



DR. AMBEDKAR'S THOUGHTS ON BUDDHISM: AN OVERVIEW

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"History of India is nothing but a history of conflict between Buddhism and Brahminism"

-Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

ABSTRACT

According to Dr. Ambedkar, Hinduism was established on the concept of social stratification. To depart, one must attain equality and self-respect. The political and religious activity demonstrates that humans are friendly creatures as well. Society is necessary for him, even if he does not want or need it. According to Dr. Ambedkar, there is no hope for the untouchables in Hinduism. He was pretty correct in blaming Hinduism for the plight of the untouchables, their treatment, and their lack of respect. Consequently, Dr. Ambedkar urged the oppressed to turn to Buddhism to achieve equality in society. The present article provides more about Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts on Buddhism in this connection.

KEYWORDS: Hinduism, Self-respect, Buddhism, Jainism, Buddha or Karl Marx, the Buddha and his Dhamma.

INTRODUCTION:

According to Dr. Ambedkar, the Hindu religion could not exist without a system of social hierarchy. You had to realise that you were equal and respected to come out of it. A human being is more than just a political and religious person. It's possible he doesn't need religion or politics, but he must have society. Dr. Ambedkar thought that the untouchables had no hope in Hinduism. Rightly, he blamed Hinduism for the untouchables' social plight, degradation, and lack of respect. As a result, the only option to be free of Hinduism was to convert to Buddhism.

Dr. B. Ambedkar thought that the only way to free the Dalits was to convert them from Hinduism to another faith. It was one of his most important life goals. After fighting for the fundamental rights of Hinduism's Dalit population for more than two decades, he arrived at this conclusion. Dr. Ambedkar urged his followers to ponder the underlying reasons for their two-thousand-year-old woes. He blamed Hindu dharma for the problem. The disparities between caste and untouchability were first acknowledged in Hinduism. All the Hindu caste's wrongdoings against the Scheduled Castes have a face on this watch. He disliked saying this, but their situation had been that they couldn't live in the villages with any self-respect up until now. Consequently, he reaffirmed his view that he should forsake Hinduism and refuse to be subjected to any further humiliation.

Hinduism rejects human self-respect, a basic human need that can't be met just via food. Leaving Hinduism and converting to another faith will get them there. Untouchables have found that adapting to their environment benefits them and are no longer prone to atrocities. The Untouchables might regain their

dignity and respect by converting to another faith. Previously, Dr. Ambedkar had prophesied that Hindu civilization was inert, unchanging, and accepted by the Hindu faith. As the foundation of the Hindu arch, Caste examined the virtues of Hindu dharma against the merits of Buddhism and eventually opted to adopt Buddhism.

The following are Dr. Ambedkar's reasons for preferring Buddhism:

- Buddhism originated in India, where it was more accessible to the poor and oppressed.
- As for untouchability, he pointed out that today's untouchables were once Buddhists.
- By joining the global Buddhist community, the Untouchables might help pave the road for the international fraternity.

Ambedkar underlined that Buddha had spoken on behalf of the oppressed and the weak in society, emphasising the necessity for social and religious changes that would benefit the vulnerable, the impoverished, and the ignored. He went on to say, "Buddhism preaches equality not only between men and men, but also between men and women, in terms of social, intellectual, economic, and political freedom. Buddhism is a vital part of the Bhartiya culture, and he said thus the day before his conversion, "I've made it a point to avoid disrupting the rich history and culture of this region with my conversion.

When fighting Chaturvarna, the Buddha was the most formidable foe. Tore it apart with his words and deeds, preaching and fighting against it. Aiming to re-establish the oppressed sections of society, Ambedkar converted to Buddhism to raise it to contemporary democratic norms. Hindu caste groups' feeling of self-respect and dominance would offer the untouchables a platform from which they might pursue increased status in society and the economy.

Taking refuge in the Buddha-Dhamma was possible because of Dr. Ambedkar's path. India had a beautiful Buddhist era, which Ambedkar believes the untouchables once enjoyed. For the first time, Buddhism can give Scheduled castes with an immediate history, a spiritual legacy, and a sense of cultural pride, all of which are important for any community to thrive. Buddhism also can bring together disparate populations via the creation of several castes. Buddhism's founder, Buddha, allegedly claimed that the only way to rescue the world's last drop of water was to dive headfirst into the never-ending sea. These minorities must join the Buddha's religion, like an ocean of equality, to live as good human beings. In this ocean of equality, they may live with respect for themselves and dignity.

Lord Buddha was one of the most significant social, emotional, and spiritual revolutionaries of all time, and his teachings continue to inspire people today. To him, the Buddhist way of life held the promise of liberation and the possibility of a new society in which everyone may live in peace, dignity, and happiness. He was a revolutionary at his core.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, the roots of untouchability can be traced back to the fight between Brahminism and Buddhism and the measures Brahminism accepted to cement its dominance over Buddhism. When the Brahmins decided to stop eating meat, they devised a plan to worship the cow instead. He emphasised that Buddhism was once the primary religion practised by most Indians. For hundreds of years, it was the religion of the majority. He waged a worldwide crusade against Brahmanism, something no other religion had ever done. Buddhism had such a deep effect on people's minds that the Brahmins couldn't oppose the Buddhists without adopting their forms and methods and implementing the Buddhist belief system to its most extreme degree.

Ambedkar's decision to quit Hinduism was welcomed by Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs who wanted to help him find a new faith. Because of their deep-seated prejudice, indignities, and inequity, he chose the three religions other than Hinduism. Regardless of his inclination, in his address in Bombay, he compared the social systems of Hinduism and Islam, identifying caste within both communities. Caste plays an integral part in Hinduism, yet he establishes a clear delineation. Their faiths will not hinder a drive to abolish the caste system in Muslim and Christian religions. However, the Hindus can't cancel their caste system without

eliminating their faith. It is a certainty. According to Ambedkar, most present Hindus in India were Shudras and untouchable castes. "Most of India's current Sikh, Muslim, and Christian was initially Hindu.

Jains also appeared to change Vedic religion, like Buddhism. Both faiths rejected Vedic disloyalty and criticized Hinduism's Chaturvarna. The Jain religion has also worked to advance gender parity. Companionship is also emphasized as the fundamental foundation of Saddhamma's virtues of knowledge, morality, and kindness. It is well-known that the teachings of Buddha and the Jain Tirthankaras on karma, reincarnation, and ahimsa have many similarities.

The steps of activity in Jainism are marked by rigidity. Self-mortification, fasting, study, and meditation are essential components of the Jain belief system in clearing one's karma and gaining salvation. The route to enlightenment for a Buddhist is clear and straightforward. If you're a lay monk or devotee in the Buddhist community, you're welcome as long as you're willing to take refuge in the Three Jewels and adhere to the Sila by your abilities. The Buddha preached and demonstrated equality in all of his teachings and deeds. Genetic castes were not acceptable to him. He asserts that a man's place in society is not based on his birthplace but his values, behaviour, and character. The Dhamma does not differentiate between castes from a religious standpoint. All are welcomed into the Sangha without difference or hardship. His Bhikkhuni order was the first of its kind in the history of monasticism. Women were allowed to be consecrated, making it the first time in human history that women were allowed to have a religious role other than domestic. The Buddha lauded the spiritual fulfilment of the Bhikkhunis, who numbered in the tens of thousands. The Buddha raised women's place in society, making them aware of their significance. "Recognized the political right of women to join the Sangha, to become a leader, and to develop their own identity and uniqueness, independent of whatever assistance they may have received from males. The Buddha dispelled the family myth and that having sons was essential to achieving enlightenment. He was the first to see the need of educating women and empowering them to take part in politics."

According to Dr. Ambedkar the Sangha of Buddhists is like a sea. The Ganga and Mahanadi rivers may be identified as well as feasible. Similarly, when we join the Buddha Sangha, we are no longer caste-based. Only one great individual, the Lord Buddha, advocated this equality: he was a towering figure in his own right. Only Buddhism can fulfil man's needs for personal growth and also engender a desire for a political-ethical solution for the happiness of the whole human race. Besides reviving traditional Buddhism, Dr. Ambedkar also reframed and revitalised Buddhism as a religion for the present world. When Ambedkar crossed the original Pali writings, he rejected later Buddhist texts and made Buddhism more rational and logical than everyone would accept.

Ambedkar was influenced by Buddhism and saw the Buddha as a holy figure as a kid. He received a book about the biography of the Buddha, authored for Baroda Siyajirao Oriental, after passing his English language proficiency exam in the fourth grade. This is what piqued his interest in Buddhism and the Dhamma in the first place. After a while, he came to see that the Buddha's religion was the only one that could satisfy the religious needs of a contemporary man who knew science. After twenty-five years of study of all faiths, he came to believe in the existence of God. Finally, after a thorough examination of the Dhamma, he decides on Buddhism as his own free decision.

In Dr. Ambedkar's view, Gautam Buddha was the first social reformer and the most influential. It is impossible to measure the remarkable achievement of social reform in India without first looking at the history of the movement in India. Comments by Dr. Ambedkar: "There was a revolution in Buddhism. In terms of scope and impact, it was as significant as the French Revolution. Although it started as a religious movement, it evolved into something more. A social and political revolution has taken place. According to Dr. Ambedkar's observations: "The people of India formerly practised Buddhism. For hundreds of years, the religion of the people remained unchanged. He railed against Brahminism from every angle, as though it were the first religion ever created. The Brahmins were unable to oppose the Buddhists, except for the Buddhists, who had lost all of their authority and prestige among the people and were making every attempt to reclaim it. To adopt their methods and adhere to the extreme version of Buddhism. After Buddha's death, his followers started assembling Buddha images and constructing Stupas. The Brahmins followed him.

Thereupon, they erected sacred places like temples and adorned them with statues of the Hindu gods in the hope of deterring the hordes who had been drawn to the idea of Buddha worship.

Ambedkar emphasised that the Buddha agreed that every reality hypothesis must be tested. Rationalism must be the foundation of all thinking. According to him, the existence or creation of the cosmos by a deity was not supported by logic or evidence. The Buddha had three goals in mind when he rejected supernaturalism. firstly, Raising man on the road of rationality was his first choice. Secondly, he sought to liberate humanity from the burden of aiming for the absolute truth. Thirdly, Eliminating this most potent source of superstition would have a devastating effect on the spirit of inquiry.

A May 1950 Maha Bodhi magazine essay titled "Buddha and the Future of His Religion" highlighted his choice for Buddhism. Numerous religious leaders have shaped the world's religious landscape, but four stand out because of the influence they continue to have on millions of people today. Jesus Christ, Muhammad and Krishna are among them. When Jesus Christ, Muhammad, and Krishna are compared to the Buddha, it becomes evident that all three of these tremendous religious figures are God. Prophet Muhammad said that he was the final messenger on earth, much as Jesus did in the Bible. While Buddha referred to himself as an average guy and the son of an ordinary man and preached his gospel as a familiar person, Krishna took it a step further: He not only saw himself as God but as God of the Gods.

In his teaching, Dr. Ambedkar believed that the Buddha differentiated between Moksha and Margadata. Mokshadata is a title ascribed to Krishna, Jesus Christ, and Muhammad, although Buddha was content to be referred to as Margadata. According to Ambedkar, if the new world realises that it will be vastly different from the old, it must have a religion, and the new religion must have a religion for more than just the ancient world. As Ambedkar pointed out in the same piece, Buddhism is nothing without morality.

His social ideology may be summarised in three words: liberty, equality, and fraternity. He made this statement on All India Radio on October 3, 1954. However, no one claims that my ideology is based on the French Revolution. I'm out of luck. Rather than political science, my philosophy is rooted in religion, not in academic research, rather than political science. They come from the teachings of my Buddha Master. However, he does not feel that the law can safeguard abuses of liberty or equality in his philosophical framework of Liberty and Equality. As the only natural defence against the denial of freedom, equality, fraternity (another name for brotherhood) or humanity (yet another word for religion), he elevated fraternity to the most incredible honour. I chose Buddhism because it presents three precepts combined that no other faith does, Dr. Ambedkar declared in another BBC address on May 12, 1956, in London. Understanding against superstition and the supernatural, (Liberty) Karuna (compassion) and Samata (equality) are all taught in Buddhism (equality). It is what a happy and fulfilling existence requires of a man." Dr. Ambedkar added Buddha's remarks, "There are two things every man needs: "Gyan and Sheel," as the saying goes. "Gyan without Sheel poses a serious threat to one's safety. It refers to a person's character, moral bravery, and capacity to resist temptation."

Dr. Ambedkar thought that "anyone who knows the central teachings of the Buddha is quite disconcerted after reading the Sutta Pitaka when he is found wrapped in a mythical cloth, disfigured by additions of purely Brahminic ideas foreign to Buddhist thought original and distorted by the turns which give it the monastic ideas intended to respect the monastic ideals,"

In the last years of his career, Dr. Ambedkar also fought for Buddhism's freedom from Marxism. He disagrees with Karl Marx's worldview in its entirety. Buddha or Karl Marx" was a guide to the underlying Marxist ideology of Buddha. He claims that society is trying to create a new foundation based on equality, fraternity, and freedom. The phrase was widely accepted during the French Revolution. Unfortunately, it didn't produce equitable treatment.

For this reason, the Russian revolution was hailed by the populace. However, the importance of preserving liberty and equality cannot be overstated in the quest for social equality. Freedom and brotherhood are essential for equality.

Only if one is on the path of the Buddha can all three exist. Communism may provide certain benefits, but not all. Marx exclusively spoke about "economic justice," not "social justice," in his writings. He

also has a mindset that doesn't fit in with the Indian culture. In Marx's society, the "rich" can become the "poor" and vice versa. However, the social structure in India is vertical. A Brahmin cannot become an untouchable here. Birth determines a person's caste.

Consequently, there can be no advancement or relegation within the caste system. As a result, the Marxist theory does not apply in India, a civilisation arranged vertically. He has an advanced Marxist theory that "social justice," rather than economic or political justice, is more vital in a vertical society. Marxism is a purely materialistic and agnostic system of thought.

Among his most important works, "Buddha or Karl Marx," Ambedkar argued that Buddhism was superior to Marxism. "Exploitation" by the wealthy is at the heart of communism since it enslaves and oppresses the people, resulting in misery, poverty, and suffering. Private property must be abolished to prevent exploitation. The Buddha remarked, "There is Dukkha (Pain) in the world," even though he never used the term "exploitation." However, he never used "exploitation" to describe his religious beliefs, which he referred to as "Dukkha." For Buddha, "Dukkha" was a term for "poor," according to Ambedkar. Because everything, according to Buddha, is transient, he saw no use in waging war over material possessions.

'The Buddha and his Dhamma' was a concise, articulate, and rationalistic Buddhist message Ambedkar wrote in his Weapon Work. For him, the Dalits would not have a traditional Buddhist interpretation. As a result of his efforts, Buddhism was revitalised in its historical form and was also given new life and relevance in the modern world. He claims that Buddhism has its roots in a short formula. Everything must end if existence, death, and rebirth are all characterised by grief. According to him, this is not a feature of the current world, and Buddhism's only aim is to eliminate suffering in this world. It is difficult for non-Buddhists to embrace the gospels of Buddhism because of the four Arya truths.

Buddha's ethereal presence It is necessary for everyone to follow the Dhamma to end their suffering. "My Dhamma no doubt accepts the reality of suffering, but do not forget that it also stresses the removal of suffering," the Buddha declared in his first sermon. My Dhamma gives me both hope and a reason to live. Ambedkar argues forcefully in his book, The Buddha and His Dhamma that Buddhism can only alleviate social and natural suffering. To him, a coherent universal religion meant offering a morality that could have the power to reconstruct the world based on liberty, equality and fraternity. Everything in this universe has a reason, according to Buddhist teachings. There was no way Dr. Ambedkar would embrace the nonsensical idea that one's place in this life was decided by one's previous life's good or bad karma. Ambedkar rejected Dr. Karma as a rebirth and transmigration. He viewed this as a moral code in which all acts had repercussions that were not taken care of specifically for each person but instead worked at society.

Bhikkhus Sangha was to become a social service organization by Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar pointed out that the Buddha kept the layperson in mind while teaching, eliminating the ambiguity that the Buddha primarily addressed to the Bhikkhus. He claims that the earliest Buddhist teachings contained the Five Precepts and Eight Paths directed to the householders. His vision of a Dhamma-realizing society is embodied in the Sangha, which he views as a role model for all other societies. To carry on Buddha's ideal society's flame, the Upasaka had no choice but to follow Bhikkhu as closely as he dared to do so. A Bhikkhu is expected to exhibit proper conduct. When it comes to his actions and demeanour, he needs to be a role model for others. A Bhikkhu's ability to guide others is limited if they aren't self-aware. As a result, he must be a morally faultless, fair, and enlightened human being himself. To accomplish so, he must engage in self-improvement and community service.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, Buddhism, or Dhamma, differed fundamentally from all other forms of religion. Religion is defined as the practice of praying, performing rituals, and offering sacrifices to appease a higher power, such as one's belief in God or the soul. Dhamma is social teaching. Righteousness refers to a harmonious interaction between man and man in all aspects of life, which Dhamma teaches. As a result, religion serves as a tool for illuminating the universe. To repair the world, the Dhamma is the ultimate goal of the teachings. Unlike Vedic or Brahminic philosophy, Dr. Ambedkar viewed Buddha's Dhamma as distinct. However, Ambedkar argued that "the Buddha's Dhamma had nothing to do with God and the soul, life after

death or the concern for prayers, rituals and ceremonies," which is contrary to what most Brahmins think of when they hear the word "dharma." In his earthly existence, however, the primary focus of his Dhamma was on the individual human being and the relationships he had with other humans.

Buddhism, according to Ambedkar, is nothing more than reason. In Buddha's view, there was no absolute truth or certainty. Anything and everything should be up for grabs. To re-examine, one must know the truth and be confident that freedom of thought was the only way to uncover the truth. No divine mandate or supreme entity gave rise to the Buddha's Dhamma, a natural rule found by an awakened Buddha for the benefit of all sentient beings. According to Buddha Dhamma, there is no one else who can justify or remove the wrongdoing of committing a crime. The ramifications of these offences must be taken into consideration.

Ambedkar favoured Buddhism because it was founded on the teachings of a scientifically-minded Buddha who was also a symbol of freedom for all people. In his view, the Buddha Dhamma is centred on the individual; it is based on morality, and its goal is the well-being of mankind. The Buddha's way is unquestionably beneficial to the oppressed, the nation, and all of mankind. The freedom that comes from following this path, which enables people to mingle in all areas of life freely, includes freedom from slavery and freedom from the rigidity of caste systems. As Dr. Ambedkar points out, Buddhism also emphasizes the individual's independence in terms of social, intellectual, economic, and political affairs. As a result, Buddha advocated for equality between men and women, not only between men and women.

Dr. Ambedkar urged the despondent classes to turn to Buddhism for solace and solace they received. Furthermore, he claimed he would dedicate the rest of his life to the restoration and dissemination of Buddhist teachings inside the country of India. Dr. Ambedkar's "three commandments" for the emancipation of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Castes, and Minorities are education, agitation, and organization, which he outlined. Note that the Buddhist Tri Saranas were the inspiration for Dr. Ambedkar's three commandments: The enlightened one, the educated one is Buddhah (Educate). The terms "Dhamma" (agitation) and "Sangham" (organization), both of which refer to the Bhikkhus' collective effort to safeguard the Dhamma, are used interchangeably. He coined these three golden mantras after studying time-tested Buddhist beliefs.

The conversion was an important aspect of Dr. Ambedkar's social effort to eliminate untouchability and elevate the underprivileged population in India. All men, not only those oppressed, benefit from following the Buddha's teachings. On the other hand, Dr. Ambedkar was persuaded that Buddhism's core principles are universally applicable.

CONCLUSION:

According to Dr. Ambedkar, Buddhism was a religion that could benefit the whole globe, not only India. Dr. Ambedkar was dissatisfied with all of the existing religious systems in existence. It dawned on him that the traditional priestly worship and teachings that define several prominent religions, notably Hinduism, would not rescue humanity. Varnashram Dharma's cultural and social legacies would not influence his vision of an independent India, rooted in the Buddhist ideals of freedom, equality, and brotherhood. Consequently, Dr. Ambedkar advocated for the spread of Buddhism in India, particularly among the downtrodden and underprivileged sections.

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