CHAPTER FIVE :

" DAYANAND SARASVATI AND HIS RELIGIOUS IDEAS "

CHAPTER - V

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The renaissance of Hinduism and an attempt to revive ancient Indian culture and religious values in the modern age was preceded by a prolonged period of religious confusion and moral depravity. The birth of Swami Dayanand Sarasvati at the time of the oth-er social movements such as the Brahmo Samaj and the Theosphical society gave new hope to the decadent Hindu society. His inspiring personality and deep scholarship coupled with his burning zeal for truth and reason shook the whole nation for his dogmatic slumber. Dayananda gave a prophetic call to the Indian nation and through it to mankind to fight against blind superstition, hypocrisy and everything that was against reason and common sense. His crusade was directed against priest-craft that was against the best interests of humanity.

The time when Dayanand appeared on the Indian scene was momentous. There was faith and philosophy, between reason and religion; between materialism and spiritualism all brought about by the impact of Western ideas on Hindu culture. By trying to divorce religion from reason, the selfish class of Brahmin priests where exploiting the ignorant Hindu Masses. For them

religion consisted of nothing other than ceremonies and out ward conformity to the caste observance. Brahmin was considered to the agent between man and God, to attain Moksha.

Religious purity meant prohibition in regard to interdining and intermarriage. Political disintegration had led to the defeat of Indians and establishment of British rule in India. As a consequence of it the western cultural values were replacing slowly the ancient Indian ideals of life. Evil social practices such as untouchability, child marriage, and widow hood adversely affected the physical strength of the Hindus. The number of orphans and widows was increasing every day; Hindu society was fast crumbling to pieces.

In the second half of the nineteenth century a new class of young men with English education arose. It became conscious of the folly and selfishness of the Brahmin pries-ts and felt revulsion at the existing false religious and social practices. But even this class did not have enough courage to direct its reason into practice against the existing forms of religion. The ancient Indian religion and social polity which had survived so many social catuclysms and political vicissitudes was now in a real danger. While India was undergoing tremendous religious and social crisis, the western world was also not at peace. It was completely in the grip of materialism. Its social life was

dominated by a religion which failed to satisfy the yearning and intellectual impulses evoked by the progress of science. The intellectual life of the west was presided over by those who did not bother abent the spiritual values. This resulted in the uneasy void in the inner-self of man which required to be filled. Thus not only India but the world at large stood in sore need of a saviour and a redeemer.

At such a juncture a high caste Gujarati Brahmin named Mulshankar, who later came to be known as Swami Dayanand set out in quest of truth. " He felt that unless the existing social polity was replaced by the Vedic polity, and supremacy of intellect and character took place, the world was doomed." He was convinced that religion and science were no enemies and therefore made up his mind to reconcil religion and reason. By unfurling the flage of the Vedas, Dayananda came to proclaim its eternal voice and preach its ever lasting truth to the representatives of all the nations of the world. He came to unite the East and the West in one harmonious blend to revive the ancient Indian religious values as the Buddha did nearly three thousand years ago. With the massage of love, he decided to teach all mankind that the various scriptures of the world were subordinate to the Vedas and the Vedas were as much the book of Hindus, as of the Mohammadans, the Christians, and the Jews etc. Thus his was a

noble mission of uniting the world in a single brother-hood, so as to make it survive all the storms and stresses that are so common in the world.

Born in a deeply religious family in 1824, Dayananda was led to embrace the whole humanity. The religious orthodoxy of his father and the tender humanitarian outlook of his mother made the young Dayananda a true devotee of the existing religion. But at the early age of thirteen, he had a unique experience on the day of Shivratri fast. In the temple of Lord Shiva he saw mice moving over the idol of Shiva. In order to remove his doubt about idol-worship, he made enquiries from his father and came to know that the idol was only the symbol of the Lord Shiva and the God himself. Thus was the turning point of his life. Dayananda felt that he must know the truth. Like the Buddha he was also shaken by the phenomenon of death.[1] Thus three ideas settled in his mind which later on shaped his personality and philosophy of religion which contributed for social reform. The ideas were disrespect for idol worship; detachment from the world; and disbelief in rituals and ceremonies. Thinking that he must prepare himself for knowing the truth and for the service of the mankind, Dayananda left his home in 1846.

Dayananda was shaped into a real Mahatma, a sage and a prophet during his stay in Mathura at the feet of the renowned

saint Swami Virjanand. The Guru explained to him the burden of sin and suffereing beneath which the mother Earth was groaning. As a gift from disciple, the Guru got the promise from Dayananda to spread the Vedic message to the whole of mankind. With determination and confidence in himself, Dayanand set at to fulfil his promise to his Guru. During his life time he did not take rest and fought single handed against all kinds of onslaughts till he sacrificed himself in 1876. " Dayananda's profound scholarship, his magnetic powers of persuasion, his powers of bombardment of an impregnable orthodox position with bombs carefully selected from the armoury of ' Sastric ' learning, his fiery eloquence inspired by rightous indignation and a heart glow with unselfish love of humanity which transfused his words and made them scalding and scorching and above all his infinite pity for his suffering fellowmen carried all before them." [2]

Swami Dayanand took pains to show that the Vedic culture was universal in its outlook and was not opposed to any religion for it catered to the essential needs of man as a spiritual being. It was the civilisation of mankind for the good of the entire human community. The Vedic civilisation was ideal and the Aryans had a society in which every man and woman enjoyed material and spiritual goods to their satisfaction. Through his book ' Satyarth Prakash ' " he tried to show that the Vedas presented a scheme of

life for the acceptance of mankind." In the words of Tarachand, his biographer, " The Rishi hold out a promise that through the Veda the world's good shall be promoted. Through the teachings of the Veda, peace shall come on earth and happiness rule every home. Through the Veda shall be hastened the advent of the Golden Age, the age of which the poets have sung, the philosophers dreamt and to which the prophets have pointed.[3]

Dayananda made the Vedas the basis of his humanism. It was his firm belief that only through the study and understanding of the Vedas one could promote national as well as international interests. The Vedic religion and culture furnished a common basis for all the various faiths and creeds. Dayananda considered the Vedas, the ultimate source of all religions, the fountain head from which the stream of religions knowledge has flowed through the channels of different religions that exist today. The only way to establish harmony among the various conflicting interpretations of religion was to accept the Vedas as its real source. But this could be possible if the real spirit of the Vedas was understood. For this very reason Dayananda took upon himself the propagation of the Vedic culture and condemning of false and distorted representation of ancient Indian views of life. All his activities were motivated by the desire to do good to mankind and to promote peace and happiness throughout the world.

Dayanand's mission was socio-religious. He emphasised the importance of religion in the life of man. But he also stressed the need of understanding the real spirit of religion against its popular and wrong interpretation. He considered the Vedic view of life as the most comprehensive religion. Dayanand said " I believe in a religion based on universal and all embracing principles which have always been accepted as true by mankind, and will continue to command the allegiance of mankind in the ages to come. Hence, it is that religion in question is called the primeval eterani religion, which means that, it is above the hostility of all human creeds what so ever."[4] He offered a statement of belief for the acceptance of all good men. He was of the view that only that creed which was acceptable to all men was worthy of belief. As a religious leader Dayananda's aim was to believe in truth and help others to believe in it; he rejected what he considered falsehood in Hindu religion and other religions; and tried to help others to do the same. He was the first modern Indian, a Hindu who could boldly declare that Brahmin priests were hypocrites and false representatives of Hinduism. He said, " any thing short of vedic prescriptions was deception and fraud on Hinduism." As it has been pointed out earlier, " observance of religion through idol worship struck him as false at the age of thirteen." From that day he thought God who was formless could not be worshipped in images. Image is

always of an object which possesses a form. There could be no image of God. He also proved on the basis of Yajurveda that idol worship was anti-vedic.[5] God is the creater and sustainer of every where and is Lord of all. "It is by the knowledge and contemplation of God alone that all men attain true happiness."[6] Dayananda said that, belief in God was essential for a theist but this had nothing to do with idol worship. Even then he considered glorification and prayer of God as essential for a religious person. Glorification meant praising God as possessed of positive and negative attributes in the sense of his being all prevading, entirely spirit, all powerful, omniscient, eternal-ruler of all and also at the same time devoid of passion, is never born never subjected to pain or grief. The act of glorification could give rise to love of the supreme. Being, reformation of one's nature, Prayer of God is essential because through it the religious person can inculcate humility, courage, and seek divine help.[7]

The Vedas were often charged with polytheism, worship of the elements and what not. According to Dayananda the charge was totally unjust. The mistake arose from confounding two different senses in which such words as Surya, Agni, Indra, Mitra, Varuna were used in the Vedas. He said all vedic words must be interpreted in their derivative sense. There is a learned exposition of this subject in the first chapter of Satyarth Prakash; in which Dayananda has given the derivative meenings of a number of terms,

such as mentioned above. He has shown that all the various terms used in the Vedas signified the one Almighty God, and hence there could be nothing like polytheism. This is confirmed by the internal evidence of the vedas- " God is one although the wise call it by many names".[8] In another verse it is said that the learned and the wise describe one existing God in many forms of expressions.[9] He also quoted the Yajurveda to show that God is different elements of the nature. In this way he tried to reinstate the monotheism of the Vedic religion in place of distorted Hindu belief in the multiplicity of god and goddesses.

There is also misinterpretation of the word " Deva or Devata in to God" Swami Dayanand revolutionised the public opinion by his masterly exposition of the word and gave its true significanc- According to him, " The word deva is derived from the root (div) which literally means to shine or a bright thing. It was applied to the Sun, the Moon, and other forces of nature. Swami Dayanand's writings have changed the whole current of thought on this point. Thus it was brought out that the Vedic religion was not polytheism; that the Vedas taught pure and perfect monotheism. Belief in one God, he thought was essential for all men in order to attain true happiness. According to Dayananda, " Idol-worshippers wander from temple to temple and place to place in an illusory expectation (to find God) and suffer afflictions by losing their religion, their worldly prosperity, their love of benevolence; besides falling victim to the mischiefs of thieves and cheats." [10]

Dayananda did not hold that man was the image of God. For him the human soul was a free agent, he could use the body, the vital forces, the senses and the mind in the matter of performing deeds subject to the laws of God in matters of reaping fruits there of.[11] God and human soul were distinct , and text like " I am God ", Dayananda considered as quotations from the Brahmanas and not from the Vedas. Man was not God but lived in God. Human souls were as eternal as God and matter. He rejected Darwin's theory of Man's evolution from lower species like an ape or monkey, and argued that as monkey's could never produce human beings, the theory of evolution suggested by Darwin was absured.

Dayananda stressed the necessity of human life properly regulated and disciplined. In his book ' Panch Maha Yajna Vidhi ' he has explained the necessity of performing five daily duties the right method of ensuring man's progress, to inspire and purify human souls and in order to inculcate the necessity of serving and doing good to others. The five duties consisted of promising the Lord to refrain from harming others; burning the odoriferous substances; sewing, giving food and respecting eleders, teachers and useful members of the society; parting with a part of the meal for the poor to bring rich near the poor; and lastly, welcoming the guests. In the 'Samskar Vidhi ' the book of Arya Samaj rituals the ceremonies have been mentioned as the scientific method of leading a man to perfection.

Apart from the five daily duties the sixteen samskaras are mentioned which furnish discipline for all men at different stages of life concerned with birth education and worldly life of man. Besides duties and samskaras prescribed for everyman, Dayananda also supported the four ashramas suggested by the Vedas, These determined the four stages the stage of education, the stage of married life of activity of procreation, the stage of worldly life (Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa). Dayanand-attached special importance to the first and the last. Brahmacharya constituted dedication to learning and abstention from all the sensuous appetites. Thus it could lead to the individual's mental and physical perfection to the preparation for leading a really happy life in the world. The last stage, this is sanyasa is specially mentioned because this stage could provide an opportunity to every member of the society to think and work for the good of all men, regardless of all considerations. The scheme of social organisations based on social perfection through caste system and individual perfection through ashrama system shows that Dayananda was not a humanist of the type who ignored individual considerations. It was not dogmatic but rational humanism based on realities of life and the possibilities for man.

Ashrama system suggested one of the two divisions of the Vedic religion, the other being the Varnashrama Dharma (Caste - system) Thus Dayananda tried to suggest concrete methods

for attaining perfection, and happiness in life. This also meant the repudiation of meaningless cermonies in the name of Hinduism. According to him the Vedic religion consisted, not so much of the desire to attain ' Moksha ' after death but perfection of life in this very world.

With the eternity of God and man, Swami Dayanand also considered matter as a reality. In spite of being a Sanyasin was not against a worldly life of enjoyment. He only condemened all kinds of artificality and hypocrisy in Hindu religion. By advocating the importance of life after this world, Brahmin priests presented a false picture of Hinduism and thereby harmed Hindu Society. By giving concrete examples, he tried to show that the Vedas were emphatic in asserting the importance of the worldly life. The Vedas considered man as a social animal. Man has relation not only with members of his family but also with others members of the society and with the whole human race. Importance is attached to the cultivation of virtues like love, kindness and sympathy in order to live a benevolent life. The Vedas prescribe duties for erveryman according to position and profession. As a realist, Dayanand laid special emphasis on the proper enjoyment of life and the satisfaction of desires.

Swami Dayanand was indiscriminate in condemning whatever false he found in Hinduism and other religions. The motive was to emphasis the truth and discovery of the common element in all

religions of the world. To call Dayanand as anti-Islam or anti-Chrisitanity etc., is not justified, because he has opposed to nothing except false hood, dogma and artificiality in the observance of religion, whichever it might be. Led by humanitarian considerations, in the introductions to the eleventh chapter of Satyarth Prakash Dayanand prayed sincerely to God to inspire the souls of men for evolving one great religion on the earth. Similarly in the forword to the fourteenth chapter of the Satyarth Prakash, he wrote, " The object aimed at by this criticism (of various religions) is to contribute to the elevation of the human race and to enable all men to sift truth from falschood.[12] In order to make his position very clear as regards his attitude towards different faiths, Dayanand said," Had I been biased I would have championed any one of the religions prevailing in India. But I have not done so. On the contrary, I do not approve of what is objectionable and false in the ins-titutions of this, or any other country, nor do I reject what is good and in harmony with the dictates of true religion, nor have I any desire to do so, since a contrary conduct is wholly unworthy of man." [13]

How strange it is that the sage who was so solicitous about peace and harmony, who was so tolerant and least dogmatic when speaking abent other religions, who generally recognised the element of good in all religions while fearlessly laying fare their errors, was denounced as the fomenter of dissension. In the

introduction to ' Satyarth Prakash ' he said, " Whatever has been written in this book in advocacy of true religion and in refutation of the false religions has been done with the sole object of the enlightenment of all ". We have thought it right to lay before the public what opinion we have formed of these four (Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam) great religions according to our understanding and knowledge after a through study of books on which they are based. " This statement is ample proof of the fact that Dayanand had love for all, irrespective of religious beliefs. The aim of religion must be the benefit of mankind, approval of what is good and acceptable. With free minds if men of different religions accept the universal truth and reject all that in which they differ, they can help to promote universal brother hood. Dayanand was himself absolutely free in his observation and declared, " We treat the foreigners in the same way as our own country men, as far as the elevation of the human race is concerned it behaves all men to act likewise." [14] During his life he established contact with leaders of various religions and tried to evolve a common apporach. But he could not succeed. He always expressed his desire that, " May God sow in our minds the seed of true religion that false religions may disappear and wise men may give up their hostilities and increase happiness.[15]

The greater part of Dayananda's life was spent in criticising the existing form of Hinduism the sects of Hinduism he considered, as the worst kind of distortion of the Vedic Monotheism, He was equal in criticism of Vaishnavism, Brahm Samaj, Prarthana Samaj and other medieval or Modern Hindu sects. He said that, " the development of sectarianism was the result of degeneration and corruption of the Vedic religion". As alien to the, ancient Indian religions, the ' Sanatana Dharma ' , sects bred discord, introduced meaningless rituals and cermonies just to serve the vested interests of the Brahmin priests. The most rational scheme of life as described in the Vedas was reduced into a few dogmas and superstitions. With a passion of a real humanist, Swami Dayanand risked his life in order to remove the evil of ignorance from over the minds of the Hindus. Whether it was his discussion with the Pandits of Banares or intellectual fight with priests of Hardwar, he did not fail to point out the foolishness of wasting money in building temples instead of feeding the poor and the needy. That is why he asked people to worship life instead of dead matter. In his own words, " It behovoes all to do away with all kinds of false and superstitions practices and do all in their power to promote, in return for their services the welfare of those pious, learned men, who are devoted to their country and are altrustic teachers of humanity, teaching and preaching to all without the least amount of hypocrisy." [16]

" I believe in a religion based on universal and all embracing principles which have always been accepted as true by mankind, and will continue to command the allegiance of mankind in the ages to come. Hence it is that the religion in question is called the primeval eternal religion, which means that it is above the hostilities of all human creeds what so ever."[17] By giving plea of the Vedas, he made a bold attempt to bring greater understanding among mankind about the reality of God and Soul, and lastly to institute rational approach in all human affairs. The language of the Vedas furnished a universal bond between different conflicting sectarian creeds and faiths. It is asserted that the Vedas are not the book of any particular sect or people but the sacred scriptures of the entire human race.

DAYANANDA AND HIS IDEAS ON CASTE SYSTEM :

Dayananda was the true representative of the ancient Indian sages. His mission was universal. He loved his fellowmen with all his heart. He wanted to make humanism the basis of social reconstruction. This could be possible only through the revival of the Vedic culture and civilisation . The system of the hereditary castes which forms the ugliest feature of the present Hindu society; and which is mainly responsible for the degradation of the Hindus, did not exist in the Vedic times. The Vedic classification of human society into four castes was different from the present caste structure in which besides four caste we have

endless sub-divisions in each principle caste. The splitting up of the society into numerous petty units, rendered all free intercourse impossible, and the various so-called Shastric restrictions laid upon each group engendered suspicion, hatred and even animosity.

Dayananda denounced castes based on the accident of birth and suggested reorganisation of the whole caste structure on the principles of merit, personal qualification, division of labour and Mutual cooperation. According to him, " the four castes were the strongest print of the Vedic sociology and made the Arya Society so strong in the past." It was replaced by the caste system based on birth, resulting in artificial distinction between different sections of the society. This led to the disintegration of the whole Hindu society. The Vedic classification of the society into four classes was aimed at the distribution of the duties, and rights in order to effect the adjustment between the individuals and the society.

According to Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, " all men were equal in the eyes of God and the conception of high and low castes was false." There are instances to show that he had genuine love for all men irrespective of castes. Once a follower of Swamiji noticed a low-caste man in Swamiji's audience and ordered him to leave the place. Swamiji did not like this attitude; and asked

the person to attend his lectures daily. Similarly, when Swamiji visited Anupshahar in Nov. 1870, a barber brought food for him. Some people near him objected to the offer but Swamiji replied that it was wheat bread and not barbers bread. He said, " He who believes that one's class is determined by the accident of his birth, not by own character, accomplishments and acquisitions, should be asked to how it is that he does not recognise a man as Brahmin even when he has left his class and become an outcaste; or has turned a Christiano or Mohammadan. The only answer he can give is that he has left off the performance of the duties required of a Brahmin and is there fore, no longer a Brahmin.[19] By such simple arguments he tried to convince ordinary people the real significanse of class division.

It is asserted that the four classes represent merely the four aspects of the society, for example, the Brahmins are like the mouth of the society, the Kshatriyas like the arms, the Vaishyas like the stomach, and the sudras like the feet of the society. Dayanand's thinking was so lofty that he could not think of any difference even between Hindus and Muslims. Once a Muslim priest came to meet him and stayed out side his room. Swamiji asked him to enter into the room because his entrance could not cause impurity to the objects of the room. He was of the view that mutual distrust was the worst evil among Hindus and Muslims of India.

From the interpretation of the Vedas, Sastras, Upanishadas, and Bhagvadgita given by Sawami Dayananda it appears that, " he was deadly against any differential or preferential treatment being given to any person due to his birth in high or low caste." For the present generation it is difficult to visualise the great gulf that existed between the caste Hindus and the Harijans during the period when Dayanand raised his voice to prove that there was no such thing as caste by birth. His interpretation of the last three Mantras of the Rigveda shows that he was against untouchability and denial to the Sudras right of free association with others of participating in social and religious ceremonies and of reading the sacred texts of Vedas.[22] In support of his views against untouchability and denial of equal rights to the Sudras. Dayananda gave references from the Yajurveda (the sixth Mantra of the 40th Chap) and the Atharvaveda (kanda 19, sukta 15, Mantra 6). He established that from the Vedic times down to the advent of the Muslim invasion there was no such class of people as Bhangis for removing the night-soil. Thus he made it clear that the disorganised Hindu society could not be made to work out the high ideals in social, religious, and political life unless the untouchability based on birth was not removed, unless Sudras were not given full rights of social equality. Inspired by the teachings of Swami Dayanand, his disciple Swami Shradhanand and others organised the 'Dalitodhar'

(uplift of the depressed classes) and ' Achhut-shudhi ' (reform of the untouchables) movements. The ground prepared by Swamiji and his disciples became the foundation of Gandhiji's movement for the uplift of the Harijanas, and besides many other social reform movements. Perhaps this provided a foundation for the various other social reform movements in Southern India.

Like his tirades against untouchability, it is well known that, " Swami Dayanand was very much against discriminatory treatment of women in Hindu society. He condemened the evils like purda, child-marriage, and illiteracy among women. Due to these evils women could not participate as equal partners with men in their social life." Swamiji advocated the complete emancipation of women through education. The net-work of girl's schools throughout the country organised by the Arya Samaj was an important and forceful step in that direction. Dayanand also opposed child marriages and wanted the marriage age of girls to be fixed at sixteen. The efforts of Swamiji and other social reformers later on resulted in the Sharda Act regarding fixation of Marriage age of boys and girls. In order to save the position of women, Dayanand also advocated intercaste marriages. Men and Women are two aspect of a society and no society can advance with its one aspect ignored and neglected. Dayanand realised this and continued his efforts for bringing women out into the wider life of the society. For these reasons he may be considered

among those humanists who take birth after centuries to arrest the downward course of human history and to uplift fallen humanity. He emphasised that Indian society could not become happy unless all its sections were uplifted.

While laying down principles for social reconstructions Dayanand also expressed his views on ideal government. He said, " Let all men elect most learned men as member of the Educational Assembly, all men of most praiseworthy as members of the legislative assembly; and let that great (Man) among them, who possesses most excellent qualities, is highly accomplished and bears most honourable character be made the Head of the President of the Political Assembly."[23] Although his field of work was religion and social reform, he rightly thought that so long as the masses of India were ignorant, were slave of dogmas, and were suffering under the imperialism of the Brahmin Priests, they could not have political freedom. In his political philosophy the principles enunciated have universal application. In ' Satyarth Prakash ', chapter which deals with the science of government presents an ideal mode of political administration which may nation can adopt. In the whole chapter there is no mention of India or Indians even once. This shows that Dayanand had a comprehensive humanitarian approach even though he was a great patriot and Hindu, he had the universe before his eyes.

To the political leaders of his time, he said that unless India was morally elevated, socially conscious and politically awakened the cry of ' Swaraj ' was of no significance. That is why his advice was to ~~included~~ inculcate love of India rather than hatred of the foreigner. He always reminded the Indians of their ancient tradition of love and universal brotherhood. Social order based on the principles of the Vedic religion could itself lead to the emeancipation of India and the world, to the restoration of human rights of freedom, equality and justice. " In Dayananda's Golden age, children born psychologically and physically mated couples consciously called into life, well educated by spirtually advanced and experienced men, shall enter the world detenrmined to enjoy a vigourous and happy life, retire from it to preserve the accumulated treasure of divine wisdom and finally help to keep the verious nationalities cemented together by strong ties of cooperation in the service of the Lord and His children. Then shall the world enjoy profound peace.[24]

Exactly eight and half years before his death, on April 7th, 1875. Dayanand founded the Vedic church known as the Arya Samaj. It was to be a society of persons who wanted to be good and to make others good. The Swami knew that inspite of his efforts the movement for the revival of the ancient Indian

religions and cultural values could not succeed fully. The Arya Samaj was founded to keep the movement alive. In establishing the Arya Samaj Dayanand's ambition was to unite the nations of the earth in one universal fold of common humanity. For this unhappy land he said, " That peace and love might reign in this blessed of our birth is my earnest prayer." [25]

The Arya Samaj began as a universal church, pleadged revolutionary religious and social reforms, propagation of lofty Vedic ideals in regard to individual and social conduct, and lastly collective activity for the good of the human race.. The leaders of the Samaj have all along tried to keep up to the ideals of its founder. It is not a communalistic church, although from the cultural point of view it is the same as the Hinduism. The difference is only of the attitude. Dayanand's aim was to purge Hinduism of foreign and diseased matter and make it a cosmopolitan religion. He thought that if Hinduism be so purified as to be identical with original Vedism, it would be the fittest religion for the whole world, and all the nations of the world would adopt it.

The Arya Samaj was accused and is still accused of being an anti-Isalm and anti-Christian Movement. The suspicions arise because of its purely Vedic leanings. As a matter of fact the Arya Samaj believes in the universal character of the Vedic church and

that there is no reference to any particular community or religion in the Vedas and thus the charges and suspicions are false. The mission of the Samaj is to a preach the Vedic Dharma, not only as a creed, but as a complete system of a thought, a complete code for the guidance of humanity in all departments of human activity, a polity as well as a science of living. It preaches way of looking at things and a definite point of view. The criticism against the Samaj is based on misunderstanding and misiiterpretation of its mission. The members of the Samaj themselves have always denounced the accusation of being sectarian; " we emphatically protest against the statement that the Arya Samaj is in any sense, a Hindu movement. Its creed is universal and its teachings are for all mankind."[26]

In the words of Prof. Gokulchand, " Swami Dayanand was a believer in the Vedic religion which stands distingwished from other religions in one most important point, viz. that it is a system of training rather than a creed or faith as other religions are.[27]

Arya Samaj took upon itself the task, of uprooting social evils like illiteracy, child-marriage, impurity, polygamy and a host of others from the Indian society. By opening a network of schools and colleges through out the country and by a regular system of religious preachings the Samaj has done a unique service

to the Indian nation besides the Hindu community. Inspired by the spirit of nationalism and democracy the Samaj tried to unite the Hindus. It proclaimed the principle of equality regardless of caste, creed, community, race or sex. It represented a form of national awakening of the Indian people. Its positive contribution is the advocacy of unadulterated truth, its negative contribution is denouncing of all that is false.

It will not be an exaggeration to say that Dayanand was the greatest religious teacher that India produced samkara. As his biographer Tarachand has said, " He had a massage to deliver to mammessage for making man happier better and nobler."[28] He has been interpreted in different ways by different men. To some he was a social reformer, to others the revivalist of Brahmacharya while others call him an educationalist and a patriot. Above all these things, he was the saviour of mankind; prophet of peace and the teacher of humanity. As a true sanyasin, he loved all men regardless of religion, caste or sex. He thought that the only way to work for the good of mankind was to preach the truth, and towards this direction he moved fearlessly. In the introduction to the second edition of Satyarth Prakash, Dayanand said that, in unfolding truth his main aim was to promote welfare of the whole human soul, possesses the capicity for ascertaining truth, yet self-interest wrong headedness and ignorance lead to its denunciation. The aim must be not to hurt any body, to help men

in knowing the truth. This, in Dayanand's opinion, was the only way to elevate the human race.

Even a casual reader of Satyarth Prakash will be struck by the fequent use by Dayanand of expressions such as ' Manushya Matra ' (Mankind) and ' Manushya Jati (Human race) with his life-long efforts to look tow-ards every creature as a friend he could not but work for the benefit of all men. Although his field of activity remained limited to India, he made it clear to the Western world that India was the centre of the hopes of humanity.

It was the ardent desire of Swami Dayanand that the Vedic relinion should spread far and wide to give peace to the troubled humanity. By preaching ritht conduct of life as prescribed by the Vedas, he tried to create harmony and love among people of nations hostile to each other. He wanted to lead every man on the right path.

Modern civilisation has completely failed in making man happy. There is a constant war going on between the rich and the poor, between the strong and the weak. The growing influence of science and technology has brought tremendous boredom in man's life it has enslaved humanity.. This mechanical process into which

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man has reduced himself must give some relief to those who seek it. According to Dayanand, the regulated system of life based on the principle of ashramas only could improve human conditions. Being firm in his convictions, he did not mince words while denouncing what he considered to be falsehood. Still he was the greatest advocate of tolerance and forgiveness. Once a man tried to poison him, he was caught red-handed. But Dayanand said, " It is contrary to my mission to have people deprived of their freedom." Thus he saved the man from the police custody.

Swami Dayanand was not in favour of ' Moksha ' or ' Emancipation' for individuals but for the whole mankind. His desire was that every man shall work for the uplift of mankind. He was much concerned with the poverty of the people in India. On many occasions he wept for the poor, on hearing of their plight. The root cause of all the various problems, he thought, was mutual hatred jealousy and differences in the name of religion caste and sex. According to Dayananda, " Mutual dissensions among the learned have been the cause of mutual hatred, discord and strife among the masses. If all these men were not immersed in selfishness and were wishful to further the interests of all, it is very likely that all mankind may have one common religion ." Mankind under the influence of ignorance always ignored the teachings of sages and saints who instead of getting any gratitude,

received condemnation and accusations. The passion of doing good to others and the mission of revealing truth to the ignorant was so dominant a factor in his life that he sacrificed everything for it. It was for speaking the truth that like Socrates, he suffered death by being poisoned.[29]

In the words of Tarachand : " In Rishi Dayanand died the prophet of peace, the saviour of mankind, the very heart of the land that is the centre of human hopes, aye the advocate of rightful religion, the supporter of the weak, the helper of the cow, the friend of the orphan, and the sympathiser of the widow."

A study of Dayananda's Life and work bring out three important features.

1) He passionately loved truth and condemned untruth.
2) He dedicated his life to the service of mankind and;
3) He loved all mankind and wanted to save all men, irrespective of religion and nationality, from degradation and falsehood.

In Dayanand humanity saw a superman who knew the truth and stood with a heart full of pity and compassion for the uplift of all men. For this reason he is rightly compared with Jesus and Buddha. Like them he gave up his life at the alter of the service of humanity. Like them he was an incarnation of mercy and

forgiveness and propagated the ideal of brother hood. As Har Bilas Sarda has said, " Time will show that he was one of the greatest benefactors of humanity - True Redeemer and Deliverer, the Regenerator of mankind.[30] He did lay down a solution, a path for the future of India. In this direction his contribution a great social reformer has been a neglected aspect. Much can be further compared and understood by assessing the various other social reformers who have followed not a very different path; which had been laid down by Swami Dayananda Sarasvati.

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: NOTES AND REFERENCES :

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29) : It is reported that the Swami rebuked his disciple king of Jodhapur for his association with a prostitute who in revenge administered poison to the Swami through his cook. He died on Oct. 30th, 1883.

30) Dayanand Commemoration Volume : Introduction p. 13. 1933.

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