


## Buddhism vs. Marxism

### What is the article about?

In an essay, written in his clear and methodical style, Ambedkar has compared Buddhism with Marxism, listing out their similarities and differences.

### What is Ambedkar's stance on religion?

- Ambedkar is often mistaken to be against religion.
- But he was deeply spiritual and conscious of the importance of religion in public life.
- He considers Buddhism to be superior to other religions.
- Ambedkar also believed the Buddha's path to be superior to the major religion-rejecting philosophy, Marxism.



**AMBEDKAR**

- December 6 is observed as the **Mahaparinirvan Diwas**, or the death anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar.
- 'Parinirvan' can be translated as 'nirvan' after death, or freedom from the cycles of life and death.
- Dr Ambedkar breathed his last on **December 6, 1956**, less than two months after he had converted to Buddhism.

### How has Ambedkar compared Buddhism and Marxism?

#### Similarity

- **End** - Both strive for the same end of a just and happy society.
- Buddhism's commitment to abolishment of private property is apparent in how its Bhikshus give up all worldly goods.
- The rules for Bhikshus owning property or possessions are far more rigorous than are to be found in communism in Russia.

#### Differences

- **Means** - The driving force of India's Constitution says that Buddha was a democrat.

- Ambedkar states that the means adopted by Buddha were to convert a man by changing his moral disposition to follow the path voluntarily while the Communists adopted violence and dictatorship.
- The Buddha established Communism so far as the Sangh was concerned without dictatorship.
- It may be that it was a communism on a very small scale but it was communism without dictatorship a miracle which Lenin failed to do.
- **Importance of religion** - Communists claim the State will eventually wither away and they don't answer when that will happen, and what will replace the state.
- Communists themselves admit that their theory of the State as a permanent dictatorship is a weakness in their political philosophy.
- To the Communists, religion is anathema (something that is intensely disliked).
- Their hatred to religion is so deep seated that they will not even discriminate between religions which are helpful to Communism and religions which are not.
- **Moral values** - Ambedkar adds that while Communist dictatorship in Russia has wonderful achievements, equality will be of no value without fraternity or liberty.
- He claims that Communism can give one but not all.
- According to him, the three can coexist only if one follows the way of Buddha.

### How did Ambedkar distinguish between Buddhism and Christianity?

- Ambedkar claims that Buddhism does not have the faults of the older religion (Christianity).
- He claims that Christianity glorifies poverty and suffering in this world.
- He says that Buddhism talks of being happy in this world and of earning wealth through lawful means.

#### Quick facts

- **Socialism** - Socialism is based on the idea of public ownership of the means of production, but individuals may still own property.
- **Communism** - Communism advocates for a classless system in which all property and wealth are communally (rather than privately) owned.
- **Capitalism** - Capitalism is an economic system characterized by private ownership and a system of laws that protect the right to own or transfer private property.

#### References

1. [The Indian Express | Ambedkar on Buddhism being better than Marxism](#)
2. [Investopedia | Communism, Socialism, and Capitalism](#)



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