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**SWAMI  
DAYANAND**  
(HIS LIFE & TEACHINGS)

**BY  
BRIJ MOHAN SHARMA, M.A., Ph. D.**

**LUCKNOW**  
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## **PUBLISHERS' NOTE**

We have great pleasure in bringing this booklet to the notice of our readers. We are very fortunate, indeed, to have secured the pen of Dr. Brij Mohan Sharma, M. A., Ph. D., the renowned scholar and writer, for producing this life sketch of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, who, however much some people might differ from some of his views, was undoubtedly, as Dr. Sharma remarks, the greatest scholar, patriot, reformer and political philosopher of modern India. We trust and hope the book will be read with interest throughout India and the outside world.

**PUBLISHERS.**





## PREFACE

No apology is needed to write this booklet at this time when a grateful nation is celebrating the semi-centenary of the death of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the greatest scholar, patriot, reformer and political philosopher of modern India. I doubt if I was the suitable person on whom the choice of the publishers should have fallen, to write even a brief sketch of the life and teachings of that great Indian. I, however, undertook the task not without serious misgivings, yet with considerable pleasure.

At a time when India was passing through a gigantic political convulsion, and at a time when the whole fabric of the great Hindu Society, with all its ancient heritage and inspiring tradition, was crumbling down, the coming in of Swami Dayanand was undoubtedly a matter of the greatest relief. He worked, lived and died for the good of his country and the world. His work, its extent, nature and full value, are not correctly appreciated by many, even in this country—

how much less, therefore, all that should be known outside India is not surprising. To what extent the awakening in India, political, social, and religious, is the outcome of the teachings of Swami Dayanand may be known by reading the following pages. Those who lay the foundation of great tasks are often forgotten in the dazzling brilliance of the subsequent achievements of their admirers. Who ever thinks of the material or the value of the most important part of a grand edifice, *viz.* the foundation which remains buried under the ground? All look to and admire the superstructure raised over that foundation. Yet, deep thinkers must not forget what really forms the base of the building. Looked at from this view-point, Swami Dayanand, may rightly be called the founder of Indian Nationalism in the modern age. His activities were great, and his achievements were still greater. The Arya Samaj is the one institution in India to which Hindus look to as the saviour of the Society and, therefore, the nation.

I am indebted to the previous writers on the subject, from whose works I have quoted

wherever I found it necessary. I am equally indebted to the publishers for giving me this opportunity to pay my homage to India's noble son. May his soul rest in peace.

B. M. SHARMA

LUCKNOW

*Sept. 20th, 1933.*

# CONTENTS

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|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| PUBLISHERS' NOTE ... ..                  | i    |
| PREFACE ... ..                           | iii  |
| <br>CHAPTER I—                           |      |
| Introduction ... ..                      | 1    |
| <br>CHAPTER II—                          |      |
| The Early Life— ... ..                   | 6    |
| <br>CHAPTER III—                         |      |
| Wanderings in Quest of Salvation ... ..  | 23   |
| <br>CHAPTER IV—                          |      |
| The Wandering Sanyasi ... ..             | 30   |
| <br>CHAPTER V—                           |      |
| At the Preceptor's Feet ... ..           | 44   |
| <br>CHAPTER VI—                          |      |
| India as Dayanand found Her... ..        | 56   |
| <br>CHAPTER VII—                         |      |
| The Rebel Preacher ... ..                | 79   |
| <br>CHAPTER VIII—                        |      |
| The Scholar and Educationist ... ..      | 100  |
| <br>CHAPTER IX—                          |      |
| The Social Reformer ... ..               | 114  |
| <br>CHAPTER X—                           |      |
| Patriot and Political Philosopher ... .. | 122  |
| <br>CHAPTER XI—                          |      |
| The Religious Reformer... ..             | 145  |
| EPILOGUE ... ..                          | 162  |

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

*Shrimad Bhagwat Gita* assures us that whenever religion is on the decline and miseries multiply in the sacred land of India, God incarnates himself and comes to the rescue of the men so that righteousness and truth alone may ultimately prevail. Whether one accepts this as truth or not, the past history of India undoubtedly supports the view that at every critical moment of our history, God has sent us a great man to change the current of thought,—whether in the social, religious, or political field—drive out evil, and direct our actions along right lines. From times immemorial right up to the present day the chain of such personalities has been maintained. So that at no time has the nation been left without the right kind of guide. Other nations too have produced,

from time to time, great men to lead them. But what particularly distinguishes the character of great Indians is the selflessness of their aims and lives.

There is, however, one more very important virtue that may easily be traced in the life and work of such Indian personalities. And that is the wide scope of their activities. They did not definitely confine themselves to one particular field only but tried to reform every branch of man's life, social, religious and political. It may be that Indian culture hardly recognises the existence of any gulf between these various activities; if man is to lead a pious and virtuous life, he must look to his activities as a whole. Ancient culture of India has thus been able to remain intact through the continuous efforts of that almost unbroken chain of God's especially sent messengers. About five thousand years ago—to speak nothing of earlier periods known as *Ram Raj*—Lord Krishna gave his message to his countrymen at a very critical period of history and clearly told all that the mission of his life was to protect the weak and the saint, to destroy the powerful sinner, and to

maintain religion in its proper place. He made no distinction between religion and politics. If he was a *yogi*, he was also a great *political philosopher*. If he was merciful, he was also a great warrior and did not hesitate to call upon Arjuna, his friend and devotee, to lay aside all thoughts of family love and to slay the sinners, and obtain victory for the cause of truth and justice.

At a later period, when cruelty had increased, and love for the living beings had declined, was born the *Buddha* who preached his message most successfully and *Buddhism* became, for some time at any rate, the recognised State Religion. But opposition to the authority of the *Brahmans* and non-recognition of the *Vedas*, the two pillars on which Vedic culture stood, as well as the demoralisation that later on began in the order of the *Buddhist Monks*, necessitated a reform. Shankaracharya came and in a few years—he died in the prime of life—he succeeded in re-establishing the authority of the *Vedas*. The *Bhakti Movement* found a very large body of supporters led by different leaders throughout the length and breadth of India. As a



result thereof thousands of temples were built and enormous wealth was willingly earmarked to maintain them so that men might not forget to worship God. For nearly eight hundred years this movement went on, although during this period the coming in of the Moslems in India and the establishment of their rule, hampered the progress of Brahmanical Hinduism. Even then the Rajput chiefs, the Mahrattas under Shivaji and the Sikhs under their *Gurus* spared no pains to maintain the glory of our ancient heritage. Gradually, the study of Sanskrit literature lost favour because the Moslem rulers introduced Persian which became the court language. Consequently, Vedic literature went into obscurity and even the greatest Pandits ceased to study the Vedas, though these sacred books were respected and studied in other lands, particularly in Germany.

Hindu society suffered in many ways, and again we needed a great personality to direct the current of our lives through proper channels. At that time was born Mool Shanker, later on known as Swami Dayanand. In this booklet we describe his life and work.

Before closing this introduction we wish to reiterate that India has been singularly fortunate in producing noble sons to guide her along the right path. These men have, by precept as well as by example, shown us how we can raise our country to the position it deserves in the world. May we believe that Mahatma Gandhi is the present link in that chain of great men, and has so quickly followed Swami Dayanand who too hailed from the land of Gujerat. It was exactly fifty years ago that Swami Dayanand died on Dewali, *Samvat* 1940 Vikrami, at Ajmer, and now when India is celebrating the Semi-centenary of his death it is but in the fitness of things that to express our gratitude to him for his noble sacrifice we must remember him on this occasion and write his life-sketch remembering well :—

Lives of great men all remind us,  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And departing leave behind us  
Foot-prints on the sands of time.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE EARLY LIFE

Swami Dayanand hailed from Gujarat, Kathiawar. He disliked the idea of proclaiming much about his family, and avoided all references to its history. He only said that he was born in an *Audichya Brahman* family in a town, in the Indian state of Morvi, situated on the bank of the Machhooka Mahanadi, in the year 1881 of the Vikram Era. Later investigations show that his birth place was village Tankara in Morvi. His father was Pandit Amba Shanker who was a very orthodox Brahman. Amba Shanker held the hereditary post of a Jamar or revenue collector in the Morvi state. He had also some income from money lending. Amba Shanker was by disposition a very stern man and did not tolerate any opposition to or criticism of his religious views

to which he rigidly clung, and hated all those who dared to criticise him. "Not that he was wanting in natural affection, or lacked sympathy with his fellow creatures at large : he had a large share of both ; but, when anybody crossed him in anything or criticised his doctrine, he had, for the time being, and perhaps for many days to come, nothing but contempt and hatred for the offender, and thought that he had no title whatever to his love and his good offices." He being an official of the state had a number of sepoy's to help him in the work of revenue collection and the resulting official spirit must, to some extent at any rate, have been the cause of his general temperament.

On the other hand, Dayanand's mother was a sweet and gentle lady; she was kind to all her neighbours and ever partook of their joys and sorrows. She had thus become very popular. She was an ideal Hindu woman, and though illiterate, she was 'the soul of simplicity, purity and goodness', and in Ruskin's words was a veritable 'queen of the home'. *real*

Mool Shanker (Dayanand) was born to

such parents of whom he was the eldest son. Naturally his birth was the occasion of very great rejoicings in which all the inhabitants of the town participated. Congratulations from all friends and well-wishers of Amba Shanker overwhelmed him on this auspicious occasion. According to the strictly orthodox Hindu customs the birth ceremonies were performed. Brought up in an atmosphere of orthodoxy and religious austerity, Mool Shanker was sent to the village school to get the rudiments of education which he began by learning the *Devanagari* characters. He proved an extraordinarily intelligent pupil who made rapid progress in his elementary education. Gradually, he learnt by heart many *shlokas* with their interpretations, as well as *Rudri* followed by the *Sanhita*. At the age of eight, his sacred thread ceremony *Yajnopavit Sanskar* was performed and he was then initiated into the *Sandhya* and *Upasana*. Although Pt. Amba Shanker was a *Samvedi*, yet he was an orthodox *Shaiva*. Consequently, Mool Shanker had to follow *Shaivism* according to his father's strict instructions. Amba Shanker enjoined on Mool Shanker the great

necessity of observing all *Shaiva* fasts and to worship *Shiva* without any irregularity. In order that the idol of Shiva may be handy, and therefore available at every time for worship, the son was asked to keep a clay idol of the deity. At the age of ten, the child was quite familiar with all forms of *Shaiva* worship and he did it with great regularity, though beyond the stated hours he showed little inclination towards his deity.

Amba Shanker wished his son to become an orthodox *Shaiva*. With this object in view he took his son to all *Kathas*, recitations of religious stories, and worships and even to all persons with whom there was any possibility of conversing on *Shaivism*. The mother protested in vain that the tender child was unable to bear the strain imposed on him. Frequent visits to *Shiva* temples showed Mool Shanker all the ceremonies of the worship. By the time Mool Shanker reached the age of fourteen, he had learnt by heart the *Yajurveda* and portions of the remaining three Vedas, as well as other Sanskrit books. The boy did not yet understand the interpretations of what he could thus repeat, yet even this oral

knowledge was of no small value. At least it satisfied the orthodox father that his son was making satisfactory progress.

About ~~this~~ time a very important event took place, which had a far-reaching influence on Mool Shanker's mind. This was the coming of the annual Shiva Ratri fast on the 13th day of the month of Magh of the year 1894 *Vikrami*. A few days before the appointed day, Amba Shanker expressed his desire that Mool Shanker must observe the fast. The mother protested again that the boy would not be able to observe the fast successfully, and even if he did it he would certainly fall ill. But Amba Shanker had made up his mind and related to his son the importance of the fast and the good results of observing it. Mool Shanker consented to keep fast and as a trial measure he took his breakfast but went without further meals on several days. At last the appointed day arrived. Mool Shanker decided to observe fast and remained without eating anything the whole day. When evening approached, the father took him to a *Shiva* temple outside the town and asked him to keep awake throughout the night so

that the fast might bear the greatest fruits, and told him that if he went to sleep, his fast would become meaningless. Mool Shanker found the temple fairly crowded with the worshippers of *Shiva*. All the worshippers began the worship, singing hymns and songs in prayer of their god. The sounds of '*Har Har, Bam Bam Mahadeva*' resounded, and the ringing of the bell filled every worshipper's heart, including Mool Shanker, with enthusiasm. Thus the first quarter of the night passed off successfully. In the second quarter, however, some of the worshippers got exhausted and went to sleep one by one; the majority still determined to keep awake the whole night. When the third quarter began, most of the devotees had spent all their energy and were unable to fight with sleep. "Nodding of heads was visible all around, and one man after another, after vainly endeavouring to battle with drowsiness and after fruitlessly exhorting his neighbour not to give in so easily, stretched himself, at full length, on the floor and commenced snoring heavily." Amba Shanker was one of the first to fall asleep and even the priests could not keep awake.



This surprised Mool Shanker who was at a loss to understand why those worshippers were acting against their professions, and he determined that he would not lose the reward of the fast. To ward off sleep, he frequently sprinkled water over his face, and fixed his eyes on the idol of the Shiva. A small mouse then silently came out creeping and climbing the Shiva idol began to eat the offerings placed on the idol by the worshippers. For some moments Mool Shanker gazed at the doings of the mouse but then he grew serious and asked himself: "Is this the Mahadeva (*Shiva*) whom the *Katha* represented as a deity with human shape, with a trident in his hand and playing upon the drum—the god who bestows a boon upon one and pronounces a curse upon another, and who is the lord of the Kailash mountain? This image had not the power to hunt away even an insignificant mouse from its presence!".

For hundreds of years Shiva's devotees had been rigorously keeping fast and waking the whole night on the 13th day of Magh, but none had such a doubt to remove, for none had been so anxious as to go to the root of



DAYANAND GETTING INSPIRATION AT SHIVA'S  
WORSHIP.

every action done. Countless people had seen apples and other ripe fruits falling down but how many of them had questioned themselves regarding the cause of their thus falling down to the earth? It was left to Newton alone to investigate the cause and discover laws of immense service to the humanity. Again, countless persons had witnessed in daily life the swinging, to and fro, of suspended bodies or lanterns? But how many were struck with the idea of finding the cause of the phenomena? It was left to Galileo to strain the faculty of reasoning, apply his brains and eventually discover the laws which have proved to be of great practical uses. In the case of the subject of this booklet, a similar result was to follow. The late Sir Syed Ahmad Khan spoke of this event thus: "What was it if not an inspiration which made Dayanand turn his face from idolatry and seek out and study those portions of the Vedas which are concerned with the unity of the formless, self-effulgent God and with His other attributes?" It was undoubtedly an inspiration which laid the foundation of the enlightenment of the later years of Mool

Shanker's life. For he heard an inner voice saying, "The boon sought after shall be thine, but there is work for thee to do, and that must be done before thou canst reach the goal. Study the primeval Veda and enrich thyself with knowledge and wisdom, and, by means of these, bring thy brethren back to the adoration of the one only true Lord of the creation tearing them from the worship of the creature." Mool Shanker heard the words in his soul and took them to be the blessing of the real being who rules the universe.

Mool Shanker again and again asked himself if the idol was the real Shiva and when he found himself unable to clear the doubt, he woke up his father and requested his help in clearing the doubt. The father angrily answered the son's question saying that he had no business to put questions like that. Undaunted by his father's angry answers, Mool Shanker coolly replied: "The mice are running over this image of stone, and taking unwarranted liberties with it. The Mahadeva of whom the *Katha* spoke, is an innate being, and how can such a being permit mice to run over his body? This idol

cannot so much as move its head, much less protect itself from others. It appears to me that it is utterly impossible to reach the living omnipotent Deity by means of this image!" Amba Shanker tried to resolve his son's doubts saying that the real Mahadeva lived over the Kailash mountain and as in this age of *Kaliyuga* no man could see him face to face, it was enjoined upon Mahadeva's followers to worship and please the deity by imagining him as inhabiting an idol of stone, wood, metal or clay. He then expressed his disapproval of Mool Shanker's raising such objections. But the father's explanations, anger and disapproval did not satisfy Mool Shanker who immediately lost faith in the institution of idol-worship.

Mool Shanker resolved then and there to give up idolatry once for all and asked his father's permission to go home for he said he felt tired and hungry. The father permitted the son to go home and sent a sepoy to escort him, asking him not to eat anything during the night lest the fast should fail. On reaching home, Mool Shanker asked for food which the tender-hearted

mother readily gave, telling him how she had predicted that he would not be able to bear the ~~strain~~ of the fast up to the end. The son ate heartily and went to bed at 1 a.m. When in the early morning Amba Shanker came home and heard how his son had broken fast, he felt annoyed and took him to task.

Mool Shanker justified his action on the ground that the idol-Shiva did not answer the description of the Shiva of the *Katha* he had heard, and hence he did not recognise the idol as the real deity. The father growled in displeasure and then kept quiet hoping to change his son's mind later on. Mool Shanker had, since his childhood, been a very inquisitive boy and he did not allow his mind to be wedded to his father's views. He approached his uncle and relating to him the whole story begged him to interfere, saying that his keeping fasts and observing ceremonies which did not appeal to his heart, badly interfered with his studies. The good-natured uncle supported by Mool Shanker's mother, successfully interfered and freed his nephew from the restraints of fasts, etc. Thus freed, Mool Shanker now put his whole heart into his

studies and he soon finished *Nighantu*, *Nirukta*, *Mimansa* and works on rituals.

Mool Shanker was now sixteen, and while he was spending his whole time in his studies he did not forget the event of the Shiva Ratri of two years ago. About this time another event—a great tragedy—disturbed the mental equilibrium of Mool Shanker. He had two brothers and two sisters, all of them younger than himself, and he loved them all. One day the eldest girl fell seriously ill, and the news was carried to Amba Shanker who was attending a dance at a friend's house, with his two sons. All hurried to the house where they found the girl in the grip of cholera. Physicians were immediately summoned, and despite their best efforts the girl died within four hours. Her death filled Amba Shanker's house with the greatest grief. All began to weep and lament bitterly, and the mother rent the air with her cries. Mool Shanker was so intensely grieved at his dear sister's death that he stood utterly bewildered and stupefied, but did not shed a single tear. The inmates of the house, including his father all thought that Mool Shanker had no

affection for his sister. They scolded him for not weeping and taunted him by saying that his heart was made of stone. Some of them even asked him to join in the expressions of grief, even though for the sake of formality. Mool Shanker had felt his loss so deeply that no tears could soften the grief. He was meditating deeply over his own present and future. At last the parents, finding that their stinging words produced no effect on him, asked him to retire if he felt sleepy. Mool Shanker retired from the scene of agony and plunged himself in his bed brooding over his sister's death. He began to search for a remedy to escape from death. Next morning when he rose from his bed he found the world of little interest to him.

Mool Shanker again resumed his studies, every now and then deeply meditating over the complex problem of life and death. Three years had hardly elapsed since the sister's death, when another tragedy of a still more stupefying effect occurred. This time it was the death of his dearest uncle who had so fondly rocked him in his lap, shared his nephew's confidence and always did his utmost



to help him in his studies. The uncle too fell a victim to cholera of a virulent type. Mool Shanker stood aghast, gazing intently at his dead uncle's face. This second tragedy in the house coming, as it did, so soon after the first unhinged his mind. He went about asking his friends if there ever was a means to attain *Mukti* or salvation. He often got the reply that one could attain salvation through *Yogabhyas* or contemplation and communion. At last, after deeply meditating over the answer to his question, he concluded that he must bid good-bye to his home. He began to look upon the world as a transitory thing, almost nothing when compared with salvation wherein there was all bliss. For he thought, as others of a similar nature and mind have done, in the following hymn:—

“Whoever thoroughly understands the nature of the visible creation and of the imperishable atom from which the visible creation springs at one and the same time, the same shall by virtue of his knowing of the primal atom, triumph over death, and shall obtain beatitude by virtue of his know-

ledge of the visible creation and by reason of his virtuous activity in that creation.” (Yajurveda, Chapter XL-XIV.)

Mool Shanker was now so deeply immersed in his thoughts that his parents soon understood his feelings. They felt alarmed at the consequences of their son's thoughts and began to devise means to distract his mind and prevent him from leaving home. At last they resolved to marry him, hoping thereby to tie him with the bonds of married-life from which he would find it difficult to escape. Mool Shanker was frightened at his parents' resolve and persuaded his friends and other members of the family to dissuade them from marrying him. At last he succeeded in getting marriage postponed for a year. During this year of respite Mool Shanker devoted his energies to an intenser study of the Sanskrit language, hoping that before the year was out something might happen to postpone the evil day (of marriage) still further, but resolving that if the parents forcibly tried to give him a wife, much against his wishes, he could trust to his legs to carry him away from the place of his birth.

He, therefore, studied on with the enthusiasm of a true seeker of knowledge, equipping his mind with a mass of facts which ultimately proved of immense help in his later life.

As the year was about to end, Mool Shanker requested his parents to send him to Benares, the real seat of Sanskrit learning, where he could quench his thirst for knowledge. The request was evidently innocent, but the shrewd parents understood the real feelings of the son who wished to go away from home to escape from the shackles of marriage. Although, Mool Shanker spoke to them of the great value and importance of *Brahmcharya* (celibacy) so highly extolled in the Vedic literature, they rejected his request and told him that he would soon be married. Mool Shanker now saw that he could not persuade his parents to send him to Kashi (Benares). He, therefore, asked them to consent to his going away to a village only a few miles from his town, where his ancestral property lay, so that he might learn there at the feet of a learned man. The father consented provided he looked after the property, which the eager student quickly

declined to do, saying that he would reside at the other village. This request having been granted, Mool Shanker commenced his studies with the new teacher who felt delighted with his pupil's progress. Once in the course of a conversation, Mool Shanker openly told his teacher that he had resolved to remain unmarried. The teacher soon conveyed these words to his pupil's parents who immediately recalled him to their village, and started preparations for his marriage.

Mool Shanker, finding that in a month he might be married, consulted his sympathisers who too opposed his idea of not marrying. At last he resolved upon flight wherein alone he saw his escape from the bonds of marriage. So that just a week before the date fixed for the marriage, he slipped out of his house one evening, after bidding secret farewell to his home, his parents and his village, never to return again, if he could do it.

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## CHAPTER III

### WANDERINGS IN QUEST OF SALVATION

Thus in the year 1902 (Vikram Era) Mool Shanker, now twenty one years of age, left his home. The ideas that must have crossed his mind more rapidly than his legs were taking him away from his home, cannot easily be imagined. He avoided the high-ways and took to the most unfrequented paths, for he knew well that his father's messengers would soon be out in search of him. The first night he passed in a village about eight miles from his home and before it was dawn he resumed his flight. He travelled the whole day and just before sunset, while he was tired, he stopped at a village, after covering some twentyfive miles. Here he passed the night in a temple of Hanuman which lay outside the village. He narrowly escaped being caught by his father's horsemen who

had pursued him and visited the village in search of him.

After thanking Heaven for this escape, he resumed his journey and soon came in contact with a party of begging mendicants who taking advantage of his simplicity, prevailed upon him to part with his ornaments which, they said, were a serious obstacle in rising above 'worldly attachments'. Hearing that there was going to be a large gathering of *Sadhus* (mendicants) at Sayle, a well-known station on the railway line (Wadhwan Morvi), he turned his steps towards that place and reached there in time. He saw a large gathering of *Sadhus* at the house of Lala Bhagat. Here he received from a Brahmachari the privileges of the order to which the latter belonged, took the name of *Suddhachaitanya*, put on ochre-coloured clothes and took a *Kamandal*.

Leaving Sayle, he reached Kontha Gangad, a town near Ahmadabad. Here he found many *Bairagis* who had entrapped a princess. They too robbed *Suddhachaitanya* (the former Mool Shanker) by persuading him to exchange his silk *Dhotis* with cotton stuff.



AMBA SHANKER CATCHES DAYANAND AT THE  
SIDHPUR FAIR.

He then started for Sidhpur, a town and railway station on the bank of the river Saraswati, where he expected to find a *Yogi* at the fair that was going to be held. In the way he met a Bairagi who at once recognised him and asked him why he (the lad) was there in ochrecoloured clothes. Mool Shanker related the whole story. The two then parted. Mool Shanker reached Sidhpur and stayed in the temple of Nilkanth Mahadeva. Here he met every learned and pious man in the fair. In the meanwhile, the Bairagi, to whom Mool Shanker had related his story, wrote to the boy's parents whom he knew, informing them of their son's whereabouts.

Taking the clue, Amba Shanker reached Sidhpur with a number of sepoy. A vigorous search was made in the fair and in the end Mool Shanker was found in the temple. When the father and son met, the former's rage knew no bounds, and he began to shower abuses on his son calling him the disgrace of his family, and the cause of bringing shame to his race. This frightened Mool Shanker who fell on his father's feet, begged his pardon and tried to explain away



his flight by putting the blame on his evil advisers. The father tore the son's coloured clothes, dressed him in a new suit and appointed a guard to watch him in the night lest he should run away.

When night approached, Mool Shanker determined to flee away the moment he could get a chance to escape the eye of the guard. He had expressed repentance to his father, merely to subside his anger at that moment and not to go back to his home. While he was thus thinking of his regaining his freedom he found the guard had fallen asleep. Seeing that the only opportunity he was looking for, he slowly crept out of the room and after going slowly for a few steps he ran as fast as his legs could carry him. After running for half a mile he saw a temple with a *Peepal* tree near it, whose huge branches covered its roof. He climbed up the tree as slowly as he could manage, carefully avoiding detection by the priest. Only a few minutes later, the guard awoke and saw that the bird had flown. An alarm was raised and instantly several horsemen started in pursuit of Mool Shanker. They came in the direction of his

retreat, approached the temple, but finding no trace of their master's son, turned back in despair. Mool Shanker was watching all this, holding back his breath lest he should be caught again. He passed the night on the tree and when the sun rose his fear abated not. He remained on the tree the whole day without food, refreshing himself with a few drops of water every time from his *lota*. When the day ended and night set in, he quietly left his hiding place, and virtually creeping down the tree, started on his journey. He travelled for four miles before he halted at a village. Thus avoiding pursuit, he reached Baroda where he came in contact with Brahmchari's and *Sadhus* of *non-dualistic* school\* and became a *Vedanti*.

After a short residence there, he again started for a place on the Narbada where he hoped to meet many learned *Sadhus*. He roamed along the bank of the Narbada meeting many learned men, till he met Parmahansa Parmanand with whom he resumed his studies and mastered several

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\*They believe in the identity of God and Soul

works, including *Vedantasara*, *Harimedha Trotak*, *Arya Hari Har Trotak*, etc. As Mool Shanker was a Brahmachari, he corked his own food and this was a serious obstacle in his studies. He, therefore, determined to become a *Sanyasi* and assume a new name which would enable him to conceal his identity. He requested Chidasram, a *Sanyasi*, to give him *Sanyas*, but the latter refused on the ground of the former's too young age. This did not dishearten Mool Shanker who stayed on, studying and hoping to succeed some day. The opportunity soon came. He came across a Dandi Swami, named Swami Purnanand, and a Dakshini Brahmchhari. Both of these were impressed by Mool Shanker's learning, and he too realised that the Swami was a 'man of profound learning' and deep scholarship. Mool Shanker succeeded in impressing the Brahmchhari with the great necessity of his being initiated by the Swami. Therefore, after great discussions, the Brahmchhari prevailed upon Swami Purnanand to give *Sanyas* to Mool Shanker, then known Sudhachaitanya. The ceremony took place and Sudhachaitanya became a *Sanyasi* and assumed the name of

Dayanand. Thus the subject of our sketch was Mool Shanker in his boyhood, became Shudhachaitanya later on, and finally on being initiated into *Sanyas* at the age of 24, he took the name of Dayanand (Swaraswati) by which name he is known to the world.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE WANDERING SANYASI

As a *Sanyasi*, Dayanand was now free to devote his time to higher studies and practising *yoga*. He heard of the fame of Swami Yoganand who was considered a great *yogi*. Dayanand went to him and studied several works on metaphysics. Thereafter he proceeded to Chitore where he studied Sanskrit grammar with Krishna Shastri. After leaving Chitore he went to another town where he studied the Vedas with another Pandit. He met two *yogis*, Jwalanand Puri and Shivanand Giri. The two *yogis* gladly taught Dayanand some practices in *yoga* and then they left for Ahmadabad, telling Dayanand that later on he could also join them there. After a month, Dayanand reached Ahmadabad where he rejoined the *yogis*. The two *yogis* very gladly taught him all the

mysteries of *yoga* and it may rightly be said that his knowledge of *yoga* was the gift of these *yogis* of whom Dayanand thought in his later life with feelings of earnest gratitude. Dayanand then left for Koh Abu, hoping to meet there many *yogis*. On reaching there he met many of them and learnt from them further secrets of *yoga-vidya*. He again started on his journey towards the Himalayas meeting all famous Pandits and *yogis* in the way and learning from them as much as he could. In 1912 (Vikram Era) he reached Hardwar where the Kumbh Fair was being held. He was now thirty and had learnt almost all secrets of *yoga*. During his stay at Hardwar he practised *yoga*, met all learned men and exchanged views on several subjects.

When the Kumbh Fair came to an end, Dayanand repaired to Rishi Kesh where he passed many days in study, solitude and contemplation. Here he met a Brahmchari and two sadhus and with them he went to Tehri. One day the new acquaintances invited Dayanand to dinner. The invitation was accepted, but at the appointed hour when

Dayanand reached his host's place, he was horrified to find meat being prepared for his dinner. Instantly he retired to his lodging, and refused to dine with them when the time for dinner came. One day, Dayanand asked the Sadhus to lend him some of the books of which they used to sing praises every now and then. The books were willingly offered to Dayanand who opening them (they were *Tantras*) found that they were full of obscene teachings, utterly subversive of all moral or social relations between the members of society—nay, between the members of the same house and family. On reading the books he found each one as bad as the other and he finally concluded that one of the causes of India's downfall was the kind of teachings contained in those books. His soul sickened on reading leaf after leaf, till at last he threw them away, sad at heart that such books could be produced to demonalise and brutalize society.

Leaving Tehri, Dayanand reached Sri Nagar and there put up in a temple. He made it a point to hold religious and literary discussions with learned Pandits and

started his crusade against irreligious and vulgar books like the *Tantras*. Of all the Sadhus Dayanand met there, he was highly impressed with the learning and character of Ganga Giri and with him he spent two months. He then visited Rudraprayag and many other places, including the tomb of Agast Muni. He spent the four months of winter in Shivapuri, at the end of which he started towards Kedar Nath Ghat. He visited all the snow-clad neighbouring hills, but was sadly disappointed on learning that there lived no Sadhus of whom he had been told before. He suffered great troubles while wandering over these hills for nearly twenty days. He, however, began to love the climate of the hills and, therefore, one day, he resolved to climb up the Tunganath hill and visit the temple on its summit. When he reached the temple he saw many idols and their worshippers, but the place did not impress him much and he resolved to descend the very day. On his return journey, he entered a jungle and was soon in the thick woods. Darkness rapidly advanced. The way was stony and crossed by rivulets.



Passing through the thorny bushes, he slowly limped on in the growing darkness. He passed the night on a tree and at day-break started towards Okhimath, hoping to meet there some pious and learned Sadhus. He found that all the caves were full of impostors who had no deep and great knowledge of religion.

He, however came across a *Mahant* who so much liked him as to ask him to become his disciple, succeed him to the *gaddi* and become master of the wealth the *Mahant* possessed. Riches had but little attraction for Dayanand and he could not give up the object he was after. The offer was, therefore, instantly refused. Dayanand started for Joshimath the next day and there he met many learned *Sadhus* and *Yogis* from whom he learned further on the subject of practical *Yoga*.

Dayanand left Joshimath and set off towards Badri Narayan where he hoped to meet learned men adept in practical *yoga*. When he reached the place he was greatly disappointed to learn that the place had no really learned persons. But the *Mahant* of

the place, called Rawalje, happened to be a man of deep learning and Dayanand was extremely pleased to converse with him on the subject of *Vedas* and *Shastras*. The surrounding hills were very charming and Dayanand resolved to explore them. So early one morning he started on his journey through the hills and reached the bank of the river Alakhnanda. He followed the course of the river for some distance, and entered into a wood where the whole mountain was entirely wrapped up in snow. Finding no path in front, he was greatly distressed. He had not sufficient clothing ; the cold was severe and evening was fast approaching. To add to his sufferings his appetite was so great that he began to eat ice. Ultimately he resolved to cross the stream, hoping to find a path on the other side. He entered the stream which was very deep at places. The current was swift and pieces of snow and the pointed and slippery pieces of stone lying at the bed of the river made the crossing extremely difficult. His feet began to bleed and were benumbed with cold.

Somehow he managed to cross the stream

and on reaching the other side he fell almost unconscious. On regaining consciousness he was bewildered to find that his legs and feet refused to move. He wrapped them tightly in his garments which were by now all torn, and tried to move forward but without success. He then realised that unless some person came forward to help him, he would perish at that very spot without accomplishing the object for which he had left his home and his all. While he was thinking in his mind, two hill-men were seen coming towards him. When they came near him, they respectfully offered to take him to their place. This offer he refused but accepted to go with them to Sidhpat Tirath. But he was stupefied to find that he could not walk. He, therefore, begged to be excused, asking them to leave him to his fate, and the men left him. In a short time he mustered courage, resumed his journey and reached Badri-Narayan at 8 p.m. The Rawalje had become very uneasy at Dayanand's prolonged absence and was pleased on seeing him back.

The next morning, Dayanand took leave of the host and started for Rampur. In the

way he met a learned Yogi, spent a night with him, and then crossing hills and jungles he reached Rampur where he put at the house of Ramgiri, a *sadhu* who commanded great respect on account of his character and virtues. Dayanand found him behaving like an eccentric man, talking to himself loudly in the night. When Dayanand questioned his disciples, they told him that it was their *guru's* habit. In his personal conversation with the Sadhu, Dayanand concluded that the man was imperfect in Yoga. Dayanand left Rampur and visited Kashipur and Daronasagar, and at the latter place he spent his winter. One day it came into his mind that he should go to the heights of the Himalayas and put an end to his life. Later reflection, however, showed him that it was a cowardly act and that 'a true manly soul ought to fight out to the end, acquire all he can of knowledge and wisdom and then resignedly wait for the call.' The event shows that there are moments in life when even the most vigorous and manly natures show weakness and despair. He then remembered the teaching of the Shastras that

his duty was to try earnestly and not to be impatient for the fruit.

At the close of the winter, Dayanand left Daronasagar and visiting Moradabad, Sambhal and Garh Muktesar on his way, he reached the banks of the Ganges. Here he one day saw a corpse floating down the river. He had read some books on physiology and anatomy but his knowledge was till then unverified. Resolving to get practical knowledge of the subject, he plunged into the river, dragged the corpse ashore, cut open the body with a sharp-knife and started a close examination of the inner parts of the human body. He was surprised to find that the description of the heart, as given in his books, did not tally with what he actually saw. He, therefore, threw the books into the Ganges and learned from the corpse as much as he could.

After passing a few days on the banks of the Ganges, Dayanand left for Farrukhabad and then further eastward. Then again, visiting Cawnpore and Allahabad, he arrived at a place near Benares and spent a month in the temple of Vindhyachal Ashvanji. Here he met many Sanskrit scholars. Leaving that

place he visited Chandalgarh and put up in the temple of Durga Kohu. He devoted himself whole heartedly to the study and practice of Yoga. While busy in that work, he contracted : very bad habit of drinking *bhang*. One day he was so much intoxicated with it that under its influence he thought he heard Parvati and Mahadeva talking about him, and discussing the *pros* and *cons* of Dayanand becoming a house-holder. On recovering from the intoxication he remembered his absurd dream. His eyes then fell on a huge image of the bull (*Nadia*) of Mahadeva. Getting up from his bed, Dayanand threw all his books and clothes into the hollow of the bull's belly. He was surprised to find that a human being was sitting in the hollow. Dayanand extended his hand towards the occupant who was so frightened that he left the place of his concealment and ran towards his village. Thereupon Dayanand occupied the vacated place and passed the night there. Next morning, a woman came to worship the bull. She made offerings of *gur* and curd to the bull. When she had gone away, Dayanand heartily

enjoyed the meal, and the sour curd mitigated the effects of intoxication. He then firmly resolved never to drink *bhang* again.

Early in 1814 (Vikram Era) he thought of searching learned Sadhus and Yogis reputed to live on the banks of the Narbada. He again started on this search and walking along the banks of the river, he passed through a dense jungle where he saw huts at different places. He lived only on milk and fruits. Once he entered a dreary forest full of prickly shrubs and tall grass which made the journey extremely difficult. While he was crossing that jungle he suddenly saw a black bear advancing towards him. For a moment Dayanand stood rooted to the place, but on quick reflection he took up a stick and gave a mighty stroke on the animal's nose, who shrieked aloud and ran back. On hearing the beast's cry, men from the neighbouring huts came out with clubs and hunting dogs, and were surprised on seeing a Sadhu in trouble. They offered him their hospitality, and warning him that the jungle was full of tigers, elephants, bears and other wild animals, asked him not to proceed further.

thankfully declined their offer, and telling them what he was after, resolved to proceed on his journey. The men then offered him a club which they said he could use to save himself from the wild animals. He at first thankfully accepted it, but after marching a few steps further he threw it away relying on God's help.

He travelled on for hours and hours till the sun began to sink. When darkness grew around him, the path became invisible and yet he did not stop. He even stumbled here and there against trees uprooted and thrown down by elephants. Advancing further he found himself in a jungle of thorny hedges and prickly shrubs. For a moment he did not know what to do. Of course, going back was out of question, therefore he crept on his knees and following a zigzag track he soon found himself in an open space. His clothes were now all torn into shreds and his body was scratched, bruised and bleeding. The growing darkness, the rank vegetation and his own condition stupefied him. Without losing courage he marched forward as fast as his wearied legs could carry him. He



then beheld a neat hut under a big tree, a stream flowing by and goats and cattle still grazing on its banks. He very much desired to enter the hut and pass the night there, but thinking that it might cause inconvenience to the inmates he quietly climbed up the tree.

When the day dawned he got down, went to the margin of the stream, washed his wounds and then made ready to start prayers. Soon a party of villagers came advancing towards him with a large number of cattle, cows and sheep, who were on their way to a temple where they intended to take part in a religious festival. The party was surprised on seeing a Sadhu (Dayanand) in that lonely place. They asked him where he had come from and what was his object in journeying through the jungle. Dayanand told them about his mission, whereupon they departed. Soon afterwards a rich man came there followed by two servants. He offered to help Dayanand, gave him a bowl of milk, lit fire round him to ward off wild beasts and left his servants there to help the Sanyasi along the way.

Dayanand passed the night there sleeping soundly and uninterruptedly under the watchful eye of the two servants left behind by the kind man. In the morning he got up and after performing ablutions and doing *Sandhya* he resumed his march. He then reached the destination he was bound for and spent full three years wandering along the Narbada, meeting the Sadhus and Yogis and learning from them. It was during these wanderings that he heard of a great blind Sanyasi of the name of Virjanand who lived at Mathura. On hearing about him, Dayanand involuntarily felt in his heart that Virjanand was the real man he was looking for and so towards Mathura he set off.

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## CHAPTER V

### AT THE PRECEPTOR'S FEET

In time Dayanand reached Mathura where he had no difficulty in searching Virjanand who had become famous and popular in the city and round about on account of his vast learning and simple way of life. Dayanand had now found the real *Guru*, for it may rightly be said that Virjanand became the real 'Maker of Dayanand.' We may here give a brief description of Swami Virjanand's life.

Virjanand was born in 1854, Vikrami, at Kartarpur, a town on the river Beas in the Punjab. This town had already become well-known as Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, passed his last years and died at Kartarpur. About the time of Virjanand's birth, Maharaja Ranjit Singh sat on the throne of the Punjab and the Sikh power was

then at its greatest height. Narayan Datta, a Brahman by caste, was the father of Virjanand. While only five or six years of age, Virjanand had a severe attack of small-pox which left its permanent effect on the child by depriving him of his eye-sight. The parents were shocked to see their infant son becoming blind and for a time they knew not what the child's future would be. The helpless condition of Virjanand, however, made his father more careful about the boy's future. Virjanand had shown signs of a promising career ever since his childhood and his father accordingly resolved to give him the best 'spiritual and temporal' education.

While Virjanand was only eleven years of age another, and a severer, misfortune befell him. His father died and the boy was practically left an orphan at the mercy of his elder brother. No doubt, Virjanand's elder brother showed all mercy on his blind brother and was ready to help him, but his wife, a very cruel and harsh-tempered woman, hated her brother-in-law and tormented him. She plainly told him that he might better leave the house. The elder brother would try to

help Virjananda but he was too weak to withstand the temper of his wife.

At last when Virjanand was convinced that even his brother connived at the faults of his wife, and his remaining in the house would no more give him happiness, he obeyed the inner voice, left his home and started for Hardwar. He experienced great hardships in the way, for there being no facilities for railway journey, the blind boy travelled for weeks and months before reaching the destination. And as he was then only twelve years of age, his sufferings may well be imagined than described. When he arrived at Rishi Kesh he was fifteen years old. There he devoted his time to study and contemplation. "Going to the bank of the river he would sit there for hours together, repeating the noblest of the Veda-mantras—the Gayatri—and meditating on the nature and attributes of the Divinity of which it so comprehensively speaks." Full three years he passed at Rishi Kesh, facing the changes of weather, hunger and thirst, but learning as much as he could.

At the age of eighteen he returned to Hardwar and there he took up *Sanyas* from

Swami Parmanand who gave the blind boy the name of Virjanand Saraswati. The blind Sanyasi Virjanand then devoted himself to studies with greater vigour and soon mastered the Sanskrit language, so much so that he began to compose original verses in that language. The Brahmans at Hardwar helped him much in his studies and to them he ever felt grateful. After some time, Virjanand himself began to teach boys whom he easily taught the *Madhya Kaumudi*. He then moved to Kankhal and there studied the *Siddhant Kaumudi* which added to his knowledge. After finishing his studies at Kankhal, he left the place, followed the course of the Ganges and arrived at Kashi. Here he studied several important works on Vedant Philosophy and soon acquired fame for his deep learning. People began to call him 'Prajnachakshus Swami,' that is the Swami possessing inner eyes of knowledge. When he reached the age of twentytwo, he left Kashi and reached Gaya, after experiencing trouble with robbers, on his way, who robbed him of the little money he had.

At Gaya, Virjanand studied the *Vedant*

*Shastras*, and thereafter he reached Calcutta where he resided at Swaron. At this place Maharaja Vinay Singh of Alwar came in touch with Virjanand, while the latter was reciting the *Vishnu Stotra* in thrilling tones, which attracted the attention of the Maharaja who at once felt a great desire to have a talk with the blind Swami. When the Maharaja interviewed the Swami, he was highly impressed by the latter's deep learning. The Maharaja prevailed upon the Swami to accompany him to Alwar, promising to learn with the Swami three hours every day. It was also agreed that in case the Maharaja any day missed the regular lessons the Swami would be at liberty to leave Alwar.

For full three years Maharaja Vinay Singh took his lessons from Swami Virjanand. One day, the Maharaja came several hours late and begged pardon of his preceptor. Virjanand felt annoyed and despite the Maharaja's repeated assurances for future regularity, the Swami left Alwar for Bharatpur. At Bharatpur, he was honoured by Maharaja Balwant Singh. Leaving Bharatpur, Virjanand reached Mursan (district Aligarh) as a state

guest of Maharaja Tikam Singh. He then arrived at Swaron where he fell dangerously ill. After leaving Swaron, Virjanand reached Mathura in 1893, Vikram Era. Here he stayed in a temple, and resumed his work of teaching boys. As days passed, the Swami's deep learning and sterling character won him the respect of all persons, and he accordingly decided to make Mathura his permanent residence. He discussed with other leading Pandits upon several controversial subjects and showed remarkable skill and wisdom which spread his fame as a renowned scholar of Sanskrit.

So that when Dayanand reached Mathura, Virjanand had already become famous for learning. Dayanand reached the small house of the Swami and knocked at his door. On being admitted, he expressed his desire to learn at the feet of the blind sage. After examining Dayanand, Virjanand told him that he had no respect for books written by ordinary scholars but that he relied only on the Aryan literature. Dayanand consented to part with the non-Aryan books which he had read so far, and actually threw them into



the Jamuna. There was another difficulty about Virjanand's teaching Dayanand, and that was the fact of the latter's being a Sanyasi, for Virjanand did not know how Dayanand would afford to continue his studies as a Sanyasi. Dayanand assured his preceptor "that he would find himself food somehow or other, no matter if it was the coarsest possible ; all that he cared for was knowledge and that, he hoped, Virjanand would not refuse him". When Virjanand was convinced that Dayanand was really feeling the thirst for knowledge, he consented to teach him.

Virjanand raised some money by subscription and purchased books for Dayanand, particularly the *Mahabhashya*. The true disciple Dayanand began his studies with his revered preceptor Virjanand and lived on the charity of the benevolent. Many days had not passed when a severe famine visited Mathura and the neighbourhood. The benevolent and generous people shrank their hands of charity and the *Vidyarthi*s were hard put to it, as they could not easily procure their meals. All this trouble did not deter Dayanand from his path ; he continued his

studies as merrily as before, without caring for his food. Often he would go without a meal, or would eat roasted gram or dry bread or any other thing which he received from the house of Durga Khattry, a generous-hearted man. Dayanand manfully and like a true Sanyasi and Brahmchari faced the critical days. One Pandit Amrit Lal 'a man of philanthropic impulse' was so impressed by the virtues of Dayanand that he promised to supply him food and books as long he cared to study. To Dayanand this help proved very great for he devoted himself heart and soul to his studies. In his later life Dayanand never forgot the generosity of Amrit Lal. Meanwhile another kind man came forward with an offer of two rupees a month to enable Dayanand to drink milk every day. A third man gave him four annas per month, being the cost of the oil he needed to burn a light.

In this way, Dayanand pursued his studies relying on the charity of the benevolent persons and the kindness and blessings of his physically blind preceptor. Day and night he worked hard, studying his books

holding literary and philosophical discourses with his fellow students, and at times asking the Brahmans to be very regular in performing *sandhya* and *upasana*. “ His extreme thirst for knowledge, his quick and clear perception of the nature of things, his lucid and convincing expositions of shastric teaching, and, above all, his righteous ways made him a favourite with the *Vidyarthi* (students) community, and his company was sought after by them one and all.” And while Dayanand thus progressed in his studies, his respect for his preceptor increased day by day. He would willingly and cheerfully do even the humblest offices for giving comfort to his blind *Guru*, including fetching water from the Jamuna for his bath, sweeping the house and otherwise serving him.

Virjanand was not slow to observe that of all his pupils Dayanand was the ablest and most brilliant, who would undoubtedly prove a great scholar. Often in moments of anger, the blind teacher would turn the pupil out of the house, only to pardon him again when the latter would express his humility. Sometimes Dayanand would even enlist the support

of men of influence in Mathura to get him excused by his preceptor. Whenever Virjanand inflicted corporal punishment, Dayanand cheerfully bore it. Once it so happened that in anger Virjanand gave a rather severe blow of his stick, which struck Dayanand on his hand causing injury and bleeding. Dayanand most respectfully addressed his preceptor, "Most holy Sir, you should not give yourself so much trouble on my account. My body is hard as iron and cannot feel much your stick. Your delicate hand might suffer by the exertion, and *that* would give me real pain." It is said that whenever in later life Dayanand saw the mark of that blow he would look at it with emotion and respectfully remember the *guru* to whom he felt himself highly indebted. Thus two and a half years passed away, during which Dayanand mastered Sanskrit grammar, Vedanta and other works of Vedic literature. Education was now over and he had to leave his *guru*. The parting ceremony took place. How many students have not witnessed such occasions in their lives ! Many similar functions take place every year

in our schools and universities. But the ceremony we are writing about had an importance which can never be forgotten by those who have any respect for India or who have ever given a moment's thought to the immense work Dayanand accomplished after leaving his blind *guru* at Mathura. With all humility, Dayanand approached his *guru*, with half a seer of cloves as his parting *guru dakshina* (the present to the preceptor), and with eyes wet with tears of love and respect, he humbly requested Virjanand to accept his most humble present, saying that that was the only thing which a poor student like him could afford to give. But Virjanand seemed to be unwilling to accept only half a seer of cloves ; he had expected much more of Dayanand on whom all his hopes had, during those two years and a half, centred. When Dayanand said he had nothing more, quick was Virjanand's rejoinder : "Do you think I would ask you for anything you have not got?" When Dayanand expressed his willingness to give anything he really possessed, Virjanand said : "*Dear son, you have got it and that is true knowledge. If you would pay me dakshina give this*



DAYANAND OFFERING CLOVES AS DAKSHINA,  
VIRJANAND DEMANDING SOMETHING ELSE.

*knowledge to my motherland. The Vedas have long ceased to be taught in Bharatvarsha, go and teach them; teach the true Shastras, and dispel, by their light, the darkness which the false creeds have given birth to. Remember that while works by common men are utterly misleading as to the nature and attributes of the one true God, and slander the great Rishis and Munis, those by the ancient teachers are free from such a blemish. This is the test which will enable you to differentiate the true, ancient teaching from the writings of ordinary men."*

Dayanand listened to his guru's parting words with great respect and then instantly promised to carry out his wishes. The blind Swami gave his pupil his blessing and then sent him into the world. To what extent Dayanand worked to redeem his promise to the preceptor is described in the following pages. We may, however, say that unlike our present graduates who listen to the words of the university authorities at the time of the convocation and then forget them the next day, Dayanand never for a moment kept out of his mind what his preceptor had said, but he lived to fulfil his promise. And in that he succeeded.

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## CHAPTER VI

### INDIA AS DAYANAND FOUND HER

Dayanand had left his parents and his home for ever, in order to seek salvation. He had wandered over hills and plains, had gone without regular meals for days together and faced all troubles in the pursuit of his object. His only aim, as he had at first thought of, was to acquire as much knowledge as he could, practise *Yoga* and then achieve salvation. We have described how at one moment of his life he had thought of going over the heights of the Himalayas and end his life there. He had never even imagined that he would have to change his aim and work whole heartedly in the world. But God had willed it so and the preceptor had asked of his disciple to devote his life to the regeneration of his country, *Bharatvarsha*, the land of the ancient sages. So that on leaving Virjanand's



house, after finishing his studies, Dayanand boldly faced the problem of uplifting his countrymen from the degraded condition they had fallen in, and he accomplished his mission nobly.

Before estimating the work that Dayanand did, we would here first describe the condition of India—political, social and religious—on the eve of Dayanand's starting his work.

### **Political Conditon—**

Dayanand was born in 1824 A. D., *i.e.* soon after Lord Hastings had relinquished the office of Governor-General of India, and Lord Amherst had succeeded to it. It was a time when India was passing through a political upheaval. The power of the Mahrattas had been finally broken and all of them, even the Holkar of Indore and the Bhonsla of Nagpur, had surrendered to the superior force of the foreigners, the East India Company. Though there were still many Indian rulers in the different parts of the country ruling in their petty states, they had all been forced to acknowledge the East India Company as their overlord. The nominal Mughal Emperor still lived at Delhi; he was politically an

impotent figure-head. The Gurkha War (1814-16) had deprived the Gurkhas of Nepal of the independence they enjoyed in their mountainous country. Only in the Punjab the Sikh power was at its height under Ranjit Singh whom the Company still dreaded, and was glad to contract friendship with him.

In Oudh, the Nawab was entirely in the hands of the Company, surrounded as he was on all sides by British territory.

India had thus passed into foreign hands, into the hands of a trading company that had come here nearly two centuries earlier with the primary object of trading with the East. It had taken advantage of the quarrels among the Indian chiefs and rulers and cleverly driven a wedge into the body politic of India. The imperialist policy of the Marquess of Wellesley (1798-1805) and Lord Hastings (1813-1823) had resulted in the annexation of vast states, with British territory and the disappearance of many native rulers. Those who were left, were compelled to seek protection of the British by keeping subsidiary forces, outwardly for their defence but really

as a mill stone round their necks. But for Ranjit Singh and the Punjab all rulers and states were entirely at the mercy of the British.

Thus, India, that had in ages gone by acquired the most supreme political position in the world and had, therefore, by her riches become the object of envy, was now rapidly losing her political power and passing into foreign hands. This was the result of internal quarrels, between the various rulers that had come into existence on the downfall of the Mughal Empire. The treachery of Mir Jafar who had badly betrayed his master and king, Nawab Sirajuddoula of Bengal, brought to the English arms of Clive the first victory (at Plassey in 1757), and the process of political disintegration of India had then begun. And when Dayanand left Virjanand (1862 A. D.), India had completely passed into English hands, including the Punjab which could not hold out for long after the death of its lion 'Maharaja Ranjit Singh'. The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 had swept over the whole of Northern India and its embers too had cooled. The rule of the Company had ended. Queen Victoria

had become the undisputed sovereign of India and the British Parliament had assumed direct responsibility for the administration of this land. The policy started by Wellesley, and continued by Lord Hastings, had been completed by Lord Dalhousie. The political map of India in 1862 A. D. was just the same as now. The Queen had, in her Proclamation of 1858, promised her very best care for her Indian subjects and had assured the petty Indian rulers and chiefs that their states would no longer be annexed and their rights would be respected. Could there be a worse degeneration of Indian politics? India had once ruled over the neighbouring countries. Her fleet had crossed the oceans and reached the other side of the globe. When Dayanand started his work, he did it in an India of the British rulers.

### **Social Condition—**

The above description shows how India was losing her political independence and passing into foreign hands when Dayanand Saraswati started his work in the country. If the betrayal of Jaichand had cost the Hindu their independence and established Muslim

rule in India, the betrayal of Mir Jafar and men of his type, nearly seven centuries after Jaichand, had sown the seeds of another foreign rule in India, *i.e.* of the Christian power from the west. In the latter case, there was a worse type of political dependence of India, for the Muslim rulers had made India their home, while the English continued to rule from their own country, treating India as a mere dependency.

The social condition was, however, far worse than even the political, for in the latter case the country was settling down to normal peace whereas on the social side the whole fabric of Hindu society was crumbling down. *in material & spiritual things & part of the* It is true that foreign rule too had its evil results on the social organisation of the Hindus by demoralising people. There were, however, other reasons too. As a result of all these causes, the whole of the social structure of the Hindus changed for the worse.

The Hindu society, as indicated in the Vedic books, was built up on the well-known system of *Varnas* which divides society into four sections, *viz.* the *Brahmans* or the priestly class entrusted with educational and religious

work, the *Kshatriyas* or the military class whose chief duty was to rule the country and protect it from foreign invasions, the *Vaishyas* or the trading class, including the agriculturists, whose duty was to till the land and do trade for enriching the country, and then the *Shudras* or the serving class who did all other service. According to the strict interpretation of the *Shastras* these four divisions were based on economic as well as political grounds, and no one class was to be considered superior to the other—all forming one organic whole, *viz.* the Hindu Society. This system of *Varnas* had worked well for ages together. But since the beginning of the Muslim rule, disintegration set in, and this went on increasing. Dayanand, therefore, found the Hindu society in a really chaotic state. The *Brahmans* were completely demoralised. They had given up their real duty of learning and teaching. A few among them had written books in strange contrast with and opposition to *Shastric* teachings. Their knowledge was very limited. They had even traded in their knowledge, by practically selling their priestly occupation and rendering priestly services for definite

sums of money. In ancient India, the real *Brahmans* were highly honoured by others, because of their virtues and learning, and sacrifices. During the ninth century, the *Brahmans* were ignorant of Vedic knowledge; they had forgotten the *Shastras*; they were even doing menial services. Some of them, who happened to be very strong in their demands, refused to impart education to members of other *Varnas*. Thus, illiteracy, pride and ignorance had demoralised the *Brahmans*.

As for the *Kshatriyas*, the less said the better. Ever since the downfall of the Rajput power and the failure of the Rajput Confederacy to withstand foreign Muslim invasions, there had grown up petty rival kingdoms and the *Kshatriya* rulers, though still possessing traditional bravery and martial spirit, had used them to fight each other. The seven centuries of Muslim rule had further demoralised them; they had even accepted ignoble posts under others. And by the nineteenth century, not a single *Kshatriya* ruler was left imbued with the spirit of independence. They had been divided into castes and sub-castes, as were

also the *Brahmans*, and these divisions had created jealousies which resulted in mutual strifes.

The *Vaishyas* had lost their trade. They had become mere brokers or trading agents of the foreign companies. Some of them had adopted service as their occupation. The riches of the country were rapidly going out to enrich foreign lands.

The lot of the *Shudras* was by far the worst. Deprived of even the most elementary education, they were considered not an integral part of the society without whom the structure was incomplete, but the worst part of population. The *Brahmans* neglected to look after them, and so did the *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas*. The *Shudras* were considered untouchables and, therefore, unholy and impure persons on this earth. They were given the meanest work to do and in return were paid the least. Their life was worse than that of slaves in America or Europe. To add to their ill-luck, even among them castes and sub-castes had sprung up, and there was none to unite them, reform their society or take up their cause. Poverty had demoralised them to an amazing extent.



In place of the four *varnas* system, the hundreds of castes and sub-castes among the Hindus had split up the whole Hindu society. Consequently, want of union had its effects on political condition too, and that is why the foreign invaders and rulers had an easy time in plundering and conquering India.

The womenfolk shared the worst fate, irrespective of the castes to which they belonged. The Brahman priests refused them the benefits of education. Although the Vedas definitely declare that the wife has the same rights to education and amenities of life as the husband, the non-Vedic books, written undoubtedly by selfish men who looked to nothing but their personal gains, refused to recognise the right of the women to education. Illiteracy, therefore, left our mothers completely backward and their sons and daughters, as time passed on, became worse and worse. The wife was considered the virtual servant of the house, whose only duty was to do what her husband said. And the condition of the unfortunate widows among the women was simply deplorable. Every one tormented them and detested to

look at them. They were given the least clothes, the coarsest food, and the worst part of the house to live in. And when it is remembered that early marriages, at the age of seven or eight or even much less (in some cases even below the age of 12 months), were the rule of the day, we can easily visualise how widows of too young ages, say four or five or ten years, must be passing their lives. Most of them were forced to burn themselves on the pyres of their husbands—to become *Sutees*, much against their will. Such was the ill-fate of the 'Queens of the House.' The Vedas enjoin upon us to worship the women-folk, for mothers are the real makers of human society. Their happiness is the happiness of the nation. *Yatranaryastu pujiyante ramante tatra devata*, i.e. gods live in the house where the females are worshipped or respected. This was the ideal of the Vedas, and this ideal was undoubtedly followed in the Vedic Age of which we all feel so proud. But in the India of the nineteenth century, all noble ideals had given place to the worst principles of life. Could we really call them principles?

The ancient Hindu religion, properly

called the Vedic religion, enjoins upon all persons to give up the life of a householder in old age, *i. e.* on reaching the age of seventyfive, and to lead the life of a *Sanyasi*, *i. e.* one who renounces all worldly possessions, wanders about in the country, preaching to people how to lead a noble life, and himself seeks salvation by practising *Yaga* and praying to God. If rightly lived, the life of a *Sanyasi* is of the greatest good to the society. With the demoralisation of other things, the life of a *Sanyasi* too did not escape this general deterioration. Any one, without distinction of age or purpose, took up *Sanyas* hoping to live comfortably on the earnings of others, and without any cares. The numbers of these parasites increased enormously, to the extent of a few millions. They included persons from the age of even five or six to seventy or eighty. They were not all literate. Though some of them had taken up *Sanyas* very *deservedly*, and were really learned and pious men, devoting their time to *Yogic* practice and prayers, most of them were mere beggars, who, in their wanderings through the country, were begging from door to door,

or town to town, doing little or no good to the people, and leading a comfortable and idle life. They were really a drag on the society. Some of them were even thieves and robbers who sometimes entrapped minor children whom they made their *Chelas* or disciples, thus causing immense misery and suffering to the latter's poor parents.

The condition of the Hindu orphans was equally deplorable. They were, without any kind of protection by the society, roaming in the towns acquiring evil habits and becoming a burden to the country.

In short, illiteracy, caste-system, early marriage, diversion from the *Varna* system and consequent neglect of duty, the ever increasing number of widows, the criminal neglect of orphans, and the swelling numbers of so-called *Sadhus* had disrupted Hindu society to a disquieting degree.

### **Cultural and Religious Condition—**

Vedic religion which had been the real cause of India's advancement in the old age of which the Ramayan and the Mahabharat depict so brilliant pictures was declining rapidly. The blame undoubtedly rested with

the Brahmans. They neglected the study of the Vedas and Shastras and confined themselves to a cursory reading of non-Vedic literature. The result was that even a correct collection of the Vedic hymns was not available in India. Benares was even in the 19th century the seat of Sanskrit learning. In fact, the ancient spirit had died out. The preceptors had become greedy and disciples equally avaricious. There was no real search for truth. Books written and compiled by lesser men with doubtful knowledge were replacing Aryan literature. The *Purans*, with due deference to their writers, had replaced the Vedas. The works on Grammar compiled by the ancient sages, were neglected and others with incomplete knowledge were replacing them. The study of Sanskrit was becoming less and less popular. One important reason of this was the existence of foreign rule. From the eleventh century upto the 18th, the Muslim rule had adopted Persian as the Court language. Consequently, according to the popular adage, 'As the King so his subjects.' Hindus began to study Persian and became quite indifferent towards Sanskrit which began

to be considered a 'dead language.' The Sanskrit *pathshalas* were replaced by *makhtabs*. Then after the establishment of British rule in India, English slowly became more and more popular, replacing even Persian and throwing Sanskrit far behind. It is true that the East India Company had established an Oriental College where Sanskrit was taught. But the effort very much resembled the keeping of a thing of antiquity in a museum, for people to look at.

When illiteracy and poverty increased in the country, the only important problem facing people was that of earning livelihood *by any means*. This was, indeed, a serious question which had great consequences. Students of history know how the Muslim invaders like Mahmud Ghaznavi levelled temples to the ground, burnt libraries and forced Hindus to become slaves and embrace Islam. *Bu-bhukshitah kim na karoti papam*, meaning, what evils a hungry man would not consent to do ! "The Islamic political ascendancy had, by openly outraging the religion of the Hindus, done a great deal in lowering their intellectual status and in perpetuating a mental slavery.

..... Although the Islamic faith, owing to its being constantly brandished over the head of the people, never influenced, in any material degree, the tenets of the Hindu religion, yet it did not fail to lend the Hindus a form of feticism which was, if not worse, at least as bad as anything already known to them. On the whole, contact with Islamic faith had only lowered the educational and moral status of the Hindus, and had, to that extent, increased their incapacity to appreciate the beauty and truth of their ancient religion." Some of the Muslim invaders had invaded India with the primary object of spreading Islam by force. The Hindus were compelled to pay *Jazia* a special tax levied on Hindus or non-Muslims. Could there be a worse fate for Hindus than being forced to pay a tax for following their most ancient religion in their own land? Such was, however, the punishment all Hindus had to pay for the treachery of Jaichand, which cost the Hindus their empire. There were undoubtedly some Muslim rulers, for example Akbar, who looked upon their subjects, whether Hindus or Muslims, as equals. But the harsh rule of the bigoted

*rulers had completely demoralised the Hindus.*

Efforts were, no doubt, made by some of the valiant Hindus to oppose the ill-treatment of their co-religionists and to save Hindu honour. The Ranas of Mewar had successfully protected their family honour in the times of even Alauddin and Akbar. But as a general rule, these efforts had not been of much avail. The number of the weak and the cowards among the Hindus was great and these played upon the ignorance of millions of their illiterate co-religionists to submit meekly to the oppressions and <sup>etc</sup> ~~persecutions~~ of Muslims. In the seventeenth century, Shivaji had made one supreme effort to save the Hindu religion and the Brahmans, with creditable success. He had organised his forces, established his kingdom and encouraged pure Hinduism. His successors, on the other hand, proved weaklings who soon lost their father's hold over the Hindus. Shivaji had been popularly given the title of 'Saviour of the Hindus' or *Hindupati*, but after his death, things took the old turn again.

Then on the dismemberment of the Mughal



Empire, the Europeans established their supremacy in India. The Portugese were the first to preach Christianity in their Indian possessions. The harshness of one of their governors, in spreading the Christian faith, is still read in history. Undoubtedly, the Hindus did not meekly submit to the Christian preachers. But the lower castes among them, those whom the Brahman priests had branded as untouchables, unholy and 'depressed', were attracted by the sympathy which the Christian missionaries showed them, and accordingly they embraced Christianity wherein they found equality of treatment for all without any caste distinctions. Consequently, in Southern India large number of Hindus, though belonging to what are called lower castes, became Christians. Then English education gave further impetus to this movement of baptism. "Apart from the direct work of conversions, which were alarming even from a numerical point of view, the chief effect of Christianity consisted in weakening generally the beliefs of the Hindus. Whenever any Hindu had occasion to come into contact with the forces which Christianity

had released in the country, he felt a benumbing cold creeping over some of his religious conceptions. English education immensely accentuated this effect, and made the operation of the causes which produced it still more destructive. It let loose into the minds of our young men a flood of foreign notions and ideals which washed away whatever of Hinduism had still continued to stick to them.....A strange void was thus created in the minds of our youngmen which, dazzled as they were by the new light, they did not know how to fill up. In the case of some, for whom the change was too powerful to be resisted, Christianity rushed in to fill up this vacuum. Those, however, who had taken breathing-time before taking any hasty step, were also in a state of suspense, and the ground under their feet was not also firm." Such was the effect of European supremacy in India.

The Muslims from foreign countries had come to India in hundreds or at the most thousands, but in course of time, as forced conversions went on, their number rose to millions. Similarly, a handful of Christian

missionaries found the already demoralised Hindus a safe people for conversion. And as the rulers had no sympathy and love for Hinduism, the missionaries had no difficulty in taking into their fold the poverty-stricken Hindus. Let it be said without the least fear of contradiction that the large majority of conversions were due to the appalling poverty, or the temptations offered, or force used.

There was one very great weakness in the Hinduism of that period, which made these conversions possible. Whenever a Hindu once embraced Islam or Christianity for any reasons, temptations, fear or ill-treatment of his fellowmen, he was not allowed to come back into the Hindu fold even if he expressed the greatest regrets and performed any penances. *small suggested as an expression of repentance* The argument advanced against such returns, by the Brahman priests, who still held the strings of Hindu religion tightly in their hands, was that just as an ass could not become a cow even if bathed a hundred times in the holiest river, so could not a Christian or a Muslim become a Hindu by performing any *Yajnas*, etc. The ignorant Hindus had to accept this argument meekly. None, however,

had the shrewdness or the courage to ask : Could a cow become an ass by eating with an ass or living with it ? Similarly, could a Hindu become a Christian or Muslim by partaking of the latter's food ? The greatest absurdity of the whole affair was that even if an ignorant Hindu, by a mistake of his, took food prepared or even touched by a Christian or Muslim, or drank water from his jug, he was at once driven out of the Hindu fold. The poor man was compelled to embrace Islam or Christianity. And if his wife or children had great love for him, they too had to leave Hinduism to keep their house running. For these reasons, the numbers of the Hindus were progressively dwindling and there was no remedy to check the process.

As for the inner working of the Hindu religion, the picture was by no means bright. Lovers of religion had, during the Middle Ages, ear-marked vast riches and property for religious purposes, built temples and *Dharmshalas*, opened free feeding houses for students and *Sanyasis*. With the lapse of time and as an indirect effect of political and social degeneration, those who were in charge of

these temples and other institutions and the property belonging to them, neglected their chief duties, began to lead luxurious life and their institutions ceased to attract the admiration of devoted Hindus. The lower-castes were not even allowed to have a *darshan* (sight of the deity) in the temple. Religious festivals lost their charm. Sacred books were not even touched. The followers of Ram and Krishna conveniently forgot to imitate the noble actions of their gods whom they worshipped in the temple. The *Sadhus* and *Sanyasis* who were in fact honorary preachers of religion, began to lead a life of comfort. In short, those who had the charge of the ignorant and devoted Hindu-folk became in Ruskin's words '*Blind Mouths*,' who cared only for their own selfish ends and did not turn an eye on their followers who were anxious to learn and practise the principles of pure Hinduism.

The above picture of the Hindu Society, as it existed in the nineteenth century, is literally true. It faithfully mirrors the conditions then prevailing. No Hindu heart can remain unmoved on looking at it. Dark clouds of ignorance, petty-mindedness, poverty and

foreign influences had covered the sky. There was darkness all round. But there was also a silver lining on the horizon, which only the far-sighted and thoughtful persons could see. And Dayanand was the one man who clearly perceived it and drew courage and hopefulness from that vision. That silver lining was : the heart of the Hindu community was still sound. The masses were yet devoted to religion as before. The religious fairs and festivals were still attended by thousands and millions. The females were especially devoted to their religion. The material for reform was there ; the Brahman priests had brought about that general degredation. What was wanted then was a brave heart, a valiant fighter for religious reform. Dayanand perceived the necessity for reform. He took upon himself the noble mission and how he did it we may know from the following pages.

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## CHAPTER VII

### THE REBEL PREACHER

When Dayanand left his *guru* Virjanand, with the latter's command and blessings, he found himself in the India as depicted in the previous chapter. Huge was the task that lay before him, but he did not feel dismayed. He had never before thought of the work he was asked by his preceptor to accomplish. As a mere *Sanyasi* and *Brahmchari* he could have easily sought refuge in a lonely *math* where he could pass his life in contemplation and prayers, fully confident of getting supplies of food and other necessary articles from a host of admirers. In that way he could have achieved the object for which he had left his home. But he did not desire to lead a thoroughly selfish life. He wished now to live for others, for the emancipation of his nation.

Before actually throwing himself into the real work he spent a few years in learning the situation. Like a wise physician, he tried to feel the pulse of the sick nation, India which then really was the *sick man of Asia*. In this he devoted full five years, and these were not wasted in vain. It was undoubtedly the experience he gained during this period that gave him the strength, the ability and the courage to start his work in the country, which ultimately crowned his efforts with success, for even the "strongest man when preparing for a leap would go back several steps to be able to put with success his entire energy into the exertion awaiting him, and so it is with the preceptor and the teacher. However able and gifted these may be, they must need take a stock of all their resources before they must burst upon the public, to brave and to bend it to their will and to thus accomplish the great mission of their life."

Immediately after leaving Mathura, Dayanand reached Agra where he put up in a garden. He devoted the greater part of his time to studying books and solitary contemplation. By chance it so happened that

*to make an estimate of 1/1000000, he had used*



Kailash Parbat, a famous Sanyasi started a regular *Katha* ( recitation ) of the *Gita* in the garden, before a large gathering. One day he came across a difficult couplet which he could not explain to the satisfaction of his hearers. One of them then requested Dayanand, who too was present there, to explain the couplet for the benefit of the audience. Accordingly, Dayanand interpreted it so beautifully as to win the highest praise from Kailash Parbat himself. This literary performance pleased the public so much that Dayanand, at their request, had to start the *Katha* of Punch Dashi. In the course of this *Katha* Dayanand came across a passage which meant that God himself is subject to delusion (*maya*). This was much more than he could tolerate for he always believed God to be supreme above everything else, and all powerful being. He instantly threw aside the book, saying that he could not go on with the *Katha* of such a mischievous book.

Dayanand collected the Vedic *mantras* of *Sandhya*, got them published at Agra, and distributed some thirty thousand copies free of cost to all who cared to read and follow it.

And as long as he continued to stay at Agra, he studied the Vedic literature, referring to his *guru* at Mathura, any difficulties he felt. He received the answers by post, but sometimes he would go to Mathura, discuss with Virjanand and get satisfactory answers. He thus spent two years at Agra.

He now felt a great desire to study the Vedas and in search of them we went to Dhaulpur and then to Lashkar (Gwalior). The Maharaja was soon (1865 A. D.) having a seven days' *Katha* of *Bhagwat*, in which about four hundred learned *pandits* took part. Dayanand too, who was at that time at Abu, reached Lashkar and expressed his complete disapproval of the *Katha*, saying that the *Bhagwat* was not a good and desirable book for the purpose. Evidently the Maharaja was not prepared to discontinue the *Katha* because of Dayanand's disapproval. Unfortunately, however, on the very night the *Katha* ended, the Maharani prematurely gave birth to a still-born child, and a month later cholera broke out in the city, and among others the Maharaja's own son fell a victim to it. Undoubtedly, these tragedies had no connec-

tion whatever with Dayanand's disapproval of the *Katha*, but their occurrence at that time coincided with the accomplishment of the recitation of *Bhagwat*. Dayanand, by his such disapprovals, incurred the displeasure of other Pandits and learned men, including Rangacharya, Gopalacharya and many others who were noted at that time. He openly challenged them to discuss with him on disputed points, but these challenges remained unaccepted.

Dayanand then visited Karoli and Jeypore. At the latter place he held three or four discussions (*Shastrarth*) in all of which his vast learning and talents won him renown. Accepting the invitation of Thakur Ranjit Singh, Dayanand visited Bikaner where his religious talks produced so great an effect that the Thakur gave up idolatry, and started the study of *Manusmriti* and *Upnishads* with the Swami. Those who attended these talks benefitted by them to a great extent and most of them gave up the evil habits to which they were long addicted.

But at that time Swami Dayanand was a believer in the purest form of *Shaivism* and

himself distributed *rudrakhas* or rosaries to people, and he succeeded in converting Maharaja Ram Singh of Jeypore to that creed.

In March 1822, Dayanand reached Pushkar where a big *mela* (fair) was about to be held. He challenged the Pandits there to hold religious discussions with him. Some of the Brahmans requested one Pandit Baikunth Shastri to take up the challenge and discuss with Dayanand. Though Baikunth Shastri accepted the challenge, he failed to arrive at the fixed place, whereupon Dayanand himself went to the Shastri's place and a discussion on the merits of the book *Bhagwat* took place. Dayanand attacked the teachings of the book, while the Shastri defended them. When the dispute was ultimately referred to Baikunth Shastri's *guru* for his decision, he gave his verdict in favour of Dayanand. Thereupon the Shastri bowed to Dayanand, acknowledging him as his superior in learning. Later on, while still at Pushkar, Swami Dayanand entirely gave up his liking for *Shaivism* and asked his adherents to throw away the *rudrakhas* or rosaries, and this action displeased the orthodox Brahmans.

In May, 1866, Dayanand visited Ajmer where too he started his propaganda against the *Bhagwat* and idolatry, attacking the temples in general. This infuriated the local Brahmans. He also had a discussion with Christian missionaries, Rev. Grey, Rev. Robinson and Rev. Schoolbred. The subject of discussion was: "God, Soul, the Laws of Nature, and the Vedas." The discussion went on for full three days and the Christians found it difficult to meet the Swami's argument. They were undoubtedly impressed with his learning, and Rev. Robinson was especially struck with his religious devotion. He gave the Swami a certificate testifying to his ability and his deep knowledge of the Vedas, and admitting that he had not come across a man of such a vast learning as Dayanand. The Reverend requested all who happened to meet the Swami to show him all respect. Swami Dayanand then saw many other Europeans, including the Agent to the Governor-General for Rajputana States. He requested the Agent to do all in his power for the protection of cows, and though the latter readily admitted the force of the Swami's arguments, he

expressed his inability to move in the matter, but gave the Swami a letter of general introduction. Several women, hearing of the Swami's presence at Ajmer, flocked to his place and requested for his *darshan*. The Swami had made it a point never to admit women to his presence, so he sent them a reply that they should better send their husbands to him, who would learn from him all he had to preach and then, in their turn, teach the same to their wives.

In November of that year (1866) a Durbar was going to be held at Agra. On hearing of it, the Swami went there and commenced his preachings, and published a pamphlet 'showing the puerile character of *Bhagwat*, and enjoining on all to discard the book. The Swami received an invitation from the Maharaja of Jeypore, to hold a discussion with Rangacharya. He accepted the Maharaja's invitation, but before going there he went to see his preceptor, Swami Virjanand, at Mathura. The meeting between the two was very cordial, the disciple offering a piece of muslin, two gold *mohars* and a copy of his tract on the *Bhagwat*. Virjanand was over-

joyed to see his disciple obeying his command and doing all in his power to spread the true knowledge of Vedic religion. This was unfortunately the last meeting between them, as Virjanand died two years later.

After receiving Virjanand's blessings, Dayanand reached Jeypore. But before the impending discussion with Rangacharya could be held, the Maharaja expressed his desire to see Swami Dayanand. The Swami, therefore, went to the palace. In the meanwhile some one told the Maharaja that the Swami was an enemy of idol-worship and *Shaivism*. This was more than the Maharaja could tolerate. Therefore, he did not like to meet Dayanand who was politely told that the Maharaja was out. The Swami understood the real cause and he declared that he did not care much for the company of princes, and quietly repaired to his quarters.

Swami Dayanand then left for Hardwar where the great Kumbh fair, which is held after every twelve years, was going to take place in the Hindu month of Baisakh, 1924 Vikrami (corresponding to April—May, 1867 A. D.). Millions of Hindus, men, women and

children, flocked there to have a bath in the Ganges, believing that thereby they would be purified of all their sins. Dayanand determined to take advantage of the opportunity of meeting such a vast multitude there, and "to do all in his power towards exposing imposture, and to disabuse the layman's mind of the impression that Hardwar was a *Tirath*\* in the true sense of the word." Consequently, he reached there a month before the actual date of the fair, and found the place choked with orthodox people who had already collected there from all corners of India. He stopped at a place about three miles from Hardwar, on the road leading to Rishi Kesh, prepared a thatched hut and took up his temporary residence there. He named the place *Pakhand Khandani* or the exposure of imposture and unreal religiousness. He started a *Katha* of the *Upnishads*, and told people that a bath in the Ganges, without the accompaniment of good and noble deeds, was of no spiritual consequence. He also distributed thousands of copies of his pamphlet

\* A holy place.



against the reading of *Bhagwat*. Pretended *Swamis* and *Sanyasis* were enraged at Dayanand's teachings and called him a rebel ; while others who liked his teachings came in with their offerings in kind and cash which Dayanand usually distributed among the poor who lived near him. His opponents, the orthodox Pandits, started their propaganda against him, "calling him all manner of names and denouncing him as an innovator of the worst possible type ! "

Swami Dayanand tried to preach to the people the real *dharma* (religion) as he had conceived it to be in the light of his interpretation of the Vedas and Shastras. He also exhorted people to give up evil habits and do noble deeds. He had built up great hopes of his doing some constructive work at such a vast gathering. But his stay there during the days of the Kumbh fair left the saddest impression on his mind. Never before in his life did he anywhere see "So much idolatry, so much degrading and debasing adoration of the temporal, so much chicanery, fraud, so much of all that is low and mean," in one single spot as he saw at Hardwar, and 'his

soul sickened at the sight.' It is said that one night, while the vast sea of human beings was lying asleep, Dayanand restlessly wandered along the Ganges, brooding over the pitiable condition of the Hindu nation, and ultimately retiring with a sad heart. He was constrained to find that "It was not only the ignorant and illiterate that clung to and cherished error, that did what should not be done, that followed and worshipped what should not be followed and worshipped; but even learned Pandits and Sadhus deliberately went in for practices and advocated views that reason and authority alike condemned as objectionable and injurious."

His mission, as prescribed for him by Virjanand, was to show people the path of truth and righteousness, to fight out evil and to preach the true Vedic religion. Who could succeed in correcting the perverted judgment of the ignorant and illiterate millions? Who could successfully meet the 'hydraheaded monster of unwisdom and delusion that sat enthroned on the heart of the mighty, myriad manned Hinduism' to regulate its life and actions? Such were the

doubts that crossed Dayanand's mind. For a moment he felt despondent, thinking that "The nation is leagued against itself, knowingly courting its destruction, and hard it is to help it." He thought and thought over the condition of the nation, and at last felt an inner urge to move forward with all 'the moral and spiritual force that comes from thought—austerity and spiritual discipline.' What a strange coincidence that Mahatma Gandhi too, after his release from the prison in connection with his twentyone days' fast, and before resuming his civil disobedience, gave expression to similar sentiments regarding the moral degradation of the nation. And just as the Mahatma started his individual civil disobedience by making the supreme sacrifice,—closing his Sabarmati Ashram—so did Dayanand launch upon a vigorous propaganda by giving away all he possessed, distributing whatever cash, clothes and utensils he had, among his followers, and sending Rs. 85 cash and a copy of the *Mahabhashya* to his *guru* at Mathura. He was left only a piece of cloth, a '*Kopin*' to cover his private parts, and a '*Kamandal*,' a wooden water jug of the

shape of a semi-ellipsoid. When Kailash Parbat Swami who was present on that occasion, asked Dayanand what he meant by doing that, the latter calmly and cheerfully replied that "he wanted to be perfectly independent and unencumbered to be absolutely simple in life, and to teach unhampered and unfettered."

Having thus freed himself, Dayanand started his crusade against *Bhagwat*, always speaking in Sanskrit so as to master the language. From Hardwar he went to Rishi Kesh, then back again to Kankhal and Landhora. He had had no meals for full three days, and was feeling great hunger. One man gave him 3 bringels which he merrily ate and thus appeased his appetite. 'Self-denial and self-control of this kind was practised day after day, and with the greatest cheerfulness.' He would sleep on the bare ground, sandy or stony, and would always speak in Sanskrit. His movements from place to place were quick, and he would not stop in any one place for a long time. Wherever he went, his deep learning and virtue would attract large crowds to whom he taught the *Gayatri*

*mantra*, and gave the sacred thread, '*Yajnopavit*.' He would also hold discussions, attacking the *Purans*, *Tantras*, and Polytheism.

Thus preaching along the banks of the Ganges he arrived at Anupshahar, a town on the river, in district Bulandshahar (U. P.). Here he had a religious discussion with Pandit Hira Ballabh Parbati, on the subject of idolatry, with the definite understanding that the one who would be worsted in that discussion would at once accept the other's views and act accordingly. For full six hours the two advanced their respective arguments, and at the end the Shastri admitted defeat, and declared Swami Dayanand's teachings to be nothing but the truth. The same day, Pandit Tika Ram, a priest in one of the temples there, was so much impressed with the Swami's learning and reasoning that he broke all his connection with the temple. He was followed by four other persons who threw away their rosaries, gave up idolatry, and resolved to have faith only in the one God, the maker of the universe.

Another man, Thakur Mukand Singh, who was present at the *shastrarth* (discussion) at

Anupshahar, was so much impressed with Swami Dayanand's reasoning, that he resolved that on reaching his village he would close all his temples—thirty in all—lying in his Zamindari villages. When he arrived at his village, he carried out his resolve and threw all the idols into the river Kali Nadi.

From Anupshahar, Swami Dayanand repaired to Karnvas, a village on the Ganges. There Rao Karn Singh, a *rais* of village Baroli in district Aligarh, heard that a *Sanyasi* had come who was preaching against idol-worship and Shaivism. The Rao was a Shaiva and a follower of Rangacharya. He became a mortal foe of Dayanand. One day the Rao went to Swami Dayanand's hut, with a dozen armed sepoy, and the Swami received him courteously. The Swami saw the mark (*tilak*) on the Rao's forehead, and smilingly asked why he, a *Kshatriya*, had put on a mark which usually beggars did. The Rao's rage knew no bounds when he heard this, and the next moment he told Swami Dayanand, that he (the Swami) was not doing the right thing by preaching disbelief in the holy Ganges and *Tiraths* or holy places, and

warned him that if he persisted in preaching the same, he would be severely dealt with. The Swami politely replied that if the Rao wanted to fight, he should not do so with a *sanyasi* but would be well advised to cross swords with the rulers of Jeypore and Dhaulpore, but if he wished to know the truth in religion, he should invite his *guru* Rangacharya to have a discussion with the Swami. The Rao felt enraged and advanced forward with his hand on the hilt of his sword, but one of his servants volunteered to put an end to the Swami's life and saying this the servant drew out his sword. Swami Dayanand quickly seized his sword and pushed him back.

Seeing this conduct of Rao Karn Singh, the admirers of Swami Dayanand, who were present there, felt surprised and annoyed, and one of them, Rao Krishna Singh, called upon Rao Karan Singh to behave better towards the *Sadhu*, and that if he persisted in his mischief, he would only carry back a broken head. The people there then desired to report the matter to the police but Dayanand calmly said that it was not proper to do so, for if the Rao was not true to his *Khatrigalva*,

why should he (the Swami) for that reason give up his Brahmanism ?

Thus foiled in his first attempt on the Swami's life, Rao Karn Singh returned to his place. But in the night he sent armed men to attempt to take the Swami's life. These men made repeated attempts, but they either found the Swami wide awake or quite prepared to meet them. The men took fright and went away. Rao Krishna Singh informed the villagers of this occurrence, who were all infuriated at Karn Singh's conduct, and even the latter's father-in-law advised his son-in-law to leave the place lest the angry Kshatriyas of the locality should attack him. Thus alarmed, Rao Karn Singh left Karnvas and reached his native village. The people of Karnvas suggested to Swami Dayanand to remove to some other safe place, but he coolly replied: "No one can harm me. It is not man that guards me but the Great Lord, who protects me everywhere. Don't be anxious on my account. I have strength enough to kill an enemy with his own weapons."

Caring little for what his opponents did to



molest him, Swami Dayanand continued his preaching, winning over youngmen, particularly students, to his side, exhorting them to discard evil and adopt nobler mode of life. He would ask people to put on *Yajnopavit*, the sacred thread, and himself distributed the same to all. The *Kshatriyas* were the most enthusiastic about getting the sacred thread from such a great man. <sup>thrown with agitation</sup>

The priestly class was perturbed at the Swami's popularity. One day, a priest who had felt enraged at Dayanand's lectures against idol-worship, came to him, with an evil purpose at heart, and offered the Swami a betel leaf, which the latter gladly accepted. No sooner the Swami began to chew it than he felt an unpleasant sensation. The poison which the man had put in the leaf began its action. Swami Dayanand, realising the danger to his life, at once went to the Ganges, descended into the water, and began *Neoli Karan*, taking in large quantities of water and pouring out the same, a Yogic practice for purifying the intestines. Thus he cleaned his stomach and saved his life.

The Moha mmadan Tahsildar of the place,

who had great respect and admiration for the Swami, heard of this and he sent the accused to prison, though in another case that was pending in his court, but primarily with a view to punish him for his evil action against the Swami. The Tahsildar, one day, approached the Swami and related to him what he had done. Swami Dayanand expressed his disapproval of the Tahsildar's action. The man was afterwards released on appeal.

Thus preaching his beliefs, exhorting people to lead a noble life, giving them the sacred thread, teaching them the *Gayatri mantra*, himself leading a simple life, and defying all sickness and changes of weather, Dayanand passed the five years (1862-67), after leaving his *guru* at Mathura. During this interval, while at Shahbazpur, Swami Dayanand heard of the passing away of Virjanand. Great was his grief, and he only exclaimed: "The highest authority on Vya-karan is no more."

These five years of Dayanand's preliminary work may well be called his training in preaching. He had gained considerable experience of men in the world, had seen at

close quarters the condition of Indians, and formulated his plan for future work and emancipation of his Motherland. And although attempts had been made on his life, and he was proclaimed a rebel by those priests whose hollowness he had exposed, he was now ready to launch upon a vigorous scheme of constructive work. Without relating the events of his later life, in the strict chronological order, we now describe his real achievements in the various spheres of life, to indicate the scope of his activities and the extent of his success.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SCHOLAR AND EDUCATIONIST

About the middle of 1868 A. D., Swami Dayanand resolved to systematise his work and with this object in view he reached Farrukhabad, a district town in the United Provinces. He had clearly perceived that at the root of India's downfall lay the illiteracy and ignorance of the people. He had also realised that whatever education there was in the country then, was confined to the study of books compiled or written by lesser brains, whereas the old Vedic literature was ignored. While not minimising the educative value of his tours and discussions, he thought of starting schools. His lectures on the value of seminaries and schools of the right type influenced Lala Panni Lal of Farrukhabad, who opened a *pathshala* in a newly constructed building and with the help of other gener ous

persons, made arrangements for the food and clothing of the *vidyarthi* (students). Swami Dayanand himself helped in the work of teaching.

Resuming his tour, Swami Dayanand made it a point to appeal to the people, in the course of his discourses,—to lovers of education—to start *pathshalas* (schools). His appeal met with an encouraging response in many places. Consequently, *pathshalas* were soon established at Kasganj, Mirzapur, Chhalesar and Benares. In each of these places proper arrangements for teaching, food and clothing of the *vidyarthi* was made. The following rules, framed by the Swami, were observed in these *pathshalas* :—

1. No *vidyarthi* shall be admitted till he has first thoroughly learnt his *sandhya*.
2. All *vidyarthi* shall be instructed in the Vedic books only—*Ashtadhyayi*, *Mahabhashya*, etc.
3. Every *vidyarthi* shall rise early in the morning and do his *sandhya* (prayer). He who fails to observe this rule shall forfeit his meal, and care will

be taken that he does not procure his food from the village. He shall get his meals only after he has done his evening prayer.

4. No *vidyarthi* ( from mafassil ) shall be permitted to visit the village ( or city ) except for the purpose of having his meals in response to a casual or permanent invitation.
5. The *vidyarthi*s from the mofassil alone shall have food at the expense of the Pathshala Funds, the local ones providing for themselves.
6. The intelligent and hardworking *vidyarthi*s shall receive special considerations at the hands of the managers as regards the quality of food supplied to them.

The students who <sup>are</sup> ~~acquit~~ themselves well in the examinations shall be allowed an extra quantity of *ghee*.

7. All *vidyarthi*s shall make a point of joining daily in the *Agnihotra*.

These principles, as further modified and expanded in the light of later experience, formed the basis of the *Gurukul* system, a

system of education as was in vogue in the Vedic age. In course of time the *Gurukuls* and schools spread over the whole of northern India, conducted and maintained by the Arya Samaj

Swami Dayanand thought that "It is the highest duty of parents, preceptors and relatives to adorn children with good sound education, nobility of character, refinement of manners, and amiability of temper." \* The Swami believed that ornaments and jewellery were not the beauty of the soul. These things only arouse vanity, and other baser passions, and create constant fear of thieves and robbers. He then quotes the Sanskrit *Shloka* which means: "Blessed are the men and women whose minds are centred on the acquisition of knowledge; who possess sweet and amiable tempers; who cultivate truthfulness and other similar virtues; who are free from vanity and uncleanness; who enlighten the minds of those who are in ignorance; whose chief

\* *Satyarthprakash*, Ch. III, p. 31, (English Translation by Dr. C. Bhardwaj). In quoting from the *Satyarthprakash*, this translation, II edition 1915, is meant throughout this book.

delight consists in promoting the happiness of others by the preaching of truth, by generous distribution of knowledge without fee or reward; and who are engaged in altruistic work as prescribed by the Vedas." This being the view of Swami Dayanand, he advocated the cause of compulsory education of children by the State and quoted Manu who says: "The State should make it compulsory for all to send their children of both sexes to school at the prescribed period (5 to 8 years of age) and keep them there for the prescribed period (Age of 16 years for girls and 25 years for boys) till they are thoroughly well-educated. It should be made a <sup>very</sup> <sup>serious</sup> <sup>crime</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>penal</sup> offence to break this law. In other words, let no child—whether a girl or a boy—be allowed to stay in the house (with the parents) after the 8th year; let him remain in the seminary till his *Samavartan* time (Return Home) and let no one be allowed to marry before that."

All this conclusively proves how Swami Dayanand advocated compulsory education and how he considered it the duty of the State to arrange for this education. He was a ~~staunch~~ supporter of the ideal of imparting



education to boys and girls of all castes or *varnas*, as he thought that if all *Classes* were given sound and good education, there would be no sufferings. Summarising the duty of the teachers he says: "They should take care that they do not neglect the education of *Classes* other than *Brahmans*, viz.,—Princes and other *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas*, and intelligent *Shudras*. Because, if *Brahmans* only were to acquire knowledge, there could be no advance in knowledge, religion and government, nor increase in wealth, for *Brahmans*, whose sole duty is to acquire knowledge and disseminate it, depend for their living on *Kshatriyas* etc., to whom they are law-givers. *Brahmans* would be relieved of all restraint and fear from *Kshatriyas*, who, being uneducated, would be quite incapable of judging the soundness or unsoundness of their teachings. They would thus gradually use their power for their own selfish ends, drift into hypocrisy and do whatever they liked and their example would be followed by other *classes*. But when *Kshatriyas* and other *classes* are also well educated, *Brahmans* will study still harder to keep ahead of the other *classes* and walk in the

path of righteousness. They could never then falsely teach and lead selfish, hypocritical lives.....*It is Kshatriyas and other classes, that are the real cause of advance in knowledge, religion, and government, and of increase in wealth, etc.....*

When all the classes are well educated and cultured, no one can set up any false, fraudulent, and irreligious practices. ”\*

He knew the dangers of allowing one particular class or community to <sup>S. see the</sup> monopolise education, and had very correctly diagnosed the evils of such monopoly in the India of his day. He writes : “The sectarian and selfish *Brahmans* of the present time prevent other people, through their false teachings, from acquiring knowledge and associating with men of learning, ensnare them in their own nets and thus ruin them physically, mentally, and materially. They want to keep the *Kshatriyas* and other classes illiterate, since they are afraid that if they acquired knowledge and become enlightened, they would expose their hypocrisy, get out of their selfish grip, and become disrespectful towards them.”

And to avoid the above dangers he suggests

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\* Ibid. page 51.

that "Both the rulers and the ruled should see that these obstacles are removed from the path of the students (males and females) of all classes. *In order to give their children sound education, they should exert themselves to their utmost with all their hearts, all their souls and all their wealth.*"\* This shows how he wished the government as well as the people to co-operate in advancing the education of the children of the nation.

Swami Dayanand has, in his book '*The Satyarthprakash*,' put forward a very comprehensive scheme of education extending over twenty to twentyone years, giving the details of study from year to year, and finally accomplishing education in all its branches. His scheme gives the order of study thus: Phonetics (*Shiksha*) by Panini, Grammar, *Nighantu* and *Nirukta*, Prosody, *Smritis*, *Shastras*, *Vedas*, and *Sub-Vedas* (including military science, music and arts). It is very refreshing and encouraging to quote his own words about the study of the Science of Government, which he makes it compulsory for each

\* Ibid. page 77.

student to study. He writes: "It consists of two parts:—Civil and Military. *Civil part*, is the art of governing people, protecting their lives and property, developing the wealth and resources of the country, making the people happy and contented by the right administration of justice—protecting the good and punishing the wicked, etc.

"*Military part*, comprises organization of the army, use of fire-arms, and the knowledge of different kinds of drill, tactics and strategy, etc. They should learn both branches of the *Science of Government* in two years."

He also recommends the books that should be taught in various subjects and appends a list of books which he considers objectionable and, therefore, unsuitable for being taught. Swami Dayanand was definitely opposed to the system of co-education of boys and girls, and also to a haphazard selection of teachers. He says: "Boys and girls when they attain to the age of 8 years, should be sent to their respective schools. In no instance, should they be placed under the tuition of teachers of low character. Only those persons are qualified to teach who are masters of their art and are

imbued with piety.....The seminary should be situated in a sequestered place. The Boys' school should be at least 3 miles distant from that of Girls. The preceptors and employees, such as servants, should, in the Boys' school, be all of the male sex, and in the Girls' school of the female sex. Not even a child of the opposite sex should be allowed to enter the school." He then insists on the abstinence from the eight kinds of sexual excitements in relation to persons of the opposite sex, *viz.*, looking upon them with an eye of lust ; embracing them ; having sexual intercourse with them ; intimately conversing with them ; playing with them ; associating with them ; reading or talking of libidinous subjects ; indulging in lascivious thoughts."

Judged in the light of modern tendencies in the system of education, these views of Swami Dayanand, based as they were on the ancient system of education of the Vedic period, will appear to be of a very revolutionary character. Undoubtedly Swami Dayanand's aim was to revolutionise the whole social, educational,—and we may be permitted to say, in a sense, the political system too, as was

in vogue in his time. He believed that unless education was given on right lines and the students led a life of complete austerity, the nation would not be able to become happy and prosperous.

Swami Dayanand had very early perceived the necessity of a *lingua franca* for India where hundreds of languages are spoken. He favoured Hindi for being given that high place. Although himself a Gujerati he preached in Hindi and wrote his most valuable book 'Satyarthprakash' in that language. In fact, all lovers and scholars of Hindi give Dayanand the foremost place among the patrons of Hindi in the modern age. He was a very great scholar, particularly of the Sanskrit language over which he had acquired a complete mastery. In his time, the study of Sanskrit was becoming less and less popular and those who did study the language and its literature, confined themselves to books of doubtful knowledge. It was Swami Dayanand who showed to the people of India the vast riches of their ancient literary heritage. He unearthed the precious jewels, wandered here and there in search of correct editions of *Shastras* and *Vedas*

( the latter he got from Germany ), and other books. It is due to his spade work and his teaching that the study of Sanskrit has received a new impetus in our days and this language is now no longer considered as 'dead.'

Swami Dayanand was the greatest Sanskrit scholar not only of his age but of the modern age. His expositions of ancient books are read with great admiration and respect. There are people who take exception to some of his interpretations of the Vedic Hymns, but even they all agree that his knowledge was vast and deep, and unanimously acknowledge his claim to the highest place among modern scholars of ancient learning. The *Gurukul* system of education is being followed only half-heartedly and this accounts for the slow progress the study of Sanskrit is making in these days.

He translated the whole of the *Yajurveda* into easier Sanskrit and Hindi, expounding the various Hymns in a scientific and scholarly way. He also translated a greater part of the *Rigveda* (9 *mandals* out of 13), and the *Brihadaranyaka* and *Chhandogya Upanishads*. His

commentary on, or introduction to the study of Vedas, entitled '*Rigvedadibhashya Bhumika*' is a brilliant product of his master mind. He also compiled a book on the various important ceremonies that are performed from a man's birth to his death, '*Sanskaravidhi*,' as well as other books, the chief of them being '*Aryabhivinaya*,' '*Panchamahayajnavidhi*,' etc. He also wrote small pamphlets to clarify people's views and ideas on such subjects as the protection of cows.

But of all the works of Swami Dayanand, the most important, because the most useful to all men, is the '*Satyarthprakash*,' or the Light of Truth. This book is popularly called the *Bible of the Aryasamaj*, and contains chapters dealing with God, Creation, Stages of Human Life, Education, Science of Government, The Fundamental Principles of True Religion, and a General Criticism of all the principal non-Vedic religions, e.g. Christianity, Islam and Buddhism and Jainism.

Before his death Swami Dayanand formed a trust to manage whatever money and property he had been generously offered by the lovers of religion to enable him to propagate



his views. The trust is called the '*Paropkarini Sabha*,' or the society for the service of others. This *Sabha* maintains a press, '*The Vedic Yantralaya*,' at Ajmer, which publishes the works of Swami Dayanand.

Swami Dayanand spread his teachings mainly through holding discussions with learned men of all faiths, and left the impress of his scholarship on the minds of his opponents. Every one testified to his deep learning, his flawless logic, and his sound reasoning.

Modern India owes a great debt to him for his scholarship which showed to the world how the study of Sanskrit literature and language could be made useful to the country. As an educationist and scholar, he undisputedly occupies the highest place in the modern age in India.

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## CHAPTER IX

### THE SOCIAL REFORMER

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a great social reformer, but Swami Dayanand was still greater and it would be quite correct to say that he was the greatest social reformer of the modern age. Swami Dayanand based all his teachings on the *Vedas* and *Shastras* and preached nothing which was not in conformity with these books. His aim was to restore society to the brilliant place it occupied in the Vedic Age.

He advocated the division of society into four classes, called *varnas*, and was a bitter opponent of the rigid caste-system in vogue in the 19th century or even these days. It was his belief that this division of Hindus into innumerable castes and communities, was one of the causes of India's downfall. Mutual feud, jealousies and antipathies grew

out of this division and ultimately weakened the power of Hindu Society. He, therefore, asked Hindus to discard the caste-system and replace it by the ancient *varnas* system. The perverted form of the *varnas* has, indeed, led to the springing up of classes which have been branded as depressed or untouchable. Swami Dayanand was a great friend of the *Shudras* or the so-called *untouchables*. He was the first reformer of the modern age, who raised his voice against the atrocities, the social inequalities, and the religious disabilities of the untouchables, or depressed classes.

The narrow-minded and selfish *Pandits* had assigned the lowest, the most degrading, position to the *Shudras*. They cited the 2nd *mantra*\* (hymn) of Chapter XXX of the *Yajurveda* in support of this. Their interpretation of the hymn was: “*Brahmans* were born of God’s mouth, *Kshatriyas*, out of His arms, *Vaishyas*, out of his thighs, and *Shudras*, out of His feet.” And they argued that ‘just as the mouth can never become an arm, nor can an

\*ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीदबाहू राजन्यः कृतः ।

ऊरूदतस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥

arm become the mouth, so can never a *Brahman* become a *Kshatriya*, etc., nor, can the latter become the former.' And yet, in actual practice these priests would not reclaim into their fold a *Brahman* who had, by mistake, eaten a Muslim's food, as they declared that he, by his action, became a Muslim. Even in the face of this self-contradictory action, there was no one to put a stop to the increasing evil in the society.

Swami Dayanand applied his mind to it and declared that their interpretation of the hymn was incorrect, for, God being formless, He could not have mouth, thighs, arms or feet. He said that the hymn really meant that "he who is the (*mukh*) head, leader among men, is called a *Brahman*, he in whom power and strength (*Bahu*) reside pre-eminently is a *Kshatriya*, He who travels about from place to place for the purpose of trade, etc., and obtains all things (for the community) on the strength of his thighs.....is called a *Vaishya*, and lastly a *Shudra* is like feet, the lower part of the body, because he is ignorant." The *Brahman* priests had insisted that a man's caste must be determined by his birth, so

that a *Brahman's* son must be considered a *Brahman* even if he did the greatest evils; and similarly a *Shudra's* son must for ever, in his life, remain a *Shudra*, the lowest caste, even if his actions were the purest. Swami Dayanand vehemently opposed this rigidity of class distinction and advocated the division into classes according to the kind of actions a man did. An evil-doer, even if born of *Brahman* parents, must be considered a *Shudra*, while a man, born of *Shudra* parents, must be classed as *Brahman*, if his actions were very pure, and led the life prescribed for a *Brahman*. "All individuals should be placed in different *Classes* according to their qualifications, accomplishments and character. By adopting this system all will advance in every respect because the higher *Classes* will be in constant fear of their children being degraded to the *Shudra Class*, if they are not properly educated. The same fear will also make the children acquire knowledge and culture. Whilst the lower *Classes* will be stimulated to exert themselves for admission into the *Classes* above them." These were the arguments which the Swami advanced in support

of the theory of class division according to actions.

Swami Dayanand thought and preached that the work of cooking food for *Brahmans*, *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas*, must be done by *Shudras*, which means that he did not consider the *Shudras* as untouchables. He writes that the *Dwijas* (twice born) "can eat what has been cooked by the *Shudras* ; because it is the duty of the *Dwijas*—*Brahmans*, *Kshatriyas*, and *Vaishyas* (both men and women)—to devote themselves to the dissemination of knowledge, the service of the State, the breeding of cattle, and to agriculture, trade and arts (and not to waste their time in cooking, etc.)"\* He then goes on to show the absurdity of our not doing so, by citing the examples of several things, e. g. sugar, flour, vegetables, butter, milk and fruits, which we readily eat, although they are usually gathered or collected (behind our backs) by Muslims or Christians or *Shudras*, and he says that "Whoever has, therefore, eaten these things has in fact eaten of the hands of men of all sorts and conditions."

\**Satyarthprakash*, Ch. X. p. 318 (English edition).

He sees no harm in the *Aryas* dining together. Describing the advantages of social unity he says: "It is extremely difficult for people to make any progress as long as their religion and their interests are not the same. Again, they cannot progress when they do not rejoice in each other's joys, nor sympathise in each other's afflictions." \* He also advocated equal opportunities and facilities, in matters educational, to the four *Varnas* including the *Shudras* or what we at present call the 'depressed classes' or 'untouchables.'

As regards the relations between man and woman, he was a firm believer in the principle of granting equal rights to both the sexes. During the Middle Ages, the selfish priestly class had succeeded in making the Hindus believe that the women, as well as the *Shudras*, had no right to education. The evils that had resulted from this wrong conception of theirs have been described in an earlier chapter. A great advocate of female education, Swami Dayanand quotes Manu, in support of his views. The latter says: "Let the husband

\* Ibid p. 320.

and the wife daily read and recite the *Veda* and other *Shastras* that give increase of wisdom, teach the means of acquiring wealth, and promote their welfare. Let them also carefully revise what they had studied during their student life and teach the same.”\*

Of the various kinds of marriages,—and he cites 8 kinds—he considers marriage by consent of the boy and the girl as the best. He was a vehement opponent of child marriage and considered it to be one of the causes of the degeneration of the Hindus. The minimum marriageable age, according to the *Vedas* and *Shastras* (which Swami Dayanand strongly supported) is 25 years in the case of males and 16 years for the females. He believed that if marriage is performed with due regard to all these factors, family life is bound to be happy. He quotes *Manu* very extensively to show what relations must subsist between husband and wife:—

“Wherever the husband is contented with his wife, and the wife with her husband, in that family alone all prosperity, fortune and



happiness perpetually dwell. And wherever they disagree and squabble there poverty, ill-fortune and misery are assuredly permanent." \*

"If the husband do not please his wife, she being unhappy, the whole family is unhappy and miserable; but if the wife be quite contented with her husband, the whole family enjoys felicity."†

"Let women be always propitiated (worshipped) by their fathers and brothers, by their husbands and the brothers of their husbands, in other words, they should speak sweetly to them and provide them with good food, nice clothes and ornaments, and thereby keep them happy. Those who seek great prosperity and happiness should never inflict pain on women." ‡

"Where women are honoured (worshipped), in that family great men are born; but where they are not honoured, there all acts are fruitless. Where women pass their days in misery and sorrow because of the misdeeds

\* Ibid. Ch III, 60.

† Manu. Ch. III, 62.

‡ Ibid. Ch. III, 55.

(such as adultery) of their husbands, that family soon entirely perishes, but where they are happy because of the good conduct of their husbands the family continually prospers." \*

Such were the views of Swami Dayanand regarding married life and the relations between the husband and the wife. He was deeply struck with the hopeless condition of the Hindu widows whom he found living in the most miserable conditions, partly as a result of the evil system of early marriage and partly on account of the wrong conceptions of men. He espoused the cause of the widows and appealed to the people to accord to these unfortunate ones the most humane and kind treatment. He was undoubtedly in favour of a widow leading a pure life without remarrying herself. But if a widow found it difficult to remain chaste throughout her life, the best course for her, as Dayanand said, was to remarry with the consent of the wise and the learned men of her family and society. He did advocate widow remarriage.

under certain conditions and with certain restrictions, for he knew what human nature is and, therefore, relying on the principle of 'choosing the lesser of the two evils,' he favoured widow remarriage. Secret abortions, secret sexual relations between widows and evil persons, he denounced as the worst crimes which, he thought, brought untold miseries in their train. Under certain conditions and for specific purposes, he even advocated temporary marriages (*Niyoga*) to produce children. But all these, he said, must be performed with the fullest consent of the leaders of society and the learned men. No doubt, these teachings of Swami Dayanand created a great consternation in the minds of the orthodox Hindus, and for these views, among many more, Dayanand was called a *Rebel* and even pelted with stones.

In propagating these views he was quite fearless, for in all of them he relied on the authority of the *Vedas* and the *Shastras*. And though for a time, *i. e.* throughout his life time and for nearly forty years after his death, the Hindu community looked upon his views with great horror, the declining social condi-

tion of the Hindus has now forced these reforms on them and at present the number of those who oppose the above mentioned reforms, as advocated by Dayanand, are few and far between.

Dayanand took up the cause of the helpless and the destitute. He appealed to the people to open widow homes and orphanages, the former for the protection of the widows and the latter for the bringing up of orphans. They were falling into the hands of non-Hindus and embracing their religions.

The Swami felt alarmed at the progressive decline in the population of the Hindus, and to arrest it he asked them not only to take back into the Hindu fold those who had, by mistake or by force, embraced non-Hindu religions but also to allow Muslims and Christians to embrace Hinduism. This system of conversion found few supporters in his time but now-a-days even the orthodox *Brahmans* have accepted it as very necessary and permissible to save the Hindu community from disruption. Hundreds and thousands of such conversions take place every year and the *Shudhi Sabha* is doing the work with great vigour.

These social reforms, as preached by Swami Dayanand, are now accepted by all Hindus, progressive or conservative. And the Swami undoubtedly deserves the gratefulness of the community which he so wisely saved from practical annihilation.

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## CHAPTER X

### PATRIOT AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHER

Swami Dayanand died in 1883, *i e.* two years before the Indian National Congress was born. Therefore, his patriotism and political philosophy, as described in this chapter, deserve a very serious and careful study. A few preliminary remarks may, however, be made before giving Dayanand's views on politics. Firstly, he made no distinction between the Church and the State. This principle does not find acceptance in the modern age; we are now accustomed to hearing that religion and politics have no relation with each other and that the State or Government must observe complete religious neutrality. In India particularly, Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858 guarantees perfect religious neutrality on the part of the

British Government in all matters. Secondly, Dayanand drew his conclusions from the ancient *Arsha*\* literature. He did not teach anything new in any sphere of man's activities; he only brought before his hearers what India's ancient sages had said and written. So that the scheme of government as laid down in Chapter VI of his monumental book '*Satyarthprakash*' is based entirely on the authority of ancient law-givers like Manu, the *Shastras*, *Vedas*, *Mahabharat* and such other books.

The activities of the Aryasamaj, in the social and religious fields, coupled with the scheme of government outlined in Chapter VI of '*Satyarthprakash*' produced great consternation, in the very early years of the present century, in the minds of government officials in India. Some of the prominent Aryasamajists,

\* *Arsha* literature comprises the works compiled or written by the ancient sages and *Rishis* of India, based on the authority of the *Vedas*. I have freely used the terms Aryan literature, or 'Vedic literature' to denote '*Arsha* literature, and I must not be understood to mean that 'non-Aryan or non-Vedic' means non-Hindu. It only means any book not written by the ancient sages. So that non-Aryan literature includes, among others, even the *Purans* and *Tantras* and *Bhagwat*, etc.

like Lala Lajpat Rai, took part in the political agitation too, and this displeased the officials. The religious antagonists of the Aryasamaj, further fanned the fire of official wrath against the Samaj, and the result was that for some time the Samaj came to be looked upon, though secretly, as a seditious or revolutionary body. Government servants were desired not to associate themselves with the activities of the Samaj, and those who defied such official wishes had to suffer for their views. They were dismissed or degraded on other pretexts. And for a time it seemed that the Samaj would have to meet a very great obstacle,—the displeasure of the Government—in its propaganda work. Ultimately, several articles appeared in the press, written by prominent Aryasamajists, memorials were sent to the Government, and books were published, to vindicate the non-political character of the Samaj. The result was encouraging. The truth prevailed in the end and the Aryasamaj is now no longer considered a seditious or mainly political body.

### **His Patriotism—**

Swami Dayanand aimed at teaching people



how to lead a noble life, and as men's activities included politics, and as the *Vedas* and *Shastras* make no clear distinction between a purely political man and a non-political man, the Swami freely expressed the political side of human life in his monumental work '*Satyarth-parakash.*' His writings everywhere show that he was an intense patriot who longed for his country's emancipation, social, religious and political. He knew that social evils and irreligiousness lay at the root of India's political bondage and that unless these evils were removed, the country would never be fit for self-government or *Swaraj*. He was pained to observe that India which boasts of a very brilliant past is now a degraded country. He expresses his views thus: "As long as they (*Aryas* or Indians) do not avoid evil things—manners, customs, etc.—and embrace good things, instead of making any progress they will go from bad to worse. The causes of foreign rule in India are:—mutual feud, differences in religion, want of purity in life, lack of education, child-marriage, marriage in which the contracting parties have no voice in the selection of their

life-partners, indulgence in carnal gratification, untruthfulness and other evil habits, the neglect of the study of the *Veda*, and other mal-practices. It is only when brothers fight among themselves that an outsider poses as an arbiter. Have you people even forgotten the practices that were in vogue at the time of the *Mahabharat* War, a little over five thousand years ago? In the war they—the soldiers—ate and drank even while riding or driving in cars. Mutual feud ruined the *Kauravas*, the *Pandavas* and the *Yadavas* in the past. *The same fatal disease is still clinging to us. None knows whether this dreadful fiend will ever leave us, or rob us of all our happiness and plunge us in the depths of misery. The Aryas are still treading the wicked path of the despicable low Duryodhan, the destroyer of his race and the enemy of his country. May God through His mercy rid us, Aryas, of this dreadful disease.*"\*

In the *Puranic* Age, the priests taught Hindus that foreign travel would make them unholy and irreligious and wrote books which

\* *Satyarthprakash*, Ch. X, pp. 320-21. (The Italics are mine). Cf. the views of Mahatma Gandhi who too, like Dayanand, invokes the mercy of God for the emancipation of India.

prohibited foreign travel. How this wrong belief degraded India, Dayanand, who was an advocate of the advantages of foreign travel, expresses clearly in these patriotic words: "When Emperor *Yudhisthira* performed his *Rajsuya Yajna*, he sent his brothers, prince *Bhima*, prince *Arjuna*, prince *Nakula*, and prince *Sahadeva* with invitations to all the kings of the four quarters of the globe to join the *Yajna*. Had they considered debasing to one's character to travel abroad, they would not have done all those things. The ancient Indians used to go abroad to all parts of the world for the purposes of trade, travel, or on political business. The present day bug-bear of loss of one's character and faith through travelling abroad is simply due to the false teaching of the wise-acres and the growth of dense-ignorance. Those who do not hesitate to go abroad, and thereby associate with peoples of various foreign countries, study their customs and manners, increase their trade, and augment their political power, become fearless and bold, and attain great power and prosperity by studiously imbibing the good qualities, and adopting the good

customs and manners of the foreigners, and rejecting their faults and evil habits, and bad manners.”\* And while wishing the *Aryas* to avoid contracting diseases and evil habits of the foreigners he says that “there can be no harm or sin in learning trade, arts and other good qualities from the foreigners. When these foolish people consider it a sin even to see or touch them, they can never fight against them, as they must see and touch them in fighting..... When we live righteous lives, foreign travel can do us no harm..... Can a country ever make any progress unless its people trade with or extend their rule over other countries? What can you expect but misery and poverty when the people of a country trade only among themselves, whilst the foreigners control their trade and rule over them?” †

He then attacks the conservative views of the priestly class and blames them for India's degradation, saying: “These stupid people

\* Ibid. p. 316.

† Ibid. pp. 316-17. Further comment is unnecessary. The words clearly indicate the Swami's views on several important subjects including foreign trade.

have lost all independence, happiness, wealth, political power, learning and activity, in short, everything. Now they are sitting idle with empty hands, praying for some one to come and relieve their distress, and give them something in charity wherewith they could get some food and ease the pangs of hunger. But that help is never forthcoming. They have thus completely ruined *Aryavarta* (India).”\*

### **His Political Philosophy—**

We have described above, in brief, the patriotism of Swami Dayanand. We now take up his political philosophy which is based upon the *Vedas*, the seventh, eighth and ninth chapters of Manu, the *Sikraniti*, *Vidurprajagar*, *Rajadharma*, and *Apatdharma*, and certain chapters of the Mahabharat. To these books we should turn if we wish to study the ancient Hindu system of government.

Dayanand supported a limited, benevolent monarchy, if we can use the term ‘*monarchy*’ to indicate the highest authority in the State, of which the Swami makes mention. He defines the definitely distinct duties of the

\* Ibid p. 318.

three Assemblies (Religious, Legislative and Educational), and quotes the *Atharva-veda* to show that these Assemblies, and the Military Councils and the Army should work together harmoniously to carry on the government of a country. He says that "no single individual should be invested with absolute power. The king, who is the president of the Assembly, and the Assembly itself should be inter-dependent on each other. Both should be controlled by the people, who in their turn should be governed by the Assembly."\* And he then describes the evils of the king being independent and enjoying absolute power, in the words of the *Shatapatha Brahman* (XII, 2, 3, 7, 8), which says that an absolute king "would impoverish the people, —being despotic and hence arrogant—and oppress them, aye, even eat them up, just as a tiger or any other carnivorous animal pounces upon a robust animal and eats it up. A despotic ruler does not let any one else grow in power, robs the rich, usurps their property by unjust punishment, and accom-

\* Ibid. Ch. VI, p. 162.

plishes his selfish end. One man should, therefore, never be given despotic power." \*

Dayanand considers the king as the chief magistrate (to use the modern expression) of the State, and quotes Manu in describing the qualifications of the person who should be elected as the king. According to this great law-giver, he alone is fit to be king who is "as powerful as electricity; as dear to his people's hearts as their breath, able to read the inmost thoughts of others, and just in his dealings as a judge. He should enlighten people's minds by the spread of knowledge, justice, and righteousness, and dispel ignorance and injustice as the sun illuminates the world." He should be like one who consumes wickedness like fire, keeps the wicked and the criminal under control like a jailor, gladdens the hearts of the good like the moon; makes the country rich and prosperous, as a treasurer keeps his treasury full; is powerful and majestic like the sun, keeps the people in fear and awe; and on whom no one in the world dares to look with a stern eye." † For, he says,

\* *Satyarthprakash*, Ch. VI, p. 162.

† *Ibid* p. 164.

a man who is not learned and cultured and is not assisted by wise, good and great men, in the discharge of his duties, cannot administer law, and is, therefore, unfit to be king.

Dayanand then proceeds to discuss the majesty of *Law* and holds that even the *King is not above the Law*. Dayanand agrees with Manu who says that "*Law* alone is the real king, the dispenser of justice, the disciplinarian. The *Law* is considered as the surety for the four *Classes* and *Orders* to discharge properly their respective duties. The *Law* alone is the true Governor that maintains order among the people. The *Law* alone is their Protector. The *Law* keeps wake whilst all the people are fast asleep. The wise, therefore, look upon the *Law* as *Dharma* or *Right*. When rightly administered the *Law* makes all men happy but when administered wrongly, *i.e.*, without due regard for the requirements of justice, it ruins the king. All the four *classes* would be corrupt, all order would come to an end, there would be nothing but chaos and corruption if the *Law* were not properly enforced."

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\* Ibid. pp 164-65



He then calls upon people to obey the *Law* passed by the Assembly, if they wish to be happy and prosperous. "Let no man transgress what has been decided by even an Assembly of three men who are scholars of the *Rig Veda*, the *Yajur Veda* and the *Sama Veda* respectively."\* Dayanand, thus, says that all the chief offices in the State including membership of three Assemblies, should be held by the pious, truthful, honest devoted persons who know the *Shastras* and *Vedas* well and act according to them. And he says that "Therefore, let not ignorant fools be ever made members of the aforesaid three Assemblies—Political, Educational and Religious."† *Manu* says: "Let no one abide by the law laid down by men who are altogether ignorant, and destitute of the knowledge of the Veda, for whosoever obeys the law propounded by ignorant fools falls into hundreds of kinds of sin and vice."‡ The State as conceived by Dayanand, who followed the

\* Ibid. p 166.

† Ibid. p 167

‡ Cf. the actual qualifications of the legislators in all countries in the modern days.

*Vedas* and *Shastras* in his beliefs, being a *Theocracy*, he definitely says that those who are not fully conversant with the *Vedas* and *Shrastras* should neither be made kings, nor ministers nor high officials, nor should their laws be obeyed.

By quoting extensively from Manu and other ancient books Dayanand defines the qualifications of the members of the three Assemblies and also the disqualifications of those who should not be elected as people's representatives on these bodies. He also describes, in great details, the qualifications and the respective duties of ambassadors, chaplains and other officers and emphasizes the necessity of building the capital town and forts in secure places.

Coming to the question of the Executive, Dayanand, while giving the king the headship of the State, and so also of the Executive, quotes Manu in support of the very great necessity of the king's having "seven or eight good, righteous and clever ministers who are natives of the country, are thoroughly conversant with the *Vedas* and the *Shastras*, are very brave and courageous, whose judgment

seldom errs, who come from good families and are well-trying men." For, as Manu says: "Even an act easy in itself becomes difficult to be accomplished by a man when single-handed. How much more so then, is the great work of the government of a country by a man single-handed. It is, therefore, a most dangerous thing to make one man a despotic ruler, or entrust a single man with the sole management of the affairs of the State"\* He says that the king should consult his ministers in all affairs of the State, e. g., Peace, War, Defence, Offence, Internal management of the country, Pacification of the newly conquered countries, etc., and should abide by the decision of the majority. †

Dayanand then proceeds to describe the rates of taxes and revenue which the king should collect, as well as the method of collection. The king should constantly keep a vigilant eye over his officers, through the agency of trustworthy and honest secret servants, to see that laws are justly administered, the officers discharge their respective

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\* Ibid. p. 170.

† Ibid. p. 171

duties faithfully, all taxes are collected justly and without undue pressure on the subjects, and lastly, that the people are happy and contented. He also describes how the king should train his army, conquer the countries that are ill-governed and then govern them justly; how the army should behave, how the foes, the neutrals and the allies should be treated. He discusses the qualifications of persons who should be considered reliable witnesses in deciding points of disputes. \*

Reverting to the Judiciary, he quotes Manu again. "Let a judge never deem it extremely necessary to examine too strictly, the competence of witnesses in cases of violence, theft, adultery, the use of abusive language and assault, all these things being done in the private, witnesses are not easily available in such cases."† Describing the eighteen causes of disputes, Manu calls upon the judges to "observe the eternal law of justice and decide all these cases of disputes among men justly, that is without partiality."‡ And speaking

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\* Ibid. pp. 171-199.

† Ibid. p. 193

‡ Ibid pp. 191.

of the dangers of injustice he says: "Where justice is destroyed by injustice and truth by untruth under the very nose of the Judges who simply look on, all those who preside over that Court are as if dead, not even one of them is alive. *Justice* being destroyed shall destroy the *destroyer*. *Justice* being protected shall protect the *protector*. Let no man, therefore violate the laws of justice, lest justice, being destroyed, destroy him. He who violates the laws of justice—justice that gives power and prosperity, and showers happiness like rain from heaven—is considered as lowest of the low by the wise. Let no one, therefore, violate the laws of justice. Justice alone in this world, is the true friend that accompanies a man even after death; all other companions become extinct with the extinction of the body. Justice never forsakes a man." \*

Should the king and the highest officers in the State be punished for violating the *law*? And if they should be punished, what should be the extent or degree of punishment? These two important questions,

\* Ibid p. p. 192.

Dayanand answers in the clear words: "What is a king but a man endowed with virtue and favoured by fortune. Were he to go unpunished, why would others obey the *law*? Besides, if the people and other persons in authority and the Assembly would deem it just and necessary to punish the king, how can he single-handed refuse to suffer punishment? Were king and high personages to go free, the king, ministers, and other men of influence and power would simply set justice and righteousness at naught, sink into the depths of injustice and ruin the people as well as themselves."\* He quotes Manu to prescribe the extent or degree of punishment to be inflicted on the king and officers of State: "Where an ordinary man is fined one penny, a king shall be fined a thousand, *i.e.*, punishment inflicted on a king should be a thousand times heavier than that on an ordinary man, the king's minister eight hundred times, the officer lower than him seven hundred, and one still lower six hundred and so on; even the lowest official such

\* Ibid. p. 200.

as a constable, should be punished not less than eight times as heavily as an ordinary man would be, for if the government officials or servants be not punished more severely than ordinary people, they would tyrannise over them." \*

Is the ancient Aryan system of government perfect or imperfect? Dayanand answers the question in the affirmative, for he says that for making the laws that have not been already provided for, there is a clear provision in Manu's Code: "Let the Parliament composed of scholars, frame such laws as are just and beneficial to the rulers and the ruled." While ending his chapter on the system of government, Dayanand prayerfully invokes divine assistance: "May we in this world, through His mercy, be privileged to occupy kingly and other high offices and may He make us the means of advancing His Eternal Justice."

Such were the views of Swami Dayanand regarding the form of the State and the system of government. In the modern age,

\* Ibid. pp. 197-98

a theocratic State finds little favour with political thinkers, hence his views would be taken exception to on important points. But, while we may differ from him in certain matters, we must give him the credit for describing what in his opinion would be an ideal State. Like all other political philosophers, Dayanand has given us the sketch of a political system which is ideal as viewed in the light of the ancient Hindu culture. That he devoted time to the study of that culture is beyond dispute. And his claim to the position of a political philosopher is also beyond dispute.

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## CHAPTER XI

### THE RELIGIOUS REFORMER

Swami Dayanand is better known as a religious reformer than in any other capacity. That he left his home in search of salvation after having received a rude shock, has been made clear in the earlier chapters. He was a Shaiva almost upto 1864; though denoun-  
cing idolatry much before that time, he continued to believe in the wearing of rosaries as a necessary sign of religiousness. His later studies and meditations led him to launch a severe attack against the *Puranc* religion, or what is more popularly, though not quite correctly, called the *Sanatan Dharma*. The Swami definitely mentioned that he was not founding a new religion. His only claim was that due to various causes the ancient Vedic religion had imbibed several evils which were undermining the very foundation of

Vedic culture. In obedience to his preceptor's command, he tried to preach the correct form of Vedic religion, basing all his views on the authority of the *Vedas* which, he considered, were the only and real revelation. He rejected the authority of the later books like the *Purans* the *Bhagwat* and the *Tantras*. He studied the principles of almost all the important religions of the world, and criticised what he considered to be untruth in them.

His teachings which revolutionised the Brahmanical Hinduism, may be summed up thus :—He considered the *Vedas* as the only authoritative scriptures, a revelation, and therefore binding on all ; he did not believe in the incarnation of God whom he considered to be formless, all powerful, eternal and all pervading, and so he opposed idolatry ; he opposed such ceremonies as *Shradha* ; he believed three things to be eternal, God, soul, and matter (*Prakṛiti*) ; he did not believe in the existence of imaginary beings like ghosts ; he preached the re-establishment of the system of *Varnas*, as opposed to the innumerable castes, and rejected the theory of caste by birth.

These views antagonised the Brahman priests of his time, infuriated men like Rao Karn Singh who tried to assault the Swami, and incurred the displeasure of the ruler of Jeypore. For his views, he had to face public odium and the wrath of the priests. His interpretation of the *Vedas* was, in many respects, different from that of the other scholars, and it was this very difference which created a gulf between the orthodox Brahmanical Hinduism and reformed Hinduism as preached by Dayanand. He rejected the use of the word '*Hindu*' and replaced it by '*Arya*', on the ground that the former was nowhere to be found in the religious scriptures while the latter was mentioned in all of them.

Many influential and wealthy persons who liked Swami Dayanand's social and educational reforms, promised him their entire support even in his religious reforms provided he gave up one plank in his programme, *viz.*, attack on idol-worship. But this the Swami refused to do. And for his vehement attack on idolatry, he raised a host of opponents, who, in their hearts, admired his deep learning.

In order to propagate his scheme of religious and other reforms he founded the Arya Samaj, and the first was established by him at Bombay in 1875 A. D. The following are the ten principles of the Arya Samaj:—

1. God is the primary cause of all true knowledge, and of every thing known by its means.
2. God is all truth, all knowledge, all beatitude, Incorporal Almighty, Just, Merciful, unbegotten, unchangeable, without a beginning, Incomparable, the support and the Lord of all, all-pervading, Omniscient, Imperishable, Immortal, exempt from fear, Eternal Holy and the cause of the Universe. To Him alone worship is due.
3. The *Vedas* are the books of true knowledge, and it is the paramount duty of every Arya to read or hear them read, to teach and preach them to others.
4. One should always be ready to accept truth and renounce untruth.

5. All actions ought to be done conformably to virtue, *i. e.*, after a thorough consideration of right and wrong.
6. The primary object of the Samaj is to do good to the world by improving the physical, spiritual and social condition of mankind.
7. All ought to be treated with love, justice and due regard to their merits.
8. Ignorance ought to be dispelled and knowledge diffused. *अज्ञान*
9. None ought to be contented with his own good alone; but every one ought to regard his prosperity as included in that of others.
10. In matters which affect the general social well-being of the whole Samaj one ought to discard all differences and not allow his individuality to interfere, but in strictly personal matters every one may act with freedom.

The constitution of the Arya Samaj is thoroughly democratic. Any one, without

distinction of caste or sex who subscribes to the above principles can become a member of the Samaj. In actual practice, the females form a separate society called *Strisamaj* or the society of the womenfolk. Beginning from the lowest step of the ladder, we find local Arya Samajes in almost all important towns in India, and in many big villages too. The number of Samajes is very large, particularly in the Punjab and the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, the former province being rightly called the stronghold of the Arya Samaj.

The constitution of a local Samaj is simple. Any one who subscribes to the ten principles of the Arya Samaj, as enunciated above, can enter the Samaj as a member. The subscription for membership is a hundredth part of the income of the person, though in actual practice very few pay this much, most of them paying far less. The elections are held every year, all members who have paid subscription for 11 months being entitled to take part in them. There is a president, one or more vice-presidents, a secretary, one or more assistant secretaries, a treasurer, an auditor, and a

librarian. These office-bearers together with a few more elected members form the executive committee (*Antarang Sabha*) of the local Samaj. The Samaj holds its weekly meetings generally on Sundays. At a weekly meeting, the programme is usually fixed, *viz.* *Havan* (*Yajna*), prayer, songs, recitation from some religious book like the *Vedas*, *Upnishads* or *Satyarthprakash*, lectures or religious discussions, readings from newspapers, and in the end *Shantipath*.

The local Samajes elect their representatives to the provincial organisation, called the *Prantik Aryapratinidhi Sabha*, at the rate of 1 representative for every twenty members on its roll, and pays to that higher body the prescribed quota of subscription. The Provincial Sabha holds its general meetings once in a year, though special meetings may be convened to transact important business of an urgent nature. The executive of the Provincial Sabha consists of a president, two or more vice-presidents, a secretary, two or more assistant secretaries, a treasurer, an auditor, one man in charge of propaganda, another in charge of publications etc., and a

few more to represent different areas in the province.

At the top is the *Sarvadeshik Sabha*, an all-India organisation, formed of the representatives from the provinces.

The activities of the Arya Samaj are religious or social. It does not, in its corporate capacity, take any part in politics, and it may be said that it has practically ceased to interest itself in the sixth chapter of the *Satyarthprakash*, which deals with the form of government for the Aryas.

In the religious field the Aryasamaj has undoubtedly awakened a great interest for the study of ancient Sanskrit books, such as the *Vedas*, the *Shsatras* and the *Upnishads*. Though this side of its propaganda is called *Veda prachar*, it has not much to do with the study of *Vedas*, a study confined to very few among the *Aryas*. One of the ten principles of the Samaj makes it obligatory for every *Arya* to read the *Vedas* daily, but it is not followed in practice. The third principle is, therefore, only a pious declaration. Although the chief aim of Swami Dayanand's life was to disseminate the correct knowledge of the *Vedas* and



although the Samaj still considers it the chief plank in its platform, the practice is not in conformity with the theory. This, however, does not mean that the Samaj has ceased to interest itself in the study of the *Vedas*. Only a few of the *Aryas* do really study *Vedas*, while the vast majority confines itself to the *Satyarthprakash*. So far as the study of the ancient Vedic or *Arsha* literature is concerned, the work of the Samaj is not much in conflict with the orthodox Brahmanical Hinduism. The *Aryas* consider the *Vedas* as the revelation of God. They believe that at the beginning of the Creation, God revealed His true knowledge (*jnan*) to four holiest *Rishis*, viz. Agni; Vayu, Aditya and Angirah, who then expressed their respective inspiration in the *Rigveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Samveda* and the *Atharvaveda*. Though Swami Dayanand did, in reality, try to prove that the *Vedas* are the store of divine inspiration and, as such, must be considered the final authority, this sort of belief which is often considered as blind faith by many moderners, does not appeal to those who trust more to their individual reason than to any belief of this

sort The *Vedas* are, however, considered, even by those who do not accept them as revelation, as the most sacred books whose teachings are very noble and lofty.

Besides the study of the *Vedas*, the other important teaching of Dayanand was the worship of the one formless God. He did not believe in the Incarnation Theory or *Avatarvada*, and thus came into direct conflict with the idol-worshippers. For this belief he several times risked his life and incurred the displeasure of some Indian Princes. But he fearlessly went on with his work. The Arya Samaj; though it has succeeded in convincing its followers or sympathisers of the correctness of its beliefs, has, however, not been able to inspire in its members real confidence in the God as conceived by Dayanand on the authority of the *Vedas*. And we, therefore, find great lack of *Bhakti* or real devotion among the modern *Aryas*, though there is too much of lip-devotion to God. This is, however, no fault of their principles, but only betrays their lack of sincerity.

The chief aim of Swami Dayanand was to reform the Hinduism of the Middle Ages by

asking the people to live and act up to the teachings of the *Vedas*. His real success, if measured by the standard of the practical life of the *Aryas*, has fallen far short of his expectations. When the Swami started his propaganda, some of his enthusiastic and sincere admirers undoubtedly showed a true missionary spirit and for a time they led almost a Puritan life. Their aim was to convert the whole world to the Vedicism, not only by preaching the principles but also by actually making a religious conquest of men's hearts in the whole world. After Dayanand's death, the *Aryas* ceased to show the same amount of sincerity as they did in his life time. The chief reason of this partial failure of Dayanand's mission,—that part of it which related to the propagation of Vedic principles—is the paucity of real and sincere workers among his followers. The Samajes have fallen into the hands of those who do not all actually follow the principles. They are perhaps unfit for the task. Lack of proper education is at the root of it. Like other sects, the Samaj, so far as its religious activities are concerned, is receding back from the position

it took up in the early years of its establishment.

In the ~~social field~~ on the other hand, the Arya Samaj has very great success to its credit. It has broken the fetters of, if not actually abolished, the pernicious caste-system. It has lessened its rigidity to a great extent. It has raised womanhood to a very high place. By abolishing the *purdah* system, by spreading education among the women-folk and by ameliorating the condition of the helpless widows, it has successfully tried to remove a great evil that was degrading Hindu society for hundreds of years. The Samaj has succeeded in fighting out the pernicious system of child marriage. No *Arya* would marry his child who has not reached the age of maturity. Hindu orphans are now no longer helpless. The Samaj has opened many orphanages where the parentless children are taken care of. In this noble task it has received the generous help of all Hindus, whether *Aryas* or not. The proselytizing work of the Arya Samaj, aimed chiefly at reclaiming the Muslims and Christians into Hindu fold, has aroused keenest

interest among the left-wingers in the Samaj. Though this activity of the Samaj has for a time saved the Hindus from being swallowed up by other religions and to that extent widened the outlook of the orthodox Hindus, it has created, as was only natural, bad blood between the Hindus and the Muslims. The two rival institutions *Shudhi* movement of the Hindus and *Tabligh* of the Muslims is chiefly responsible for most of the communal riots in India, which have undoubtedly retarded the political progress of this unfortunate country, at a most critical period of its history. Communal feelings have been excited to a pitch at which it is becoming increasingly difficult for the sober section of the people to remove the bitterness between these two important communities in India.

The most important item in the social programme of the Arya Samaj is the uplifting of the low-caste Hindus. Undoubtedly, the Samaj can rightfully claim the palm in this field of activity. It was the first to begin this work, and although in the very early stages of the social propaganda, the priestly

class bitterly opposed the *Aryas* in giving rights of social equality to the low castes, the recent *Harijan* movement having received the stamp of Mahatma Gandhi's heartiest co-operation, has considerably minimised the opposition of the orthodox Hindus. Widow remarriage, fight against early marriage and untouchability, care of the widows and the orphans, and female education are the social reforms successfully introduced by the Arya Samaj.

The greatest achievement of the Arya Samaj, far greater than its social work, is that in the educational field. Though the *Aryas* do not number even ten millions, they have succeeded in starting a very large number of educational institutions. Swami Dayanand had worked for the establishment of *pathshalas* on ancient lines and had drawn up a complete scheme of education. The Samaj opened institutions of that type, called *Gurukuls*. These number more than twenty in the whole of India, but the two most important are those of Kangri and Brindaban, the former run by the Punjab Sabha and the latter by the U. P. Sabha. In these institutions the

study of Sanskrit language, *Vedas* and *Shastras*, occupies the most important place. Mathematics, general science, philosophy, theology, history and geography are also taught. These institutions are neither recognised by the Government nor patronised by them, so that those who are educated in these institutions, find it difficult to secure services inspite of their high intellectual attainments. They have to obtain degrees of recognised universities to secure services.

Besides the *Gurukuls*, the Arya Samaj maintains a very large number of recognised educational institutions, girls' schools and colleges, and boy's schools and colleges. In the Punjab, there is not a district without two or more high schools, not a big town without some school. There are many colleges, most of them teaching up to the Intermediate Classes. Some of them are degree colleges too. Of the last, the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College at Lahore is the biggest institution of its kind in India. It has nearly two thousand students, a large number of life-members on its teaching staff, and a host of paid professors and teachers. The college has been raised to

to the eminent position it now occupies by the successive principals who have worked as life-members. The huge buildings of the college and its hostels have been raised without getting a copper from the Government as grant-in-aid, not because the latter was reluctant to give generous aid, but because the founders and patrons of the college have desired to run an entirely national institution. The college does not receive any recurring grant even from the Government. The entire expenses are met with from the income from fees and donations from philanthropic bodies and individuals. The Punjab has a real network of educational institutions of all grades, and with the Lahore College at the top, these institutions redound to the credit of the Arya Samaj. The United Provinces too, have more than a dozen high schools, one degree college at Cawnpore, one Intermediate college at Dehradun, and a very large number of middle and primary schools, and many girls' schools. These schools, receive Government aid as well as generous help from philanthropic individuals, and are either managed by the local *Samajes* or by managing com-



mittees and educational boards set up for the purpose.

In other provinces too, there are educational institutions of the Samaj, the most important of them being the Raja Ram College at Kolhapur, which is maintained by the Kolhapur Durbar.

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## EPILOGUE

We now close the book, but before doing so, recapitulate the life work of Dayanand. Born of an orthodox Brahman family, he left his home while still not very mature, in search of salvation. He bore the troubles of a wandering life, seeking knowledge from whomsoever he expected to learn anything. He travelled extensively throughout northern and central India, till at last he came to the feet of Swami Virjanand at Mathura. Here he studied for less than three years, and promising to carry out his preceptor's behests he started on his life mission. In the first five years, he simply learnt the situation,—so to say—and then began a constructive work. He established the Arya Samaj as the chief agency to carry out his scheme of work. How the Samaj has worked and what it has achieved, its success as well as its failings,

have all been described. The Samaj may, on the whole, rightly claim to have reformed the Hindu society in many respects. Swami Dayanand was really the greatest scholar, philosopher and religious and social reformer of India in the modern age, and the Arya Samaj, his chief institution, is now the front guard of the Hindu society.

Such great men are not always born. Dayanand was, therefore, one of the few chosen of God. He lived to serve his fellow-men and ultimately laid down his life, a victim to the jealousy of his adversaries who poisoned him, at Ajmer on the 30th of October 1883. And now that the Arya Samaj is celebrating the semi-centenary of his death, at Ajmer, a grateful nation should remember him as one of its greatest benefactors, who sacrificed all for the service of others.

May his soul rest in peace.

THE END.

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