

DAYANAND THE MAN AND HIS MISSION

MHARSHI Dayanand ranks among the greatest figures not only of india but also of the whole world. He served as beacon of light and led hummanity from darkness to light. He wrought wonders by extricating india from the whirl-pool of degradation and carved out a way for its all-round growth advancement.

He was the first to proclaim 'India for Indians' and to show that the original home of the Aryas had been India. Thus, he gave a new direction to the patriotic instinct of his country men. It was he who gave a new and remarkable orientation to the Hindu society and through it to the whole mankind.

He represented the hoary and holy traditions of the Rishis of yore. he declared that his countrymen are descendants of the Rishis, and are, at the same time, inheritors of a rich cultural heritage which evolved itself on the pattern of vedic ideals. He counselled them to own it and thus be able to raise their heads high and achive the glory of giving once

again the guidance to the world at large.

Swami Dayanand appeared on the Indian scene at a time when its culture, its civilization and its richness were at stake facing the process of utter collapse under alien domination. Vedic Dharma (Religion) and Aryan culture were panting lying wrapped in darkness of ignorance which had swollen to enormosity in thousand of years. Monotheism was replaced by polytheism with the result that the Indian society was rent asundered into hundreds of sects. A number of vices-humbugss,hypocrisies and ostentations had crept in the name and under the garb of Dharma. Women and the so called “Shudras” were subjected to humilitating plight. In human treatment was meted out the so called untouchables. In certain parts of India several roads were kept blocked for them one some others roads and streets their apperance

within prescribed limits was prohibited, not only this, but even having a look at them, was considered a sin Vulgare customs and superstitions reigned supreme. Prevalence of child marriages and non-observance of celibacy had eaten the vitals of the community, exposing it to insults and humiliations. unsuitable marriges had aggravated the evil of child marriage resulting the widow -hood of crores of women. sins like foeticide, abortions infanticide etc had become glaring blots on the Hindu community. verna system was degenerated into caste system based on birth, dividing the community in to innumerable water-right comparments, imaginary castes and sub-casts with attendants, evils.

Indians knew thew names of the Vedas, but what they

contained was not known to them. Even a correct copy there of was not available here in India. Mythological literature and beliefs ruled the scene—Available commentaries on the Vedas were obscene and misleading. When a Russian scholar was approached to translate them into the Russian language he flatly refused to do so remarking that the dictates of morality did not permit him to present such filthy translation before the Russian Vedas.

Mr. Griffith translating some portions of the Yajurveda on the basis of Mahidhara's commentary had remarked. "I never wanted to defile the sanctity of my English language by translating these passages into it".

In the wake of such chaotic conditions and religious social and political degradations, Swami Dayanand appeared to steer safe the ship of the

nation which was tossing up and down of the floating on the turbulent water without a rudder.

He was born in Samvar 881, at Tankara, a village lying in the erstwhile Morvi state (Kathia Wada) in a rich Brahmin family. By the age of fourteen this promising lad had learnt the whole Yajurveda and several portions of the other Vedas by heart. His father, Karsanji was a devotee of "Shiva".

On the occasion of Shivaratri festival (Samvat 1894)

he had kept fast and night-long vigil in the Shiva temple of his village to see the lord Shiva face to face. When at midnight, all the devotees including his father fell asleep, he saw a mouse playing tricks with the idol. This unexpected sight touched the chord of his inquisitive mind. He began to question the ef-

ficacy of the Universe but could not defend itself from the onslaughts of a tiny mouse.

People daily see fruits falling down from the trees, but it had a phenomenal effect on Newton culminating in the discovery of the Law of Gravitation. Sight of dead bodies and old people is an occurrence of every day, but it was a unique experience to Gautam, which had left upon his mind an indelible impression of the perishable nature of the world and subjection of the matter to change and decay. The incidence of Shiva temple though ordinary to the masses was an extraordinary one to Dayanand that had messes was exposed the futility of idol worship and given an incentive to make a search of the real Dhiva. Sudden demise of his sister and uncle whom he loved dearly

presented a clear picture of the perishable nature of the world and fanned the spark of spirituality into a conflagration. So great an impact was of these happening that he left his parental home for ever with a view to have vision of real God and to conquer death. He was then 22. even father's persistent and strenuous efforts to bind him in nuptial ties could not deter him.

He wandered for fifteen year incessantly in search of savants, ascetics and saints. He had to pass through shaggy forests, climb the high mountain peaks, cross the turbulent and icy rivers and enter into hazardous caves. He had subdued his mind and passions by exercising penance and observing celibacy. At the age of 24 he initiated into Sanyashashram at Charnadi Karnali situated on the bank of Narmada by Swami Purnanand who was noted for

his vast learning. During this period he had acquired a great knowledge of sanskrit literature and proficiency in "yogic" practices. Even then he had felt that something was lacking in him indicating that his thirst for knowledge of the devine was not fully quenched.

At the instance of Swami Purnanand, a renouend old hermit of haridwar. Swami Dayanand reached Mathura. He knocked at the door of Dandi Swami Virjanand. Who are you ? rang forth a stern voice from inside. This is the query, to which I have come to seek a fitting answer said Dayanand who stood outside the cottage. This query takes us back to about nine lacs of years when sri Ram was accosted with the same question to Guru Vashistha when Ram had gone to his house to learn the vedas. History re-

peated the coincidence axactly with Dayanand.

The door opened and a true preceptor got a true pupil at the sacred city of Mathura where Lord Krishna was born. Guru Virjanand's penetrating inner eyes had fully grasped the debasing state of affairs prevailing in india. For want of physical eyes, he was handicapped to take up the work of regeneration of the country. Consequently he was looking for a desciple like Dayanand. This meeting between preceptor and the disciple had turned the scale. Swami Dayanand sat at his preceptor's feet continully for three years. After having been charged with the lofty task of the propagation of Vedik Dharma and service of mankind he took leave of his preceptor and threw himself into the field of action.

Equipped with absolute self-command and fathomless scriptural knowledge, this Sanyasi rose as tempest and began to bring about radical changes. His fearless and matchless utterance and ideas travelled far and wide affecting with vibratous motions the cottages of the poor and the palaces of the princes. He was welcomed with bricks and stones, abuses and reproofs.

He was administered poison several times but the kind-hearted Dayanand did not swerve from the path he had chosen. When a muslim Tahsildar (A Government official) at Anupsahahr (U.P.) arrested a man who had poisoned Swamiji handcuffed, he was stunned to hear Swamiji's strong disapproval and chiding in the memorable words:-

"I have come to free people from

the shackles and not to tie up with them."

How fearless and adamant he was in his reforming zeal could well be imagined when he rebuked openly the king of Jodhpur who was seen with a harlot in the royal palace. "*Bitches should not be associated with the lions*"

He was a profound scholar of the Vedic lore. Paying tribute to him Madam Blavatsky had said, "It is perfectly certain that India never saw a more wonderful orator, and a more fearless denunciator of any evil than Dayanand since the time of Shankaracharya". He was the first vedist, in modern times to open the portals of the sacred Vedas to all human beings. Declaring "Yatheman Vscham kalyani ma Vedani janebhya (Yajur 26/2)", he conceded the right of study, of

the Vedas to woman and “Shudras” which was denied to them and which the saints of medieval times such as Shri Ramanuja and Shri Shankaracharya hesitated to concede. He recognised the Vedas only as having their own authority and other religious books of dependent character requiring the authority of the Vedas. Thus denouncing idol-worship, ceremonial pacification of the dead, theory of re-incarnation and pilgrimage to rivers as anti-Vedic customs. He declared that these are based on the “puranas”. He encountered a historic debating contest on idol worship with an array of profound Sanskrit scholars at Varanasi, the citadel of Hindu orthodoxy and a renowned seat of Sanskrit learning of which he had come out victorious. He held and declared that the Vedas enjoined worship of only on

formless. God He exhorted people to purify their minds by doing good deeds and thus be able to have vision of God who dwells in the inner of a man. He further enjoined to do good to others.

He wrote commentaries on the Vedas which are noted for lucidness, and authenticity. He regarded the Vedas as the books of all true knowledge. To him all the world of the Vedas seemed as having root meanings and their teachings are beneficial for all times and climes. Commending on his method of comment, Shri Aurobindo says :-

Dayanand has no doubt found the key to the Vedas through his unique system of interpretation. It is for us to know to use the key and open the portals of Vedic wisdom. There is nothing astonishing in his claim that Vedas have many scientific truths which have yet

to be discovered by the modern man. I feel that Dayanand made an understatement about it.

Maharshi Dayanand declared that women were entitled to social and legal rights at par with men. He championed the cause of their education as well as their right to the study of the Vedas. He brought them out from the seclusion of the “pardah” and held them in great esteem. We find him bowing down his head before a small girl who was playing with other children in a street at Udaipur. She symbolised a mother who gives us birth.

He categorically condemned the caste system based on birth. He exhorted people to uproot it as it had no sanction of the Vedas and was harmful. He declared that the social status of a man should be determined on the basis

of his attainments, performances and cultural refinements. As a consequence of his teachings interdining and intercaste marriages among the Hindus began to come in vogue, and a number of institutions sprang up to popularize them.

He directed people to revive Gurukul system of education based on perfect self discipline. This was his unique contribution to national education which was far superior to the present day public School system. Gurukul Kangri was the first and the foremost experiment in this direction where children from all classes and walks of life lived and studied together undergoing a rigorous discipline. They forgot their caste distinctions and regional loyalties. He announced in unmistakable terms that a physically

strong and morally uplifted society could only be founded on the foundations of Brahmacharya (perfect control on carnal desire). His biography is full of descriptions of miraculous feats of his bodily strength. Once he had pulled out of deep mud on his shoulders a heavily loaded bullock cart belonging to a farmer to which the bullock yoked were unable to take out. On another occasion a chariot could not move on though the horses were heavily whipped by the coachman. On ascertaining the cause, it was found out that it was held back by Swamiji from behind.

He combined in himself a large heart, a great soul and a strong physique. No wonder, the great French scholar, Romain Rolland described him as man of leonine strength, who infused new life into a moribund society. Mr. Francis Young husband saw in

Dayanand embodiment of the Socrates dictum. “The mind of a sage inside the body of an athlete.”

As a protagonist of Hindi and Sanskrit his achievements were wonderful, Through he came of a Gujrati family and a considerable part of his life was devoted to the study of Sandkrit, yet he wrote his books “Satyarthha Prakash” etc in Hindi He proclaimed that Hindi could and should and should be Lingua Franca of India as well as the basic link of national integration. The credit for raising the standard and status of Hindi to the exalted position of national language goes primarily to Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj.

He was the first to write against the British domination. The first Indian to use the word “Swaraj” (Self Government) was he. aone dday lok Manya Balgangandhar Tilak saw to his amaze-

ment the renowned parsi patriot Dada Bhai Naroji turning over pages of "Satyarth Prakash". He jokely asked the patriot," Hve you become an Arya Samajist ?". No, I get great inspiration from Swami Dayanand's work in my struggle for Swarajya was the reply." (Vide Sainik Samachar Oct. 20, 1968 sponsored by Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India) It was Swami Dayanand who had declared "The indigenous Government is by far the best. A foreign Government, perfectly free from religious prejudices, impartial towards all the Indian and foreigner,- kind, beneficent and just like their parents though it may be, can never make people perfectly happy."

A number of passage included in his works are marked with so deep patriotic sentiments that one is apt to con-

clude that his mind always planted for national advancement. Even then he cherished no ill will onhated towards the people because he had, at his heart, the god of the whole mankind. His patriotism, unlike the present day conception of narrow nationality, was based on universal brotherhood as his mission was universal. His patriotism embraced all people, whatever their religion or creed. He was anxious for the collective well being and enlightenment of all in 1877 at the Durbar of Lord Lyton, he had called a conference of the followers of all religions and told them:-

Let the followers of different faiths sit together discover and propagate common spiritual and ethical values. Let each of them purge his faith or religion of superstition, hypocrisy, sham and cant. Let our approach to religion

be national and dispassionate. Let us eschew that which divides .”

That was his way of achieving national unity. How many people know his direct or indirect influence on patriots and revolutionaries like Shyam, Krishna, Verma, Lala Lajpat Rai, Swami Shradhanand, Balmakund Gupta, Ram Prasad Bismil of kakori fame and the great revolutionary Sardar Bhagat Sing.

Social welfare is an essential pre-condition to political advancement, peace and happiness. Individual and social well being are inter-dependent and consist in the development and refinement of both of them. Swami Dayanand carved out the way for their harmonious development and devise means to achieve it.

Almost the whole Gandhian con-

structive programme was fore-shad-owed by Swami Dayanand. Both of them laid great stress on Swadesi spirit, asherence to our own culture, uplift of the so called depressed classes, removal of untouchability prohibition, national language, national education and cow protection etc. As a metter of fact Gandhiji told the late centenarian Vedic scholar Pandit damodar Satvalekar that he was only carrying out Dayanand’s programme of national reconstruction in his own way.

(Vide Sainik Samachar p.32)

SHRI DR. RADHAKRISHNAN
FORMER PRESIDENT OF INDIA
PAYING TRIBUTE TO SWAMIJI
HAD SAID THAT SEVERAL ITEMS
OF SWAMI DAYANAND’S
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CORPORATED IN INDIA'S CONSTITUTION.

After producing profound impression of his learning and reforming spirit, he founded the Arya Samaj in the year 1875 for the betterment of people individually, collectively, physically, morally, socially, religiously and politically and propagation of Vedic Dharma in the whole world. The Arya Samaj and its members into severe declings notably at patiala from which thy had come out victorious. It took no time to dawn upon the british that the Arya Samaj is a purely religious body and not a political one. Of course its activities and the teachings of Swami Dayanand tend to make people patriotic.

The Arya Samaj has to its credit martyrs more than any other religious body. They have proved well that blood

of martyrs is the seed of the church.

Regarding the achievement of the Arya Samaj late Sir Jadunath Sarkar had said, " Wherever the Arya Sanaj is a reality, there has been a marvellous elevation of the masses. It is essentially a democratic religion. The energy of the Arya Samaj has overflowninto the broad field of education, relief from distress, reclamation of backward classes no less than in almost incredible. To-day Hinduism has paid the Arya Samaj tha highest tribute that of imitation by stealing its programme."

He wanted to see Arya (Hindu) community strong, well organised and exalted. To bring this about, he left no stone unturned. He opened the doors of the community for those who had left it and gone over to the folds of alien faiths. He declared that they should be readmitted by means of "Shuddhi".

He was poisoned by a cook at Jodhpur and left the earthly scene on the historic day of Dipawali (Day of illumination 30.10.1883) at Ajmer when he was 59 creating by his passing away a profound impression of Godhood was on Pandit Gurudatta was struck to see how a “Yogi” and a confirmed believer in God conquers death. An agnostic as he had been, he witnessed all this and was changed. He whole heartedly began to believe in God. Swamiji forgave the man who had administered poison upholding once more the ideal of great Rishis of Aryavarta.

The great Americal philosopher Emerson has said, “ to be great is to be misunderstood” Indeed for his fierce attacks on what he considered the excrescences of different religions, he has been misunderstood. Some though he was intolerant. He himself repeated in

his “Satyarth Prakash” over and over again that he was only trying to attack the irrational and ugly features in every religion. He was moved by the highest consideration to awaken the people of diverse faith to the need of tidying up their own religious systems. That is why he was most harsh on his coreligionists. In a similar context he remarks:-

“My aim is to unite the people into one simple, fraternal bond over and sects must be abolished”. He had taken recourse to harsh criticism in order to pull mankind out of darkness and ignorance so that it may be able to lead a happy and exalted life.

He was seeker of truth. He lived and died for it. It is certain that coming generations will assess rightly the debt under which he had mankind by showing light of truth.

Of himself, he had said, “ I have not come to preach any new dogma or religion, nor to establish a new religious order or be proclaimed as a new Messiah or Pontiff, I have only brought before my people the light of Vedic wisdom which had been hidden during the centuries of Indias thraldom.”

He was not interested in raising any memorial or monument to commemorate him. A few days before his death, he instructed that there should be no “Samadhi” for him. His ashes should be scattered in the fields where the peasants, the real rulers of the land sweat and plod for the benefit of the nation.

No doubt, he was devoted to the Vedas, But it was not a sentimental attachment. To him the Vedas signified knowledge and wisdom- Spiritual and

temporal. He believed more in esoteric significance of the Vedas than in any acripture. For him he Vedas represented a constant search of knowledge of this world and beyond.

He was a man of God who was sent with a definite mission to make children of God spiritually enlightened and temporally prosperous and united. To him their welfare had a greater appeal than his ownsalvation. He had thus created a powerful impression of spritual practibility. He was as Romain Rolland put it a rare comvination - a thinker of action with a genus of leadership.

His stature was nearly 6ft. high.. His body was plump and some what corpulant. He shaved all the hair. A scarf formed his upper garment. A sash passed round the waist and between the legs. He sat on the folds of a blanket. It

appeared from long time he was engaged in consideration that he used no stimulant drugs like other ascetics. The colour of his body was light swarthy tending to fair. His eyes were of middle size, calm and penetrating. The expression of countenance was grave. He preferred to sit crosslegged upon the ground. The mouth was a little wide the voice sonorous ; pronunciation clear ; accent wellmarked enunciation loud ; distinct, and slow ; the modulation of tone very harmonious ; the delivery of speech fluent eloquent and impressive ; the didactic power highly persuasive ; reasoning convincing ; arguments sound, concise, and logical and judgment quick and decisive. The recitation and quotation of long passage of poetry and prose without hitch or hesitation on the requirement of occasion,

attested this wonderful retention of memory and readiness of knowledge. His answers were always to the point. The anger of opponents never disturbed and ruffled the placidity of mind and the gravity of features. A abusive epithets never called from him corresponding ill names either explicitly or suggestively. The sweetness of the language called forth the admiration of opposition the profundity of Sanskrit learning was astounding to the Indian scholars. The Christian and Mohamedans. On all reformatory matters, his decision was marked with deliberation and pregnant with universal good. All objection were silenced in anticipation. His language was easy, natural and well adapted to the communication of his thoughts with intelligibility and in consonance with the capacity of hearers. His method of express-

ing things was so unique and uncommon and agreeable to the nature of mind, that however long his lecture might be audience listened to it with breathless attention. Though his comments in the audience, yet no gust of pride ever flushed upon his cheeks. Seriousness and earnestness were always displayed in the expression of thoughts, no interest however, dear, caused his deviation from truth. His undivided attention enabled him to grasp speedily and surely the import of speakers statements, his eloquence induced the most taciturn to talk with him. Politeness was the chief characteristic of his conduct. Perfect equanimity pervaded all his actions, decency and decorum adorned his deportment. He had no ambition to shine in the world by the royal or popular

favour.

WHAT IS ARYA SAMAJ

The most sacred scriptures of the Arya Samaj are the four Vedas—Rigveda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda. The founder wrote several books to elucidate the Vedas, the Satyarth Prakash (Light of Truth).

The Arya Samaj does not believe in isolated abstract spirituality but is active in social service. It has fought for the emancipation of women and the spread of education and against the untouchability and the caste system. Swami Dayanand Saraswati considered caste to degenerate successor of the once pure Varma system and maintained that social position should not be based on birth but on worth.

The Central representative body of all the branches of which there are

3,000 comprising eight million members in India. Burma, Africa, South America, Fiji, U.K. America europe, Mauritius, Thailand, malasiya, etc..is the international Aryan League (Sarvadeshik Arya pratinidhi Sabha, maharashi Dayananda Bhawan, New Delhi 1). The organisation of the movement is democratic and all the members having a say in the administration.

The Arya Samaj advocstes a socol structure based on spritual values, pacifism, vegetarianism and a world Government.

Those ageeing with the ten principles are welcomed as members, who are enjoined to contribute one percent of their income.

(Theosophical News and Notes, London, june, 1955)

Ten principles of Arya Samaj

1. God is the primary source of all true knowledge and of all that is known by this means.

2. God is existent, conscious, all-beatitude, formless almighty, just merciful, unbegotten, infinite, unchangeable, without organ, incomparable, the support of all, the lord of all, all-pervading, omniscient and controller of all from within, evermeture, impershiable, fearless, enternal and creator of the universe. To him alone is worship due.

3. The Vedas are the scriptures of all true knowledge. It is the paramount duty of all Aryas to read them, to teach them (others) and to hear the others reading to them recite them (others).

4. All person should ever be ready to accept truth and renounce untruth.

5. All acts ought to be performed

in conformity to Dharma i.e. after due consideration of right and wrong.

6. The prime object of Arya Samaj is to do good to the world. i.e. to ameliorate physical, spiritual and social condition of all men.

7. All ought to be treated with love, justice, righteousness and due regard to their merits.

8. Ignorance ought to be dispelled and knowledge disseminated.

9. No one should remain content with his own well-being but on the contrary, he should regard his well-being lying in the well-being of others.

10. In matters affecting well-being of the society (all others), the individual should subordinate his personal likes, in matters affecting him alone, he is to enjoy the freedom of action.

The first two principles indicate that

the Arya Samaj is religious, secondly a theistic; thirdly a monotheistic society. The third principle shows that the Vedas are its religious scriptures, that it has doctrinal connection with the old scriptures, that it has doctrinal connection with the old scriptures of the Aryas. Principle 5th emphasizes not only a regard for truth but for the search for the truth. They enjoin upon members to remain seekers of truth all their life and whenever they find that they should discard it. The remaining five principles deal with the duties which man owes to other in this world.

religion for an Arya Samajist is not an exclusively individual affair. We are a part of the greater whole and our place in this whole has to be determined and constantly kept in view the performance of our religious duties. Religion, as referred to be in these principles is some-

thing that establishes an adjustment between the whole and the part. We are not isolated beings arbitrarily put together by some external agency. We are tied down by natural and inseparable relations and our individual well-being is not at all conceivable, much less realisable except through the well-being of others.

(Theosophical News and notes, London, June, 1955)

Tribute to Maharshi Dayananda

Dayananda Saraswati was a personality of the highest order. This man with the nature of a lion is one of those whom Europe is too apt to forget when she judges Indian but whom she will probably be forced to remember to her cost for he was that rare combination, a thinker of action with a genius of leadership.

Dayananda transfused into the languid body of India his own formidable

energy, certainty. His words rang with heroic power. Dayananda would not tolerate the abominable injustice, of the existence of untouchables and nobody has been a more ardent champion of their rights. They were admitted to the Arya Samaj on the basis of equality, for the Arya are not a caste.

Dayananda Saraswati was the most vigorous force of the immediate and present action in India at the moment of the re-birth and re-awakening of the national consciousness. He was one of the most ardent propher of reconstruction and of national organization. I feel that it was he who kept the vigil.

Romain Rolland

