



EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF MAHARISHI DAYANAND SARSWATI

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Abstract

Maharishi Dayanand was a great philosopher, educationist and a social reformer. He was a great soldier of light, a warrior in God's world, a sculptor of men and institution. Dayanand Saraswati's greatest contribution was the foundation of Arya Samaj which brought a revolution in the field of education and religion. Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati is known as a most important reformer and spiritual personality of India. The philosophy of Dayananda Saraswati can be know from his three famous books "Satyarth Prakash", "Veda Bhashya Bhumika" and Veda Bhashya. Maharishi Dayanand is the great founder of Arya Samaj, occupies a unique position in the history of education system of modern India. When the educated young men of India were slavishly copying the superficial aspects of European civilization and were making agitation for transplanting the educational thought of England in India without paying any head to the genius and culture of the Indian people, Maharishi Dayanand boldly opposed, India's defiance against the social, cultural and educational domination of the west. He was against some social evils like idol worship, caste system, ritualism, fatalism, infanticide, sale of grooms etc. He also stood for the liberation of women and upliftment of depressed class. Keeping in mind the supremacy of Vedas and Hindus, he opposed Islam and Christianity and advocated for Suddhi movement to reconvert the other sects to Hindu order.

INTRODUCTION:

Maharshi Dayanand was a great educationist, social reformer and also a cultural nationalist. His greatest contribution was the foundation of Arya Samaj which brought a revolution in the field of education and religion. He has known as one of the most important reformer and spiritual force in India. The dominant personality of Dayanand Saraswati had found extraordinary reflection in the Arya Samaj movement and in almost every one of its adherents. The contribution of Arya Samaj in the field of education is commendable. According to Dr. S. Radhakrishna, "Among the makers of modern India who had played an important role in the spiritual uplift of people and kindled the fire of patriotism, in me, among them Maharishi Dayanand has occupied the chief place."

LIFE SKETCH:

Dayanand was born in an orthodox Brahman family at Tankara in the Morvi state in Kathiawar in 1824. The name of his father was Karsamji Tiwari who served as a priest in a Shiva temple. The childhood name of Dayananda was Mulasankar. Under the loving care of his father Dayanand had acquired proficiency in Veda, Sanskrit grammar and Sanskrit language from childhood. Mulshankar life was also like other children but after a incident of his life changed life style. When he was fourteen years old he kept fast on the Shivaratri day with the other members of the family. At night other members of the family after worshipping Shiva began to sleep but Mulaji remained vigilant. He saw a rat eating the offering made to Shiva by the Devotees. This incident led him to think that the idol of Shiva could not be real God. When the idol could not protect the offering made to it, it could never protect the whole world. He became convinced about the futility of idol worship. This experience aroused his conscience and Mulshankar became a staunch crusader against the vices of Hinduism. His father tried to involve him in family life

through marriage with a view to put restriction on his independent mind. But now he was not willing to enter into the bondage of family life. In 1861, he came at Mathura in contact with Swami Brijananda. This contact is decisive point in his career. He became Swami Brijananda disciple and studied the ancient religious literature, various mythological books and Sanskrit grammar text. His philosophical foundation took concrete shape at Mathura. He got knowledge and realization. Now Mulasankara became Dayanand Saraswati and by the instruction of his guru dedicated himself to spread the message of Veda and to fight against the conservative Hindu religion and wrong traditions.

Maharishi Dayanand though had contact with Brahma Samaj; they were not prepared to accept the supremacy of the Vedas and transmigration of soul. To fulfil the mission of his life, he founded Arya Samaj at Bombay on 10th April, 1875 and passed the rest of his life in establishing Arya Samaj branches at different places. His reformative zeal irritated the orthodox Hindus. He stood firm and resolute in the face of criticisms. He died of food poisoning on 30th October, 1883.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY:

The philosophy of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati can be known from his three famous contributions namely "Satyarth Prakash", "Veda Bhashya Bhumika" and "Veda Bhashya". Further the journal "Arya Patrika" edited by him also reflects his thought. He has devoted two chapters (2nd and 3rd) of the "Satyarth Prakash" to the subject of education for the infants as well as the adolescents. Besides establishing his reputation as a prolific writer, above works indicate his role as an educational and religious reformer. Swami Dayanand Saraswati also criticizes the present education system. He said this system failed to deliver. It is not producing good student. An educated person was supposed to be modest and bear good character. He was required to have control over speech and mind, be energetic, respectful to parents, teachers, Elders and guest, to follow the Nobel path and to shun evil ways, to enjoy the company of the learned people and to liberal in making gifts. He wrote booklet called as "Vyavharbhanu". In this book he delineated the qualities of a pandit learned person who was entitled to teach and contrasted them with the character of a fool who should not to be entrusted with the education of the children. Swami Dayanand is not composed of a superficial knowledge of three or four subjects as unfortunately it happens to be the case at present, but it covers a wide range of subjects beginning with grammar, literature, the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharat and Ayurveda, the Science of health; Dhanurveda, the Science of war; Gandharvaveda, Aesthetic arts; Arthaveda, Vocational training, Astronomy, Algebra, Arithmetic, Geology, Space science etc. His was certainly a scheme of broad-based foundational education. As for the medium of education, both of this personality have different idea Dayanand, chose to write his works in the lingua franca of India, which he termed as the Aryabhasha, so that his message could reach the masses. Language, apparently, to him was the medium, the vehicle of communication of knowledge and principles of healthy and Dharmic. Same time he also advocacy of Sanskrit but did not supported the English while Swamiji is put great emphasis on mother tongue is the right medium for social or mass education; he prescribes the learning of English and Sanskrit also. While English is necessary for mastering Western science and technology, Sanskrit leads one into the depths of our vast store of classics. The implication is that if language does not remain the privilege of a small class of people, social unity will March forward unhampered.

To him Veda is rock-bed of Hindu culture and infallible, being the inspired one of God. He tried to purge Hinduism from its vices and to provide it a rational basis. He gave the clarion call "Goods Back to Vedas". As a social reformer Dayananda was not influenced by western culture but was a true symbol of Hinduism. His approach was reformative to strengthen the fighting spirit of Hinduism. The gurukulas, Girl's Gurukulas and DAV colleges were the most significant contribution of him. In fact his efforts to freed the people from the clutches of western education. For this purpose Arya Samaj established so many educational institutions in all over India.

The establishment of educational institutions, particularly in the northern and eastern parts of India, and the formation of the Gurukula Academy at Hardwar exemplify the very rightful eagerness of many members of Arya Samaj to revive the ancient ideal and traditions of Hindu education. The members of Arya Samaj

movement are also in the forefront of other Maharishi Dayanand the great founder of Arya Samaj, occupies a unique position in the history of modern India. When the educated young men of India were slavishly copying the superficial aspects of European civilization and were making agitation for transplanting educational institutions of England in Indian soil without paying any head to the genius and culture of the Indian people, swami Dayanand boldly hurled India's defiance against the social, cultural and political domination of the west. Swami Dayanand, the greatest apostle of the indo-Aryan culture and civilization also proved to be greatest exponent of the most advanced ideas in politics in India. He succeeded in carrying his ideas of liberalism and nationalism to the very heart of rural India and to the masses tied down to age long ignorance and superstition. Like a skilled physician he diagnosed correctly the maladies from which India was suffering and prescribed remedies, which being properly administered, would make her strong, vigorous and self confident again.

Swami Dayanand educational philosophy, we can say that his scheme of education brings to light its constructive, comprehensive character. He realizes that it is only through education that the upliftment of masses and regeneration of society was possible. The sense of dignity rises in man when he becomes conscious of his inner spirit, and that is the very purpose of education. He tried to harmonize the traditional values of India with the new values brought through the progress of science and technology. It is in the transformation of man through moral and spiritual education that he finds the solution for all social evils. Founding education on the firm ground of our own philosophy and culture, he shows the best of remedies for today's social and global illness. Through his scheme of education, he tries to materialize the moral and spiritual welfare and upliftment of humanity, irrespective of caste, creed, nationality or time.

SOCIAL IDEAS:

He was against idol worship, caste system, ritualism, fatalism, infanticide, sale of grooms etc. he also stood for the liberation of women and upliftment of depressed class. Keeping in mind the supremacy of Vedas and Hindus, he opposed Islam and Christianity and advocated for Suddhi movement to reconvert the other sects to Hindu order. Swami Dayanand Saraswati sincerely believed that through the spread of Vedic education the urge of regeneration of Indian society could be met.

The gurukulas, Girl's Gurukulas and DAV colleges were the most significant contribution of Dayananda. In fact the efforts of Swami Dayanananda freed the people from the clutches of western education. Dayananda Saraswati also contributed to the growth of democracy and national awakening. It is said that "political independence was one of the first objectives of Dayanand. Indeed he was the first man to use the term Swaraj. "

He was the first to insist on people to use only swadeshi things manufactured in India and to discard the foreign things. He was the first to recognize Hindi as national language of India." Dayanand Saraswati was the strong votary of democracy and self government. He declared that good Government was no substitute for self-government.

He paid utmost attention to the regeneration of rural India. In many ways Dayanand anticipated Mahatma Gandhi in his constructive programme. His Arya Samaj was constituted through the procedure of democratic election from the below to bottom. Swami Dayanand represented a transitional stage and inaugurated future developments with his vision of a complete overhaul of Hindu Society through education.

Dayanand founded the first Arya Samaj at Bombay in 1875 and another at Lahore in 1877. The Arya Samaj was the institutional symbol of Dayanand's philosophy. The Samaj had done splendid work in social and educational field.

The success of this Samaj has been greatly due to commendable contribution of three gifted successors of Dayanand- Lala Hansaraj, Pandit Guru Dutt and Lala Lajpat Rai. The objectives of Arya Samaj was to recover and revive the forgotten values of Aryan culture, to inspire the Indians with the great Aryan ideal

of the past and to re-establish the greatness of India by responding to internal as well as external challenges.

The members of Arya Samaj were guided by "Ten Principles" of which the first one was to study and realize the importance of Veda. The other principles provide emphasis on leading a moral and virtuous life. The Arya Samajists believe in one Supreme Being, who is omnipotent, eternal and maker of all. Dayananda believed in God alone and difference did not want the people to mistake shadow for the substance. Arya Samajists also emphasized on the expansion of education and abolition of illiteracy.

They also believed in karma and rebirth pursued path for the well being of the world. The Arya Samajists were opposed to idolatry, ritual and priesthood, and particularly to the prevalent caste system and popular Hinduism as preached by orthodox Brahmins.

They were also the ardent advocate of social reform, enlistment of women and depressed class and spread of education. The Arya Samajists stood for social equality and championed social solidarity and consolidation. One of the objectives of Arya Samaj was to prevent conversion of Hindus to other religions and to reconvert those Hindus who had been converted to other religions like Islam and Christianity through a pacificator ceremony called Shuddhi.

The Arya Samaj movement through its multi-dimensional activities weakened the hold of orthodox and conservative elements. It also contributed more than the rational movement of Brahmo Samaj to the development of a new national consciousness in India.

To conclude with the observation of cultural Heritage of India Series "The Arya Samaj is Dayanand writ large, and it reflects his versatile personality. It has in it saints, philosophers, organisers, scholars, thinkers and the laity-all reflecting in different prisms, in potent ways, the light of the brilliant son of lofty moral and spiritual ideals that Dayananda embodied. There is no doubt that his personality will leave its impress on humanity, and will influence, in an increasing measure, the religious history of India and the world."

Although a sanyasi, Dayanand had a sensitive and compassionate heart that melted at the sufferings of the poor. 'To love the creation of God is to love God Himself' - so he taught people. To awaken people from lethargy, the Swamiji travelled all over India. Wherever he went, he roundly condemned the caste system, idol worship, child marriage and other harmful customs and traditions. He preached that women should have equal rights with men and laid stress on pure conduct in life. This created a stir among the people. Over the centuries, with the passing of time some wicked customs had crept into Hinduism. These customs stood out prominently and therefore the real power and greatness of Hinduism were dimmed. With the teachings of Swamy Dayanand true Hinduism came to shine forth. Thousands of young people who had been influenced by Western Culture and were about to accept Christianity turned back and became the staunch followers of Vedic religion. Some time Hindus who had gone over to other religions wished to come back. But the Hindus would not permit this. Swamy Dayanand took the Christian and Muslim converts back into the Hindu fold by performing purification rites for them. So it may be said that Dayanand brought about a revolution in the social life of Indians.

He laid particular emphasis on the equality of women. He used to say that India had fallen to such a miserable condition precisely because women were not given education but were kept in ignorance. As long as women were prisoners of foolish customs like the purdah, progress was beyond reach like the reflection of a bundle of jewels in a mirror. They should throw away their purdahs. Seetha and Savithri are remembered not because they were behind the purdah, but because of their chastity and virtue. So he went on preaching.

Dayanand was bitterly opposed to un-touchability. "Un-touchability is a dreadful curse of our society. Every living being has a soul which deserves affection; in every human being there is a soul worthy of respect. Anyone who does not know this basic principle cannot understand the true meaning of the Vedic religion." So he preached.

Dayanand was fully convinced that the nation cannot prosper unless education spreads. But our education system should not be a mere carbon copy of the western type of education. There should be a law to compel the parents to send every boy or girl who is eight years old to school. Every boy and every girl should be sent to Gurukulas where they stay with their gurus. There should be separate Gurukulas for boys and girls. The King's son and the farmer's son should be equals in a Gurukula. They should all be made to work alike. The Gurukula should be situated far from the town and the city, and should enjoy calm and serenity. Our culture and our great books like the Vedas should be introduced to our students. Side by side, mathematics, geology, astronomy and other sciences which are important in modern life should also be taught. Swamy Dayanand founded gurukulas at various places to fulfil these objects. Among them Kangadi is famous even to this day.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati is one the most important reformers and spiritual forces India has known in recent times. The dominant personality of Dayanand Saraswati had found extraordinary reflection in the virility of the Arya Samaj movement, and in almost every one of its adherents. The contribution of Arya Samaj in the field of education is commendable. The establishment of education institutions, particularly in the northern and eastern parts of India, and the formation of the Gurukula Academy at Hardwar exemplify the very rightful eagerness of many Samajists to revive the ancient ideal and traditions of Hindu education. The members of Arya Samaj movement are also in the forefront of other public services of the country. This is evident from the number of members of the Samaj who have attained public eminence and have won the gratitude of the Indian nation. The contribution and importance of Swami Dayananda will remain alive in the country so long as the Arya Samaj exists and continues its activities of religious and social reforms.

The 10 principles of Arya Samaj

1. God is the efficient cause of all true knowledge and all that is known through knowledge.
2. God is existent, intelligent and blissful. He is formless, omniscient, just, merciful, unborn, endless, unchangeable, beginning-less, unequalled, the support of all, the master of all, omnipresent, immanent, un-aging, immortal, fearless, eternal and holy, and the maker of all. He alone is worthy of being worshiped.
3. The Vedas are the scriptures of all true knowledge. It is the paramount duty of all Aryas to read them, teach them, recite them and to hear them being read
4. One should always be ready to accept truth and to renounce untruth.
5. All acts should be performed in accordance with Dharma that is, after deliberating what is right and wrong.
6. The prime object of the Arya Samaj is to do good to the world, that is, to promote physical, spiritual and social good of everyone.
7. Our conduct towards all should be guided by love, righteousness and justice.
8. We should dispel Avidya (ignorance) and promote Vidya (knowledge).
9. No one should be content with promoting his/her good only; on the contrary, one should look for his/her good in promoting the good of all.
10. One should regard oneself under restriction to follow the rules of society calculated to promote the well being of all, while in following the rules of individual welfare all should be free.

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