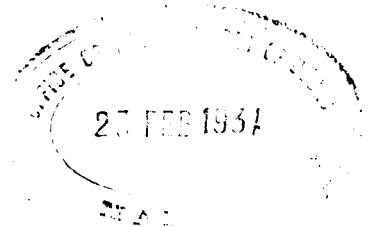


The Vedic Caste System
And
The Panchama Problem



Pandit K. JNANI,
Siddhantalankar.

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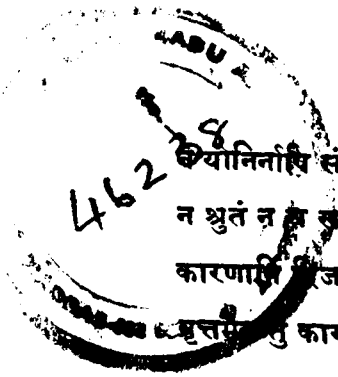
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योगनिर्वाह संस्कारो

न श्रुतं न ज्ञेयं नान्तरिः ।

कारणानि विजित्वस्य

वृत्तमनु कारणम् ॥

—महाभारते

Neither birth nor lineage,
neither culture nor knowledge
of the Vedas, can render one
a twice born, Good conduct
is the only deciding cause.

—Mahabharat.

Introduction

The Aryasamaj is the greatest leveller. It levels the differences in worship by destroying the individual dieties and by installing one Universal God, whom Veda describes : स एवः एकवृद् एक एव 'He is One and One only.'

The Aryasamaj gives equal rights of study, marriage, etc. to both—males and females. It brooks no partiality to the stronger sex, nor injustice to the weaker sex.

The Aryasamaj opens the Divine Scripture of the Veda for one and all, without distinction of caste, creed or sex. It says 'the fruit of knowledge-tree must not be forbidden to any body.'

Again, it removes all barriers of castes based on mere birth.

"All individuals" says Swami Dayananda, "should be placed in different classes according to their qualifications, accomplishments, and character. By adopting this system all will advance in every respect, because the higher classes will be in constant fear of their children being degraded to the Shudra class, if they are not properly educated. The same fear will also make the children acquire knowledge and culture. Whilst the lower classes will be stimulated to exert themselves for admission into the classes above them." —The Light of Truth.

Last but not least, the Aryasamaj wages a constant war against the demon of untouchability. It feels, so long this demon is not destroyed the existence of Hindu Dharma is in danger. This is the weakest part of the Hindu fabric and the earlier we take care of it the better.

In close, let us request the reader to go through the following pages carefully and see for himself how much we have deviated from the Vedic ideal of Varna and how urgent is the need to return to it again.

The Vedic Caste System And The Panchama Problem

If we look back into the cultural history of Ancient India we find tremendous progress almost in every line of activity. Whether it was science or art, philosophy or religion, India had no rival. On the other hand people came from far off countries to sit at the feet of the learned men of India and receive education. Manu says :

एतद्देश प्रसूतस्य सकाशादग्न जन्मनः ।

स्वं स्वं चरित्रं शिक्षेन् पृथिव्यां सर्व मानवाः ॥

"Let all people of the world learn different branches of knowledge from the Brahmins of this country."

True it was, and we must feel proud of our ancestors. But where do we stand to-day?

The order is obviously reversed. Every year hundreds of students have to go to foreign countries to receive higher education. India is one of the most backward nations at the present time. It has lost all its glory and prestige. To the people of the West : “ Inertia, helplessness, lack of initiative and originality, lack of staying power and of sustained loyalties, sterility of enthusiasm, weakness of life-vigour itself—all are traits that truly characterize the Indian of to-day.”

* * * *

The Caste System :—Now-a-days one finds sweeping condemnation of caste everywhere. Undoubtedly, among various causes of our downfall, the caste stands very prominent. But as says Lala Lajpat Rai, it is not an unmixed evil.

“ The caste system of the Hindus has been their curse as well as their salvation. While it has been the principle cause of their social and political downfall, it has saved them from complete disruption and from total annihilation as a social and national organism. It has saved them from absorption into other religio-social systems that

attained more or less ascendancy in India in the different periods of the history of that country.”

—*The Aryasamaj by Lala Lajpat Rai.*

The Origin :—In the famous Purusha Sukta of Rigveda the origin of caste is described thus :

ओ३म् । ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीद् बाहू राजन्यः कृतः ।
ऊरु तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पदभ्यां शूद्रोऽजायत ॥ ऋग् ॥

This hymn is often misunderstood by foreign translators. They explain “ The Brahmins came out of the mouth of Brahma, the Kshatriyas out of the arms, the Vaishyas out of the thighs and the Shudras out of the feet.” But little they know that they are proving themselves fools by translating thus. The question is :

ओ३म् । यत्पुरुषं व्यदधुः कतिधा व्यकल्पयन् ।
मुखं किमस्यासीत् किं बाहू किमूरु पादावुच्येते ॥ ऋग् ॥

“ Of the great Lord, the Creator, what constituted mouth, arms, thighs, etc. ? ” The answer must be “ That Brahmin was the mouth of Brahma, the Kshatriyas the arms, the Vaishyas

the thighs, etc." Swami Dayananda Saraswati has explained it beautifully in his famous book "The Light of Truth." Says he :

"In this universe created and sustained by the Omnipresent God, he who is the (Mukha) head—the leader among men—is called a Brahmin ; he, in whom power and strength (Bahu) reside pre-eminently, is a Kshatriya ; he who travels about from place to place for purposes of trade, etc., and obtains all things for the community (i.e., who is the support of the community just as the thighs are that of the human body) is called a Vaishya ; and lastly the Shudra is like the feet—the lowermost part of the body—because he is ignorant and bearing the burden of all other parts."

The Shatapatha Brahmana also supports the same view. It reads :

यस्मादेते मुख्यास्तस्मान्मुखतो ब्रह्मज्यन्त । शतपथ ब्राह्मणम् ।

"As they (Brahmins) are the heads—leaders, they are said to be born out of the head of Brahma—the Creator."

Just as the head is the highest organ in the body, so is that man—the noblest and the best in the body politic—whose knowledge is perfect and whose acquisitions, accomplishments and character are of the highest order among men. He is therefore called a Brahmin.

Similarly the other names should be understood.

Manu writes :

विप्राणां ज्ञानतो ज्यैष्ठ्यं क्षत्रियाणां तु वीर्यतः ।
वैश्यानां धान्यधनतः शूद्राणामेव जन्मतः ॥ मनुः ॥

Mahabharata says :—

जातकर्मादिभिर्वस्तु संस्कारैः संस्कृतः शुचिः ।
वेदाध्ययन संपन्नः षट्सु कर्मव्यवस्थितः ॥

शौचाचारस्थितः सम्यग् विषसाशी गुरुप्रियः ।
नित्यं व्रती सत्यपरः स वै ब्राह्मण उच्यते ॥

क्षत्रजं सेवते कर्म वेदाध्ययन संगतः ।
दानादाने रतिर्वस्तु स वै क्षत्रिय उच्यते ॥

विशत्याशु पशुभ्यश्च कृष्यादान रतिः शुचिः ।
 वेदाध्ययन संपन्नः स वैश्य इति संज्ञितः ॥
 सर्वभक्षरतिर्नित्यं सर्वकर्मकरोऽशुचिः ।
 त्यक्तवेदस्वनाचारः स वै शूद्र इति स्मृतः ॥ म. भा. ॥

Vide Bhagavadgita :—

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च ।
 ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्ति वयं ब्रह्मकर्मस्वभावजम् ॥
 शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धेचाप्यपलायनम् ।
 दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥
 कृषि गोरक्ष्य वाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम् ।
 परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ॥ गीता ॥

Everywhere the division of caste is limited to four only. A fifth caste is not even permitted. But how hopelessly is the Hindu society split into innumerable castes and sub-castes at present! According to the Census Report, there are over five thousand castes to-day in our society, and they too are divided again into numberless sections and sub-sections.

The Process of Division :—The pride of individuality is ever present in the bosom of man. However low he may be, yet he is conscious of his peculiar aptitudes. He thinks that he stands unique in certain respects when compared to others. This consciousness may have a real or imaginary basis. It is there all the same. This grows on and on. In social matters he segregates himself and a limited number of families over which his individuality spreads, and thus forms a separate caste.

Sir Herbert Risley, in his book “The People of India” explains the formation of castes in a similar manner :—

“The process of caste-making has indeed by no means come to an end. Fresh castes are constantly being formed, and wherever we can trace the stages of their evolution they seem to proceed on the lines followed in the traditional scheme. The first stage is for a number of families who discover in themselves some quality of social distinction, to refuse to give their women in marriage to other members of the caste from

whom nevertheless they continue to take their wives. After a time when their numbers have increased and they have bred women enough to supply material for a *Jus connubii* of their own, they close their ranks, marry only among themselves, and pose as a superior sub-caste of the main caste to which they belong. Last of all they break all connection with the parent stock, assume a new name which ignores or disguises their original affinities and claim general recognition as a distinct caste."

Thus the original four castes have multiplied into thousands, basing their differences on some traditions, customs, occupations, geographical situations etc.

But reverting to the original four Varnas, we find a constructive idea underlying. As the human life is divided into four stages otherwise known as Ashramas, so also the society is divided into four sections, called Varnas. Their plain object is the division of labour. As in an individual's body we require a head to think about, arms to fight and

protect, lower portion to produce and the feet to labour, so also in a body politic we do require an educator, a warrior, a merchant and a workman. There is no question of high and low in it. The workman is as important as the capitalist himself. In fact it is on account of the former that the latter gets fat. The workman allows himself to be exploited and the exploiter gets bold. The ideal state requires equal interdependence and protection of both the interests. If we read the most ancient Hindu Scriptures we find the very same idea propounded. Let us quote Atharva Veda :

ओ३म् । प्रियं मा कृणु देवेषु प्रियं राजसु मा कृणु ।
प्रियं सर्वस्य पश्यत उत शूद्र उतार्ये ॥ अथर्ववेदः ॥

The King prays "May the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras love me alike." In other words, he promises to safeguard the interests of all sections of the society and thus claim their voluntary allegiance.

In brief, the Brahmin is one who devotes all his energies for the intellectual and spiritual growth of the society. He is teacher and preacher both.

Since he aims at helping the Society, the latter helps him in return. Thus he makes both ends meet.

Second comes the Kshatriya: 'As Kalidasa said: क्षताकिल प्रायत इत्युदप्रः because he saves the society from the attacks of the enemy he is called Kshatriya. His main duty is to learn the up-to-date methods of war and keep himself ready to go to the field at any moment. He must be healthy, strong, brave and fearless.

Next comes the Vaishya: He is an ideal business man. He specialises in various trades and technical professions. He is also an expert agriculturist and dairy farmer. In brief, he knows all the ways and means of making money and enriching his society.

Last but not least is the Shudra or workman. His only business is to help the other three castes in the proper discharge of their duties and thus spend his days.

*

This caste division is no freak of the Hindus. In other nations as well we find similar divisions. Says Dr. Haug:—

“In the Zend Avesta—the religious record of the Iranians, who are so nearly allied to the Hindus, the four castes are quite plainly to be found, only under other names *i.e.* Atharva—Priest, Rathaestao—warrior, Vastriyabshiyas—cultivator and Huitis—workman.”

So also in the medieval Europe one comes across, more or less, the same division of the society under these heads, *viz.*, the clergy, the baranage, the people and the serfs.

The Original Fluidity of the Caste:—In Mahabharata comes a question:

ब्राह्मणः केन भवति क्षत्रियो वा द्विजोत्तम ।

वैश्यः शूद्रश्च विप्रर्षे तद्ब्रूहि वदतां वर ॥ शान्तिपर्व ॥

Rishi Bharadwaja is asking Rishi Bhrgu: “What makes a man Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra? Kindly explain in detail.” The very question denotes clearly that the castes in ancient times were not so rigid as one finds them to-day. Professor Max Muller says:

"If, then, with all the documents before us, we ask the question, 'Does caste, as we find it in Manu, and at the present day, form part of the most ancient religious teachings of the Vedas?' we can answer with a decided 'No'—Chips from a German Workshop.

Mr. R. C. Dutt also says that in the entire range of the Vedas "we have not one single passage to show that the community was cut up into hereditary castes"—Civilization in Ancient India.

In Vajra-Soochikopanisat there is a discussion on (को वा ब्राह्मणो नाम) "who is a Brahmin"? Is it (जीवः) soul or (देहः) body or (जातिः) caste or (ज्ञानम्) knowledge or (कर्म) action or (धार्मिक) a benefactor? The Rishi dismisses all these one by one and concludes thus in the end :

तर्हि को वा ब्राह्मणो नाम ? यः कश्चिदात्मानमपरोक्षीकृत्य
कृतार्थतया वर्तते स एव ब्राह्मण इति श्रुति स्मृति पुराणेतिहासानाम-
भिप्रायः ॥ बज्रसूचिकोपनिषद् ।

"Then who is a Brahmin? He who has actually experienced and perceived the Atma, and thereby remains completely satisfied with its sole enjoyment, is the Brahmin who is recognised by Shruti, Smriti, Purana and Itihasa."

The above question and answer clearly show that Brahmin was not born but made. So much so that if a man, even though born in a Brahmin family, was found wanting in the Brahminic qualities, he was atonce transferred to another caste, which he deserved. Again, if any man of the other three castes was found suitable for the Brahminic profession, he was given all encouragement, nay, actually lifted to the proper place. The following verses amply support the above view :

योऽनधीत्य द्विजो वेदमन्यत्र कुरुते श्रमम् ।

स जीवन्नेव शूद्रत्व माशु गच्छति सान्वयः ॥

शूद्रो ब्राह्मणतामेति ब्राह्मणश्चैति शूद्रताम् ।

क्षत्रियाज्जातमेवं तु विद्याद् वैश्यात्तथैव च ॥ मनुस्मृतिः ॥

न कुलेन न जात्या वा क्रियाभिर्ब्राह्मणो भवेत् ।
चाण्डालोऽपि हि वृत्तस्थो ब्राह्मणः स युधिष्ठिर ॥ महामारतम् ॥
न जात्या ब्राह्मणश्चात्र क्षत्रियो वैश्य एव न ।
न शूद्रो न च वै म्लेच्छो भेदिताः गुणकर्मभिः ॥ शंकरनोति ॥

And it was not a mere theory but a hard fact of life. In Upanishats and other Sanskrit works we find numerous instances wherein the castes were changed.

The story of Satyakama Jabala (Chhandogya Upanishat) is very well-known. A boy of doubtful parentage, simply on account of speaking truth was admitted into the Gurukula and made a Brahmin. Rishi Aitareya, the famous author of the Aitareya Brahmana was the son of इतरा or a Sudra woman as the very name betrays. Similarly many other Rishis attained Brahminhood by dint of their spiritual achievements. The names of Vasishtha, Vyasa, Parashara and Vishwamitra need no introduction. And it so happens that all these were born in so-called low castes.

Vide Mahabharata.

गणिका गर्भं सम्भूतो वसिष्ठश्च महामुनिः ।
तपसा ब्राह्मणो जातः संस्कारस्तत्र कारणम् ॥
जातो व्यासस्तु कैवर्त्या श्रपाक्यास्तु पराशरः ।
बहवोऽन्येऽपि विप्रत्वं प्राप्ता ये पूर्वमद्विजाः ॥
ततो ब्राह्मणतां जातो विश्वामित्रो महातपा ।
क्षत्रियः सोऽप्यथ तथा ब्रह्मवंशस्य कारकः ॥ म. भा. ॥

Equality of the Four Castes :—Although the present day Brahmin may claim special divine rights on account of mere accidental birth in a particular family, the vedic conception is totally different. The scriptures grant no preferential position to any caste whatever. In the eye of the Lord, so to say, all the castes are absolutely equal.

Says the Rig Veda :

ओ३म् । अज्येष्ठासो अकनिष्ठास एते संभ्रातरो वावृधुः सौभगाय ॥

“Among the members of a society none is great or small; all are equal brothers; and all should work unitedly for the progress and prosperity of the state.”

Gita says:

विद्या विनय संपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।

शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥ गीता ॥

“Sages look equally on a Brahmin adorned with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant and even a dog and an out-caste.”

There rises a question “What about the following texts?”

अविद्यो वा सविद्यो वा ब्राह्मणो मामकी तनुः ॥

पतितोऽपि द्विजः श्रेष्ठो न च शूद्रो जितेन्द्रियः ।

निर्दुग्धा चापि गौः पूज्या न च दुग्धवती स्वरी ॥

ब्राह्मणो जायमानो हि पृथिव्यामधिजायते ॥

Our only answer is that these are mere fabrications of the clever priestly class in order to maintain its superiority for ever. As the majority of the Sadhus and Sannyasins of to-day have lost their pristine character and put on the ochre garb just for the sake of the belly (उदर निमित्तं बहुकृत वेशः), so also these caste-Brahmins have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. There was a time, we should admit, when Brahmin was wor-

shipped like a veritable God. But that is long past. Since the day the Brahmin left off the Vedic study and developed a hunger for worldly power, he lost his real worth, and with it his respect and honour. Even now if the Brahmin is anxious to regain his position he should revert to the ancient mode of life as prescribed by the Shastras and set an example before the world of what a true Brahmin ought to be. To us the following two verses fairly describe the state of an ideal Brahmin:

संमानाद् ब्राह्मणो नित्यमुद्विजेत विषादिव ।

अमृतस्येव चाकांक्षेदवमानस्य सर्वदा ॥

कुशूल धान्यको वा स्यात् कुम्भी धान्यक एव वा ।

व्यर्हहिको वापि भवेदश्वस्तनिक एव वा ॥ मनुः ॥

* * * *

Who is a Shudra? There is a lot of confusion about the Shudra caste. Some western translators of the Vedas, not understanding the term Dasyu, thought Shudra and Dasyu were synonymous. Some others quoted a so-called scripture “शूद्रः दासीपुत्रः” and said “Shudra means

a man born of a servant maid." And on this saying they developed a historical theory that when the Aryans came to India, they enslaved the original inhabitants, who were known as Dravidians, and the children born of such enslaved inhabitants were known by the detestable term Shudra. First of all there is no detestation of any caste whatever in the Shastra. As we have shown above the Vedas preach absolute equality of all the four castes. Then who is a Shudra? Nirukta says: शुचा शोकेन रोदति इति शूद्रः। The one who feels sorry for being unfit for any of the avocations of the first three castes and has to take up the profession of a labourer. Even there he is not damned eternally. He is given chances over and again to attempt for better life and compete with the Dwijas. Some Shastras are so liberal as to allow him even (यज्ञोपवीतम्) *Sacred Thread* and also to give facilities for initiation into the mysteries of Divine knowledge—the Vedas.

All this clearly shows that in ancient times there was no slur on the Shudra name. It was something like an open race where each individual was given an equal opportunity. Those who arrived

in time were classed Dwijas and the rest Shudras. But it was not a final classification. The Shudras were asked to try and try again in order to equip themselves better and join the Dwija fold. And if any of the Dwijas were found wanting in the proper discharge of their duties, they were at once thrown down. Thus the four castes had ever to remain alert and perform their respective functions as best as they could. That was the happy competition which proved immensely helpful to the society.

What about the Panchama? When we say that there are only four castes according to the scriptures, a question about the Panchama is but natural. What is the literal meaning of the word Panchama? It means the fifth. But Lord Krishna says:

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुण कर्म विभागशः ॥ गीता ॥

"I created only four castes according to the qualities (गुणः), actions (कर्म) and character (स्वभावः)."

Then wherefrom is the fifth caste? Obviously when it is not created by God it must have

been created by man. So it is without doubt. If we go back into the history of Pauranic India, we come across a number of persecutions of innocent Buddhists by the orthodox Hindu Kings as well as by their subjects. This act of violence against the most non-violent people on earth continued for over a century until the Sanatanists drove off the Buddhists from their mother country for ever. Those who somehow escaped had to undergo social ostracism of the severest type. They were out-cast from society and even refused entrance into the Hindu quarters. They were divested of their properties and made forcible slaves under the Hindu landlords. Thus they were absolutely at the mercy of the caste Hindus even for their very existence. And it is believed by some of the historians that the present day Panchamas of the South are no different from the persecuted Buddhists. And an additional reason advanced for the above theory is, that it was mainly the Kshatriya caste which got converted to Buddhism, and that after their persecution and ostracism, we do not find many Kshatriyas in the Madras presidency. While Brahmins, Vaishyas and Shudras

have their due quota in the present day Hindu society, Kshatriyas are hopelessly insignificant in numbers. And considering the sturdy and robust bodies of the Panchamas, it is not unlikely that these may be the same Kshatriyas who were converted to Buddhism nearly two thousand years ago. We are told that some Panchama clans of Malabar have traced their origin to some of the ancient kings of the Buddhistic period. And it is no wonder that continued research work in the ancient Indian history may bring out strange revelations.

Another origin of the Panchama is explained by way of the intermixture of castes. Hindu Smritis mention two types of marriages, viz., Anuloma and Pratiloma.

स्वस्त्रीषु स्वस्य वेधेन मार्गेणोत्थः स्वयं भवेत् ।
 अवरासूतमाज्जातस्वनुलोमः प्रकीर्तितः ।
 उत्तमास्ववराज्जातः प्रतिलोम इति स्मृतः ।
 वर्णस्त्रीष्वनुलोमेन जातः स्यादान्तरालिकः ।
 वर्णासु प्रतिलोमेन जातो ब्राह्म्य इति स्मृतः ॥ स्मृतिः ॥
 शूद्रैव भार्या शूद्रस्य सा च स्वा च विशः स्मृतः ।
 ते च स्वा चैव राज्ञश्च ताश्च स्वा चाग्रजन्मनः ॥ मनुः ॥

चतस्रो विहिता भार्या ब्राह्मणस्य पितामह ।
 ब्राह्मणी क्षत्रिया वैश्या शूद्रा च रति मिच्छता ॥ म. भ.
 ब्राह्मण्यां क्षत्रियात्सूतो वैश्या द्वेदेहिकस्तथा ।
 शूद्राज्जातस्तु चाण्डालः सर्ववर्म बहिष्कृतः ॥ याज्ञवल्क्यः ॥

Anuloma means marrying in a higher caste than one's own. Pratiloma means marrying in a lower caste than one's own. For example, if a woman of the Vaishya or Shudra caste marries a man of the Kshatriya or Brahmin caste it is called Anuloma; but if a woman of either of the above two castes marries a man of either of the lower two castes, it is called Pratiloma. In the Shastras, Anuloma marriage is allowed under certain circumstances but the Pratiloma is strictly prohibited. So much so that if a person marries Pratiloma, his children are outcast. And it is claimed by some Sanatanists that the present-day Panchamas are born of such Pratiloma marriages. But considering the vast extent of the Panchama community it seems impossible that full sixty million children would have been born as a result of a few Pratiloma marriages.

Another, the most popular belief is that all these untouchable castes are those who did evil deeds in their previous births and by way of punishment for the same, they are suffering the stigma of untouchability. Therefore when we ask the Sanatanists to ameliorate the lot of the Panchama, they atonce answer "Who are we to interfere in the design of God? Whom He made low, He alone would elevate."

But it is easily forgotten that this life is not mere भोगभूमिः but also कर्मभूमिः. Here we sow as well as reap. Every day we are doing new Karma and thus changing the old order. Besides, this division of Varna is made by man although the principle underlying is Divine. And the principle is so elastic that it damns nobody to eternal degradation. As we have shown in the foregoing pages the castes of the ancient Hindus were not so rigid as they are found to-day. People did change their Varna in this very birth.

Be as it may. The Panchamas are there now numbering sixty millions. They follow the faith of the Hindus. They worship the same gods and

goddesses. They observe the same rites and ceremonies. They give allegiance to the same Hindu Shastras. What is our duty towards them? Leave apart the origin of the Panchamas; they are atleast human beings and as such deserve human treatment.

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Nearly forty years ago, Swami Vivekananda in his Southern tour, gave expression to the following strong sentiments, which are only too true till to-day.

"And one-fifth, nay one half, of your Madras people will become Christians if you do not take care. Was there ever a sillier thing before in the world than what I saw in Malabar country. The poor Pariah is not allowed to pass through the same street as the high caste man, but if he changes his name to a hodgepodge English name, it is all right. What inference would you draw except that these Malabaris are all lunatics, their homes so many lunatic asylums, and that they are to be treated with derision by every race in India until they mend their manners and know better. Shame

upon them that such wicked and diabolical customs are allowed; their own children are allowed to die of starvation, but as soon as they take up some other religion they are well fed. There ought to be no more fight between the castes."

—*Swami Vivekananda.*

The following observation of Sri Aurovindo on the question of untouchability is worth careful perusal:

"We should recognise without any sophistical detail or hesitation those things in our creeds of life and social institutions which, apart from all phenomena of decline or deterioration, are in themselves mistaken, some indefensible, weakening to our national life or degrading and dishonouring to our civilization. One need only instance the flagrant example of the treatment of our out-castes. There are those who would excuse it as an unavoidable circumstance of the past and even as the best possible solution then available; but the latter contention is highly disputable and an excuse is no justification. There are others who would justify it, and with whatever modifications, prolong

it as necessary to our social synthesis. A solution which condemns one-fifth of the nation to permanent ignominy is no solution; it is an acceptance of weakness and a chronic wound in the social body and its spiritual, intellectual, moral and material well being; a social synthesis which can only live by making a permanent rule of the degradation of our fellow men stands condemned; the evil effects may be kept under the work only by the subtler, unobserved action of the law of Karma, but once the Light of Truth is let in on these dark spots, to perpetuate them is to maintain a seed of disruption and ruin."

No truer words were uttered before. The seed of disruption is already sown and it is only a question of time when it grows into a mighty tree and bears the fruit of ruin and disaster.

Mahatma Gandhi, the founder of the new Harijan movement also hints the same in one of his interviews given to a Press representative :

"If the so-called depressed classes are so disgusted with the so-called high class Hindus that they

want absolutely to cut themselves adrift from Hinduism and Hindus, then they form a separate entity, which means they establish a new religion, or they accept any of the other prevailing religions of India. That is a thing which can, if the so-called higher classes continue to follow in their imaginary superiority and do not perform the elementary duty of regarding the Harijans as their kith and kin."

All this is not a mere supposition. We find a lot to substantiate the same in the writings of Dr. Ambedkar and others of his class. Their whole attitude is anti-Hindu and they seem to be working with vengeance.

Says the Doctor.—"The outcaste is a by product of the caste system. There will be outcastes as long as there are castes. Nothing can emancipate the out-caste except the destruction of the caste-system. Nothing can help to save Hindus and ensure their survival in the coming struggle except the purging of the Hindu faith of this odious and vicious dogma."

—B. R. Ambedkar.

Says M. C. Rajah :—

“ Men called sub-beasts by their fellow men till they themselves believe it. Men in the name of a thing called religion condemned to live their whole lives among human excreta. Men born to dishonour, abuse, filth, slavery of body and soul—held down without possibility of escape—and yet, inspite of all that, still men enough to sting at their work, and to wangle the chance like a man to die.”

“ No greater wrong can be done to a community endowed with human feelings and human capacities that to place it in such circumstances as to force it or lead it to believe that its members are eternally and for all time to come doomed to a life of ignorance, servitude and misery, and that any sort of ambition in them for betterment or improvement is sin. These voiceless millions are ground every day into the dust, and are treated with contempt, a barbarity that is not accorded even to vilest of animals. Hungry, naked, dispirited, living in wretched hovels, cringing in their attitude through long oppression, driven often by hunger to anything they get, abandoned religiously, morally, mentally and physically, they remain utterly miserable and helpless.”

Katherene Mayo in her “ Slaves of the Gods ” has made one Medical officer Mr. Gordon speak the following about a young Panchama—“ Just a sweeper—a boy of sixteen—squatting out in the blistering sun, singing as loud as he could shout, just some doggeral while with his bare hands he cleaned latrine pails. With his bare hands, mind you, nothing to work with but his two bare hands. No wonder all sweepers stink to heaven.”

She quotes in the same book a passage from M. C. Rajah which shows our degeneracy in its nakedness :

(Addressing to the caste Hindus) “ You may breed cows and dogs in your houses, you may drink the urine of cows and swallow cow-dung to expiate your sins, but you shall not even approach an Adi-Dravida.”

The following outburst of a prominent Panchama of malabar shows whither the wind blows:

“ It is high time for the Thiyyas (a so-called untouchable caste of Malabar) to shake off a creed which is nothing less than an impediment to their welfare, freedom and convenience as a self-respect-

ing community and to join the folds of another. Indeed we are on the threshold of a crisis when we are to shun the Hindu Religion as we would a cruel satan and to run away from it as if it were a place of malignant epidemic, aye, to shun this creed of Hinduism which owing to the hideous customs resulting from the existence of a thousand and one classes and castes within its fold has become the hotbed of all that is absurd, mean, odious, nasty, loathsome and good-for-nothing. A Panchama who has a grain of self-respect in him must not remain in its fold."

"Accordingly the recent sessions of the All-Travancore Thiyya Youth League held at Shertallai has resolved that the Thiyyas should separate from the Hindu faith. The S. N. D. P. Yogam, the All-Kerala organisation of the Thiyyas at its 30th session held at Alleppey has confirmed the resolution of the All-Travancore Thiyyas Youth League and has authorised the Youth League to take steps to carry on propaganda in pursuance of that resolution. It is evident that in the course of a year 22 lakhs of Thiyyas will demonstrate their separation from the Hindu fold."

Another prominent Adi Dravida leader has appealed to his community to leave Hinduism and embrace Islam. Following is his argument :

"Educated Adi Dravidas have begun to realize that the only cause of their downfall or their community is Hinduism and that no political or social progress is possible until the Adi Dravidas cut themselves adrift from Hinduism. Some have already realized this truth and given up the Hindu faith."

"But which is the best religion for the Adi Dravidas to adopt? Buddhism, Aryasamaj, Brahmosamaj, etc., could not solve their difficulties. But Islam could enable them to tide over their difficulties. Muslims form a strong and democratic community; they are infact in a majority, if the depressed classes who are not at all Hindus are excluded from the Hindu community. By becoming Muslims the Adi Dravidas could solve their social problem and breathe the air of freedom."

It is a well-known fact that a good majority of conversions to other faiths are from among the Panchamas. They are converted not for the charm of any extraordinary teachings of those

faiths but simply on account of their abominable position in Hinduism. According to the Missionary Census nearly 300 persons are converted to Christianity every day in the Madras Presidency. And undoubtedly 95% of them are Panchamas. As to the Islamic conversions, although we don't have exact figures, yet the following from the Madras Census Commissioner regarding Mapillas in Malabar, will give a fair idea :

“Malabar, where Islam is represented by the Mapilla. to this community Hindu Depressed Classes have largely contributed and the Mapilla is still in contradistinction to his co-religionists in other districts.” Madras Census Vol. 1, P. 517.

At present a number of Islamic organizations are working in the South with the sole object of converting Panchamas into their faith. They are slowly spreading their net in the country and according to their own reports they have been successful to a large extent. Here we quote a few lines from “A Public Appeal” of one such Islamic organization :

“Islam thus flings open the doors of greatness

for the untouchables. The Shastras bind them down to degradation, the Quoran sets them on the road to the noblest achievements. It is not an empty promise. Millions of untouchables have already been absorbed into the Muslim ranks and today they stand shoulder to shoulder with the greatest of Muslims in the race of life. Islam is a living force, and the only living force in the world that brings about an entire change in man.”

As it is in one part of the country so in the other. Everywhere we come across hosts of Missionaries and Mullahs carrying vigorous propaganda in order to convert the Panchamas wholesale to their faith. And it is no wonder that they succeed in seducing several lakhs from Hinduism every year. Infact it was this bleeding wound that pained the late Swami Shradhananda and other Hindu leaders and compelled them to organize the Hindu Sangathan movement and establish Hindu Mahasabha. Although the Swami had to lay down his life for the cause yet the movement went on and to-day one finds wonderful awakening in the Hindus of the North. But the South is still in

the same deep slumber as before. And we are afraid, it may be too late when it wakes up.

What is Shuddhi? Shuddhi literally means purification. All those, who have left Hinduism and gone to other faiths, are re-admitted into the Hindu fold after due Prayaschittam ceremony. Here some non-Hindu critics ask "Why do you call it Shuddhi or purification, which otherwise means that the followers of all other faiths are Ashuddhas or impure?" Our answer is simple: As Muslims call Hindus Kaffirs, Christians call non-believers Pagans so also to a Hindu every non-Hindu is a Mlechha and his Shuddhi or purification is imperative if he desires to enter into the Hindu fold. Moreover, supposing a Hindu leaves his faith and embraces another, naturally enough, a change will come in his diet and general mode of life which, more often than not, will be against the accepted customs of the Hindu society. To be more precise, let us take an example. To a Hindu a cow is the most sacred animal. But to a Muslim, it makes no appeal. He will kill it every day and include it in his daily menu. With such a wide gulf between,

how can the two meet? For that only the Shastras have provided the various Prayaschittams to bridge over the gulf. Any person, by walking over that bridge, may safely come away to Hinduism and get a suitable place in the society.

One more idea underlying the Shuddhi movement is to make Dharma elastic. Hinduism, according to our belief, gives chances over and over again to its votaries to improve their lot. Unlike Xians and Muslims, Hindus are not damned eternally for the sins committed once. They get numberless opportunities to reform themselves. Here in this birth, through Prayaschittam, they may wipe away all their old sins and begin afresh on a clean slate. And if they don't succeed here and now, there is a series of lives to come when they will be given untold opportunities to better themselves and attain the highest wisdom and happiness. Lord Krishna says in the Gita :

मां हि पार्थ ! व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।

स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥ गीता ॥

"They, who take refuge with me, O Partha !

be they out-castes, females, Vaishyas or Shudras, attain the highest bliss."

But Shuddhi is necessary. *Vide* Manu :

अकुर्वन् विहितं कर्म निन्दितं च समाचरन् ।

प्रसन्नश्चेन्द्रियार्थेषु प्रायश्चित्तीयते नरः ॥

तस्मात्तेनेह कर्त्तव्यं प्रायश्चित्तं विशुद्धये ।

एवमस्यांतरात्मा च लोकश्चैव प्रसीदति ॥ मनुः ॥

Having done such deeds as are prohibited by the Shastras and having mixed with the people whose company is undesirable, man becomes sinner, and to expiate his sins he must undergo Shuddhi ceremony.

In Shastras the word for expiation is *Prayaschittam*. That means :

प्रायः पापं विजानीयात् चित्तं तस्य विशोधनम् ।

Prayah-Sin, Chittam-Removal; thus removal of sin is *Prayaschittam* or Shuddhi.

But are the sins really removed or destroyed? Gita answers:

यथैषांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात् कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।

ज्ञानाग्निः सर्व कर्माणि भस्मसात् कुरुते तथा ॥ गीता ॥

"As the burning fire reduces fuel to ashes, O Arjuna! so doth the fire of wisdom reduce all actions to ashes."

In Shastras, sins or Patakams are divided in five classes: Mahapatakam, Atipatakam, Anupatakam, Upapatakam and Patakam.

असच्छास्त्राभिगमनम् and नास्तिक्यम्, *i.e.*, leaving one's faith and becoming atheist are considered Upapatakam or minor sins when compared to ब्रह्महत्या, सुरापानम्, *etc.* which are known as Mahapatakam or major sins. And for the expiation of the Upapatakam, according to Yajnavalkya :

उपपातक शुद्धिः स्यादेक चान्द्रायणेन वा ।

पयसा वापि मासेन पराकेणाथवा पुनः ॥ याज्ञवल्क्यः ॥

"By Chandrayana or Paraka—two kinds of *Prayaschittams*—the minor sins are expiated."

The abovenamed *Prayaschittams* are explained in detail by various *Smritis*. In brief they

mean fasting for a number of days and performing meditation after a prescribed method. And it is well-known that fast is the best remedy for the bodily evils whereas meditation the best for the psychic.

This Shuddhi ceremony is not at all new to Hinduism. The Vedas—the oldest books of the Aryans—contain numerous passages to that effect :

ओ३म् । इन्द्रं वर्धन्तो असुरः कृषन्तो विश्वमार्यम् ।

अपन्नन्तो अरावृणः ॥ ऋग्वेदः ॥

ओ३म् । आ संयत मिन्द्रणः स्वर्स्ति शत्रुतूर्याय बृहतीममृन्नाम् ।

यया दासान्यार्याणि वृन्ना करो वज्रिन् सुतुका नाहुषाणि ॥

॥ अथर्ववेदः ॥

In the Smritis :

बलादासीकृता येतु म्लेच्छ चाण्डालदस्युभिः ।

अशुभं कारितं कर्म गवादि प्राणिर्हिसनम् ।

उच्छिष्टमार्जनं चैव तथोच्छिष्टस्य भोजनम् ।

खरोष्ट्रविद् वराहाणामामिषस्य च भोजनम् ।

तत्स्त्रीणां च तथा संगस्ताभिश्च सहभोजनम् ।

अशीतिर्यस्य वर्षाणि बालो वाप्यूनषोडशः ।

प्रायच्छित्तार्थमर्हन्ति ॥ देवलस्मृतिः ॥

In the Bhavishya Purana the story of Rishi Kanva is well-known. It is said that he went to Mishra Desham or the present day Egypt and brought from there, ten thousand Mlechhas to Aryavartta, whom he later on converted into Hindus and settled them in the soil of Rajputana. It is believed that the Rajputs of to-day are the direct descendents of those Egyptian settlers.

Even in recent times we find many an instance of Shuddhi. Dr. Tailang in his, "Gleanings from the Maratha Chronicle" has given a number of cases of those who had once left Hinduism and were again reconverted. In the "Bhakthi Lilamrit", a famous Marathi book, one Bahiram Bhatta Paithan is said to have been reclaimed to Hinduism. In the times of Shivaji and Sambhaji, many Marathas, who were converted to Islam under various circumstances, were claimed back after due Prayaschittam and Shuddhi ceremony. The names of Bajaji Nimbalkar and Gangadhar Raghu-nath Kulakarni still stand prominent among them,

In the Jammu Kashmir state, where some of the Mohammedan rulers played havoc, we find numerous firmans issued by the subsequent Hindu kings permitting all the forced converts to regain their old faith if they so chose. There in the voluminous book—रणवीर प्रायश्चित्तम् we find elaborate processes of Prayaschittams prescribed by the orthodox scholars of that day to meet all sorts of cases. Another historian Sir Desai writes in his "British State" that near Vasai village many a Hindu was converted to Christianity by the Portugese Missionaries, and to reconvert them the Brahmins of the place advised various Prayaschittams.

In our own times the Shuddhi of Miss Nancy Miller and other non-Hindu men or women is quite familiar. The dictums of Sri Shankaracharya of Karvirpitham, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, late Swami Shraddhananda, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bhai Paramananda, Dr. Moonje and others, are all in favour of Shuddhi. It is only a few followers of Varnashrama Sangha who, like the frogs in the well, refuse to see beyond the narrow walls of their age-long superstitions and feel foolishly satisfied that nothing can be bigger than their little horizon.

The following from the pen of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya—an acknowledged leader of the Sanatanists, should suffice to convince even an orthodox Hindu:—

(Addressing to Gandhiji).

"I fear you have been led to form a wrong impression. There is plenty of authority for the view that certain persons are untouchables under certain conditions and that certain other persons are untouchables by reason of their birth and occupation. But what is more important to note is that the same Smritis and the Puranas which lay this down also proclaim that, though a man may be of very humble birth, he can, by religiously avoiding certain acts and things which are prohibited and by practising those that are applauded, rise to the status of a Vaishya, a Kshatriya, and even to that of a Brahmin. This result will be definitely promoted by a person taking a *diksha* in one of the above mentioned Mantras, for, on doing so, he will necessarily have to discard the use of forbidden food and drink, will have to take his daily bath and to recite the द्वादशाक्षर and other *mantras* every day before

taking his meal. He will also have to take the vow of अहिंसा सत्यमस्तेयं शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः, which are prescribed as the compendium of the dharmas common to all the castes. The combined effect of all which will be that the *dikshit* person will naturally rise in the socio-religious scale and will soon cease to be regarded as untouchable."

"Guided by this authority, during the last six years I have myself initiated some thousands of our brethren and sisters of the humblest classes in some of these mantras and have been gratified to see the change it has wrought in them. I have now had the good fortune of having obtained the approval of a large number of learned men for this system of initiation, and I feel that the time is ripe for an organisation on a large scale to secure the benefit of it to our people as a whole."

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Well, what about the Panchamas? First of all there is no Panchama by name. And if by committing certain sins like adultery, murder, etc., one has been degraded from the original class or Varna, then the Shastras give him every opportunity to regain his original position after undergoing due

Prayaschittam or Shuddhi. We cite below a few verses from various Sanskrit books showing that even the worst sinners are reclaimed as soon as they bring faith unto the Lord, who has the Divine power to consume all evil.

अपिचेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।

साधुरेव स मंतव्यः सम्यग् व्यवसितो हि सः ॥ गीता ॥

पुण्यक्षेत्राभिगमनं सर्वपाप प्रणाशनम् ।

देवताभ्यर्थनं पुंसामशेषाघ विनाशनम् ॥ विष्णुपुराण ॥

स्नानमात्रेण गंगाया पापं ब्रह्मबधोद्भवम् ।

दुराघर्षं कथं याति चिन्तयेद्यो वदेदपि ॥ भविष्य पुराण ॥

यस्तु रागादि निर्मुक्तो ह्यनुताप समन्वितः ।

सर्वभूत दयायुक्तो विष्णुस्मरण तत्परः ॥

महापातक युक्तोवा युक्तोवा ह्युपपातकैः ।

स वै प्रमुच्यते सद्यो यतो विष्णुरतं मनः ॥ बृहन्नारदीयम् ॥

So all these Panchamas of to-day, even granting their being outcastes according to the old orthodox school, can be easily brought round after Shuddhi and given rights and privileges of an average Savarna Hindu. We submit, if that is

done the problem of Panchamas would be easily solved. The same was first begun by Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of Aryasamaj, who not only made Shuddhi of Mohammedans but reclaimed even Chandalas numbering two thousands in the Maruda state. Thereafter the Aryasamaj went on with the work. The late Swami Shraddhananda fraternised thousands of Panchamas of the Punjab, who were known Rohatiyas, Odes, Meghs, etc. and granted them an honourable position in the Aryan society. He also started Shuddhi work near Muttra, Agra, Bharatpur and various other places and succeeded in bringing back lakhs of Malkanas to Hinduism. Now numerous Hindu Sabhas and Shuddhi Sabhas are established in the country and they are carrying on the reclamation work on large scale. Even in the South, certain districts of Malabar, South Kanara and Andhra have witnessed Shuddhi work and several thousands of Panchamas have been reconverted to Hinduism. In Tamilnadu, with Headquarters at Madras, the Shuddhi work is being organized and an appreciable number has been already reclaimed.

Sangathan Movement.—Sangathan means organization. The object of this movement is to organize the Hindus. At present on account of the caste differences, the whole society is split into numberless watertight compartments. Each unit different from the other. And that is the reason while the Hindus are in overwhelming majority in the country, yet their voice is not heard. They are practically ignored in all matters. On the other hand minorities like Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Sikhs receive a preferential treatment everywhere.

So long as the Brahmin hates the Non-Brahmin and *vice versa*, there can not be Sangathan. But how to bring both the parties together? The past history and the present vested interests stand in the way. Therefore until both decide to bury the past and make common cause in the present and future, there is little hope. They say, trust begets trust. Both should learn to trust each other. The Brahmin should voluntarily yield place to the Non-Brahmin and the latter should try to avoid all invidious distinctions.

Next comes the Panchama, who is hated by both—the Brahmins as well as Non-Brahmins. Both dispise him. Both ill-treat him. And both are equally responsible for his present deplorable state.

As natural, there is a growing dissatisfaction among the Panchamas to-day. They can't tolerate the abominable treatment of the caste Hindus any more. They are throwing open challenges to the Savarnas: "Well, if you want us to remain as part and parcel of your society then alter your attitude. Give us all human rights. Treat us lovingly. Or else we shall have to desert your faith and join another where we are respected and treated honourably."

What is the reply of the orthodox? "Although you follow, more or less, the same Dharma as we do, yet you can not be admitted into the society. Shastras and ancient traditions have declared you untouchables and you must be satisfied with your lot. That is the command of Dharma. And if you don't like to obey it, you are at liberty to go anywhere you please. We, the orthodox Hindus,

care not who comes to our faith and who goes out of it."

On the other hand the attitude of the reformers is beautifully expressed by Mahatma Gandhi in the following lines:

"Injustice is being done all the world over but we have given to it the sanction of religion. These distinctions have not been created by God. The Harijans are on the lowest rung of the ladder not because of any inherent defects but only because they have been kept down by the so-called higher castes. God has bestowed on them the same talents that He has given us, but we deny them the opportunities for using them. They should surely have the same rights and privileges and the same opportunities of growth that we enjoy."

Look at the absurdity of current Hinduism. A Panchama has no right to draw water from the common village well so long he is a Hindu. But as soon as he changes faith and becomes a Muslim or a Christian, he is given every possible right. There are hundreds and thousands of instances

where Panchamas were obliged to renounce Hinduism in order to obtain the common rights of either drawing water from the Public wells or walking freely on the public roads. In our restaurants Christians are openly admitted to sit and enjoy the dainty dishes prepared by Brahmins, but a Panchama, howmuchsoever educated or cultured he may be, is shown the disgraceful board, which eternally hangs on the gate with the shameful inscription "Panchamas not permitted" Truly was it said by one of the leaders of the Untouchable community: "It is a standing disgrace for us to be treated worse than dogs and pigs. We are human beings and we must claim human treatment. If the Hindus yield, alright, or else say good-bye to Hinduism. It is better to be without religion than to loose self-respect under its name. We have tolerated too long. Now we should be out to mend or end."

As we have stated before, nearly 300 Panchamas are converted to Christianity every-day in South India and nearly 200 to Islam, thus totalling 500 a day. At this rate the annual turn out from the Hindu society will come to nearly two lakhs.

If a bank, howsoever rich it may be, goes on paying two lakhs every year and receives not a pie, it requires only simple arithmetic to find out the time when its coffers will be absolutely empty and the bank will have lost its existence. Just the same is the case with the Hindu society. Don't think it is a fantastic play with figures. Nations die in this way. Where are the Greeks and the Egyptians who once played an important part in the history of the world? Gone, gone for ever. Who can say the same won't happen with the Hindus? The nation which does not know how to guard the interests of its members is sure to suffer sooner or later. In the struggle of life, it is only the strong that survive. The weak must go to the wall. For strength we must have numbers as well as organization. But the Hindus are constantly dwindling in numbers. The organization they have, is *nothing worth the name*. Hence the importance of the Sangathan work.

A word of warning. There is a movement now in certain quarters to separate the Panchamas from the Hindu society, and thus weaken it's

numerical position. Mind you! with numbers the votes go and with the votes, the power.

Unfortunately some misguided Panchama youths also are fraternising with Non-Hindus and thus sowing the seeds of disruption. They should clearly understand that although Non-Hindu leaders may be very sweet in their behaviour just now, no sooner is their object achieved, than they will chuck them off. That is the fate of such selfish alliances. Hence, although the caste Hindus treat them in an unbecoming manner yet their interests are much safer here than elsewhere. Don't they know, blood is thicker than water.

Especially with the Harijan movement of Mahatma Gandhi, times are going to change soon. Already the intelligentsia is feeling for the betterment of the lot of the Panchama. The caste Hindus are trying to help the Untouchables both with money and man-power. The old barriers are breaking. New relations of love are being formed. Hundreds of wells and schools are being opened for the free use of the Panchamas. Now caste Hindus do go to the quarters of the so-called

Depressed classes. They have given up their false pride and prestige. Untouchability, in the towns and cities, is almost extinct. The villages are gradually following.

A word more. In the act of exploitation both the exploiter and the exploited are equally guilty. Hence if the caste Hindus are to blame for their most inhuman treatment, the Panchamas also are no less guilty. For a tyrant can not tyrannise unless the other indirectly induces him by his meek submission. If the Panchamas were brave and bent upon receiving honourable treatment, then no power on earth could humiliate them thus. It is in fact their own weakness that has made the caste Hindus overbearing. Hence it is the duty of the Panchama leaders to organize their community and educate them in such a manner that they will never pocket insults, but on the other hand rightfully claim all the privileges hitherto enjoyed by the caste Hindus. Life is not worth living without self-respect. Therefore every Panchama, nay, every Indian should learn to value honour more than even the very breath of life.

Let us close this booklet with the following words of Mahatma:

"The Harijan work can be done only through self-purification. This is a great sacrificial fire in which we have to burn our load of sins and come out purified..." 46238

"We are on our trial to-day. If we miss to-day the opportunity that God has given us, we may never hope to get the opportunity again in this generation. What we refuse to do voluntarily to-day we shall have to do in future per force, and we shall repent for having lost this opportunity. I pray to God that we may come out successful from this trial and save Hinduism and ourselves from destruction."

May God bless us!

शान्तिः ।