



Dr. BR Ambedkar and Buddhism: Need of the hour

Dr. Ashok H Gurushantappa

Department of Women' Studies, Gulbarga University, Kalaburagi, Karnataka, India

Abstract

Ambedkar was not, of course, the first person to be impressed by the vast extent of Buddhist literature, nor even the first to compile a volume of selections for the benefit of the common reader. As early as the ninth century CE the poet-sage Shantideva had compiled – mainly from earlier Mahayana sutras-his *Siksa-samuccaya* or 'Compendium of Instruction', and in modern times American and British scholars, in particular, have produced a number of such works. By far the most popular of these was Paul Carus's *The Gospel of Buddha*, published in 1894, which apart from Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* (1879) did more to promote the wider dissemination of Buddhism than any other book. Two years after Carus's best-seller came Henry Clarke Warren's *Buddhism in Translations*, a scholarly work which had a much more limited circulation. After an interval of several decades these pioneering efforts were followed by such well-known anthologies as F.L. Woodward's *Some Sayings of the Buddha* (1925), Dwight Goddard's *A Buddhist Bible* (1932), E.J. Thomas's *Early Buddhist Scriptures* (1935), J.G. Jennings' *The Vedantic Buddhism*.

Keywords: Dr. BR Ambedkar and his Dhamma, need for the buddhism, need for the hour

Introduction

Buddhism was a great revolution, says Ambedkar, "it was as great a revolution as the French revolution. Though it began as a religious revolution, it became more than religious revolution. Political revolution". In 20th Century it was Ambedkar, who set the process of Modernization of Buddhism; as a part of it he felt that, three steps appear to be quite necessary first to produce a Buddhist Bible; second to make changes in the organisation aims and objects in the Bhikkhu Sangh; third to set up a world Buddhist mission. Despite having a vast literature, Ambedkar felt that Buddhism's disadvantage vis-à-vis other religions was that it lacked a handy gospel; a book which one could carry in person and read. And, therefore, he felt the need for having a Buddhist bible.

The Buddhist Bible does not contain a chapter on ceremonies, birth initiation, marriage and death, as indicated in the Buddha and the Future of his Dhamma. However, he compiled a book of prayers which he described to be accepted as a standard prayer book. He introduced the Twenty-Two Oaths for converts, to ensure complete and absolute. Renunciation of Hinduism and acceptance of Buddhism. However, Ambedkar did not feel that the need of separate personal law for Buddhists.

Ambedkar and the Buddhism

The Buddha's Dhamma is the basic theme of Ambedkar's philosophy. Because, his morality is nothing Buddha's Dhamma. Ambedkar writes that, in Dhamma morality takes the place of God, although there is no God in Dhamma. He also writes. That in Dhamma there is no place for prayers, pilgrimages, rituals ceremonies or sacrifices. And in his opinion, morality is the essence of Dhamma. Without it there

is no Dhamma. Morality in Dhamma arises from the direct necessity for man to love man. Dhamma is a social and ethical doctrine which appealed to the mind and reason of Ambedkar. He feels that the purpose of Dhamma is to reconstruct the world. That is the main reason why he adopted Dhamma of Buddha. Ambedkar wants neither to establish a relation of man with god nor to replace human responsibility with divine responsibility. He preferred Buddha Dhamma, as a great humanist, because the proper object of his philosophy is human, the empirical human, who lives and believes in social relationship. Hence, for Ambedkar, man is the measure of all things and "the true measure of man is worth, not birth."

It is true knowledge, which can dispel the wrong beliefs of man, and can encourage him in performing his duties well. Therefore Ambedkar wants, imparting true education for the development of human personality. In his philosophy, the humanist education, is being emphasised, since it is for "the effort of man to rediscover himself as a free being rather than as a child of the church of the state."

As Buddhist education believes, if the mind is controlled, individual and social life could be harmonious; and for Ambedkar, the most sublime human values are intellectual matters of mind. The exercise of one's intellectual powers, through education, constitutes the highest good of man in the type of humanism, Ambedkar thought.

It is only through right education that one could enlighten oneself and organize social forces against tyrannical and oppressive elements of traditional societies in India and the world over. In other words, without education scientific lines, one cannot build up society, for human betterment, rather both illiteracy as well as falsified education, contributes to weaken the society, since this sort of education cannot help people to face their problems. So the right education of Ambedkar is

nothing but true knowledge of Buddha Dhamma.

Ambedkar accepted, it, because, he believes that, only Buddhist education, which contains 'true knowledge' can bring human mind to think of humanity, than divinity. And the thinking of humanity by man contributes to betterment of humankind. This is the main purpose of right education in Ambedkar's social thought.

With science. In other words, religion if it is to function, it must be in accord with what is merely another name for science.

In the same article, Ambedkar writes that religion as a code of social morality, must also stand another test. It is not enough for religion to consist of a moral code, but its moral code must also recognise the fundamental tenets of liberty, equality and fraternity. Unless religion recognises these fundamental principles of social life, "religion will be doomed". And he is confident that people can develop inquiring attitude in question of religion. Ambedkar feels that, time seems to have changed, and many persons throughout the world have exhibited an unprecedented piece of courage with regard to inheritance of their religion.

Many have, as a result of the influence of scientific enquiry, come to the conclusion that religion is an error, which ought to be given up. There are others who, as a result of the Marxian teaching, have come to the conclusion that religion is an error, which ought to be given up. There are others who, as a result of the Marxian teaching, have come to the conclusion that religion is opium which induces the poor people to submit to the domination of the rich, and should be discarded. Whatever be the causes, the fact remains that people have developed an inquiring mind in respect of religion. For Ambedkar, religion means, ethics or morality and must be based on rational or scientific.

Ambedkar's religion aims at to bring to bridge the gap between science, on the one hand, and religion, on the other. His concept of religion is dynamic and progressive and opposed to infallibility and eternal divine concepts. Thus Ambedkar believed that Buddhism alone, among all religions of the world, fulfilled these tests; and Buddhism alone is an essentially scientific or a rationalist - humanist approach to life.

Conclusion

In the Indian context, Ambedkar's liberty, equality and fraternity is a new equity applicable in all spheres of life including law and legal institutions. And law is characterised by secularism that is it has to be coloured by sacredness of fraternity as well. Law must have human face and it should have social purpose. The synonym of all these features of law is Dhamma (Law) of Buddha. What Ambedkar has done is, applied it to present society and then concluded that law of Buddha is humane jurisprudence and he adopted it to replace manu vite jurisprudence.

Reference

1. Ambedkar's Views on Economic Development, Planning and the Role of the State, for seminar, New Delhi, Centre for the Study of Regional Development, JNU Thorat, SK. and Deshpande, RS, 1998.
2. Economic Models of Caste Ssystem: A Critical Review

with Reference to Ambedkar, ibid Zelliott, Eleanor, 1998.

3. Dr. Ambedkar and the Search for a Meaningful Buddhism Situating Ambedkar's The Buddha and His Dhamma and Discovering His Own Saddhama Yana Dahrendorf, Ralf, 1987.
4. Ambedkar and the Hindu Social Order Jadhav, Narendra, 1991.