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Buddhism and Ambedkar

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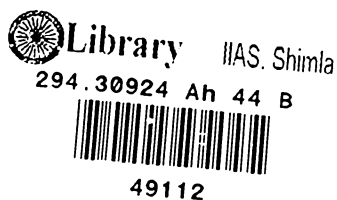
D. C. AHIR

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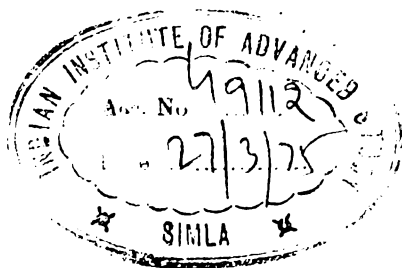
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To

NIRMAL, VIJAY AND SUNITA

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PREFACE

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, though engrossed in politics throughout his life, was essentially a religious man. He had immense faith in the spiritual values and the cultural heritage of India. The religion had influenced his life in many ways. Speaking about religion, he once said, "What good things I have in me or whatever have been the benefits of my education to society, I owe them to the religious feelings in me. I want religion but I do not want hypocrisy in the name of religion". His conversion to Buddhism in 1956 was, therefore, the climax of the religious evolution which was progressing in him slowly but steadily ever since he declared his intention in 1935 to give up his parent religion. Clarifying the motive behind his move for the change of religion he had then declared as follows, "My religious conversion is not inspired by any material motive. There is hardly anything which I cannot achieve even while remaining an untouchable. There is no other feeling than that of spiritual feeling underlying my religious conversion". If in 1935 his move to change his religion was not motivated by any material gain, it was much less so in 1956. It has to be conceded that if he and his followers had gone over to Sikhism, Islam or Christianity in 1935 they would have certainly derived some sort of material advantage as the leaders of those creeds were not only anxious to have them in their fold but were also willing to help them in every respect. Dr. Ambedkar, however, unmindful of any such advantage sought refuge

in the religion of the Buddha by accepting which his followers stand to lose even those rights and privileges which they had enjoyed hitherto.

The main theme of this short treatise about one of the greatest national leaders of modern India is to prove that Dr. Ambedkar was essentially a religious man; he lived his life in accordance with the tenets of the Dhamma and had those qualities and virtues which are necessary for the career of a Bodhisattva. It also brings out in bold relief his place in Buddhism. I hope this insignificant contribution of mine will enable the readers to have better appreciation of Dr. Ambedkar's pilgrimage to Buddhism.

Coming to personal contacts, I might mention that I had the good fortune of knowing Dr. Ambedkar for over ten years. It was in February, 1946 that I had his first 'darshan' at his residence at 22, Prithvi Raj Road, New Delhi. After that, I kept on going of and on to him as he, being a symbol of self-elevation, self-help and self-respect, was an immense source of inspiration to me. The last time I met Babasaheb was on the 8th October, 1956 at 26, Alipur Road, Delhi. Whenever I bowed before that saint-scholar and giant intellectual I felt some kind of inner-joy which is beyond description

I am grateful to Dr. R. L. Soni who took pains to write an interesting, impressive and befitting Introduction and also suggested certain very useful improvements. I am also thankful to the Publishers due to whose co-operation this book has seen the light of the day.

14 April 1968.

D. C. Ahir

INTRODUCTION

It has been my pleasure to go through this book on the life and work of my dear and esteemed friend, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, by Shri D. C. Ahir.

Dr. Ambedkar was certainly one of the most remarkable personalities of modern times. Born amidst the Untouchables, a class of people known by their utter poverty, social backwardness, and illiteracy and besides even denied of elementary rights as human beings, he rose to be not only one of the best educated persons but also one of the greatest national leaders of contemporary India. His life brings home to us the previous lesson that given determination, patience, perseverance, and optimism, all obstacles become stepping-stones to success. Such an inspiration is certainly the need of the hour, when millions of his devoted followers are facing hardships and obstacles in the realisation of their sublime dreams of their happy integration into the mass of Indian life and of ennobling it through the ethical and spiritual values taught by the Buddha and retold and upheld by Dr. Ambedkar in recent times.

Though I knew Dr. Ambedkar for over two decades, particularly more intimately for six years (1950 to 1956), we, however, developed a peculiar fascination for each other in December 1954, when he was my guest for just over a week at Mandalay (Burma) and when he discussed

hot and cold over his formal conversion to Buddhism I made out that he was really an ardent Buddhist since 1935, if not earlier, and that it was to iron out certain social, political, and constitutional difficulties in his way and also to mature his plans of action that he had delayed his formal acceptance of the Buddha and His Dharma. The fact was that he was very much worried over the wellbeing of his followers running into millions—a fear, the truth of which was vividly understood shortly after his passing away when they began to suffer in diverse ways. However, as a result of our continued discussion he came to the happy decision of publicly acknowledging Buddhism as his religion along with his followers in the Mahajayanti Year 1956. No sooner he spoke of it, we embraced each other as real brothers-in-the-Dharma. The grace and warmth of that precious embrace are a cherished sacred memory with me. It is a perpetual reminder for the implementation of the spirit behind it. We also had a Conference with eminent Buddhist leaders from fifteen countries in our Hall under his chairmanship in the course of which momentous decisions were made for the return of Buddhism to India. Also, he and I discussed several Buddhist schemes and projects for India. His sudden passing away, not long after his formal acceptance of the Buddha-Dharma, was therefore, not without reason, a terrible personal shock and loss to me.

When I think of Dr. Ambedkar, he appeals to me as a gentleman of distinction, a great scholar, a brilliant author, an able statesman, an outstanding social reformer, a remarkable law-giver, a patriot in the true sense, a

lovable friend, and a Dharmaduta par excellence. Multi-talented, this devoted son of Mother India, laboured hard to remove the blot of 'Untouchability' from her face. A man of practical sense, this intellectual luminary was, above all, a far-sighted religious leader. He was certainly the hero of the contemporary Buddhist renaissance in India. Moreover, in the annals of the world-wide revival of Buddhism in the mid-twentieth century, he stands out as a beacon-light for all times and climes. Besides, his wisdom and vision have made a lasting contribution to the social consciousness of humanity. That he was without political ambitions is obvious. However, these, unlike in others, were conditioned not by selfish motives but by an irresistible urge to serve and uplift his followers through the Dharma of the Buddha.

Over quarter of a century has rolled by since Buddhist values started pressing themselves to the attention of Dr. Ambedkar. That these values were earnestly accepted and carried on by him is amply borne out by the narrative in this book, which besides mentions some elements of Buddhism not orthodoxically but on a broader basis. Also are explained certain personal views of Dr. Ambedkar leaning towards deviation from the usually accepted standards. It is, nevertheless, certain that this publication shall find a happy reception not only with his followers but also with others. Certainly, it fills a long-felt need. It shall enable them to understand the psychological evolution undergoing within him in favour of Buddhism since his childhood. It were his painful experiences as a member of the outcastes that obliged him to discover an effective cure for the social injustices and other woes

suffered by his people. At last he reached the shrine of the Buddha, in whose teachings alone he found the right directive for a complete break-off from the caste-system. It is time that the Hindu world awoke to the stern reality of the situation and repented for its sins of commission and omission in the past. Also the Hindus must realise that they themselves were to be blamed for the bitter feelings of Dr. Ambedkar against Hinduism, which had denied for centuries even human rights to what they characterised as 'Untouchables'.

The principal theme of this book, is that of establishing Dr. Ambedkar as a Bodhisattva. To this end the author has marshalled considerable evidence. His method has been that of testing the life of his illustrious hero by standards of quality by which a Bodhisattva was to be known. Certainly, no better criterion could be envisaged.

The truth is that a Bodhisattva generally passes through life without being conscious of his eminent status. His being, nevertheless, because of his Initiation by some Buddha in the distant past, is so conditioned that he cannot but march on towards the Goal of Bodhi, perfecting himself life after life in one way or another, in terms of the sublime virtues, the Paramitas, till he becomes the Samma-sambuddha, the Supremely Enlightened One. Of course, a Bodhisattva, on the attainment of Buddhahood, would be vividly aware of his entire past. Before this final Attainment, however, the supreme interest of a Bodhisattva is neither to know of his spiritual status nor to care of proclaiming it, if aware of it, but to go ahead

with the job of his Supreme Perfection along a direction, which has but one outstanding feature, namely that of self-sacrificing deeds for the wellbeing of others, and which has but one Goal, namely that of Buddhahood. While it may be beyond us to locate the times and the Buddha when and under whom a person was marked out as a Bodhisattva or a Buddha-to-be, it is not as difficult to discern the spiritual direction in which the life-current of a being flowed. This vital motion, however, is in evidence even before the Initiation as a Bodhisattva, for, to be formally Initiated by a Buddha into the career of the Buddha-to-be, there is, certainly, need of a protracted spiritual preparation, qualifying one of almost Arhatship. Therefore, it is not without reason that this stage of Preparation is regarded as an integral part of the career of a Bodhisattva. In the light of this view, Dr. Ambedkar, conspicuous by the spirit of self-sacrifice, noble service in the cause of the depressed and the oppressed, heroic determination, and sustained action in the right direction, could well be accepted as the one coursing along a Path that unmistakably led to Buddhahood.

Today millions of Indians who owe him their liberation adore him as their greatest saviour for centuries. I was, certainly, impressed beyond measure by their devotion to him when I addressed some half a million of them at Nagpur in October, 1957. His unique qualities of head and heart, dignified personality, selfless activities, generous nature, and above all his devotion to the Buddha, have made an eternal home in the hearts of his entire community. Then I vividly understood the import of

the salutation 'Namo Bheemai' with which his followers greeted his name in appreciation and gratitude of his sterling services for their upliftment.

The passing away of Dr. Ambedkar has certainly increased the personal and social responsibilities of his followers. The glorious vision of social equality and a casteless society bequeathed by the great leader still awaits to be universally realised. This is a standing challenge to every sensible and patriotic Indian, who, far from putting obstacles in the path of the ideal, must endeavour to do his best to glorify India through the practical realisation of it.

The author, Shri Ahir, has done well in writing this book. He needs be congratulated for the pioneering effort he has put in.

The Soni Buildings,
Mandalay (Burma).

R. L. Soni
Founder Director-in-Chief
The World Institute of
Buddhist Culture.

*O Exalted One ! I trust myself whole-heartedly,
To the Tathagata whose light pervades,
Without any impediment, the regions in the ten quarters,
And express my earnest desire to be born in Thy land.*

From The Buddha And His Dhamma



Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

*Taking the Three Refuges and Five Precepts from the
Ven. U Chandramani Maha Sthavira at Nagpur on October 14, 1956*

CHAPTER I

THE GREAT VOW

*Hard to find is the Man Supreme, such a one
does not take birth every where. But where
such a wise man is born, that family thrives
happily.*

Dhammapada, 193.

It is said that much before the birth of Dr. Ambedkar a prophecy was made that he would be a great man.

It so happened that one of the uncles of Ramji Sakpal, his father, who had turned a Sanyasi, per chance came to Mhow where Ramji and his family were residing. Ramji Sakpal entreated him to bless his house with a visit. As, however, the Sanyasi had renounced the world, he declined. But, he conferred on Ramji Sakpal a boon¹ that a boy would be born in the family who would leave his mark on history. This boon took effect at Mhow on Tuesday, the 14th April, 1891.

Mhow, in Madhya Pradesh, the birth place of our hero, was lucky to be associated with his name. The

1. P. 9, Dr. Ambedkar, Life & Mission-Dhananjay Keer.

ancestral village of Dr. Ambedkar was Ambavade, five miles off Mandangad, a small town in Ratnagiri District of Maharashtra. But his father, being headmaster in the military school at Mhow, resided with his family in military quarters there. Though Mhow has the honour of being the Lumbini of our hero but Ambavade, his ancestral village, also stands immortalised as it is associated with his surname 'Ambedkar' which was originally spelt as 'Ambavedkar'.

Bhim, our hero, was the youngest son of his parents and the darling of the family. He was, besides, handsome and lovely. Perhaps this led his kind-hearted mother Bhima Bai to name him after her own name. However, like Lord Buddha, Bhim was deprived of this motherly love and care at an early age as Bhima Bai passed away when he was hardly 7 years of age.

Bhim's father tried his best to make Bhim's life happy and comfortable in every way, but poor Bhim could not escape the hardships due to his lot on account of the stigma of untouchability and other social handicaps suffered by his community. Not only during his childhood but throughout his life he was harassed and embarrassed by these disconcerting notions and practices of the Hindu Society. If we look back into the closing years of the nineteenth century and the conditions then prevailing in India, it will be seen that in the name of religion the Hindus were treating about one-fifth of the Indian population as under-dogs. These unfortunate people were called Pariahs, Panchamas, Avarnas, Ati-Shudras and above all Untouchables whose mere

touch and even shadow would pollute the Caste-Hindus. They suffered from numerous social disabilities. Not only they were denied the use of public wells and other public places but also they had no right to acquire property even if they could afford to pay for it. Their children were not admitted into schools and the door of the Hindu temples were closed to them. They were forbidden to wear golden ornaments, to use certain delicious dishes and to make pacca houses for themselves. As a rule they lived in dirty and dingy dungeons outside the villages. They could take up only the lower and degrading occupations as the more clean and paying Jobs were not open to them on account of untouchability practised by the Caste Hindus. All public services were also not open to them as they, being illiterate and untouchable, were declared unsuitable for these jobs. In the villages they were the victims of forced labour. In short, they were slaves and their children too were doomed for slavery as they had no choice but to serve the so-called high castes for no reward whatsoever. Thus, they were at the lower rung of the social ladder and were denied every opportunity of uplifting themselves.

Such were the deplorable conditions when Bhim Rao was born. So he faced and experienced the same humiliations, difficulties which every Untouchable had to face in those days. He some how managed to go to school but there he was treated indifferently and insulted not unoften. Many a time he had to go without water, not because there was no water nearby but because he, being an Untouchable, had no right to drink from the

common source. In illustration of the kind of treatment which Bhim received at the hands of his co-students, we might mention that one day when the class teacher called upon Bhim to solve an arithmetical problem on the black board, there was uproar in the class and the caste Hindu children cried out against Bhim, saying that his touch would pollute their tiffins kept behind the board. Ultimately, Bhim was allowed to solve the problem only when the tiffin boxes had been removed. During his High School days Bhim was not allowed to study Sanskrit by his teachers who thought that Sanskrit was a key to the Vedas which were neither to be heard nor to be read by the untouchables like Bhim. So he was obliged to study Persian. In his later life, however, Dr. Ambedkar studied Sanskrit and became a scholar of the forbidden language.

That he suffered much at the hands of the Caste Hindus is further supported by the following incidents. Once he alongwith his elder brother, took up a journey to see their father, who was employed at Goregaon. In the course of it they hired a bullock cart, the driver of which learning of their indentivity threw them out on the road, denouncing them for having polluted his wooden cart by their touch. Some how they won over the cartman by paying double the fare; however Bhim's elder brother had to drive the cart, the driver following it on foot. On the way to their destination they could not get even water to drink, for, whenever they asked for it, they were pointed out to filthy water in the ponds or asked to go away. Thus they reached Goregaon humiliated and exhausted.

Such demonstrations of hatred and abhorrence continued to injure the feelings of our hero even in his later life. Recalling one such experience he once said, "As a man in the Accountant General's office at Baroda, papers had to be flung at me instead of handed to me, and the carpet had to be rolled back lest the higher castes stood on the same material as I stood on'. At Baroda again he could not get any accommodation because no body was willing to rent out accommodation to an Untouchable. Later he managed to hire a room in the local Parsi Dharmshala. But when the neighbours came to know his identity, there was hue and cry and they attacked him with lathis and spears. Thus he had to leave Dharmshala in disgust. He appealed to the Maharaja of Baroda to arrange for his accommodation but the Maharaja could not do the needful. So he resigned. Like this, examples are many but this much seems sufficient for our purpose here.

Continued harassment and ill treatment at the hands of the caste-ridden society touched Bhim to the core. He pondered over the situation and came to know that this humiliation of his kith and kin was because of the Hindu religion which had given birth to the curse of untouchability. He was deeply moved and took a solemn vow² that 'he would try his utmost to free millions of his unfortunate brethren from the yoke of social slavery, and if he failed, he would put an end to his life with a bullet'.

2. P. 446 Dr. Ambedkar, Life & Mission-D. Keer.

With a resolve as above, Bhim now devoted himself more seriously to his studies considering these as a necessary pre-requisite for the fulfilment of his vow. At last fully equipped with the degrees of Master of Arts, Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Science and Bar-at-Law acquired in the United States of America and England and his studies in Germany; he jumped into the battle-field to fight for the rights of the down-trodden. In this noble battle for human rights he did not commission any guns but he used his pen as a gun; his brain as ammunition and his simple and poor people as army.

We all know how Mara tried in vain to dissuade Lord Buddha from the 'thought of enlightenment'. Similar was the case with Dr. Ambedkar. This sterling saviour of suffering humanity in the 20th century was despised and condemned by not a few. Sometimes efforts were even made to keep him away from his ideal by throwing out to him the baits of social position and political power, and on occasions endeavours were set afoot to crush his resolve by means fair as well as foul. But nothing daunted Babasaheb who had taken a Bodhisattva-like vow in his childhood. He marched ahead regardless of the obstacles thwarting his progress as he had come to fulfil a mission. According to Zodiac³, his horoscope showed Jupiter in Aries and it is said that a person born under this sign usually entertains some vision or ideal towards which he directs the full intensity of his thought and action.

3. Article titled 'Jupiter in Aries-Marks Man of Action' by Zodiac. The Sunday Standard, dated 3/4/1949.

(Please see appendix also pp. 24-26)

That Babasaheb was able to live upto his vow, is a historical truth. It is an acknowledged fact that the progress made by the Depressed Classes of India under his able guidance and leadership during the short span of about 35 years (from 1921 to 1956) was much more than the progress made by these classes during the last 1000 years. Who can deny the patent facts? At one time these classes were not allowed to study the religious books; rather it was sin for them to look at these. But now they are free in religion, qualified to study and preach it to others. Also, at one time these people were ignorant of the means to prosperity, the way of salvation and the path to liberation, but now they are in a position to guide even others. In short, the Depressed Classes have achieved tremendous progress. But due to whom? Certainly, the credit goes to Dr. Ambedkar who earnestly and sincerely worked throughout his life for the welfare of the down-trodden. Though few other reformers may have contributed a bit towards their emancipation but shining like a star, above all of them, is Babasaheb. He was their real saviour, liberator and inspirer, and initiator of a New Awakening amongst them.

—O—

Glory to those who would keep on their struggle for the liberation of the enslaved inspite of heavy odds, carping humiliations, storms and dangers till the down-trodden secure their human rights.

APPENDIX

Jupiter in Aries Marks Man of Action

by Zodiac

The trail of ambition associated with Jupiter is manifested clearly in the sign Aries for the later planet also aspires to ever-widening horizons. This an excellent position for Jupiter.

The person born under this aspect usually entertains some vision or ideal towards which he directs the full intensity of his thought and action. His fortune lies in action, positive accomplishment and progressive psychological attainments.

TRAITS

This position lends the person a forward-looking capacity and optimism as well as the gift of foresight.

Kindness, generosity and understanding are inherent in his nature. Wit and humour are natural traits that contribute to his success.

His ambitions can be achieved through determination, since success is generally within his reach once he makes up his mind to go after it. He possesses the practical power to put his visions into expression and can find glory in the attempt.

He will be intense about his work and enthusiastic about the achievement of his ideals, and can draw others to share his enthusiasm.

His judgement is good, although he may tend to recklessness and impatience at times, and the balancing of these extremes is very necessary for him, to further worth-while aims.

He is seldom dismayed by troubles which would depress others. Ordinarily, he accepts constructive criticism with good grace, and is willing to change his mind when he realizes that he has been mistaken.

Direct Action.

In any controversial affairs he prefers direct action, since he cannot tolerate anything that is underhand. After the issue is forced into the open, he is willing to take the consequences good or bad.

If any one tries to block his way to his ideal he gets stubborn and makes herculean efforts to eliminate obstructions.

He may be an eager defender of controversial affairs-social or religious-or he may just as eagerly attack its weakness motivated as he is by a driving necessity to develop what seems a higher concept.

This is because the position of Jupiter in Aries implies an activation of the philosophical side of the person's consciousness as well as the urge and ability to manifest philosophy in action.

Good reputation and forthrightness are very important to him. His social standing can be the means to his success.

He is capable of holding responsible positions and has the ability to assume leadership of any group, because he has the knack of giving orders without being bossy.

Possible Jobs.

The vocational possibilities under this aspect are teaching, writing, research and exploration in science, participation in scientific expeditions, statesmanship, army career, humanitarian work, public speaking, industry, politics, prospecting in distant places.

Among the prominent persons born under this aspect are Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, J. R. T. D. Tata and Miss Hellen Keller.

—o—

*Nothing valuable in this world
is achieved except by great efforts.*

CHAPTER II

IN THE FOOT-STEPS OF THE BUDDHA

April 14¹ is really an auspicious day for the Buddhists as on this day in 1891 was born Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who has been hailed as a modern Bodhisattva. Again, the Buddha was also born¹ on the '14th April' as it happened to be a Vaisakha Purnima day in 623 B. C. This is not an ordinary coincidence. It is meaningful: obviously, Babasaheb's connection with the Buddha and Buddhism goes back to the distant past. Verily, from early childhood Dr. Ambedkar was following in the footsteps of the Buddha

Dr. Ambedkar was not a born Buddhist but his mind was inclined towards the Buddha—Dhamma from his very childhood. His first initiation into Buddhism goes back to as early as 1907 when he was just 16 years old. This happened in Bombay when a meeting was held by his kith and kin and other admirers to felicitate him on his success in the Matriculation. In this meeting a booklet in Marathi titled 'Buddh Chariter' (Life of Gautama Buddha) was presented to him as a token of love and appreciation by

1. Article titled 'Stars of Destiny that turned a royal prince into a Great Saint' by Raj jyotishi Pandit Harish Chandra in Blitz, May 18th-25th, 1956. (Please see Appendix pp. 36-38).

Shri Krishnaji Arjun Keluskar, a well known Marathi author and social reformer. This little gift awakened the mind of our hero. After this event Bhim Rao was so much fascinated by Buddhism that he made deep study of its vast literature. In December, 1927, after the conclusion of a Conference at Mahad, Dr. Ambedkar and his party visited the excavations in the neighbourhood supposed to belong to the earliest phase of Buddhism. There, he vividly described to his colleagues how the disciples of Lord Buddha in His days remained celibates, embraced poverty and served society selflessly. He was so much inspired by these ancient remains that, as a mark of respect and reverence, he asked his colleagues not to occupy any of the seats as they might have been the seats of the Buddhist monks.

By the time Dr. Ambedkar became prominent in public life, he was full with love for Buddhism and was always inspired by its ideals. The conclusive proof of this trend can be seen in the episode of 1935 when he made known his intention of leaving Hinduism in a Conference held at Yeola² on October, 13. The Sikhs, Muslims and Christians promptly tried to induce him to embrace their religions. They offered enormous funds and other amenities not only for himself but for his followers as well. But he flatly refused all these tempting offers as his attachment to Buddhism was so deep that no other religion could win him to any extent.

2. P. 19, Dr. Ambedkar, Life and Mission-D. Keer, 1954.

To say that Babasaheb was inclined to embrace Sikhism in 1935 is not correct. Of Course, like a genuine seeker of truth, he tried to study and scrutinize the other religions. In his search for truth he even undertook a journey to Amritsar where he attended the Sikh Missions Conference on the 13th and 14th April, 1935. From this visit perhaps the people formed the impression that he was inclined towards Sikhism. But, how could a Bodhisattva embrace any other religion? However, there seems nothing wrong in what he did. Even Lord Buddha had tried to understand and learn the religious practices prevalent in His days.

With a view to consider the question of conversion further, Dr. Ambedkar summoned a special Conference of his people on May 30 and 31, 1936. Addressing the special Conference, he exhorted his followers to remember the last words of Tathagata 'Be Ye lamps unto yourself' and asked them to take refuge in reason. This was a clear indication of his love for the Buddha and his Dhamma. So, taking cue from this, the Italian Bhikshu, Venerable Lokanatha, who had in early May, 1936, addressed an open letter to the people of India appealing for the revival of the Dhamma in the land of its birth, met him on June 10, 1936, and tried to persuade him to embrace Buddhism as early as possible. Babasaheb promised³ to consider his suggestion favourably.

After this, the love for Buddhism became stronger in him and came to be reflected in various ways. In

3. P. 243 Dr. Ambedkar, Life & Mission-D. Keer.

November, 1945, a Conference was held at Ahmedabad on the banks of Sabramati and its spacious pandal was called 'Buddhanagar'. Symbols as these indicated the trend of his mind and were a writing on the wall for his followers. So they sought advice from him as to how best to understand and follow the marvellous Dhamma. In response to their persistent requests, in 1948 Dr. Ambedkar got, reprinted Lakshmi Narasu's book 'The Essence of Buddhism' and recommended it for study to the would-be Buddhists. In the preface⁴ to this book Babasaheb also mentioned that he was himself writing a book on Buddhism. This book, came out as a posthumous publication in 1957, under the title 'The Buddha and His Dhamma', though the author had seen and corrected its final proofs himself.

In 1950, it became perfectly clear that embracing of Buddhism by Dr. Ambedkar was a matter of time only. In that year he asked his followers to celebrate the Buddha Jayanti. In the celebrations at Delhi he himself participated. Thus, on May 3, 1950, Delhi witnessed a Buddhist procession for the first time some thousand years after the disappearance of Buddhism from India. Same year he contributed an article to the May number of the Mahabodhi Journal of Calcutta under the title 'Buddha and the Future of His Religion' in which, summarising his thoughts about Buddhism, he said that Buddhism was the only religion which the world could have, because of its reason, morality, liberty, equality and fraternity. Also in May,

4. P. ix. Preface to third edition. The Essence of Buddhism, 1948.

1950, Dr. Ambedkar visited Ceylon with a view to participate in the first Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists. While in Ceylon his main object was to observe the Buddhist ceremonies and rituals; to see how the Bhikkhus preach and to find out how the Ceylonese have kept the light of the Dhamma burning. After his visit to Ceylon, wherever Babasaheb went, he talked about Buddhism, its past glory and its future prospects. In one of the meetings held on September 29, 1950, he declared⁵ that he would devote the rest of his life to the revival and spread of Buddhism in India. On knowing this declaration, Sankar's Weekly of Delhi, a periodical devoted to cartoons, humorously called him 'Bhikkhu Bhimrao'. How could a poor Journalist judge at that time that he was in fact 'Bodhisattva Bhimrao'.

Dr. Ambedkar's love for and devotion to Lord Buddha and His Dhamma were too deep. This is evident from the Constitution of India also, of which he was the main architect. It was due to his efforts that the Buddhist Wheel of Law (Asoka Chakra) was incorporated in the Indian National Flag and that the 'Lions from an Asokan Pillar' at Sarnath were adopted as National Emblem by the Constituent Assembly.

Babasaheb had great fascination for the Buddhist method of meditation also. He wanted his followers to follow the Buddhist way of meditation as diligently as possible. For their benefit and guidance he published in 1951 'Baudh Upsana Path'—a collection of Buddhist Suttas, which are gems of wisdom.

5. P. 403, Dr. Ambedkar, Life and Mission-D. Keer.

In 1954 Dr. Ambedkar went to Burma to participate in the Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists which was held at Rangoon. While in Burma he visited Mandalay also, where he was the guest for a week of Dr. R. L. Soni, Director-in-Chief of the World Institute of Buddhist Culture. There, while with Dr. Soni, he finally decided to formally embrace Buddhism in 1956.

Now turning to his Philosophy we find that though Dr. Ambedkar had his own philosophy of life but in his thoughts, feelings and volitions was always flowing the under-current of Tathagata's Teachings. In many aspects, therefore, his philosophy of life is identical with that of Lord Buddha. In matters like education, self-elevation, caste, freedom of thought, idolatry, and rites and rituals etc., the views of the historic Buddha and the modern Bodhisattva are strikingly identical.

In a child's career, Education is number one because without the knowledge of three R's (reading, writing and arithmetic) a child is not only imperfect but he cannot even aspire for a successful life. Education helps to develop the physique powers of thinking, feeling and volition which are basic characteristics of a human being. Another aim of Education is culture; and, culture, according to Dr. Ambedkar, divides man from brute. He says 'culture is not possible for brute but it is essential for man'. Now culture means cultivation of mind with a view to raise it to the level of receiving what is desirable and this object can be achieved only through education. Therefore, better education ensures more success for the man in life. It was for this reason that Lord Buddha advised

parents to give education to their children. In Sigala Sutta, Tathagata says that parents should show affection to their children, by 'keeping them away from evil, putting them on the right path, getting them educated, providing them with suitable wives/husbands and in time handing over their fortune to them'. Babasaheb also attached great importance to education. In fact he considered it the basis for a child's destiny and opined that parents could change the destiny of their children by getting them educated. This is what he said in a letter written to a friend of his father from New York in 1913, "We must now entirely give up the idea that parents give birth—'Janma' to the child and not destiny 'Karma'. They can mould the destiny of their children; and if we but follow this principle, be sure that we shall soon see better days and our progress will be greatly accelerated if male education is pursued side by side with the female education". Again in the historic Conference at Mahad on March 19, 1927, concluding his presidential address, the modern Bodhisattva said, 'There will be no difference between parents and animals, if they will not desire to see their own children in a better position than their own position.' Education being so important, the very first step of Dr. Ambedkar's slogan of action was Education (Wisdom), the second and third being Agitation (Struggle) and Organisation (Unity). And this trio-slogan had its roots in the Triple Gem of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha i. e. the Buddha (Symbol of Wisdom), the Dhamma (Symbol of Struggle) and the Sangha (Symbol of Unity).

Self help was the slogan of Lord Buddha. He always exhorted Ananda and others to depend upon themselves. He said, 'Apply yourself to effort. Strive for your own welfare; apply yourself to your own welfare; dwell heedful, ardent and resolute' and 'Be ye lamps unto yourself.' The advice given by Tathagata to mitigate suffering was 'Get yourself rid of this vast suffering by becoming possessed of perfect knowledge, by acts of faith, good conduct, exertion, meditation, investigation into the truth, and enlightened consciousness'. Similarly Dr. Ambedkar also laid great emphasis on selfhelp. In 1929 while addressing a gathering of his followers he said, 'You must abolish your slavery yourself. It is disgraceful to live at the cost of one's self-respect. Self respect is the most vital factor in life. Without it man is a mere cipher. To live worthily with self respect one has to overcome difficulties. It is out of hard and ceaseless struggle alone that one derives strength, confidence and recognition'. Again in a Conference in 1933 he said, 'Abolish your slavery yourself. Do not depend for its abolition on God or Superman'. Dr. Ambedkar believed that 'lost rights are never regained by begging and by appeals to the conscience of the usurpers, but by relentless struggle'. So he more than once said, like Lord Buddha, to his followers 'Believe in self-help which is the best help'.

Lord Buddha did not believe in rites and rituals. Rather, He declared them unnecessary and superfluous for leading a spiritual and higher life. Babasaheb was too against this unnecessary burden on humanity. He wanted people to utilise their time and energy more gainfully

instead of wasting it in performing rites and rituals. In a Conference at Bombay in 1933 he said to his followers, 'Devotion to (Hindu) Scriptures would not free you from your bondage, want and poverty Divert your attention from fasts, worship, penance and pilgrimage and apply it to capturing law-making power as law is the abode of all worldly happiness'.

As is well known, there is no place for 'fate' in Buddhism. Lord Buddha did not believe that Stars can change the course of life and he said 'self effort' not 'stars' can mould the destiny. He says, 'The fool may watch for lucky days, yet luck he shall always miss. Luck itself is luck's own star, what can mere stars achieve'. Again the Master says, 'Toil on, my brother; still in hope stand fast, nor let the courage flag and tire. Myself I see, who, all my woes past am master of my heart's desire'. Dr. Ambedkar also had the same view. He says, 'Do not believe in fate. Believe in your strength'.

Rational outlook and freedom of thought are two important principles of Buddhism. Lord Buddha always acclaimed reason as the basis of faith. The Buddhist Scriptures are full of discourses on this subject. In Kalama Sutta, Tathagata says "Do not believe in rumours, nor in anything merely because it is accepted by many or because it is based upon some seemingly brilliant authority or some ancient and venerable tradition or some grand wishful thinking or, because it seems extra-ordinary or because it has commendable connection; only when after proper observation, analysis and reflection, it is found in

accord with reason and experience and is also conducive to general good, then accept it and live upto it”.

Being a true follower of the Master, Dr. Ambedkar too did not force his views on any one. He always asked his followers to think and decide themselves before accepting his advice. At the time of Mahad Satyagraha, while addressing them, he said, ‘Mind you, do not leap into the fire because I tell you to do so. Do it, if you are fully convinced of the justness of your cause’. Again in October, 1956 he frankly told his people that ‘he does not need blind followers; those who want to embrace Buddhism must come only after considering all pros and cons of their step so that they remain firm in the sacred religion of the Buddha’.

The above observations make it amply clear that long before his formal conversion on the 14th October, 1956, Dr. Ambedkar was a true Buddhist and that Buddhism had completely captivated his mind and conditioned his actions.

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APPENDIX

**Buddhas’ Horoscope Annalised
Stars of Destiny that turned a royal prince
into a Great Saint.**

by Raj Jyotishi Pandit Harish Chandra Shastri

Twenty five hundred years ago when society was passing through a religious turmoil, Lord Buddha descended on earth as an incarnation of God. In the

nativity of Lord Buddha, the Planetary Combination creating a divine configuration will be taken up here for brief discussion. Sun and Moon powerfully placed in angle have created a Raj-Yoga.

There are different views about his birth year and date but according to the latest finding by eminent scholars the following birth date has been accepted. He was born on April 14, 623 B. C. i. e. 2579 years ago on Baishakhi full moon day Gautam Buddha was born. Ayanamsa 14" 15"-Born in the Vinsattariya Jupiter's Dasa, 11 months 24 days of Jupiter's Dasa had elapsed before his birth.

According to different views, there is a difference of 1 or 2 degrees in the birth chart. Mr. F. C. Dutta, Mr. Civil Fagam, Mr. Narayan Rao, Mr. B.N. Raman and other reputed scholars have accepted the chart printed on this page* and according to this chart, we will discuss Lord Buddha's life. Mars, the Lord of 10th is strongly placed in 11th being fully eyed by Lord of Lagna. This is why the Native under went stern and rigorous austerities. Sun on the meridions is in full mutual aspect with Moon; this is why Buddha descended on earth as a "Nara Narayana".

The Lord of Lagna Moon has occupied the sign of Venus being fully aspected by five planets. So Moon is well guarded. Lagna and Lagnahipati are both fully aspected by Mars; Lord of Lagna Moon being in Mesha in Naramsa his body was charming and well built. Sun, the Lord of Wealth is exalted in 10th; Moon, the Lord of body and physical attributes is in 4th angle fully aspected by her disposer venus. Sun and Moon being in

*Not Printed here

“Visamsaptak” he came of a royal family and was endowed with unending virtues; his virtues and ideal will reign supreme till the last day of creation.

The exalted Rahu is in the 9th of Moon and 12th of Lagna, this made him rich in spiritual wealth ignoring material wealth. In 10th place of occupation there being a cluster of 5 planets, he preached a new message to the world and became the professor of untold and unknown spiritual wealth, renounced the world and realised the ultimate truth. His fame and honour were unbounded.

The horoscope clearly indicates the life of a mighty saint. So we do not hesitate to accept this horoscope. Being born in the 1st pada of Visakha Star, he had to accept life of a mendicant though born as a prince.

Sun is exalted. Moon is aspected by 5 planets in the Mid-heaven; Mars and Saturn in fall being in conjunction; he appeared. As the Lord of 9th is in 11th, the Lord of 10th is in 10th a “Mitrasihasan Yoga” that made him a towering superman; in later days half the world bowed to him.

Rahu was in “Mokshasthan”-so the call of renunciation came just after the birth of his only son, Rahul.

For the attainment of his goal and realisation of ultimate reality he wandered through forests and hills for years, but only in vain. No school of philosophy or Hata Joga could satisfy him. At last he decided to sit under Bodhi Tree, near Gaya, and take to meditation. In his 35th year he realised the ultimate truth and attained enlightenment.

CHAPTER III

WAS AMBEDKAR A BODHISATTVA ?

The Bodhisattva is a Bodhi-being, a heroic being, a spiritual warrior and an aspirant for Bodhi. In other words, a Bodhisattva is a future Buddha. The word 'Bodhisatta' or 'Bodhisattva' is as old as Buddhism itself though its meaning and scope have been developed and enlarged to a considerable extent by the Mahayana teachers. In early Buddhist literature, which is considered to be the oldest and authentic version of the Buddha's Teachings the Blessed One refers to Himself as a Bodhisattva before the attainment of Enlightenment. The Buddha says :—

"Before my enlightenemt monks, when I was unenlightened and still a Bodhisattva, I thought, 'Into wretchedness, alas, has this world fallen, it is born, grows old, dies, passes away, and is reborn. But from this pain it knows no escape, from old age and death' Samyutta Nikaya II, 10,

Similarly in the Jataka Tales, which give account of the previous lives of the Sakya Sage, Siddhartha is spoken of as a Bodhisattva. Since Bodhisattva is a person who is destined to be a Buddha, the conception of the Bobhisattva is common to all branches of Buddhism, be it Hinayana, Mahayana or Tantaryana.

As the Sacred Scriptures reveal, during the life time of the Buddha and for about three centuries after him, the attainment of Nirvana through Arhatship was the ideal before every Buddhist, lay folk, Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis. This ideal, being the fourth in the ladder of the spiritual or transcendental stages, was the highest. These stages were :

- (i) The Stream Enterer (Sotapanna);
- (ii) The Once-Returner (Sakadagami);
- (iii) The Non-Returner (Anagami); and
- (iv) The Arahant (Arhat).

Another ideal which came into vogue and became popular during this period was of Pratyeka Buddha or Pacceka Buddha (Pali). A Pratyeka Buddha (Private Buddha) is a being who attains the supreme and perfect insight but dies without proclaiming truth to others. As these ideals more or less meant personal salvation and individual gain, many Bhikkhus became self-centred and contemplative and neglected their primary duty of preaching the glorious doctrine of the Buddha and of helping the suffering humanity which is enshrined in the following Teaching of the Master :

"Go ye, O Bhikkhus, and wander forth for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of gods and men. Proclaim, O Bhikkhus, the Doctrine glorious, preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and pure."

Mahavagga, Vinaya Pitaka

With a view to check this tendency of self-culture and self-development, obviously not much beneficial to the society, the Buddhist thinkers and philosophers pondered over the situation and declared in about 2nd century B.C. that the ideals of Arhatship and Pratyeka-Buddha were inadequate so far as the common good of the society was concerned. They protested against the limited scope of these ideals. They also protested against the conception of Nirvana as understood and preached by the early Buddhists. This resulted in the discovery of the new Bodhisattva ideal. This development has been well explained by Dr. Har Dayal¹ :

“The arhat’s ideal of nirvana did not include intellectual Perfection and supreme Wisdom. The arhats also believed that a monk, who attained nirvana in his life, could not remain in touch with this world of conditioned phenomena after his death, whatever his state of existence might be. He was not reborn on earth or in the heavens : that much was certain. He ceased to exist, or he existed in an undefinable, inconceivable sphere somewhere or nowhere (asamskrta), or nothing could be predicted about him. At any rate, he was lost to the world of men and devas as a friend and helper, as there was nothing that bridged the gulf between the samskrta (conditioned) and the asamskrta elements (unconditioned). Nirvana was, of course, regarded as an asamskrta dhatu. Thus the arhat, once deceased’ was dead and gone, as far as his relations with the world of living beings were concerned, whatever

1. P. 3—4, The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Sanskrit Literature Dr. Har Dayal, 1932.

his destiny, positive or negative, might be. The bodhisattva doctrine was promulgated also as a protest against this theory of arhatship, which was regarded as doubly defective. It dis-regarded the higher duty of acquiring the perfect Wisdom of Buddha; and it deprived the world of the services of the holy men and women who had attained nirvana and passed away. A bodhisattva was defined as one who strove to gain bodhi and scorned such nirvana, as he wished to help and succour his fellow creatures in the world of sorrow, sin and impermanence,”

Unlike the Arhatship, the essence of the Bodhisattva Ideal lies in the vow to attain Enlightenment not for his own sake but for the sake of liberating all sentient beings. Commenting on this aspect of the Bodhisattva ideal, Dr. D. T. Suzuki, the famous Japanese Scholar says², “The essence of Bodhisattva-hood is an unequivocal affirmation of the social, altruistic nature of human mind. Whatever enlightenment one gains, it must be shared by one’s fellow beings. The Bodhisattva is a man of ‘inexhaustible vows. Without these he is not himself. To save the world, to bring all his beings up to the same level of thought and feeling where he himself is, and not to rest, not to enter into Nirvana until this is accomplished, how infinitely long and inexpressively arduous the task may be. This is the Bodhisattva”.

In the words of P. Lakshmi Narasu, though the ways of an Arhat, a Pratyekabuddha and a Bodhisattva are slightly higher in ascending order than each other, but they all

2. P. XVI, The Lankavatara Sutra-Dr. D. T. Suzuki, 1956.

lead to the same goal and are thus a proof of the universality of Buddhism. He says³, "Apparently many are the ways shown by the Lord to the *Summum Bonum* but truly speaking there is only one way (ekayana) and that is the way of reason (tatvayana). From practical point of view one may distinguish three means. Three means are piety, philosophy and striving for the welfare of one's fellow beings. These are respectively designated by the term Sravakayana, Pratyekabuddhayana & Bodhisattvayana. Higher than the simple piety of the Sravaka or Upasaka who under the guidance of a Buddha becomes an Arhat is the self acquired enlightenment of the Pratyekabuddha; higher than this enlightenment for one's own salvation is the unselfish (selfless) devotion of the Bodhisattva, who out of infinite love (maha karuna) desires supreme happiness (bliss) for others and therefore devotes himself to their spiritual elevation, desisting from entering into Nirvana."

Now we come to the pertinent question, was Dr. Ambedkar in the lineage of the Bodhisattvas? All sources combined the essential conditions for the career of a Bodhisattva turn out to be as follows :--

- (1) He occasionally takes birth amongst the lowly;
- (2) He makes a vow in his early career to serve the suffering humanity;
- (3) He interprets the teachings of the Master in

3. P. 30, The Essence of Buddhism P. Lakshmi Narasu, 1948.

accordance with the spiritual and social consciousness of humanity in his age;

(4) He practises the Bodhipakkhiya Dhamma ; and

(5) He perfects himself in the Paramitas.

According to the Buddhist Philosophy, a Bodhisatta or Bodhisattva can also take birth in the non-Buddhist countries. The only difference is that the Bodhisattvas in the Buddhist lands serve the humanity from their very childhood in accordance with the Buddhist values whereas the Bodhisattvas in the non-Buddhist lands serve the people according to their own methods but generally in accordance with the Buddhist principles. Since India was not a Buddhist country for the last few centuries, the circumstances of the birth of a Bodhisattva amongst the non-Buddhist countries are also applicable in the case of Dr. Ambedkar. Keeping this background in mind, let us examine the conditions stipulated above :—

(1) Birth amongst the lowly.

A Bodhisattva's birth amongst the lowly is occasionally necessary because a would-be Bodhisattva must be fully aware of the sorrows and sufferings of the poor and neglected masses for whose welfare he is to attain perfection. Such a knowledge can only come from practical experience which is gained by sharing the troubles, tribulations and turmoils of the lower strata of society. As already mentioned, Dr. Ambedkar was born amongst such people who were not only poor but were also treated

indifferently by the so called high-borns. It is a fact that they were not only repressed, oppressed, suppressed and depressed but were also treated as untouchables, unapproachables and unseeables. Referring to his father's poverty, he once said that he inherited only two things from his father, 'one was the robust and healthy body and the other debts⁴.'

Further, he once said in Parliament that "he had lived in Improvement Trust Chawls for several years who charged him rupees three as rent⁵."

Dr. Ambedkar's birth amongst the down trodden is, therefore, a sign presumptive of his being in the lineage of the Bodhisattvas.

(2) The Vows of a Bodhisattva.

The career of a Bodhisattva is said to commence with the "rising of the Thought of Enlightenment (bodhi-citta-uppada)". The Thought of bodhi is followed by his vow to work for the welfare, happiness and liberation of his fellowbeings. Since the Thought of Enlightenment is a private and personal experience it is rather difficult to trace its origin-it may have arisen in the present life or in the past, nay distant past life. The making of vow is, however, a public declaration and is the real start of a Bodhisattva's career. The vows of a Bodhisattva are

4. P. 7, Ambedkar's Life Struggle (in Hindi) R. C. Banodha, 1947.

5. Constituent Assembly Debates, Part II, Dated 25. 2. 1949.

innumerable and differ in number as well as in nomenclature in various Buddhist works but the following four vows are most important and as such they are regarded as "Great Vows"⁶ :

1. To save all beings;
2. To destroy all evil passions;
3. To learn the Truth and teach others; and
4. To lead all beings towards Buddhahood.

Amongst these Great Vows, the first vow of saving all beings from suffering is the supreme one as from it follow the subsequent vows.

As already stated in Chapter I, Dr. Ambedkar had taken a vow in his childhood to devote his life to the cause of the suffering masses. In fact his vows were many as is evident from the following lines⁷ in the Buddha and His Dhamma :

- There are beings without limit,
Let us take the vow to convey them all across.
- There are depravities in us without number,
Let us take the vow to extinguish them all.
- There are truths without end,
Let us take the vow to comprehend them all.
- There is the way of Buddha without comparison,
Let us take the vow to accomplish it perfectly.

6. P. 465, A Survey of Buddhism-Bhikshu Sangharakhshita, 1957.

7. P. 598, The Buddha and His Dhamma-Dr. Ambedkar.

In consequent of his vow. Dr. Ambedkar did try to destroy all evils, to teach Truth to others, and to lead all his fellow-beings towards Buddhahood by impressing upon them and making them understand the inherent qualities of the Buddha-Dhamma. For their sake he wandered throughout India and preached the Truth like a true disciple of the Lord. He also made ceaseless efforts to mitigate their troubles and turmoils.

(3) The interpretation of the Teachings of the Master.

Even though the teachings of the Buddha are ever true and ever-lasting, but still they need re-interpretation in each age, in accordance with the growing spiritual and social consciousness of humanity. This duty falls upon the Bodhisattvas who take birth mainly to give impetus to the propagation of the Dhamma. Dr. Ambedkar fulfilled this assignment also successfully through his monumental work 'The Buddha and His Dhamma'. As the title suggests 'The Buddha and His Dhamma' is the compendium of the life & teachings of the Master. Hence on this count also he is qualified to be hailed as a Bodhisattva. (For critical study of 'the Buddha and His Dhamma' please see Chapter IV).

(4) The Bodhipakkhiya Dhamma or Principles of Enlightenment.

The Bodhipakkhiya Dhamma includes the following thirty seven practices and principles of Enlightenment which have been divided into seven groups⁸:

8. P. 31, Buddhist Dictionary Nyanatilioka, 1956. and

P. 82, The Bodhisattva Doctrine-Har Dayal.

- (i) The Four Fields of Mindfulness (Satipatthana).
- (ii) The Four Right Efforts (Samma-Padhana).
- (iii) The Four Roads to Power (Inddhipada).
- (iv) The Five Spiritual Faculties (Indriyas).
- (v) The Five Mental Powers (Balas).
- (vi) The Seven Elements of Enlightenment
(Bojjhanga).
- (vii) The Noble Eight-fold Path
(Ariya-atthangika-magga).

These practices and principles are regarded as most beneficial for the career of a Bodhisattva as they lead to the attainment of Perfect Knowledge and have been termed as the sum-total of His Teachings by the Buddha in the Mahaparinibbana sutta. Such being the importance of the thirty seven Principles of Enlightenment, let us consider them one by one, though we are told, it is not necessary for an adept to fulfil all of them and it is enough if, for the attainment of emancipation, one or two groups are fully developed.

(i) The Four Fields of Mindfulness (Satipatthana)

Mindfulness plays a major role in Buddhism. Lord Buddha has time & again emphasized the value and necessity of it. He says, "Control your mind, control your body, be watchful and vigilant constantly, lest your mind, may fall prey to unworthy things." In the Dhammapada, the Lord says, "Neither mother, nor father, nor any other relative can do a man such good as is wrought by a rightly directed

mind.” Asvaghosha praises Mindfulness like this : (1) “He who had established Mindfulness as doorkeeper at the gate cannot be menaced (overpowered) by sins, even as one cannot (conquer) a well guarded (or concealed) town. (2) Sin does not arise for him who applies Mindfulness to the body : he guards his mind under all circumstances, as a nurse protects a child.”

The Four Fundamentals of Mindfulness are :—

- (a) Contemplation of the body (Kaya-satipatthana);
- (b) Contemplation of the feelings
(Vedana-satipatthana);
- (c) Contemplation of the mind (Citta-satipatthana);
- (d) Contemplation of the mind-objects
(Dhamma-satipatthana).

Dr. Ambedkar was fully conscious of the need, necessity and value of Mindfulness and he practised the same as the following evidence shows :

(a) Kaya satipatthana :

The mindfulness about the body has two aspects. A Bodhisattva, knowing fully well that the body is transient, unsubstantial and subject to disease, old age and death, has no attachment to his body but at the same time he endeavours to keep it fit because it is the instrument of altruistic service and final perfection. Further, by knowing the true nature of the body a Bodhisattva abandons the sins of sensual passion and does not commit any sins for the sake of the body. As for Dr. Ambedkar he

took extra care for maintaining his physical strength. Even during his study days in the United States of America he used to take exercise according to the Yoga⁹ in order to maintain sound health because he knew that only a sound body can have a sound mind. He never indulged in bodily pleasures for the sake of pleasure.

(b) Vedana-satipatthana :

The Vedana generally means 'feeling' and there are three kinds of feeling : pleasant, painful and neutral. The practice of mindfulness enables a Budhisattva to restrain and control his feelings. Neither pleasant nor painful feelings disturb his equilibrium. He is ever calm, serene and disciplined. Dr. Ambedkar too had controlled his feelings and was far away from the sensual pleasures. Instead of going for drinks in the clubs he used to drink the nectar of knowledge in his study room. He was a perfect teetotaler. He never touched wine or even cigarettes for that matter. He had no interest in the pictures and other tamashas.

(c) Citta - satipatthana :

The Citta means 'thought' or 'mind'. By practising mindfulness with regard to mind a Bodhisattva understands and comprehends its true nature i. e. keeps it free from attachment, hatred or delusion, and controls it both internally and externally. Since mind is the fore-runner of all the mental states Lord Buddha has everywhere

9. P. 17—18, Ambedkar's life Struggle (Hindi) R. C. Banodha.

impressed upon the necessity of keeping watch over it, and for directing it towards fruitful channels.

Dr. Ambedker lived a disciplined life and he had complete control over his mind. As laid down in the Dhammapada, he was energetic, mindful, pure in conduct, self-restrained, righteous of life and vigilant. He knew fully well the value of mindfulness in practising the Dhamma. As such, he advised the Buddhists to visit the Viharas at least once a week and hear the discourses on the Dhamma. The Dhamma, he thought, must be dinned constantly into the ears of the people if it was to be a moral force for the regeneration of society. So he said that, 'they (the people) must be made aware, every day and all the time, that the Buddha's Dhamma is there, standing by them like a policeman to guard lest they should go the wrong way'¹⁰. According to him, the world cannot be reformed except by the reformation of the mind of the man, and the mind of the world. And mind can be reformed only through constant effort and due vigilance. He, therefore, wanted his followers to be ever vigilant and zealously guard their new faith lest they may again fall prey to false views. Addressing them at Nagpur, he said, "It is your bounden duty to practise the Dhamma most diligently and sincerely. Otherwise you are sure to invite criticism for this change of religion". Further, it was only for this reason that he enjoined upon them to undertake twenty-two vows prescribed by him. These vows, inter-alia, implore them to leave behind all the traditional rites and ceremonies which conflict with the Dhamma.

10. His speech in Kathmandu in November, 1956.

(d) **Dhamma-satipatthana :**

The Dhamma here means 'phenomena, outer world, universe in general'. The practice of mindfulness by a Bodhisattva in this field enables him to be free from all delusion and darkness about his capacity to fulfil his mission. Dr. Ambedkar was fully conscious of his limited capacity and the limited time at his disposal for ameliorating the condition of the suffering masses. That is why he once said that 'the span of human life being limited, he will be satisfied, if during his life-time he was able to ameliorate the condition of the suppressed and oppressed mass of humanity known as Scheduled Castes'¹¹.

(ii) **The Four Right Efforts (Samma-Padhana).**

The Four Right Efforts are:—The Effort to Avoid (Samvara-Padhana), the Effort to Overcome (Pahana-Padhana), the Effort to Develop (Bhavana-Padhana) and the Effort to Maintain (Anurakkhana-Padhana). The first effort is to avoid evil and ensure that the evil and sinful conditions do not arise; the second effort is to get rid of the evil and sinful conditions which have already arisen; the third effort is to endeavour for the right and meritorious conditions and the fourth effort is to ensure permanence and promotion of such right and meritorious conditions which have already arisen.

Now, turning to Dr. Ambedkar, we find that not only he made right efforts but right effort was inherent in

11. P. 68, Ambedkar's life struggle (Hindi) R. C. Banodha.

every action of his. After obtaining the degrees of M.A. and Ph. D. from the Columbia University, U.S.A., he came to London and commenced studies for the degrees of M. Sc., D. Sc. and Bar-at-Law. But just after a year when he was half way through, the Maharaja of Baroda called him back as duration of the scholarship granted by him was over. Bhim Rao obeyed the call given by his benefactor and returned to India without accomplishing studies. On return to Bombay he tried his level-best to earn and save money for pursuing his unfinished studies. And when he had saved sufficient money to continue the studies of his own he went back to London and successfully completed the job. In this way his efforts to acquire the degrees of M.Sc, D.Sc. and Bar-at-Law were fruitful. Surely any ordinary man in his place would not have bothered to study further after being M.A. Ph. D. and getting a nice job of professorship at a salary of Rs. 450/-¹² p m. which Dr. Ambedkar got in 1918-20 as Professor of Political Economy in the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics, Bombay. Since, however, our hero had a higher mission to fulfil, he resigned, went back to London and made sincere efforts to attain the highest level in education.

In his endeavour to liberate the suppressed and oppressed masses, he made consistent efforts and resorted to all ways and means at his disposal. He made efforts in the social field, in the political field and last of all in the religious field. To say in few words, the saviour

12. P. 43, Babasaheb's life Struggle (Hindi)-Chandrika Prasad Jagiasu, 1961.

of the down-trodden first made the unfortunate classes conscious of their miserable condition and of the ways and means to elevate themselves. This task he accomplished through his effective, inspiring and purposeful speeches and writings. Self-help and unity were the key-notes of advice to his people whom he used to address every now and then. On March, 19, 1927 at Mahad he emphatically exhorted them to 'Be lamps upto themselves' and added¹³, "No lasting progress can be achieved unless we put ourselves through a three-fold process of purification. We must improve the general tone of our demeanour, retone our pronunciations and re-vitalise our thoughts. We will attain self-elevation only if we learn self-help, regain our self-respect and gain self-knowledge". Never before such inspiring words worthy of instilling self-confidence in the dejected and distressed minds, were heard by the suppressed masses; the response to their leader's call for action was, therefore, spontaneous. They rallied around Babasaheb and gave impetus to the struggle launched by him.

To achieve his object Dr. Ambedkar organised a militant organisation called 'Social Equality Army.' With the help and co-operation of this Army he made heroic efforts to achieve social equality by launching satyagrahas, notable of these being the satyagrahas of Mahad (for the right to take water from the public tank) and Nasik (for the right of entry into temples) launched in 1927 and 1930 respectively. This direct action served a double purpose. Firstly, it made the Untouchables realise the strength of their united effort, and secondly it brought their goal nearer

13. P. 67, Dr. Ambedkar, *Life and Mission* D. Keer, 1954.

to such an extent in a few days what million days of preaching by the reformers would never have done.

After inculcating in the dumb and deaf mass of humanity the spirit of self-confidence and self-respect, the apostle of liberty moved on to secure political rights for them because he saw in political power a better scope for realization of his goal. At the Indian Round Table Conferences held in London in 1930-32 he, therefore, made an all out effort in this direction. His efforts were fruitful and the Scheduled Castes got 'political rights' for the first time through the Communal Award announced by the British Government. Thenceforth he urged his followers to care more for political power than for temple entry. Thus addressing a huge gathering in Bombay on the 28th September, 1933, he said "The object of the temple entry is good. But you should care more for your material good than for spiritual good. You do not get food to eat, clothes to wear, opportunities for educating your children, and medical help for want of money. You, should, therefore, be watchful of the political gains. You should develop your strength and struggle for gaining material advancement in life."

Education being the key to all success in life, Dr. Ambedkar always impressed upon the masses to educate their children and himself helped them by organising educational societies, schools, colleges and hostels. And when he himself got political power in 1942 in his capacity as Labour Member of the Viceroy's Council, the first thing he did was to persuade the Government to help the deserving Scheduled Caste boys to go abroad for higher studies.

Also, he secured reservation in the services for those classes because he found that the curse of untouchability was blocking their entry into Government service. He also safeguarded their interests in the Constituent Assembly and incorporated protective clauses in the Constitution.

After safeguarding all other interests of his people Dr. Ambedkar turned his eyes towards their spiritual elevation. Though in the modern world many people are sceptic about spiritualism, rather they neglect it and only hanker after material gains, but Babasaheb being in the lineage of the Bodhisattvas, gave due importance to the cultivation of spiritualism. In his view the only difference between the animal kingdom and the mankind is that whereas the animal is satisfied with fodder but man needs something more than bread. Man has, in addition to stomach, a mind which can't be satisfied with bread alone. He says¹⁴, While the ultimate goal of a brute's life is reached once his physical appetites are satisfied, the ultimate goal of man's existence is not reached unless and until he has fully cultivated his mind. In short, what divides the brute from man is culture. Culture is not possible for the brute, but it is essential for man. That being so, the aim of human society must be to enable every person to lead a life of culture, which means the cultivation of mind as distinguished from the satisfaction of mere physical wants." When, therefore, he found Governmental work of not much use to the well-being of the servile classes he resigned from the Cabinet and decided to devote his remaining life to the

14. P. 204, What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables-Dr. Ambedkar, 1945.

cause of their spiritual elevation. He fulfilled his mission when he exhorted his followers to take refuge in the Buddha after himself becoming a formal Buddhist at Nagpur on the 14th October, 1956. Speaking on this historic occasion he said,¹⁵ "Religion instils hope in Man and drives him to activity. Hindu religion has watered down the enthusiasm of the down-trodden. We have found a new way. The way in which there is hope. It is the Grand way of happiness and prosperity. We have not imported it from somewhere. This Noble Path belongs to this land. It is Indian and was prevalent in India about 2000 years ago. We are really sorry that we could not embrace it earlier. The principles of the religion of the Buddha are eternal. This religion is capable of change according to the times. No other religion is so rational and reasonable".

The Deeksha Ceremony at Nagpur was a befitting finale to the efforts of Babasaheb for the realization of his goal. The way of the Buddha is, doubtless, good for the down-trodden, good for the country, and good for the whole mankind. To follow this path means freedom from slavish mentality freedom from caste rigidity, and freedom from graded inequality as it enables all its votaries to inter-mingle freely in all walks of life.

In view of the aforesaid chronology of events, is it not correct to say that Dr. Ambedkar tackled the problems at the right moment with right weapons and he, like a Bodhisattva, moved forward and forward to achieve his goal.

15. His speech at Nagpur on the 15th October, 1956.

(iii) The Four Roads to Power (Iddhi-pada)

The Iddhi-pada is generally translated as 'wonder working power' but it does not mean magical or super natural power. The four wonder working powers are achieved by a Bodhisattva by uniting his Strong will (Chanda), Consciousness (Citta), Energy (Viriya) and Investigation (Nimamsa) to the moulding forces of concentration and effort. The practice of these enables him to work for his own good as well as for the good of others.

Dr. Ambedkar throughout his earthly existence directed his efforts to achieve his ultimate aim, though, as a rule he concentrated his mind on the task immediately before him. It is said that during his study days in America, when he was approached by Lala Lajpat Rai, who had gone to the United States to organise a political organisation which may help India, Ambedkar politely declined¹⁶ to join the movement on the plea that he had come there for studies and that was his first mission to be fulfilled. He eventually completed his studies successfully. Again at the Round Table Conference in 1930-32 he concentrated his efforts to secure necessary safeguards for the Scheduled Castes. He pleaded their cause from the core of his heart and the result was all success, though there was considerable opposition from the vested interests. The reason for his success lay in his wonderful power as a speaker, orator, debator and argumentator, the qualities which were the fruit of his vast learning gained through hard work as a student. He had truly understood the meaning of the principle of 'first things first'.

16. P. 30, Dr. Ambedkar, Life and Mission-D. Keer.

His towering personality and organising capacity enabled Dr. Ambedkar to arouse the conscience of the most degraded part of the Indian Society. He took up the cause of the Untouchables, who were discarded by others, being considered unfit for improvement just as a doctor discards a hopeless patient. Further, they themselves were not aware even of their rights as human beings. It was our hero who made them conscious of their wretched condition and their capacity to change it. He gave them new life and inspired them with the idea of self-dignity and self-respect. But for him they would have been to-day as bad as ever. The changes brought by him in their social status are so significant that these could be expected only from a Bodhisattva with his wonder-working powers.

(iv) The Five Spiritual Faculties (Indriyas) &

(v) The Five Mental Powers (Balas)

The Indriyas and the Balas are (1) Faith, (Saddha), (2) Energy (Viriya), (3) Mindfulness (Sati), (4) Concentration (Samadhi) (5) Wisdom (Panna). The Indriyas and the Balas are one and the same thing. The only difference being that the Indriyas are regarded as static and the Balas as dynamic. Literally Bala means power; it therefore, naturally implies dynamicism. Another difference is that the Balas are unshakable by their opposites and they represent the aspect of firmness in the Spiritual Faculties (Indriyas) : (1) The power of faith is unshakable by faithlessness (unbelief). (2) Energy by laziness (3) Mindfulness by forgetfulness. (4) Concentration by distractedness, and (5) Wisdom by ignorance.

We have already dealt with 'Mindfulness' under the four fundamentals of Mindfulness and the items of 'Energy', 'Concentration' and 'Wisdom' will be discussed under the Paramitas. Thus, here we shall discuss only Saddha (faith). Faith in Buddhism is always accompanied by reason because faith becomes superstition when it parts company with reason. Mere reason is not enough because reason without faith would turn a man into a machine without enthusiasm for his ideals. Faith, therefore, conceived as confidence or trust is the mother of all virtues required for the realisation of an ideal. Accordingly, a Bodhisattva is expected to have faith in the Buddha and His Dhamma.

Dr. Ambedkar had immense faith in the Tathagata. It was his Faith (Saddha), in the Buddha and His Dhamma which inspired him to write a monumental work about the Master and His Teachings. Further, it was his faith in the Tathagata which induced him to name the first educational institution established by him in 1946 as 'Siddharath College.' Again, it was his faith in the holy places visited by the Tathagata which induced him to name his residence in Bombay as 'Raj Graha'. So again, it was his faith in the by-gone glory of the Buddhists which induced him to name his educational institution in Aurangabad after the name of Milinda a Buddhist monarch who flourished in Punjab in the 1st century B. C. The extensive area in which this institution (Milinda Vidyalaya) is situated has been named as Nagsena Vana in honour of the famous monk who converted king Milinda to Buddhism.

(vi) **The Seven Elements of Enlightenment
Bojjhanga.**

The Seven Elements of Enlightenment are :

- (1) Mindfulness (Sati).
- (2) Investigation of Doctrine (Dhamma-Vicaya).
- (3) Energy (Viriya).
- (4) Rapture (Piti).
- (5) Tranquility, serenity (Passaddhi).
- (6) Concentration (Samadhi).
- (7) Equanimity (Upekkha).

We have already discussed Mindfulness. Energy and Concentration will be covered under the Paramitas. Here, therefore, brief description is being given about the remaining Elements of Enlightenment.

By investigating the Doctrine (Dhamma-vicaya) a Bodhisattva dispells all causes of doubt and uncertainty and is thus in a position to preach the Dhamma effectively. Dr. Ambedkar thoroughly investigated the Dhamma and the result of his investigation has come to us through his book 'The Buddha and His Dhamma.' This perfect and well arranged publication is really revolutionary in certain aspects as in it the modern Bodhisattva has re-interpreted the Dhamma in the light of the experience and knowledge gained by humanity during the last 2500 years. This book has thrown very valuable light on certain problems of

Buddhism which had baffled Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike for many centuries.

Rapture (Piti) and Tranquility (Passaddhi) enable a Bodhisattva to do his duty without any grudge as their cultivation not only makes him calm and serene but also saves him from sloth and languor. Throughout his life Dr. Ambedkar was criticised by one and all but the only reply he gave to his critics was that he was not at all disturbed by this criticism and condemnation as he was doing his duty which by chance involved challenge to the authority of those who were exploiting the weaker sections of society. He was, therefore, never annoyed over their criticism but rather pitied them for their narrow and selfish outlook. Dr. Ambedkar always felt satisfied once he had done his duty. Concluding his historical thesis, 'Thoughts on Pakistan' he wrote¹⁷, "A thick and impervious wall of false sentiments and false illusions has prevented the Hindu from receiving fresh light. It is because of this that I felt the necessity of applying my batteries. I do not know how far I have succeeded in making breaches in the wall to let in light in the dark places. I am satisfied that I have done my duty."

Dr. Ambedkar says that 'the duty must be performed let the efforts be successful or not; let the work be appreciated by the ignorant or not. When a man's sincerity of purpose and capacity are proved even his enemies come to respect him.' It is a fact that he maintained this approach throughout his life and never

17. P. 340, Thoughts on Pakistan-Dr. Ambedkar, 1941

wavered from the right path. His philosophy of life is well summed up in the following lines :-

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate,
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.

Equanimity (Upekkha) is that faculty which enables a Bodhisattva to maintain the same attitude in all circumstances, favourable or unfavourable, pleasant or unpleasant and delightful or sorrowful. Babasaheb had bodhisattva-like temperament. By nature he was calm and quiet and reacted in a reasonable way even in adverse circumstances. When in 1932 Gandhiji started a fast unto death to get the Communal Award amended, his followers sent all sorts of threatening letters to Dr. Ambedkar and threatened to kill him if he did not yield and saved the life of their Mahatma. His colleagues were very much perturbed and they planned to take necessary security measures but Babasaheb simply laughed over their suggestion and did not reveal any fear of death. In 1928, the Bombay Textile Mills faced a strike which continued for about six months. Dr. Ambedkar did not like the indefinite suspense. He favoured the resumption of work but the other Trade Unions were opposed to this move. So there was tense situation. Some workers were openly resenting his move. It was not safe for him to move freely. And some of his followers fearing the danger to Babasaheb's life took upon themselves the duty of safeguarding their leader. But he did not like this shadowing

even by his devotees. One day; therefore, he said¹⁸, like Lord Buddha, to the men guarding his office, 'Stop this nonsense. Do not risk your lives for me. Who would avert my death? There is no necessity for taking such a great precaution.' Again Upekkha implies equal affection for friends and relations and equal treatment for all living beings. Dr. Ambedkar's behaviour was equal towards all. He had no extra-ordinary attachment even towards his only son. He helped all without giving any preferential treatment to the people of his area or his kith and kin. His motto was welfare of all without any discrimination and he lived upto this ideal. He enjoyed so much power and prestige that he could have made his kith and kin abundantly rich but Babasaheb showered the benefits over all without any discrimination and there lies his greatness. Thus impartiality, neutrality was a fact with him.

(vii) The Noble Eightfold Path ;
(Ariya-atthangika-magga)

The Noble Eightfold Path is the famous Middle Path which is the basic Teaching of Lord Buddha. This is a via-media between two extremes of sensual pleasures and self-mortification taught by the Tathagata in His First Sermon at Sarnath. He said "O Bhikkhus, there are two extremes which a monk should avoid. Attachment to sensual pleasures is low and vulgar; it is fit only for the ordinary persons and not at all for the noble disciples ; it is associated with evil ; it is not conducive

18. P. 115, Dr. Ambedkar, Life & Mission-D. Kcer, 1954

to spiritual life, to disgust with the world, to dispassionateness, to destruction (of Pain), to insight, to perfect wisdom and to final liberation. And this (other) extreme course, which consists in the practice of mortifying (tormenting) one's body, this is also painful and associated with evil, it causes pain in this present existence and also results in pain in the future. The Tathagata, avoiding these two extremes, teaches the Doctrine of the Middle Way." The Middle Path (Majjihma-Patipada) has the following eight components :—

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| (1) Right View (Samma Ditthi). | } Wisdom
(Panna) |
| (2) Right Thought (Samma Sankappa) | |
| (3) Right Speech (Samma Vaca) | } Morality
(Sila) |
| (4) Right Conduct (Samma Kammanta) | |
| (5) Right Livelihood (Samma Ajiva) | |
| (6) Right Effort (Samma Vayama) | } Concentration
(Samadhi) |
| (7) Right Mindfulness (Samma Sati) | |
| (8) Right Concentration (Samma Samadhi) | |

(1) Right View (Samma Ditthi).

There is enough evidence to show that Dr. Ambedkar followed this Noble Path as diligently as could be expected of a Bodhisattva. Right View means giving up of belief in the efficacy of rites and rituals, and the abandonment of superstition and supernaturalism. Dr. Ambedkar's views were not only well balanced on each and every problem but were also free from any kind of superstition or delusion. He had truly understood the value of the Buddha and His Dhamma. He compared the Dhamma with morality, equality

liberty, and fraternity and the Sangha he thought was meant for the service of the mankind which implied that the role of a Bhikkhu was that of a social servant. He saw the things around him in the right perspective. What makes a man successful in his life is right understanding of the problems. Dr. Ambedkar had this quality also. That is why he was successful as a lawyer, as a social reformer, as a politician, as an administrator, as a constitutionalist and as a preacher of the Dhamma.

Right View also means the understanding of the noble truth of the 'existence of suffering' and the 'removal of suffering'. It further implies the proper assessment of the capacity of the man's mind and the power of his will. Bhagwan Buddha says that 'the will of the man, if properly directed, can lead him to liberty'. But the will can only be awakened and set in motion through mind as 'mind' is the instrument through which light can come to man. Baisaheb was conscious of the power of the mind and he utilised its power fully in removing the ills of the suffering humanity. He first made the oppressed classes conscious of their plight and degraded position in the Hindu society which touched the core of their minds and awakened their wills. He then exhorted them to better their economic condition; to get education; and to fight for equal status in society through social, educational, political and religious means. He said that, "they should not depend on others but must fight it out with whatever little power and energy they had at their disposal". This clarion call resulted in blowing to pieces the shackles of their slavery. Further, Dr. Ambedkar's proper

understanding of the problem of untouchability enabled him to give a death blow to this curse. He thought and proved that the Scheduled Castes could get rid of untouchability only by their own efforts and by being independent of the religion which had given birth to this curse.

(2) Right Aspiration (Samma Sankappa).

Right Aspiration or Thought means that it should be high and worthy of the great men like Bodhisattvas. The fundamental aspiration of a Bodhisattva is the liberation of the masses from their pains and sufferings. As already stated Dr. Ambedkar's main ambition was to uplift the suppressed humanity which had suffered for centuries at the hands of others. Over and above that, he aspired for the good of all and for the good of the country.

(3) Right Speech (Samma Vaca).

Right Speech is a moral code which teaches that one should speak only that which is true and one should not speak what is false. Further, one should not indulge in pointless, foolish talk but his speech should be sensible and to the point. It should not be inspired by fear or favour but should be a true reflection of the facts.

Dr. Ambedkar always spoke without any reservations and with clarity of mind. He always adhered to truth, no matter whether it pleased or annoyed others. And this truthfulness he maintained even during his academic career. His theses were always full of free and frank opinion and sometime ended with strong condemnation of the existing

procedures and practices. Let us take an instance from his thesis, the "Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India" which earned him the degree of Phd. in 1916. While commenting on the taxation system in vogue in those days thus observed¹⁹ our hero :

"On an impartial survey of the revenue as prevailed under Imperial regime one is constrained to say that justice in taxation was conspicuous by its absence. It was a cruel satire, or at best an idle maxim for the lancet was directed not where the blood was thickest but to that part of the body politic which on account of its weakness and poverty most meekly bore the pang. The landlords who passed their lives in conspicuous consumption and vicarious leisure on the earnings of the poor tenants, or the many European Civil servants who fattened themselves on pay and pickings, were supermely exempted from any contribution towards the maintenance of the Government whose main activities were directed towards the maintenance of pomp and privilege. On the other hand, the salt tax and the Maharpha (a tax on trades and occupations embracing weavers, carpenters, metal workers etc.) and other oppressive taxes continued to harass the industrious poor".

Some people thought that Dr. Ambedkar was pro-British because he gave first preference to the abolition of untouchability and demanded social freedom of the Depressed Classes alongwith the political freedom of the

19. P. 16-17, Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India, Dr. Ambedkar, 1923.

country but they were mistaken. Dr. Ambedkar was a true patriot and he gave a convincing proof of his patriotism in his speech before the Plenary session of the Indian Round Table Conference on the 20th November, 1930. In this speech²⁰ he, no doubt, vehemently criticised the Hindus for exploiting the Scheduled Castes, he also condemned the British Government for keeping Indians as slaves by hook or crook. To quote his own words, this is what was said by the modern Bodhisattva :

“Mr. Chairman : My purpose in rising to address this Conference is principally to place before it the point of view of the depressed classes, whom I and my colleague, Rao Bahadur Srinivasan, have the honour to represent, regarding the question of constitutional reform. It is a point of view of 43,000,000 people, or one-fifth of the total population of British India. The depressed classes, a group by themselves which is distinct and separate from the Muhammadans, and, although they are included among the Hindus, they in no sense form an integral part of that community. Not only have they a separate existence, but they have also assigned to them a status which is invidiously distinct from the status occupied by any other community in India. There are communities in India which occupy a lower and subordinate position; but the position assigned to the depressed classes is totally different. It is one which is midway between that of the serf and the slave, and which may, for convenience, be called servile—with this

20. P. 123-129, Indian Round Table Conference, First Session 12th November, 1930 to 19th January, 1931—Proceedings.

difference, that the serf and the slave were permitted to have physical contact, from which the depressed classes are debarred. What is worse is that this enforced servility and bar to human intercourse, due to their untouchability, involves not merely the possibility of discrimination in public life,, but actually works out as a positive denial of all equality of opportunity and the denial of those most elementary civic rights on which all human existence depends. I am sure that the point of view of such a community, as large as the population of England or of France, and so heavily handicapped in the struggle for existence, cannot but have some bearing of the right sort of solution of the political problem, and I am anxious that this Conference should be placed in possession of that point of view at the very start.

That Point of view I will try to put as briefly as I can. It is this that the bureaucratic form of government should be replaced by a government which will be a government of the people and for the people. This statement of the view of the depressed classes I am sure will be received with some surprise in certain quarters. But the reasons for this change of attitude are not far to seek. We have not taken this decision simply because we wish to throw in our lot with the majority. Indeed, as you know, there is not much love lost between the majority and the particular minority I represent. Ours is an independent decision. We have judged of the existing administration solely in the light of our own circumstances and we have found it wanting in some of the most essential elements of good Government. When we compare our present position with the one which it was our lot to bear in Indian society of the pre-British

days, we find that instead of marching on, we are only marking time. Before the British, we were in the loathsome condition due to our untouchability. Has the British Government done anything to remove it? Before the British we could not draw water from the village well. Has the British Government secured us the right to the well? Before the British, we were denied entry into the Police Force. Does the British Government admit us in that Force? Before the British, we were not allowed to serve in the Military. Is that career now open to us? To none of these questions can we give an affirmative answer. That the British, who have held so large a sway over us for such a long time, have done some good we cheerfully acknowledge. But there is certainly no fundamental change in our position. Indeed, so far as we are concerned, the British Government has accepted the social arrangements as it found them, and has preserved them faithfully in the manner of the Chinese tailor who, when given an old coat as a pattern produced with pride an exact replica, rents, patches and all. Our wrongs have remained as open sores and they have not been righted, although 150 years of British rule have rolled away.

We must have a Government in which the men in power will give their undivided allegiance to the best interest of the country. We must have a Government in which men in power, knowing where obedience will end and resistance will begin, will not be afraid to amend the social and economic code of life which the dictates of justice and expediency so urgently call for. This role, the British Government will never be able to play. It is only a Government which is of the people, for the people and by the people that will make this possible.

I have no quarrel with logic and logicians. But I warn them against the disaster that is bound to follow, if they are not careful in the selection of the premises they choose to adopt for their deductions. It is all a matter of temper whether you will abide by the fall of your logic, or whether you will refute it as Dr. Johnson did the paradoxes of Berkeley by trampling them under his foot. I am afraid it is not sufficiently realised that in the present temper of the country, no constitution will be workable which is not acceptable to the majority of the people. The time when you were to choose and India was to accept is gone, never to return. Let the consent of the people and not the accident of logic be the touchstone of your new constitution, if you desire that it should be worked."

Could there be a better challenge and warning to the British rulers than this forthright assessment of the situation in a statesmanlike manner. No wonder, the British delegates were stunned by his strong words and they whispered that Dr. Ambedkar seems to be an Indian revolutionary. This belief of theirs was further strengthened when he time and again spoke against British policies and demanded self-government as early as possible. Mark what he said²¹ before the Federal Structure Committee on the 16th September 1931 :

"In my opinion, what is of the utmost importance is that the people of India should be impregnated with the sense that in the last resort, they are responsible for the good govern-

21. P. 121—122, Indian Round Table Conference-Second Session, Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee, Volume 1, 1932.

ment of the country. And I venture to suggest that, unless the Indian citizen is made to feel that it is he who can make or unmake the government, we shall never be able to succeed in establishing the true foundations of a responsible government in India."

Another instance of Right Speech at the right moment we intend to quote is from Dr. Ambedkar's speech in the Constituent Assembly on the 23rd November, 1949 regarding the responsibility of the Indians to safeguard their freedom :²²

"I do not wish to weary the House any further. Independence is no doubt a matter of joy. But let us not forget that this Independence has thrown on us great responsibilities. By Independence, we have lost the excuse of blaming the British for anything going wrong. If hereafter things go wrong, we will have nobody to blame except ourselves. There is great danger of things going wrong. Times are fast changing. People including our own are being moved by new ideologies. They are getting tired of Government by the people. They are prepared to have Government for the people and are indifferent whether it is Government of the people and by the people. If we wish to preserve the Constitution in which we have sought to enshrine the principle of Government of the people, for the people and by the people, let us resolve not to be tardy in the recognition of the evils that lie across our path and which induce people to prefer Government for the people to Government by the people, nor to be weak in our initiative to remove them. That is the only way to serve the country, I know of no better."

22. P. 980-981, Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol, XI, 14th-26th November, 1949.

While winding up the debate on 25. 11. 49 the third reading of the draft Constitution Dr. Ambedkar said:²³

"Here I could have ended. But my mind is so full of the future of our country that I feel I ought to take this occasion to give expression to some of my reflections therein. On 26th January, 1950, India will be an independent country (Cheers). What would happen to her independence? Will she maintain her independence or will she lose it again? This is the first thought that comes to my mind. It is not that India was never an independent country. The point is that she once lost the independence she had. Will she lose it a second time? It is this thought which makes me most anxious for the future. What perturbs me greatly is the fact that not only India has once before lost her independence, but she lost it by the infidelity and treachery of her own people. In the invasion of Sind by Mohammed Bin-Kasim, the military Commanders of King Dahar accepted bribes from the agents of Mohammed Bin-Kasim and refused to fight on the side of their King. It was Jaichand who invited Mohammed Gohri to invade India and fight against Prithvi Raj and promised him the help of himself and the Solanki Kings. When Shivaji was fighting for the liberation of Hindus, the other Maratha noblemen and the Rajput Kings were fighting the battle on the side of Moghul Emperors. When the British were trying to destroy the Sikh Rulers, Gulab Singh, their principal commander sat silent and did not help to save the Sikh Kingdom. In 1857, when a large

23. P. 977—978, Constituent Assembly Debates, Volume XI, 14th—26th November, 1949.

part of India had declared a war of independence against the British, the Sikhs stood and watched the event as silent spectators."

In this context, another extract from the same speech is also worth quoting. After impressing upon the unity of the Indian nation the Chief Architect of the Constitution said²⁴:

"These are my reflections about the tasks that lie ahead of us. They may not be very pleasant to some. But there can be no gainsaying that political power in this country has too long been the monopoly of a few and the many are not only beasts of burden but also beasts of prey. This monopoly has not merely deprived them of their chance of betterment, it has sapped them of what may be called the significance of life. These down-trodden classes are tired of being governed. They are impatient to govern themselves. This urge for self-realization in the down-trodden classes must not be allowed to develop into a class struggle or class war. It would lead to a division of the House. That would indeed be a day of disaster. For, as has been well said by Abraham Lincoln, a House divided against itself cannot stand very long. Therefore, the sooner room is made for the realization of their aspiration, the better for the few, the better for the country, the better for the maintenance of its independence and the better for the continuance of its democratic structure. This can only be done by the establishment of equality and fraternity in all spheres of life. That is why I have laid so much stress on them."

24. P. 980—981, Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. XI, 14th—26th November, 1949.

The last example in this series we would like to quote is from his speech before the fourth Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists held at Kathmandu, Nepal in November, 1956. This was his first and the last important speech as a formal Buddhist before an international gathering. The subject of this talk²⁵ was 'Buddhism and Communism' and Babasaheb treated this delicate subject in a masterly way. Concluding his speech he turned towards the Bhikkhus and said :

"I advise the younger generation of the Buddhist countries to pay more attention to the actual teachings of the Buddha. If I may say so in conclusion if any peril arises to the Dhamma, in a Buddhist country the blame shall have to be cast upon the Bhikkhus because I personally think that they are not wholly discharging the duty which devolves on them. Where is the preaching? The Bhikkhu is living in his cloister taking his meal no doubt and sitting quietly: probably he is reading, and most probably I find them sleeping, and in the evening having a little music. That is not the way of propagating religion.

My friends, I want to tell you, I do not want to criticise any body; but religion, if it is to be a moral force for the regeneration of society, you must constantly din it into the ears of the people. How many years has a child to spend in school? You do not send the child to school on a day and then withdraw the child home and

25. P. 2—3, December, 1960 issue of the Samyak Drishti (Right View), Ajmer.

expect the child to grow into learning, to get education. The child has to go to school every day, sit there for five hours and study constantly. It is then, and then alone that the child gets somewhat saturated with what is called learning. Here the monastery is not a state. The Bhikkhus do not call the people to the monasteries on any single day and deliver sermon to them on some subject or moral education. I have never seen it."

On the basis of so much evidence it is perfectly correct to say that Dr. Ambedkar never parted company with Right Speech in the hope of getting material gains or appreciation from the audience. He spoke the truth without any fear or favour from any quarter.

(4) Right Conduct (Samma Kammanta).

Right Conduct means that every action of a person should be founded on respect for the feelings and rights of others. His action should be in harmony with the laws of existence. Dr. Ambedkar's behaviour towards others was commendable. He did not hate any body though he disliked some for their selfish and narrow-outlook. He had many friends in the opponent camps whom he used to criticise for their policies and programmes but in their private meetings the impression one got was that they had no difference of opinion at all. He knew the value of friendship. He had equal respect for rich and poor, for educated and uneducated. That is why people from all walks of life used to go him; some for personal favours, some for political or social business, and some

for mere 'darshan' only. And Babasaheb entertained all and satisfied their desires.

5. Right Livelihood (Samma Ajiva).

A Bodhisattva is supposed to have a pure and honest mode of gaining his livelihood. Dr. Ambedkar earned his livelihood by working honestly and sincerely. Being a highly qualified person he was in a position to earn a lot of money which he earned and then gave dana for the welfare of the suffering humanity. As an advocate he was very popular with the poor because either he would not charge them any fee or he would charge a very reasonable and nominal fee. Thus, he never fleeced people, rather he helped them.

6. Right Effort (Samma Vayama).

As already explained under the Four Right Efforts Dr. Ambedkar made efforts in the right direction at every stage. But for this faculty he would not have been so successful in his mission as he was found to be.

7. Right Mindfulness (Samma Sati).

Babasaheb cultivated mindfulness in deed, word and body as already stated under the Four Fields of Mindfulness.

8. Right Concentration (Samma Samadhi).

The practice of Samma Samadhi trains the mind in concentration and enables one to always think of Good Deeds. It enables a person to over-come permanently

the five hindrances of coveteusness, ill-will, sloth and torpor, doubt and indecision. Dr. Ambedkar always concentrated his mind over these faculties which bring good to oneself and to others. In this connection please see comments under the Dhyana Paramita also.

5. The Paramitas.

The *summum bonum* of a Bodhisattva's career is the practice of the Paramitas. These perfect virtues are considered the chief factors of his career as they distiguish a Bodhisattva from an Arahant. In accordance with the Mahayana (Sanskrit) tradition a Bodhisattva is supposed to have the following six chief and four supplementary Paramitas²⁶ (perfections, highest virtues) :

Chief

1. Dana (Charity, Generousity, Liberality).
2. Sila (Virtuous, Conduct, Morality, Righteousness).
3. Ksanti (Forebearance, Patience).
4. Virya (Energy).
5. Dhyana (Raptmusing, Concentration).
6. Prajna (Wisdom).

Supplementary

1. Upaya (Skilfullness in the choice or adaptation of means for conversion).
2. Pranidhana (Aspiration or Resolution).

26, P. 168, The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Sanskrit Literature, Har Dayal, 1932.

3. Bala (Strength, Power).
4. Jnana (Knowledge).

Chief Paramitas

1. Dana Paramita.

The Dana Paramita not only means generosity, liberality and charity but it means renunciation (tyaga) also. A Bodhisattva is expected not only to show liberality in alms-giving but also in being amiable and sympathetic to others in their joys and sorrows. The practice of Dana by a Bodhisattva is to be judged from two angles i. e. (a) to whom Dana is given, and (b) what is given. These aspects are briefly discussed below :

(a) To whom Dana is given.

A Bodhisattva makes no distinction between his friends and foes while giving Dana. He treats all sentient beings alike. However, the poor, the sick, the afflicted and the hopeless, and the members of the Saugha are the greater beneficiaries of his gifts.

In giving Dana, Dr. Ambedkar was very generous. Not only for the down-trodden but for the sake of the entire country he sacrificed his health, wealth, and intellect. Dr. Ambedkar gave protection to each and every person in trouble. The poor and innocent masses were always seen around him as they not only got protection but also got inspiration from the way he treated them. He endeavoured to improve the condition of every poor house like his own house. He considered every poor child his own child and tried to educate him and bring him up

nicely He tried his utmost to mitigate the pains and sufferings of every suffering man and woman. The greatest proof of his generosity he gave in 1932 when he saved the life of Mahatma Gandhi by giving him Dana of life at the time of the Poona Pact even though the future of the down-trodden was at stake. Commenting on this episode the modern Bodhisattva later on wrote as under :²⁷

"The fast nonetheless created a problem, and that problem was how to save Mr. Gandhi's life. The only way to save his life was to alter the Communal Award which Mr. Gandhi said hurt his conscience so much. The Prime Minister had made it quite clear that the British Cabinet would not withdraw it or alter it of its own, but that they were ready to substitute for it a formula that may be agreed upon by the Caste Hindus and the Untouchables. As I had the privilege of representing the Untouchables at the Round Table Conference, it was assumed that the assent of the Untouchables would not be valid unless I was a party to it. All eyes naturally turned to me as the man of the moment or rather as the villain of the piece.

As to myself, it is no exaggeration to say that no man was placed in a greater and graver dilemma than I was then. It was a baffling situation. There was before me the duty which I owed as a part of common humanity, to save Mr. Gandhi from sure death. There was before me the problem of saving for the Untouchables the political rights which the Prime

27. P. 88, What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables-Dr. Ambedkar, 1945.

Minister had given. I responded to the call of humanity and saved the life of Mr. Gandhi by agreeing to alter the Communal Award in a manner satisfactory to Mr. Gandhi. This agreement is known as the Poona Pact."

(b) What is given.

The gifts of a Bodhisattva can be classified under the following six categories; (i) material things; (ii) fearlessness (iii) education; (iv) life and limbs; (v) merits; and (vi) the Dhamma.

(i) The gift of the material things is essential since Buddhism does not offer imaginary riches in the heaven as an adequate substitute for poverty and degradation in this earthly existence. Babasaheb, like a true Bodhisattva, endeavoured throughout his life for the material advancement of the suffering and afflicted masses. "Woeful in this world is poverty and debt," so says Buddha. And to remove that poverty, the cause of sorrow and suffering, Dr. Ambedkar did his best. He was certainly instrumental in uplifting the poorer sections of the society and in bringing them to their present status. The large number of the Scheduled Caste members in the Indian Parliament and the State Assemblies as well as in the services are enjoying the fruits of his labours.

(ii) The gift of fearlessness (abhaya) inspires courage and confidence in the victims of exploitation as they feel protected. Before the advent of Dr. Ambedkar, the Untouchables were living the life of lethargy and in-action. In fact they were not living; they were just existing under the notion that their pitiable condition was the result of

their past karmas and that there was no escape from it; and no hope of changing it. Dr Ambedkar instilled a new life in them. He exhorted them to revolt against slavery and serfdom. His maxim 'Tell a slave, he is a slave and he will revolt' worked wonders. Through his numerous speeches, talks and articles he made these classes conscious of their degraded position, its cause and the way to improve it: In his books on diverse subjects also he highlighted the pitiable condition of the lower strata of Indian society. This served the double purpose of exposing the designs of the high-ups and of rousing the conscience of the sufferers. Thus the low and the lowly felt emboldened and they prepared themselves for the struggle ahead.

(iii) Education has an important place in a man's life. It is essential as it enables a person to exercise his rights and perform his duties correctly as a citizen and as a member of the society. Dr. Ambedkar attached great importance to education and he always exhorted his followers to give proper education to their sons and daughters. As is evident from the slogan 'Educate, Agitate and Organise' education, in his view, was the basic necessity for uplifting the down-trodden. Not satisfied with mere slogans, he himself organised many educational societies. As a result of his Dana in this field, we have, to-day, impressive educational institutions like the Siddharth College, Bombay and the Milinda Vidyalaya. Aurangabad.

(iv) A Bodhisattva does not hesitate even to sacrifice his life and limbs for the sake of the public at large. Dr. Ambedkar, too, never faltered whenever the occasion

arose of sacrificing some-thing. In fact, he sacrificed every thing in his possession for the sake of the oppressed and suppressed classes amongst whom he was born. For their sake he even sacrificed his children. He did not care much for the welfare of his son Yashwant and his nephew Mukand, not because he did not love them but because he was too much busy with his social and other activities and had practically no time to think of family affairs. For the sake of others he sacrificed his limbs also. He was injured in the Mahad Satyagraha in 1927, which he was leading when the fanatic Hindus attacked the processionists. Again, on 23rd October, 1929 during his tour of East Khandesh, the people of Chalisgaon invited him to address a meeting. From the station they wanted to take their leader in a tonga but all the tonga drivers refused to carry the untouchable leader. After some persuasion, a tonga-driver agreed on the condition that the tonga should be driven by an untouchable. But the new driver being unaccustomed to this work, the horse bolted and Babasaheb was thrown out on the stone pavement severely injured²⁸. In this accident one of the bones of his right foot was fractured and this injury became a permanent source of trouble during the remaining part of his life. Further, while engaged in drafting the Constitution of India he did not at all care for his failing health. Thus he sacrificed his life and limbs also for the sake of others.

(v) The transference of merit is practised by a Bodhisattva in a most natural manner as he sees no

28. P. 129, Dr. Ambedkar, Life & Mission—D. Keer.

difference between himself and others. Whatever merits Babasaheb had accumulated as a result of his vast learning and hard work, he gladly shared these with his fellow-creatures.

(vi) Lord Buddha says, 'the gift of Dhamma excels all other gifts'. This excellent gift of the Dhamma was also given by Dr. Ambedkar on Sunday, the 14th October, 1956 at Nagpur, when he himself embraced Buddhism and inspired others to do the same. With this gift of religious instruction he literally fulfilled the task of a Bodhisattva.

In view of the foregoing we can safely say that Dana was part and parcel of Dr. Ambedkar's life. He gave, gave, and gave, whatever he could, he gave. In giving Dana he was not prompted by personal gain. He gave for the sake of ensuring enlightenment to all ignorant people.

2. Sila (Morality).

This Paramita includes all the ordinary virtues of honest, respectable layman and householder. It is moral perfection and is attained by completely extinguishing the fires of the passions. It constitutes the Buddhist layman's definite code of practical ethics. Babasaheb was a man of character. Whatever he preached, he practised. He lived up to his ideals. His each and every action, whether private, political, social or religious was in accordance with morality. He treated every human being kindly. His doors were open to all irrespective of their status in the society. It was his good nature as a man and his respect for moral values which prompted Dr. Ambedkar to save the life of Gandhiji in 1932.

Dr. Ambedkar practised Sila in all walks of life. Some might say that his speech was harsh on certain occasions. But that was only where he rebelled against something and wanted to prick the conscience of the orthodox people. Otherwise his speech was kindly; his heart was full of love and compassion for the masses. Babasaheb was a firm believer in the moral order in this universe. He exhorted his followers also to follow the moral code of the Buddha because morality has the same status in Buddhism which God has in other religions. Further, the observance of the Five Precepts etc. is the key to moral character. Character, according to Dr. Ambedkar, is more important than education. "An educated man without character and humility is more dangerous than a beast", so says the modern Bodhisattva.

3. Ksanti (Forebearance).

This Paramita has three aspects : (i) Forebearance, Patience; (ii) Endurance of pain and hardship; and (iii) Acceptance of the ideals and doctrines of the Dhamma with faith.

(i) Forebearance.

Patience and fore-bearance was a rare quality in Dr. Ambedkar. He was a great idealist and he believed in slow and steady effort for achieving his goal. Haste was foreign to his nature. He used to speak very seldom but whenever he spoke, he spoke after considering all pros and cons of his speech. He was true to his words; whatever he promised, he fulfilled. When in 1932 Gandhiji and other

Hindu leaders asked for a period of 10 years to ameliorate the condition of the Scheduled Castes, he agreed and then gave them full 10 years to fulfil their promise. Thus, it was only in 1942, after the lapse of the stipulated period when he found that Gandhiji and his followers had failed to live up to their promises that he organised the Scheduled Castes Federation. Under the banner of this Federation he endeavoured to unite the Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes of India with a view to fight their cause more vigorously. Again his patience for 21 years from 1935 to 1956 over the question of the change of religion is a clear proof of deeprooted forbearance in his nature. Remember, after his historic declaration in 1935 when so many Hindu leaders approached him and pressed him to withdraw the declaration or at least postpone the issue, Dr. Ambedkar said that he would wait for 5 to 10 years for a change of heart on the part of the Hindus. He, however, waited not only for 5 or 10 years but for full 21 years. This shows intensity of his patience.

With such patience, forbearance and sympathy he used to hear woeful stories of the poor and simple folk that even mother cannot hear as attentively the woeful stories of her child. His doors were open to all. He never disappointed anybody. Young or old, urbanite or villager, educated or illiterate, all were respected by him alike. That is why every one considered Babasaheb his true friend, philosopher and guide.

(ii) Endurance.

The circumstances under which Dr. Ambedkar had to fight for the rights of the down-trodden against the Hindu

society were far from satisfactory. Anybody with hasty nature would have certainly lost patience and turned to violent methods, but Dr. Ambedkar, a true Bodhisattva, tried to solve each and every problem peacefully. He always exhorted his followers to avoid violence and to fight against tyranny by following the principle of Ahimsa. As for himself he was always calm and quiet and undeterred even by the threats to his life. Referring to the abuses which fell to his lot as a social reformer and historian he said as under in the Preface²⁹ of his famous thesis, 'Who were the Shudras' :

"The only thing I did not know was how the meek and non-violent looking Hindu can be violent when any body attacks his sacred books. I became aware of it as never before when last year I received a shower of letters from angry Hindus, who became quite unbalanced by my speech on the subject delivered in Madras. The letters were full of filthy abuse unmentionable and unprintable and full of dire threats to my life. Last time they treated me as a first offender and let me off with mere threats. I don't know what they will do this time. For on reading the book they are sure to find more cause for anger at what in their eyes is a repetition of the offence in an aggravated form for having brought forth chapter and verse to show that what goes by the name of Sacred Books contains fabrications which are political in their motive, partisan in their composition

29. P. viii-ix, Who were the Shudras ? —Dr. Ambedkar, 1946.

and fraudulent in their purpose. I do not propose to take any notice of their vilifications or their threats. For I know very well that they are a base crew who professing to defend their religion have made religion a matter of trade. They are more selfish than any other set of beings in the world, and are prostituting their intelligence to support the vested interests of their class."

(iii) Acceptance of the Dhamma.

A Bodhisattva investigates the Doctrine thoughtfully and intelligently, and thus acquires the firm faith in the merits of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. As already mentioned, Dr. Ambedkar was not a haste convert to the faith of the Buddha. Even though he was attracted by the glorious Doctrine of the Buddha much earlier and showed his inclination towards the Dhamma in 1934-35 but he accepted it formally only when the light of his life was about to extinguish. Thus he took more than 20 years to investigate the Truth. Not satisfied with his theoretical knowledge gained through innumerable works on Buddhism he visited Ceylon and Burma to see and find out how the Teachings of the Blessed One had moulded the lives of its votaries. After having satisfied himself fully that the Dhamma was glorious in the beginning ; glorious in the middle, and glorious in the end, Babasaheb not only himself took refuge in it but asked all his countrymen also to follow suit and thus bring back the bye-gone glory to the land of the Buddha. Exhorting them at Nagpur, he said. "To-day, all of you should take an oath that through the Dhamma you will

not only emancipate yourself but will emancipate your mother land, nay the entire world as well.”

4. Virya (Energy).

This Paramita means strength, energy, courage, power and vigour. It is energy in the pursuit of Good and effort for the Good. It plays a major role in the career of a Bodhisattva because it is the chief and paramount cause of all the auspicious principles. Further, in order to tread the Path it is necessary to be energetic and strenuous, not to give way to weakness and discouragement, not to become attached to wordly pleasure and to keep one's resolutions strong. Broadly speaking, the Virya Paramita has three aspects, viz. (1) Moral Development, (2) Education, and (3) Altruistic Activity.

(1) Moral Development

Dr Ambedkar's moral development started right from his childhood. His father, Subedar Ramji, was a very devout follower of Kabir, a famous saint who flourished in the 15th century, and used to sing songs of his praise every morning and evening. In the evening sessions all his children including Bhim, our hero, had to join their father and recite the devotional songs of Kabir. This is what Dr. Ambedkar³⁰ once said about his father's devotion to religion :

“Our's was a poor family but its atmosphere was like that of a progressive educated family. That we

30. P. 35-36, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (Hindi)—Vijay Kumar Pujari, 1958.

should take interest in our studies and our future be bright was the ardent desire of our father and he took all possible steps in this respect. Before allowing us to take our morning meals he made us to say prayers in the family shrine. All of us, especially I, after saying our prayers in a haphazard manner used to rush to the kitchen. On seeing this, our father would ask, 'Why have you finished recitations to-day so hastily' ? But without replying to his question we used to disappear from there. This is what happened in the mornings but in the evenings we had to obey our father. He had made it a rule that at eight O clock in the night my two sisters, elder brothers and myself, all of us must be present in the family shrine. Absence of any one of us was never pardoned by him. When our father recited the devotional songs of Kabir and other saints the atmosphere was filled with holiness and seriousness. Following him, when my sisters also started singing bhajans in their sweet voice, I felt convinced that the religion and the religious instructions were essential for a man's life".

This regular and continuous practice of devotional recites, recitations and expositions inculcated the spirit of moral values in Bhim and broadened his religious outlook.

It is truism to say that Dr. Ambedkar, like a Bodhisattva was always vigilant to maintain this spiritual instinct which is the basis and the source of moral development. The fact that he was a man of character needs no justification. His moral character was above board and throughout his life he cared more for moral values than for anything else.

(2) Education.

Apart from the study of the Scriptures, a Bodhisattva is supposed to acquire a thorough knowledge of general education covering atleast logic or dialactics, grammer, medicine, and the technological arts and crafts.

As already stated, Dr. Ambedkar had studied and understood the Buddhist Scriptures. In fact Buddhism came to him through books, Scriptures and others, and the result of his vast study, which commenced as back as 1907, is before us in the shape of his monumental work "The Buddha and His Dhamma". The standard of his general education needs no introduction. The mere fact that Dr. Ambedkar, though born amongst the lowly, achieved such academic distinctions, which no other Indian had, is a tribute to his energy, diligence and industriousness. He had mastery over arts, philosophy, science, logic, sociology, economics, finance and law. He was able to achieve all this because of his attentive study and mental concentration. As the scanning of his biography reveals,³¹ during his college days he used to get up at two O' clock in the night because he found the early morning hours most suitable for attentive studies, there being calmness and quietness all around. In the Columbia University, New York and in London he often used to study for eighteen hours a day. Thus, as a result of this constant and regular study Dr. Ambedkar was able to obtain the highest academic degrees within the shortest possible time.

31. P. 17, Dr. Ambedkar, *Life & Mission*—D. Keer,

His interest in study made Dr. Ambedkar a lover of books. He constructed a palacial house 'Raj graha' which he filled with thousands of books which were a source of inspiration to him. His personal library was so big and enormous that the visitors were taken aback and in their bewilderment they used to ask whether he had read all these books. But Babasaheb, the ocean of knowledge and the lover of books was so intimate with his books that from a distance he could recognise any book and tell its gist, which fact often added to the bewilderment of his guests.

(3) Altruistic Activity.

Writing about this aspect of Virya (Viriya), Har Dayal says³², "A Bodhisattva reflects carefully before he embarks on an enterprise; but he carries all his work to a successful issue. He does not leave it half-done, and he is not daunted and discouraged by difficulties and dangers. He maintains the same energy and resolution under all circumstances. He devises the proper expedients for attaining his end. He is indefatigable and optimistic. He does not lose hope on account of the stupidity and wickedness of the people; he does his daily task like a sun. Like a king he has devoted soldiers, whose names are Zeal, Strength, Joy, Exclusive Application, Self-mastery and Courage."

Now coming to our hero we find that he was so energetic and had such a strong will that he faced every eventuality with courage and determination. Like a valiant fighter he always went forward and forward and never looked backward. He had immense organising capacity, a tribute

32. P. 219, The Bodhisattva Doctrine—Har Dayal.

to his strength as well as will-power. The credit for the success of the Untouchables in their first War of Independence against the Hindu tyranny launched in the shape of Satyagraha at Mahad (Maharashtra) in March, 1927 goes to no one else but to our hero. Remember the first War of Independence of the down-trodden was fought neither for power, nor for wealth but it was fought to claim the right to use the water of a public tank (Chowder tank) at Mahad. No doubt, water is nature's gift to mankind and is essential for human life but the poor and unfortunate low-born were denied its use by the so-called Caste Hindus in the name of their religion. To raise voice against such a tyranny was natural for the saviour, protector and liberator of the down-trodden. Again, under his able and energetic leadership the Untouchables launched Satyagraha in March 1930 at Nasik. This time the object was to claim the right of entry into Kalaram Mandir, entry into which like all other abodes of Hindu-Gods was prohibited for them because the Hindus thought that their touch would pollute their Gods of stone and marble. This struggle went on for many years and ultimately the organisers were successful, but this episode convinced the modern Bodhisattva that the salvation of the down-trodden lies in saying good bye for-ever to the Hindu religion. To sum up, the story of the Satyagrahas as told by Dr. Ambedkar himself runs as follows³³ :

33. P. 258, What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables—Dr. Ambedkar, 1915.

"The Satyagraha at the Chowdar Tank situated in Mahad, a town in the Kolaba District of the Bombay Presidency, was organised to establish the right of the Untouchables to take water from public watering places. The Satyagraha at the Kala Ram Temple situated in Nasik, a town in the Nasik District of the Bombay Presidency, was organised to establish the right of the Untouchables to enter Hindu temples. There were many minor satyagrahas. These were, however, the two principal ones over which the efforts of the Untouchables and their opponents, the Caste Hindus, were concentrated. The din and noise caused by them were heard all over India. Thousands of men and women from the Untouchables took part in these satyagrahas. Both men and women belonging to the Untouchables were insulted and beaten by the Hindus. Many were injured and some were imprisoned by Government on the ground of causing breach of the peace. This Satyagraha movement went on for full eight years when it was brought to a close in 1935 at a Conference held in Yeola in the Nasik District in which the Untouchables as a result of the adamantive attitude of the Hindus in refusing to give them equal social rights resolved to go out of the Hindu fold."

It is on record that when, in the historic Kalaram Mandir Satyagraha, the life of our hero was in danger as the violent mob of the believers in untouchability was serging ahead and had almost attacked the unarmed but disciplined satyagrahis, Dadasahib B. K. Gaikwad and some police officials approached Babasaheb and tried to persuade him to take shelter in some safe place, but he, thundering like a lion, replied, I appreciate your feelings but I cannot leave my people alone at such a

critical juncture, I must die or live with them³⁴. Further, his life being full of troubles and turmoils, struggles and hardships, often he had to face the entire society single handed but he always faced them with courage and confidence. If there be any doubt, mark what Dr. Ambedkar said in reply to his Hindu critics who threatened him with dire consequences if he tried to expose their Sacred Books. He says³⁵:

"What is outrageous is that they do so because they believe that their high stations in life would invest their words with an amount of terror which would be sufficient enough to cow down any and every opponent of orthodoxy. What I would like to tell these amiable gentlemen is that they will not be able to stop me by their imprecations. They do not seem to be aware of the profound and telling words of Dr. Johnson who when confronted with analogous situation said 'I am not going to be deterred from catching a cheat by the menaces of a ruffian.' I do not wish to be rude to these high placed critics, much less do I want to say that they are playing the part of a ruffian interested in the escape of a cheat. But I do want to tell them two things: Firstly that I propose, no matter what happens to follow the determination of Dr. Johnson in the pursuit of historical truth by the exposure of the Sacred Books so that the Hindus may know that it is the doctrines contained in their Sacred Books which are responsible for the decline and fall of their country and their society. Secondly, if the Hindus of this generation do not

34. P. 105, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (Hindi)-Vijay Kumar Pujari.

35. P. ix, Who were the Shudras ? Dr. Ambedkar, 1946.

take notice of what I have to say I am sure the future generation will. I do not despair of success. For I take consolation in the words of the poet Bhavabhuti who said "time is infinite and earth is vast, some day there will be born a man who will appreciate what I have said".

Again, it was the energetic courage and will power of Dr. Ambedkar which took him to each and every corner, not only of India but of the entire globe. He had many a time visited U. S. A., U. K., Germany and Switzerland and had also been to neighbour countries like Ceylon, Burma and Nepal. Within the country he had sanctified almost all the States by his visit, and wherever he went it was quite an event.

His capacity to work hard is also evident from the fact that when the task of framing the Constitution of India, fell to his lot, he took the entire responsibility over his shoulders and worked day and night, uncared even of his health. The result of his ceaseless efforts is one of the longest written Constitutions in the world.

To produce this Constitution of 395 Articles and 8 Schedules, the Drafting Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Ambedkar sat for 141 days. The Constituent Assembly took 114 days spread over 5 sessions to finalise this historic document. How minutely the draft Constitution was discussed and clarifications sought from Dr. Ambedkar in regard to its various Articles can well be judged from the fact that the number of amendments tabled was approximately 7,635 and out of these 2,473 were actually moved in the House, the rest being withdrawn

after some discussion. Referring to this herculean task accomplished by Dr. Ambedkar, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly, had observed like this in his concluding speech³⁶ in the Assembly on the 26th November, 1949, "Sitting in the chair and watching the proceedings from day to day, I have realised as no body else could have, with what zeal and devotion the members of the Drafting Committee and especially its chairman, Dr. Ambedkar inspite of his indifferent health, have worked. (Cheers). We would never make a decision which was or could be ever so right as when we put him on the Drafting Committee and made him its chairman. He has not only justified his selection but has added lustre to the work which he has done."

5. Dhyana (Concentration).

This Paramita means the practice of rapt musing or abstraction. It has been defined as concentration and stability or fixity of the mind. Meditation enables a Bodhisattva to attain the perfection of concentration as he passes through its various stages from mindfulness and self-possession to attainment of super-conscious states and development of the super-normal powers. As a preliminary step to the practice of Dhyana a Bodhisattva practises (1) Renunciation and Solitude, and (2) the four meditations called Brahma-Viharas (Sublime or Perfect states).

(1) Renunciation and Solitude.

Dr. Ambedkar had great love for solitude. Lord Buddha in his childhood used to go out and meditate under

36. Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol, XI. 14th-26th November, 1949.

the trees. So did Bhim also. Once, when he was just a lad he slipped away from his home in Bombay and went to forests for meditation purposes.³⁷ His parents searched every nook and corner of the city but in vain. Next day, however, Bhim himself returned home. Apparently he thought that he was yet too raw to follow this path. Further, it is on record that in 1935 he had actually taken Sanyas³⁸. Though he was not a Buddhist at that time, even then he became a sanyasi with a view to have practical knowledge of a homeless wanderer and seeker after truth. Thus he knew fully well the value of concentration, meditation and contemplation.

Venerable L. Ariyawansa of Buddha Vihara, New Delhi, tells me that Babasaheb often used to come to that Vihara and ask him about the why and how of the Buddhist meditation, with specific relation to the Sacred Suttas of the Scriptures. He thus followed the system of the Buddhist meditation which is based on faith, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. He wanted others also to do it. That is why he got printed in 1951 a small booklet 'Baudh Upasana Path' which was a collection of Suttas designed for this purpose. Further, it is said that when Babasaheb went to Bodh Gaya on pilgrimage he sat silently meditating for hours under the Bodhi-Tree where the Blessed One had attained Enlightenment. At Sarnath also, Dr. Ambedkar sat for hours in Dhyana near the venue of Lord Buddha's First Sermon.

37. P. 13, Ambedkar's Life Struggle (Hindi), R. C. Banodha,

38. P. 241, Dr. Ambedkar, Life and Mission, D. Keer.

(2) Brahma-Viharas.

The four Sublime states consist of (i) Metta (Love or friendliness); (ii) Karuna (Compassion); (iii) Mudita (Sympathetic joy); and (iv) Upekkha (Equanimity).

Metta teaches fellow feeling towards all living beings but Karuna is especially directed towards unhappy and afflicted living beings. Dr Ambedkar was truly a messenger of love and he taught the rich to love poor, the stronger to love weaker, and, in short, to love all irrespect of their creed, colour or rank. He was, of course, critical of certain vested interests which were responsible for keeping in bondage a large mass of humanity and this may perhaps be cited as not based on Metta. But it must be remembered that love can flourish only on the basis of equality and must originate on both sides. It is rather difficult for a servant to love his unreasonable selfish master. It is, therefore, the duty of a Bodhisattva to fill all such gaps in the society by whatever means he may have to adopt. Babasaheb did all this and that too splendidly.

The zeal, enthusiasm and devotion shown by Babasaheb to the cause of the suffering masses, Scheduled Castes and Tribes in particular, was prompted by nothing else but Karuna, compassion. Compassion that was awakened in him when he saw them without refuge, penniless and without merit, practising evil and being led into wicked ways, suffering from incurable diseases and practically drowning in the ocean of Sansara, having no ambition to do good and going astray from the path of

righteousness, the Dhamma. He, as such, had boundless compassion and good-will towards the suffering multitude as he wanted to see them on the right Path of the Buddha. Dr. Ambedkar's sole desire was to give health to the ailing; wealth to the poor; courage to the coward; wisdom to the fool; and goodness to the evil-minded. His loving kindness had thus endeared him to the poorest of the poor as well as to the highest of the high. No wonder, whosoever came into contact with this great reformer and religious leader of modern times, whether in the social, political or official capacity, remembers his qualities of Metta and Karuna most.

Mudita implies the feeling of happiness in the happiness of all. Dr. Ambedkar worked throughout his life to minimise the suffering of the down-trodden so that they could also share the happiness enjoyed by the high-ups. He wanted to see all the people happy as in their happiness he found his own happiness.

For Upekkha (Equanimity), please see the description under the Seven Elements of Enlightenment.

6. Prajna (Wisdom).

This Paramita is the summum bonum of the Buddhist philosophy. It means perfect wisdom, insight, and intuition. It also implies the true knowledge of the doctrine of universal causation and inter-dependence known as Pratitya Samutpada (Pali: Paticca-samuppada). The Dependent Origination is the doctrine of the conditionality of all physical and mental phenomena. By understanding the truth of the Dependent Origination a Bodhisattva frees

himself from all delusion and error. Thus he understands each and every human problem in right perspective and is in a position to remedy them.

In wisdom, intellect, and insight Dr. Ambedkar had no parallel in the modern era. He had so many degrees to his credit that people in their bewilderment used to wonder how and from where he had acquired these degrees. His pilgrimage in search of knowledge to far flung countries like America, U. K. and Germany as well as his study of thousands of books on all subjects had made him an ocean of knowledge and wisdom. He had knack for research and whichever subject he touched upon, he acquitted himself so well that his works are a constant source of help, guidance and inspiration to scholars. Posterity will, therefore, be ever grateful to this genius of the modern times, whose wisdom was so deep and whose degrees so many that none else could compete with him. No wonder, the Indian Universities felt little and shy before him. These Universities showered honorary degrees on almost all other Indian leaders but when they thought of Dr. Ambedkar they were non-plussed. Why? Because what an ordinary lamp can offer to a mighty sun. Dr. Ambedkar was beyond their reach. The only Universities which appreciated the services of our hero as a scholar and conferred upon him the honorary degrees of LL.D. and D. Litt. were the Columbia University, New York (U. S. A.) and the Osmania University, Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh) respectively. The Columbia University, from where our hero had obtained the degrees of M.A. and Ph. D. in 1916-20, while awarding

the degree of Doctor of Law on the 5th June, 1952 hailed him, "As a framer of the Constitution, Member of the Cabinet and of the Council of States, one of India's leading citizens, a great social reformer and a valiant upholder of human rights³⁹."

Babasaheb was a great far-sighted philosopher and statesman. In 1935 he declared that even though he had taken birth as a Hindu'. But he will not die as a Hindu⁴⁰. This solemn and meaningful declaration was fulfilled by Dr. Ambedkar after 21 years in 1956, and his last rites were performed according to Buddhism. What a great historical truth. Again, in 1940 he wrote his historical master-piece titled 'Thoughts on Pakistan' and gave a clear picture of Pakistan to come. At that time even Muslims were not clear in their minds as to the concept of Pakistan, their cherished slogan. It was just a dream for them. And Hindus were simply enraged on hearing the name of Pakistan which meant partition of the Indian Sub-continent. Under such confused circumstances Dr. Ambedkar published his thought provoking thesis in which he surmised that Pakistan will become a reality in the near future and its creation will involve partition of some provinces which may be accompanied by 'exchange of population'⁴¹.

Hitherto people had heard about partition but the idea of exchange of population came to them like a

39. P. 420, Dr. Ambedkar, Life and Mission, D. Keer.

40. P. 244, Ibid.

41. P. 106-110, Thoughts on Pakistan, Dr. Ambedkar, 1941.

bomb-shell. Naturally they scoffed at this idea but the prediction of a giant intellectual was there. It was true and became true when in 1947 Pakistan came into existence not only almost on the same lines as visualised by Babasaheb but the partition was accompanied by the 'exchange of population' also. The only difference being that this exchange was agreed to by the parties concerned very late and by that time the situation had become sufficiently explosive and almost out of control. The result was blood-shed on both the sides.

Dr. Ambedkar had both theoretical as well as practical wisdom. Whatever he said, he said after careful consideration, but once he said something, he accomplished that notwithstanding the difficulties in fulfilling his promise. Certainly his ideas were practical well balanced and clear-cut, and there was no difficulty in executing them.

Supplementary Paramitas.

Upaya or the virtue of skilfulness in the choice or adaptation of means for conversion is the chief supplementary Paramita. Vimalkirti says, "Prajna is the mother of the Bodhisattva and Upaya his father : there is no leader of humanity who is born without it."

It is not difficult to attract people towards political revolutions because politics has the charm of power. But social or religious revolutions do not have any thing of this kind to offer and to induce people to change their religion is the toughest job. Further, since in modern times man has been affected to a great extent by the

materialistic ideas he has not only become money-minded but his respect and reverence for religion and moral values is also evaporating by and by. Under such circumstances, conversion of people from one faith to another has become really a much more difficult task than it was ever before. Another problem which confronts a religious propagandist in modern times is the way the people stick to their ancestral faith, not because it satisfies the urge of their mind but because their fore-fathers had been following it.

A Bodhisattva employs the following four Elements of Conversion. Firstly, he gives Dana of wealth and material things; Secondly, he always speaks to them in a lovable manner; Thirdly he does good to them; and Fourthly, he himself practises the virtues he recommends to others.

Dr. Ambedkar too employed these methods to achieve his ends and he succeeded in his efforts as he had the foresight and wisdom of a Bodhisattva and also knew the value of strategy. He gave Dana of wealth in the shape of human rights to the down-trodden who were hitherto treated as dumb driven mass without any privileges or rights whatsoever. He created and secured for them social, political, and even service rights. He attracted people towards Buddhism by laying emphasis on its message of social equality and scientific outlook so badly needed in the atomic age of to-day. First he prepared the ground by hard work for more than 20 years and made the masses understand the drawbacks inherent in their traditional faith as well as the qualities of the Buddha-Dhamma and the advantages that would accrue by the suggested change. And when he

found the soil fertile he sowed in it the seed of the Dhamma which is sure to become one day a flourishing tree. The appropriateness of the means adopted by Dr. Ambedkar in furthering his cause is also clear from the timing of his call for conversions. Had he embraced Buddhism in 1935 when he had made known his intention of leaving Hinduism, it would not have been so important as very few people would have followed him to the refuge of Lord Buddha. But he judged the pulse of the time and waited patiently for the right opportunity and right time, and formally came to Buddhism only when he was cocksure that not thousands but millions of his loyal followers would take refuge with him in the sacred religion of the Buddha. This happened in 1956 in which year the 2500th Buddha Jayanti was celebrated throughout the Buddhist world. The most important event of these celebrations took place on the 14th October, 1956 when at Nagpur Dr. Ambedkar turned the Wheel of Law and asked his followers to embrace Buddhism. By now more than three millions have responded to the call of the modern Bodhisattva and more are likely to do so.

The Elements of Conversion also include the four Analytical knowledges, namely (i) the knowledge of the phenomena; (ii) the knowledge of meanings of the various categories of the Doctrine; (iii) the knowledge of the subjects like linguistic, public speaking and literary composition and the knowledge of courage-courage and boldness in speech and ready solutions.

Dr. Ambedkar's wisdom knew no dimensions. He was a giant intellectual and had mastery over numerous

branches of knowledge. He had studied the Dhamma well. Public speaking was an art with him. His speeches were always lucid and to the point. His oratory was so impressive that with one speech he could captivate the hearts of the audience and change the course of their thinking. One such powerful speech, which could be quoted here with advantage, is the speech which he delivered in the Constituent Assembly on the 16th December, 1946. This was his maiden speech in the Constituent Assembly and the occasion was provided by Dr. M. R. Jayakar's amendment seeking postponement of the passing of the resolution on the Declaration of Objectives moved by Shri Nehru. Narrating this incident, Dhananjay Keer, his biographer writes:⁴²

“And then the President of the Constituent Assembly unexpectedly called upon a Member to have his say. In response to the call a massive figure with a long head, a stubborn chin and an oval face rose from his seat to support Jayakar's amendment. It was Ambedkar, the avowed enemy of the Congress, who had lashed their ideology and scoffed at their leader privately and publicly. The House was all attention. Ambedkar took a view of the House. Every-body thought that Ambedkar by playing such a dangerous role, would go under with the mover of the amendment. To rise against the will and objectives of the Congress bosses, who were the nation's most powerful leaders, was to meet one's Waterloo. The Congress Members were ready with their hands raised to cripple their avowed enemy and throw him down.

42. P. 371, Dr. Ambedkar, Life and Mission, D. Keer,

Ambedkar saw himself surrounded by great political leaders. Majority of the white clad elite had never heard him, although they had heard big things about him, In a grave manner, with an unlimited command of language and supreme courage he began his speech". In this speech⁴³ he said :

"Now I come to the first part of the Resolution, which includes the first four paragraphs. As I said this has become a matter of controversy. The controversy seems to be centred on the use of that word 'Republic'. It is centred on the sentence occurring in paragraph 4 "the sovereignty is derived from the people". Thereby it arises from the point made by my friend Dr. Jayakar yesterday that in the absence of the Muslim League it would not be proper for this Assembly to proceed to deal with this Resolution. Now, Sir, I have got not the slightest doubt in my mind as to the future evolution and the ultimate shape of the social, political and economic structure of this great country. I know to-day we are divided politically, socially and economically. We are a group of warring camps and I may go even to the extent of confessing that I am probably one of the leaders of such a camp. But, Sir, with all this, I am quite convinced that given time and circumstance nothing in the world will prevent this country from becoming one. (Applause). With all our castes and creeds, I have not the slightest hesitation that we shall in some form be a united people (Cheers).

Sir, my friend Dr. Jayakar, yesterday, in arguing his case for postponing a decision on this issue put his

43 P. 999-1013, Constituent Assembly Debates, Volume I, Dated 9th December to 23rd December, 1946.

case, if I may say so, without offence to him, somewhat in a legalistic manner. The basis of his argument was, have you the right to do so? He read out certain portions from the Statement of the Cabinet Mission which related to the procedural part of the Constituent Assembly and his contention was that the procedure that this Constituent Assembly was adopting in deciding upon this Resolution straightaway was inconsistent with the procedure that was laid down in that Paper. Sir, I like to put the matter in a somewhat different way. The way I like to put it, is this. I am not asking you to consider whether you have the right to pass this Resolution straightaway or not. It may be that you have the right to do so. The question I am asking is this. Is it prudent for you to do so? Is it wise for you to do so? Power is one thing; wisdom is quite a different thing and I want this House to consider this matter from the point of view, not of what authority is vested in this Constituent Assembly, I want this House to consider the matter from another point of view, namely, whether it would be wise, whether it would be prudent to do so at this stage. The answer that I give is that it would not be prudent, it would not be wise. I suggest that another attempt may be made to bring about a solution of the dispute between the Congress and the Muslim League. This subject is so vital, so important that I am sure it could never be decided on the mere basis of the dignity of one or the other party. In deciding the destinies of a people, the dignity of the leaders or men or parties ought to count for nothing. As Burke said, "It is easy to give power, but difficult to give wisdom." Let us prove by our conduct that we have not only the power but also the wisdom to carry with us all sections of the country which is bound to lead us to unity. (Cheers)".

What was the reaction of the House to this 'call of unity' and the 'path of wisdom'. In the words of D.Keer⁴⁴, "So forceful was the passionate appeal that it produced an excellent impression upon the Constituent Assembly. He was frequently cheered by the Congress Members. Dr. Jayakar's speech containing the same appeal aroused resentment while Ambedkar's fine oration evoked a sense of Co-operation in their minds, and the hands that were itching to smash him rang with approbation. It was a red-letter day in the romantic life of Ambedkar". This speech, which was the natural outburst of a sincere and patriot Indian, therefore, gave a turn to his life. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Ambedkar was nominated as Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution and also appointed as Minister of Law in the Nehru Cabinet.

To judge his capacity as a writer, the readers are requested to glance through Chapter VII, where his publications have been listed. One thing which is worthy of note, whether judging his speeches or writings, is his boldness to call spade a spade. He always showed courage and boldness in highlighting the faults in the Indian society. He was a social reformer, rather a social revolutionary, and faced the protagonists boldly, notwithstanding the dangers to his reputation or even life.

Of the remaining three supplementary Paramitas viz. Pranidhana, Bala, and Jnana, the last two are identical with Virya and Prajna and we have said already enough about them. Thus there is no need to add anything more

44, P. 372-3, Dr. Ambedkar, Life and Mission, D. Keer.

here. As regards Pranidhana (aspiration), Dr. Ambedkar had from the very beginning aspired to serve the suffering humanity. In fact he had taken a vow to relieve them from their pain, misery, serfdom and slavery. What a better aspiration or resolution there could be for a Bodhisattva than to serve the suffering masses ?

Theravada tradition

So far we have been discussing the Paramitas as known in the Mahayana (Sanskrit) Buddhist tradition. According to the Theravada (Pali) tradition the ten Paramitas are:⁴⁵

1. Dana (Charity, Liberality) 2. Sila (Morality),
3. Nekkhamma (Renunciation of the lustful desires),
4. Panna (Wisdom), 5. Viriya (Energy), 6. Khanti (Fore-bearance), 7. Sacca (Truthfulness), 8. Adhitthana (Determination), 9. Metta (Universal loving kindness) and
10. Upekkha (Detachment, Equanimity).

We have already discussed the virtues of Dana (Charity), Sila (Morality), Panna (Wisdom), Viriya (Energy) Khanti (Forebearance) and Metta (Loving kindness) under the Sanskrit Paramitas. For comments on Sacca (Truthfulness) and Adhitthana (Determination) please see notes under the Noble Eightfold Path and for comments in regard to Upekkha (Equanimity) attention is invited to the Seven Elements of Enlightenment. Thus, we are left here with Nekkhamma (Renunciation of the lustful desires) only on which some comments may be offered.

Dr. Ambedkar detached himself completely from the lustful desires. He never did anything for the sake of

45. P. 116, Buddhist Dictionary-Nyanatiloka, 1956.

pleasure. He never wasted even a moment in the pursuit of lustful desires. His sole desire was to serve and uplift the down-trodden. To fulfil this desire he sacrificed all other desires. He sacrificed the comfortable and dignified career of professorship in 1920 and went abroad for further studies. There he spent more on books than on his food and clothes, what to talk of amusement for which he had no inclination. As already stated, he had renounced the world in 1935 though its duration was short as his colleagues and followers persuaded him to come back. They felt and rightly felt that there was none else to guide them in their struggle for liberation. This incident shows that Dr. Ambedkar was ready-rather keen to be away from all sorts of worldly affairs and lead a simple life. The spirit of renunciation also is evident from the episode of 1951 when he sacrificed ministerial power and prestige because he preferred simple but purposeful life to useless comfortable life. Thus in him there was no streak of selfishness, no wavering whenever there arose the need to give up, to renounce, and to sacrifice.

Ten Positive Precepts

It may be worthwhile to mention here that the self-perfection which is revealed through the Paramitas is facilitated through the practice of the following Ten Positive Precepts :

1. Charity.
2. Morality.
3. Meditation.
4. Allowing others to share one's good actions.

5. Feeling Joy when others perform meritorious acts.
6. Serving others.
7. Paying respect to worthy people.
8. Expounding Truth to others.
9. Hearing the exposition of Truth, and
10. Coming under the refuge of Triple-Gem, i.e. the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

After having discussed the Paramitas, there is little to be said about the extent to which Dr. Ambedkar practised these Precepts. About 'Charity', 'Morality' and 'Meditation' sufficient justification has already been given under the Paramitas' titled 'Dana', 'Sila' and 'Dhyana'. As regards the remaining Precepts, it can be said with confidence that Babasaheb was following these Precepts also in his day-to-day life.

Allowing others to share one's good actions.

Starting with Precept No. 4, it is a fact that he not only allowed others to share his good actions but he also gladly shared with them his fortunes and even his knowledge. An illuminative example which can be quoted here is the gift of his personal library, which he had nurtured with affection and devotion, to the Siddharath College, Bombay. Further, he not only shared the fruits of his labours with others but he shared even honours. Though he was the undisputed leader of the Scheduled Castes and the Buddhists but the Presidentship of their organisations was generally assigned to Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj, his worthy colleague and co-worker.

Feeling joy when others perform meritorious acts.

As for Precept No. 5, Dr. Ambedkar used to be certainly happy whenever he performed any meritorious deed but he was doubly happy when he saw others performing meritorious acts. He always induced and inspired others to do good deeds and when they accomplished the same he showered his blessings upon them. He often wrote inspiring and appreciative letters to his lieutenants. In one such letter⁴⁶, written by him from London in 1933 to Shri Bhaskara Rao Kadrekar, he said "I quite understand the difficulties you are undergoing and I have always felt, and this is no more flattery, that we all, and personally myself, owe you a very great debt of gratitude for you are slaving yourself for a paltry pittance". Like this, he acknowledged and appreciated the valuable services of all his colleagues and co-workers.

Serving others.

Coming to Precept No. 6, there seems little to be said about it. With a view to serve his countrymen he kept himself away from Government Service. Referring to this aspect he said, in his historic address on the 15th October 1956 at Nagpur, that when he returned from abroad after completing studies he was offered the post of a District Judge (a great thing in those days) but he declined the offer as he did not like anything, not even power and prestige to come in his way of serving his people for which purpose he had taken a vow. Dr. Ambedkar served others upto his last breath in whatever capacity or role the

46. P. 231, Dr. Ambedkar. Life and Mission—D. Keer, 1954.

circumstances demanded. He served the masses through his brain (wisdom), body (physical struggle), and bank (monetary help). His heart was ever filled with sympathy for the suffering humanity and he did his best to liberate them from their serfdom. For their sake he faced innumerable hardships, as he had to wage a relentless struggle against the exploiters and aggressors, but he never wavered even for a moment because of his determination to fulfil his duty as a Bodhisattva.

Paying respect to worthy people.

Dr. Ambedkar was one of the greatest national leaders of modern India who had made their name and fame not only within the country but also in the outside world, yet he used to respect and pay homage to worthy people. As an instance, we quote here an extract from his speech⁴⁷ in the Constituent Assembly on the 25th November 1949 :

“As to the compliments that have been showered upon me both by the members of the Assembly as well as by my colleagues of the Drafting Committee I feel so overwhelmed that I cannot find adequate words to express fully my gratitude to them. I came into the Constituent Assembly with no greater aspiration than to safeguard the interests of the Scheduled Castes. I had not the remotest idea that I would be called upon to undertake more responsible functions. I was, therefore, greatly surprised when the Assembly elected me to the Drafting Committee. I was more than surprised when the Drafting Committee elected me to be its Chairman.

47. P. 994, Constituent Assembly Debates, Volume II, 14th November to 26th November, 1949.

There were in the Drafting Committee men bigger, better and more competent than myself such as my friend Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar. I am grateful to the Constituent Assembly and the Drafting Committee for reposing in me so much trust and confidence and to have chosen me as their instrument and give me this opportunity of serving the country''.

Thus he practised the Precept No. 7 in a manner worthy of such great men.

Expounding Truth to others.

To expound Truth to others as implied in Precept No. 8 is a difficult task and sometimes dangerous too. Our hero practised this Precept without any kind of fear or favour. His writings were full of such facts of truth which earned nothing but wrath for him at the hands of the orthodox people but he gladly accepted their abuses and did his duty of expounding the truth. Through his bitter pills of truth, truth which is seldom sweet, Dr. Ambedkar gave a rude jolt to the conscience of the so-called high-ups and proved that they were standing on false prestige.

Hearing the exposition of Truth.

The Precept No. 9 implies hearing to the advice of others and also includes humility, an essential state of mind for the proper reception of the exposition of truth from worthy quarters.

Babasaheb used to listen intently to the exposition of Truth by others. In his search for the true and real Dhamma

he had long parleys with the Bhikkhus like Venerable U. Chandramani, his preceptor, Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan, Van. Vira Dhammavara, Ven. L. Ariyawansa and others whom he considered the custodians of the Dhamma. Thus, he never swerved from acknowledging the truth whenever it was presented to him.

Even though Dr. Ambedkar was adjudged as one of the best brains of the world, still he was completely free from any kind of pride. Knowledge and humility are a rare combination but our hero was an exception. As an example of his humility we quote an extract from the preface of his thesis, 'Who were the Shudras'. He says⁴⁸ :

"While it may be admitted that a study of the origin of the Shudras is welcome, some may question my competence to handle the theme. I have already been warned that while I may have a right to speak on Indian politics, religion and religious history of India are not my field and that I must not enter it. I do not know why my critics have thought it necessary to give me this warning. If it is an antidote to any extravagant claim made by me as a thinker or a writer, then it is unnecessary. For, I am ready to admit that I am not competent to speak even on Indian politics. If the warning is for the reason that I cannot claim mastery over the Sanskrit language, I admit this deficiency. But I do not see why it should disqualify me altogether from operating in this field. There is very little of literature in the Sanskrit language which is not available in English. The want of knowledge of Sanskrit need not therefore be a bar

48. P. iii-iv, Who were the Shudras ? Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, 1946.

to my handling a theme such as the present. For I venture to say that a study of the relevant literature, albeit in English translations, for 15 years ought to be enough to invest even [a person endowed with much moderate intelligence like myself, with sufficient degree of competence for the task. As to the exact measure of my competence to speak on the subject, this book will furnish the best testimony. It may well turn out that this attempt of mine is only an illustration of the proverbial fool rushing in where the angels fear to tread. But I take refuge in the belief that even the fool has a duty to perform, namely, to do his bit if the angel has gone to sleep or is unwilling to proclaim the truth. This is my justification for entering the prohibited field".

Coming under the refuge of Triple-Gem.

The last Precept needs no comments. As already stated Dr. Ambedkar took refuge formally in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha on the 14th October, 1956. This event has made history; it being the last and important step in the chain of his religious career.

Conclusion

Having marshalled so much evidence, are we not justified to infer that Dr. Ambedkar lived his life in accordance with the practices and principles prescribed for the career of a Bodhisattva. Undoubtedly, he was such a great leader of humanity as appear in this world very rarely and when they appear they mould the world according to their will, instead of being moulded by it. Dr. Ambedkar's life-story proves this beyond doubt. Verily, he was a Bodhisattva.

CHAPTER IV

BUDDHIST BIBLE

Dr. Ambedkar was a great missionary. He urged the delegates attending the First Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists held at Kandy, Ceylon in 1950 to declare that 'they were determined not merely to have a Fellowship but that they would propagate the Dhamma and make sacrifices for it'. Summing up his ideas about the ways and means of spreading the Dhamma he wrote in the Maha Bodhi that the only way to realize the ideal of spreading Buddhism seems to take these three steps¹:

First : To produce a Buddhist Bible.

Second : To make changes in the organisation,
aims and objects of the Bhikshu Sangha.

Third : To set up a World Buddhist Mission.

Of the above three steps, the first one is most important and difficult too. Such a standard and comprehensive work could be the basis of the World Buddhism acceptable to all schools of thought.

1. Article titled 'the Buddha and the Future of His Religion' by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar—The Maha Bodhi, Volume 58, April-May 1950, Calcutta.

Babasaheb was aware of this. With this end in view, he, first of all, concentrated all his efforts to produce a Buddhist Bible. His monumental work 'The Buddha and His Dhamma' fulfils this role splendidly. In this treatise the modern Bodhisattva has explained in an ample measure as to what kind of Buddhism will suit the modern times. His emphasis is on the social gospel of the Buddha. Doubtless, the Buddha was concerned with 'this world' rather than the 'other world'. As such 'the Buddha and His Dhamma' is a true guide for all the Buddhists. It is the best basis for propagating the Dhamma, at least in India.

The 'Buddha and His Dhamma' is a master-piece. In it the Life and Teachings of the Master have been treated in a masterly way. It has 599 pages and is divided into eight books or parts. Each chapter of this monumental work is studded with short and crisp sentences which have been numbered for facility of reference. The field covered by the author is not only vast but in some cases he has broken new ground as well. His reasoning is logical and in accordance with the scientific theories. He has endeavoured to re-interpret the Dhamma with a view to prove that it can amply meet the needs of the modern world. While giving a brief resume of the various chapters we have, wherever considered necessary, offered our comments also.

Book I

The first book covers the events from Lord Buddha's birth to His Enlightenment. Dr. Ambedkar, while writing

about the Renunciation², has opined that the tribal war which took place over the waters of the Rohini River between the Sakyas and the Koliyas was the main cause which drove Siddhartha into the Renunciation. If not the main, certainly this seems to be one of the causes. The legend of 'messengers' in the guise of a sick, an old and dead man, and Sanyasi mentioned so often in the Pali Texts might also be true in the sense of contributory causes.

The next two parts of this book deal with 'the Buddha and His Predecessors (Vedic Rishies, Kapila-the Philosopher and the Brahmins), and the Buddha and His Contemporaries (Purna Kassapa, Makhali Ghosal, Ajit Kesakambal, Pakudha Kaccyana, Sanjaya Belaputta and Nigantha Nathaputta)'. Under the last heading 'Comparison and Contrast' Dr. Ambedkar has given in nut-shell, What the Buddha Rejected, What He Modified, and What He Accepted. This being the essence of Buddhism is worth quoting in full here :

"What He Rejected³.

1. This survey of the philosophical and religious thought shows that at the time when the Buddha formulated his Sasana, certain ideas had a firm grip on the mind of the people. They were :

- (i) Belief in the infallibility of the Vedas.
- (ii) Belief in Moksha or Salvation of the soul, i.e. its ceasing to be born again.

2. P. 24-28, The Buddha and His Dhamma—Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, 1957.

3. P. 103, Ibid (B. & H. D.)

- (iii) Belief in the efficacy of rites, ceremonies and sacrifices as means of obtaining moksha.
- (iv) Belief in Chaturvarna as the ideal for social organisation.
- (v) Belief in Iswara as the creator of and in Brahmana as the principle underlying the universe.
- (vi) Belief in Atmana. or the soul.
- (vii) Belief in Sansara, (wandering together), i. e., transmigration of the soul.
- (viii) Belief in Karma, i. e., the determination of man's position in present life by deeds done by him in his past life.

2. In formulating the principles of his Sasana the Buddha dealt with this old stock of ideas in his own way.

3. The following are the ideas which he rejected.

- (i) He condemned indulging in speculation as to the whence, whither and what am I ?
- (ii) He discarded heresies about the soul and refrained from identifying it with either the body, sensations, volitions and consciousness.
- (iii) He discarded all the Nihilistic views which were promulgated by certain religious teachers.
- (iv) He condemned such views as were held by heretics.

- (v) He discarded the theory that the cosmic progress had a known beginning.
- (vi) He repudiated the theory that a God created man or that he came out of the body of some Brahma.
- (vii) The existence of the soul he either ignored or denied.

2. What He Modified⁴.

- (i) He accepted the great grand law of cause and effect with its corollaries.
- (ii) He repudiated the fatalistic view of life and other equally foolish view that a God pre-destined as to what should happen for man and the world.
- (iii) He discarded the theory that all deeds committed in some former birth have the potency to produce suffering, making present activity impotent. He denied the fatalistic view of Karma. He replaced the view of Karma by a much more scientific view of Karma.
- (iv) Transmigration (sansara) was replaced by the doctrine of re-birth.
- (v) He replaced the doctrine of moksha or salvation of the soul by the doctrine of Nibbana.

The Buddha Sasana is thus an original piece. The little in it which is old is either modified or restated.

4. P. 104, B. & H. D.

3. What He Accepted⁵.

1. The first distinguishing feature of his teachings lay in the recognition of the mind as the centre of everything.

2. Mind precedes things, dominates them, creates them. If mind is comprehended, all things are comprehended.

3. Mind is the leader of all its faculties. Mind is chief of all its faculties. The very mind is made up of those faculties.

4. The first thing to attend to is the culture of the mind.

5. The second distinguishing feature of his teachings is that mind is the fount of all the good and evil that arises within and befalls us from without.

6. Whatsoever there is of evil, connected with evil, belonging to evil—that issues from the mind. Whatsoever there is of good, connected with good, belonging to good—all issues from the mind.

7. If one speaks or acts with a pounded mind then affliction follows him as the wheels of the cart follow the feet of the bullocks who pull the cart. The cleaning of the mind is, therefore, the essence of religion.

8. The third distinguishing feature of his teachings is the avoidance of all sinful acts.

5. P. 104-105, B. & H. D.

9. The fourth distinguishing feature of his teachings is that real religion lies not in the books of religion but in the observance of the tenets of the religion.

10. Can anyone say that the Buddha's religion was not his own creation ?"

Book II

The second book opens with the Buddha's First Sermon at Sarnath and contains a vivid account of the Campaign of Conversions such as the Conversion of the Parivrajakas' (Panchvargiya Bhikkhus), Conversion of the High and the Holy (Yashas, Kassapas, Sariputta and Moggallana, Bimbisara, Anathapindika, Pasenjit, Jeevaka and Ratthapal), Conversion of the Low and the Lowly (Upali, Sunita, Sopaka, Suppiya, Sumangla and Suprabuddha), Conversion of Women (Mahaprajapati Gotami, Yeshodhara and her companions and Prakrati), and Conversion of the Fallen and the Criminals (Angulimala and other criminals).

Book III

The third book has its title 'What the Buddha Taught.' In it the Teachings of the Master have been explained by the author by giving correct interpretation of the word 'Dhamma'. The Teachings have been divided into three groups⁶ i. e. (a) Dhamma, (b) Adhamma and (c) Saddhamma. In brief, the three categories are as follows :

6. P. 229-302, B. & H. D.

(a) What is Dhamma ?

1. To maintain purity of life is Dhamma.
2. To reach perfection in life is Dhamma.
3. To live in Nibbana is Dhamma.
4. To give up craving is Dhamma.
5. To believe that all compounded things are impermanent is Dhamma.
6. To believe that Karma is the instrument of Moral Order is Dhamma.

(b) What is Adhamma ?

1. Belief in the Supernatural is Not-Dhamma (Adhamma).
2. Belief in Ishwara (God) is Not Essentially a part of Dhamma.
3. Dhamma based on Union with Brahma is a False Dhamma.
4. Belief in Soul is Not-Dhamma.
5. Belief in Sacrifices is Not-Dhamma.
6. Belief based on Speculation is Not-Dhamma.

(c) What is Saddhamma ?

1. Dhamma is Saddhamma when it makes learning open to all.
2. Dhamma is Saddhamma when it teaches that mere learning is not enough. It may lead to pedantry.

3. Dhamma is Saddhamma when it teaches that what is needed is Prajna (Pradnya).
4. Dhamma is Saddhamma only when it teaches that mere Prajna is not enough. It must be accompanied by Sila.
5. Dhamma is Saddhamma only when it teaches that besides Prajna & Sila what is necessary is Karuna.
6. Dhamma is Saddhamma only when it teaches, that more than Karuna what is necessary is Maitri.
7. Dhamma to be Saddhamma must break down barriers between man and man.
8. Dhamma to be Saddhamma must teach that 'worth' and not 'birth' is the measure of man.
9. Dhamma to be Saddhamma must promote equality between man and man.

Book IV

In the fourth book are discussed the relation of Religion Dhamma, and Morality; theories of Rebirth, Karma, Ahimsa and Transmigration; the Buddhist Way of Life and Nibbana.

The other religions of the world and the Buddha-Dhamma differ from each other in the sense that while the former are considered personal and as such to be kept to oneself, the Dhamma is social. It is all embracing and for the entire humanity. In other religions a person leading a secluded life and performing certain rituals is

considered to be a religious man but in Buddhism a man's behaviour towards his fellow-beings is the test of his being religious. Dhamma teaches righteousness which means right relations between man and man in all spheres of life. Society, therefore, cannot do without the Dhamma. If the Dhamma is not social, and is not for the welfare of the people, then it has no value for the suffering humanity. Further, the underlying meaning of the Dhamma is a message for equality. Where there is equality, there is hope for individual initiative, progress and attainment of Nirvana, the supreme state of Bliss, the ultimate aim of every Buddhist. Further, in most religions there is no place for morality but morality is the essence of the Dhamma. Without it, there is no Dhamma. Truly speaking, in the Dhamma morality⁷ takes the place of God although there is no God in the Dhamma.

The other two important statements made by Babasaheb in the fourth book are :-

(i) The Buddha's law of Karma applied only to Karma and its effect on present life;⁸ and

(ii) The Buddha meant to make a distinction between will to kill and need to kill.⁹

The first statement refers to the theory of Karma. The Buddhist theory of Karma certainly differs from the Brahminical theory in which man's present life is destined

7. P. 322-325, B. & H. D.

8. P. 337-344, B. & H. D.

9. P. 346-347, B. & H. D.

by the actions of his previous life and man can do little to change the course of suffering and pain in this life but according to Tathagata a man can change his present life with the dint of his labour and true efforts. In the Buddhist law of Karma; man's environments, and not hereditary connections, are important. Generally the law of Karma has been taken to be a positive law or law of retribution but Lord Buddha was opposed to this view. This is quite clear from His discourse reproduced below :-

"O Bhikkhus, if any one were to say that man must reap according to his deeds, in that case O Bhikkhus, there is no religious life, nor is any opportunity afforded for the entire extinction of misery."

"But if any one says O Bhikkhus, that the reward a man reaps accords with his deeds, in that case O Bhikkhus, there is a religious life and opportunity afforded for the entire extinction of misery".

The second statement refers to the doctrine of Ahimsa. The Buddhist doctrine of Ahimsa has unfortunately been mingled with the Jain conception of Ahimsa which is an extreme. The maxim of Ahimsa Parmo Dharma is an extreme and is, therefore, a Jain doctrine. It is certainly not a Buddhist doctrine as it cannot stand the test of the Middle Path which is the basic principle of Buddhism. According to Dr. Ambedkar, Ahimsa in Buddhism is a principle and not a rule as is the case with Jainism. He says that the Buddha meant to make a distinction between 'need to kill' and 'will to kill.'

No doubt the Buddha denounced Himsa (violence) and advocated ban on killing of animals for the sake of food, sacrifice, sport or pleasure but it is wrong to interpret that He banned Himsa under all circumstances. It is note-worthy that for a prospecting Bhikkhu, Lord Buddha has prescribed *inter-alia* the condition that he should not have run away from the Army. This means that the Buddha attached great importance to the defence of the country and did not like the soldiers deserting the Army with a view to join the Sangha. The principle of 'need to kill' and 'will to kill' therefore, seems to be correct. To kill is entirely a matter of necessity and personal moral responsibility. Every act has to be guided by man's own Prajna (wisdom) and Karuna (loving kindness). Thus Ahimsa in Buddhism teaches non-aggressiveness but in self-defence if one has to fight, he must fight.

The last chapter of this book contains a selection of the Buddha's Sermons on the following topics : Sermons for Householders; Sermons on the need for maintaining Character; Sermons on Righteousness; Sermons on Nibbana; Sermons on Dhamma; and Sermons on Socio-Political Questions. The Socio-Political Questions¹⁰ reveal that, according to Buddha, it is not proper to depend on the favour of the Government; a righteous king (ruler) is the best inducement for the subjects to be righteous; social system is the basis of the political and military strength; war is wrong; and the duty of the victor is not to further degrade the vanquished but to use his victory for the service of the vanquished.

10. P. 405-410, B. & H. D.

Book V

The fifth book deals with the Sangha and its Organisation and has also chapters on 'the Buddha's conception of the Bhikkhu, the duties of the Bhikkhu, the Bhikkhu and the Laity and Vinaya for the Laity.'

In regard to the role of the Bhikkhu, Dr. Ambedkar says¹¹ that the Bhikkhu is for the purpose of self-culture and social-service, especially social-service. Some Bhikkhus may feel somewhat hesitant to call themselves as social servants. But, they should remember that the Tathagatta had asked his followers to keep always in mind the principle of 'Bahujana Hitaye, Bahujana Sukhaye'. This principle will have no meaning if the Bhikkhus are to remain content with educational degress and monastic discipline acquired by remaining aloof from the masses. The object of Lord Buddha in creating a Bhikkhu was to have a social servant devoting his life to the service of the people and acting as their friend, philosopher and guide. Therefore, a Bhikkhu's first duty is to serve the suffering humanity by offering practical help and personal guidance. Further, if the Bhikkhu is selfish for personal gain, he is of no use for propagating the Dhamma. If on the other hand, he is a social servant, he may prove to be the hope of Buddhism.

Book VI

The sixth book gives a detailed account of the 'Master's Benefactor's (Bimbisara, Anathapindika, Jeevaka, Ambapali and Vishakha), His Enemies (Jains, Brahmins and

11. P. 435, B. & H. D.

Devadatta, His Cousin) Critics of His Doctrine, and Friends and Admirers (Dhananjani, Visakha, Mallika, Keniya and Pasendi)?.

Book VII

The seventh book gives an account of the Buddha's last journey; His meeting with His near and dear (Mahaprajapati Gotami, Yeshodhra, Rahula and Sariputta), His farewell to Vesali; halt at Pava; and His Mahaparinirvana at Kushinara.

Book VIII

The last book summarises the qualities of the Lord as a man. It has three parts dealing with His Personality, His Humanity (His Compassion, Concern for the Sick, Tolerance of the Intolerance and Sense of Equality and Equal Treatment); and His Likes (Joy at the Beautiful) and Love for the Lovely) and Dislikes (Dislike of Poverty and Dislike of the Acquisitive Instinct).

In the Epilogue, Dr. Ambedkar has included the tributes paid to the Buddha by the modern thinkers and scientists; A Vow to spread His Dhamma; and a Prayer for His Return to His Native Land.

Judged from all angles, "the Buddha and His Dhamma" is an extensive treatment of the subject and is certain to serve the purpose for which it was designed by the author.

CHAPTER V

TURNING THE WHEEL OF LAW

From the folk tales of Burma and some palm-leaf manuscripts discovered in Ceylon we learn that the devout Buddhists of those countries had for long nurtured a belief that after 2500 years of the Maha-Parinirvana of the Buddha, Buddhism in general, and in India, in particular, would take a turn for the better. The 2500th Buddha Jayanti Celebrations of 1956 undoubtedly marked the beginning of a New Era; an era of hope, peace and prosperity for Buddhism. This is particularly true of India as Buddhism has again become a living religion in this country.

The late Prime Minister, Shri Nehru, while laying the foundation stone of the commemorative monument (Buddha Jayanti Park) in New Delhi, said, "The 2500th Buddha Jayanti Celebrations signify the home-coming of the Buddha." Not satisfied with mere gestures of thanks-giving to a great Sage like the Buddha, Dr. Ambedkar went a step further and sanctified the occasion by embracing Buddhism, alongwith his half a million followers, on the 14th October, 1956. Thus Dr. Ambedkar made the 'home-coming of the Buddha' a reality by showing the way to the suffering humanity who were in search of a democratic and just religion like Buddhism.

According to a tradition, the Dharmacakra-pravartana has taken place twice in the past after the Turning of the Wheel of Law by Lord Buddha at Sarnath. The first reference is to the resurgence of the Mahayana and the second to the rise of the Yogacara school of Vijnanvada. To this, we can add the fourth awakening which began towards the close of the 19th century and reached its zenith with the clarion call given by Dr. Ambedkar at Nagpur on the 14th October 1956. This call was no doubt the Turning of the Wheel of Law. Surely, it was an epoch-making event; it not only changed his destiny but changed the course of history as well. From that day onward he came to be known as a Bodhisattva, a religious leader, and his followers became Buddhists. Not only that, on this day the movement for the revival of Buddhism in India entered into an Era of intense activity which can be rightly called the 'Ambedkar Era' of Indian Buddhism. The lead given by Dr. Ambedkar also gave a fresh inspiration to the Buddhists of other countries to propagate the Dhamma with more vigour and vitality.

The mass conversion ceremony at Nagpur was by all means a miracle. In fact, it was the greatest miracle of modern times. Never before so many people, at one time and at the instance of one man have changed their religion. It was also a true miracle as Dr. Ambedkar had by persuasion brought a vast mass of humanity to the refuge of the Buddha. The Blessed One says :

"There are three miracles. The first is the miracle of power, in which extra-ordinary power is manifested, as in

walking on water, exercising devils, raising the dead and so forth. When the believer sees such things his faith may become deepened, but it would not convince the unbeliever, who might think that these things are done by the aid of magic. I therefore see danger in such miracles and I regard them shameful and repulsive. The second is the miracle of prophecy, such as thought reading, sooth saying, fortune telling etc. Here also there would be disappointment, for those too in the eyes of the unbeliever are no better than extra-ordinary magic. The last is the miracle of instruction. When any of my disciple brings round a man by instruction to rightly employ his intellectual and ethical powers, that is the True Miracle".

The fact that Dr. Ambedkar employed the method of instruction in bringing these people to the refuge of the Buddha needs no justification and elaboration here. As already explained under the Upaya Paramita in Chapter III, Dr. Ambedkar had employed the same means of conversion which a Bodhisattva is expected to employ to attract people towards Buddhism.

The Turning of the Wheel of Law by Dr. Ambedkar was not a hasty act. He had planned this step for a number of years and waited for the opportune time. The selection of time, date and place by him for this historic event itself shows his far sightedness. He selected the year '1956' because that year marked the completion of 2500 years of the Buddhist Era. He selected '14th October' because it was the auspicious day of Vijaya Dashmi, the day on which Asoka the Great had embraced Buddhism and had declared that thenceforth

he would conquer the people by love and persuasion instead of by force, thus giving it the title of Dham a Vijaya. As for Nagpur, this was selected because of its association with the Naga people who were amongst the foremost devotees of the Buddha in good olden days. Such a careful precision and selection could only be expected from a Bodhisattva. No wonder, the light of the Dhamma which emanated from Nagpur has since spread far and wide in all directions.

In 1891, Anagarika Dharmapala, the founder of the Maha Bodhi Society, had dreamt of revival of Buddhism in India in a big way. But after sixty years labours of the Maha Bodhi Society and other organisations, the number of Buddhists in India rose to 1.8 lakhs only. Then came Dr. Ambedkar. He called upon his followers to embrace Buddhism. This opened flood-gates for the down-trodden. They responded in a big way and the number of Buddhists in India rose from 1, 80, 823 in 1951 to 32, 50, 227¹ in 1961. This means a spectacular increase of 1670.71% within five years (1956-1961). Thus Dr. Ambedkar's contribution to the revival of Buddhism in India is *par excellence*. His share in this noble cause is far more important and impressive than that of any one else.

Let us now see who were the people who obeyed the call of the modern Bodhisattva and sought refuge in the Triple-Gem. According to Dr. Ambedkar, their history

1. P. viii-x, 1961—Census of India, Paper No. 1 of 1963—Religion.

goes back to the early ages. He says that the Primitive Society was nomadic. Their only wealth was cattle. They used to migrate after cattle who went from place to place in search of new pastures. But, when a new species of wealth i.e. land and the art of farming and cultivating, were discovered, the society became fixed or settled. Since, however, all the tribes did not take to settled life at one and the same time, some became settled and some remained nomadic. Further, the settled tribes became more wealthy because now they had both corn and cattle. The nomadic tribes coveted their wealth and organised raids on them with a view to steal their wealth. The settled tribes being engaged in gainful occupation could not always defend themselves as neither they could change their ploughs into swords nor they could pursue the raiders beyond their normal frontiers. This tribal warfare continued for a long time and it often resulted in a tribe being defeated and routed instead of being completely annihilated. In many cases a defeated tribe became broken into bits. These smaller groups of 'Broken men' felt the necessity of shelter and protection. On the other hand, settled tribes felt the necessity of some one who could undertake to look after their watch and ward work. So both these groups, 'Broken' as well as 'Settled' solved their problems by a mutual agreement. The former agreed to do the watch and ward work and the latter in turn agreed to give them shelter. In view of the different blood of the 'Broken men' and also from the strategy point of view, they were made to live outside the villages by the settled tribes.

Dr Ambedkar believes that similar evolution took place in India and the Indian Primitive Society too had 'Settled

tribes' and 'Broken men'. He further adds that these 'Broken men' later on became Untouchables. His theory is supported by two historical facts.² Firstly in the Hindu Shastras the Untouchables are referred to as 'Antayaja'. The word 'Antya' means the end of the village. So Antayaja means 'who lives outside the village'. As an example, Dr. Ambedkar has pointed out that every village in Maharashtra is surrounded by a wall and the quarters of the Mahars are outside this wall. The other fact is that the totems of the Mahars (Broken men) of a particular village differ from the totems of the Hindus of the village. After proving that the present day Scheduled Castes were Broken men, the learned author goes on to prove that they became Buddhists. In his view, in the distant past all the Indians used to eat meat including beef. The advent of Buddhism and Jainism, curbed this tendency and the doctrine of Ahimsa became popular. As Buddhism had for the first time raised the slogan of liberty, equality and fraternity, the people from all walks of life, and especially the lower classes, became its votaries in large numbers. Since Brahmins were thus relegated to the background, they were feeling jealous. With a view, therefore, to win their lost prestige as well as favour of the masses, they took certain measures to regain the lost ground. As a part of this strategy they stopped beef eating and declared the cow a sacred animal. The Broken men being poor, however, could not leave beef eating along with others. So the Brahmins took advantage of their poverty and condemned them as Untouchables. Of

2 P. 32-33, The Untouchables—Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, 1946.

course, another reason for harsh treatment was that they professed Buddhism which was an eye sore to the Brahmins because of its gospel of equality. Thus these people were made the victims of untouchability in about 4th century³ A. C. when cow killing was made a capital offence by the Gupta Kings.

Dr. Ambedkar's theory and his arguments in support of it seem irrefutable. Whatever he has stated in respect of Maharashtra is also true of other States as well. For example, in almost every village of the Punjab the houses of the Scheduled Castes are just at the end in the western side of the village. Again the gotras of the Scheduled Castes are different from the gotras of the Hindus or Sikhs. Further, most of the Punjab villages have names on the basis of the gotras of the Hindus or the Sikhs which indicates that they were earlier or superior settlers. That the Scheduled Castes were Buddhists can also be proved on other counts. Almost all their customs and manners are essentially Buddhistic. They do not bother much for Hindu gods and goddesses but adore their Gurus like Ravidass, Chokhamela, Kabir, etc. Thus, they are more Gu-bhaju (who worship their Gurus) than Dev-bhaju (who worship their gods and goddesses) and this Gu-bhaju tendency⁴ has its roots in Buddhism.

Another evidence to support this theory is the usage of similar terminology. For example, some of the

3. P. 155, The Untouchables—Dr. B R. Ambedkar.

4. P. 24-25, Introduction by Hara Prasad Shastri to Modern Buddhism and its followers in Orissa—N.N. Vasu, 1911.

Scheduled Castes of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh call themselves 'Ad-Dharmis' and some Scheduled Castes of Delhi and Rajasthan call themselves 'Adi-Dharmis'. The word 'Ad' means ancient, earlier or original and the Ad-Dharmis believe that they are the followers of an ancient faith. Undoubtedly the names like 'Ad-Dharmi' and 'Adi-Dharmi' have Buddhistic seeds as they resemble the Buddhist terms like Adi-Buddha and Adi-Dharma which, according to a Mahayana tradition represent Intelligence or Mind, and Matter respectively. Further, the Buddhists have all along been calling their religion a Dharma or Saddharma. Speaking about the Mahima-Dharmis of Orissa, N. N. Vasu says, "From a careful study of the Buddhistic Scriptures, whether of ancient or of much later times, we do learn that the Buddhists never passed themselves for such, nor did they ever designate their faith as Buddhism. In every page of the history of their religion they have been found to have called it simply Dharma or at most 'Saddharma', or 'Sadharma' and to have styled themselves as 'Dharmin' or 'Saddharmin'⁵."

In view of the above facts, it can be said with confidence that these people were Buddhists in distant past. What happened later seems to be that due to persecution and lack of education they forgot the name of the Buddha or may be, they abandoned Lord's name purposely to avoid hardships as Achyutananda, a 16th century poet of Orissa, consoles them by saying that

5, P. 150-151, Modern Buddhism and its followers Orissa,

---N. N. Vasu.

'it is desirable in the Kaliyuga that the followers of Buddha should be disguised⁶.' He further says :

"Veiling themselves in innumerable ways three thousand votaries of Buddha were passing their days. Afraid of Kali, they were eagerly and anxiously waiting for the day when their Lord would again come down and reveal himself in all his glory⁷."

The author of *Yacomatimalika*, an Oriya work of the 19th century, also says:

"In Kaliyuga the devotees are passing their lives in disguise. Though they have not yet seen the form of the Buddha but they ardently believe that the Lord will assume the form of a human being for the good of His devotees, who will thus attain the emancipation⁸."

Thus the Buddhist poets of Utkala (Orissa) have been singing far over four hundred years that in the Kaliyuga the Indian Buddhists would remain in disguise because of their fear of persecution till a Bodhisattva appears to encourage, guide and raise them. After taking into account all the available data regarding life, mission and work of Dr. Ambadkar, it is our considered view

6. P. 130, Ibid

7. 134-135, *Modern Buddhism and its followers in Orissa*—
N.N. Vasu, 1911.

8. P. 180-181, Ibid,

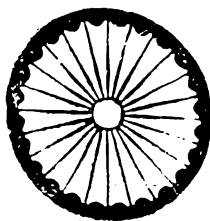
“चाहि कलिमध्यरे भक्ते छन्ति रही ।

बुद्ध अवतार रूप दर्शन ना पाइ ॥ १७७

माया रूपे बुद्ध अवतारे नरदेहौ ।

भक्तजन द्विते भक्त उद्धारिने पाइ ॥ १७९”

that the Superman to whom the Utkala Buddhists were referring was he and none else. He has no doubt shown the right Path to the Indian Buddhists who had been hitherto living in disguise. Now they can proclaim themselves as Buddhists without fear of any kind as the advent of Dr. Ambedkar has practically changed the shape of India. Verily, he has fulfilled their long-cherished desire.



THE WHEEL OF LAW

CHAPTER VI

BAHUJANA HITAYA, BAHUJANA SUKHAYE

Like the Buddha, Dr. Ambedkar too had great love for his fellow-creatures and also an urge to serve those who were in need of help and guidance. Pursuing this path of 'gain of the many, welfare of the many' he worked with full vigour and zeal for the emancipation of one and all, though the weaker sections of the society received his special attention and care for obvious reasons.

Dr. Ambedkar's struggle for the rights of the down-trodden has already been explained. Having elevated them, he made concerted efforts to ameliorate the condition of women. In his capacity as Law Minister in the Nehru Cabinet (1947-51) he did his utmost to improve their lot by means of legislation. With a view to afford them equality in the matter of property, marital relations and adoption etc., he drafted and piloted the Hindu Code Bill. While moving consideration of this measure he made a speech¹ in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) on the 24th February, 1949, which for mastery and massive cogency was one of the best ever heard in that House.

1. Constituent Assembly (Legislative) Debates. Vol. II Part, II, dated 24.2.1949.

The efforts by our hero to unify the Hindu Code; to make it progressive and in tune with the modern thought were really laudable. As such handsome tributes were paid to him by many progressive Hindu leaders. Speaking in support of this measure Shri H. V. Kamath praised Dr. Ambedkar and said that the Hindu Code Bill should be named as Bhim Smriti² :

“As regards the Smritis which are interlinked or interlocked with Dharma, my honourable friend Dr. Ambedkar said the other day that there are perhaps 137 Smritis. If I am wrong he will correct me. I believe he has counted them. Of the Upnishads it is stated that there are 180 and so many other unknown and unearthed Upnishads. There may also be many more Smritis, unknown and unearthed. Of the Smritis known to Dr. Ambedkar there are 137. And now we have got the 138th Smriti. He will pardon me if I refer to this, not in a light hearted fashion because this is also a measure which, although not revolutionary, has introduced changes in our Hindu social relations. So I can apply the same term as has been applied to the other Hindu Social Codes and Social Texts that have been already written for us. This we may call the 138th Smriti. I may call it the Bhim Smriti. I hope Dr. Ambedkar will pardon me if I refer to this as the Bhim Smriti.”

Some called Dr. Ambedkar as modern Manu i.e. Law-giver. But his efforts to codify and liberalise the Hindu Law were virtually wrecked by the protagonists of orthodoxy. He, therefore, resigned. In his letter of

2. Ibid. Dated 25.2.1949.

resignation dated the 27th September, 1951 to the Prime Minister, he wrote, "For a long time I have been thinking of resigning my seat from the Cabinet. The only thing that had held me back from giving effect to my intention was the hope that it would be possible to give effect to the Hindu Code Bill before the life of the present Parliament came to an end. I even agreed to break up the Bill and restricted it to Marriage and Divorce in the fond hope that atleast this much of our labour may bear fruit. But even that part of the Bill has been killed. I see no purpose in my continuing to be a Member of your Cabinet."

The value of the humanitarian work done by Dr. Ambedkar in different fields is very well described in the tribute³ paid to him in the Lok Sabha on the 6th December, 1956 by the Prime Minister, Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru. Paying a glowing tribute he said:

"Dr. Ambedkar, as every Member of this House knows played a very important part in the making of the Constitution of India, subsequently in the Legislative Part of the Constituent Assembly and later in the Provisional Parliament for some time. Then he came back to the Rajya Sabha of which he was a sitting Member."

"He is often spoken of as one of the architects of our Constitution. There is no doubt that no one took greater care and trouble over Constitution making than Dr. Ambedkar. He will be remembered also for the great interest he took and the trouble he took over the question

3. Lok Sabha Debates-Part I, dated 6.12.1956,

of Hindu Law reform. I am happy that he saw that reform in a very large measure carried out, perhaps not in the form of that monumental tome that he had himself drafted, but in separate bits. But I imagine that the way he will be remembered most will be as a symbol of the revolt against all the oppressive features of Hindu society. He used language sometimes which hurt people. He sometimes said things which were perhaps not wholly justified. But let us forget that. The main thing was that he rebelled against something against which all ought to rebel and we have in fact, rebelled in various degrees. This Parliament itself represents in the legislation which it has framed, its repudiation of those customs or legacies from the past which kept down a large section of our people from enjoying their normal rights."

"When I think of Dr. Ambedkar, many things come to my mind, because he was a highly controversial figure. He was not a person of soft speech. But behind all that was his powerful reaction and an act of rebellion against some thing that represented our society for so long. Fortunately, that rebellion had the support, not perhaps in the exact way he wanted it, but in a large measure, the principle underlying that rebellion had the support of Parliament, and I believe of every group and party represented here. Both in our public activities and in our legislative activities, we did our utmost to remove that stigma on Hindu society. One cannot remove it completely by law, because custom is more deep-rooted and I am afraid, it still continues in many parts of the country even though it may be considered illegal.

That is true. But, I have no doubt it is something that is in its last stages and may take a little time to vanish away. When both law and public opinion become more and more determined to put an end to state of affairs, it cannot last long. Anyhow Dr. Ambedkar, as I said became prominent in his own way and a most prominent symbol of that rebellion. I have no doubt that, whether we agree with him or not in many matters, that perseverance, that persistence and that, if I may use the word sometimes virulence of his opposition to all this did keep the people's mind awake and did not allow them to become complacent about matters which could not be forgotten, and helped in rousing up these groups in our country which had suffered for so long in the past. It is therefore sad that such a prominent champion of the oppressed in India and depressed in India and one who took such an important part in our activities, has passed away."

Dr. Ambedkar was doubtless a symbol of social revolt. He rebelled against the orthodoxy; fought bitterly against the protagonists of inequality and exploitation and made consistent efforts to reform the society in the light of the Dhamma. In fact, he wanted to make the Dhamma an all pervasive force as it teaches liberty, equality and fraternity for all. Had Dr. Ambedkar not revolted against the orthodox hierarchy and challenged their supermacy, the shape of modern India would have been quite different. It is a fact that it was Dr. Ambedkar alone who taught the servile classes to fight against injustice and to depend upon their own strength. Under his banner these people

once for all discarded superstition, ignorance and inaction and this resulted in blowing the shackles of their slavery to pieces. But for his courageous lead they would not have been able to attain the status they now enjoy in the Indian society. He was essentially a man of action and his name has come to be associated with a system or rather a mode of thought which is called 'Ambedkarism'. Ambedkarism, in short, means 'courage, boldness, self-dignity and faith in struggle for achieving one's goal rather than in begging and appealing to the usurper.'

Whether it was a question of social reform or of social revolt Dr. Ambedkar's ultimate aim was the good of every one. In his multifarious role as a thinker and philosopher, as a politician and statesman, as an economist, as an administrator, as a law-giver, and last of all as a mass leader he worked earnestly and sincerely for the welfare and well-being of the society as a whole. He spent his whole life in the service of the people. Even his call for the revival of Buddhism in India was inspired by the principle of Bahujana Hitaye, Bahujana Sukhaye. What Independent India needs to-day is, unity and integration, and to achieve real unity and integration a casteless and classless society is the need of the hour. It is, therefore, in the interests of the country that the religion of the Buddha should regain its lost heritage in all its glory. Buddhism knows no caste. It not only teaches equality but is also based on reason and is in accord with science. Lord Buddha did not recognise any distinction between man and man and even man and woman. He preached and practised complete equality for all. He said :

'Just, O brethren, as the great rivers—Ganga, Yamuna, Aciravati, Saraswati and Mahi—when they have fallen into the great ocean, lose their different names and are known as the great ocean,—just so, O brethren do, these castes, when they begin to follow the doctrine and discipline as propounded by the Tathagata, they renounce different names of castes and rank, and become members of one and the same society'.

Thus the real unity and integration can best be achieved through the religion of the Buddha which is based on the tenets of liberty, equality, and fraternity; teaches respect for human dignity and affords equal opportunity to all men and women as equality is not only its slogan but practice too. Obviously, Babasaheb has done a great service to India by pointing to the right path which is the only hope at least for the classes which have been exploited for centuries in the name of religion.

"A patriot and a nationalist in India is one who sees with open eyes his fellowmen treated as being less than men. But his humanity does not rise in protest. He knows that men and women for no cause are denied their human rights. But it does not prick his civic sense to helpful action. He finds whole classes of people shut out from public employment. But it does not rouse his sense of justice and fair play. Hundreds of evil practices that injure man and society are perceived by him. But they do not sicken him with disgust. I am glad I do not belong to that class of patriots. I belong to that class which takes its stand on democracy and which seeks to destroy monopoly in every shape and form."

Dr. Ambedkar

CHAPTER VII

WORDS OF WISDOM

Generally there are two tendencies amongst the writers. Some write for the sake of writing while others write with some purpose. Again, some are generally admirers of Beauty and their writings are based on imaginations while others go after Truth and their writings are based on reason. True literature is that which is not only creative and instructive but also distinctive of certain notions and beliefs which humanity comes to regard as true but actually they are not so. Since all Men with some Mission are Truth-seekers, they prefer and create this type of literature Dr. Ambedkar too created similar literature as he was a 'Man with a Mission' and a seeker of Truth. Neither he read for amusement nor he wrote for amusement. He once said, 'what instructs me, amuses me' Thus he was interested in learning and disseminating knowledge only. Accordingly, he used his intellect and wisdom to create a vast range of instructive literature which will always be a source of inspiration to scholars and others alike. In addition to numerous 'Papers and Articles' he contributed to Journals, Dr. Ambedkar in all has 18 books to his credit. The manuscripts of many more are, however, still lying unpublished. His writings covered diverse subjects of human interest such as law, economics, finance, administration, sociology, philology, anthropo-

logy, politics and so on. With a view to reach the intellectual class, national as well as inter-national, he wrote in English but for the masses, like Lord Buddha, he wrote in their language i. e. Marathi, the language of Maharashtra, the land of his birth and early achievements.

We owe the following works to Babasaheb's mighty pen :—

1. Ancient Indian Commerce.
2. The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India.
3. Provincial Decentralisation of Imperial Finance in British India.
4. The Problem of the Rupee.
5. Caste in India.
6. Small Holdings in India.
7. Annihilation of Caste.
8. Thoughts on Pakistan.
9. What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables ?
10. Who were the Shudras ?
11. The Untouchables.
12. Federation V/s Freedom.
13. States and Minorities.
14. Mr. Gandhi and the Emancipation of the Untouchables.
15. Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah.
16. Parliamentary Democracy.

17. Thoughts on Linguistic States.

18. The Buddha and His Dhamma.

The first four books were the result of his academic pursuits in U. S. A. & U. K. (from 1913-17 and again from 1920-23) and these works were responsible for earning him degrees of M. A., Ph D., M. Sc. and D. Sc. respectively. Subject-wise, we find that broadly Dr. Ambedkar wrote 5 books on economics and finance, 6 on democracy and political thought, 6 on sociology and anthropology with specific reference to the down-trodden, and the last one on the Dhamma.

In view of the limited scope of our study, we have selected here just 101 quotations from the writings and speeches of Dr. Ambedkar. These quotations, we hope, will enable the readers to have a glimpse of his views on important topics like Religion, Dhamma, Culture, Education, Noble Life, Self-Help, Poverty, Caste, Democracy, Liberty, Ahimsa etc.

Religion

1. The function of a true religion is to uplift the individual. For that purpose it should teach the virtues of fellow-feeling, equality and liberty.

2. Religion must mainly be a matter of principles only. It cannot be a matter of rules. The moment it degenerates into rules, it ceases to be religion as it kills responsibility which is the essence of a truly religious act.

3. Religion is an influence of force suffused through the life of each individual moulding his character,

determining his actions and reactions, his likes and dislikes.

4. Man cannot live by bread alone. He has a mind which needs food for thought. Religion instils hope in Man and drives him to activity.

5. Religion in the sense of morality must remain the governing principle in every society.

6. Religion, if it is to function must be in accord with reason which is merely another name for Science.

7. It is not enough for religion to consist of moral code, but its code must recognise the fundamental tenets of liberty, equality and fraternity.

8. Religion must not sanctify or ennoble poverty.

9. Religion must be judged by social standards based on social ethics. No other standard would have any meaning if religion is held to be a necessary good for the well-being of the people.

10. The religion that compells the ignorant to be ignorant and the poor to be poor is not religion but a vitiation.

11. Religion and slavery are incompatible.

12. Religion is for man and not man for religion.

Dhamma

13. Religion, it is said, is personal and one must keep it to oneself. One must not let it play its part in

- ✓ public life. Contrary to this, Dhamma is social. It is fundamentally and essentially so.

14. The purpose of religion is to explain the origin of the world. The purpose of Dhamma is to reconstruct the world.

15. Dhamma is righteousness, which means right relations between man and man in all spheres of life.

16. In Dhamma, morality takes the place of God although there is no God in Dhamma.

17. It is not to please God that man has to be moral. It is for his own good that man has to love man.

18. Morality in Dhamma arises from the direct necessity for man to love man.

19. In Dhamma, there is no place for prayers, pilgrimages, rituals, ceremonies or sacrifices.

20. Morality is the essence of human survival. It governs a large part of humanity. It is the most fundamental element in human life and law.

Culture

21. What divides the brute from man is culture, Culture is not possible for brute but it is essential for man.

22. While the ultimate goal of a brute's life is reached once his physical appetites are satisfied, the ultimate goal of a man's existence is not reached unless and until he has fully cultivated his life.

23. The distinctively human function is reason, the purpose of which is to enable man to observe, meditate, study and discover the beauties of the universe and enrich his life and control the animal elements in his life.

24. The aim of human society must be to enable every person to lead a life of culture which means the cultivation of the mind as distinguished from the satisfaction of mere physical wants.

25. Both for society as well as for the individual there is always a gulf between merely living and living worthily. In order that one may live worthily, one must first live. The time and energy spent upon mere life, upon gaining of subsistence detracts from that available for activities of a distinctively human nature and which go to make up a life of culture.

26. Culture is conserved by language.

Education

27. Knowledge is the foundation of man's life.

28. A man's power is dependent upon, (1) physical heredity, (2) social inheritance or endowment in the form of parental care, education, accumulation of scientific knowledge, everything which enables him to be more efficient than the savage, and finally (3) on his own efforts.

29. The lack of understanding is the root of all evil.

30. We must entirely give up the idea that parents give birth 'Janama' to the child and not destiny

'Karma'. They can mould the destiny of their children by giving them education.

31. If his education is detrimental to the welfare of the poor, the educated man is a curse to the society.

32. An educated man without character and humility is more dangerous than a beast.

33. Character is more important than education.

Man

34. A man with an empty mind is like a ship without a ballast and without a rudder. It can have no direction. It may float but may also suffer shipwreck against a rock for want of direction.

35. It is quite wrong to hold that man is not a factor in the making of history. Man is necessary to rub two pieces of flint to make fire.

36. More than political or religious, man is a social animal. He may not, he need not have religion, he may not have, he need not have politics. He must have society; he cannot do without society.

37. Man is a factor in the making of history and that environment forces whether impersonal or social, if they are, they are the first and not the last things.

38. The world cannot be reformed except by the reformation of the mind of the world.

39. Man is mortal. Every one is to die some day or other. But one must resolve to lay down one's life in

enriching the noble ideals of self-respect and in bettering human life.

40. Man must eat to live and he should live and work for the well-being of the society.

Noble Life

41. Dragging on life some-how or to live like a crow for a thousand years is not the only way and worthy way in this world. Life can be ennobled by sacrificing it for a lasting good such as the cause of truth, a vow, honour or country.

42. Better to die in the prime of youth for a great cause than to live like an oak and do nothing.

43. Blessed are those who are awakened to their duty to those among whom they are born.

44. Glory to those who devote their time, talents and their all to the annihilation of slavery.

45. Glory to those who would keep on their struggle for the liberation of the enslaved inspite of heavy odds, carping humiliations, storms and dangers till the down-trodden secure their human rights.

46. A Great man must be motivated by the dynamics of a social purpose and must act as the scourge and scavenger of society.

47. There is no honour in mere survival. What matters is the plane of survival. One can survive by unconditional surrender. One can survive by beating a cowardly retreat and one can survive by fighting.

48. Learn to live in this world with respect. You should always cherish some ambition to do something in this world. They alone rise who strive.

49. It is disgraceful to live at the cost of one's self-respect. Self-respect is a most vital factor in life. Without it, man is a mere cipher.

50. Nothing is more disgraceful for a brave man than to live a life devoid of self-respect and without love for the country.

Self-Help

51. Whatever might be one's ideal, either a national progress or self-development, one should patiently exert oneself to reach it.

52. One should concentrate one's mind and might on one's goal.

53. Nothing valuable in this world is achieved except by great efforts.

54. All great things in the world were achieved by patient industry and by undergoing toil and tribulations.

55. It is out of hard and ceaseless struggle alone that one derives confidence and recognition.

Poverty

56. The poor are made to suffer wants, privations, and humiliations not because it was pre-ordained by the sins committed in their previous births, but because of the

over-powering tyranny and treachery of those who are above them.

57. The sooner the poor remove the foolish belief that their miseries were pre-ordained, the better.

58. The thought that poverty is an inevitability, and is inborn and inseparable is entirely erroneous.

Caste and Class

59. Practically speaking, in a class structure, there is on the one hand, tyranny, vanity, pride, arrogance, greed, selfishness and on the other, insecurity, poverty, degradation, loss of liberty, self-reliance, independence, dignity and self-respect.

60. Without social union, political unity is difficult to be achieved. If achieved it would be as precarious as a summer sappling liable to be uprooted by the gust of any hostile wind.

61. The castes are anti-national. In the first place because they bring about separation in social life. They are anti-national also because they generate jealousy and antipathy between caste and caste.

62. The outcaste is a by-product of the caste-system. There will be outcastes as long as there are castes. Nothing can emancipate the outcaste except the destruction of caste-system.

63. Social evils can have no justification in a civilized society. But nothing can be more odious and vile than

that admitted social evils should be sought to be justified on the ground of religion.

64. Wherever there are social evils, the health of the body politic requires that they shall be removed before they become the symbols of suffering and injustice. For it is the social and economic evils which everywhere are the parent of revolution or decay.

65. A society which rests upon the supermacy of one group over another, irrespective of its rational or proportionate claims, inevitably leads to conflict.

66. The group set-up prevents an individual from acquiring consistency of mind which is possible only when society has common ideals, common models.

67. The group-set-up leads to stratification of classes. Those who are masters remain masters and those who are born in slavery remain slaves. Owners remain owners and workers remain workers. The privileged remain privileged and serfs remain serfs.

68. The existence of caste and caste conscious has served to keep the memory of past feuds between castes green and has prevented solidarity,

69. The caste system is a system which is invested with the spirit of isolation and in fact it makes isolation of one caste from another a matter of virtue.

Democracy

70. Democracy is not merely a form of Government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint

communicated experience. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen.

71. A democratic society must assure a life of leisure and culture to each one of its citizens.

72. The slogan of democratic society must be machinery and more machinery, civilization and more civilization.

73. The Democracy is a form and a method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed.

74. The first thing required for the successful working of Democracy is that there must be no glaring inequalities and there must be neither an oppressed class nor an suppressed class. The second thing required is the existence of opposition to show whether the Government is going wrong. The third thing is equality before law and in administration. The fourth is observance of consitutional morality. The fifth point is the functioning of moral order in society, for moral is taken for granted in Democracy. The sixth thing is the requirement of public conscience.

75. The soul of Democracy is the doctrine of one man, one value.

76. Democracy is incompatible and inconsistent with isolation and exclusiveness resulting in the distinction between privileged and the unprivileged.

77. The roots of Democracy are to be searched in social relationship, in terms of the associated life between the people who form the society.

78. Making the individual a sharer or partner in the associated society, so that he feels its success his success, its failure as his failure, is the real thing that binds men and makes a society of them.

Liberty

79. Liberty cannot be divorced from equality, equality cannot be divorced from liberty. Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity. Without fraternity, equality and liberty could not become a natural course of things. It would require a consable to enforce them.

80. Without fraternity, equality and liberty will be no deeper than coats of paint.

81. Fraternity is nothing but another name for brotherhood of men, which is another name for morality.

82. Thought is rare all over the world and free thought is rarer still. The victories won in the battles over freedom of thought have not produced free thinking.

Political Power

83. Political power is the key to all progress.

84. Politics is nothing if not realistic. There is very little in it that is academic.

85. The executive power could do more in a year than the whole order of preaching friars could be relied upon to do in a century.

86. Political power is the most precious thing in the life of a community, especially if its position is challenged

and the community is required to maintain it by meeting challenge. Political power is the only means by which it can sustain its position.

87. Power seldom commits suicide of its own accord.

Ahimsa

88. Buddha meant to make a distinction between will to kill and need to kill. He did not ban killing where there was necessity to kill. What he banned was killing where there was nothing but the will to kill.

89. Buddha made a distinction between Principle and Rule. He did not make Ahimsa a matter of Rule. He enunciated it as a matter of Principle or way of life. A principle gives you freedom to act. A rule does not. Rule either breaks you or you break the rule.

90. Where virtue is in danger, do not avoid fighting, do not be mealy-mouthed.

91. Truly speaking, the law should be non-violence wherever possible, violence whenever necessary.

92. Force, it cannot be denied, is the medicine of the body politic and must be administered when the body politic becomes sick. But just because force is the medicine of the body politic it cannot be allowed to be its daily bread.

Miscellaneous

93. Bhakti in religion may be road to salvation of the self. But in Politics, bhakti or hero-worship is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship.

94. Sin and immorality cannot become tolerable because a majority is addicted to them or because the majority chooses to practise them.

95. The call of back to nature means, back to nakedness, back to squalor, back to poverty and back to ignorance for the vast mass of people.

96. Indifferentism is the worst kind of disease that can infect a people.

97. They cannot make history who forget history.

98. If unity is to be an abiding character, it must be founded on a sense of kinship, in the feeling of being kindred. In short, it must be spiritual.

99. One language can unite people. Two languages are sure to divide people. This is an eternal law.

100. Ideals or norms are good and are necessary. Neither a society nor an individual can do without a norm. But a norm must change with change in time and circumstances. No norm can be permanently fixed. There must always be room for revaluation of the values of our norm.

101. No thinking human being can be tied down to a view once expressed in the name of consistency. More important than consistency is responsibility. A responsible person must have the courage to re-think and change his thoughts. Of course, there must be good and sufficient reasons for unlearning what he has learned and for recasting his thoughts. There can be no finality in thinking.

CHAPTER VIII

NAMO BHEEMAI

When Dr. Ambedkar came to the scene, the depressed and oppressed classes were not only victims of exploitation, which followed as a result of caste-system, but the curse of untouchability had deprived them even of their status as human-beings. They had no rights of education, equality and liberty and even no choice of profession. They were slaves for all practical purposes, and were, in fact, treated as worse than slaves as their 'touch'-rather a 'shadow' was considered enough to pollute the so called high caste Hindus. Thus, their condition was even worse than what it was 2500 years ago at the time of Lord Buddha.

The story of the wretched condition of these classes when Babasaheb took up their cause and the progress made under his able guidance is very well reflected in the evolution of the name of the Marathi Weekly Paper 'Prabuddh Bharat'. Around the second decade of this century their condition from economic, social, religious or any other angle was really deplorable. They were human beings in name only, but actually they had no rights, no education, and no voice. So Dr. Ambedkar christened their first spokesman in print as 'Mook Nayak', meaning the Leader of the Dumb. This was on the 31st January, 1920. Later on, when he found that his people

had progressed a bit and had realized their worth as human beings, he changed the name of the paper on 3rd April, 1927 to that of 'Bahishkrit Bharat' i. e. Excluded from India. This was about the time of Mahad struggle which the followers of the modern Bodhisattva fought with great force, courage and bravery in a disciplined manner. Again, when the mass of humanity following him progressed further and were nearing the goal of equality with others Dr. Ambedkar changed the name of the paper to that of 'Samta', meaning 'Equality'. This process of evolution continued and after the 1st Round Table Conference in 1931, this paper was given the name, 'Janata', meaning the 'People' because the down-trodden had by that time realized their worth as human beings and aspired to inter-mingle with others on the basis of liberty, equality and fraternity. In the end, when these people, fully conscious of their duties, rights and privileges, became capable of not only looking after their own interests but also capable of protecting others from exploitation the name of their organ was changed to 'Prabuddh Bharat' i. e. 'Enlightened or Awakened India.'

This is how the modern Bodhisattva transformed the 'Mooks' (Dumbs) into the 'Prabuddhas' (Awakened beings) within a short span of three decades ; how he elevated them from their wretched condition ; and how he inspired them to do wholesome deeds. It was because of this marvellous and glorious success, and also because of his loving kindness, that Dr. Ambedkar endeared himself to his followers to such an extent that they had come to venerate him as they would a living Buddha.

For them he was a symbol of strength, action and hope as well as vivid reflection of the Buddhist values.

With such rare wisdom, honesty, and sincerity Dr. Ambedkar guided and helped the oppressed and suppressed mass of humanity that he in this far excelled every body else. In him, the down-trodden for the first time found a true friend, philosopher, and guide. He was truly an embodiment of love and loving kindness. He loved and cared the lower-strata of Indian society like a true disciple of the Compassionate One. It is no exaggeration to say that only his kind-heartedness inspired these unfortunate and neglected people for struggle, for social freedom, for wholesome deeds and for secular and spiritual progress. Surely, it was only he who could bring this vast mass of humanity to the refuge of the Buddha. His qualities of love and urge to serve those in distress, brought solace, hope, and encouragement to not a few. No wonder, the poor but good-hearted masses adored him like anything. They venerated him like a god and were ready to sacrifice any thing at his call.

Dr. Ambedkar was, undoubtedly, the uncrowned king of the millions of people who now every morning recite 'Buddham Saranam Gacchami.' They would never have come to the fold of Buddhism had they not unabiding faith and confidence in his leadership and in the efficacy of what he did and said. He was their ideal friend, philosopher and guide in all times and climes. They were always anxious to hear his loving, soothing, and inspiring advice because he himself practised, whatever he preached. For them, he was a Superman who had specially come to

unchain their shackles of slavery. In his words they found solace and inspiration to live worthily. His deeds of kindness were numerous and his followers owe a great debt to him. They can never forget his compassion as his compassion for them was not abstract but concrete and intimate. He had courage to fight for their cause, capacity to organise them into a well-knit unit and ability to give resolutions to their minds. Thus he was their true saviour and liberator. He was their spiritual guide also. As such the grateful followers of such a great benefactor just to remember in their hearts the sacred name of their liberator greet each other by saying 'Jai Bhim'. Out of sheer respect and reverence for him they also recite 'Namo Bheemai' on certain occasions, such as his birthday etc. This is an ordinary and very reasonable thing for them to do. By doing so, they only express their gratefulness to the man who raised them from dust to doyens and showed them the way of the Buddha.

There seems nothing wrong in showing such veneration to Dr. Ambedkar. A fundamental difference between Buddhism and other religions is that while others worship their Gods, the Buddhists worship their Gurus. Significantly enough, according to Nepalīs, there are only two religions in the world, namely, Gu-bhaju¹ and Dev-bhaju, those who worship their Gurus and those who worship their Gods and Goddesses. The Buddhists worship Lord Buddha, their Greatest Guru, and His worthy sons, Arahats and Bodhisattvas, as it is meritorious to show respect and reverence to worthy ones. The Blessed One says :

1. P. 24-25, *Modern Buddhism and its followers in Orissa*, Nagendra Nath Vasu, 1911—Introduction by Hara Prasad Shastri.

"He who reverences those who are worthy of reverence, whether the Buddhas or their disciples, who have transcended all obstacles, have passed beyond the reach of distress and lamentation; who have attained Nibbana and are free from fear, he who pays reverence to such worthy men, his merit is immeasurable."

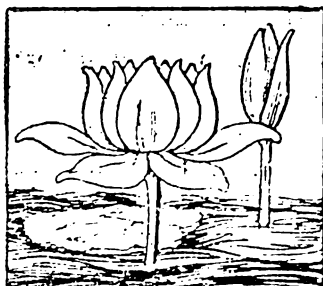
Dhammapada, 195-96.

Similar instances of demonstrative veneration of the pioneer Dhamma-dutas can also be found in other Buddhist lands. For example, in Ceylon, Mahinda, son of Asoka the Great, who introduced Buddhism into that country is called Arahata in their chronicles and is the most respected and revered personality in that island.

Some Buddhist countries have developed this Gu-bhaju tendency to a greater extent than others. The Tibetans, after taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, also take refuge in the vast host of their deities and deified saints. The case of St. Padmasambha is specifically relevant here. He was an Indian monk who went to Tibet in 747 A. D. at the invitation of the Tibetan king. Though Buddhism had travelled to that country more than 100 years earlier but it was St. Padmasambha who put it on the proper footing and made it the living religion of Tibet. The Tibetans, therefore, call him Guru Rim-poche², or 'precious Guru' or simply Lo-pon the Tibetan equivalent of the Sanskrit 'Guru' or 'Teacher' and venerate him almost like the Buddha. After taking Trisarana (Triple refuge) they take refuge in St. Padmas-

2. P. 26, The Buddhism in Tibet—L. Austine Wadel.

ambha as they believe that the Guru who shows the Path of the Buddha deserves equal respect and reverence from his votaries. However, Babasaheb, the modern Bodhi-sattva, emphasized that the Buddhists have only Three Saranas of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, and his followers respect the sanctity of the Triple-Gem.



ANNEXURE

Events of Dr. Ambedkar's life in Chronological order. (1891-1956)

1. 14th April, 1891 : He was born at Mhow (near Indore) in Madhya Pradesh.
2. 1898 : His mother Bhimabai died.
3. 1907 : He passed Matric.
4. 1912 : He became a Graduate.
5. January, 1913 : He was appointed as a Lieutenant in the Baroda State Forces.
6. 2nd February, 1913 : His father Subedar Ramji passed away.
7. 21st July, 1913 : He reached New York & joined the Columbia University.
8. 1915 : He obtained his M. A degree from the Columbia University for his thesis "Ancient Indian Commerce."
9. May, 1916 : He read a paper "Castes in India" before the Anthropology Seminar.

10. **June, 1916 :** He became Doctor after earning the degree of Ph.D. from the Columbia University for his thesis 'National Dividend of India A Historic and Analytical Study' which was later on published under the title 'The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India.'
11. **October, 1916 :** He joined London School of Economics and Political Science and Grays Inn for the degrees of M.Sc., D. Sc. and Bar-at-Law.
12. **21st August, 1917 :** He came back to India without getting these degrees because the duration of his scholarship had expired and the Maharaja of Baroda asked him to come back.
13. **September, 1917 :** He was appointed Military Secretary to the Maharaja of Baroda. But he resigned this post soon after because of the misbehaviour of his subordinates and the Maharaja's inability to arrange a house for him in Baroda.
14. **11th November, 1918 :** He was appointed as Professor

of Political Economy in the Sydenham College, Bombay.

- 15. January, 1919 :** He gave evidence before the Southborough Committee dealing with the franchise in the light of the Montagu Chelmsford Reforms.
- 16. 31st January, 1920 :** He founded the paper 'Mook Nayak' (Leader of the Dumb). This paper is now called 'Prabuddh Bharat' (Enlightened India) having passed through the stages of 'Bahishkrit Bharat' (Excluded India), 'Samata' (Equality) and 'Janata' (People).
- 17. 5th July, 1920 :** He resigned the professorship and sailed for London to accomplish his unfinished studies.
- 18. June, 1921 :** He was awarded the degree of Master of Science for his thesis "Provincial Decentralization of Imperial Finance in British India."
- 19. October, 1922 :** He was called to the Bar.
- 20. April, 1923 :** He was awarded the degree of D. Sc. for his thesis, "The Problem of the Rupee"

- 21. 14th April, 1923 :** He returned to India after equipping himself with the degrees of M. Sc., D.Sc. and Bar-at-Law.
- 22. June, 1923 :** He started practice as a Barrister
- 23. 20th July, 1924 :** He founded the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha, Bombay. The name of this organisation kept on changing. It was also called Equality League, and Depressed Classes Institute for sometime.
- 24. 1926 :** He founded the Samata Sainik Dal (Social Equality Army).
- 25. 1927 :** He was nominated as member of the Bombay Legislative Council.
- 26. 19th-20th March, 1927:** He launched at Mahad the first War of Independence of the down-trodden with a view to get for them the right of drinking water from the Chowdar Tank. He was injured in this Satyagraha when the Hindus attacked the Satyagrahis.
- 27. August, 1928 :** He founded the Depressed Classes Education Society.

28. 23rd October, 1928 : He gave evidence before the Simon Commission.
29. 23rd October, 1929 : While on a tour of East Khandesh he was injured when the horse of the tonga bolted.
30. 2nd March, 1930 : He started Satyagraha at Nasik with a view to get the right for entry into the Kalaram Mandir.
31. 4th October, 1930 : He sailed for London to participate in the 1st Round Table Conference. He returned from London on 27. 2. 1931.
32. 15th August, 1931 : He sailed again for London to participate in the 2nd Round Table Conference.
33. 26th January, 1932 : He came back to Bombay. His efforts in the Round Table Conference were fruitful as the down-trodden got political rights through the Communal Award.
34. 24th September, 1932 : He signed the Poona Pact and saved the life of Gandhiji who had undertaken a fast unto death on the issue of the political rights of the down-trodden which Babasaheb had secured for them for the first time.

- 35. 7th November, 1932 :** He went to London to participate in the Third Round Table Conference.
- 36. 30th April 1933.** He went to London to attend the session of the Joint Committee.
- 37. 27th May, 1935 :** His wife Ramabai died.
- 38. 1st June, 1935 :** He was appointed as Principal of the Government Law College, Bombay.
- 39. 13th October, 1935 :** In a Conference at Yeola he declared that though he was born a Hindu but he would not die as a Hindu.
- 40. 1936 :** He founded the Independent Labour Party.
- 41. May, 1936 :** He published his treatise 'Annihilation of Caste'. It was proposed to be his presidential address to the Annual Conference of the Jat Pat To-dak Mandal, Lahore but the Conference was cancelled as the organisers did not like certain portions in the address.
- 42. February, 1937 :** He resigned from the Govt. Law College, Bombay.

43. May, 1938 : He was elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly. His party (I. L. P.) won 15 seats out of 17 it contested.
44. 2nd July, 1942 : He was appointed as Labour Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council.
45. 19th July, 1942 : He founded the Scheduled Castes Federation.
46. 1942 : He secured reservation in the services for the Scheduled Castes.
47. June, 1945 : He participated in the Simla Conference on behalf of the Scheduled Castes.
48. September, 1945 : He established the People's Education Society, Bombay.
49. 15th April, 1946 : He represented the case of the down-trodden before the Cabinet Mission.
50. 20th June, 1946 : He established Siddharth College, Bombay.
51. 1946 : He was elected to the Constituent Assembly from Bengal.
52. 15th August, 1947 : He became the 1st Law Minister of Independent India.

53. 29th August, 1947 : He was elected as Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee.
54. 1948 : He published his book, "The Untouchables" in which he propounded the theory that the Untouchables were Buddhists.
55. 26th November, 1949 : The Constitution drafted by him was passed by the Constituent Assembly.
56. 1950 : He participated in the 1st World Fellowship of Buddhists Conference, Kandy, Ceylon.
57. 1951 : He established Milinda Vidyalaya, Aurangabad.
58. September, 1951 : He resigned as Law Minister of the Govt. of India.
59. March, 1952 : He was elected as a Member of the Rajya Sabha.
60. December, 1954 : He participated in the 3rd World Fellowship of Buddhists Conference, Rangoon, Burma.
61. 14th October, 1956 : He embraced Buddhism at Nagpur at the hands of Venerable Chandramani Mahathera of Kushinagar.

62. October, 1956 : He founded the Bhartiya Baudh Mahasabha (Buddhist Society of India).
63. 19th-22nd Nov., 1956 : He participated in the 4th World Fellowship of Buddhists Conference, Kathmandu, Nepal.
64. 30th November, 1956 : He founded the Republican Party of India.
65. 6th December, 1956 : He passed away in sleep at his residence, 26 Alipur Road, Delhi. He was cremated in Bombay (Shivaji Park, Dadar) on 7th December, 1956.

Thus ended Dr. Ambedkar's eventful earthly existence of 65 years, 7 months and 22 days.

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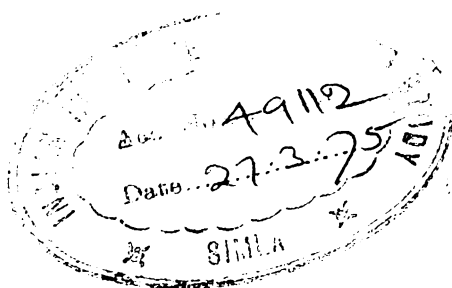
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