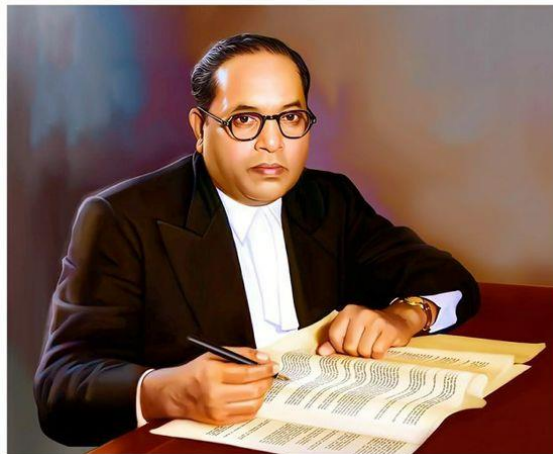




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## The great son of India Dr. Ambedkar

The great son of India, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, is always remembered with reverence and respect due to his immense personality and timeless contributions. His profound scholarship, transparent authenticity, unique eloquence, extraordinary organizational skills, and resolute determination against injustice characterize him as a towering figure in history. Dr. Ambedkar was born into the oppressed Mahar community, fought lifelong for the untouchables, and until his last moments, he remained dedicated to the welfare of his fellow countrymen.



Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar was born into the Mahar community and had to witness many humiliating situations personally imposed on India's untouchables. During his school days, young Bhimrao realized the meaning of the stigma of untouchability. Once, when Bhimrao and his brother were traveling from Masur railway station to Goregaon, they hired a bullock cart. Shortly after setting off, the cartman learned that the two boys in the cart were 'untouchables'. The cartman immediately got off the cart. Bhimrao's elder brother had to drive the cart while the cartman followed on foot, fearing pollution from the untouchable children! Furthermore, due to the same reason, they couldn't find water throughout the journey.

Due to being an 'untouchable', Bhimrao was forced to sit apart from the rest in school. He couldn't mingle or play with other boys. It's said that teachers avoided touching his notebook, and some wouldn't even address Bhimrao and other students of his caste because they feared being contaminated. When they felt thirsty in school, they weren't given glasses to drink from; instead, they had to tilt their heads forward and cup their hands together so someone

could pour water into their mouths. But, most degrading of all, they were not allowed to learn Sanskrit. For Bhimrao, this was perhaps the most humiliating indignity.

However, as the saying goes, "Where there is a will there is a way". Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar overcame all disabilities, humiliations, and poverty through the sheer brilliance of his intellect and determination. Soon, his exceptional abilities began to be recognized. Thanks to the foresight of the progressive Maharaja Sayajirao of Baroda, Bhimrao was able to enrol in Elphinstone College in Bombay and later join the Baroda State Service after graduation. Sometime later, the Maharaja, who was sending some students to the United States for higher studies at Columbia University, included Bhimrao among them. Professor Seligman, the renowned economist, was his teacher there. In 1915, Bhimrao obtained a Master's degree for his thesis "Ancient Indian Commerce". In May 1916, he presented a paper on "The Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis, and Development", at the Anthropology Seminar sponsored by Dr. Goldenweiser. In June 1916, he submitted his Ph.D. thesis entitled "National Dividend for India: A Historic and Analytical Study", which was published eight years later under the title "The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India". Bhimrao dedicated the book to Maharaja Sayajirao. In his introduction to the book, Professor S.A. Seligman stated: "Nowhere to my knowledge, has such a detailed study of the underlying principles been made." In this way, Bhimrao emerged in the academic field. He studied Economics, Law, and Political Science in America and later at the London School of Economics and Bonn University, where he wrote the history of Indian currency and banking.

This notion is misleading that Dr. Ambedkar was not as enthusiastic about obtaining self-rule as he was about the emancipation of the Dalits. The fact is that he desired self-rule for all. He wanted complete self-rule, not concentrated in the hands of a few, but for everyone. He also believed that until the Dalit community was awakened and organized to fight for their rights, if independence were achieved, it would remain restricted to the oppressors. Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts on self-rule are profound, fundamental, and inclusive. Along with political freedom, he advocated for social, economic, and cultural freedom for all people here. In his speech at the First Round Table Conference on November 12, 1930, Dr. Ambedkar said, "We need a government that can sincerely pursue the country's welfare and not be concerned with anyone's greed or bias towards social and economic issues." Not only that, in the grand reception held in Dadar Maidan, Pre-independence Mumbai, he also said that Hindus, Muslims, Dalits should all have self-rule if it is achieved. Recently, the All-India Dalit Congress has also approved a similar proposal. There is unanimity among all on this issue, but the problem is that whether the power obtained through self-rule will be equally distributed among all sections of society or will remain in the hands of a particular group.

Very few people are aware that when Dr. Ambedkar was included in the first cabinet of independent India, he wanted to handle the Ministry of Economic Planning. However, he was given the Law Ministry instead. The subject of the doctoral dissertation Dr. Ambedkar wrote to obtain his degree was 'The Problem of the Rupee'. It was so influential that the renowned socialist thinker Mr. Harold Laski commented on it, saying that its author is 'quite a radical'. He had a profound study on subjects related to economics and law. His contemplation on these matters is reflected in his books, which established him as an economist.

Dr. Ambedkar was a great political thinker, but his politics was connected to principles. He considered untouchability a curse and devoted his entire life to its eradication, yet his struggle always remained peaceful. When some provocative actions occurred during the Satyagraha at the Chavdar tank of the Mahad by the savarnas, Dr. Ambedkar prepared his followers to work with restraint, and they succeeded in it. He did not accept the term 'untouchable', but he also did not like the term 'Harijan' given by Gandhi. He believed that the term 'Harijan' reflected a patronizing attitude, which was against the trinity of self-respect, self-reliance, and self-improvement that he advocated.

The Constitution written by Dr. Ambedkar is a complementary and protective ornament to our fragmented country's democracy. In the Constitution, Dr. Ambedkar has written the moral values of every individual. Traditional religions connect humans to the concept of God and instead of facing temporal problems, they leave the burden of those problems to God. This makes human agency ineffective and creates obstacles to progress. Disturbance arises in interpersonal dialogues, hindering the development of brotherhood. Dr. Ambedkar showed their distinctiveness by considering these deceptions in 'Religion and Dhamma'.

Dr. Ambedkar appears to have laid down a common thread of liberalism, socialism, state socialism, and Dhamma in all of them, which is Liberty, equality, and fraternity. We see repeated recitations of these elements in his writings and speeches. From his inaugural address before the Mahad Conference (1920) to 'Buddha and His Dhamma' (1957) and many other essays and speeches, references to Liberty, equality, and fraternity can be found. It means he did not accept these principles at any stage of his life, but embraced them throughout his life. He considered these principles as his ideals. In 'Annihilation of Caste', he says: "If you ask me, my ideal would be a society based on Liberty, equality, and fraternity." In the famous speech 'The Annihilation of Caste', Dr. Ambedkar advocated that compassion, equality, and freedom are essential for human advancement.

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