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REVIEW ARTICLE

SWAMI DAYANANDA: A GREAT PREACHER

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Swami Dayananda: A Great Preacher

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Swami Dayananda was the founder of Arya Samaj. He was a great preacher of Vedic literature, a dynamic social reformer and a profound philosopher. He sacrificed the luxuries and comforts of life for the emancipation of society. He envisioned a society based on equity and mutual respect.

Swami Dayanand, founder of the Arya Samaj, was one of the few great men of the world who sacrificed everything for emancipation for mankind. He was a great scholar, a Yogi, a social reformer, a philosopher and a political thinker.

Born in affluence and luxury, he left the house when forced by his parents to get married and wandered in the Himalayas in pursuit of knowledge and truth. Facing hardships and difficulties, resisting all temptations, he studied the ancient scriptures, particularly the Vedas which he regarded as a source of Divine Knowledge and engage himself in the Herculean task of spreading that knowledge,

He said in his later phase of his life, "It is the object of this society to do good to the entire world i.e. physical, spiritual and social development." Therefore he did not confine his ideas only to the spiritual freedom but also to the social and economic freedom as well. In the present global political and economic scenario his thoughts need a relook from the universal point of view in the world of missiles on one hand and the starving third world countries on the other.

Swamiji, a Messenger of Universal Peace and Harmony: Swami Dayananda was a universal messenger, he had a message for the world. And what was that message? According to an eminent thinker, this was not the outcome of his brain; this was not the ingenuity of his brilliance; this was not the promptings of jealousy of a mere verbal jargon but a divine message; it is a divine revelation of the Vedas.

Eternal Religion: Swami wanted to propagate the religion of the Vedas. And what is that religion? He said, "I believe in a religion based on universal and all-embracing principal who have always been accepted as true by mankind, and will continue to command the allegiance of mankind in the ages to come. My religion is the primeval eternal religion, which means that it is

above the hostility of all human creeds whatsoever. Whatever is born of ignorance or based on sectarianism is not worthy of being accepted by the wise. That faith alone is really true and worthy of acceptance which followed by the Apatas i.e. who are true words, true deeds and thoughts, promote public good and are impartial and learned; but all this is discarded by such men must be considered as unworthy of belief and false"(A Statement of My Beliefs by Dayananda).

Universal Harmony: He practised and preached broad principles. He cherished love for entire human race, never hated man, he loved Hindus, Muslims, Christians and all. His heart wept on seeing the people still groping in dark. He criticised his contemporary religious leaders who have become the major centres of attraction for the vast multitudes but have selfish motives. He said, "But I detest the religious warfare of sects; for they give vent to their angry passions and crude notions in the form of religion. Therefore, the purpose of my life is the extirpation of evils; introduction of truth in thought, speech and deeds; the preservation of unity of religion. The expulsion of mutual enmity; the extension of friendly intercourse and the advancement of public happiness by reciprocal subservience of the human family."

He acquired a universal image when he got several requests even from the western scholars to deliver lectures on divinity. Therefore Swami called on Col. Olcott, the founder of the Theosophical Society and the only interest in this alliance was that a nucleus for the propagation of Vedic faith may be formed in the west also. But his dreams could not finalise because of his cut short life. But an eminent scholar Pt. Shyamji Krishan Varma was picked up by Swamiji who later became a professor of Sanskrit at Oxford. But he could not conform to the Swami's ideas to propagate the Vedic philosophy. But Swamiji wrote to him, "It is very strange that so many years have elapsed and you have acquired no fame in that country." But Pt. Varma has joined some political activities consuming biggest chunk of his time. Therefore Swamiji's dreams to propagate Vedic

message from the English land could not materialize much.

Basic Tenets: On Indian soils his teachings and preaching still command our thoughts in religion and philosophy in the search for humanity and universal brotherhood. He emerged as a world teacher in such respects. His teachings were not intended for any particular community or country. He envisaged the world as a whole and all the communities of the world as an equal offspring of one universal soul. He during his long and incessant research for the truth and humanity taught the universal principles which are summed up by various scholars as below.

1. The God is called the *Brahama*, the most high, who permeates the whole universe; he is truth, intelligent and happiness; whose nature attributes and doings are holy; who is omniscient, incorporeal; all pervading; unborn; infinite, almighty, just and merciful and lord of the creation.
2. The four Vedas, the repository of the knowledge and religious truth are the word of God. They comprise what is known was Samhita Mantra Bhag only. The commentaries on the four Vedas are following in the conformity of the Vedas only.
3. That which is devoid of partially which includes justice and equity which teaches truthfulness of thought, speech and deed and in conformity with god's will, I call it dharma. But where one finds injustice, teaches untruthfulness of thought, speech and deed of which is agnostic to the will of god, I call it Adharma.
4. God requires no intermediaries to deal with men. In the beginning, the world he gave them the Vedas for their guidance in life. He has no need to send and never sent any prophets to propagate to carry on his message. Men must suffer the consequences of their acts.
5. He thought that no one is bestowed Mukti or freedom from transmigration but everyone either man or woman has to achieve it himself. No avtara, father, mother, son of god or acharya can give it.
6. Accept the truth whatever found and reject the untruth. An Arya should always be ready to accept truth and to renounce untruth.
7. Everyman should even keep before him, whatever he does and wherever he lives, the good of mankind as a whole.

Though all such principles of the Arya Samaj must be taken his principle teachings and which according to him should guide mankind in his life have universal application. The universal character of his teachings is

also proved by the fact that being an Indian, he has not declared any part of India as holy land but considers all the world a land inhabited by the almighty.

Righteousness is the Essence: He said that a man who is righteous in his conduct and speech and thoughts is certain to get salvation not only from the transmigration but from the vices like hatred and violence which have infested our minds since the dawn of civilisation. His *Swamatvyamantavya* (beliefs and disbeliefs) are the basis of his guidance. His beliefs are free from personal, communal or national envies. These are applicable to the mankind as a whole. He said that marriage, food and dress have nothing to do with religion and are only regulated by the customs of a country.

He said that all men are entitled to know and practice the truth when they find it and nobody has the right to prevent anyone from seeking and accepting the truth and light. He advocated not only the reconversion of Hindus converted to other religions but to bring them to the Vedic faith. Therefore his teachings are acclaimed throughout the world which are above communal or sectarian voices. These are good for all the men having the ideas universal acceptability either in past, present or future. They inculcate no new religion of faith nor are they in anyway elective in character. They embody truth which was taught by god at the time of Creation. His teachings when viewed dispassionately, would be found universally applicable, where minds are free from prejudice, prepossession and partiality.

Peace, a Development Ingredient: The present world scenario is pining for peace but every effort in this direction has not been achieved with much positive results. They have become materialistic which cannot bring mental peace at all but only physical *bhogas*. To him, internal and external peace is obtained not from outer sources but eternal bliss. And there is no other way to acquire internal peace but to look to east. In the words of a scholar, "...east is poor; east is ugly; east is black and the worst thing that east is still under the domination of the western influence either material or technical. We look to the outward descent appearance, but not to the black heart within. But east is still standing tall spiritually.

The Patriot Within: He added the view that India had lost her freedom, because her people had lost their character. His remedy, therefore, was to raise the character of the people by bringing them to the Vedic culture. Later Gandhiji echoed the same thought when he said that the movement for the *Swaraj* has movement for self-participation. Being precursor of Gandhi in all his freedom programmes i.e. moral regeneration of the nation, unity of the people, emancipation of women, upliftment of the downtrodden, khadi and cottage industries, Hindi as our lingua franca, cow protection and new orientation, to our education. Gandhiji reaped what Dayananda

has sown in the 19th century. Pittabhai Sitarammaya, a former president of the Indian Nation Congress once said, "Gandhi is the father of nation, and Dayananda is the grandfather of the nation." He was a saint cum patriot. He said, " Even the best foreign would be but a poor substitute for our own worst govt. No nation could built its own edifice on foreign foundations." Swamiji in his commentary on the Rigveda prays to god to get self-rule and enjoy *Swaraj*. On *Yajurveda* commentary he says, "foreign rulers should not stay in our country. We should never be slaves." Once in a conversation with the Viceroy Lord Northbrook (as the tradition says) he replied, "I cannot include any such prayer for the perpetuation of the British in India. It is my firm conviction that India should attain complete independence. That is my prayer, morning and evening. I pray to god to liberate my country from the foreign yoke. Such was his feeling of deep patriotism and he never withheld his liberal thoughts whenever he found the opportunity.

His Tenets in the Contemporary Scenario: Very soon after the World War II, the western countries began showing signs of fatigue and mutual cool hatred and it will be soon tired of materialistic outlook as it has failed to bring a word of happiness in them. It has already grown sick and when such tendencies are swept away, spiritualism will hold its hold over the whole world. Recent economic meltdown has stunned the whole world with its ugly face and the people had to suffer a lot. We observe and are forced by the eternal instinct to look to the great sages like Dayananda to seek salvation from modern temptations. He once said, "The sole aim of my life, which I have also endeavoured to achieve, is to help, to put an end to this mutual wrangling, preach universal truths, bring all the men into the fold of one religion whereby they may cease to hate each other instead, may firmly love one another, live in peace and work for their common weal. May this doctrine, through the grace help of god, and with the support of the truthful, honest and learned. Who are devoted to the cause of humanity, reach every nook and corner of this earth so that all may acquire righteousness, wealth, gratify legitimate desires and attain salvation and thereby elevate themselves and live in happiness. This alone is the chief object of my life." Thus the day is not far when the whole world will rise above communal, sectarian and hemispherical bounds and say this Vedic hymn:

"Peace to all heavenly bodies;

Peace to space and water:

Peace to earth; Peace to air.

Peace to animals and plants.

Peace to all that is around me.

And may this peace be ours also."

But the central idea of this hymn is not an easy achievement if seen in contemporary scenario. But the human mind has ever thought to have a sigh of relief to the effect that such internal bickering may come to an end and the learned may so spread the doctrines *all* over the world to facilitate everybody's endeavour in the advancement of virtue, wealth, godly pleasures and salvation so that peace, prosperity and happiness may ever reign in the world.

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