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A Review of the Poem A Messiah of the Masses



Dr. B. Krishnaiah

Assistant Professor

Department of English

School of Humanities

University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad

Telangana, India

A Messiah of the Masses

-P. Laxmi Narayana

Dr. Bheemrao Ambedkar, a proud son of India

The mud particles of this country are wet with your sweat and toil

A mighty monarch of intellectual empire

How the human world hideously divided on caste considerations

And it is an awkward fragmentation into community compartments

Where men are subhuman creatures—

A dedicated thinker appears on the horizon

Burning midnight oil to bring light into the endless darkness

To liberate great masses of men and women from the clutches of untouchability

A freedom from subjugation and slavery of the countries

Accepting insult, injury and humiliation in a long drawn existential battle
A brave warrior who never bowed down to the brutal assaults and attacks
It was no less than Prime Minister Nehru inviting you to assume the highest office of
chairman
You have created a historic humane document— the *Constitution of India*
Now are we all, the most respected equals: free from exploitation and intimidation
You are a great genius of unbounded intellectual sweep
India owes you for the extraordinary work you have executed
You are the patron of the poor and the torchbearer of the oppressed
How a conservative land turns into a modern Indian State
Let poverty and squalor pass off into the procession of time
Millions of salutations to you— a hero who lives in the hearts and souls of this great
nation!

Review

The poem “A Messiah of the Masses” by P. Laxminarayana, a former Professor, Department of English, Osmania University, Hyderabad, portrays life and struggles of Bharataratna Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the icon of the masses in general and the oppressed in particular, who earned the untouchables of the past and Dalits of today, and women in India a respectful and dignified space. He worked for the uplift of Dalits and women throughout his life by sacrificing his personal and family life. Though it is a short poem, it is very significant in presenting the important events in life of Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar has led uncompromising and innumerable social, economic and political movements against discrimination and oppression of Dalits and the marginalized for the prevalence of the feelings of democracy, liberty and equality in the psyche of Indian citizens, particularly among the upper-caste Hindus. Life of the untouchables/Dalits in India is unimaginable as it is now without the heroic fights and writings of Dr. Ambedkar. The poet, P. Laxminarayana, begins the poem considering Dr. Ambedkar “a proud son of Indian” soil and “a mighty monarch of intellectual empire,” who has put forth his vision touching upon every social evil and problem of the nation.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has emancipated the masses of India from the clutches of oppression and discrimination of Hindu caste system. He has never budged an inch in his fight to achieve human rights and put an end to the darkness in lives of the Dalits by providing them opportunity for education and employment, and rooting out untouchability and inequalities in the society. He faced many insults and injuries at the hands of caste Hindus in the process. The poet presents it very effectively in the poem as follows:

To liberate great masses of men and women from the clutches of untouchability

A freedom from subjugation and slavery of centuries

Accepting insult, injury and humiliation in a long drawn existential battle

A brave warrior who never bowed down to the brutal assaults and attacks

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, well aware of Dr. Ambedkar’s knowledge of constitutions of various countries, was an admirer of the genius of Ambedkar. He appointed Dr. Ambedkar the chairman of Drafting Committee of Indian constitution soon after Independence. The chairman executed his acumen, wisdom and polymathy and successfully reflected the spirit of democracy built on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity in the greatest document of India called constitution. Therefore, the nation considers him the father of Indian constitution.

These principles bring about a considerable change in the social structure of India turning it from conservative and traditional to a modern and scientific state. The nation is heavily indebted to him for this revolutionary change being the corollary of his intellectual genius. The poet says:

You are a great genius of unbounded intellectual sweep
India owes you for the extraordinary work you have executed
How a conservative land turns into a modern Indian state

Undoubtedly, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is a universal genius and a “patron of the poor and the torchbearer of the oppressed.” He topped in the Cambridge University’s survey of the world’s top 100 intellectuals in the year 2011. His writings dealing with the myriad social issues are being still discussed and debated in many universities all over the world. The United Nations recognized his services by celebrating his 125th birth anniversary for the first time this year. The poem ends on an optimistic note: “Let poverty and squalor pass off into the procession of time” and paying great homage to Dr. Ambedkar: “Millions of salutations to you— a hero who lives in the hearts and souls of this great nation”. Thus, P. Laxminarayana presents Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as an emancipator of the discriminated, oppressed, exploited and marginalised in India in his poem. As the poet has presented his views, the young generation of today should take forward the great message and mission of Dr. Ambedkar into the society to rebuild our nation, a modern state— free from oppression and exploitation.