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IT IS CRIMINAL TO COLLECT MONEY IN THE NAME OF RELIGION AND WASTE IT

Inaugural Address by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar M.A.,Ph.D., Bar-at-Law, at All India Sai Devotees Convention held on January 24, 1954 on Zeviyar College ground at Bombay.

He said,

"Many thanks for your invitation to address you a few words on this occasion. I have no claim for it. I do not belong to those who are reckoned as the followers of Sai Baba. I have not had the good fortune of meeting or seeing the Sai Baba. I only heard of him. It would have been better if someone, who knew him better, had been invited to speak to you on this occasion. But, as those who came to invite me insisted that the resolution to invite me was unanimous one, it was not easy to say 'No' though in the present condition of my health I could have very easily done so.

As I have said before, my knowledge of Sai Baba is nil and what little I know about him consists of what I have heard about him. The Baba is dead some time ago and I understand that he has left large gathering of followers who are ever growing even though the Baba is dead. He is known to be a Religious *Guru* to many.

Religion in India has taken various shades. In its original form religion was a matter of personal salvation of a man's soul. Later on there was a great change in the religious outlook and purpose. It meant not so much the salvation of the soul as the maintenance of a human brotherhood based on moral rules governing the mutual conduct of human beings towards each other. Then came a third stage which led men to worship those personalities who satisfied the wants of their lives. Some wanted children, some wanted gold, some wanted escape from a calamity. If a person satisfied such material wants he became their God and they worshipped him. Then the fourth was to worship a person who performed miracles of one sort or the other, which were beyond the ken of common men, and the miracle-maker became a God. We find in India all these.

Today in India there is no religion without the worship of idols, *Sadhu* and Saint and miracle-maker. Our religion today has neither God nor morality. I have no doubt that this is a very degraded state of human mind and it is a task for the future generations to restore religion to its purer and nobler form.

In the meantime, we must take note of the facts such as they exist. We have not only gone the wrong way in the matter of religion but it has become a profession to collect money in the name of religion and waste it on purposes for which there can be no social justification. There is so much poverty and misery in the world that it is criminal to collect money in the name of religion and waste it on feeding Brahmins and other pilgrims.

The Buddha had well considered this question. In his moral code, the Buddha preached the *Pancha Shila,* the *Ashtanga Marga* and *Nibbana.* But in addition, he taught his followers to cultivate ten virtues—(1) प्रज्ञा *(Pradnya),* (2) शीला *(Sheela),* (3) नेखम्म *(Nekhamma),* (4) दान *(Dana),* (5) वीर्य *(Veerya).* (6) खन्ति *(Khanti)* (7) सच्च *(Sachha),* (8) अधित्थान *(Adhitthan),* (9) मैत्री *(Maitri), and* (10) उपेक्खा *(Upekkha). Pradnya* is wisdom, the light that removes the darkness of *Avidya, Moha* is Neo-science, *Sheela* is moral temperament, the disposition not to do evil and the disposition to be good. *Nekhamma* is renunciation of the pleasures of the world. *Dana* means the giving of one's own possession—blood and limb, and even life-without expecting anything in return. Veerya is right endeavour which is doing with all your might whatever you have undertaken to do, with never a thought of turning back. *Khanti* is forbearance, not to meet hatred with hatred. *Sachcha* is truth ; a person must never tell a lie; what he says must be truth and nothing but truth. *Adhitthan* is resolute determination to reach the goal. Maitri is extending fellow-feeling to all beings, not only to one who is a friend but also to one who is a foe, not only to men but to all beings. *Upekkha* is detachment as distinguished from indifference, is a state of mind where there is neither like nor dislike, remaining unmoved by the results and yet engaged in the pursuit. The Buddha insisted that these virtues must be practised by every individual to the highest extent possible. That is why they, are called in the Pali literature—*Paramitas.*

The Buddha, although he preached *Dana Paramita,* was very particular in insisting that *Dana* must be to a deserving person. While it does elevate the person who gives, it must not degrade the person to whom it is given. Charity is aid and help to those who have fallen in order that they may one day walk the road of life by themselves.

If you have collected money in the name at the saint whom you revere, it is necessary that you should devote this money in the establishment of such acts as are indicated by the *Paramitas*. There is so much misery, so much ignorance and so much sickness that in the modern days it would be an act of cruelty, as I said, to feed well-to-do people who can look after themselves. Such charities should be devoted to hospitals, to education, to establishing small scale industries, for the helpless and the widows who, may be enabled to earn their living by being taught some trade or some industry. There are many examples yet to be found for you to copy if you were only convinced of my thesis and if you would only look around yourselves for practical examples.

I hope I have given you some food for thought. If you have collected money, use it in the way I have suggested. It will not only do you good but it will elevate the name of Sai Baba."[1]

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[1]: Reprinted from a printed booklet circulated in Sai Convention held at Bombay in January 1954.

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MY PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Every man should have a philosophy of life, for everyone must have a standard by which to measure his conduct. And philosophy is nothing but a standard by which to measure.

Negatively, I reject the Hindu Social Philosophy propounded in the Bhagvat Geeta based as it is, on the *Triguna* of the Sankhya philosophy which is in my judgement a cruel perversion of the philosophy of Kapila, and which had made the Caste System and the System of Graded Inequality the law of Hindu Social Life.

Positively, my Social Philosophy, may be said to be enshrined in three words : Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Let no one, however, say that I have borrowed my philosophy from the French-Revolution. I have not. My philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science. I have derived them from the teachings of my Master, the Buddha. In his philosophy, liberty and equality had a place ; but he added that unlimited liberty destroyed equality, and absolute equality left no room for liberty. In His Philosophy, law had a place only as a safeguard against the breaches of liberty and equality ; but He did not believe that law can be a guarantee for breaches of liberty or equality. He gave the highest place to fraternity as the only real safeguard against the denial of liberty or equality or fraternity which was another name for brotherhood or humanity, which was again another name for religion,

Law is secular, which anybody may break while fraternity or religion is sacred which everybody must respect. My philosophy has a mission. I have to do the work of conversion ; for, I have to make the followers of *Triguna* theory to give it up and accept mine. Indians today are governed by two different ideologies. Their political ideal set out in the Preamble to the Constitution affirms a life of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Their social ideal embodied in their religion denies them.

Dr. B. R. AMBEDKAR
(All-India Radio broadcast
of speech on October 3, 1954.)

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I AM A DEVOTEE OF GAUTAM BUDDHA, KABIR, MAHATMA PHULE AND WORSHIPPER OF LEARNING, SELF-RESPECT AND CHARACTER

"Under the auspices of Dr. Ambedkar's Diamond Jubilee Celebration Committe, a public meeting attended by about 25,000 persons was held at Purandare's Stadium, Naigaum, Bombay at about 6-30 p. m. on October 28th, 1954. Shri R. D. Bhandare presided.

Shri Shankar Anant Upasham, while giving an account of the collection towards the purse, said that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had completed 60 years on 14th April 1952, and the celebration ought to have taken place in 1952, but they could not perform the celebration on the date and they were doing it on the day in question. He said that so far they were able to collect about 93,000 rupees and after deduction of expenses the amount would come to Rs. 88,000. This collection had been made from the people of his community in the Greater Bombay. He further said that the people outside Bombay had collected about 32,000 rupees for the Building Fund and that amount would be added in the amount mentioned above and the total amount to be given to Dr. Ambedkar was one lakh and Eighteen Thousand rupees.

The president during the course of his speech said that Dr. Ambedkar was greater than Vyas, Manu, Abraham Lincon and even Karl Marx. He said that there was no leader in India who could be compared with Dr. Ambedkar. It was he who predicted the results of the partition of the country ten years before the actual partition took place. He has sacrificed his whole life for the uplift of the Downtrodden people and while presenting the purse of Rs. one lakh and 18 thousand he on behalf of all the people requested Dr. Ambedkar to use that amount for his own purpose. He assured him that they could collect a separate amount for erecting a building as desired by him.

Dr. Ambedkar in reply declared that the amount given to him would be utilised for building a hall. He said that a land had already been purchased for the purpose and those who were

residing on that plot of land were being removed from that plot. He further said that it was wrong to presume that he was a brilliant student from the beginning. He was an ordinary boy like other boys in his community. He said that his father did not care to maintain the record of his birth date and his exact date of birth was not known. He might be above sixty or below sixty. He said that it was true that he was born at about 12 mid night, and his mother had great pains at the time of his birth. He further said that when he was born, the stars were bad and it was told by the astrologer that his mother would die soon. He was therefore hated by his brothers and sisters. He said that after the death of his mother he was brought up by his aunt. He said that he had gone through religious books like *Mahabharat, Bhagwat Gita* in his young days but when he came across the book about Gautam Buddha, it had great impression on him and since that time he became the follower of *Buddha.* He said that the Hindus also would have to embrace *Buddha* Religion for their good. He further said that he was a devotee of *Guatam Buddha, Kabir* and *Mahatma Phule* and worshipper of learning, self-respect and character. He had none of the bad habits but he was fond of reading. He said that learning was essential for every individual if he wished to make progress in the life. He further asked the audience to get themselves learned to contribute part of their earnings for their community and work for their Federation wholeheartedly as they had not yet reached the goal. They were on their way to goal and if they showed any slackness, they would fall down. He appealed to them not to quarrel for leadership. He said that he always remained out of Government service as he desired to serve his community, and throughout his life he stuck to the principle. If he had accepted any Government job he would have by this time a pensioner, he said that he was not going to give them guidance for more than 7/8 years. They should come forward in his life time to take up the place.

The function terminated at about 8-45 p. m.

About 300 organisations and individuals garlanded Dr. Ambedkar and his wife."[1]

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[1] : Police Report : Source Material. Vol. 1, Pp. 421-422.

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BUDDHIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA : A BLUE PRINT

BUDDHA NEEDS NO PASSPORT NOR VISA

The International Buddhist Conference was held on 4th December 1954 at Rangoon (Burma). Dr. B. R. Ambedkar attended the Conference. He delivered the speech in the Conference. He had prepared an enlarged version of his talk in the form of Memorandum in two parts : Part I of the memorandum Contains programme of propagation of Buddhism in India. Out of the points which Dr. Ambedkar has raised in the memorandum I, he himself fulfilled two important points : (1) by publishing the Buddhist Gospel under the title "BUDDHA AND HIS DHAMMA" and (2) introducing a cermony for conversion to Buddhism. Part II consists of the conditions of Indian Buddhist in South-India.—Editors.

Following are the Memoranda :

Memorandum-I

Record of My Talk to the Buddhist Sasana Council of Burma An Enlarged Version

1. To spread Buddhism outside Burma to be one of the aims of the Sasana Council then India is the first country they should make the centre of their effort. No other country will yield so much as India will.

2. The reason is obvious. India is a birthplace of Buddhism. It flourished in India from 543 B.C. to 1400 A.D. i.e. for nearly 2,000 years. Although the Buddhist Religion has vanished, the name of the Buddha is still held in great veneration and the memory of His Religion is still green. In India Buddhism may be a withered plant; but no one can say that it is dead at the roots. He is regarded by the Hindus as Avatar of Vishnu. In India we do not have to restore veneration for a new prophet as Neburchnerar had to do for his Gods among the Jews. All that we have to do is to bring back His religion. Such easy conditions for a fruitful effort cannot be found in any other country. In them there are well and long established

religions and Buddhism would be regarded as an intruder without a passport. So far India is concerned the Buddha needs no passport nor does He require any visa.

3. There are sections among the Hindus who are eager to leave Hinduism and go over to Buddhism. Such are the Untouchables and the Backward Classes. They are against Hinduism because of its doctrine of graded inequality. In the present stage of their intellectual awakening these classes are up in arms against Hinduism. Now is the time to take advantage of their discontent.

They prefer Buddhism to Christianity on three grounds :—

(1) Buddhism is not a religion which is alien to India;

(2) The essential doctrine of Buddhism is social equality which they want;

(3) Buddhism is rational religion in which there can be no room for superstition.

4. There should be no hesitation in launching the movement on the ground that the majority of the people entering Buddhism in its early stages will becoming from lower classes. The Sasana Council must not make the mistakes which the Christian Missionaries in India made. The Christian Missionaries began by attempting to convert the Brahmins. Their strategy was that if the Brahmins could be converted first the conversion of the rest of the Hindus could not be difficult. For they argued that if the Brahmins could be converted first they could go to the Non-Brahmins and say "When the Brahmins have accepted Christianity why don't you; they are the heads of your religion." This strategy of the missionaries proved fatal to some Christians. Why should they ? They had all the advantages under Hinduism. The Christian Missionaries in India realized their mistake and turned their attention to the Untouchables after wasting hundreds of years in their effort to convert the Brahmins. By the time they turned to the Untouchables the spirit of nationalism had grown up and every thing alien including Christianity was regarded as enemical to the country. The result was that the Christian Missionaries could convert very few Untouchables. The Christian population in India is surprisingly small notwithstanding the missionary efforts

extending over 400 years. They might have converted the whole of Untouchables and the Backward Classes if they had begun with them first.

5. Attention may be drawn to the entry of Christianity in Rome. For it is very instructive. From the pages of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" it is clear that Christianity entered first among the lower classes as Gibbon says among the poor and the dispized section of the Roman population. The higher classes came in later on. Gibbon ridicules Christianity as a religion of the poor and the downtrodden. In holding this view Gibbon was thoroughly mistaken, he failed to realize that it is the poor who need religion. For religion, if it is right religion, gives hope of betterment to the poor who having nothing else need as a soothing suction. The rich have everything. They need not live on hope. They live on their possession. Secondly, Gibbon failed to realize that Religion, if it is of the right type, ennobles people and elevates them. People do not degrade religion.

6. I will now turn to the preliminary step which must he taken for the revival of Buddhism in India. I mention below those that occur to me :

(i) The preparation of a Buddhist Gospel which could be a constant companion of the convert. The want of a small Gospel containng the teachings of the Buddha is a great handicap in the propagation of Buddhism. The common man cannot be expected to read the 73 volumes of the Pali Cannon. Christianity has a great advantages over Buddhism in having the message of Christ contained in a small booklet 'The Bible'. This handicap in the way of the propagation of Buddhism must be removed. In regard to the preparation of Buddha's Gospel care must be taken to emphasise the social and moral teachings of the Buddha. I have to emphasise this because what is emphasised is meditation, contemplation and Abhidhamma. This way of presenting Buddhism to Indians would be fatal to our cause.

(ii) The introduction of a ceremony like Baptism is in Christianity for the laity. There is really no ceremony of conversion i.e. for becoming a lay disciple of the Buddha. Whatever ceremony of conversion there is, is for becoming a Bhikkhu, for entering into the *Sangha*. Among the Christians there are two ceremonies -

(1) for Baptism showing acceptance of Christianity and

(2) for ordination i.e. becoming a priest. In Buddhism there is no ceremony like Baptism. This is the main reason why people after becoming Buddhist slip out of Buddhism. We must not introduce a ceremony like the Christian Baptism which every lay person must undergo before he can be called a Buddhist". Merely uttering the *Pancha Sila* is not enough. Many other points must be added to make person feel that he is ceasing to be a Hindu and becoming a new man.

(iii) The appointment of a number of lay preachers who could go about and preach the Buddhists and see how far they are following the Buddha's Dhamma. The lay preachers must be paid and secondly they may be married persons. In the beginning they may be part time workers.

(iv) The establishment of a Buddhist Religious Seminary where persons who wish to become preachers could be taught Buddhism and also comparative study of other Religions.

(v) The introduction of congregational worship in the *Vihara* every Sunday followed by a sermon.

7. In addition to these preliminary steps it is necessary to do some other things which require to be done in a big way as aid to our propagation campaign. In this connection I make the following proposals :

I. Building big temples and *Viharas* in the four important towns, (I) Madras; *(2)* Bombay; (3) Nagpur and (4) Delhi.

II. Establishment of High Schools and Colleges in the following towns; (1) Madras; (2) Nagpur; (3) Calcutta and (4) Delhi.

III. Inviting Essays of Buddhist topics and giving prizes to the first three sufficient in value so as to attract people to make their best efforts to study Buddhist literature. The essays should be open to all, Hindus, Muslims and Christians; to men as well as to women. This is the best way of making people interested in the study of Buddhism.

8. Temples should be as big as to create the impression that something big is really happening. High Schools and Colleges are necessary adjuncts. They are intended to create Buddhist atmosphere among younger men. Besides they will not only pave their way but bring a surplus which could be used for other misssionary work. It should be remembered that most of the Christian Missions find funds for financing their activities from the surplus revenue which is yielded by the Schools and Colleges they run.

9. I have set out above that preliminary steps must be taken. I feel that I must also set out what precautions must be taken in launching the movement for the revival of Buddhism in India, if Buddhism is not to disappear again.

10. Buddhism has not disappeared from India, because its doctrines were found or proved to be false. The reasons for the disappearance of Buddhism from India are different. Buddhism was in the first place over powered and suppressed by the Brahmins. It is now sufficiently known that the last Maurya Emperor, decendent of Emperor Asoka, was murdered by the Brahmin Commander-in-chief by name Pushya Mitra who usurped the throne and established Brahminism as a State religion. This led to the suppression of Buddhism in India which is one of the causes of its decline. While the rise of Brahminism brought about the suppression of Buddhism in India the Muslim invasion of India brought about its complete destruction, by the violence it practised in destroying Viharas and killing *Bhikkhus*.

11. The danger to Buddhism from Islam no longer exists but the danger from Brahminism exists. It will be its toughest opponent. A Brahmin will remain a Brahmin no matter what colour he assumes or what party he joins. That is because Brahmins want to maintain the system of graded social inequality. For it is this graded inequality which has raised the Brahmins above all and to be on the top of everybody. Buddhism believes in equality. Buddhism strikes at the very root of their prestige and power. That is why the Brahmins hate it. It is quite possible that if the Brahmins are allowed to lead the movement of revival of Buddhism they may use their power to sabotage it or misdirect it. The precaution to exclude them from position of power at least in the early stages of our movement is, therefore, very necessary.

12. All these proposals raise a question of finance. This question it must be frankly said, cannot be solved by India. The only people who could help are the Buddhists in India, who in the early stages must be very few. The burden must, therefore, be borne by the Buddhist countries outside India which I feel they can easily do by diverting their *Dana* to this purpose.

(Sd.) B. R. Ambedkar.

Memorandum II

Report on The Condition of Buddhism in South India

1. I went on tour of South India to see for myself the condition of Indian Buddhist Communities there, I was there from 7th to 14th July.

2. I found that there exists Buddhists Communities in the following places :

A. Near Madras city there are two centres :

(i) Perambur; and
(ii) Kanchipuram (Chingeput)

B. In the Interior of the Madras State :

(i) Palikonda (in North Arcot District);
(ii) Tripuram (in North Arcot District);
(iii) Vellature (in Vellur District) and
(iv) Vaniveda (in Banipeth).

C. In the Mysore State :

(i) Kolar Gold Fields;
(ii) Prazer Town, Cantonment Banglore City
and (iii) Near Central Jail in the Bangalore City.

These centres of Buddhism in South India have been in existence for about 30/40 years. It speaks of their remarkable tenacity to hold on to Buddhism, surrounded though they are by Brahamins and Hindus.

4. The Viharas that they have built out of their own resources are poor structures. It would be a great encouragement if some help could be given to them to renovate, rebuilt and repair their Viharas.

5. I met the Maharaja, the Rajapramukh of Mysore State on the 8th July and requested him to grant a piece of land which is situated in Bangalore and which is his personal property for opening a centre for our work in Bangalore. The Maharaja was very graciously pleased to donate 5 acres of land. I enclose herewith a copy of letter from the Personal Secretary to His Highness the Maharaja. Please keep this matter a secret. The gift deed has yet to be drawn up.

6. This is a beautiful piece of land and has a beautiful situation. It is also very valuable . My idea is to use this land for constructing a Buddhist Religious Seminary for training our priests and our preachers and also a centre for propagation of Buddhism in South India.

(Sd.) B. R. AMBEDKAR.

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PANDURANG WAS NONE OTHER THAN BUDDHA

While unveiling an image of Buddha in a newly constructed Buddha Vihar at Dehu Road near Poona, on 25th December 1954, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar told his audience* that the image of the God Vithoba at Pandharpur was in reality the image of the Buddha. He said further that the name of the God Pandurang was derived from Pundalik. Pundalik meant lotus and lotus was called Pandurang in Pali. So Pandurang was none other than Buddha. According to him, Buddhism disappeared from India because of the wavering attitude of the laity which worshipped many other Gods and Goddesses set up by Brahmins to destroy Buddhism. [1]

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* : About 4,000 attended the function : Source material Vol. I, P. 423.

[1] : Kuber, Ambedkar—A Crital Study, P. 94.

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THERE IS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE AHIMSA PREACHED BY BUDDHISM AND JAINISM

Extracts from the speech delivered by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar at a meeting held at Buddha Vihar under the auspices of the Mahabodhi Society of India, New Delhi on the 5th February 1956.

Any religion that cannot provide an anwser to Communism will not survive. The only religion, in my view, that can serve as an antidote to Communism is Buddhism.

I do not agree with those who believe in every faith and pick up something from every where. Such an attitude is in evidence in India. One should make one's choice and stick to it.

One faith can be different from another. There is a great difference between the Ahimsa preached by Buddhism and the Ahimsa preached by Jainism. The latter has taken Ahimsa to the highest degree.

I have full faith in the rebirth. I can prove it to scientists that rebirth was logical. In my view, it is the elements that changed and not the man.

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WHY I LIKE BUDDHISM

In the short time allotted to me, I am asked to answer two questions. First is "Why I like Buddhism" and the second is "How useful it is to the world in its present circumstances".

I prefer Buddhism because it gives three principles in combination which no other religion does. All other religions are bothering themselves with God and Soul and life after death. Buddhism teaches *Prajna* (understanding as against superstition and supernaturalism). It teaches *Karuna* (love). It teaches *Samata* (equality). This is what man wants for a good and happy life on earth. These three principles of Buddhism make their appeal to me. These three principles should also make an appeal to the world. Neither God nor Soul can save society.

There is a third consideration which should make an appeal to the world and particularly the South East Asian part of it. The world has been faced with the onslaught of Karl Marx and the Communism of which he is made the father. The challenge is a very serious one. That Marxism and Communism relate to secular affairs. They have shaken the foundation of the religious system of all the countries. This is quite natural for the religious system although today is unrelated to the secular system, yet is the foundation on which every thing secular rests when the secular system cannot last very long unless it has got the sanction of the religion, however, remote it may be.

I am greatly surprised at the turn of mind of the Buddhist countries in South East Asia towards communism. It means that they do not understand what Buddhism is. I claim that Buddhism is a complete answer to Marx and his Communism.

Communism of the Russian type aims to bring it about by a bloody revolution. The Buddhist Communism brings it about by a bloodless mental revolution. Those who are eager to embrace Communism may note that the *Sangh is* a Communist Organisation. There is no private property. This has not been brought about violence. It is the result of a change of mind and yet it has stood for

Speech on British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C.), London, 12th May 1956.

2500 years. It may have deteriorated but idea is still binding. The Russian Communism must answer this question. They must also answer two other questions. One is that why communistic system is necessary for all times. They have done the work which it may be admitted the Russians could never have been able to do, but when the work is done why the people should not have freedom accompanied by love as the Buddha preached. The South East Asian countries must, therefore, be beware of jumping into the Russian Net. They will never be able to get out of it. All that is necessary to them is to study the Buddha and what he taught, a right and to give political form to his teachings. Poverty there is and there will always be. Even in Russia there is poverty but poverty cannot be an excuse for sacrificing human freedom.

Unfortunately, the Buddha's teachings have not been properly interpreted and understood. That his gospel was a collection of doctrines and social reforms have been completely misunderstood. Once it is realized that Buddhism is a social gospel, the revival of it would be everlasting event for the world will realize why Buddhism makes such a great appeal to every one.

26, Alipur Road,
New Delhi,
Dated: 12th May 1956. **(Sd.) (B. R. AMBEDKAR)**

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THE TIDE OF BUDDHISM WOULD NEVER RECEDE IN INDIA

A letter was published in Prabuddha Bharat of 12th May 1956 requesting to celebrate 2500th Buddha Jayanti by all the branches of Indian Buddhist Council. Accordingly a historical meeting has arranged at 'Nare Park' Bombay on 24th May 1956. About seventy five thousand people were assembled for this meeting. The meeting was presided over by Mr. Balasaheb Kher, former Prime Minister of Bombay State. He spoke on the life of Buddha and his Dhamma.[1]

After his speech Dr. B. R. Ambedkar declared that he would embrace Buddhism in October 1956. In his speech he made a vitriolic attack on Veer Savarkar who had written a series of articles on the non-violence preached by Buddhism. Dr. Ambedkar with a snort of rage said.

He would reply to Savarkar if he knew precisely what Savarkar had to say. It seemed as if there was again a fierce debate between the leaders of Hinduism and those of Buddhism. Those alone, Dr. Ambedkar roared, who aimed at uplifting them were entitled to criticize them. He said his critics should leave him alone ; let him and his people have the freedom to fall into a ditch. Dr. Ambedkar stated frankly that his people were his sheep, and he was their shepherd. There was no theologian as great as he. They should follow him, and they would get knowledge by and by.

To him Buddhism differed from Hinduism. He further observed : "Hinduism believes in God. Buddhism has no God. Hinduism believes in soul. According to Buddhism there is no soul. Hinduism believes in *Chaturvarnya* and the Caste System. Buddhism has no place for the Caste System and *Chaturvarnya*." He told his followers that his book on Buddhism would be published soon. He had closed all the breaches in the organization of Buddhism and would now consolidate it; so the tide of Buddhism would never recede in India. The communists should study Buddhism, so that they might know how to remove the ills of humanity.

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[1] : Prabuddha Bharat, dated 2nd June 1956.

During his speech Dr. Ambedkar compared himself with Moses who had led his people from Egypt to Palestine, the land of freedom. According to him, there were three causes for the decline of any religion. Lack of abiding principles in it ; lack of versatile and conquering orators ; and lack of easily understandable principles. He also declared that he was going to build a magnificient temple of Buddha.

Thus ended his last speech in Bombay. [1]

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[1] : Keer, Pp. 492-93.

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PROSPECTS OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIA *

The subject assigned to me is, "What are the prospects of democracy in India"? Most Indians speak with great pride as though their country was already a democracy. The foreigners also, when they sit at a dinner table to do diplomatic honour to India, speak of the Great Indian Prime Minister and the Great Indian Democracy.

From this, it is held without waiting to argue that where there is a Republic, there must be democracy. It is also supposed that where there is Parliament which is elected by the people on adult sufferage and the laws are made by the People's Representatives in Parliament elected after every few years, there is democracy. In other words, democracy is understood to be a political instrument and where this political instrument exists, there is democracy.

Is there democracy in India or is there no democracy in India ? What is the truth ? No positive answer can be given unless the confusion caused by equating democracy with Republic and by equating democracy with Parliamentary Government is removed.

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 the people who form a society.

What does the word 'Society' connote ? To put it briefly when we speak of 'Society,' we conceive of it as one by its very nature. The qualities which accompany this unity are praiseworthy community of purpose and desire for welfare, loyalty to public ends and mutuality of sympathy and co-operation.

Are these ideals to be found in Indian Society ? The Indian Society does not consist of individuals. It consists of an innumerable collection of castes which are exclusive in their life

* Voice of America, 20th May 1956.

and have no common experience to share and have no bond of sympathy. Given this fact it is not necessary to argue the point. The existence of the Caste System is a standing denial of the existence of those ideals of society and therefore of democracy.

Indian Society is so imbeded in the Caste System that every thing is organized on the basis of caste. Enter Indain Society and you can see caste in its glaring form. An Indian cannot eat or marry with an Indian simply because he or she does not belong to his or her caste. An Indian cannot touch an Indian because he or she does not belong to his or her caste. Go and enter politics and you can see caste reflected therein. How does an Indian vote in an election? He votes for a candidate who belongs to his own caste and no other. Even the Indian Congress exploits the Caste System for election purpose as no other political party in India does. Examine the lists of its candidates in relation to the social composition of the constituencies and it will be found that the candidate belongs to the caste which is the largest one in that constituency. The Congress, as a matter of fact, is upholding the Caste System against which it is outworldly raising a outcry against the existence of caste.

Go into the field of industry. What will you find ? You will find that all the topmost men drawing the highest salary belong to the caste of the particular industrialist who owns the industry. The rest hang on for life on the lowest rungs of the ladder on a pittance. Go into the field of commerce and you will see the same picture. The whole commercial house is one camp of one caste, with no entry board on the door for others.

Go into the field of charity. With one or two exceptions all charity in India is communal. If a Parsi dies, he leaves his money for Parsis. If a Jain dies, he leaves his money for Jains. If a Marwadi dies, he leaves his money for Marwadis. If a Brahmin dies, he leaves his money for Brahmins. Thus, there is no room for the downtrodden and the outcastes in politics, in industry, in commerce, and in education.

There are other special features of the Caste System which have their evil effects and which militate against Democracy. One such special feature of the Caste System lies in its being accompanied by what is called 'Graded Inequality'. 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. This feature of the Caste System has most pernicious consequences. It destroys willing and helpful co-operation.

Caste and class differ in the fact that in the Class System there is no complete isolation as there is in the Caste System. This is the second evil effect in the Caste System accompanied by inequality. This manifests itself in the fact that the stimulus and response between two castes is only one-sided. The higher caste act in one recognised way and the lower caste must respond in one established way. It means that when there is no equitable opportunity to receive the stimulus from and to return the response from different caste, the result is that the influences which educate some into masters, educate others into slaves. The experience of each party loses its meaning when the free interchange of varying modes of life experience is arrested. It results into a separation of society, into a privileged and a subject class. Such a separation prevents social endosmosis.

There is a third characteristic of the Caste System which depicts the evils thereof which cuts at the very roots of democracy. It is that one caste is bound to one occupation. Society is no doubt stably organized when each individual is doing that for which he has aptitude by nature in such a way as to be useful to others; and that it is the business of society to discover these aptitudes and progressively to train them for social use. But there is in a man an indefinite pluralities of capacities and activities which may characterize an individual. A society to be democratic should open a way to use all the capacities of the individual. Stratification is stunting of the growth of the individual and deliberate stunting is a deliberate denial of democracy.

How to put an end to the Caste System ? The first obstacle lies in the system of graded inequality which is the soul of the Caste System. Where people are divided into two classes, higher and lower, it is easier for the lower to combine to fight the higher, for there is no single lower class. The class consists of lower and lowerer. The lower cannot combine with the lowerer. For the lower is afraid that if he succeeds in raising the lowerer, he may well himself lose the high position given to him and his caste.

The second obstacle is that, the Indian Society is disabled by unity in action by not being able to know what is its common good. Plato has said that the organization of society depends ultimately upon knowledge of the end of existence. If we do not know its end, if we do not know its good, we shall be at the mercy of accident and caprice. Unless we know the good of the end, we have no criterion for rationally deciding what the possibilities are which we should promote. Question is, can the Indian Society in its caste-bound state achieve what is the ultimate question? We come upon the most insuperable obstacle that such knowlege is not possible save in a just and harmonious social order. Can there be a harmonious Social Order under the Caste System? Everywhere the mind of the Indians is distracted and misled by false valuations and false perspectives. A disorganised and factional society sets up number of different models and standards. Under such conditions it is impossible for individual Indian to reach consistency of mind on the question of caste.

Can education destroy caste ? The answer is 'Yes' as well as 'No'. If education is given as it is to-day, education can have no effect on caste. It will remain as it will be. The glaring example of it is the Brahmin Caste. Cent percent of it is educated, nay, majority of it is highly educated. Yet not one Brahmin has shown himself to be against caste. Infact an educated person belonging to the higher caste is more interested after his education to retain the Caste System than when he was not educated. For education gives him an additional interest in the retention of the Caste System namely by opening additional opportunity of getting a bigger job.

From this point of view, education is not helpful as means to dissolve caste. So far is the negative side of education. But education may be solvent if it is applied to the lower strata of the Indian Society. It would raise their spirit of rebellion. In their present state of ignorance they are the supporters of the Caste System. Once their eyes are opened they will be ready to fight the Caste System.

The fault of the present policy is that though education is being given on a larger scale, it is not given to the right strata of Indian Society. If you give education to that strata of Indian Society which has a vested interest in maintaining the Caste System for the