

My Babasaheb Ambedkar: Remembrance, Reflections and Thoughts



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Ghukha Choppy 6 December 2020 8375 views

““The Indian Constitution provides inspiration in preparation of a new South African Constitution. We hope that our efforts in formulation of a new constitution will reflect the work and ideas of this great son of India. Dr.Ambedkar’s contribution to social justice and to the upliftment of the oppressed is worthy of emulation.” ”

“– Dr. Nelson Mandela”

On December 6, 1956, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar attained immortality. Jawaharlal Nehru said that, “B R Ambedkar deserves to be remembered always by us because of his fight against social injustice. The great service that he had rendered in framing the constitution of India”. Dr. Ambedkar died in his sleep on 6th December 1956 at his home in Delhi. 6th of December is observed as Dr. Ambedkar Mahaparinirvan Diwas. A Buddhist cremation was organised at Dadar Chowpatty beach (Chaitya Bhoomi) on 7th December, attended by lakhs of grieving people. It began to be known as Chaitya Bhoomi after Babasaheb Ambedkar was cremated there. Chaitya Bhoomi is a revered place of pilgrimage for not only Ambedkarites and the Buddhists but also for all those who believe & cherish the ideals of Justice, Equality, Liberty and Fraternity. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is a universal symbol of Justice. Every year on average more than four lakh people from different parts of India and the world visit “Chaitya Bhoomi” to pay their respect and express gratitude to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born on 14th April, 1891 in a small town at Mhow Cantt near Indore in Mahar caste, which is known as untouchable caste in Maharashtra. He died on 6th December, 1956. His name was Bhim Sakpal, during childhood. His father was Ramji Sakpal, who was the follower of Saint Kabir. Therefore, he never believed in caste. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar adopted Buddhism along with five lakh people in a historical congregation on 14th October, 1956 at Nagpur. He was the first Indian among untouchables who went abroad for higher education. He got PhD in 1917 from Columbia. In 1916, after submission of his PhD thesis, he went to London for the study of law and also took admission in London School of Economics and Political Science for the study of economics. In 1921, he got the degree of Master of Science and also PhD on his thesis entitled, “The Problem of the Rupee” from London University. Simultaneously, he did Bar at Law.

In 1923, Ambedkar started his law practice and also devoted himself for the upliftment of depressed class (Dalits and Tribals) and poor. In 1930, he became the president of the All India Depressed Class Association. In 1936, he formed an Independent Labour Party, which later on turned into All India Scheduled Castes Federation. On 7th August, 1942, Ambedkar became the member of the Council for Governor General. In his chairmanship, the Constitution of India was drafted. On 3rd August, 1949, he took the charge of the Law Minister in the Government of India. In 1955, he formed The Buddhist Society of India. Ambedkar always felt that the depressed classes have no honour in the Hindu religion which also reflects in his writings and actions.

A student like me, who is just a second generation learner, can learn a lot from life, struggles and work of Dr. Ambedkar. Despite facing unparalleled hardships, severe discrimination, insults and humiliation he did not give up his studies. Babasaheb Ambedkar was not allowed to sit in the classroom because he was 'untouchable'. He successfully completed his entire schooling by sitting outside the classroom and came out victorious. Babasaheb Ambedkar never ate Paan, Tamul, Tobacco nor he ever touched Bidi, Cigarette or Alcohol, but he spent his entire life with books and books alone. He used to study eighteen hours a day as a student and later as a statesman. He is the only man on this planet who constructed home for the books which he named "Rajgruha", located at Dadar- one of the suburbs in Mumbai.

I often wonder who could be better idol, a rolemodel for us students than Dr. Ambedkar? Many students in Nagaland who experience academic failure give up their studies. Many thinks earning money or salary is an ultimate goal of human life. Many dream of becoming rich people, getting higher position in politics or administrative services, nothing wrong in that but, Is this definition of individual success sufficient enough for a person who is born in a society where majority is still struggling in the darkness? What is the impact of individual success on society? Are we able to free ourselves from our narrow tribal consciousness? Are our people from Eastern Nagaland getting Justice? Where are the roads? Where is the sanitation? Where are the medical facilities? Why the sanctity of public elections has seen to be compromised in Nagaland? Why is it that our National Criminal Justice System is eclipsed by Customary Laws in Nagaland where accused do not receive any strong deterrent punishment? Where Is the Rule of Law? When are we going to learn the principle of “One man, One Vote, One Value”? Why is it that there is no female Gaonbura or Dobashi? Why is it that there are no Female MLA/MP? When are we going to get freedom from the village influence over individual’s life and liberty where his political, social, economic, cultural, religious behavior is heavily influenced? Are our political leaders leading us from darkness to the light? Are our social leaders victims of their own intellectual prison? Why do we have so many leaders but not a single statesman? Where is our own Social Reformer? I ask questions. In this dark time and circumstances, if it is not Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, then who will inspire us?

Myself being a man who prefer to be lost in the world of books and thoughts I feel our Naga society need many Ambedkars. My Professor at Tetso College who taught us Human Rights and International Law also taught us that “Social Transformation ‘demands’ inevitable sacrifices of educated, visionary people who are willing to bring change in our ‘today’ for a better and brighter ‘tomorrow’ in the interest of the generations to come”. It pains me when I see our well-educated, intelligent people are running out of state in search of greener pasture. Why is it that none thinks about ‘building’ a new world for the future generations like how Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar did? I read that Dr Ambedkar got opportunity to teach abroad, he also got opportunity to become a Bombay High Court Judge but he refused? Why? Because he wanted to work for the people, he wanted to bring them out from the darkness to the light. He wanted to create a new, better, brighter world for those who were the captives of the dark ghetto of ‘Caste system’. Dr. Ambedkar’s life teaches us to be stronger and selfless. He was a man who had a passion for learning his whole life, who was dedicated to reason over superstition, to progress over tradition. He was a man who had great faith in young people and their capacity to lead a social revolution. His message to youth was, "Educate. Agitate. Organize." Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is an example to us of what is possible, individually and collectively.

Dr. Ambedkar was an extraordinary patriot, social mastermind, political reformer, philosophical essayist with dynamic thoughts. He represented all political, social and social activities which expanded the explanation of human advancement and satisfaction. He was the spirit for the constitution of India. He campaigned for the advancement of the abused and discouraged classes. He stood uncommon crusading soul, cutting out in this method assumes significant job for himself between the main engineers of current India. In this procedure, Dr. Ambedkar rises not just as a Valliant upholder of the Indian equitable republic, yet too catches the extraordinarily unmistakable spot in the Indian Pantheon as an unordinary scholarly mass pioneer who stirred the social still, small voice of contemporary India.

Today Babasaheb is not with us but the path that he has shown is before us. Dr Ambedkar is being remembered all over the world. His message has now reached to every corner of the planet. The “ROMAS” (derogatorily referred to as gypsies across Europe), discriminatory minority in Hungary turn to Babasaheb Ambedkar in their quest for Dignity and Equality. Dr Qbádélé Bakari Kambo, Ph.D. an Afrikan anti-amerikkkan from the University Campus in Ghana said, “Ambedkar is more relevant to Africa than Gandhi”. “We need Ambedkar, Not Gandhi” he famously advocated while protesting for the removal of the statute of Mahatma Gandhi. On this note I ask final question- When will we understand the relevance of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, his life and struggles to us? Undoubtedly, the words of a man who rejected violent Karl Marx and accepted compassionate Buddha – Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar will forever echo in the eons to come.

Ghukha Chophy

Ghukha Chophy, An Enlightened Citizen, Dimapur

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