do with the strength after becoming more powerful? Will they wage wars against each other? Even after becoming powerful they won't marry each other. This is what happens, isn't it? But such a situation existed in the past also; didn't it?

Can anybody, through their argument, demonstrate how fusion of sub-castes would make castes more mischievous?

A sub-caste in the Brahmin caste will have fewer objections to fuse with another sub-caste within its own caste and will have more objections to fuse with entirely a different caste.

To visualize inter-caste marriages, the only logical method is to visualize the fusion of sub-castes of the same region.

If sub-castes merge, the number of castes decreases and the scope of marriages broadens. This is a very good change compared to the past.

A sub-caste in a given caste would like to fuse first with another sub-caste and it won't like to fuse with another caste in the first instance itself. Therefore, to begin with abolition of sub-castes is practical and the only correct path! But Ambedkar's argument goes to the following extent:

If at all anything should happen, abolition of castes should take place first; otherwise all the caste distinctions including sub-castes will have to remain forever. Let there not be any change. Abolition of sub-castes is more mischievous! This is the trend of his argument!

Here, there is no reasoning that it is desirable for a good change to begin at any corner, instead of not beginning at all. Will any name be more suitable than 'crazy argument' to this argument which implies that it is very dangerous if caste distinctions diminish?

Not only here but also in many contexts, Ambedkar doesn't like others' arguments however good they may be since others put forward them. It is he alone who has to say 'great' things and has to reject whatever others say. What will remain if he rejects even a good argument? Only a wrong argument! That is what he could offer! The same thing is happening at every place!

See how strangely did Ambedkar's argument go!

"If a caste claims the right to inter-dine and inter-marry with another caste placed above it, it is frozen, instantly it is told by mischief-mongers, and there are many Brahmins amongst such mischief-mongers, that it will have to concede inter-dining and inter-marriage with castes below it!" (Vol. 1, p. 72).

What mischief did those Brahmins whom Ambedkar called 'mischief-mongers' do in this context? What did they say? They say that a caste should not only try to fuse with castes above it but also fuse with castes below it and that it should give opportunity to other castes to mix with it. Is it wrong to say this? Is this mischief-mongering? Will attempts at annihilation of caste be hampered if they say so?

If the attempts are really destroyed, it would happen for the following reasons: There is a caste called **B**. It has the desire to fuse with castes above it but doesn't like to mix with the castes below it. Suppose somebody says to **B** that it 'should not only fuse with castes above but also with those below it'. Then **B** begins to ponder over it. "Oh, I have to mix with castes below me if I mix with castes above me! What a nuisance this is!" Due to this fear, it will stop trying to mix with castes above it as well! If this happens, the attempts of **B** to annihilate caste will stop. Then we have to criticise **B** only. That is, we criticise those people who would like to mix only with upper castes and not with lower castes. But we cannot find fault with those who say that 'one should mix with all'.

Ambedkar's intention in calling Brahmins 'mischief-mongers' in this context is this: People of caste **B** are eager to mix with upper castes, aren't they? They are not ready to mix with lower castes. Then why should

Brahmins insist on them thus, "You should mix not only with upper castes but also with lower castes!" They may change after some time, won't they? If you frighten them by asking to mix with lower castes immediately, they may stop trying to mix even with upper castes you see! Thus the whole attempt will be destroyed. Look at Brahmins! How are they frightening people?—This is what Ambedkar meant in calling Brahmins 'mischief-mongers'.

Let us suppose that Brahmins said all that not with a good intention but with the intention to frighten people. Caste B could stand fearless, isn't it? Caste B can tell Brahmins thus, "We don't have any objection to mixing with lower castes. When we want to mix with upper castes, don't we know that we should mix with lower castes as well, How will the attempt of B to annihilate caste be destroyed by the words of Brahmins if they have such a view? Caste B will give up all its attempts to annihilate caste if it does not hold such a view and if it does not like to mix with castes below it. Then we have to criticise B, or to use a Telugu idiom, 'give grass' to B to eat.

But Ambedkar does not criticise B. Moreover he has sympathy for it! His entire anger is on Brahmins who gave a useful caution that a given caste should also "concede interdining and intermarriage with castes below it" This is the justice here!

3) Is 'annihilation of caste' impossible?

All the people belonging to lower castes feel happy whenever they hear and wherever they read the expression 'annihilation of caste'. They experience a hope that they would find a solution for the 'annihilation of caste' in a book with that title.

But Ambedkar's essay gradually concludes that annihilation of caste is impossible! In this context, we experience doubt, surprise and sorrow simultaneously: Has Ambedkar titled his essay *Annihilation of Caste*, then, merely, to say that 'annihilation of caste' is impossible?

To say that 'annihilation of caste' is impossible, Ambedkar showed mainly 2 reasons:

- 1) Brahmins don't agree for it.
- 2) No caste would like to change.

Discussing these two factors, the essay ends without a definite conclusion and a programme for the people. The essay which starts with much enthusiasm, leaves its readers finally in despair.

We have to carefully understand why a person, who is opposed to the caste system, is saying so. Let us examine his views.

"[Annihilation of caste] is a stupendous task, well-nigh impossible. The Hindus hold to the sacredness of the social order. Caste has a divine basis. You must therefore destroy the sacredness and divinity with which Caste has become invested. In the last analysis, this means you must destroy the authority of the *Shastras* and the *Vedas*... Speaking for myself, I see the task to be well-nigh impossible. Perhaps you would like to know why I think so. Out of the many reasons, which have led me to take this view, I will mention some, which I regard much important. One of these reasons is the attitude of hostility, which the Brahmins have shown towards this question.... Is there any hope of the Brahmins ever taking up a lead in the future in this matter? I say no. You may ask why?... You may argue that there are secular Brahmins and priestly Brahmins and if the latter do not take up the cudgels on behalf of those who want to break Caste, the former will.... But in all this it is forgotten that the break up of the Caste system is bound to affect adversely the Brahmin Caste.... Is it reasonable to expect the secular Brahmins to take part in a movement directed against the priestly Brahmins? In my judgement, it is useless to make a distinction between the secular Brahmins and priestly Brahmins. Both are kith and kin.... Some of you will say that it is a matter of small concern whether the Brahmins come forward to lead the movement against Caste or whether they do not. To take this view is in my judgment to ignore the part played by the intellectual class in the community... In no country does the mass of the people live the life of intelligent thought and action. It is largely imitative and follows the intellectual class. There is no exaggeration in saying that the entire destiny of a country depends upon its intellectual class.... You may think it a pity that the intellectual class in India is simply another name for the Brahmin caste. You may regret the two are one; that the existence of the intellectual class should be bound with one single caste, that this intellectual class should share the interest and the aspirations of that Brahmin caste, which has regarded itself the custodian of the interest of that caste, rather than of the interests of the country. All this may be very regrettable. But the fact remains, that the Brahmins form the intellectual class of the Hindus.... When such an intellectual class, which holds the rest of the community in its grip, is opposed to the reform of Caste, the chances of success in a movement for the break-up of the Caste system appear to me very, very remote" (This is a condensed quotation from Vol. 1, pp: 69-71).

(1) Who are 'intellectuals'?

The commonly understood meaning of the term 'intellectual' is a person with intelligence. Intelligence — concerning what? If we examine

this term' thoroughly, it will become clear that intelligence is something connected with the labour that a person performs. When it refers to the skill connected with the labour, we should call a person an 'intellectual' if he or she has skill in labour and whether that labour is mental or manual. It follows that we may have to call a skilled carpenter an intellectual just as we call a skilled doctor an intellectual. But there is no such usage of the term in society.

True, that there is no need of skill for doing manual labour as we need to do mental labour. Yet the 'intellect' is not the sole property of mental labourers. But in this society, by and large only skill and expertise connected with mental labour is considered intelligence and intellect. Moreover, all those who do mental labour become the intellectual class!

Mental labours are those which teachers, doctors, scientists, engineers and such others do. These people know something about their respective subjects. But each one of them is confined to their respective sphere of activity only. Once they cross their sphere, none of them knows anything about other spheres. Yet all these people are 'intellectuals'.

Apart from those who pursue an occupation, we find some people working in the sphere of politics or social reform movements. Even these people know something, yet again only about the sphere in which they function. Yet all these people too are intellectuals.

There is some justification in the meaning that intellectuals are those who do mental labours. But, for Ambedkar, this meaning of intellectual is irrelevant. For him, only Brahmins are intellectuals! There are people who do mental labour in other upper castes. Yet none of them is an intellectual. He has not explained the basis for his determination of Brahmins as the only intellectuals.

If we take any problem in society, we find mutually opposite sides. Each side will have its own intellectuals. In the question of caste distinction the opposite sides are: upper castes and lower castes. Again each side will have its own intellectuals. The people of lower castes depend on the leadership of their intellectuals and not on the leadership of intellectuals belonging to the enemy class.

What happened in the case of struggle for Chawdar Tank? Did Brahmin intellectuals come forward and lead the movement? What happened in the Round Table Conferences? Did Brahmin intellectuals come and argue in favour of reservations for Dalits? Nowhere do we find Brahmin intellectuals in any of the programmes connected with Dalits. The upper caste intellectuals like Gandhi and Rajagopalachari worked against and not in favour of lower castes.

No doubt that leaders think in a somewhat systematic manner compared to the ordinary masses of people. In other words, those who can think systematically become 'leaders'. But this does not mean that people always remain as followers of the leaders and do not think intelligently. If people cannot think of 'struggle', there will not be any struggle at all.

Ambedkar thinks that any change in society depends on intellectuals, that is leaders. Well then, what is the role of ordinary people? For example, what would have happened if ordinary masses of people were not prepared for the struggle for Chawdar Tank and if there were only a couple of Dalit leaders? There wouldn't have been a meeting, a procession, and entry into the tank.

Did those people assemble there like sheep without any thinking on their own part at all and merely to follow the leaders? Don't the masses also think about their problems?

It is completely incorrect to separate people and their leaders in a movement. Leaders cannot exist without people. Leaders are also part of people. The interests of both people and leaders are identical. A 'movement' is a combination of both people and the leaders. There cannot be any movement or change if either of them is absent. Therefore, the view that the entire destiny of a country depends upon its intellectual class is totally meaningless.

So far we have seen the first point of Ambedkar that annihilation of caste does not take place because Brahmins do not agree to it. Now let us see the second point, namely, 'no caste does not like to change'.

(2) Does any Caste not like the change?

Ambedkar says:

"the second reason, why I say the task is impossible, will be clear if you will bear in mind that the Caste system has two aspects. In one of its aspect, it divides men into separate communities. In its second aspect, it places these communities in a graded order one above the other in social status. Each caste takes its pride and its consolation in the fact that in the scale of castes it is above some other castes. As an outward mark of this gradation, there is also a gradation of social and religious rights technically spoken of as *Ashtadhikaras* and *Sanskaras*. The higher the grade of a caste, the greater the number of these rights and the lower the grade, the lesser their number. Now this gradation, this scaling of castes, makes it impossible to organise a common front against the Caste System" (Vol. 1, p. 72).

This second reason is easily understandable, isn't it? According to this, no caste likes the abolition of caste because each caste will have castes below it. Compared to those lower castes, a given caste will be at a higher status. If there were no caste system that caste would not enjoy higher status. Hence no caste agrees to the abolition of caste system.

How wonderful is this reasoning!

Let us suppose there are 4 castes called A, B, C and D.

Caste A is the highest. The other castes are graded one below the other. Caste D is the lowest.

Caste A may not agree to the abolition of the caste system and equality among all as it would lose its social status. But, why do the remaining castes not agree?

Caste D would agree totally. It is needless to explain why it agrees. As it is the lowest of all castes, it would be ready to get rid of its lowly position. Further, it is the same case with castes B and C as well.

Let us look at caste B. This is lower than A and higher than C and D. According to Ambedkar, B too would not like the abolition of the caste system because it is at a higher status than C and D. Ambedkar has simply mentioned this aspect and stopped at that point. Well, won't B gain anything by abolition of the caste system? Won't it become equal with A, which is higher in status? Won't it be relieved of the humiliation that it is lower than A? Will B not gain something even as it 'loses' something due to abolition of the caste system? Ambedkar's reasoning concerns only what is 'lost' and it does not concern with what is 'gained'.

Let us consider caste C. This is lower than A and B and higher than D.

Though C would lose something compared to D, it also gains something compared to A and B.

Therefore, of the four castes A, B, C and D, caste A may not like the abolition of caste but the remaining castes do not oppose it. This means, those who begin the movement for annihilation of caste should first depend not on the highest caste but on the remaining castes! Not on the Brahmins caste but on other castes! Exactly contrary to what Ambedkar says! One has to depend mainly on the lower castes.

Concerning the lower castes, Ambedkar says:

"The Untouchables... are a disunited body, they are infested with the caste system in which they believe as much as does the caste Hindu. This caste system among the Untouchables has given rise to mutual rivalry

and jealousy and it has made common action impossible. The Mohemmedans have also a caste system among themselves... But their religion is a strong unifying force... In the absence of any unifying force, the Untouchables are just fragments with no cement to bind them and their numbers are therefore of no advantage to them" (Vol. 5, p. 266).

From this, it is clear that there are different castes even among untouchables and marriages do not take place between them. Yet the reason for the existence of 'rivalry' and 'jealousy' among untouchables and other lower castes is not the absence of religion that unifies them. Conditions of insecure livelihood and competition for work create 'rivalry' among them. People who do not have even slightly better living conditions will develop jealousy for those who possess them. All this is connected with the economic problem. If there occur necessary changes that give comfortable living and if they receive knowledge concerning the abolition of caste, all these castes will favour abolition of castes.

If we think like Ambedkar, the Brahmin caste alone may not change since it is the uppermost caste. It may remain like that. If the remaining castes change, that will be a very big change, indeed. If such a change takes place, it would be not possible for the Brahmin caste to remain unchanged. But Ambedkar's argument is different. According to him, Brahmins must change first. They are the intellectuals. They alone must initiate the abolition of caste. As they do not take that initiative any way, there is no way to annihilate caste. The Hindu religion has kept the caste system intact. We can not do anything to it. Its annihilation is most difficult! Impossible! This is what Ambedkar said through his essay *Annihilation of Caste!* But every problem has its own solution. The organizers of the movement have to find it. To Ambedkar, annihilation of caste has appeared to be the most difficult issue because he depended for its solution on the leadership of Brahmins and the reform of the Hindu religion. He opined that there should be only one authentic Hindu religious text devoid of caste distinctions by abolishing all the Hindu religious texts and Brahmins alone must take initiative for the annihilation of caste. As such things are not possible, annihilation of caste too appeared to be impossible.

Nothing comes in the way of inter-caste marriages even if we do not reform the Hindu religion according to Ambedkar's suggestion. For people with religious beliefs—however deep they may be—do not follow literally each and every saying of the religious texts. When other conditions favour them, they will be able to go for inter-caste marriages, disregarding religious customs.

By other conditions we mean living conditions that form due to education, occupation, jobs, economic situation etc. If the living conditions

of different castes are similar, there will be ways of the coming together of young men and women of different castes.

However strong the caste system may be, it does not mean that inter-caste marriages are not at all taking place. They have been taking place for a long time. But very rarely: one here and one there. That too, they happened between one upper caste and another.

After the introduction of 'reservations for lower castes', we may find some changes with reference to inter-caste marriages. They are: (1) The number of inter-caste marriages may have increased. (2) Now we may find marriages taking places not only between one upper caste and another but also between upper castes and lower castes.

The reason for the marriages between upper castes and lower castes is the entry of the lower castes into higher levels of education and employment through reservations.

When an untouchable youth receives education to some level and does a job connected with mental labour, a young woman belonging to an upper caste may get acquainted with him either during his studies or at the job, may become a friend and finally she may be prepared for an inter-caste marriage disregarding the caste distinctions. However, if that untouchable young man were a scavenger or a toilet cleaner, that upper caste girl would not like to marry him.

Even among the upper castes, marriages within the same caste take place between families of equal economic status and marital relations do not take place between a rich family and a poor family. The same thing applies to inter-caste marriages also.

In the inter-caste marriages that take place with the lower castes, the lower caste individuals—whether men or women—will be invariably educated and employed. In the case of women, we find education invariably even if they are not employed.

Nowhere do we find marriages of the individuals of upper castes with those of lower castes who perform the lowest manual labours and unclean labours.

Even in countries where there is no caste system, marital relations are not possible between people who do lowest manual labour and those who do mental labour. All these things will definitely be confirmed if we can collect information relating to inter-caste marriages on the following counts:

1. In the past, did inter-caste marriages in the past take place only among upper castes or between untouchables and upper castes also?

2. Are there instance of inter-caste marriages between young men and women who do scavenging work and the young men and women of upper castes?

3. Has the number of marriages between lower castes and upper castes increased after the development of education and employment of lower castes through reservation?

4. What is the situation of young men and women of lower castes in the inter-caste marriages that took place after reservations? Do they have education and jobs?

If we collect answers to these kinds of questions, we can see that inter-caste marriages became possible only when the living condition of young men and women of lower castes has improved.

What do we understand from this? The main prerequisite for frequent occurrence of inter-caste marriages is the development of living conditions of lower castes. This is an aspect linked with labour relations and division of labour that exist among all castes. This alone is the main issue. Without this, that is, while the lower caste population is confined only to the lowest manual labours and lives in dire poverty, marriage-relations between upper castes and lower castes will not be possible even if we prepare a single new Hindu religious text without reference to caste and put it in the hands of the upper castes. If we intensify religious reform what may happen at the most is that inter-caste marriages among upper castes will take place on a somewhat larger scale. But marital relations between upper and lower castes will not form by any religious reform.

In order to come out of any problem, the lower castes would have to concentrate their attention on their economic progress. That is, on the situation of 'exploitation of labour'! This is because the change that takes place in the life of lower castes even through reservations is very meager. That too for a very few people in those castes. Moreover, reservations are a temporary arrangement. If they are given up, the situation will again be as before.

Progress does not mean a change that is limited only to some people, to some extent and that too temporarily. It is a higher form of change that benefits (1) every one and (2) permanently. This is not possible through reservations.

Unless we follow a path that would achieve real progress, we cannot imagine inter-caste marriages occurring at a higher level of frequency than at present. If we do not follow such a path, annihilation of caste is really an impossible thing. But such impossibility is not due to what Ambedkar calls the lack of reform of the Hindu religion.

After explaining how ‘annihilation of caste’ is nearly impossible due to certain reasons, in 1936 Ambedkar declared that he was himself not going to continue in the Hindu religion:

“...this would probably be my last address to a Hindu audience... I am sorry, I will not be with you. I have decided to change” (Vol.1, p. 78 & 80).

Having declared this, Ambedkar concluded his essay with a couple of paras.

Ambedkar, who declared thus in 1936, did not leave the Hindu religion until 20 years. He, however, made his declaration 20 years before! This is amazing!

Finally, neither hope nor solution for abolition of caste may be found in the essay *Annihilation of Caste*! There is no programme in it as to what the lower castes population should do! There is no other programme except that the lower-castes should think of the upper castes thus, ‘It would be good if upper castes change! They don’t change but it would be very nice if they did! It would be still better if the Brahmins change!’

But, why can’t any leader of a movement who attempts at the annihilation of caste, offer a programme, for example as follows, to both lower and upper castes with certain minimum suggestions and activities?

➤ We must develop logical reasoning and rationalism in every aspect including in the matter of caste.

➤ Caste is an evil practice. We should refine ourselves so as to abandon it.

➤ The lower castes too observe hierarchy of castes. It is the same case even with untouchable castes! This means that lower castes’ people are terribly harming themselves. Try to abandon this practice!

➤ In the name of ‘inter-caste dining’, invite people from other castes which are higher than yours for dinners to your house. Similarly go for dinners to the houses of those whose caste is lower than yours. In case they cannot afford to offer food to you, bear the entire expenditure yourselves!

➤ When you are expected to look for a marital relationship for one of your family members, think of individuals in the castes that are nearer to your castes. Especially, keep in view the castes that are lower than yours! Tell them that you are willing to have a marital relationship with them and discuss all things! Begin to reform yourselves by mixing with castes that are lower than yours. If you are not willing to mix with castes that

are lower than yours, it means that you are losing your eligibility to mix with castes higher than yours! Make yourself eligible to get rid of the evil practice of caste. Understand that it is in your hands.

➤ Do not object to the 'love marriages' which young men and women decide on their own! Generally, they have the nature of being 'inter-caste marriages'.

➤ Don't imitate the customs of upper castes with a hope to become their equals. For example, don't do things like wearing the so-called sacred thread, chanting of mantras, doing Sandhyavandan etc. Whichever caste practices them, they are useless to life and are meaningless acts. Try to understand that it is possible to get rid of caste distinctions only through inter-caste marriages and not by imitating the appearance and speech of upper castes! Don't try to derive pleasure by adding the word 'Brahmin' to the names of the lower castes and by changing your caste names into Sanskrit! Try to throw away the entire caste system.

➤ Stop admiring reformers like Vivekananda and Gandhi who are in circulation as Hindu religious reformers but who in fact did not at all want the welfare and progress of the lower castes. Do not insult yourselves with such practices as hanging their photographs at your houses and giving their names to your children.

➤ People of upper castes should learn this: Give up caste chauvinism! Acquire the minimum sense that 'all human beings are equal! Give up the meanness of demonstrating your castes by adding caste names at the end of your names! Show enthusiasm for dining in the houses of lower caste people! Start inter-caste marriages with other castes which are closer to you!

➤ Preach to people in every possible way through associations for annihilation of castes.

Why shouldn't Ambedkar, in his essay *Annihilation of Caste*, teach such things to at least lower castes people as to how they should behave in the matters of caste?

Well, what did that essay teach the lower castes people? What did it offer them? It gave them the impression that 'It was no use. Even the lower castes people do not change'. On the whole, it left all people of the lower castes to their ignorance!

We have seen before that the problem of caste is not simply an evil practice but is also *linked with poverty*.

Ambedkar did not leave the problem of poverty as well. He suggested a solution for it too. We shall now examine in detail what it is.

14 ACCORDING TO AMBEDKAR, “PROTECTION AGAINST ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION”

Ambedkar made some proposals in a piece titled “Protection against Economic Exploitation” (Vol. 1, p. 391, 396 & 397). The meaning of these proposals is that there would be no economic exploitation if certain changes were made in society. However, he does not explain what economic exploitation means.

Unless they know what does economic exploitation mean, how will people know whether the suggested protective measures are correct or not? How will they evaluate them?

It appears that it is Ambedkar’s opinion that an explanation of ‘exploitation’ is not required, that everybody knows about it. Either because of this understanding or any other reason, he has written only a single sentence about such an important issue. He has limited himself to very few suggestions with reference to the protective measures. Yet we have to try to understand his views based on these minimum suggestions.

While making suggestions, a dozen terms relating to economic issues roll out in this document. The terms include propertied class, masters, government, money, land, landlord, classes, rent, interest, debentures and wages. We do not find any explanation for any term. All are stray words. They remain isolated. The readers would understand these words in accordance with the views that they already hold. They will learn nothing new from these suggestions.

For example, what notion do people have about interest? When a person borrows some money or commodity as loan from another person, he has to give some more money than borrowed while repaying the debt. interest is the name of that excess amount of money!

Not only the person who receives interest but also the person who pays it too will have a positive opinion about interest. That is, an opinion which considers both paying interest and receiving interest as a fair transaction. All people know only this.

But what will the recipient of interest do with that money? He will buy products that are necessary for his subsistence. Which means, he is receiving those products as interest. That person is able to use products made by labour even without doing any labour himself. He would lend the principal amount again afresh as a loan and receive interest afresh again. The same thing happens again and again. He will always be receiving products as interest without doing labour at all. He thinks that he is earning them by a fair means.

According to the existing economics, interest is justified. But that economics itself is a big blunder! All notions formed accordingly are faulty. All relations that appear from its view point are faulty.

According to the correct meaning, interest is exploitation of labour. 'Economic exploitation' is its another name! This meaning forms on the basis of 'law of value'.

Value means human labour. Another name of 'value' is money. Whether you call it 'value' or 'money' it is labour only.

If a person receives some money in the name of interest, it means he has received some labour. But that labour is not his own labour. It is others' labour.

What does 'others' labour' mean? Is it the labour of those who paid interest? If the person who pays interest performs labour, then the interest which he pays will be part of his labour. Or if that person does not perform any labour, the interest which he pays will not be his labour. Such a person pays a certain portion of the surplus value, which he 'earns' from the labourers who work under him, as interest. In such contexts, it is not the labour of the person who paid the interest. It is the labour of his labourers. Whichever way we look at it, interest is the portion of value which does not go to those who do labour. It goes into the hands of the lender. That lender, without doing labour, lives on others' labour. That is by means of 'exploitation'.

Let us suppose the person who earns interest is also doing some labour. Also let us suppose that that person is earning 5 units of money through his own labour and 6 through interest. Here there is no problem with regard to 5 which comes from his own labour. No doubt that individuals should get the fruits of their respective labour. Here the question is concerning 6 that comes from interest. Interest is the income that comes from others' labour. If the income of an individual consists entirely of interest, then it means that he is living wholly on the exploitation of labour.

This means, an individual, an organisation or a bank that earns interest is engaged in exploitation of labour. If we consider the whole world, money

lenders, banks, finance companies and such other organisations, all these are exploiting labour.

What we have to grasp from this is that the term interest has two mutually conflicting meanings!

The first meaning: Interest is a justifiable income of an individual who lends money. This meaning has been in existence for ages.

The second meaning: Interest is part of exploitation of labour. Since nobody should possess the right to exploit others' labour, it follows that no person or no organisation should possess the right to receive interest. This is the meaning which Marxism gives.

Interest is not the only way of exploitation of labour. Land-rent and profit are also other ways of exploiting labour. These three are incomes unconnected with one's own labour. In addition to these, taxes paid to the government and unproductive expenses also come under this category of incomes in the sense that they are part of surplus value. These details are enough for this context.

Just as interest has two kinds of meanings, all the terms which Ambedkar mentioned have two kinds of meaning.

It is not simply some terms but the entire Economics itself will have two kinds of meanings. The first kind of Economics defends all the property rights and similar relations that are necessary to carry on exploitation of labour. This is **Capitalist Economics** or **Bourgeois Economics**. Opposed to this is the one which explains the concept of exploitation of labour and rejects the Bourgeois Economics. This is the **Marxist Economics** or **Communist Economics**.

Concerning the elimination of exploitation of labour and achieving equality, Marxist economics suggests mainly 3 changes.

- 1) Every person both men and women must perform labour. Their labour should be the source of their livelihood.
- 2) We should abolish such sources of income as rents, interest and profit and also the exploitative property rights that fetch these sources of income.
- 3) We should abolish the **exploitative division of labour** according to which a person always performs a manual labour while another person always performs a mental labour. We must establish a **new division of labour** according to which all men and women both perform certain manual and mental labour.

Only if these changes take place will the exploitative relations of labour change into equal relations of labour. This means, exploitative society will form into a society with a new character.

Those who have only a half-baked knowledge of Marxism consider it as something that concerns only relations between workers and capitalists, not of other sections of population including women. But this is utterly wrong.

If we take any period in history since the days of slave society, we will find society split into many classes and sub-classes. But all those classes/sub-classes boil down essentially to 2 classes only: the class that performs labour and the class that does not perform labour. Though there is a third class that depends partly on its own labour and partly on exploitation, we may classify some sub-classes under the class of labourers and some others under the class of non-labourers. On the whole, we may classify the entire population—men, women, young and old—will come under these 2 classes only. Reference to these 2 classes implies the entire society.

When we use the term **masters**, all the members of their families come under that term. When we use the term **labourers**, all the members of their families come under that term. The two constitute virtually the whole society.

Different kinds of labour relations, namely, productive labour, unproductive labour and family labour, are intertwined among the entire population of society.

Men and women, young and old, everyone belongs to some class and some group in a given class. The place a person occupies in the labour relations and the source of income for his subsistence determine his class and group position.

Beggars, people in the prisons, inmates in the orphanages, people in religious institutions, prostitutes, rowdies and so on belong to some class depending on the source of their livelihood. In these examples, except those who live in religious institutions, all people belong to the labouring class. Though prostitutes live by their occupation, prostitution cannot be called labour. Prostitutes are not labourers. Similarly, rowdies are also not labourers.

If we understand all these labour relations, it will be clear that Marxism has talked about the entire population in society.

How can readers understand the concept of 'economic exploitation' unless one explains such economic phenomena as interest, profit and rent?

If they do not know the ‘truth’, they will understand things only in accordance with the ideas that they had already formed in the past.

Ambedkar has used the term ‘economic exploitation’, was he not? It is doubtful if he has used the term in the sense of ‘exploitation of labour’. Does he defend or oppose rent, interest and profits? We find answers to these doubts when we see the protective measures which he suggested.

All the demands concerning reservations which Ambedkar put forward in the Round Table Conference of 1930 were meant only for untouchables. Reservations were merely a temporary arrangement. But the protective measures that we look at now are not meant only for untouchables but also for all the poor people. Further these are not temporary but permanent. These are meant to change permanently all the spheres of life. This means, Ambedkar has suggested not only temporary solution but also permanent solution.

Before elaborating these safeguards, Ambedkar clarified that they were meant

“to remove social, political and economic inequality by providing better opportunities to the submerged classes” (Vol. 1, p. 387).

Social inequalities means caste distinctions: upper vs. lower castes.

Economic inequalities imply that some are rich and some are poor.

Political inequalities imply that the rich people have access to the administrative positions while poor do not have access.

The aim of these safeguards is to eliminate all these inequalities. That is, briefly speaking, these safeguards are aimed at establishing caste-less and classless society.

Ambedkar proposed these safeguards in March 1947. He wished that the government of India should implement them after India became independent.

Now let us look at Ambedkar’s proposals concerning Protection against Economic Exploitation:

“The United States of India shall declare as a part of the law of the constitution—(1) That industries which are key industries or which may be declared to be key industries shall be owned and run by the State; (2) That industries which are not key industries but which are run by the State or by Corporations established by the State; (3) The Insurance shall be a monopoly of the State and that the State shall compel every adult citizen to take out a life insurance policy commensurate with his

wages as may be prescribed by the Legislature; (4) That agriculture shall be State Industry; (5) That State shall acquire the subsisting rights in such industries, insurance and agricultural land held by private individuals, whether as owners, tenants or mortgages and pay them compensation in the form of debenture equal to the value of his or her right in the land. Provided that in reckoning the value of land, plant or security no account shall be taken of any rise therein due to emergency, of any potential or unearned value or any value for compulsory acquisition; (6) The State shall determine how and when the debenture holder shall be entitled to claim cash payment; (7) The debenture shall be transferable and inheritable property but neither the debenture holder nor the transferee from the original holder nor his heir shall be entitled to claim the return of the land or interest in any industrial concern acquired by the State or be entitled to deal with it in any way; (8) The debenture-holder shall be entitled to interest on his debenture at such rate as may be defined by law, to be paid by the State in cash or in kind as the State may deem fit; (9) Agricultural industry shall be organized on the following basis: (i) The State shall divide the land acquired into farms of standstill size and let out the farms for cultivation to residents of the village as tenants (made up of group of families) to cultivate on the following conditions: (a) The farm shall be cultivated as a collective farm; (b) The farm shall be cultivated in accordance with rules and directions issued by Government; (c) The tenants shall share among themselves in the manner prescribed the produce of the farm left after the payment of charges properly leviable on the farm; (ii) The land shall be let out to villagers without distinction of caste or creed and in such manner that there will be no landlord, no tenant and no landless labourers; (iii) It shall be the obligation of the State to finance the cultivation of the collective farms by the supply of water, draft animals, implements, manure, seeds, etc.; (iv) The State shall be entitled to—(a) to levy the following charges on the produce of the farm; (i) a portion for land revenue; (ii) a portion to pay the debenture-holders; and (iii) a portion to pay for the use of capital goods supplied; and (b) to prescribe penalties against tenants who break the conditions of tenancy or willfully neglect to make the best use of the means of cultivation offered by the State or otherwise act prejudicially to the scheme of collective farming; (10) The scheme shall be brought into operation as early as possible but in no case shall the period extend beyond the tenth year from the date of the Constitution coming into operation" (Vol. 1, pp: 396-7).

If these safeguards against economic exploitation, interest, rent and right to private property are intact as before. The only change proposed here is that the State becomes the single owner in the place of private owners.

According to these proposals, what the State should do is this: It should purchase all the lands under the possession of landlords by paying compensation and take them under its possession. Similarly, it must purchase all the industries of the capitalists by paying compensation and take them under its possession. Also it must pay the equivalent value to shares and securities.

The question that immediately arises is: why should the State pay ‘compensation’ for lands and industries? To say that the State has to pay compensation for the properties amounts to accepting the contention that land is indeed the property of landlords and capital is the property of capitalists! Well, if you accept that properties belong to owners, then what is the meaning of economic exploitation?

Land cannot be the private property of any individual. It exists in nature. No human being has made it out of his/her labour. It existed even before human beings came into existence. Hence it is nobody’s private property. Human beings have the right only to do labour on the land. Even that right is not meant to occupy land as a permanent private property or to rent it out to others. The system of occupying land as private property came into practice only in order to enable some to live without doing any labour. The person who occupies land will become its master. He lets it for rent to those who do not have land. The Master takes some portion of the crop from the land as his right for rent and thus lives on the rent without doing any labour. What the slaves and feudal peasants did for the sake of slave masters and feudal lords respectively was nothing but sacrificing their ‘surplus labour’. It is the same thing which workers do under capitalism. The surplus labour of workers splits into many parts and it feeds the class that does not do any labour.

Therefore, in order to prevent others from exploiting their labour, labouring people should not treat the property rights of the owners as legitimate rights. They should not care for the property right of the landlord who receives rent. As land is part of nature and does not belong to the landlord, they need not pay any compensation to him. Just as labourers do, a landlord and his family too must live on their own labour performed on some land. Then the term ‘rent’ will disappear.

Similarly the working class need not pay compensation to the capitalists because capital is not the fruit of the labour of the capitalists. It accumulated as a result of surplus value which the working class has been giving continually for many generations.

For these reasons, the labouring class can confiscate properties without paying a single paisa as compensation for lands or industries.

But this is not what Ambedkar proposes. According to him, lands are the property of landlords and capital is the property of capitalists. Hence, we must pay money for them. We have to pay the value of the property without causing any loss to the property owners!

Well, what sort of change it would be if we pay compensation to the property owners? When the land is in the possession of the landlord, he rents it out and his family lives on the labour of others who pay rent. Or, instead of land if the landlord possess money which he gets by selling the land, his family would still live on the labour of others because he gets interest on this money. If the State does not pay money immediately after it buys the land of the landlord, it would give him a paper of equivalent value called **debenture**. The State pays interest every year on that debenture. Ambedkar's ninth point identifies the source from which the State should pay interest. We will examine that point later.

What change occurs when the landlord sells his land to the State? He lives on rent when he possessed land and he would live on interest when he possess money instead of land. What is the difference between the two? Nothing. Both are same. Both imply exploitation of labour. The property in land is turned into property in money. This means that family did not really lose its property. It retained its property. Only the form of property has changed.

If a family possesses land, the rent will never stop coming.

If a family possess money, instead of land, interest too will never stop coming. This means, the family of owners will never have any need to do labour. If we confiscate land from the landlord without compensation, it is not possible for the landlord to earn either rent or money. This means, there won't be any scope to live by exploitation. Then landlord too will, then, have to depend on his own labour.

Paying compensation means changing the form of property instead of abolishing exploitative property right. It is the same case with the question of property rights of capitalists as well. If they receive debentures equivalent to the value of their property and get interest on the debentures, it only means that the form of the property has changed. Owing to this the property owners will not lose any thing. They will never face the risk of doing labour for themselves.

Debenture is a paper that guarantees livelihood without doing any labour. Mr. Ambedkar is handing over these papers respectfully to property owners! Moreover, he is assuring them that rights over these debentures are 'inheritable' for any number of generations. This means, Ambedkar Sahib is permitting landlords and capitalists to metamorphocize into a class

of debenture-holders and enjoy interest for generations and live happily without doing any labour until the sun and the moon disappear from the universe!

The State should pay money after purchasing lands of the landlords and industries of capitalists, should it not? Then, why did Ambedkar suggest that the ‘State should give debentures’, instead of money? He has not given any reason for this. What appears outwardly is that the State would not possess enough money to purchase all the properties in society. Taxes alone constitute the income of the State. They constitute only a portion of the annual mass of production. The State has to spend these taxes unproductively on legislatures, government offices, police, military etc. It would never happen so that some balance remains after all the expenditure and the State pays that balance to the landlords and capitalists. Hence Ambedkar meant that the State should buy properties on credit basis without paying money and pay only interest every year. Which means, it would never be possible to pay the principal amount. The heirs of those properties of land and industries can surely receive interest from the State for any number of generations.

But the actual and correct reason for the inability of the State to pay money for the purchased properties is different. We can understand it only if we know the concept of value.

‘Value of land’ will be as follows: Land is not made of human labour. The raw land that existed in nature had no value. Suppose a person pays some money to buy such raw land and then cultivates it, raises a crop, sells it and gets back the money he spent on buying the land. It appears as though he got back from the land the money which he spent on buying the land. But it is not true. Since land has no value at all, the money that he got from the crop is not something that came from the land. There is no connection between money and land. The money paid for the land is part of surplus value of those people who performed labour in that land.

Conversion of a piece of ‘raw land’ into a form that facilitates cultivation or other need involves expenditure of some labour. Raw land will change into another form. As some amount of labour is necessary for such conversion, the land acquires some value due to the expenditure of labour. If some one purchases the land by paying that expended value alone, it would be possible for the owner to get back that value through the land. If some one purchases the land by paying more value than what is expended, it is not possible to get back that excess value through the land. If some one pays value which the land really does not have, then it is possible to pay that value only from the surplus value of those who performed labour on the land.

The summary of the whole thing is that the total money available in society does not include any part connected with the value of the raw land. All that is called money concerns with labour only. Just because land does not have value, the State won't find money to pay for the lands that it purchases. Hence it is not possible for the State to pay that money. This appears outwardly as if the State does not have so much money.

Regarding capital: capital means a collection of some articles. All the articles are made by labour and will have value. Which means capital will have value. Whenever the capitalist sells products made with capital, the entire expended value of capital keeps returning.

Though capital has value, it is not possible for the State to pay the values of industries which it purchased from capitalists. This is because the State should possess capital if it wants to run those industries. If the State gives away money to the capitalists, it has to borrow that money from the capitalists in order to run those industries under its auspices. Whether it pays off money, borrows the same money on credit, and pays interest; or it does not initially pay money but pays interest on the amount which it did not pay initially both are the same.

Well then how should the State pay interest on its debts? Point 9 of Ambedkar's safeguards indicates as to how to distribute products annually. We have to see this point.

The State purchases the entire land in village on credit and rents to villagers either individually or collectively. Crops grow in that land. How to distribute them?

There are two ways to do this. That crop may get distributed in one way under the system based on exploitation or in another way under the system where there is no exploitation.

In the system without exploitation: After deducting the entire expenditure on means of production required for raising the crop, the remaining belongs to those who performed the labour to raise the crop. They need not pay any rent, interest and profit out of the amount that they get. If the State is opposed to exploitation, people have to pay some portion of the crop toward taxes since it is their responsibility to run the State. If it is not the State of the people, however, it amounts to losing their labour when they pay taxes.

According to Ambedkar, the distribution of the crop should be as follows: (1) since it is the State that incurs expenditure necessary for cultivating the land, we have to first take out that amount. This is correct and we have to pay all the expenditure to the State. This amount will serve as new expenditure at the time of next cultivation. (2) Next, we have to

pay some portion of that crop toward interest on debentures of the landlords. This is what we pay in lieu of the property right which the landlord possesses. Whether we paid rent in the past or pay interest now, both mean the same. This is exploitation of labour. Ambedkar is defending this. (3) Thereafter, we have to pay taxes to the State. Since this State defends the exploitative property rights, the entire expenditure that sustains the State is part of the surplus value (that is exploitation of labour). (4) The State which invests in the cultivation of the land does not satisfy itself by merely taking back the invested capital. It must also get profit on its capital. We have to pay that profit from the crop itself. But Ambedkar did not say that ‘we have to pay profit too to the State’. He simply said that we have to give back its capital and pay taxes. We can imagine that the taxes will be at such a level that they include profit as well. This we can imagine because here we find the defense of property rights. (5) The labouring population have to distribute only that crop which remains after all other payments. When they distribute it so, it would be equivalent to wage. Here the surplus value consists of interest on debentures of the landlords and the taxes to the State. The taxes themselves include profit on the capital which the State invested.

Same is the case with industries: In a given industry, we have to take out from the production all the expenses connected with the means of production. This is correct. Next, we need to pay interest on debenture of the capitalist. It is the same thing whether the capitalist got profit or interest on capital. The interest that goes to the capitalist will also include interest that goes to the landlord for his land-rights. Next come taxes payable to the State. They may also include profit on the capital which the State invested. After all these deductions, the labourers of the industry will have to distribute the remaining amount. It will be merely a ‘wage’ for them.

The third point in Ambedkar’s proposals says that the State shall compel every adult citizen to take out a life insurance policy commensurate with his wages. But wage is the labourer’s income that a labouring person gets. The label ‘wage’ does not apply to the class which gets interest on debentures without doing any labour.

Ambedkar’s proposals do not include, however, the condition that every adult citizen must do labour. Without such a condition, how do wages and life insurance ‘commensurating with wages’ apply to each individual?

For the sake of argument, let us assume that even the debenture-holder performs some labour and Ambedkar also assumes this. One may, then, argue as follows: Ambedkar said that every adult citizen should take life

insurance with his wages, didn't he? How can a person get wage without doing any labour? Doesn't this mean that Ambedkar had to imply that every person should do labour?

Are we expected here to interpret Ambedkar's words (that every adult citizen should take insurance policy commensurate with his wages) in our own way even when he does not express an important point explicitly?

Fine, let us believe that Ambedkar did imply that every person should do labour. Do you know what will happen then? Debenture-holders will have two kinds of income. (1) Wage (2) Interest on debenture. Wage is in return for the labour performed while interest is in return for the labour **not** performed! Interest is merely toward the 'property right'. It comes from the surplus value of the other labourers who do labour along with the debenture-holders! That's it! Here what we really need to grasp is this: even if every person performs labour that is not enough in order to eliminate exploitation. It is imperative to abolish property rights which the propertied class has been enjoying for so long! If this does not happen and if exploitative property rights remain intact, the propertied class will continue to receive exploitative income even if they begin to do labour.

All the capitalists keep claiming that they too work very hard. If they take wage for that hardship, it is reasonable. But they get not only wage but also profit and interest. The whole problem, however, concerns incomes unconnected with labour.

If there were no exploitative property rights, there would neither be debentures nor interest. The question of exploitation itself would not arise, then. Then every one will be a human being living on his own labour and not by exploitative income.

But Ambedkar's proposals do not include the condition that former property owners should no longer possess property rights in the new scheme. Moreover, there is a condition that they should possess those rights! That too inheritable! Permanently! For generations!

This means that Ambedkar's scheme includes exploitative sources of income as before! The class that consumes such income also remains.

Ambedkar's proposal begins with the term 'economic exploitation'. On the one hand he speaks of exploitation and on the other hand he defends income that comes without doing any labour! When we examine all this, we experience a doubt concerning Ambedkar's understanding of economic issues.

Should we think that though Ambedkar has used the term exploitation, he in fact does not know anything about it? Or should we think that he knows everything and yet he defended exploitation knowingly?

The first of these interpretations appears to be the correct one. People who do not know anything about exploitation too recite the term ‘exploitation’! In the same manner, it appears that, Ambedkar too does not know at all anything about ‘exploitation of labour’. Nowhere has he used terms like ‘class that performs labour’ and ‘class that does not perform labour’. Nowhere has he expressed his opposition to or criticism of exploitative sources of income such as rent, interest and profit. His entire understanding of economic issues is capitalistic. But capitalists do not use the term economic exploitation. They do not acknowledge the existence of exploitation, whereas Ambedkar spoke of exploitation. But he defended exploitation.

In Ambedkar’s scheme, there is no place for the struggle which the labouring class needs to wage in order to come out of exploitation. All the changes take place through the existing State in its legislative assemblies.

In Ambedkar’s view, the State is an institution above all classes. It rules and treats the entire population equally. Hence it buys all properties from private owners. By paying inheritable interest to the class of property owners and wages to the class of labourers, the State treats the two classes equally and thus rules nicely!

In Ambedkar’s view the legislature is a place of great struggle, its members are not like statues in a museum. Here they achieve rights by waging struggles and thus it is such a great place. He tells:

“A Legislative Council is more than a museum, it is a place where, for instance, social battles have to be fought, privileges have to be destroyed, and rights have to be won” (Vol. 2, p. 471).

The entire struggle which the poor people wage involves nothing more than sending representatives to the legislature. Those representatives will wage struggles by means of new laws. It will be a great struggle if they make a law to buy properties of the private owners. It will amount to winning rights which they did not possess earlier.

What does elimination of privileges mean? This means it is a struggle that makes all people equal in such a way that none will have special privileges. This equality consists of paying interest to debenture-holders until the earth itself disappears and continue paying wages to the labourers! This is equality according to Ambedkar! This is what elimination of special privileges means!

1) Ambedkar's 'State Socialism'!

Ambedkar mentioned the term 'State Socialism' many a time while discussing property relations.

"The main purpose behind the clause is to put an obligation on the State to plan the economic life of the people on lines which would lead to highest point of productivity without closing every avenue to private enterprise, and also provide for the equitable distribution of wealth. The plan set out in the clause proposes State ownership in agriculture with a collectivised method of cultivation and a modified form of State Socialism in the field of industry. It places squarely on the shoulders of the State the obligation to supply capital necessary for agriculture as well as industry" (Vol. 1, p. 408).

There is no explanation of such questions as these: what is Socialism? What is State Socialism? The only meaning that appears here is that State Socialism means control of all properties by the State.

At least some people know that Socialism means equality. People who speak of equality must oppose relations of exploitation even if they do not know what equality actually means in every sense. The fundamental condition for equality is that everyone must perform labour. But there is no reference to labour in Ambedkar's conception of equality. He referred to equality and State Socialism in terms of State's control of all property. The question here is whether property should be under the control of private owners or the State? Here there is no understanding that it is the same thing whether property is under private control or State control unless we eliminate exploitation and establish new relations.

Ambedkar suggests 'to plan the economic life on lines which would lead to highest point of productivity'. What is the 'highest point'? If we consider some point as the highest point, what sort of point would it be if some more improvement takes place in productivity?

Ambedkar further says about State Socialism:

"State Socialism is essential for the rapid industrialization of India. Private enterprise cannot do it and if it did it would produce those inequalities of wealth which private capitalism has produced in Europe and which should be a warning to Indians" (Vol. 1, p. 408).

Does this mean that if the private capitalism produces inequalities in wealth, Ambedkar's State Socialism will establish equality in wealth: equality between debenture-holders who do not perform labour and labourers who lose their surplus value?

Emphasizing the need for collective farms, Ambedkar says,

“Consolidation of Holdings and Tenancy Legislation are worse than useless. They cannot bring about prosperity in agriculture. Neither Consolidation nor Tenancy Legislation can be of any help to the 60 millions of Untouchables who are just landless labourers. Neither Consolidation nor Tenancy Legislation can solve their problem. Only collective farms on the lines set out in the proposal can help them. There is no expropriation of the interests concerned” (Vol. 1, p. 408).

Similar questions arise on this issue as well. How do collective farms help untouchables when you convert the landed property of landlords into money and give the same landlords the control over that money? What is the use of collective farms if the former landlords receive interest without performing any labour? What is the way to help the sixty million untouchables who are landless agricultural labourers? Is it to hand over the surplus value which they produce in collective farms to the debenture-holders?

2) What is the difference between Gandhi and Ambedkar concerning ‘Property’?

Ambedkar seriously criticised Gandhi with reference to the question of property relations, that Gandhi is not on the side of labourers, and so on. But both Ambedkar and Gandhi are alike on the question of property. The only difference between the two is in their words!

Gandhi does not like class struggle between tenant farmers and landlords and between owners and labourers. It is the same case with Ambedkar. Even according to Ambedkar, there is no struggle that the labouring class wages.

During the peasant movement of 1921 in Uttar Pradesh, the tenant farmers stopped paying rent to the Zamindars (landlords). They stopped fetching water for the landlords. They even stopped services like hair cutting. This revolt worried Gandhi, who described these acts of revolt as acts of ‘violence’! He said that peasants should not resort to violence, that they were obliged to pay rent to the landlords and that they should conduct a friendly discussion on the subject with the Zamindars (Vol.9, p. 282).

Finding fault with Gandhi on this episode, Ambedkar says:

“Mr. Gandhi does not want to hurt the propertied class. He is even opposed to a campaign against them. He has no passion for economic equality... His solution for the economic conflict between the owners and workers, between the rich and the poor, between landlords and tenants

and between the employers and the employees is very simple. The owners need not deprive themselves of their property. All that they need to do is to declare themselves Trustees for the poor. Of course the Trust is to be a voluntary..." (Vol. 9, p. 282).

There is nothing surprising in Gandhi's words; indeed it would have been surprising if Gandhi had not talked so about the propertied class. Well, then, what did Ambedkar say about the same class? Did Ambedkar speak of the propertied class differently from Gandhi in 1947, much later after he found fault with Gandhi and after he had himself grown in age and experience and had many opportunities to improve his understanding? What is the difference between Gandhi's advice that peasants should pay rent to the Zamindars and Ambedkar's proposals that peasants should pay interest to the debenture-holders (formerly landlords)? Ambedkar says that Gandhi's solution is very simple in the sense that the propertied class need not deprive themselves of their property. Well, then, is Ambedkar's proposal so tough that the propertied class should have to give up their property?

True, what Gandhi said is not 'economic equality'. But does Ambedkar's proposal constitute economic equality? It is also true that Gandhi does not wish to hurt the propertied class. Well, does Ambedkar wish to hurt the propertied class? Does conversion of property into money amount to hurting the propertied class?

Ambedkar cited a context in which Gandhi in fact found fault with the labourers. These are Gandhi's words:

"Should the labourers obtain an increment in their wages by violence? Even if that be possible, they cannot resort to anything like violence, howsoever legitimate may be their claims. To use violence for securing rights may seem an easy path, but it proves to be thorny in the long run... The labourer does not trust the capitalist and the capitalist has no faith in the labourers... But when labour comes fully to realise its strength, I know it can become more tyrannical than capital" (Vol. 9, pp: 279-80).

What should a person, who wants to criticise Gandhi, say? He should say that it is not violence to go on strike for a wage rise. He should also say that 'labourers and capitalists do not trust each other because they are totally antagonist classes'. But Ambedkar himself did not give these kinds of answers. On the contrary, he gave reasons for the inability of labourers to become owners:

"The mill owners will have to work on the terms dictated by labourers, if the latter could command intelligence of the former. It is clear, however, that labour will never attain to that intelligence. If it does, labour will

cease to be labour and become itself the master. The capitalists do not fight on the strength of money alone. They do possess intelligence and tact” (Vol. 9, p. 280).

The capitalist intellectuals have always been singing the song that capitalists run their industries with intelligence and business acumen by which they get profits and not by exploitation of labour. Ambedkar’s understanding too has the same tune. He says that labourers would become masters if they had intelligence. Will those masters-turned labourers not themselves need labourers to work for them? This means, unintelligent people will become their labourers! Ambedkar’s words imply that all intelligent people become masters and all stupid people remain labourers.

But it is not intelligence or tact that is needed to become masters; it is the exploitative property rights that are needed! Those who have property rights over lands and other means of production will alone become masters!

It is not intelligence that is required to retain those rights but weapons! The class of masters is able to sustain itself by means of strength of weapons.

For Ambedkar, possessing intelligence means becoming masters. Ambedkar does not have the understanding that ‘there should not be any masterhood in human relations at all’. The presence of masterhood implies the presence of labourhood or servitude. This means there is no equality. But Ambedkar is not concerned with it. Ambedkar’s series of questions against Gandhi proceed as follows:

“Is there anything new in the Gandhian analysis of economic ills? Are the economics of Gandhism sound? What hope does Gandhism hold out to the common man, to the down-and out? Does it promise him a better life, a life of joy, and culture, a life of freedom, not merely freedom from want but freedom to rise, to grow to the full stature which his capacities can reach?” (Vol. 9, p. 282).

Will each one of these questions not apply to Ambedkar himself? True, there is nothing new in Gandhi’s analysis; but is there anything new in Ambedkar’s analysis? True, Gandhi’s economics is not sound. Well, then, is economics of Ambedkar sound? Why should we not confront Ambedkar with each question which he raised against Gandhi?

Let Ambedkar criticise Gandhi in any number of ways, both are essentially the same in respect of property relations. Both are favourable to the propertied-class, both their economics is the same. But Gandhi defends the old economics as it is without any change and without uttering the word exploitation. It is very easy to understand him. However

Ambedkar's proposals are confusing! The confusion consists in uttering the word 'exploitation' on the one hand and defending it on the other hand!

We have yet to see some more points in his scheme of safeguards. His proposals are meant not only to remove economic inequalities but also social inequalities; that is to remove caste distinctions. Point 9 of his proposals indicates how it helps the removal of caste distinctions. It suggests that the land be let out to villagers without distinction of caste or creed and in such manner that there will be no landlord, no tenant and no landless labourer. If this is done, the lower castes people too will get the land equally with the upper castes people. As a result, their economic condition will improve. Also it will lead to their entry into the political sphere. Thus, according to Ambedkar, all kinds of inequalities will vanish by following his proposals. It was inevitable for him to suggest the same solution which he himself opposed whenever others proposed it, namely, that all the problems of lower castes are linked with the problem of poverty and the solution to the caste system too should proceed along the path of economic relations. He did not simply stop at suggesting inter-caste marriage as a solution to remove caste distinctions. He had to go to land and industry! That is, to the question of means of production and relations of production. It is a different issue whether Ambedkar suggested the solution correctly or wrongly. But he too had to suggest the same path. This means it proves that to solve the problems of any kind of inequality, one has to change economic relations along the path of equality.

But it is explicitly evident that Ambedkar's scheme, which retains the propertied class permanently, does not yield economic equality. The path that does not lead to economic equality will not lead to other kinds of equality either. This means, Ambedkar's scheme retains all inequalities as they stand.

If we really want protection against economic exploitation, we need correct plan instead of wrong plan. We need a plan that will make every individual do labour, abolish exploitative property rights and transform exploitative division of labour. In other words, we need Marx's plan instead of Ambedkar's plan.

Marx's plan improves the economic conditions of lower castes permanently. It also changes the present situation in which the lower castes are devoted to the lowliest manual and unclean labour. Such changes will facilitate inter-caste marriages as a common practice. Gradually it dismantles the caste distinctions. To accomplish all this, we need class struggle against exploitation of labour as Marx suggests and not the struggle in the legislature as Ambedkar suggests.

But Ambedkar has lot of opposition to Marxism. This we will see later. Ambedkar does not like to treat the propertied class ‘harshly’ unlike Marxism. At the same time, Ambedkar also knows pretty well that the labouring class would not like if he defends ‘property’ wholly in its classical form as Gandhi does. Therefore he has to discover a new path ‘without letting the snake die and the stick break’! It is a new path which Ambedkar alone can discover! The result of his search is buying off properties with money! It is the path of struggle against exploitation by means of debentures!

It is Ambedkar’s belief that he could be able to show to the poor people a beautiful path that is not Marxism! But Ambedkar’s path—let it not be revolution—it is not even a ‘petty reform’. It is simply status quo-ism in disguise! In other words, Ambedkar’s safeguards were not meant for the protection of the poor but for the protection of exploiters!

If Gandhi, in some moment of enthusiasm, speaks radically, Ambedkar ridicules him a lot.

“Mr. Gandhi sometimes speaks on social and economic subjects as though he was a blushing Red. Those who will study Gandhism will not be deceived by the occasional aberrations of Mr. Gandhi in favour of democracy and against capitalism. For Gandhism is in no sense a revolutionary creed” (Vol. 9, p. 290).

Says Ambedkar as if his ‘ism’ is a revolutionary creed!

Ambedkar too would like to become ‘Red’ once in a while. But suddenly he stifles his enthusiasm (perhaps he is reminded of the risk involved in becoming Red!) and satisfies himself with ‘State Socialism’.

‘Socialism’! The term itself is a revolutionary force! All intellectuals know that the word attracts all the poor people. Even those whose theories do not at all agree with Socialism try to stick the word—abandoning its original sense—to their theories. Ambedkar’s State Socialism too is akin to such theories. Socialism in the company of property rights, debentures and interest!

3) The ‘Ideal Society’ that Ambedkar cherishes!

It seems that Ambedkar’s confidence in his own proposals concerning protection against economic exploitation gradually declined. Hence without mentioning those proposals, he began to say that Buddhism alone is the path of liberation for the entire humankind.

In his essay *Annihilation of Caste*, he explained what an ideal society means:

“What is your ideal society if you do not want caste is a question that is bound to be asked... If you ask me, my ideal would be a society based on *Liberty, Equality and Fraternity*. And why not?” (Vol. 1, p.57).

In his essay *Buddha or Karl Marx?* (Vol. 3), Ambedkar argues that an ideal society is possible only through Buddhism and not through Marxism. He explained what ‘Buddhism’ is in his book *Buddha and His Dhamma* which constitutes volume 11 running to about 600 pages. So hereafter we need to begin to examine Buddhism as Ambedkar depicted. First we need to know this since Ambedkar is proposing it as the path of liberation for lower castes and poor people. Later, we need to examine his essay that compared Buddhism and Marxism. If we do this job, we will be able to locate the path to an Ideal society. Such a path is, surely, necessary not only to India but also to any country where human beings live, isn’t it?

15

ACCORDING TO AMBEDKAR, WHAT IS ‘BUDDHISM’?

Ambedkar gave an account of Buddha’s life in his essays *Reformers and their Fate* (in Vol. 3) and *Who were Untouchables?* (in Vol. 7) and also in his book *Buddha and His Dhamma* (the whole of volume 11). He did not mention the books on which he based his account. In his introduction to Vol. 11, he said,

“Depending on the Nikayas, not only the presentation of a consistent story of the life of the Buddha becomes a difficult thing and the presentation of some parts of his teachings becomes much more so”
(Vol.11, Intro.).

Regarding Ambedkar’s source for Buddha’s life, excepting this single sentence, we don’t find a single word extra. It is clear in many contexts that Ambedkar narrated the story of Buddha in his own way and with his own comments. In his ‘Introduction’, he mentioned certain popular notions with which he disagreed and gave his own interpretations in the main text. For example, the popular explanation regarding the question ‘why did Buddha take Parivraja (renunciation)?’ was not acceptable to Ambedkar and hence he gave another explanation. Similarly, he explained certain other things merely accounting his understanding.

As Buddha's story relates to a time 2,500 years ago, there is no concrete evidence for any event in it. There is no scope to treat it as a concrete historical fact when we read that Buddha said such and such. It might be what Buddha himself said or what others created. In his Introduction, Ambedkar too put a question as follows:

"Do they form part of the original gospel or are they a later accretion by the monks?"

[All the quotations given in this chapter are, unless specifically mentioned, are from volume 11 and hence only page numbers are given in brackets after every quotation].

This is a narration which passed from one generation to another. Like other religions, here also anybody can give them any interpretation. Ambedkar too did the same thing. But in whatever manner one may change their narration, there won't be much difference in the essence of the story. What is important for us is, what is the theory that appears under the name Buddha Dharma or Buddhism?

Now let us go into the story.

1) According to Ambedkar, Buddha's birth and renunciation

This story relates to the 6th century B.C. There was a non-monarchical subsidiary state called Sakya in the Northern India. Kapilavastu was its capital city. Suddhodana was the king. Just like any other king, Suddhodana too was a wealthy person.

"The lands he held were very extensive and the retinue under him was very large. He employed, it is said, one thousand ploughs to till the land he owned. He lived quite luxurious life and had many palaces" (p.2).

He had two wives, Mahamaya and Mahaprajapati. Buddha was Mahamaya's son. His original name was Siddharth Gautama.

According to the information which Ambedkar put before his readers, the narration of Buddha's birth begins as follows: in the month of Ashad on the seven-day of midsummer festival,

"she [Mahamaya] rose early, bathed in scented water, bestowed a gift of 4,00,000 pieces of money as alms, adorned herself with all precious ornaments, ate choicest food, took upon herself the fast-day vows, and entered the splendidly adorned royal bedchamber to sleep. That night Suddhodana and Mahamaya came together and Mahamaya conceived"

(p.3).

Why is this information that on that night Suddhodana and Mahamaya came together and Mahamaya conceived? Will the readers be confused as to how women conceive if this information is not given? Won't Buddha's birth be wonderful unless Ambedkar begins to narrate what happened in that night?

"Lying on the royal bed she fell asleep. While asleep she had a dream. In her dreams she saw that the four world-guardians raised her as she was sleeping on her bed and carried her to the tableland of the Himalayas, placed her under a great sal tree and stood on one side. The wives of the four world-guardians then approached and took her to the lake Manasarovar. They bathed her, robed her in a dress, anointed her with perfumes and decked her with flowers in a manner fit to meet some divinity. Then a Bodhisatta, by name Sumedha, appeared before her saying, "I have decided to take my last and final birth on this earth, will you consent to be my mother?" She said, "Yes, with great pleasure." At this moment Mahamaya awoke" (p.3).

Very strangely, even Ambedkar's narration of Buddha's birth begins with Bodhisatta's entry into the womb of Mahamaya to take his "last and final birth on this earth!"

"Next morning Mahamaya told her dream to Suddhodana. Not knowing how to interpret the dream, Suddhodana summoned eight Brahmins who were most famous in divination" (p. 3).

Here follows a long description of "a befitting reception" which Suddhodana gave to those eight Brahmins:

"He caused the ground to be strewn with festive flowers and prepared high seats for them. He filled the bowls of the Brahmins with gold and silver and fed them on cooked ghee, honey, sugar and excellent rice and milk. He also gave them other gifts such as new clothes and tawny cows. When the Brahmins were propitiated, Suddhodana related to them the dream Mahamaya had, and said, "Tell me what it means. The Brahmins said: "Be not anxious. 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" (p. 4).

The Brahmins did not say any thing definitely; they said 'either this will happen or that will happen'! What could those fellows, who ate so much and who grabbed so many presents say except prattling that some thing great would happen to the King's son?

The tales relating to Buddha may have been full of superstitious notions. But should Ambedkar accept all such crazy tales as they are? The person, who resolved to explain Buddhism as a solution to social problems,

is telling his readers thus, "Look, how miraculous the birth of Buddha is"! In fact, Ambedkar too believed that Buddha's birth was miraculous. That is why he narrated every thing as a great truth as if all incidents and miracles occurred exactly as depicted in the religious stories! It was Ambedkar's attempt to tell his readers that Bodhisatta was going to emerge as Buddha and raise the world to a greater height. If this were not his attempt, the narration would have been like this: A son was born to a king, and so on. But there is no difference whatsoever between a stupid religious text and Ambedkar's narration. Having carried the womb for ten months, Mahamaya started for her parental home. A golden palanquin, with its carriers and many servants, were ready to take her. They reached Lumbini Grove. The Grove looked beautiful with various kinds of trees with flowers and fruits. Mahamaya wanted to take a stroll in the Grove, got down from the palanquin, stood under a 'royal sal tree' and held its branch.

"She rose on her toes and caught the bough. Immediately she was lifted up by its upward movement and being shaken, she felt the pangs of childbirth. While holding the branch of the sal tree she was delivered of a son in a standing position" (p. 5).

She delivered a child while holding the branch of a tree, says Ambedkar! Moreover, "being shaken, she felt the pangs of childbirth". Ambedkar tells it as logic! The real intention of this kind of narration is to say that ordinary human beings are born on the earth but very great persons are born in the sky without touching the earth. Ambedkar has not hesitated even a little to transfer the garbage from religious stories. The confidence of this devotee in the Buddha's birth is at such a level!

"The child was born in the year 563 B.C. on the Vaishakha Purnima day... At the moment when the child was born there dwelt on the Himalayas a great sage named Asita. Asita heard that the gods over the space of the sky were shouting the word 'Buddha' and making it resound... Surveying with his divine eyes the whole of the Jambudvipa, Asita saw that a boy was born in the house of Suddhodana shining with all brilliance" (p. 5).

(Ambedkar narrates this as if he was a witness to sage surveying with divine eyes like a pair of Binoculars). That sage at once started to the king along with his nephew. (This means Sages also roam here and there along with their nephews and nieces!) The sage blessed the king and made him happy saying, "Victory, Victory, O Raja, may you live long!" He also said, "A son is born to you, O Raja! Desiring to see him have I come".

Suddhodana said, "The boy is asleep, O sage!..."

"Not long, O king, do such great beings sleep. Such good beings are by nature wakeful", the sage said. (So, great beings are those who

are wakeful even when they are asleep! This is the definition of great beings!).

“Then did the child out of compassion for Asita, the great sage, make a sign of awakening” (p. 6).

(It would have been better if sage Asita jumped into some pond and died. He himself was such a great sage that he could survey the whole of Jambudvipa with his divine eyes! But this kid is much greater than the sage! It is because he is the son of a king, you know!)

The sage rose up with joy and held the boy who woke up. (Sages and their ilk should not hold infant babies. They grow very long beards. In fact none of those who have beards and moustaches should hold children. That is why, children are born to women and brought up by women!)

As soon as he saw the boy, the sage realized that this boy was a great man. The sage has the knowledge of ‘science of marks on the body’. He realized that the boy’s body has all the features of a great man.

“Asita observing the child, beheld that it was endowed with the thirty-two marks of a great man and adorned with the eighty minor marks, his body surpassing that of Sakra, Brahma, and his aura surpassing them a hundred thousand-fold, breathed forth this solemn utterance, “Marvellous, verily, is this person that has appeared in the world” (p.6).

Of the 32 marks on the body of the child, we will see some details concerning only 2 marks. Nowhere do we find details concerning the remaining 30 major features or the 80 minor marks.

Sage Asita knows that a person with all those marks on the body will become either a ‘universal monarch’ or a ‘fully enlightened Buddha’, that is, either of these two. To become great men, one should either be an autocrat who keeps the entire world under his foot or a person who possesses great knowledge possessed by no one else. Such great men should not be equal with other human beings. Except these two kinds of great men, who are above all persons, the remaining human beings are useless fellows! Of all the millions of human beings living on the earth, a great emperor and a great sage—these two persons alone are great human beings! Ambedkar has no contempt for such wicked notions which are useless from the view point of either logic or the principle of equality. Moreover, he agrees with such kinds of hegemony!

Sage Asita understood that the boy would become a Buddha. He said:

“this boy will without doubt become a Buddha and attain supreme and complete enlightenment and having done so, will turn the supreme wheel

of the Doctrine that has not been turned before him by any other being in the world; for the weal and happiness of the world will he teach his Doctrine" (p. 7).

The fact that sage Asita said—that the child would teach a particular doctrine—means that the sage himself knew the doctrine, didn't he? Then what is the point in saying that no other being knew it before him?

Sage Asita praised the child, made the king happy, ate well, collected gifts and departed happily with his nephew. The sage was really wise, wasn't he?

Ambedkar narrates such stories as these to show that very great sages had said that the boy was to become a very great man. He may believe in such crazy stories. But, even if believes, he should not bring in such stories into a discussion of 'social problems', should he? But 95% of what Ambedkar wrote concerning Buddha's life represents the same trend. It is so because this trend shows the path of emancipation for human beings! We are obliged to understand Buddhism out of such stories. So we must examine them.

Even in the Biographies on Ambedkar, we find accounts suggesting that he too was born due to a mantra of a sanyasi. If very great men are born due to Bodhisattas, asectics, and sages, ordinary people are born foolishly due to their parents! This is the difference!

Well, coming back to our child, he was given the name Siddharth. The surname was 'Gautama' (hereafter Siddharth Gautama, Siddharth or Gautama). When the boy was 7 days old, his mother died due to some ailment. Gautama's maternal aunt had a son named Nanda. Ananda was Gautama's paternal uncle's son and Devadatta was Gautama's paternal aunt's son.

"At the age of eight Siddharth started his education". Ambedkar describes Siddharth's teachers as "of distinguished descent and of high lineage". It did not occur to Ambedkar that he should reject such terms as 'high lineage'.

Siddharth mastered Vedas, Vedangas and Upanishads. Became an expert in all the philosophic systems. He also learnt the science of concentration and meditation.

"While everything for the cultivation of the mind was provided his education in the military science befitting a Kshatriya was not neglected" (p. 10).

Siddharth was a kind hearted person. He did not like hunting. His maternal aunt used to argue with him saying:

"You have forgotten that you are a Kshatriya and fighting is your duty. The art of fighting can be learned only through hunting for only by hunting can you learn how to aim accurately. Hunting is a training ground for the warrior class" (p. 11).

Siddharth would ask her: "Why should a Kshatriya fight? How can it be the duty of man to kill man?"

She would say, "Kshatriyas must fight. If they don't, who will protect the kingdom?"

Gautama would respond: "If all Kshatriyas loved one another, would they not be able to protect their kingdom without resort to killing?"

Once when Siddharth was on his father's farm, a bird shot by an arrow fell at his feet. He saved the bird by removing the arrow, dressing its wound and giving it water to drink. Devadatta, who had shot the bird with his arrow, came to Siddharth and demanded that he give the bird to him. Siddharth refused.

"The matter was referred to arbitration. The arbitrator upheld the point of view of Siddharth Gautama" (p. 13).

There is a strange incident which tells that Siddharth used to oppose *exploitation*.

"Siddharth was of kindly disposition. He did not like exploitation of man by man. Once he went to his father's farm with some of his friends and saw the labourers ploughing the land, raising bunds, cutting trees, etc., dressed in scanty clothes under a hot burning sun. He was greatly moved by the sight. He said to his friends, can it be right that man should exploit another? How can it be right that the labourer should toil and the master should live on the fruits of his labour? His friends did not know what to say. For they believed in the old philosophy of life that the worker was born to serve and that in serving his master he was only fulfilling his destiny" (p. 10).

Is it not strange to note Siddharth speaking of exploitation. Though Ambedkar did not give details of the book in which he found this incident, he must have had some basis, surely? Are all these words found exactly in this form in that original source? Are these expressions, namely, 'exploitation of one man by another' and 'master living on the fruits of the toil of the labourers', found in the original? Or did Ambedkar give them his own interpretation of the incident as he did in many contexts? We may find the details if we refer 'Nikayas' or some such source. If we don't find any textual sources for the expressions 'labourers', 'toil', 'exploitation', 'fruits of labour', it amounts to Ambedkar's own

interpretation. It implies that Ambedkar created this incident in order to claim, 'Look, how Siddharth was moved by exploitation of man by man as early as two thousand years ago'. Hence it is important for us to ask, 'what is the basis for this incident?'

If the belief that 'the worker was born to serve his master' was the old philosophy, what was the new philosophy of Siddharth? A person who thinks that it is not right if the master employs the fruit of the labour of labourers would also know the 'right' thing to do. Did Siddharth say, then, that it would be right if masters lived on their own labour instead of living on the fruits of the labour of labourers?

We will see later what Siddharth said about the same thing which he considered unjust in his boyhood. Siddharth married Yashodhara after he completed the sixteenth year. They had a son. His name was Rahula.

The prophecy of the sage Asita that Siddharth would become sanyasi, however, continued to haunt his father. In order to get his son engrossed in the 'pleasures and carnal joys', he provided a harem with 'very beautiful inmates'. But Siddharth refused to even glance at the other women.

The prime minister persuaded Siddharth and preached him in many ways that even very great sages enjoyed the company of women other than their wives, that it was the duty of the prince to enjoy such pleasures and so on.

Siddharth rejected all that the Prime Minister said and replied: these are transitory and my mind cannot find pleasure in such worldly pleasures. We should not follow those great men who became victims to desire. They not only enjoyed those pleasures but also were destroyed by them. One should not touch women without real love. A man and woman who deceive one another are unfit even to look at each other.

Siddharth completed 20 years of age. At this age, every Sakya youth was expected to become a member of Sakya Sangh. The main duty of a member is to safeguard the interests of the Sakyas. For eight years, Siddharth was a 'very devoted and steadfast member'. Then an event occurred. Bordering on the state of the Sakyas was the state of the Koliyas. The two kingdoms were divided by the river Rohini. There used to be disputes and quarrels between those kingdoms for the sake of the river waters. One such clash now occurred afresh. The Sakya Sangh discussed whether they need to wage a war on Koliyas.

Siddharth opposed the war. He said: War is not a solution to any problem. One war will lead to another. The killer gets a killer in his turn. We must solve the problem through negotiation.

But most members of the Sangh opposed Siddharth. They resolved to wage war. Siddharth refused to participate in the war. He opposed the majority decision. Now this was a major offence according to the rules of Sakya Sangh. The Sangh could impose three kinds of punishment for this offence: death sentence, exile, or confiscation of property. It required permission of the king of Kosala to impose either of the first two punishments. The Sakya Sangh could impose the third punishment on its own. The Senapati (main official) of the Sangh said to Siddharth:

“Remember the Sangh has other ways of punishing you. The Sangh can declare a social boycott against your family and the Sangh can confiscate your family lands. For this the Sangh does not have to obtain the permission of the king of the Kosalas” (p. 27).

“Siddharth realized the consequences that would follow if he continued his opposition to the Sangh in its plan of war against the Koliyas”.

The last of the consequences is ‘confiscation of property’ of his family. Siddharth said:

“Please do not punish my family... Do not make them destitute by confiscating their land which is their only means of livelihood... I am the guilty person... Sentence me to death or exile, whichever you like” (p. 28).

Sentencing Siddharth to exile is confirmed. But the Sakya kingdom was a subsidiary of the Kosala kingdom. The Sakya Sangh was afraid that the king of Kosala might come to know about the sentence imposed on the Sakya prince.

Then the head of Sakya Sangh said to Siddharth:

“the matter is sure to become known to the king of the Kosalas and he is sure to conclude that it is the Sangh which has inflicted this punishment and take action against the Sangh.”

“If this is the difficulty I can easily suggest a way out,” said Siddharth Gautama. “I can become a Parivrajaka and leave this country. It is a kind of an exile” (p. 28).

He also said, “I promise I shall not appeal to the king of the Kosalas” (p. 28). This means, Siddharth said that he would not tell in public that the Sangh had imposed the sentence of exile but would tell the public that he had voluntarily left the country. The Sangh agreed to this. Siddharth Gautama chose to become a Parivrajaka.

All that is shown here as a reason for Siddharth’s conversion into Sanyasa is Ambedkar’s modification of the original narrative. This is how Ambedkar has explained his modification in his ‘Introduction’:

“Why did the Buddha take Parivraja? The traditional answer is that he took Parivraja because he saw a dead person, a sick person and an old person. This answer is absurd on the face of it. The Buddha took Parivraja at the age of 29. If he took Parivraja as a result of these three sights, how is it he did not see these three sights earlier? These are common events occurring by hundreds and the Buddha could not have failed to come across them earlier. It is impossible to accept the traditional explanation that this was the first time he saw them. The explanation is not plausible and does not appeal to reason. But if this is not the answer to the question, what is the real answer?”

Questioning thus, he stopped that discussion at this point. This means, Ambedkar himself changed the old reason since it did not appear logical! He changed it in such a way that Siddharth Gautama opposed war, that he was punished for it and that he became sanyasi in order to keep the sentence secret.

Well, is this new reason logical if the old reason was not?

If Siddharth believes that his decision not to wage war was correct, he should face any kind of punishment. Just as he was ready for other punishments, he should also be ready for the punishment of confiscation of property. What should he tell the Sangh? He should have said, ‘I believe my decision to be right. If you think it is wrong, you may pass any sentence against me. That is up to you. I am prepared to face any punishment’. But Siddharth did not say so. What did he say? He requested them not to impose the sentence of confiscating the property of his family. If the Sangh had the right to impose such a punishment, he should not ask for exemption. But Siddharth begged the Sangh not to confiscate the property of his family. He further said, ‘I will tell the people that I have myself become a Parivrajaka and am leaving the country. I will not tell people that the Sangh passed the sentence of exile against me’. This means he was prepared to tell a lie. Does this behaviour fit to the character of Siddharth? A person who stood for an ideal, instead of facing any sentence, begged the Sangh not to pass a particular punishment. This is the first blunder! Promising to tell lies to people that he would become Parivrajaka and then leave the country voluntarily is the second blunder.

Siddharth Gautama had been a person of good character since boyhood. Speaking lies is not in tune with his character. Moreover why should a person leave the country when he became a Sanyasi? Why can he not stay in his own country? Ambedkar did not advise Siddharth as to what answer he should give if some one asked him thus, ‘Fine, you have become a sanyasi. But why must you leave the country?’

Even more important than this point is the question whether, before

this, Siddharth ever saw a corpse, a sick person or an old man until then? This question is not something that has no answer. Why does a prince have to see 'dead bodies'? Siddharth was originally a tender hearted person. Perhaps his family might have kept him away from such scenes! Concerning aged people, though he might have seen some old people he might not have seen hundred year old people! Similarly he might not have seen a person suffering with serious illness. Therefore, there is nothing odd in the traditional interpretation. In fact, there is a positive feature in it. To say that Siddharth witnessed some tragic scenes, was moved deeply and therefore became sanyasi in order to discover the path of emancipation would mean that he became a sanyasi in order to do some good to the world.

But according to the new reason, we get an impression that Siddharth left his family under the pretext of renunciation in order to avoid confiscation of the properties of his family by Sakya Sangh. Which reason is appropriate to the character of Siddharth? The second reason makes Siddharth a liar and some one who is very anxious to protect his property. The first reason presents Siddharth as someone who became a sanyasi for the welfare of the world. Hence the old reason alone is logical. The new reason which Ambedkar discovered is not useful for anything except to defame Siddharth.

Ambedkar at every point faces this kind of problem because of his over-anxiety to discover a 'new reason'! He does not check whether his new reason is correct or not! He simply 'discovers' something or the other!

It is strange to note his desire to propose a new theory even without considering the simple question and obvious question, why should a person, who became sanyasi, leave his country?

After interpreting that Siddharth became sanyasi in order to avoid confiscation of his family property by Sakya Sangh, will it possible for anybody to protect Siddharth's reputation? Will it be possible even for Ambedkar? This means, Ambedkar thought very logically and discovered a means of defaming Siddharth!

2) Stories that 'defame' Buddha!

Siddharth Gautama, in order to take Parivraja (renunciation), started for the Ashram of Bharadwaja on a horse accompanied by his servant Channa. His parents and citizens too reached the Ashram and were filled with grief.

Siddharth removed his dress, ornaments and garments, gave them to Channa to take back home.

"Then he had his head shaved as was required for a Parivrajaka. His cousin Mahanama had brought the clothes appropriate for a Parivrajaka and a begging bowl. Siddharth wore them" (p. 34).

Looking at the crowd that followed him he said,

"I have failed to settle the dispute between the Sakyas and the Koliyas. But if you create public opinion in favour of settlement you might succeed" (p. 34).

(He had promised the Sangh that he would not reveal the actual reason, hadn't he? Why is he revealing it here Mr. Ambedkar? This is another blunder. It seems he has not understood the reason that you said for becoming a Sanyasi!)

Siddharth Gautama was 29 when he became sanyasi.

All the people admired him saying that he was doing a "supreme sacrifice" for the sake of maintaining "peace" (p. 35)!.

Siddharth reached the banks of the river Anoma on a horse, along with Channa. While Channa was overcome with sorrow, Siddharth consoled him:

"Abandon this distress Channa... change is inevitable in corporal beings who are subject to different births" (p. 37).

After consoling Channa, Gautama went on his way toward the forest.

"Leaving Kapilavastu, Siddharth Gautama thought of going to Rajagraha, the capital of the kingdom of Magadha". Halting at Ashrams of Brahmin men and women, he travelled for 400 miles by foot. People who saw him on his way were astonished at his 'personality', 'dignity' and 'splendid beauty'.

"Gautama reached Rajagraha surrounded by five hills, well guarded and adorned with mountains, and supported and hallowed by auspicious and sacred places" (p. 45).

(It is an 'auspicious and sacred' place, apparently, only if mountains and temples surround it! Even the earth has the quality of being an 'auspicious' and 'sacred' place. Ambedkar too is respecting such descriptions and reproducing them in his book!)

On reaching Rajagraha Gautama put up a small hut made of leaves at the foot of the Pandava hill.

Bimbisara, the King of Magadha came to see Gautama and began to praise him: your race began with the sun; your hand is fit to rule the

kingdom and not to hold a begging bowl; If you don't like taking your father's kingdom, I will give you half of my kingdom; I will give you my army. Conquer your enemies! Or, if religion is your aim, then offer sacrifices! Climb up to heaven! (pp: 46-9).

In response to Bimbisara's advice, Gautama gave a very long answer with modesty.

O King! You have said all this with affection for me. "Those men who act unchangingly towards their friends in reverses of fortune are true friends. (Is Gautama thinking that there is a reverse of his fortune?) I am not so afraid even of serpents nor of thunderbolts falling from heaven, nor of flames blown together by the wind, as I am afraid of the worldly objects...when they have obtained all the earth girdled by the sea kings wish to conquer the other side of the great ocean... Pleasures, which are like an angry, cruel serpent bite even men of self-control... Water is desired for allaying thirst; food in the same way for removing hunger: a house for keeping off the wind, the heat of the sun, and the rain; and dress for keeping off the cold and to cover one's nakedness. So too a bed is for removing drowsiness; a carriage for remedying the fatigue of a journey; a seat for alleviating the pain of standing; so bathing as a means for washing, health, and strength. External objects therefore are to human beings means for remedying pain—not in themselves sources of enjoyment;... Since the well-known opposite pairs, such as gain and loss and the rest, are inseparably connected with everything in the world,—therefore, no man is invariably happy on the earth nor invariably wretched. When I see how the nature of pleasure and pain are mixed, I consider royalty and slavery as the same; a king does not always smile, nor is a slave always in pain" (pp: 49-53).

Thus, Gautama said many more things. (All these words are briefly given here. There is much more preaching in Ambedkar's report).

If we examine Gautama's words so far, both master and slave are alike in the view of Gautama. Both will have pleasure as well as pain!

But what is the truth? While the master gets pleasure by means of his slaves, the slaves will get pain from their masters. This is their relationship. But according to Gautama, both are same: the one who serves and the one who receives service. As the slave does not always cry but also laughs once in a while, it amounts to the fact that slave too has pleasures. Similarly a master will have not only pleasures but also some pain, he too will face hardships. In this manner, both the master and his slave have pain and pleasures equally. This is the understanding of Gautama regarding master and slave.

Let there be any number of blunders in this story that goes back 2,500 years. We have to leave it like that thinking that such was the conception of that period. But we can not criticise Gautama as we might criticise a contemporary person. If we have any criticism, it is not against Gautama but against Ambedkar since he tells us, "look, how great is Gautama's theory. If we raise questions Gautama's words in this story, it does not mean that we are raising them against Gautama but really against Ambedkar.

Ambedkar did not make any criticism of Gautama's words, namely, 'no man is invariably happy on the earth nor invariably wretched', and 'I consider royalty and slavery the same'. Ambedkar agreed totally with these words as if they contained great truth. Well, will Ambedkar apply this principle to Hindus and untouchables? Will either Ambedkar or the untouchables agree if someone says, all will have pain and pleasures. The pain of untouchables and the pain of Hindus are the same. Or that the pleasures of untouchables and the pleasures of Hindus too are the same! If they agree, why would they make those special demands and special arrangements for untouchables? From Gautama, they ought to learn the principle that all are the same, ought they not? Why didn't they learn this lesson, then?

When he was young, what did Gautama say concerning the labourers working on his father's farm? Is it right if the master enjoys the fruit of the labour of labourers? he had asked. It was in the sense that some injustice being done to the labourers. But the same Gautama is now, at the age of 29, saying that Masters and labourers are the same! Ambedkar has neither criticism nor he is surprised.

Gautama was not satisfied with simply saying that 'royalty and slavery are same'. He also said that the sorrows of King were great. Concerning the sorrows of kings, he said:

"Since to be a king involves a wider range of responsibility, therefore, the sorrows of a king are great; for a king is like a peg,—he endures trouble for the sake of the world" (p. 53).

This is also what all people think about kings: that the king shoulders the responsibility of protecting the entire country and he works very *hard* for this!

But in reality, the king is the principal representative of the propertied class. He too possesses vast lands, mansions, heaps of money, ornaments and many kinds of other properties. 'Administration' is merely a programme that oppresses the class that performs labour.

Many hundreds and thousands of labourers do service for the king inside and outside the house. He does not have any work to do. He does nothing, nor even the slightest job. He does not even put on his own shirt. Servants do it for him. What the king always does is to wallow here and there—on the throne for a while, conspiring for a while as to how to occupy the neighboring kingdom, in the flower gardens for a while, in his harem for a while—excepting these activities, he does not do anything. It is the servants who undergo the entire drudgery, other higher-grade employees manage administrative matters and soldiers take care of the defence. There is nothing which the king has to do except wallow in comfort.

Goutama knew all these facts. He had observed kings closely. Yet he says that 'kings endure trouble for the sake of the world'. He further says that what happiness does a king have by being a king; he has all sorrows and troubles. His sympathy for the kings reveals itself like this:

"And since after even conquering the whole earth, one city only can serve as a dwelling place and even there only one house can be inhabited, is not royalty mere labour for others? And even in royalty nothing more than one pair of garments is all he needs, and just enough food to keep off hunger; so only one bed, and only one seat is all that a king needs; other distinctions are only for pride" (p. 53).

He is treating the throne as a 'need'. Only one pair of garments! Only one bed! Only one palace ('house'). He needs only one of every thing. These are the needs of the king according to Gautama. Then why should he conquer the world? For the sake of the world? Will the world ask him to conquer itself?

Gautama perhaps says, "Even if the king conquers the whole world, it is still only a single world. It is a pity that he won't have two worlds to conquer!"

All the royal luxuries are meant for exhibiting royalty; says Gautama! That is not for the king! Whose need is exhibiting royalty? Is it of the king or of the people? Every thing that a king does is labour for others! Which means, the king always endures troubles for the sake of people—this is what Gautama believes.

While Gautama speaks like a faithful advocate of kings, Ambedkar presents Gautama's words with reverence as if they contain great morals!

Finally, Gautama told Bimbisara:

You advise me to enjoy pleasures, by ruling the kingdom? But I can live with satisfaction even in the absence of a kingdom. I don't want to be diligent in sacrifices and seek a glorious fruit by causing pain to other living beings.

Bimbisara saluted Gautama and returned to his palace.

Subsequently, Gautama came to know through some Parivrajakas (sanyasis) that attempts to wage the war were stopped due to the agitation of people and the Koliyas and Sakyas had made peace. This news made Gautama very uneasy. "There is now no need for you to continue to be a Parivrajaka. Why don't you go home and join your family?" said those Sanyasis.

"Left alone, he began to reflect on his own position and to make sure if any reason was left for him to continue his Parivraja" (p. 57).

This is a continuation of the change that Ambedkar made. The question whether to abandon Parivraja in the middle or to continue would not have arisen if Gautama had become a Parivrajaka due to the old reason—that he was moved by the sight of a very old person, a sick person and a corpse and became a sanyasi with a view to discover a path to emancipation. Now Gautama is in big trouble because the story runs according to Ambedkar's modification that he had become a sanyasi on account of the question of war.

Since Sakya Sangh itself withdrew its attempts to start a war, the sentence passed against Gautama too could be withdrawn. The Sangh could ask him to come back. Hence, Gautama is placed in a situation in which he ought to think whether he has to return home or continue as a sanyasi.

Gautama not have any specific objective as to what to do by continuing as a sanyasi. He left his country in the attire of a sanyasi in order to protect his family's property and not out of a desire for renunciation. Now Ambedkar pushed the story as if Gautama thought of the 'welfare of the world' and decided to continue Parivraja (renunciation). But how big an injustice it is to the character of Gautama if he debated even for a while whether to continue Parivraja or not! This problem would not have arisen if the story had proceeded in such a way that Gautama was seen to become a sanyasi originally for the welfare of the world. But the second mistake of Ambedkar became inevitable as a continuation of his first mistake.

Gautama's thoughts proceeded as follows after he came to know about the peace:

"He had left his people for what?, he asked himself. He had left his home because he was opposed to war. "Now that the war is over is there any problem left to me? Does my problem end because war has ended?" On a deep reflection he thought not. "The problem of war is essentially a problem of conflict. It is only a part of a larger problem.

This conflict is going on not only between kings and nations but between nobles and Brahmins, between householders, between mother and son, between son and mother, between father and son, between sister and mother, between companion and companion. 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. True, I left home on account of war. But I cannot go back home although the war between the Sakyas and Koliyas has ended. I see now that my problem has become wider. I have to find a solution for this problem of social conflict. How far do the old-established philosophies offer a solution of this problem? Can he accept any one of the social philosophies? He was determined to examine everything for himself' (pp:57-8).

In this manner, Gautama determined to discover something for the welfare of the world and left Rajagraha. On his way, he stayed in the hermitage of sage Brighu for some time and observed various kinds of penances. The food that the saints ate included: things growing out of water (Does it mean fish?), uncooked food (They do not have wives, you see?. Who will cook for them round cakes made of black gram and fried in oil and who will cook sweet cakes made of various grams and fried in oil?) and bulbous roots. This is why, ascetics *invade* the houses of people with families and relish the feasts offered. How long would they chew roots and eat seeds? We find evidence to this in this volume (No. 11):

"A Brahmin by name Amagandha was an ascetic who lived in the region of Himalayas with his pupils... Every year they came down from their hermitage in search of salt and acids. The inhabitants of the village received them with honour and gave them hospitality for four months" (p. 401).

This means they were vexed eating grass and the like all the time.

In Brighu's Ashram (p. 61), "Some live like the birds on gleaned corn, others graze on grass like the deer, others live on air like the snakes [Do snakes live on air? All these are lies! They catch frogs, don't they?], as if turned into ant-hills" (If the backs and beards of sages are places to play, there would be lot of fun for ants!).

A sanyasi tells Gautama that sanyasis eat cowdung and sleep on a bed-of-thorns (This is in another context: p. 429).

Human beings who roam in the forests without doing any labour have to live like animals eating whatever they find in nature. That is why, these sages who do not perform any labour, live on leaves, seeds, grass and the like.

"Others, with their tufts of matted hair continually wet with water, twice offer oblations. [perhaps cowdung or grass which they eat] to Agni with hymns; others, plunging like fish into the water, dwell there with their bodies scratched by tortoises."

Which means, they have so much dirt and itching that they cannot get rid of that muck unless tortoises scratch them! So on the whole, Brighu's Ashram is like a mental asylum!

All these troubles are for the sake of 'heaven' only! This is what sages themselves told Gautama. They also said that pain is the root of happiness. But this did not impress Gautama: You are doing all this for the sake of heaven. What I want is not heaven. My desire is that the ills of life on earth be probed and a solution found. Hence now I leave this place. You have been so affectionate to me. It is painful to me to leave you. But I am obliged to leave. Allow me to take your leave, he said and proceeded toward Vindhya.

He reached the Ashram of Muni Arada in the city of Vaishali. Saluting the Muni, Gautama said, "I wish to be initiated into your doctrine and discipline" (p. 63). Impressed by the obedience of Gautama, the Muni "expounded to Gautama the tenets of what was known as the Sankhya philosophy" (p. 63).

Control of breathing is the means of achieving Dhyana (concentration of mind). Anapanasati and Pranayama are the ways by which Dhyana is achieved. Breathing in is called 'Puraka', holding the breath is 'Kumbhaka' and breathing out is 'Rechak'. Thus the Muni explained that the breathing process consists of three parts.

This sage is an expert in the control of breathing. (This means barring this expert, other human beings do not know how to breathe in and breathe out!)

Gautama felt that it would be very useful for him if he could get some training under the sage Arada. (Did Gautama think 'to emancipate the world from sorrow by learning the technique of breathing in? He thought of a very easy way, indeed!)

Gautama learnt well the technique of breathing, became an equal to his teacher and asked him if there was anything more to learn. 'No friend, this is all that I can teach', replied Arada. (This sage is a very good fellow, isn't he? He spoke the truth that he does not know anything except breathing).

Then Gautama went to another yogi by name Uddaka Ramaputta and learnt a technique that enables him 'to go one stage higher than that devised

by Arada'. (Does 'renunciation' involve only the nose? Why are they troubling the nose so much!)

Gautama then went to Magadha. (Sir, Gautama had already gone to Magadha, hadn't he? He had also talked to Bimbisara there, hadn't he? Now again to Magadha? Has he lost his way? It seems Gautama has really lost his way under the direction of Ambedkar!)

Gautama realized that the technique of controlling breathing in Magadha was different from that of Kosala. (What! Is breathing through nose in one way at Kosala and in another way at Magadha? Oh, all these sages have decided to see the end of the *nose*! They don't touch *ears*, do they? Then, why are they running after the nose?)

The technique in Magadha was not to breathe but to reach concentration by stopping breathing! (Good! Stopping breathing and going straight to heaven! This is what is needed, isn't it?)

"Gautama learned this technique. When he tried concentration by stopping breathing he found that piercing sounds used to come out of his ears, and his head appeared to him to be pierced as though by a sharp pointed knife. It was a painful process. But Gautama did not fail to master it. Such was his training in the Samadhi Marga" (p. 654).

(On the whole it is ear-aches and head-aches that Gautama achieved!).

Later Gautama wanted to learn 'asceticism'. He went to the hermitage of Negari situated on the banks of the river Nairanjana in Gaya.

The path of asceticism is much more 'severe'. (Alas! What kind of thing it would be!) Gautama practised this path with severe 'austerities and self-mortification'.

According to the restrictions, he should not accept food from not more than 7 houses. He should not accept more than 7 morsels of food from one house.

"He lived on a single saucer of food a day, but not more than seven saucers" (p. 66).

Shall we count how many morsels of food there would be if collected from 7 houses in a day? People in a house give 7 morsels of food. The number of morsels in 7 saucers is $7 \times 7 = 49$. This is the amount of food consumed per day during the period of asceticism! What would be the amount of food if it were during the normal period of time?

After practising 49 morsels per day, later he will have food only once in two days! Thereafter only once in a week! Still thereafter only once in a month!

"As he advanced in the practice of asceticism his sole diet was herbs gathered green, or the grain or wild millets and paddy, or snippets hide, or water plants, or the red powder round rice-grains within the husk or the discarded scum of rice on the boil, or the flour of oilseeds" (p. 66).

"Thereafter Gautama lived on a single bean a day—or a single grain of rice a day" (p. 67).

(The beans, sesamum seeds and grains of rice of that time were perhaps of the size of present day palm fruits! This must have been the case).

His attire during the period of asceticism:

"His raiment was of hemp or hempen mixture of cerements of rags from the dust-heap, of bar, of the black antelope's pelt either whole or split down the middle, of grass, of strips of bark or wood, hair of men or animals woven into a blanket, or of owl's wings" (p. 66).

Asceticism means torturing one's own body. One should not stand up; should not walk. One has to move only in the squatting position! The more you move squatting the greater your asceticism! You have to pluck out the hair of head and beard! The more you pluck the more you become an ascetic!

"He plucked out the hair of his head and the hair of his beard, never quitted the upright for the sitting posture, squatted and never rose up, moving only squatting" (p. 66). [Let him pluck his own hair. We should thank him for not pouncing on others and pluck their hair]. "He took up his abode in the awesome depths of the forest, depths so awesome that it was reputed that none but the senseless could venture without his hair standing on end. When the cold season brought chill wintry nights, then it was that in the dark half of the months he dwelt by night in the open air and in the dark thicket by day. But when there came the last broiling month of summer before the rains, he made his dwellings under the baking sun by day and in the stifling thicket by night. In a charnel ground did he lay down with charred bones for pillow" (p. 67). [So he is permitted to sleep? That too, with a pillow under his head!]

The dirt and filth accumulated on his body for years and it dropped off by itself.

What is Ambedkar's intention in narrating such crazy stories about Gautama? It is to say, "Look how severely Gautama practised asceticism in search of truth!" But need he tell us such incidents for that purpose? It did not occur to Ambedkar that these stories—of moving only in the squatting position and plucking of his own hair—would lower the reputation of Gautama (not only of Gautama but also his own reputation). Do all

these weird actions make great ascetic practice? Are these actions consistent with those of a sane person? The character called Gautama has some 'logic' right from the childhood. Why these crazy actions in his behaviour? Moreover, Gautama opposed them himself when he observed sages who practised such things. How can such a person himself perform these insane actions? Thus this narration is not appropriate for this story of Gautama. But Ambedkar didn't consider this reasoning. He thought that all these crazy actions would bring Gautama lot of reputation.

Gautama, with these crazy acts, practised asceticism for a period of not one month or two months but for years! However much he did he couldn't find any 'new light' (except accumulation of dirt, filth and itching of the back!)

Finally, (after 6 years) He reflected to himself: 'This is not the way, even to passionlessness, nor to perfect knowledge, nor to liberation' (p.67).

'Can they call torturing ('mortification') of the body spirituality? Since mind regulates body, it is important to control thought. When the body is wearied with hunger, thirst and fatigue, the mind would no longer be under its own control. How can we reach the goal when the mind is not composed? We can attain mental peace and stability only when we satisfy the body's wants constantly—thinking thus and wearied with hunger, thirst and fatigue, Gautama sat under a Banyan tree.

There a woman named Sujatha came to worship the tree. She offered food to Gautama in a golden bowl.

Gautama took a bath in the river and ate the food. That night, when he slept Gautama had five dreams. (He must have slept the whole night happily. He might have even received five bowls of food in five dreams!) "When he awoke he interpreted his dreams to mean that he was sure to attain enlightenment. He had also tried to forecast his future. This he did by throwing the bowl of food into the river Nairanjana saying: "If I am to have enlightenment let the bowl ascend the stream; if not let it go down."

Look, it is pity that he threw away someone else's bowl! Moreover the crazy fellow is asking the bowl to forecast his future. The bowl should forecast whether this madness would diminish and humankind would find the path of emancipation! Aha! How miserable is the situation of *human kind!*

"The vessel, indeed, began to float against the current and at last sank near the abode of Kala, a Naga king" [Did it sink? It shouldn't have sunk, should it!]

Aha! How wonderful is Ambedkar's courage! Will a thousand voices be enough to eulogize that courage?

"Fortified with hope and determination he ([Gautama] left Uruvela and towards evening went along the wide road to Gaya" (p. 73). [Sir, Gautama had already reached 'Gaya'! Now, he is *at* Gaya! Again to Gaya? Pity that he has no mental balance; he is wandering here and there!]

3) This is the 'Enlightenment' which Buddha obtained!

After the forecast of his future by vessel, Gautama left Uruvela and sat under a Banyan tree along the wide road to Gaya. Like all sages, he too sat down cross-legged facing the East.

"Skin, sinew and bone may dry up as they will, my flesh and blood may dry in my body, but without attaining complete enlightenment I will not leave this seat" (p. 73).

What is this? He had already realized that one should not trouble the body, hasn't he? Then why is he doing it again? What fresh enlightenment does he get if he spoils thus the enlightenment which he had already obtained? How nicely he used to think when he was young! Why has he become so stupid after becoming a sanyasi?

Gautama, however, is not so stupid. Do you know what an intelligent thing he did before he sat under the tree to meditate?

"To feed himself during the period of meditation Gautama had collected enough food to last him for forty days" (p. 74).

Food for forty days! How did he gather? If one goes for alms, people give alms enough only for one day. Whatever is collected in a day would suffice for that day only. How did he collect food for 40 days? Where did he store it? Why does he need more 'enlightenment' than this? What greater enlightenment would be there than the knowledge of collecting food in advance? Enlightenment has already dawned, hasn't it? What more should happen?

Mr. Ambedkar! Did you think you would protect Gautama's reputation by saying that he sat for meditation after collecting food for 40 days. Alas!

"On the night of the last day of the fourth week light dawned upon him" (p. 75).

Oh, what a relief! Knowledge dawned? After four weeks? That is, after 28 days! Well, then, why does he need food for 40 days? Oh! Is

it because it is always better to store more than one needs? Well, then the real enlightenment had occurred a long time before he commenced his meditation. Ambedkar tells us:

“He reached final enlightenment in four stages. In the first stage he called forth reason and investigation... In the second stage he added concentration. In the third stage he brought to his aid equanimity and mindfulness. In the fourth and final stage he added purity to equanimity and equanimity to mindfulness” (p. 75).

One stage of enlightenment per week! four stages of enlightenment in four weeks!

“So in the end, after meditation for four weeks, darkness was dispelled, light arose, ignorance was dispelled and knowledge arose. He saw a new way” (p. 75).

“He realized that there were two problems. The first problem was that there was suffering in the world and the second problem was how to remove this suffering and make mankind happy” (p. 75).

“To both these questions he got a right answer which is called ‘*Samma Bodhi*’ (Right Enlightenment)” (p. 76).

If we want to know what knowledge did Gautama obtain, it is not possible to know about it now itself, we must move further. Until then, a description of the lives of Bodhisatta and a discussion of Vedic philosophy will go on and on.

Gautama was merely a Bodhisatta before he attained enlightenment. He became ‘Buddha’ after enlightenment.

“Who and what is a Bodhisatta? A Bodhisatta is a person who is seeking to be a Buddha” (p. 76).

How did Bodhisatta become Buddha? Bodhisatta acquires certain qualifications for ten lives and would finally become Buddha only in the tenth life. The following are the qualifications which a Bodhisatta acquires in each life (pp. 76-77):

- **In the first life:** He acquires Mudita (joy). He becomes sober like the moon freed from clouds. He is fervent in his desire to benefit all beings.
- **In the second life:** He acquires Vimala (purity). He now removes all thoughts of lust. He will be kind to all.
- **In the third life:** He acquires Prabhakari (Brightness). He will be ready to sacrifice anything for the sake of highest wisdom.

- **In the fourth life:** He acquires Arcishmati (Intelligence of Fire). He fixes his mind on the Eightfold path.
- **In the fifth life:** He acquires Sudurjaya (Difficult to conquer). He fully understands the connection of the relative and absolute.
- **In the sixth life:** He becomes Abhimukhi. He grasps the evolution of things, its cause, the Twelve Nidamas.
- **In the seventh life:** He becomes a Durangama (going far off). The lusts of the world (except lust for enlightenment!) no more cling to him than water to a lotus leaf. In this life he knows the Dhamma and presents it in ways understood by the people. (Alas, do we have to live seven lives in order to tell things intelligibly to all people!). He practices charity, patience, tactfulness, energy, calmness, intelligence and the highest wisdom.
- **In the eight life:** He becomes Achala (immovable). All strivings on the part of the Bodhisatta cease.
- **In the ninth life:** He becomes Sadhumati. This is the condition of one who has penetrated all Dhammas.
- **In the tenth life:** He becomes Dharmamegha. The Bodhisatta attains the infinite divine eye of a Buddha. Bodhisatta transforms into Buddha just as a hairy caterpillar evolves into a butterfly through some stages—all this narration is akin to exposition of scientific principles! Agreeing with the theory of lives in succession of Bodhisatta, Ambedkar is presenting this wealth of knowledge to people asking them, 'Learn this knowledge of lives in succession'. Thus Buddha emerged out of such great evolutionary process.

In order to know what new knowledge Buddha gained, we have to know first what the old knowledge already in currency was. Only then will we know whether Buddha's new knowledge is better than the old knowledge.

Most part of the old knowledge of that time relates to 'Vedas' only.

Vedas: "The Vedas are a collection of *Mantras*, i.e., hymns or chants. The reciters of these hymns are called Rishis. The Mantras are mere invocations to deities... The invocations are mere prayers for help against enemies, for gift of wealth, for accepting the offerings of food, flesh and wine from the devotee" (p. 81).

"The main problems of these Vedic philosophers were: How did the world originate? In what manner were individual things created? Why have they

their unity and existence? Who created, and who ordained? From what did the world spring up and to what again will it return?" (p. 81).

The answers to the questions are various: for example, Anila, Vedic philosopher, says that everything was created out of air (vayu). (Where did that air come from?). Dirghamas argues that every thing comes from the sun. Narayana says that Purusha (God) is the first cause of the universe. It is from Purusha that the sun, the moon, the earth, water, fire, air, mid-air, the sky, the regions, the seasons, the creatures of the air, all animals, all classes of men, and all human institutions, had originated (p. 82).

"Among the ancient philosophers of India the most pre-eminent was Kapila." [The essence of his philosophy is that there is no truth without proof] "For purposes of proving the truth Kapila allowed only two means of proof—(1) perception and (2) inference. By perception is meant mental apprehension of a present object. Inference is threefold: (1) from cause to effect, as from the presence of clouds to rain; (2) from effect to cause, as from the swelling of the streams in the valleys to rain in the hills, and (3) by analogy, as when we infer from the fact that a man alters his place when he moves that the stars must also move, since they appear in different places" (p.84).

"Further, argued Kapila, an effect must differ from its cause, though it must consist of the cause. That being so, the universe cannot itself be the final cause. It must be the product of some ultimate cause" (p. 85).

(If the *universe* is the product of *some ultimate cause*, that some ultimate cause too is part of the universe. The universe plus some ultimate cause together constitute the *total universe*. The cause of that total universe lies in the universe itself. Universe itself is the cause for universe. It is its own cause. This appears to be a rational principle, doesn't it? Kapila, who thought about everything correctly, should have thought about the universe along these lines.)

Kapila's philosophical approach is as follows:

"The non-existent cannot be the subject of an activity: There is no new creation. The product is really nothing else than the material of which it is composed: the product exists before its coming into being in the shape of its material of which it is composed. Only a definite product can be produced from such material; and only a specific material can yield a specific result. What then is the source of the empirical universe? Kapila said the empirical universe consists of things evolved (Vyakta) and things that are not evolved (Avayakta)... When asked why the unevolved cannot be perceived, why does it not show movement which would make it perceivable, Kapila replied: "It may be due to various causes. It may be that its fine nature makes it imperceptible, just as other

things of whose existence there is no doubt, cannot be perceived; or because of their too great a distance or proximity; or through the intervention of a third object, or through admixture with similar matter; or through the presence of some more powerful sensation, or the blindness or other defect of the senses or the mind of the observer" (p. 85).

There is *Dukha* (suffering) in the world. This is, then, the essence of Kapila's philosophy.

Gautama did not like the philosophical approaches of Vedic Rishis. Kapila's philosophy greatly impressed him. Three aspects of Kapila's philosophy impressed him a lot. (1) To accept something as 'reality', it must rest on 'proof'; (2) There is no logical or factual basis for the presumption that God exists or that he created the universe; and (3) There is *Dukha* (suffering) in the world. These aspects made Buddha think. Based on these aspects, Buddha formed his views on Vedas and other texts.

In his view the Vedas were as worthless as a desert. He thought that there is nothing worth learning or borrowing from the Vedic Mantras. The philosophy of Vedic Rishis is useless because it does not teach any social values.

Brahmanas: These are part of the Vedas. Brahmanas and Vedas together are called by the common name 'Srutis'. According to the Brahmanas, Vedas are not only sacred but they are infallible and never to be questioned. The salvation of the soul—that is escape from transmigration—can be had only by the due performance of sacrifices and observance of religious rites and ceremonies and the offering of gifts to Brahmins. The system of *ChaturVarna* (four Varnas) is an ideal society. Shudras and women are unfit for education. Human life ought to go through the four stages: *Brahmacharya*, *Grahashtashrama*, *Vanaprastha* and *Sannyasa*. *Sannyasa* is not open to the Shudras and women.

Buddha did not concur with any of these theses of the Brahmanas.

Upanishads: These are not part of the Vedas. "Some of them were ranged against the Vedic theologians, the Brahmin priests. All of them agreed in viewing Vedic study as a study of nescience or ignorance (*avidya*)" (p. 92).

They rejected sacrifices and funeral oblations. Their discussions centred round Brahman and Atman.

Of the theses of different schools of philosophy of his time, Buddha rejected some, accepted some and modified some in accordance with his own views.

He rejected the belief, for instance, that the Vedas are infallible and

they should not be questioned. He rejected the concepts of *creator* and *soul*. He opposed ritual sacrifices and the four Varna distinctions. And he accepted the logic of Kapila.

The philosophical notions and issues that Buddha modified are the following. He considered irrelevant such questions as: who is the creator of this universe? Does it have a beginning and an end? What will happen to human beings after death? For Buddha, these questions were in no way useful to human life. They teach people any Dhamma to be practised. It is useless to discuss things that have no connection with life. Buddha gave different interpretations of the concepts Karma, Rebirth and Salvation.

Karma: According to a conception prior to Buddha, Karma in the present life (birth) was the consequence of acts of a person in his past life or lives (birth). The past Karma of a person predetermines everything in his life. Buddha's meaning is different. He maintains that pain and pleasure in present life are due to environment.

Rebirth: Buddha too believed in *rebirth* but not in relation to the existence of the *soul*. When the human body dies, its elements join the mass of similar elements floating in space (Akash) and a new birth takes place. This is what the Buddha meant by rebirth.

"It must be noted that the body dies. But the elements are ever living. This is the kind of rebirth in which the Buddha believed" (p. 330).

This is how Ambedkar interpreted Buddha.

Salvation: According to its conception prior to Buddha, salvation meant the saving of a soul from being sent to hell (p. 217). "With Buddha salvation means Nibbana and Nibbana means of control of passions" (p. 221). It is the duty of human beings to attain salvation.

In this manner, Buddha formed his own knowledge by accepting some of the old theories, rejecting some and modifying some.

What we have examined so far does not, of course, represent the entire theory of Buddha. A good deal more needs to be examined.

After having attained enlightenment, doubt arose in the mind of the Buddha that people, who held superstitious notions of soul and god, may not like his theory. Then a miracle occurred. Brahma Sahampati, knowing what was passing in the mind of the Buddha, left the Brahma world and appeared before the Buddha. And arranging his upper robe on one shoulder (Ambedkar refers to arranging of upper robe as though the actual incident had happened before his own eyes!), he bent down and said with clasped hands:

"Thou art Buddha. Thou art the Blessed one who is blessed with the fullest enlightenment... May the Lord in his compassion design to teach his gospel to men and to gods" (p. 112).

Further Brahma Sahampati kept on proclaiming to the world:

"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" (p.113).

In this manner, he said many things and declared:

"His doctrine is the doctrine of righteousness and his aim is to establish the kingdom of righteousness on earth. His doctrine is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Blessed is the Buddha for his is the path of reason and his is the way of emancipation from superstition" (p. 114).

Coming down from the Brahma world and talking about *reason* and *emancipation* from *superstition*! Ambedkar is the witness to Brahma Sahampati's departure from the Brahma world and his appearance before Buddha!

What is this narration of stupid stories about Buddha who was a rationalist?

Didn't Ambedkar ignore the story that Buddha became a sanyasi after seeing a sick person, an aged person and a corpse on the ground that it seemed illogical? Similarly, he ought to have ignored other stories of the kind as well, oughtn't he? Are all such stories logical—for instance, that Bodhisatta took ten births and some guy came from the Brahma world and so on—? Can any disciple of Buddha, who was a rationalist, tolerate such stories which are irrational and superstitious?

But this is the trend that we find throughout Ambedkar's 600-page book on Buddha. All his personal interpretations of Ambedkar are meant only as defence of these false stories. What greater insult can a disciple inflict on his teacher who is a rationalist? It is simply a whimsicality of Ambedkar to put expressions like 'kingdom of righteousness' in the mouth of Brahma. It did not occur even a little to Ambedkar how crazy it would be to mention Brahma in Buddha's life. Such a crazy story appeared more logical to Ambedkar!

Initially, Buddha wanted to 'teach' his 'doctrine' to Alara Kalam. He came to know that Alara Kalam had died. Then he thought of preaching it to Uddaka Ramputta. But he too had passed away. Then he thought of the five sanyasis (Parivrajakas) whom he knew. Having learnt that they were in Sarnath, he went there and met them. They received him with great respect. Buddha told them that he found a new path. He said that

his Dhamma (religion) has nothing to do with god, soul, life after death, rituals and ceremonies.

He said that

Men are living in sorrow, in misery and poverty. The world is full of suffering and that how to remove suffering...is the foundation and basis of Dhamma.... A religion which fails to recognize this is no religion at all (p. 121).

Buddha's words greatly impressed the sanyasis and they asked:

"Tell us how does your Dhamma remove suffering!" (p. 122).

Ah! At last we came to the real point! Those sanyasis have asked a good question. But, it would have been very nice if they had asked, You said that human beings are living in poverty and sorrow, didn't you? Why does suffering exist at all? Why do poverty and riches exist? But the sanyasis did not ask him this question.

They could have at least asked another commonsensical question: 'You said that human beings are living in poverty. Do all people live in poverty? Emperors, tributary kings, slave masters, merchants, moneylenders and such others are living in opulence. All are not living in poverty, are they? When you speak of human beings are you speaking of all or only some?'—This is what those sanyasis should have asked. But such a simple question did not occur to those sanyasis either. But let that pass. They did ask a very beautiful question, namely, 'How does your Dhamma remove suffering?' If there is a way of removing suffering, it would remove the suffering of the poor people as well, wouldn't it? That is, it would remove poverty. Hence, the question that they raised is enough!

Buddha did answer their question.

"The Buddha then told them that according to his Dhamma if every person followed (1) the Path of Purity, (2) the Path of Righteousness; and (3) the Path of Virtue, it would bring about the end of all suffering" (p. 122).

This means, every person should be pure, righteous and virtuous. If all persons are good, none will suffer. This is the Dhamma that Buddha discovered. This is the enlightenment about which we eagerly awaited thus, 'what was the enlightenment of Buddha? What was it? What was it?'

The sanyasis have again asked him,

"What does it mean by being pure, righteous and virtuous?"

Oh, these people are asking him so nicely, aren't they?

4) Purity, Righteousness and Virtue!

Terms like 'path of purity', 'path of righteousness' and 'path of virtue', clothed in archaic language sound orthodox, don't they? Not only here at this point, but also in subsequent pages of Ambedkar's book, we find such archaic language. But, the question is not whether the language is old or new. Even if the language is archaic and even if the path was proposed hundreds of years ago, we need not ignore it on the ground of language and time. We do need to consider whether the content of the doctrine is right or wrong and whether it solves the problem or not. This is the right attitude. Hence, let us not worry about usage!

We need to examine path of Buddha in a greater detail since Ambedkar is telling us that it is the only path of liberation of human kind. We ought to know the path of our emancipation.

Buddha has elaborated his path as follows.

Path of Purity means: 'Panchasheela' is another name of Buddha's path of purity. It has five principles: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not utter falsehood; (3) Do not steal; (4) Do not indulge in lust, and (5) do not take intoxicating drinks.

Path of righteousness means: Ashtanga Marga is another name of the path of righteousness. There are eight constituents of the Ashtanga Marga.

- (1) **Samma Ditti** (Right views): One should not believe and practise rites, ceremonies, superstition and supernaturalism.
- (2) **Samma Sankappo**: Aims, aspirations and ambitious of man should be noble and praiseworthy and not ignoble and unworthy.
- (3) **Samma Vacca** (Right speech): One should always speak truth. Should not speak evil of others. Should not slander others. Should not use angry and abusive language towards any fellow man. Should speak kindly and courteously to all. One should not indulge in pointless, foolish talk but let his speech be sensible and to the purpose. The observance of right speech should not be the result of fear or favour.
- (4) **Samma Kamanto**: One should practice right behaviour founded on respect for the feelings and rights of others.
- (5) **Samma Ajivo**: Every individual has to earn his livelihood. But there are ways and ways of earning one's livelihood. Some are bad; some are good. Bad ways are those which cause injury or injustice to others. Good ways are those by which the individual earns his livelihood without causing injury or injustice to others. This is *Samma Ajivo*.

- (6) **Samma Vyayamo** (Right endeavour): It removes Avijja. One has to prevent and suppress those states of mind that are in conflict with the Ashtanga Marga. It promotes the state of mind suitable for Ashtanga Marga. (This reminds us of physicians telling their sick persons: 'This medicine treats indigestion, this cures rheumatism, this absorbs the heat in the body', and so on. In the same manner, each of the constituents of Ashtanga Marga will treat the mind in one particular way!)
- (7) **Samma Satti** calls for mindfulness and thoughtfulness. It means constant wakefulness of the mind. Watch and ward by the mind over the evil passions is another name for *Samma Satti*.
- (8) **Samma Samadhi**: There is a risk of confronting the five hindrances which come in the way of the mind that tries to achieve the seven constituents of Ashtanga Marga mentioned above.
(5 hindrances for 7 constituents! For 1 hindrance,

$$\frac{5}{7} = 0.7 \text{ hindrance! The 'sum' is somewhat difficult!}$$

Is it better to learn 'arithmetic' first?)

The five hindrances are: covetousness, ill will, sloth and torpor, doubt, and indecision. It is necessary to overcome these five fetters.

It is possible to overcome these fetters only through 'Samadhi'.

"Samadhi is mere concentration. No doubt it leads to Dhyanic states which are self-induced, holding the five hindrances in suspense"

(p.126).

This means, it *is* doubtful. If the mind tends to jump towards covetousness and doubt, Samadhi will do the job of pulling it from jumping thither! But it is said that the effect of Samadhi is only temporary. Then what is the way out? There is one called 'Samma Samadhi'. We have to get hold of it. This is eighth constituent of the Ashtanga Marga. We should not consider Samadhi and Samma Samadhi the same. They are different. This Samma Samadhi controls the mind itself. The mind can't fool around with Samma Samadhi! The Samma Samadhi is so effective that

"these Dhyana states (of Samadhi) are temporary. Consequently the suspension of the hindrances is also temporary. What is necessary is a permanent turn to the mind. Such a permanent turn can be achieved only by *Samma Samadhi*. Mere *Samadhi* is negative inasmuch as it leads to temporary suspension of the hindrances. In it there is no training to the mind. *Samma Samadhi* is positive. It trains the mind to concentrate..."

(pp. 126-7).

That's it! Is it clear now what *Samma Samadhi* does? This is the eighth constituent. So far we have seen 'Ashtanga Marga'; that is 'path of righteousness'. Now let us look at the path of virtue also.

The path of virtue: It is also called theory of 'Paramitas' (States of Perfection). The path of virtue or Paramitas meant the observance of the 10 virtues: Sila, Dana, Upekkha, Nekkhamma, Virya, Khanti, Succa, Adhithana, Karuna and Maithri.

"These virtues one must practice to his utmost capacity. That is why they are called Paramitas (States of Perfection)" (p. 128).

This is the path of virtue.

The details of these 10 virtues are (pp: 127-8):

- (1) "**Sila** is moral temperament, the disposition not to do evil and the disposition to do good; to be ashamed of doing wrong. To avoid to do evil for fear of punishment is *Sila*". (Should people avoid doing evil merely for fear of punishment? Is that virtue? Is it not an 'evil' to say so?)
- (2) "**Dana** means the giving of one's possessions, blood and limbs and even one's life, for the good of others without expecting anything in return". (From the viewpoint of doing good to others, this is not wrong. If a small baby falls into a well or tank, one has to save the child even if one loses one's own life in such an attempt. One should have this kind of view to help others. But if one does not properly understand the context, it may lead to foolish sacrifices).
- (3) "**Upekkha** is detachment as distinguished from indifference. It is a state of mind where there is neither like nor dislike." (How can a person, who has neither like or dislike, love 'good' and reject 'evil'? How can a person, who is detached, acquire good character? How can he save himself when he is in difficulty? This principle will merely harm its follower).
- (4) "**Nekkhamma** is renunciation of the pleasures of the world". (We can't discuss this point unless we know what the 'pleasures of the world' are. There are no details about those pleasures).
- (5) "**Virya** is right endeavour. It is doing with all your might whatever you have undertaken to do with never a thought of turning back, whatever you have undertaken to do." (We can hardly understand this without examples).
- (6) "**Khanti** is forbearance. Not to meet hatred by hatred is the essence of it. For hatred is not appeased by hatred. It is appeased only by forbearance." (In the formulation 'hatred is not appeased by hatred', if the former is hatred, the latter—which is only a response to it—cannot

- be called hatred. It would be 'self-protection'. If there were no former hatred, there won't be latter hatred. One has to refer to the former hatred and advise people not to have hatred. To advise not to show hatred to those who hate them is to advise them to surrender to the former hatred!)
- (7) **Succa**: Always speak truth. Don't lie. (To those who propound this principle, we must tell the truth of 'exploitation of labour'. Then we will know how far they will accept this truth. The truth of 'exploitation of labour' pales vis-a-vis Ambedkar!)
- (8) **"Adhithama** is resolute determination to reach the goal." (But one's goals can be either good or bad. Is it a goal in self-interest or a goal that aims at the welfare of all people, or a goal that is necessary for self-protection? There are so many different goals. Every one considers his own goal good. But it is not the touchstone. Resolute determination to reach the goal will do good only if the goal is good. If the goal is bad, the absence of resolute determination itself will do good!)
- (9) **"Karuna** is loving kindness to human beings." (This is a good quality. But it is not kindness if people, who show kindness to fellow human beings, do not realize that others are in a miserable condition that expects kindness, that such a condition is not a matter of self-respect and none should show kindness to others. Such kindness will not help any one).
- (10) **"Matri** is extending fellow feeling to all beings, not only to one who is a friend but also to one who is a foe: not only to man but to all living beings." (Fellow feeling for enemies! Where is the question of fellow feelings to an enemy? One should either say 'don't have enmity at all' or 'be a refined person and don't be cruel when you want to show anger toward your enemy'. But we should not advise others to love their enemies. 'Fellow feeling' toward all living beings is a quality that human beings have to acquire. But when 'self-protection' becomes inevitable, fellow feeling towards poisonous creatures and wild animals is not possible. Therefore, the principle that 'fellow-feeling to all living beings' simply cannot apply to all situations. Yet it is a good quality that human beings should necessarily acquire).

With this the path of virtue is over. So far we have examined all the three paths: purity, righteousness and virtue.

Purity, righteousness and virtue are all the same. The difference is only terminological. If we follow one path, it amounts to following all the other paths. The essence of all these paths is 'be good'. This is the main essence of these paths.

"Man is what his mind makes him." (p. 359). The basis for good or bad behaviour of human beings is the mind. Hence, we have to make

mind good. We need to train it. The paths of purity, righteousness and virtue give such training. This is Buddha's meaning.

If man behaves in accordance with the mind, what is the basis for mind's behaviour? Why does it think badly in the first place? Nowhere do we find an explanation for this. At best, we may find the answer, 'because of selfishness'.

In this manner, Buddha told the sanyasis that in order to behave properly, human beings should train their minds and that is the core of his doctrine!

Another name for the path of purity is 'Panch Sila'. Another name for the path of righteousness is 'Ashtanga Marga'. Another name for the path of virtue is 'Paramitas'. "His (Buddha's) religion emphasizes Panch Sila, the Ashtanga Marga and the Paramitas" (p. 283). Buddha, however, mentioned his doctrine as 'Ashtanga Marga'.

The new wisdom (enlightenment) which Buddha attained during his 4-week meditation under a Banyan tree along the wide road to Gaya was—this Ashtanga Marga!

According to Buddha this is 'complete knowledge'! New knowledge! He is Buddha because this knowledge dawned on him. 'Buddha' means a person who obtained enlightenment! One who has awakened!

Since his enlightenment occurred under the Banyan tree, the tree is called 'Bodhi tree'!

Ambedkar called this tree 'Banyan tree'. Some people call it 'Fig tree'. Whether Banyan or Fig, its specialty is its big size. People glorify trees, hills, rivers and everything that is of a big size. They treat them as holy things, worship them. But, however large a tree may be, in fact it can neither be holier nor greater than a straw.

We don't get 'new knowledge' by merely sitting under a tree and meditate. We may come to know new things if we read many books, discuss things with knowledgeable people, conduct research or do some such thing. Thus our knowledge may increase. But if we sit under a tree or on a hill, facing east and do experiments in breathing with left nose or right nose, we don't get any new knowledge but lose our brain. But Ambedkar depicted this with great admiration:

"On the night of the last day of the fourth week light dawned upon him... So in the end, after meditation for four weeks, darkness was dispelled, light arose, ignorance was dispelled and knowledge arose. He saw a new way" (p. 75).

Dawning of knowledge, Buddha, Bodhi (Banyan) tree—all these words are contradictory to rationalism. This is Puranic terminology. This is a narration in terms of religious stories and mythological language!

The actual fact is, a person called Gautama expressed certain rational ideas. This is the essence. That is how we must look at the whole matter.

There are two clear-cut differences between Vedic religion and Buddhism. While Vedic religion is based on superstitious notions concerning 'nature' like god, heaven and hell, Buddhism is based on reason and logic. This is one distinction.

Concerning society, the Vedic religion preaches, 'worship God! Worship! Worship!' Except this, it does not give any other programme to human beings. But, on the other hand, Buddha preaches human beings to reform themselves: "Be good! Don't do evil things! Be kind! Have forbearance!"

In this manner, Buddhism began with rejection of Vedic religion and taught the path of reason and refinement to human beings.

However, the question to be put to Buddhism is 'will human beings be free from suffering if they follow the path of righteousness?' Buddha emphatically claimed that his religion (Dhamma) would remove suffering.

Ambedkar too assures us that Buddha's doctrine will remove suffering and sorrow from the world.

"Such is the gospel the Buddha enunciated as a result of his enlightenment to end the sorrow and misery in the world" (Vol. 3, p. 450).

We must now examine how far this is valid.

5) Will Buddha's 'Path' remove suffering?

During Buddha's time society was based on exploitation. In this society, all *land* was under the control of slave masters as their own personal property. Whoever owned that property were masters. Those who did not own land were slaves and servants ('work folk'). (There are no details about the differences between slaves and workfolk in these stories). Society was already split into classes by then. State power and monarchies that defended the property rights of the masters were already established. Slave/servant men and women did all the labours necessary for the maintenance of the families of the master. They alone did the agriculture work; they reared the cattle; they wove cloth, stitched shoes, built houses, drove carts, pulled boats and excavated mines. They also did all kinds of labour in the homes of masters.

Out of the total labour which the slaves did, the very least portion came to them and they lost the remaining whole. Suppose the value of a day's labour of a slave is 10 and he receives only 2, his *surplus labour* will be 8. This goes to the master. If the family of a master has 10 slaves, the value of the labour that the family receives will be: $10 \times 8 = 80$. If the family has 50 slaves the labour that it gets will be $50 \times 8 = 400$. The more the number of slaves the more the mass of products that the family gets.

The family of the master uses all kinds of products without doing any labour whatsoever. It does not engage in agriculture, yet consumes all the foodstuffs. It does not weave cloth, yet wears clothes. It does not make shoes, yet wears them. It does not construct houses, yet lives in elaborate buildings. In this manner, it uses all products without doing a single labour. Slaves alone perform labour.

Of the products that it gets from the slaves' labour, the master's family uses comfortably as many products as necessary and earns 'money' by selling the remaining products. This means, if the master's family has money, it is nothing but the labour of the slaves. Surplus labour of slaves is the wealth of the masters.

It means, the real cause of the riches and poverty is 'exploitation of labour'. Those who lose their labour live in poverty and those who exploit others' labour live in riches.

Masters possess all rights including the right to property. Slaves do not have any rights. They don't have right even over their bodies.

All the slaves could, of course, unite and revolt against the masters and occupy the land. If that happens, it will be 'class struggle'. It will be the concluding phase of the system of slavery. As long as it does not happen, all an individual slave can do is to bear out the suffering. Or, to flee into forests. Then the hunting dogs of the masters would be ready to search the slave, catch him and tear him apart. Even if this does not happen, the slave is sure to be at the mercy of wild animals in the forest.

Slaves have to obediently serve their masters as long as they are physically fit and eventually perish with hunger, disease and sorrow.

If we examine the condition of the class of masters, it will have two kinds of problems (1) How to spend time? (2) How to spend money? As this class does not do any labour, there is no scope for it to spend time in labour. It ought to have some way to spend its time. Hence it has invented luxuries, gambling and addictions of all sorts! All these are essential for the leisure of the class that does not labour.

Secondly every year new wealth (new surplus labour of slaves) accrues to this class. This class alone has to spend the whole of it. If the

master's family leads a simple life with only a pair of clothes a year, a small cot, moderate quantity of food and a pair of shoes, it will be sunk neck deep in the wealth which it can't spend. If it wants to spend the masses of labour that it grabs, it will be made possible only by means of luxuries. It is not possible by means of a simple way of life. If this class too were to live on its own labour, its labour will suffice for its maintenance. Then a situation will not arise in which excess wealth accumulates. But, as this class lives by grabbing of others' labour instead of living on its own labour, luxuries become inevitable for expenditure of that wealth.

No matter how much wealth and riches he possesses, a master may have some sorrows as well: sorrows connected with property, namely, that he incurred some loss of property, that his property has not increased, that his fellow master has become richer than him, and so on. As Buddha said to King Bimbisara,

"When they have obtained all the earth girdled by the sea, kings wish to conquer the other side of the great ocean" (p. 50).

Similarly, the sole ultimate goal of a master is to expand his property!

Buddha's teaching rejects not only the superstitions of Vedic religion but also the anarchic freedom of wealthy life. For example: "eschew both scents and wreaths" (p. 392); "abstain from ornaments and decorating" (p.416); "abstain from the love of gold and silver" (p. 416); "hunting is unrighteousness" (p. 385); gambling, debauchery and drinking are vices that lead to downfall (p. 379). All these sermons apply only to the lives of the rich people. But, in essence, there cannot be much difference between the behaviour of rich and poor. If the rich people wear gold, diamonds and precious stones, the poor wear cheap metals, bangles and beads. The essence of their desires is the same. If the rich pass their time with expensive addictions, the poor enjoy cheap addictions.

The rich class, of course, also is the ruling class. The ideas of the ruling class are the ideas of the ruled class. That is why, the behaviour of both the classes is essentially the same. But the life of the rich is the root of any evil phenomenon. Addictions and luxuries first begin in the life of the rich and they spread to the life of the poor in changed forms. When we are not clear about rich-poor differences, the identical behaviour of rich and poor appears to be natural. Hence, it seems as if all people require the same kind of teaching.

If we look at the Ashtanga Marga of Buddha superficially, all its aspects seem good. There is nothing wrong in those sermons, namely, human beings should perform good deeds. They should not perform bad

deeds. They should not utter falsehood, should not steal, should not abuse others, and should not lead a luxurious life. They should love all living beings.

But Buddha himself says that 'the world is full of suffering' (p. 121). And yet, while slaves' suffering is connected with minimum subsistence and self-protection, the suffering of the master is connected with the increase of his property and his desire to live the life of an idler.

Buddha treats these two kinds of sufferings as though they were the same. He suggests Ashtanga Marga as the solution for the sufferings of all people. How does this Marga (path) remove suffering? This is the real question.

Let us first consider the situation of a slave:

Suppose a slave follows faithfully the path of 'Ashtanga Marga'. That is, he does not speak untruth. He doesn't steal. He doesn't indulge in debauchery. He doesn't consume intoxicants. He doesn't cause any harm to others' life. He doesn't perform rites, sacrifices, yagas, etc. He doesn't rely on an astrologer or palmist. He doesn't believe in supernatural powers. He doesn't speak harshly to others. He doesn't hanker after comforts. He never hunts. He doesn't even kill an ant. He is very kind to all living beings. Whenever human beings or animals are in danger, he tries to protect them even at the risk of his own life. He is zealous to observe all the principles of the paths of purity, righteousness and virtue. Yet, let us say, he continues to be a slave as ever. He continues to live as before with hunger, disease, difficulties and risk of life. Will the Ashtanga Marga remove his suffering?

Let us also examine the situation of the master:

The master too does not speak lies. He doesn't steal; doesn't indulge in debauchery, doesn't take intoxicants, doesn't perform sacrifices, doesn't worship gods and Agnihotras (sacred fire). He does not seek foretelling palmistry and mantras. He does not wear garlands and ornaments; doesn't apply scents, doesn't do harm to others' life. He never hunts. He does not torture animals. He does not speak harshly even to his slaves. He behaves in accordance with the paths of purity, righteousness and virtue. But he does not do any labour. He gets all labours done by the slaves. He does not give a single inch of his land to slaves. He does not give them any other rights either. He continues to buy and sell them (slaves) as before. He continues to possess fertile lands rich with crops, cattle herds, mansions, flower gardens, horse-driven carriages and everything. However self-controlled he is, the master will have his own worries that his property

has not increased or run-away slave has caused great deal of loss. Will the Ashtanga Marga free him from his suffering?

In the relation between master and slaves, the suffering of the slave is due to the master only. But, the suffering of the master is not caused by the slave. If the master becomes sorrowful on the ground that his slave did not work loyally and as a result he incurred some loss of property, the slave is not responsible for that. The master himself is responsible for his own suffering. This means, it is the master who is responsible for the sufferings of both the slave as well as the master.

When both a master and a slave live in such a relation and follow the Ashtanga Marga by not speaking untruth, not stealing, not taking intoxicants, not speaking harshly, not wearing wreaths and ornaments and by not torturing animals, will they be free from suffering? Will they be free from worries? And will amity and affection form between the two?

6) Does Rationalism apply only to 'Nature'?

Let us suppose that both sides in the relation between master and slave suffer and each side has its own worries. But the Ashtanga Marga will not be of any use to remove their sorrow.

To remove the sorrow of the slave, we have to remove the conditions whereby a slave exists. Ashtanga Marga does not offer this solution. Hence, there is no use of Ashtanga Marga for the slaves.

To remove the sorrow of the master, his property should daily increase and there should be no problems and dissatisfaction concerning property. But, the Ashtanga Marga does not give any ideas as to how to increase property. Hence, the Ashtanga Marga is useless for the masters as well.

However devotedly the two sides may follow Ashtanga Marga, each side will continue to have problems; each one will have his own sorrow. If both sides have to be freed from the sorrow, the relation which forms the basis of that sorrow has to be abolished. The relation—whereby one person occupies *land* as his private property and does not perform labour in his capacity as a master, while another person lives the life of a slave who lacks all means of production for himself and labours solely for the benefit of the master. Both persons should become equal in the sense that both do labour and both use land freely. Then a slave would not be a slave. The condition would cease to exist whereby he has to experience slavery and poverty. Similarly, a master would not be a master. Then he would not have to exercise cruelty in carrying out his masterhood, not suffer from avarice to increase property, not come into conflict with slaves and not suffer sorrows that result from such situations.

When the condition of both the sides becomes one, equality and amity will exist between them. It follows that the removal of sorrow and problems of human society is not something that can be achieved by superficial moral sermons like 'don't speak untruth, don't take intoxicants, don't lead a luxurious life, love all living beings and so on! When we find slavery on one side and domination on the other, poverty on one side and riches on the other, when we find gambling, addiction, avarice, jealousy, deep seated aggressive animosity and if all these evils have to perish and love and affection are to be established, it is clear that Buddha's Panch Sheel, Ashtanga Marga and Paramitas will not help at all! We, however, should not criticise Buddha for preaching superficial sermons and for not talking about exploitation of labour which is the root cause of all. For though exploitation of labour must have been taking place during Buddha's time as well, it was impossible for him to grasp it at that time. Even if Marx had been present at that time, he too could not have grasped it since there were no appropriate conditions that enable him to understand it.

In order to understand the phenomenon of exploitation of labour, the situation should be such that every aspect concerning labour should appear in terms of money calculations. This means, when a person performs labour, the value of the means of labour, the value of raw materials, the value of the means of subsistence of the labouring person, the value of the products which he produces afresh and the value of various portions which gets distributed under various names—all these aspects should appear in terms of money.

This means that products in all branches of production should have prices and they should be sold out. Whatever the slave receives for his maintenance, it should be in the form of *wage* and money calculation. Only when all these conditions exist, is it possible to grasp whether the value of labour which the slave does for the master and the value of the wage which the master gives are equal. But all these conditions were not yet present in slave society. Especially, there was no system of wages for slaves. The system of sale of products was present only in certain branches and not in many branches. Under these conditions, the grasp of a person, however intellectual he might be, would stop within the boundaries of the given situation. This means, under such conditions, it is not possible to grasp the fact of exploitation of labour by means of logic. It would be possible only when minimally required conditions emerge.

Even under 'feudal' society, conditions did not emerge. The feudal peasants too did not have the system of 'wages'. The sale of products exists only in certain branches and not in many branches. If all these conditions emerge, it would thenceforth be capitalist society. Here the

system of wages for labourers would begin. We find sale of products in many branches. Every aspect concerning products would be in terms of 'money calculations'.

So what we need here is a person or persons who can examine all the existing conditions in a systematic manner. Marx carried out this job. He, without any fear to accept the truth, could get hold of the phenomenon of 'exploitation of labour'.

This is how it happened. Suppose the production of an article involves an expenditure of Rs.4 on the means of production and Rs.6 on the wages of labourers. The total is 10. This is 'capital'. Suppose the capitalist sold the product for 18. After deducting 10 capital from 18, the capitalist got a 'surplus' of 8. Now the question arises, 'how did this surplus come?' While this is so, 'value means labour' according to the 'law of value'. Any item that does not involve labour will not value. According to this law, it will be clear that rent, interest and profit are unconnected with labour, that they are merely incomes connected with rights of property in land and capital. If we can understand all these details, it will be clear that the 8 surplus too is the fruit of the labour of labourers.

This means that the actual value of the labour of labourers is: 6 wages + 8 surplus = 14. Which means, labourers performed a labour of 14 value and received only 6 as wage. They do not know about 8. Not only labourers but also capitalists do not know about it. The 8 value which labourers did not receive will be distributed as incomes called 'rent, interest and profit'. These incomes are those which are received without performing any labour at all. In this manner, of the many things which Marx could discover, surplus value is the crucial one. The entire secret of 'exploitation of labour' is hidden in this.

It became possible to discover this only under 'capitalism'. Suppose the same production of 18 value took place in a slave society. Even in that society, let us say, all the expenses connected with that production were similar to those in the present example. That is, even at that time, slaves performed a labour of 14 value, received articles of 6 value and lost the remaining 8. But it is not possible to anyone in that society to realize that this had happened. It is because there we don't find money calculations to any item. The means of subsistence given to slaves will not be in the form of money but in the form of articles. Those articles do not have prices. Similarly, there won't be money calculations concerning the expenses spent for products which the slaves produced afresh. As the master does not sell the newly produced articles to outsiders, their value is not known. This means that there won't be conditions necessary to grasp the facts, namely, 'the master initially spent that much and he got this

much as surplus' or 'the slaves performed labour of so much value but they received back only this much value'. It was the time when the system of wages for labourers and the system of selling commodities of all branches of production had not yet emerged. That is why, it was not possible for any one to discover the fact of exploitation of labour. An intellectual of that time like Aristotle could not grasp this fact either. Buddha belonged to a time earlier than Aristotle. We cannot and should not criticise Buddha who belonged to such a remote past on the ground that he did not speak of exploitation of labour and he only preached superficial sermons.

We can, however, criticise Buddha on such issues in which we find contradiction in his words or actions. For example, when he was young, Buddha said, 'how can it be right that the labourer should toil and the master should live on the fruits of his labour?' (Here Ambedkar or the original text on which Ambedkar based his account must have mistakenly used the word 'labourer'. This is because we can't find system of wages during Buddha's time, can we?) Why didn't Buddha, who in youth was upset and spoke of an injustice, never again speak of it when he became older and acquired the wisdom by which he could enlighten all human kind? We can and should put this question to Buddha. Buddha said so many things such as 'don't do this, don't do that'. Why didn't he say that 'the master should not enjoy the fruit of the labour of labourers, he has to live on the fruit of his own labour'. What does it mean that Buddha, who felt that injustice was being done to labourers, did not mention that fact in his Ashtanga Marga? Does it mean that he had real concern for those who are subjected to that injustice? We can raise such questions.

Well, let us once again return to the point of Buddha's enlightenment. Buddha is still preaching his sermons to the sanyasis. At one point he says,

"why do men not mind enslaving or dominating others? Why do men not mind making the lives of others unhappy? Is it not because men are not righteous in their conduct towards one another?" (p. 128-9).

Man does not hesitate to enslave or dominate others because he will gain from that. It is because he can live without doing any labour. He can make propertyless persons his slaves and become a master only when he occupies all the means of production including *land*.

Though he did not know this reason, Buddha could say whatever he could. Buddha himself was saying that enslaving and dominating others is not a justifiable behaviour, wasn't he? Then why didn't he include in his Ashtanga Marga the point that 'no man should enslave another man and that he should free the slaves under his control'? He simply asks, 'is this not injustice? Is this not injustice?' But he has not said in his theory that 'men should not do this injustice'. Just as he said that 'don't speak

untruth, don't take intoxicants', he could as well have said 'don't keep slaves with you'. He could say this since he himself considered it an injustice. But he didn't say so. Why? Because masters would not have liked it?

Further, Buddha at one place says, "I recognize the earth as earth. But I have no craving for it" (p. 589). Well, then, he should have said the same thing in the Ashtanga Marga, shouldn't he?

He could have said, 'treat earth as earth. Don't crave to own it as your property'. But he didn't say so. Except sermons like 'don't speak untruth', we do not find a single utterance concerning land or slaves in his Ashtanga Marga.

Concerning the *poor*, he says as follows at one place:

"Is not Dana necessary to remove the suffering of the needy and the poor and to promote general good? Is not Karuna necessary to be drawn to the relief of poverty and suffering wherever it exists?" (p. 129).

'Relief' to the poor! This means, reducing the suffering to some extent! There was no scope for Buddha to say more than this. When one does not know why poverty exists, he won't know that 'it is possible to remove poverty'. Riches and poverty appear as natural as light and darkness. When poverty appears as an inevitable phenomenon, the only thing that can be done is to try to reduce that hardship to some extent. Hence, Buddha could say to that extent only.

If Buddha says, that one has to give Dana (charity) to the poor, he would be a 'kind' hearted person. But, if an educated person recommends Buddha's path today, even after the secret of exploitation of labour has been exposed, he ought to become an 'unkind' person toward the poor.

A person who is a rationalist should be able to think rationally not only about Nature but also about society. Logic or reasoning is not merely realization of the fact that 'there are no supernatural forces in Nature; there are no heaven and hell'. A rationalist must have the logic concerning the lives of human beings as well. But, correct logic concerning society might not have existed during Buddha's time. Was it absent even during Ambedkar's time?

Of the sorrow existing in the world, some part is simply unnecessary. It is the sorrow of idlers. The remaining sorrow is real sorrow. The solution for this is revolt against exploitative property relations! All this Buddha did not know. He preached Panch Sila, Ashtanga Marga and Paramitas and considered what he preached great knowledge. He thought he had discovered a new path. He further gave his sermons to those sanyasis at length.

The sanyasis who heard all his *sermons of knowledge* praised Buddha a lot, 'Oh! How great is this theory! So far we have not been aware of such a great path that can remove human suffering!' They did not ask Buddha any question. But those sanyasis, after having heard everything, should have asked a question as follows: 'You say that human beings are not conducting themselves good and they should behave well, don't you? What is the reason for people's misconduct? They tell lies, steal, take intoxicants, live with addictions and luxuries. They fight with one another. Why do they do all these things? Simply due to lack of knowledge? Will they stop all the activities if we explain the truth? Or is human psychology itself bad? If character itself is bad, can we change it? Or, are human beings behaving so due to any other reason? What is the real reason? Tell us what is the reason for the evil behaviour of human beings?' But the Sanyasis had no such questions. They thought that the nature of human beings is such. They behave badly. Buddha is preaching so as to rectify their behaviour'.

Buddha's theory impressed them a lot. They 'at once surrendered to him and requested him to accept them as his disciples' (p. 132).

It is no wonder that the Sanyasis have no doubts about Buddha's doctrine. But Ambedkar, who belonged to the present time, has no doubts either. He does not raise the question, 'why do human beings behave badly?' He does not raise such questions as, 'If rich people too have sorrow, what sort of sorrow is it? Who is responsible for that?' Also he does not ask, 'How can Ashtanga Marga remove the sorrow of slaves?'

Further, he has no such questions as follows: 'what path removed the sorrows of slaves in the countries where slavery existed: the struggles of slaves or Ashtanga Marga? Did Buddha's path remove the sorrow of people of any country during the past 2,500 years? Not only here but also in the subsequent story of Buddha nowhere does Ambedkar raise any question, even when he comes across most surprising incidents. Moreover, he ignores others' criticism of Buddha and is zealous to establish that Buddha's path alone is a panacea of all kinds of sorrow.

We need to raise an important question concerning Ambedkar's attitude to Buddha's doctrine. Why did he not prescribe Ashtanga Marga as a solution for the sorrow of untouchables? When he realized that there was no greater path than Ashtanga Marga, why did he, instead, suggest this 'mundane' path of 'reservations, special provisions' and so on? Why didn't he give up the path of reservations for untouchables even after studying Buddha's doctrine and arriving at a definite conclusion that Buddha's doctrine alone is the path of emancipation? Was he not confident of Buddha's doctrine? Shouldn't any one confront with this question Ambedkar?

7) Disciples begin to join

Disciples began to join Buddha. They were of two categories: Upasakas and Bhikkus. Upasakas may follow Buddha Dhamma while leading a family life. They may own property. Whereas Bhikkus should abandon family life, shave their heads, wear saffron robes, remain celibate and live on alms alone. Their duty was to propagate Buddha's doctrine by preaching the Ashtanga Marga and by leading the higher life of a Sanyasi.

Buddha started a 'Sangh' for the sake of Bhikkus. Upasakas did not belong to Sangh because they did not propagate Buddha's doctrine.

There are no restrictions of caste or sex on those who wish to become Bhikkus. (In the beginning, Buddha strongly opposed admitting women as Bhikkus. That is a different matter).

"No Bhikku is to possess more than the following eight articles:— (1) Three pieces of cloth to cover his body: (i) lower garments called Antarvaska. (ii) upper garment called Uttarasang. (iii) covering garment against cold called Sanghati. (2) A girdle for the loins. (3) An alms-bowl. (4) A razor. (5) A needle. (6) A water-strainer" (p.418).

He has to follow Trisaras: the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangh. If a Bhikku commits an offence, the other Bhikkus should conduct a trial and award an appropriate punishment, namely, warning and eventual discharge or expulsion from the Sangh.

This means that it is possible that Bhikkus may involve accepting gifts, buying and selling land and appropriation of property of the Sangh. This means Sangh also accumulates property!

This is how Buddha Dhamma and a Sangh that preaches it began.

8) The life of Sanyasis is a life based on exploitation of labour

The life of a Sanyasi is, in fact, contrary to the rest of human life because a sanyasi does not do any labour to maintain himself. When a person wants to propagate his theory, he ought to do so while maintaining himself. If he has to conduct his propaganda secretly and has to lead an underground life, he cannot pursue any occupation openly. But, this does not apply to such propaganda as is not secret in nature. As the life of a sanyasi is not a secret life, he can maintain himself by doing some labour for some time. If we live without doing labour, it is exploitation of labour.

No person has a right to live without doing any labour at any time except in childhood, state of ill-health and old age. No matter how great a Sanyasi is, if he does not perform any labour, it amounts to living on exploitation. (There was a criticism on Buddha that he lived like a 'parasite'. We will see this point later).

Buddha was a rationalist. To be rational was his trait. He did not accept the existence of god, supernatural powers and superstitious beliefs. But all those, including Ambedkar, who claim to be disciples of Buddha themselves entertained superstitious beliefs! They did not have a rationalist outlook in any sense! They filled Buddha's biography with vulgar stories. Such people are, indeed, totally unfit to be disciples of Buddha!

9) Disciples intoxicated with wealth

"There lived in the town of Benares a nobleman's son called Yashas... He lived in abounding wealth" (If some one has wealth, Ambedkar apparently does not have opposition to use the word 'nobleman's son'). Yashas passed his time like a swinger for years in drinking, dancing and 'carnal pleasures'. Finally, bored with his swinging life-style he joined as Buddha's disciple and became a Sanyasi.

"Four friends of Yashas belonging to the wealthy family" too did the same thing. (These wealthy fellows neither did any labour earlier nor would do any labour after becoming sanyasis. It makes no difference).

In Benaras, there were three sanyasi-brothers of Kassyapa family. They were called 'Jatila' sanyasis because of their long hair. They perform fire worship. Each one of them has his own Ashram. (Possession of an Ashram by a sanyasi surely implies possession of property). There were about a thousand disciples with these three brothers. (All a band of idlers). Besides these disciples, hundreds of devotees visit the Ashrams (these devotees are the only source of 'donations' to these Ashrams. All the donations make up the *earning* of the Ashrams!) Of the three brothers, the elder fellow had a reputation of a 'great sanyasi'. Buddha thought of converting this reputed sanyasi into his path by preaching his doctrine to him and hence went to his Ashram.

Every night a 'savage Naga king' would come into that Ashram and trouble the inmates. (There are no details whether that Naga king was a human being or a snake). Buddha, even after hearing about the Naga king, stayed in the Ashram on one night without fear.

The Naga king came at mid-night. Fascinated by the glowing face

of Buddha, he began to worship the lord. All people in the Ashram witnessed the scene and realized the greatness of Buddha. (Is it necessary to understand the doctrine of a rationalist by means of a 'miracle'?)

Later Buddha told them that it was futile to perform fire-worship and Agnihotra cannot cleanse the sins of man. He further said that if man conquers lust, anger and delusion he would acquire true vision, knowledge and pure conduct. In this manner, when once one develops distaste for sin, this distaste removes covetous desire and thereby one is able to become recluse. ('Covetous desire' is desire for something which does not belong to one, that is 'desire for others' property'. Others' property means others' labour. A fellow who became a recluse still continues to consume others' labour. This means that unless one knows the truth concerning 'labour', no discourse of Dhamma would save him from sin).

All the three Kassapa brothers abandoned fire worship and became Buddha's disciples. Here Ambedkar comments:

"The conversion of the Kassapas was a great triumph for the Blessed Lord. For they had a very strong hold on the imagination of the people" (p. 140-41).

This means, ordinary people follow Buddha's path because of the Kassapas. Here, what is Buddha Dhamma? That one should not have 'covetous desire' for others' property! But it is not the ordinary people who have covetous desire for others' property. They always lose their property (their labour) to others. Therefore, there is nothing that ordinary people can learn from Buddha concerning covetous desire for others' property. Did Buddha's doctrine do good to ordinary people by asking the rich to *abandon their property*? No, there is no such thing in it. Therefore, Buddha's doctrine is of no use to ordinary people.

Sariputta and Moggallana were Brahmin sanyasis. They had been following another Guru (teacher). Having heard about Buddha, one day they took 250 companions and proceeded to visit Buddha. Buddha saw them coming from afar and said to his disciples around him: look at those two companions!

"These will be my chief pair of disciples, and auspicious pair" (p. 143).

They have not yet come close! They have not yet asked him to admit them as his disciples. He says that the newly arriving persons are 'auspicious' and 'chief' disciples compared to the disciples who were already with him. The teacher himself says all this to the disciples who are around him! Moreover those coming toward him were not simply two

persons but 250 persons! All of them were coming to join as his disciples! Yet Buddha has no concern for them. He has special attention for their *leaders*. If you catch hold of leaders, you can get easily all those who are under their control, can't you? This was Buddha's 'pure conduct'.

What is the use of such stories as these except to defame Buddha? A disciple like Ambedkar too has not observed minimum fairness while narrating Buddha's story. This did not occur even to Ambedkar: 'Is it a fair thing to humiliate the old disciples by praising new persons as 'auspicious'? He could not understand what is fair and what is unfair.

Well, all of them who came asked Buddha to admit them as his disciples. Buddha admitted all the 250 Parivrajakas along with Sariputta and Moggallana by uttering the usual formula "Ehi Bhikku" (Come Monks!). Then how far is it justifiable not to treat all persons equal but to glorify only two of them as his chief and auspicious disciples?

Bimbisara was the king of Magadha. Rajagraha was his capital. Do you know how many wives he had? Do you think he had two or three wives? Or do you think he had ten wives? He had 500 wives! (p. 152). This is what Ambedkar tells us!

This king asked Buddha to admit him as his disciple. How nice it would have been if Buddha had scolded him: 'How dare you desire to become my disciple when you have 500 wives?' Buddha, who emphasized that one should not even touch woman without real love and that one should not indulge in lust, admitted His Royal Highness Bimbisara, who had 500 wives! This means, it is a new doctrine of Buddha according to which kings can exhibit 'truthful love' for hundreds of women and it does not amount to 'lust'!

As all the converted persons need not become sanyasis, His Excellency Bimbisara, though converted, remained King as before. All his properties remained his! Peasants continued to pay rent to him! Slaves continued to do service both at home and outside! Wives continued to suffocate in the harems! For the king, every thing goes smoothly and happily! Yet he became a 'disciple' of Buddha! His Excellency the King knows pretty well that he has no need either to acquire fresh knowledge or give up anything for the sake of his discipleship. He need not give up his properties. He need not give up his servants. He need not give up his wives. Moreover he can increase everything. It is enough if he throws donations to the Buddhist Sangh! Well, how difficult will it be for the king to practice discipleship of Buddha? Ambedkar had indescribable respect for king Bimbisara. In Ambedkar's view, this king was a 'great

supporter of Dhamma' (p.473). Ambedkar, named his house in Bombay 'Rajagraha', the name of the capital city of this king. Ambedkar had so much respect for this king who had 500 wives.

Buddha was not concerned even if kings committed any sort of crime. He can embrace a king who killed his own father. The story of Bimbisara tells that Ajatsatru killed his father, the king Bimbisara.

"When Bimbisara died Jeevaka continued to serve his son Ajatsatru and was mainly instrumental in bringing him to the Lord after his crime of parricide" (p. 153).

It was Jeevaka, a physician to the king, who negotiated with Buddha to admit Ajatsatru as his disciple. Here we are concerned not with Jeevaka but rather with Buddha! Whenever he opened mouth, Buddha would speak of 'Morality! Morality! Love! Love!' Such a person admitted a mean fellow who killed his own father as his disciple. He thought that the reason that 'he has changed' would suffice to save him. Once you killed your father and sat on the throne, you could express your repentance to any extent. This new king too has changed like that. The one who is smoldering with repentance is the King who currently in power. Then how can Buddha not believe His Royal Highness?

This means Buddha had embraced the father-killer, admitted him as a disciple, and said 'don't worry my boy! It doesn't matter even if you have killed your father! Anyway you are repenting deeply now'!

Buddha, how moralistic you were in your youth! How sensitive you were! Did you not realize exactly how far this obsession for enlightenment had taken you? Those who flutter with hundreds of women are also your disciples! Those who kill their parents for property too are your disciples! Those who sink slaves in the sea of sorrow too are your disciples! How much moral enlightenment can you give to the world with this immoral band of disciples? Why have you—who stood with unshaken ideals as Goutama—fallen to such depths? What did you expect? How nice it would be if you knew the path of your own liberation before you found the path of liberation of other human beings!

Sudatta was the wealthiest person in the Kosala kingdom. He was the treasurer of the king. (Well, then, what is the problem? Everything perhaps goes straight to his house from the treasury!) Besides all this he had large commercial interests. He had many servants under him. His another name is Anathapindika since, it is said, he was very kind to the poor! (The poor are 'anathas' or 'orphans'!)

Once this wealthy person came to Buddha and expressed his desire to hear Buddha's sermons on spiritual matters. Buddha explained his rational philosophy.

"Neither Ishavara, nor the Absolute, nor the self, nor causeless chance, is the maker, but our deeds produce results both good and evil"
(pp.147-8).

He also said that it is better to stop worshipping Ishavara.

Concerning the conduct of human beings Buddha said: 'God had not created human beings. God had not created the joy and sorrow of human beings. Human beings themselves are creating them. Human beings create not only joy but also sorrow. He suggested the 'Ashtanga Marga' as the path to freedom from sorrow.

Buddha did not know the distinctions (classes) among human beings. He did not know even the distinction between the sorrow of the rich and the poor. It is a correct reasoning to say that 'god had not created joy and sorrow because god does not exist'. But what does it mean to say that 'human beings themselves create their sorrow'? According to this argument, we may have to arrive at the conclusion that 'slaves are creating sorrow for themselves'.

Does Buddha in fact mean the following? 'Yes, slaves are responsible for their sorrow. They can be free from slavery if they fight against masters, can't they? So aren't they responsible for their sorrow if they don't fight and remain slaves?' If this is Buddha's intention, he ought to have preached 'revolt' as a way to get rid of that sorrow. He should have said: 'Rebel wherever there is domination! Fight! Rebellion is the only way to eliminate sorrow. If you don't fight, it means that you are perpetuating your sorrow'. But Buddha did not preach 'rebellion'. He preached only Ashtanga Marga as a means to eliminate sorrow. This means, Buddha did not know the real causes of the sorrow. After hearing Buddha's discourse on religious matters, Anathapindika put forward his personal problem before Buddha:

"My life is full of work, and having acquired great wealth, I am surrounded with cares. Yet do I enjoy my work, and I apply myself to it with all diligence. Many people are in my employ and depend upon the success of my enterprises" (p. 148).

(Every master always talks like this. Instead of thinking that his entire life is dependent on his workmen, he believes that his workmen are dependent on him).

"My heart yearns to do what is right and to be a blessing unto my fellow-beings. Let me then ask you, must I give up my wealth, my home, and

my business enterprises, and, like you, go into homelessness in order to attain the bliss of a religious life?" (p. 148).

This means, he asked Buddha whether he should give up his wealth and his present way of life.

Would you like to know what Buddha then said in response? He said a great deal, but briefly: Those who are not slaves to riches but use it properly are friends of fellow human beings. So, continue in your occupation and carry on your business with diligence.

"It is not life and wealth and power that enslave men, but the cleaving to life and wealth and power. The Bhikku who retires from the world in order to lead a life of leisure will have no gain. For a life of indolence is an abomination, and lack of energy is to be despised. The Dhamma of the Tathagata does not require a man to go into homelessness or to resign the world unless he feels called upon to do so: what the Dhamma of the Tathagata requires is for every man to free himself from the illusion of self, to cleanse his heart, to give up his thirst for pleasure, and lead a life of righteousness. And whatever men do, whether they remain in the world as artisans, merchants, and officers of the king, or retire from the world and devote themselves to a life of religious meditation, let them put their whole heart into their task; let them be diligent and energetic, and, if they are like the lotus, which, though it grows in the water, yet remains untouched by the water, if they struggle in life without cherishing envy or hatred, if they live in the world a life not of self but a life of truth, then surely joy, peace, and bliss will dwell in their minds" (pp. 148-9).

This was Buddha's sermon to the wealthy.

Go ahead with your business! You need not give up anything. It is enough if you keep your heart pure—this is what the Buddha said. This means that there is no need of the least change in the life of a businessman. He can have all his riches. Further, he can increase his riches by doing business more diligently. His masterhood will continue as before. His slaves, servants and everything—as before!

According to the path which the Buddha showed to the wealthy, kings could continue to rule their kingdoms, traders could carry on their trade. One can acquire wealth in one's own way. However, everything should take place without selfishness. Like a drop of water on the lotus! Why could not the Buddha say to that wealthy person, 'you say that you have worries due to this wealth, don't you? Then why do you have so much wealth? Why so many ventures? Is it not enough to have things that enable you to lead a simple life?' The Buddha did not say this because the wealthy

people will not like it, will they? (Ambedkar too would not like the Buddha to say so!) How could the Buddha suggest a path which the wealthy would not like? That is why he suggested a great path: well, there is nothing wrong in possessing wealth. Have you noticed a drop of water on the lotus? Remain touched and untouched by wealth! This means that one has to eat lavish food with disinclination! While riding on the horse drawn chariots, one has to ride with disinclination! While sleeping on silk-covered beds, one has to sleep with disinclination! That is how it goes on! The only principle is touch and yet remain untouched.

The Buddha's sermon impressed Anathapindika greatly. Is it not, indeed, impressive? It does. The Buddha said that it was not necessary to worship God. Anathapindika must have thought, 'God! I am saved!'

Anathapindika perceived that this was the most excellent system of truth, simple and of wisdom born (p. 149).

What wisdom! What truth!!

The Buddha gave many sermons while admitting King Pasenjit to discipleship: 'Regard your people as we do an only son. Do not oppress them... Give comfort and befriend the sufferer... Transgress not the rules of kingly conduct. (This means, don't give up your power and privilege). After sermons of this sort, the Buddha assured him that he would acquire 'a good name for distant ages' (pp: 150-51). Impressed by this sermon, the king vowed to become his disciple (only a 'promise'! This fellow seems the cleverest of the lot!)

Why do wealthy people listen to such sermons if the sermons are not in their favour? Does any rich person listen to the sermons if the Buddha said, 'Give up your kingly life! Give up your wealth and riches! Live a life of austerity by tilling the land! Perform labour as slaves do?' Will they join as disciples of these Sanyasis? The Buddha knows that it won't happen. That is why, kings can rule their kingdoms! Traders can carry on their trade! All the masters can dominate slaves! The life of the rich persons can remain as ever!

In this manner, "Lord" Buddha, while admitting the wealthy as his disciples, gave them sermons so that their wealth remains and their feelings are not hurt.

10) The poor disciples

Upali was a barber and he came to the Buddha along with some Sakyas for admission as a disciple. The Sakyas told the Buddha:

"We Sakyans, Lord, are haughty. And this Upali, the barber, has long been an attendant, Lord, upon us. May the Blessed One admit him to the Order before us, so that we may render him respect and reverence, and bow down with outstretched hands before him as our senior and thus shall the Sakyan pride be humbled in us!" (p. 185).

Accordingly, the Buddha admitted Upali as his disciple. Citing this situation, some Dalit intellectuals argue: 'Look what the Buddha did to make upper castes worship a low caste person! He did so to honour the low castes'. But worshipping and serving low castes by upper castes is as bad as worshipping and serving upper castes by lower castes. The desired change is not the reversal of existing hierarchical order.

When the Sakyans asked so, the Buddha should have corrected their views. 'It is not a correct principle to worship a person who is first admitted as a disciple. It is not correct if upper castes worship low castes. Give up caste consciousness and acquire a new perspective that 'all are human beings and all are equal'. As the Buddha did not correct the views of the youth, it led to a misunderstanding that 'the Buddha made upper castes worship low castes'.

None knows whether all these incidents in the Buddha's life occurred or not and if they did was it exactly as depicted here. Our comments and critique will be and should be on the basis of what and how the writers of these stories have told them.

Well, Upali became a Sanyasi. So what has happened here? He was until then doing some physical labour and living by his own effort. But hereafter he turns into a sanyasi, becomes a parasite on the public and begins to live on the labour of other people, with a sense of pride of a sanyasi thus, 'give me alms! It is your duty'. This is what happened!

Let us see Sumita's story. Even this man belonged to a low caste. He was a scavenger (road cleaner) in Rajagraha.

One day in the early hours of the dawn the Buddha walked into the streets for alms followed by a large number of Bhikkus (p. 186). The Buddha used to go for alms 'too early' (p. 318). He used to go to the Ashrams of other Sanyasis, sit there and continue to discuss Dhamma till dawn. Similarly, now also, he started for alms along with his disciples. They need 'food' after they wake up, don't they?

Shouldn't all these Sanyasis take brooms and sweep the streets? Shouldn't they do some work or other either in the fields or at the looms? How shameless are they to go for alms without doing any work?

Sunita, who was cleaning the street and collecting rubbish, looked at the group of Sanyasis with joy and awe, stood as if stuck to the wall and saluted the Buddha. 'Lord' the Buddha, "in voice divinely sweet", said, 'Sunita! Why are you leading such a wretched life? Will you leave home and join the Sangh?'

What? Is cleaning streets a wretched life? Should he stop doing it? Even if Sunita stops doing it, some other person has to do that job, doesn't he? The streets won't be clean if none sweeps, would they? Look, the person who acquired great enlightenment under a Banyan tree, is advising people not to sweep the roads!

In response to the Buddha's words, Sunita hesitatingly asked the Buddha, 'will you admit me into your Sangh?' Immediately the Buddha called Sunita 'Bhikku'! Sunita at once got a bowl and robes.

Describing how Sunita became so great because of conversion, the Buddha said,

"As on a rubbish-heap on highway cast a lily may grow, fragrant and sweet, so among rubbish-creatures, worldliness blind by insight shines the very the Buddha's child" (p. 186).

The Buddha knew that rubbish heaps accumulate on highways. But this man of enlightenment (the Buddha) did not understand the necessity of cleaning highways. The Buddha was praising Sunita saying that he became a holy person because he gave up scavenging and joined as his disciple. This means, the person, who was until then living on his own labour became a 'fragrant and sweet lily flower' after giving up his labour and began to live on others' labour.

Won't the group of sanyasis start for alms the next day as usual along with Sunita? Then Vinita or some one will sweep the streets, won't he? The Buddha has to ask that sweeper why he was leading such a wretched life and advise him to join his Sangh. He should save one person daily from sweeping the highway, shouldn't he?

Persons with enlightenment entertain this kind of false thought because their knowledge concerning society is not the real knowledge. When a person is not aware of the fact that human society is based on labour and labour relations, performing labour appears to be a mean thing and escaping from labour appears to be a great thing. It appears so to either the Buddha or Ambedkar or any one who does not know about labour relations. While this is so, there is another question here: What did the Buddha say when wealthy merchants asked him whether they should give up their business enterprises and become homeless like him? He said, 'It is not necessary. Carry on your business diligently! It is enough if you

keep your hearts pure'. When he admitted kings into his Dhamma, he did not ask any king to join his Sangh. He told kings to rule their kingdoms. He told merchants to carry on their business. Though admitted as disciples, they were involved in activities of increasing their wealth without changing into Bhikkus. Well, then, why did the Buddha ask Sunita to join his Sangh? Why didn't he put the same question to the wealthy?

Why shouldn't Sunita become a disciple without becoming a Sanyasi and live with his family members? Who would care for his children if he became Sanyasi? Who would take care of his parents when they became old?

He didn't say such words to the wealthy because they won't heed his advice if he says 'leave your families, riches, wealth and slaves'. The propertyless paupers alone are ready for anything, aren't they? Hence, one can give any crazy sermons to them.

The Buddha admitted some more low caste people as disciples and turned them into Bhikkus. Sopaka and Suppiya were untouchables in Shravasti, Channa was a native of Kapilavastu and was a slave in the house of Suddhodana. Dhanniya was a potter in Rajagraha. And some more low caste people. All these people received sermons of the Buddha, turned into sanyasis and became holy like a fragrant and sweet lily. What were the sermons that these people received? 'Don't speak untruth, don't steal, don't take intoxicants, don't do sacrifices, don't wear ornaments and garlands'. These are the sermons. In other words, 'Follow Ashtanga Marga!' A path that makes them pure, righteous and virtuous! These are the words, which these Bhikkus too have to teach people living at different places. They have to wander saying that 'this alone is the path of human emancipation'. These Bhikkus are not like beggars who stand in front of the houses of people and beg. Their status is very high. The householders invite them to their houses and serve them meals with varied delicious and lavish dishes until the guests say, 'it is enough! It is enough!' They arrange feasts by extending invitation in advance: 'Please come to our home tomorrow'. These Bhikkus directly go there, say a few words in the name of 'sermon', then enjoy the feast and leave the place. Next day, at another house! All the householders are of the type who think, 'it is enough if a sanyasi visits us. Our home will become a holy place!'

11) Nothing is our own, except slaves!

When 'Lord' Buddha was touring Kuru country preaching his doctrine, a young man named Rathapala heard the Buddha's sermons and converted into a Bhikku. He was a very rich man. He had slaves to serve him at home. He had 'wives'. Some days after conversion, he requested

the Buddha to permit him to go to his home and see his parents. The Buddha suspected that he might not return.

“Scanning with his own heart the thoughts of Ratthapala’s heart, and recognizing thereby that he was incapable of abandoning his training and reverting to the lower life of a layman, the Lord bade him go when he would” (p. 155).

This means, the Buddha permitted Ratthapala to visit his parents only after he was convinced that there was no risk of Ratthapala’s staying back and that he would definitely return! He would return if he liked. Otherwise he wouldn’t return. Should a person not have the freedom to cease to be a Sanyasi if he feels so? The Buddha should tell him, ‘Go happily to your home! Come back if you feel like coming back! There is no compulsion’; should he not tell him so? The Buddha himself told Anathapindika earlier, ‘Tathagatha’s doctrine does not compel any one’; didn’t he? Now what is this? He wouldn’t have allowed him to leave if he suspected that this young man wouldn’t return!

What sort of stories are these, Mr. Ambedkar? Sir, have you determined to defame the Buddha?

Well, Ratthapala went to his home, ate the ‘excellent meal’ and relaxed in the deer-park. The Kuru King came there to see this Bhikku. The Bhikku gave the following sermons of Dhamma:

“The world is in continual flux and change. The world has no protector or preserver. We own nothing; we must leave everything behind. The world lacks and hankers, being enslaved to craving” (pp: 159-60).

To this sermon, the Kuru King responded, “It is wonderful! It is marvellous!”

That’s all! Everything is as before! The king remains a king. The slaves in the house of Bhikku (Ratthapala) remain slaves! “We own nothing”, this sermon of the Bhikku remains sermon! All the rich people own their respective properties! The king owns his kingdom! The wealthy person owns slaves! All the masters own lands! The Bhikkus own sermons, propaganda and feasts! This is what the sermon, ‘we own nothing’ means!

12) Aha! How comfortable this renunciation is!

Anuruddha and Mahanama were brothers in Kapilavastu. Mahanama asked Anuruddha one day, “will you join the retinue of the Buddha or shall I join”.

Anuruddha replied, "I can't lead such a homeless life my dear brother! You do so".

Then Mahanama began to explain how difficult the household life was compared to homeless life:

"Anuruddha, listen! Let me tell you how householder's life looks like! First you have to get your fields ploughed. You have to get the seeds pulled up. You have to get the crop arranged into bundles. You have to get it trodden out. You have to get the straw picked out, the chaff removed and winnowed. You have to get the harvest garnered. When that is done, you have to do just the same the next year, and the same all over again the year after that" (pp: 168-69).

Hearing all this Anuruddha said, "Then you do household duties! I will join the Buddha's retinue". Then he became a sanyasi.

This means, the life of a sanyasi is easier than that of a householder! He can eat well and roam around without any work!

It was Ambedkar's hope to enhance the reputation of the Buddha!

13) 'Signs' of a 'Great Being' in the Buddha

When the Buddha was a child, a rishi announced that there were 32 signs of a great person on the body of the Buddha. Mr. Ambedkar is now going to show what those features are. Once the Buddha along with 500 Bhikkus, was touring Kosala country for the propagation of his Dhamma and stayed in the village 'Ikkhahanankala'. Pokkharsadi, a Brahmin in that village asked his pupil Ambattha: Ambattha, people of all countries say that Goutama had acquired great knowledge and virtue. Go and find out whether it is true or false! Go and observe the Buddha's body whether it has 32 signs that are found on the body of a great man. The teacher and the pupil have a lot of Vedic knowledge by which they can recognize signs on the body of a great person (Vol. 3, p.205).

Ambattha went to the Buddha on 'a chariot drawn by mares'. The Buddha told Ambattha how ancient Vedic rishis led a principled life of austerity. 'You and your teacher parade about well groomed, perfumed, trimmed as to your hair and beard adorned with garlands and gems, clad in white garments, in the full possession and enjoyment of the five pleasures of the senses. You are eating boiled rice and various curries and sauces. You are going about driving chariots drawn by mares'. Thus the Buddha criticised their luxurious life.

Conversation took place between the Buddha and Ambattha for some time. Ambattha was looking for signs of a great person on the body of the Buddha.

“...he (Ambattha) took stock of the thirty-two signs of a great man, whether they appeared on the body of the Blessed One or not. And he perceived them all save only two” (Vol. 3, p. 217).

There are no details as to what those 30 signs are which Ambattha noticed. The 2 signs which he could not see are: “the concealed member and the extent of tongue” (p. 217). Ambattha could not see whether the Buddha had these two things in the same proportion as the great men have.

“...the Blessed One knew that he was so in doubt. And he so arranged matters by his Wondrous Gift that Ambattha the Brahman saw how that part of the Blessed One that ought to be hidden by clothes was enclosed in a sheath. And the Blessed One so bent round his tongue that he touched and stroked both his ears, touched and stroked both his nostrils, and the whole circumstance of his forehead he covered with his tongue” (Vol.3, p. 217).

Touching ears with tongue? Covering forehead with tongue? Is the Buddha a human being or an animal-like being or an animal like a wolf. As per this description, all men in the world are merely dwarves—including Ambedkar!

Satisfied with the proof, Ambattha returned in the chariot.

The teacher did not believe his pupil's words. He wanted to see for himself and proceeded to the Buddha. He had “sweet food, both hard and soft, made ready at his own house, and taken on wagons”.

“...the Brahman Pokkharasadi took stock, on the body of the Blessed One, of the thirty two marks of a Great Being. And he saw them all plainly, save only two. As to two of them the sheat concealed member and the extensive tongue he was still in doubt and undecided. But the Blessed One showed them to Pokkharasadi, even as he had shown them to Ambattha” (Vol. 3, p. 219).

That Brahman perceived that the Buddha's body had not only some signs but all the signs. Having perceived this, he was impressed by the Buddha and became his disciple. The Brahman Pokkarasadi said:

“With my sons, and my wife, and my people, and my companies, betake myself to the venerable Gotama as my guide” (Vol. 3, p. 220).

But why should his wife believe what he said about the greatness of the Buddha? This gentleman too did not believe the matter when his pupil Ambattha reported, did he? He came here to see every thing with his own eyes, didn't he? Shouldn't his wife too see those wonders with her own eyes?

In this manner, Ambedkar narrated through two great Brahmans the miracle of the Buddha's hidden parts of the body and proved that the Buddha is indeed a great being!

The sooner the better the human kind realizes that its comfort and peace are hidden in the measurements of the hidden parts of its body!

14) Why should a leprosy patient live?

Once the Buddha was staying near Rajagraha in a bamboo grove. A leper by name Supprabuddha came there to listen to the Buddha's sermon. Looking at the whole gathering, the Buddha thought that Supprabuddha alone could grasp the truth. According to the story, the specialty of Supprabuddha is that he was a leper. Other than this feature, there was no difference between him and the others. Why did the Buddha think that Supprabuddha alone could grasp the truth? Does one have to suffer from leprosy in order to grasp the truth? This stupid story is meant to tell us, 'look how affectionate the Buddha was toward a leper!' Thereafter, the Buddha gave a special sermon to this leper.

"He pointed out the meanness and vileness of sensual desires and the profit of freedom from the asavas" (p. 189).

The story does not say that this leper acquired this disease because of 'sensual desires'. Then why did the Buddha specifically point out the 'meanness and vileness of sensual desires'? This means that the Buddha, as soon as he saw the leper, thought that the leper must have acquired this disease due to sensual pleasures. That is why, he gave him a special kind of sermon.

That stupid leper, without grasping that the sermon was an insult to him, praised the Buddha a lot and begged him to accept him as 'His follower'. After conversion, Supprabuddha saluted the Buddha and went away. While he was on his way, 'a young calf flung the leper Supprabuddha down and gored him to death" (p. 190). What does the ending of this story mean? Does it mean, 'why should a leper live?'

15) Does the Buddha do magic?

Angulimala was a big bandit. He was a very cruel 'ruffian'. He used to rob people, kill them and

"from every human being whom he slew, he took a finger to make for himself a necklace" (p. 204).

The Buddha heard of this cruel creature, decided to 'convert' him into a righteous man and proceeded alone toward the forest. Many people

who met the Buddha on his way warned him not to go that side. Yet the Buddha did not stop his attempt.

Angulimala was astonished to see the Buddha coming from a distance. He wanted to kill that sanyasi (the Buddha). But "the robber, for all his efforts, could not catch him up". Then the robber surprised, 'This is wonderful! I could always overtake an elephant, or a horse, or a carriage, or a deer, when going out full speed. Today I am unable to overtake this Bhikku.' He shouted to the Buddha to stop. Angulimala threw away the string of his victim's fingers, which he had worn round his neck and followed the Buddha. This is the story! How did the Buddha convert a robber into a righteous person? With a miracle! The entire book of Ambedkar is full of miracles! Full of supernatural powers!

What should disciples say when they read such stories as these about the Buddha? They should say, 'the Buddha is a rationalist. What are all these stories, full of supernatural powers? We should not believe such stories as these wherever they appear'. They have to present the Buddha's life history with caution. But Ambedkar did not do so anywhere. He collected all false stories in vogue on the Buddha and put them uncritically before readers as if they were true incidents. Ambedkar did not hesitate to write all these scrap stories promising to tell the story of a rationalist.

16) Feast after feast! Gift after gift!

Wealthy disciples began to compete among themselves to present 'gifts' to the Buddha, however, in the name of donation to Buddhist monks! (pp: 473-82).

Once King Bimbisara invited the Buddha to his palace for a 'meal' (feast). He ordered excellent food to be prepared. He arranged special seats for the Buddha and other monks. He sat near the Buddha and thought of a place for the Buddha to live in. He decided to give away his pleasure garden, Veluvana, that is away from the crowd, where there is little sound and little noise by night. He made the gift of the pleasure garden to the Buddha by pouring water over the Buddha's hand from a golden vessel.

Anathapindika too wanted to offer a gift to the Buddha. When he expressed his desire to found a vihar for the Buddha, the Buddha showed his willingness to accept the gift. While searching for a place, Anathapindika saw the garden of the prince of Shravasti with its 'green groves and limpid rivulets' and thought that it was the right place for the Buddha. He began to bargain for it. The prince demanded money enough to cover the garden with gold coins. Anathapindika agreed to pay it. (This means that the fellow who uplifts the poor as so much money!)

Anathapindika began to spread gold, the prince created trouble and refused to sell the garden. The dispute went to the magistrate. All people came to know about the dispute. (It did not bother the Buddha despite so much dispute about the place which he was going to get as a gift!). Then the prince came to know that Anathapindika was buying the place for the sake of the Buddha. The prince felt happy and agreed to sell it for half the price. Now the place is available. They began to build a Vihar in it.

“Having made the foundation, they began to build the hall which rose loftily in due proportions according to the directions which the Blessed One had given; and it was beautifully decorated with appropriate carvings” (p. 475).

See what sort of welcome the Buddha received when he entered the vihar called ‘Jeetavana’.

“Anathapindika scattered flowers and burned incense, and as a sign of the gift he poured water from a golden dragon pitcher, saying, “This Jetavana Vihara I give for the use of the brotherhood throughout the world” (p. 475).

Receiving this gift, the Buddha said, ‘May this gift be a blessing to mankind in general and especially to the giver!’ Especially to the ‘giver’! That is ‘fame’ for the giver! ‘Property’ to the receiver! What does humankind get from this? Muck!

Why these gifts at all for monks? It is said that they have to collect ‘alms’ in the village and live on alms. One of the rules which monks are expected to observe is ‘don’t take gifts’. Are simple hermitages not enough for the monks to live in? Do they need viharas in pleasure gardens with beautifully decorated and artistic carvings? Does living in viharas not mean enjoying comforts? Whose property is that entire property? Who are the people that enjoy those luxuries?

The Buddha, who advises not to wear wreaths, walks on the flowers! The person who says ‘no luxuries’ wanders amidst burnt incense and gold and silver! The person who advises to eat limited food always enjoys feasts.

Do the writers and supporters of these stories have any morality?

Jeevika, the royal physician wanted to give a big gift to the Buddha. He expressed his wish to the Buddha that he wanted to build a Vihara in Ambavana and gift it to him.

“The Blessed Lord (the Buddha) showed his acceptance by remaining silent” (p. 476).

Amrapali was a courtesan in Vesali. She invited the Buddha to come to her house for a feast along with her monks. The Buddha visited her place along with his group of followers.

Amrapali served sweet rice and cakes to the Buddha and other monks till they were sated. When Amrapali said that she would like to gift her 'pleasance' (pleasure garden) to the Buddha and his Sangh, 'the Exalted One (the Buddha) accepted the gift'. One palace at each place! One pleasure garden at each place! They said that Bhikkus (monks) should not own properties, didn't they?

"Vishakha was a wealthy woman of Shravasti".

Those who do not know how 'wealth' is accumulated will not have repulsion to the 'wealthy'. They describe 'wealth' as a great virtue. Ambedkar does not at all simmer with anger to describe and praise the rich people as 'noble families' and 'wealthy'.

Vishakha was a 'wealthy woman'. Not only that but also a 'munificent' woman! One day she invited the Buddha 'to take his meal at her house'. After the meal she requested the Buddha to give her eight boons! Any one would normally ask for only one boon not eight boons at a time.

So this shrewdness is the secret of her wealth! She might have amassed her entire wealth in this manner.

"The Tathagatas grant no boons unless they know what they are" (p.479).

This gentleman calls himself 'Lord' and 'Tathagata'. He has this crazy habit! Let it be crazy, he said a good thing, 'I don't give those boons without knowing what they are'. He was very frank without hesitating thus, "Just now, I have taken my meal at this home. How can I say no?"

The boons that she asked were that the Buddha should allow her to provide monks with eight comforts, namely, constant supply of rice milk, robes and so on. What does the Buddha, who lives on 'alms' need more? He accepted the gift and praised her a lot: 'Your gift is heavenly, destructive of sorrow, and productive of bliss' (p. 482). Overwhelmed by the praises, Vishakha also donated the "Purva-Aram or Eastern Garden". How many gardens did she have in various directions? Who knows?

Owing to these donations, the monks will constantly get delicious meals, clothing, medicines and pleasant places of residence! Without doing any labour! The entire labour will be that of slaves who work for these donors in their fields and business. The labour of the slaves first goes to

the masters and from there it reaches the recipients of the donations. This means, all these donors and recipients live on the exploitation of slaves.

A pleasant narration about a feast:

“Lohikka the Brahmin served the Order, with the Buddha at its head, with his own hand, with sweet food both hard and soft, until they refused any more” (p. 288).

“And the Exalted One went on to the dwelling-place of Lohikka the Brahman, and sat down on the seat prepared for him. And Lohikka the Brahman satisfied the Order, with the Buddha at its head with his own hand, with sweet food both hard and soft, until they refused any more!”
(Vol. 3, pp: 223-24).

Thus the Buddha's Sangh had feast after feast Gift after gift!

“Anathapindika was one of the eighty chief disciples who bore the title of Chief Almsgiver” (p. 476).

According to these stories the Buddha's Sangh too carried the activity of accumulating properties!

17) Quarrels among monasteries for properties

All the monasteries keep earning gold, silver, land and cash in the name of gift. The heads of different monasteries or sects keep fighting for the control over these properties. Owing to these properties, the bands of sanyasis (monks) pass time, without work of any sort in eating, drinking, debauchery and addictions of various sorts.

Antagonism, quarrels and fights for the sake of properties between different monasteries or sects of monks keep going on. Ultimately murders too take place! The Buddha's Sangh was not an exception to this.

Envious of the properties which the Buddha's Sangh was earning, other monasteries became antagonistic toward the Buddha's Sangh. People stopped giving gifts to sanyasis called Tirthikas.

“Standing on the public streets they used to harangue: If Samana Gautama is enlightened (the Buddha), we are also. If you acquire virtue by showering presents on the Buddha, you will get the same by giving us presents. Therefore make gift to us” (p. 490).

These Tirthikas, in order to discourage people from giving gifts to the Buddha's Sangh, planned to defame the Buddha. They hired some assassins, got a prostitute killed and conducted a false propaganda that it

was the Buddha who had got her killed. Some more incidents of this kind occurred. Though all this false propaganda was not exclusively due to properties, the main reason was property. The situation would have been different if the Buddha's Sangh had lived a life of austerity in ordinary huts without accepting land, mansions and pleasure gardens.

On one occasion the Buddha said to his follower not to long for gains or favours. Do you know when? When he came to know that Devadatta, who had turned hostile to him was receiving gains and favours from prince Ajatasatru!

"...so long as Prince Ajatasatru thus supports Devadatta it is ruin that may be expected of Devadatta, and not growth in good conditions. Thus terrible, brethren, are gains, favours, and flattery of the princes" (p. 405).

But the same the Buddha, who utters all these morals, accepted many properties in the name of gifts from kings and the wealthy: at least from 80 persons!

The Buddha's enemies murdered Mogallana, one of the chief disciples of the Buddha.

"Mahamogallan was then living in a solitary Vihar near Rajagraha. He was murdered by some assassins employed by the enemies of the Blessed Lord... Sariputta and Mahamogallan were his two chief disciples" (p.538).

Antagonism for share in the properties arise inevitably where people do not do any physical labour but lead a luxurious and leisurely life by earning properties in wrong ways. This became inevitable even in the Buddha's Sangh.

18) Criticism against the Buddha

There were some points of criticism against the Buddha's doctrine during and after his life-time. Important among them are that the Buddha is a parasite living on others, that the Buddha's Ahimsa (non-violence) involves non-resistance to evil and that the Buddha's doctrine is 'barren metaphysics'. And there are some more points of this kind.

Citing this criticism, Ambedkar argues that critics make these charges since they have not understood the Buddha's Dhamma properly. He gave some illustrations how to understand the Buddha Dhamma.

(1) Is the Buddha a parasite?

According to Ambedkar, the Buddha gave a very good reply to this charge. This means, this charge had been there since the Buddha's time. Ambedkar narrated a story to illustrate the Buddha's reply (pp: 486-88).

When a Brahmin by name Kasi-Bharadvaja was doing work in his field at the village of Eka-Nala near Magadha, the Buddha went to the Brahmin for alms. Observing the Buddha, the Brahmin said: "Before I eat I plough and sow. You too should plough and sow before you eat". In response, the Buddha said, 'I too plough and sow before I eat". He explained the nature of his cultivation:

"My seed is faith; austerity of life my rain; wisdom my yoke and plough; my pole is fear to err; plough share and the goad... Watchful o'er word and deed, and temperate in diet, I make in sight weed my crop, nor rest till final bliss is harvested. Effort is my stout ox, which turns me on, to that last borne where anguish is no more. Thus, I till with Deathlessness for crop. And who tills as I, is freed from ills" (p. 487).

Thus the Buddha claimed that he was raising a more valuable crop than the farmer working in the field.

We will see later how the farmer responded to this. But what should have been his reply? "Is that so? Are you also tilling the land like me? Are you harvesting the final bliss? Well, then, why have you come to me for your food? Won't your hunger be satisfied with the harvest of final bliss? I haven't come to you for food, have I? Can't you satisfy your hunger with your harvest? If you need my crop to satisfy your hunger, then what is the use of your crop? A person like you, who harvested such a great crop, had to come to a farmer like me for alms! Will you exist to harvest such a great crop if some one does not give you alms? Have you understood that it is my crop, which is necessary for humans to survive? What sort of a knowledgeable person are you if you don't understand such a mundane issue?"

But that innocent farmer did not say so. He put a blank face in response to the Buddha's proud description of 'harvesting the final bliss'. Immediately, he offered milk-rice in a great bronze dish and praised the Buddha: 'You are a tiller indeed'. Bowing his head at the Buddha's feet, he cried: 'Your doctrine is wonderful! Accept me as your disciple!' Then the 'lord' admitted Kasi-Bharadvaja as an almsman.

There is a saying in Telugu: 'A baying donkey disturbed the grazing donkey'. The farmer, who was dutifully cultivating the land stopped doing work and became a lazy fellow without doing any work. Hereafter, this new monk too will become a parasite on another farmer and maintain himself for the day by uttering few useless words like: 'My plough, my people, my harvest of final bliss!' Just as farmer was fascinated by the Buddha's reply of harvesting the final bliss, Ambedkar too was fascinated. He narrated this story as if the Buddha gave a fitting reply to the charge of being a parasite.

Just as the farmer did not raise the question—as to why the Buddha, who harvested the final bliss, came with a bowl to the farmer's crop in the field—Ambedkar too did not raise the question.

Let us think about the matter. Can't we assume that the Buddha is doing service to the society by teaching his doctrine and hence society has the responsibility of maintaining him? A teacher teaches students and receives some remuneration from them, doesn't he? Similarly, why can't we think that the Buddha is preaching his doctrine and receiving alms in return?

No, we can't think like that. It is because it cannot be 'service to society' if a person takes remuneration for the work done. Do we call it 'service to society' if the teacher teaches students and takes remuneration in return to a work? Then it amounts to selling that work. It becomes 'service to society' only if it is done free. A person who does 'service to society' has to do it while doing some job for his maintenance. That person has to plan his time in such a way that he can do two kinds of jobs. This is how it is possible: if a person is simple in his personal needs and does not indulge in passing of time unnecessarily, then the time required for self-maintenance will decrease and he finds some time to do service to society. If he does so, it amounts to service to society. Whatever the Buddha does cannot be considered if he takes alms in return for the preaching of his doctrine.

Well, let us think that it is not service to society. Let us not call it so. Let us say that he is receiving alms from the people and giving his wisdom in return. This means, he is not taking alms free. Then how can he be a parasite? Can't we think like this?

But this interpretation too is not wholly appropriate. True that the Buddha is preaching doctrine of wisdom to the people. But what he receives from them in return is not something required for a simple maintenance. It exceeds it many times. He receives daily feasts, many mansions, many pleasure gardens and many properties. Further, the Buddha is not a teacher in the view of people. He occupied the place of a 'Lord'. If he were a teacher no one would eulogize him with such address forms as: Blessed Lord, Blessed One, Exalted One, Tathagata and so on. All these eulogies and daily salutations to the feet are the free gifts which devotees present to a religious teacher and not remuneration which students offer to an ordinary teacher. Therefore we cannot argue that the Buddha took alms only in return to what he gave the people. When a person gives less and takes more he inevitably becomes a parasite.

Any sanyasi (monk) is a parasite. The same applies to the Buddha as well: however great his doctrine may be! It (the greatness of his doctrine) is a different matter!

Whether it is in the past or the present, it is the labouring people who have been maintaining all these bands of monks as a whole. It does not mean that monks have been living on their own labour.

(2) On the Buddha's 'Ahimsa' (Non-Violence)

A criticism against the Buddha's doctrine is that it involves non-resistance to evil. Concerning this criticism, Ambedkar says,

"This is a complete misrepresentation of what the Blessed Lord taught by his doctrine of Ahimsa" (p. 507).

"He taught that evil should be cured by the return of good. But he never preached that evil should be allowed to overpower good" (p.509).

To prove this, Ambedkar cited an example. At one time there was an agitation in Magadha kingdom. The king Bimbisara ordered his commander to capture the offenders and kill them. (This king is considered to be a great follower of the Buddha). The commander gave the same orders to his subordinate officers. Those subordinate officers found themselves in a dilemma. They were believers of the Buddha's doctrine of Ahimsa. They knew that the Buddha would advise not to wage wars. They did not want to impose death sentence on the offenders. They were prepared to leave their jobs. They became Bhikkus (monks) in Sangh. The Buddha knew all this.

The king came to know about it and discussed with his officers of justice. They advised him to behead those who converted them into Bhikkus. The king went to the Buddha and reported the incident as if it had happened elsewhere. He told the Buddha that there are some kings who would harass the Bhikkus for encouraging the soldiers to leave the army and join the Sangh and sought his intervention.

Do you want to know how the Buddha responded?

"It was never my intention to allow soldiers under the cloak of Ahimsa or in the name of Ahimsa to abandon their duty to the king or to their country" (p. 508).

Moreover, he made a rule against the admission of persons in royal service. He declared that the king should not confer the Pabbajja ordination on any person in the army and

"He who confers the Pabbajja ordination on such a person will be guilty of a dukkata offence" (p.508).

This is the story! Ambedkar, by citing this story, argues along the following lines. 'Where did the Buddha say not to resist evil? He said to suppress agitation that flares up in the kingdom, didn't he? Does this mean he suggested resisting evil.

How surprising is this? According to this story, Bimbisara is a big thief! He speaks blatant lies even while talking to the Buddha. He does not attach any value to the Buddha's doctrine.

In this story, commanders are very noble persons. They had really believed the Buddha's doctrine. They decided not to participate in wars even if they lose their jobs and hence they gave up their profession. Every person should have freedom to change his occupation. They did accordingly.

According to this story, the Buddha is an outright hypocrite. He is a stooge of kings. He speaks one thing and does another. According to him, soldiers must follow orders of the kings. They are obliged to participate in wars. They have to kill all those who revolt against the king. Soldiers should not have the freedom to oppose the orders of the kings. What should the Buddha say when Bimbisara cunningly reported the matter? Knowing all the details, he should say 'your military officers have acted wonderfully!' He should also say, 'It is their wish not to participate in wars, if they don't like. They have the right to decide how to lead their lives. If you want people who fight wars for you, search for those who are willing to do so! If no one is ready, let all kings stop wars! This is what I want to say'. But the Buddha did not say so. Moreover he said that soldiers should not leave their profession, that they are obliged to participate in wars, that they should kill people and thus secure kingdoms for their kings! How odd this is!

Has Ambedkar narrated this story with the confidence that the Buddha's reputation would still stand even after this story?

We may save the Buddha to some extent if we offer an explanation that 'some fools might have composed this story. How is the Buddha responsible?' But if we want to set these stories aside and see the real Buddha, in which book will we find that real the Buddha? All these stories are narrated by his devotees, aren't they?

Let us keep the Buddha aside. We are actually concerned with Ambedkar. Isn't Ambedkar courageous to depict the Buddha saying at one place, 'war is not a solution for anything. People should not fight wars' and in another place, 'soldiers should fight wars if the kings order so'!

What has Ambedkar—who argued many a time in other contexts that every individual should have the freedom to choose occupation of his

choice—done here? He narrated the denial of freedom to those who decided to give up the profession of a soldier as some thing great and the Buddha performed that great deed! What should we call such a narration?

19) Ahimsa in the case of 'food'

What is the nature of the Buddha's concept of 'Ahimsa' in the case of 'food'? Can we kill animals for the sake of food?

"Kill, nor cause slaughter" (p. 358). "Slay not, nor doom to death, nor sanction slaughter. Do no violence to aught that lives³/₄strong or weak" (p. 392).

Sermons of this sort are plentiful in the Buddha's doctrine. We will find them every where in his preaching. This is the specialty, which is not there in the Vedic religion. It is the specialty of the Buddha that he says that human beings should not only think of their own well-being but also think kindly about all other living beings in Nature.

When some one reads this preaching, can any one imagine that the Buddha intended these qualities of compassion and Ahimsa not to apply to matters of food?

According to the Buddha, all monks can eat fish, meat (flesh of animal) and every thing! In fact all monks including the Buddha ate everything!

Feasts of animal food used to be arranged for monks.

"In the time of the Buddha there was in Vaisali a wealthy general named Siha who was a convert to Buddhism. He became a liberal supporter of the Brethern and kept them constantly supplied with good flesh-food... a breakfast given by Siha to the Buddha and some of the Brethren, for which the carcass of a large ox was procured..." (Vol. 7, p. 347).

The sanyasi called Tirthikas began to ridicule and abuse Buddhist monks with reference to eating fish and meat. Then the Buddha formulated certain principles regarding the use of meat in his Sangh. He specified that there is nothing wrong in eating meat in 5 kinds of situations. They are: 1) Bhikshu should not watch the animal put to death. 2) He should not hear about it. 3) He should not have even a suspicion that the animal was killed for his sake. 4) The animal should have died a natural death. 5) When the animal was killed by a bird of prey or other savage creature. There is nothing wrong in eating fish and meat in these kinds of situation. (Vol. 7, p. 347). This is the Buddha's concept of Ahimsa in the case of food. Of these five reasons, the natural death of the animal and its death by savage creature are unconnected with the Bhikshu. All the other reasons

are wholly hypocritical. Even if they themselves do not kill the animal, or do not watch while it is killed or do not hear about its killing or even if it was not killed specifically for their sake, all the meat eaters are responsible for that violence. It means, not only those who kill the animal but also all those who eat that meat committed that violence.

Many rich persons invite Bhikshus for meals. They get dishes of meat prepared for the Bhikshus because they eat such food. But while serving that food, the rich hosts would say, 'we have not got these dishes prepared for you! We are serving you whatever we had prepared for us'. This explanation is enough for Bhikshus. They eat those dishes of meat happily thinking, 'we have no connection with this violence. We are the incarnation of non-violence'. How hypocritical this is!

Another argument of Bhikshus in defense of their eating meat is: 'when we go for alms, we should accept whatever alms givers offer, shouldn't we? We have to accept even if they give meat'. Will they accept toddy liquor if the alms-givers offer just as they offer milk? No, they won't. As there is a rule prohibiting consumption of intoxicants, they refuse it on that ground: 'We don't want toddy. We should not drink toddy. Give us gruel. It is enough!', they say. They can say the same thing when their hosts offer them meat: 'we don't want meat. Give us morsels of pickle'. If they ask like this, the hosts won't say, 'no, we will offer only meat. Eat only meat!' It is bad if the alms takers ask for expensive foodstuffs and it is not bad if they refuse expensive food. Therefore, the argument that 'one has to accept whatever alms givers offer' is nothing but a hypocritical motive to eat meat.

'If you have not witnessed the killing of the animal or if you have not killed it, you have nothing to do with that violence even if you ate meat'—this kind of argument impressed Ambedkar a lot. Ambedkar defended shamelessly this hypocritical argument describing Ahimsa as a very great doctrine and that the Buddha had wisely formulated certain rules.

Ambedkar's explanation concerning the proper interpretation of the Buddha's doctrine of Ahimsa is as follows:

"The Buddha has nowhere given any definition of Ahimsa...One has, therefore to spell out his intention from circumstantial evidence. The first circumstantial evidence on the point is that the Buddha had no objection to eating meat if it was offered to him as part of his alms. The monk can eat meat offered to him provided he was not a party to the killing of it. He resisted the opposition of Devadatta who insisted that the monks should be prohibited from eating meat given to them by way of alms. The next piece of evidence on the point is that he was only opposed to the killing of animals in Yajna (sacrifice). This he has himself said.

Ahimsa Permo Dharma is an extreme Doctrine. It is a Jain Doctrine. It is not a Buddhist Doctrine. There is another piece of evidence, which is more direct than circumstantial which almost amounts to a definition of Ahimsa. He has said: "Love all so that you may not wish to kill any." This is a positive way of stating the principle of Ahimsa. From this it appears that the doctrine of Ahimsa does not say "Kill not. It says love all.... It is quite clear that the Buddha meant to make a distinction between will to kill and need to kill. He did not ban killing where there was need to kill. What he blamed was killing where there was nothing but the will to kill. So understood there is no confusion in the Buddhist doctrine of Ahimsa" (p. 346).

What does 'will to kill' mean? If we consider 'hunting', though it originally began for the sake of food, it gradually turned into killing for joy. Similarly there is another practice of killing in order to watch the animals while suffering. Cock-fights, sheep fights, bull fights, wrestling of humans—all are of the same type. All these are cruel acts. All these are killings for the sake of mean entertainment.

Suppose we interpret the problem thus: 'killings as these amount to violence but killing for food is not violence and there is nothing wrong in the violence committed for the sake of 'food'. Is this interpretation right? It is immaterial for animals whether human beings are killing them for the sake of food or for any other reason. Whatever be the reason, it causes pain to the animal. Pain to animals is inevitable even when people kill animals for a non-violent reason. We have to examine the question of 'Himsa' (violence) and 'Ahimsa' (non-violence) from the view point of animals and not of human beings. It is nothing but violence if it causes pain to the animal. It is not violence if it does not cause pain. Therefore, it amounts to violence even when people kill for the sake of food. It is a different matter if people can kill an animal without causing anxiety and fear of death to the animal. Hence the interpretation that 'it is not violence if people kill for the sake of food' is wrong. If it is essential, they have to accept it as 'violence'.

The formulation—that eating meat is not violence if you are not one of the killers and if you get meat as part of your alms—is nothing but hypocrisy. Such is the explanation of Ambedkar. It is not necessary to talk more about such wrangling.

There are many more kinds of criticism. Ambedkar himself says that there is no unanimity even among Buddhists on certain issues (p. 511). They act as they like in respect of Ahimsa or about some other issues. Some Buddhists do not eat fish or meat. They eat only eggs. Some Buddhists eat every thing. They practise non-violence according to their own understanding.

It is the same case with all issues. Not only about 'food'. Burmese Buddhists interpret differently the formulation that life is short.

"The Burmese celebrate the event of death in a family as though it was an event of joy" (p. 511).

Ambedkar too endorses this view:

"Nobody minds the death for it was to come" (p. 511).

He meant that people need not feel sorry because death is natural. Let us accept that people need not feel sorry but why should they feel happy? Let them neither feel sorry nor feel happy. Instead of the two, people can treat it as some thing that occurs normally, can't they? Ambedkar too should make a critical observation on Burmese Buddhists, shouldn't he? But what did Ambedkar do? Instead of criticising them or to use a Telugu idiom, instead of 'giving them grass to eat', he defended their interpretation as a great one.

20) 'Barren Metaphysics' of the Buddha

While mentioning different views on Buddhism, Ambedkar says:

"To some it is a system of barren metaphysics. To some it is sheer mysticism... Many other views regarding Buddhism can be collected. This divergence of views is astonishing" (p. 225).

He, however, concludes that the reason for so many interpretations is the inability to understand Buddhism properly. He thinks that he has understood Buddhism well and others are not able to do so.

We can decide whether Buddhism is 'barren metaphysics' or not by examining the Buddha's preaching concerning sorrow and desires. For this, the story of a girl named 'Prakriti' will help us a lot (p. 196). Prakriti belonged to an untouchable caste. She saw a Buddhist monk named Ananda and wanted to marry him. She told her mother about her wish and asked her to convince him. Prakriti's mother knew 'sorcery'. One day she invited Ananda to her house for a meal, told him about her daughter and said, 'my daughter will commit suicide if you don't marry her'.

Ananda calmly said, 'I can't help. I am a sanyasi. I am vowed to be celibate'.

The mother and the daughter prevented him from leaving the room and the mother with her sorcery created fire and threatened to throw him into the fire.

Ananda did not yield. Mother and the daughter let him leave. But, later, the girl was following Ananda wherever he went. (This means that

not only male rowdies but also female rowdies have been there since that period!)

Ananda narrated the entire episode to the Buddha. The Buddha called the girl and asked her about it. She expressed her wish to marry him. What should the Buddha have then said? 'Why are you pestering a person who does not love you? Is it not coercion?'—shouldn't the Buddha say so? But the Buddha did not say so. He said:

"Ananda is a Bhikku and he has no hair on his head. If you can get yourself clean shaven I shall see what could be done" (p. 198).

How surprising! He uttered misleading words and created a hope that her marriage with Ananda could take place.

The Buddha tries to convert poor and low caste people into Bhikshus. We find this in many stories which Ambedkar cited.

The girl went to her mother and told her: 'Lord the Buddha has promised me to get me married to Ananda if I get myself clean shaven'. At once she got herself clean shaven, stood before the Buddha and told him, 'I did as you suggested'.

The Buddha asked her, 'what part of his (Ananda's) body you cherish?' (Have you ever heard a vulgar question such as this before?) She said she liked his eyes, nose, ears, voice and everything. The Buddha began his sermon:

"Do you know that the eyes are the home of tears, the nose is the home of dirt, the mouth is the home of spit, the ear is the home of dirt and the body is the container of dung and urine" (p. 199).

What should that girl then say to him? She should have said, 'it is the same case with my body also, isn't it? Both our bodies suit each other, don't they?' But she didn't say that. She began to ponder! This girl, in fact, didn't have brain originally. She did not have goodness either. How can a person be fair to others when she herself chased and tried to subjugate with coercion, some one who didn't like her? How can such a person question the Buddha? But what would have happened to the Buddha's argument if that girl had asked thus: 'is it not the same case with every person's body? Isn't the Buddha's body a 'container of dung and urine'? Aren't people not bowing down and saluting the feet believing that his body has great light and aura? What if Ananda's body is a container of dirt? (It is always surprising to note that Ambedkar does not raise at least this kind of question).

According to this story, the Buddha is such a stupid fellow without

common sense that bodily structure is a natural property. His disciples too are of the same type.

The Buddha's sermon is not yet over. He further says to the girl:

"When men and women come together they procreate children. But where there is birth there is death also; where there is death there is sorrow also. My dear girl, what are you going to get by marrying Ananda. I do not know" (p.199).

This is another crude argument!

If there is sorrow where there is death, can't there be happiness where there is birth? Don't parents feel happy when they beget children? If we consider the law of nature that death comes only in the old age, parents won't see at all the stage in which their children become old and die. This means parents feel happy not sorrow when they beget children. But the Buddha is saying that it is useless if men and women come together and the procreation of children is a matter of sorrow. A while ago he depicted human body as a container of dirt and urine: that nose is the home of dirt, the ear is the home of dirt and so on.

Mr. Ambedkar, what else people call this except 'barren metaphysics'? Well, do suggest any other reasonable term other than 'barren metaphysics'!

When the present day Ambedkar himself is fascinated or, to use a Telugu idiom, faint with admiration, by this metaphysics, should we consider the feeling of this stupid girl? After listening to the Buddha, the girl realized that there was no use in marrying Ananda. She saluted the Buddha and said,

"Owing to ignorance I was going in pursuit of Ananda. My mind is now enlightened....The Blessed Lord by his wise words of advice has awakened me from my sleep" (p. 199).

Then the Buddha praised her a lot:

"You are of low caste, but Brahmins will learn a lesson from you".

What does 'from you' mean? From her body, 'the container of dung and urine'? Or from somewhere else?

"Swerve not from the path of justice and righteousness and you will outshine the royal glory of queens on the throne" (p. 200).

If she does not deviate from the path of justice and righteousness, she will get the remuneration that outshine the royal glory of queens! Not simply the royal glory of queens but some thing that 'outshines' it! The remuneration one gets in return for justice and righteousness is 'royal glory'!

"The marriage having failed (attempt to marry without the knowledge of the bridegroom!), the only course for her was to join the Bhikkuni Sangh... she was admitted into it, though she belonged to the lowest caste" (p. 200).

The purpose of getting her head clean shaven was to become a Bhikkuni (a woman monk), wasn't it? Then what else could happen? When will this girl, who became a Bhikkuni, enjoy royal glory? In the 'coming birth'? But there are no such rebirths, are they? Well, when will she enjoy it? Is the life of a woman-monk itself is perhaps a life with royal glory? Yes, because a Bhikkini will have no work to do. She can enjoy feasts at the houses of the rich people: with different kinds of meat, until she said, 'Enough! Enough!' What more royal glory could there be? Have you recalled a point concerning 'untouchability'? Has Ambedkar, who argued at great length elsewhere that untouchability was absent during the Buddha's time, noted the fact that the Buddha himself admitted untouchables into his Order? Well, let that be! How do Burmese Buddhists feel happy if some one dies while the Buddha so clearly says that death causes sorrow? Why didn't Ambedkar get this question?

The 'barren metaphysics' is not yet over. Ambedkar has cited many more sermons of the Buddha, which the human kind has to learn. We have to examine at least some of them.

"It is to cultivate detachment, detachment from property, from friends, etc., that he said. 'All these are impermanent'." (p. 241).

If 'friends' are not permanent, the attachments that people cultivate for friends and the people who cultivate them are also not permanent, are they? When everything is impermanent and not eternal, any two things (the people and their attachments) coincide or do not conflict with one another. Then what is the problem here?

"Let no man have attachment to anything; loss of it gives pain. Those who love nothing, and hate nothing have no fetters" (p. 357).

If people do not have pain because they have no attachment, they will also have no joys, will they?

"From craving is born sorrow, from craving is born fear. To him who is wholly free from craving there is neither sorrow nor fear" (p. 357).

To wish to be free from craving and fear—is this not a kind of craving?

"One who harbours the thought: 'He reviled me, maltreated me, overpowered me, robbed me,' in him anger is never stilled" (p. 359).

This means a person should not get angry even if others revile, maltreat, overpower or rob him. Well, then, will Ambedkar preach the same thing to untouchables: that they should not be angry toward Hindus whatever they do? Is the sermon—that teaches the sufferers not to be angry—in favour of sufferers or oppressors, the Buddha and Mr. Ambedkar?

“It is not I...that quarrel with the world, ..but the world that quarrels with me. A teacher of the truth does not quarrel with anyone in the world”
(p.447).

The teacher of the truth quarrels with those who teach untruth. Truth quarrels with untruth. If truth is friendly with untruth without quarreling, then that truth cannot be a truth at all.

Now look at this story which surpasses all other stories and which preaches, ‘abandon all longing’. (This is a condensed narration, from pp: 579-80). Once the Buddha was staying at Kapilavastu in the fig-tree park. Then a disciple called Mahanama asked the Buddha,

“how a discreet layman who is sick, in pain, grievously afflicted, should be cheered by another discreet lay-brother?”

The Buddha explained as follows: ‘Cheer him with the Four Comfortable Assurances. Take comfort in the Norm and in the virtues dear to the norm kept unbroken and unsolved which tend to the balance of mind. Tell him to abandon all longing for everything. Suppose the sick man wants to see his parents. Then tell him, “My dear good man, you are sure to die. Whether you have longing for your parents or not you will die. So, abandon your longing to see your parents. (That sick man is not in the stage of death. He is in such a stage that he will recover if someone gives him confidence. Then, why does someone say ‘you will die’? (Buddha, what is wrong in seeing one’s own parents? Is this what one has to say to a sick person who is on his death bed?)

Suppose the sick man says that he abandoned his longing for parents, then tell him, “My good sir, you may have longing to see your children. As you must die in any case, abandon longing for your children. Suppose he says he has abandoned it. But he may have a longing for the five pleasures of the senses. Suppose he expresses that desire. Then tell him, ‘My friend, you must die in any case. Heavenly delights are better than the five pleasures of the senses. So clear your mind from human joys and fix it on the joys of the Four Great Deva Kings” (Is fixing on the joys of the Four Great Deva Kings not a ‘longing’?)

Supposing he says, his mind is so fixed. Then tell him to fix his

mind on the Brahman world. (The fellow, overburdened by this sort of crazy sermon, might have already left for the Brahman world! He himself will witness it.) Suppose he says he has fixed his mind so. Then tell him that 'even the Brahma world is impermanent. Therefore concentrate on cessation from the personal. If the sick person says that he has done so, then it amounts to his emancipation.

My dear reader sire, this is the path of enlightenment, which Lord Ambedkar learnt from Lord Buddha in respect of cheering a sick person, and communicated to all of us! He communicated it in a lucid manner this great knowledge and high values consisting of the Brahma world and four Great Deva kings.

The illiterate rustic people or, to use a Telugu idiom, 'those who do not have a single letter in their mouth', too knew that, when a person falls sick, we have to enable him to see whomever he wants to see, offer him whatever kind of food he wants and give him courage, 'Don't worry. Nothing will happen to you. You will recover soon and become normal'. Otherwise, if people throw the sick person into the forest, he will groan for a few days, later recover and then come back to the village happily. A seriously ill person will recover happily if Buddhist monks do not surround the sick person like the messengers of death and harass him, 'you will die! You will die! You will die! Abandon that longing! Abandon this longing!'

The Buddha—is he so crude? If some one calls the Buddha's theory of Four Great Deva Kings, 'Barren Metaphysics' will there be a more charming name than that?

There is a criticism against the Buddha's theory of rebirth. "The Buddha denies the existence of Soul, then why does he talk of rebirth"—this is the criticism.

To this Ambedkar replies: The human body is composed of the four elements of existence. When the body dies, those elements join the mass of similar elements floating in space and a new birth takes place. This is what the Buddha meant by rebirth. It is a rebirth for those elements
(p. 330).

"He (the Buddha) believed in the regeneration of matter and not in the birth of the soul" (p. 332).

Why should the Buddha, who thinks that it is unnecessary to talk about what happens after death, say that the matter in the dead body will have rebirth? To say that matter does not die relates to physics or some

other science but not the science of rebirths. If we talk about the matter in the language of rebirths, it would lead to superstitious notions only.

21) For whom is it possible?

There is an accusation against Buddhism that it is pessimistic. This accusation surprises Ambedkar.

“It is rather surprising that a reference to Dukkha should give cause to such an accusation” (p. 512).

Ambedkar questions:

“Karl Marx also said that there is exploitation in the world and the rich are being made richer and the poor are being made poorer. And yet nobody has said that Karl Marx’s doctrine is pessimism. Why then should a different attitude be shown to the Buddha’s doctrine?”

Ambedkar thinks that he raised a very great question.

Ashtanga Marga was the path of liberation, which the Buddha proposed. Class struggle is the path of liberation from exploitation, which Marx proposed. If Ambedkar does not understand as to why people call the Buddha’s theory ‘pessimism’ and why they don’t call Marx’s theory pessimism and moreover if Ambedkar thought such an attitude as discriminatory, is it possible for any one to make a person—who closed his eyes or to use a Telugu metaphor, eyes of knowledge—understand the actual point?

22) What does the Buddha say about ‘property’?

Every philosopher expresses his view on many issues: concerning god, religion, human nature and many more issues. Of all these, his views on property are important! We have to specially note what a philosopher said on riches and wealth, wealth and poverty, masterhood and servitude.

Now let us see the Buddha’s views on property. Ambedkar cited these views without criticism at any point. This means Ambedkar is agreeing with the Buddha’s views on property too. The Buddha’s views are the following.

“Men are born unequal. Some are robust, others are weaklings. Some have more intelligence, others have less or none. Some have more capacity, others have less. Some are well-to-do, others are poor. All have to enter into what is called the struggle for existence” (p. 308).

Here the Buddha is treating differences between the 'well-to-do' and 'poor' people as natural differences like physical differences between people (robust vs. weaklings). Moreover, he says 'rich-poor' differences are for the sake of struggle for existence. Which means, for the sake of 'livelihood'! Each has his own livelihood! Both are same! There is no wonder if the Buddha talks of this theory of 'struggle for existence'! It is surprising to note that Ambedkar too talks about it!

Once Anathapindika asked the Buddha 'what things are welcome, pleasant, agreeable, to the householder but which are hard to gain'. Buddha said,

"Of such things the first is to acquire wealth lawfully. The second is to see that your relations also get their wealth lawfully" (p. 459).

"Lawfully"! Which means, as per the laws! If a person acquires 'property' as per law, it is righteousness! What sort of laws existed during the Buddha's time? There existed laws that permitted Masters to own, sell, buy or kill slaves. If they did so, it was right because laws permitted it. If the laws say that slaves do not have rights, it is justified. The Buddha might not know that those laws were improper and the masters themselves had framed them. Does Ambedkar too not know about it?

"Take the case of Ariyan disciple with riches gotten by work and zeal, gathered by the strength of the arm, earned by the sweat of the brow; justly obtained in a lawful way he makes himself happy, glad, and keeps that great happiness; he makes his parents happy, glad, and keeps them so; so likewise his wife and children, his slaves, his workfolk and men" (p. 587).

Note that this Ariyan (Aryan) disciple has slaves and workfolk. Which means, this disciple is a slave master. Needless to say specially how this master got riches. But according to the Buddha, he earned these riches by the strength of his arm and by the sweat of his brow. To be a slave master is a 'lawful way'. In whatever way a master may earn, it amounts to earning by hard work and the sweat of the brow. If His Excellency the King sits on the throne it is also done by the sweat of the brow! If his minister sits on another seat, it is also done by the sweat of the brow! Persons who sit on thrones also get 'sweat', don't they? Even though there are servants who fan them!

Shouldn't we praise Ambedkar's courage once again for he informed human kind the Buddha's words that the slave masters earned the riches in a lawful way?

The Buddha, in the term 'Samma Ajivo' of his Ashtanga Marga, said that 'every individual has to earn his livelihood and bad ways of earning

are those which cause injury or injustice to others'. Citing this point, can any one argue that the Buddha said not to earn through bad ways and he advised every one to do labour for their livelihood? No, it is not possible to argue like that. It is because, to say that 'one should earn his livelihood' does not imply that the Buddha said, 'till land! Weave cloth! Make shoes!' Earning livelihood means the way the masters earn money. It is earning livelihood if kings rule their kingdoms! The Buddha does not mean that kings should till the land.

"Bad ways of earning are those which cause injury or injustice to others", said the Buddha, didn't he? What does injustice mean in the view of the Buddha? Did the Buddha explain which ways are good and which are bad to earn livelihood? Nowhere did he say this. All the prevailing ways, which he saw, were just and lawful. Then what does 'injustice' mean? He has not explained it anywhere.

When one does not know which is the just and which is the unjust way of earning property, he won't know that his way of earning causes injury to others. Does the slave master know that his owning slaves as private property causes injury to the slaves and his action is injustice? Does the king think that the wars that he wages for the purpose of expanding his empire will cause injury to the soldiers and people? Does a money lender think that his business causes injury to the borrowers who pay him interest? (Ambedkar himself did not consider money lending as injustice. In that case is it necessary to talk about the Buddha's time?)

The wrong-doer does not understand that his deed will cause injury to others if he does not realize that it is wrong. Or, the person who does wrong will not bother about the injury to others if he has a vested interest in doing wrong. Therefore, all the bad ways, which the masters follow to earn properties, will appear as just and lawful ways in the view of the Buddha too! Also in the view of Ambedkar!

"...the Blessed Lord did not comfort the poor by praising their poverty nor did he sublimate poverty as a happy state for man to live in"
(p.587).

This is to say that the Buddha did not defend poverty! But this is in the case of masters only! For masters poverty is not a boon. Masters cannot live happily in poverty. Masters feel happy if their wealth increases. All this relates only to masters not slaves.

According to the Buddha, owning of slaves by masters is lawful and just, isn't it? In that situation, will the slaves live in riches and wealth instead of poverty? When slavery is natural, poverty too should be natural. The Buddha assumes the relationship between the master and his slaves

as a natural relationship. However, he would advise the masters to be kind to their slaves.

“A master should minister to his servants and employees by assigning them work according to their strength, by supplying them with food and wages, by tending them in sickness, by sharing with them unusual delicacies, by granting leave at times. For, servants and employees love their master, they rise before him, they lie down to rest after him, they are content with what is given to them, they do their work well, and they carry about his praise and good fame” (p. 465).

It is the cultural refinement of the Buddha to say that the master should take care of his servants. It is a matter of great compassion! But he knows only to that extent. He did not raise such questions as ‘why should one person is living like a servant of another person called master? Why is he like that? All human beings are equal, aren’t they?’

But what does it mean if a person of the present day times teaches exactly like the Buddha? This means, that the person has not progressed at all since the days of the Buddha! This also means, that the person has not at all learnt anything from the knowledge that has been in existence for 2,500 years subsequent to the Buddha. This means just as the Buddha did not have certain kinds of questions, the person who teaches the Buddha verbatim too did not have those questions.

Ambedkar narrated at length a story depicting how a king could wonderfully eradicate poverty in his kingdom. (Vol. 3, p. 188 onwards).

“Long ago the Bodhisattva, it is said, was a king who had obtained his kingdom in the order of hereditary succession. He had reached this state as the effect of his merit..”

This is how the story began. In the first sentence he became king ‘in the order of hereditary’. In the second sentence he reached this position because of his ‘merit’. There is no consistency between the first sentence and the second. The entire story runs with this sort of crazy argument.

This man was a monarch over many vassals (subordinate kings). They were obedient to him. This monarch was such a noble person that he promoted the happiness of his subjects whole-heartedly. (There is no other thing than praising kings and emperors that makes Ambedkar glow with ecstasy).

“Now it once happened that, though protected by his arm, his realm, both in consequence of the faulty actions of its inhabitants and inadvertence on the part of the angels charged with the care of rain,

was afflicted in several districts by drought and the troublesome effects of such a disaster" (p. 189).

Brahmins advised him to perform a sacrifice that 'requires the massacre of many hundreds of living beings'. He did not accept animal sacrifice and said that he would perform a human sacrifice of a thousand evil-doers. He informed his decision by a beat of drum. Owing to 'the fear of death' people abandoned their bad conduct' wholly, observed the 'moral precepts', avoided hatred and enmity, settled their quarrels, began to live with good manners and modesty like those who lived in Krita Yuga. His Excellency the King felt very happy and gave away as much money to people as they wanted. He gathered all beggars into alms-halls and gave them presents daily.

"So poverty disappeared and the people, having received wealth from the part of the king, dressed and adorned with manifold and fine garments and ornaments exhibited the splendour of festival days" (Vol. 3, p. 193).

This is the story that eradicated poverty very smoothly.

We find beggars throughout the country! But poverty disappears without any trace just because His Excellency the King gives away as much money as people want and because people wear jewellery and new garments. This story entitled 'The story of the sacrifice' is meant to tell us that the King did not perform animal sacrifice, went on for 8 pages with various stupid and scrap stories. This is a stupid story meant to demonstrate how beautifully poverty can be eliminated by following the Buddha's path.

23) A good story

Of all the stories given in volume 11 to elaborate the Buddha's path, there is only one story that is good (p. 298). The story is as follows: "Once upon a time there lived in Shravasti a lady named Videshika, who was reputed gentle and meek, and mild. She had a maid servant named Darkie, a bright girl, an early riser and good worker". One day Darkie thought, 'my master is reputed to be gentle. Won't she get angry at all? Let me see'. Next day, she did not wake early in the morning. The mistress lost her temper and shouted impatiently, "Darkie! Darkie! Why don't you get up?" Then Darkie got up. She did the same thing the next day also. The mistress shouted very angrily, 'why don't you get up?' The third day also Darkie did not get up early. The mistress, "in her anger and displeasure", picked up the lynch-pin and struck the girl on the head with it, drawing blood" (p. 299). The maid servant realized, 'this lady will be gentle if I wake up early in the morning and do the work. Otherwise she too gets angry'!

The Buddha's intention in telling his story was to teach that 'more than Karuna what is necessary is Maitri'. Does it mean there is 'maitri' between the mistress and the maid if the mistress is tolerant even when the maid wakes up late? Even if the maid servant does not wake up early and sleep for some more time, it is she who is expected to do all the household chores. She has to always remain a servant. Then where is the question of her maitri with her mistress?

Mythri is greater than Karuna, says the Buddha. Ambedkar explains the Buddha's meaning of the terms: "Karuna is only love for human beings... Mythri is love for living beings" (p. 297). If we examine the story from this meaning, there is no connection between the sermon and the story. As Darkie is a human being it is enough if her master shows Karuna toward her. There is no need to say in this story that Karuna is greater than Mythri. This point does not apply to this story. Let us examine the matter by giving different meanings. Karuna means kindness, sympathy and the like. These are attitudes, which are shown toward people who live in inferior situation. Whereas Mythri means friendship. This is an attitude shown toward equals. According to this meaning Mythri is greater than Karuna. But in order to establish Mythri between two persons, they have to be 'equal'. Master and servants are not equals. If the master is good he will show Karuna toward his servants. If he is a 'very' good person, he would show 'more Karuna'. But Mythri is not possible between the two. Yet it appears to be possible for those who consider master-servants distinction as natural. What the Buddha did not say in this story is that feelings of masters like gentleness, patience and serenity arise only because they do not perform any labour. If they are people who do labour, they face many kinds of situations concerning that work. They express irritation and agitation. Moreover if it is not independent work but servitude under a master, there arise also fear and dislike for that work.

The gentle smile, serenity and royal glory that glows on the surface of the face of His Excellency the King—who sits on the cushion of the throne without any work—will not glow on the face of a labourer who sweeps the roads and who cleans the toilets. If His Excellency the King steps down from the throne and hold a broomstick, plough, saw or a loom, his face too will fill with the burden of labour and his royal glory is bound to evaporate. This is the secret of the gentle nature of the mistress of Darkie. We can pretty well understand this point in this story.

24) Good sermons

There are some good things in the Buddha's teachings which we have to definitely learn from.

- Know...that there are these two extremes which man ought not to follow—the habitual indulgence on the one hand, of those things whose attraction depends upon the passions, and especially of sensuality—a low and pagan way of seeking satisfaction, unworthy, unprofitable and the habitual practice thereof, and on the other hand, of asceticism or self-mortification, which is painful, unworthy and unprofitable (pp. 120-21).
- The Right path is for the happiness not of the few but of all (p. 370).
- May creatures all abound, in weal and peace; may all be blessed with peace always, all creatures weak or strong, all creatures great and small; creatures unseen or seen dwelling afar or near, born or awaiting birth, may all be blessed with peace! (p. 410).
- If you, on that account, should be angry and hurt, that would stand in the way of your own self-conquest. If, when others speak against us, you feel angry at that, and displeased, would you then be able to judge how far that speech of their's is well said or ill?
(pp: 444-4).
- ...courage to stand by what is right even if one is alone (p. 285).
- Far surpassing the fragrance of sandal or incense or lotus or jasmine, is the fragrance of virtue (p. 355).
- Better is the lonely life, for fools companions cannot be (p. 393).
- Without self-culture he is not fit to guide (p. 435).
- The controversies regarding the path cannot be settled by a dictator
(p. 548).
- Majority agreements is the way to settle the disputes and not the appointment of a successor (p. 548).
- The flatterer is to be reckoned as a foe in the darkness of a friend
(p. 462).
- Where virtue is in danger do not avoid fighting, do not be mealy-mouthed (p. 447).
- Truth is the sweetest of all tastes. The living endowed with wisdom is said to be the noblest thing (p. 582):

These and such others are the sermons that we must learn from the Buddha.

The Buddha did not explain what 'truth' is. Therefore we cannot learn from him what it is! But we can learn from the Buddha the fact that there is something called 'truth'. We can search for it.

25) What did Buddhism do for Shudras?

Ambedkar repeatedly says that Buddhism elevated the position of Shudras and women to a higher level. He observed that under Vedic religion, Shudras and women did not have access to property, education and salvation (by becoming sanyasis) and the Buddha provided them these opportunities and he 'broke' the rules of Aryans (Vol. 13, p. 221).

Ambedkar describes how Buddhism elevated Shudras to a higher level as follows:

"To put it briefly a Shudra under the Buddhist regime could acquire property, learning and could even become a king. Nay he could even rise to the highest rung of the social ladder occupied by the Brahmin in the Vedic Regime. The Buddhist order of Bhikshus was counterpart of the Vedic order of Brahmins...The Shudra could never aspire to be a Brahmin in the Vedic regime but he could become a Bhikshu and occupy the same status and dignity as did the Brahmin...The elevation of the status of the Shudras and women was so much the result of the gospel of Buddhism that Buddhism was called by its enemies as the Shudra religion (i.e. the religion of the low classes)." (Vol. 3, pp: 309-10).

Ambedkar is telling us that Bhikshus under Buddhism occupied the same highest position, which Brahmins occupied in the Vedic religion.

If a Bhikshu in Buddhism is superior to others just as Brahmins are superior to others in the Vedic religion, it means that there are hierarchical differences under Buddhism also. Then what is the specialty of Buddhism? What 'equality' did it propose?

Let us suppose that one or two out of hundred Shudras became kings due to the opportunities, which Buddhism provided. This means they became representatives of the wealthy. If one Shudra becomes a king, countless Shudras will become 'servants' of that king. What can Buddhism do to those Shudras who are servants? We have to conclude that Buddhism was useful only to Shudras who turned into kings or Brahmins (Bhikshus).

There is nothing to feel over-joyous on the part of Shudras just because one Shudra became a king and four Shudras became Brahmins (Bhikshus). When some individuals from Shudra varna become dominators over them, Shudras should learn to totally oppose and not respect them.

Just as no religion has any way to change the social status of countless poor and lower castes, Buddhism too has no solution.

26) What did Buddhism do for women?

Ambedkar says that Buddhism brought about a great change in the case of women as well.

“Similar change is noticeable in the case of women. Under the Buddhist regime she became a free person. Marriage did not make her a slave. For marriage under the Buddhist rule was a contract. Under the Buddhist Regime she could acquire property, she could acquire learning and what was unique, she could become a member of the Buddhist order of Nuns and reach the same status and dignity as a Brahmin” (Vol. 3, p. 310).

How surprising is this? Did woman become a free person under Buddhism? Did she acquire property and learning? Was marriage a contract based on free choice? What are all these utterances? Is it to declare that all these features were present in Buddhism just because they were absent under Hindu religion?

Ambedkar himself observed in 'Castes in India' (Vol. 1) that male domination is present in society. This we have seen in the beginning itself. Now Ambedkar is saying that male domination has disappeared due to Buddhism.

While stating that the Buddha held very noble views concerning women, Ambedkar cited 2 stories (in Vol. 11).

Let us take a look at these stories.

A story (p. 466): Once the Buddha went for meal to a householder named Uggaha. “Uggaha served with his own hand and satisfied the Exalted One with plenty of food” (p. 466). After the meal, Uggaha requested the Buddha, ‘My daughters will go to their husbands’ houses after marriage. Lord, please teach them a few good things’. Lord Buddha gave the following ‘good advice’: ‘You have to be in love with the husbands whomever your parents have brought for you for the sake of your comfort and happiness. You have to wake up before your husbands wake up and go to sleep after they go to sleep. You have to discharge your duties voluntarily. Talk gently and sweetly. You have to treat with honour and respect all the relatives of the husbands. As soon as they arrive, offer them a seat and drinking water. You have to learn and acquire skill concerning home crafts like spinning wool or cotton. You have to get work done by the workfolk in the husband’s house, give them food. Keep money, grain, silver and gold secure which your husbands bring and protect them from thieves’. The daughters of Uggaha listened to everything that the Buddha said and were happy.

The Buddha said the same words, which all people usually say to girls. How did the situation of women change due to this preaching which tells them that it is not proper to either eat or sleep before the husbands do?

Another story (p. 376): Once Pasendi, the king of Shravasti, was sitting with the Buddha. A messenger came from the palace and informed him that queen Mallika had delivered a baby girl. As soon as he heard the news, the king became sad and depressed. Then the Buddha began to console the king, 'Oh king! Why do you worry? A daughter may prove a better offspring than a son!'

To say that 'a daughter is greater than a son' is as bad as saying 'a son is greater than a daughter'. Can't the Buddha, who talks rationally, speak better words than these? Should he say that 'men and women are equal in nature. Human kind cannot exist without either. We have to raise whatever child (male or female) we get' or should he say that female child is greater?

The Buddha explained how the greatness of the daughter will be proven: she may receive appreciation from her mother-in-law as wise and virtuous. She may receive appreciation as a true wife and a daughter. The boy that she may bear may do great deeds and rule great realms! He may become country's guide!

The Buddha's consolation satisfied king Pasendi. This is the Buddha's teaching! That female should grow wise, virtuous and become a true wife. Okay, she would do that. It is alright to that extent. But she should not give birth to a daughter like her mother. She has to give birth to a female child. If she gives birth to a daughter, she cannot be a great woman. Okay, it is also not a problem. This mother, let us say, will pass this peril on because half of the children that mothers give birth include sons also. The main peril is that the son must become a king! If this does not happen, it is no use even if she gave birth to a male child. A mother is not wise and virtuous if she gives birth to a son who cannot become a king.

A man who is a king alone will be the country's guide. How can a fellow who is not a king give guidance?

What did the Buddha say to a fool who was sad because he got a female child? 'That she (the female child) may give birth to male child! And that the male child may become a king!'

Ambedkar cited these two stories to say, 'Look, how noble the Buddha's ideas towards women!' From these stories, is it also not clear what Ambedkar's ideas are toward women?

These stories demonstrate that the situation of women has changed, he claims!

Ambedkar further says that Buddhism provided an opportunity for women to become Bhikshus and that amounts to transformation of women into free persons.

If we keep aside the question, 'Is conversion into Bhikku a symbol for freedom?', we find many more women who did not become Bhikkhunis. How did Buddhism change the lives of those women? This means all women should become Bhikkhunis if their problems are to be solved! Because it is a symbol for freedom! This is a great solution for women!

In fact the Buddha initially opposed a lot to admit women as Bhikkhunis. He said it was not possible. He agreed only after Ananda argued at length. It is Ambedkar who gave this information (p. 193).

There are some sermons of the Buddha: that society should have concern for women, that women should not be oppressed and women should not be subjected to ill-treatment and so on. All such sermons indicate the Buddha's goodness but they were not at all enough to change the situation of women.

Changing the situation of women is not something that happens by petty sermons, fables or idle stories.

We have to first recognize the fact that men and women are not equal either at 'home' or 'outside' home. We have to understand the reason why they are not equal and why men are dominating. We have to understand the division of labour that has been confining women to housework and men to outside work.

Equality is absent not only between men and women but also between men and men. There is no equality between the rich and the poor. This is a problem of 'exploitation of labour'. The problem of 'division of labour' arose from this.

The inequality between men and women is connected with the 'exploitation of labour' and its consequence 'division of labour'. This means, unless we are able to solve the problem of 'exploitation of labour', equality either between men or women or between any two individuals is not possible. It is nothing but craziness to say that all kinds of equality had been formed long ago due to Buddhism.

We should not criticise the Buddha saying that he did not change the situation of women. But we should not remain uncritical of those who make false statements that the Buddha raised women's status to a very high level!

27) Buddha visits home and returns

The Buddha, seven years after he left the country, visited his country again along with his band of followers at the call of his father. Seeing the Buddha's 'beauty, dignity and lustre', his parents, relatives and people were speechless. When his father looked sad, the Buddha gave a sermon. The son praised the father, 'your heart is full of love. Show your love to all your fellow-beings'. After the son's praise for the father, the father too praised his son.

The father informed his son that Yashodhara had got her head shaven, abandoned ornaments and ate in an earthen bowl. The Buddha went to Yashodhara and said, 'your purity, gentleness and devotion had been invaluable to me as a Bodhisattva when I was aspiring to attain enlightenment' (p. 166).

In the olden days, they used to show certain things in films. While the husband wanders across various places to accomplish some great deeds and face hardships, his wife wears a glittering silk saree, gathers the pictures of gods, sings sorrowful songs and worship the gods. The gods stare at the beauty of that woman from top to bottom and relieve her husband from hardships. The same thing, it seems, had happened in the case of the Buddha too! The Buddha, who wandered, accomplished the act of enlightenment just because Yashodhara was pure with noble virtues! Oh, this is the actual secret of the matter!

The Buddha's seven year old son Rahula came to his father and asked him, 'what do you give me as inheritance?'

'Path of righteousness is my spiritual treasure. I give it to you in plenty. Will you join my brotherhood', said the Buddha to his son. The son agreed and joined the brotherhood of the Bhikshus.

The Buddha began his return journey from his country. His father's minister approached him, caught hold of him on his way back, asked him to come back and rule the kingdom. (Should he ask then—keeping quiet until he was about to leave?) The Minister gave sermons to the Buddha, the Buddha again gave sermons to the minister and sermons again from both the sides continued.

Finally the Buddha said, 'This doubt whether anything exists or not,

is not to be solved for me by another's words. I will myself grasp whatever is the truth concerning it' (p.175). (What is this? Has he not cleared his doubt? Should he have to find out the 'truth' again now? No, it is not so. The problem is that Ambedkar is narrating things in a repetitive manner without following any order or sequence!) Here the Buddha said one good thing.

"But having seen that this 'sacred tradition' is uncertain, know that that only is right which has been uttered by the trustworthy; and know that trustworthiness means the absence of faults; he who is without faults will not utter an untruth" (p. 176).

These words are like guidelines. For example, when we have a doubt about an issue, there is no one who can properly explain it. In that case, we have to depend on a sincere person. A sincere person, even if he does not know about the issue properly, will say whatever he believes and he won't have any selfish interest. He won't tell fictitious things for his own benefit. Therefore, whenever we get doubts it is proper to depend on good people. These are very good words.

It is the specialty of the Buddha to utter such 'logical' words.

The Buddha refused to convert again into a householder and left the place.

28) Essence of Buddhism

There is nothing more to examine Buddhism as depicted by Ambedkar. Whatever we have seen so far is its essence. The same essence continues a few more hundreds of pages with new descriptions and new praise. The whole of it is nothing but 'Ashtanga Marga'. All people should be pure, righteous and virtuous! This is what the entire Buddhism constitutes!

In Buddhism, all the rational views concerning nature are logical, we may accept them. But Kapila had already said this. There is nothing special, which the Buddha said in this regard. 'Human beings should be kind to other living beings'—this principle also relates to nature. This will enhance the cultural refinement of human beings. We have to accept this.

From what he said concerning society, we have to accept the principle that 'human beings should acquire good qualities' and so on. This will refine human conduct. This is what we can learn from Buddhism. There is nothing more than this. Buddhism is not aware of such problems as 'riches and poverty', 'master-servant' relations and 'property'. There is no scope for Buddhism to know these problems. This means Buddhism does not know anything concerning 'human relations' (that is, labour relations).

If we examine the question of 'sorrow' or 'suffering': We need not specially say that there is sorrow in nature. Because, there is not only sorrow but also happiness. If ill-health is sorrow, good health is happiness. If darkness is sorrow, light is happiness. These contradictions are natural. It is not possible to dispense with these contradictions. Even Buddhism too cannot change them. To say that 'there is sorrow in nature' is not knowledge. There are both sorrow and happiness in nature.

If we consider sorrow in 'society', this does not apply to all. Only some people have this sorrow. For example, all people do not suffer due to 'untouchability'; only some people do. Sorrow due to poverty is not for all people; only for some people. Sorrow due to slavery/servitude is not for all; only for some. Sorrow concerning the increase in wealth is not for all; only for some people. Thus it is the same case with regard to any sorrow that people experience in society. It is possible to prevent all this sorrow. But, the Buddha's theory does not give this solution.

There is no solution to the problem of sorrow in nature. There is solution for the problem of sorrow in society. If we don't make a distinction between the kinds of sorrow and mix up sorrow in nature and sorrow in society it appears as though there is no solution for sorrow. On the whole, there is no knowledge, which the Buddha can offer in the case of 'sorrow'.

The Buddha's story went on like an ant hill of superstitious beliefs at every step. The story, which Ambedkar narrated, is filled with more superstitions than other writers' works on the Buddha. According to Ambedkar's story, the Buddha appears as the stooge of the wealthy and a big hypocrite. Says one thing and does another! No consistency between any two things.

In fact, the term the Buddha (meaning: the one who attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree) itself is a big superstitious notion. Knowledge does not come under trees. It is only a superficial knowledge if a person, who is in the stage of not knowing anything about human society, talks about human relations. The Buddha too offered the superficial knowledge. Even today, we will be in the same stage at which the Buddha was, if we don't know anything about knowledge.

There is some logic and some compassion in the character of the Buddha. He was a reformer in some aspects. That is his specialty!

If some one wrote the Buddha's story in a somewhat more careful way than Ambedkar, the shortcomings in the story would have been fewer. But even then, none can show great knowledge and greatness beyond 'reform'. There are many doubts regarding the words, which are in currency as the Buddha's words. Ambedkar says:

"One has to be careful in accepting what is said in the Buddhist canonical literature as being the word of the Buddha... Anything which is rational and logical, other things being equal, may be taken to be the word of the Buddha" (pp: 350-51).

Can't others' words (which are in currency as the Buddha's words)—apart from the Buddha's words—be logical? Will others' words be invariably illogical? What moral right does Ambedkar have to talk of 'rationality' and 'logic' since he himself filled the Buddha's story with miracles, supernatural powers and gods?

The eulogy in the Buddha's story of Ambedkar is disgusting.

"...he remembered hearing from old and aged Brahmins... that those who became... all enlightened, reveal themselves when their praises are sung" (p. 568).

Ambedkar has a lot of respect for the sayings of Brahmins! He reproduced without leaving a single letter the eulogy of the Buddha by a Brahmin named Sale:

"Perfect of body, goodly, Lord, art thou, well grown, well liking, golden-hued, with teeth which gleam lustre; vigour fills the frame; the body's full perfection manifests each single sign that marks a Superman. Clear-eyed and handsome, tall, upright art thou, effulgent as a sun among thy train, so debonair, so golden-hued; why waste thy beauty's prime as homeless anchorite. As world-wide monarch thou shouldn't ride in State; and indeed from sea to sea should own thy sway. Proud princes shall thy village headmen be; rule thou mankind, as sovereign, king of kings" (p. 568-9).

"Ananda describes the colour of his body as exceedingly clear and bright so much so that the pair of cloth of gold when placed on the body of the Blessed One appears to have lost its splendour" (p. 569).

In this manner, the book is full of praises! Though the eulogists of the Buddha apparently say that the Buddha became a sanyasi for the welfare of the world, they don't really like his conversion. 'He should have continued as King. He should have crushed all kings, plundered their kingdoms and ruled the earth till the seas—this was the opinion of all the Buddha's eulogists including Ambedkar! They can't attach value to these eulogies if they did not have this kind of opinion. Those who praise the golden complexion of a body are saying that people without that complexion are not great people! Is the bodily colour of Ambedkar gold or not? Is the complexion of untouchables gold? Does it not mean that giving greater value to a golden complexion is to degrade those who don't have such a complexion? What is this description of a sanyasi as somebody

who can rule all the kings? Where did Ambedkar's logic culminate, to use a Telugu idiom, in which river like Ganga?)

29) The Buddha breathed his last

The Buddha lived up to the age of 80 years. During his life time he centred his activities in towns like Kapilavastu, Vaishali, Shravasti and Rajagraha, travelled almost the entire northern part of India and propagated his doctrine.

The Buddha observed that listeners of sermons are of three kinds. Some are wooden-headed. They hear everything verbatim. But they don't take anything into their brain. The second kind of people listen enthusiastically. They even put counter questions. But they shake off whatever they have heard. The third kind of listeners listen to everything carefully. They take it seriously. Try to implement it. Then practise it.

Yashodhara came to the Buddha at the age of 78.

"She told him that she was to die that very night" (p. 535).

(In Ambedkar's stories, dying is also subject to individual's decision!)

Sariputta too died in his village.

During the same period, Mahamogallan was murdered.

Once severe famine ravaged the city of Vesali. As soon as the Buddha entered rain fell in torrents and famine disappeared (p. 541).

Later the Buddha went to Pava and stayed in the mango grove of Chunda.

"Next day Chunda made ready in his dwelling place sweet rice and cakes and some preparation of Sukara-Madhava" (pork).

The food, which Chunda served, did not suit the Buddha. He fell seriously ill. He suffered from Dysentery, sharp and shooting pain. The sickness led to his death (p. 543).

"The Blessed One, bore pain without complaint" (Against whom will he complain? If he wants to complain he has to complain against himself for he ate pork at the age of 80 years. Against whom will he complain except himself? Mr. Ambedkar, do you always and everywhere praise the Buddha? The Buddha said that 'no flatterer is to be reckoned as a foe in the likeness of a friend', didn't he? You yourself have mentioned these words, haven't you? Do you forget everything every time or to use a Telugu

metaphorical expression, do you feel every time an empty stomach despite eating a lot?

In his last days, the Buddha tells his disciple Subhadda that Ashtanga Marga is part of his Dhamma and it is the best of all paths (p. 550).

The Buddha said to Ananda:

“let the extreme penalty be applied to Channa when I am gone... He should be left alone” (p. 552).

The Buddha who fell ill in Pava went to Kushinara. He said to Ananda, ‘At the third watch of the night the utter passing away of the Tathagata will take place’ (p. 553). Ananda said,

“Let not the Blessed One die in this wattled and daub town in the midst of the jungle. For Lord there are great cities, such as Champa, Rajagraha, Savathi, Saketa, Kosambi and Benaras. Let the Blessed One die in one of them” (p. 555).

Do you know what the Buddha told Ananda?

“Say not so, Ananda! Say not so, Ananda. This Kushinara, Ananda, was the capital of king Maha-Śudassana under the name of Keshavati” (p.555).

This means, the Buddha is saying, ‘this is not a small village; this is not a place without reputation. Once this place was the capital city of a great king, do you know?’

What the Buddha, in fact, should say? “All places are the same in Nature, aren't they? Do we need greater cities to spend the last hours of our life?” But according to the Buddha, all places are not the same. The Buddha, who says that he treats land as land, does not treat land as land in reality. He attaches value to those cities, which were capitals of kings. Ananda himself should not have uttered words like: ‘You should select bigger towns’. If he spoke so, the Buddha should have criticised him. But the Buddha also feels that capital cities of kings alone are great, and hence he expressed the same opinion. This is the noble idea concerning land, which an 80-year old experienced philosopher and his closest disciple held!

All those who wrote the Buddha's stories are sycophants of kings and their capital cities. Hence they wrote stories with such ideas! They chose only such stories!

“And in the third part of the night, as previously announced, the Blessed One breathed his last” (p. 555).

It was 483 B.C. At the midnight of Vaisakha purnima. Then the question as to how to conduct the last rites arose. Ananda said, ‘We will do what people do for kings’.

Look what sort of fellows are these great sanyasis! They always glorify that Goutama abandoned his kingdom, don't they? But they compare everything with kings! Every thing should happen as it happens in the case of kings! Why should things not happen as they happen in the case of sanyasis? In fact none of the sanyasis has any respect for remuneration. All their attention is on the luxuries of kings!

Ambedkar does not express even an atom of dissatisfaction or criticism against these trends. The entire Buddhism, which Ambedkar showed, is a happy narration of royal luxuries.

Ananda describes how last rites are conducted for kings:

"They wrap the body of a king of kings in a new cloth. When that is done they wrap it in cotton-wool. When that is done they wrap it in a new cloth and so on till they have wrapped the body in five hundred successive layers of both kinds. Then they place the body in an oil vessel of iron and cover that close up with another oil vessel of iron. They then build a funeral pyre of all kinds. This is the way in which they treat the remains of a king of kings" (pp: 557-8).

They did the same thing for Lord Buddha also. They gathered garlands and perfumes. They made decorations. Dancing, hymns and music went on. The whole thing thus went on for six days and on the seventh day they carried the dead body and set fire to it. 'The mortal remains of the Blessed One were reduced to ashes'.

All the kings sent messengers for a portion of the remains from the ashes. They divided the remains into eight parts and shared them. Later stupas arose in every land.

With this, the entire information given in the book "The Buddha and His Dhamma" is over. This is what I have narrated very briefly at every point. You will get the entire information if you read the original (Vol.11).

So far we have seen the whole of Buddhism as narrated by Ambedkar. The Buddha's story as narrated in books written by others may be different from Ambedkar's narration. We are not concerned with those stories. We are concerned only with what Ambedkar narrated.

The next step is to compare the theory of the Buddha and the theory of Marx. Ambedkar himself did this job in his essay *Buddha or Karl Marx?* Now we have to examine that essay too. If we examine the two, we will know whose theory is better and whom we should follow. Therefore, let us begin to examine that essay.

16 AMBEDKAR ON MARXISM

We have examined all the views of Ambedkar concerning Buddhism. Now we have to see his views on Marxism.

1) 'Buddha or Karl Marx?': the essay begins!

This essay is included in volume 3. The date of its composition is not clear. But other pieces of evidence indicate that he wrote this article around 1956. In the same period, he wrote "The Buddha and His Dhamma".

What Ambedkar said in this essay is that the Buddha had already talked of Communism a long time ago much earlier than Marx! 'Both said the same thing. Both have the same goal ("end"). However, they differ in the case of the 'means' to achieve the end. The means which Marx suggested are totally wrong. The Buddha's path is the best one'—This is what Ambedkar intended to say in his article.

"The differences are about the means. The end is common to both"
(Vol. 3, p. 450).

Hence, the entire human kind round the world should follow the path of the Buddha, instead of Marx's, for their liberation from sorrow and suffering! This is what Ambedkar discussed in this essay. Now, we have to examine his discussion.

(All the quotations cited in this chapter, unless and otherwise specifically mentioned, are from volume 3 only).

In other contexts, Ambedkar mentioned that, in order to elaborate the Buddha's theory, he relied on Nikayas, Tripitakas and Jataka Kathas. But nowhere did he mention the source books for his elaboration of Marx's theory. How did Ambedkar come to know about Marx's theory? Through which books? Is it merely through 'hearsay' knowledge or due to having read something? We do not find this anywhere in his volumes. This information is absent even in an essay which is specially entitled *Buddha or Karl Marx?* and which undertook a 'theoretical discussion'. We find criticism of and comments on Marx's theory in almost all volumes of Ambedkar.

This essay—which says that the Buddha's theory is greater than Marx's theory—is very short. It is only 22 pages. But we need to examine each and every sentence. Because, every sentence in this essay attempts to tell us how Buddhism is superior to Marxism and he gives arguments only to tell this point. Hence we have to examine every argument.

The Buddha was born in 563 BC. Marx was born in 1818 AD. There is a distance of 2381 years between the two.

This essay begins with the sentence:

“A comparison between Karl Marx and the Buddha may be regarded as a joke” (p. 441).

Yes, this is a joke but it is a joke not in terms of ‘distance in time’ but in terms of ‘distance in content’!

Aristotle too lived 2 thousand years ago (384-322 BC). He too is far from Marx. But he initiated research on ‘value’ and ‘money’. The question ‘what is money’—which Aristotle raised—got an answer ‘money means human labour only’—which Marx understood. This means, it took about 2 thousand years to understand what money is. However distant Aristotle and Marx are, there is no oddity in comparing the two because both had investigated the same question. But a comparison between the Buddha and Marx appears to be strange since there is no similarity between the two in the ‘content’. We have to examine how Ambedkar can deal with this oddity.

In the beginning of his essay Ambedkar hesitates a little:

“Marx is so modern and the Buddha so ancient! The Marxists may say that the Buddha as compared to their master must be just primitive... What could a Marxist learn from the Buddha? What can the Buddha teach a Marxist?” (p. 441)

But it is a great blunder if Marxists think that they don’t have anything to learn from others. They can learn all the good things that the Buddha taught. They can learn even from those who are still ‘primitive’. Marxism would not have formed if there was no orientation to learn. Hence, it is meaningless to doubt that Marxists do not like to learn from others.

“If the Marxists keep back their prejudices and study the Buddha and understand what he stood for I feel sure that they will change their attitude” (p. 441).

Let us definitely do so! We have already studied the Buddha to a large extent. We have understood the cause for which he stood. Further we will see it in this essay also again. Let us definitely change our attitude if necessary. Those who want the truth should accept anything that is good anywhere.

Well, will either Ambedkar or Amberkarists study Marxism and understand the cause for which Marx stood? Will they change their attitude if necessary?

It has already been proved that they won't change. Ambedkar's comparison and discussion of the Buddha imply that he has already studied both the theories. Even after studying it, he concluded that the Buddha's theory is superior to Marx's theory, didn't he? This means he has not changed his attitude even after knowing Marxism, has he? Marxists have to examine Buddhism. Ambedkarists should examine Marxism. They have to form their attitude only after examining every thing.

A discussion is a discussion irrespective of whether any person or group of persons learn or not. It has to continue, doesn't it?

2) According to Ambedkar, **Marxism is useless!**

Ambedkar briefly enumerated what the Buddha taught in the form of 25 points:

"I enumerate them below as I have understood them from my reading of the Tripitika" (p. 441 onwards).

We have already seen these points earlier. Hence I leave out certain items and give some important things as 13 points.

(1) 'The creed of the Buddha'

1. Religion is necessary for a free society.

(By a 'free society', Ambedkar means a society with features of 'liberty, equality and fraternity').

2. Not every religion is worth having.

3. Society is divided into two classes, owners and workers.

(We should not call it a religion if there is no god. The custom so far has been to call it religion when it is based on the concept of god. The term 'religion' does not apply to a way of living based on rationalism. Hence, one should not call the Buddha's preaching a religion but Buddhism. But Ambedkar calls it a religion. He insists on others calling it so too) (Vol. 11, p. 452).

4. It is not enough for morality to be the ideal of life. Since there is no god it must become the law of life.

(Ambedkar simply mentions that 'there is no God'; but all that Ambedkar did is to resort to the miracles of god while narrating the Buddha's story).

5. The function of religion is to reconstruct the world and to make it happy and not to explain its origin or its end.

(Here, we have to understand the word 'world' as 'society').

6. The unhappiness in the world is due to conflict of interest and the only way to solve it is to follow the Ashtanga Marga.

(We have not seen earlier anywhere that the Buddha talked of 'conflict of interest'. We will make critical comments on this point later).

7. The private ownership of property brings power to one class and sorrow to another.

(There is a difference between what is said in point 6 and here. The 6th point says that no class among human beings will be happy due to 'conflict of interests'; isn't it! But this 7th point is telling us that the propertyless class will have sorrow and the propertied class will have power instead of sorrow).

8. It is necessary for the good of society that this sorrow be removed by removing the cause.

(All philosophers say that we have to remove the cause. But there are many differences in identifying what the cause is).

9. Maitri or fellowship...even to one's own enemy.

10. Learning without character is dangerous.

('Character' means 'good conduct'. That is following Ashtanga Marga).

11. Nothing is infallible...Everything is subject to inquiry and examination.

(Suppose something stood to inquiry and passed the examination. Then it amounts to having been proved to be infallible, isn't it? Then why should he say 'nothing is infallible'? Aren't certain things be infallible? Is Ashtanga Marga too not infallible according to Ambedkar?)

12. Nothing is final.

(If it is Nature, nothing is final. But if it is a particular phenomenon, a matter, a living being or a thing, it has a beginning and an end. Therefore the statement 'nothing is final' does not apply to everything).

13. War is wrong unless it is for truth and justice.

In this manner, Ambedkar enumerated 25 points and said, "This is the creed of the Buddha in a summary form". He also praised them a lot: "How ancient but how fresh! How wide and how deep are his teachings!"
(Vol. 3, p. 442).

If we doubt any of these items, there is no way to check their 'source'. In this essay, Ambedkar has mentioned only one word namely 'Tripitaka'. This one word is not enough as evidence.

See item 6! Ambedkar is saying here that the Buddha talked of 'conflict of interest'. But no where does this point find place in the 600-page book on *Buddha and His Dhamma*.

Well what is that conflict of interest? This is in point 7. The private ownership of property brings power to one class, sorrow to another. If the Buddha had realized this fact, what solution did he suggest? For this we have to see the 6th item! He showed Ashtanga Marga as solution.

In item 8, he suggested removing sorrow by removing the cause for sorrow. The cause for sorrow is possession of property by a few persons. To remove this cause, one has to say that only one class should not possess the right over property. Well, did Ashtanga Marga say this? There is no mention of property rights. In that case how can Ashtanga Marga be a means of the resolution of the conflict of interest?

If there are different classes in society and if their interests are different, why do different classes follow a single path called 'Ashtanga Marga'?

Why did the Buddha suggest Ashtanga Marga instead of an appropriate solution if he had realized the fact of conflict of interest? If he had understood the cause and yet not given the appropriate solution, does it not mean he was hypocritical? Ambedkar does not raise these questions.

The problem is: riches for some, poverty for others!

Whereas the solution is: Ashtanga Marga!

Which means, don't speak untruth! Don't steal! Don't debauch! Don't take intoxicants! Don't...! Don't...! Don't....!

Ambedkar did not understand whether the problem and the solution have coherence or consistency. He is interested exclusively in eulogizing Ashtanga Marga! Praises like: How modern! How wide! How deep! How great!

Thus after flooding Buddhism with praises, he talked of Marx's theory in the following 10 points (Vol. 3, p. 443).

(2) Marx's theory

1. The purpose of philosophy is to reconstruct the world and not to explain the origin of the universe.

(This is wrong. It is not possible to reconstruct society without explaining its origin. We can reconstruct society if necessary only when we understand the origin).