

# **PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL REVOLUTION**

**Ideas of Leading Thinkers on  
Basic Change in Indian Society**

Editor

**Prof. Rakesh Sinha**



**भारत नीति प्रतिष्ठान  
India Policy Foundation**

It is mandatory to give credit to

the publication for using its

content for reference.

Published by :

**India Policy Foundation**

D-51, Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110016 (India)

Tele: 011-26524018

Fax: 011-46089365

E-mail: [indiapolicy@gmail.com](mailto:indiapolicy@gmail.com)

Website: [www.indiapolicyfoundation.org](http://www.indiapolicyfoundation.org)

Edition:

First : August, 2014

ISBN : 978-81-925223-9-5

© India Policy Foundation

Price :

Rupees One Hundred only (Rs. 100.00)

Printed at :

I'M World

C-33, Sector 10,

Noida

# CONTENTS

1.	<b>Introduction</b>	01
2.	<b>VHP's Udupi Resolution</b> Untouchability is Anti-Dharma	13
3.	<b>M S Golwalkar</b> Theory of Repent and Humility	19
4.	<b>Balasaheb Deoras</b> Untouchability - Symbol of Repression and Cruelty	27
5.	<b>Dattopant Thengadi</b> The Guiding Principles of Social Equality	47



# 1 INTRODUCTION

Thoughts not only influence personal life, structure of the society, culture and civilization but also decide their course. Stagnation of ideas is hence harmful to any civilization, society or organization. For ideas to be effective what is required is not just freedom of expression, but also a critical approach and creative ability. It was primarily the stagnation of ideas that was responsible for the decline of the Roman Civilization in the ancient times and Marxism in the modern era.

There are several living examples of civilizations and nations where result-oriented efforts were made to end this stagnation. Till the middle of the 19th century slavery, unacceptable in any civilized society, was prevalent in some states in America. The American President, Abraham Lincoln, fought a decisive battle against it and the nation had to pass through a civil war. Lincoln was not just a politician but also a great thinker with enormous social concern. That was the reason why, when the menace of slavery was not addressed at the level of society, he took a decisive political step. It is estimated that the number of injured, missing and killed soldiers in the civil war was around 51,000. The Gettysburg memorial built to commemorate the victims of the Civil War was inaugurated on November 19, 1863. Lincoln was the chief guest on the occasion and Edward Everett was the

main speaker. Everett spoke for about two hours. His speech was based on bookish knowledge and was quite scholarly. When his turn came, Lincoln finished his speech in just two minutes. People were disappointed but what he said in two minutes has become the universal definition of democracy. Democracy, he said, was “the government of the people, for the people and by the people” and this fact would never change.

The second example is that of South Africa. There was a long struggle against racism and finally apartheid ended there and the blacks got the right to rule. Nelson Mandela provided leadership to the Anti-Apartheid struggle. After taking over reins of governance, Mandela doused the flames of revenge, shut retaliation and revenge out of the socio-political discourse. He provided the practitioners of racism an opportunity for atonement. The South-African government constituted a '*Truth and Reconciliation Commission*'. This was an exemplary experiment. Inherent to both these historical events were both victory and loss. Both in America and South Africa racial feeling still persists in the people's subconscious. Even though political solutions to social and cultural complexities leave behind several questions, social and cultural initiatives lead to minor renaissances.

### I

The stream of ideas never stagnated in India. That is why, that despite all kinds of turmoil, ups and downs, the continuity of civilization has always been maintained in India, giving it a unique status among world civilizations. So much so that even during imperial times, when politics had primacy over everything else, there was positive debate, intellectual churning and strong initiatives taken on social, cultural and religious issues. There was neither political inspiration nor sentiment behind these initiatives. It was rather social and cultural movements that influenced politics at different levels reforming and refining it. The socio-religious reform movements of the 19th and 20th centuries faced the institutionalised evils and rituals embedded in the Hindu society. These had a rather deleterious impact on our society, culture and world-view. The practice of 'purdah', self immolation by women on the husband's pyre (Sati), child marriage, widow remarriage, dowry and untouchability were several issues that stood between our golden past and a bright future.

During this period, thinkers and reformers played a revolutionary part in breaking ritualistic practices, ideas, social behaviour and status quo-ism. It is interesting to note that there has never been a dividing line between thinkers and reformers in the Indian tradition. This underlines the fundamental difference between the intellectual stream of India and the West. The method of study in the West is critical and analytical. This intellectual tradition has its own uniqueness. Thinkers constitute separate and autonomous groups in the West. They join the intellectual stream bringing with them their knowledge, experience, ideas, prejudices and understanding of reality. Indian thinkers, on the other hand, look at socio-cultural life as their laboratory. Whatever understanding these thinkers develop was through active participation in social, cultural and religious life. This created a social base for every thinker. There are in our intellectual tradition several sub-streams that reinforce the process of change.



The most complex problem of the Hindu society has been untouchability and caste discrimination. There is not a single corner where there was no instance of caste discrimination and untouchability and, at the same time, there is not a single place in the country where independent and strong voice was not raised to denounce it. There are innumerable instances which show that constructive minds and forces were in action for egalitarian social order. Jyotiba Phule (1827-1890) started Satya Shodhak Samaj in Maharashtra. Phule raised a strong voice against caste discrimination. But while doing so, he also challenged the British rule in India. Phule questioned the supremacy of the Brahmins and their excesses, but while he did so, no one ever supported any attempt to stifle his voice. He remained a symbol of social pride in the ranks of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920) and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar (1856-1895). After Tilak was released from jail in 1882, a grand reception was organized in Poona to felicitate him, Phule and Agarkar together.

One radical individual initiative against status-quoism is equivalent to reading and writing dozens of books. In southern India, Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu (1862-1939) was a humanitarian educationist,

thinker and reformer. He was the Vice-chancellor of Madras University. His initiative forced the society to introspect. In 1904, he had brought four orphans from Ponteri near Chennai and brought them up with his daughter and arranged for their education. Such outlook and courageous step became an inspiration not only in his province but even outside.

In Orissa, the eastern part of India, Fakir Mohan Senapati (1843-1918) was awakening people about these evils through his writings. His statements pronounce his commitment to the principle of equality. Who is Vedadhikari? In other words: Who has the right to study the Vedas? The precise answer to this question is that Vedas are Sanatan religious scriptures. They were co-created with the human beings. Any man or woman of any caste, color or religion can study them without any discrimination. His contemporary in the same province, Bhima Bhoi (1850-1895), said with untouchability in mind that he would be prepared to live in hell for the well being of this world.

Caste system and caste discrimination in Kerala was as deep-rooted as anywhere else and was opposed as strongly, but constructively. When feudal elements did not allow the Ezhava community to enter Lord Shiva's temple, Narayan Guru (1856-1928) constructed separate Shiva temples and sarcastically pronounced that there were two forms of Shiva: the 'Brahmin' Shiva and the 'Ezhava' Shiva. He was the epitome of philosophy, spirituality and reform. Ayyakali in Kerala, who himself was an untouchable, took up the human rights issues of the untouchables and campaigned for the education of children of the deprived sections.

But a special feature of the social reform movements in India during this period was that they were not centralized. The reform process was ceaseless in small places, villages, cities and other areas. Reformers were carrying forward the reform movement at their own levels with full commitment. We can say that though the nature of the social reform movement was decentralized, its voice was heard all across the country. On the one hand Kumaran Asan (1873-1924), editor of the Malayalam magazine Vivekodayam from 1904 to 1919, was hitting out at caste discrimination and untouchability with the help of literature and journalism, on the other, almost three thousand kilo-meters away from Kerala, Lala Lajpat Rai was committed to ending untouchability and caste discrimination in Punjab through his social actions and critical writings. Lala Lajpat Rai's voice was heard equally in Kerala, just as Narayan Guru had shaken the conscience of



the people in North India. Kumaran Asan had written in the editorial of Vivekodayam –

“There would not be a single Indian who would not have heard the name of Lala Lajpat Rai. It is very important for everyone to know what he had written about the lower castes in the ‘Indian Review’. So we are trying to translate the incident verbatim. We hope that the attention of every reader will be drawn to this incident.”<sup>1</sup>



The attempt to centralize the decentralized untouchability elimination movement was initiated by reformers like Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883), Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) and Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (1889-1940). Mahatma Gandhi looked at untouchability as a national disaster. His HarijanYatra (1933-34) was one such centralized anti-untouchability programme. He visited Harijan settlements for nine months from one corner of the country to the other. His was a mass movement of social reform. He had a critical dialogue with Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar (1891-1956) and his followers in this regard. Discourses of this kind also represent an ideological understanding of the time.

Sanatanis vigorously protested against Gandhi’s HarijanYatra and derided it as ‘anti religious’. At many places he was shown black flags. Gandhi

---

<sup>1</sup>Lala Lajpat Rai wrote that the painful condition of the so called untouchables and people considered to be lower caste is not only against ethical values and humanity, but it is also against our ideas of social relations. As long as the condition of people called patits remains the same, unity of the society is impossible. Unless people from different sections of the society live together in harmony, the intellectual and moral growth of the society at large is not possible. Every member of the society must grow. It might be difficult for all to reach the same level; facilities should be provided to all to strive to reach that level where they can utilize their mind and qualifications optimally. These people of the Hindu Community are being driven out of the Hindu religion. If these people are not with the community, the strength of Hindus would diminish. Despite the fact that they are not having their freedom, they want to remain Hindu. Therefore, it is the duty of Hindus to consider these people called untouchables as their own and destroy the prevailing social evils. And the Hindu who is unable to do this, however ignorant he/she may be about its results, he would be treated as an enemy of the society.”

formed the Harijan Sevak Sangh to strengthen his movement and started a fund for the elimination of untouchability. He also started publishing a magazine called "Harijan". But Gandhi's conscience could not become the conscience of the Congress. During his lifetime itself the efficacy, sharpness, influence and attraction of this movement dissipated. He wanted to see unstoppable silent social initiative to end untouchability and convert individuals into organic tools for such transformation.

On the question the elimination of untouchability, Gandhi found that the RSS was doing qualitatively greater work than his own Harijan Sevak Sangh. Incidentally he visited the winter camp of the RSS at Wardha in 1934 and was astonished to see both Brahmins and Mahars living together rather normally and harmoniously as one Hindu family at the camp. This spectacle signifying a fundamental change touched him deeply. He had come to the camp just out of curiosity, but on finding that the RSS had made anti - untouchability an ideological mission which operated with spontaneity, he became a great admirer of Dr. Hedgewar. For Gandhi the elimination of untouchability was just a programme but he saw how Dr. Hedgewar had transmitted his idea to thousands of RSS workers who identified themselves with this social task. He expressed his strong desire to meet the founder of the RSS. A constructive dialogue took place between these two leaders.

Elimination of untouchability does not merely mean not treating someone as untouchable, its aim to create a social order of equality and harmony through the elimination of embedded prejudices. There is a section in the society that argues for equality and tolerance but whose talk is no more than an intellectual indulgence. Members of this class can be professional speakers and listeners but have no courage for the required action. Hitting out at this situation, the famous social reformer Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901) once raised a pertinent question. There is an incident pertaining to the time when Mahatma Gandhi had come visiting India after raising his voice against racial discrimination and humiliation of the people of Indian origin by the whites in South Africa. A meeting was organized at the Hindu Union Club. Gandhi narrated how Indians in Natal, Cape Colony and Transvaal were being meted out inhuman and uncivilized treatment. Ranade, who was in constant touch with Gandhi and was his advisor as well, supporting Gandhi's efforts and the demands of Indians in South Africa, asked the audience whether this solidarity was confined to the humiliated and oppressed Indians in South Africa alone or was also extended to all subject to such inhuman treatment anywhere, including India,. He

wondered whether it was proper to criticize Africans while a big section of people was being openly exploited and subjected to inhuman treatment in their own country. He further asked why the so called progressives were maintaining silence about their brethren in their own neighbourhood? There was a hidden message in the address of Ranade. Words and action cannot be effective unless they accord with each other. Therefore, only those could be expected to become harbingers of change who have felt the pain of such evils.

Efforts to end untouchability have been continuing since long. There has not been any dearth of anti-untouchability literature and campaigns. Whereas the absence of commensurate results has been a cause of anguish, recurrence of incidents of untouchability from time to time even in areas where it has been apparently eradicated, has been a cause of even greater pain. Narratives of humiliation, indignities and discrimination bear testimony to the continuance of this evil practice.

The Indian National Congress included the elimination of untouchability in its political resolution of 1920. Almost 100 years have gone by, still more than 250 kinds of untouchability prevails in India, including a ban on the entry of the untouchables into temples and kitchens. Actually the prevailing untouchability is collective failure of the society and no one can escape responsibility, right from status-quoists to progressives.

In the past one century, several organizations cropped up to remove untouchability and caste discrimination. Among the important ones are included the Harijan Sevak Sangh, Jaat Paat Todak Mandal and Satya Shodhak Samaj. But the question for consideration before us is as to why they have remained ineffective. It is, however, also true that profound social change has been taking place smoothly. There are positive happenings taking place in the society and people with progressive thinking are actively involved in the process of change. Jagjivan Ram, for example, mentions in his memoirs that members of the upper-caste society used to listen to his father's sermons and touch his feet. It is obvious that both progressives and reactionaries in different proportions have been present in the society in every age and period. It is the responsibility of the intellectual leadership to step out to end social reaction, unmindful of personal loss or gain and to tilt the balance in favour of the social progressives.

## IV

Dr. Hedgewar was aware of organizational and individual limitations and shortcomings in the process of social reform. That the process of change remains uninterrupted was ensured through the activities of the Sangh. He believed that commitment, reason, empathy and personal conduct were prerequisites to ending the higher and lower caste divides. Absence of any one of these elements will defeat the avowed purpose and instead create handicaps. There may be ideological agreement over reform of the individual or the group, but without emotional engagement, the matter remains only a subject of discussion. Such discussions are often far removed from the ground reality and acquire purpose only when backed by emotion. Intellectual agreement on issues reinforced by commitment and courage of conviction are imperative. Dr. Hedgewar strived to keep the four elements strung together.

Struggle or the pressure of numbers or acceptance of the principle of equality, merely due to democratic values, carry within them the seeds of division, jealousy and disintegration. If the number of blacks had been less, would the struggle for equality have been possible? It is obvious that they would in that case have been granted equal rights as alms out of pity or as a democratic imperative. Actually it is essential to imbibe the first principle of humanity before talking about equality. It is basically a principle of natural human rights. Living with dignity, independence and equal opportunity is the natural right of every human being. The system, tradition, culture, philosophy or religion that legitimizes differences among human beings actually challenges a fundamental principle of nature. That is why positive attempts have been made at regular intervals in different parts of the world towards the goal of human equality. India has been the living laboratory of social reformers. Wherever the curse of inequality and discrimination was visible, initiatives were always taken to counter it. It was not the strength of numbers but an appeal to human heart and mind that helped promote the ideals of equality and brotherhood. This approach, however, did not imply the exclusion of protest and struggle by the oppressed and exploited. Democratic protest is, in fact, a moral and constitutionally legitimate weapon. It is, however, necessary to understand the philosophy that drives this struggle. Is this struggle merely an instrument to attain dominance and rights or does it aim at the eradication of systemic evils and drawbacks? All distinction between organized struggle and reform is obliterated if basic flaws are targeted and the two become complementary to each other.

Despite all individual and collective efforts, untouchability unfortunately is still prevalent in our society in all its distorted forms. It is a blot on our culture, civilization and the so called modernity. Political solutions to this problem were sought after Independence, but the desired results eluded us. Problems of some kind or the other kept emerging, polarization at the social, literary and political levels being one of them. The pain felt by social thinkers and regret over their apparent lack of success have only strengthened their resolve. The horizon of the global vision of these thinkers was far wider than the perspective of the traditionalists. Political and financial empowerment of the oppressed, apart from the removal of untouchability, is in their view not just necessary but also obligatory. This book comprises four chapters which are like a manifesto of a new social revolution. Apart from the speeches and writings of three thinkers, the book also include a historic resolution passed by social activists and religious leaders together who had set aside their differences and disputes to express solidarity against untouchability.

## V

The regional convention of the Vishva Hindu Parishad was held at Udupi (Karnataka) in 1969, just five years after the formation of the Parishad, but its importance is historic. To this convention were invited Hindu saints and religious leaders. The Sangh believes that religious leaders and institutions have an important role to play in progressive socio-economic and cultural changes and their appeal against social evils creates propitious ground for further social actions. The Udupi gathering was the result of a long process of dialogue between religious leaders of various sects and the RSS. Another important aspect of this engagement was that after their appeal by religious leaders it becomes easier for social workers to fight with orthodox elements that commonly take shelter behind religion. The Udupi convention issued an appeal to the people to eliminate the evil of untouchability from their thought and action. The collective appeal by these leaders demolished the myth that scriptures and religious leaders sanctioned the practice of untouchability.

Intellectual clarity is essential to fight social evils. Half hearted attempts lead to mere ritualism. The second RSS Sarsanghchalak, Sri M. S. Golwalkar (Shri Guruji), considered conferences, resolutions, proposals and idealism of personal conduct insufficient for the alleviation of untouchability. A letter written by him to a senior RSS worker, Shri Surya Narayan Rao, is included in the second chapter. Shri Golwalkar averred that removing social evils is not the last goal, but rather the creation positive social environment accompanied by humility born out of genuine atonement for the mistakes of the past. There are other dimensions of this letter of Shri Golwalkar. He believes that elimination of untouchability is not an act of mercy or generosity. It is rather an opportunity to free ourselves of our collective guilt and taint. It was not just a simple letter but a revolutionary manifesto for social change of universal importance. Shri Golwalkar opposed reform that makes people carrying it out suffer from a sense of exclusive responsibility. He called it social and moral action. He expected people involved in this social and moral activity to have the commitment of a Karmayogi with no expectation of appreciation and the desire to take credit. These lines are a clarion call for re-establishing basic values that had eroded basic values that had eroded across the world due narrow-mindedness. He writes - "We have to completely eliminate untouchability and distinctions of higher and lower castes. We have to do away with them and so that the entire Hindu society moves on, unified by the ideals of brotherhood. Every section of the society must feel the pain and hunger of every person and that is only possible when dharma (religion?) permeates every sphere of life in a practical form".

The third chapter contains a speech of the third Sarsanghchalak of the RSS, Shri Balasaheb Deoras, delivered by him as part of the Vasant Vyakhyanamala in Poona in 1974. Politics continued to dominate our society after Independence. Socio-cultural issues came to be viewed in the political corridors purely from the viewpoint of political loss and gain. Social change was reduced to a political slogan. Shri Deoras gave a call for total change analyzing the contemporary Indian society threadbare.

He fiercely attacked status-quoism. The society's thinking must be constantly progressive. For the welfare of the society, systems that accord with the times must be created. He says: "Whatever systems were created in the ancient times were created to fulfil contemporary needs. If they are not needed today, they must be abandoned." Emphasizing the need to change the distorted caste-system at the present time, he said: "Untouchability is a

most painful and unfortunate aspect of social inequality in our society.” In the fight against untouchability, he expected social organizations to play an important role through mass movements and by ensuring people’s participation in them through social awakening. His speech appears to have stirred people: “If untouchability is not a sin, nothing is.”

In the last chapter, it has a write-up based on the speeches of a senior thinker of the Sangh, Shri Dattopant Thengadi. He questions the very basis of democracy and liberalism of the West that treats equality as autonomous. In other words, Western thinking postulates that the moment struggle, dispute and deprivation are removed, equality is automatically established. He wonders whether it really happens. He agrees that all hurdles must be removed and they must be removed through reform or struggle. But he does not consider equality to be autonomous. It is not complete in itself. Disparity is removed, but differences remain. People view such equality as victory or defeat. Positive elements remain missing from both the charade of progressivism and the inability to stem change. In the process of reform and struggle, Thengadi establishes a philosophy of brotherhood that involves repentance for mistakes, thankfulness for initiative and the desire for and expectation of common purpose. The cycle of change is complete only when there is a feeling of unity in mind, word and deed. He sees similarity in the efforts of Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar and Dr. Hedgewar. Brushing aside questions raised about him, Thengadi considers the role of Dr. Ambedkar very important and socially useful. In Shri Thengadi’s world-view, harmony is the mother of equality that rears it and makes it strong.

Constructive efforts as well as democratic struggles to remove untouchability continued, and their positive results also continued to emerge. Therefore all such efforts, whether individual, collective, organizational, and ideological or in the form of struggle, must always be welcomed. A question that keeps echoing in our ears is: Why is progressivism dependent on exceptions like Chokhamela. It was the first time in the 14th century that an untouchable called Chokhamela was made a temple priest. Even today such exception based efforts are afoot. Will untouchability continue to be a means for our intellectualism even after 700 years?

Therefore we shall also have to understand the complexity of this old age malady. In this practice inhere a feudal imprint, cruelty anyway; it signifies insensitivity and mental atrophy as well. Not inconsiderable effort has gone

into the elimination of untouchability, but it all has not been enough. So there is a need for serious churning on the questions thrown up by this social curse and the need for bold and decisive social and cultural intervention. All the four chapters in the book take us in that direction. One message emanates from these four chapters- that untouchability-elimination should not become a perpetual, never-ending programme, and decisive social and intellectual action is required to achieve the goal of social egalitarianism.

**Rakesh Sinha**

August 10, 2014



2

**UNTOUCHABILITY IS  
ANTI-DHARMA**



## VHP's Udupi Resolutions

Change in the society cannot be achieved by mere slogans, imaginations and good intentions. One has to struggle with the reality. At every step there is resistance. The tendency towards maintaining status quo merely preserves the existing structures and mindset. To shake off this inertia, it is imperative that the socio-cultural-religious environment has to change. In this process, those people need to be involved whose words, behaviour and presence mostly influence the common people. Therefore on this issue of untouchability, the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) brought the saints and religious leaders on a single platform. Towards achieving this goal, the VHP convened the first Hindu Conclave at Udupi (Karnataka) on December 13-14, 1969. All the Hindus sects-like Shaiva, Veer Shaiva, Madhva, Vaishnava, Jain and Sikh were represented by their religious leaders. The most prominent of them were the Swami of Siddhganga Tumkur Math, Swami of Admar Math Uddipi, Swami of Gokarna Partgali Math, Swami of Mutugarajendra, Swami Chennaiveer Swami of the Vanvasis, Shaivacharya Swami of Udigar, Dakshinapath, Shri Ramanand Goswami of Assam and Budhrakshit Ther of Bangalore. The then Sarsanghchalak of RSS M S Golwalkar was also present at the convention. The huge success of this conclave can be judged from the fact that 15,000 people had assembled at the conference while only 5,000 were expected.

## A Brief Note

Untouchability has been the most harmful malevolence of the Hindu society. This has caused great damage to social progress, balance and harmony in the Hindu society. It is not merely a social evil or flaw in a civilian society but is a big stigma which is damaging the basic feature of the Sanatan Dharma. Hindu society since ages has been characterised by a sense of brotherhood, broad-mindedness and equality; which is also the elemental nature and objective of each Hindu. Untouchability, unfortunately, acted as damaging element to the healthy social ecosystem. A multi-pronged approach is called for to remove this anomaly.

In this context, the speech of Shri Golwalkar is very apt and pertinent. He said that in a religious country like India, efforts to eradicate this evil cannot be achieved without the cooperation of the religious leaders. For removing untouchability and discrimination from the minds and behaviour of the people, it is necessary that the religious leaders not only practice it by self but also give a clarion call to the people. At the end, the conclave observed the sentiments exactly as presented by Shri Golwalkar. All the saints and religious leaders agreed that the prevailing evils in the society become a cause to disintegration of the society.

# Untouchability is Anti-Dharma

There is resistance to end the social evils rooted since centuries. This is a struggle between the mind and reason. Such a struggle destroys social life and in the pseudo fight for self respect, polarisation starts. Reactionary forces emerge in such struggles. An evil that the Indian society has not been able to get rid of is untouchability; a feeling of purity and impurity.

Untouchability is a symbol of backwardness, status-quoism and sham. This is not just a social evil rather a human crime and inhuman behaviour. Is it not differentiating between two people on the basis of their birth as higher and lower, but denouncing the nature and rejection of the Sanatan culture?

The fundamental thing in natural justice is a person's freedom and the self respect. Any social tradition or law cannot deny the right provided by nature. If it is so, it should be opposed.

In a society whose fundamental structure gives importance to religion and spirituality, in that society religious teachers, religious institutions and scholars have an important role in bringing change. Generally, unlike social reformers, religious teachers lack swift activism and aggressiveness and form opinion about anything based on several rituals and the recommendations. Wrong interpretation of rituals and religious scriptures also cause hurdle in it.

In Indian milieu, untouchability is infected by trinity of sham of rituals, feudal mindset and socio-educational disparity. Making religious leaders agree to uproot it, bringing them out of their religious rituals, sermons and institutions by giving them the role of a social reformer, is a big challenge. This is not an easy job. Religious gurus are associated with different religious system, sectoral tradition and social basis. By creating a consensus among them and making them ready for the progressive social move, such evils can be countered.

The RSS in the sixth decade of the last century tried to take a progressive initiative by making them commit to the cause. How much energy was exhausted for the purpose and how far the opposition was to be faced by the RSS is a different issue. Sensitivity of the religious gurus and their social concern and commitment for change has a long history. They have been unleashing lives, making humanity respectable and creating concern among people since centuries.

In the conference there was serious discussion and introspection that is the social reform improper, wrong and misleading interpretation of the religious hurdles. Shri Golwalkar said in his speech that “conformism is not religion; we must have to understand the element of religion to take the victory flag to places. We will have to end the differences of untouchability, upper caste and lower caste, and move on forgetting those so that the entire Hindu society is governed by unified brotherhood”.

He said that no Hindu can be impure (*Na Hindu Patito Bhavet*). Every member of the society must understand hunger and thirst and must other's pain, and this is only possible when religion is given a practical form in different walks of life. There is a need to have proper behaviour instead of issuing sermons. There was an appeal for change, for a social revolution in which energy and warmth of spiritualism is used to fight obstructions and show commitment in building a coherent society. This proposal was in the very small form but every word of it was inspirational, influential and had productive energy. Talking about the similar proposal of religious and social rituals, he said that all Hindus must remember that they all are children of 'mother nation'. So they must boycott social evils like untouchability and other such ills. The entire Hindu society must be united

and must be tied in a single thread and feelings and propensity of touchability and untouchability-inspired disintegration should be curbed. Every Hindu in the world must have the feeling of unity and equality. The message of the conference was:

*Na Hindu Patito Bhavet* (No Hindu can be impure)

*Hindu Sodrah sarve* (Every Hindu is a brother, born to the same mother)

*Mam Deeksha Hindu Raksha* (My education is to save Hindus)

*Mam Mantra Samanta* (Equality is my mission)

For the India laden with the pain and effect of untouchability, these principals are expected to work actively instead of becoming a heritage.

# 3

## **THEORY OF REPENT AND HUMILITY**



**(19 February, 1906 - 5 June, 1973)**



## M S Golwalkar

Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar has been one of the greatest thinkers of modern India. In the four decades of his public life, he toiled hard to build a strong foundation of a conscious and thoughtful nation. He got associated with the RSS in 1929 and became its second Sarsanghchalak in 1940. He served the RSS as its guide and philosopher upto 1973 till he took his last breath. Shri Golwalkar is credited with making perfect intervention as an original thinker in Indian discourse which had been facing challenges of wave of westernisation, Marxism and colonial legacies and was getting alienated from the 'self'. So much so that the very identity was in question that who we are? People were getting defensive while answering such questions. At this critical juncture, Shri Golwalkar's original thoughts and philosophy acted as intervention to a new intellectual discourse. He did not allow discourses to be one sided rather restored the relevance of cultural heritage and highly conscious thought process against the decaying and mystified political and intellectual system. His book *Bunch of Thoughts* is the best example of this. It was his competent and successful leadership that effectively challenged the repressive policies of Jawahar Lal Nehru government, in a non-violent and dauntless way.

He did not consider political differences as a hindrance in the nation building. Rather, he became an inspiration for an alternative polity in the country. With the help of the RSS, Bharatiya Jan Sangh was founded in 1951. He firmly believed that socio-cultural transformation and a spirited society only can make the nation strong. His letter to the senior Swayamsevak Shri Suryanarayan Rao, on January 14, 1970, is a historical document which will remain relevant for all nations and ages to come.

## A Brief Note

The social issues cannot be resolved by meetings, speeches and by passing resolutions. The resolution passed against untouchability will be effective only if its inherent message is sincerely practiced and spread in each home, village and city of the country. And while doing so, one should not claim credit and be arrogant to initiative but must work with compassion and politeness resulting repressive past of the society. It is essential to empower the affected with economic and political opportunities along with attempts to eradicate this evil. Education should be used for social enlightenment. Religions have been reduced to superstitious rituals. One needs a dedicated Karmayogi to bring about meaningful transformation.

Blaming others is a negative approach. We should avoid it and work with a positive mindset and energy. Discrimination and differentiation between humans is unnatural, undesirable and unacceptable. Caste, creed or religion should never come in our way to help those who are in sufferings and distress.

# Theory of Repent and Humility

The Karnataka Provincial Conference of the Vishva Hindu Parishad is over. It was a grand affair beyond even the most excessive expectations of the conveners and workers. Naturally its success has roused great expectations in the minds of all. But I think it will not be reasonable to assume that the systems will change to a better in a magical way. It needs hard and persistent work. Indeed the conference may be rightly considered to be a clarion call to unite efforts for the all round betterment and consolidation of the Hindus. The success of the conference should not make us complacent.

For example: The resolution on untouchability, which is supported and blessed by all our Acharyas, Dharmacharyas, Mathadhipatis and holy men of all other creeds and that holds our pious expressions merely cannot be applied in actual life. Centuries of old prejudices do not disappear only by superior sense and wishful thinking. Hard work and right propagation has to be taken from town to town, village to village, house to house, and people have to be educated to accept and practice what has been resolved. It should not be presented as a dispensation to the pressure of modern times, but as an abiding principle and way of life, in a humble spirit of atonement for our past mistakes. A change of heart, a moral and emotional change in the attitude and behaviour has to be brought about. Working for the economic and political betterment of those who had been relegated to the background and bringing them up to stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of our

people, is a Herculean task. But this in itself is not enough. Such 'equality' may be brought about without shedding the feeling of separateness. What we should desire and strive for is not merely economic and political 'equality'- we want a real change, a complete integration.

This change is beyond the political will and government plans. It is also impossible to accomplish it by the clever manipulations of political parties, doing patchwork in the name of integration. An appeal is made to all the participants to this conference to make a strenuous effort springing from the heart and manifesting itself in day-to-day behaviour at all economic, moral and social level. All who have extended their sympathy and support the cause must also come forward to shoulder the responsibility and blow apart the age-old pernicious prejudices into pieces with mighty stroke.

Another important task is educating our people on Dharma in both the principle and the practice, encompassing elements of the plebeian and embracing the norms of the particular cult one may have been born into or later accepted. This education has to begin with ourselves. For the one wanting to educate others cannot do so effectively without first educating himself and putting into practice what he has learnt and what he wants to teach. Absolute faith and devotion, purity of character, authentic words, and pure feelings and deeds alone confers on the authority to teach others. So we have to cultivate these great qualities assiduously.

We have to carry this education to the remotest corners of our country, to those for whom Dharma has been reduced to a mere crude superstitious rites, to those who never had the opportunity to learn the religious elements and conduct, to all living in the villages, hills and in the dense forests. We have to be ready for indefatigable hard work, and bear infinite troubles and tribulations in this work. Often we may feel that there is no credit for this task. But without expecting immediate results or miracles to happen, we must be ready, in the true spirit of a Karmayog, to face the hard conditions with infinite patience to plot the success.

Many workers appear to take a delight in blaming others for all the chaos and inequality. Some of them put the blame on the political defacement, others blame it Christians or Muslims and other such aggressive cults. Let our team keep their minds free from such tendencies and work for "Our People, Our Dharma", with the positive energy. We need to lend a helping hand to all our brethren who need help, and should strive to relieve distress

wherever we observe it. There should not be any distinction between people in this service. We have to serve all, weather the person is a Christian or Muslim or follower of any other faith. The damages of calamities, distress and misfortunes affect everyone equally and make no division. Sense of mercy or consolation should not prevail in serving to relieve the sufferings, rather it should be in a spirit of compassion considering everyone as representative of God. We have to surrender everything in noble service, with our original religious sense, to those who are our father, mother, brother, friend and everything to all of us.

May our noble actions succeed in bringing the repute and magnificence of our eternal Sanatana-Dharma.

# 4

## **UNTOUCHABILITY: SYMBOL OF REPRESSION AND CRUELTY**



(11 December, 1915 - 17 June, 1996)

## Balasaheb Deoras

Madhukar Dattatraya (Balasaheb) Deoras made a great imprint on the social, cultural and political life of India during his six-decade-long public life. An organizer par excellence, he indelibly influenced the intellectual discourse by his thoughtful interventions. He always stood for change in the society and his vision greatly advantaged democracy and transformational initiatives. He joined the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in 1926 and became its third Sarsanghchhalak in 1973. When he took over as the Sarasanghchhalak, the country was in a state of political turmoil. Erosion of democratic institutions and suppression of voices by the then dictatorial regime led the country towards the biggest confrontation ever between the democratic forces and the Indira Gandhi Government which had the support of the Communist Party of India. At this juncture, RSS under the leadership of Deoras played a decisive and critical role. The anti-totalitarian movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan was essentially initiated, consolidated and perpetuated by RSS swayamsevaks across the country. Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency on June 25, 1975, and suspended the fundamental rights of the citizens. Deoras himself was arrested on June 25, 1975, and spent 19 months in Maharashtra's Yavada jail. In his interview to

*The Illustrated Weekly of India* (March 12, 1978), Deoras said, "Regarding the anti-Emergency movement, I can say that almost 80 per cent of the burden was carried by us. Because organizationally we were the only people equipped to do it." Eventually, Indira Gandhi and her party witnessed defeat in the 1977 general elections and the Janata Party came to power. Deoras was of the opinion that basic transformation in society was a prerequisite for its overall progress. Like Mahatma Gandhi did not let the initiatives for removal of untouchability get receded under the pressure of Civil Disobedience Movement, Deoras too did not lose sight of the need for immediate corrective measures in social life. Removal of untouchability was of utmost importance to him. He declared it as an evil and blot for our nation. In his speech during the "Vasant Vyakhyanmala"<sup>1</sup> in 1974, he declared, "If untouchability is not wrong, nothing is wrong in the world." His speech is a doctrine of social transformation in India.

---

<sup>2</sup>Shri Mahadev Govind Ranade started Vasant Vyakhyanmala in Pune in 1875. This Vyakhyanmala is organised every year between 21st April to 28th May at Tilak Smarak Mandir, Pune.



## **A Brief Note**

The endemic social inequality in our country was one of the major reasons for the success of foreign invaders, which proved to be disastrous and disintegrative for the country. We should never give up our glorious cultural heritage. This heritage is immersed with compassion and equality. Society should always be evolutive and developing. Stagnation leads to status quo-ism. Social structures, institutions and traditions are relevant for a particular time and in a context. The beliefs and conduct of one age is not necessarily a good fit for today. The social systems and practices which are irrelevant, expired and lost their utility must be discarded with innate sense. We must bring an end to every form of discrimination and any science that preaches unfairness. Untouchability is a distressing and unfortunate feature of our society. If this is not wrong, then nothing is wrong in this world! We should put a meaningful, bold and sustained effort to eradicate this evil.

# Untouchability: Symbol of Repression and Cruelty

I feel humbled and honoured for your kind invitation and giving me an opportunity to express my views on the Vasant Vyakhyannala Lecture for this year.

The organisers of this programme had suggested some topics for my speech. Out of those, I have chosen the topic 'Social Equality and Hindu Consolidation', as it is very vital for the future of our nation. Hindu consolidation is a must for the welfare of the nation. Hence all its dimensions are important. The question of social equality being a delicate and currently relevant topic, appealed to me as one of great significance. That is why I thought that I should not miss this opportunity of expressing my views on it.

I do not claim to be one among the thinkers and scholars of the society. But I have travelled much amongst our people. That has helped me have varied experiences and ideas, and I also have some understanding of the feelings of the people. Keeping all those in view, I shall try to present before you what all of us might be feeling.

While broaching the subject, the first question that naturally poses itself before us is: "Who is a 'Hindu'?" Many definitions of the word 'Hindu' have been forwarded but none of those appears to be perfect, as they happen to be

either 'too short' (Avyapti) or 'too much expansive' (Ativyapti). But can we deny the very existence of the Hindu society just because it defies definition? Although the word cannot be so easily defined, we all know very well that the 'Hindu society' does exist. Also, all of us have a definite and common understanding as to who all constitute this society.

Some years ago, the Government formulated the Hindu Code, which was approved by the Parliament. Pandit Nehru and Dr. Ambedkar were the main architects of the Code. In order to make the Code applicable to the largest social group in this country, they had to perforce name it, 'The Hindu Code'. While defining its scope of applicability, they had to declare in the beginning that all except the Muslims, the Christians, the Parsis and the Jews come under its purview and that it was applicable to Sanatanis, Lingayats, Arya Samajists, Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists and even others who did not come under any of these categories. It was also made clear that anyone seeking exemption from it will have to bear the onus of justifying such an exemption. The only comprehensive term which could denote the people whom they had in mind was 'Hindu'.

We want to unite and organise all the Hindus. Organisation implies bringing and keeping the people together and making them realise the purpose of their remaining together. This is no easy task. Some of those unifying factors are emotional in content; because the constitution of the human mind is such. Therefore we start with our motherland.

"This is our motherland, we are its children and we have been living here for the past thousands of years. During this long past, we have created in this land a glorious history and also contributed to world thought, culture and civilisation. We alone have been responsible both for its rise and fall. Therefore we, being the children of this soil, must come together and live together. These realisations should form the emotional basis of our unity. Even those who call themselves 'rational' will have to accept such an emotional basis. There is nothing wrong in it. Even Stalin had to remind his compatriots that they all belonged to a single, great nation, when Russia faced a terrible ordeal during the Second World War. He had to invoke the spirit of 'nationalism' and 'fatherland'. The necessity of such an emotional inspiration is beyond controversy.

However, will this suffice? While actually working in the social field, we feel it necessary that there should also be a practical manifestation of this

basis. It is of course essential that everyone must emotionally feel that we are all one, and that we are all equal, but at the same time we should also be able to experience naturally and always this 'oneness' in our day-to-day life. So long as we do not have this living experience and the emotional attachment, the basis of our unity will neither be robust nor long-standing.

Our history of the past hundreds of years tell us that just a handful of Muslims and even fewer Englishmen could rule us and could forcibly convert many of our brethren to their religions. They also created controversies like 'Brahmin and non-Brahmin', 'Savarna and Asprishya' (upper castes and untouchables). But in this regard, we cannot just blame the foreigners and exonerate ourselves. What is the point in lamenting that it was because of the foreigners' divisive machinations that our unity was shattered? It was but inevitable that we would have, sooner or later, come in contact with the foreign societies and their cultures. There could not for ever be a 'Berlin Wall' between us. It is only the diffident people who are afraid of foreign contacts and thoughts, build up a wall around themselves. The greatness of any system is proved only when it can hold its head high even when it is in contact with others. When a system encloses itself in an impenetrable shell, it is only declaring its own inferiority. Hence, instead of blaming others for our shortcomings, we should introspect within ourselves and try to know which of our failings enabled the foreigners to get the better of us. In this regard, Dr. Hedgewar, the founder of the RSS, had a unique outlook. Whenever this question cropped up, he used to say, "We cannot escape our responsibility by simply blaming the Muslims and the Europeans for our downfall. We must look for our own failings." We have to admit that social inequality amongst us has been a major reason for our downfall. Fissiparous tendencies like caste and sub-caste rivalries and untouchability have all been the manifestation of this social malaise.

For the Hindu Sanghatanists, this is a delicate and difficult issue since we are immensely proud of our religion and culture. It is true that we have a lot of things of which we can be justly proud. The philosophy and values of life of this land have received the highest acclamation of the thinkers the world over who consider those as an invaluable contribution to peace and progress of humanity. These values of life have stood the test of time. We all naturally feel that these eternal life-principles should be preserved.

However, it is clear that even while cherishing this pride it would not do to think that all that is old is gold.

*Puraanamityev na saadhu sarvam.*

Just because something is old, it need not necessarily be good and valid for all time. Neither should we think that since we have been living all these years on the basis of these old principles, we need not even think on new lines.

*Taatasya koopoyamiti bruvaanaaha  
Kshaaram jalam kaapurushaaha pibanti.*

“My father and grandfather dug this well. The water was salty. But they drank it and lived on. Hence we shall also drink the same water”- such bigotry does no to good anybody. We have been told that such a person can't be called Satpurusha (liner human being) but only as a Kaapurusha (coward). Such a way of thinking is wrong.

The society is made up of various types of people. There will be some who will jump at any new things and think that it is good and ideal; some others react to any new thing adversely and reject it outright as being useless and worthless. But those who have taken up the mission of eradicating the social defects and reorganising the society should not take up either of these extreme attitudes. They have to adopt the attitude of *Santaha pareekshyaanyatarat bhajante.*

They will have to discriminate, preserve and take up whatever is worthy and not lament the end of any social practice which is irrational. The more our people adopt this rational way of looking at things, sooner will the mission of Hindu consolidation and removal of absurdities be fulfilled.

### **Reform in Keeping With Times**

For instance, the Jewish people have according to a book I read recently, reviewed their religious texts and practices after every century or two and re-evaluated those in the contemporary context. Of course the wordings of the religious texts could not be changed, but fresh interpretations were placed keeping the changing times in view. These were introduced in practice and became popular too. It means they discriminated between what was eternal and what was changeable. I believe that in our own country too similar rethinking and revaluation of our religious texts must have been done in the olden times. Otherwise there is no reason why so many different

types of religious books - smritis - should have come into existence. See how many changes have taken place regarding our Gods and Goddesses. Lord Indra, Varuna, Agni and other Gods have gave place to Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva. There was at one time conflict between Shaiviites and Vaishnaviites, but Sri Sankaracharya established a harmony between the two and ushered in the puja of the Panchaayatana. And now Shivaratri and Shayani and Prabodhini Ekadasis are being observed in almost every household. It means that even in olden times, efforts were made from time and again to establish harmony and bring in new interpretations, and that people were not insistent on sticking to every word and syllable of everything old.

### **A Common Human Weakness**

There are many stories recounted in the ancient texts and Puranas. But do we accept them all as literally true? For instance, it has been said in the Puranas that the lunar and solar eclipses are a result of 'Rahu and Ketu swallowing the Moon and the Sun'. But should we, in order to affirm our devotion to our old religious texts, incorporate this story in the school text books to explain to the children why the eclipses take place? We are bound to give in text books only what is scientific and factual.

It is not peculiar to only Hindu society that religious texts are understood only by letter, and the texts or stories therein believed in blind faith. In 1925, a thrilling court case took place in America (The trial that rocked the world, Readers' Digest, July 1962)-a country believed to be most scientific in outlook. A teacher in one of the states was placed in the dock. He was charged by a Christian citizen with teaching the "theory of evolution" in contradiction to the story of Genesis and Creation of Man as told in the Bible. The teacher had taught in the light of the latest theory of evolution. The court declared him guilty and he was punished. However, today no Christian gives credence to that story of evolution in the Bible; but still they have not tried to destroy their faith in the Bible. This may appear strange, but has a great lesson for us.

### **Spirit Eternal, Forms Ever New**

Such problems are common in all countries. Solutions must be found to them. Whenever I speak like this, some people say that these are things created by God. It is their intention perhaps to impress upon us the idea that such things cannot be changed or amended because they are created by God.

But how far can this argument stand? God Himself has declared: "Whenever Dharma declines, I reincarnate myself." However, the re-establishment of Dharma after its decline does not mean that the old order will be re-established without any change whatsoever. Nobody in our country, like Mohammed Paigambar, has ever said: "I am the last Prophet." So it is but proper that we should rethink how far it is right to assert that this is the 'word of God' and hence unchangeable. The re-establishment of Dharma can only mean that the same eternal life principles will be preserved, while its expressions and manifestations will change. And we must be prepared to welcome these changes.

We should also be able to think clearly and without bias regarding the genesis of the systems which came into vogue in those old days. There is no reason to think that our ancestors had no insight into things and that they had set up the systems arbitrarily or in ignorance. We must keep in mind the fact that the thinkers and leaders of society of those times considered the needs of the society under those conditions and laid down suitable norms to ensure its solidarity and progress. In case those systems are unnecessary or no longer useful at present, we are free to reject them. But it is necessary that we should also understand why a particular system was introduced in a particular period of time.

Take for instance the varna system-it is said that there was no varna system in olden times. Later on, it was felt that some system was necessary to ensure proper and steady progress of society. The leaders of the society at that time thought that the society could progress only if four kinds of functions were properly and efficiently executed. Hence the society was classified into four groups depending upon the specific propensities and aptitudes of individuals and groups of individuals. Thus the varna system evolved. Every system entails classification. However, this system was not designed to create differences in the status of the people belonging to the different groups. Classification is one thing and class-discrimination is another.

According to some scholars, the classification in the beginning was also not hereditary. But as time went by, without an efficient means of quick transport or communication, it must have become increasingly difficult to recognise and classify aptitudes in an extensive society spread over such a vast stretch of land. Under such a situation, birth in a particular family must itself have been taken as the indication of his aptitudes and as a basis for

classifying a person or a group of persons. That is how the *Varna* system must have evolved over the years. But even at that time there were no superiority or inferiority complex. On the other hand, the whole society was visualised as a single living entity, personified into a magnificent figure with 'a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet'. Such a glorious concept does not permit the perverse and ridiculous notion that the thighs are superior to the feet, the hands are superior to the thighs or the head is superior to the hands. The idea is that all these limbs are equally essential for the proper functioning of the society.

This mistaken sense of high and low that we witness today had no place in that concept of one corporate living social entity. To imagine otherwise would be to do grave injustice to those visionaries. It was for this reason that the system was acceptable to one and all. And it was because of its common acceptance that certain systems of checks and balances were introduced to make it relevant for the succeeding generations. For example, the group endowed with the intellectual power was to embrace poverty. The group with ruling power was denied power of wealth. The power of state and of wealth was not allowed to combine in the same group. So long as these checks and balances were efficiently maintained, the system worked well. But defects crept in the system when these checks and balances were ignored in course of time.

Defects are bound to creep into any system. It is well known that Communism aimed at the removal of all types of inequalities, particularly the exploiting 'class'. But Milovan Djilas (a top communist leader of Yugoslavia) in his famous book *'The New Class'* has written that a new class has come up in all communist countries. He had to say this of the communist system within less than 50 years of its capture of State power—a system which was avowedly born to do away with all classes. Human nature is such! Vested interests develop in any system. The varna system too was no exception to this human weakness, and as a result it became distorted and collapsed. But none can say that the originators of the system had any such perverse intentions in their minds when they introduced it.

### **Limitations of Hereditary Aptitudes**

Even though our ancestors classified the society on the basis of heredity, they were aware of the limitations of the inherited talents. In our old religious literature, such expressions are scattered all over. They said:



*Shudropi sheelasampanno gunavaan braahmano bhavet  
Braahmanopi kriyaahenaha shudraat pratyavari bhavet*

“By his noble conduct a Shudra can become a Brahmana, and a Brahmana becomes a Shudra without that rectitude.” Or

*Jaatyaa braahrnana iti chef na.*

“One cannot become a Brahmana because of birth alone.”

Great sages like Rishyashringa, Vishwamitra and Agastya stand as illustrious examples of people, who, though not born as Brahmins became Brahmins by their penance, virtues and attainments.

It is said in the Puranas that Mahidas, the author of Aitareya Brahmana, who became a Dwija (twice-born), was the son of a Sudra woman. Jabala, who had no father to be named, was initiated into the Brahmin order by his Guru through the Upanayana ceremony. These things were possible only because they had recognised the limitations of the inherited talents and had made the system elastic in outlook. Thus, it was possible for the system to last for centuries.

### **The Changed Situation**

Today the situation has changed completely. This calls for changes in our way of thinking too. In the ancient days, a student had to learn his lessons at the residence of his teacher. Of course, the printing press was not there. The machine age had not set in. The blacksmith's son, the jeweller's son or the weaver's son used to learn his trade by observing his father at work. The home was his school. Thus heredity and environment combined together in imparting professional education to the individual. With the advent of the printing press, education was to be imparted in educational institutions, not at homes. In the machine age, the manufacturing work shifted from homes to factories. Science has progressed, new inventions have been made. The whole environment has changed so fast.

It is now recognised by one and all that though heredity is important, environment also has an effective role in shaping the human character. Therefore, it is inconsistent with the demands of modern times to insist on the hereditary varna and caste system.

### **Importance of Environment**

Some people attach great importance to the differences because of natural and hereditary factors. To an extent their contention is true. But to term these differences as science is simply ridiculous. It is definitely not to the credit of man if he was to make efforts only to substantiate the hereditary disparities in individuals. His efforts should be to study nature's processes and devise ways and means for lessening these disparities and making them tolerable. Therein lays his greatness and his courage. Keeping in mind the limited importance of heredity, we should, by changing the environment and imparting education and training and introducing suitable systems, try to remove any hereditary defects and handicaps among any section of the society. This is possible in the present times. The Japanese were considered to be dwarfish in stature. But after the Second World War, they came into close contact with the Americans. Appreciable change took place in their eating and drinking habits as also in their all-purpose way of life. As a result, their average height has now increased.

Before the First and the Second World Wars, only certain groups of people in our country and other countries were considered of martial race. But during the two world wars, large scale mobilisation and conscription had to be resorted to in all the countries as huge armies were raised. It was then observed that all these people fought better than even the professional soldiers, better than even those traditionally associated with the professional army. Nobody accepts the notion of 'martial' or 'fighting' races any more. Hence, it is now futile to try to give heredity a philosophical basis. In fact, circumstances have changed so much that even to say that varna system and caste system could serve as a necessary basis for the proper functioning of the society, is ridiculous. Perversion and confusion pervade the atmosphere. Castes no doubt exist, but they have nothing to do with the preservation of the social fabric. Caste is now confined only to marriage alliances. It exists only in form, the spirit having disappeared long ago. What exists now is not (varna) system but only disorder. Hence, we should all put our heads together and think how to guide it—a system which has to die and is already dying must finally end and have a natural death.

### **Hasten Slowly**

There is in vogue a phrase Roti-Beti-Vyavahaar (Bread-Daughter-Behaviour). In the olden days, even the Roti-Vyavahaar (inter-caste dining), that is, sharing of food was restricted within a caste. That restriction

has, however, worn-out and nowadays people of all castes have started sharing food with one another. The credit for such a change is shared by the English education system, the Jhunka-Bhaakar Sangh, community dinners and the social workers taking up the task specifically. RSS also deserves some credit on account of its camps and other congregational programmes. This has contributed greatly in the easing out of disparities among different castes. Inter-caste marriages are also taking place now.

It can be said without reservation that if the Beti-Vyavahaar (inter-caste marriages), just like Roti-Vyavahaar, also takes place in a greater measure; it will help to a very great extent in wiping out caste-differences and bringing about homogeneity in the society. However, inter-caste marriages are a more difficult proposition than inter-caste dining. Keeping this in mind and without unseemly haste, all should conduct themselves in a congenial manner. The reason is, as soon as the idea of marriage comes up, the question of a good match naturally crops up. One cannot marry anyone indiscriminately. It can be a good match if only the bride and the groom can claim near equality in educational, economic and social standards. This is possible only to the extent that residences are close together encouraging the habit of close contact with one another. Residential colonies like the LIC colony, the bank employee's colony, the railway workers' colony and the teachers' colony, which are coming up in good number and nowadays help greater socialisation subscribe substantially towards this end. Along with this, when their economic status also improves, education becomes universal; then such marriages also become common irrespective of caste differences. Legislations, monetary temptations, propaganda tactics cannot bring this about. That would be wrong. This is a delicate matter which cannot have a rough and ready solution. Everyone of us has to keep this in mind and subscribe towards bringing about social transformation. The change-over may take time, but it is bound to take place.

### **Uproot this Evil**

Untouchability is a still more saddening and unfortunate aspect of our social inequality. Some thinkers opine that it was non-existent in the olden times, but at some stage during the passage of time, it entered into our social system and got rooted. Whatever be its origin, all of us consider that untouchability is a terrible folly and it must, of necessity, be thrown out lock, stock and barrel. There are no two opinions about it. Abraham Lincoln, who abolished slavery in America, said, "If slavery is not wrong, then

nothing is wrong". Similarly, it is for all of us to declare, "If untouchability is not wrong, then nothing in the world is wrong!"

Everyone of us must therefore aim at eradicating social inequality in each and every form. We must clearly explain to the people at large how our society became weak and disorganised on account of social inequalities. We must also show them the way to get rid of those. It is necessary that every individual must make his or her contribution in this effort. That would remove a stumbling block in the way of Hindu consolidation.

### **Success through Persuasion**

In this task of bringing about social equality, we should be able to win over the support and cooperation of various types of people. We should, for that purpose, conduct ourselves with restraint and grace. It is only then that we will be successful. There are our religious leaders, saints, sages and scholars. They hold a sway over the popular mind. Their cooperation in this task is essential. Sometimes we feel that they are firmly attached to the old customs and would not like to see them changed. However, this should not make us misunderstand their good intentions. In other countries too there are religious teachers pinning their faith in ancient systems. Nevertheless, the people there do not ridicule them on that account. We too, with proper approach, could plead with our religious leaders that they should, in their preaching and discourses, tell the people which facets of our Dharma are of eternal value and which of those are changeable according to time. Such an exposition on their part would be more effective. We should also submit to them that the responsibility of protecting the society is theirs and that it can be discharged only by their coming out of their ashrams and matths and unreservedly mixing in the society.

Though this appears an uphill task, actually it is not so. Fortunately, there are already indications that our Dharma Gurus have started working in this direction. Our late Sarsanghchalak Param Poojanceya Sri Guruji had brought together all the religious leaders on a common platform, under the auspices of Vishva Hindu Parishad, to persuade them to accept this viewpoint. As a result, many saints and religious leaders have begun mixing with various sections of society. They have given up their previous opposition to reconversion and have now come forward to take back into their fold those brethren of ours who had converted to other religions.

The enlightened section of our society has a great responsibility in this regard. They should think and act to achieve equality without creating any bitterness in society. Those who suggest solutions to the problem should also keep in mind the dangers that may crop up from such solutions.

*Upaayam chintayan praagnaha apaayamapi chintayet.*

We want equality only for the purpose of establishing in the society an atmosphere of goodwill, harmony and mutual cooperation. Those that speak, write or act without understanding this basic viewpoint will only harm the purpose they wish to serve.

### **The Right Approach**

Many times, a particular section of society is subjected to harsh criticism. It is highly improper to disgrace or to demoralise any segment of our society. Maintaining their morale is important. Examples of new and better social behaviour should be placed before them. Unfortunately, there are still some people in our society who believe in propagating discrimination and are unable to grasp the right attitude. In the final analysis, they are all a part and parcel of the Hindu society. There are certainly ways of persuading and bringing them round.

This was the way revered Dr. Hedgewar, the Founder of the Sangh, worked. I had the good fortune in my young age to work under his guidance. In the early beginning stages, we had very interesting experiences. I was present in the first Sangh camp. In that there were quite a number of mahaar (untouchable) brethren. During meals, some hesitated to sit along with them. They had never before in their life sat for meals with the mahaars. They cited their problem to Doctorji. But he did not enforce any disciplinary action against them or ask them to get out. Doctorji simply said: "Our practice is to sit together. We shall sit accordingly." All of us sat together for meals. Those few who were hesitant sat in a separate line. But for the next meal, they came to Doctorji and apologised and sat with us out of their own will. If Doctorji had taken disciplinary action against them at the very outset and sent them out of the camp, they would not have been transformed.

A very enlightening episode worried my late friend Sri Bachharaj Vyas. He was a volunteer of the Sangh shakha of which I was a worker. Having been born in a highly orthodox family, he would not come even to my house for

meals. When he first attended a Sangh camp, taking meals posed a problem for him. He could not have the meals prepared and served to all. When I placed this problem before Doctorji, he did not quote any rule of the camp and prevent Sri Bachharaj from attending the camp, since he was certain that the desired change in his outlook would definitely take place. He knew Bachharaj was a man of great calibre and utterly selfless at heart. He told me, "Let him come to the camp. We shall give him the utensils and the ration; let him cook his own food." It was so for the first year. The next year, Sri Bachharaj himself said to Doctorji, "I shall take meals with the others!" Thereafter, as he involved himself more and more in Sangh work, as you all know, his behaviour underwent a metamorphic change in spite of his orthodox background. He became a trusted worker of the Sangh and served as the Provincial Organiser of the Sangh in Rajasthan. Later he even became the All India President of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

Many a times, at the root of the internecine quarrels and violent conflicts in the Hindu society lay political or personal rivalries. Election clashes, land and family disputes also assume vicious form. Further, the politician or the interested person projects it as a colour of conflict between two castes to save his skin and serve his political ends. At such times, unfortunately, many well-meaning persons, who are ignorant, are made pawns in this game. In particular, pressmen in search of a scoop do not bother to obtain first-hand knowledge of what has actually happened but weave out a story with a single thread of information and give it a sensational headline. When clashes take place between Hindus and Muslims, they are reported as a clash between one community and another, while even petty quarrels among the Hindus are magnified and reported in an inciting fashion. This is certainly not right. We should all exercise the greatest care and restraint in all our actions, if we are to lessen the social disparities.

### **Not Criticism but Cooperation**

It is a fact that the backward or untouchable brethren of ours have borne quite an amount of misery, insults and injustice in the past centuries. That agony is there in their hearts. We are also much pained at this sight. Now we have to find a way out. All of us feel that onslaughts on them are wrong and that they should stop. Therefore, the efforts of all of us, our talk and our behaviour should be such that it should be conducive to the achievement of this goal. I appeal to the oppressed brethren also to exercise this restraint. The faults and follies in our society must certainly be criticised. But there

are different ways of criticism. When foreigners criticise us, it is with a sense of contempt. But when our own people criticise, it carries an element of pain borne out of affectionate concern. Otherwise, if we begin to drag our quarrels of the past into the present, we shall be only placing our future in jeopardy. That will only hamper our progress towards equality and harmony. They (the oppressed brethren) should feel that they are also part and parcel of the same society, and shall live with other members of society. If they stand up shoulder to shoulder with others who have similar ideas and feelings, then the combined efforts of both will make the task much easier and bring the goal much nearer.

In the past, some eminent leaders of the oppressed communities have severely criticised certain castes and religious texts. That was necessary at that time. In order to draw the attention of the people to a certain point and rouse public opinion, an individual may use a sharp language in the early stages of the struggle. But it is not necessary that such tirades should continue forever. Now the time has changed. The actual transformation has to take place now. As such, the responsibility is upon all of us to employ only such language which will help the process change.

### **The Self-respectful Way**

I believe that the 'backward' brethren of ours do not ask for the mercy of anybody. They only desire an equal status with others and that too on their own merits. Since they have remained backward all these years, they only want that facilities and opportunities should be provided to them in order to progress in life. This is perfectly justified and it is for them to decide how long these privileges should continue. In the long run, however, they will have to compete with others and earn an equal status only on the basis of merit. Perhaps they also know this. It is for them to think, strive and chalk out a time-bound plan of lifting themselves up. A day has to come when all of us will feel equal in our worth and capacities.

### **The Real Basis of Equality**

In spite of many drawbacks, the Hindus have their own specialties. They have certain concepts and attitudes with regard to life. Thinkers the world over concede that this society has established certain great and eternal values of life. If the Hindu society, believing in such specialties and eternal values of life and following them in practice, can stand up united, imbued with the spirit of social equality, then only those specialties will live forever

and prove beneficial to the world at large. But unfortunately, today, the Hindu society is weak and disorganised. Dr. Ambedkar was very much pained that in this society which considers all human beings as children of God, nay, as part and parcel of that Divinity itself, there should be no sense of high and low. He also said that there could be no better basis for equality than the basic faith in the existence of a common spark of divinity in all human beings.

### **Adopt Constructive Outlook**

We have an ancient society. All these centuries, there was absolute freedom of thought and action. As a result, quite a good number of things were written in our texts, some of which could even be misinterpreted. If *na stree swaatantryamarhati* (woman is unworthy of freedom) is quoted to make it appear that the woman was despised in this society, the saying *yatra naaryastu poojyante, ramante Tatra devataaha* (where women are revered, there the Gods' rejoice) is also available to show that women were held in the highest esteem. If one wants to establish unity and harmony in the society, one has to think what are the concepts which should be picked up from our religious texts and from our history, which would be conducive to the removal of disparities and the consolidation of Hindu society.

May all of us sincerely feel that the Hindus must unite and achieve it. Social equality is a must. With this conviction, may all of us come forward to make our society united and strong. This is my fervent appeal to one and all.





# 5

## **THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL EQUALITY**



**(10 November, 1920 - 14 October, 2004)**

## Dattopant Thengadi

Dattopant Thengadi is among those ideologues and activists who constructively contested the idea of globalization and liberalization, which predominantly served the interests of the western capitalist world. He favoured an alternative socio-economic structure to achieve harmonious world order. His work "*Third Way*" is an endeavour and a strong message in quest of new path different from both capitalism and communism. Thengadi exemplifies a multifaceted personality - a rare combination of a leader, organizer and thinker. He founded many organisations with the inspiration of RSS, which include Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) and Samajik Samrasta Manch (SSM). During the 1950' when the communists claimed monopoly on the working class, he founded BMS with a new philosophy and perspective to the trade union movement. Eventually BMS emerged as the largest and the most effective labour organization in the country. Thengadi has been perhaps the rarest exception as non-leftist trade union leader who had been acclaimed and honoured by leftist trade union organisations and leaders.

Self study, constant dialogues and thinking were an integral part of his personality. He was forthright and eloquent. He believed that no individual could be evaluated without taking into consideration the socio-economic realities at that point in time. This was much evident in case of Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar. With the emergence of Dalit movement in India in the late twentieth century, Dr Ambedkar acquired centrality in political discourse. Contemptuous observations and evaluations were made against him by a section on the pretext of a 'research'. Thengadi strongly countered such aspersions and his work "*Dr Ambedkar aur Samajik Kranti ki Yatra*" is considered as one of the finest biographical and ideological sketch of Dr Ambedkar. He regarded Dr Ambedkar as a committed social reformer and original thinker. This was the last work of Thengadi ji. Thengadi founded Samajik Samrasta Manch to accelerate the process of social transformation and social egalitarianism.

This essay is based on the many speeches he delivered on diverse occasions. His thoughts are, in fact, a spirited philosophy of social reform.

## **A Brief Note**

"Samajik Samrasta Manch" is based on the philosophy of social transformation which makes the radical shift in thought process and instils the feeling of oneness in society. Both Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar aimed at strengthening the social fabric and elimination of social inequality thus strengthening the Nation. Their objective was to bring about substantive social change through purity of thought and complete dedication.

The issue of social equality has become very complicated and multi-dimensional. Politics merely complicates it more. The lasting solution can be found only by the initiative taken by the society. Harmonious relationship in the society would help usher in equality and dignity for all.

# The Guiding Principles of Social Equality

The Samajik Samrasta Manch was set up on April 14, 1983. There were different reasons for it. We can see that in the past few years, the situation in the country is aggravating/getting worse. Several new issues are arising. Without trying to find the root cause of the diseases, instant treatment is being provided. Though one injury would heal but new ones might come up which would again have to be treated. It is true that to dress the injury and to treat it, is the immediate necessity. That cannot be ignored. But the root cause of the disease should be found out and medicines should be given to purify the blood. This is the permanent treatment. Today Punjab is burning, tomorrow Assam will degenerate, day after Tamil Nadu will disappear. Thoughts like this come to our mind. Has anyone thought about it in depth and with seriousness? And if someone has, have they found a solution to the disease. When we began our investigation, we found that there were many finest individuals who were not given the respect/recognition they deserved in the then society. But in the coming times, these persons will definitely be recognised. We have seen some of best in the country who have found some diagnosis and have suggested some solutions and have implemented those also. Last year, out of sheer coincidence two of these finest individuals Babasaheb Ambedkar and Honourable Hedgewar ji had their birth anniversary on the same day, April 14, according to English and Hindi calendar respectively. On this special occasion, the Social Harmony Forum was launched. Although not any big task was anticipated from the Forum,

yet it was launched with the idea of bringing together social thinkers, giving direction to their thought process and building coordination among them.

The names of these two intellectuals were mentioned as a source of inspiration. We have gathered here on the birth anniversary of Late Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar ji. Though today we are not going to deliberate on his life, still I feel that keeping in mind the appreciation he will receive in the future for his work, while paying homage to him, it should be normal to think about his objective, what is that he wanted and what path needs to be followed to bring it to the forefront.

### **Dr Ambedkar's Appeal**

Before beginning this topic, it appears that I should make it clear why I was attracted towards Babasaheb Ambedkar. We had a very good relationship. The relationship was not equal. I was a small youth karyakarta (worker) and he was a senior and important national leader of India. The relationship was thus in accordance with it.

Before 1950, I had only heard the name of Babasaheb. But I thought of him as a leader of a particular community. I did not know him personally then and had no idea about his life and character. I had no idea about his work too. First around 1950, a few of us youths got fascinated to him. One of the reasons for it was that I had spent three years of my life in political activities. At that time, we were attracted to two big leaders, both of them doctorates, for an act of theirs. One was Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and another was Dr Shyamaparsad Mukherjee. Both were given a place in the first Ministry of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. But both of them resigned from their post. We found this strange. We developed a lot of respect for their behavioural sense of right and wrong. Because the fact was: behavioural conscience says that we are ministers and are in the Ministry, we should not create much annoyance. Jawaharlal Nehru had assured Dr Ambedkar that he will be given the Finance Ministry but he did not give him the portfolio. Despite this, to be seated in vehicle thinking that the vehicle will move and someday the terminus/station will come, that it will bear fruit, that if not today, someday our future will brighten, was a easy thought like many have the behavioural sense of using their principles to come to power. To come to power, to be a part of power, the growing idea of announcement of ideologies was not adopted by them. The use of power for their ideologies and the madness of abandoning power seeing that their ideologies are

taking a back seat despite they being in power, was admired by the youth and gradually we got the opportunity to be beneath his guidance.

Babasaheb visited Nagpur before the first elections. After addressing the audience, there was a press conference where he answered some questions. Shri Sharad of Nagpur Times, who is also my good friend, went to Dr Ambedkar after the conference and said I have a question to ask but I couldn't have asked that in front of others. Dr Ambedkar said, "What is that?" He asked: You said that the Scheduled Caste Federation which has fielded its candidates in the elections is not only to oppose the government. You said that it will not only be an opposition party but it also aspires to form the government someday. Tell me in how many years do you think you can form the government. To this, Dr Ambedkar said, I am not an astrologer. Ask an astrologer." This is how he spoke. Sir Shinde questioned again, "Nothing like that, still what is your assumption." To that Baba replied, "Read the history of England. See when was the British Labour Party formed and which year did the party get absolute majority. Read it and you can guess from that. But keeping Babasaheb's age in mind, it was doubtful that through the Scheduled Caste Federation, he would be able to become the Prime Minister in his life time. An intelligent man like him must have also never thought so.

### **Committed Conduct**

After this, another such situation arose. In May 1954 there was by-election in Bhandara. At that time in the reserved constituency there were two candidates from Congress - one reserved and another from the general caste. In the opposition was Babasaheb contesting for the reserved category and for the general seat there was another important candidate from another national party. It is not important to name the party as the party is non-existent in Maharashtra today. There is also no reason to take the name of that person as he is no more in politics today. In summation, the situation was such that if the Scheduled Caste Federation people voted for anyone other than the Congress, then that candidate would win. But Babasaheb would not get elected for the reserved seat. To increase the popularity of the party he was a member of, he knew the art of tying up with others and taking away their votes. But he did not want to risk his votes in favour of the other party. After an experience in Mumbai, it was there in everyone's mind that there is no benefit in voting there. A meeting was arranged to discuss and deliberate. I was also present in the meeting as a petite worker. The party



workers presented their opinion with great enthusiasm. They proposed that "If the other vote is given to him, then Mr... of Congress will win and Babasaheb will lose the elections. So we need to burn the other vote. (The word "burn the vote" meant not voting anyone. This was the term used in Vidharbha then). Discussion on this was going on and Babasaheb listened. He came and sat in the meeting and asked: "What are you discussing". All present said, "The other vote has to be burnt. If we do not, you will be defeated."

Very calmly he said, "See I have drafted the Constitution. I cannot tell or bear that my followers will violate the constitution. I will not tell you to burn the other vote. I cannot give you the permission for that. Even if I lose the elections because of that, it is okay. But I will not give you the permission to burn the other vote." And the result was obvious. The other candidate won and Baba lost. Despite there being an easy winning strategy, he did not accept it. Not just that, he was too dedicated too. Because of his dedication, he had a different personality altogether and I had begun realising that.

### **Forward looking Imagination**

The third incident happened during Dharmachakra Pravartan. A meeting of the workers was held at Hotel Sham. The Branch-in-charge of the Bharatiya Boudhajan Samiti Sri Bamanrao Gobbale was invited to the meeting, but it was actually a meeting of all important workers of Babasaheb. A day prior to conversion, that is on October 13, 1956, when the discussions were held, I was present as a worker who served tea and poha (flattened rice). Dr Ambedkar said to his workers, we are changing our religion but it is important to know our entire plan. He said, "The philosophy we have, should be laid down in detail." It is clear that he did not elaborate on the philosophy during the meeting and it was natural as the people sitting there were associated with him since years and decades. But Baba said, "We have to lay down the base of the philosophy we have. We have to keep in mind our future strategy. Giving further details, he said the part on Scheduled Caste, is socially for us. Now we will be accepting the Buddhist thought. Some from the Scheduled Caste will become Buddhist. The Boudh Scheduled Caste will be us and those who will not take up Buddhism will also be a part of us. But we shouldn't confine Buddhism to Scheduled Caste only; we have to take it beyond that. As a result those people will also come to us who are not Scheduled Castes. They would believe in Buddhism and we will have a Non-Scheduled Caste Buddhist Class. Meaning we will have

Buddhist Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Caste Non-Buddhist and Non-Scheduled Caste Buddhist. We are also launching a new party. Some of the philosophy of this party is based on traditional as well as Western democracy.

I know you may have more interest in politics than in religion but I get more nectar from religion than politics. The Scheduled Caste Federation has helped build self-respect and self-standing of the Dalit class. But a big wall has come up between the Dalits and other castes in the society. The situation is such that the people from other caste do not vote for candidates from the untouchable caste and the untouchables too do not vote for other caste candidates. So take help from those who are compassionate about the Scheduled Caste issues and set up a national side and try to work with leaders of other castes. It is time to observe the reality. Those who accept our philosophy will join us. Among them, there will be some who will be from outside the Scheduled Caste. There will be some who would believe in Buddhism and some who will not. Meaning we will have different groups who will be non-Scheduled Castes, non-Buddhist Republicans. There will also be a group who will be non-Scheduled Caste, non-Republican Buddhist. One religion, one political ideology and one social strata, and there will be different categories within these three categories. People from different categories will come to us. With this, be it small or large, we will have a social base of one philosophy.

This happened in October 1956. At that time looking at his nature, age and the strategy he had prepared, we were thinking that he must be conscious whether he will be alive to see the execution of his long-term strategy and the result. He knew he will not be alive to see it. He had set the mission knowing it well that he would not be alive to see it attained, and was working hard to achieve that mission leaving aside a life of comfort. Why was this man taking up such difficulties at this age when even nature is not supporting him and that too to achieve a long-term mission? It was the symbol of his finest personality. There was another reason for the affection and closeness I had with Babasaheb-his organisational view.

#### **Attention towards Organisational Behaviour**

Babasaheb's uniqueness was that while rendering his high thoughts, he gave equal importance to small organisational knowledge. For example on July 14, 1952, during a meeting at Damodar Hall in Mumbai, he spoke

about the structural fund and said that of the money we have received from our people, at different places many individuals and organisations have paid more than Rs 25. So there is a total of Rs 25,709 and 4 anna. There is Rs 1,000 collected from those who have given less than Rs 25. Further there is Rs 5,000 of which we do not have details as people have not returned us the receipt books. There is possibility that more money has been collected in the receipt books. So the extra amount collected might have been swindled. It is natural that doubts will arise. So in order to remove the doubts, you should give back all the receipt books with the balance money. Not returning the book or not giving the money collected is forgery and according to law, it is considered a crime. All should keep this in mind.”

### **Interaction with Workers**

I am only presenting some dialogues of Babasaheb with the workers as an example.

“Leaving our house and entering other’s premises is a great foolishness. Keep your house secure. If we do not, our situation will also become like the Brahmins. What has been the fate of the Brahmins? Till 1932, we used to work together; then the Brahmin leaders realised that they did not get any benefit staying away from the Congress. They entered the Congress thinking that they will be able to make a hollow in the party from inside which they could not while staying away from it. I tried to explain it to them but they did not listen to me. They later realised that they did a mistake getting into the Congress. I have doubts how far they will be able to put the situation right. That we break the house and then ally with them is not acceptable to me. We will not do anything like breaking the house.

“While joining hands with any side, be it Congress, Socialist or Shetkari Kaamgaar (peasants and workers), we should not break our organisation. Individually, human beings have no value. Today, the recognition I have in the Congress and in politics, is because I have the Scheduled Caste Federation with me. The day the basis of the federation is shattered, I will have no value in politics. So keeping defence of the nation in mind and knowing the relationship of friends and enemies in future politics, we have to be cautious and pave our path in the leadership of the Scheduled Caste Federation.

“Now we have to purify our mind. We should be attracted towards good nature. This way we have to become religious. It is not like if we are having an education, all our works are done. There is no doubt that education has value. But along with education, it is important that a human’s morality should also become better. Without morals, the value of education is zero. Knowledge is like a sword. Think if a person has a sword in his hand, whether he should use it for good or for something wrong will depend on his moral. With the sword he can kill a person as well as save a life. Knowledge is also something similar. If the principles of an educated person are good, he will utilise his knowledge for the welfare of all, but if he does not have any morality, he will use his knowledge for the disadvantage of others. Morals are an important part of religion. An educated person should not be self-centred. Those who cannot think of anything else other than their own selfish interest, they do not know even a little about ultimate reality. So what if they are educated, how will it help others? If a steel or aluminium frying pan is cleaned properly, it shines like a mirror. Similarly, education should be used like that.

“The party workers think that election is politics. They think there is no other meaning of politics besides elections. So all struggle to get tickets during elections and as soon as the election gets over, they sit at home. But for society-life, politics is extrinsic, politics is not everything. The development in the society is not only because of politics. The socio-economic angle is no less important in the society. Because of the notion that politics is everything, there is struggle for tickets during elections, division in the society is created because of not being given ticket, workers stay back at home on being disappointed for loss in elections and keep quiet in the assembly after winning the elections. Workers have this thinking.

“I do not love any worker individually. I only love the work. The one who works is dear to me.

“Only if the system works according to me, I will be in it. This is wrong.

“Even in our federation there are people who are market-oriented. If they aim to take apart the federation, they can leave. There is no place for them here. Do not step on two roads/paths. The tree of this federation will not bear fruit that soon. The fruit will be borne late, but will remain stable forever. The tree which grows fast and bears fruit dies fast. A tree like that is of no use to us. Those who want results quickly can go there.

“Those who do not have patience cannot become a leader. When a human being is ready to die, he/she never dies and those who are scared of death are already dead. We should understand that.

“All those who want to be politicians should practice politics properly. Without practice, it is not possible to achieve anything in this world. It is necessary that in our society, every worker and politician should effectively indulge in religious and economic practice. Those who want to be leaders, should be careful about the duties, work and responsibility of a leader, as leaders of our society have tremendous responsibility. For our leaders the circumstance in our society is not like in other countries. In other societies, leaders go to meetings, give tall lectures, get accolades and come back home with a garland. In our society leaders cannot live on doing all this. Our leaders have to practice regularly, deliberate and work hard. It is only then that they can do some good to the people and become leaders in true sense. You must be thinking it is easy to become a leader, but I feel it is a difficult task to be a leader. I myself feel leadership is difficult as I do not have the qualities of a leader like others. When I began the movement there was no association then. I had to do everything myself. If I had to organise a meeting, I had to do it myself. If I had to publish a newspaper, I had to do it on my own. I had to myself take out newspapers like *Muk Nayak*, *Bahishkrit Bharat Janta*. I had to do all works to manage the press.

“Anger is of two kinds. One is out of vengeance and another out of love. When a butcher goes with a knife, the anger he has is of reprisal. And what will one say when a mother slaps her child? Her anger is out of love. A mother beats her child so that the/she be a person of good morals. My anger is also based on love. Your character should be even, so I abuse politics.”

The Indian constitution maker's guidance to the workers keeping in mind their mental status was much praiseworthy. Babasaheb's directions to the workers are still suitable for workers of all groups. I being a preacher/propagator of the Sangh understand the importance of the guidance.

### **Behaviour in accordance with Rank/Level**

There are people we have to move forward with. It is important that we talk and behave with them keeping in mind their position. In the initial days, I had the opportunity to be present during a dialogue between Shri Dasrath

Patil, Chairman, Scheduled Caste Federation and Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar. The evolution of the work "Ladwaan" was discussed there. While expressing his thoughts, Babasaheb used certain Barhadi (a Marathi dialect) words which surprised me. I had heard praises about his intelligent speeches in the parliament and committees, but the same individual could use Barhadi words with such clarity, made me happy. If one does not go and address the people at their level of understanding, how can they be brought together?

Another thing was that his thoughts were so clear and fundamental that on their right expression, the sine qua non was incidental animosity. In one context he realised that it is necessary to make certain things clear---"I am aggressive in nature and I always have a tussle with those in power, so they should not think that I will speak some harsh words about India abroad. I have never revolted against the state. Deep in my heart I have always thought about the good of the country. During the round-table conference I was 200 miles away from Mahatma Gandhiji for the good of the nation."

In yet another context he had said that "many Hindus consider me their enemy. But I have some personal friends among the Brahmins, the Brahmins who consider people from our community to be worse than dogs and cats. It is in my fate that I oppose their anti-societal acts. This situation is beyond my control."

As a matter of fact in all his works, Brahmins and people from other upper caste helped him a lot. Babasaheb has also time and again expressed his gratitude to them.

### **Opinion on Muslims**

We all remember the swirl created by his book "*Thoughts on Pakistan*". The supporters of Hinduism were shuddered by it. It was not possible for anyone to think that there would be logic in his thoughts in the sensitive circumstances then. I do not agree with Babasaheb's extract in the book. But it is important for all and especially the supporters of Hinduism to look at the logic he gave. "Democracy does not affect the minds of the Muslims. If they have belief on anything, that is religion. Their politics is mostly based on religion. The Muslim community is against good insights. In the entire world, they appear to be regressive. Muslims think that Islam is a universal religion. But the friendship of Islam is not ubiquitous, it is not worldwide.

Their friendship is limited to the followers of Islam only. They have animosity against non-Muslims and scorn them. The countries where Muslims do not rule are their enemies. So Islam will never let a true Muslim believe that Hindustan is their motherland and Hindus are their friends. This was Babasaheb's clear thoughts.

### **Tolerance of Hindus**

Late Babasaheb always had it in mind that we will never be able to absorb the Muslims with us. So it is good to keep a foreign element separate from our Nation. Later I had an opportunity to discuss with him on this when another similar question came up on the Kashmir Valley. Then Babasaheb said with great zeal that "I am no less patriotic than you. But the difference is I am able to feel where the shoe is pinching while you are not even able to notice that the shoe is pinching. To keep the Kashmir Valley in India, we have to imbibe all Muslims there with Hindus. If we do not do that, a Damocles sword will always keep hanging above our head. As a matter of fact, despite us being a part of you, you have not been able to digest us till date. Do the savarna (upper caste) Hindus have the capacity to imbibe all Muslims in Hinduism? I know your digestive capacity, and so I had said that the foreign elements should better remain outside the country."

No matter what, this opinion of his was not acceptable to me and I told him that. He took my words as the words of an innocent child. Dr Ambedkar's conclusion is a sad demonstration of the Hindu society's digestive capacity in the present time.

In February 1942, while speaking on his book *Thoughts on Pakistan*, at Bagle Hall, Babasaheb said, "There is no point arguing with those who think Pakistan is not a subject of discussion. To all those who feel the formation of Pakistan was wrong, will find Pakistan a terrible thing. It is wrong to tell people that forget history. Those who forget history cannot build history. In order to reduce the dominance of Muslims in the Indian Army, it is necessary that we create a sangh (group) which would be loyal. We will protect our own nation. After having Pakistan, Muslims should not think that they will spread their empire. Hindus will make them fall on the ground. I admit that I have differences with the touchable Hindus on certain points. But I promise before you that I will give up my life to protect the sovereignty of my country."

Some of Dr Ambedkar's intended negative task hurt the followers of Sanatan Dharma and their anger was obvious. But they should also try to understand the mental state of Baba.

### **Indisputable Focus**

It is natural for artists to be in deep love with their art work and litterateurs with their literature. Dr Ambedkar drafted the constitution. The world felicitated him with the title of "Manu of Modern India". This was the biggest achievement of his life, which he was never proud of as he was focused. He drafted the constitution so that it helps achieve his basic goal and makes it credential. But if this is not achieved, the title of Modern Manu will not be a solution. He was not in blind love with the constitution he drafted. He was very well aware about its limitations. For example look at his observation. He had said: On January 26, 1950 we are going to enter a tensed life where we are against each other. We will have political equality but socially and politically there will be inequality. We will accept that in politics each individual will have his opinion and a value. But because of our social structure, we will continue not to accept "one individual, one value" in our social and economic life. How long will we be leading such a life full of contradiction? How long will we ignore the inequality in our social and economic life? If we ignore equality for long, our democratic politics will be in danger. So we should very soon do away with the discordance or else the people facing disparity will destroy the democratic structure created by our constitution-committee with so much effort."

On September 2, 1953, in a lecture at the Law Board, he said, "I drafted the constitution on request from the government formed with absolute majority. This was my helplessness. I had to draft the constitution according to popular verdict. The Constitution of India does not give special rights to the Governor on safeguarding the untouchables. Hence their preservation has not been done rightly. So I will first burn this Constitution.

The indicators he had adopted for *Manusmriti*, he adopted the same for his own writing *Bhimsmriti* too.

### **Religion: The Basis of all Thoughts**

All thoughts of Honourable Babasaheb were based on religion. Meaning the Brahmins had exploited the Bahujan Samaj in the name of religion. They were kept away from acquiring knowledge and esteem. To protect the



Brahmin's inherent selfish interest, a system was created wherein they were kept in a seamless religious dependency. His harsh words for Brahmins and Brahmin religion continued. But he also said that the flaw is with the Brahmins and not in the basic visualisation of religion. He used to say that "in the entire world except a few Communist, you would not find a single human being who does not want religion. We should also protect religion like that. But that should be in good faith. A religion where there is equality among people, where all gets equal opportunity, this is true religion, rest are vice."

"According to Hinduism, if there is cosmic object everywhere, so it should be there in the untouchables too. So why is there inequality in Hindu religion? Lord Buddha left the world 2,000 years back, but his religion is flourishing even today. There is no ruler or chief. Towards the end of his life, Lord Buddha was asked by a disciple: "What will happen to this religion after you leave?" To this, the Lord had replied: "After I leave, religion will be your administrator. If you are not pursuing it, then what is its use? A religion accepted with a pure mind is your ruler."

"Once Lord Buddha asked his disciple Vishakha that what is religion? "To clean the dirty mind is religion" was the answer. Untouchability is not a stone laying on the road that social reformist would pick up and throw it away. Only when our mental faith will change, religion will change."

### **Greatness of Character**

No doubt education has its importance. But more important is moral character. If that is not there, even education can be self-destructive. The highest place for moral character is religion.

On February 6, 1954, during the inauguration of the Mahatma Phule Cinema by Shri Attre, Babasaheb said, "Today in the country there is no character and in a country where there is no ethics, the future of that nation is onerous. Whether Jawaharlal Nehru is the Prime Minister or Morarji Desai, your future is dark. The Ministers cannot rescue the nation. The one who has understood religion properly can only save the nation. Mahatma Phule is one among the religious reformers. Every individual should build his character on the fundamentals of religion: education, spiritual intellect, compassion, moral and friendship. Those getting an education and having no compassion are butchers according to me. Compassion means human

beings-the love among human beings. Human beings should go beyond that.

On June 13, 1953, delivering his lecture before the Mahila Mandal (Women's Forum) in Mumbai, Babasaheb had said: "Along with education, a person's morals should also be put right. Without morals the value of education is zero. Moral is an important part of religion."

### **Regulation of Wrong-Doing**

"Religion controls wrong doing. I will give you an example in your own language. In a bullock cart, there are two spheres, two bullocks, a cart and a person to make the bullocks pull it. A lubricant is applied in the cart. But only if there are nails in the spheres, the bullock cart will move. Similarly, religion is bondage for sinful and wrongful behaviour. Without the bondage of religion, work cannot sustain.

According to him, religion is necessary for the downtrodden. In the world the need for religion was first felt by people of lower strata. In Rome and Italy, first the poor accepted Christianity."

### **Priority to Protect Sovereignty**

As a matter of fact after centuries of oppression when the society becomes conscious; it awakens, opposes, cures and attacks. This affects the unity of the country and the peace and order is hampered. There were people like this too among Babasaheb's followers. But Baba used to explain it to them that "the path is suicidal". "Some people say that the Dalit Federation will never revolt. What is the meaning of revolt? Will we be able to digest the politics of revolution? If we revolt, you will suffer. If we go to the jail, they will make you suffer. They will give you pain telling you 'Let's see what help you can provide to Ambedkar'. It is better you work hard. Your heart should be pure and that will help do away with differences of opinion among us."

On January 11, 1950, while accepting the public felicitation, he said, "I am not interested in entering the politics of present day. But I feel it important to tell certain things."

"Earlier our politics was based on enmity. Earlier leaders of untouchable castes were ashamed and their behaviour was also alike. I am also responsible for this to some extent. But we have to change this facet of politics."

“Now we have to keep in mind one thing and that is we have to look after the good of our own community and along with that we have to see that the freedom of our country remains unimpaired. Even after attaining independence of our country, we had to live in dependence. People of lower strata need liberty as much as the upper strata. We are free from the slavery of the British. But if we have to live again in servitude, it will be sad. So every citizen of the country should take it as their utmost duty to protect the sovereignty of the nation.”

### **Opposition to Communism**

Assuming the possibility of amazement/hope in the eyes of the dalits in India on seeing the success of communism, Babasaheb said, “Do not be taken away with the success of the communist. I have complete faith that even if we get one-tenth part of the enlightenment attained by Lord Buddha, we can get the same result with love, justice and goodwill.”

Honourable Babasaheb was a great supporter of democracy. He used to say, “A government system where revolutionary changes are brought in the economic and social life of people without any bloodshed is democracy.” This was also a reason why he opposed the communist. He was against pure materialism.

To the materialistic people and society he used to quietly say that “materialistic comfort is not everything for an individual. With that a human being’s sorrows cannot be abated. A human being does not only survive with food, he also requires good culture”. He used to tell the Marxists, “A human being does not survive only on bread. He has a heart and the heart needs thoughts as diet. Religion creates hope in the hearts of the people which inspires them to work. Hindu religion has taken away the zest of the Dalits. This is the reason why I felt the need for religious conversion and took up Buddhism. There is no bondage of age and time. It can acquire affluence in any country. I will not keep any relationship with a country which gives more importance to swamitwa (headship). If in the Hindu religion, Dalits were given the freedom to take up arms, the country would have never become reliant (invaded).”

In September 1937, a district council was organised in Masoor under his chairmanship. Speaking during the council, he said that there is no likelihood that I will go and meet the communists. “I am a dire-hard enemy

of the communists who exploit the labour class to fulfil their political interest.”

The communism as had been written in the books is yet to get the pulse of the country. Telling this he questioned, “In India the labour class is poor. But can we make the distinction of poor and rich only. Can we say there is only this difference? Can we say that the poor in India do not believe in caste, sect and the distinction it creates? Do they not believe in differences other than that of rich and poor? When such a situation exists, can the labour class be united against the capitalist class? If the labour class cannot get united, so how can there be a revolution?”<sup>3</sup>

The source of Babasaheb’s thought process was religion. The Constitution and democracy had become his character. Lord Buddha, Mahatma Kabir and Mahatma Jyotiba Phule were his gurus.

### **Unsolicited False Insight**

Several false perceptions of Dr Ambedkar’s<sup>4</sup> false popular aspects have been proved baseless. I will cite two instances as example.

In Maharashtra, Agarkar<sup>5</sup> and others worked hard for the betterment of the society and gave more importance to social development than politics. It does not mean they had no interest in swaraaj (self-governance). But instead of understanding it, false insights were spread about these reformers. This can also be said in the context of Babasaheb.

It would be wrong to say that Dr Ambedkar was against swaraaj. His clear thought was that “There is possibility of attaining power in accordance with constitution of self-governance. Unless we attain sovereignty, we will not be able to emancipate our people. Think more and more about your welfare and I assure you that swaraaj is our aim. Accept it.”

Swaraaj was his objective but he gave first priority to position/rights of the Dalits in the constitution of swaraaj.

---

<sup>3</sup>Annihilation of Caste, page 18.

<sup>4</sup>Original speech in “Pujiyaniya Babasaheb”.

<sup>5</sup>Gopal Ganesh Agarkar (1856-1895), was first editor of Marathi Newspaper ‘Kesari’. He also published English newspaper ‘Maratha’ followed by ‘Sudharak’.

### **Emphasis on Harmony**

In the initial period of his public life, Babasaheb emphasised on harmony. He was aware that only having negative attitude against the upper caste will be of no help. He was attentive of the work undertaken by the Ayrā Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Satyasodhak Samaj and Theosophical Society, in order to liberate the dalits. He was also aware of the announcement made by the public figures from the upper caste to remove untouchability. This was the reason why he had appointed Chimanlal Setalvad, Rangar Paranjapae, Balasaheb Gangadhar Kher etc from the upper caste as the chairman and deputy chairman while setting up the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha (Outcast Beneficiary Council). He had also included members of other higher caste Hindus. Dr Ambedkar had clarified about it by saying, "The objective of the organisation will not be fulfilled unless there are members of the group which have to be emancipated and also people from other categories who are bothered about it." This was Babasaheb's main role. But because of the obstinacy of people who think they are contractors of religion, he had to take up other tasks.

About 20-25 years before religious conversion, when it was being discussed, on the desire of Savarkar<sup>6</sup>, Dr Munje<sup>7</sup>, Kurtakoti Shankaracharya of Hindu leaders, Babasaheb chose Sikhism. They had said it clearly that if Islam or Christianity was chosen, the religious people will become hostile towards the nation. He had good personal relationship with leaders of Hindu Sabha. But Babasaheb had objection that these leaders did not have a say amongst the conservative society and those who had a say, did not have similar point of view. He was sad that they have not been able to change the hearts of the upper caste people.

It is true that because of the rigidity of the conservative people and their fanatic mindset, Babasaheb had to become a reactionary. But his role has mostly been of a synthesiser. It is clear that if the conservative people had not disappointed Babasaheb, the country would have benefited more from his capability and intelligence.

### **The Predicament of Social Inequality**

In the Indian circumstance, the question of social equality has become very

---

<sup>6</sup>Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.

<sup>7</sup>Dr. B.S. Moonje was president of Hindu Mahasabha and native of Nagpur.

complicated and multifaceted. The problem is becoming even more complicated as there is lack of deep understanding among the politicians and they show off and propagate. Still if a new intellectual today thinks about the situation seeing the circumstances, his conclusion is in accordance with the late leaders' thoughts. Recently, in his book "*Competing Equalities*", Marc Galentar has written about the social injustice in India and the opposition to it, the history of the legal efforts in the Constitution to achieve this special purpose as well as the details of the Supreme Court and High Court verdict on the subject.

In the beginning of the book, Galentar said, "The Indian effort to provide special favour to the groups exploited in the past is worth applause. Despite having a background of clear, valuable and detailed conservative inequalities, India has accepted the value of equality. The Constitution of India was born to remove the inequalities among the different strata of the society. As a result certain policies were made which I think is a discriminatory policy. Keeping in view the national character of indifference towards the lower strata of the society, it will be right to say that in the last 30 years the policy of providing compensation is being implemented continuously and open-handedly. But this policy has always been proved draconic and consequent. We can probably say that."

It is praiseworthy and exemplary that a foreign intellectual has worked hard to study the critical internal problems of India. India is grateful to him for his efforts. But since he did not know the pulse of the citizens and had the history of Negroes struggle in mind, he could not reach the roots of the problem. Still the result of the study is commendable.

The storm that rose all across the country for caste-based reservations in education and government jobs, the price of discharging it, and the problem of zero result, is a deep and big problem which can be imagined. It has been written in the book that social equality cannot be attained through social justice provided by the Constitution, law and judiciary.

Recently a book has been published, named "*Equality and Inequality: Theory and Practice*". It has been edited by Andreas Atle. It is a compilation of the write-ups of renowned intellectuals wherein all aspects-educational, social, economic has been touched upon. It is clear from this that only law and the Constitution solely cannot bring social equality. The conclusion of the book says that law cannot fulfil the drawbacks of general education.

I will present the response of one among all those who look at it impartially and apprehensively. Dr Shivraamya used to say, "The hurdles have increased even more as in the fundamental provisions there is conflict and contradiction between fundamental rights and directive principles. The contradiction is because of scarcity of resources. Because of this, government is unable to fulfil its responsibility towards the weaker class and on the other hand increase their skills as well. Under such circumstances, the directive principles are making a fun of the poor class. Those who do not have work, how will they get work. How will all those having no support get justice without help from the government. The answer to this is beyond understanding.

### **Long-term Work Plans**

It is clear from this discussion that this question will not be resolved with rules of the state. In the virtual situation, though such proposals look fruitful, they are not complete to fulfil the goal of equality and cannot achieve it either. For the realisation of the goal, there is the need for in depth fundamental thinking and practical plans. With the lack of it, you will get the will of others but the problems will not get resolved.

### **Embracing Constitutional Way**

From the different examples that I gave during my lectures, it must now be clear to all of you how Babasaheb's mind was functioning. During an important event he had made the proclamation of equality. It is true and as I told you in the beginning it creates a spur also. Even in circumstances when there was physical attack on him and his followers were determined to counter, he proclaimed about equality. In all this, the final picture that he had in mind was that of a united India. The ultimate picture in his mind was that of devotion to the Nation. He tried to explain it to the upper caste people but they did not understand. As a result he had to take up some other ways. He chose the ways which were based on religion and were constitutional. If we think about the balance he maintained, we can very well understand the picture he had in mind.

Under such circumstance if a solution has to be found and temporary dressing is done or political solution is found, it is important to know what the disease is. And it is also important to see what Babasaheb's medicine was for it. He was clear about his role and that he will not let conflict happen among the different groups. There should be unity in the entire society. If

there is unity like this, then everything else will remain in consolidation. He had expressed this opinion again and again.

### **Dr Hedgewar's Positive Viewpoint**

Emphasising on the other side of truth, another significant personality, Dr Hedgewar ji, had also worked on it and had tried to solve the problem in a different way. Because of caste differences, status differences and the problems that arose because of it, Dr Hedgewar was of the opinion that we do not need all this. But what is the means to end all this? He said tell them that it is bad and so leave it. But his opinion which was based on psychology said that negative viewpoint is often unproductive. "Forget the differences" is a viewpoint and "we are all one" is just another. The message is the same but there is difference on their importance and presentation. This difference should surprise all. If we differentiate these two viewpoints, there is difference in the language and there is change in the psychology. With this positive viewpoint, Dr Hedgewar began a new experiment without any fanfare. In this it was told that there is no caste. We told that "we are all Hindus and we do not accept untouchability. Where is untouchability? We are all Hindus." With this viewpoint, Dr Hedgewar began his work. His viewpoint reminds us of the gospels of Lord Buddha.

### **Differences in Conceptions**

Lord Buddha tells the bhikshu (monks) of Bhikshu Association, Hey bhikshu, you have come from different nations and different castes. We have several rivers in our land which when go and merge with the sea do not remain separate, they all merge together. The Boudh Sangh is like a sea where all are equal and of one type. The Sangh is also like the sea. From this point of view, both of theirs focus and aim of looking at the social and national problems had been the same. But the circumstances both were in were different. Hence there was difference in their outlook of the problems and their solutions. While one has given emphasis on a certain thing, the other has emphasised another thing. But the ultimate aim and belief of both was the same. In 1934, our camp was organised near the ashram of Mahatma Gandhi ji. Gandhiji expressed his desire to visit the camp. Honourable Appaji Joshi welcomed Gandhiji and Mahatmaji and Gandhiji inspected the arrangements in the camp. After that he asked: "There are how many Harijans in the camp." To this Appaji said: "I do not know as we do not ask anyone his caste." Gandhiji asked: "Tell me the number of Harijans here." Appaji replied that he cannot do that. "As long as we have



relationship, they are all Hindus and that is enough for us.” Mahatmaji said: “Then what would I ask,” Appaji said that it depends on “your desire”. Gandhiji spoke to many volunteers and asked them their caste. He learned that there were many Harijans in the camp and they were working with all others and eating with them too. The next day Dr Hedgewar went to meet him. Gandhiji then asked him that in your Sangh how do you spread awareness against untouchability? Dr Hedgewar said, “We do not tell people that do not practice untouchability. We tell them that we all Hindus are like a family. As a result all differences wane from the minds of our followers.”

### **Viewpoint of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh**

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh believes that all Hindus are like a family. Recently a false notion was deliberately being spread against a thought of guruji. But after the speech given by the third Sarsanghchalak, Balasaheb Deoras, from the dais of the Vasant Vyakhyanmala, the false presumptions ended. Guruji used to say that the problem has cropped up because of the pettiness in the hearts of the upper caste. Hence it is natural for the newly awakened untouchable caste people to get agitated. But as long as untouchability is not removed from the hearts of the upper caste, the problem will remain unresolved. The issue can be dealt with positive familial feelings. Sh Guruji used to say, “Today none of the varnas have any entity, none of the castes have any entity. We all have one varna and one caste and that is Hinduism”.

This is true that unlike other social reformers, Dr Hedgewar and Guruji did not take up the leadership of the social reform efforts because of their character. It was their desire that dharmacharyas (priests/saints) accept the leadership. With this intention, in 1969, Guruji brought together several priests having diverse viewpoints during the Vishva Hindu Parishad Summit. Babasaheb Ambedkar used to say that if Golwalkar and Shanakaracharya gave different judgements on a particular social and economic issue, so whose rendering will the general upper caste Hindus accept. No doubt they will listen to the Shankaracharya. Who believes in Shankaracharya? To this question, Guruji used to calmly say: “The question is not whether you and I believe in Shanakaracharya. The question is whom do the upper caste people whom we ask not to believe in untouchability, believe in. This is significant. Those people do not believe in me or you. They believe in the Shankaracharya. Meaning if we have to change the

hearts of these people, it will be more fruitful if we explain it to them by the decree of saints." Because of this though the work of the Vishva Hindu Parishad is not like that of a reformer yet it is very indispensable. This has to be accepted by an intellectual and unbiased individual. This is how we all know about Dr Hedgewar. I have explained to you through some examples what the feelings of Dr Ambedkar were. Now India has become independent. So I am worried about the differences among us first due to caste and now because of political interest. So we have to keep our national unity intact. This was said by Babasaheb during his closing speech. If we think about his feelings of 'one sentiment, one aim' but a different concept, we would know how the work of these two great men was. Without social unity, equality is not possible, Babasaheb was very well aware of this. We all Indians are siblings of each other and we all Indian citizens are brethren. When this feeling is there in the heart, then it is known as friendship. In the social life if there is something which showers nectar, it is friendship. It is difficult to follow this doctrine in our day to day life. There are many castes in India. These castes are against the country. The first reason for this is that casteism severs the society and life. The other reason is that casteism gives rise to disdain within us. If we want to be a nation in the true sense, we have to remove all these hurdles from our path. Because where there is a nation, friendly feeling will arise there. If there is no friendly feeling in existence, so what would be the entity of independence and equality?" Babasaheb was aware of the inner oneness of Hindu society and also the inherent cracks because of which he was very unhappy. He vehemently wanted that social unity would be established once again. He explained social unity in the following words: "For social unity it is important for all of us to participate in all tasks because this creates a vibration in each individual to do the work. An individual has the feeling that I am a part of this work. He can feel the success and failure of the work. This helps in a great way in creating a bond among the people. This is how a society can stand up. Because of the caste system, there was restriction on doing a particular work for all people. As a result, Hindus were unaware of a life of unity and infinity and could never become one."

To say that the warmth Honourable Babasaheb had for the Hindu society was different from the extreme passion of Dr Hedgewar, would be a sign of lack of insight of their aphorisms.

### **Equality from Harmony**

We should discuss on Dr Hedgewar's emphasis on harmony and Babasaheb's emphasis on equality. Equality cannot be achieved without harmony. Keeping in mind the psychology of human beings, if there is no harmony, lack of it will create inequality. If there is no harmony towards the entire society then why would the strong not exploit the weak and the rich the poor? There is no support or relevance. Even though I have the capacity to exploit others, I would not exploit anyone and will use my strength for the good of others. These feelings can arise only with social harmony. If there is any fundamental guarantee of this, it is harmony. The feeling of being a family is such that we feel the entire society is our family. Likewise, if we have harmony in society, the feelings of equality will naturally arise. Although it is right to build equality leaving aside inequality, but equality cannot be the last aim, this is an interim step. The ultimate aim is harmony.

### **Harmony is Friendship**

Tattvagyan (abstract knowledge or knowledge of the essence behind everything) is my basic religion not political science. From my guru Lord Buddha's knowledge, I could achieve this. In my abstract knowledge, there is place for independence and equality. But with unlimited freedom, equality ends. Liberty does not have a place in intrepid harmony. In my opinion, freedom and equality should not be violated. So there is place for only free preservation. The feeling of friendship was at the topmost of my abstract knowledge. Preservation as against liberty and equality is only possible with the feeling of friendship. It's another name is friendship or humanity and humanity is another name of dharma. This brotherhood, this feeling of companionship is social harmony. This is humanity, this is religion. With Lord Buddha's comradeship and compassion, harmony was nourished. With this equality was build and grew. I challenge the progressive, liberal transformers and revolutionaries who believe that equality is the ultimate aim and destination, and ask them to give me an example from world history where only with the desire of equality, equality was build and established. In every revolution it has been felt that all those who were exploited or suffered, have protested against the exploiters. This is true but a great analyst, Mr Frayer, has said: "Whenever the exploited class revolted against the exploiters, then there have been two kinds of revolutionary leaders." What kind of leaders are they (both)? He has said that, hatred towards the class which exploits is but natural. But there are two kinds of leaders who create hatred against the exploiting class. Those who

feel that the exploiting class should not exist, also have values in life like the leaders of the exploiting class. They have the feeling that we do not want this exploiting class, they should be thrown away and we should take their place. But their values of life are like that of the exploiting class. He then says that a revolution can happen and the revolution can be successful. With this the exploiting class can come to an end and the leaders of the exploited class can come to power. But their values in life/ideology are the same as the exploited class. And when these leaders come to power, from both the point of view, they act the way the exploited class used to behave. As a result the condition of the citizens remains the same.

### **Maoist Philosophy**

But there can be another class, whose values of life are different. We have to remove the exploiting class and bring revolution and change. But the revolution they want is of different life values. So if they come to power, they are not greedy of power and set up the society in a new way. There can be a class like this but Frayer has said that "from the different revolutions it has been experienced that these types of revolutionaries who have a different ideology towards the exploited class and are committed to them are extraordinary and exceptional." The leaders show dedication towards the exploiting class and one exploiting class is removed and replaced by another similar exploiting group and hence there again arises the need for another revolution. This was told by thinkers like Mao Tse-Tung. He had said: "In 1949 we had a revolution; power was handed over to the revolutionaries. But after giving them the reign, it was realised that the revolutionaries of the past have become opponents. The need for another cultural revolution was felt in order to remove those revolutionaries from power." He had clarified this while beginning the Cultural Revolution. But at yet another place and being very honest, he had said that "by revolting and removing the old revolutionary group, nothing will be achieved as the new leaders will become a part of the ruling class and will again become antagonists. So in order to remove them, yet another uprising will be required."

### **Resolution of the Problem**

As and when there has been revolt, reaction and retaliation in a newly awakened society, it has been noticed that this not only gives rise to heat in the minds of the people, but because of hatred, at many places there is manhandling, and the thought of taking revenge arises in the minds of the

exploited class. With all this, we cannot find a new way to walk together along with the entire society. Dalits will also not gain from it as the Dalit leaders taking forward the revolution will soon turn into the oppressor class after they come to power. This has been experienced from every revolt. We need not name them. Those who revolted against the established class and caste, those who led the revolt, the same individuals now after getting fame are ready to revolt against their own people. This has been noticed in different regions of India. If we have to find a solution to the problem, we have to accept two undesirable things. Accepting the resentment of selfish, uninterested people who would take over power after the new revolution and those oppressed class who have become extremist and are impulsive and want immediate change in the situation; we have to take the constitutional recourse, remain balanced and lead the exploited class. While doing this we should understand that both the oppressor and the oppressed are a part of the same society. Just like in a family all stand united, we have to accept the entire society as one family and we should all have the natural leaning to think about the people who are socially and economically weak. On this subject, the route taken by Mahatma Phule is significant. "Within this social sacrificial ground, when all including the sudras, bhil, koli (caste and tribes) become intellectuals and have the capacity to judge, even then without bringing them all in one floor, a nation cannot be built."

There is no need to explain this in a different way. Of this, we can only term unanimity as social harmony.

In the Hindu Samaj, the division between untouchables and savarnas is like that of whites and blacks in America and the slave-citizen division that was prevalent in the ancient times. The different incidents that happened in history are unfortunate as it is true that these are all integral components of a nation. The precarious truth in Jyotiba's thinking is felt by all as a thought instigator. He says: "When there are different communities in India and there is no fellow-feeling to live cordially with each other, so how would there be nationalism here." With this we get to know that the nationalists and nation builders have outright sense of their social responsibilities. When all make a strong resolution in the mind to end groupism and live together warmly with others, it is social harmony. And based on this, it is possible to remove social inequality and to rouse strong genuine nationalism.

### **Change with Mutual Contact**

Having the yearning for equality and making equality stagnant, if anything is going to suffer, that is harmony. With this type of thought, a forum named "Article of Faith, Social Harmony Forum" was set up last year. Today we have gathered here for the first anniversary of the Forum. This Samajik Samrasta Manch has not been set up to do any great work. As and when we make announcements of doing any great work, doubts arise in our minds about it. Still at a small pace, in a peaceful way, just the way you and we have our methods of contact, taking that technique forward, we will take a small undertaking and bring awareness, though it will take time. This forum has not been established by only instigating the feelings of the people and getting their opinion that whether they are untouchables or savarnas, or they are from the so called upper caste or lower caste. There is no need for the cheap way of getting popularity by being an extremist and hurling abuses. If we have to find a solution to this problem, we will have to do that in a peaceful manner.

We have to keep in mind that if we are in the right path, we have to try to increase our speed. The efforts that are being undertaken are a result of that. It will take a little time to complete this task. For example the people who were thought of having great inclination towards religious associations and hence thought that they cannot become reformers, have even taken such decisions keeping in mind the circumstances. If we think about it (be it the efforts of Dr Hedgewar or Babasaheb), the integrated result of all efforts can definitely be seen. These results cannot be seen soon, but we have got to know that it creates an impact. I will give you a small example as to how it is consequent. Last week, on 7-8 (April 1983) during the religious parliament that was organised by the Vishva Hindu Parishad, the fifth sutra (session/chapter) was: "To create respect for labour in the society and to make friends from lower strata experience equality and unity in the society." The focus here is that both the words equality and unity have been taken up. And in another session, he said that "in any society if the weak class is looked down with hatred and considered untouchable, then there is the need for refining it completely", and with this intention of creating rapport with all, he requested the dharmacharyas to make them obliged by organising a padyatra (journey by foot)." I am only reading out an example. The impulsive people, who feel that this is hopeless, should not hurry and should believe that everything has a result. Increase your speed slowly as Guruji's message to us.

### **Basis of Humanism- Harmony**

This much of an effort to know the relationship between social equality and social harmony is enough. From all that we have discussed till now, the conclusion is that we consider social harmony as the ultimate aim. Equality is an important footstep on the way. Only equality cannot be the last destination because only in the demonstration of equality, we cannot get the assurance that equality can be established and will grow. If social harmony is established, social equality will also be established.

As I have told you earlier though we are from different places, our main direction and way is the same. The supporters of both equality and harmony are travellers of the same route. In the conscience of the people speaking of unlimited equality, social harmony is present though they do not understand it clearly and similarly those who have full interest in social harmony, social equality is inbuilt in their mind. The difference is in how to formulate it. Some Social Equalists term it social convergence, and even then its uttermost, behavioural and experimental use is towards establishing social harmony. The way to achieve social equality though in a passive way is influenced by social harmony. Today on this auspicious occasion, to discuss both these concepts uniformly is the best way to pay homage to both Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and Dr Hedgewar. That I am present here on this occasion is a great privilege for me. By telling this sincerely, I am paying my homage to them. But I do not have the eligibility and stature to understand such great men and pay homage to them. I am very well aware of it. So according to my thoughts, instead of making unchartered efforts, I will present before you a message from Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar to the Hindu nation, which was sent on the special occasion of his 50th birth anniversary. I will also present the homage paid to him from a different viewpoint of Hindu nation before I end my address.

### **Dr Ambedkar's Viewpoint**

In his message Late Veer Savarkar said: "If we compare Ambedkar's personality, his intellect and organisational skill and capacity to lead, he will be included among the greatest people in the world. He succeeded in untouchability elimination and building strong confidence and conscience creation among lakhs of untouchables. He offered invaluable service to the country. His work is eternal. There is a pride for the nation in his heart and he is an exponent of humanism. A great person like Ambedkar was born in a so-called untouchable and Dalit caste; and his life provides the vigour to

remove pessimism from the hearts of the untouchables and the ability to challenge the supremacy and dominance of upper caste. With due respect to Dr Ambedkar's personality and work, all my life I think about his life, health and great work.

In 1962 on the occasion of the 73rd Anniversary of Ambedkar, Sh. Guruji sent a small but very touching write up for "*Gaurav Visheshank*", which was launched on the occasion. In this write up, Guruji writes: "This is my natural duty to honour venerable Dr. Ambedkar on this pious occasion. Swami Vivekananda who had moved the entire world with the thunder of the divine message from India, had said that "the poor, deprived, weak, ignorant and illiterate Indians are my God. Their service and awakening their dormant consciousness and making their entire life happy and progressive is serving God." He attacked all conservative ideas with great propensity and understood it well even "when don't touch me, don't touch this' was prevalent in the society. He appealed to everyone for the restructuring of the entire society. The direct reward to this appeal in different words, different ways, political and social exploitation was that Dr. Ambedkar did it swiftly. His incredible contribution to a big and important section of our society which was ignorant and lived in pain and humiliation, in helping them stand up with self respect, is extraordinary. He has done a great obligation to our nation. He was so great that the society will always remain indebted to him.

Swami Vivekananda guided people by saying that development of India is possible only when the sharp intellect of Shankaracharya and the compassionate heart of Lord Buddha work together. By accepting the ideas of Buddhism and taking it further he completed a very important task, and Ambedkar played a very important role in taking things towards the end. His interpretation and sharp intellect found some shortcomings in Buddhist ideas that he had mentioned too. Equality in behaviour, purity, personal relations, friendly warmth and other such specialty, providing inspiration for the service of humanity, building faith for Buddhist ideology and benefits from this, is going to be important for the development of the nation and growth of human beings. It appears that knowing this he took forward all these ideas with great enthusiasm. Lord Buddha strongly criticised the tendency of the contemporary society for reforms in the society and establishing specific forms of religion. This criticism was not to separate from the society. In the present times, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was also working with the vision that the timeless society should be pure and



flawless for the good of the society and betterment of religion. Therefore being the follower of Lord Buddha in this era, my heartiest welcome to his pure and chaste reminiscences.”

## **Appendix**

### **Comparing Dalit Society and Negro Society**

In fact the Dalit Society of India and the Negro society of America cannot be compared. The Dalit society of India is part of our blood and flesh but this is not true with American's Negro Society. Therefore, the American example does not fit here. There is a lot to learn from the struggle of the Negroes, from their politics and from their outlook. This can be looked at as an example but cannot be followed fully. In this regard, the book by "For Black Only" by Sterling Takar is a good read.

In the initial introductory section, the publisher writes: "Polarisation is continuing in America. Black and white are evoking to topple the radical and extremist government and to end the distorted racial society. Their invocation is looking violent. In reaction to this, peace and order should be established at any cost. This is the voice of people. They are demanding that law should be made and the police and National Guard force should be utilised. This voice is the voice of violence, mostly terrorists' voices are heard and people feel that one of them has to be chosen."

In the Lincoln memorial address of "March on Washington" in 1963, John Luis said: "Citizens rights-laws are insufficient and there was delay in bringing them. There is not a single safeguard in these laws to save people from the atrocities of the police. Court won't do anything and we won't wait for it because we had been waiting for centuries. We will not be able to stop any of them, the President, Justice Department and the Congress. We will make the power centre outside the national border. Revolution is at the threshold...the Black crowd is marching ahead. We will implement our policy and show them their place non-violently. We will work, and last few months appeared good.

In 1964, another leader of the Negro movement Bayard Rustin said: "The Negro community will not accept Martin Luther King's known violent policy for long. If any Negro leader wants to say this, even then he cannot ask to "love the whites". I will not do this in the future because I do not want to encourage mental dishonesty anymore. They don't love them. There is no need for them to love them and there is no basis that they can love them. Who can love such a person who does this with others?"

In the same United States which had great people like Abraham Lincoln, Bukar T. Washington and Martin Luther King, under the terrorist leadership from both the sides, racialism became so much prevalent and strong that the process of making both the group understand came to standstill. The situation had gone out of hand and the mental status had reached to the top of long-time terrorism. In such a situation also some of the rational leaders from the Negro society kept their balance intact and which was really very astonishing. Mr Sterling Tucker was one such leader among them who's presented roles expresses his indicated outbreaks.

Sterling Tucker believes that knowledge and understanding of reality is the only way. He also feels that this path is directly available to the system that gives way to change. Tucker also mentioned about human rights movement and the failure of these movements. After using the word veneration of non-whites, he said that this imagination has intensified the energy level. It was unable to provide strength, purpose and same level to all the movements of equal rights. While analysing the national mentality, he had presented that the feeling of fear and crime had stopped the whites in understanding the black Americans. Finding wrong meaning to the violence by the blacks, for justice the whites brought the concept of "law and order" in the mainstream.

After this, he analysed the objective policies to solve the problem. By showing that, the black terrorists were unable to accept the American realities, which he considered an objective of separatism. Their danger for ideology and temporary opponents also discussed its creative utility. He analysed the matter of alliance in detail and told the way by which the white people who were expelled from the organisations of blacks, must be taken back without any precondition.

On the basis of the experiences gained as the chief of the Urban League Field, he has said that the society can be motivated for solving the large scale issues of education, employment, crime, residence, police and issues related to political power. In the time of contradictory extremism, the entire emphasis was on how anger of black Americans could be fitted into the only available contemporary society of the US.

Tucker said that how fast this harmony is achieved is the only question. The basis of legal action of the movement was that separatism causes inequality and that becomes stronger. It was this belief that harmony can bring equality that gave strength in the historical legal cases of "Swat verses Painter" and "Brown verses Topeko" in 1950 and 1954 respectively.

Tucker said, "We non-white poor, white poor, non-white labourer and white labourer are victims of such a system where distribution of income is so unbalanced that it cannot be believed." If we non-white people have the aspiration of leading a good life in the US and our exploiters are trying to get rid of poverty then we must join hands and build friendship with those white people who are also being exploited. As they are not dark-skinned like us, they are supposed to do less hard work in comparison to us. Yet it is fact that they are still exploited. We must join hands with white people to wage a battle against tax laws favouring the rich and making the poor more poor. And we must fight jointly for minimum annual wage also. An Italian-American Catholic religious teacher Father Geno Baroni reminds us that this is true that danger would be horrific. Greedy politicians who speak without thinking will use the pain of the society for their selfish purposes and would try to create division between the whites and non-whites who should otherwise be natural friends. It is important to tell that today people living below the poverty line in America is around five crore. In it, the influence of Negroes, Perkins and Mexicans is more than their population. But among the poor people of the country, there are more whites than Negroes. The total Negro population is less in proportion to the poor whites. Among the whites, there are 20 per cent people who are poor.

In the past, community Churches, Guilds, Societies and clubs for men had influence on the non-white society. Those organisations are still active. Even general clubs hold up their identities by doing welfare works as the non-white society pays attention to only a few selected issues. In the past, the senior leaders were handed over the responsibility to solve these issues. But now the society has taken over this responsibility. Resultantly, the big leaders of the society have given up this formal label and large numbers of local leaders have come to the forefront. The focus of these leaders is on different issues. Honest supporters support them. Earlier local organisations were limited and attention was not paid towards them. Their influence was also less. But now an unknown simple leader of a small village tells how the houses in his colony should be planned and he is heard also. That which is called democracy, a similar process is going on, and that is forcing the senior non-white leadership to be more collective, to react and put across the relevance of issues.

Days of celebrity non-white leaders are gone. Adam Clayton Powell was defeated because he was working like a celebrity leader. He had served the people in his area but later on he became a symbolic leader. From the point

of view of today's non-white society, this is not enough. In such situations celebrity leaders are getting deserted.

"Therefore we are looking at such a leadership coming which is for the people; which is aware of the problems faced by the lower strata of the society; which understands the need of the society and reacts accordingly. As long as the new leaders fulfil the needs of the situation, they will be considered trustworthy. Such leaders have a right and the freedom to work."

**Rakesh Sinha**

Associate Professor of Political Science in  
Delhi University.

The stream of ideas never stagnated in India. That is why, that despite all kinds of turmoil, ups and downs, the continuity of civilization has always been maintained in India, giving it a unique status among world civilizations. So much so that even during imperial times, when politics had primacy over everything else, there was positive debate, intellectual churning and strong initiatives taken on social, cultural and religious issues. There was neither political inspiration nor sentiment behind these initiatives. It was rather social and cultural movements that influenced politics at different levels and reformed and refined it. The socio-religious reform movements of the 19th and 20th centuries faced the institutionalised evils and rituals embedded in the Hindu society. These had a rather deleterious impact on our society, culture and world-view. The practice of 'purdah', self immolation by women on the husband's pyre (Sati), child marriage, widow remarriage, dowry and untouchability were several issues that stood between our golden past and a bright future.

During this period, thinkers and reformers played a revolutionary part in breaking ritualistic practices, ideas, social behavior and status quo-ism. It is interesting to note that there has never been a dividing line between thinkers and reformers in the Indian tradition. This underlines the fundamental difference between the intellectual stream of India and the West. The method of study in the West is critical and analytical. This intellectual tradition has its own uniqueness. Thinkers constitute separate and autonomous groups in the West. They join the intellectual stream bringing with them their knowledge, experience, ideas, prejudices and understanding of reality. Indian thinkers, on the other hand, look at socio-cultural life as their laboratory.



D-51, First Floor, Hauz Khas, New Delhi - 110016 (India)  
Tel.: +91-11-26524018  
Fax: +91-11-46089365  
E-mail: [indiapolicy@gmail.com](mailto:indiapolicy@gmail.com)  
Website: [indiapolicyfoundation.org](http://indiapolicyfoundation.org)

ISBN 9788192522395



9 788192 522395

Price : Rs. 100/-