

CONCLUSION

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Babasaheb Ambedkar had envisaged a society where there would be no Caste; no inequality; no superiority; no inferiority; no suppression; and no exploitation; all persons are equal. To him, the new society should be reorganized on the basis of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. In his philosophy self-respect and human dignity had a pivotal importance. He espoused the noble cause of equality of status and opportunity to every Indian, assuring the dignity of the individual and unity of the nation. He sacrificed his whole life for the dignity and uplift of the poorest of the poor and was committed to the cause of those who suffered from slavery, injustice, and inhuman exploitation. His vision of Independent India would be free from the cultural and social inheritance of Varnashram Dharma and built on the Buddhist principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.

During the decisive phases of India's freedom struggle, Dr. Ambedkar had fought for a correlated but different freedom struggle, one for the liberation of the most oppressed sections of Indian society. This was a liberation movement wider and deeper than that of fighting colonialism; focusing on the kind of new nation that was to be built. It was understandable that Ambedkar, emerging from the lowest section of India's Caste-oppressed gained an education that few could equal, would take a stand not as a proponent of a revitalized, Vedic and Vedantic-centred tradition but of revolution, the revolution of 'liberty, equality and fraternity' first echoed in the French Revolution and that he found in the message of the Buddha proclaimed thousands of years before.¹ Dr. Ambedkar, until 1935, took three directions: the most visibly successful was the awakening and organizing of the Untouchables- through newspapers of their own, social and cultural institutes, and widely attended conferences, then called 'Depressed Classes' Conferences. He also participated in every opportunity to petition the British government for political representation for Untouchables, and these opportunities were many: the Southborough Committee on Franchise, the Simon Commission to evaluate the reforms and the famous Round Table Conferences at London. Ambedkar also served in the Bombay Legislature in which his efforts had won token representation for the Untouchables. The third direction his work took was that of encouraging education among the lower classes, first by exhortation and founding of hostels so that they could have a place to stay

while attending school, and eventually by establishing a still-growing network of colleges under the Peoples Education Society.² He also spoke on all phases of India's development, worked on problems of labour and law, as a member of the government, and even put aside his theories to help create a viable, generally accepted Constitution.³ Moreover, Dr Ambedkar reconceptualised the whole notion of emancipation of Untouchables in India by broadening the horizons of the concept of emancipation to include within its ambit certain other critical aspects of empowerment which remained largely, if not totally, out of its ambit till date. For instance, before the arrival of Ambedkar on scene, the idea of emancipation of Untouchables remained confined to the domains of the social and religious reforms being championed by various reform organisations. The removal of unsociability and all disabilities, from which the depressed classes suffered, formed an important item in the programmes of all social reforms and religious reform movements that sprang up in India during the British rule'. What is however, noteworthy in this context is the fact that most of such movements conceptualized the notion of emancipation of Untouchables in a narrow sense of reforming the social and religious moorings of the Hindu Socio-religious order. But when Ambedkar set on to visualize the portents of emancipation of Untouchables; he was quick enough to include the idea of appropriate representation of Untouchables in the political bodies as well as the services of government in order to afford an irreversible position of substance to the Untouchables in the socio-political dispensation of the country. Thus with Ambedkar having taken over the mantle of being the leader of Untouchables in the country, the notion of emancipation of Untouchables underwent a subtle transformation to include sufficient representation of the Depressed Classes in the politico-legislative bodies and the services of the government, besides eradication of all other socio-religious disabilities of these people.⁴ Thus, Ambedkar will be remembered as one of the greatest Architects of our Constitution. He was also very anxious to see that the Hindu law was enacted and most of it has been enacted. For Nehru, Ambedkar was "the symbol of revolt against all the oppressing features of Hindu Society". And Nehru also said: "there is no doubt that no one took great trouble and care over Constitution-making than Ambedkar".⁵ Manu made laws for Hindu society, only for Hindus, and even among them for the benefit of certain Classes like Brahmins and Kshatriyas, but Dr.Ambedkar produced laws for Indian society: Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, and Sikhs etc. He framed the Constitutional laws, not for the benefit of

certain Classes, but for the interests of all men living in Indian society irrespective of Caste and Creed, whereas Manu gave priority to the interests of a particular class.⁶ Nehru saw in Ambedkar a pioneer of Hindu law reform, and he eulogized him for it with these words: “I am happy that he saw that reform in a very large measure carried out, perhaps not in the monumental form in which he himself drafted it but in bits. I imagine that he would be remembered most as a symbol of revolt against all the oppressing features of the Hindu Society. Perhaps Ambedkar used strong language which sometimes hurt people but let us forget that. The main thing was that he revolted against which we all ought to revolt and in fact, had revolted in various degrees”.⁷ As Minister of law in Mr. Nehru’s cabinet he was one of the real authors of the Indian Constitution. More than that, he was the principal draftsman of the statutory “Hindu Code”, whose purpose was to change, under law, some of the basic framework of the Indian society and to move it into more liberal and humanistic patterns.⁸

By any standard Ambedkar may be regarded as the shining star among the revolutionaries of our time. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a great political thinker and social revolutionary that modern India had produced. His pragmatic approaches to political and social problems enabled him to become the greatest revolutionary of this century. But his revolution is not to be delivered through war and violence; it is to come through law and democracy”.⁹ The entire philosophical, ethical and religious reflections of Ambedkar are grounded in humanism, because the proper object of his study is man, the empirical man, who lives and behaves in society. The inherent idea of his thought is that man is the measure of all things, i.e., the true measure of man is worth, not birth.¹⁰ Thus, the social humanism of Babasaheb Ambedkar contained following principles: (1) equality among human beings; (2) every human being as an end in himself; (3) right of every human being to social, economic, political and religious freedom; (4) to make every human being free from want and fear; (5) to maintain liberty, equality, fraternity, and to strive to secure redemption from oppression and exploitation of man by man, class by class, and of nation; (6) to stand for a democratic society under a Parliamentary system of government; (7) to believe in non-violence as an instrument of social change and adopt peaceful and persuasive methods to avoid class conflicts and possibility of civil war; (8) to avoid any ‘ism’ or any theory or dogma in its extreme aspect; (9) need for spiritual discipline; and (10)

firm foundation of universal love, equality and human brotherhood that the Buddha taught.¹¹ Dr. Ambedkar, symbolized the life and action of a visionary and practitioner whose entire pursuits were aimed at securing rights, dignity and emancipation of the untouchables. However, the net result of his pursuits appeared to be half way marked from any angle. Certainly he obtained major concessions from the British by collaborating with them- including a new policy of positive discrimination in favour of the Untouchables- and his politics made an impact during the constitutional debates when he gained more concessions for the Dalits and succeeded in marginalizing some Gandhian propositions. But he did not get the separate electorate he wanted for the Scheduled Castes, he failed to have concrete social reforms adopted, such as the Hindu Code Bill, and he was not able to establish a party representing the interests of the Untouchables of India as a whole.¹² He lamented seeing the plights of the lower sections of the Indian society and urged them in the following words:

You must have a firm belief in the sacredness of your goal. Noble is your aim sublime and glorious is your mission. Blessed are those who are awakened to their duty to those among whom they are born. Glory to those who devote their time, talents and their all to the annihilation of slavery. Glory to those who would keep on their struggles for the liberation of the enslaved in spite of heavy odds, humiliations, storms and dangers till the down-trodden secure their human rights.¹³

Dr. Ambedkar's messages to his people, "whatever I have done, I have been able to do after passing through crushing miseries and endless trouble all my life and fighting with my opponents. With great difficulty I have brought this **Caravan** where it is seen today. Let the **Caravan** march on despite the hurdles that may come in its way. If my lieutenants are not able to take the **Caravan** ahead they should leave it there, but in no circumstances should they allow the caravan to go back. This is the message to my people."¹⁴ On the question of leadership of the Dalitbahujan movement he never depended on anybody. He believed in the principle of self-help. Dr. Ambedkar had no confusion in his mind. He never considered it possible for the oppressors to become the liberator of the oppressed. "Lost rights are never regained", Ambedkar encouraged his followers, "by begging, and by appeals to the conscience of usurpers, but by relentless struggle".¹⁵ He views that nothing is achieved without sacrifice. To get a thing you have to pay something. Therefore, Babasaheb advised his

people to be courageous, brave and lion-hearted. He clarified: “Goats are used for sacrificial offerings and not lions”.¹⁶ With justice on your side, I don’t see how you can loose our battle. The battle to me is a mater full of joy. The battle is in the fullest sense spiritual. There is nothing material or sordid in it. It is a battle, not for wealth or for power; it is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for the reclamation of human personality, which has been suppressed and mutilated by the Hindus social system. Thus, his **Final Words** of advice was ‘**Educate, Agitate and Organise**’, have faith in yourselves and never lose hope. I shall always be with you as I know you will be with me.¹⁷ Dr.Ambedkar said:

I have built the house for you and it is upto you to maintain it in proper order. I have planted the tree, if you water it, you will enjoy the fruits and you will be able to enjoy its shade, if not, you will have to sit in the sun. Our community will be ruined. So every Scheduled Caste should come under the banner of the Scheduled Caste Federation and make it more powerful. Only if we unite, we can achieve something. United we stand and divided we fall.¹⁸

Moreover, he was a savior of the dumb millions who had been forced to live the lives of sub-human beings. He was a liberator preaching them the grand universal law that liberty was never received as a gift; it has to be fought for. Self-elevation is not achieved by the blessing of others but only by one’s own struggle and deed.¹⁹ Dr.Ambedkar’s aim was the welfare of the poor classes, ending inequality based on socio-economic characters, reorganizing the political economy for the benefit of all, maintaining full employment and education, providing social security for the weak and sick and finally rebuilding the Indian society on the foundation of co-operation, love, friendship rather than division of men into rigid social barriers.²⁰ He was courageous enough to give a clarion call to the people who had suffered for thousands of years to get out of this pattern of caste and ritual, superstition of Indian society and seek truth in the Buddhist way of life, and creating a new society of harmony and happiness around them.²¹ His endeavored to establish a social order based on *Bahujan Hitaya Bahujan Sukhaya* which means greatest good for greatest number. The principle he followed from the teachings of his guru Buddha. To him, the principles of Buddhism are based on the concept of ‘Liberty, Equality and Fraternity’ and it is not only good for the down-trodden, but also good for the country, and good for the whole mankind.

Dr.Ambedkar, the builder of modern India, contributed enormously towards nation building and reconstruction of society in many ways. He loved his country and the people and worked earnestly and dedicatedly for their liberation, progress and betterment.²²

To be brief, Ambedkar's sole emphasis was on the equal treatment of all human beings in terms of law, religion and morality. And his philosophy of life was grounded in liberal culture, modern wisdom, dynamic humanism, and spirit of rationalism, transformation of traditional man into a modern literate man and drastic change of the conventional Caste-ridden society into an open society of equal fellow-beings. Undeniably, the country is indebted to the dynamic personality of Dr.Ambedkar whose earnest effort made India a Democratic, Social and Secular country which is today known as one of the best successful democratic country and also the Largest Democracy of the world. He presented the country a temple like the Constitution. And he entrusted the people of India with the task of protecting this temple. He accepted the Buddhist religion as the Indian religion based on equality, liberty and fraternity.

Finally, he had the vision of to unite the down-trodden, the oppressed in a manner which no other social reformer in India had thought of before. He interpreted justice and social equality as inalienable human right that a state must ensure for its citizens. For the first time, the great mass of India's poverty-stricken, illiterate, oppressed, tortured and absolutely marginalized millions were united as citizens, with all the citizenship rights acquired to them after their denial to them that went unquestioned in the thousands of years of Indian history. This was Dr.B.R.Ambedkar's greatest contribution to the nation and whose far-reaching implications will be felt in the coming years with the emergence of a new India where the Dalit-Bahujan mass will be increasingly able to develop themselves, shape their own destiny by following the concrete paths shown by Dr.Ambedkar and be able to steer the country to new horizons. As implied by Eleanor Zelliot, Ambedkar has become a symbol of total commitment against social injustice and also achievement against all odds, including non-Dalit social causes.²³ The true assessment of Ambedkar's movement, to my mind, is that it has shown how a social impossibility, in the framework of a very rigid social system, can have success in altering the socio-political set-up within such a small span of time. In a way, the Dalits in India have

gained more due to the political rights granted to them by the constitution the drafting of which was mostly prepared and coordinated by Dr.Ambedkar, than the blacks in the USA have gained through the Civil rights movements. It is known that even after the passing of many Civil rights, the racial problems in the United States could not be solved entirely because of the still existing undercurrents of colour prejudices among the whites reflected in various private sectors. The new identity that the Ambedkar ideology gifts to the Dalits not only has earned a socio-political discourse of its own, but has also been able to cut across the national boundaries to accommodate every oppressed groups giving them courage to challenge any oppressive world systems.

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