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SWAMI DAYANAND'S ROLE IN INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

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Swami Dayanand's Role in Indian Freedom Struggle

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Abstract – It was Swami Dayanand who with his military approach made Indian realize that they were heir of a splendid heritage. It was he who made them realize that they must be adhere to their own religion, must be proud of their own culture and must cultivate their own language. This burning patriotism of Swami Dayanand made Indian Nationalism more broad based and brought it nearer to common masses of India. Dayanand Saraswati was a personality of the highest order. He was that rare combination, a thinker of action with a genius of leadership. His aim was to rally India against the encroaching in roads of Christianity and Islam and to obtain defense for her own traditional line of thought as inspired by Vedas. During his times Dayanand Saraswati was confronted by variety of faiths which were destroying the national glory. The Christianity, the Islam and even the Hinduism presented many hurdles on his way to nationalism. With his two watch words 'Back to Vedas' and "India for the Indians" Swami Dayanand desired that religion as well as the sovereignty of India ought to belong to Indians. He was the great saint who wanted to bring reform. In his opinion strong, honest and truthful men of high character could not remain political slaves for a long lime. He loved Indians and India and perhaps the secret cause of his birth was to serve this holy motherland India upto his last breath.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) was one of the great leaders of Indian renaissance. He was not only a reformer who initiated a powerful movement to regenerate India's society and religion but also a progressive thinker. "Man is a creature of circumstances", says Robert Owen, but great men by dint of hard work and determination can exploit circumstances to achieve their objects. Swami Dayanand was one such great man.

Dayanand was born in 1824 in a small town called Morbi in the princely state of Kathiawarh in modern day Gujrat. His father Karshanji Lalji Tiwari was a wealthy Brahmin and a devotee of Lord Shiva. Dayanand was his eldest son. Dayanand's parents had named him Moolshankar. Karshanji was a man of influence and prestige and held the position of revenue collector. Swami's mother name is Yashodabai, who was a very polite and religious lady. His father was stern, unbending and orthodox and wanted his son to emulate him. But Dayanand did not inherit these qualities of his father. Dayanand was being educated on the conventional pattern and was not permitted to mix freely with children of his age, outward influences left hardly any impact on his personality.

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POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF INDIA IN SWAMI DAYANAND'S TIME

India of Swami Dayanand's time was under British Rule, having no self-governing institutions. Democracy was not known in India at that time. Spirit of nationalism was also not developed properly in India. Religion and culture was being destroyed by British rulers and their educational policy was aimed at this. India was left much behind in the field of scientific knowledge and economic and industrial development in comparison to the west.

Some reform movements like Brahmo Samaj and Prarthana Samaj were begun in the first half of nineteenth century in India. Self-governing institutions like village Panchayats had been destroyed by the

Britishers. Britishers did not admit any Indian to the higher hierarchy of the government. It was highly painful for Swami Dayanand to observe India being demolished and degenerated both politically and culturally. He holds the view that crisis of character in the Indian society was the root cause of its generation. So Dayanand proposed its cure. For this, he drew inspiration from the Vedas and suggested remedies in accordance with the teachings of ancient Indian scriptures.

SWAMI DAYANAND AND SWARAJYA

During those days when colonialism was all pervasive and the western people were moving ahead with mission to civilise the backward Asian and African people, Swamiji desired for complete

independence in all aspects especially political and cultural. He told the people that it was India that ruled all over the world in the remote past. Dayanand taught the importance of Swarajya to our decadent and prostrate people. Dayanand Saraswati in Yajurvedabhashya says, "Constant efforts should be made by the people for their freedom by the people for their freedom by untying the bonds of slavery."

Dayanand Saraswati in Rigvedabhashya says, "All should know that only that state flourishes in which the elite, lowliest, the righteous, the educated all the lovers of self-government of their own state (Swarajyapriyah); are destroyers of the enemies and are faithful to their masters." Swami Dayanand puts forth the idea of Swarajya in the sense of having an independent sovereign state. Swami Dayanand ji not only aspired for Swarajya but he also gave much needed shake to the political awakening of the people of that century. He was the first to have the vision of India's own sovereign sway over the country and whose boundaries extended from Himalayas in the north to the Rameshwaram in the south.

Many associations were formed in the country in the middle of nineteenth century who express their dissatisfaction with the British rule.

SWAMI DAYANAND AND THE UPRISING OF 1857

The Mutiny of 1857, the first war of independence which was a serious effort to overthrow the British rule. Swami Dayanand was considered as the first visionary to have the vision of united India which he called 'Aryavarta'. This 'Aryavarta' was colonized by the Devas or Aryas i.e. the cultured people and was called 'Aryavarta' because of Aryas or the cultured people that dwelt therein.

Swami Dayanand's period between 1857 and 1860 is considered by ascribing him an active part, though not a leading part in: "The Mutiny" Shri Ram Sharma.

An intelligent and patriotic man like Dayanand could not remain inactive in time of such a serious national crisis. The inspiring names and deeds of Rani of Jhansi, Tantia Tope, Nana Sahib, Bala Rao are known to all during this war of independence. But lesser known is the Guru of Swami Dayanand, Swami Virajanand, who played a key role in this uprising as an inspirer. Swami Virajanand was regarded as a source of guidance and inspiration by the heroes of 1857 revolt by Nana Sahib and the son of Bahadur Shah Jafar. Swami Virajanand said that Independence is heaven and slavery is hell. Self-government of the country is thousand times better than the government by the people of other country. During the uprising of 1857, the princes of Rajputana remained neutral and did not realize that it was the time for regaining their sovereign status that might be the reason that Swami Dayanand's attention was drawn towards them and he made Rajputana as the centre of his activities.

SWAMI DAYANAND AND SWADESHI

Swami Dayanand was the first protagonist of the cause of Swadeshi. Indian National Congress formally passed a resolution in the year 1908 for boycotting British goods and using Indian articles only. Dayanand had raised his voice in favour of Swadeshi. He was not happy in seeing the people of India in using articles of Foreign manufactures and wearing European dresses. He wanted to strengthen the economy of the country by advocating the cause of Swadeshi goods. According to Swami Dayanand, the term Swadeshi had a wider significance. It not only implied the use of Indian made articles but also the use of one Indian Language, Arya Bhasha (Hindi) by all the countrymen.

SWAMI DAYANAND AND THE ARYA SAMAJ

Swami Dayanand was not satisfied merely with placing his vision of Hinduism before the people of India; he wanted that the vision should assume a practical form. So he established a very dynamic organization known as the Arya Samaj. The Arya Samaj began its work with great enthusiasm when there is famine, an earthquake or any other calamity, the Arya Samaj sends its workers to render every help to the suffering people. Before Mahatma Gandhi took up the cause of the untouchables, the Arya Samaj was the only body which was trying to reclaim them and get them recognized as equal members of Hindu society. The removal of untouchability is a most important plank of the program of the Arya Samaj.

So, Dayanand Saraswati will be remembered for his signal services to the cause of regeneration of Hindu Society and for inspiring the Indian people to make themselves worthy of their ancient glory and to strive to occupy their rightful place in the comity of Nations, Swami's tireless efforts proved that Indian nationalism was to be no beggar at anybody's door. Indian has her own priceless heritage to offer to anybody who has anything to contribute to her regeneration thus Swami Dayanand's views gave a new shape and creed to Indian Nationalism. Among the religious leaders and social reformers of modern India, Dayanand occupies an exalted place and will go down in history as the greatest patriot of the nineteenth century.

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