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## Daya Nand "Saraswati": True Humanist of Socio-cultural Renaissance of 19th century

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Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, was one of the makers of modern India. With an indigenous orientation, he wanted to bring a new social, religious, economic and political order in India. Taking inspiration from veda, he criticized evil practices like idolatry, caste system, untouchability etc. as prevailed in the then Indian society. By 1921 the British Rule in India had established in all parts of the country and with it spread the western ideas which brought about revolutionary changes in the attitude of the people. The ideas of democracy, sovereignty of the people, rationalism, nationalism and humanism helped the people to think a new and critically their own society. The orthodox elements of the society were apposed to the introduction of modern education as well as to new social changes. But the Indian society as a whole was very much influenced by the western ideas of equality, democracy and justice. In the Urban areas people were much influenced by humanitarian ideals which they learnt when they came in contact with the western history and literature. Modern industries, new means of transport, growing urbanization and increasing employment of women in factories, offices, schools, hospitals. The penetration of capitalism made social status dependent mainly in money and profit making became the most desirable social activity.<sup>1</sup> The development of science and scientific outlook attracted every aspect of activity, military, political, economic, social and religious. Before the English education, Indian society was static and decadent society. In the village as well as cities life was insecure from the foreign invasions and inside the country it was made unsafe by strifes of local rulers who fought battles for their false honour and lack of ability to govern. Therefore the conditions of the people were deplorable.<sup>2</sup> The development of science and scientific outlook attracted every aspect of activity. The villagers of India were poor and followed their traditional progressions because there were no industries in the province during the period of review but this poverty did not disturb them till their bare necessities were fulfilled with their own efforts. But it is certain that in most of the cases the indebtedness in the villagers was due to imprudent expenditure on rituals and ceremonies which they practiced only on account of their blind and unthinking devotion to the things which could be easily avoided, otherwise the wants of the villagers were very few and they could be easily met with the things they produced. The peace given by the English rule helped Indians to think to better their lots. The new scientific outlook, the doctrine of nationalism and humanism impressed the educated classes and their leaders agitated to achieve the rights which were due to all human beings irrespective of their castes and colour. The rule of law of the Raj gave full opportunity to the Indians to demonstrate their feelings against things which they considered unjust and discriminatory, and which could never be possible under a tyrannical rule of indigenous rulers.

Swami Dayanand soon started preaching about the Vedas and his fame spread throughout the country. Swami Dayanand then, in order to give an organized and systematic structure to his teachings and formed Arya Samaj on April 7, 1875 at Bombay. Swami Dayanand named ten tenants of the Arya

Samay- He also fanned different rules and devised many principles for the Samaj Most important Principle was that God is blissful, omniscient, omnipotent and holy. He also is worthy of being worshipped. Truth and Dharma are two important things according to Swami Dayanand He also told that universal goodmen should be filled with justice righteousness and love our motive should be to promote education and to dispel ignorance from the world. One should not be selfish and the good of the society. should be the motive of the every human being. The Welfare of the society is so important that it should be our prime motive. At that time, it was very difficult for a person to fight with so many evils. Swami Dayand found that by initiating educational reforms society can be reformed in a true sense Swami Dayanand found that the present education system had failed to create an ideal human being. An educated person must be a man of good character and humility should be in his words and behaviour On 22 October, 1969, there was a great debate with him in which 27 Scholars, 12 pundits and this debate was conducted in front of fifty thousand people. He told the people that lack of knowledge always remains the root cause of many problems was the key to eradicate evils from the society and to usher in the new epoch of knowledge. He believed that the Gurukul education was best suited for the overall development of a child and that's why establishment of Gurukuls was necessary to infuse new life into decadent Hindu Society Swami Dayanand had views that the Gurukul Should be located at a distance from and education the cities that the students or Brahmacharis may get calm and peaceful environment of the Gurukuls were later established of are Gurukul. A number by Swamiji and his followers DAV institutions also the products of his mind- Swami Dayanand also emphasized on the women's education and Arya Kanya Mahavidyalayas were opened up later by his followers. Swami Dayanand was not against western education system But at the same time he laid emphasis on education based moral values the moral values are important a good human being and education should emphasize importing these values to human being. Religious books the part of many Swami Dayanand read of all religions and he not only found the Hindu religion, he told that fault with Some chapters of the Bible and Quran were also not good. Likewise, there were scope for improvement in Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism Swami Dayanand found that hindu religion. was gripped in many soul evils, such as idolatry, animal sacrifice, pilgrimages, caste discrimination, meat eating, gender discrimination, Sati tradition, priest crafting and temple offerings etc. Swami Dayanand Saraswati's philosophy and knowledge deciphered from his three books. which he published which were satyarth Prakash, Veda Bhasya Bhumiya and Veda Bhasya. He was the editor of one journal Asya Patrika. Man should According to Swami Dayanand, a respect his teachers, elders, parents, guests and he should always follow the path of righteousness, equality and justice used the word Politically, Swami Dayanand believed that India Should be politically independent and for this he swaraji "Self Rule? He wanted that should be self dependent and they should try to strengthen the indigenous economy. He urged people to use the indigenous things manufactured in India and discard foreign things. He was also against the use of English in all official works and he advocated for the promotion of Hindi as a national language. He told the people that there is a huge difference between a good government and self government Swami Dayanand worked relentlessly for the benefit of the society he wanted to make the world an the good Aryan world where "Aryans" means people in all respect. He wanted to create a society. that is free from evils.

Some social reformers sought to reform Hinduism from within and sought to purge it of superstitions beliefs and practices. Idolatry, image worship, practice of pilgrimage came up for close scrutiny and consequent reforms. A great stress was put on the regulation of individual religious social life in accordance with the principles of reason and to discard traditional beliefs and practices which could not stand the test of modern knowledge. This approach affected the intellectuals stratum of the society. As the masses in India were mostly illiterate they were not much affected by the new scientific ideas and most of the Hindu society remained stuck to its old beliefs. The feeling of caste and forms of religion continued as before. Through in the North West of India the Arya Samaj changed the hearts of a large number of educated class yet the practice of idolatry could not be brought to an end.<sup>3</sup> Though the social reformers considered the caste system a barrier for the unity of the Hindu society and progress of the nation yet they failed to do much practically due to the wrath of general people who

considered the caste system as person who attempted to introduce such innovations excited universal resentment and apposition and was branded as a dangerous person. Arya Samaj took up the task to break the barriers of the classes.<sup>4</sup> Arya Samaj played a vital role to quicken the zeal of Hindus to remove caste distinctions and espouse the genuine cause of their suppressed brethren. With the spread of new education by Arya Samaj, change in Hindu social order in society, people began to realize their potential value. The depressed classes held meetings at several places and organized themselves to make powerful organization of their own to come out of the backward state they were thrown in by the mischief of orthodox Hindus.<sup>5</sup> Arya Samaj was founded in 1875 by Dayanand Saraswati. He was a typical fearless social and religious reformer in 19th century. Through his life and career he preached Indians to imbibe courage fortitude moral soundness, power, strength of body and mind and such other virtues as would make them independent and possessors of sovereign imperial sway. He claimed India for Indians. Dayanand stands out by himself, with peculiar and salutary distinctness, one unique in his type and he is unique in his work. He was mystic and yogi and could remain in samadhi for 18 hours at a stretch. He would live on milk alone for days together. He remained hungry sometimes as it was not his custom to beg for food. He faced hardships and was stoned and poisoned many times. Like a true saint he forgave them. Nobel- laureate Romain Rolland, Sri Aurobindo and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan paid him rich tributes for his character, wisdom, strong will and courage. Dayanand's message was "BACK TO THE VEDAS" was not only scientific and rational but also this was surely glance of practical intuition on his part for in a real sense, the vedas were the original source of religion, culture and civilization of India, they were the real foundation of Indian thought, philosophy and knowledge. Born in a Brahmana family of Tankara in the state of Marvi, South Gujrat, Dayanand turned out to be a rebel and militant child of his family and the age in which he was born, His father Krashan ji Laji Trivedi tried his best to prepare the child in the shaiva traditional way. In the process Dayanand learnt certain lessons in Sanskrit grammar and some vedic text by heart. He accompanied his father on his religious missions. He is said to have Completed his formal education 1838. His father had banking house, a hereditary office and he wanted Dayanand to help him in his business.<sup>6</sup> Like all other great men of the world Dayanand also passed through period of conflict sufferings and an urge to seek the truth. The conflict came his faith in traditional religious practices was shaken at the sight of a mouse dancing the idol of Lord Shiva for whom has was made to fast. He felt that it was impossible to reconcile to the idea of an omnipotent, living God, with the idol which allowed his image the mouse to run over his body and polluted in without the slightest protest for him. All his father's arguments and persuasion could not end his conflict soon after, not with standing the best possible care, his younger sister expired. It was his first bereavement to and the shock he received was very great. He said, friends and relatives were sobbing and lamenting around me but I stood like on pertifield, plunged in revery.<sup>7</sup> He realized that one could escape death and he too could be snatched away any time. He asked himself. "What should I do to alleviate this human misery? a where shall I find the assurance for and mean of attaining salvation I came to a decision then and there that I would strive to find an answer to these questions, Caste whatever it might, so that I could save myself from the untold miseries of the dying moments" <sup>8</sup> His uncle who loved him clearly also passed away shortly afterwards. "His death lift me in a state of utter dejection and with a still profounder conviction. I settled in my mind that there was nothing stable worth living for these world".<sup>9</sup> Apprehending marital wedlock, he left home in 1846 in search of truth / Moksha. For more than fifteen years he wandered through one part of the Country to the other on the bank of the river, thick jungles, in the hermits of various Yogis, Sadhus-Sanyasis, On the peaks of the hill to learn the science of Yoga and through yoga the Moksha was his ambition of life at that time, Ultimately he found a Guru in swami Virjananda at Mathura with whom he stayed for 3 years (1861-63) Swami Virjananda was a great grammarian. Dayanand had so far devoted himself to Vedanta, Yoga and some grammar perhaps It is quite possible that after his wanderings in the country and meetings with sadhu-Yogis, Sanyasees of various sects, he might have discovered that the deepest secret of religion and Moksha lay hidden in the Hindu Scriptures and as they are in Sanskrit. They could be opened only with the key of grammar. It was for this reason that he came to virjananda, who was recognized as an established authority on grammar.<sup>10</sup> During his stay with Swami Virjananda besides mastering the



Asthadhyayim Mahabhashya, Nirukta, Nighantu, which provided him with the key to unlock the treasury of the Vedas, Dayanand learnt to control his body and mind through yogic power. Having finished his education, Dayanand made Customary offering of clove so dear to swami Virjananda, as dakshina to his teacher saying that he is poor man and could not offer anything except that. Virjananda's reaction to it was indeed wonderful. He observed "I demand from you something else as dakshina. Take a vow before me that so long as you live, you will work incessantly to spread true knowledge of the 'Vedas' and the 'Arsha-granths' and condemn works which teach false doctrines and tenets; and that you will even give your life if necessary in reestablishing the vedic - religion. Dayanand bowed and vowed, Tathastu. So it be".<sup>11</sup> "This is my dakshina". True to his word Dayanand fulfilled his vow to the last breath of his life. After taking leave of his guru, Dayanand came to Agra in April 1863 and stayed here for two years passing most of his time in practicing yoga and studying the vedas and shastras thus preparing himself for the mission for which he had pledged himself before his guru Swami Virjanand. Dayanand visited almost every part of India from cape Comorin to Himalayas and from Calcutta to Mumbai. He was a man with a powerful intellect and social conscience. He challenged traditional beliefs and rituals. His personality and teachings affected the lives of millions of people.<sup>12</sup> He denounced evil and vulgarities spread by the vested interests in the name of religion. Vedas in hand, he challenged the Hindu Orthodoxy to prove if they could justify on their basis polytheism, pantheonism, idol worship, Casteism untouchability, infant marriage forced widowhood, Sati infanticide and numerous other superstitions degenerating Hinduism. The whole front line and the reserve of orthodoxy came forward to silence him, but Dayanand brought them to their knees.<sup>13</sup> By this way he did profound revolutionary reform for human welfare. After socio-religious work of reform in the Hindu society, Dayanand's next concern was to arouse consciousness among his people. He was undoubtedly, one of the major figures of India's national resurgence. Some of the writers strongly feel that the events of 1905 in Bengal was a direct impact & Dayanand's teachings."<sup>14</sup>

Throughout his life Dayanand endeavoured to purge the humanity of the prevalent social and religious evils. He was a visionary who looked far ahead of his times and visualized a society based on social justice equality of opportunity and political freedom. He was of the view that character of Nation was the real foundation on which the superstructure of political uplift could be built. He aimed at regeneration of the Indian and through Indians the whole humanity. He tried to expound truth and to bring the followers of all religions together on one platform. He worked hard to make them free from malice. He generated the feeling of love and worked for their welfare and peaceful world existence. Although charges are made against him that his attack on other religions had done more harm than good to the Indian society. but researches in the field have absolved Dayanand of these charges because he never rejected that which was good in other religions and never spared Hinduism of its social evils. Dayanand felt that there were learned men in all religions and if they could give up prejudices, accept all these broad principles on which all religions were unanimous, reflect differences and behave affectionately towards each other much good would be done to the world, the miseries of the people would decrease and usher an era of happiness.<sup>15</sup> Dayanand is often blamed that he criticized the different religions and the different sects of Hindu society. However his main aim was to criticize only those elements indifferent religions which led the masses to fight each other he had no malice or hatred towards any religion, he simply criticized what he thought as untrue (in that religion) and wanted to bring different faiths under the banner of one universal religion. He was of the view that all these things which are common to all religions obviously condemn false things, for they create difference in different public all the secrets and open things of all to exchange their view and reach some unanimity!"<sup>16</sup> Dayanand Starved hard to preach universal truth to bring all men under one religion so that they may, by ceasing to hate each other and firmly loving each other, live in peace and work for their common welfare.<sup>17</sup> He could not be contended with more theoretical propositions in this respect and embarked on practical ventures. He invited a conference of the representatives of almost all the religions in India on the occasion of the Delhi Durbar, 1877 in which Keshab Chandra Sen, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Munshi Alkadhari and other purpose, it paved the way for the later religious parliaments and conferences working for peace and happiness of mankind.

It is a strange coincidence that Dayanand was poisoned by a Hindu but was treated by a muslim Doctor Alimadan Khan. He passed away on October 30,1883 and cremation at Malusar Cremation Ground Ajmer.

In the matter of vedic interpretation, I am convinced that whatever may be the final complete interpretation, Dayanand will be honoured as the first discoverer of the right clues Amidst the chaos and obscurity of old ignorance and age-long misunderstanding he was the eye of direct vision that pierced to the truth and fastened on that which was essential. He has found the key of the doors that time had closed and rent as under the seal of imprisoned fountains.

Sri Aurabindo,  
Bankim-Tilak Dayanand  
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