The great and pious land of India defies all comparisons to the sheer number of sages, saints, seers and statesmen she has nurtured in her lap. Much water has flown in the Ganges since she had cradled the first of human civilizations with fathomless antiquity. But then the pages of history is punctuated with the foot-prints of some of her progeny who have defied death. Who upon this mortal Earth has achieved immortality after all? Perhaps No; but, by dint of indefatigable deeds, do some live as legends indomitably in the memories of men. Such a one, undeniably, is Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar.

Wonderful is the way of the world. Since the days of mythology and the pre-historic days, it has been seen time and again that the lotus blooms in the mire, the lighting beams in the dark clouds, dark is the bard Nightingale and pearls are produced by the oysters. In the same way, the one who like a glow-worm in the dark night had glowed in a blue-moon night of 14th April of 1891 in the untouchable Mahar family of Major Subedar Ramji Shakpal and Bheemabai of the Ratnagiri district of Maharasthra was none else than Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar. The Sixth Child of the couple was dearly christened as Bhim, after the legendary Pandava. His father endearingly called him ‘Bhim’.

He was bereaved of his mother when he was only two years old. So he went into the care of his elder sister Meerabai. Lord Krishna was born of Devaki but was brought up by Yosoda. The fate of Bhim also drew a parallel. Who did ever dream that the orphaned Bhim would one day be instrumental in shaping the future of the sub-continent? The parental care and commandments, the foster-mother’s spiritual moorings shaped him as a man of austere, work-culture and wisdom.

He received his primary education in Satara of Maharashatra. The problem of untouchability in India at the time was very acute. The people of the lower castes were despised. The schools were not free from the practice. Even the teachers were not sparing either. Eating and drinking were restricted. Food was served separately and drinking water used to be poured
on their palms. This practice of hatred deeply touched his sensibility. He was honest to the hilt and importunate since his very childhood. He was ambitious, diligent and wistful. So, a teacher of his, whose surname was Ambedkar, loved him. The name of his village and his teacher, he himself adopted the surname as his own.

As the first amongst the untouchables, Ambedkar matriculated from the Elfinstone High School of Mumbai in 1907. So, he was hailed in the area and the pre-eminent Maratha, Lok Krishnaji Arjun Keluskar had gifted him a book called “Goutam Buddha”. With much difficulty he completed his college education. He graduated in 1912, with the financial help from Raja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad, the Maharaja of Baroda and later he moved abroad for higher study under a pact that after his return he would serve in his Kingdom for at least a decade.

In 1913, he left for New York for higher studies. There was no untouchability, no caste-bar, no discriminations. All were equal and free. So the days there were fun-filled. He Passed M.A in 1915 and acquired a Ph.D in 1916. He had a desire to go to England for further studies, but his commitment to the scion of Baroda brought him back to India. Back here, he was placed in a prestigious position, but was never free from that trouble of untouchability. He was seen with scorn as he belonged to an touchable caste. Later, he moved to London for higher studies. He returned to India in 1923 after taking degrees in Economics and Law. He had decided to do his might for the upliftment of the down-trodden. In consequence, untouchability was made inconsequential in offices. ‘As you think, so be it’, became fruitful. He then formed an ‘Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha’ (Outcastes Welfare Association). He believed in the Oneness of all as the Children of the God and that all human beings are equal. He later joined the Indian Freedom Movement under Mahatma Gandhi’s leadership and attended the Round Table Conference in 1932. There he succeeded in securing separate constituencies for the untouchables. He was thus successful in bringing to the notice of the world the plight of the untouchables. He was untiringly trying to do away with the blight.

He was a politician, lawyer and an economist of the highest order. Whenever he went abroad, he collected large numbers of books. Once, he had brought more than three thousand books from New York. He had a personal library which he had named “Raj Griha”. Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar was fond of reading and writing. He was a scholarly person and had penned a number of books that dealt with myriad topics ranging from politics to Buddhism, from castes in India to important Political figures in India. Some of his major writings are as follows :- (1) Essay on Untouchables and Untouchability : Social, (2) Small Holdings in India and their Remedies, (3) Buddha and Karl Marx, (4) Manu and the Shudras, (5) Untouchables or the Children of India’s Ghetto, (6) Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah, (7) Statement of Evidence to Royal Commission on Indian Currency, (8) Who were Shudras ?, (9)Buddha and his Dharma, (10) Revolution and Counter Revolution in India, (11) Paramountacy and the Claim of the Indian States to be independent, (12)The Evolution of Provincial finance in British India : A Study in the Provincial, (13) History of Indian currency and banking, (14) The Untouchables : who were they and why became untouchable?, (16) Federation versus Freedom, (17) Philosophy of Hinduism, (18)Notes on Acts and Laws, (19)Ancient Indian Commerce, (20) Caste in India : their mechanism, genesis and development, (21) Annihilation of Caste, (22) Preservation of social order,
His works are testimony enough of the vastness and depth of his studies, wisdom and the free-feeling thought and greatness of his qualities which are eloquently refugient in his works.

In the Round Table Conference of 1932 in London, he had succeeded to secure separate constituencies for the untouchables. Gandhi was opposed to this as, in his idea, this would widen the divide. But, later, Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar was able to secure 184 seats for the Harijans in place of only 71. Under a pact in 1941, Ambedkar was included as a member of the Armed Forces Committee. Thus he secured more placements for Mahars in the Armed Forces and in forming a separate regiment for them. The Mahars were almost deprived of Higher Education due to untouchability. So, in the memory of Lord Buddha, he established a College named ‘Siddhartha College’. Especially for the Mahars on the 20th June, 1947 at the time of India’s Partition, Ambedkar raised the question of the fate of the untouchables in the ceding regions. As a result, Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel brought a bill in the Constituent Assembly on 29th April, 1947 which was passed to make “untouchability a Punishable Crime”, it thus became A Red letter day in Indian history. The Life-time struggle of Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar became fruitful and the blot was done away with for good. The world leader’s were all praise for him.

Once, as a boy, Ambedkar was not allowed to board a cart and was debarred from using a well; one day he was inducted as the Labour Minister in the Viceroy’s Council and in this capacity he had done a lot for the labour fraternity, as also he had got legislation passed against untouchability.

Ambedkar became the first Law Minister in free India. Everybody welcomed the Nehru Cabinet; but there writ large the confusion as to what would be the future governance like, and what should be the Constitution like and who would shoulder the responsibility of framing all things which would envisage the future of India on the path of peace, progress and prosperity. It won’t be an easy task at the least. The story of India’s Constitution is no less interesting. India was ever ruled by various dynasties through the ages on the strength of the wisdom and acumen of the rulers and on the basis of Shastras, Shruties, Samhitas, Vedas and Purans. The foundation was dharma, and dharma, as ever, was guided and guarded by the guardian rulers. The Britishers never accepted that India had the right nor the might to frame a constitution for themselves. They therefore appointed the Simon Commission to find a modus operandi to find a solution and the result was the formation of the Nehru Committee headed by Motilal Nehru and the Nehru Report was the first frame-work in this direction.

Making a constitution was not at all any body’s cup of tea. It definitely pre-supposes a pre-knowledge of the various constitutions-prevailing in the contemporary world, deep knowledge on law and, after all, a thorough understanding of Indian history and ethos, without which a step ahead would invite apprehensions of dangerous proportions in the given situations.

As the Constitution that the Nation got was the longest in the world, so was the process
of making it prolonged and highly debated. It took two years eleven months and eighteen days to make it. As per the cabinet mission plan the commitment of the State legislative councils was called for. There were 389 members in the constituent assembly in all. In the meanwhile, India was bifurcated and the number came down to 299. On the November 26, 1949, the 248 members present in the Constituent Assembly put their assent on the draft constitution and got it passed. Before that, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected as the President of constituent assembly on the December 11, 1946. The Drafting Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar taking as members in it the heads of different Committees. The other members were N. Gopalaswami Ayangar, Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, Sayed Mohammed Sa’adulla, K. M. Munshi, B.L. Mitter and D. P. Khaitan (Later N. Madhav Rao was appointed in B.L. Mitter’s place and T. T. Krishnamachary was appointed in the vacancy caused by the death of D.P. Khaitan). They produced such a complete and commendable constitution which not only succeeded in giving a viable democracy to India but in upholding and maintaining unity in diversity of Indian society and culture. In this regard the comment of Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar in the Assembly on 25th November, 1949 is remarkable; he said, “The constitution, I offered may be good or bad, it will depend on how the men in office use it”. It means, “However good a Constitution may be, if the executors fail to deliver, it may prove to be a bad one, and if the executors are good enough, however bad the constitution may be, it will definitely prove to be good.”

On the 26th November, 1949 Dr. Rajendra Prasad, in his inaugural speech announced in his memorable style that the Constitution Assembly in the whole has been successful in giving us a commendable constitution and expressed confidence that would be effective enough to fulfill the needs of India, but opined that the success of a constitution will depend much on the ability, integrity and character of the elected representatives. If they lack in the qualities, however ideal constitution may be, it will fail to deliver.

On the 29th of August 1947 he was made the Chairman of the Drafting Committee; he was to give India the biggest and the most complex of a Constitution. He turned out to be fortune-maker of a great nation. He became the Chairman of the Crips Committee which is a land-mark event in India’s history. He was equal to the monumental task he was entrusted with and proved himself to be the Modern Manu as the chief architect of the monument called the Indian constitution. Not only did he create but achieved for himself legendary dimensions. He gave a lot to the nation and the nation was awaiting for more from him, when at the very critical juncture of the nation’s new phase of history, his very health had started failing.

The Constitution as the brain-child of Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar acumen had incorporated the greatest schedules on the Dalits and Down-trodden which brought eulogies from the world over. The schedule was accepted on the November 29, 1948. He had warned against the nation-baiters and likened them to the traitors in history who had betrayed the ruler of Sindh, Dahir and the likes of Jayachandra who led to India’s ultimate subjugation. He warned against such treachery in future. Therefore he had vowed to guard India’s freedom till his last drop of blood.

Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar was a great son of India. As the architect of Indian Constitution, his contribution remains unmatched. The
eradication of untouchability and casteism will remain his unforgettable tribute to the making of the modern legacy in the country. This has not only immortalized him, but lifted the deprived, depressed and the down-trodden from the deep pit of discrimination. The betterment of the battered was the mission of his life. His experiences as a member of the depressed class was an open book for himself which guided his future course of action to achieve the goal of his dreams. Though he was intent upon the upliftment of the oppressed, his focus was very much on the unity, integrity and glorification of the nation despite all the contradictions and diversities. Because he believed that, only in unification and not in the disintegration, lies the good of all. The various provisions of the constitution stand testimony to these ideals of the great mind. The secular sentiments of the constitution are the refulgent of his liberal and all-assimilative mindset.

Whenever history has witnessed a depression in the arenas of vital social life, history has always come up with a man with might to refurbish and resurrect, and the great Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar is such a trend-setter and history-maker who rose to the occasion of time and set the time on the roll.

There is no dearth of such men and women in the long and lustrous history of India who have incarnated from time to time at various points of history, and regenerated and enlivened the continuity and refulgence of the glory to get going.

The role played by Buddhist teachings in shaping the mind and thought of Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar has very much reflected in his brain-child, the Indian constitution. It was this that deterred him from denouncing the deathless Vedic dharma and embracing any foreign religion, but induced him for a great and universally assimilative conciliatory approach. The acceptance of the constitution on the January 26, 1950 is no less a tribute to the trials and tribulations undergone by Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, who dedicated, with determination, his all to treat the ailing India for a healthy and rejuvenated life of endless embarkment into the future. His motto of struggle for the right and not against anything definitely saved India from more possible turmoil’s. His inducements and indictments will always keep the unprivileged inspiring and the atrocious deterred. The posthumous award of “Bharat Ratna” to him was really deserved. But, no amounts of awards or laurels can match his personality, pursuits and performances. The extent of his achievements has definitely secured for him a unique and fluorescent place for him in the annals of history. The world will remember him as a messiah and as a man of destiny, who designed and defined the destiny of a nation and a people.

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