

**EDUCATE, AGITATE, ORGANIZE,
HAVE FAITH AND LOSE NO HOPE**

The All India Depressed Classes Conference was held at Nagpur from 18th to 20th July 1942. On this occasion the Chairman and Members of the Reception Committee presented the Address to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on 20th July 1942. The draft of the Address and reply to the Address by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar are as follows : Editors.

Address Presented to

The Hon'ble Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

M.A., Ph.D., D. Sc, J.R, Barrister-at-law,

Member of The Executive Council of H.E. the Viceroy

Our Most Beloved Babasaheb,

We, the Chairman and Members of the Reception Committee of the third All India Depressed Classes Conference held at Nagpur, beg respectfully to present you this address on the occasion of your having completed 50th year of age, in token of our grateful appreciation of your long, sustained and untiring zeal and work in the cause of the downtrodden dumb millions of India.

This year is, by co-incidence, a most important one in the history of the Depressed Classes of India inasmuch as you have completed 50eth year of your age and you have now changed your sphere of work from active politics to the executive. If your life-history is anything, it is nothing but the history of the progress of the oppressed millions and sacrifice of one individual. You are not only an individual to us but an institution. You are our sole guide, friend and philosopher; nay, you are the only prop of the Depressed Classes. Your continuous and sustained efforts in the just and righteous cause for the uplift of our classes are really the means of such benefits as we have so far achieved.

A budding lawyer as you were, with a vast future, you risked your all by throwing yourself whole-heartedly in the struggle for relieving the distressed from the oppressed. In doing so, you did not halt to realise that you were antagonising your future clients, viz. the touchable classes, for a fight in the interests of the Depressed Classes is a fight against the so-called caste Hindus. Little did any one then realise that your efforts, in a short space of two decades, would result in the recognition of the rights of the Depressed Classes as a living entity necessitating a seat on the highest Executive of the country.

The procession from the Railway Station Nagpur to the Conference Pandal and the grand attendance at the Conference Session are testimony of the extent to which you are held in esteem by the people of our Communities. This spontaneous expression is but a little expression of the devotion of our classes to you for what you have done. You are more than a creator to us. We were thrown by the creator in a bottom-less abyss, but unlike him you have done everything to lift us up out of it.

We can find in history no equal to you in respect of your head and heart, who, for no other reason than service to our classes, has been as liberal as you, in keeping open the purse freely and devoting all life and energy for our cause. Words fail us to open our hearts and give expression to our feelings. Suffice it to say that if there be any living God on earth, he is personified in you.

We again offer you our sincere and heartfelt gratitude and wish you a long life so that your mission on this earth may be fulfilled.

Nagpur,

We Beg to Remain,

The 20th July, 1942.

Your most grateful and devoted followers.
Chairman and Members of the Reception
Committee of the All-India Depressed Classes
Conference

In replying to the address. Dr. Ambedkar said :—

“Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you for the Address you have presented to me.

I wonder if such an address was at all necessary. Toasts and addresses have a peculiar history behind them, at any rate, toast has. The ceremony of drinking to the health of the King as we see it in the English Society came in after the civil war and during the period of restoration. It was originally a matter of compulsion and was forced on those English Regiments which had rebelled against the King. It was to enforce loyalty to the new King that they were forced to drink for the health of the King. Drinking for the health of the King is now universal and nobody cares to inquire about its origin. Its origin, as I told you, lay in the desire to compel doubtful loyalty to proclaim itself. Your loyalty, I know, is not doubtful and I should have thought it was unnecessary to vouchsafe it by means of this Address. Now that you have insisted on my accepting it, I welcome it as a token of the sentiments of love and affection which you bear towards me. It is a token of your appreciation of what I have done for the Untouchables. This Address proves that you uphold the stand I have taken in Indian politics in the name of the Untouchables of India. Our ideal is to be recognized as honourable partners with the Hindus and the Muslims in running the Government of this country—partners on honourable and equal terms. I can assure you that I will strive to achieve the ideal we have fixed before us.

You have less need of an assurance from me that I will fight for the ideal. I stand in greater need of an assurance from you. You have assured me of your love and affection. It was quite unnecessary. I want an assurance of another kind. It is an assurance of strength, unity and determination to stand for our rights, fight for our rights and never to return until we win our rights. You promise to do your part. I promise to do mine. With justice on our side, I don't see how we can lose our battle. The battle to me is a matter full of joy. The battle is

in the fullest sense spiritual. There is nothing material or sordid in it. For ours 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 Hindu Social System and will continue to be suppressed and mutilated if in the political struggle the Hindus win and we lose. My final words of advice to you is educate, agitate and organize, have faith in yourselves and never lose hope. I shall always be with you as I know you will be with me.”¹

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1. Report of Depressed Classes Conference, Nagpur Session - July 1942.