

June 2013

Buddhist

Voice

Year 1, Issue 1

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

Labour and Parliamentary
Democracy

Open & Distance Learning

Globalization of Caste

Buddhism

by Cultural Revolution

Buddha's Challenge

to Caste System

Principles of Buddhism

in Co-operative Movement

Articles on
Buddhism

Articles on
Social Issues

News
Upcoming Events

Dhammapada - The Treasury of Truth

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

June 2013 Year - 1 Issue - 1

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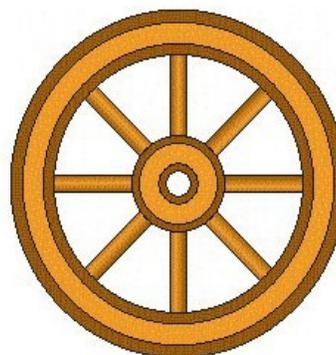
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It gives us great pleasure in presenting the first issue of **Buddhist Voice** to you. This is perhaps the first experiment in India to publish an e-magazine dedicated to issues concerning Buddhist. Our main focus will be Socio-Economical and Political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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Caste in Theory and Practice

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

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

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

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

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

Caste, Feudalism and Capitalism

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

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

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

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

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

The Current Challenges

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

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

Placing Justice as the centrality of anti-caste movement

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

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

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

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

Annihilation of Caste – The final blow

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

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

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

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

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

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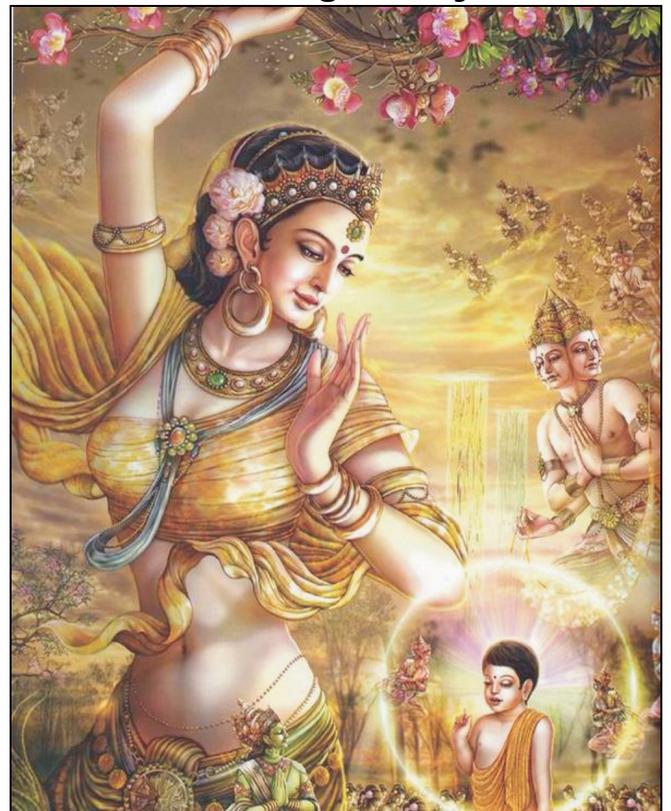
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Buddha Life Painting Gallery



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

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

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

Let us try to understand the depth of this quote.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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आवाहन

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

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

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

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

1 Yamaka Vagga (The Twin Verses)

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

Pali Version

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

Meaning

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

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

Commentary

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

The Story of the Monk Cakkhupàla (Verse 1)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

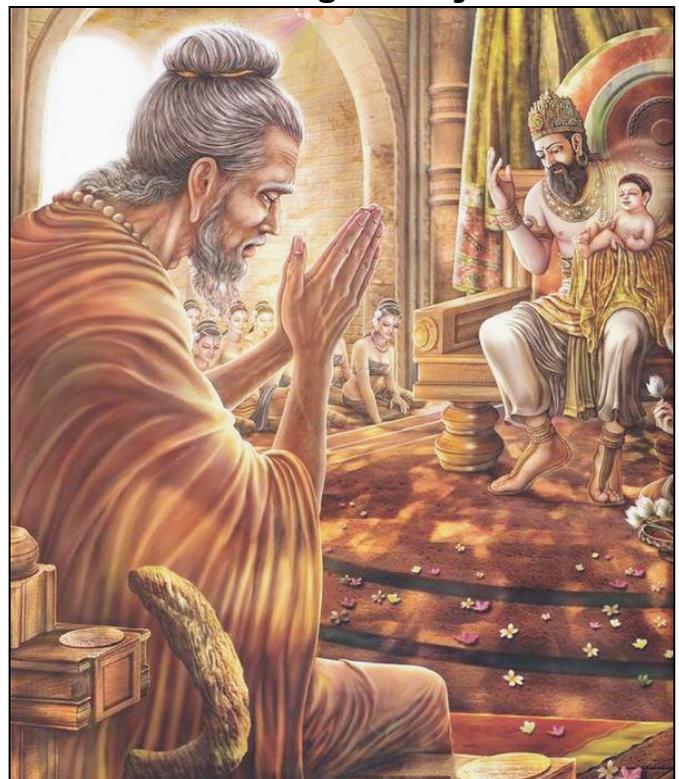
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Do not believe in anything (simply) because you have heard it.
Do not believe in tradition because they have been handed down for many generations.
Do not believe in anything because it is spoken and rumoured by many.
Do not believe in anything (simply)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

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