

Contribution of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar towards Indian Society

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Abstract: Dr. Ambedkar, a tenacious fighter and a brilliant scholar, has significantly contributed to society's pursuit of liberty, equality, and fraternity. He was the first Indian to break down the barriers to the advancement of women in India. He led several social movements to secure human rights for the tyrannised and depressed sections of society. He stands as a symbol of the struggle for social justice. He laid the foundation of standard civil code for Hindus and other sections of Indian society. This paper aims to highlight Dr. Ambedkar's views and contributions to Indian society. He created awareness among poor, illiterate women and inspired them to fight against unjust social practises like child marriages and the devadasi system. Dr. Ambedkar's analysis of the caste system, untouchability, and Hindu social order was intended to bring about a homogenous Hindu society based on human values of equality, liberty, justice, and universal brotherhood. Dr. Ambedkar tried to adequately include women's rights in India's political vocabulary and constitution. He insisted on the Hindu Code bill, suggesting some basic improvements and amendments in the assembly. His deep concern and feelings for the overall development of women are expressed in many of his writings.

Keywords: Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, social justice, education, caste system, Indian constitution, Indian Society

1. Introduction

Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Chief Architect of the Indian Constitution, was a scholar par excellence, a champion, a visionary, an emancipator, and a true promoter of social justice. Dr. Ambedkar started his movement in 1920. He started fierce propaganda against the Hindu social order and launched a journal, Mook Nayak, in 1920 and Bahiskrit Bharat in 1927. Through its issues, he stressed gender equality and the need for education and exposed the problems of the depressed and women. The encouragement of Dr. Ambedkar to empower women to speak boldly was seen when Radhabai Vadale addressed a press conference in 1931. He strongly advocated for family planning measures for women in the Bombay Legislative Assembly. Dr. Ambedkar incorporated the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity in the Constitution of free India. It's a living homage to his juristic genius and social heart that, over time, the High Courts and the Supreme Court have shaped the law to serve people of India. He advocated inter-caste marriage as one of the solutions to the problem of casteism. But he stresses that belief in the "Shastras" is the root cause of maintaining gene pools. He thus suggests, "Make every man and woman free from the servitude of the Shastras; cleanse their minds of negative views on the Shastras; and he or she will interdine and intermarry." According to him, society must be based on reason and not on the atrocious traditions of the caste system.

The life of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar is a saga of the great struggle of a man who, in spite of being born into a family of "untouchables," rose to great heights and occupied essential positions entirely on account of his great merit and hard work. It takes courage to break free from the shackles of social inequality. It takes enormous amounts of courage to believe that things can change. A leader must fight these inequalities and establish a new social order. Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was a scholar, a social reformer, and a leader who dedicated his life to eradicating social inequality in India.

2. Journey of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, and everyone knows he was one of the architects of the Indian Constitution. He was a well-known political leader, eminent jurist, Buddhist activist, philosopher, anthropologist, historian, orator, writer, economist, scholar, and editor. Dr. Ambedkar fought to eradicate social evils like untouchability and for the rights of the Dalits and other socially backward classes throughout his life. Dr. Ambedkar was appointed India's first law minister in the Cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour in 1990. He established an India of equals, a country that provided more significant opportunities for historically disadvantaged people. He was a man who made us a nation of equals. Babasaheb's family was from the Mahar community and came from the Ambavade town of Mandangad taluka in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. However, he was born in the military cantonment town of Mhow, now in Madhya Pradesh, on April 14, 1891, as his father was then a subedar major with the Mahar Regiment of the Indian Army. He went to a government school where children from lower castes, regarded as untouchables, were segregated, given little attention or assistance by the teachers, and not allowed to sit inside the classroom. Students from the community had to go without water if the peon did not report for duty. In 1894, Babasaheb's family moved to Satara in Maharashtra, and his mother passed away shortly after their family moved to Satara. His teacher, Mahadev Ambedkar, a Brahmin, was fond of him and changed his surname from "Ambavadekar" to "Ambedkar" in school records. In 1897, Babasaheb's family moved to Bombay. In 1918, he became a Professor of Political Economy at the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics in Bombay. Though he was very popular with his students, he faced discrimination from his colleagues. During this period, Babasaheb started taking greater interest in politics as he was invited to testify before the Southborough Committee, which was preparing the Government of India Act of 1919. During this hearing, he argued for creating separate electorates and reservations for untouchables and other religious communities. Babasaheb continued to fight for justice for the untouchables in the years that followed as a practising lawyer and as a social reformer.

By 1927, he decided to launch active movements against untouchability and espouse access to public drinking water resources and the right to enter Hindu temples. He led a satyagraha in Mahad to fight for the right of the untouchable community to draw water from the main water tank of the town. He was appointed to the Bombay Presidency Committee to work with the Simon Commission

in 1925. In 1936, Babasaheb Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party, which contested the 1937 Bombay election to the Central Legislative Assembly for the 13 reserved and four general seats, securing 11 and 3 seats, respectively. He served on the Defense Advisory Committee and the Viceroy's Executive Council as minister for labour during this period. This is also the period when Babasaheb wrote extensively on the condition of Dalits and the caste system in Hindu society. During this period, Babasaheb renamed his party as Scheduled Castes Federation, which later evolved into the Republican Party of India.

He was initially elected to the Constituent Assembly from Bengal, but his seat went to Pakistan following the Partition of India. He was subsequently elected from the Bombay Presidency in place of a senior jurist, Jaykar, ahead of Shri GV Mavalankar. India became an independent nation on August 15, 1947, and Babasaheb Ambedkar was appointed as the Union Law Minister and Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, responsible for writing India's new Constitution. Babasaheb Ambedkar's text provided constitutional guarantees and protections for a wide range of civil liberties for individual citizens, including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability, and the outlawing of all forms of discrimination. Granville Austin described the Indian Constitution as "first and foremost a social document." The constituent Assembly formally approved the draft constitution on 26 November 1949. The Indian Constitution, considered the most influential work of Babasaheb, became our way of life on January 26, 1950. While he is remembered for his relentless crusade for a new social order, the Indian nation will always be indebted to him for giving us a constitution that defines our core values.

3. Contribution of Dr. Ambedkar on towards Indian Society

Dr. Ambedkar contributed immensely in various spheres of society. Indeed, he took several measures to bring about change in the existing social order through various means. Some of his contributions towards Indian society are given below:

3.1 Contribution towards education

Dr. Ambedkar saw education as an essential tool for improving the overall well-being of the oppressed and underprivileged classes. He believed that education was a moral weapon in all social movements and that the more educated we were, the more opportunities we had for progress. Ambedkar recognized the importance of education in his struggle to free Dalits from Indian religious slavery. He hoped that the upgrading of the marginalized group in the country would be the work of the country's educated citizens. Dr. Ambedkar wanted a type of Education that teaches awareness and fulfilment of human rights among citizens and human dignity and justice in India. According to him, Education could open the eyes and encourage the oppressed to fight and remove the injustice and exploitation they have been suffering for ages. He recognized that lack of education was the leading cause of the backwardness of poor people. He preferred humanistic education, which enables a man to rediscover himself and ensure freedom rather than being a student of the church, school or the state. He put all his efforts into ensuring educational opportunities for all the citizens of independent India without discrimination, for which he framed some rights in the Indian Constitution.

Education has the sole purpose of enlightening the depressed classes to enhance their cause of social, economic, and political upliftment. The social and ethical philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar aimed at making depressed people aware of the importance of changing their thoughts and old behaviour patterns and of moving forward in the direction of unity and freedom through education. The basic theme of his philosophy of education was to teach the values of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, and, regions, classes, and castes.

Dr. Ambedkar listed these three components as objectives for policymakers:

- i. Recasting the aims and purposes of education,
- ii. Education as an instrument of substantive equality,
- iii. Women's education

3.1.1 Education as a tool to ensure Social Justice

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar wanted an educational system that would serve all. His educational model was a socialist one based on Buddhist ideology. According to Dr. Ambedkar, "The backward classes have come to realise that education is the greatest material benefit for which they can fight." We can forego material benefits as well as civilizational benefits. Still, we cannot forgo our rights and opportunities to reap the benefits of the highest education to the fullest extent. The backward classes, have realised that, without education, their existence is not safe." Dr. Ambedkar's idea for the untouchables was to raise their educational standards so that they may know their condition, have aspirations, and rise to the level of higher class and be in the position to use political power as a means. Dr. Ambedkar's final words to the Untouchables are, "Raise yourself in society".

"He believed that the liberation of depressed classes is based on education as an educated person can assert his rights and be motivated for development. It trains the human mind to think and make the right decision to ensure social justice. He asked, "It is the education which is the right weapon to cut the social slavery, and it is the education which will enlighten the downtrodden masses to come up and gain social status, economic betterment and political freedom." He awoke the Dalits regarding the injustice – social, economic and political. He made them aware of the possibilities of establishing a society where they could be given equal rights, respect and opportunities and regarded as equals.

"Humans are mortal. So are ideas. An idea needs propagation as much as a plant needs watering. Otherwise, both will wither and die." – Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

3.2 Contribution towards Social Justice

The issue of social justice has been not only the concern of political philosophers but also political leaders. Ambedkar's idea of social justice must be seen in the context of the particular injustices in Indian society. The elemental composition of Indian culture has been based on caste. According to Ambedkar, the caste system is a graded system of hierarchy where the lives of people at the lowest levels are like hell. Ambedkar belonged to the community of untouchables/antyaja. The most depressing section. Social justice for Ambedkar meant a life of dignity for this section of society. According to Ambedkar, social justice requires the annihilation of caste. Caste is the basic structure of Hindu culture. For Ambedkar, Hinduism is not a religion but 'madness.' Ambedkar recognised that caste Hindus would be unable to escape the caste system; thus, the practical approach to justice in the Indian context must be compensatory justice. Ambedkar believed political power was necessary for the empowerment of the

untouchables. As a result, Ambedkar advocated for a separate electorate, but ultimately succumbed to Gandhi's pressure and agreed to reservations. Ambedkar's idea of social justice embraced the concerns of India's subaltern class, the Bahujan Samaj. It included the problems of untouchables, Shudras, tribal minorities, women, labourers, and peasants. As a law minister, Ambedkar was inspired by the concept of social justice to introduce the Hindu Code Bill. The Hindu Code Bill proposed by Ambedkar challenged the patriarchy present within Hindu personal laws based on 'Manuvaad.' The special rights which minorities have in India can be attributed to Ambedkar's idea of social justice.

Ambedkar's concept of social justice stands for the liberty, equality and fraternity of all human beings. He stood for a social system based on proper relations between men in all spheres of his life. As a rationalist and humanist, he did not approve of any hypocrisy, injustice, or exploitation of man by man in the name of religion. He stood for a faith based on universal principles of morality that applied to all times, countries, and races. It must be in accord with reason and be founded on the basic tenets of liberty, equality and fraternity. He considered the caste system the greatest evil of the Hindu religion. The varna system, according to him, is the root cause of all inequality and is also the parent of the caste system and untouchability. Ambedkar stood for a social system in which a man's status is based on his merit and achievements and where no one is noble or untouchable because of his birth. He advocated a policy of preferential treatment for the country's socially oppressed and economically exploited people. The Constitution of India, which was drafted under his chairmanship, contains several provisions that urge the state to secure justice, social, economic, and political liberty, equality, and fraternity for all its citizens. It also includes several provisions that guarantee preferential treatment to the downtrodden in various sectors. Article 17 of the Indian Constitution declares untouchability as abolished. Ambedkar, in his speech before the Constituent Assembly for the success of the Constitution, said, "I have completed my work; I wish there would be a sunrise tomorrow."

"The new India has political freedom, but it is yet to raise the sun of social and economic liberty." He believed that the most important component of social justice is equality and fraternity. Ambedkar believed that only fraternity prevents anarchy and helps sustain moral order among men. Individualism produces anarchy. Without fraternity, a significant component of social justice, an ideal society is inconceivable. Therefore, according to Ambedkar, the core components of social justice are liberty, equality, and fraternity. Social justice means a complete change in the fundamental notions of individual life and a complete change in our outlook and attitude towards people and things. Ambedkar was fully aware of the pattern and problems of Indian society. Hence, Ambedkar's concept of social justice included the following:

- unity and equality of all human beings
- the equal worth of men and women
- respect for the weak
- regard for human rights
- benevolence, mutual love, sympathy, tolerance, and charity towards fellow beings
- humane treatment for all
- the dignity of all citizens
- abolition of caste distinctions

3.2.1 Socio-economic justice for the people

The concept of socio-economic justice, as envisioned by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, is very well reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy. Part IV of the constitution, which is entitled "directive principles of state policy," includes the right to adequate means of livelihood, the right against economic exploitation, the right of both sexes to equal pay for equal work, the right to leisure and rest, and the right to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, and the like. This part also contains some economic and social justice principles and certain ideals that the state should strive to attain. Article 38, for example, directs the state to create a social order in which justice—social, political, and economic justice—is applied uniformly to all institutions of national life. Article 39 directs the creation of conditions where there will be no "concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment" and to see that the "ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as to best serve the common good." The real contribution of Ambedkar is reflected in the protective discrimination scheme, or the government's reservation policy, envisaged under some provisions of Part III and many of Part IV dealing with the constitutional mandate to ameliorate the condition of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the other backward classes. Provisions like Articles 15(4), 16(4), and Article 30 dealing with the protection of minorities are some notable examples of Part III and Part XI. Schedules V and VI, dealing with the upliftment of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, speak clearly about Ambedkar's substantial and significant contribution to the untouchables' development. Ambedkar made it his mission to uplift the untouchables and other oppressed masses from the unequal position of inferiority to that of parity in socioeconomic status with high-caste Hindus. To achieve this goal, the reservation policy or the scheme of protective discrimination was advocated and implemented by him for ten years (from the date of enforcement of the Constitution), at least to ameliorate the conditions of the downtrodden sections of Hindu society.

3.3 Contribution towards the empowerment of women

"I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved"

Ambedkar's perception of women's questions, emphasising their right to education, equal treatment with men, property rights, and involvement in the political process, resembled the global feminists' demand. As J. S. Mill stated in 'The Subjection of Women', the legal subordination of one sex to the other is wrong in and of itself, and is one of the major impediments to human development, and should be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no privilege or power on one side, nor disability on the other. Ambedkar holds similar views on work for women. In January 1928, a women's association was founded in Bombay with Ramabai, Ambedkar's wife, as its president. In the Kalram Temple Entry Satyagraha at Nasik in 1930, five hundred women participated, and many of them were arrested along with men and ill-treated in jails. The encouragement of Dr. Ambedkar to empower women to speak boldly was seen when Radhabai Vadale addressed a press conference in 1931. She said, "It is better to die a hundred times

than live a life full of humiliation." "We will sacrifice our lives, but we will win our rights." Ambedkar deserves credit for women's self-esteem and determination. Dr. Ambedkar believed in the strength of women and their role in the process of social reform. The historic "Mahad Satyagraha" witnessed the participation of three hundred women along with their male counterparts. Addressing another meeting of about 3000 women, he said, "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress that women have achieved." Let every girl who marries stand by her husband, claim to be her husband's friend and equal, and refuse to be his slave. "If you follow this advice, I am sure, you will bring honour and glory to yourselves." Ambedkar's major concern for women's status has been reflected in the Hindu Code Bill. He has even remarked that his work on the Hindu Code Bill would be as important as his work on the Constitution itself. The Hindu code bill as prepared by Dr. Ambedkar had a long history as it was inspired by a bill which was passed by the British known as the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act, 1937. In the words of Ambedkar. "This Bill had its origin in legislation which took effect in the year 1937. It covers the following principles of codification:

- i. Right to property
- ii. Order of succession to the property
- iii. Maintenance, marriage, divorce, adoption, minority and guardianship

There were two schools of Hindu law generally, "*Mitakshara*" and "*Dayabhag*," which created and sustained inequality for many years and were mainly based on Hindu religious books known as "Shrutis" or "Smritis." The two systems were fundamentally different. According to *Mitakshara*, in simple terms, it is a school of thought known as "inheritance by birth." According to this, the property of the Hindu was not his property. It was a property that belonged to a coparcenary consisting of a father, son, grandson, and great-grandson. This is an orthodox school. The right to the property passes by survivorship to the other male family members. On the other hand, in *Dayabhag* rule, under which the heir held the property as his personal property with an absolute right to dispose it of either by gift, by will, or in any other manner that he had chosen. The main objective of the bill was to codify and reform Hindu personal law in India, abolishing religious law in favour of a standard law code. The bill outlawed polygamy and contained provisions dealing with inter-caste marriages and divorce procedures. The bill codified laws around seven different matters, all directly related to women's autonomy, independence, and rights. It codified the rules governing the property rights of a deceased Hindu who died without leaving a will, regardless of gender.

Dr. Ambedkar's emphasis was not only against caste discrimination and inequality between men and women, but his primary purpose and vision were to reconstruct the ancient Indian woman's society. He struggled to challenge the ideological foundations of *Manusmriti* that deny equality, freedom, and human dignity to women in Hindu society. In Ambedkar's philosophy, women have found a new identity. His work and deeds have inspired thousands of women and will continue to do so in their struggle against injustice. He thus believes that any social transformation is incomplete in society until gender discrimination comes to an end. In general, having access to education is one of the fundamental rights that every human being is born with. It causes an inevitable problem if it is denied to a specific section of people in society. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a fighter for women's rights and their rights to education, property, and social justice.

3.3.1 Constitutional contribution for women

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's view to women's right was different from other social reformers. His goal was to make a society based on social justice. To secure this goal, Ambedkar has given equal status to women at par with men by providing many provisions in the Indian Constitution. The preamble of Indian constitution guarantees social and economic justice to women and that is because of Ambedkar's contribution. The constitution of India contains various provisions, which provide for equal rights and opportunities for both men and women. Dr. Ambedkar tried excellently to include women's rights in the political vocabulary and constitution of India. Following Articles were framed in the constitution to empower women in different arenas

- Article 14—Equal rights and opportunities in political, economic, and social spheres Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.
- Article 15(3) (3) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children
- Article 39: "Equal means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work."
- Article 42: Human conditions of work and maternity relief
- Article 51 (A) and (C): Fundamental duties to renounce practises derogatory to the dignity of women
- Article 46: "The state shall promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of the weaker section of the population and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation."
- Article 47: "The state shall raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people, improve public health, and so on."
- Articles 243D (3), 243T (3), and 243R (4) provide for the allocation of seats in the Panchayati Raj System.

3.4 'Constitution Making'

The Indian Constitution and its drafting process are often synonymous with Ambedkar. He is often referred to as the father of the Indian Constitution and is probably the most well-known of all Constituent Assembly members. The Constitution of India was not typed or printed but was handwritten and calligraphed in both English and Hindi. Ambedkar became a key figure in India's constitution-making process due to his efforts, interventions, and speeches in the Assembly. He was the chairman of the Assembly's most important committee, the Drafting Committee, and a member of other important committees. As Drafting Committee Chairman, he had to defend the Draft Constitution, which the Committee prepared, and therefore intervened in nearly every debate. On behalf of the Scheduled Caste Federation party, Ambedkar wrote and submitted states and minorities to the Constituent Assembly's Sub-Committee on Fundamental Rights. States and minorities framed solid constitutional protection for the Scheduled Caste community in a mini-Constitution. Ambedkar's interventions and speeches on various aspects of the Constitution were insightful, well-reasoned, and carefully researched. This won him the support and respect of other members of the Assembly, who

allowed him to lead the constitution-making project. Though he made an outstanding contribution in framing the Constitution of India, his efforts in enacting Article 32 of the Constitution, which guarantees a citizen the fundamental right to move the Supreme Court directly for enforcement of their fundamental freedoms, were noteworthy. The rationale was to provide quick and inexpensive justice in response to orders or writs such as habeas corpus, mandamus, certiorari, and so on, or any other appropriate remedy, as the case may be, for the enforcement of fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The text provided by Ambedkar provided constitutional guarantees and protections for a wide range of civil liberties for individual citizens, including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability and outlawing all forms of discrimination.

Dr. Ambedkar regarded this provision as "the very soul of the Constitution and the heart of it". His contribution to the evolution of free India lies in his striving for ensuring justice-social, economic and political- for one and all. The real contribution of Ambedkar is reflected in the protective discrimination scheme or the reservation policy of the government envisaged under some provisions of Part III and many Part IV dealing with the constitutional mandate for the betterment of the condition of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the Other backward classes. Provisions like Article 17 prohibiting untouchability, Article 30 dealing with the protection of minorities are some of the notable examples. Due to his contribution towards the making of the Indian Constitution, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is called the Father of the Indian Constitution.

4. Conclusion

Ambedkar was entirely committed to the destruction of the caste system. According to him, the caste system is not merely a division of labour but a division of laborers. It is a hierarchy in which the division of labourers is graded one above the other. This division of labour is based on neither natural aptitude nor the individual's choice. It is, therefore, harmful since it involves the subordination of man's natural powers and inclinations to the difficulties of social rules. Ambedkar reiterated: "The caste system prevents common activity, and by preventing it, it has prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with" a unified life and a consciousness of its being." As a result, Ambedkar's great vision urged the abolition of casteism in all its forms, as he opposed all divisive forces and aimed to strengthen the impulse. National integration. The greatly cherished ideals of "fraternity and equality" were the cement he wanted to use to bind together a cohesive nation. His long-range response was a direct attack against the root cause, i.e., the caste system. Baba Sahib was a friend, philosopher, and guide to the people who belonged to the lower strata of society. All these people have seen a ray of hope through the eyes of Baba Sahab. Dr. Ambedkar's main goal was to uproot the evil of the deeply rooted caste system and transform this country from uncivilised to civilized. The Indian Constitution evolved due to Dr. BR Ambedkar's relentless efforts and strategic approach. Dr. BR Ambedkar's provisions in the Indian Constitution have enabled Dalits and women to enjoy the prospects of freedom and to realise their identity.

The overall development of disadvantaged groups in India (which is getting visible, though at a minuscule level), is only because of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. What ails a sensible citizen today is the need for more interest in the effective implementation of the Constitution. The condition of the hour is to implement the Constitution in its true spirit. It will enable Indian society to overcome all the social and economic evils the nation faces. While Manu introduced social stratification based on caste, Dr. Ambedkar envisioned the annihilation of caste in India. Indian Hindu orthodoxy stood by Manu, while Ambedkar stood for Dalits and women's development in India. Ambedkar defeated Manu through the Constitution by incorporating several articles to ensure individual human dignity, human rights, equal opportunities, and, most notably, social justice. The conditions of the untouchables and depressed sections of Indian society have not changed much. Social and economic justice is still evading them.

The pathetic state of the depressed classes has not shown the expected improvement. Social and economic inequalities continue to persist. Ambedkar's dream of a society based on socio-economic justice, human dignity, and equality has yet to be realized.

Dr. Ambedkar's legacy will have to be retrieved and extended by activists committed to the social and cultural renaissance he had envisioned, not by the political purveyors of exhausted rhetoric who claim to speak in his name. His title to this dignity rests upon the social purposes he served and how he served them. His life is a saga of great struggles and achievements. His message to the people was: "You must have a firm belief in the sacredness of your mission." Your goal is noble, and your mission is sublime and glorious.

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