

June 2013

# Buddhist

## Voice

Year 1, Issue 1

Worlds First International Buddhist E-Magazine From The Land Of Buddha

Labour and Parliamentary  
**Democracy**

Open & Distance Learning

Globalization of Caste

# Buddhism

by Cultural Revolution

## Buddha's Challenge

to Caste System

## Principles of Buddhism

in Co-operative Movement

Articles on  
**Buddhism**

Articles on  
**Social Issues**

News  
**Upcoming Events**

# Dhammapada - The Treasury of Truth

**World's First International  
Buddhist E-Magazine From  
The Land of Buddha**

June 2013 Year - 1 Issue - 1

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Editorial 3

**Columns**

Critical Quest.....	Goldy George	4
Conscience Speaks.....	Vivek Sakpal	7
The Treasury of Truth – Dhammapada.....	Anil Yadavrao Gaikwad	9

**Articles – Buddhism**

Buddhism by Cultural Revolution.....	Vidya Bhushan Rawat	12
Buddha's Teaching Methodology.....	Dr. Tilokasunkari Kanyawasam	15
Buddha's Challenge to Caste System.....	Ram Puniyani	18
Buddhism & Co-operative Movement.....	Dr Prakash H Karmadkar	20

**Articles - Social Issues**

Globalization of Caste.....	Abhay Dongre	23
Open & Distance Learning.....	Dr. Krupapar Wasnik	26
Labour and Parliamentary Democracy.....	Speech by Dr Ambedkar	29

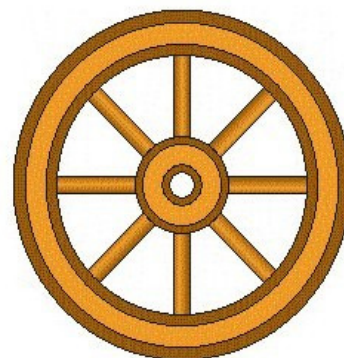
**News**

Dr. Ambedkar Memorial in USA	32
Dhammapada in Poetry Form	33

**Upcoming Events**

- Spreading Buddhism Conference 2013	34
- Celebration at Columbia University	35
- Buddhist Business Network	36

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**I**t gives us great pleasure in presenting the first issue of **Buddhist Voice** to you. This is perhaps the first experiment in India to publish an e-magazine dedicated to issues concerning Buddhist. Our main focus will be Socio-Economical and Political issues at large, besides religious issues of Buddhist world wide and special attention to issues related to Indian Buddhist.

India was once a Buddhist country and majority of the population today in India had their ancestors as Buddhist. Buddhism was prominent in business communities, who found it well suited to their needs and who increasingly established commercial links throughout the then Mauryan Empire. Post 12<sup>th</sup> Century, the decline of Buddhism started on account of wasted interest of dominant caste and apart from a small community in Eastern Bengal in which it had survived from ancient times and Nepal, Buddhism was virtually extinct in India by the end of the 19th century. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism in 1956 has written a new chapter in Buddhist history. It is now about six decades since Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar reignited the minds of the downtrodden by adopting the Lord Buddha's Dhamma in the land of Buddha. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar had many options to choose while he was contemplating the renouncing of Hindu religion after he announced his firm decision in 1935. Very early in life, Dr Babasaheb had realized that if he has to bring his people to the path of progress and up-lift their socio-economical status, the first and the most important step would be to come out of the shackles of Hindu religion. The entire Hindu religion is based on the caste system and the social status of a person is based on the caste in which he is born. Hinduism is the only religion in the world which will not allow its follower to come up in life or achieve higher social / economical status if he is born in lower caste irrespective of his personal intelligence, willingness to work hard and his capabilities. Dr Babasaheb allowed over two decades time to the Hindus to change the social pattern and bring equality amongst all the Hindus but nothing changed in caste system neither Hindu leaders initiated any social reform process.

Post independence and conversion to Buddhism, though a political equality has been established in the country, the majority of Buddhist in India still face discriminations by the dominant caste people. Consistently, there has been no political representation to Buddhists in India and their socio-economical issues have still remained unsolved.

It will be our attempt to raise these issues in public forum and create awareness of present situations of Buddhist amongst the fellow citizens. It will also be an eye-opener to most of the educated Buddhist strata that today appears to have detached from the majority of Buddhist who are still struggling to meet the basic needs. The opening of economy by Indian Government appears to be widening the gap between the lower class, middle class and upper class. In addition to the discrimination due to caste in India, we have also started experiencing the class struggle in India.

It will be our attempt to provide the reading material which will help Buddhist to educate them to uplift economically and socially. From the next issue, we will be introducing our regular columns on Wealth Building, Self Employment and Entrepreneurship in collaboration with [www.indianbusinessman.com](http://www.indianbusinessman.com) besides columns on teaching of the Lord Buddha. We hope to be connected through this e-magazine which will be available to you without any cost and with a freedom to read on desk top and lap tops through our website [www.buddhistvoice.com](http://www.buddhistvoice.com) and also on your Tab, I-Pad, Kindle or Smart Phones through our e-pub, mobile and kindle versions. We also hope to connect Buddhist all over the world with Buddhist in India through this magazine.

We are looking forward to have your co-operation and constant support in this journey we are starting today. Your suggestions for improving our content and presentation will be welcomed.





Atrocities against ex-untouchables have been on the rise in India in recent times. There is no state where some forms of caste atrocity, untouchability practices, discrimination and social exclusion is not a daily happening. The recent incidents in Dharmapuri, Villupuram, Virudhnagar, Theni of Tamilnadu is only the tip of the iceberg; yet it narrates volumes on its functional mechanism in the present phase. The vigour, violence and vibrancy of caste – with essential modifications from its original format – is quite active even today. In this paper, I attempt to look at the various challenges that the anti-caste movement may have to bravely face at present and also be prepared for further.

### Caste in Theory and Practice

The social system of India as a nation is based on caste. It is an open truth that Dalits, one of the most oppressed and repressed strata anywhere in the history of world, still reel under the nefarious chains of casteism. It is essential to understand the context under which the people at the grassroots are resisting the challenge. Also it will give us a wider picture of the nation as a whole and its complexes from the abyss. While discussing it, one should not get an assumption that we were not in any sort of crisis earlier, but today the crisis has expanded to unpredictable magnitude with severe implication and utter insinuation. As a community we are in crisis – the crisis of life; the crisis of disharmony; the crisis of livelihood; the crisis of sustainability and so on. The state is helpless (George, 2004A).

Caste as a system runs as the lifeline of India's reality. Since caste still operates as a definite pre-condition in establishing marriages, social relations and access to employment – millions of Dalits and other low-caste people remain behind in education, employment and access to wealth. Although untouchability and casteism is banned in India, discrimination is widely practiced, and statistics draws the logical conclusion that there is a broad correlation between one's economic state and one's position within the caste hierarchy (George 2013: 2).

Caste as a system could be understood in two parts viz. the material and the ideological-cultural-spiritual. The material base of caste operation systematically took away the control over property (the entire resource base), operationalised division of labour, income distribution and surplus appropriation. In the second part, the geo-centric culture, history, ideology and spirituality was replaced with an alien culture built on slavery and subjugation. The *shastras* referred the indigenous people of impure origin, which in turn groomed a psychological feel that the latter's culture was substandard. Because of the substandard culture – determined by ones' birth – the communities were subjected to inhuman suppression. Everything was centered on 'birth'. They were culturally, ideologically and spiritually forced to apply all energies on the revival of their 'status' in the next

birth from the present lower caste background to a higher ladder. This elevation as per the '*shastras*' was only possible through tireless service of the upper caste lords in the present birth thereby avoiding the traumas in the next birth (George, 2011: 1).

This traditional order was an ideological construct along with an economic and political structure. It articulated and encapsulated an entire system of production that existed over centuries with only minor alterations within its confines. The economical and political realities of inequalities were justified, defined and glorified through religious pronouncements based on the purity-pollution divide (George, 2011: 2).

### Caste, Feudalism and Capitalism

Caste system is perhaps the oldest feudal system in the world. Traditionally, ritualistic compulsion and coercive oppression ensured their compliance in providing virtually free labour for the upper caste landowners. The fact that they had been denied right over land or territory only compounded the matter by making them completely dependent upon the owners and controllers of the means of production and livelihood (George, 2011: 2).

The downfall of feudalism in Europe was also the beginning of modern capitalism. With the growth of capitalism as a world economic system, it aligned with dominant social systems. In India, capitalism began to exploit its roots during the colonial British regime. The programme of capitalism had its earlier collaboration with Indian mercantile capital and British capital. Unlike Europe, it did not have to battle against feudalism; rather it was implanted on the trunk of the latter in India. As a result, even in the capitalist institutions in the cities, caste discrimination simultaneously existed. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar was quite aware of the exploitative potential of capital and hence he had declared capitalism and Brahmanism as the twin enemy of his movement. Capitalism was in an infantile stage then, but Brahmanism encompassed the phases of slavery, feudalism and extended its tentacles as we see to the phase of imperialism (Teltumbde 1997: 40).

In recent times capitalism has surfaced back in new form in the name of globalisation. Principally globalisation aggravates social divide between the have and have not. **Globalisation emerged as the cannon fodder of capitalism in the mid-eighties and early nineties. Practically globalisation is nothing new, it is the establishment of the territory of the mighty across the globe through dictums of political and economic power centres and its controlling points.**

The fundamental attribute of globalisation, then and now, is the increasing degree of openness in most countries. The openness is not simply confined to trade flows, investment flows and financial flows; it also extends to flows of services, technology, information, ideas and persons across

national boundaries. There can be no doubt, however, that trade, investment and finance constitute the cutting edge of globalisation. The past two decades have witnessed an explosive growth in international finance, so much so that, in terms of magnitude, trade and investment and now dwarfed by finance (Singh 1998: 5). The political stability or instability has a direct bearing on the process, pace and intensity of the globalisation and reforms, which admittedly have been slow and inadequate (Tripathi:1)

### **The Current Challenges**

*Undoubtedly, we live in a caste and fascist society married with imperialist capitalist state in its neoliberal form of globalisation.* Fascism is a terrible political domination capable of infringing people's life to unpredictable magnitude. Caste in India remains as the oldest form of fascist regime. History has witnessed various forms of fascism that turned inertly against the already broken people. Fascism remains among the Indian masses in the form of casteism and communalism without letting any opportunity for response to such a brutish system. Again globalisation is not just confined to India, it had become a global fact and its direct impact is visible all across the world. In India it is closely associated with the process of caste and communal fascism (George: 2004A).

This intricate mix of tradition, social system and modern formats of exploitation makes it difficult to decipher, almost impossible to construct one overarching formula to come off the clutches. That is perhaps the reason that the Dalit movement has failed to place itself on a broader plank of justice in order to fulfill Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's dream to annihilate caste. The movement has further failed to establish democracy as a social system across the various societal cross-sections too.

### **Placing Justice as the centrality of anti-caste movement**

Justice of the commons is not the edifice on which the anti-caste movement stands today. Unless justice becomes its central focus, persistence of caste is inevitable. What is needed is the go back to the origin of anti-caste movement, which clearly addressed the different formats of injustice. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had strongly voiced against this. He said, *"If consciousness and reason can be insinuated into the resulting struggles they can only qualify, never abolish the injustice. If injustice is to be abolished it must be resisted and when injustice proceeds from collective power, whether in the form of imperialism or class domination, it must be challenged by power. A class entrenched behind its established power can never be dislodged unless power is raised against it. That is the only way of stopping exploitation of the weak by strong."*

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar categorically narrates what he means by Justice. There are two aspects he had often referred to; one is justice for all and the other is justice to the untouchables. He remarked, *"Justice has always evoked ideas of equality, of proportion of compensation. Equity signifies equality. Rules and regulations, right and righteousness are concerned with equality in value. If all*

*men are equal, then all men are of the same essence, and the common essence entitles them of the same fundamental rights and equal liberty... In short justice is another name of liberty, equality and fraternity."*

Justice is a concept of moral righteousness based on ethics, rationality, relationship with nature, balance of culture, equity, fairness and natural law along with law, administration based on law, taking into account the inalienable and inborn rights of all human beings and citizens, the right of all people and individuals to equal protection before the law of their civil right, without any discrimination on the basis of race, class, caste, origin, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, colour, religion, disability, age or other characteristics, and is further regarded as being inclusive of social justice. The vantage point of the anti-caste movement has to be justice; otherwise any process could have a natural death.

### **Annihilation of Caste – The final blow**

Annihilation of Caste is the least spoken topic these days among all circles, whether it is activists, politician, bureaucrats, academician, scholars, students, or any other groups. The Clarion call of Babasaheb to "Educate, Agitate and Organise" and his most important project was the annihilation of caste has been almost forgotten today. People are scared of discussing annihilating caste and rarely speak on it. All efforts at various levels are aimed at strengthening caste, opposite to annihilation.

Let us not forget that caste forms the mainstay of India's society and mode of production. The highest number of labourers, agricultural labours, casual workers, migrant labourers and others hail from the Dalit communities. The common masses are not in position to discern the truth through a complex context in which certain things were said or done by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. For instance, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had said that Brahmanism and Capitalism were two enemies of Dalits and elaborated that he was not against the Brahmans but their attitude, their creed. He went further and said provocatively that Brahmanism could well be found even among untouchables (Teltumbde 2011).

In order to annihilate castes, it is primary to understand its core characteristics along with the existential form, the ways and means it has survived in history and the sources of their sustenance. It has mainly survived due to its characteristics of holding multiple institutions as well as intruding in all areas of life in a hierarchical manner. Had it been only one sphere of life, then caste would have had a natural death long ago. Justice would have not required this length to remain undelivered.

Hence annihilation of caste draws the background sketch of anti-discrimination struggle. This means annihilation of caste is not one-dimensional; it's multidimensional. The dimensions include various nitty-gritties of injustice in the society needing urgent engagement. It encompasses of

battles against caste institution, anti-class process, the complexities of patriarchy, and the questions of minorities, along with the issues of backwardness, poverty and disharmony. This is perhaps where the cycle gets complete.

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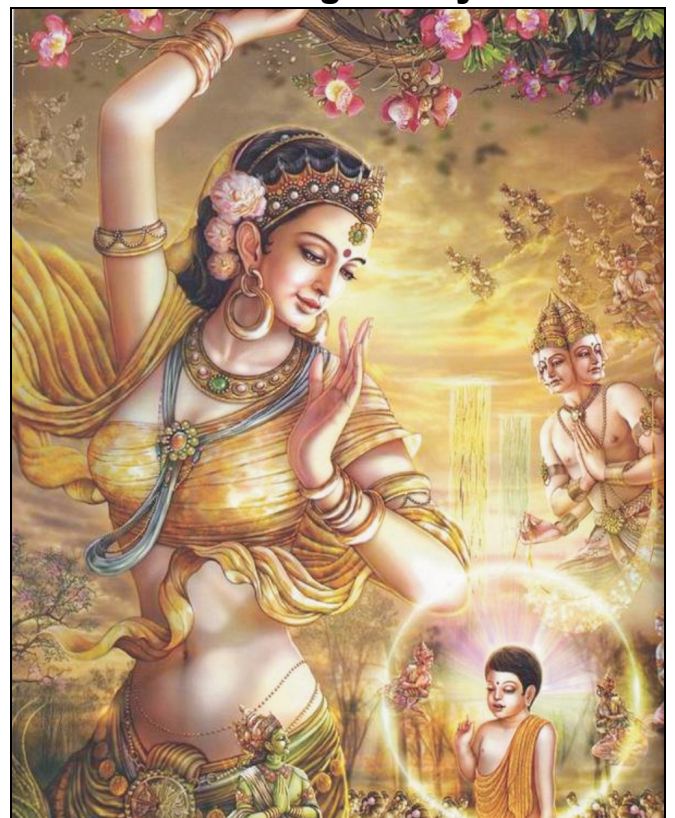
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### Discussions and Letters

We encourage you to comment on the articles published in Buddhist Voice. Your comments / letters should be restricted to 300 words. If found suitable, we will publish your comments / letters in our e-magazine.

## Buddha Life Painting Gallery



It is widely said that the quote is a Buddhist quote. There are some people who argue that Buddha never quoted such a statement. There are also multiple references to this quote in Zen Buddhism, hence for the time being, even we consider that this is a quote from Buddhism and proceed with understanding it.

The vocabulary need not be understood in its literal meaning of being a student and teacher. Here the teacher can be in any form, any shape, need not even be human. The student can also be a newly born child or a person on deathbed.

As it is usually spoken that learning is a never-ending process this quote can be seen on similar lines.

Let us try to understand the depth of this quote.

In our life, many times we come across many problems, difficulties and we also end up finding solutions and way out from them. Yes, many have experienced, others, if not, may have not taken notice of it. Life along with problems also offers you the opportunity to learn things. In many difficulties we learn from elders, friends, and people we know, to deal with issues and problems. It won't be good to go on elaborating the same with experiences, hence lets analyse a story taught to us in school days.

The story goes such that, a brave king is fighting a long battle, with time he realises that he is on losing end so he runs away, letting his soldiers die. He hides himself in a cave where he notices a spider weaving its cobweb. The spider attempts and fails, he tries again, again fails, this is repeated multiple times. The spider keeps doing it over and over. Failing and attempting till the cobweb is ready. The king feels and learns, if a small spider can't give up, how and why could he being such a big king, give up on his duty. He decides to go back to the battlefield and fights till victory. School teachers enforced moral of the story on the students. "Try and try till you succeed". This is fair enough as a lesson to be learned. As students we blindly learn what the teachers teach and never give a thought beyond our rational and curious mind.

Revisiting this same story in later part of life, I realised, there was one important lesson that my teacher never taught. When the king was in need of some will power to fight back, he learned it then and there. Nature, the world's best teacher taught him. Also important is to realise that the king was ready to learn. Had the king never wanted to learn, in spite of looking at the spider he would have never learnt the lesson. He might have even attacked the spider and killed him thinking it's poisonous.

One important thing we can learn from this story is that when the student is ready the teacher will appear.

Now let's see another viewpoint. Most of us in our life try to be teachers. We keep teaching (giving suggestions, opinion, options, etc) to anyone we come across. We may not be

doing it in personal interest, most of the times, we also see some benefit the receiver may get from that but still, many a times, we end up in disappointment.

The prime reason is we fail to see that the student is not ready to learn. We become teachers, mentors, guru, or guide. But the student is missing. First and prime most aspect in learning is student. The focus and energy should be resourced to develop the student aspect of learning, self-learning.

In Buddhist era, the mode of teaching used was also on these lines. It was called Sharmanik, where in there is a set of students and a teacher. The students are free to learn in the guidance of the teacher. Whenever there is doubt, the teacher / guru is there to answer him. Classical example of this mode of learning is Questions by King Milinda, where King Milinda keeps on asking questions and gets the answers. As a student he keeps on asking questions and keeps on learning till he is fully satisfied with his queries. We need to promote this attitude, like King Milinda, in ourselves and also in others, to seek, to question, and also to find answers for all the questions that arise in our minds.

In Hinduism, the story of Eklavya is well known. It's also looking from social point of view where a tribal student is deprived of knowledge and is discriminated on ethnic grounds. But as a student, Eklavya was ready. He went ahead to learn from the statue of a guru. Basically he just wanted some kind of guru, so he used a statue. His major learning came from his practice and may be his ethnic background. Being a tribal there are high chances that he may have been exposed to high level of archery since childhood looking at his parents, village hunters around. As a child they must have taught him basics. The accuracy he possessed needed practice and hence he used a superficial guru, who never taught, but the student did learn from him.

For the movement of the depressed class, what needs to be cultivated is being a student. One has to learn how the law is specially crafted for their social justice and welfare. There should be a lot of discussions and debates on these. It is only when one becomes a student of these topics, they find answers to social justice and empowerment. Glorification and making idols of great leaders may not help. Not everyone can be an Eklavya and learn from the statues of great visionaries like Ambedkar, Phule, Shahu, and Buddha. But by reading their literature, discussing it, and understanding it only shall help the movement.

All are students and all are teachers. A one way shall lead to a dead end. Lets stop being only teachers and come out of the illusion that one knows something to a good extent. Ignite the student in yourself and others. The answers (teacher) shall follow.





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## आवाहन

महाराष्ट्रातील सर्व बौद्ध उपासकांसाठी आवाहन करतल्या वेळी एही, आठवा आठवल्या तपिकाच्या बुद्ध विहादामी राबिरतद् आदिनी ल्हावीव विहाजी अधिभुत डेटव्हिडवद् पाठवावी. जेणेकरून आपले बुद्ध विहाय डेटव्हिडव्या जाधेवमावुल जगत्वावीव बौद्ध उपासकाघटीत पोहोचू शकेल.

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उगवणाऱ्या सूर्याप्रकरि प्रकाश  
दिला  
तरीयण आजही वाहिजे तसा  
प्रकाश आपल्या विहारवर आणि  
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धम्म जगाला दाखवा!

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औरंगाबाद । जालना । बीड । नांदेड । परभणी । हिंगोली । उस्मानाबाद । लातूर । पुणे । मुंबई । बुलडाणा । यवतमाळ । यागिम । अकोला । अमरावती । नागपूर । सोलापूर येथून एकाचवेळी वितरित होणारे महाराष्ट्रातील एकमेव वृत्तपत्र.



The Dhammapada is collection of 423 melodious Pali Verses spoken by Lord Buddha on about 300 occasions during a period of 45 years after he achieved enlightenment. Dhammapada was not preached by Lord Buddha in the present form. Three months after Mahaparinirvan of Lord Buddha, all the senior monks assembled at the first Convocation to rehearse the teaching of the Lord Buddha and at such convocation, they collected the teachings of Buddha which has poetic form and arranged and classified such teachings in 26 types know as Vagga ( groups) as follows :-

S No	Name of the Vagga	Verse No.	Key Word
1	Yamaka Vagga	1-20	Pairs or Twin Verses
2	Appamada Vagga	21-32	Heedfulness
3	Citta Vagga	33-43	The Mind
4	Puppha Vagga	44-59	Flowers / Blossoms
5	Bala Vagga	60-75	The Fool /Fools
6	Pandita Vagga	76-89	The Wise
7	Arahanta Vagga	90-99	The Arahant or Perfected One / Arahants or The Worthy
8	Sahassa Vagga	100-115	The Thousands/Thousands
9	Papa Vagga	116-128	Evil
10	Danda Vagga	129-145	Violence / The Rod of Punishment
11	Jara Vagga	146-156	Old Age / Aging
12	Atta Vagga	157-166	The Self / Self
13	Loka Vagga	168-174	The World / Worlds
14	Buddha Vagga	179-196	The Buddha /Awakened
15	Sukha Vagga	197-208	Happiness / Happy
16	Piya Vagga	209-220	Affection / Dear Ones
17	Kodha Vagga	221-234	Anger
18	Mala Vagga	235-255	Impurity / Impurities or Taints
19	Dhammattha Vagga	256-272	The Just / The Judge or The Righteous
20	Magga Vagga	273-289	The Path or The Way
21	Pakinnaka Vagga	290-305	Miscellaneous / Miscellany
22	Niraya Vagga	306-319	Hell / Woeful State
23	Naga Vagga	206-319	The Elephant/Elephants
24	Tanha Vagga	320-359	Craving
25	Bhikkhu Vagga	360-382	The Monk / The Bhikkhu / The Mendicant
26	Brahmana Vagga	283-423	The Holy Man / Brahmins

Each Vagga or group illustrate the moral and philosophical teachings of the Buddha. In order to explain the meaning of every verse a story was told so that we can get the exact meaning of the verse. In this column we are going to re-produce Dhammapada verse and its meaning explained by some of the experts on the subject. In our every issue we are going to deal with one verse at a time with the story. There are many books available on Dhammapada on internet and one can download and read it if you want to finish the Dhammapada at the earliest.

The Dhammapada is not a book to be read only once and kept aside but it is the book which needs to be read and re-read many times. Those who are using Android phone can down load an app on Dhammapada which can be installed on your phone and you can read one or two verse everyday in order to understand the true teaching of Buddha.

### 1 Yamaka Vagga ( The Twin Verses)

Main Message from the verse is “*Suffering is Mind-made*”.

#### Pali Version

Mano pubbangama dhammā, mano settha manomaya  
 Manasa ce padutthena, bhasati va karoti va  
 Tato nam dukkhamanveti, cakkam’va vahato padam || 1 ||

#### Meaning

Mind is the forerunner of (all evil) states.  
 Mind is chief; and they are mind-made.  
 If one speaks or acts with a corrupt or wicked mind,  
 Suffering follows as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught - ox.

All that we experience begins with thought. Our words and deeds spring from thought. If we speak or act with evil thoughts, unpleasant circumstances and experiences inevitably result. Wherever we go, we create bad circumstances because we carry bad thoughts. We cannot shake off this suffering as long as we are tied to our evil thoughts. This is very much like the wheel of a bullock cart. The cart-wheel, along with the heavy load of the cart, keeps following the draught oxen. The animal is bound to this heavy load and cannot leave it.

### **Commentary**

The first two verses in the Dhammapada reveal an important concept in Buddhism. Buddhism teaches that all that we experience (the 'world' as well as the 'self') is created by thought, or the cognitive process of sense perception and conception. The Buddha states clearly that the world, the beginning of the world, the end of the world, and the way leading to the end of the world, are all in this fathom long body itself with its perceptions and conceptions.

### **The Story of the Monk Cakkhupàla (Verse 1)**

While residing at the Jetavana Monastery in Sravasti, the Buddha spoke this verse, with reference to Cakkhupala, a blind monk.

On one occasion, Monk Cakkhupala came to pay homage to the Buddha at the Jetavana Monastery. One night, while pacing up and down in meditation, the monk accidentally stepped on some insects. In the morning, some monks visiting the monk found the dead insects. They thought ill of the monk and reported the matter to the Buddha. The Buddha asked them whether they had seen the monk killing the insects. When they answered in the negative, the Buddha said, "Just as you had not seen him killing, so also he had not seen those living insects. Besides, as the monk had already attained arahantship he could have no intention of killing, so he was innocent." On being asked why Cakkhupala was blind although he was an arahant, the Buddha told the following story:

Cakkhupala was a physician in one of his past existences. Once, he had deliberately made a woman patient blind. That woman had promised to become his slave, together with her children, if her eyes were completely cured. Fearing that she and her children would have to become slaves, she lied to the physician. She told him that her eyes were getting worse when, in fact, they were perfectly cured. The physician knew she was deceiving him, so in revenge, he gave her another ointment, which made her totally blind. As a result of this evil deed the physician lost his eyesight many times in his later existences.

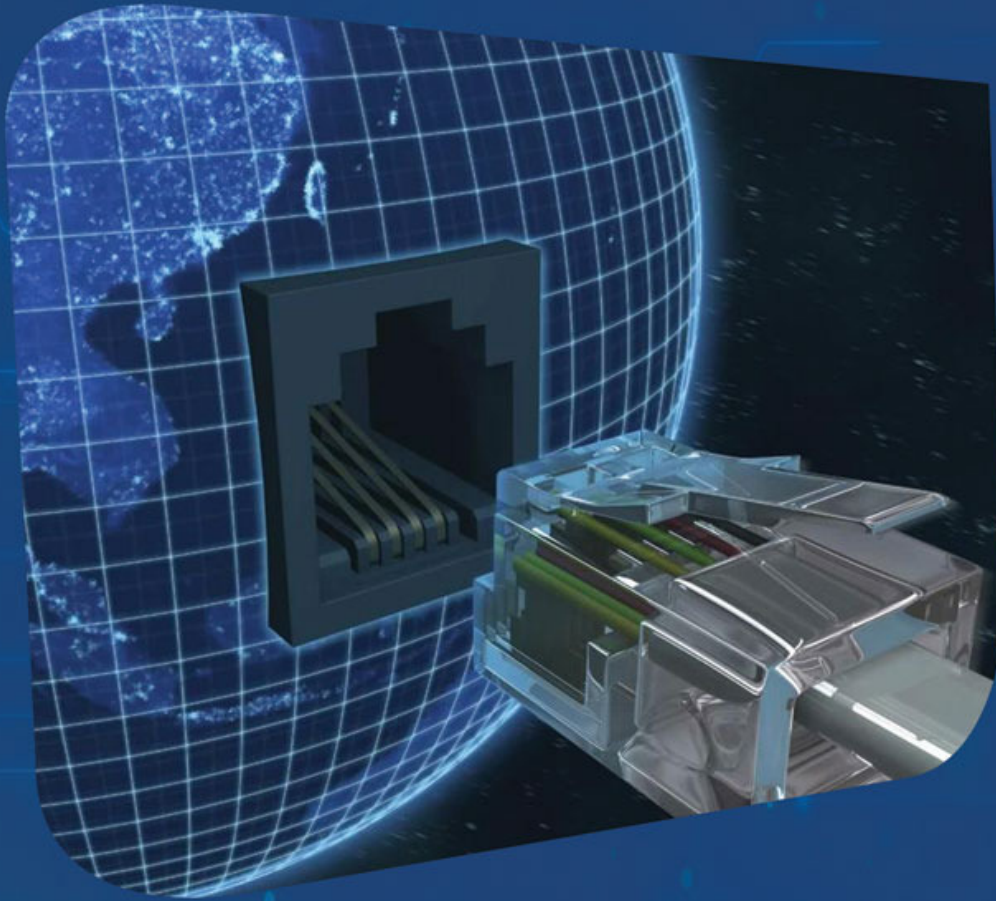
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“The thought manifests as the word;  
The word manifests as the deed;  
The deed develops into habit;  
And habit hardens into character.  
So watch the thought and its ways with care,  
And let it spring from love  
Born out of concern for all beings.”

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A senior district education officer in Uttar-Pradesh informed me that there was no untouchability in the schools when I narrated him the incident of Dalit students being denied mid-day meal or sharing of water from the school tap. He out rightly rejected and said if anything like that happens anywhere, he would take strict action against the same. Next day i.e. on May 11<sup>th</sup>, when we visited a Bansfodbasti (bansfods are bamboo workers and basically belong to manual scavenging community) in Haripur village of Pathardeva block in Deoria district, we came across much shocking news of wide ranging untouchability persisting there. The Bansfods charged the Chamars (another Dalit community) of practicing untouchability with them and not allowing their children to drink water from the school tap. 'Our children are given mid-day meal outside the school. They eat outside the campus of the school and for drinking water they have to come to their homes', said a Bansfod woman. It was more than shocking for us as untouchability level persisting so much among various communities only justify what Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said so many years back that caste system is a 'graded inequality' and therefore defeating Brahmanism is more difficult than anything else as all the oppressed forces are not together but most of the time at the loggerheads with each other. Except for political rhetoric, no serious efforts have been made to bring various communities together. It is only possible through a complete annihilation of castes and propagation of more humane way of life as propagated by Dr Ambedkar.

It was during this visit recently when a group of Dalit students from two universities in Varanasi were with me in various villages where we went and recorded such harrowing tales. Caste system was operative in different forms and we were unable to find the answer. How can the Chamars, who are themselves a victim of caste system and untouchability can do it to others, we wondered but as Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said, our villages are den of corruption, casteism, feudalism and ignorance. Attempts have not been made to bring them together and the result is that the two communities who should have been together are fighting each other much to the comfort of the high caste Hindus.

It is important to understand these caste dynamics and our own histories. India became a nation under the British regime. 400 years of Mughal rule and then British Raj, brought a lot of changes in India, whether administrative reforms or institutionalization of democratic process yet one thing that remained unchanged was the caste discrimination. Prior to British, the stream of Sufi saints rejected the brahmanical system and injustice meted to Dalits but their focus was more making people aware of themselves and tried to take shelter in a seemingly egalitarian religion by terming God does not discriminate, he is one and omnipresent and omnipotent.

But the real changes came when in the 19th century, when the approach of the leaders of deprived castes became not only of a revolt against the values and thoughts imposed by the Dominant Caste Hindus led by the Brahmins but an assertion in the belief of modernity which resulted in the democratization process in Europe, United States as well as Eastern European Countries, which many of you might not like at the moment.

Democracy is essentially a practice of alliance building. And the first such grand alliance of farmers, marginalized communities and the deprived communities was forged by Mahatma Jyoti Ba Phule, as he termed these communities as 'Bahujan' and felt that those ruling India were really minorities leaders of the dominant caste Hindus.

But Dr Ambedkar who got educated in United States, UK and Germany did not really feel the same way. His concerns were really about the constitutional provisions for the Dalits. He realized that Democracy was a broadly a majoritarian concept and cannot really be confined to electoral exercise and therefore a mere political alliance of communities which lead to political power cannot be the only objective of a democratic exercise. Instead, he felt that our institutions should be strong enough to protect the constitutional provisions made for the most marginalized communities. He knew that the communities that he was leading did not understand much about discrimination and rights as it was thoroughly disempowered one. He knew that communities which remain in enslavement and hunger because of various rituals and ideologies and philosophies injected in their minds that they would not be able to understand what their rights are. Many of them still feel that what they have been doing was perfectly divine and nobody has a right to stop that. The theory of karma, that what you are today because of your bad karmas in the previous birth hence to undo that one must stick to his/her duties. Dr Ambedkar said that Karma theory did the maximum damage to the rights of the depressed classes most commonly known as Untouchables or Dalits.

We must not forget that Dr Ambedkar approached the Dalits problem through a minority view point. He wanted to ensure constitutional rights so that the Dalits do not become victim of majoritarian assertion during the elections. That is why he fought for the separate electorate for them in 1932 and which was justifiably awarded by the British that time known as communal award. In all his life time, Ambedkar addressed the issue of the untouchables from the view point of a democratic polity and not just politics.

After India got independence and Dr Ambedkar led the drafting of the Indian constitution, Dalits got 17.5% seats reserved in parliament and state assemblies. Actually Dr Ambedkar never asked for this reservation as he feared that the leadership that would emerge after this would be serving more to the high caste Hindus who form the majority than

the Dalits. And this resulted in defeat of Dr. Ambedkar in the very first election he contested from Mumbai, Maharashtra as all the high caste Hindus ganged up against him and got him defeated.

Dr. Ambedkar could not live more but the Dalits became vote bank of the ruling party. Many leaders were elected and became ministers and governors and chief ministers of the state but the overall condition of the Dalits was a matter of great concern. However, there were a few symbolic exceptions which were utilized to mobilize the Dalit opinion for a particular political formation.

Let us first come to what Dr. Ambedkar said about Indian democracy in an interview to Voice of America on May 20th, 1956. He was asked this question whether there is a democracy in India and he says: 'Democracy is quite different from a Republic as well as from parliamentary Government. The roots of democracy lie not in the form of Government, Parliamentary or otherwise. A democracy is more than a form of government. It is primarily a mode of associated living. The roots of democracy are to be searched in the social relationship, in the terms of associated life between people who form a society.'

And to further his cause he points out: "The Indian society does not consist of individuals. It consists of innumerable collection of castes, which are exclusive in their life and have no common experience to share and have no bond of sympathy. The existence of caste system is a standing denial of the existence of those ideals of society and therefore of democracy. An Indian cannot eat or marry with an Indian simply because he or she does not belong to his or her caste. An Indian simply cannot touch an Indian because he or she does belong to his or her caste." Dr. Ambedkar questions the political system and how Congress party fields its candidate and how they are selected carefully on the basis of their caste. Dr. Ambedkar says: "How does an Indian vote in an election? He votes for a candidate who belongs to his own caste and no other. Further he considers caste system as a bane to democracy. 'Castes are not equal in their status. They are standing one above another. They are jealous of one another. It is an ascending scale of hatred and descending scale of contempt. The feature of caste system has most pernicious consequences. It destroys willing and helpful cooperation."

Unfortunately, after Dr Ambedkar's death his legacy was claimed by certain leaders for their own purposes. Dr. Ambedkar ideals were kept in books and what was projected was his themes and views which were suitable to various political leaders. What they failed to understand that Ambedkar grew up over a period of time and many of his views changed. If he had bitter experience on the issue of questioning the religious text with Gandhi and on the issue of empowerment of the Dalits, he joined the constitution making process to empower the community leaving his bitterness aside. Post 1940s he was more into positive action and sent many Dalit scholars abroad at his own expenses.

Never in his life did Dr. Ambedkar resorted to identity of caste for political purposes. He formed Indian Labour Party. He formed Depressed Classes League and he conceptualized Republican Party of India, all showing his concerns and ideals of how he wished to fight the question of discrimination. To eradicate the caste identity of different Dalit communities or Scheduled Castes, as they are called constitutionally, Ambedkar redefined Buddhism in a radical humanist way and termed it as Navayana. I am not going to discuss the issue here. The point I want to make it is that Dr Ambedkar's quest for a progressive Dalit identity beyond caste has not been properly followed up by those who claim his legacy purely on the basis of his caste.

In the parliamentary democracy of First Past the Post System, which Dr Ambedkar himself actually felt inadequate to protect the interest of the Dalits, the politics is fast turning into a game of identities where the minority identity have no meaning. It is fast merging with the broader majoritarian identity as the slogan grew up in the air 'jisaki jitani sankhya bhari uski utni sajhedari', the more numbers you have, the bigger the share in power structure. Nowhere, it has any insurance for the minorities. It claims to reserve seats for them according to their number but the fact is that the concept of this kind of politics has fragmented the Dalit politics further, with more and more leaders focusing on their primary caste identities to get into vote bank politics. Hence, those whose castes have more numbers get the leverage of power and those who do not have suffered in this process despite their efforts. We have seen many Dalit leaders who have focused on their issues more than any other political leaders and getting marginalized in the process because the sheer number of their castes. What is this? I call it depoliticisation of the Dalits and their issues which is very dangerous as those who really do not work and are expert manipulators can get elected in their names. More so because, the democracy is actually going in the hands of those forces which are anti-democratic and have no faith in it. Dalits who got their legitimate rights through democratic means today feel betrayed by this. As we use symbol to tell the world that the Dalits have been empowered in India, it is time to look into the ugly realities of the process.

We can see the process of political changes in two most populous states of Uttar-Pradesh and Bihar. Both were the first one where the National parties got thoroughly marginalized and a large number of the Dalit-OBC (the Other Backward communities, artisan-peasantry) dominated the political process since 1990. But this broader unity of Dalit-Bahujan could have changed the entire polity in India but because the individual leaders and their egos became bigger than their political parties which became one man/woman show and no internal democracy in these parties resulted in collapsing these forces.

Anti-Brahmanism is the quintessential central theme of the Dalit-Bahujan theory but this does not apply to the High Caste Hindus only, it applies to the leadership and diverse communities also as brahmanical system operate through them too. Unfortunately, whether it is politics or so-called

social movements, except for a few, most of the Dalit-Bahujan politics became a rhetorical agitated one harping on the victimized politics while clearly failing to address the issue of inter community dialogue and clarity of ideological perspectives. Hence a broad movement which had the power to change power equations in India became an instrument to keep their flock together by abusing the High caste Hindus during the day and dine with them in the night and strategizing things with them, to monopolize the power structure with one particular community. As I said earlier democracy is essentially an alliance building exercise based on ideology but here alliance building was a criminal alliance of one particular community with other one ( both stronger ones and numerically powerful one) resulting in the marginalization of the other communities among the Dalits and backward castes who were numerically nonexistent. This happened in Bihar where a backward leader made alliance with Muslims. His Yadav and Muslim community made a lethal alliance and ruled the state for nearly 20 years but without any developmental work. Similar thing happened in UP where the Ex-Chief Minister Ms Mayawati combined her caste strength i.e. Chamars with the Brahmins much to resentment of the other Dalit communities. There again the government forgot basic Dalit agenda of governance like land reform, education and health sector focus or any new scheme for the poor. The result was that, the Chamars themselves got fed up with the government where they were just fodder to give the Brahmins a power and fell out of the government. In Bihar also, the other marginalized and mostly Dalits revolted and allowed a new government in power.

The continuous assertion and democratization process in India will continue. Every community which has been left in the race want political representation and cannot be satisfied with our romanticization of a broad Dalit-Bahujan concept to give a few elite to capture power in their name and become dictator and use state tools as a fancy for their personal wills. People will question leaders and thrash them if they fail to deliver. India's transition to democracy is still in process and the Dalits and other marginalized communities its biggest asset. The democratization process will bring new leaders from the marginalized communities. One phase where the middleman masquerading politicians came to power structure in the name of identity but mere identity does not work. People want to development, people want their voices... and they are not ready that someone in the name of their identity grab power structure and use it for his / her personal gain which was widely perceived. The political leaders will have to democratize themselves and address the basic issues of the community. India has one of the best constitutions but it is rarely implemented fully. Dalit-Bahujan power polity need to first stick to its basic preambles and lead from the personal example. How can they ignore the rich legacy of Ambedkar-Phule and Periyar, each one of them person of high integrity and deeply committed to the cause of oppressed communities? It is time that this legacy is carried forward by the current leadership

with basic principles by becoming modern, democratize yourself and with a humanist perspective. Dalit Bahujan politics cannot be exclusive in nature but more broad, open minded and inclusive and should provide an idea which did not exist in the brahmanical mindset, the idea of freedom and humanism its basic tenants, as it lead those communities which were victim of the caste system in India.

The Dalit movement cannot be a movement of caste identities but beyond that providing alternative political theory in India. It must be a movement to annihilate caste system and provide an alternative culture. It must also ensure that the most marginalized too feel a part of the movement. May be the beginning could be made with giving representation to different marginalized communities within the power structure of the political parties that they care for the numerically lesser communities who do not matter much in terms of vote or who cannot become vote bank. Our current parliamentary system does not do justice to these most marginalized communities and hence Dalit empowerment will only be of a particular individual with political heritage of the family. It results in hegemony of one family or individual by destructing the monopoly of others. Idea of governance remain a far cry in this entire scheme as the entire focus revolve around identity turning the entire community as apolitical and making leaders much bigger than the political parties and movement. Such a situation is dangerous for the communities.

Caste cannot be simply strengthened to market a few individual and their self-serving political theories. **The issue of caste and Dalits is actually needed to be addressed as the civil rights movement in the United Nations. It is important that it does not become a few seats in parliament and empowerment of the elite leaders in the name of communities. It has to be broad movement for human rights and human dignity.** It has to be a movement against the religious rituals and holy texts which kept them subjugated for centuries and enslaved their minds. Humanists have that capacity to deliver it as they believe in that. Today's Dalits have the capacity and democracy has provided them alternative. Only a modern democratic theory with republican ideas as envisioned by Dr Ambedkar can be their true emancipator otherwise, caste based identities are threatening basic Dalit unity in the country and it is fast becoming a self-defeating exercise. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar wanted to eliminate and annihilate caste through Cultural Revolution in India that is why he embraced Buddhism. Once you are a Buddhist you must cease to be from your former caste. That is why mere political change alone cannot make India what Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar wanted. The political changes must happen after Cultural Revolution of Buddhism and only then this infighting among caste will end and we will be able to provide a better life to millions of people.

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**B**uddhism is both a science and an art. As a science the Buddha teaches us the laws that govern our nature, our life. The Buddha teaches us the structure of the human mind, the working of our mind and how the mind can be systematically cultivated. Buddhism as a science teaches the laws that govern man's behaviour based on the mind.

It teaches Dependent Origination, The Five Aggregates, structure of the Human Mind and Nibbana (The Deathless State) and Kamma the theory of cause and effect. Science also includes the coordination of human experience, in a systematic and logical form, the statements of general laws, their use in prediction and the further research on the basis of new experience. It is here as a mental science that Buddhism not only holds its own but even surpasses science. As an art the Buddha teaches us how to attain the goal expressed by the Science of Buddhism, how to perform good action and avoid ill-will, how to train ourselves so that the Noble Eightfold Path becomes to us a reality by realizing Nibbana. A study of the Commentaries and the Tripitaka are necessary to grasp the Buddha's doctrine fully. Cosmologies by no means constitute the Buddha's doctrine. They are only incidental additions.

It is a scientific teaching not contradicting but rather conforming to the demands of reason and confirming science and modern learning. There is an intimate interdependence, between science and art. Education is also based on psychology.

Rahulovada Sutta is a compendium of educational practices. A close scrutiny of this Sutta would expose a general methodology of teaching in Buddhism. This general methodology relates to accepted educational principles and psychological theories.

To direct the educational enterprise of Ven. Rahula in such a way as to bring about his optimum development and adjustment to his culture, the Buddha followed a general methodology of teaching, which is even ahead of modern day theories. When Ven. Rahula was 7– 11 years of age, the Buddha wanted to teach him Truthfulness and Mindfulness as he considered these as the corner-stones for building up character and for developing the faculties of mind. How did he do it? He took concrete examples and made use of aids which would appeal to children of 7-11 years.

The examples given were from the child's own life experience. Mangoes, water in a basin, are what appeals to a child of that age. Ample use of similes, words and illustrations that would appeal and impress the child's mind are the prominent teaching techniques he adopted. This discourse is named Ambalathika Sutta or Boy's Questions. These are given in the Khuddakapaina of the Sutta Pitaka. Piaget call the age of 7 -11 the period of concrete development which means that only with concrete things the child should be taught and a child can learn.

When Ven. Rahula was 18 years old the Buddha taught him more abstract concepts. Before teaching him, the Buddha

thought like this: "Mature is Rahula in those qualities that bring deliverance to maturity. Should I not now give further guidance to Rahula for the extinction of suffering." He taught him meditation, selflessness the five aggregates and the importance of equanimity. According to Piaget this is the formal developmental stage, when an individual could be taught by questioning and discussion. The Buddha used the exact method in teaching Ven. Rahula at this age. Ven. Rahula was obsessed with the idea that he was handsome and was the son of the Buddha. The two were going together with Ven. Rahula walking behind. At once, the Buddha by his extrasensory perception seized that moment and advised the young Bhikkhu, his son. This is the moment when the brain is in its maximum motivated state and that is the best time to teach a person. It is the best moment to rehabilitate a psychologically affected person. This technique is used in teaching languages. In teaching mentally ill people this is recognised as a curative method. Even today, it is in its experimental stage and expects us all to inquire into, test, experiment with and verify the truth of the Dhamma by direct knowledge. Isn't this the scientific method? A scientist does not ask fellow scientists to accept a theory on faith. In the same way, the Buddha only shows us the way but it is we who have to do the work of Dhamma which is well proclaimed – sukhi hontu. It produces results without delay in this very life Sandittihiko. It invites anyone to verify it for himself – ehipassiko; it leads to the desired goal opanaiko, and it is to be realised by the wise, each person for –paccatam vedhitabbo vinnuhiti. This appears as if the Buddha was addressing an intellectual group of the twentieth century, for the method that the Buddha recommends is what we today call the scientific method.

The following verse of the Buddha from the Tattvasangraha says "Just as experts test gold by burning it, cutting it and applying it on a touchstone, my statements should be accepted only after critical examination and not out of respect for me".

In the Digha Nikaya too it is stated: This scientific method in the Buddha's own words as given in the Samyutta Nikaya is "This the Tathagata discovers, having discovered and comprehended it, he points it out, teaches it, lays it down, establishes, reveals, analyses, clarifies it and says 'Look'."

The techniques used by the Buddha are very relevant for the topic and clientele he dealt with. He adopted a number of varied teaching methods – the analytical method, the psychotherapeutic method, the scientific method, the client – centered method, the discovery method, the question and answer method. His entire missionary enterprise was launched on three specific methods of Dhamma desana– the direct lecture method. When delivering a lecture the direct instructional function of learning is involved. Then comes Dhamma Savana – Attentive listening. This suggests the role of listening in the learner. Another is Dhamma Sakaccha– Discussion, the learning exercised through discussion.

To motivate a person he adopted the known to unknown method. He would find an opportunity to deliver a lecture to suit that particular audience. Sometimes he made use of super-wisdom for this purpose. One of the wisdom attributed to the Buddha is the super-wisdom. When he handled a large group his pedagogy varied. He took into consideration the individual differences and catered mostly to the average and always made use of the personal factor and techniques or simulation technique. e.g. the woman in the story is now Yasodhara. This is one way of motivating a crowd, using his 'super-wisdom' sustaining the interests and reinforcing what has been said. He used simple parables, similes, allegories, illustrations. With a large group the method most often adopted was narration. He was a consummate story-teller. He touched upon various topics and the five hundred and fifty Jataka stories were presented on such occasions. Khema an, individual obsessed with her beauty, was dealt in a completely different manner. He made use of visual aids to motivate her and change her. In dealing with abstract concepts he always used the formal logical operational method-question and answer was one. Discussion was another method. The learner is greatly aided by being questioned on positive terms and their opposites. This is one way of assessing the intelligence of the individual and appealing to his level of development. There is the way of intellectual and mnemonic method, the simplifying and unifying effect obtained by causing all the questions to refer to one topic. There was a formal pattern in answering questions put to the Buddha (1) Answering it straight away (ekamsa). (2) Giving an analytical explanation (vibhajja) or answering it through another series of relevant questions (patipuccha). (3) Malumkaya Putta was dealt by the silent method (thapaniya), where the Buddha refrained from answering. In psychology these methods of questioning other than the last are called the formal logical operations method.

It is when Ven. Rahula was 21 years that the Buddha taught him the profound theory of the Three Characteristics of conditioned existence namely suffering, impermanence and soul-lessness. So the Buddha made use of the mental development of Ven. Rahula to teach these abstract concepts by methods of questioning and discussing.

Finally, the Buddha's last teaching to Ven. Rahula was Dhammayada Sutta which explains the life of a monk. Thus the Buddha sought out Rahula's own active interest in the world around him, stirred him into asking questions and then encouraged him in every possible way to search out his own answers and make his own progressive discoveries. These were methodologies adapted to the mental development of Ven. Rahula. He adopted a different methodology for every different developmental stage.

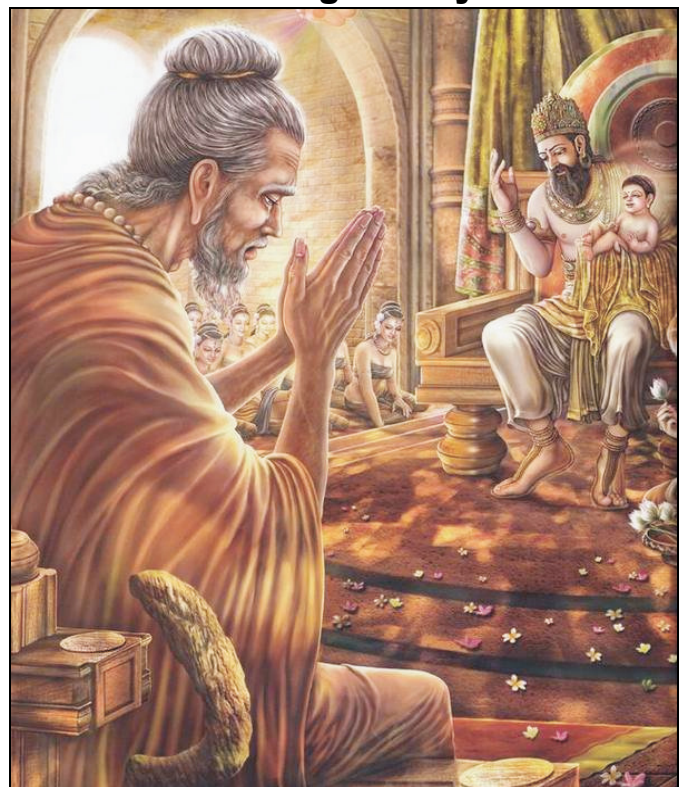
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***Do not believe in anything (simply) because you have heard it.***  
***Do not believe in tradition because they have been handed down for many generations.***  
***Do not believe in anything because it is spoken and rumoured by many.***  
***Do not believe in anything (simply) because, it is found written in your religions books.***  
***Do not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders.***  
***But after observation and analysis, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one an all Then accept it and live up to it.***

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When on this (14<sup>th</sup> April 2013) anniversary of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, we pay tribute to his yeomen services towards the cause of social justice and bringing to fore the values of democracy; we also need to think as to how his dream and vision of annihilation of caste can be taken further. Where do we stand in this direction six decades after the Independence and after the formal implementation of Constitution of India, which gives us the values of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity?

Caste has been the major marker of Indian, particularly Hindu, society. While world over the serfs were under the bondage of feudal lords, we had religiously ordained system of Varna-Jati (Caste). Many theories of caste prevail, the racial theory, superior Aryans versus the natives, now stands debunked. The hypothesis of Morton Klass argues that it was a way of adjusting of tribal to the system of production, which generated surplus. This understanding indicates towards the understanding that caste evolved with the particular system of production in India. Kosambi looks at origin of caste as being due to the continuous process of fusing of tribal into general society. The major contribution to the understanding of genesis of caste comes from Dr. Ambedkar as per whom caste-varna came into being due to ideological-religious factors. According to him caste system came into being as the result of ideologies of Dharmshatras, which was part of Brahmanism.

In Indian society the interesting point is that caste is prevalent not only amongst Hindus, it also prevails in other religious communities. The difference being that amongst Hindus, the caste is prescribed in the holy books, while in other religious communities; it is a social phenomenon, like Ashraf, Ajlaf and Arzal amongst Muslims and different denominations amongst Christians and Sikhs. *The first challenge to caste system came from Lord Gautam Buddha, who talked of Samta, equality. This concept of Samta, equality became very popular and was accepted by large number of people till Buddhism was attacked and wiped out from India in eighth century by those who wanted to restore the varna-caste.* During medieval period the Bhakti saints in particular talked against and questioned the system of graded inequality, but their voice though a powerful articulation of the plight of the low caste, remained just an expression of pain and sorrow of the poor, and was strongly opposed by Brahmin clergy.

The rule of Muslim Kings and British did not change the social structure of the subcontinent, though during British rule due to the industrialization and introduction of modern education, the caste system started being questioned, opposed and socially challenged. The edifice of caste started loosening up. During the rule of Muslim kings the social structure remained intact. With the British rule the half way process of industrialization and modern education came in. At the same time the caste-varna also continued on the side,

though its legitimacy started being questioned in a more serious way. In the changed situation starting from Jotirao Phule the movements for caste abolition found grounding in society, though they were not able to uproot the phenomenon of caste in the full measures as the feudal production system ran side by side with the process of modernization. The process of secularization, abolition of the hold of landlord and clergy, remained incomplete and so the process of caste transformation remained half way through.

All the struggles started by Dr. Ambedkar aimed for social justice, social equality and democratic values. He led the movements like Chavdar Talab, for right to have access to public drinking water, Kalaram Mandir, right to enter temples and also the burning of Manusmriti, as symbolic of the rejection of religiously ordained caste hierarchy. The resistance to these led to his decision to leave the Hindu fold, which is dominated by Brahmanical values of Varna. The social political base to his movements was provided by the national movement, which was aspiring for throwing away the British colonial power and also struggling for democratic values. Here Dr. Ambedkar took off from this movement, but the national movement was not adequate to give him total social justice as this movement also had upper castes in good measure. So here we see the dilemma of Mahatma Gandhi versus Dr. Ambedkar. Gandhi was not able to go beyond the limits posed by the participation of all castes in freedom movement. He kept talking of varna system in a more refined form while taking up cudgels against untouchability.

Gandhi also opposed the separate electorate, provided by communal award of MacDonald in 1932. The Poona pact between Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar led to the reserved Constituency and the provisions of reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Dr. Ambedkar's vision was that reservations and inter-caste marriages will be steps towards annihilation of caste. Today both these face serious obstacles on social ground. The rigidity of caste is increasing and inter-caste marriage is facing serious obstacles from conservative forces. While freedom movement led by Gandhi was half way conceding to the needs of dalits, the other ideology, the one of religious nationalism was waiting in the wings with the concept of Hindu Rashtra, Hindu nation. Ambedkar did realize that acceptance of religious nationalism, formation of Pakistan on that ground will be a disaster for dalits as it will pave the way for Hindu Rashtra, the slavery of dalits. Today while most of the commentators are attacking Gandhi, they need to focus more attention to the impact of the politics and ideology of Hindu religious nationalism, which is a major obstacle to caste abolition today.

The reservations for dalits led to newer caste equations. On one hand the section of rising middle class stood to oppose these reservations, tooth and nail. The anti reservation

violence has been witnessed in the Gujarat in particular in 1980s. Also since the overall development process is not accommodative of all, the inner competition for reservation has led to a strange situation where different communities are vying for status as a particular reserved category. The overall future for the youth is dismal and it gets reflected in the form of movements for particular castes getting recognized in this or that category. The other major obstacle to caste transformation is the politics of Hindutva. On one hand it talks of Samajik Samrasta (social Harmony), that all castes should have harmony amongst them. The Hindutva's concept of 'Integral Humanism' emphasizes on different castes continuing their professions for smooth social functioning. The social engineering by religious political forces is co-opting the low caste through various mechanisms, to the extent of using them as foot soldiers of their anti minority violence. A section of dalits also is influenced by the process of Sanskritization, aping at upper caste and imitating them for their future trajectory. As a logical corollary; the cultural mechanisms, the TV serials,

the preaching's of hoards of God men are promoting the values of Manusmriti in a more sophisticated form.

At the same time a serious layer of progressive and dalit intellectuals are trying to restore the core values and principles of struggles against caste-varna. The situation today is very complex and caste as a social phenomenon is far from extinct. Today's political scenario is a conflict between the values of democracy on one hand, and the values of religious nationalism; the politics representing the defense of caste and gender hierarchy; on the other. The process of social equality; caste annihilation and values of democracy need to be brought in through a fresh series of multilayered struggles for a truly democratic society. That alone will be a tribute to the life and work of the legend of this great visionary, Babasaheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar.



***“The wise person who is able to recognize the true values leading to spiritual attainments is capable of attaining true spiritual heights. Such person is possessed of right views.”***

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ऐशोरिना  
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In the recent years India has emerged as a major global power. India's economic reforms have made the Indian economy as vibrant as ever. A conducive climate for foreign investment has been created. Indian democracy despite its contradictions has given the nation political stability which has no doubt strengthened the country's developmental plank. However, despite all this India has been struggling with problems of poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, social inequalities, insurgency, etc. The strategies formulated to tackle these problems have not paid full dividends.

### RELIGIONS IN INDIA

India, known as the land of spirituality and philosophy was the birthplace of some religions, which even exist today in the world. The most dominant religion in India today is Hinduism. Hinduism is a colorful religion with a vast gallery of Gods and Goddesses. Hinduism is one of the ancient religions in the world. It is supposed to have developed about 5000 years ago. Later on in ancient period other religions developed in India.

Around 500 BC, two other religions developed in India, namely, Buddhism and Jainism. In ancient times, Jainism and specially Buddhism were very popular in India. Indians who accepted Buddhist philosophy spread it not only within the Indian sub-continent but also to kingdoms east and south of India. These three ancient religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, are seen as the molders of the India philosophy. In 'modern' period new religions were also established in India. One comparatively new religion in India is Sikhism and it was established in the 15th century. About 2% of Indians are Sikhs. Along with the religions that developed in India, there are followers of non- Indian religions. The largest non-Indian religion is Islam. They are about 12% of India's population. Christians are more than 2% of India's population. There are also Zoroastrians who even though make less than 0.01% of India's population, are known around India. There are also a few thousand Jews in India.

### BOOST TO COOPERATIVES

The need of the hour for the cooperative sector in the era of liberalized environment is to seize every opportunity available to it. Thus, the future vision of cooperative movement will have to be based on efficiency parameters relating to promotion of excellence, improvement of operational efficiency and strengthening of financial resource base. Sugar industry has made substantial progress especially in the co-operative sector. Maharashtra is known for the development of sugar industry on co-operative lines in which the farmers acquire a share in the sugar mills, Pharmaceuticals, petrochemicals, heavy chemicals, electronics, automobiles, engineering, food processing and plastics are some of the major industries of the state. Maharashtra is noted for the production of three wheelers, jeeps, commercial vehicles and cars, synthetic fibers, cold rolled products and industrial alcohol. The economic

liberalization has given a big push and projected as an engine of economic growth and an instrument for eliminating poverty, curbing unemployment problems, opening up new fields of activity and the enlistment of downtrodden sections of society. Cooperatives establishing people-to-people contacts and are given prime importance.

At a time when cooperative sector initiatives have gained thrust in India, the situation is ripe for popularizing the concept of "Peace Through Cooperatives" in a big way through strong advocacy and practical action. Cooperatives as a strategy to promote peace by solving the problems of poverty, unemployment, etc. can succeed if effective inter-linkages are established between "Cooperatives initiatives" and "peace", and appropriate action plans are devised accordingly. India has strong community and democratic ethos. Community-based initiatives based on people's participation have been quite effective in India in solving the socio-economic problems of the people. They have also been successful in building up strong collaborations based on people's efforts which have led to creation of a peaceful and cordial atmosphere. In fact, the peaceful under-currents of Indian democracy are evident in the working of community-based ventures. Limitations of the centralized form of planning have compelled the policy-makers to pin their faiths on such people-based ventures.

### COOPERATIVES AND RELIGION

Cooperation means living, thinking and working together. It is working together to learn to live in our society peacefully and harmoniously. A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common, economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. Cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others. In an age of declining values, peace can remain elusive if the values are not well propagated and communicated to the society at large. No doubt, in this scenario the value-based organizations have an important role to play in peace-building. The cooperatives have a strategic advantage over other organizations in this respect. The principles and values of cooperatives are the best guidelines to create a sustainable and peaceful world. They are intended to safeguard the human rights and enable the members to practice democracy and enjoy freedom of action. Cooperatives are the organizations which have strong community roots. They are embedded within the communities in which they exist. They work for sustainable development of communities through emphasis on values which create a peaceful atmosphere within the community. The basic philosophy of Co-operative movement has been derived from the tenet of Buddhism.



## COOPERATIVE CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE

60 million people around the world are members of cooperatives. In Kenya 20% of the population is a member of cooperative, while in Argentina it is over 29%, 33% in Norway, and 40% in Canada and US. The contribution of cooperatives to poverty alleviation can be gauged from the fact that they provide 100 million jobs and in some countries and areas are among the largest employees as in Columbia where a national health cooperative is the largest employer at national level. There are at present 5.04 Lakhs cooperative societies of different type with a membership of 22 Crores, covering 100 percent villages and 67 percent rural households in India. The transition from controlled economy to open competitive economy in the name of globalization or liberalization has thrown a whole lot of challenges to the cooperative sector. It was believed that cooperatives would not be able to survive in the face of stiff competition posed by private sector. A study of functioning of cooperative societies in various segments such as agricultural credit, agricultural marketing, fertilizer distribution, agro-processing, dairy and sugar industries has shown that there are some strong and viable cooperatives. But at the same time one must realize the fact that the cooperative structure, as it emerged, has shown few weaknesses. Worldwide the cooperative movement has contributed to peace by helping to eliminate poverty, sustain environment, provide employment, and enrich social standards of the people. The value-based orientation of the cooperative movement has played a crucial role in checking the capitalist tendencies in the society by creating an equalitarian society through which chances of conflict are minimized. In India the cooperative concept has worked wonders. Starting in 1904, the cooperative movement has made rapid strides in all areas of socio-economic activities. Today, there are more than 5 Lakhs cooperative societies in the country with a membership of over 23 Crores and working capital of Rs. 198,542 million. IFFCO and KRIBHCO are two cooperative fertilizer giants which have matched global standards of performance. The cooperative credit institutions are disbursing 46.15% of agricultural credit and cooperatives are distributing 36.22% of total fertilizers in the country. Dairy cooperatives in India with their strong and extensive network have excelled in their areas of operations. They have ushered in milk revolution in the country. India is the largest producer of milk in the world. The housing cooperatives in India have not only reaped economic reforms, but have also contributed to peace through promoting social harmony and community living.

The cooperatives in India have played a pioneering role in saving the poor from clutches of moneylenders by providing them credit at reasonable rate of interest so that they may start economic activities through a long chain of credit cooperatives set up at various levels. Besides, the cooperatives have convinced the poor that they are the institutions for their welfare, not exploitation. In the recent years the Self Help Groups based on cooperative principles have mushroomed in large numbers which have mobilized the rural poor by providing them avenues of income

generation. In India the cooperatives have played an important role in employment generation. About 15.47 million individuals are employed in the cooperative sector and the numbers of persons who are self-employed in the cooperatives are more than 14.39 million. The cooperatives have shown their strength in social sector too. For example, the sugar cooperatives in Maharashtra have come up in the field of education and health. In the field of environment, the cooperatives have played an important role in environment preservation. IFFCO has played a laudable role in protecting environment through pollution control measures through its plants and farm forestry cooperatives.

## COOPERATIVES AND MEDITATION

When the mind is stilled, there occurs an experience of Identity Shift. One realizes that one's true identity is not a body-mind complex. It is rather an eternally blissful awareness. One experience that one's real self is a divine light. One was all along living in a state of ignorance of this truth. The Self is the core of one's being. The mind is waved out of it and it also dissolves in it. Mental formations – including perspectives, ego, decisions etc. – are just transient formations arising and dissolving in the eternal expanse of the Self. Considering the contribution of cooperatives to peace and the value-based peaceful orientation of cooperatives, it is natural that the cooperatives are well positioned to strengthen the agenda of peace. If meditation becomes a key agenda of all the nations, a peaceful world order is bound to emerge. The institutions like cooperatives can play an important role in peace building if they are involved in meditation.

The strength of rural area in Maharashtra lies in the villages, and the cooperatives field 100% of the villages. A large mass have a high level of involvement in whatever they do about rural tourism as they want to participate in cultural affairs, traditional lifestyle, etc. The cooperatives in the rural areas in India have strong cultural affiliations. The cooperatives can not only acquaint the Cooperatives with rich culture of the region, but they can also understand their urge to participate in and experience the local culture closely. The cooperatives can play a big role in strengthening domestic as well as bonds of cultural heritage by making the people feel that they are a part of cooperative culture which is built on peace. Formation of Sangh, Cooperatives for guiding, escorting, maintaining local handicrafts, etc., can generate jobs, and end their poverty. In India the primary agriculture cooperatives are the strength of the cooperative system in the rural areas. They can promote rural Peace directly. Their contribution in poverty alleviation along with potential development of area can be important in promoting peace. The Indian Government is already sensitized on the importance of rural peace and the need for involving community based organizations. The cooperatives which have stronghold over the rural areas in the recent years have taken initiatives to promote infrastructure development. For example, the dairy cooperatives in Gujarat have built up the roads, and have come up with schools. The cooperatives in India due to their effective community inter-linkages can promote ethical conflict ridden zones.



## COOPERATIVE DIVERSIFICATION

A review of the cooperative trends in the recent times indicates that cooperatives are already on the way to multiplicity in new areas like peace. The rural life is rich in cultural tradition. Cooperative Marketing Development Federation is having branches in village of Maharashtra. The cooperative products have developed strong brands which clearly indicate that cooperative principles and values which can be used for effective business. For example "Amul", brand of Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation is a household name in India signifying milk revolution. Like Amul, Lijjat Papad, Katraj Milk etc. these cooperative products spread the message of peace.

## WHY SHOULD ONE MEDITATE?

To realize who one is. This is the main goal of meditation. But, as there is extreme turbulence and suffering in most of the minds, the first motivating factor can be the cessation of agitation and pain. It is only when one understands that happiness and fulfillment are a state of being independent of external factors that one can learn to outgrow suffering and turmoil. When the mind is able to remain unconditionally peaceful vis-a-vis the external situations, there occurs the possibility of meditation. So the first reason that one should learn and practice meditation is the cessation of turbulence.

It is not only the suffering, but even the apparently harmless agitations of mind have their roots in illusory conditionings. If one wants to experience true peace and happiness, one will have to understand and detach from these unconscious stories. The best de Conditioning happens through deep contemplation. The best way of doing deep contemplation is in a peaceful and solitary place. Doing a retreat is always helpful, but it might not be feasible for one and all. There can be exigencies, beyond one's control, which don't allow one to live in a retreat environment. These are revolutionary principles of meditation. Integrating them with one's practice, one can make speedy and enduring progress in this beautiful mind-elevation. A person can train his or her mind to improve attention and regulate emotions; it can also improve a person's level of happiness and well-being.

## MEDITATION FOR LIFE

Though it's predominantly rooted in Buddhist tradition, there are many varieties of meditation in the world. Some involve sitting quietly for hours at a time, while others encourage movement. Some are tied to religion or physical practices such as yoga and martial arts; others are based in psychology. There are also numerous techniques.

India is ideal for formulating effective strategies for promoting peace. For promoting peace, the cooperative strategy merits consideration. The Indian cooperative movement is the largest movement in the world. National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) is the apex organization of the cooperative movement in the country. 196 cooperative organizations at all levels are as its members. Being a promotional organization with emphasis on training,

education, advocacy, research, publication etc. NCUI has worked hard to promote the cooperative movement in the country. It has always formulated effective policies to promote cooperative diversification. For example, due to strong campaigning of NCUI, the cooperatives were recently allowed entry into insurance. The NCUI has also taken initiatives in the new fields of insurance, electrification environment, etc. IFFCO, a major cooperative fertilizer giant, has already made effective forays in the fields of insurance, electrification etc. The NCUI has effectively popularized the concept of cooperation amongst the rural population by its Cooperative Education Field Projects located all over the country. NCUI is in a good position to promote rural peace in the country, taking into account the strength of Indian cooperatives in promoting peace through cooperatives.

## CONCLUSION

Ahinsa, as preached and practiced by Buddha, is the only answer to problems of poverty and pollution confronting humanity. Gandhiji rightly stated: "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man. It is remarkable that unlike Vedic religion, Jainism and Buddhism stands for pure Ahinsa without any condition: in Maharashtra Saint Eknath, Saint Tukaram, Saint Gora Kumbhar, Dnyashwar, Chokhomala and many others, showed faith that eventually our heart and mind will lean to let go of all obsessive patterns of thought and desire. Then we can awaken to true peace, love, and joy. When we go to spiritual counseling, By learning to trust ourselves and to open our hearts and trust the other, Spiritual counseling helps direct us, stop feeling. When we stop cutting the world into pieces with our judgmental mind, everything within us and within the world can then be experienced as Buddha. The fundamental goal of Buddhism is peace, not only peace in India but peace in all over the worlds. The Buddha taught the first step on the path to peace The Buddhist vision is a world in which all life is sacred, in which selfishness, in the guise of greed, anger and foolishness, does not interfere with the basic interconnectedness of all living beings. That interconnectedness, when freed from the distortion of selfishness, is based upon the potential for enlightenment that every being shares.

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*"Good men and bad men differ radically. Bad men never appreciate kindness shown to them, but wise men appreciate and are grateful. Wise men try to express their appreciation and gratitude by some return of kindness, not only to their benefactor, but to everyone else."*

*“As Hindus migrate to other regions of the earth, Indian caste would become a world problem”*

*Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*

**I**t was a regular pub in the teeming Indian quarter of London otherwise known as Southall, but on the wall someone had scrawled, "Chamars and dogs not allowed." - London-1992.

On 4th March 2013, an Amendment Clause to the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (ERR) Bill making Caste an aspect of race in the Equality Act was agreed in the House of Lords with a majority of 103 votes.

### **Earlier in 2001:**

At the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related intolerance, a conference promoted by the United Nations in Durban, held in 2001, the National Human Rights Commission in India Indicated that it would follow on the declaration and programs adopted at Durban Conference.

The Indian Government mischievously avoided the issue of caste discrimination in Durban giving bizarre justifications that caste is an internal affair. India's answer to the request of discussing also the caste system ranged from claiming that the issue was an internal affair, not to be interfered with by the United Nations. Further adding to the wounds of victims of caste based discrimination, the Indian government ensured that, given the legislation in place, caste was no longer a problem that needed to be addressed.

In 2002 the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), noting that the existence of such discrimination has become evident, and strongly condemning descent based discrimination, such as discrimination on the basis of caste and analogous systems of inherited status, as a violation of the Convention, recommended measures of general and specific nature to avoid discrimination, segregation, dissemination of hate and to promote the civil, political, economic and social harmony.

**United Kingdom:** Evidence of Caste Discrimination in the form of case studies and testimonies were presented to Government by a number of organizations since 2004 in the UK including the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA), Dalit Solidarity Network UK, Caste Watch UK, the Federation of Ambedkarites and Buddhists Organizations UK, Voice of Dalit International, British Asian Christian Council, Mr. Guru Valmiki Sabha International, Central Valmiki Sabha International and the Association for Community Cohesion. The report 'Hidden Apartheid – Voice of the Community – Caste and Caste Discrimination in the UK' in November 2009 by the ACDA in collaboration with Professor Stephen Whittle OBE, Professor of Equalities Law University of Manchester and Dr Roger Green, Centre for Community Research, University of Hertfordshire was presented to Government.

The study in which over 300 people participated provided clear evidence that was required by Government.

Their demand was simple- "If Caste Discrimination is not treated in the same way as other forms of unacceptable discrimination in the UK, it will continue to flourish because it will have been left unchecked. In the long term this would hinder the creation of the much fairer and cohesive society to which the Government says it is committed".

### **The Movement:**

Mr. Rajinder Rattu, Community Activist and Managing Director, Neighborhood Consultancy Ltd says "Growing up in Birmingham I faced tremendous caste discrimination and ill treatment because I was a Dalit (or Untouchable) at the hands of so called high caste people. I became involved in the anti-caste movement so that victims of modern day discrimination would have a voice and legal redress".

### **Anti-Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA)**

ACDA a voluntary organization and an Umbrella body for a number of groups and organizations who were working to eliminate Caste Discrimination in the UK played a major role in organizing and taking up the issue in the United Kingdom. Hidden Apartheid, Voice of Community – Caste and Caste Discrimination in the UK prepared its report in November 2009.

The Key findings of the report were:

- 45% stated that they had been either treated in a negative way by their co workers (20%), or had had dismissive comments made about them on account of their caste (25%);
- 9% believed they had missed promotion at work due to their caste;
- 9% stated they had experienced verbal abuse;
- 7% said that, when they were under 12 years old, they had been subjected to threatening behaviour, and 16% to verbal abuse;
- 10% of perpetrators of caste-based discrimination for the under 12s were said to have been teachers, and 42% fellow pupils;
- 13% stated that a community nurse had asked them directly or indirectly about their caste;
- 18% stated that they knew the Caste system existed because of places of worship specific to particular castes;
- 58% confirmed that they had been discriminated against because of their caste;
- 79% believed they would not be understood appropriately by the UK police service if they

reported a "hate crime" incident based on Caste-based discrimination;

- 85% were aware that there is no legislation in place to protect victims of Caste based discrimination.

“As long as caste in India does exist, Hindus will hardly intermarry or have social intercourse with outsiders; as Hindus migrate to other regions of the earth, Indian caste would become a world problem.” This was stated by Dr. Ambedkar way back in 1916 in his first published paper ‘Caste in India’ which was subsequently published in the Indian Antiquary of May 1917, before being published in the book form and became the first published work of Dr. Ambedkar.

The caste Hindus proved the fears of Dr. Ambedkar. What Dr. Ambedkar said in 1916 became a reality in U.K. One can only escape the poison if he migrates to a country where there are no Hindus. Once they come, the pest of caste follows.

### **The Economics of Caste**

Dr. Ambedkar saw in his own country that Industry, Trade, Finance and the controlling positions in the Indian Economy are monopolized by few castes. "Caste system is not merely division of labour. It is division of labourers. It has affected the mobility, efficiency and dignity of labourers. While visiting the narrow lanes of Industrial areas and speaking to labourers he found that caste system has proved to be an 'Unnatural division of labourers into water-tight compartments.

One has to carefully understand the economics of caste, otherwise those upholding the sacred religion which prohibited touch of an untouchable, which polluted them by a mere touch would not have been controlling and owning the biggest businesses in India like export of beef and meat, the biggest pathology labs which collect urine and shit samples, the professions of doctors where post-mortem of dead body is to be done, collecting the leftover food in flights and disposal of waste plates and owning the biggest toilet chains in India.

### **Equality Act:**

The inclusion of Section 9(5) A in the Equality Act 2010 provides for Caste to be treated as an aspect of Race if independent evidence of Caste-based Discrimination comes to light.

According to the study of National Institute of Economic and Social Research UK, “There is clear evidence from the survey and the focus groups that the caste system has been imported into the UK with the Asian Diaspora and that the associated discrimination affects citizens in ways beyond personal choices and social interaction.”

The victory in the House of Lords sent a strong and unequivocal message that discrimination on the grounds of Caste has no place in the U.K. After a setback in house of Commons, for the third time in 6 weeks, Dalit groups,

communities and campaign organizations made a call to rally in Parliament Square to continue to urge the government to do the necessary to legislate against caste discrimination in the UK. Their call was again answered as coach loads of people from across the country joined members of Caste Watch UK, Dalit Solidarity Network UK, Voice of Dalit International, Federation of Ambedkarite Buddhist Organizations UK, Central Valmik Sabha UK, Indian Christian Concern and Dr Ambedkar Memorial Committee GB, as well as scores of regional and community organizations and met at the rally.

As the Shadow Junior Minister for Equalities Kate Green, MP and Ms. Seema Malhotra, MP, came out to the crowd to break the momentous news – the UK Parliament had passed the amendment without the need for a vote, as there was cross-party consensus!

Kate Green announced that Caste discrimination would soon be outlawed in the UK which brought cheers and whoops from the 1000 people present.

‘This is a major victory for us. Our planned demonstration in Parliament Square today to protest against the Government’s stand on the issue has now turned into a celebration,’ said Caste Watch UK General Secretary Davinder Prasad, who has been spearheading a campaign in favour of caste-based discrimination to be included in the UK’s equality laws.

Today, with power and strength of communities and wisdom of British Parliament a last push was given to bury it for good. I pay tributes to all who stayed the course and witnessed the epoch making event. There was singing, dancing and as ever with us Asians – a plethora of delicious food and snacks to be had and shared by all with everyone there.

### **Blacks and Dr. Ambedkar**

It is no exaggeration to say that the fate of the Israelites in Egypt, or the life of the Blacks in America or the condition of the Jews in Germany was better than the life of Scheduled Castes in India, their own land. At a Pacific Relations conference in Canada, Dr. Ambedkar related the problems of Untouchables to be worse than the problems of Slaves, Blacks and Jews. He stated that the problem of untouchability is worse than racism. ‘There is a South Africa in every village of India’, he said.

### **India**

The Indian Constitution has formally abolished castes in 1950. Among other, articles 15, Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, 17, Abolition of Untouchability, 29, Protection of interests of minorities and 46, Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections, clearly ban the discriminatory nature of caste forbidding any discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth and provide for proper protection against caste-based discrimination. Following such constitutional guarantees, the Indian government has



successively passed the Protection of Civil Rights Act (1955), the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act (1976), the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act (1989) and the Employment of Manual Scavenging and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act (1993).

Despite these efforts, the effects of these and related laws have been in many cases painfully slow, if not negligible. And, by reaction, caste violence is on constant rise since the early 1990s, causing thousands of deaths. The point is India is not lacking laws, but law enforcement or, in other words, political will, not only in those rural regions where the main part of the population (and over 80 per cent of the dalits) are living, but also in cities, workplaces, central and state government departments, public sector undertakings where the policy of reservation is implemented, where the SC-ST employees are at the mercy of their castiest bosses, the private sector is not behind as in India the name suggests the caste of an Individual, discrimination exists everywhere. The atrocities like Khairlanji and Dharmपुरi continue even after existing laws.

**Lessons to be learnt:** The Dalits in India need to learn from the U.K success story of different Dalit organisations uniting for a common cause, their show of strength and power, the perseverance. While there is absolutely no harm in having

number of organisations, they need to honestly take up the cause which their saviour Dr. Ambedkar began more than a century ago.

Dr. Ambedkar said "I shall be satisfied if I make the Hindus realize that they are the sick men of India and that their sickness is causing danger to the health and happiness of other Indians".

The damage has been done, not only to other Indians but also globally. Countries which never witnessed the unusual and absurd phenomenon of Caste are now testimony to hundreds of caste apartheid incidents. The U.K government has shown wisdom and acumen to outlaw caste discrimination. The Indian government already has laws in place, the only thing needed is - implementation in true spirit.

The Indian government will have to tackle the caste plight more seriously than ever in the next few years, not only because India is now exposed to increasing international relations and scrutiny, but even because this shaming and perverse system is already acting as a political destabilizing factor, so that the future of the whole Indian society will strongly depend on the solutions given to this issue.

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The Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode of education is now being preferred not only by the disadvantaged and drop-outs but also by those who need an easy access to school education. Open learning is a system of learning guided by the philosophy of freedom to learn without the constraints that are characteristics of conventional education. Distance education is a mode of education, a methodology adopted to make open learning possible. Open learning is a philosophy which is characterized by learner - centeredness, openness in terms of learners' access to educational provisions, flexibility in the organization of learning and process of achieving success in learning. On the other hand, distance education is a mode or methodology of organizing learning experiences to achieve the objectives of open learning. Distance education is a modality, which permits the delivery of study materials by means of multiple media without the necessity of regular classroom participation and wherein the individuals themselves are responsible for their own learning. Open learning, in this sense, is characterized by its progressive outlook and innovative and flexible approach. It places more emphasis on the learner's need, interests etc. than anything else. Studying through the open and distance learning mode requires great commitments on the part of the students. Once they are enrolled in a course, they will need to complete assignment and examinations according to a specific schedule. Being working adults, they find it helpful to get support of their employees and their family. This support keeps them motivated.

The emergence of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System has been a natural and phenomenal evolution in the history of education development towards the latter half of the twentieth century. While the conventional system continues to the mainstream of educational transaction, it has its own limitations with regard to expansion, access, and equity and cost effectiveness. Major challenges that India faces today in the educational arena are:

- The challenge of numbers,
- The challenge of credibility, and
- The challenge of quality.

Although Open Distance Learning (ODL) has travelled a long journey and has been steadily growing in stature in its various *avatars*, somehow residual prejudice about its status and effectiveness *viz-a-viz face to face mode* as a second rate or inferior mode of education still continues. The developed countries have got over this hangover due to their long experience and expertise is using different types of technologies to upgrade, innovate and compete while using distance education as a mode and strategy. It is commonplace to mention here that developing countries, for obvious reasons, are yet to catch up with educational practices that are urgently needed but not yet in place precisely for the reason of not having enough experience and expertise. The most critical issue here is to convince the academia in the developing world that hard evidence based on credible research is the only way to remove the stigma as

well as prejudice against the efficacy and efficiency of ODL (Ramaanujam , 2010).

*In fact, Shachar and Neumann (2003) in their meta analysis concluded that:*

Based on 86 studies and using learning outcome data from over 15,000 participating students, the results of the meta analysis show a strong positive trend indication that Distance education is an effective form of instruction. This analysis demonstrates that students engaged in Distance Education mode have academically outperformed as compared their face to face (F2F) counterparts.

Realizing that there are immense opportunities for human resource development in the field of agriculture, manufacturing and social services sectors for developing countries like India, a properly planned and effectively implemented Vocational Education and Training (VET) system through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) will;

- (i) Equip the learners having varying learning abilities with particular emphasis on marginalized groups with appropriate skills for sustainable livelihood,
- (ii) Facilitate creation of a pool of technologically qualified human resource, and
- (iii) Make the youth entrepreneurs.

However, in many countries, particularly in developing countries, the Vocational Education and Training (VET) program under the formal education system faces certain limitations with regard to expansion, access, and equity and cost effectiveness. Consequently a large number of individuals who would like to acquire competencies and skills are excluded from the benefits of VET.

There is a need (i) to sensitize the society about the importance of VET in the context of reduction of unemployment and poverty, (ii) to bring about attitudinal changes in the society to ensure dignity of labour thereby diverting more people to join skill based programs for earning livelihood and (iii) to provide equitable access to Vocational Education and Training (VET) program.

*Certain other challenges that need to be addressed are:*

1. Need to meet the constantly changing requirements of technology/industry with inbuilt flexibility to switch over courses with changes in demand pattern.
2. Quality improvement by involving industries in designing the courses, development

The revolution brought about by the growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has greatly facilitated the expansion of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System and permitted adopting a flexible, constructivist, learner friendly and multi-perspective approach to teaching learning process which is so essential for creativity, leadership and scholarship leading to total development of human personality and in responding appropriately to the challenges identified above.

### Vocational Education through NIOS

National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) is an apex Open Schooling organization in India. It operates through its five departments, 19 Regional centers and two regional sub-centers and network of study centers known as Accredited Institutes (AIs). Accredited Vocational Institutions (AVIs) and Special Accredited Institutions for the Education of the Disadvantaged (SAIEDs) spread all over the country. The National Institutes of Open Schooling (NIOS) is committed to enhance the quality of its courses, learners support services, capacity building of the open schooling functionaries. Vocational education program is an integral part of the scheme of studies of the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). **The objective of the NIOS vocational education program is to ensure that educational opportunities for development of vocational skills are provided to learners so as to enable them to become entrepreneurs capable of running their own businesses. The emphasis of the vocational education program is to develop a cadre of skilled persons that are capable of being a job providers rather than job seekers.**

Presently, 97 vocational courses of NIOS are offered in broad areas such as agriculture, engineering & technology, health & paramedical, home science, business and commerce, computer science and IT, teachers training, library science amongst others. The range of courses has been expanding upon learners' needs and market demands. The present courses of NIOS relate to both urban and rural sectors, for women and school dropouts, SCs/STs, etc.

The NIOS vocational courses are offered at pre secondary, secondary, senior and post secondary levels. The pre-secondary courses are linked to the open Basic Education Programs of NIOS. Life enrichment courses are also offered as non credit courses under the vocational stream. These vocational courses are for literate to the senior Secondary level and from six months to two years duration.

Admission to these courses takes place twice in one calendar year. The vocational courses are delivered through professionally managed bodies called Accredited Vocational Institutes (AVIs) which are responsible for the hands on training, providing career counseling to the students; enroll students and conducts practical examination. Students, who want to join vocational courses of NIOS, can visit to the nearby Accredited Vocational Institute of NIOS (AVIs) and can enroll for course.

#### Why to join vocational courses of NIOS?


- a. Minimum age for admission is 14 years and in certain courses 18 yrs. No upper age limit
- b. Admission is valid for five years
- c. Nine attempt to clear the course
- d. Facility of re-registration
- e. NIOS provides self learning study material
- f. Large network of study centers
- g. More emphasis on skill training
- h. Examination after every six months
- i. Affordable course fee.

**Come join NIOS, learn with flexibilities and earn with pride.**

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(Author is Director - Vocational Education at National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), Noida)



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## Labour and Parliamentary Democracy

Speech by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar

*(Speech delivered at the concluding session of the all India Trade Union Workers' Study Camp held in Delhi from 8<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> September 1943 under the auspices of the Indian Federation of Labour)*

I appreciate very much the kind invitation of your Secretary to come and address you this evening. I was hesitating to accept this invitation and for two reasons. In the first place I can say very little which can bind the Government. Secondly I can say very little about Trade Unionism in which you are primarily interested. I accepted the invitation because your Secretary would not take a "No" from me. I also felt that this was probably the best opportunity I can have to speak out my thought on Labour organization in India which have been uppermost in my mind and which I thought may even interest those who are primarily interested in Trade Unionism.

The Government of human society has undergone some very significant changes. There was a time when the Government of human society had taken form of autocracy by Despotism. This was replaced after a long and bloody struggle by a system of government known as Parliamentary Democracy. It was felt that this was the last word in the frame work of government. It was believed to bring about the millennium in which every human being will have the right to liberty, property and pursuit of happiness. And there were good grounds for such high hopes. In Parliamentary Democracy there is Legislature to express the voice of the people; there is the Executive which is subordinate to the Legislature and bound to obey the Legislature. Over and above the Legislature and the Executive there is the Judiciary to control both and keep them both within prescribed bounds. Parliamentary Democracy has all the marks of a popular Government, a government of the people, by the people and for the people. It is, therefore, a matter of some surprise that there has been a revolt against Parliamentary Democracy although not even a century has elapsed since its universal acceptance and inauguration. There is revolt against it in Italy, in Germany, in Russia and in Spain, and there are very few countries in which there has not been discontent against Parliamentary Democracy. Why should there be this discontent and dissatisfaction against Parliamentary Democracy? It is a question worth considering. There is no country in which the urgency of considering this question is greater than it is in India. India is negotiating to have Parliamentary Democracy. There is a great need of some one with sufficient courage to tell Indians "Beware of Parliamentary Democracy, it is not the best product, as it appeared to be."

Why has Parliamentary Democracy failed? In the country of the dictators it has failed because it is machine whose movements are very slow. It delays swift action. In a Parliamentary Democracy the Executive may be held up by the Legislature which may refuse to pass the laws which the Executive wants, and if it not held up by the Legislature it may be held up by the Judiciary which may declare the laws as illegal. Parliamentary Democracy gives no free hand to Dictatorship, and that is why it is a discredited institution in countries like Italy, Spain and Germany which are ruled by

Dictators. If Dictators alone were against Parliamentary Democracy it would not have mattered at all. Their testimony against Parliamentary Democracy would be no testimony at all. Indeed Parliamentary Democracy would be welcomed for the reason that it can be an effective check upon Dictatorship. But unfortunately there is a great deal of discontent against Parliamentary Democracy even in countries where people are opposed to Dictatorship. That is the most regrettable fact about Parliamentary Democracy. This is all more regrettable because Parliamentary Democracy has not been at a standstill. It has progressed in three directions. It has progressed by expanding the notion of Equality of Political rights. There are very few countries having Parliamentary Democracy which have not adult suffrage. It has recognized the principle of Equality of social and Economic opportunity. And thirdly it has recognised that the state cannot be held at bay by corporations which are anti-social in their purpose. With all this, there is immense discontent against Parliamentary Democracy even in countries pledged to Democracy. The reasons for discontent in such countries must obviously be different from those assigned by the dictator countries. There is no time to go into details. But it can be said in general terms that the discontent against Parliamentary Democracy is due to the realization that it has failed to assure to the masses the right to liberty, property or the pursuit of happiness. If this is true, it is important to know the causes which have brought about this failure. The causes for this failure may be found either in wrong ideology or wrong organization, or in both. I think the causes are to be found in both. As an illustration of wrong ideology which has vitiated Parliamentary Democracy I can only deal with only two. I have no doubt that what has ruined Parliamentary Democracy is the idea of freedom of contract. The idea became sanctified and was upheld in the name of liberty. Parliamentary Democracy took no notice of economic inequalities and did not care to examine the result of freedom of contract on the parties to the contract, should they happen to be unequal. It did not mind if the freedom of contract gave the strong the opportunity to defraud the weak. The result in that Parliamentary Democracy is standing out as protagonist of Liberty has continuously added to the economic wrongs of the poor, the down-trodden and the dis-inherited class. **The second wrong ideology which has vitiated Parliamentary Democracy is the failure of realize that political democracy cannot succeed where there is no social and economical democracy.** Some may question this proposition. To those who are disposed to question it, I will ask a counter question. Why Parliamentary Democracy collapsed so easily in Italy, Germany and Russia? Why did not collapsed so easily in England and the U.S.A.? To my mind there is only one answer ---namely, there was a greater degree of economic and social democracy in the latter countries than it existed in the former. Social and economic democracy are the tissues and the fiber of a political

Democracy. The tougher the tissue and the fiber, the greater the strength of the body. Democracy is another name for equality. Parliamentary Democracy developed a passion for liberty. It never made even a nodding acquaintance with equality. It failed to realize the significance of equality, and did not even endeavour to strike a balance between liberty and equality, with the result that liberty swallowed equality and has left a progeny of inequities.

I have referred to the wrong ideologies which in my judgment have been responsible for the failure of Parliamentary Democracy. But I am equally certain that more than bad ideology it has bad organization which has been responsible for the failure of Democracy. All political societies get divided into two classes - the Rulers and the Ruled. This is an evil. If the evil stopped here it would not matter much. But the unfortunate part of it is that the division becomes stereotyped and stratified so much so that the Rulers are always drawn from the Ruling class and the class of the Ruled never becomes the Ruling class. **People do not govern themselves, they established a government and leave it to govern them, forgetting that is not their government.** That being the situation, Parliamentary Democracy has never been a government of the people or by the people, and that is why it has never been a government for the people. **Parliamentary Democracy, notwithstanding the paraphernalia of a popular government, is in reality a government of a hereditary subject class by a hereditary ruling class.** It is this vicious organization of political life which has made Parliamentary Democracy such a dismal failure. It is because of this Parliamentary Democracy has not fulfilled the hope it held out the common man of ensuring to him liberty, property and pursuit of happiness.

The question is who is responsible for this? There is no doubt that if Parliamentary Democracy has failed to the benefit the poor, the labouring and the down trodden classes, it is these classes who are primarily responsible for it. In the first place, they have shown a most appalling indifference to the effect of the economic factor in the making of men's life. Someone very recently wrote a book called the 'End of the Economic Man'. We cannot really talk of the End of the Economic Man for the simple reason that the Economic Man was never born. The common retort to Marx that man does not live by bread alone is unfortunately a fact. I agree with Carlyle that the aim of civilization can not be merely to fatten men as we do pigs. But we are far off from that stage. The labouring class far from being fat like pigs are starving, and one wishes that they thought of bread first and everything else afterwards.

Marx propounded the doctrine of the Economic interpretation of History. A great controversy has raged over its validity. To my mind Marx propounded it not so much as doctrine as a direction to Labour that if Labour cares to make its economic interests paramount, as the owning classes do, history will be a reflection of the economic facts of life more than it has been. If the doctrine of Economic interpretation of History is not wholly true it is because the labouring class as a whole has failed to give economic facts the imperative force they have in determining the terms of

associated life. The Labouring classes have failed to acquaint itself with literature dealing with the government of mankind. Everyone from the Labouring Classes should be acquainted with Rousseau's Social contract, Marx's Communist Manifesto, Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical on the conditions of Labour and John Stuart Mill on Liberty, to mention only four of the basic programmatic documents on social and governmental organization of modern times. But the labouring classes will not give them the attention they deserve. Instead labour has taken delight reading false and fabulous stories of ancient kings and queens and has become addicted to it.

There is another and a bigger crime which they have committed against themselves. They have developed no ambition to capture government, and are not even convinced of the necessity of controlling government as a necessary means of safeguarding their interest. Indeed, they are not even interested in government. Of all the tragedies which have beset mankind, this is the biggest and the most lamentable one. Whatever organization there is, it has taken form of Trade Unionism. I am not against, Trade Unions. They serve a very useful purpose. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that Trade Unions are a panacea for all the ill of labour. Trade Unions, even if they are powerful, are not strong enough to compel capitalists to run capitalism better. Trade Unions would be much more effective if they had behind them a Labour Government to rely on. Control of Government must be the target for Labour aim at. Unless Trade Unionism aims at controlling government, trade unions will do very little good to the workers and will be a source of perpetual squabbles among Trade Union Leaders.

The third besetting sin of the labouring classes is the easy way which they are lead away by an appeal to Nationalism. The working classes who are beggared in every way and who have very little to spare, often sacrifice their all to the so-called cause of Nationalism. They have never cared to enquire whether the nationalism for which they are to make their offerings will, when established, give them social and economic equality. More often than not, the free independent national state which emerges from a successful nationalism and which reared on their sacrifices turns to be the enemy of the working class under the hegemony of their masters. This is the worst kind of exploitation that Labour has allowed itself to be subjected to.

If the working classes have to live under a system of Parliamentary Democracy then it must devise the best possible means to turn it to their benefit. As far as I can see, two things are necessary if this object is to be achieved. First thing to do is to discard mere establishment of Trade Unions as the final aim and object of Labour in India. It must declare that its aim is to put labour in charge of Government. For this it must organize a Labour Party as a political party. Such a party will no doubt cover Trade Unions in its organization. But it must be free from the narrow and cramping vision of Trade Unionism, with its stress on the immediate gain at the cost of ultimate benefit and with the vested right of Trade Union officials to represent Labour. It must equally dissociate itself from communal or capitalistic political parties such as the Hindu Mahasabha or the



Congress. There is no necessity for Labour to submerge itself in the Congress or the Hindu Mahasabha or be the camp followers of either, simply because these bodies claim to be fighting for the freedom of India. Labour by a separate political organization of its rank can serve both the purposes. It can fight the battle of India's freedom better by freeing itself from the clutches of the congress and the Hindu Mahasabha. It can prevent itself from being defrauded in the name of nationalism. What is most important is that it will act as a powerful check on the irrationalism of Indian politics, Congress politics is claimed to be revolutionary. That is why it has secured a large number of followers. But it is also a fact that Congress politics has brought nothing but frustration. The reason is Congress politics is so irrational and it is irrational largely because Congress has no rival. A Labour Party in India would be most welcome corrective to this irrationalism which has dominated Indian Politics for the last two decades. The second thing for Labour in India to realize is that without knowledge there is no power. When a Labour Party is formed in India and when such a party puts forth its claim to be installed on the Gadi before the electorate, the question, whether Labour is fit to govern, is sure to be asked. It would be no answer to say that Labour could not govern worse or display greater bankruptcy in

*(Reproduced from Page 106 to 112 of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches Volume 10 Titled as "Dr Ambedkar as Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council 1942 – 46". The views expressed by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar are very much relevant even today after more than six decades of Parliamentary Democracy in India)*

home or foreign affairs than the other classes. Labour will have to prove positively that it can govern better. Let it not also be forgotten that the pattern of Labour Government is a very difficult one than that of the other classes. Labour government cannot be a government of laissez faire. It will be a government which must essentially be based on a system of control. A system of control needs a far greater degree of knowledge and training than a laissez faire government does. Unfortunately, Labour in India has not realized the importance of study. All that Labour leaders in India have done, is to learn how best to abuse Industrialists. Abuse and more abuse has become the be-all and end-all of his role as a Labour leader.

I am, therefore, very glad to find that the Indian Federation of Labour has recognized this defect and has come forward to open these study circles for the Labouring Classes. They are going to be the most effective means of making Labour fit to govern. I hope the Federation will not forget the other necessity namely to inaugurate a Labour Party. When this is done, the Federation will deserve the thanks of the Labouring Classes to have raised them to the status of a governing class.



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**Dr. Ambedkar Memorial in USA**



Dr. Ambedkar International Centre (AIC) announced on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2013 that it has acquired a 13 acres property in Washington DC area with the aim of uniting all Ambedkarites in the USA and abroad and establishing a collective leadership that would work to build an enlightened society in South Asia based on Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's principles and vision.

Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar-father of modern India and the Indian constitution, graduate of Columbia University, Doctorate from London School of Economics (LSE) and the first Law Minister of India after its independence - was from a Dalit community and created constitutional rights for Dalits, women and other backward castes who were denied human rights in a society dominated by upper castes in India.

There are several teams, organizations, groups and non-profit agencies working to support people from underprivileged areas in India and South Asia. These organizations are working to develop an equitable society. In practice, some developments and improvements can be seen, but a large population of Dalits and tribes still suffer from discrimination and injustice in all walks of life throughout South Asia.

To find an effective way to resolve these problems of injustice and the atrocities that stem from it, Ambedkarites need to stand united and create a forum, where all interested and like-minded people and organizations in the United States of America can contribute and stand together to support, help, educate and create awareness. To enable campaign and advocacy efforts, peace and justice awareness camps, educational seminars and social and economical activities, as well as create a support base, the Dr. B. R. Ambedkar International Center (AIC) was formed.

Today Ambedkar International Centre is networking Ambedkarites all over the world.

Many existing factions of Ambedkarites groups can collectively raise their concerns here and stay united. The AIC will serve as a venue for social change initiatives, meetings, conferences, celebrations and the propagation of Dr. Ambedkar's philosophy throughout the United States. The broad objective of the AIC is to provide well-equipped facilities for learning, so academicians and students can undertake and disseminate the ideas of Babasaheb Dr. Bheemrao Ambedkar.

The AIC plans to establish a library containing speeches, books, pamphlets, newspapers, periodicals, microfilms, motion pictures, sound recordings, and other materials about Dr. Ambedkar and his ideas. The library will also host seminars, symposia, conferences, workshops, lectures, exhibitions, and fairs concerning the life and mission of Dr. Ambedkar. Acquiring property for the AIC in Washington DC area is a monumental historic achievement. Every great journey begins with a single step and acquiring this property is AIC's first step towards its vision and goals.

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## Dhammapada in Poetry Form

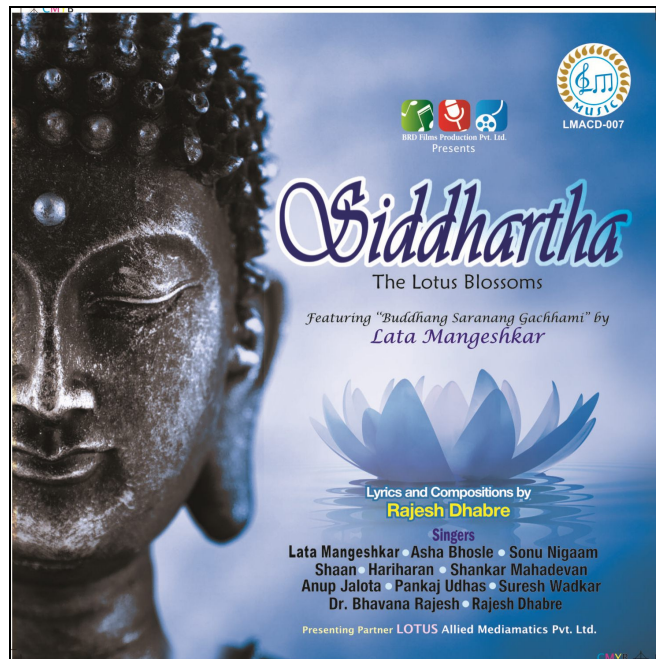


The Dhammapada, is the best known and most widely esteemed text in the Pali Tipitaka, the sacred scriptures of Buddhism. The work is included in the Khuddaka Nikaya ("Minor Collection") of the Sutta Pitaka, but its popularity has raised it far above the single niche it occupies in the scriptures to the ranks of a world religious classic. Composed in the ancient Pali language, this slim anthology of verses constitutes a perfect compendium of the Buddha's teaching, comprising between its covers all the essential principles elaborated at length in the forty-odd volumes of the Pali. A Tamil writer and poet, Mr. Yazhan Athi, has translated the Dhammapada in Tamil in a poetry form. The Dhammapada, till date, has been translated in many languages, including Tamil in prose form. The Tamil Poetry version of the books was released May 2013 in Chennai by Buddha's Light International Association.

Mr. Yazhan Athi, a school teacher by profession, is presently residing in Ambur in Tamil Nadu. Mr Yazhan, as a writer and poet, has written many books, including many well known books such as Sevipparai, Isai Uthir Kaalam, Nedunthee and Kaspaa. He is recognized as one of the notable modern poet in Tamil language. The translation of Dhammapada to Tamil language has also been done using simple words which are easy to understand for a reader.

Mr. Yazhan Athi came to know about Buddhism thoughts through Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's writings. He says "I had

an opportunity to read Dr Ambedkar's 'Buddha and His Dhamma' and I got attracted to Buddhist thoughts."



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## Upcoming Events

### Spreading Buddhism Conference 2013

(World Buddhist Unity for Peace)

Buddhist in Asian countries, wherever they are in minorities, are facing problems arising out of racial discriminations, caste prejudice, international terrorism and social injustice at the hands of the ruling dominant groups / castes. In India, it is very much prevalent. As such, the existences of the Buddhist in India and in Asia are at stake.

It is widely known that the Indian Buddhist are discriminated on the grounds of the Caste and they are deprived of their legitimate and constitutional rights in respect of their share in Public Administration, Government Jobs and Private Entrepreneurship.

In the wake of these alarming situations, the CIVIL RIGHTS PROTECTIONS CELL invites the eminent Buddhist Monks, Scholars, Thinkers, Social Workers and Activists to attend the *Spreading Buddhism Conference 2013* to be held on 20 & 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2013 at Nagpur, Maharashtra State, India.

During the two days conference there will discussions on the following topics:-

1. **Buddha Sangiti:** Panel Discussions by Buddhist Monks on how to preserve and transfer ancient Buddhist culture to next generations.
2. **The Concept of Buddhist India:** Panel Discussions on how to fulfil the dream of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar of Buddhist India.

3. **Buddhist Code of Conduct:** Open Discussion on how to form a uniform Buddhist Code of Conduct which can be followed by all the Buddhist traditions in the world.
4. **Buddhism and Women Empowerment:** Panel Discussions
5. **Buddhist Literature:** Panel Discussions on role of Buddhist Literature in Spreading of Buddhism.
6. **Buddha's Economics –** Panel Discussion
7. Buddhist Poets gathering and cultural events (Buddhist Kavi Sammelan).

The organisers have also invited research papers from the scholars, which they can present during the conference. The paper should not exceed 3000 words and it should reach the organisers latest by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013. Interested individuals can get in touch with Dr. Milind Jiwane, Chairman and Chief Organizer, Civil Rights Protection Cell, Nagpur, Maharashtra State, India. Contact No. +91-9370984138 / +91-9890586822 / dr.milindjiwane@yahoo.com or / and civilrightsprotectioncell@yahoo.in.

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Celebration at Columbia University, New York, USA



Ambedkar International Mission (AIM) has planned a grand Centenary Celebration of historical milestone in the life of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's i.e. admission to Columbia University, USA in 1913. It will be a day long program on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2013 which will be attended by the delegates from all over the world, prominent professors and intellectuals from USA. The celebration function will start at 9.00 AM and will end at 6.30 PM (USA Time) The organisers have invited the delegates from all over the world. AIM will also be publishing souvenir on this occasion and invited articles from all over the world.

AIM was formed in 1994 under the leadership of Mr. Raju Kamble who is present president. AIM's main objective is to unite the Ambedkarites from all over the world under one umbrella. Over last two decade, AIM has organised many functions in various countries. Bheem Jayanti and Buddha Jayanti celebrations are organised by AIM in all major countries in the world. Till date AIM has also organised two international conventions of Ambedkarites. The last convention was held in December 2011 at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The next International Convention is planned in UK and France in year 2014.

The individual, who are interested in attending the function on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2013 may get in touch with Mr. T N Urkude on +91-9869803940 or tnurkude@yahoo.com.





**Buddhist Business Network, India**

Buddhist Business Network (BBN) is a community of Professionals who run their individual businesses with a deep sense of Fraternity-Blue, Equality-Yellow, Exertion-Red, Liberty-White, and Wisdom-Orange. The professionals, necessarily, are risk-taking Entrepreneurs; bring ideas and values to actual life. Their success suggests economic well-being of the society.



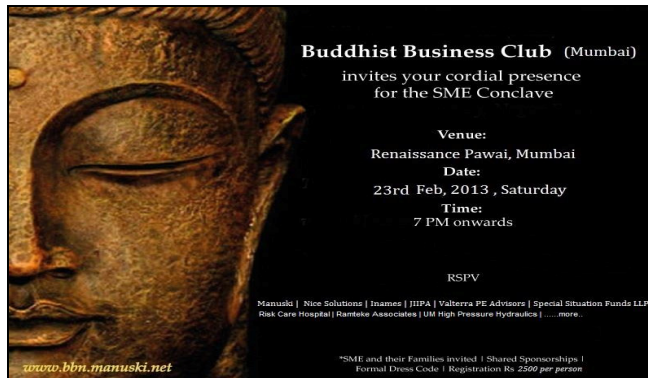
A Business Network was thought out in October 2005, when several businessmen from different Buddhist countries gathered in Nagpur. Larger Socio-economic benefits were anticipated due to the Buddhist Business Network (BBN). However, a world-wide reach-out plan was made only in 2009 and process of identifying Buddhist Business Enterprises started. Today BBN members are spread over following sectors:-

- Agro Sector: Textile, Food Product Export, Dyes
- Manufacturing Sector: Steel, Automobile, Construction
- Service Sector: Banking, Hospital, Real Estate, Hospitality
- Quaternary Sector: Law, Design, Finance Planning

At macroeconomic level, structural difficulties exist due to reasons of social and political nature. On the ground, logical expectations are of financial assistance, active resource mobilisation, market access and communication. While getting connected, Buddhist Enterprises shall share solutions on their problems increasing profitability and clientele reach.

The number of companies joining the network keeps rising every quarter due to BBN's unique services portfolio and member focus. Annual 20% growth in membership is directly apportioned to BBN's ability to connect and facilitate the businesses in East Asia.

The Buddhist Business Network welcomes the act of building solidarity amongst member Companies. The Companies share thoughts, concerns and resources within and without. The Network sends strategic missions in order to interact with various pressure groups and business ally in different Buddhist countries thereby lobbying and offering social security to its member Companies. Together socio-economic interests of the community and the Nation are preserved.





The Enterprises enter the Buddhist Business Network with many benefits in mind, few likely are:

- It enables Enterprises Share Resources
- It also helps Enterprises for joint publicity tools range
- Enterprises become part of Business Delegation across the territories
- Economic way to analyze Market forces
- Listing, prototyping, product ideas

BBN has been organising the Business Meet of Buddhist Business Persons (BBP) in order to increase the interactions and networking. Being headquartered at Pune, BBN organised its first BBN meet at Pune in September 2012. The meet was attended by the Buddhist Business Persons mainly from Pune and nearby area. After successful meet at Pune, BBN organised its second meet at Mumbai on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2013 at Hotel Renaissance, Powai, Mumbai. The Meet was attended by more than 100 BBPs from Mumbai and nearby area. BBN's 3<sup>rd</sup> Business Meet was in Nagpur on 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 at Jubilee Hall, Sun N Sand Hotel. Nagpur Meet was attended by more than 70 BBPs mainly from SME sector. BBN's 4<sup>th</sup> Business Meet was held 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2013 at MNR Plaza, Vijayapuri, Tarnaka, Hyderabad. Soon BBN will be organizing a Business Meet of BBPs in Chennai.

BBN has also planned a historical visit of BBPs from SME sector from India to Sri Lanka in July 2013. The delegation will have convention of two days at Colombo, Sri Lanka, followed by visit to various industrial projects in Sri Lanka. The main objective of BBN's Sri Lanka Meet is to organise interactive sessions with Sri Lankan Business Persons so that there can be exchange of ideas which can lead to business tie-ups amongst the Buddhist Business Persons from India and Sri Lanka.

Please feel free to contact the BBN Secretariat at the following address:

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